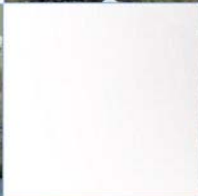


Nine Stone Rig, East Lothian Archaeological Re-instatement: Data Structure Report

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ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE

CONSERVATION

Nine Stone Rig, East Lothian, Archaeological Evaluation and Re- instatement: Data Structure Report

On Behalf of: **Black Mountain Farms**
c/o Baikie Hodge Ltd
Suite C1
Stirling Agricultural Centre
Stirling
FK9 4RN

National Grid Reference (NGR): **NT 6254 6549**

AOC Project No: **22125**

Prepared by: **Martin Cook, Kevin Paton, Jake Steatfeild-James**

Illustration by: **Jake Steatfeild-James**

Date of Fieldwork: **4th to 5th July 2012**

Date of Report: **13th July 2012**

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

Author: Martin Cook

Date: 13th July 2012

Approved by: John Gooder

Date: 13th July 2012

Draft Report Stage:

Date: 13th July 2012

Enquiries to: AOC Archaeology Group
Edgefield Industrial Estate
Edgefield Road
Loanhead
EH20 9SY

Tel. 0131 440 3593
Fax. 0131 440 3422
e-mail. admin@aocarchaeology.com



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Abstract

A programme of archaeological works was required by Black Mountain Farms on the Scheduled Monument (SM) of Nine Stone Rig (Scheduled 1987, Index No.4423), south of Garvald, East Lothian (NGR: NT 6254 6549) which had recently been accidentally disturbed during the course of groundworks. This programme of archaeological works was required by Historic Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Ministers to restore the SM to its original condition prior and to assess the extent and significance of the damage caused to the monument by the unauthorised groundworks.

The archaeological works focussed on a single evaluation trench located, over the area of disturbance, through the central area of the monument. The trench measured 3.5 m by 3.5 m in plan, and was up to 0.25 m in depth. The trench was excavated through 0.25 m of redeposited material comprising peat and turf.

The evaluation revealed that the monument was built into overlay natural gravel. Subsequently, a thin layer of peat c.0.25 m in depth formed around the base of the stones. As the interior of the monument was sterile of any features such as stone sockets, the damage caused by the excavation of the bird feeder was relatively limited. The probable socket stone of the displaced stone was located and the stone replaced.

Neither previously unknown features nor artefacts were identified.

0 NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 0.1 A programme of archaeological works was required by Black Mountain Farms on the Scheduled Monument (SM) of Nine Stone Rig (Scheduled 1987, Index No.4423), south of Garvald, East Lothian (NGR: NT 6254 6549) which had recently been accidentally disturbed during the course of groundworks. This programme of archaeological works was required by Historic Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Ministers to restore the SM to its original condition prior to the recent disturbance and to assess the extent and significance of the damage caused to the monument by the unauthorised groundworks.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location

- 1.1.1 The Nine Stone Rig site lies just above 300 m OD, on a south-facing slope, in open moor land (NGR: NT 6254 6549; Figure 1).

1.2 Archaeological background

- 1.2.1 Nine Stone Rig (NMRS: NT66WW14), is a stone circle and Scheduled Monument (SM 4423). Only eight stones survive; three on the NW arc being still upright and five prostrate. Six stones enclose a three-quarter circle approximately 6.6 m in diameter, with the southern arc being open. One stone, almost buried, lies outside the NE arc, and another, the most southerly, lies outside this line. The largest erect stone, on the NW, is 1.5 m long, 0.6 m wide and 0.9 m above ground level, while the five that are overthrown vary from 0.6 m to 2.1 m in length.

1.3 Curatorial control

- 1.3.1 The site of Nine Stone Rig is a Scheduled Monument. Prior to the on site works commencing the scope of works was discussed with Historic Scotland and Final Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC AMH/4423/9) was subsequently granted by Historic Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Ministers.

2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:
- i) to determine the extent and significance of the damage to the SM by survey, plan and photography prior to any other works being undertaken;
 - ii) to determine and fully record the character, extent, condition, quality, date and significance of any archaeological remains exposed by damage to the SM;
 - iii) to determine if the socket hole of the displaced stone can be identified within the disturbed area;

- iv) to conduct and oversee the reinstatement of the SM to a level that meets with Historic Scotland's approval.

