

Scotia Archaeology

**REPORT
TO
SCOTTISH & SOUTHERN ENERGY**

**11KV OVERHEAD LINE REFURBISHMENT
AND
33KV & 11KV INTERCONNECTORS
ISLE OF ISLAY**

**WALK-OVER SURVEY
JUNE 2012**

*5 Bank Street
ABERFELDY
Perthshire
PH15 2BB
Tel & Fax No: 01887-820880
email: scotarc@o2.co.uk*

INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of a walk-over survey along the routes of proposed power line refurbishments on the Isle of Islay, Argyll. It also includes the principal contents of a desk study of archaeological and historical monuments on those routes carried out prior to the commencement of field work.

A major element of the work will require an underground cable to be installed between Bowmore and a point midway between Bruichladdich and Port Charlotte and two shorter ones near Loch Gorm on the west of the island. The other main elements are the construction of a new section of overhead line around Port Charlotte and another near Forland House to the east of Loch Gorm. In addition, a small number of poles are to be replaced in the vicinity of Portnahaven.

The desk study and walk-over survey were undertaken at the request of Max Bigham of Scottish & Southern Energy (SSE). Sites and monuments identified from the desk study and others found during the field survey are shown on the accompanying maps. The original A3 maps supplied by SSE were at a scale of 1:10,000. For ease of use, both in the field and for this report, they have each been divided into two sections, for example Maps 1A and 1B. The proposed routes of underground trenches are shown as broken red lines (Maps 1-6). Those for overhead lines appear as unbroken blue lines (Maps 7 and 8) while individual poles due for replacing are shown as blue dots (Map 6).

The maps accompanying this report are based on those in the desk study but include the small number of previously unrecorded sites noted during the walk-over survey. In this report, the conclusions and recommendations are listed according to the five sections of the walk-over survey.

THE DESK STUDY

Sites and monuments are listed according to the numbers allocated by RCAHMS (eg NR26SE 2) or by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS) (eg WoSAS 60156). Those given protection by the Scottish Ministers under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act of 1979 (scheduled monuments) have the prefix SAM.

BRIDGEND TO PORT CHARLOTTE AND LOCH GORM

This part of the refurbishment will consist of excavating a trench from Bowmore Power Station, at NR 3204 6024, alongside the north bay of Loch Indaal as far as Braibruich, at NR 2560 5980, 1km north of Port Charlotte. It will measure some 11.6km long.

MAP 1

The cable will run northwards along Traigh Cill an Rubha, a beach to the west of Bridgend. The only records of interest within this area relate to two vessels being stranded on the beach.

Site 1 NR36SW 8003 Traigh Cill an Rubha: craft

A craft was stranded somewhere on this beach before 1957. The precise grid reference of the accident is unknown and it is not clear whether the vessel was removed or if it lies buried beneath the sand.

Site 2 NR36SW 8007 Traigh Cill an Rubha: vessel

The 71-ton Emily was stranded on the beach on 13 January 1866 although it may have been recovered thereafter.

MAP 2

Site 3 WoSAS 60156 Rubha Ban: cultivation strips

An area of relatively low-lying ground to the landward side of the A847 shows traces of past rig and furrow cultivation at NR 31213 62831. Further traces of cultivation are evident between that point and NR 31950 62750 where the remains continue onto the seaward side of the road. In general, the rigs are 1.5-2m wide and up to 0.35m high. The distance between the crowns of the rigs is 8-10m.

Site 4 NR26SE2 Uiskenuie: standing stone

At NR 2938 6336, at the east end of a 50ft raised beach, is a standing stone measuring 3.0m high and 1.4m by 0.6m wide at its base.

Site 5 NR26SE 6 Cnoc Iolairean: enclosures, quarries

In 1960-62 F Newall described enclosures and quarries at NR 287 636 although these features are now considered to be simply turf-covered quarry pits of no significance.

