

North of Scotland Archaeological Society Project



**REPORT
of the
Archaeological Excavation of
a clearance cairn/possible shieling
at Achleum, Glen Feshie, Inverness-shire
September 2004**

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With the kind permission of Glen Feshie Estate
and the financial support of the Heritage Lottery Fund

**The Report of the Archaeological Excavation
of a Clearance Cairn/possible Shielling
at Achleum
Glen Feshie, Inverness-shire
by members of the North of Scotland Archaeological Society,
16th to 19th September 2004**

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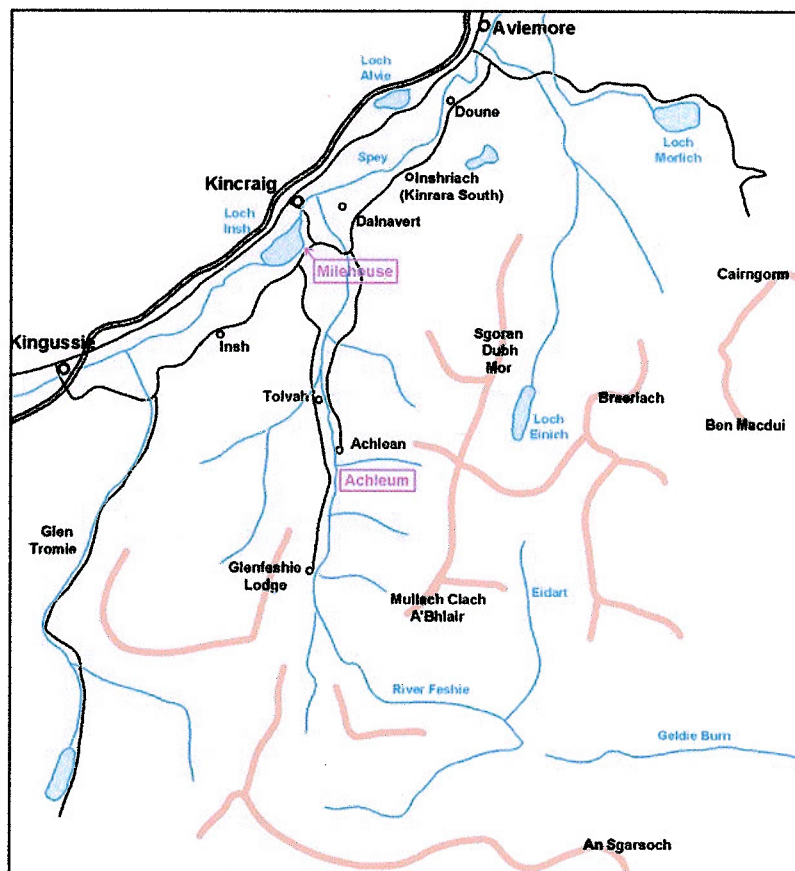
This report was compiled and produced by Meryl Marshall with
generous assistance from members of the team

Front page - the west cairn from the southeast following removal of vegetation.

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Location of Excavation



Introduction

During a recent archaeological survey of upper Glen Feshie, Inverness-shire two pairs of clearance cairns were identified as possible shielings. Both are on the east bank of the River Feshie. One pair is at Achleum-a-choid, 8 kms south of Feshiebridge, and the other is at Righ-na-Bruach, a further 3 kms up the glen, indeed the name Righ-na-Bruach means "shieling of the bank (border or edge)". The two pairs of cairns are of similar shape, size and orientation. At both sites more recent settlements and land improvements have taken place, and it is thought that the original shielings could have been used as deposits for clearance material during this later period.

This project set out to record the pair of cairns at Achleum-a-choid, GR NN 85125 96683, to excavate one of them to discover if indeed there was a structure underlying it and if possible to identify the building and date it.

The two cairns are situated close to the river in an extensive area of improved land with evidence of rig cultivation. A few metres to the south of the cairns, a small watercourse is marked on the OS map. Nothing remains of this today apart from a shallow dip in the level of the land. 200m to the south there are the remains of a settlement, comprising 6 buildings, a corn-drying kiln and a large enclosure. This settlement is variously referred to as Achnahoid, Achleum-a-choit, Achleum-a-choid or Achleum white and is thought to mean "cottage of the field of the leap" - the "leap" referring to a narrow section of the river close by. On present day maps Achleum is marked to the north of the site, the name appears to have been adopted for a later gamekeepers cottage.

The project had five aims:

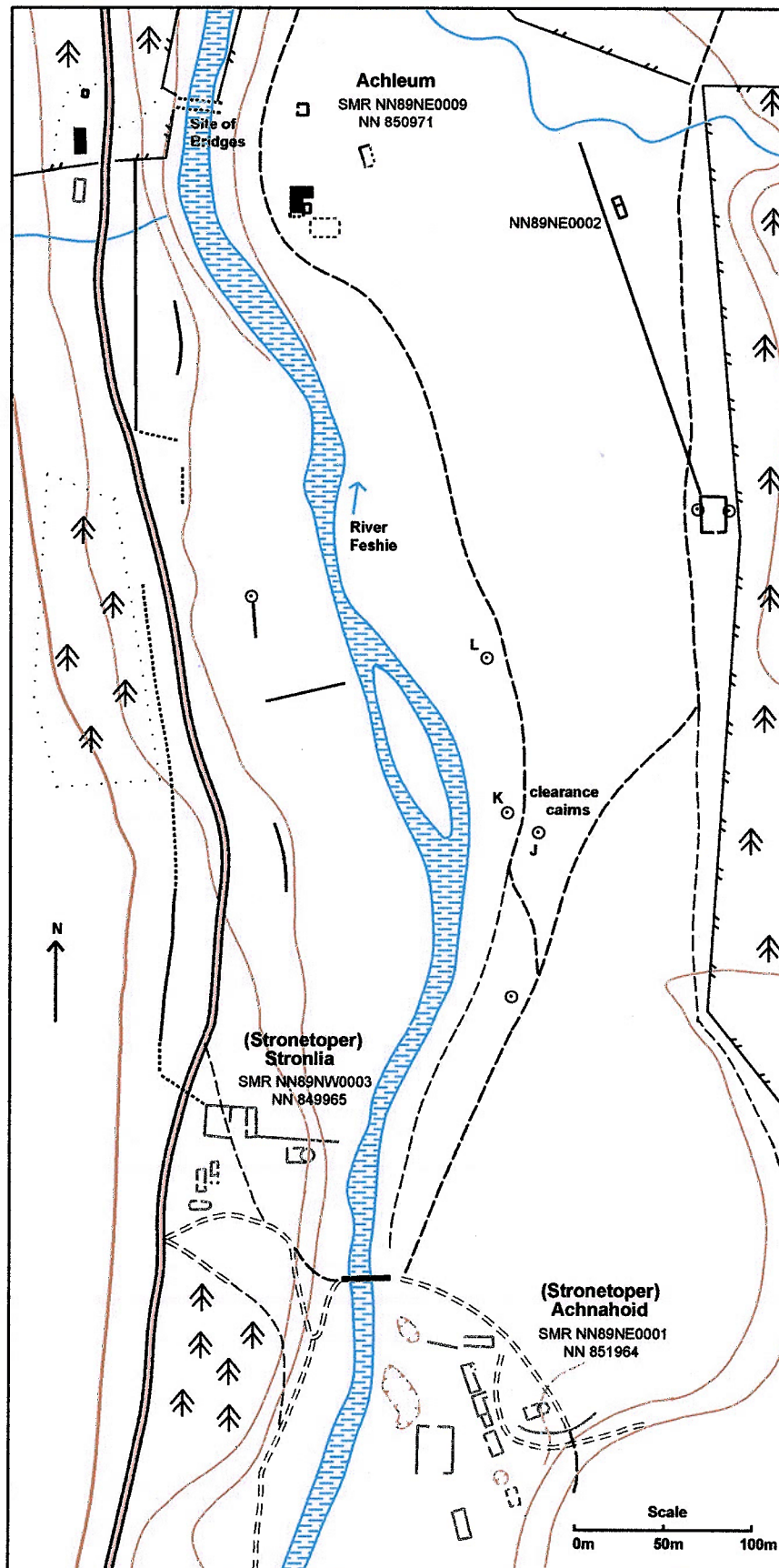
- To accurately record the pair of cairns at Achleum-a-choid (NN 85125 96683)
- To establish whether or not one of the cairns was originally a shieling and thereby a sequence of landuse in the glen.
- If possible to find dating evidence for that shieling
- To establish that a clearance cairn may possibly incorporate a building.
- To give members of NOSAS valuable experience in excavation.

