

Scotia Archaeology

**REPORT
TO
SCOTTISH & SOUTHERN ENERGY**

**RE-ROUTING OVERHEAD LINE
AT
RAIT, PERTSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF**

*Lismore
Dollerie Terrace
Crieff
Perthshire
Tel: 01764-652638
email: scotarc@btinternet.com*

Descriptions of the monuments in the vicinity of the overhead line are summarised below. The inventory does not include standing buildings. Monument numbers are listed according to records held by the Royal Commission on the Ancient Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) (e g NO22NW 64) and by PKHT (e g MPK6706). Scheduled monuments are given the prefix SAM (e g SAM7214).

NO22NW 64/MPK6706/SAM7214 Cultivation remains, unenclosed settlement

Cropmarks identified by aerial photography around NO 230 271 indicate several small, circular features some 100m south-east of standing stone NO22NW 9 (see below), most of them forming a cluster. In addition, there appears to be the remains of a souterrain some 60m to the NNE of the cluster.

The cropmarks are located a short distance to the north of the east terminus of the new power line.

NO22NW 76 Cultivation remains, settlement

Aerial photography has identified evidence of an unenclosed settlement and cultivation remains centred on NO 231 272, a short distance to the north-east of monument NO22NW 64 (see above) and a similar distance north of the east terminus of the new power line.

NO22NW 9/MPK4688/SAM7213 Standing stone

A standing stone, 1.5m high and 1.2m by 0.8m at its base, is located at NO 2293 2716, approximately 120m north of the east terminus of the new line.

NO22NW 63 Socketed axe-head

The blade of a late Bronze Age socketed, bronze axe-head was found some 40m south of standing stone NO22NW 9, at approximately NO 229 271. It was donated to Perth Museum and Art Gallery in 1992.

NO22NW 65/MPK6610 Cropmarks

Aerial photographs show indeterminate cropmarks at NO 230 269, to the immediate north of Rait Fort (NO22NW 6) and 100m south of the east terminus of the power line. A field evaluation and watching brief undertaken within this area in 2000-2001 revealed nothing relating to the cropmarks although other possible features were uncovered.

NO22NW 66/MPK6707 Cropmarks, cultivation remains

A series of cropmarks have been noted on the north side of the Rait Burn at the west end of the village, at NO 223 269. One of the features may be the remains of a round-house. The west end of the power line passes through the area containing these cropmarks.

Further cropmarks relating to prehistoric settlements have been noted to the west and south of Rait village.

THE WATCHING BRIEF

Nine trenches for new poles (Poles 48-56) and a few associated stays were dug using a 7-tonne mechanical excavator. The new section of line extended north-westwards past Pole 56 but that part of the line lay beyond the area in which archaeological sites might be expected to occur and consequently was not monitored. The excavations were carried out on a mainly dry day with some light rain and occasional sunshine.

From the village the land rises northwards into the Braes of the Carse, the new overhead line being in the area between the village and the wooded uplands further north. The section of line that was monitored crosses two arable fields bisected by a local tarmac road. The east field, in which potatoes had been harvested recently, contains Poles 48-50 while Poles 51-55 were erected in a field covered with cereal stubble to the west of the road. Pole 56 stands just beyond the west edge of the stubble field, in an area of rough, low-lying ground close to the Rait Burn.

The pole trenches measured a uniform 2.0m by 0.8m wide and 1.6m deep, their long-axes being parallel with the new overhead line which is aligned east/west. The exception was the trench for Pole 56, an angle pole, which was aligned approximately north-west/south-east.



View from the west across the east field, Pole 48 being inserted in the distance

Pole 48

Located at NO 22881 27018, this trench cut through 0.5m of mid- to dark brown, silty ploughsoil which merged with the underlying fluvio-glacial deposit of mid-brown clay containing some pebbles.

Pole 48 is an angle pole, its stay being located some 4m to the north of the pole. The stay trench was 0.7m wide and 1.8m deep, the materials excavated from it being identical to those of the pole trench. Nothing of archaeological interest was uncovered in either trench.

Pole 49

Pole 49 was sited at NO 22778 27019 where the topsoil was again 0.5m deep and overlay fluvio-glacial clay and pebbles, nothing of archaeological significance being uncovered in it.



The trench for Pole 49, viewed from the east

Pole 50

The trench for Pole 50 was excavated towards the west end of the field, at NO 22698 26997. It cut through 0.7m of topsoil, at which depth a patch of small cobbles was identified at the east end of the trench. This feature, which did not extend far into the trench, was approximately 0.15m deep and sat directly on fluvio-glacial clay and stones.

Given the constraints of the project, it was not possible to determine the full extent or purpose of the cobbles and it is not clear whether they constituted a natural feature (perhaps a

localised fluvio-glacial deposit) or had been laid deliberately. Nothing else of archaeological significance was uncovered in this trench.

Pole 51

Pole 51 is located at NO 22602 26980, hard against the fence and its drystone wall precursor that define the east limit of the stubble field, adjacent to the farm road.

The trench cut through 0.5m of topsoil and the naturally deposited compact yellow sand with some pebbles of natural origin that lay below. At the east end of the trench was a substantial deposit of rubble, probably the remains of the collapsed drystone field wall or field clearance boulders. No other features were encountered in this trench.

Pole 52

Located at NO 22510 26970, Pole 52 will link with another overhead line that runs parallel to this one at the south edge of the field. As a consequence, trenches for two stays were excavated some 3m to the north of the pole.

All three trenches cut through 0.7m of topsoil which overlay naturally deposited orange clay and rounded boulders. Nothing of archaeological interest was uncovered in any of them.

Pole 53



The trench for Pole 53, viewed from the east

Pole 53 is located at NO 22435 26961 where the topsoil is 0.8m deep and overlies fluvio-glacial orange clay and boulders. No archaeological features were found in this trench.

Pole 54

In the trench for Pole 54, at NO 22351 26952, the topsoil was only 0.25-0.3m deep and contained a large concentration of pebbles, in contrast to the situation further east in the field where the topsoil is considerably deeper. Here the fluvio-glacial material comprised grey-brown gravel and pebbles. Nothing of archaeological interest was uncovered in this trench.

Pole 55

Located at NO 22268 26938, the trench for Pole 55 cut through 0.3m of topsoil which gave onto orange-brown, fluvio-glacial silt, gravel, pebbles and larger stones. No archaeological features were found in this trench.



View eastwards across the west field, showing Pole 55 being erected

Pole 56

This angle pole is located at NO 22181 26925, just beyond the stubble field, in an undrained area close to the Rait Burn. Excavation revealed 0.5m of pale brown, silty loam over undisturbed pale brown sand, pebbles and shattered bedrock. Nothing of archaeological interest was uncovered in this trench or the one excavated for a stay, some 3m to the south-west.

CONCLUSIONS

The only feature of possible archaeological significance uncovered during the watching brief was the spread of cobbles in the trench for Pole 50 although it could not be determined whether this feature was man-made or natural in origin.

Otherwise, nothing of archaeological interest was uncovered during this excavation although clearly the area around Rait contains the remains of a rich archaeological landscape and one that should be preserved wherever possible.

REPORTING

Copies of this report have been forwarded to SSE, PKHT and RCAHMS. A summary account of the excavation findings has been produced for publication in *Discovery & Excavation in Scotland*, the annual journal of Archaeology Scotland. Site data has been uploaded onto the online digital resource site OASIS.