MAP 3

Site 6 NR26SE 34 Glenfield: farmstead

A farmstead, comprising two roofed buildings, one partially roofed, long building, one unroofed building and three enclosures is depicted on the Ordnance Survey (OS) first edition 6-inch map (Argyllshire 1882, sheet ccviii) at NR 2714 6246. One roofed building, one unroofed building and one enclosure are shown on the 1981 edition of the OS 1:10,000 map.

Site 7 NR26SE 1 Bruichladdich: chapel, burial ground

At NR 2677 6147, in a level pasture field above the shoreline, are located the turf-covered footings of this chapel, which measure approximately 4.2m east/west by 2.5m wide within walls 1m thick. The entrance is centrally placed in the west wall. The masonry of the building appears to be of drystone or clay-mortared construction.

The burial-ground measures roughly 20m square within walls some 1.5m thick; there are indications of an entrance on the south-west side. Within the burial-ground is a single plain grave-marker. No early Christian finds have been reported from this site.

Site 8 NR26SE 5 Coultorsay: finds spot

Flints, including cores, were found at NR 2602 6042 in 1958 and 1959.

Site 9 NR26SE 27 Coultorsay: farmstead

A farmstead comprising two unroofed buildings, four roofed buildings, one of which has two wings, and one enclosure are depicted on the OS first edition 6-inch map (Argyllshire 1882, sheet ccvii) at NR 2590 6040. Two roofed buildings, one unroofed building and one enclosure are shown on the current (1981) edition of the OS 1:10,000 map.

Site 10 NR26SE 7 Coultorsay: finds spot

An assemblage of struck flints was found at approximately NR 2582 6016, between the 100ft and 150ft contours in a field on Coultorsay Farm. Of over 100 pieces of whitish and brownish flint, about a dozen were small blades, 20-30mm long. One of them was a scraper. The flints are now at Coultorsay.

Site 11 NR26SE 28 Coultorsay: building

One unroofed building is depicted on the OS first edition 6-inch map (Argyllshire 1882, sheet ccvii) at NR 2597 6017 but is not shown on the 1981 edition of the OS 1:10,000 map.

Site 12 NR26NE 6 Port Ban: finds spot

An oval quartzite pebble with pecked cups was found in the face of the raised beach at Port Ban, at NR 2595 5995, and two small hammer stones were recovered from early turf and cobble walls nearby. The pebble measures 178mm by 133mm by 57mm and has one cup pecked on each face, the cups being 50mm and 63mm in diameter and 12mm deep. A third

cup, obliquely positioned, has been partly removed by fracture at the narrow end of the pebble.

MAP 4

Site 13 NR26NW 7 Ballinaby: cup-marked rock

A cup-marked schist slab lies in rough grass at NR 2216 6717, 1m north-east of the garden wall of a ruined house at Ballinaby and 14m SSE of a gate in a field wall. When it was originally noticed the stone was being used as a base stone for the gateway and was moved to its present position by the farmer. It is a flat slab measuring 900mm by 660mm and bears on one surface (at present uppermost) five cups, each measuring 40mm in diameter and 25mm deep.

MAP 5

Site 14 NR26NE 27 Carn Bhiogairt

Although termed a 'cairn', this is a natural feature located at approximately NR 258 662. It has no archaeological significance.

Site 15 SAM 6127 An Sidhean: settlements, field systems

This Scheduled Ancient Monument comprises an extensive landscape of prehistoric settlement and farming which has been divided into three distinct areas and described under numerous separate monument numbers by RCAHMS. The westernmost area, centred on approximately NR 2500 6670, measures some 700m north/south by 600m east/west. Another large area, measuring a maximum of 350m by 350m is centred at approximately NR 2620 6670 while midway between the two is a smaller, circular area, some 100m in diameter and centred at NR 2567 6650.