Nine members were interested in helping, 6 for the whole time and 3 others for two days each. Three days were allowed for the project, with the option of a fourth day, when and if we could spare people from helping with the SAM (Scottish Archaeology Month) walk which was organised for the Sunday. The excavation proved to be a bigger task than we had anticipated, so although it was a small site and we were jostling for space at times, we were pleased to have many helping hands. Four people stayed behind on the Sunday to complete the work.

On the whole the weather was kind to us. The overall impression is one of wind, but there were many periods of sunshine and just a few showers. On a few occasions we retired to the tent for shelter. The tent itself took some upkeep, as it threatened to succumb to the wind - we chose to dismantle it at night when we left the site.

The excavation was "on display" as part of the Scottish Archaeology Month walk up the glen on the Sunday. 20 members of the public enjoyed the walk which also took in the upper glen and sites connected with Sir Edwin Landseer, Georgina Duchess of Bedford and the early deerstalking scene.

The remains of a further small building most probably a shieling, were discovered 50m to the south of the excavation site. It was recorded together with another cairn, 100m to the north, which was of very similar shape and size to the cairn excavated and may well be a another shieling, making 4 in total at this location - see Appendix



Location of clearance cairns and surrounding archaeological remains

Historical background

The lands of Badenoch and Lochaber were gifted to the Earls of Huntly (later Dukes of Gordon) in 1452 for services to King James 2nd at the Battle of Brechin. Lands which included Dalnavert and South Kinrara (now Inshriach), were made over to Lachlan Mackintosh, Chief of the Clan, by the Earl of Huntly, in 1568 as compensation for the beheading of his father, William Mackintosh, whilst on a social call to the Earl of Huntly in 1550. Mackintosh leased the lands to the family of Shaw from this time. Glen Feshie was described as the "Summer shielings of Dalnavert" in the early titles.

The "Forrest of Glenfeshie" is mentioned in an Act of Parliament of 1685. It seems to have been maintained as a hunting forest at that time. A warrant of the Duke of Gordon to Invereshie for overseeing the Forrest of Glenfeshie in 1727 states - "You are to allow no Horse or other cattle to be within the forrest of Glenfeshie or any other person to travel through the same with gunns" (NAS GD 44/28/15). Perhaps the Duke of Gordon was wishing to hunt in the forest himself and to conserve the wildlife there. However Scrope (1883) reports:

"The whole of this vast tract (the land between Ben Avon and Ben Nevis) was not solely appropriate for breeding deer, for tenants were allowed to erect shielings in the confines of the forest and their cattle were permitted to pasture as far as they chose during the day, but they were bound to bring them back to the shielings in the evenings; and such as were left in the forest over night were liable to be poinded. These regulations answered very well between Huntly and his tenants, but they made an opening for small proprietors, who held in fee from the Gordon family, to make encroachments, and in course of time to acquire a property to which they had not the smallest legal title". "No alteration took place in these forests till after the Rebellion of 1745 when the whole was let for grazing"

And Bil (1990, p102):

"Forest owners actively encouraged settlement and agriculture in the neighbourhood of their forests even though it carried the risk of more permanent future expansion. As early as 1669 shiels were ordered to be erected in the Forest of Atholl to counter the encroachments of people from adjoining districts of Badenoch and Mar. At the turn of the 18th century Killiehuntley was ordered to grass in a place near the boundary between the Forests of Atholl and Spey, chiefly to prevent Speyside trespassers from encroaching on the grounds of the Forest of Atholl. Forest boundary keeping was an important function of shielings. It was not unknown though for grazing pressure within the forest to rise beyond the carrying capacity of the land where overstocked shielings competed too successfully with the deer and very often shieling activities were banned or resited to less exhausted zones of the forest".

The earliest documentary evidence of the existence of Achleum-a-choid is in 1726 when John Shaw, described as tackman of Kinrara: "continuing in favour with his chief, obtains a tack of that part of Dalnavert called losal of Croftbeg and of Achleam-a-choid in Glenfeshie". (Fraser-Mackintosh, 1898 p102). It is probable that it was used as a shieling ground at this time. About this time too, it is clear that the woods in Glen Feshie were being exploited for their timber. The Avery map of 1735 marks extensive "Fir woods" in the lower glen and a saw mill on the east bank of the river, probably on the Allt Garbhach. The Old Statistical Account (1792) for the Parish of Alvie states: "One proprietor only has exclusive right to the woods on his own estate who is lately let a lot of it to a Company which will probably bring him £2000". (Was this "The Wood Company" which paid rent at Ruigh Aiteachan from 1812 to 1819?).

On the adjacent Mar Lodge estates, there was concern that the forest was being over exploited by settlers who were occupying the shieling grounds. In 1719 an agreement was reached between the tenants and the estate, in which guidelines for the use of the forest were outlined - "the removal of fir timber, except for use in roof-couples or of fir branches for cabers or rafters was banned, furthermore, no timber was to be used for the walls of shieling huts, fencing yards or corn-stacks". This agreement allowed the landowner to limit the tenants use of the woods whilst at the same time exploiting the woods for profit himself. In 1726 Glen Lui was cleared in order that the landowner might proceed with improvements and the sale of timber. In conjunction with the felling operations a sawmill was established in 1727. In order to control the pressure of grazing animals sourning lists

were drawn up in 1729, defining the number of cattle that could graze on a particular piece of ground (Mar Lodge survey, p8). These restrictive measures were being mirrored in many areas of the Highlands (Bil, p223-225). Glen Feshie was a hunting forest, just as the Mar estate was. It is quite possible that a similar situation existed in Glen Feshie, although no documentary evidence has been found yet.