3 METHOD

- 3.1 The details of the archaeological works, laid out below, were designed fully to meet the requirements of Historic Scotland. Following discussion between AOC and Ms. Clements of Historic Scotland, a programme of works was agreed that would satisfy Historic Scotland's needs. These works would encompass an assessment of damage to monument, followed by the cleaning and excavation of the area of damage to the SM. The excavation area would be hand cleaned to expose the top of the *in situ* archaeology, with the sections cut back to a vertical edge before being fully recorded. Following this a geotextile layer would be used to cover the archaeology before the disturbed material to back-fill the excavations and return the damaged areas to their former appearance.
- 3.2 All hand excavation was undertaken according to AOC Archaeology Group's standard operating procedures (AOC 2012).
- 3.3 All features and sections were fully recorded by measured drawing, written record, digital survey and photography.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The works were conducted between Wednesday 4th and Thursday 5th July 2012. The weather conditions were mixed, dry and sunny in parts with heavy showers. Overall archaeological visibility was good.
- 4.1.2 The various data gathered from the excavation are presented as a series of appendices:

- Appendix 1 contains trench summaries;
- Appendix 2 contains the photographic register;
- Appendix 3 contains the context register;
- Appendix 4 contains the drawing register;
- Appendix 5 reproduces the *Discovery & Excavation in Scotland* entry.

4.2 Evaluation (Plates 1 & 2)

- 4.2.1 The evaluation comprised the excavation of a single trench located across the position of the unauthorised groundworks within the SM. Although originally it was intended to excavate a 3.5 m by 3.5 m area, on initial excavation it was realised that the area of disturbance was much smaller. The outer edges of the area comprised simply turf redeposited on turf. For this reason the actual trench measured 2.8 m by 2.5 m.
- 4.2.2 On excavation, it was established that the area of disturbance measured slightly less than first thought, as much of the damage simply comprised redeposited turfs, overlying the existing turf. The actual area of excavation was therefore aligned north to south across the central area of the SM, and measured 2.8 m east to west by 2.5 m north to south (Figures 2 and 3). It was located within the

central area of the SM, enclosed by the stone circle, which was damaged by the removal of an area of heather and turf by a JCB (Plate 1) for a bird feeder.



Plate 1: Pre-excavation shot of Scheduled Monument

- 4.2.3 The objective of the excavation of the trench was to assess the damage and establish the extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological features present, including the possible location of the socket for the displaced standing stone. The bird feeder was removed and re-deposited material was excavated. The trench was excavated by hand through overlying peat to natural gravels. The sections of the trench were cleaned and straightened.
- 4.2.4 On excavation, the main area of disturbance was found to be relatively limited, the works having avoided the majority of the surrounding stone circle. Instead, the damage comprised the machine excavation of an approximately 2.8 m by 2.5 m area. The disturbance consisted of the removal of up to 0.25 m of turf and peat. A plastic sheet was then laid across the area, to catch rain water and act as a bird feeder. The displaced material was placed around the edge of the bird feeder, raising the edge slightly, resulting in a bowl feature.



Plate 2: Post-excavation shot following removal of peat and turf



Plate 3: Post-excavation shot following removal of plastic sheeting

- 4.2.5 A second point of disturbance comprised the displacement of one of the standing stones. The stone was identified within the centre of the SM, partially overlying the waterproof sheet of the bird feeder. The whole area, including the main area of disturbance was inspected in an attempt to identify the location of the stone socket. No socket was identified within the central area, suggesting that the stone had been disturbed from outwith this area and subsequently placed within the bird feeder area to help weigh down the sheeting. A small hole, measuring 0.60 m by 0.40 m in size, was identified to the south-west of the main disturbance, but within the stone circle (Figure 2 and Plate 4). The size and location of the feature suggest it is a likely origin for the stone. The probable socket hole was recorded and planned and the stone placed within it (Plate 5).



