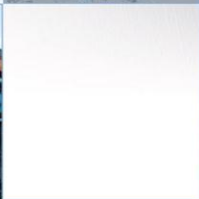
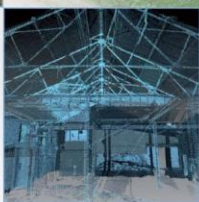
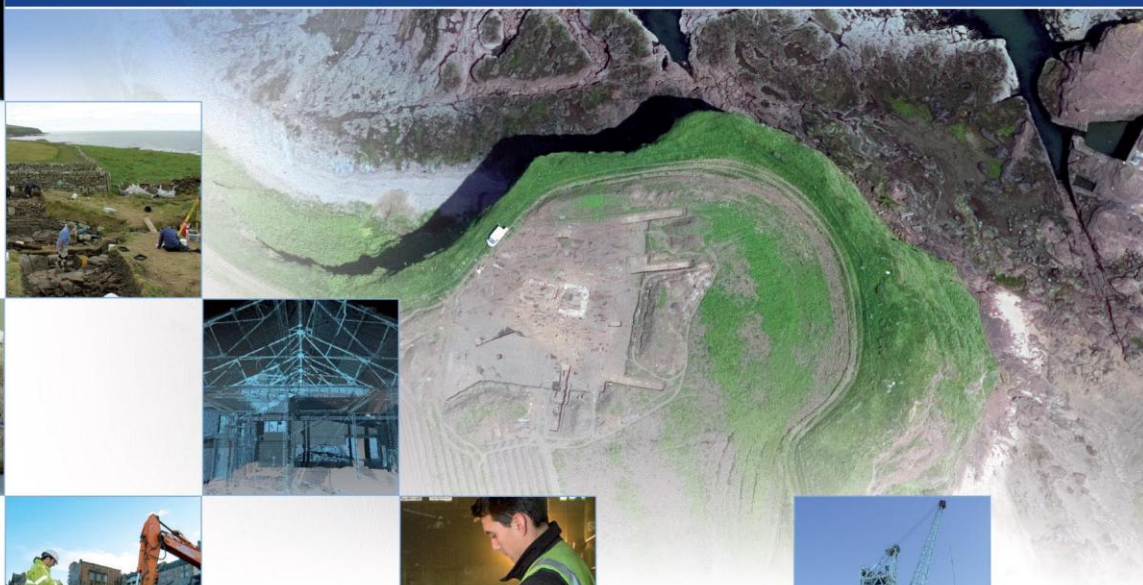


Bucharn Cairn, Strachan

Archaeological Survey Report

22631

11th February 2014



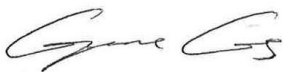
Bucharn Cairn, Strachan

Archaeological Survey Report

On Behalf of:	Forestry Commission Scotland 1 Highlander Way Inverness Business Park Inverness IV2 7GB
National Grid Reference (NGR):	NO 6593 9301
AOC Project No:	22483
Prepared by:	G.Cavers
Illustration by:	G.Hudson & G.Cavers
Date of Fieldwork:	28th January 2014
Date of Report:	11th February 2014

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

Author:



Date: 11/2/14

Approved by:



Date: 11/2/14

Enquiries to:

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

Contents

Page

List of illustrations	1
List of plates	1
Abstract.....	3
Introduction	4
Survey.....	4
Archaeological Context	4
Bucharn Cairn: Site Description	4
Condition.....	5
Survey Metadata.....	5
References.....	6

List of illustrations

Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2: Orthographic plan of the site derived from laser scan data, with elevations

Figure 3: Plan of the cairn and later structures (1:150 at A3)

Figure 4: Terrain model of the cairn in plan

Figure 5: 3D Views of the cairn terrain model

List of plates

Plate 1: Panoramic view of the cairn, from the N

Plate 2: General view of the cairn from the N

Plate 3: Structure 1, facing SW

Plate 4: General view of the platform kerb and later clearance to N of cairn, facing W

Plate 5: General view of the mound to the W of the cairn.

Plate 6: Walling between structures 1 and 2, facing SW

Plate 7: Kerb of mound to W of cairn, looking SW

Plate 8: Structure 5, looking N

Plate 9: Structure 6, facing E

Plate 10: Structure 7, facing N

Plate 11: Small cairn built on top of the main cairn mound, facing W

Plate 12: Structure 9, on top of the cairn, facing N

Plate 13: Structure 10, facing E

Plate 14: Structure 11 and surrounding cells, facing E

Abstract

An archaeological survey was undertaken at the cairn at Bucharn, near Strachan, Aberdeenshire in January 2014. The site was recorded using laser scanning and a series of visualisations and a 2D plan were produced. The cairn is generally in good condition, despite interference caused by later construction on and around the cairn body.

