

Standing Building Survey

Balgownie Mill, Eassie, Angus



Former mill building looking South West



29th August 2011

Introduction (Illustrations 1 and 2)

Charles Heath and Sandy Greene propose to convert the former mill building at Balgownie into a dwelling house. The planning consent for this development (Angus Council Planning Application 09/00683/FUL) included an archaeological condition which specified the need for the implementation of a Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England (RCHME) specification Level 1 standing building survey to record the former mill building prior to redevelopment. This survey was carried out by the author on Wednesday 24th August 2011 (Site Code BAL01); weather conditions were overcast with occasional sunny intervals.

Historical Background (Illustrations 3, 4, 5 and 6)

The earliest reference to a mill at Balgownie was found in an entry in the Records of the Scottish Parliament dating to 12th June 1672, this document is a ratification of land grants and ownership to Patrick (Lyon), earl of Kinghorn, Lord Lyon and Glamis and refers to ‘...all and whole the lands of Balgownie, Eassie, with the mill, mill-lands, free and astricted multures and sequels of the same.’ (*RPS*, 1672/6/147). General Roy’s Military Survey of Scotland (1747-55) shows ‘Balgown’ (probably the farm) but there is no sign of a mill (Illus 3). However John Ainslie’s map of 1794 does mark ‘Mill of Balgownie’ (Illus 4) and the first detailed map of the mill complex at Balgownie is the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of the 1860’s (Illus 5).

There is good evidence in the Scottish Census records for the occupants of the mill in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The 1841 and 1851 Census lists six members of the Whamond family at Balgownie Mill (William (Corn miller) and Margaret plus their four children) plus Elizabeth and Ann Clark (aged 20 and 15) and John Miller (aged 18). In 1861 and 1871 only William, his wife and one daughter are listed plus Charles Robie (aged 18). By the 1881 census the mill is occupied by the Dempster family (James and Ann and their three children aged 23, 21 and 15) plus William Callis (aged 13) and John Scrimgeour (aged 87). Interestingly one of the Dempster children is named George which may explain the initials ‘GD’ carved into the stone beside the door into the ground floor of the mill (Illus 14). By 1891 only James and Ann Dempster and one daughter remain at Balgownie and by 1901 Balgownie Mill is occupied by the Allerdice family (Alexander and Agnes and their two daughters aged 30 and 25) plus Alexander and Daniel McLaughlin (aged 8 and 6). The Allerdices are still at Balgownie mill in 1911 although there are now eight of them ranging in age from 9 to 71. A mill is still marked to the east of Balgownie farm on the 1930’s Ordnance Survey map although it is no longer named Balgownie (Illus 6). From the limited research for this survey it has been difficult to ascertain when the mill stopped operating.

Description of mill complex (Illus 7)

The roofless remains of the two buildings that represent the former mill at Balgownie lie on the Western side of the former mill lead that runs North towards Eassie. The main building is aligned North to South and is split into two sections (A and B) and has another smaller structure (C) butted against its Eastern side that is aligned East to West.

Building A

Southern Elevation (Illus 8)

This gable elevation is blank and is constructed of mortar bonded red sandstone blocks, it comprises both Southern end gable wall of building A and the Southern side wall of building C. A circular hole for the water wheel shaft is visible in the wall of building A and there is a small square hole visible just below and to the East of the shaft hole whose function is unclear. The wheel pit stands 1.2m to the South of the Western end of this elevation (see below).

Wheel Pit (Illus 9 and 10)

This feature is 1.2m wide and at least 1.75m deep, it is currently full of water and some collapsed rubble so may be slightly deeper. The Western end of the pit has a curving sloped end and was obviously fed with water from that end. The external wheel pit wall contains a semi-circular hole directly opposite the wheel shaft hole in the wall of building A which would have supported the other side of the wheel shaft.

Western Elevation (Illus 11 and 12)

This elevation is constructed of mortar bonded red sandstone blocks, it comprises both the Western side walls of buildings A and B. It has a small window at its Northern end (B), a doorway that would have accessed first floor level in building A and another small window at its Southern end (A). Towards the Southern end of this elevation there is another doorway at ground floor level and a narrow slit window close to the gable end (both in A). There is a substantial dump of rubble against this elevation which has created a platform allowing access to first floor level in building A.

Northern Elevation (Illus 13)

The northern gable elevation of Building B is constructed of mortar bonded red sandstone blocks and has a single small window. Both wall corners at the end of the gable have alternate shaped red sandstone quoins.