Plate 4: Detail of probable socket hole identified to the south-west of main disturbance



Plate 5: Detail of displaced stone re-instated in former position

- 4.2.6 Following excavation and recording the area was lined with geotextile sheeting and the hand excavated material replaced. Additional loose material that had been disturbed during the unauthorised groundworks was gathered and used to help reinstate the site to its former height (Plate 6).



Plate 6: Detail of SM following backfilling

5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1 The archaeological works completed at Nine Stone Rig comprised limited evaluation and re-instatement work, and therefore unfortunately did little to elucidate our understanding of the monument. However, the little work completed can still be used through analogy with better understood monuments to aid further discussion.
- 5.2 The evaluation of the monument was limited to the area previously disturbed by ground works, and was confined to the central area of the stone circle. The re-excitation of this area identified a thin layer of peat up to 0.25 m in depth, overlying the natural gravel. The stone circle was built into the underlying gravel; the peat forming around the existing monument. Evaluation of the central area demonstrated the absence of any surviving central features such as stone sockets or burials, or artefactual material, within this confined space. Similarly, inspection of the immediate environs of the site failed to identify any associated surface features or structures, such as cists, protruding from the ground. Limited inspection of the stones demonstrated an absence of decoration such as cup marks, on any of the visible surfaces.
- 5.3 The term 'stone circle' is a relatively generic title, and as such refers to a variety of different monuments with different regional traditions (Downes 2012, 121). Specifically, analogy with better preserved and excavated sites across Scotland suggests a variety of functions, chronological differences and dates. For example, the larger and more complex monuments such as the recumbent stone circles of the north-east are believed to have either a funerary function or ritual function, or perhaps both (ibid). Similarly, many believe stone circles to have an astronomical function, measuring solar and lunar cycles in the Bronze Age (ibid, 123). The apparent relative simplicity of Nine Stone Rig in comparison to these more complex monuments, while not entirely conclusive, perhaps indicates a more localised tradition, as well as a chronological difference. For example, while no funerary remains were identified, current research clearly demonstrates the high occurrence of burial at such sites. The apparent absence of such remains at Nine Stone Rig may simply be a function of the limited scope and scale of remediation work undertaken at the site.

