

# *Scotia Archaeology*

**REPORT  
TO  
SCOTTISH & SOUTHERN  
ELECTRICITY NETWORKS**

**BUTE AND GREAT CUMBRAE  
REPLACEMENT POWER SUPPLY**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WALK-OVER SURVEYS  
MARCH 2018**

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## INTRODUCTION

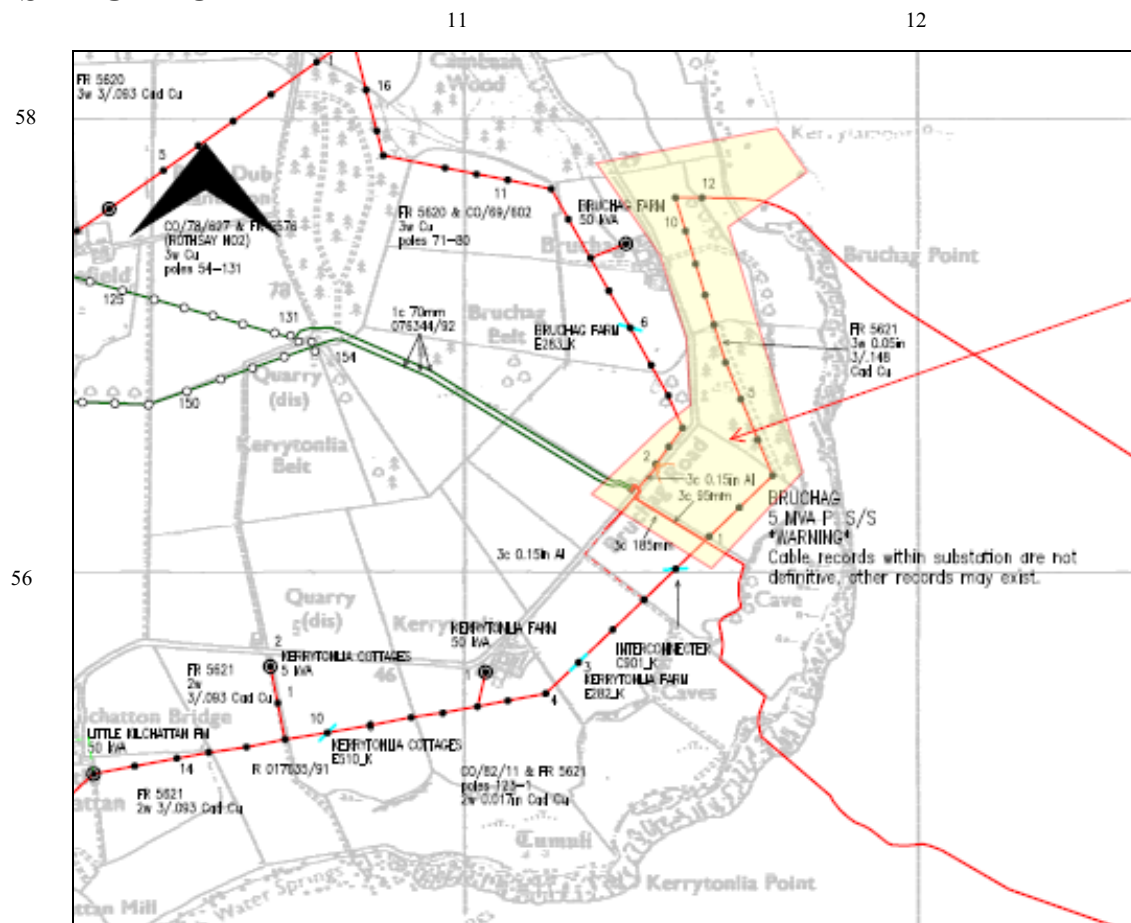
This report describes the results of walk-over surveys undertaken for Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) in advance of the installation of a replacement submarine and overland power supply to the Isles of Bute and Great Cumbrae. This work was commissioned by Gary Knox of SSEN, Perth and carried out by John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology on 20 and 21 March 2018, the first day being bright and sunny, the second dull with some light rain.

