

246/SUT

**A836 Farr to Kirtomy
Archaeological Field Survey**

**Report and
Discovery and Excavation in Scotland entry**

*J S Rideout
November 1997*

Alba Archaeology Ltd

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Client:
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This report consists of -

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Introduction

An archaeological survey was carried out in October 1997 on the line of a proposed road improvement to the A836 between (approximately) Farr and Kirtomy, Sutherland. The Project Brief, by Highland Council Archaeology Service, is reproduced as an appendix to this report (Appendix 1). Alba Archaeology Ltd was supplied with a plan at 1:2500 of the proposed development and with details of the wayleave, as chainage and offset measurements, defining the limits of the survey, by Highland Council Roads and Transport. Prior to the field survey being undertaken, the centre line of the proposed road was marked out on the ground at 20 m intervals with pegs, and nails where the points coincided with the present road line. The resulting area was 3880 m long and between 60 m and 200 m wide covering a total area of more than 38 hectares. The chainage and offset information (below) is indicated on the folded plan which accompanies this report -

Chainage (m)	Offset left (m)	Chainage (m)	Offset right (m)
0-400	30	0-750	30
400-1000	50	750-1000	80
1000-1400	30	1000-1940	30
1400-1620	50	1940-2200	100
1620-2300	100	2200-2900	50
2300-3880	50	2900-3100	80
		3100-3880	50

A desk-based assessment was done prior to the field survey being carried out.

Sources consulted

Sources in the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS), in the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS), in the National Library of Scotland Map Library, and the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) in Highland Council offices in Inverness were consulted. Apart from details of archaeological relevance in NMRS and in Highland Council's office (*ie* the records based on the old Ordnance Survey record cards), little information was forthcoming. It was clear from the earlier maps that the survey area is on the edge, or beyond, the area of medieval and post-medieval settlement. The earliest maps, Pont's map (Pont 2, Strathnaver; Kyle of Tongue; Farr, reproduced in Stone 1989, 19-28) and the version in Blaeu's atlas (reproduced in Stone 1991, 79-80) show nothing in the

area of the proposed road improvement. The Roy map for the area shows fields along the road to the south of Farr, along the road to the south of 'Swardally' and to the north of the road at Kirtomy. Further east, nothing is shown until the Armadale area.

The NMRS records of immediate relevance to the survey are confined to the following -

NC 76 SW 7 Fiscary Field Systems and Hut Circles
NC 76 SW 43 Swordly Mill Water Mill.

The record for NC 76 SW 7 proved to be confused since it contains references to an earlier survey (Mercer 1981) and incomplete details on the monuments located on the NMRS 1:10,560 map. Included in the record are Mercer's monument numbers 74, 77 and 79 although the discussion of his results hinders rather than clarifies understanding of the situation. As a result of this, it was decided that the field survey would be approached in an objective manner, *ie* understanding that prehistoric settlement remains could be expected at the western end of the survey area and with only those round-houses nearest to, or within, the survey area plotted on the plan supplied by Highland Council Roads Department.

Field Survey results

Introduction

The survey was carried out between 21 and 23 October 1997. With the exception of a few light showers on 22 October the weather varied between bright sunshine and slightly overcast conditions with average temperatures. Ground conditions varied between heather cover, mostly short to medium height, to short grass sward at the western end of the area. Survey was hampered, however, by dead bracken, some dense, particularly in the westernmost 800 m.

The area was walked by Jim Rideout and Ralph Troup, starting at the eastern end, where there were no known monuments. Monuments encountered, 46 in all, were located with reference to the marked line of the proposed road and to known points marked on the 1:2500 plan supplied by Roads. With the exception of two examples included in the report because of unusual features or apparent age, road-side quarries were excluded from the recording. Monuments were recorded in rough notes in the field and monument record sheets prepared from the notes off-site. The results fall into two general groups - prehistoric settlement activity and post-medieval and recent activity.

Prehistoric settlement

This was located at the western end of the survey area within and beyond the area marked on the annotated 1:10,560 map in NMRS and the area marked on the Highland Council SMR map. The area, marked by pecked lines on the maps, has subsequently been extended nearly 200 m to the east (Fig 4, page 26). The pecked areas on the two maps do not quite match - the stone-built fank is shown outside the area on the NMRS map, but inside the area on the SMR map.

Since the purpose of the survey was to identify monuments likely to be affected by the road improvement, all monuments encountered - round-houses, field boundaries and clearance cairns - were individually recorded (except where elements of different form are closely related spatially). This is somewhat more detailed than a standard rapid walk-over field survey but necessary for a coherent discussion in the recommendations section (below).

A total of 33 or 34 monuments belong to this period. They are covered in the NMRS in record NC 76 SW 7, and in Mercer (1981) by monument groups 74 and 79. As mentioned above, the result has been confusion. The record claims that Mercer's site plan '...is inaccurate and it is impossible to relate some of the features shown with what is on the ground.'. In another part, it states that 'Of the 'hut circles' noted by Mercer only 'H' can be verified as a hut circle'. What is unclear from this passage is that the hut circle referred to is structure 74h, part of the group of monuments (probably robbed clearance cairns) between the A836 and the road to Farr, not the hut circle 'H' marked on the NMRS map (and which appears to be part of Mercer's monument group 79).

The three round-houses (hut circles) within the survey area and one just outside it (excluded from the gazetteer below), however, are good examples of houses dating to the Bronze Age or Iron Age, although some are better-preserved than others (No 1 to No 3 - Fig 1 to Fig 3). Associated with these houses are lengths of field boundary or linear clearance (four or five within the survey area - No 4 to No 8)), and field clearance cairns (26 examples, including possible cairns - No 9 to No 34). These are shown on the accompanying plan, more or less to scale although smaller cairns have been exaggerated to make them more visible. As detailed in the Brief, the plan is based on the one supplied by Roads which has been annotated with the monuments and their numbers, then copied.

