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TRUMP INTERNATIONAL GOLF LINKS SCOTLAND

Report on Trial Trench Evaluation of Cairn (Site 98) on the championship golf course

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PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

Client	IRONSIDE FARRAR
National Grid Reference	NJ 99215 21140
Address	N/A
Parish	BELHELVIE
Council	ABERDEENSHIRE
Planning Application Ref No	F/APP/2006/4605
NMRS No	N/A
Oasis No	N/A
SMR No	N/A
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Signed off by: .....

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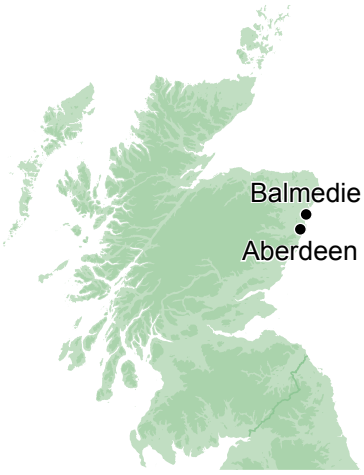

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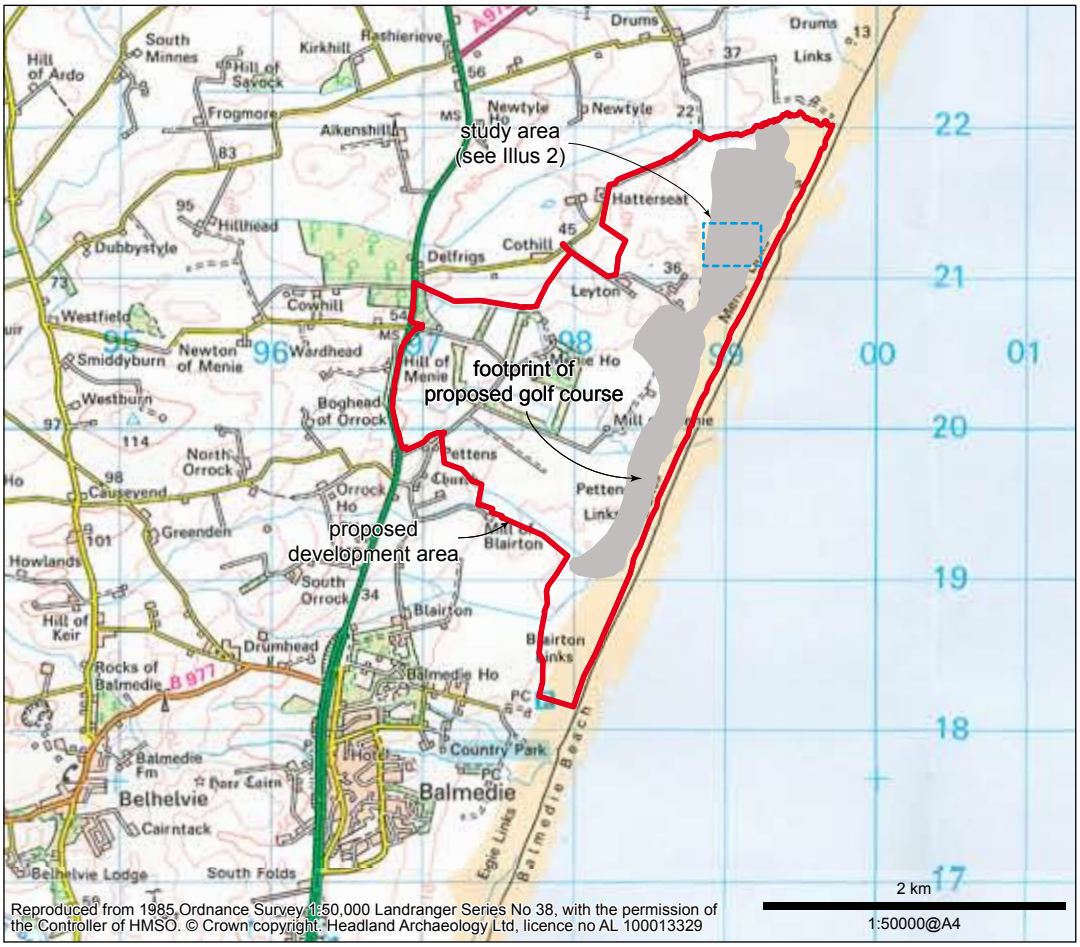


