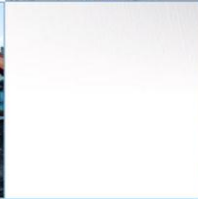
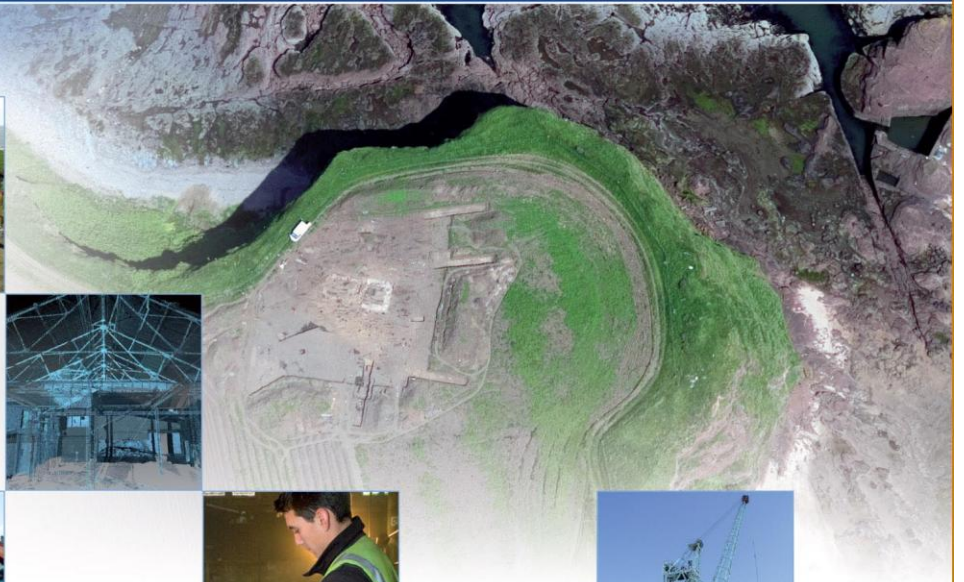
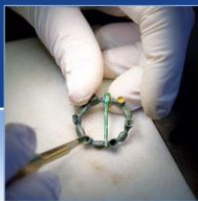


# Druim an Duin and Dun a' Choin Duibh Survey Report

AOC 21950  
18th November 2011



**AOC**  
Archaeology  
Group



ARCHAEOLOGY

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## Druim an Duin and Dun a' Choin Duibh Survey Report

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| <b>On Behalf of:</b>                   | <b>Forestry Commission Scotland</b><br>1 Highlander Way<br>Inverness Business Park<br>Inverness<br>IV2 7GB |
| <b>National Grid References (NGR):</b> | <b>NR 7811 9130 (Druim an Duin)</b><br><b>NR 8043 6407 (Dun a Choin Duibh)</b>                             |
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| <b>Date of Survey:</b>                 | <b>24th-26th October 2011</b>  |
| <b>Date of Report:</b>                 | <b>18th November 2011</b>  |

This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

|                                  |              |
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# Drum an Duin and Dun a' Choin Duibh, Argyll

## Survey Report

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by the Forestry Commission Scotland to undertake a detailed topographic survey of two duns in Argyll, at Druim an Duin (NMRS No: NR79SE 1; NGR: NR 7811 9130) and Dun A' Choin Duibh (NMRS No.: NR86SW 4; NGR: NR 8043 6407) in order to act as a detailed record and provide baseline data for conservation management.
- 1.2 The surveys were carried out between 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October 2011. Both sites were laser scanned using a Faro Focus 3D laser scanner, while interpreted detail and topographic features were recorded using a Trimble S6 total station. A photographic record was compiled using a Canon 1000D digital SLR, and was cross referenced to the plans. Data processing was undertaken in Faro Scene and Trimble Realworks, with interpreted survey processed using Trimble's Terramodel package.

### 2. Druim an Duin

- 2.1 Druim an Duin is located at the NE end of a precarious spur of rock that runs NE/SW, around 500m W of Loch Choille-Bharr in Knapdale. The location is dramatic, and although the dun is now surrounded by conifer plantation it is clear that the site was chosen for the dramatic views offered over the surrounding glens, and to the north towards Moine Mhor. Druim an Duin was excavated in 1904/5 by Christison (Christison 1905), at which time the interior was cleared of rubble and the two entrances excavated. Finds included a steatite cup, coarse stone tools and the upper stone of a rotary quern (Anderson, in Christison 1905:291-2).