The practice of transhumance in the Highlands had been in existence for generations. The stock would be taken to the hill grazing for the summer months, in order to keep them away from the growing crops and the pasture on the lower grounds. A large part of the activity at the shielings centred around the cattle, the womenfolk would milk the beasts and make dairy produce. Butter and cheese were an important commodity, not only as a food but for paying rentals and as barter for trading. Generally speaking the shieling huts that were occupied in these summer pastures can be divided into two groups, although their construction also depended on the materials that were available. The earlier shielings are of turf or turf and stone construction and they have an oval mounded form. The later shielings are rectangular and constructed of stone (Fenton p134, Bil p238 - 244). The banning of timber walling in the 1720s on many estates perhaps encouraged the habit of stone construction. By the 1780s, landowners were prescribing the use of stone. Very often the huts are in pairs with the smaller one possibly serving as a dairy. On occasions it was quite usual for two sets of shielings to be linked with the same farm, one being more distant. This provided a better utilisation of grazing resources. In these cases it is very often the nearer shielings that are the rectangular ones, since they remained in use for longer, the more distant ones being deserted earlier (Fenton p139). Where cultivation was possible there are instances of corn being grown on the shieling grounds (Bil p219).

The decline and breakdown of the shieling system happened gradually over a period of time. It is complex and variable, and thought to be due to a number of factors. The conversion of shieling areas into hill grazing farms for sheep was contributory, as was the more permanent colonisation and cultivation of the shieling grounds, possibly as a result of population increase. The "improvements" and the ending of the old run-rig form of cultivation, where several tenants occupying a piece of land were replaced by a single farming unit, was another factor (Fenton p138). The potato too is thought to have played a part. The crop needed more attention in the summer months than the traditional bere and oats, therefore the people could not be released to go to the high grounds in the summer months.

The Roy map of 1750 has "Achnahoid" appearing in the position of our site. Rig cultivation is noted in the immediate vicinity, so it would seem that the settlement is well established and probably a single farming unit existed by this time. In 1786 rent was paid to Mackintosh of Mackintosh for Achleum White (taken as being Achleum-a-choid) (NAS GD 176/1514) and continued until 1804, with Achleum white being described as the home of Margaret and Ann Shaw - children of William Shaw (of Dalnavert). William Shaw (born 1730) had died in ? with only female issue. James Clark, son of Margaret, had succeeded at Dalnavert by 1804. Was the mother "retired" to Achleum-a-choit? It must have been a very hard life there for a pair of elderly ladies!!

Sheep rearing was introduced into the Highlands in the early years of the 18th century, but it was not until the 1760s, when landowners encouraged shepherds from southern districts of Scotland to settle in the Highlands as part of "the Improvements", that it took hold. Farming and sheep rearing could co-exist, but the shieling system by this time was in decline.

The rearing of sheep in Glenfeshie had commenced in 1753 when Invereshie had extended his leasing of lands specifically for the purpose, but it would also seem that the rearing of cattle by his tenants continued too, and it is not clear whether any of the population was removed from the glen at this time. If they did leave it is possible that they went voluntarily. The Old Statistical Account of 1792 for the parish of Kingussie and Insh states that "sheepfarming has not as yet made any considerable progress, black cattle is the primary object." A short distance to the north of the project site, a farmstead, sheepfold and substantial field boundary are to be found. They are most likely the remnants of this early period of sheep farming, perhaps co-existing with the occupation of the settlement of Achleum-a-choid.

In 1830, the Thomson map has no mention of Achleum/Achnachoid, but the census records of 1841 have Donald Macpherson, agricultural labourer, and his wife, together with Donald MacBean, aged 20 (also an agricultural labourer) living there. The name does not then appear in the census records until 1871, when Alexander Stewart, gamewatcher, and his sister were in residence. Was the name transferred to the new keepers cottage to the north? (marked as Achleum on the current OS maps). Achleumchoid continues to be mentioned until 1901, when John Macpherson, gamekeeper, and Malcolm Macpherson, his brother and a teacher are mentioned. This almost certainly refers to the gamekeepers cottage. We know that there was a school on the opposite side of the river at Stronetoper and there are the remains of a 2 footbridges linking the 2 places.

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NAS GD 44/28/15

NAS GD 176/1514

Pre-excavation record

East Clearance Cairn

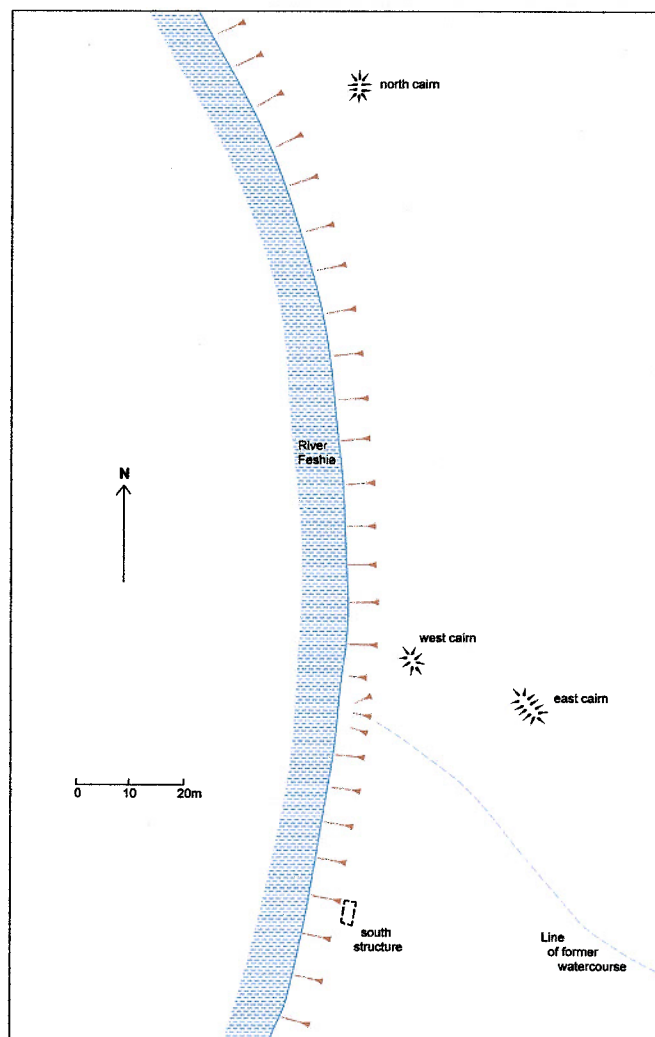
NN 85141 96673

One of two clearance cairns situated in a large area of improved land. Roughly rectangular, 7.5m x 3.5m (with rounded ends). It lies on a NW-SE axis and is 0.5-0.6m at its highest. Partially heather covered. This may be a former shieling that has been used as a deposit for clearance material. Photograph from SW



West Clearance Cairn
 NN 85125 96683

A few metre to the west of the previous cairn and nearer the river, this similar cairn is on the same axis, measures 6m x 3m and is 0.6m at its highest. Almost entirely heather covered. As with the previous cairn, this may be a former shieling. Photograph from SW



Pre excavation plan of the two cairns (centre) showing proximity of the river and other archaeological features in the vicinity

Methods

The two targeted cairns were stripped of heather. Well defined regular shapes were revealed. The east cairn was on an oval mound, whereas the west cairn was more rectangular. At this stage there was no firm evidence to indicate that either of the cairns had a structure underlying it. The east cairn was planned using taped off-sets and profiles were taken.