PORTNAHAVEN TO PORT CHARLOTTE

The refurbishment of this line will necessitate constructing a new stretch of overhead line from NR 2553 5963, at Braibruich, to a point just south of Port Charlotte, at NR 2470 5770 (see Map 7), its length being approximately 2.1km. In addition, four poles around NR 1690 5190 and two around NR 1970 5295 on the same line, are to be replaced (see Map 6).

MAP 6

Site 16 NR15SE 32 Portnahaven: find spot

A flint blade was found on the beach in 1997. The rather vague grid reference for this discovery is given as NR 167 521.

MAP 7**Site 17 NR25NW 30 Carn, Port Charlotte: building**

Formerly described as the probable remains of an opened cairn, this site, located at NR 2454 5759, has been re-interpreted as the foundations of a small house. The remains measure 10.7m by 7.4m within walls 2.5m thick and surviving to a height of 0.7m.

Site 18 NR25NE 2 Octomore, Port Charlotte: find spot

A ground axe, probably of local granite, was found around NR 250 587 in clayey, peaty soil near Octomore Farm in 1957. It measures 154mm by 81mm and has its butt flattened to a tiny circular platform 7mm in diameter.

Site 19 NR25NE 98 Bruach Gorm: evaluation

An archaeological evaluation undertaken in 2008 over an area measuring some 260m by 130m and centred on NR 25365 58763 uncovered nothing of archaeological significance (DES 2008, 39).

SUNDERLAND TO FORELAND HOUSE

Another new overhead line will run from NR 2515 6455, just east of Sunderland Farm, to NR 2750 6358, to the south-east of Foreland House (see Map 8). This section will measure approximately 2.8km long.

MAP 8**Site 20 NR26SE 33 Carn Nan Coileach: settlement**

A settlement comprising two unroofed buildings, one enclosure and the possible fragmentary remains of a head-dyke is depicted on the OS first edition 6-inch map (Argyllshire 1882, sheet ccvii) at NR 2626 6467. Four unroofed buildings, one enclosure and a short length of wall are shown on the current (1981) edition of the OS 1:10,000 map.

Site 21 NR26SE 24 Carn Nan Coileach: lazy beds

An RAF air photograph shows a circular enclosure on a rocky knoll used as a platform for lazy beds at NR 2631 6445. This feature was probably associated with the settlement (NR26SE 33) described above.

Site 22 NR26SE 23 Carn Nan Coileach: quarry

An RAF air photograph shows a sub-oval quarry pit at NR 2631 6445.

Site 23 NR26SE 32 Creag Liath: farmstead

What may be a farmstead comprising one unroofed building of two compartments and an attached incomplete enclosure is depicted on the OS first edition 6-inch map (Argyllshire

1882, sheet ccvii) at NR 2654 6382 but is not shown on the current (1981) edition of the OS 1:10,000 map.

Site 24 NR26SE 9 Foreland House: cists

Various accounts have been written about burial cists to the west of Foreland House. One report refers to eight burials while another describes only one. Perhaps the most reliable summary is provided by RCAHMS who describe the discovery of two cists in 1926 about 1.2m below the surface of the south-east flank of a grass-covered, sandy hillock at NR 2691 6355, 750m south of Foreland House. Each was built of four slabs and a cover slab, the larger cist measuring about 1m by 0.6m and 0.5m deep, the smaller one 1m by 0.4m and 0.35m deep. The latter contained the fragmentary remains of an inhumation and a flint knife. The cists and the bones were reburied, and the flint knife has subsequently been lost.

Site 25 NR26SE 36 Tynacoille: farmstead

A farmstead comprising one unroofed building, two roofed buildings and four enclosures is depicted on the OS first edition 6-inch map (Argyllshire 1882, sheet ccviii) at NR 2750 6358. One unroofed building, one roofed building and three enclosures are shown on the current (1981) edition of the OS 1:10,000 map.

THE WALK-OVER SURVEY

The survey was undertaken by John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology between 17th and 19th June 2012, during dry and mostly sunny weather. The principal routes are outlined below.