It is clear that the prehistoric monuments are in two broad clusters, one 'centred' on the two western round-houses (No 1 and No 2) and the other 'centred' on round-house No 3 and on NMRS NC 76 SW 7 'C' (included on the plan although outside the survey area). Most of the elements are to the north of both the present road and the proposed road. It was also clear, during the survey, that the area of prehistoric settlement activity terminates just to the south of the road where the higher, drier land meets lower, boggy valley bottom and Loch Salachaidh. The eastern end of the activity dies out in higher rougher moorland. Previous surveys show that the activity continues over a large area to the north as well as in small pockets to the south, on the other side of the wet valley (eg NMRS records NC 76 SW 33 and 34).

Post-medieval and later activity

The survey confirmed the view given in the earlier maps that there has been little or no medieval or post-medieval settlement activity in the survey area. Such activity may have been confined to those sites currently occupied by houses - at the junction of the A836 and the road to Farr and at Swordly Mill, with little peripheral activity resulting in monuments. Mercer's interpretation of the monuments in his group 74 should, however, be considered a possibility. Indeed, the NMRS record seems to accept one of his 'structures' as a genuine hut site and the present author spent some time before coming to the conclusion that the monuments in the present survey area are robbed cairns. Those immediately outside the area are clearly sub-rectangular or elongate and could, therefore be partly robbed rectangular houses. All of the monuments resulting from agricultural activity in the present area, however, can fit easily into a prehistoric context.

The monuments in this period, therefore, consist of a well (No 35 - Fig 5), two road-side quarries (no 36 and No 37), a mill lade (No 38 - Fig 6), a peat track (No 39), a wall (No 40) and six stretches of old road (No 41 to No 46). All of the monuments appear to be less than two centuries old. The well is relatively modern, although the site may have been used for a longer period. The quarries are associated with the old road or present road. The old road has probably been in use for centuries (a road is shown on the Roy map) but, since it continued in use in the form shown on the first and second editions of the Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 map (Sutherland sheet XVIII) well into this century, very little is likely to have survived re-

surfacing work. Parts of the old road, surviving as loops or short stretches isolated by later road improvement, are shown on the plan of the proposed road as parallel pecked lines (but not all of the surviving stretches are marked). The precise age of the mill lade is unclear.

Recommendations

The plan shows that the proposed road, as marked, directly affects a number of monuments. These are round-house No 3, field boundaries No 4, No 6 and No 7, and cairns Nos 12, 24, 28 and 30, as well as stretches of the old road, quarry No 36 and track No 39. The most important of these is the round-house which will be nicked by the road in its present form. If the area of damage caused by the road works is wider than the final road form, however, most, if not all of the round-house will be affected, as well as parts of the other two round-houses and a proportionately greater number of associated works. Since it is current archaeological practice to preserve monuments rather than excavate them, it is recommended that the level of damage be minimised by

1. alteration of the road line, from Loch Salachaidh to its western end, as far to the south as is practical
2. careful and clear marking of monuments still under threat from accidental earth-moving, and similar operations, and partial monitoring of the same.

If, for instance, the road line is moved ten metres to the south, and if earth-moving works in the most sensitive areas can be confined more or less to the final road form, as few as four cairns (Nos 12, 13, 29 and 34) and the well (No 35) would be affected as well as, possibly, field boundaries Nos 4, 6 and 7. In addition, the old road would be hit at two points at No 42 and at No 44 as well as at points where widening of the existing road coincides with old arcs of road. The quarry No 36 and the peat road No 39 are probably not worth investigating.

This would result in consideration of the value of investigating further cairns, the well, the field boundaries and the old road. The removal of threat from the round-houses, however, would mean that investigation of the peripheral structures would be isolated from the *foci* of the activity. While it is clear, however, that clearance cairns can be nothing more than piles of stones (and the section of No 24 would appear to confirm this), it was noted at Machrie Moor on Arran that one in nine clearance cairns contained burials or activity of a funerary nature (John Barber pers comm). The proximity of large burial cairns a few hundred metres to the north of the survey area indicate that activity of this nature was being carried out in the immediate vicinity (NMRS NC 76 SW 4, 5, 6 and possibly 24) and their presence may have encouraged the use of clearance cairns for burial. Indeed, it is not unknown for natural mounds to have been used for just such a purpose (*cf* Abercairny, Perthshire (Rideout 1987)). In addition, the soils under cairns and field banks may contain evidence of the environment at the time when they were being formed. This however, is not always the case. Because of the nature of the cairns, water can filter through and affect the soils beneath as at Kilearnan Hill in the Kilmartin Valley, Sutherland (and where one of the ten cairns excavated produced evidence of funerary activity (Haggarty 1983)). Excavation of three dykes and three clearance cairns near Armadale 7 km to the ENE of the present survey in 1995 also produced nothing of significance (Strachan 1996).

At the other extreme, if the whole of the wayleave is to be affected by the road improvement work, the three round-houses, as well as a proportion of the cairns and field boundaries, would have to be included in any excavation strategy. The three round-houses each show a slightly different construction technique. No 1 appears to be the remains of a

house on more or less level ground defined by the remains of a stone, or stone and turf, wall (although the remains are so slight that it may have been a timber-built house with uprights set in stone-packed post-holes, with the packing now protruding above the surrounding ground). No 2 has been scooped into the hill-slope and appears to have had a 'split-level' interior within a stone, or stone and earth, wall which continued around the top of the scarp at the back (*ie* uphill side) of the house. No 3, although obscured by bracken, appears to have been on a natural platform but slightly scooped at the back, with its wall or bank on the front side only. There is also a possibility that No 3 is on the site of an earlier house.

Information on round-houses in northern Scotland is notably sparse. Few settlement sites of this type of structure have been excavated and fewer still have included whole houses. Earlier excavations tended to concentrate on the internal areas, either the whole of the interior or as small trenches, as at Kilphedir in the Kildonan Valley (Fairhurst and Taylor 1974) or at Lamsdale Leans and Loch Shurrery, c 33 km to the ESE of the Fiscary settlement remains (MacLaren forthcoming). Some later excavations were restricted by the area of threat, as on a previous Roads-related excavation at Suisgill in the Kildonan Valley (Barclay 1985). More recently, larger areas, including areas outside houses, have been excavated as on other Roads-related excavations at Armadale (Strachan 1996) and Lairg (*cf* McCullagh 1991). Final reports are not yet available for the more recent work. It is generally agreed, however, that any excavation of houses should involve excavation of the interior, the wall, where it exists, and the exterior.

