

# **Alloway Kirk, South Ayrshire: Archaeological Mitigation**

Data Structure Report

by Douglas Gordon and Peter Klemen

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**Rathmell**  
Archaeology Ltd

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Signed .....

Date .....

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Checked .....

Date .....

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## Introduction

1. This Data Structure Report has been prepared on behalf of the National Trust for Scotland in respect to the installation of lighting at Alloway Kirk, South Ayrshire (NGR NS 3319 1805). The archaeological works were designed to monitor the hand-dug excavation of trenches for the installation of cables and light fittings associated with a new lighting system.
2. Rathmell Archaeology Limited was appointed by the National Trust for Scotland to undertake the development and implementation of archaeological works during the development. This Data Structure Report provides the detail of the works for the mitigation pertaining to all ground-breaking works and hence the direct physical impact on buried sediments.
3. The Data Structure Report is structured to meet the advice of the West of Scotland Archaeology Service who recommended to the planning authority that archaeological issues should be addressed.

## Planning Context

4. It was necessary to secure a number of consents for this development; each had a specific remit and archaeological response.

### *Planning Consent*

5. South Ayrshire Council conditioned the granted consent (11/01342/APP) with a negative suspensive condition for archaeology (Condition 3). This required the agreement of a Written Scheme of Investigation prior to the commencement of work and then its implementation. Through discussion with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service they made clear the requirement for close archaeological monitoring of all ground-breaking works.
6. Condition 8 of the same consent also specified that all ground-breaking work was undertaken by hand. While a non-archaeological condition, this had bearing on the working practice defined in this document.

### *Listed Building Consent*

7. South Ayrshire Council granted consent (11/01333/LBC) with no specific archaeological conditions. However, Condition 4 replicated Condition 8 of the Planning Consent – requiring hand excavation.

### *Scheduled Monument Consent*

8. Historic Scotland granted Scheduled Monument Consent for works within the designated area (Case Id 201105184) specifying: the agreement of a Written Scheme of Investigation prior to the commencement of works (Condition 3); two weeks' notification of works' commencement (Condition 4); and that ground disturbance must be limited to modern gravel layers (Condition 1).
9. This consent relates solely to impacts within the designated monument, which comprises the shell of the kirk and all ground within. Hence Condition 1 does not relate to the surrounding graveyard.
10. An amendment to Condition 1 of the Scheduled Monument Consent was granted on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2012 in order to allow that all ground breaking works within the Kirk was archaeologically monitored under the terms of the Written Scheme of Investigation (Case Id 201202212).

915

916 Grave Yard

Well

Accompany Park  
(In Ruins)

Glasgow Necropolis

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## Archaeological and Historical Background

11. The roofless ruin of Alloway's medieval parish church, Alloway Kirk, stands on the south side of its walled burial-ground (Figure 3a). It is gable-ended and rectangular on plan (measuring 14m by 7.7m within walls 0.9m thick); the structure has been modified on a number of occasions and a small aisle appears to have formerly projected from the east end of the north wall.
12. The east gable (supporting a 17th-century bell-cote) is largely original and incorporates a double lancet window of 13th-century character, the head of which appears to have been restored. The eastern portion of the interior has been divided off from the remainder to form a mortuary enclosure; this is entered through a doorway in the south wall, where the lintel bears the incised date 1516, but in its present form the inscription is unlikely to be earlier in date than the 18th century (RCAHMS Canmore 41599). A pointed-arch doorway at the west end of the north wall is probably of medieval date, with a medieval graveslab now in use as a lintel for a window in the south wall. A number of 18th-century gravestones are situated on the northeast side of the church.
13. The church, dedicated to St Mungo, appears to have been a pendicle of Ayr but c.1501 it became a prebend of the Chapel Royal of Stirling. In 1690 the parish was united with Ayr, but in 1860 it was re-erected as a separate parish (ibid). The Kirk is depicted as an isolated structure within its burial ground on Roy's Military Survey of Scotland (1752-55, see Figure 1a).
14. By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century the Kirk was depicted as a ruin within its burial ground (see Figure 1b); a condition that remains constant through the Ordnance Survey mapped sequence. The original path structure within the burial ground appears to have been established by 1896 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey).
15. The ground to the immediate north and west was built upon by the Maidens & Dunure Light Railway; authorised through Act of Parliament in 1899 and opened to traffic in 1906 the stretch of track lying immediately adjacent to the church was concealed within a tunnel (presumably of 'cut and shut' construction style). Built to service Turnberry and the coast, the line was twenty miles in length; running from Alloway Junction to Girvan Junction, it was closed by 1968.