The west cairn was chosen for excavation and more detailed inspection, because it was close to the eroding river bank and therefore more threatened by the River Feshie, which is notable for its flash flooding. The heather was taken off the cairn to reveal an "ovoid" shape. The form became more obvious when the rest of the vegetation was removed. It was a sub-rectangular pile of stones, with 2 regular linear edges and 3 well defined corners. Tumbled stones lay outwith the linear edges. This was almost certainly a building. Lichen covered loose stones, probably clearance material, made up the central portion of the cairn. The cairn was planned at a scale of 1:20 using taped off-sets and profiles were taken.

It was decided to concentrate on the northern half of the cairn, that way, if time did not allow, we could call a halt after completing half the structure. The loose stones were removed, they overlay a central shallow dark organic layer, given context number 102, which was roughly 2m square. The remains of the walls (context 104) of the building now became obvious, they were comprised of closely packed stones of irregular shape and size. The area of stone removal was extended by a further 1m to include the whole wider part of the structure in order to determine what was happening at the internal corner.

A sample was taken of the dark organic layer which formed a matrix between stones. Small quantities of scattered charcoal were identified throughout it in the central area. The dark organic layer overlay an irregular floor of stones. Several fire cracked stones indicated a hearth (context 107) in the central area. The limits of the hearth were indistinct, but there were two obvious larger flat stones close by.

It was thought that an area of width 0.8m at the north end of the building could be discerned as being "partitioned off" by slightly larger stones. Within this area 2 circular stone features were revealed (contexts 105 and 106). The whole exposed area was planned at a scale of 1:20 using planning frame and levels were taken. The NW corner was then explored - the smaller circular feature had been constructed within another larger circular feature (context 106A), this was cleaned, planned and photographed.

During removal of the loose clearance stones from the NE wall, a linear stone edge (context 108) had appeared, crossing the wall at an angle. Could this be an entrance? It was not clear whether the remaining stones were part of the wall so they were planned before being removed. They overlay a red-brown silty layer (context 108A) which was adjacent to the linear edge - this almost certainly was an entrance. The area was cleaned up, a sample taken of 108A and a further plan of this second "layer" of excavation made at a scale of 1:20 using a planning frame. Levels were also taken.

A sondage 20cms x 30cms and 23 cms deep was excavated through the central hearth area. Natural morainic deposit lay immediately below the hearth/floor.

At all stages photographs were taken, usually from a height, using a ladder with support/stabilisers, to get best advantage.

The site was covered with polythene and backfilled so that we have the option of returning to do further work.

Results

The Cairns

The east cairn is oval in shape - it measures 8m x 4.8m at its base. It was generally 0.5m in height and appears to be on a mound of turf or grass. The stones were confined to the upper part. The southern part of the cairn, comprising 6m or so, was noted as being very stony and the northern 2m less so. It sloped more gradually and unevenly to the north. A particular feature, which may or may not be significant, were 5 small mounds at the base of the cairn. The three mounds at the north end were soft and contained no stones when probed, whereas the two to the south were made up of stone. There was a certain symmetry about 4 of these mounds. They were positioned on the long axis of the cairn, externally to each corner. Could these be the bases for hip gable props? Or were they just "dumps" - barrow loads of waste material? It can be safely assumed that the east cairn is a structure, probably a shieling, particularly as its neighbour to the NW was revealed as being such during the project. It is possible that it is an earlier shieling, since it appeared to be on a turf mound and was oval in shape. The irregular area at the north end of the cairn may be an outbuilding.



East cairn from the NW, note the two mounds in the foreground

The west cairn presented with an unusual shape once the heather had been removed. It was ovoid, tapering to the south and measured 7m (at its widest) x 4m. There was nothing to indicate that a building was underlying the cairn at this stage. Unlike the east cairn, the west cairn appeared to be comprised, in the main, of stones. The form of the cairn became more distinct once the vegetation had been taken off. Only then did we start to become more confident that a building lay underneath. It was a sub-rectangular pile of stones. Regular linear edges were identified on the SW and NW sides and well defined corners to the NW, SW and SE. Could this be the outside edges of a building? The dimensions were 5.6m x 3.5m, which seemed feasible for a small structure such as a shieling. Lichen covered loose stones, almost certainly clearance material, made up the central portion of the cairn. There was a "notch" at the SE corner and a very grassy area of fertile soil external to it. The structure was a chunky L-shape with the major part being to the north. Was there perhaps two compartments?



West cairn after removing vegetation, from the NE

The Structure

The structure revealed was almost entirely made up of stones. If it was a shieling, then this would indicate that it was of a later type, possibly constructed when the use of wood or wood and turf was being restricted. The remains of the walls of the building were made up of closely packed stones of irregular size and shape. The stones had clearly been set, although the construction of the wall was quite crude. Root bound earth formed the packing between the stones. The external edge was quite well defined but no clear internal face or edge could be seen, apart from at the north wall where it was just discernable. The walls were roughly 0.8m in width and their height varied from 20 to 35cms. There was no evidence of cruck slots. The span of the roof was only two metres, so it was quite possible that the roof had rafters or large branches on which the roofing thatch could rest (Bil p246)



North end of west structure, after removing clearance material, viewed from the SW

The internal area was roughly 2m x 2.4m. Within this, there appeared to be an area, of width 0.8m, partitioned off at the north end by slightly larger stones. Within this area there were 2 circular stone features. The larger feature in the NE corner (105) was "bucket" shaped, with an upper diameter of 40cms, and a lower of 30cms. It was 27cms deep and had a base of small cobbles. The smaller



Larger stone feature (105) in NE corner



Smaller stone feature (106) in NW corner

one in the NW corner (106) was 20cms in diameter and 12cms deep, it had been constructed within a third similar stone feature (106A) which was 50cms in diameter and 20cms deep, again with a base of small cobbles. Their function is unclear.

The irregular dark organic layer (context 102) was a mystery too. It was varying in thickness but no more than 7cms. It did not appear thick enough to be a fallen turf roof nor did it appear to be an occupation layer since it covered the hearth and the partitioned area too. Was it a degraded roof of branches and thatch? Or was it perhaps a build up of degraded lichen, moss and wind blown material, "down washed" through the cairn over 250 years?



Stone feature 106A (underlying 106) in NE corner, from the south



Hearth (107), from the northeast

The central hearth was in a slight hollow and had no apparent limits or edges to it - it was bounded by several fire-cracked stones. It appeared to be an improvised affair, as if no proper provision had been made for it. There were two larger flat stones nearby. The hearth was immediately inside the entrance and there was very little space to access the entrance/exit. Was this a hearth used during the later stages of the buildings occupation, when the building was being utilised on a more permanent basis?