- 1 The longest route is between the east edge of Bowmore and the south side of Port Charlotte. Most of it, from Bowmore to Braibruich, midway between Bruichladdich and Port Charlotte, will comprise a new underground cable. The remaining 2km will see the installation of a new overhead line.
- 2 A new underground cable will connect the two hamlets of Ballinaby and Saligo, to the west of Loch Gorm.
- 3 A new underground cable will connect two existing overhead lines near the extensive scheduled monument of An Sidhean, to the east of Loch Gorm.
- 4 Small-scale refurbishments will be undertaken at poles to the immediate east of Portnahaven and at a point some 3km east of Portnahaven.
- 5 An auxiliary overhead line will run alongside an existing one from the east side of Sunderland Farm to a point a short distance south-east of Foreland House, to the north of Loch Indaal.

BOWMORE TO PORT CHARLOTTE

This, the longest, section of line, runs from Bowmore Power Station, at NR 3204 6024, to the south side of Port Charlotte, at NR 2470 5770. The overall length of this section is approximately 13.7km.

The cable route runs along the beach on the north side of Loch Indaal, coming on shore at approximately NR 3130 6285, between Carnain and Blackrock. Thereafter, the walk-over survey continued alongside the A847 road as far as approximately NR 2740 6305 where the SSE map showed the route to deviate onto the top of the raised beach to the north of the road.

However, a conversation with an SSE operative established that the new line will now run along, or close to, the beach rather than beside the road before mounting the raised beach. As a consequence, this area was also inspected during the survey.

From NR 2740 6305 the cable will run roughly southwards alongside the existing overhead line as far as Braibruich, 1.5km south of Bruichladdich at NR 2553 5963. From there a new overhead line will complement the existing one as far as NR 2470 5770, just beyond Port Charlotte.

The survey identified two previously unrecorded sites close to this line. One (Site 26) comprises a small area of lazy beds at NR 30228 62815, close to the shore and a short distance west of Blackrock (see Map 2A). This feature appears to be very close to the amended route of the underground cable and hence potentially vulnerable to the development.

The other feature (Site 27) is located at NR 24920 58051, in a pasture field on the edge of Port Charlotte and some 25m east of the existing overhead line (see Map 7A). It consists of a low, circular mound completely grassed over and measuring approximately 8-9m across and 0.4m high. Its summit is slightly dished, perhaps indicating that its interior is filled with collapsed walling although this has not been verified.

Clearly, without resorting to excavation, the true nature of this feature remains unclear. It seems unlikely to be natural feature and might be a burial mound or the remains of a hut circle.

BALLINABY TO SALIGO

A new underground cable will run from an existing overhead line at approximately NR 2218 6705, on the edge of the settlement of Ballinaby, westwards to the terminus of another line at NR 2100 5628, at Saligo. Its overall length will be some 1.4km. The route runs along the north side of an unclassified public road, through level fields given over mostly to the cultivation of hay and barley although a few fields are under pasture. No structures or features of archaeological or historical significance were noted along this route.

AN SIDHEAN

A new underground cable will connect a pole at the end of an overhead line at NR 2638 6655, 550m south of Kilchoman Schoolhouse, to Pole 19, at NR 2465 6604, on a north/south line that runs alongside the B8018 from near Bruichladdich to Sanaigmore in the north of the island. This new route crosses peat bog over a distance of nearly 2km, skirting around the south side of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of An Sidhean (Site 15 in this report).

The scheduled monument is divided into three separate zones encompassing numerous sites and monuments described under different monument numbers by RCAHMS. In summary, a large area extending either side of the B8017 and as far west as NR 2470 6670 and as far east as NR 2630 6650 includes the remains of many prehistoric hut circles and associated field systems.

The indicative route given by SSE for the proposed underground line runs east/west a short distance to the south of the scheduled area. It cuts across a peat bog showing extensive evidence of peat hags although no sites of archaeological or historical significance were observed during the walk-over survey.