#### 2.2 2011 Survey

- 2.3 Druim an Duin is sub-oval in plan, and comprises a thick wall enclosing a space 13.96m N/S by 9.6m E/W. The wall is generally in the region of 4m thick, although the western portion has collapsed over the cliff edge. The site is approached from the S, where the wall survives to its greatest height, standing to over 1.7m in around seven courses (plates 1 and 2). The southernmost of the two entrances into the site is a passageway oriented NE/SW, 1.37m in width and 5.1m in length. The passageway widens 2m from the external wall face, behind two opposed door jambs. In the SE -facing elevation, a partially collapsed corbelled alcove has been constructed; this does not seem likely to represent an intra-mural gallery, and is only c.1m deep (see plates 3 and 4).
- 2.4 Behind the eastern jamb in the NW-facing elevation, there is a well preserved bar hole which extends into the wall for over 1m. An intramural gallery is accessed through a doorway in this elevation, leading to a collapsed corbelled cell (plates 9 to 11). The lintels over this intramural passage are intact, but the cell itself is choked with rubble and very overgrown (plates 12 to 14).

- 2.5 Like much of the site, the interior is very overgrown, although there is clearly a secondary rebuild within the original dun wall, forming a sub-rectangular space that blocks the N entrance through the original wall (see plate 19). Vegetation prevents recording this structure in detail, but tracing the original wall face it seems likely that the secondary rebuild constitutes a re-skin c.0.7m thick; it survives to 0.6m in height in places.
- 2.6 The N entrance to the dun is less well preserved, and very overgrown. There is no evidence of any intramural features, although the passageway is similar to the S entrance in having opposed door jambs around 1.5m from the external wall face (see plates 19 and 20). The overall length of the passage is 4.98m. To the NE, the exterior wall face is relatively well preserved, standing to over 1.4m in eight courses (see plate 21).
- 2.7 To the E of the site, the wall is partly ruinous and has collapsed to form a rubble slope, with wall facing surviving only in places (at points 6 and 7 on plan, see plates 22 and 23). The rubble slope is overgrown with a thick covering of moss, and several trees have taken root in this area.

### 2.8 Condition

- 2.9 The surviving stonework at Druim an Duin is generally in good condition, although the stability of some of the collapsed portions of the corbelled cells to either side of the S entrance is questionable. The site is very overgrown, and although the forestry plantation has not directly disturbed the site, several naturally seeded saplings have colonised the interior of the dun (see plate 18), while a number of broadleaf species have taken root in the surrounding rubble. It is recommended that these colonising trees are removed before their root systems can pose a threat to the stability of the site.

## 3. Dun a' Choin Duibh

- 3.1 Dun a' Choin Duibh occupies a typical location for an Argyll dun, on a steep-sided hill overlooking Loch Tarbert. Like Druim an Duin, a precipitous location was chosen, and the proximity to an eroding cliff face has meant that parts of the stone walls have been lost to collapse. No formal excavation has taken place at Dun a' Choin Duibh, although some digging was carried out in the small cellular features in the lower areas of the site, at which time iron slag was recovered. A large quern stone, probably of medieval or later date, was found in the interior of the upper enclosure, and a flagpole was apparently erected nearby; neither are now visible on the site.

### 3.2 2011 Survey

- 3.3 The site comprises three principle components: two large enclosure dun walls and a central, circular dun with complex mural architecture. Previous surveyors have considered the site to represent a central 'citadel' dun with associated enclosures (Alcock et al 1989), although Childe and Graham (1943) suggested, probably correctly, that the enclosures may be earlier than the central circular dun. Two small circular structures have been appended to the lower enclosure; these seem likely to represent late use of the site.
- 3.4 The central structure (dun 1) is the best preserved area of the site, although the SW quadrant appears to have been lost to the erosion of the steep slope (plate 25). At its highest, this structure stands to 2m

in height, and the wall foot averages 3.1m in thickness (plates 26 and 27). Previous surveyors (RCAHMS 1988) have noted the presence of a rough median wall face, visible at the SW breach in the walling, as well as the possibility that the wall contains an intramural gallery to the S of the W entrance. Neither of these suggestions could be demonstrated unequivocally at the time of the current survey.