### *Archaeological Interventions*

16. Development work undertaken to the north and west of the burial ground in 2001 established the presence of human remains outside the west boundary wall. Articulated burials were found to extend for at least 12m beyond the wall, in the immediate vicinity of the findspot of a 8th to 12th century cross-slab. The burials were aligned NNE-SSW, noticeably different from those located within the kirkyard and perhaps indicating association with an earlier ecclesiastical structure. In the western portion of this area, the evaluation also found a large ditch which contained in its lower fills burnt and organic material, including burnt bone. Charcoal from near the base of the ditch produced a calibrated date of AD 610-770 (Lelong 2001).
17. The Kirk itself was subject to building survey and assessment during 2006 (Francoz & Arthur 2006). This took place prior to conservation work in order to review the evidence for the past use of the building, its archaeological significance and the potential impact of any alterations. This was to inform the Conservation Plan and attempt to trace the development of additions and alterations to the building.
18. Further works monitored conservation work undertaken in 2007 (Rennie 2008). This included the renewal of footpaths around the Kirk, during which large quantities of human remains and two previously unmarked graves were uncovered. The remains were disarticulated and had clearly been disturbed at an earlier date.

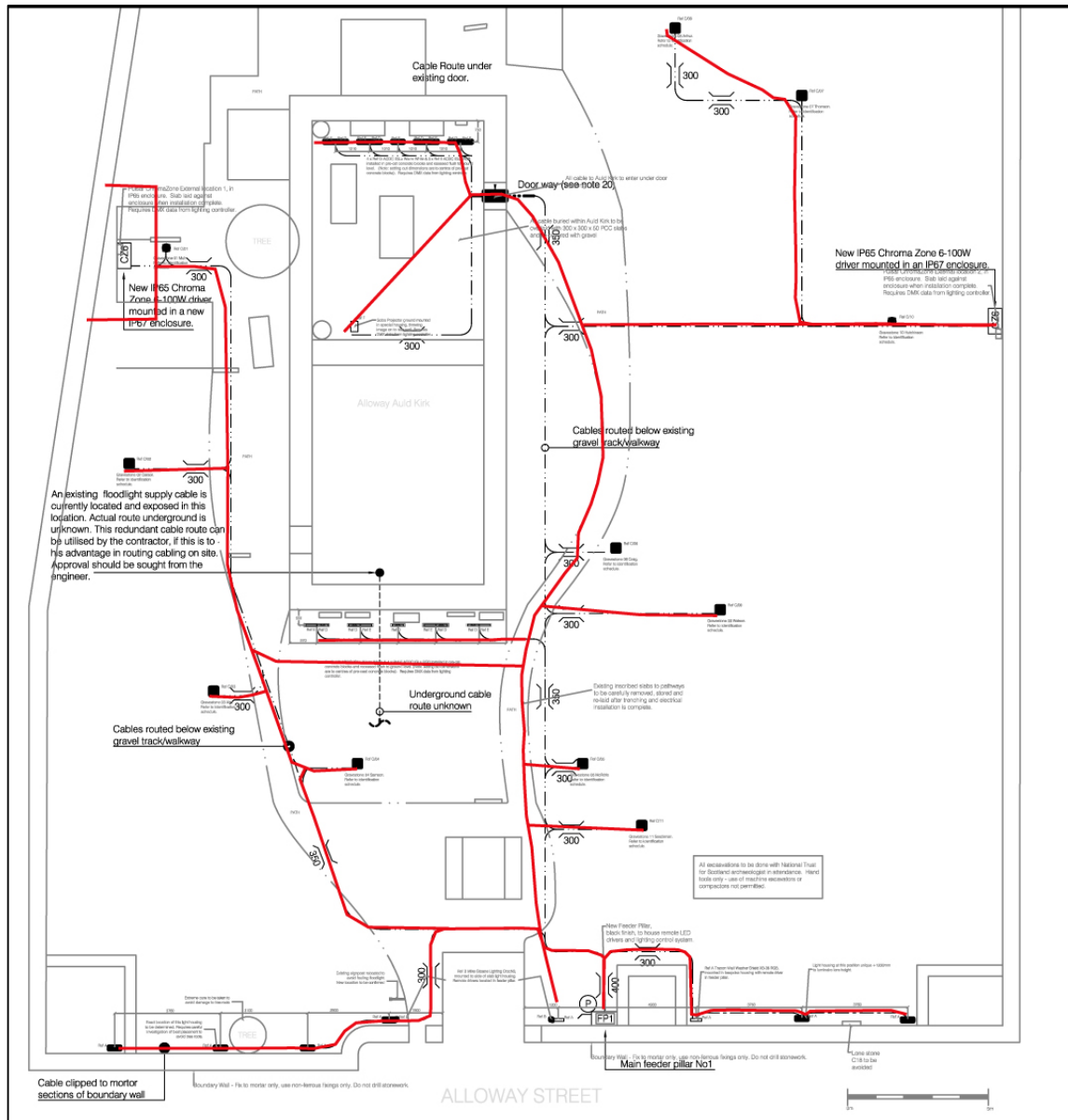


Figure 2: Electrical duct trenches as dug (in Red)