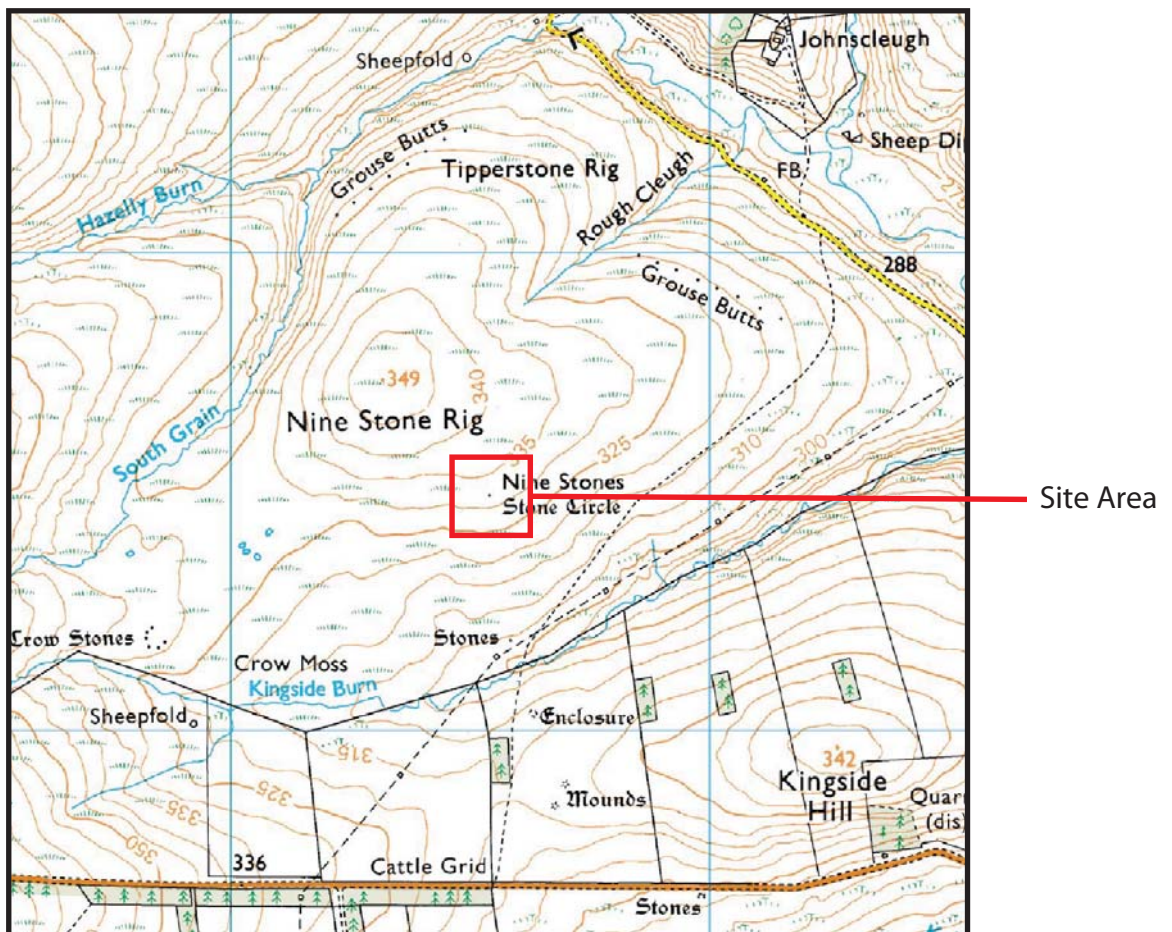
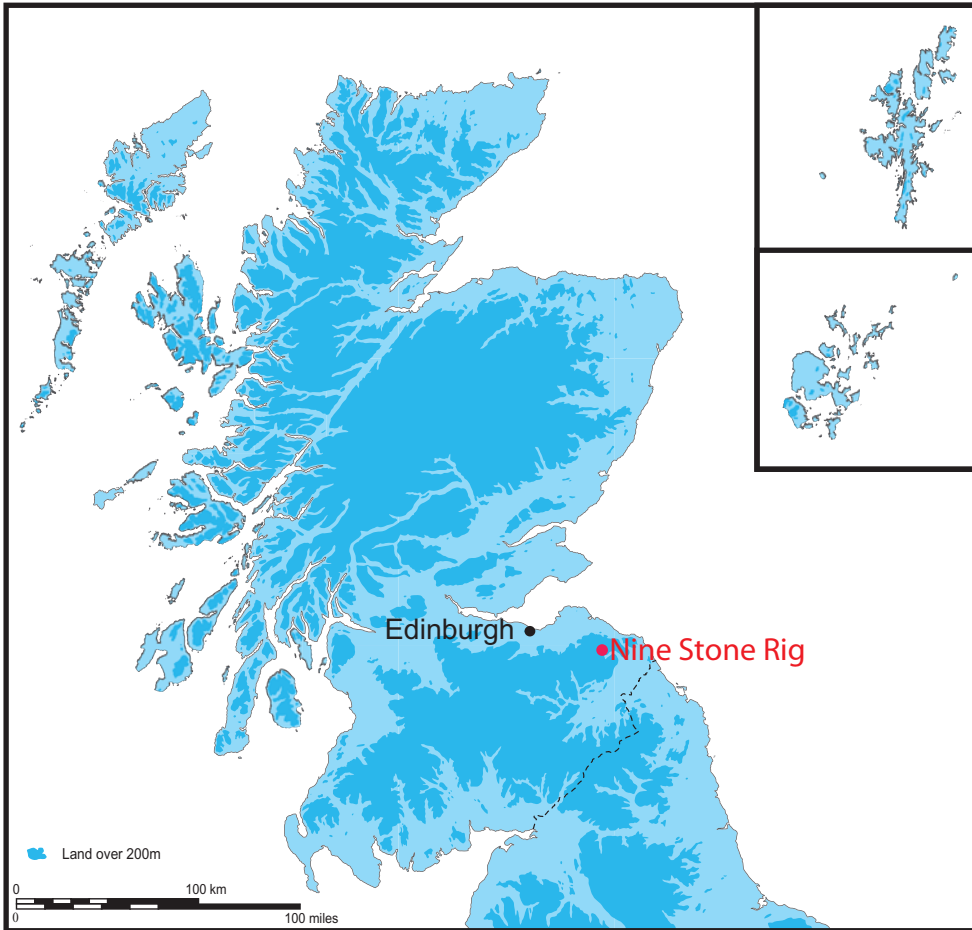
6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The evaluation demonstrated that the disturbance to the SM had been relatively limited. The main area of disturbance comprised an area of 2.8 m by 2.5 m. Although up to 0.25 m of peat had been excavated and removed, the bulk of the disturbance had avoided the stone circle itself.
- 6.2 The displaced stone has been returned to its probable point of origin prior to the recent disturbance..