Eastern Elevation (Illus 2, 14 and 15)

This elevation is constructed of mortar bonded red sandstone blocks and comprises the side walls of buildings A and B. The second building in this complex (C) is butted against the Southern end of this elevation. Buildings A and B are one and a half storeys high with three small windows at 'attic' level (two in A and one in B). Building A has two doorways at first floor level, the Southern one of these just survives on the edge of a substantial wall collapse. Building A has another doorway at ground

floor level and a small window just beside its junction with Building C. One of the quoin stones on the Southern side of the doorway has the initials 'GD' carved into it, similar initials are also carved into the Northern side wall of the doorway (see Historical Background). The Eastern wall of Building A steps out 1.2m from the Eastern wall of Building B.

Interior of Building A (Illus 2, 16-23)

There is no visible floor level in the interior of this building which is full of rubble, nettles and a small tree. At its Southern end there are the collapsed remains of a timber structure which seems to be associated with the millstones which lie on the ground within it. Joist holes are visible in the Eastern and Western walls for two floor levels (one an attic), there are no joist holes in the Northern and Southern walls but there are lines of concrete visible at first floor level and timber planking at attic level on the Northern wall. The Southern wall has a circular hole in the wall to take the end of the wheel shaft and the Western wall has a narrow angled slit window at first floor level. The Northern wall has a wooden chute at attic floor level and a 'fireplace' at ground floor level that has no chimney, this represents a system for heating up the air in Building B (see below). The Northern wall is butted against the Western and Eastern faces of the buildings side walls.

Interior of Building B (Illus 2, 24-27)

This building has no obvious means of access and at ground floor level is occupied by the base of a kiln, this is heated up from the fireplace visible in the Northern interior wall of Building A. At attic floor level three narrow iron 'planks' run through the Eastern and Western walls and are chocked in place on the external Eastern side, the chocks are missing on the external Western side. Some of the attic floor planks still survive in situ the rest have fallen down onto the top of the kiln. There is a line of shaped sandstone blocks visible at attic floor level in the inside faces of the walls. A door in the Southern wall allows access to the 'attic' floor level of Building A. The wooden chute starts at attic floor level in this building and leads into Building A.

Building C (Illus 28-31)

This single storey structure is butted against the outer face of Building A at its Southern end. It is open ended at its Western end and is full of rubble, there is no floor level visible. There is a pile of large roof slates dumped on its Northern side.

Discussion

Building B at Balgownie mill represents the kiln house where harvested corn was dried prior to it being bagged up and transported elsewhere. The chute from the attic floor level of Building B led into the first floor of Building A which had a doorway on its western side which provided access to deal with the bagging up and transport of grain. The slit window at first floor level at the southern end of the building presumably allowed for the checking of the flow of the water in the lade that fed the waterwheel. The ground floor of Building A contained the millstones and along with Building C may also have provided the main living area.

Limited documentary research has suggested that this mill may be originally of 17th century date and operated through the 18th and 19th centuries prior to its demise sometime in the 20th century. The

mill complex at Balgownie is an excellent surviving example of an estate mill in this part of Angus that may have 17th century origins.

Recommendations

The author feels that the photographic survey and written notes of the nature of the mill buildings are an adequate record of them prior to their refurbishment. Depending on the nature of any proposed groundwork's for the refurbishment of the building it might be useful to carry out an archaeological watching brief on any excavations to record any surviving evidence for earlier phases of the mill building, its lade system and any associated dating evidence. However the final decision on the need for any further work rests with Aberdeenshire Archaeological Service in their advisory role to Angus Council.

References

Cartographic Sources (<http://www.nls.uk/maps>)

Roy, William General 1747-55 **Military Survey of Scotland**

Ainslie, John 1794 **Map of the County of Forfar or Shire of Angus**

Ordnance Survey Maps - Six-inch 1st edition, Scotland, 1843-1882

Ordnance Survey Maps, One-Inch 'Popular Edition' 1847-1930

Internet Resources

K.M. Brown et al eds 2007-2011 *The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707*, 1672/6/147 St Andrews (<http://www.rps.ac.uk/mss/1672/6/147>)

Ancestry.co.uk Census Records for 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901
(<http://search.ancestry.co.uk/search/category.aspx?cat=35>)