Illus 1
Trump International Links Golf Course - location plan

TRUMP INTERNATIONAL GOLF LINKS SCOTLAND

Report on Trial Trench Evaluation of Cairn (Site 98) on the championship golf course

by Magnar Dalland

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at a possible cairn at of the proposed links golf course at Menie Estate, Aberdeenshire at the end of October 2009. The evaluation demonstrated that the cairn comprised a single layer of stones draped over natural deposits in the current dune landscape. The feature is most likely to represent fairly recent folly created during recreational use of the area.

1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of the trial trench evaluation of a possible cairn previously recorded in an area affected by the construction of the international championship golf course at the proposed golf and resort development at Menie Estate, Aberdeenshire.

The development area is situated some 8 km to the north of Aberdeen at Menie estate (NGR NJ 98 20) immediately to the north of Balmedie (Illus 1). The area is roughly D-shaped facing the North Sea to the east. The development area covers 452 hectares and extends just less than 4.3 km m along the coast and over 2 km inland to the west.

The possible cairn is located at the seaward edge of the dune slack at NJ 99215 21140 some 500 m to the east of the Coast Guard Lookout Station that lies on top of an old raised beach platform. The structure lies at the foot of the fore dunes (Illus 2, 3). It was first recorded during a walk-over carried out by AOC in 2007 (Site 98). During a survey of selected sites carried out by Headland in June 2009, it was noted that the feature previously identified as a cairn appeared to comprise a single layer of stones sitting on a surface of windblown sand. However, the feature had a well-defined circular extent indicating it was man-made as no obvious natural processes would form this type of stone feature. In order to clarify the true nature of this feature Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service requested it should be investigated further by excavating one quadrant of the cairn.

The work was carried out at the end of October 2009 in accordance with a written scheme that was prepared by Headland and based on requirements outlined by Moira Greig of Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service.