7 REFERENCES

AOC. 2012 *Nine Stone Rig, East Lothian: Archaeological Evaluation Written Scheme of Investigation*
AOC Archaeology Client Report

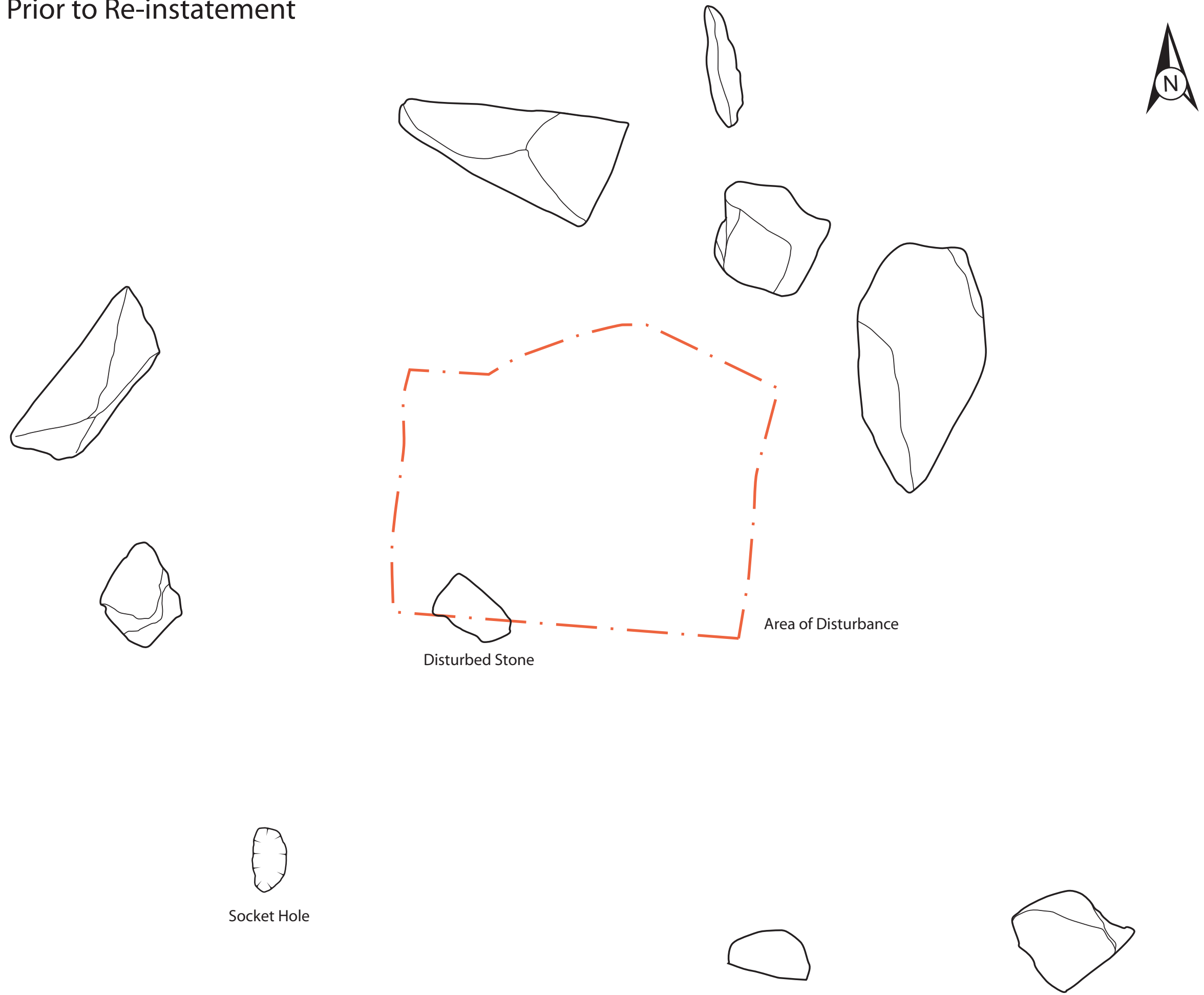
Downes, J 'Chalcolithic and Bronze Age Scotland' ScARF Summary Bronze Age Panel Document,
June 2012, The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (ScARF 2012 www.scottishheritagehub.com)