Scotlands People Census Records for 1911
(<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/search/census/index.aspx?1911>)

Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Angus
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Balgownie Mill
PROJECT CODE:	BAL01
PARISH:	Eassie
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S):	Derek Hall
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Derek Hall, archaeologist and ceramic specialist
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Standing Building Survey
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Former mill building
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	N0 359 468
START DATE	24 th August 2011
END DATE	24 th August 2011
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A rapid photographic standing building survey of the former mill building was undertaken in advance of its refurbishment as a house. One end of the building contains a drying kiln with a collapsed drying floor at attic level. The rest of the building shows traces of first floor and attic floor levels and contains at two millstones and the collapsed remains of their timber framing. The wheelpit lies to the South and was fed by a lade system which is now overgrown and filled in. Limited documentary research has suggested a possible 17 th century origin for this mill.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Sandy Greene and Charles Heath
CAPTIONS FOR ILLUSTRS	N/A
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	34 Glenfarg Terrace, Perth, PH2 0AP
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended)	NMRS
EMAIL ADDRESS:	Derek.hall1@blueyonder.co.uk

Report Illustration List

Illustration 1 Location of former mill building, Balgownie Mill (based on Ordnance Survey map Crown Copyright 2010. All Rights Reserved. Licence number 100049628)

Illustration 2 Mill buildings at Balgownie Mill as numbered for survey Scale 1:100

Illustration 3 'Balgown' on General Roy's Military Survey 1747-55 (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)

Illustration 4 'Mill of Balgownie' on John Ainslie's map of the late 18th century (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)

Illustration 5 Balgownie Mill on 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of c 1860 showing water source for mill and dam system (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)

Illustration 6 Mill marked to the East of Balgownie on Ordnance Survey map of 1930's (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)

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Illustration 27 Top of internal Northern elevation of Building B showing door access into attic floor level of Building A, remains of collapsed attic floor and entrance to grain chute.