The entrance in the NE wall was angled through the wall so that it was pointing away from the prevailing wind. An external earthfast area of stones to the east may have been a windbreak - it appears that earlier people were very much aware of the wind in Glen Feshie just as we were! We were not able to determine whether or not the entrance had been blocked up intentionally. The linear edge, 108, formed the southern wall of the entrance. At its the eastern end (the outside end) there appeared to be a small circular area that may have "housed" a doorpost, two possible chockstones were noted. The reddy-brown deposit in the entrance may be "rake-out" or ash from a fire.



The entrance (108A) viewed from the north

During the project 74 photographs were taken, 11 contexts detailed, 2 samples taken, 5 plans and 5 sections drawn and a diary kept. Only 2 finds were made - a piece of glass in the outer wall and the charcoal.

Four of the five aims of the project were achieved. We recorded the two cairns and proved that a cairn of a the particular shape and size could have an underlying building. We have established that at least one of the cairns and probably both were shielings and that they pre-date the settlement which lies to the south. We did not find evidence to accurately date the building, however the stone construction and the rectangular form would suggest that it was of a later period, when the practice of transhumance was in decline and the shieling grounds were being colonised on a more permanent basis - probably in the early half of the 18th century . Last but not least all participants agreed that it had been an excellent experience, both for themselves as individuals, and for NOSAS. For NOSAS it had been a valuable lesson in the organisation and logistics of running an excavation and in making their own decisions.

Future Work

More searching of primary document sources is needed. More investigation and research into local dairying practices at the shielings and local variations of shieling construction would be useful.

More excavation work could be done on the structure already exposed, in an attempt to learn more about its construction and any adaptations that have taken place. We would like to remove the remaining stones from the interior of the building. There may well be another entrance. It would be useful to extend the trench to the NE to take in an area immediately outside the entrance, where possible rake-out from the fire might provide information which enables us to date the building more exactly.

We could excavate either of the two adjacent structures, both of which appear to be earlier in type. This would establish a chronology of use and also enable us to learn more about the different methods of construction. One of the mounds at the base of the east cairn could be sectioned to determine whether or not it is the base for an external roof prop.

We would like to plan the later settlement to the south at a large scale using the planetable. A search of the surrounding landscape might provide more information on associated shieling and agricultural practices. The watercourse immediately adjacent to the 2 cairns/shielings, for example, may have been diverted at a higher point.

NOSAS is keen to continue this project and the estate has indicated that it would be quite agreeable to a return visit.



The north end of the structure viewed from the southwest showing the two larger circular features

Photographic Record

Pre excavation - 15.09.04

1. East cairn from NW
2. East cairn from SE
3. East cairn from SE
4. East cairn from SW
5. East cairn from SW
6. West cairn from SE
7. West cairn from SW
8. West cairn from NW
9. General view of site from NW
10. General view of site from NW
11. Re-erecting tent after it had blown down
12. Re-erecting tent after it had blown down

West cairn after clearing vegetation and before removing loose stones - 16.09.04

13. West cairn from WSW - 101
14. West cairn, N half from west
15. West cairn, S half from west
16. West cairn from NW - 101
17. West cairn from NW - 101
18. West cairn from SE
19. West cairn from SE
20. West cairn from SE
21. West cairn, S half from east - 101
22. West cairn, N half from east - 101
23. NW corner from west showing detail
24. NW corner from north - detail
25. NW corner from north - detail
26. SW corner from SE - detail
27. SE corner from NE - detail

East cairn after clearing heather - 16.09.04

28. East cairn from NW
29. East cairn from NW
30. East cairn from NW
31. East cairn from NE
32. East cairn from SE
33. East cairn from SE - closer
34. East cairn from SE
35. East cairn from SE (lower angle)
36. East cairn from SW
37. East cairn from SW
38. East cairn from SW
39. Action - taped offsets on west cairn
40. Action - taped offsets on west cairn

West cairn after removal of internal stones to mid-point of cairn - 17.09.04 and 18.09.04

41. West cairn from NE, before cleaning lichen and moss from dark organic layer -102, 104
42. West cairn from NW, cleaned to dark organic layer -102, 104
43. West cairn from NW (closer), cleaned to dark organic layer -102, 104
44. West cairn from SW, cleaned to dark organic layer -102, 104
45. West cairn from SW (closer), cleaned to dark organic layer -102, 104
46. Action - cairn from south
47. Action - cairn from east

West cairn/building, now cleared of loose stones for a further 1m to the southeast and cleaned to stone ?floor level (103) - 18.09.04 and 19.09.04

48. Circular feature, NE corner (context 105) from NW
49. Circular feature, NE corner (context 105) from NW - closer
50. Circular feature, NW corner (context 106) from NW

51. Circular feature, NW corner (context 106) from NW - closer
52. North part of cairn (now building) from NW - 103, 104
53. North part of cairn (now building) from SW (closer) - 103, 104
54. North part of cairn (now building) from SW - 103, 104
55. Circular feature, NE corner (context 105) from NW
56. ?Hearth - context 107 from north
57. ?Hearth - context 107 from east
58. Circular feature, NE corner (context 105) from NW

After further exploration of NW corner, ?entrance in NE wall and sondage through floor - 19.09.04

59. Sondage from ?south
60. Entrance (context 108A) from north
61. Entrance (context 108A) from north
62. Sondage from north
63. Circular feature, NW corner (context 106A) from south
64. Circular feature, NW corner (context 106A) from west, 105 in background
65. The team
66. South structure from north
67. South structure from east
68. South structure from SSW
69. General view of site from west
70. General view of site from west - zoomed
71. Settlement of Achnahoid/Achleum-a-choid (immediately to the south) from NW
72. North cairn from east
73. North cairn from south
74. North cairn from east - closer

List of contexts

- 100 - topsoil
- 101 - tumble and clearance material
- 102 - black organic layer
- 103 - possible stone floor
- 104 - walls
- 105 - Circular feature in NE corner
- 106 - Circular feature in NW corner (within 106A)
- 106A - Larger circular feature in NW corner (outwith 106)
- 107 - Hearth
- 108 - Linear stone feature in NE wall
- 108A - Entrance floor