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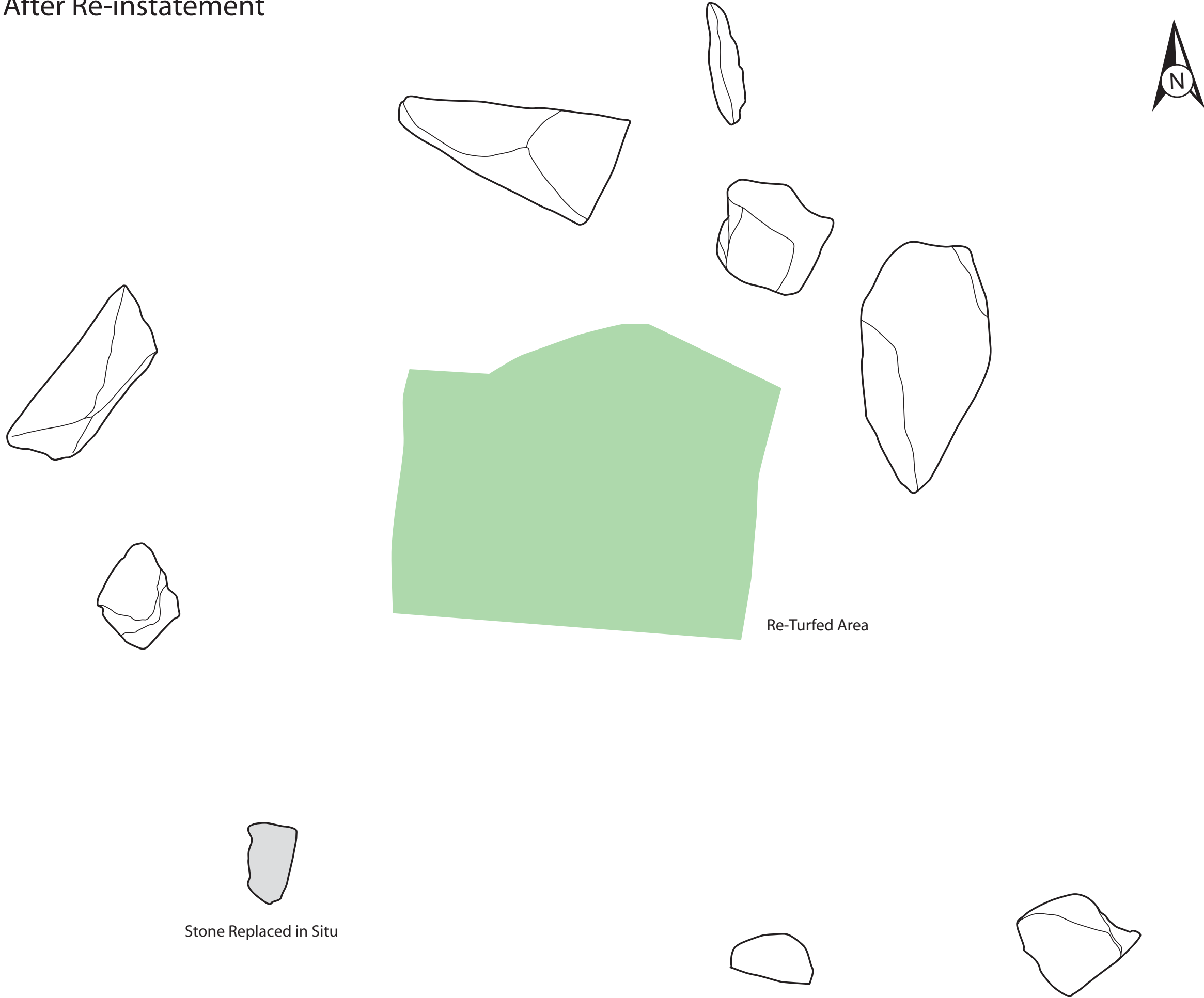
Figure 1: Location of the site at Nine Stone Rig