## Project Works

19. The programme of mitigation works comprised archaeological monitoring of the ground breaking works within the designated area, as per the Written Scheme of Investigation (Rees 2012) agreed with Historic Scotland and the West of Scotland Archaeology Service. Monitoring works took place from 18<sup>th</sup> June 2012 to the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2012, then on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of July 2012.
20. The works consisted of the hand-digging of trenches for electrical ducting across the graveyard and within the kirk's interior for the installation of a new lighting system (Figure 2). At each stage of implementation specific details were agreed with Historic Scotland and the West of Scotland Archaeology Service. Any recovered disarticulated human skeletal remains were reburied in close proximity to their original findspot, in keeping with the instruction of the Registration and Bereavement Services, South Ayrshire Council.
21. All works were conducted in accordance with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service's Standard Conditions, the Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct and Historic Scotland Policy Statements.

## Findings

22. All trenches were hand-dug and excavated no deeper than 300mm and therefore did not extend any deeper than the topsoil (001) (Figure 3b). The topsoil (001) covered the whole graveyard and was characterised by a dark brown humic sandy/silt layer with frequent small to large tree roots, and frequent sub-rounded and sub-angular medium to small stones. In addition, there were occasional inclusions of disarticulated human bone. Between the covering layer of turf and (001) there was a light yellow and moderately compacted layer of mortar (004) present to approximately 50mm in depth (004), which was frequently found to the north and east of the Kirk building.
23. The footpath leading around the Kirk - renewed during the conservation works carried out in 2007 - is formed of small sub-angular and sub-rounded gravel (002) and ranges from 120mm-200mm in depth. The soil profile below the footpath (003) is characterised by a mid-brown, humic silty sand with frequent sub-rounded small stones and medium to small tree roots, as well as frequent inclusions of disarticulated human bone.
24. Within the Kirk, the trenches revealed an upper surface (006) composed of small red gravel 70mm in depth which was starting to become obscured by grass and moss. This in turn was overlying (007), which comprised medium-sized gravel set within a dark brown silt matrix with inclusions of moderate-sized tree roots, roofing slate, sandstone fragments and occasional disarticulated human bone (Figures 4a and 4b).
25. There was a paucity of finds as would be expected in a graveyard, though occasional sherds of 19th and 20th century pottery were observed within (001) and (003). Part of a gravestone (005) was uncovered within (001) in the northwest portion of the graveyard and several pieces of slate perforated by nail holes (<1> and <2>) were recovered.

## Discussion

26. No significant archaeological deposits or features were uncovered in the course of the archaeological monitoring works. The presence of disarticulated human bone within contexts (001), (003) and (007) would appear to be indicative of the reuse of the graveyard over time, with older graves being disturbed to make room for new ones.
27. The presence of the yellow mortar (004) in the graveyard probably represents areas where mortar has been left after conservation works were undertaken in 2007
28. The lack of any significant archaeology within the graveyard is most likely due to the extremely long period through which the Kirk and its associated graveyard have been established and used as a burial ground. Similarly, the presence and recovery of disarticulated bone within (001) would most likely reflect the length of time that the graveyard has been in use.





Figure 3a: Auld Kirk Alloway from the Northeast



Figure 3b: Trench within the graveyard from the North





Figure 4a: Trenches within Kirk from the West



Figure 4b: Trenches within Kirk from the Northwest

## Recommendations

29. The archaeological mitigation works revealed no significant archaeological features or artefacts within the development area and as such no further works are recommended as a direct consequence of these phases of monitoring.
30. The appropriateness and acceptability of our recommendations rest with South Ayrshire Council and their advisors, the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

## Conclusion

31. A programme of archaeological monitoring was carried out from 18<sup>th</sup> June 2012 to 24<sup>th</sup> July 2012 on behalf of the National Trust for Scotland, in respect to the installation of lighting at Alloway Kirk, South Ayrshire (NGR NS 3319 1805). The archaeological works were designed to monitor the hand dug excavation of trenches for the installation of a new lighting system.
32. No new significant archaeological remains were discovered during the course of these works.