Illustration 28 Eastern gable elevation of Building C looking West

Illustration 29 Northern elevation of Building C looking South

Illustration 30 Southern elevation of Building C looking North West

Illustration 31 Pile of large roof slates visible on North side of Building C

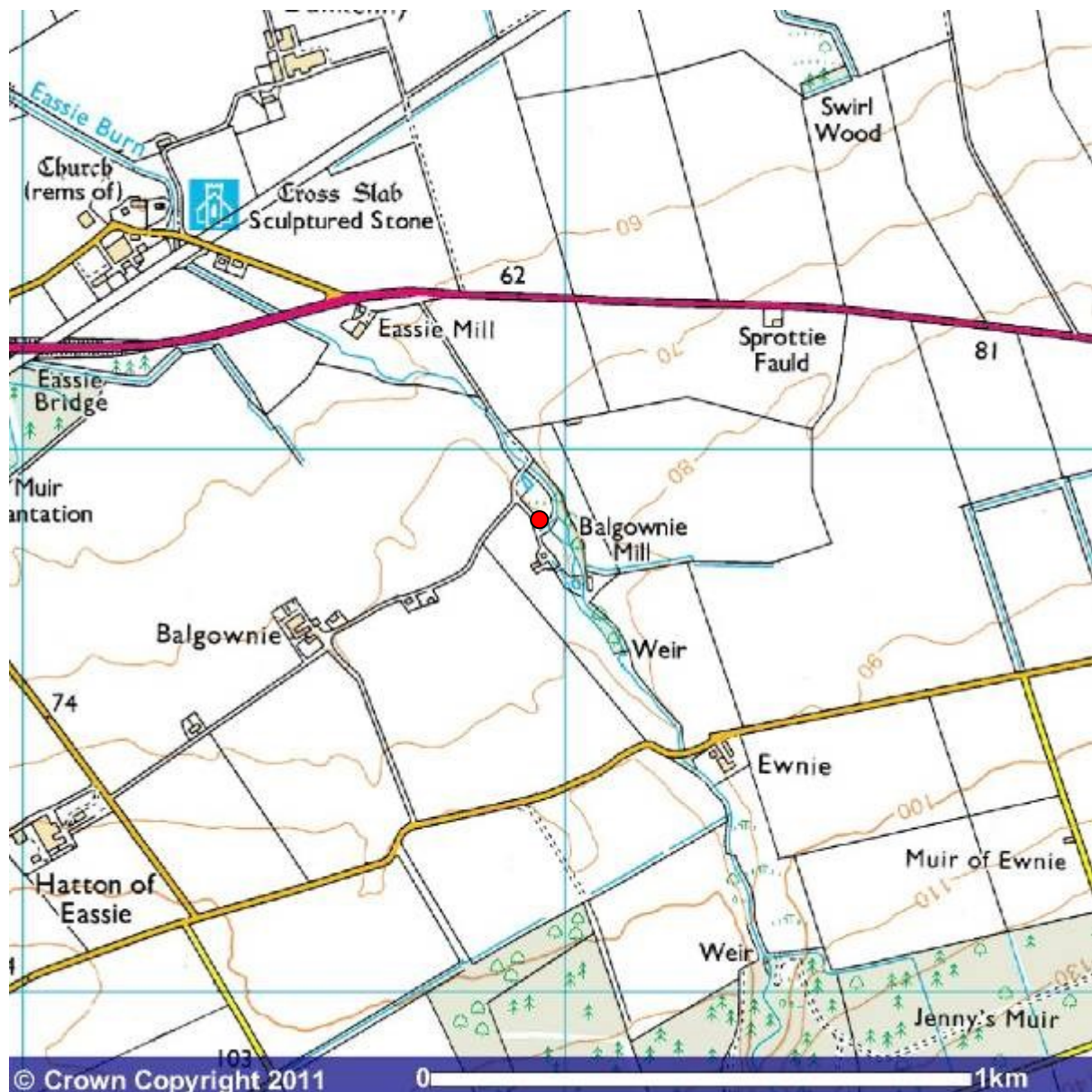


Illustration 1 Location of former mill building, Balgownie Mill (based on Ordnance Survey map Crown Copyright 2010. All Rights Reserved. Licence number 100049628)

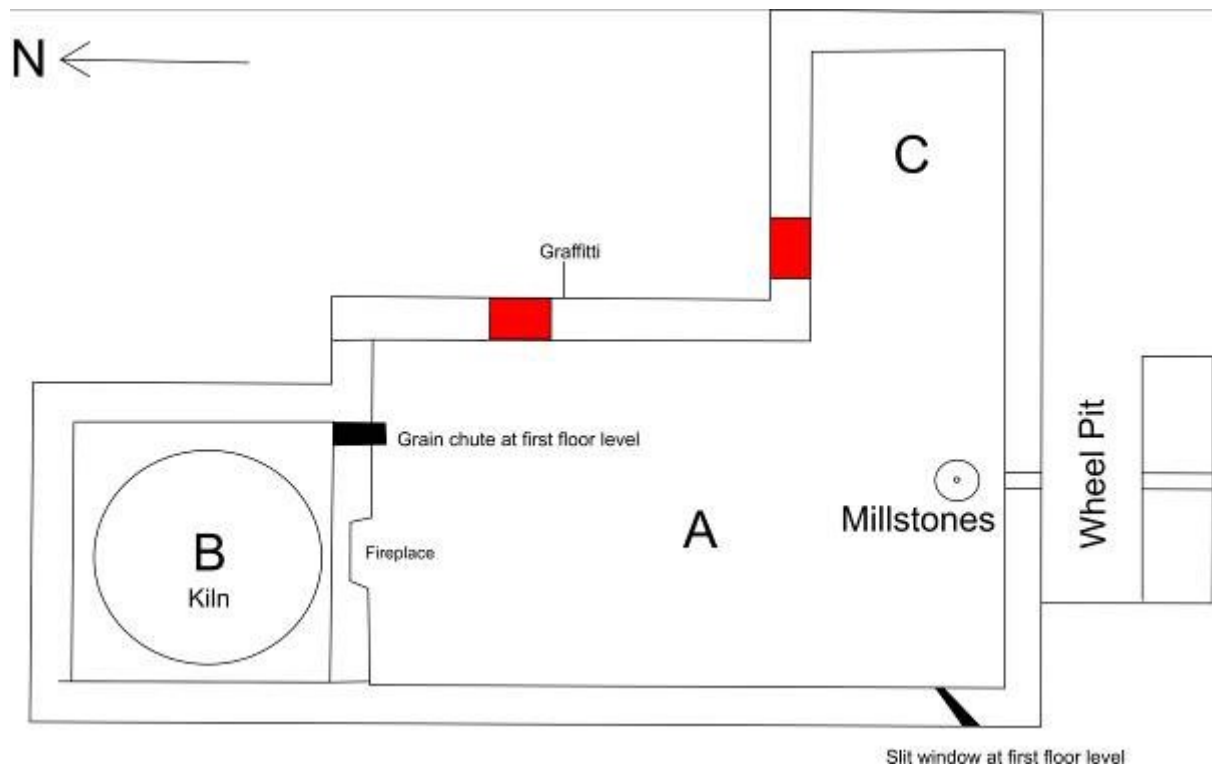


Illustration 2 Ground floor level of Mill buildings at Balgownie Mill as numbered for survey with doorways marked in red. Location of graffiti and first floor level grain chute and slit window also marked Scale 1:100

