

---

# Scotia Archaeology

**REPORT  
TO  
GREEN HIGHLAND**

**ROROYERE  
HYDRO-ELECTRIC SCHEME**

**Archaeological monitoring  
and  
protection of archaeological sites  
August 2010**

*5 Bank Street  
ABERFELDY  
Perthshire  
PH15 2BB  
Tel & Fax No: 01887-820880  
email: scotarc@o2.co.uk*

## INTRODUCTION

This report describes a programme of archaeological monitoring and the protection of sites during trenching along sections of the route of a pipeline for a new hydro-electric scheme at Roroyere, Glen Lyon, near Aberfeldy, Perthshire.

Planning consent has been granted by Perth & Kinross Council to Green Highland Renewables (Roroyere) Limited to construct the new hydro-electric scheme (Planning Application reference number 08/00911/FUL). Prior to permission being granted the Scottish Urban Archaeology Trust (SUAT) undertook a desk study of documentary and cartographic sources relating to sites lying on or close to the route of the new pipeline. This was followed by a walk-over survey of the route in August 2007.

Following the results of the surveys and on the recommendation of its archaeological advisers, Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust (PKHT), the council attached two conditions to the planning consent whereby sites of archaeological and historical significance were protected during groundworks associated with the installation of the pipeline.

PKHT supplied Terms of Reference for a programme of archaeological work which included the following:

all ground-breaking works within areas deemed to be archaeologically sensitive should be monitored by an approved archaeological consultant (Condition 12); and

the upstanding remains of any structures lying within those areas should be fenced off to avoid accidental damage during construction work (Condition 13).

Subsequently, a further condition was added to ensure the protection of sites lying adjacent to a temporary access route to the site. This route, along the south bank of the River Lyon between Bridge of Balgie and Roroyere, was used while an old bridge at Roro was demolished and replaced by a new one.

The archaeological work was carried out in the context of the historic environment sections (in particular sections 110, 111, 123 and 124) of the Scottish Planning Policy and in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) outlining proposals to safeguard the archaeological record. The WSI, produced by Scotia Archaeology, was agreed by PKHT and approved by the planning authority before development commenced within archaeologically sensitive areas.

Sites lying within the development area as well as those adjacent to the access track from Bridge of Balgie were then fenced off and, on 4th August 2010, archaeological monitoring was undertaken by John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology during the initial stage of groundworks along the pipe route.

## THE SITE

The route of the pipeline runs along the west side of the Allt Gleann Da-Eig, on the south side of Glen Lyon, some 26km west of Aberfeldy. There is a single intake of water from the burn at approximately NN 6102 4609, the outfall from a new power house being around NN

6121 4736, some 1.25km to the north. The pipe route runs through mainly rough hill pasture that falls quite steeply from the intake point as far as the flood plain of the River Lyon, a short distance from its terminus at Roroyere.

The pipe route runs very close to the remains of a settlement whose origins are thought to date from the second half of the 18th century although they probably continued in use well into the following century. These are described briefly below, using site numbers given by SUAT in the report of their surveys as well as the catalogue numbers assigned by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) (eg NN64NW 13) and by PKHT (eg MPK9449).

## **Site 2: Roroyere settlement (MPK17849)**

The farmhouse and ancillary structures of Roroyere stand on a glacial terrace on the edge of the flood plain of the River Lyon. This elevated location is also presumed to be the site of the presumed pre-Improvement settlement shown on early maps. On the river flood plain, a short distance to the north, are the remains of animal enclosures. One enclosure, which appears to be relatively recent in date, still stands to a considerable height while others survive only as scant remnants with barely one course of drystone masonry remaining.

To the west of these enclosures stands a large glacial mound, upon which stand the remains of the cemetery of Balmenoch (NN64NW 10/MPK197) at NN 6108 4738. It is believed to be where unbaptised infants were buried from the 16th or 17th century until c1830.

## **Site 1: structure (NN64NW 13/MPK9449)**

At NN 6119 4660, close to the pipe route and to the access track that runs southwards from Roroyere, stand the remains of a rectangular structure which, although interpreted as a possible shieling hut, was probably a more permanent dwelling (see below).

## **Site 7: structures (MPK17850)**

SUAT identified the remains of four masonry structures a short distance to the north of the water intake point. They are arranged around NN 6110 4615, alongside the access track and close to the route of the pipeline. In addition, they noted two field boundaries (SUAT Sites 9 and 10) which will be crossed by the pipeline around NN 4770 6110. However, most of the archaeological features identified in SUAT's surveys were not threatened by the development.