Prior to the commencement of fieldwork, a desk study of readily available source material was carried out to identify known sites of archaeological or historical significance along the proposed routes. A similar study had been forwarded to SSEN by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS), archaeological advisors to Argyll & Bute and North Ayrshire Councils.

Maps showing the locations of the survey area were supplied by SSEN and are reproduced in this report. The maps include the positions of known sites of archaeological significance as well as other information relevant to the surveys.

Sites described below are listed according to the numbers attributed by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS), eg NS15NW 7.

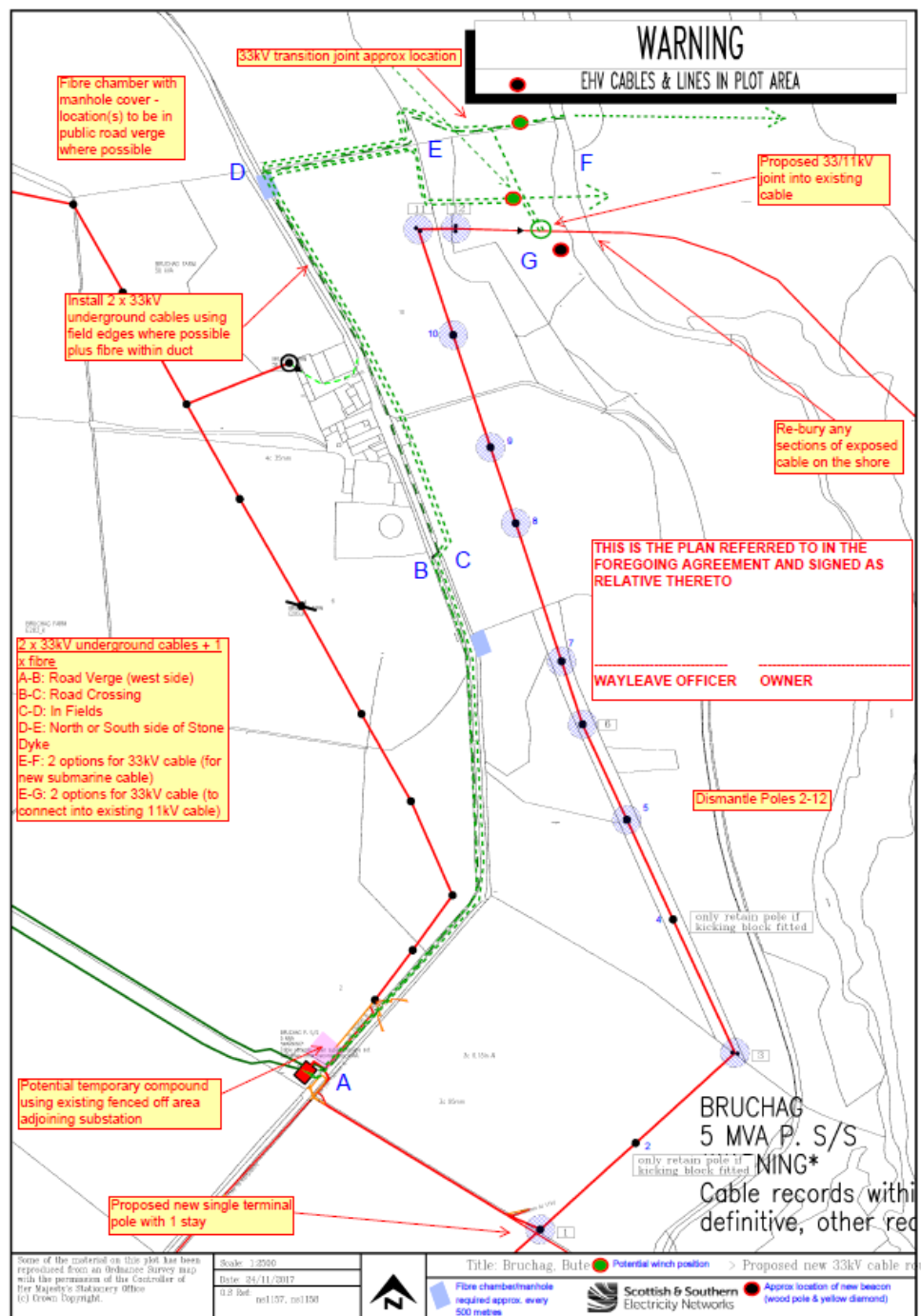