The round-houses have been shown to belong, in the main, to the Bronze Age and Iron Age with some of those at Lairg dating to the late second/early first millennium BC (McCullagh 1991, 46) while those at Kilphedir dated to the later first millennium BC/early first Millennium AD (Fairhurst & Taylor 1974, 90). The houses at Suisgill belonged to early to mid first millennium BC (Barclay 1985, 192). Excavated houses also show a variety of construction technique. Those at Suisgill were timber-built with no stone walling, while Kilphedir, Loch Shurrery and Armadale all had stone walls. Those at Lairg had large earth and stone around them. The 'split-level' interior in Fiscary No 2 has no excavated parallels in northern Scotland although a similar internal arrangement was seen in houses in the later first millennium BC *oppidum* at The Dunion, Roxburghshire (Rideout 1992).

The settlement style at Fiscary is often described as unenclosed, or open, settlement. It has been found that houses in 'open settlements' are often not contemporary with each other *ie* the distribution of houses is the result of single, or small numbers of, family units moving around the landscape, possibly with breaks in the occupation of the whole area. This is likely to have been the case at Lairg and was seen to have been the case at Carn Dubh, Perthshire (Rideout 1995) where occupation of the area appears to have been intermittent over the last four thousand years.

Investigation of all three round-houses at Fiscary is likely, therefore, to reveal not only constructional differences but also, possibly, whether this was due to differences in location, differences in materials used and differences in the dates and duration of the occupation of the houses.

To summarise, if the road improvement is to go ahead the following levels of excavation should be considered -

1. If the line of the road cannot be changed, and if the work affects all of the wayleave, the following is recommended -

Total excavation of Round-houses No 1, 2 and 3
Half-sectioning of ten clearance cairns from the following list - Nos 10, 11, 12, 13, 19, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 34
Two sections cut through linear clearance No 23
Sections cut through field boundaries Nos 5, 6, 7 and 8
Section cut through the old road at one point (choice to be made at the time of excavation).

2. If the line of the road cannot be changed, and if the works involve peripheral damage up to 10 m from the line -

Total excavation of Round-house No 3
Partial excavation (southern 50% at least) of round-houses No 1 and no 2
Half-sectioning of clearance cairns Nos 12, 13, 19, 24, 25, 28, 29, 30 and 34
Sections cut through field boundaries Nos 6, 7 and, possibly, 8
Section cut through the old road at one point (choice to be made at the time of excavation).

3. If the line of the road cannot be changed, and if the peripheral damage does not extend beyond the final form of the road as marked on the plan -

Total excavation of round-house No 3
Half-sectioning of clearance cairns Nos 12, 24, 28, 29 and 34
Sections cut through field boundaries No 6 and No 7
Section cut through the old road at one point (choice to be made at the time of excavation).

4. If the line of the road is moved 10 m to the south, and if peripheral damage is avoided -

Half-sectioning of clearance cairns Nos 12, 13, 24, 28, 29 and 34
Section cut through the old road at No 42.

Excavation of the well (No 35) and the wall (No 4) would be unlikely to reveal anything of value. It should be noted that, if the road line is moved to the south by less than 10 m, the number of monuments affected would increase, and would include two field boundaries (No 6 and No 7).

Excavation should be done to an acceptable standard and should include, where necessary, sampling for environmental and dating evidence.

Archive

The archive consists of the following elements -

Correspondence/admin file	1 (contents listed in Appendix 3, below)
Photographic record	1 page (Appendix 4, below)
Field Survey record sheets	46 sheets in five polythene pockets
Colour prints	24 plus negatives in original wallet.

The archive will be deposited with NMRS at a time agreed with Highland Council Archaeology Service and Highland Council Roads and Transport.

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Gazetteer

No.1

NGR: NC 7300 6229 (centre)

Class: Round-house

Location: Fiscary

Description: Round-house, NMRS NC 76 SW 7 'A', defined by a low, intermittent stony bank 0.2 m high, partly damaged by the present road cutting. It measures 11 m east/west by 10 m. Situated on the north side of the road, to the north-east of the cattle grid. This appears to be missing from the plan (Fig 7) in Mercer 1981.

Land use: pasture

Condition: Vestigial remains nicked by road cutting - under short sward.

No.2

NGR: NC 7307 6229 (centre)

Class: Round-house

Location: Fiscary

Description: Round-house, NMRS NC 76 SW 7 'H' and probably Mercer's monument 79a, scooped into the hill slope to the north of the present road. There is a low bank, up to 0.25 m high, on the downhill side forming the front wall which continues around the top of the scarp. The entrance appears to be to the SSE (where the bank meets the slope). Measuring 11 m east/west by 10.5 m overall, it is *c* 6 m in diameter internally with a slight annular higher area around the back of the central area (*ie* it has a 'split-level' floor).

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Under heather but apparently in good condition. There is a modern drainage ditch immediately to the south of the house wall

No.3

NGR: NC 7333 6223 (centre)

Class: Round-house

Location: Fiscary

Description: Round-house, NMRS NC 76 SW 7 'D', to the north of the present road and to the north-west of Loch Salachaidh. It is a platform near the road cutting with its front wall surviving as stony banks up to 0.5 m high on east, south and west sides (with gaps between the banks). It measures 11 m east/west by 10 m overall. There is a curved mound 5 m to the north of the north side of the house, measuring *c* 5 m long, 3 m wide and 0.5 m high. This may be either a clearance cairn or vestigial remains of an earlier house.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Somewhat obscured by variable grass, bracken and heather cover.

No.4

NGR: NC 7295 6226

Class: Wall

Location: Fiscary

Description: A short length of low, tumbled walling, 0.25 m high, lies at the bottom of the slope below the road beside the junction of the A836 with the road to Farr. It appears to be related to the road use or some activity after its construction and is probably of no great age.