Roy Map - zoom out to display Roy Map Index

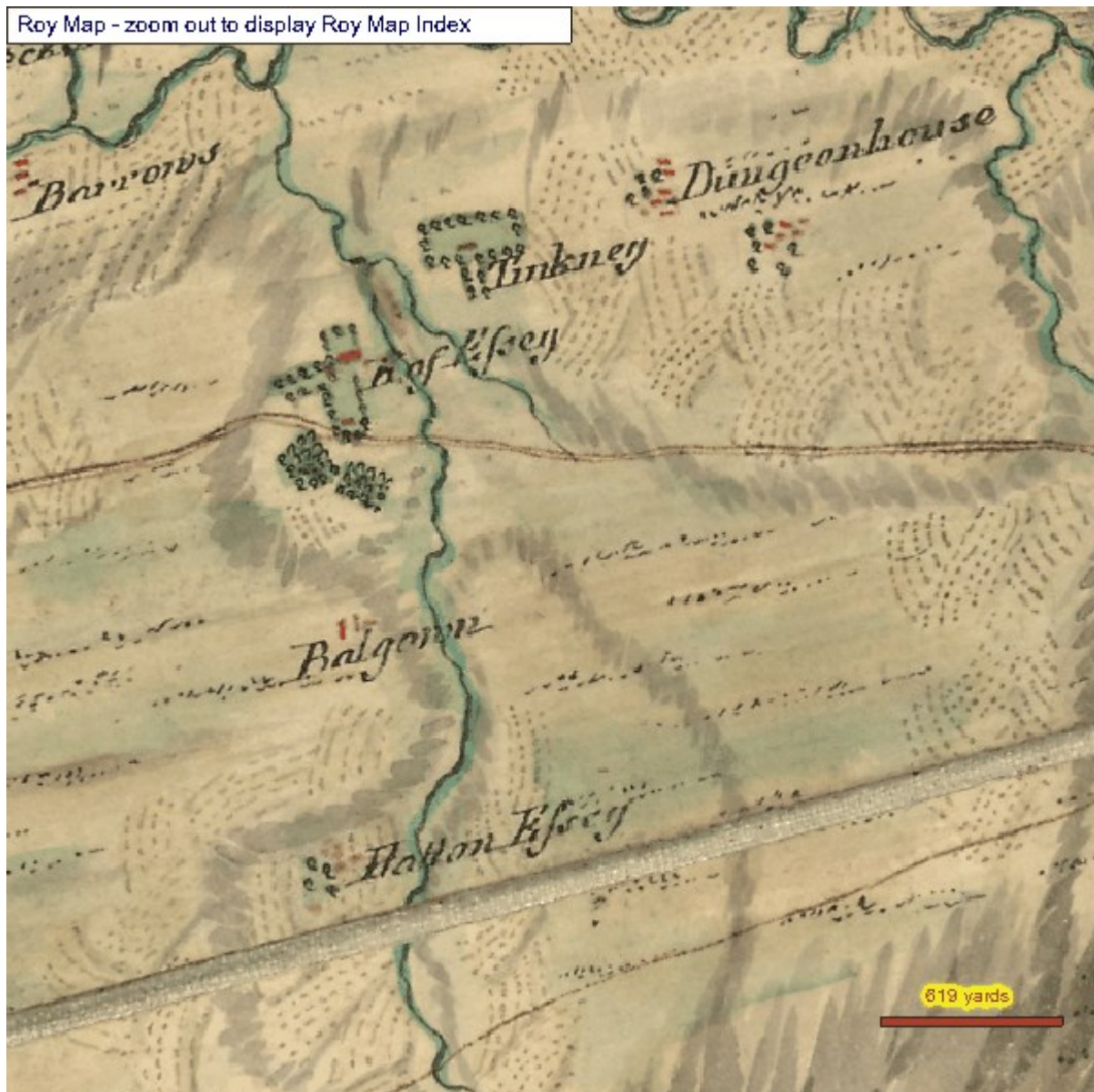


Illustration 3 'Balgown' on General Roy's Military Survey 1747-55 (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)