List of Plans

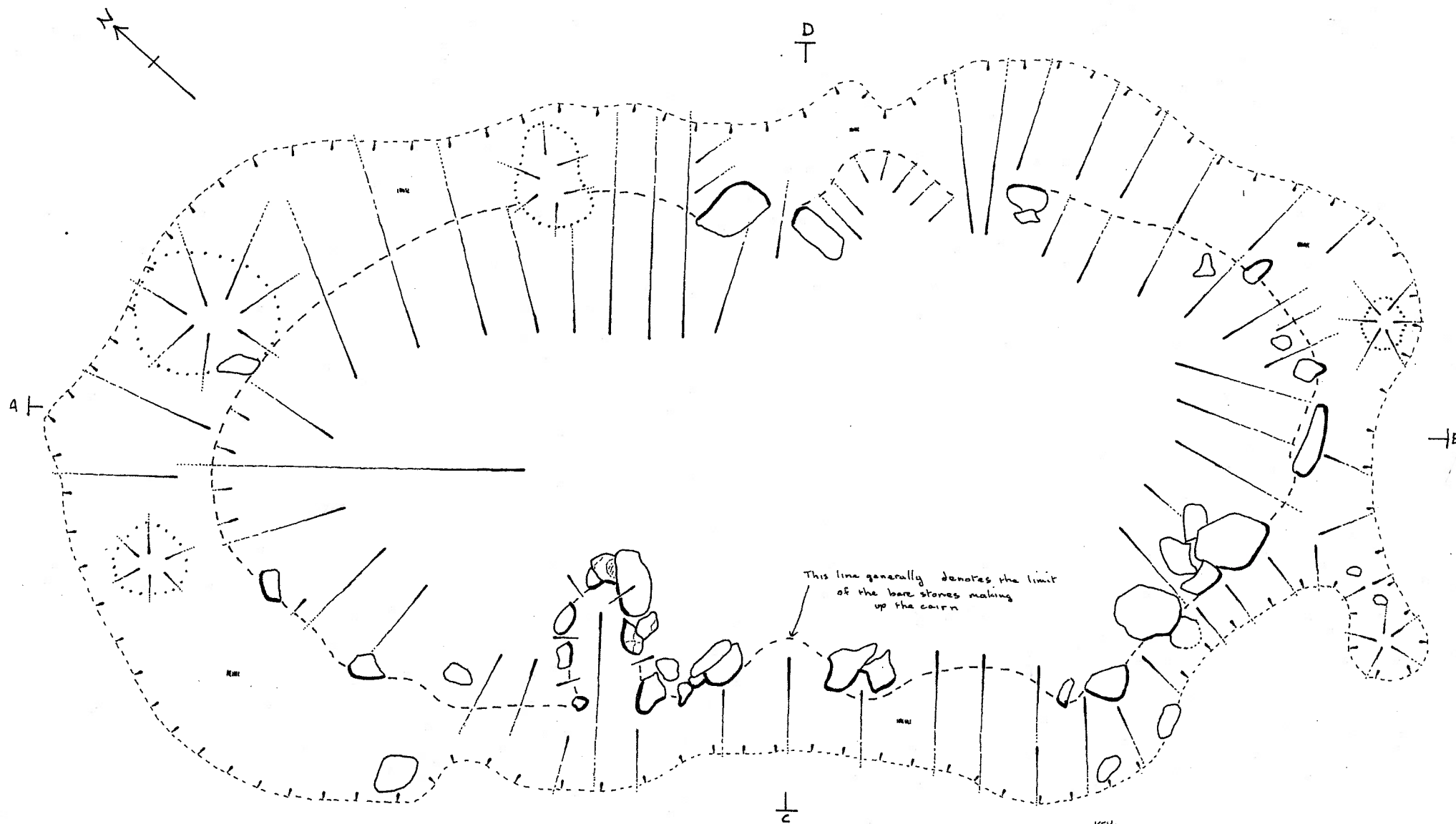
- | | |
|---|------|
| 1. West cairn, cleared of heather | 1:20 |
| 2. East cairn, cleared of all vegetation | 1:20 |
| 3. Northern half of west cairn/structure - (contexts 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108) | 1:20 |
| 4. Northern half of west cairn/structure after excavation to second level - NW corner (106A), entrance (108A) and sondage | 1:20 |

List of sections

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| 1. West cairn - longitudinal profile | 1:50 |
| 2. West cairn - width profile | 1:50 |
| 3. West cairn - width profile | 1:50 |
| 4. East cairn - longitudinal profile | 1:50 |
| 5. East cairn - width profile | 1:50 |

Samples

1. Context 102 - dark/black organic layer
2. Context 108A - reddy-brown silt



SCALE
0 1m 2m
TW, 99-17.09.04

PLAN No 2 EAST CAIRN ACHLEUM GLEN FESHIE SCALE 1:20

KEY:
 - - - - - MAIN KERB
 - - - - - OUTER LIP
 MARGIN OF MOUNDS
 ——— PROFILES
 (small circle) TURF
 (large circle) STONES

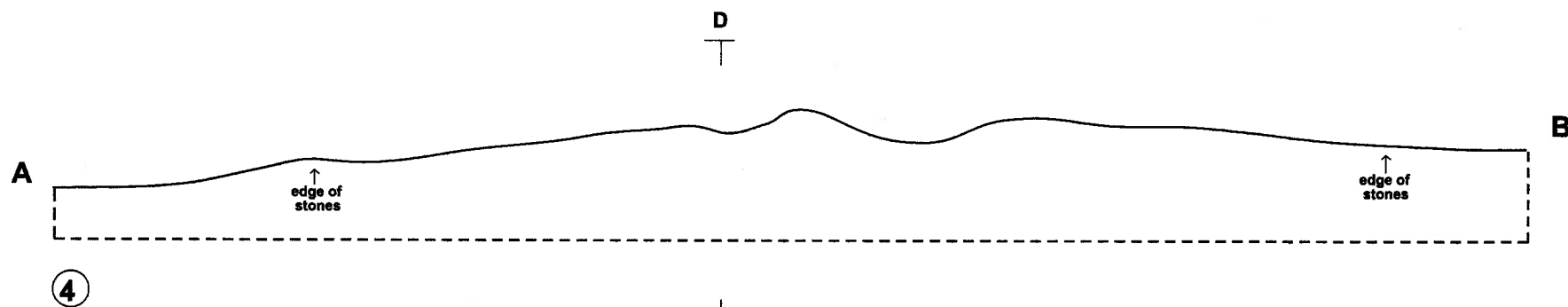
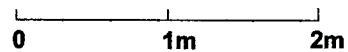
Achleum, Glen Feshie

