

Scotia Archaeology

REPORT
TO
CAMPBELL OF DOUNE
AND
AUCHNAFREE ESTATE

THE 'COLONEL'S LOCH',
ALLT A CHOIRE CHAOIL
GLEN ALMOND, PERTSHIRE

Walk-over survey
July 2015

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

INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of a desk study of archaeological sites and monuments and a walk-over survey at a site known locally as the 'Colonel's Loch' on the Allt a Choire Chaoil, Glen Almond, Perthshire. The survey was carried out by Scotia Archaeology at the request of Campbell of Doune, Civil and Structural Engineers of Crieff.

THE SITE

The 'Colonel's Loch' is located some 3km north of Auchnafree on the Allt a Choire Chaoil, a small stream that feeds into the Glenshervie Burn on the north side of Glen Almond. The putative loch no longer exists but it is believed to have been an artificial lake constructed during the 19th century to provide fishing and perhaps duck-shooting. This location is now proposed for an emergency source of water for a recently constructed hydro-electric scheme lower down the Glenshervie Burn (see Lewis 2011).

THE DESK STUDY

A desk study of readily available cartographic material undertaken prior to the commencement of fieldwork revealed no known sites of archaeological or historical significance in the vicinity of the 'Colonel's Loch'. However, there is one documentary reference contained within a book (Whitaker 1927) written by the grandfather of the current owner of the estate, Sir Jack Whitaker. It mentions that '...at the bottom of the coire [sic] is a flat area of about 7 acres where Col Williamson attempted to create a loch by damming the burn. His dam, however, was washed away...so my grandfather never saw it.'



Illus 1: location of the 'Colonel's Loch', viewed from the south

THE WALK-OVER SURVEY

The field survey was undertaken on 14 July 2015 when Duncan Campbell of Campbell of Doune accompanied John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology to the site of the 'Colonel's Loch'. It is located within a landscape dominated by the results of glaciation and covered with heather, coarse grass and blaeberry. The 'loch' consists of a widened stretch of the stream's valley which appears to have been artificially dammed at approximately NN 80849 36420 (Illus 1). The dam wall is barely visible, surviving only as a line of drystone foundations on the east side of the valley (Illus 2).



Illus 2: remnant of dam wall, viewed from the west

No visible trace of masonry is evident on the opposite bank although a change in vegetation may signify the presumed line of a wall there.

There is an interesting feature on the top of the bank on the west side of the burn where a narrow channel runs north/south along the top of a mound of morainic debris (Illus 3). This channel, approximately 1m wide with a stone lining visible on its east side, may well have been an overflow channel from the original dam.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The 'Colonel's Loch' is not shown on either the first or second edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey map nor on any other known map of previous or later dates. However, there is sufficient material evidence to indicate that the Allt a Choire Chaoil had been dammed at some stage and that evidence supports the reference in Whitaker (1927).



Illus 3: the channel, viewed from the south

REFERENCES

Lewis, J 2011 *Glenshervie: desk study and walk-over survey*, unpublished report to Green Highland Renewables and Auchnafree Estate.

Whitaker, J A C 1927 *The Auchnafree Book*. Private publication.