Land use: Rough pasture

Condition: Clearly visible at foot of slope.

No.5

NGR: NC 7338 6222 to NC 7337 6225

Class: Field boundary Location:

Fiscary

Description: A curving bank of variable height and thickness, but up to 0.3 m high and 2 m wide, runs for about 30 m on the gentle hill-slope between round-house No 3 and the stone-built sheep fank. It is possibly linear clearance rather than a proper boundary wall or bank.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: In deep bracken - of variable condition.

No.6

NGR: NC 7337 6221 to NC 7340 6221 Class: Field boundary

Location: Fiscary

Description: A line of turf-covered stones, 1m wide and 0.2 m high, runs along the edge of a low-lying area beside the present road for about 30 m. A 'spur' forks off the line, running along the centre line of the proposed road and becomes confused with the ditch beside the present road. Part, at least, may be an old field boundary.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: In deep bracken - of variable condition.

No.7

NGR: NC 7245 6219 to NC 7246 6221 Class: Field boundary

Location: Fiscary

Description: An intermittent line of boulders runs for about 12 m at roughly 90° to, and to the north of, the present road, in a small gully to the north of Loch Salachaidh. It is probably an old field boundary.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Vestigial remains.

No.8

NGR: NC 7353 6217 to NC 7360 6215 Class: Field boundary

Location: Fiscary

Description: A low bank, up to 2 m wide, 0.5 m high and c 70 m long, rises across a hill-slope to the north-east of Loch Salachaidh. In places it appears as nothing more than a discontinuous line of stones and boulders.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Mostly in bracken but surrounded by heather.

No.9

NGR: NC 7282 6225

Class: Clearance cairn

Location: Fiscary

Description: A robbed clearance cairn, grass-covered with stones showing in the robbed area, partly inside the survey area and to the south of the road. It measures 6 m in diameter and 1 m high. This may be part of Mercer's monument group 74.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Robbed at some time in the relatively recent past.

No.10

NGR: NC 7282 6229

Class: Clearance cairn

Location: Fiscary

Description: A robbed clearance cairn or small quarry (or both) appearing as a hollow with a low bank around it lies just inside the western end of the survey area. It is 6 m in diameter and the bank is up to 0.3 m high. There is a possibility that this is a hut site. It is probably part of Mercer's monument group 74, possibly 74n.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.11

NGR: NC 7283 6229

Class: Clearance cairn

Location: Fiscary

Description: A clearance cairn, 3.5 m in diameter and 0.2 m high, of largish stones partly covered by grass lies between an electricity pole and a fence. It is possibly part of Mercer's monument group 74, possibly 74q.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.12

NGR: NC 7286 6226

Class: Clearance cairn (possible) Location: Fiscary

Description: A turf-covered mound, 3 m in diameter and 0.4 m high, to the south of the present road and immediately to the south of the proposed road. In the same area are rickles of stones not recordable as cairns but which are probably also field clearance.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.13

NGR: NC 7289 6225

Class: Clearance cairn

Location: Fiscary

Description: A turf-covered clearance cairn, 3.5 m in diameter and 0.3 m high, to the south of the road and near a corner in a fence.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.14

NGR: NC 7295 6230

Class: Clearance cairn (possible) Location: Fiscary

Description: A possible clearance cairn, 3.5 m in diameter and 0.5 m high, on the northern boundary of the survey area and near the junction between the A836 and the road to Farr (above the bus shelter). It is turf-covered and partly robbed.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.15

NGR: NC 7297 6230

Class: Clearance cairn

Location: Fiscary

Description: A clearance cairn, 3 m in diameter and 0.3 m high, on the northern boundary of the survey area and to the north-west of round-house No 1.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.16

NGR: NC 7298 6230

Class: Clearance cairn (possible) Location: Fiscary

Description: A small possible clearance cairn, 3 m in diameter and 0.2 m high, on the northern boundary of the survey area and to the north-west of round-house No 1.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.17

NGR: NC 7300 6230

Class: Clearance cairn

Location: Fiscary

Description: A turf-covered clearance cairn measuring 6 m east/west by 4 m and 0.7 m high on the slope above round-house No 1. It is higher on the downhill side and mostly outside the survey area.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.18

NGR: NC 7302 6229

Class: Clearance cairn

Location: Fiscary

Description: A heather and turf-covered clearance cairn, 4 m in diameter and 0.3 m high, on the northern boundary of the survey area.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.19

NGR: NC 7302 6228

Class: Clearance cairn

Location: Fiscary

Description: A turf-covered clearance cairn, 4 m in diameter and 0.2 m high to the east of round-house No 1. It has been robbed.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.20

NGR: NC 7303 6230

Class: Clearance cairn

Location: Fiscary

Description: A heather and turf-covered clearance cairn, 2.5 m in diameter and 0.3 m high, on the northern boundary of the survey area.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.21

NGR: NC 7332 6228

Class: Clearance cairn

Location: Fiscary

Description: A heather-covered clearance cairn, 7.5 m east/west by 5 m and 1.7 m high, which has been cut into on the north side. It is mostly outside the survey area.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.22

NGR: NC 7323 6229

Class: Clearance cairn

Location: Fiscary

Description: A heather-covered, irregularly-shaped (*ie* off-conical) cairn, 5 m in diameter and 1.2 m high, mostly outside the northern boundary of the survey area.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.23

NGR: NC 7324 6228 to NC 7326 6227 Class: Clearance cairn (possible) Location: Fiscary

Description: A possible linear clearance heap, heather covered. It appears as a curving bank *c* 24 m long, 3 m wide and up to 0.7 m high to the south-west of round-house NMRS NC 76 SW 7 'C' (which is outside the survey area).

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.24

NGR: NC 7327 6223

Class: Clearance cairn

Location: Fiscary

Description: A heather and bracken-covered area of clearance heaps, 6.5 m by 3.5 m and 0.6 m high, cut by the present road cutting (to the south). Stones show in the exposed section. A line of stones, possibly a wall, runs eastwards along the edge of the road cutting for *c* 9 m from the cairn.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: The exposed section indicates that erosion of the cairn from the road cutting is ongoing.