Introduction

1. A measured survey equating to the RCAHMS Level 4 was undertaken at Bucharn cairn (Figure 1; NMRS: NO69SE 3; NGR: NO 6593 9301), near Strachan in Aberdeenshire on January 28th, 2014. The purpose of the survey was to record the site in detail to provide a baseline for conservation management planning and to provide a series of visualisations, elevations and a traditional plan.

Survey

2. The site was surveyed on 28th January 2014. A detailed topographic survey of all visible features was undertaken using an S6 robotic total station, working from control points established using a differential GPS, a Trimble R6 rover using real-time corrections via the VRS Now Service. The site was recorded using laser scanning with a Trimble Focus 3D laser scanner (see Table 1); 38 scanning stations were required to provide total coverage of the monument.

Archaeological Context

3. Bucharn cairn was noted in the Old Name Book of 1864 (Ordnance Survey 1864), but was not visited by the RCAHMS until 1972. The RCAHMS surveyors considered the platform surrounding the cairn likely to be original, though accentuated by ploughing. The stone mound immediately to the W of the cairn was considered at that time to be entirely composed of field clearance, and was apparently considered unrelated to the cairn itself.
4. Aerial photographs of the cairn were added to the Aberdeenshire Sites and Monuments Record in 2001. The site is not a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Bucharn Cairn: Site Description

5. The cairn comprises an oval mound of stones averaging c.30cm across, and stands to a height of 4.1m above the lower platform, but over 6.2m in total height to the lower platform on the down-slope side (Figures 2, 3 and 4; Plates 1 and 2). The central cairn is oriented with long axis E/W, measuring 23m by 18.5m. There is no visible evidence of a chamber or other internal structures; it is probable that these remain undisturbed.
6. The platform comprises a bank of large boulders forming a rounded trapezoid which forms a roughly level platform respecting the central cairn. Although the platform has clearly been added to with recent field clearance, particularly in the NE area where several large boulders rest on the surface (Plate 3), it seems likely that this platform was designed to provide a level surface onto which to build. Large boulders embedded in the platform in the SE and NW suggest that the outer face of the platform may be comprised of large set stones, but the majority are buried.
7. Immediately to the W of the cairn is a large mound of stone, similar in character to the platform onto which the cairn was built (Plate 4). As noted above, the RCAHMS considered to this mound to be modern field clearance, and there are certainly large boulders overlying the mound that appear to have been added relatively recently, but the similarity in construction to the cairn platform must raise the possibility that this was a similar platform feature associated with the prehistoric

construction. While there is no evidence to tie this feature definitively to the cairn, the presence of large boulders protruding from the outer faces of the mound in a similar manner to the cairn mound might suggest that the structure was built rather than dumped as field clearance.

8. Both the cairn and the mound to the W have been used as the basis for later construction. In the case of the mound to the W, at least two and possibly three buildings have been constructed (marked 1, 2 and 3 on Figure 3; Plates 5 and 6). Structures 1 and 2 are congested with rubble, but appear to form two small conjoined cellular buildings. Structure 3 may be similar, but is obscured with large boulders probably deriving from clearance. A linear stretch of walling, 4, may represent the remains of an enclosure around the structures on the mound. A series of set boulders on the SE side of the mound (5) may, perhaps more speculatively, represent a further structure (Plate 8).
9. The cairn itself shows evidence of numerous interventions into the rubble mound, and it is not clear which of these represents the construction of a small building or shelter, and which may be the result of haphazard digging into the mound. Structure 6, on the SW side of the platform is similar in character to the buildings constructed on the mound to the W, but is in a ruinous condition (Plate 9). Of the buildings constructed at the foot of the mound and on the mound itself, those marked 7, 8, 9 and 11 (Plates 9, 10, 12, 13 and 14) on Figure 3 are the most substantial, but several other smaller cells have been dug across the top of the cairn. The structure marked 10 on Figure 3 is upstanding and may represent a relatively recent shooting butt or similar ad hoc structure, but the precise nature and date of these structures remains to be demonstrated. A small cairn, probably of relatively recent date, has been built on top of the cairn (12), overlying structure 9 (Plate 11).
10. Surrounding the cairn (and visible in the laser scan data to the S and E, see Figure 4) are numerous hollows and mounds. It is probable that these indicate the presence of buildings similar in character to those constructed on and around the cairn. The scope of the present survey did not extend to detailed recording of these structures, but one scooped hollow is located immediately to the S of the cairn, spanning the modern fence (marked 13 on Figure 3). It is possible that these features represent the remains of an historic settlement surrounding the cairn. Without closer scrutiny it is difficult to be confident in their character or date but it is possible that they represent examples of buildings of medieval date that are generally few and far between in the improved landscape of Aberdeenshire (e.g. RCAHMS 2008:199-201).