Profiles of East Cairn

Sections 4 and 5

Scale

Drawn by GG - 17.09.04



D

B

A

edge of
stones

edge of
stones

4

C

B

C

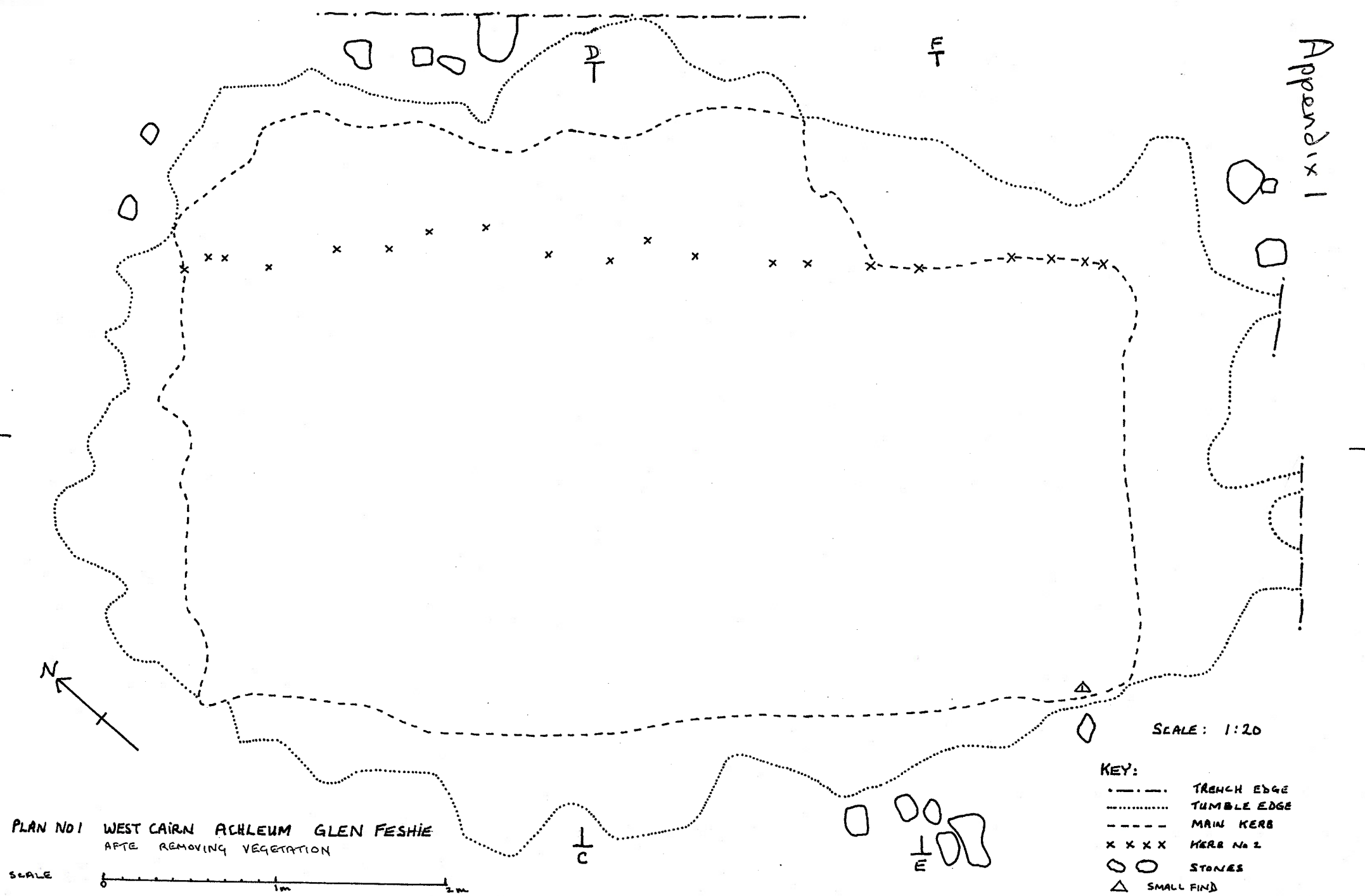
edge of
stones

edge of
stones

D

5

A



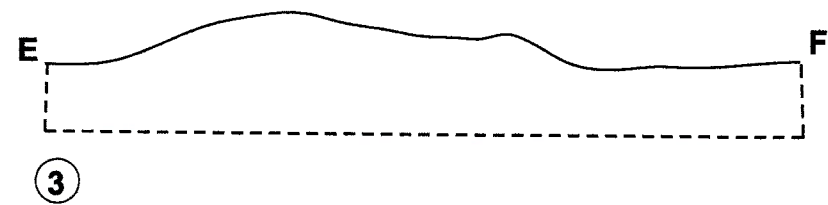
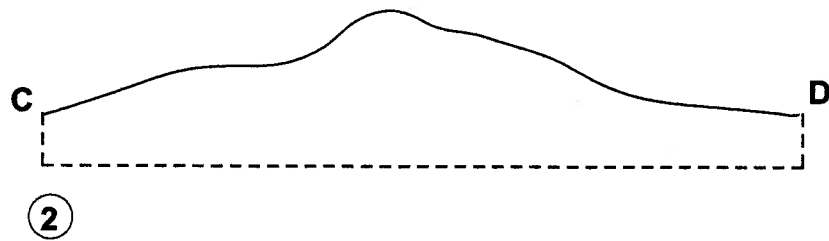
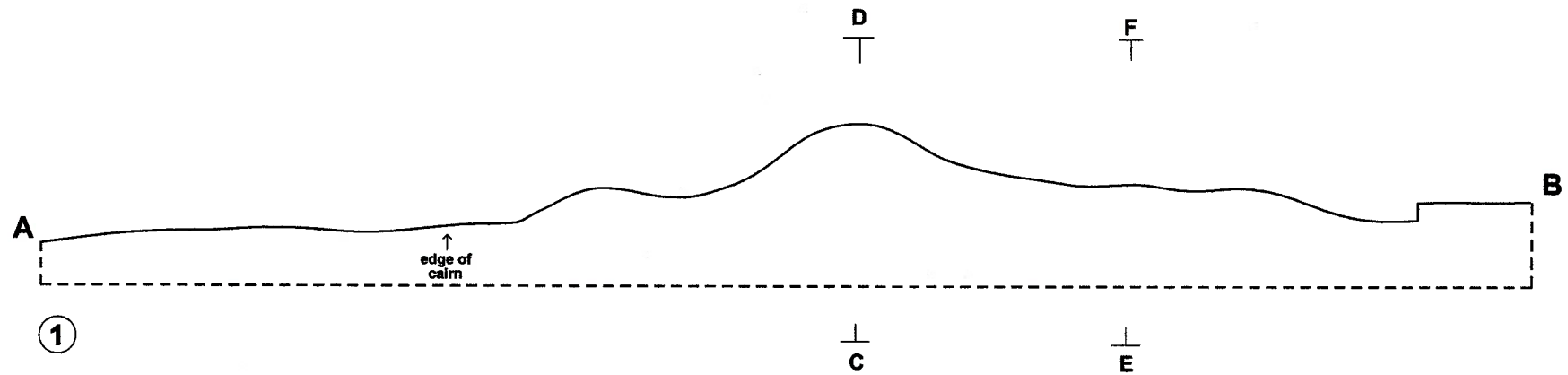
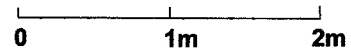
Achleum, Glen Feshie

