

INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of a further watching brief undertaken during the excavation of a section of a pipe trench to take water from the Inverliever River to the power-house of a new hydro-electric scheme at Inverliever, Ford, near Lochgilphead, Argyll. It followed a desk assessment of archaeological sites and monuments lying on or near the pipeline, a walk-over survey along it and a series of watching briefs during excavations along several sections of the route. All of this work was commissioned by Adrian Loening of Carbon Trade Limited and undertaken by John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology.

The walk-over survey and the initial watching brief were undertaken on 31st July 2008 and 12th May 2009 respectively. Reports of these phases of work have been submitted to the client and to the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS), archaeological advisors to Argyll & Bute Council, and to the National Monuments Record of Scotland.

The pipe route begins on the River Liever at approximately NM 8934 0680, with a feeder coming in from a tributary stream at NM 8924 0675. It runs southwards alongside the river for some 200m before turning towards the south-east through commercial forestry as far as NM 8957 0623. From there it runs southwards alongside a forestry road before crossing a field in front of Inverliever Lodge to terminate at a power-house which will be built at NM 8953 0543. Its overall length is some 1.6km.

THE WATCHING BRIEF

The original watching brief included monitoring the clearance of vegetation and topsoil from a level platform of irregular shape (designated Site C) on the elevated east bank of the river, a short distance from the intake points. Centred on NM 89209 06600, the platform measured approximately 4m by 4m. The removal of turf, bracken and 0.1m of topsoil revealed underlying glacial deposits of orange gravel and boulders. A few boulders appeared to be set into the edge of the river bank but otherwise there was no indication of any structural features on the platform and no artefacts were retrieved during the excavation.

During the second watching brief, undertaken on 1st October 2009, a 25-tonne, mechanical excavator dug the pipe-trench through the east edge of the platform and part of the adjacent, steeply-sloping bank. Excavation of the new trench, which measured 2.5-3.0m wide and 1m deep, revealed no archaeological features or deposits, only glacially-deposited gravel and stones beneath a thin layer of topsoil.

CONCLUSIONS

The level area (Site C) near the north end of the pipe route appeared to be man-made and might well have been a house platform. The few boulders at its west edge might represent remnants of a wall although no other trace of habitation survived. While stonework might have eroded down the river bank, it seems unlikely that masonry set further into the slope would have suffered such a fate. One explanation for Site C is that the platform had been cleared and levelled at some stage but nothing built on it thereafter.

PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

- 1 Excavation in progress to the immediate south of the monitored area, as viewed from the north
- 2 The trench fully excavated within the area of the watching brief, viewed from the east
- 3-4 The trench fully excavated within the area of the watching brief, viewed from the west
- 5 Section through glacial till on the east side of the trench, viewed from the west