## ISLE OF BUTE



*Map 1: location of the area of investigation*

The area of investigation is located in the south-east corner of the island, some 7km south of Rothesay and comprises mostly pasture fields between Bruchag Farm and the shore. It is shaded yellow on Map 1 above. The extant submarine line comes ashore to the north-east of Bruchag Farm, connecting with Pole 12 from where it runs southwards as an overhead line. The survey area measures approximately 1km north/south by 200-300m wide.

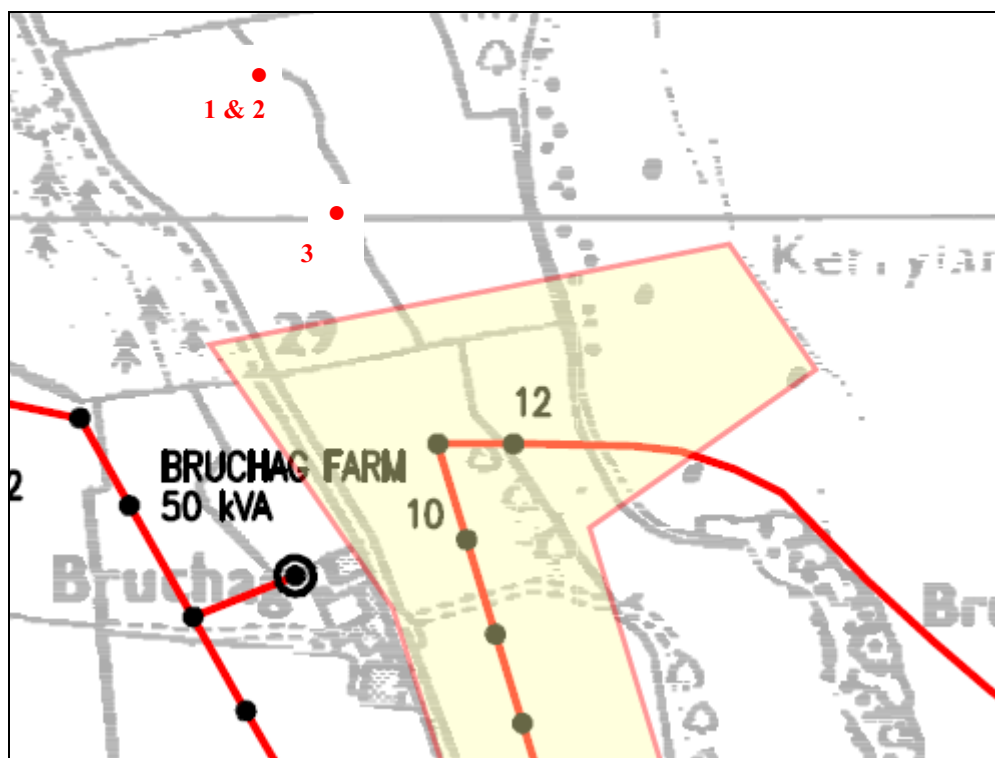
SSEN intends to replace the existing submarine cable with a new one and to continue the line underground on a route roughly parallel with the existing overhead one. It is shown as a broken green line on Map 2 below.