Condition

11. As noted above, the cairn is generally in good condition despite the disturbance caused by later activity. There was no obvious immediate threat to the cairn at the time of the survey, although relatively extensive animal burrows were noted in the area to the S of the cairn.

Survey Metadata

12. The topographic survey of the site was carried out using a Faro Focus 3D laser scanner, using 139mm registration spheres and flat targets. The scanning survey was controlled using a Trimble S6

total station, recording the positions of spherical and flat targets. The data was registered using Faro Scene 5.1.6, with orthographic images produced using Pointools 1.8 and CAD plans produced using Rhino and Autocad 2009. Final layouts were produced in Adobe Illustrator CS. The photographic survey was carried out using a Canon 1100 digital SLR.

Quality 3x
Resolution: 6mm at 10m
Colour capture: On
Registration sphere diameter: 139mm

Table 1: Laser scan parameters used during the survey.

References

Ordnance Survey 1864 *Object Name Books of the Ordnance Survey (6 inch and 1/2500 scale)*

RCAHMS 2008 *In the Shadow of Bennachie: a field archaeology of Donside, Aberdeenshire*, HMSO: Edinburgh

Bucharn Cairn, Strachan

Archaeological Survey Report

Section 2: Figures and Plates

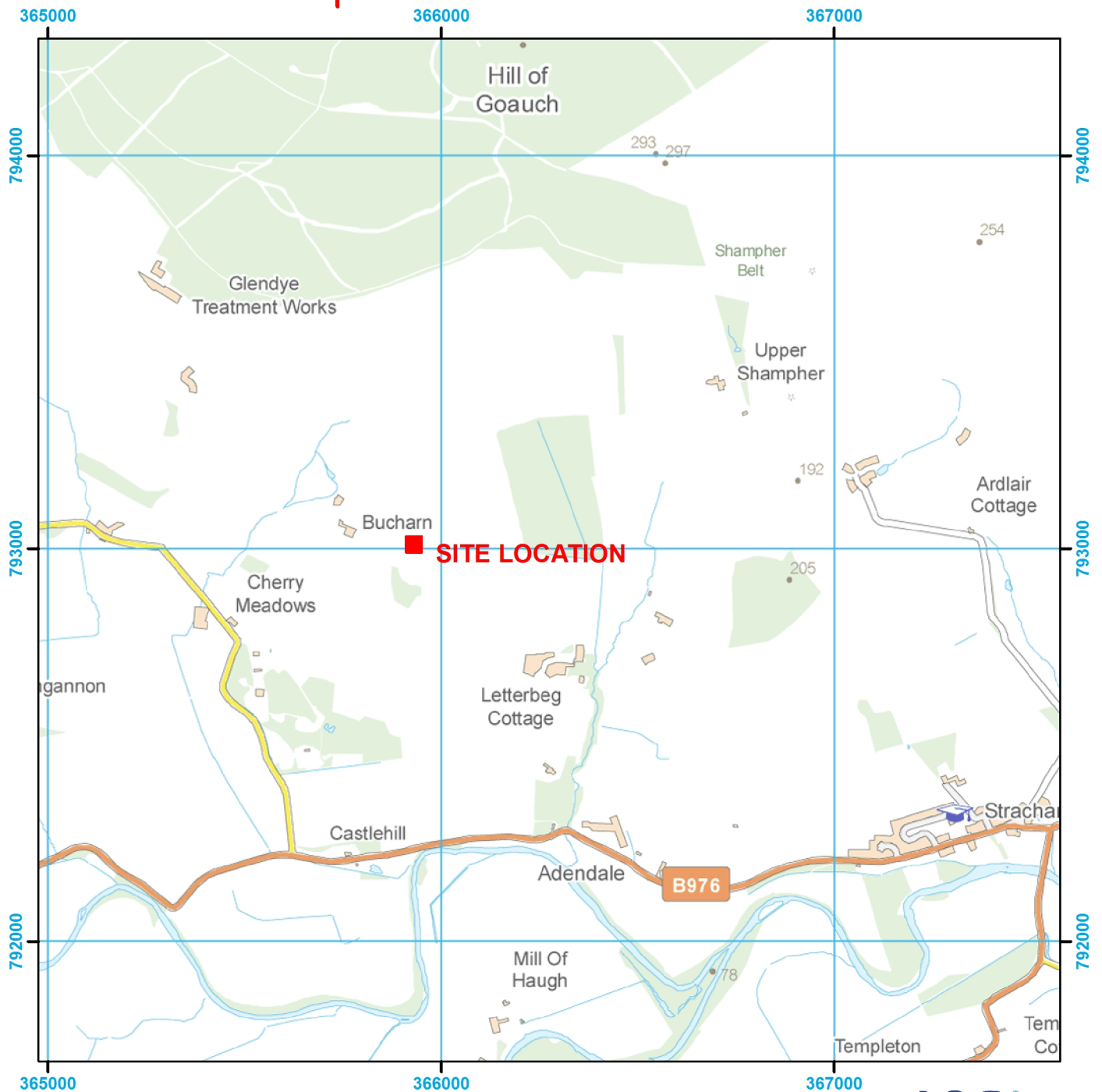
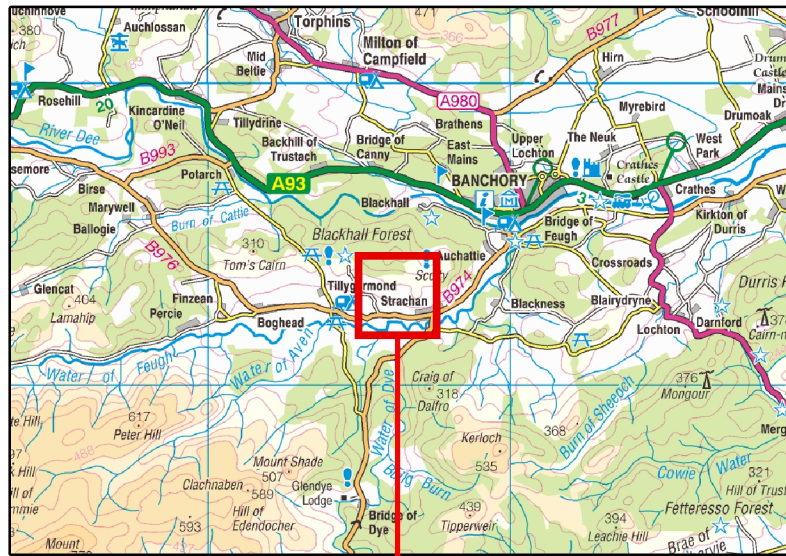
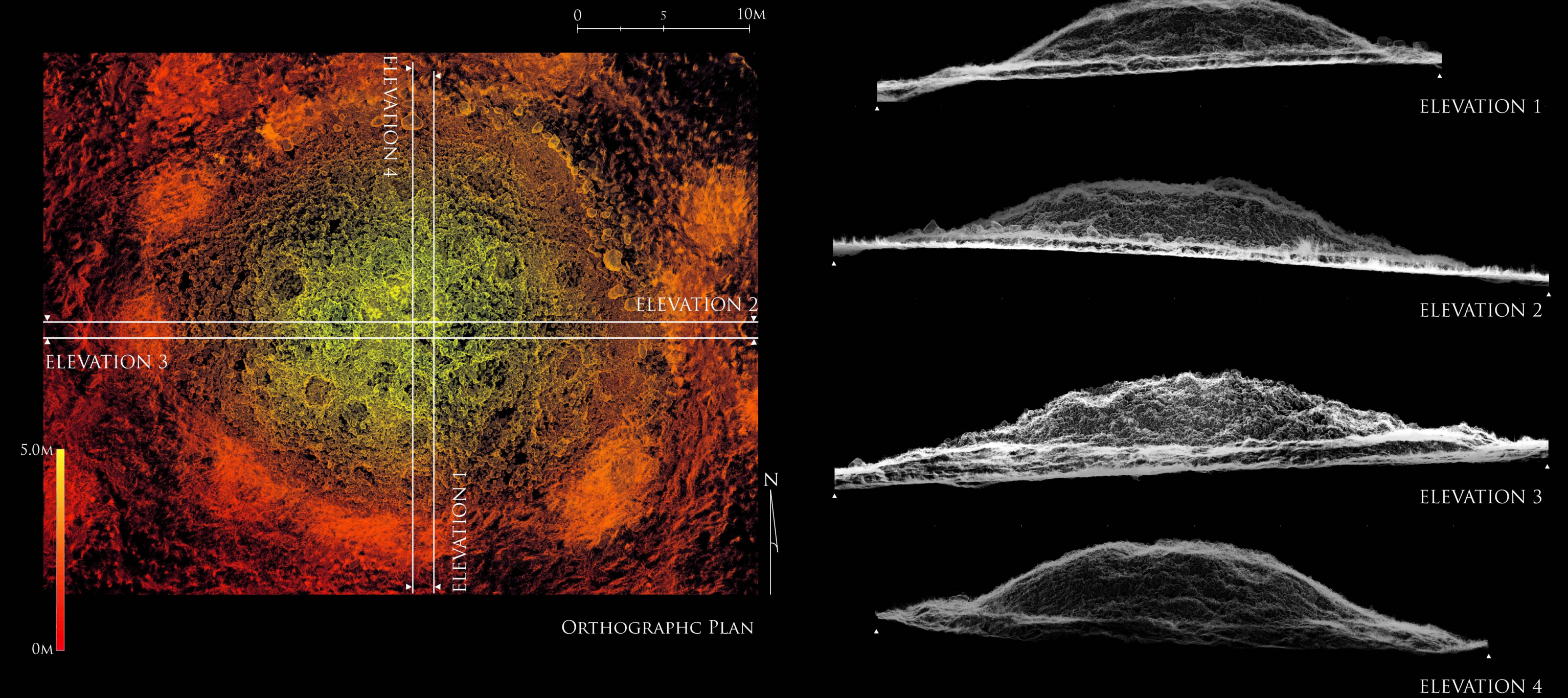
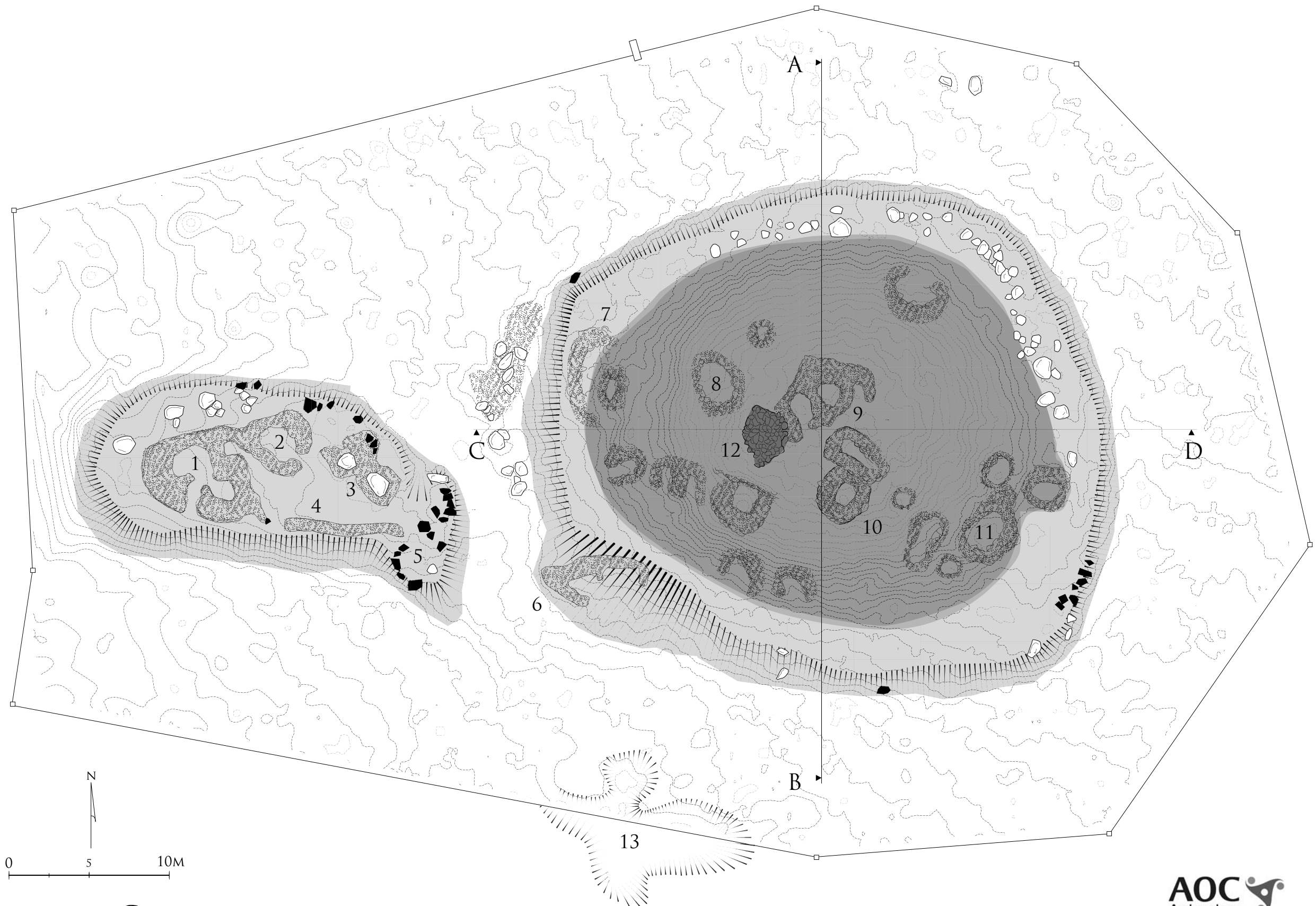
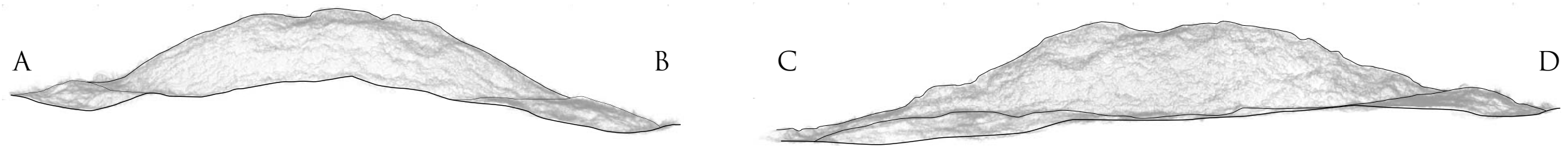


FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION

BUCHARN CAIRN

FIGURE 2: ORTHOGRAPHIC PLAN AND ELEVATIONS





BUCHAR CAIRN
1:250

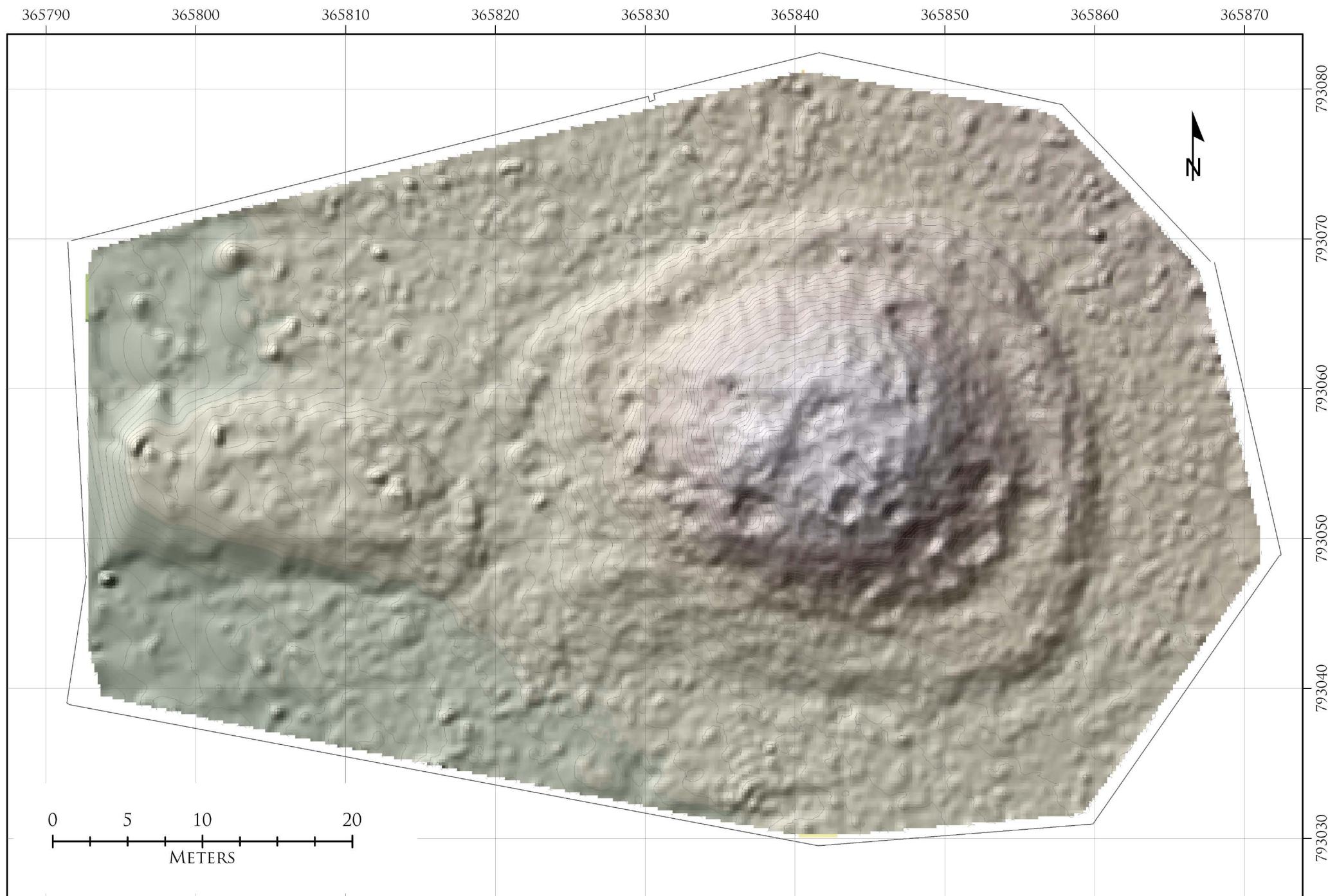


FIGURE 4: TERRAIN MODEL

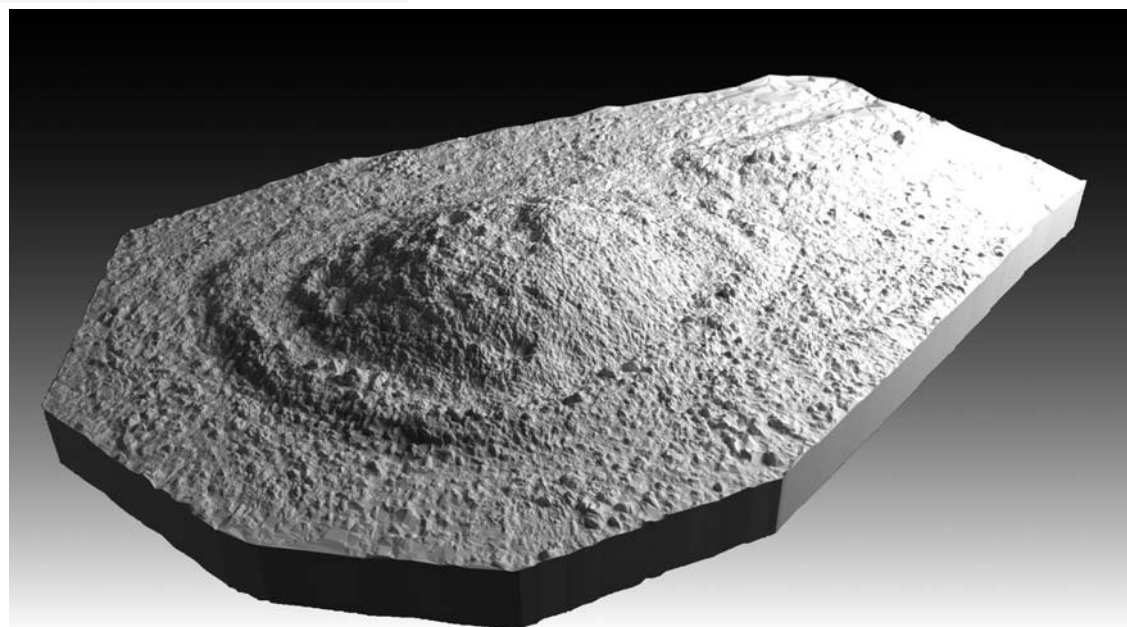
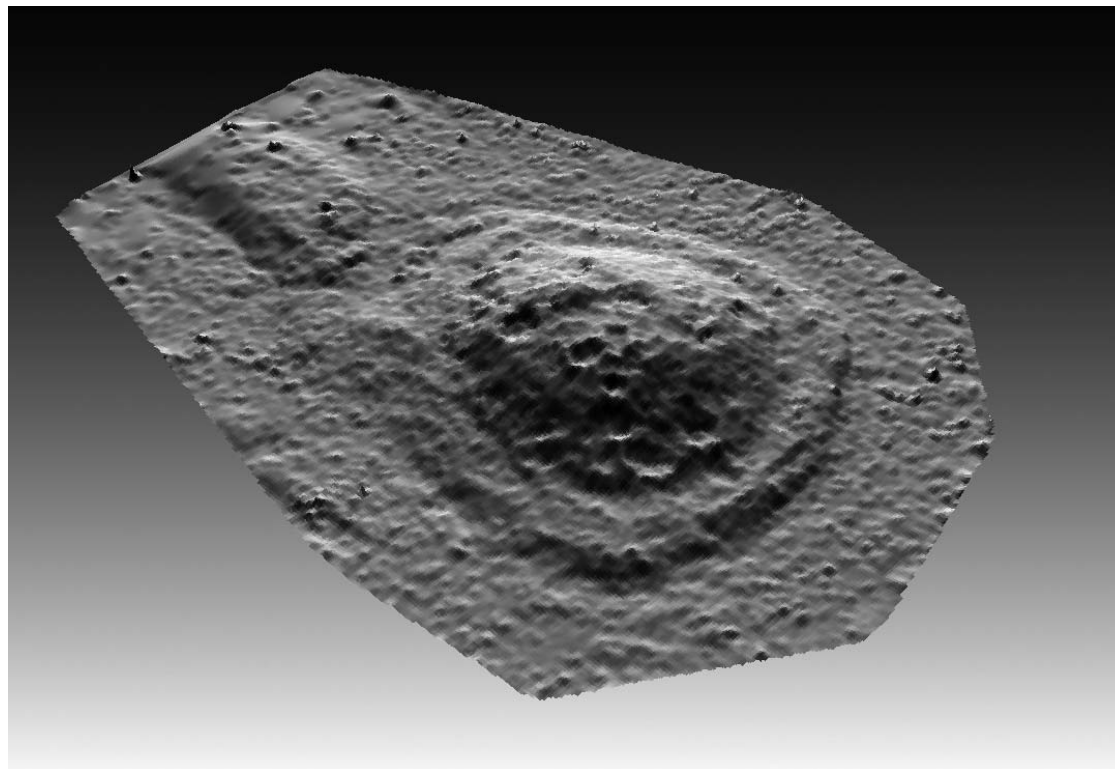


FIGURE 5: TERRAIN MODELS, 3D VIEWS



Plate 1: General view of the cairn from the N



Plate 2: General view of the cairn from the N



Plate 3: General view of the platform kerb and later clearance to N of cairn, facing W



Plate 4: General view of the mound to the W of the cairn.