2 METHODS

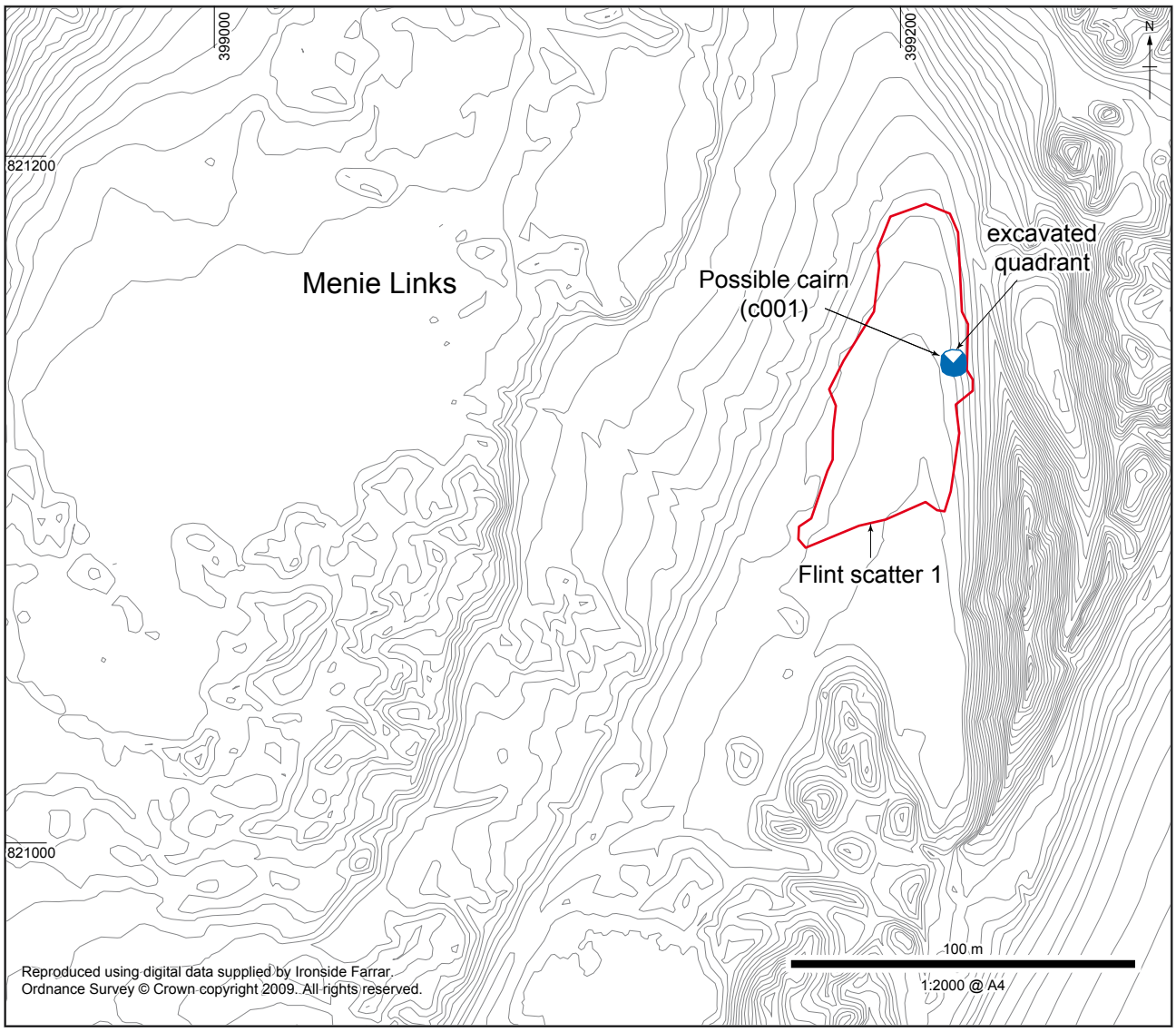
The north side of the cairn was examined in order to clearly define the edge. The feature was then photographed before being planned by hand at a scale of 1:20. A series of levels were taken and related to Ordnance Datum.

Having planned the feature all stones within the north quadrant were removed. As a few struck flints had been noted amongst the stones along the edge of the feature, the north quadrant was divided into twelve units measuring 1 m by 1 m square. The spoil from each square was collected and dry-sieved separately through a 1 mm square mesh for total retrieval of artefacts.

Having removed the upper sand surface from underneath the stones, two 1 m wide trenches were excavated along the axis of the quadrant towards the centre of the cairn. During excavation strong winds and heavy rain caused flooding and partial collapse of the trenches before photographs were taken. This also made recording of the section difficult. However, it was possible to make a sketch section of one trench based on notes and observations made during the excavation.

3 RESULTS

The possible cairn was sub-circular in plan and just over 8 m in diameter. It comprised well rounded flattish stones (C001) fairly uniform in size between 0.1 m to 0.2 m across. The extent of the stones did not define any domed surface as they appeared to be draped over the general dune surface. The stone-density were slightly less in the east half of the cairn (Illus 5) though several irregular small groups of stones of similar size and shape as those in



Illus 2
Detailed contour map of the area showing the location of possible cairn and flint scatters

the cairn were located to the east and are likely to have originated from it.

The possible cairn lay within the extents of Flint Scatter 1, recorded during the Headland survey in June 2009. Struck flints were noted along the edges of the stone cluster situated in a very thin deflation horizon (C002). The result from the separately sieved 1 m by 1 m squares confirmed that the struck flints were confined to the edges of the stone cluster. (Illus 5).