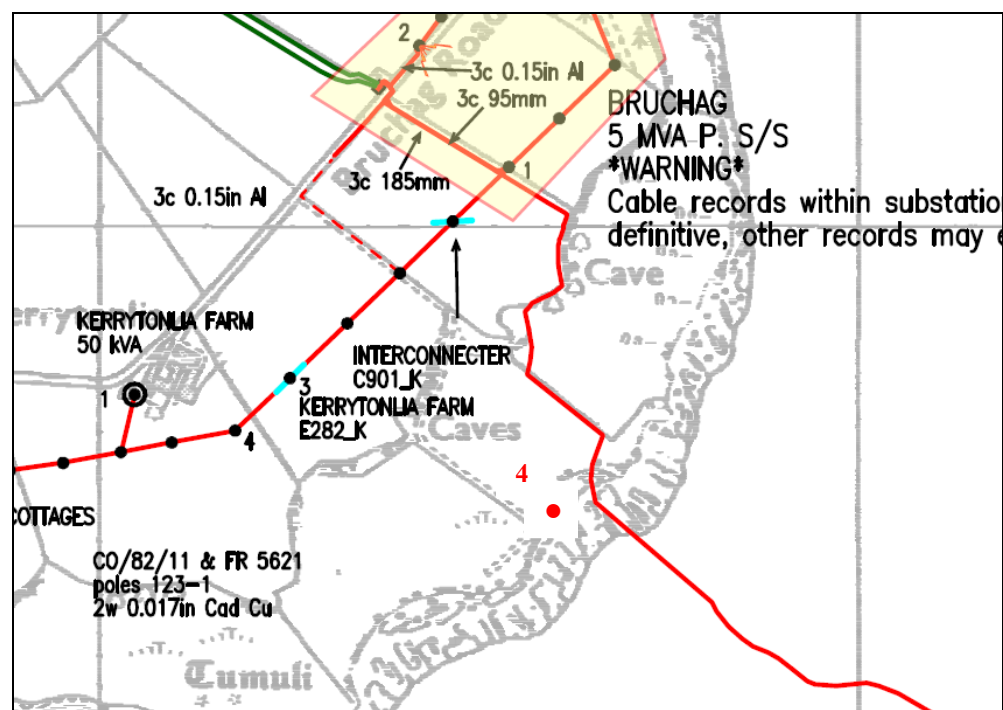
**Map 2: the route of the proposed new underground line**

## RESULTS OF THE DESK STUDY

Several sites of archaeological significance have been noted in the vicinity of the proposed area of development. These are shown as red dots on Maps 3 and 4 below.



*Map 3: archaeological sites to the north of the investigation area*



*Map 4: archaeological sites to the south of the investigation area*

**Site 1 NS15NW 1**

Nothing is now visible of a cairn and associated cist containing an urn with cremated bones reputedly uncovered in 1817 at approximately NS 11284 58046. The first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) 6-inch map (Buteshire 1869, sheet 215) depicts a 'tumulus' at this location.

**Site 2 NS15NW 26**

Roy's military map (1747-55) and a near contemporary estate map (Foulis 1759) show a farmstead called 'But Leary' comprising one building and enclosure at approximately NS 11292 58034, 200m south-east of Bruchag Lodge. A later estate map indicates that the farmstead had been abandoned by 1780 (May 1782) and it is not shown on the OS 6-inch map of 1869.

**Site 3 NS15NW 23**

A small assemblage of split quartz pebbles and flint flakes and blades was retrieved from around NS 1130 5800 during field-walking immediately after ploughing in 2003.

**Site 4 NS15NW 7**

Cropmarks in the south-west corner of a cultivated field appear to indicate the remains of a promontory fort on a raised beach at NS 11517 56878.

**THE WALK-OVER SURVEY**

*North end of survey area, viewed from the north*



Most of the survey area now comprises improved farmland, mainly pasture, the ground sloping gently down to the shore on the east. A short section of the extant overhead line runs through a cleared corridor within woodland, the ground along that swathe being covered with rough vegetation including bracken which was dead at the time of the survey.

Near the shore the land dips down steeply across an old sea cliff, at the base of which stands the terminal pole (Pole 12) for the extant line (see photograph below). The new line is intended to run further north across the same field.