Plate 5: Structure 1, facing SW



Plate 6: Walling between structures 1 and 2, facing SW



Plate 7: Kerb of mound to W of cairn, looking SW



Plate 8: Structure 5, looking N



Plate 9: Structure 6, facing E



Plate 10: Structure 7, facing N



Plate 11: Small cairn built on top of the main cairn mound, facing W

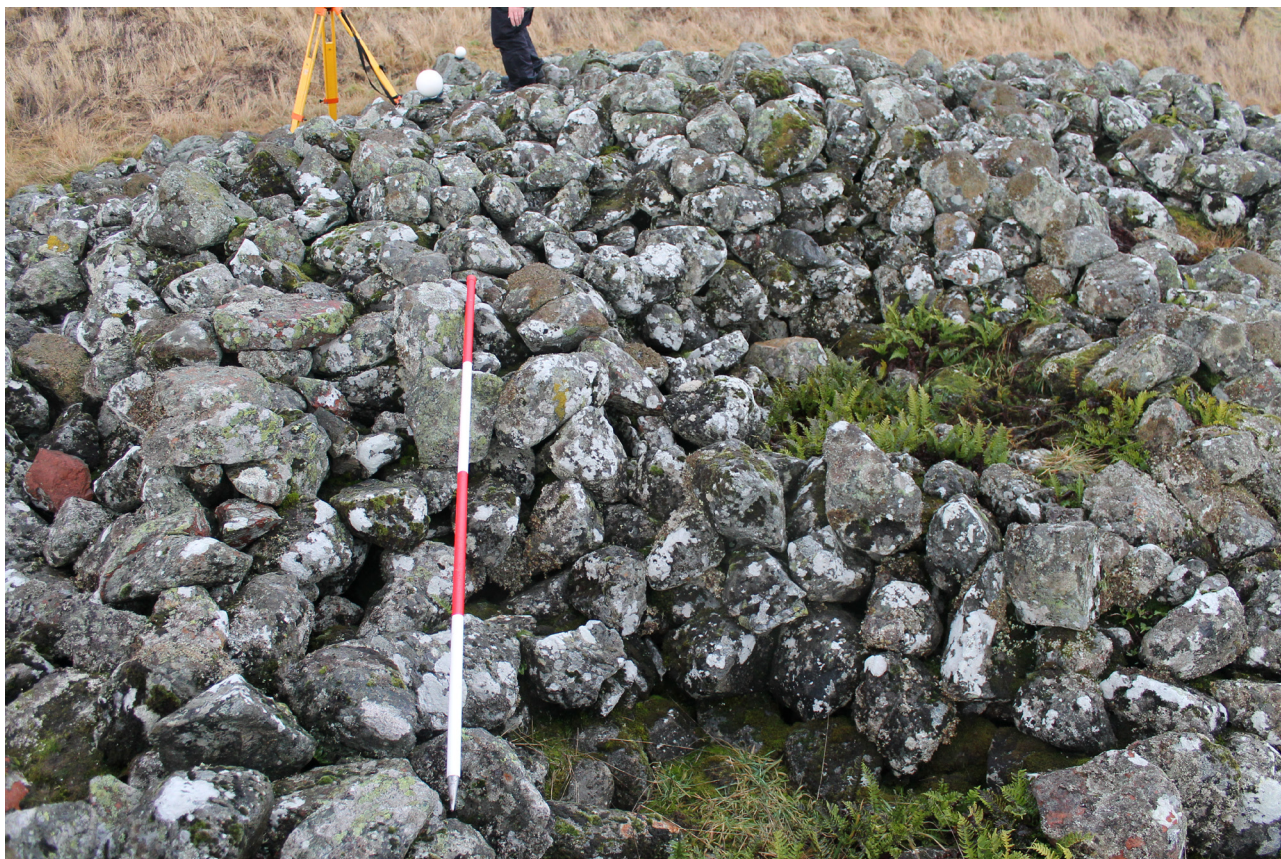


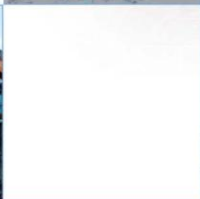
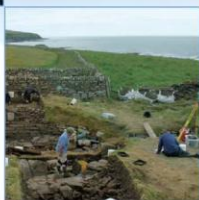
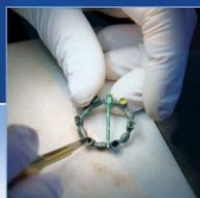
Plate 12: Structure 9, on top of the cairn, facing N



Plate 13: Structure 10, facing E



Plate 14: Structure 11 and surrounding cells, facing E



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