

## ARGYLL & BUTE

### Killarow and Kilmeny; Kilchoman parishes

#### Islay power supply refurbishment

*Walk-over survey and watching briefs*

*John Lewis – Scotia Archaeology*

**Walk-over survey** NR 3204 6024 to NR 2470 5770; NR 2218 6705 to NR 2100 5628; NR 2638 6655 to NR 2465 6604; NR 2516 6455 to NR 2748 6358; NR 1685 5200; NR 1970 5295 Walk-over surveys were undertaken at various locations on Islay between 17 and 19 June 2012 in advance of the refurbishment of sections of the island's power supply. The principal stretches were: Bowmore to Port Charlotte (NR 3204 6024 to NR 2470 5770); Ballinaby to Saligo (NR 2218 6705 to NR 2100 5628); around An Sidhean (NR 2638 6655 to NR 2465); and around Foreland (NR 2516 6455 to NR 2748 6358). Smaller investigations were centred on NR 1685 5200 and NR 1970 5295, near Portnahaven.

Two previously unrecorded sites were encountered. At NR 30228 62815, a short distance west of Blackrock, is a small area of lazy beds. At NR 24920 58051, in a pasture field on the edge of Port Charlotte is 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 could not be verified.

**Watching briefs** NR 26345 61433 to NR 26210 61175; NR 25887 60040 to NR 25599 59589; NR 25380 66750 to NR 24858 66410; NR 27273 63045 to NR 26563 64208; NR 29404 63315; NR 33136 60618 Watching briefs were undertaken between 18 September 2012 and 31 January 2013 during the excavation of three trenches to accommodate new underground power cables and numerous pole trenches for overhead lines. Most of the underground cable between Bowmore and Port Charlotte was laid using a mole plough which cuts a narrow furrow, lays the cable and backfills the trench with minimal ground disturbance. This process was not monitored archaeologically. Watching briefs were carried out at two short stretches on this line, at Bruichladdich and Braibruich, where open-trenching was employed in areas where several prehistoric find-spots have been identified.

NR 26345 61433 to NR 26210 61175 **Bruichladdich** A trench some 330m long was excavated to the rear of the Bruichladdich distillery. Initially, a 4m-wide strip of topsoil was cleared before the cable trench, 0.7m wide and 1m deep, was cut through the centre of the strip. Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered, only 0.2-0.3m of topsoil and underlying glacial till.

NR 25887 60040 to NR 25599 59589 **Braibruich** A trench approximately 630m long was excavated through fields to the immediate N of the A847 road between Bruichladdich and Port Charlotte. Topsoil was stripped along a width of 5m before the 0.7m wide and 1m deep cable trench was dug through the cleared area. Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered, only 0.2-0.3m of topsoil and underlying glacial till.

NR 25380 66750 to NR 24858 66410 **An Sidhean** An underground cable was inserted between overhead lines at Grulinmore and the former Kilchoman Schoolhouse. The cable trench ran along the north side of the B8017 through part of a prehistoric and pre-Improvement landscape known as An Sidhean, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 6127). Within this area the remains of eight hut circles, field banks and clearance cairns, probably dating from the late Bronze Age, as well as traces of rig and furrow agriculture of probable post-medieval date were identified in 1981 (Barber & Brown 1984; RCAHMS 1984, 123-26). The cable trench, approximately 700m long, 0.7-1m wide and 1m deep, cut through the

sparse remains of two earth and stone banks, at NR 25199 66607 and NR 25045 66511. The trench skirted around a low mound, measuring 5m by 3m, at NR 24945 66454. The latter did not appear to be a field clearance cairn or a glacial feature and could be a burial mound.

NR 27273 63045 to NR 26563 64208 **Foreland** The excavation of 24 new pole trenches were monitored during the construction of a new overhead line to the W of Foreland House, in an area where burial cists were uncovered in the 1920s. Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered in any of these trenches.

NR 29404 63315 **Uiskenie** A watching brief was kept during the excavation of a trench for a replacement pole for an overhead line which stood very close to a prehistoric standing stone (NR26SE 2). Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered in this trench.

NR 33136 60618 **Gartmain** A replacement pole for an overhead line was inserted some 130m NE of the site of the early chapel and burial ground of Cill A' Bhuilg, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 2355). Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered in this trench during a watching brief.

### **References**

Barber, J & Brown MM 1984 *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 161-88.

RCAHMS 1984 Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland: Argyll, an Inventory of the Monuments, 5. Edinburgh.

Archive and report: RCAHMS, Historic Scotland and WoSAS

Funder: SSE