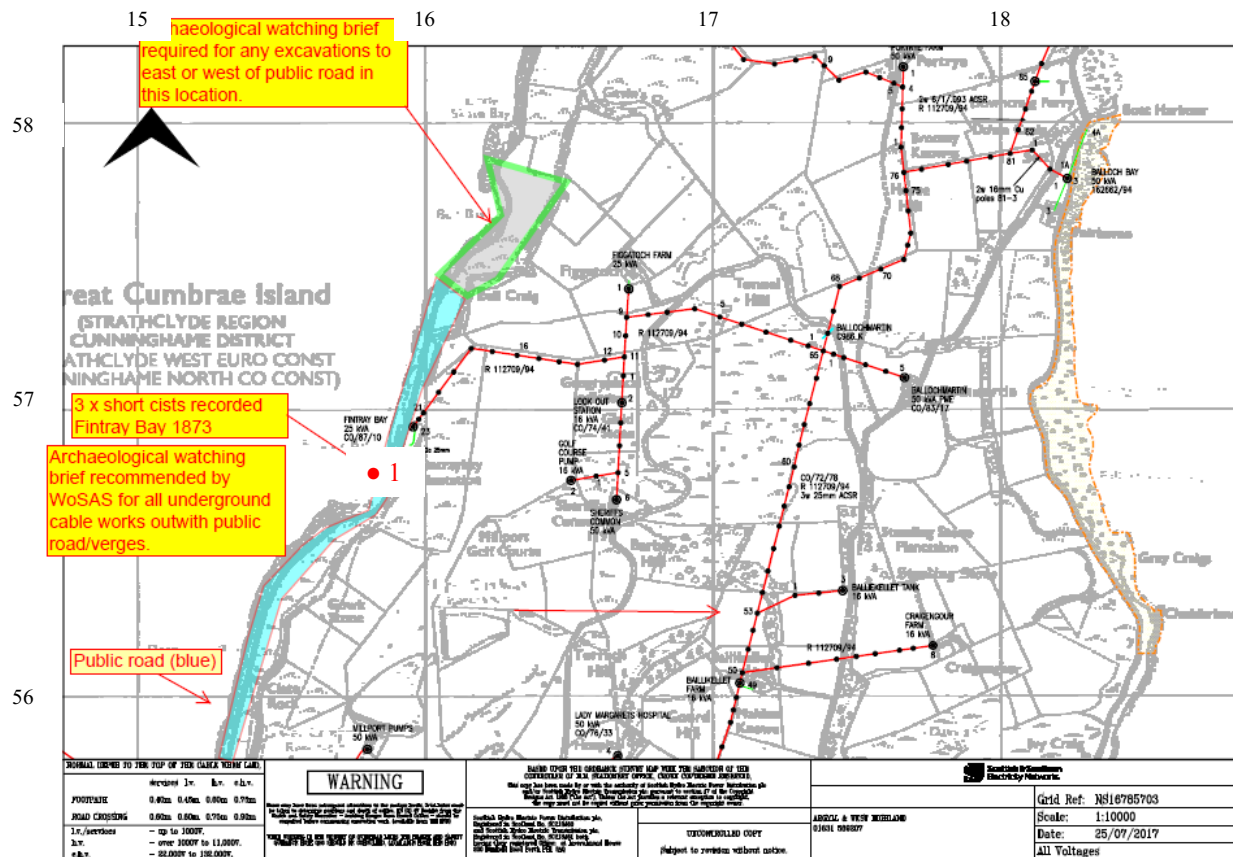
*The field through which the extant underground cable runs, viewed from the north-west. Pole 12 is in the middle distance with Bruchag Farm beyond.*

It is intended to take the new underground cable adjacent to the field wall bordering the public road that runs past Bruchag, thus minimising any damage to the archaeological record.