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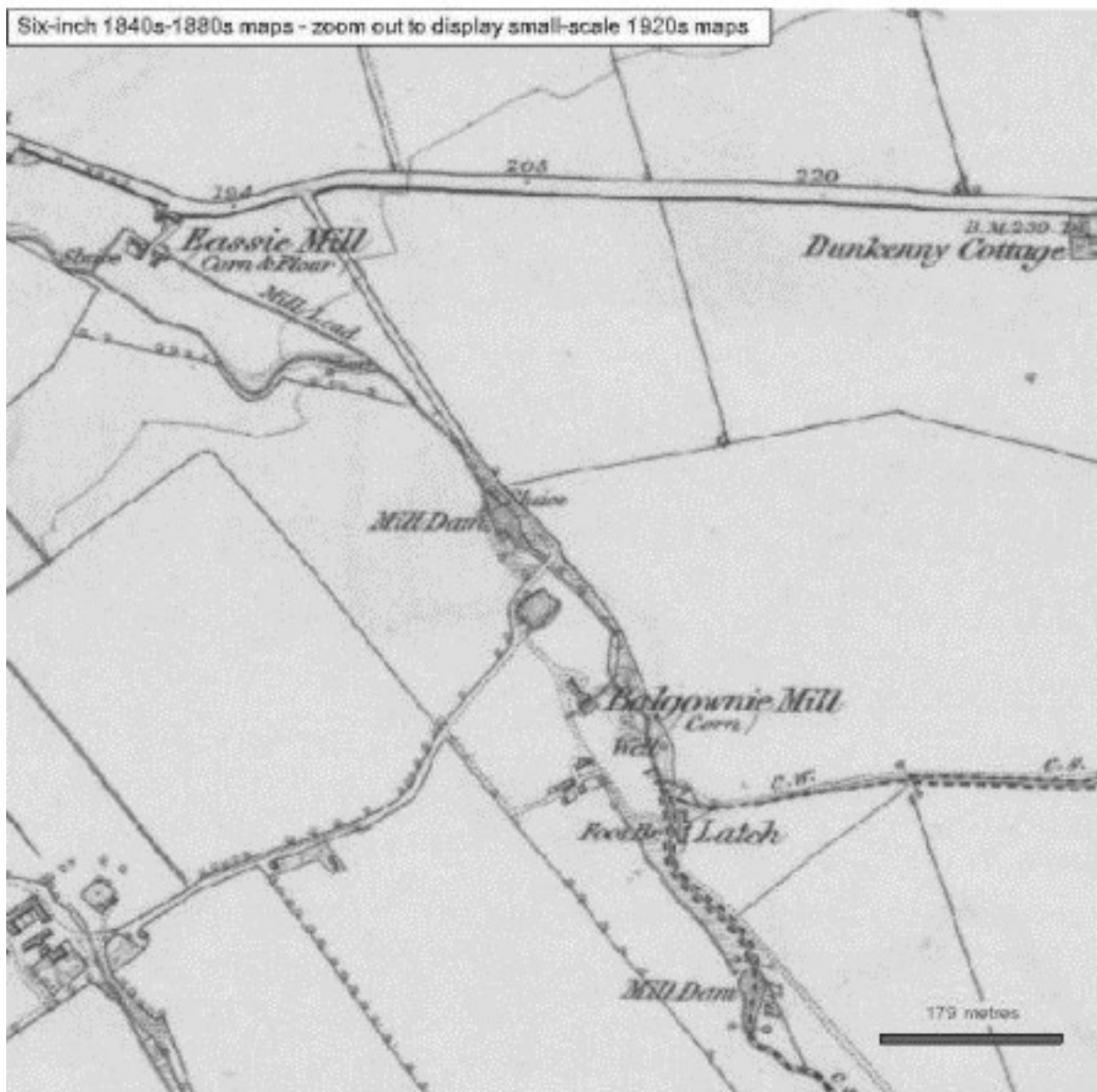


Illustration 5 Balgownie Mill on 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of c 1860 showing water source for mill and dam system (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)



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