## References

### *Cartographic*

1747-1755	Roy	Military Survey of Scotland
1857	Ordnance Survey	Ordnance Survey 1st Edition

### *Documentary*

Francoz, C and Arthur, J 2006 'Auld Kirk, Alloway, South Ayrshire (Ayr parish), desk-based assessment, standing building survey', *Discovery Excav Scot*, vol.7, pp 156

Lelong, O, 2001 'Doonbrae, Alloway, South Ayrshire (Ayr parish), early medieval ecclesiastical site', *Discovery Excav Scot*, vol.2, pp 88

Rees, T., 2012, *Alloway Kirk, South Ayrshire: Archaeological Mitigation Written Scheme of Investigation*. unpublished commercial report by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd.

Rennie, C 2008 'Alloway Auld Kirk and Kirkyard, South Ayrshire (Ayr parish), monitoring of renovation works', *Discovery Excav Scot, New*, vol.9, pp 164-165

## Appendix 1: Registers

Within this appendix are all registers pertaining to works on-site during the archaeological mitigation.

### *Context Register*

Context No.	Area/ Trench	Type	Description	Interpretation
001	Whole site	Deposit	Dark brown, humic sandy silt, frequent small-large tree roots, frequent sub-rounded/sub-angular medium to small stones.	Topsoil
002	Footpath	Deposit	Small sub-rounded/sub-angular gravel, 210mm-200mm depth.	Footpath
003	Whole site	Deposit	Mid-brown humic silt sand, frequent small stone with sub-rounded inclusions, frequent medium-small tree roots.	Grave Yard soil under footpath
004	Whole site	Deposit	Light yellow, mortar between turf and (001).	Mortar from re-pointing
005		Stone	Sandstone, 1m long 300mm wide.	Possible grave stone base
006	Kirk Interior	Deposit	Thin layer of turf with areas of small red gravel (002) 70mm deep	Modern surface layer
007	Kirk Interior	Deposit	Dark brown silt and gravel with moderate inclusions of roots, slate, sandstone fragments and occasional disarticulated bone.	Gravel layer with organic material
008	Kirk Interior	Deposit	Sandstone rubble fragments ( $\leq 130$ mm) within (001) below the threshold stone	Packing/foundation for threshold stone

### *Finds Register*

Find No.	Area/ Trench	Context No.	Material Type	Description	Excavator	Date
001			Slate	1 Piece of slate with nail hole	DG	/06/12
002			Slate	4 x Pieces of slate with nail holes	CW	23/07/12

*Photographic Register*

Image No.	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
01					1	Trench in NW quadrant	S	18/06/12
02					2	Trench in NW quadrant	SW	18/06/12
03					3	Marked stone	S	18/06/12
04					4	General shot of Kirk	N	18/06/12
05					5	General shot of Kirk	NE	18/06/12
06					6	General shot of New Kirk	NW	18/06/12
07					7	General shot of Kirk	ENE	18/06/12
08					8	Gravestone	E	18/06/12
09					9	Position of possible buried grave stone	E	18/06/12
10					10	Mid section of trench	E	18/06/12
11					11	Trench to north of junction box	S	18/06/12
12					12	Trench extension to Hutchinson grave	E	18/06/12
13					13	Trench extension to Thomson grave	E	18/06/12
14					14	Trench extension to Thomson grave	E	18/06/12
15					15	Trench from (north) junction box -footpath	S	19/06/12
16					16	Trench from (north) junction box -footpath	N	19/06/12
17					17	Trench to south junction box	N	19/06/12
18					18	South trench through footpath to tree	S	19/06/12
19					19	Trench to grave, SE quadrant	E	19/06/12

Image No.	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
20					20	Threshold stone for Kirk	N	20/06/12
21					21	Trench down footpath	SW	21/06/12
22					22	Trench down footpath	W	21/06/12
23					23	Trench connection to west of junction box	N	21/06/12
24					24	Trench down north of footpath	E	21/06/12
25					25	Threshold stone of Kirk	S	21/06/12
26					26	Position of north junction box	S	21/06/12
27					27	Trench from north of footpath	N	21/06/12
28					28	Trench continuing down north of footpath	W	21/06/12
29					29	Trench continuing down north of footpath	E	21/06/12
30					30	Trench continuing down north of footpath NE quadrant	E	21/06/12
31					31	Trench continuing down north of footpath by Burns grave	E	22/06/12
32					32	Trench continuing down north of footpath to junction box (east)	W	22/06/12
33					33	Possible base of a wall or stone surrounding a headstone	W	25/06/12
34					34	Showing small section of stone exposed, possibly related to a surrounding wall of a grave	S	25/06/12
35					35	Trench being dug at graveyard entrance	S	25/06/12
36					36	De-turfing lighting trench	S	25/06/12
37					37	Digging lighting trench	SW	25/06/12
38					38	Post-ex of lighting trench, east of grave 86	S	26/06/12