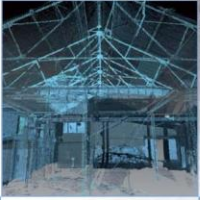
- 3.5 Dun 1 has two entrances. The first of these, on the W, is similar in style to the entrances to many Atlantic Iron Age settlements, comprising a narrow passage, capped by a triangular threshold lintel 0.98m across (plates 29 to 31). The unusual feature of this entrance is the z-shaped path it follows through the dun wall; the reason for this arrangement is not clear.
- 3.6 The northern parts of dun 1 are largely collapsed, forming a steep rubble slope down to the lower enclosure (plates 32 and 33). The second entrance to the central dun is located on the N, and comprises a ruinous passage 2.8m in length, now clogged with rubble. Collapse and vegetation growth since the time of the previous survey have now obscured any evidence of the passageway architecture, and the door jambs are now obscured (plates 34 and 35).
- 3.7 Although the SW quadrant of the central dun has collapsed, the remnants of walling are visible along the edge of the steep slope (plate 36). Although this is where the missing section of the dun 1 seems likely to have stood, the alignment of this walling seems to accord more comfortably with the path of the upper dun enclosure, dun 2, so that the latter may have formed the footing for the construction of the central dun. This would suggest that the dun 2 is the earlier phase, and was later built over by the central circular dun.
- 3.8 Dun 2 enclosure wall is generally ruinous, and wall face survives only in places on the exterior. At point 7, the steep wall face appears to form a revetment for the dun 2, and may have supported the central dun prior to its collapse. Elsewhere the upper enclosure stands to around 0.6m in height at ground level, but the external wall face is over 1.8m tall in places (plates 38 to 40). To the N, the upper dun enclosure has been built close to the craggy step down to the lower enclosure, accentuating the impression of height from below.
- 3.9 The lower enclosure of Dun a' Choin Duibh, dun 3, is similar in form to the dun 2, with the exterior wall face surviving in several places to almost 2m in height (see plates 41 and 42). Dun 3 encloses an area 7.0m N/S by 11.5m E/W; there is no clear entrance, although the most likely location for this would be on the E side, near where dun 3 meets the base of the rubble slope. Excavation would be required to confirm this. Two small circular structures, 2.3m by 4.7m and 1.7m by 3.2m across, have been built against the inner wall face of dun 3; the character of this walling suggests that these structures are of later date.

### 3.10 Condition

- 3.11 Dun a' Choin Duibh is generally in good condition, and the active management of the encroachment of the surrounding forestry is helping to prevent damage by colonizing saplings. The upstanding walls on the site are generally stable and in good condition, although the fragments of surviving wall face around the lower enclosure are relatively fragile and should be monitored for risk of collapse. Erosion of the upper enclosure (dun 2) by visitor access over the rampart in the SW is a concern, although the wall is already very denuded at this point and there are few alternative access points to the site.

#### 4. References

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- Childe, V.G. and Graham, A. 1943 'Some notable prehistoric and medieval monuments recently examined by The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, vol.77, pp.41-2
- Christison, D 1905 'Report on the Society's excavations of forts on the Poltalloch Estate, Argyll, in 1904-5', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, vol.39, pp 285-292



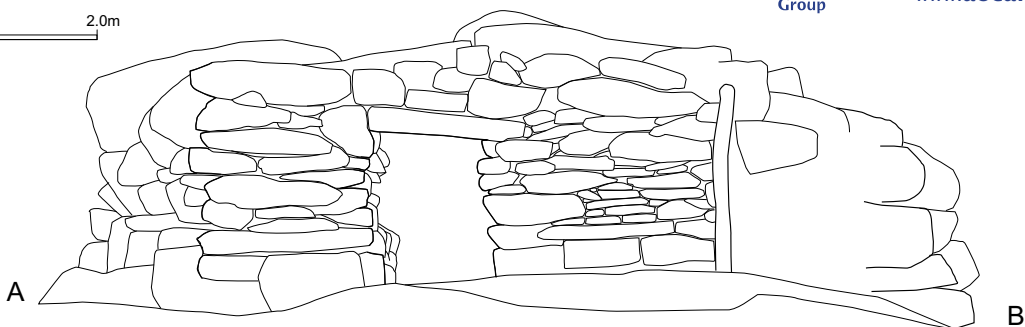
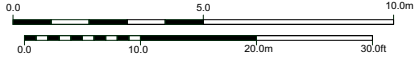
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# Druim an Duin, Argyll