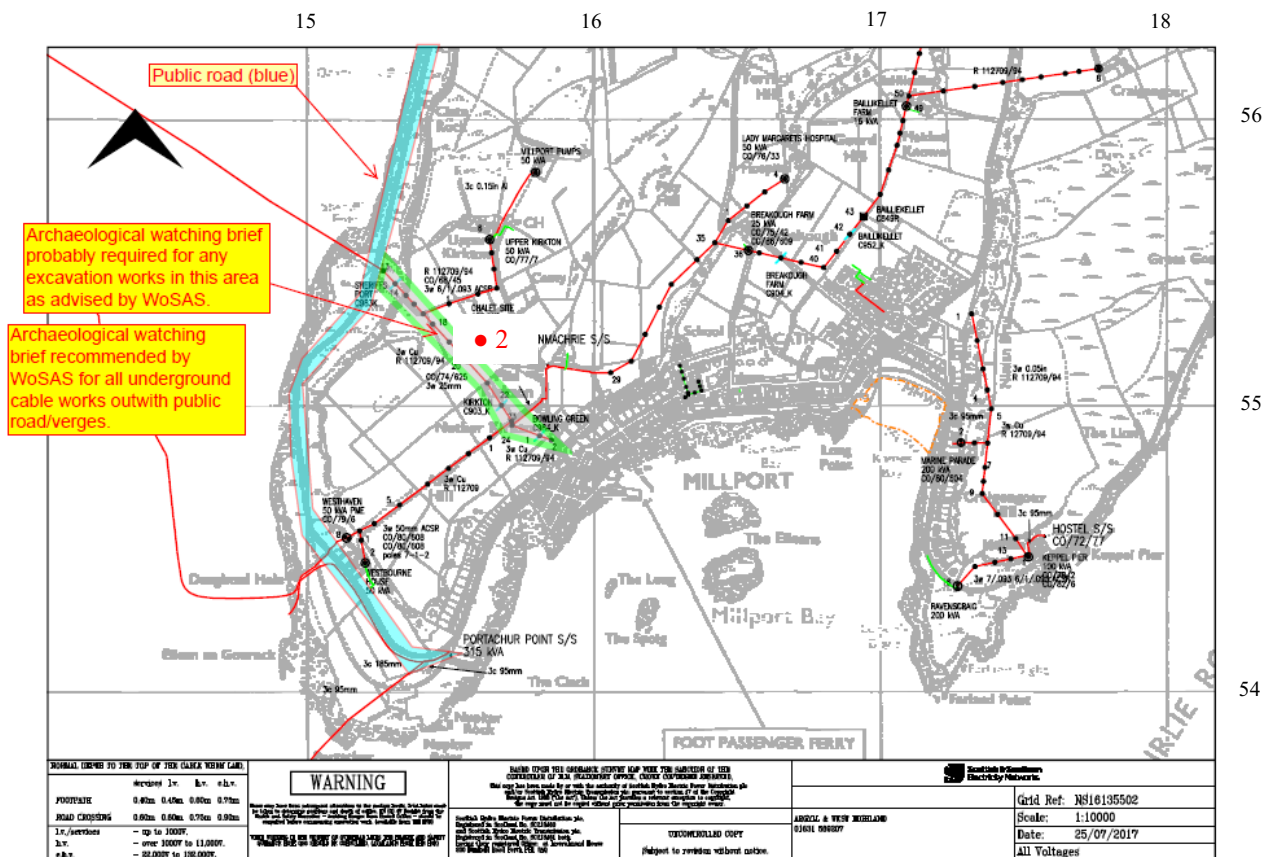
No structures or features of archaeological significance were noted on any part of the survey.

## **ISLE OF CUMBRAE**

The survey on Great Cumbrae comprised two elements. The principal area of investigation extended from the south-west tip of the island, at approximately NS 1550 5413, along the A860 northwards as far as Bell Bay, at NS 1625 5785, an overall distance of some 4km. This covers the proposed route of an underground cable that will link with the submarine cable from Bell Bay to the Isle of Bute and which is shown as a wide blue line on the two maps below. At the north end of the area, at Bell Bay, there will be a working compound, delineated in green on Map 1.

