

## HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL



## FIELD MONUMENTS

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

4 DISTRICT CAITHNESS		5 PARISH REAY		1 SITE CODE HND 05 NW 009	
7 AREA STATUS		8 SITE STATUS SCHEDULED		2 NGR ND 04085783	
9 REGIONAL STATUS		10 GENERIC TYPE CHAPEL + BURIAL GROUND		3 QUAL CE	
11 CONCORDANCE ND 05 NW 9		12 FORM SITE OF		6 SITE NAME CREAG/BHEANNAICH *	
13 DIMENSIONS		14 PERIOD/DATE		15 DATING METHOD	
16 RELATIONSHIP OF ELEMENTS		17 CONDITION DESTROYED		18 SHAPE	
20 LAND USE ENCLOSED PASTURE		21 GEOLOGY		19 THREAT AND DATE	
22 SOILS		23 VEGETATION		24 HYDROLOGY/DRAINAGE	
25 RELIEF GENTLE HILLSLOPE TO VALLEY FLOOR		26 ASPECT 360		27 ALTITUDE 84 = 91m OD	
28 EXCAVATION (EXCAVATOR: DATE: EXTENT: QUALITY)					
29 BIBLIOGRAPHY (AUTHOR: DATE: TITLE: JOURNAL OR PUBLISHER: VOLUME: DETAIL)					
1. Ordnance Survey: 1963: 6" map. 2. Ordnance Survey: 1872: Object Name Book: 9: 143. 3. RCAHMS: 1911: Caithness Inventory: HMSO: pp 109, 110, Nos. 406 + 409. 4. MacFarlane, W.: 1906: MacFarlane's Geographical Collections: Vol. 1: p 185. 5. Pennant, T.: 1776: A Tour in Scotland in 1769: : p 329, appx. 5, edn. 1. 6. MacDonald, A.S. + Laing, L.R.: 1967-68: Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.: Vol. 100: p 125 + plan.					
30 GROUND PLAN NO.			31 GROUND PHOTO NO. (OVER)		
32 SLIDES NO.			33 HR. AP. NO.		
34 NMR. AP. NO.			35 OTHER AP. NO.: SOURCE		
36 ARCHIVE AND LOCATION					
37 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY			38 SAMPLES		
39 PALYNOLOGY			40 NUMERICAL DATES: RANGE: LAB NO.		
41 SMALL FINDS				42 MUSEUM/LOCATION	
43 OTHER					
44 NAME & ADDRESS OF OWNER				45 ATTITUDE OF OWNER	
46 NAME & ADDRESS OF TENANT				47 ATTITUDE OF TENANT	
48 ACCESS & RESTRICTIONS					
49 NAME & ADDRESS OF FINDER/RECORDER: DATE				50 RECORDER: DATE SEM: 29.7.1985.	
				51 CHECK: DATE 45.8.1985	
52 TEXT					

"Cairn. 26.0m x 20.0m x 1.3m high. Subcircular grass-covered mound with boulders and orthostats on and around it. Two main depressions on top." (7)

"See HND 05 NW 008 for map"

"See continuation card for text."

"ND 041 578 CREAGAN A' BHEANNAICH, CHAPEL AND GRAVEYARD." (8)

6\* "Full name: 'Creagan a' Bheannaich'."

"Otherwise known as 'Rheanauchan', in 1906." (4)

7. Mercer, R.J.:1985:Field Survey in N. Scotland:EUP:Vol. 3:FOR No. 317.

8. HEB (SDD): 1985: List of Scheduled Monuments.

'A round low hillock covered with stones, the remains of a chapel and graveyard. No one of the present age has seen anyone interred here, but some of them can point out two or three graves with rough flat stones over them shown to them by their forefathers. There is nothing of the chapel to be seen except a few large scattered stones. To whom it has been dedicated is not known unless, as some say, there has been a saint of the name of Bheannaich. A large stone which stood on end somewhere near this place was broken down for building purposes. Part of it is still to be seen in a wall near Tigh a Bheannaich ('House of the Blessing': ND 040 577). Cut on that part of this stone which is in sight, is a cross and a small circle. Besides this there was an inscription on it, written in Hebrew, but that is not anywhere to be seen.'

