

Scotia *Archaeology*

**REPORT
TO
SCOTTISH & SOUTHERN ENERGY**

**OVERHEAD POWER LINE
AT BROOMHILL,
FORTEVIOT, PERTSHIRE**

**Watching brief
November 2013**

*Lismore
Dollerie Terrace
Crieff
PH7 3EG
Tel No: 01764-652638
email: scotarc@btinternet.com*

INTRODUCTION

This document describes the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken during the replacement of a pole (Pole 185) on an overhead power line at Broomhill, Forteviot, Perthshire. The original intention was to monitor the replacement of one pole and the stays on two adjacent poles (184 and 186) but only the pole change was implemented. The refurbishment was carried out by Scottish & Southern Energy (SSE) whose representative, Denise Oudney, commissioned the watching brief which was undertaken by John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology on 30 November 2013, the weather being cold but dry and sunny.

Prior to the commencement of fieldwork a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), outlining proposals for this work, was presented to Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust (PKHT), archaeological advisors to Perth & Kinross Council. The WSI described a programme intended to mitigate any action that might damage the surviving archaeological record. SSE agreed to the work outlined in that document and to funding it.

THE SITE

The 33kv overhead cable line runs north-east/south-west as it passes through Broomhill, some 1.3km west of Forteviot. Pole 185 is located 600m north of Broomhill Farm within the flood plain of the River Earn and 400m from the river. This fertile area is given over almost entirely to arable farming.

Pole 185 stands at the edge of a field, very close to a small burn or drainage ditch, within the remains of a Roman temporary camp (NO01NW 1/MPK 1929) which is believed to date from the early third century. It was first discovered by air photographs in 1951 and parts of the ditch were identified by probing the following year (Feachem 1952). No investigations have been undertaken within its interior.

The fort lies on a level terrace close to a meander in the river and measures 640m north/south by 410m across, giving an overall area of 26 hectares. There was a small annexe near its south-east corner and there appears to have been entrances on its north, west and south sides. A gold coin dating to the reign of Hadrian (117-138) was found at Broomhill in 1829 (Bateson 1989, 166).

THE WATCHING BRIEF

Initially the old pole, whose core had decayed, was lifted cleanly from its socket by machine without disturbing the adjacent ground. Thereafter, a trench was dug by machine to the immediate west of the socket, at NO 04050 17789, to accommodate the new one. The location of Pole 185 is shown highlighted in blue on the accompanying map which was supplied by SSE.

The trench measured 1.8m east/west, 0.7m wide and 1.8m deep, most of it cutting through backfill from the original pole's trench. Only the western extremity of the trench cut through undisturbed ground which comprised 0.3m of dark brown, silty topsoil with a few small stones over alluvium of dark brown silt with no evidence of any features cutting into it. The base of the trench rapidly filled with water and the trench sides were very unstable.

No structures, features or deposits of archaeological significance were uncovered within this trench and no artefacts retrieved from it.

CONCLUSIONS

Nothing of interest was uncovered during the excavation of the pole trench although the majority of the trench cut through materials disturbed during the installation of the earlier pole. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that significant remains of the Roman fort still survive and that excavations at Broomhill will produce important finds at some stage in the future.

REFERENCES

Bateson, J D 1989 'Roman and medieval coins found in Scotland, to 1987', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 119, 166.

Feacham, R W 1952 'A Roman camp at Forteviot, Perthshire', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 84, 217.

PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

- 1 Inserting the replacement pole, viewed from the west
- 2 The pole trench, viewed from the south