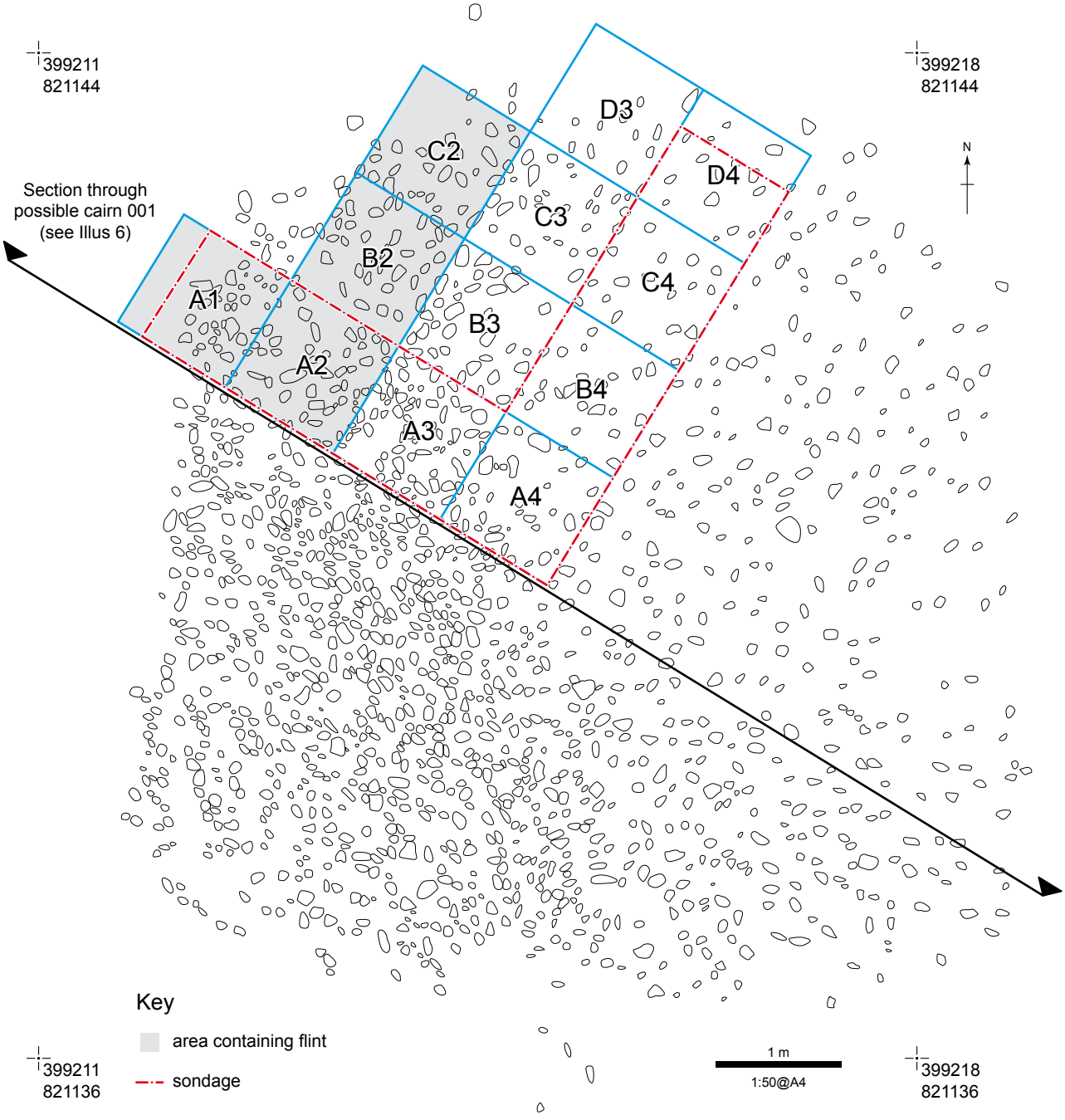
Beneath the upper deflation surface (C002) were deposits of windblown sand (C003) that increased in depth from 0.15 m at the west edge to 0.5 m in the centre, along the south side of the quadrant. This remained at a fairly constant depth of 0.5 m along its east side. The nature of the deposit was revealed by thin laminations formed by slightly different grain-size in the sand reflecting variations in wind-speed during deposition.