Figure 2: Nine Stone Rig Prior to Re-instatement



0 1 2m

Figure 3: Nine Stone Rig After Re-instatement



APPENDIX 1: PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER

Black & White Print Film 1 & Digital

Frame	Description	From
1-2	Registration	-
3-4	Pre-ex shot of damage	N
5-6	Pre-ex shot of damage	E
7-8	Pre-ex shot of damage	W
9-10	Pre-ex shot of damage	S
11-12	Post-ex shot of disturbance following removal of material	N
13-14	Detail of possible socket [103] for displaced stone	E
15-16	Detail of possible socket [103] for displaced stone	S
17-18	Area of disturbance following removal of bird feeder	N
19-20	Post-ex shot of trench	N
21-22	Shot of terram l place, pre backfilling	N
23-24	Detail of backfilled area	N
25-26	Detail of backfilled area	E
27-28	Detail of possible socket [103] for displaced stone	W
29-30	Detail of possible socket [103] for displaced stone	S
31-32	Displaced stone re-laid in place	S
33-36	General shots of Nine Stone Rig following re-instatement	N

APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT REGISTER

Context	Description
100	Peat covering site
101	Gravel natural
102	Possible socket for displaced stone

APPENDIX 3: DRAWING REGISTER

Find No.	Description	Scale
1	Plan of Nine Stone Rig	1:20
2	Section through disturbance	1:10

APPENDIX 4: DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND REPORT

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	East Lothian Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Nine Stone Rig Evaluation and Re-instatement
PROJECT CODE:	AOC 22125
PARISH:	Whittinghame
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Martin Cook
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology Group
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Evaluation and Re-instatement
NMRS NO(S):	NT66WW14
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Stone Circle
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 6254 6549
START DATE (this season)	4 th July 2012
END DATE (this season)	5 th July 2012
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>A programme of archaeological works was required on the Scheduled Monument (SM) of Nine Stone Rig (Scheduled 1987, Index No.4423), south of Garvald, East Lothian which had recently been accidentally disturbed during the course of groundworks. This disturbance included the displacement of a stone. This programme of archaeological works was requested by Historic Scotland to restore the SM to its original condition prior to the recent disturbance and to assess the extent and significance of the damage caused to the monument by the unauthorised groundworks.</p> <p>The archaeological works focussed on a single evaluation trench, over the area of disturbance, through the central area of the monument. The trench measured 2.8 m by 2.5 m in plan, and was up to 0.25 m in depth. The trench was excavated through 0.25 m of redeposited material comprising peat and turf.</p> <p>The evaluation revealed that the monument was built into natural gravel. The trench found the central area of the stone circle to be sterile of any features. Nearby the probable socket of the displaced stone was located and the stone re-placed.</p> <p>Neither previously unknown features nor artefacts were identified.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	No further works
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	n/a
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Black Mountain Farms
ADDRESS OF MAIN	C/o AOC Archaeology Group

CONTRIBUTOR:	
EMAIL ADDRESS:	Martin.Cook@aocarchaeology.com



AOC Archaeology Group, Edgefield Industrial Estate, Edgefield Road, Loanhead EH20 9SY
tel: 0131 440 3593 | fax: 0131 440 3422 | e-mail: edinburgh@aocarchaeology.com

www.aocarchaeology.com