(2)

At Sandside House (NC 95 65) there is a stone with incised symbols which was found built into a stone dyke not far from Tigh a' Bheannaich, a name which suggests the site of an ancient oratory or church. The stone is a rectangular sandstone block 2ft 5ins long, 9ins broad, and 8ins thick. On the face is incised a small stemmed circle or orb, 4ins in diameter, containing an equal-armed cross. The stem is 3½ins long, 1ins broad where it joins the circle, and 1½ins at base. Beneath, and occupying the breadth of the stone is a plain circle with a diameter of 8ins.

8ins = 203.20mm

4ins = 101.60mm

3½ins = 88.90mm

1½ins = 38.10mm

(3)

In Shurrery there is a chapel 'called Rheannauchan which seems to be St Benedict's, and it is observable about the place that the highland people have a great many expressions which seem to be Latin.'

(4) (5)

This is an oval grass-covered stony mound measuring 17m NW-SE by 14m transversely and 0.5m high. There are upright stones on the E, S and W sides, but other than these there is nothing to indicate that a chapel and graveyard existed in the area; and the site strongly resembles the remains of a cairn being comparable with sites HND 05 NW 006, 007 + 011.

(OSFI:EGC:11.4.1961.)

Apparently the remains of a very early church, with associated structures, on a turf-covered mound. The mound is about 5ft high, strewn with earthfast boulders, some massive, and a few orthostats. The possible church surmounts the mound and measures 22ft N-S by 17ft E-W, and has rounded corners and walls about 2ft thick which are now merely turf-covered footings of large boulders. There is a possible entrance east of the centre of the south wall. There are earthfast boulders all over the interior, and at the north end is a heap of stones and boulders which is possibly an altar platform, though it is not against the wall. There are indications of other small structures on the mound.

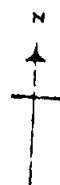
MacFarlane's version of the name 'Rheannauchan' should be 'Bheannauchan' from 'Beannachd', 'benediction' or 'blessing', and the assumption of a dedication to St Benedict presumably derives from this, and so has no real authority.

(6)

There is strong evidence for a church or chapel in this position based on the name Creagan a' Bheannaich (verified), the discovery of a cross-slab, the local tradition of a chapel and graveyard, and the turf-covered footings of the building itself, which is as described and planned by the RCAHM, although there are possible traces of a turf-covered wall extending 3.0 to 4.0 m further S. However, the alleged graveyard is a distinct stony mound, as described (OSFI) and closely resembles Corn Blath (HND 05 NW 007) and other mounds in the Shurrery area (HND 05 NW 011, 012), which may be pre-Christian homesteads. These mounds demonstrate upright slabs protruding through the turf in no recognisable pattern, and appear to be random exposures of the mound content; Creagan a' Bheannaich has four such orthostats which may have been thought to be grave-markers.

It is possible that a church or chapel was erected on an existing prehistoric mound; the quantity of stone in the mound is not commensurate with rubble from a building. Alternatively, the local tradition of a chapel and graveyard may have developed from the false assumption that the exposed slabs are grave-markers. The remains of the building and mound are too indistinct to enable positive

(OSFI:NWB:16.12.1981)



(6)

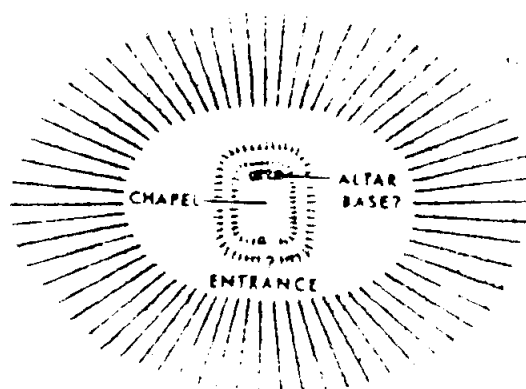


FIG. 4. 'Creagan a' Bheannaich', Shurrerv.  
Caithness