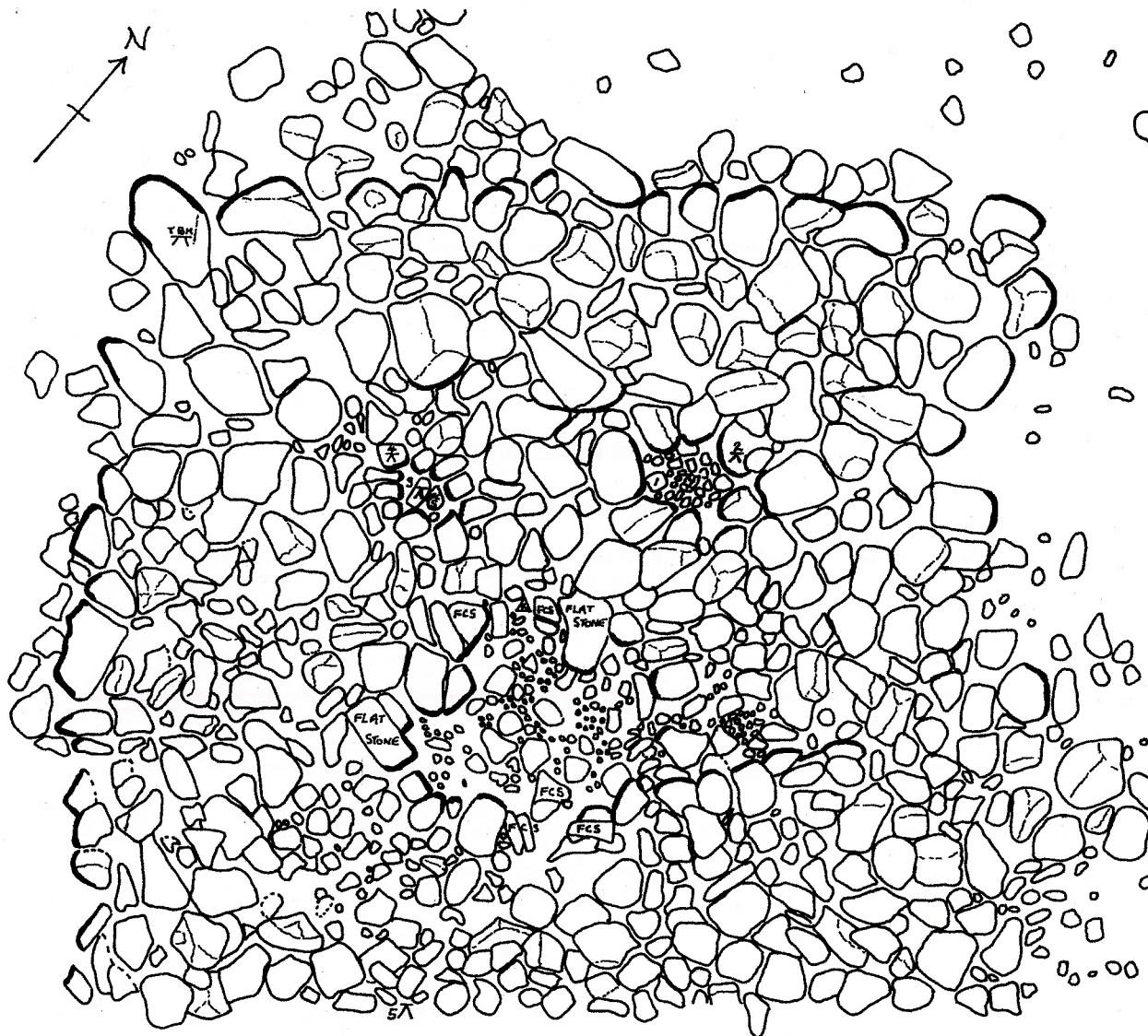
Profiles of West Cairn

Sections 1 2 and 3

Scale 1: 50

Drawn by GG - 17.09.04





LEVELS - TBM 0.98
 1 BOTTOM OF STONE FEATURE / CONTEXT 105 1.30
 2 TOP OF STONE FEATURE / CONTEXT 105 1.09
 3 BOTTOM OF STONE FEATURE / CONTEXT 106 1.25
 4 OF STONE FEATURE / CONTEXT 106 1.18
 5 TOP OF BLACK ORGANIC LAYER / CONTEXT 102 1.13

KEY
 TBM TEMPORARY BENCH MARK
 π LEVEL
 Δ SMALL FIND
 FCS FIRE CRACKED STONE

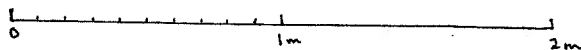
PLAN NO. 3
 DRAWN BY AC, EWS, JW

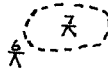
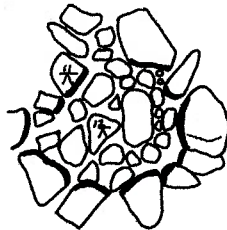
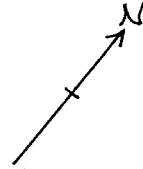
DATE 18th, 19th SEPT 2004
 SCALE 1:20

NOTES

1st LEVEL OF EXCAVATION
 NORTHERN PART OF THE
 WEST CAIRN - TRENCH 1

SITE
 ACHLEUM, GLEN FESHIE





LEVELS - TEM-SEE PLAN 3

6	TOP LEVEL OF SONDAE	1.21
7	BOTTOM OF SONDAE	1.44
8	TOP OF RED/BROWN LAYER / CONTEXT 108A	1.21
9	TOP OF ? THRESHOLD STONE	1.23
10	COBBLES AT ENTRANCE	1.22
11	TOP OF STONE FEATURE / CONTEXT 106A	1.11
12	BOTTOM OF STONE FEATURE / CONTEXT 106A	1.30

KEY



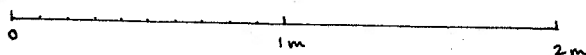
POSITION OF SONDAE



LEVEL

PLAN NO. 4
DRAWN BY AC, J.W.

DATE 19th SEPT 2004
SCALE 1:20



NOTES

2nd LEVEL OF EXCAVATION
NORTHERN PART OF THE
WEST CAIRN - TRENCH 1

SITE

ACHLEUM, GLEN FESHIE

Appendix 2

Archaeological Site Record

Site Name - Achnahoid / Achleum

Location - Glen Feshie, Inverness-shire

NGR - NN 85109 96635

SMR No. - NN89NE 0001

Site type/Class - Building, ?shieling

Situation and surroundings - Very close (0.5m) to the eroding bank of the River Feshie, in an area of improved land with evidence of rig cultivation

Description

This rectangular structure, on a N-S axis, is almost flush with the surrounding ground level and barely discernable. The building has measurements of 4.5m x 2.6m and is defined by low stones, up to 40cms in size, partially or wholly covered with turf. There may be an entrance to the building in the east wall and an obvious group of stones at this point may be a windbreak



Photographed from south



Photographed from north

Comments - Situated only 40m to the southwest of other probable shielings, but on a more barren patch of ground. This may be an earlier shieling.

Recorder/Date - MM - 25.09.04

Archaeological Site Record

Site Name - Achnahoid / Achleum

Location - Glen Feshie, Inverness-shire

NGR - NN 85110 96793

SMR No. - NN89NE 0001

Site type/Class - Clearance cairn, ?shieling

Situation and surroundings Adjacent to a large area of improved land, although to the immediate west there is an area of heather. It is situated in a hollow, and is 20m east of the eroding bank of the river

Description

This roughly rectangular pile of stones, on a N-S axis, has measurements of 5.3m x 3.3m and is roughly 0.6m in height. It is partially covered by heather.



Photographed from east



Photographed from south

Comments - Situated 100m to the north of 2 shielings, this may well be another shieling. It has very similar dimensions to the west cairn/shieling to the south, which was excavated in Sept 2004.

Recorder/Date - MM - 25.09.04