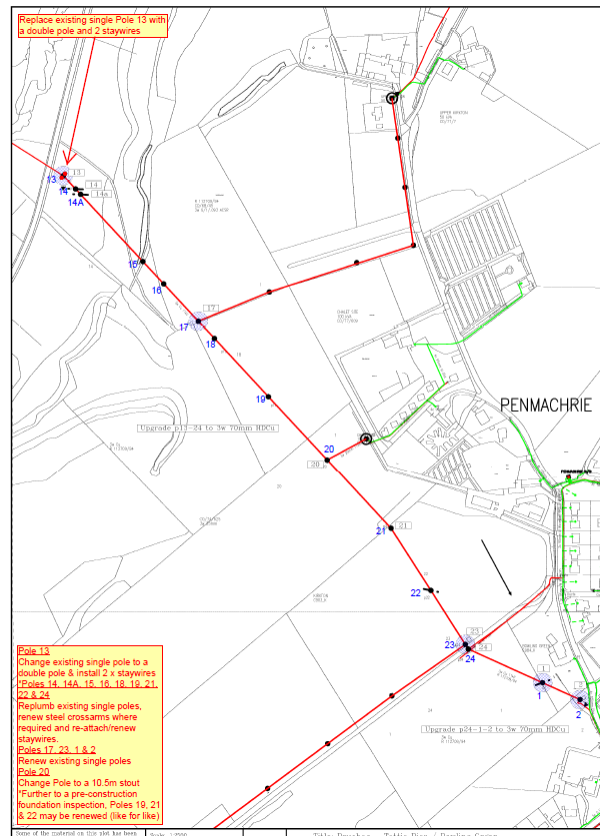


Map 1: north section of survey area



Map 2: south section of survey area

The second area surveyed, delineated in green on Map 2, follows an extant overhead power line from where the existing cable comes ashore, running south-eastwards to the outskirts of Millport (see map below). Several elements of this line are to be refurbished which would include inserting some new poles and associated stays.



**Map 3: the route of the overhead line**

## RESULTS OF THE DESK STUDY

A small number of known sites of archaeological interest lie close to the survey areas. One (NS15NE 8) is listed by RCAHMS but not shown here. It was formerly identified as a fort but is now interpreted as a natural feature on a cliff overlooking Bell Bay at NS 1620 5742.

### Site 1 NS15NE 3 (Map 1)

Three short cists were uncovered when a mound was disturbed during road building at Fintry Bay in 1873. The site of these cists was re-excavated in 1978 and two of the cists examined although both were empty (Gordon 1979).

### Site 2 NS15NE 17 (Map 2)

Around NS 1563 5522 are the remains of a series of churches possibly dating back to the early medieval period.

The present parish church dates from 1837, replacing one built at this location in 1802 which itself overlay the remains of another dating from 1612. In turn, this building replaced the



church of St Columba which was associated with the 'chapel of Cumray', granted in 1318. RCAHMS records also mention 'the Church of Maura' being probably built on or near the site before 642 (Hewison 1895; Lytteil 1886). In addition, several fragments of cross slabs, thought to date from the 7th or 8th century, and other carved stones have been found in this vicinity, many of which are stored in nearby Millburn House (Fisher 2001).

## THE WALK-OVER SURVEY

It is intended to run the underground cable close to the A860 road. If directly adjacent to it the trench is likely to cut through ground already disturbed during road construction, resulting in no threat to the archaeological record. If the cable trench is taken further from the road it would pass through ground covered with coarse grass, reeds, gorse, bracken, brambles, heather and some small trees. In places there may be difficulty traversing bedrock.

No features of archaeological significance were noted during this part of the field survey.

The overhead line between the west coast and the outskirts of Millport runs from Pole 13 at NS 15266 55494 to Pole 2 at NS 15852 54879. Near its north-west end it climbs the old sea cliff through rough, occasionally waterlogged ground covered with tussocks of coarse grass and brambles. Thereafter it crosses agricultural land, both pasture and arable (see photographs below).



*View to the south-east of the overhead line as it climbs the old cliff.  
Pole 13 is in the foreground*



*View to the north-west from near the south-east terminus of the overhead line*

No features of archaeological significance were noted during this section of the field survey.

## REFERENCES

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Foulis, J 1758-9 *A Survey of the Isle of Bute*'. Bute Archive, Mount Stuart. Copies held at the National Archive of Scotland (RHP14107) and RCAHMS.

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Roy, W 1747-55 *Military Survey of Scotland*.