PORTNAHAVEN AREA

Surveys were undertaken at two locations near Portnahaven where a small number of overhead line poles are to be replaced.

Four poles are to be replaced on the cliffs to the immediate east of Portnahaven, the poles being centred on approximately NR 1685 5200. Nothing of archaeological or historical significance was noted in this area.

Two more poles (Poles 327 and 328) are to be replaced on the same line some 3km east of Portnahaven, to the immediate north of the A847 road at approximately NR 1970 5295. Nothing of archaeological or historical significance was noted at this location.

FORELAND HOUSE

Running to the east and south-east from NR 2516 6455, 500m east of Sunderland Farm, to NR 2748 6358, 1km south-east of Foreland House, this route measures some 2.8km long. For most of its course it follows the B8018 road through pasture fields, some of it well drained and some not, as well as boggy areas covered with heather and reeds.

No previously unrecorded sites were noted during the walk-over survey. However, the new overhead line is likely to pass through or very close to an area of lazy beds (Site 21) centred on NR 2631 6445, near the former settlement of Carn Nan Coileach.

This line will terminate very close to the site of the former farmstead of Tynacoille (Site 25) as well as to a modern house which is surrounded by a deer fence. There was no trace of any structures or features associated with the early settlement near to the existing overhead line, other than a few clearance cairns of probable recent origin a short distance to the south and south-west of extant Poles 5 and 6.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the original desk study the sequence of sites and monuments corresponded with the order of maps supplied by SSE. Here they are laid out according to the five sections described in the walk-over survey.

BOWMORE TO PORT CHARLOTTE (Maps 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B, 7A, 7B)

Sites 1-2 (Maps 1A and 1B)

The two known wrecks on Traigh Cill an Rubha are unlikely to require avoidance action or archaeological monitoring during trenching for the new underground cable.

Site 3 (Map 2A)

The several areas of cultivation strips that constitute Site 3 are a probable indication of a pre-Improvement settlement nearby although no such settlement has been found to date. Every effort should be made to avoid these features during the installation of the underground cable.

Site 26 (Map 2A)

It is understood that the realigned route of the cable trench is likely to pass very near the small patch of lazy beds that comprise Site 26. As a consequence, it is recommended that this area is fenced off, that all machinery avoids it and that no materials are deposited in its vicinity.

Site 4 (Map 2A)

Prehistoric standing stones often attracted secondary activities, particularly burials, and it is possible that archaeological remains may survive in the vicinity of this monument. However, it is understood that a new route for the underground cable will pass some considerable distance from the standing stone.

Site 5 (Map 2B)

These quarry pits are not thought to be particularly significant. Furthermore, the cable trench will probably be located some distance from them.

Site 6 (Map 3A)

The proposed line of the cable trench will be located some distance from the remains of this farmstead. Furthermore, the power line will be set on the terrace of a raised beach, thus posing no threat to the site which is at the base of the cliff.

Site 7 (Map 3B)

The new power line will be located a considerable distance from the chapel and burial ground although the excavators should be aware of the presence of this monument.

Site 8 (Map 3B)

It is unlikely that the installation of the cable trench will affect the archaeological record at this location where flints were retrieved in the late 1950s.

Site 9 (Map 3B)

The cable trench will be located well away from this farmstead.

Site 10 (Map 3B)

A fairly large assemblage of flint artefacts was recovered from this location and a watching brief may be required during trenching in the vicinity of Site 10.

Site 11 (Map 3B)

The remains of the building at Site 11 ceased to be visible above ground before the OS map of 1981 was published although remnants may still survive beneath the ground. Nevertheless, the site is located some distance from the proposed route of the cable trench and is unlikely to be affected by it.

Site 12 (Map 3B)

This finds spot is some distance from the proposed cable route and is unlikely to be affected by its installation.