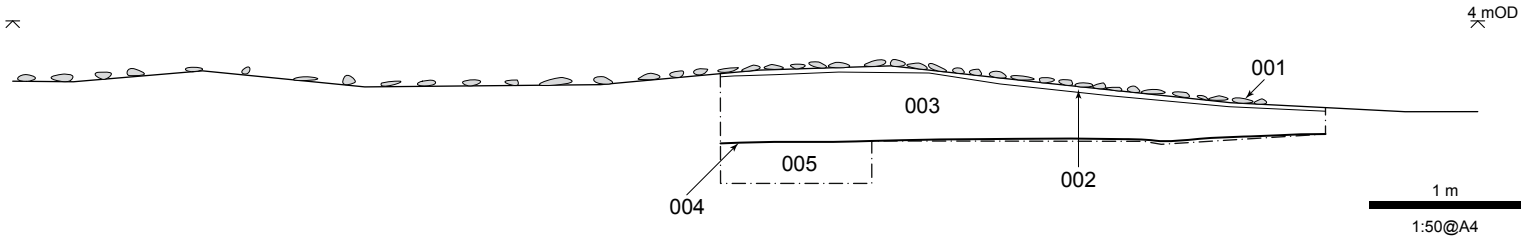
The deposit of windblown sand overlay a second very thin deflation surface (C004) defined by a horizon of sparsely distributed stones and a thin dark line in the sand. This deflation horizon contained a significantly higher concentration of struck flints compared to the upper surface (C002). Below C004 was a further deposit of windblown sand (C005). Prior to the flooding of the

Illus 3
Pre-excavation shot of possible cairn. From W

Illus 4 (right)
Flooded excavation trench. From NW

Illus 5 (below)
Plan of possible cairn





Illus 6
Profile across possible cairn with northeast facing section of excavation trench

Illus 7
Wind erosion of sand from between stones in possible cairn. From NW

trench the excavation reached a depth of 0.7 m below the surface at the middle of stone cluster (Illus 6).

4 DISCUSSION

The identification of the feature as a cairn looked plausible at first sight. However the results of the investigation indicate that the feature comprised a circular deposit of beach rolled stones in a single layer overlaying deposits of windblown sand. It is clear that the stone cluster rests on a natural surface and that there were no indications human intervention in this surface below the stones. Nevertheless the uniformity and of the stone size and the near circular extent seems to indicate that there has been some human input in the formation of this feature. At the moment there seems to be two possible interpretations of this feature:

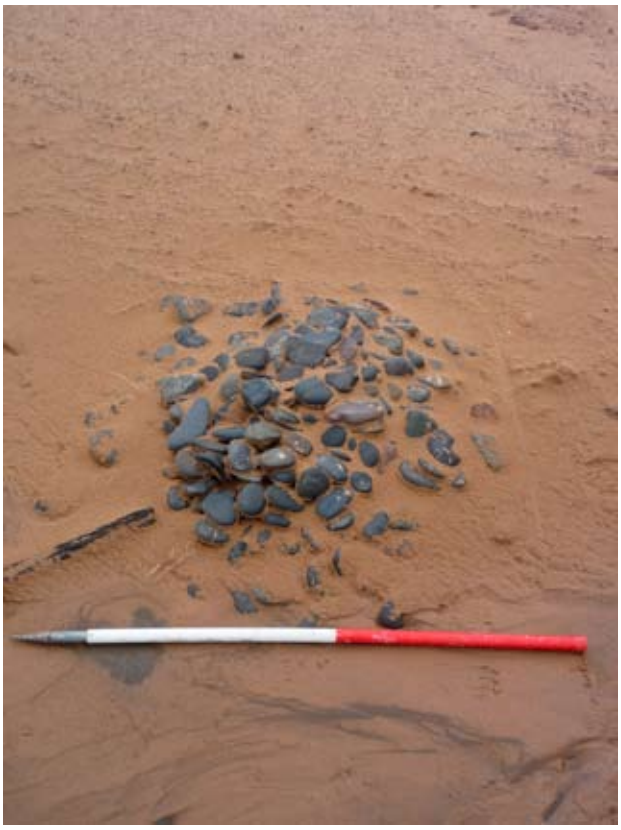
4.1 Recent 'folly'

This area has been used for recreational purposes for many years. It is possible that children and /or adults have made this 'cairn' in recent times using pebbles found in nearby stream beds and in the deflation surface at the south end of Flint Scatter 1.