## **PROTECTION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES**

Prior to the start of the development, measures were taken to protect structures and features of potential archaeological or historical significance lying close to the pipe route and to the access route from Bridge of Balgie. Activities that might affect these sites included: the excavation of the pipe trench, deposition of spoil and backfilling of the trench; storage of materials, especially the pipes; and vehicular access to the site.

The sites were protected by secure fences which were installed by the main contractor, Tam Shilliday Plant Hire & Groundworks Limited, on the advice of Scotia Archaeology. The most vulnerable features were the building at Site 1 and three structures at Site 7, all of which were

located close to the access track and the pipe route whose courses coincided over the southernmost half of the pipeline. There are no structures or features at the north end of the route (Site 2) needing such protection.

The fencing was to remain in place and maintained by the main contractor throughout the construction of the hydro scheme.

## **THE WATCHING BRIEFS**

PKHT's Terms of Reference originally specified that excavations at Sites 1, 2 and 7 should be accompanied by archaeological watching briefs. However, following another visit to Roroyere, it was clear that little of significance would be endangered during trenching at Site 2 and it appeared that the pipe route would by-pass the structures of Site 7, leaving only Site 1 as the only area needing to be monitored. Subsequently, although the route through Site 1 was altered, it still proved necessary to undertake a watching brief in that area.

The excavation of the pipe trench was undertaken in two phases. Initially an area 5-8m wide was stripped of vegetation, topsoil and other materials to expose the underlying sand, gravel and boulders of the subsoil and, in places, bedrock. Thereafter, a narrow trench to accommodate the pipe was dug although this second phase was not monitored.

### **Site 1**

At Site 1, the trench ran along the course of the access track, passing within 6m of the remains of the only visible structure in this area. Centred on NN 61199 46601, it measured 11.5m north/south by 3.7m wide over drystone walls, 0.6m thick, which stood to a maximum height of 1.4m. A doorway, only 0.75m wide, pierced the west wall midway along its length but there was no evidence of windows at the surviving level of the building. There was no visible trace of a dividing wall or a hearth within the gables although the latter could have been in the centre of the building.

A single surviving course of a small outhouse measuring 4.4m north/south by 2.2m wide was set against the north end of the east wall.

The watching brief was maintained during excavation some 50m to the north and south of the building. Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered, the only materials uncovered being vegetation, topsoil, make-up for the track and soil that had washed onto its surface.

### **Site 7**

SUAT identified four structures at Site 7, two of which (Structures A and B) lay 6m from the route of the pipeline and one (Structure C) about 40m from it. The excavation was monitored in the vicinity of Structures A and B. Thereafter the trench veered towards the south-east, keeping well away from Structure C. Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered in the trench, only turf, a thin layer of topsoil and make-up for the track. Removal of these materials exposed large boulders and bedrock.

Structure A, located at NN 61075 46197, measured 14m by 2.1m survived to a maximum height of 1m and was not divided into small chambers. No entrance was visible although bracken covered much of this feature.

Structure B, located 15m to the south-west of Structure A at NN 61064 46173, measured 10m by 2.5m was divided into four small compartments and had a small (3m by 2.5m) extension. Its walls were narrow and only one course survived. Again no entrance was visible, probably because of vegetation growth.

Structure C was located at NN 61031 46134 and measured 5.5m by 2.7m with curved ends and walls a uniform height of 1m. There were no internal partitions and no entrance into the building.

## CONCLUSIONS

No evidence of structures or features of archaeological importance was uncovered in the two stretches of trench covered by the watching briefs and no artefacts of any descriptions retrieved during the operation.

A cursory examination of the various structures lying close to the pipe trench suggests that most of them are related to early sheep-farming in Glen Lyon. Structures A and B at Site 7 are probably lambing pens while the building at Site 1 is too substantial for a shieling hut and may well have been a shepherd's dwelling.

Structure C at Site 7 was probably a planticrue in which kail seeds were overwintered before being transferred to a kailyard the following spring. There was no entrance in its 1m-high walls, probably to deter sheep gaining access to the young plants within.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

The photographs listed below form part of the site archive and are not included in this report.

- 1 Site 1, viewed from the south prior to excavation
- 2-3 Remains of the building at Site 1, viewed from the south
- 4 Trench at Site 1 with building on the right, viewed from the north
- 5-6 Trench at Site 1 with building on the left, viewed from the south
- 7-8 View to the north from Structure C at Site 7
- 9-10 Structure C, viewed from the south
- 11 Structure B, viewed from the south-west
- 12 Structure A, viewed from the south
- 13 Trench at Site 7 with Structure A on the left, viewed from the north