No.25

NGR: NC 7328 6224

Class: Clearance cairn (possible) Location: Fiscary

Description: A heather and bracken-covered possible clearance cairn measuring 6 m north-west/south-east by 4.5 m and 0.5 m high.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.26

NGR: NC 7330 6226

Class: Clearance cairn

Location: Fiscary

Description: A heather-covered cairn, 7 m NNE/SSW by 5 m and 1.5 m high, to the SSE of round-house NMRS NC 76 SW 7 'C'.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.27

NGR: NC 7330 6224

Class: Clearance cairn

Location: Fiscary

Description: A heather and turf-covered clearance cairn, 5 m in diameter and 1.3 m high, on a slope above the present road. It is irregularly-shaped - an area of different heaps rather than a single heap.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.28

NGR: NC 7330 6223

Class: Clearance cairn

Location: Fiscary

Description: An irregularly-shaped clearance cairn, 5 m in diameter and 1.2 m high on the line of the proposed road.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.29

NGR: NC 7329 6221

Class: Clearance cairn

Location: Fiscary

Description: A bracken and turf-covered clearance cairn, 6 m east/west by 4 m and 1 m high, cut by, and to the south of, the present road. It has been partly robbed.

Land use: rough grazing

Condition: Stable but at risk from damage because of its proximity to the present road.

No.30

NGR: NC 7335 6222

Class: Clearance cairn (possible) Location: Fiscary

Description: A low spread of stones down-slope from, and to the south-east of, round-house No 3.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.31

NGR: NC 7339 6223

Class: Clearance cairn (possible) Location: Fiscary

Description: A turf and bracken-covered possible clearance cairn, 3 m in diameter and 0.3 m high between field boundary No 5 and the stone-built sheep fank.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.32

NGR: NC 7342 6224

Class: Clearance cairn

Location: Fiscary

Description: A small clearance cairn, 1.2 m in diameter and 0.2 m high, to the east of the stone-built sheep fank.

Land use: Rough pasture

Condition: Stable

No.33

NGR: NC 7342 6223

Class: Clearance cairn (possible) Location: Fiscary

Description: A heather-covered possible clearance cairn, 5 m in diameter and 1 m high, to the south-east of the stone-built sheep fank.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.34

NGR: NC 7344 6218

Class: Clearance cairn

Location: Fiscary

Description: A bracken-covered possible clearance cairn, 2 m in diameter and 0.3 m high, on the north side of Loch Salachaidh.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.35

NGR: NC 7291 6225

Class: Well

Location: Fiscary

Description: A small stone-built well or watering-hole at the edge of damp level ground with three higher sides in the west, north and east sides and a single rectangular stone forming the south side. It is partially roofed with a single rectangular stone. Low walls extend *c* 1 m to each side (east and west). It is probably of no great age and may have been built to provide the sheep with water in the summer.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.36

NGR: NC 7357 6212 (centre)

Class: Quarry

Location: Loch Salachaidh

Description: A small road-side quarry, *c* 10 m in diameter, of interest because it has a stone-revetted spoil heap within it. It is revetted on one side only (west). On the line of the proposed road.

Land use: within rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.37

NGR: NC 7443 6193

Class: Quarry

Location: Swordly Burn

Description: A small quarry, *c* 8 m in diameter, to the south of the old road (see No 43) where it has been cut off by the realignment to the present road.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.38

NGR: NC 7399 6196 to NC 7395 6220

Class: Mill lade

Location: Swordly Mill

Description: The remains of the mill lade for Swordly Mill, running parallel to the track to the mill. It is *c* 3 m wide and walled on the downhill side (south-west) by large boulders and smaller stones and has been breached near its eastern end where a channel of Swordly burn runs through it.

Land use: Track on one side, rough grazing in the other

Condition: Unstable - in time the whole of the walled section will collapse

No.39

NGR: NC 7524 6239 to NC 7526 6234

Class: Track

Location: Kirtomy Burn

Description: A peat track, probably of no great age, to the south of the present road and west of the track running up the burn called Féith Tharsiunn on the 1:10,560 map. The track runs beyond the survey area, to the south.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.40

NGR: NC 7541 6242 to NC 7544 6241 Class: Wall

Location: Kirtomy Burn

Description: An intermittent stone dyke partly defining a sub-rectangular area c 34 m east/west by 20 m to the north of the present road and south of Kirtomy Burn. A concrete platform lies immediately to the west of the area. The function of the dyke is obscure but it seems to be intimately associated with the burn and its use.

Land use: Rough grazing and modern disturbance

Condition: Stable

No.41

NGR: NC 7314 6225 to NC 7321 6224 Class: Road

Location: Fiscary

Description: Part of the old road isolated by upgrading to the present road. It is on the north side of the present road and has a running surface 4.5 m wide, a ditch and bank on the uphill (north) side and a slope down on the south side. It continues eastward as No 42.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.42

NGR: NC 7323 6223 to NC 7334 6221 Class: Road

Location: Fiscary

Description: Part of the old road isolated by upgrading to the present road. It is on the south side of the present road and is a continuation eastward of No 41.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.43

NGR: NC 7433 6187 to NC 7457 6197 Class: Road

Location: Swordly Burn

Description: A large loop of the old road isolated by upgrading to the present road. It is on the north side of the present road.

Land use: rough pasture

Condition: Stable

No.44

NGR: NC 7524 6239 to NC 7528 6240 Class: Road

Location: Kirtomy Burn

Description: Part of the old road isolated by upgrading to the present road. It is on the south side of the present road and continues eastward as No 45.

Land use: Rough grazing

Condition: Stable

No.45

NGR: NC 7530 6241 to NC 7534 6241 Class: Road

Location: Kirtomy Burn

Description: Part of the old road isolated by upgrading to the present road. It is on the north side of the present road and is the continuation eastward of No 44.