4.2 Modified cairn

It is possible that the stone cluster represent the remains of a structure that over the years has been re-shaped by natural processes. Although the strong winds and torrential rain disrupted excavation of the stone cluster it demonstrated of how wind and rain affect the dune landscape. Despite heavy rain the strong winds eroded the sand from around the stones in the cluster, leaving some of them balancing on top of small sand pillars (Illus 7). The water that flooded the trench carried significant amount of sand into the trenches (Illus 4).

If a cairn had been built in the sand dune, wind erosion could eventually leave the cairn on a sandy pillar. Eventually the stones along the edges would roll down the slopes of the steep pillar creating a wider distribution of stones. Over the years the stones spread out over a wider surface and, as the sand was eroded away from between the stones, they ended up being draped over the current dune surface. If



Illus 8
Small cairn made from the stones removed from one quadrant of the cairn. From W

there had been a cist beneath the cairn, the stones from the cist would have ended up amongst the cairn material. However if there had been an un-cisted burial beneath the cairn it is possible that all trace of the burial would have been dispersed by the wind over time.

When removing the stones from the north quadrant all the stones were gathered in a pile in order to get an idea of the amount of stones within the cluster. The stones from one quadrant formed a pile some 0.8 m across and 0.15 m high (Illus 8) indicating that the total amount of stones within the scatter would make a cairn less than 1.5 m across and 0.3 m high.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The investigation demonstrated that the stone cluster did not represent an *in situ* cairn. The excavation established that the feature comprised a single layer of stones on top of the dune surface and that there were no indications that any cuts had been made into the natural sands below the stone cluster. It could be possible that the stones represented the remains of a man-made cairn built higher up in a dune that since have been denuded through wind erosion. However, assuming that the majority of the stones from the original cairn are confined within the stone scatter, the original cairn would have been less than 1.5 m across and it is therefore not likely that it would have been a funerary cairn. It appears therefore that the most likely interpretation is that the stone scatter represents a folly made during the last century.

APPENDIX 1 SITE REGISTERS

1.1 Context register

Context No	Over	Description
001	002, 003	Single layer of flattish well rounded beach stones, 0.1 m to 0.2 m across
002	003	Thin deflation horizon, defined by small stones less than 2 cm across
003	004	Laminated deposits of yellow windblown sand. Up to 0.5 m deep
004	005	Thin deflation horizon. Identified by a thin black line and a distinct concentration of small stones and flint flakes.
005	–	Laminated deposits of yellow windblown sand.

1.2 Photographic register

Photo No	Prints	Slides	Digital file name	Direction facing	Description
1-26	–	–	–	–	Pictures taken during initial survey in July 2009
27	1	1	TIGL08-005-27.jpg	E	Pre-excavation shot of 'cairn'
28	1	1	TIGL08-005-28.jpg	S	Pre-excavation shot of 'cairn'
29	1	1	TIGL08-005-29.jpg	S	Working shot – Ross planning 'cairn'
30	1	1	TIGL08-005-30.jpg	SE	Flooded excavation trench in 'cairn'
31	1	1	TIGL08-005-31.jpg	SW	Flooded excavation trench in 'cairn'
32	1	1	TIGL08-005-32.jpg	S	Flooding to the S of 'cairn'
33	1	1	TIGL08-005-33.jpg	S	Flooded excavation trench in 'cairn'
34	–	–	TIGL08-005-34.jpg	SE	Close-up of flooded excavation trench in 'cairn'
35	–	–	TIGL08-005-35.jpg	S	Flooded excavation trench in 'cairn'
36	–	–	TIGL08-005-36.jpg	SW	Flooded deflation surface beneath stones
37	–	1	TIGL08-005-37.jpg	SE	Wind erosion of sand from between stones in 'cairn'
38	–	–	TIGL08-005-38.jpg	SE	Wind erosion of sand from between stones in 'cairn'
39	–	–	TIGL08-005-39.jpg	SE	Wind erosion of sand from between stones in 'cairn'
40	–	–	TIGL08-005-40.jpg	SE	Wind erosion of sand from between stones in 'cairn'
41	–	–	TIGL08-005-41.jpg	E	Small cairn made from the stones removed from one quadrant of the cairn