Site 27 (Map 7A)

This mound of uncertain, but possible prehistoric, origin lies a short distance from the existing overhead line and fairly close to the proposed new line at Port Charlotte. As a consequence, it is recommended that the mound is fenced off. In addition, all machinery should be excluded from its vicinity, no spoil deposited near it and materials such as cable drums stored well away from the area.

Site 17 (Map 7A)

The new line is sufficiently far from the farmstead of Site 14 as to pose no threat to it.

Site 18 (Map 7B)

The single artefact (a stone axe) retrieved from Site 18 appears to be a stray find and the line refurbishment is unlikely to affect the archaeological record at this location.

Site 19 (Map 7B)

Site 19 refers to an archaeological evaluation undertaken in 2008 and will not be affected by operations in this area.

BALLINABY TO SALIGO (Map 4B)**Site 13**

The cup-marked rock at Site 13 is located to the north of the farm buildings at Ballinaby whereas the new underground cable will run southwards from the settlement. As a consequence, this monument should not be endangered by the proposed development.

AN SIDHEAN (Maps 5A, 5B)**Site 14 (Map 5B)**

Site 14 is a natural feature and hence nothing of archaeological interest requires protection at this location.

Site 15 (Maps 5A and 5B)

An Sidhean is a designated Scheduled Ancient Monument. Although the new power line will not cut directly through any of the three separate areas that make up the monument, every care should be taken to ensure that no element of it is disturbed by the transit of machinery or the storage of materials. Furthermore, it is recommended that the east end of the cable trench should be diverted further away from the scheduled area than is indicated on SSE's map.

PORTNAHAVEN AREA (Maps 6A, 6B)**Site 16 (Map 6A)**

The refurbishment of the line on high ground above Portnahaven will have no effect on Site 16 which refers to a flint blade found on the beach in 1997.

The two poles due for replacement that are shown on Map 6B are not near any known archaeological sites.

FORELAND HOUSE (Maps 8A, 8B)**Site 20 (Map 8A)**

The buildings of Carn Nan Coileach were located to the north of what is now the B8018 road while the new overhead line will run to the south of it. The walk-over survey revealed no trace of the township near the new line other than an area of lazy beds that may have been associated with it (Site 21: see below)

Site 21 (Map 8A)

Site 21 comprises an area of lazy beds that were probably associated with the former township of Carn Nan Coileach (see above). The lazy beds, which are still quite prominent, are located on or very close to the proposed new overhead line. As a consequence, it is recommended that this feature should be fenced off and trenching, together with the movement of machinery and the stockpiling of materials, should be kept as far as possible from it.

Site 22 (Map 8A)

The quarry identified on an air photograph was not encountered during the walk-over survey and is believed to present little or no obstacle to the line refurbishment.

Site 23 (Map 8B)

The farmstead of Creag Liath is some distance from the new overhead line and should be under no threat from it.

Site 24 (Map 8B)

There appears to be some confusion concerning the discovery of cists near Foreland House. The reported location of these findings is some 100m from the proposed new overhead line and the possibility of uncovering evidence of burials in pole trenches is very small.

Site 25 (Map 8B)

The surviving remains of the farmstead of Tynacoille are separated by a fence from the existing overhead line and from the proposed new one. The only features noted within the area were a few field clearance cairns which appear to be of relatively recent origin.

REFERENCE

DES *Discovery & Excavation in Scotland*, Archaeology Scotland. Edinburgh.

PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

- 1 Cultivation strips (Site 3) centred on NR 31377 62858, viewed from the south-east
- 2 Standing Stone NR26SE2 (Site 4) at Uiskenuie, viewed from the east
- 3 Lazy beds (Site 26) centred on NR 30228 62815, viewed from the north
- 4 Lazy beds (Site 26) centred on NR 30228 62815, viewed from the north-east
- 5 Mound (Site 27) at NR 24920 58051, viewed from the north
- 6 Mound at (Site 27) NR 24920 58051, viewed from the west
- 7 Lazy beds NR26SE 24 (Site 21) at Carn Nan Coileach, viewed from the east.