Condition: Stable

Land use: Rough grazing

No.46

NGR: NC 7566 6242 to NC 7572 6243 Class: Road

Location: Kirtomy Burn

Description: A straight length of track, probably part of the old road isolated by upgrading to the present road. It is on the south side of the present road.

Land use: Rough pasture

Condition: Stable

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Project Brief

HIGHLAND COUNCIL Cultural and Leisure Services ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE

Project brief for archaeological work commissioned by the Archaeology Service

FARR - KIRTOMY, SUTHERLAND

Archaeological Evaluation

Terms of Reference

Tenders are invited by the Archaeology Service on the basis of this brief and the accompanying draft contract. It is for a minimum standard of work; a higher standard may be offered and accepted.

This brief is for archaeological recording work at A 836 Farr - Kirtomy, NGR NC 737 622 (centre point) occasioned by planning application no. SU/97/87. It is based on preliminary plan no. RS 6094/3 (enclosed).

The project should be carried out by, or under the immediate direction of, a Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists or an archaeologist of equivalent standing, to ensure that work is carried out to professional standards.

As this is for a road proposal the area to be covered is the entire wayleave.

Objectives

1. To identify the nature and extent of any archaeological remains which may exist within the application area.
2. To propose arrangements for the safeguarding where possible and recording where necessary of any archaeological features or finds identified
3. To ensure that the needs for archaeological conservation and recording are met without causing any unnecessary delay or disturbance to the development project.

Method

1. A rapid, desk-based assessment of all records, documents and maps available in Inverness and in Edinburgh relating to the application area will be carried out.
2. A survey will be made of the area identified on the attached plan, using

- * walk over the area indicated on the attached plan and indicate visible features of possible importance on the plan provided .
- 3. No excavation is to take place as part of this specification
- 4. The report must propose appropriate arrangements for the safeguarding where possible or recording where necessary of any objects or features identified by this evaluation.

Tenders

Tenders must include the following:

1. CV details for all members of the proposed team / the project director and site supervisor / etc
2. Indicative budget for post-excavation work
3. All report production and deposition costs
4. Proposals for presentation of project results to the local community : the archaeologist appointed is responsible as part of this specification for arranging (including publicity) a presentation of the project results to the local community within a year of the completion of the fieldwork. Arrangements must be agreed with the Highland Archaeologist.
5. A statement accepting the proposed contractual arrangements or proposing any changes thought necessary.

Monitoring

1. The Highland Archaeologist will normally monitor projects to ensure that briefs are met, normally by unannounced site visit. Alternative or additional monitoring arrangements may be made in individual cases.
2. Prior notice of fieldwork starting dates, with contact names and local addresses, telephone numbers and directions and other arrangements for access must be given to the Highland Archaeologist.
3. Any unexpectedly significant or complex discoveries, or any other unexpected occurrences or conditions which might affect the agreed project work or its timetable or cost must be notified immediately to the Highland Archaeologist so that revised arrangements can be made.

Reasons given later for non-completion to brief given, agreed budget, or timetable will not normally be accepted if immediate notification has not taken place.

Reporting

1. Project report

At least FOUR copies of the project report must be produced.

- * One copy for the client Dennis Pryde, Consultancy Unit, Roads and Transport, Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness.
- * Two copies for the Highland Sites and Monuments Record, The Archaeology Service, Old School, High Street, Clachnaharry, Inverness, IV3 6RB. where it will be available for immediate consultation by the public.

- * One copy to be deposited in the National Monuments Record for Scotland , John Sinclair House, 16 Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 9NX.

The report must be submitted to the Highland Archaeologist within 4 weeks of the completion of the work.

The report must include, as a minimum,

1. Location plan showing the project area and archaeological sites and features affected
2. Circumstances and objectives of this work, including a copy of this specification
3. Weather and other conditions affecting fieldwork
4. Plans, drawings and photographs of archaeological features noted
5. A full index to any records or other material generated by the project including its location
6. Details of any measures proposed to mitigate the impact of the application on the archaeological resource
7. A brief analysis of the project results drawing in comparative data as appropriate.
8. General comments and proposals for future archaeological projects arising from the carrying out of this project

The completed report will be available for immediate public consultation for research purposes at the Highland Sites and Monuments Record.

2. Treasure Trove

Any report to the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer must be copied to the Highland Archaeologist.

3. Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

A brief summary of the results must be sent to the Council For Scottish Archaeology for inclusion in Discovery and Excavation in Scotland. The archaeologist is responsible for any charge made.

General

1. The archaeologist appointed must be of a professional standing acceptable to the Highland Archaeologist and must carry out the work according to the Code of Conduct, standards and guidelines of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
2. The archaeologist is responsible for taking all necessary measures to conform with the Health and Safety at Work Acts and be covered by all necessary insurances.
3. The archaeologist must agree a timetable for the work with the client and the Highland Archaeologist

4. The archaeologist appointed will not comment to the press or other media without prior approval from the Highland Archaeologist
5. Proper provision must be made for prevailing weather conditions in northern Scotland
6. Failure to meet any part of the contract may result in non-payment for work undertaken. The Highland Archaeologist further reserves the right not to invite tenders for future work from contractors who fail to meet required standards.