Plan: 1: 200 @ A3  
Elevation: 1: 50 @ A3

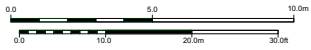




# Dun A'Choin Duibh, Argyll

180420  
+ 664110

180450  
+ 664110



664060  
+ 180420

+ 664060  
180450

Plan: 1: 150 @ A4  
Elevation: 1: 75 @ A4

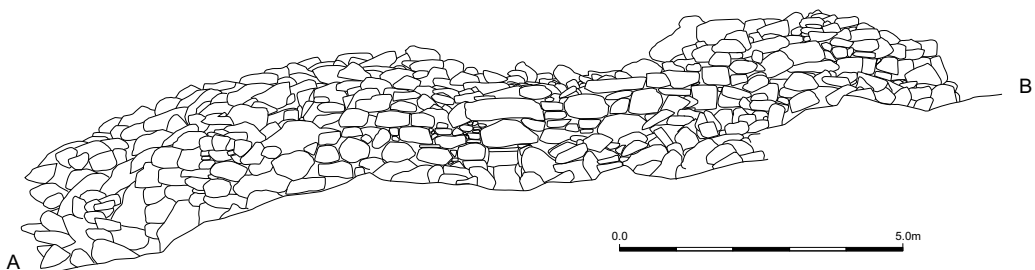




Plate 1: General view of the S entrance to Druim an Duin, facing north



Plate 2: General view of the S entrance to Druim an Duin, facing NW



Plate 3: S entrance to Druim an Duin, SE-facing elevation (point 1), from the N



Plate 4: Detail of the collapsed cell in the SE-facing elevation, S entrance



Plate 5: Internal wall face at point 3, from N



Plate 6: Bar hole in SE-facing elevation of entrance, behind door jamb



Plate 7: Detail of bar hole



Plate 8: S entrance to Drum an Duin, NW-facing elevation (point 2), facing E



Plate 9: Entrance to guard cell in NW-facing elevation of S entrance



Plate 10: General view of S entrance, from dun interior, facing S



Plate 11: View into the collapsed guard cell from above, facing W



Plate 12: Exposed stonework in the guard cell, facing N





Plate 13: View of the stonework in the entrance to the guard cell, facing E



Plate 14: View of the lintels capping the guard cell in the southern entrance



Plate 18: View of the interior of the site, facing S



Plate 19: View of the N entrance at point 4 with secondary walling blocking the passageway



Plate 20: View of the W facing elevation (point 5) of the N entrance



Plate 21: View of the exterior wall face (point 5) to NE of N entrance



Plate 22: Fragment of surviving wall face at point 6, facing W



Plate 23: Fragment of surviving wall face at point 7, facing W



Plate 24: Rubble slope to E of dun, facing W



Plate 25: View of broken wall of dun 1, at point 1, Dun a'Choin Duibh



Plate 26: View of external wall face of dun 1, at point 2, facing NE



Plate 27: General view of dun 1, facing E



Plate 29: View of the W entrance to dun 1, at point 3, facing E



Plate 30: View into the W entrance to dun 1



Plate 31: View of the lintelled W entrance passage of dun 1



Plate 32: View of broken wall and rubble to N of dun 1, at point 4, facing S





Plate 33: View of rubble slope to N of dun 1, at point 4, facing S



Plate 34: View of the ruinous N entrance to dun 1, at point 5, facing E



Plate 35: View of the ruinous N entrance to dun 1, at point 5, facing NE



Plate 36: Remnants of SE quadrant of dun 1, at point 6, from N



Plate 37: View of interior of dun 1, facing NW



Plate 38: View of wall face fragment at point 7, facing N



Plate 38: View of wall face fragment at point 8, facing N



Plate 39: View of wall face fragment at point 9, facing NE



Plate 40: View of wall face of dun 2, at point 9, facing E



Plate 41: Outer wall face of dun 3, at point 10, facing E



Plate 42: Outer wall face of dun 3, at point 11, facing S



Plate 43: Circular structure at point 12, facing N



Plate 44: Circular structure at point 13, facing W



Plate 45: General view of rampart of lower enclosure, dun 3, from S