Image No.	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
39					39	As above, with flags to show orientation of trench	S	26/06/12
40					40	Looking south showing continuation of trench	N	26/06/12
41					41	Post-ex, trench with flags to show alignment	SW	26/06/12
42					42	Post-ex, trench with flags to show alignment	N	26/06/12
43					43	Working shot, south side of Kirk, grave 191	NE	26/06/12
44					44	Pre-ex of lighting trench route between graves 198-199	N	26/06/12
45					45	Pre-ex of lighting trench route between graves 200-201	W	26/06/12
46					46	Working shot of south end of trench	N	26/06/12
47					47	Showing change of lighting trench through graves	SE	26/06/12
48					48	Showing change of lighting trench route through graves	NE	26/06/12
49					49	Working shot of trench east of graves 54-56	NE	26/06/12
50					50	Looking south, post-ex of trench	N	27/06/12
51					51	Working shot of trench being dug	N	27/06/12
52					52	Small trenches for lights being excavated east of east gable	N	27/06/12
53					53	As above, the smaller trenches became one larger trench	S	27/06/12
54					54	Trenches to hold headstone lights along eastern wall	SW	28/06/12
55					55	As above, NE area of wall	SW	28/06/12
56					56	Pre-ex of Kirk interior (SE Corner)	NW	23/07/12
57					57	Pre-ex of Kirk interior (W Side)	NE	23/07/12

Image No.	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
58					58	Pre-ex of Kirk interior (W Side)	NE	23/07/12
59					59	Working Shot Digging within the Kirk	E	23/07/12
60					60	Working Shot Digging within the Kirk	E	23/07/12
61					61	Working Shot Digging within the Kirk	E	23/07/12
62					62	Post excavation of Trench to SE Corner	NW	23/07/12
63					63	SW facing section of Trench to SE corner	SW	23/07/12
64					64	Post excavation of Trench to SE Corner	NW	23/07/12
65					65	Post excavation of Trench to SE Corner	SE	23/07/12
66					66	Post excavation of passage under Threshold stone	S	23/07/12
67					67	Post excavation of passage under Threshold stone	S	23/07/12
68					68	Section running E-W in NW corner	E	23/07/12
69					69	Section running E-W in NW corner	E	23/07/12
70					70	Section running E-W in NW corner	E	23/07/12
71					71	Section along W side	N	23/07/12
72					72	Area excavated at threshold	S	23/07/12
73					73	General Post excavation of Kirk interior (SE Corner)	NW	23/07/12
74					74	General Post excavation of Kirk interior (W Corner)	E	23/07/12
75					75	General Post excavation of Kirk interior (N Corner)	E	23/07/12
76					76	Pit Dug for new sign location	W	23/07/12
77					77	Pit Dug for new sign location	W	23/07/12
78					78	Pit Dug for new sign location	W	24/07/12



Image No.	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
79					79	Pit Dug for new sign location	W	24/07/12
80					80	Site where sign removed from	W	24/07/12
81					81	Site where sign removed from	N	24/07/12

## Appendix 2: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	South Ayrshire
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Alloway Kirk
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	RA12021
<b>PARISH:</b>	Ayr
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Douglas Gordon and Peter Klemen
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	Rathmell Archaeology Limited
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Watching brief
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	NA
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	NA
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR</b> (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NS 3319 1805
<b>START DATE</b> (this season)	18/06/12
<b>END DATE</b> (this season)	24/07/12
<b>PREVIOUS WORK</b> (incl. DES ref.)	None
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (may include information from other fields)	<p>Archaeological monitoring was carried out on behalf of the National Trust for Scotland with respect to the installation of lighting at Alloway Kirk, South Ayrshire (NGR NS 3319 1805) from 18<sup>th</sup> June to 28<sup>th</sup> June 2012 then on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of July 2012 . The archaeological works were designed to monitor the hand dug excavation of trenches for the installation of cables and light fittings associated with a new lighting system.</p> <p>No new significant archaeological remains were discovered during the course of these works.</p>
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	None
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	The National Trust for Scotland
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Unit 8 Ashgrove Workshops, Kilwinning, Ayrshire KA13 6PU
<b>E MAIL ADDRESS:</b>	contact@rathmell-arch.co.uk
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b> (intended/deposited)	Report to West of Scotland Archaeology Service and archive to RCAHMS Collections

## Contact Details

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