Allison Fox
June 1997

evalbrf.doc

Appendix 2 - Photographic Record			
Farr to Kirtomy A836 Improvement survey - Photo record			
Colour Print A			
Frame no	Details	From	Date
1	Well, no 35, with Ralph Troup	E	22.10.97
2	Round-house, No 1 (NMRS NC 76 SW 7 'A')	W	22.10.97
3	Round-house, No 1 (NMRS NC 76 SW 7 'A')	NNW	22.10.97
4	Round-house, No 2 (NMRS NC 76 SW 7 'H')	SW	22.10.97
5	Round-house, No 2 (NMRS NC 76 SW 7 'H')	S	22.10.97
6	General view of cairns (Nos 20-24)	W	22.10.97
7	Round-house (NMRS NC 76 SW 7 'C') - outside survey area	SSW	22.10.97
8	Round-house (NMRS NC 76 SW 7 'C') - outside survey area	N	22.10.97
9	A836 beside Loch Salachaidh	NW	22.10.97
10	Round-house, No 3 (NMRS NC 76 SW 7 'D')	N	22.10.97
11	Round-house, No 3 (NMRS NC 76 SW 7 'D')	N	22.10.97
12	Round-house, No 3 (NMRS NC 76 SW 7 'D')	W	22.10.97
13	General view of E end of settlement area (NMRS NC 76 SW 7)	WNW	22.10.97
14	Mill lade, No 38, Swordly Mill (NMRS NC 76 SW 43)	S	22.10.97
15	Mill lade, No 38, Swordly Mill (NMRS NC 76 SW 43)	SW	22.10.97
16	Mill lade, No 38, Swordly Mill (NMRS NC 76 SW 43)	S	22.10.97
17	A836 from NC 789 619	W	22.10.97
18	A836 from NC 748 619	ENE	22.10.97
19	A836 from NC 789 619	SSW	22.10.97
20	A836 from NC 755 623	E	22.10.97
21	A836 from NC 755 623	WSW	22.10.97
22	A836 from NC 758 624	SW	22.10.97
23	A836 from NC 758 624	NE	22.10.97
24	A836 from NC 71 625	SW	22.10.97

Appendix 3 - Correspondence/Admin File contents list**A836 Farr to Kirtomy Improvement survey -
Correspondence/Admin File contents list****Document no Details**

010.1.1	Plan accompanying Project Brief
010.1.2	Project Brief
010.1.3	Invitation to tender from Highland Council Archaeol Service (HCAS)
010.1.4	Alba Archaeology proposal
010.1.5	Covering letter for 010.1.4
010.1.6	Purchase Order from Highland Council Roads
010.1.7	Acceptance of tender letter from HC Roads
010.1.8	Chainage details from HC Roads
010.1.9	Email to HCAS asking for brief on disk
010.1.10	Draft text faxed to HCAS for comment
010.1.11	Email reply to email and brief text from HCAS
010.1.12	Email to HCAS with queries
010.1.13	Second email to HCAS with queries
010.1.14	First email reply from HCAS
010.1.15	Second email reply from HCAS

To be continued as required until archive delivered

Appendix 4 - Discovery and Excavation in Scotland entry

HIGHLAND

A836 Farr to Kirtomy Improvement

Farr parish

J S Rideout (Alba Archaeology Ltd)

Survey

A survey in advance of proposed road improvement was carried out in October 1997. The survey partly covered and extended the area of prehistoric settlement recorded as NMRS record NC 76 SW 7. Since mitigation was part of the brief, all monuments were individually recorded -

NC 7300 6229 (centre)	Round-house (NMRS NC 76 SW 7 'A')
NC 7307 6229 (centre)	Round-house (NMRS NC 76 SW 7 'H')
NC 7333 6223 (centre)	Round-house (NMRS NC 76 SW 7 'D')
NC 7295 6226	Wall
NC 7338 6222 to NC 7337 6225	Field boundary
NC 7337 6221 to NC 7340 6221	Field boundary
NC 7245 6219 to NC 7246 6221	Field boundary
NC 7353 6217 to NC 7360 6215	Field boundary
NC 7282 6225	Clearance cairn
NC 7282 6229	Clearance cairn
NC 7283 6229	Clearance cairn
NC 7286 6226	Clearance cairn (possible)
NC 7289 6225	Clearance cairn
NC 7295 6230	Clearance cairn (possible)
NC 7297 6230	Clearance cairn
NC 7298 6230	Clearance cairn (possible)
NC 7300 6230	Clearance cairn
NC 7302 6229	Clearance cairn
NC 7302 6228	Clearance cairn
NC 7303 6230	Clearance cairn
NC 7332 6228	Clearance cairn
NC 7323 6229	Clearance cairn
NC 7324 6228 to NC 7326 6227	Clearance cairn (possible)
NC 7327 6223	Clearance cairn
NC 7328 6224	Clearance cairn (possible)
NC 7330 6226	Clearance cairn
NC 7330 6224	Clearance cairn
NC 7330 6223	Clearance cairn

NC 7329 6221	Clearance cairn
NC 7335 6222	Clearance cairn (possible)
NC 7339 6223	Clearance cairn (possible)
NC 7342 6224	Clearance cairn
NC 7342 6223	Clearance cairn (possible)
NC 7344 6218	Clearance cairn
NC 7291 6225	Well
NC 7357 6212 (centre)	Quarry
NC 7443 6193	Quarry
NC 7399 6196 to NC 7395 6220	Mill lade
NC 7524 6239 to NC 7526 6234	Track
NC 7541 6242 to NC 7544 6241	Wall
NC 7314 6225 to NC 7321 6224	Stretch of old road
NC 7323 6223 to NC 7334 6221	Stretch of old road
NC 7433 6187 to NC 7457 6197	Stretch of old road
NC 7524 6239 to NC 7528 6240	Stretch of old road
NC 7530 6241 to NC 7534 6241	Stretch of old road
NC 7566 6242 to NC 7572 6243	Stretch of old road

Sponsor: Highland Council

Alba Archaeology Ltd
129 Lochend Road
Edinburgh
EH6 8BX

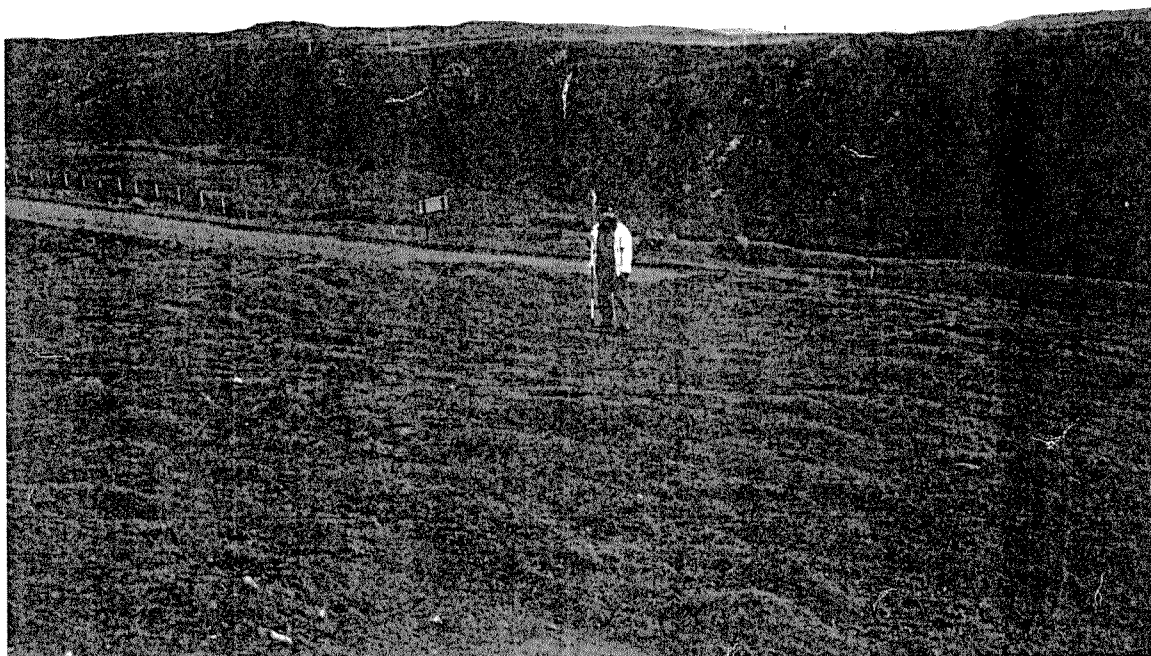


Fig 1: Round-house, No 1, from above (from the NNW)

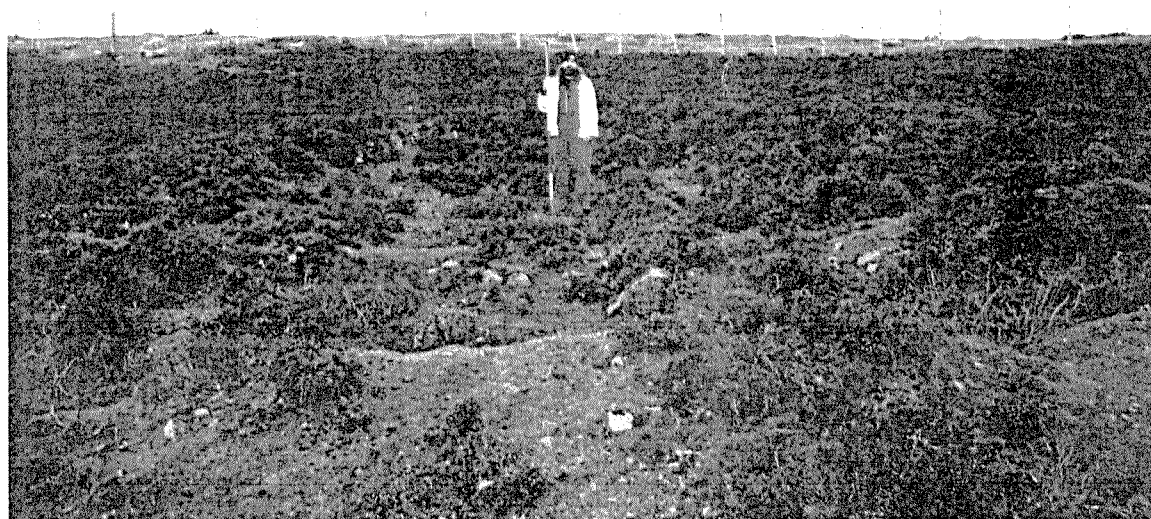


Fig 2: Round-house, No 2, from below (from the south)



Fig 3: Round-house, No 3, from above (from the north)

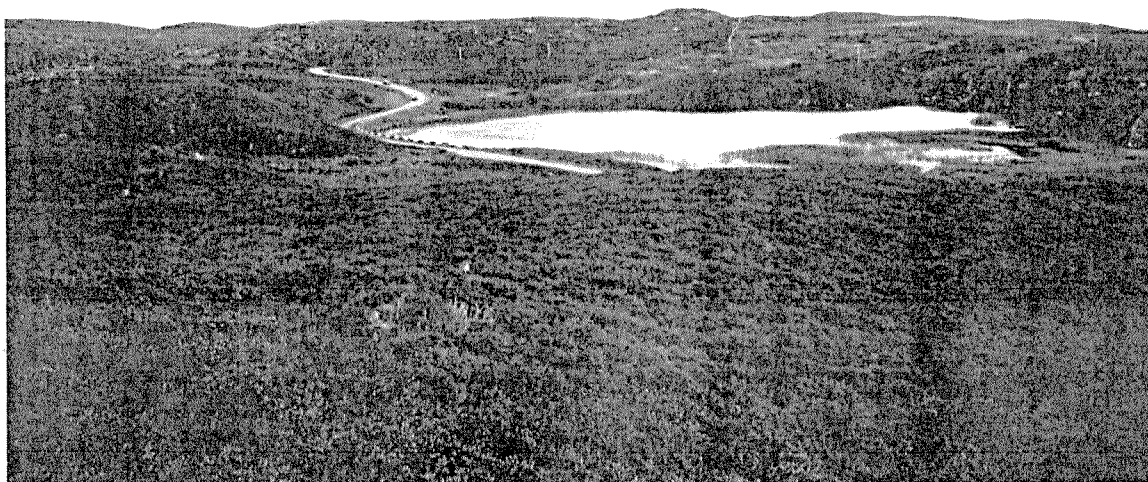


Fig 4: Eastern end of the settlement, and Loch Salachaidh, from the north-west - field boundary No 8 curves over the slope to the left and slightly above the loch



Fig 5: Well, No 35, from the east



Fig 6: Mill lade, No 38, and Swordly Mill, from the south