

**Report of Archaeological
Walkover Survey**

**Ledmore, by Elphin
Sutherland, Highland.**

Centred NC 2490/1285

Client: McGlade Forestry Ltd

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Contents

1. Introduction
2. Acknowledgements
3. Objectives
4. Survey Results
5. Conclusions
6. Archive
7. Discovery and Excavation
8. References

Non-Technical Summary

Stuart Farrell was commissioned by McGlade Forestry Ltd in June 2016 to undertake an archaeological desktop and a walkover survey for an area of proposed forestry at Ledmore, by Elphin, Sutherland, Highland.

Work revealed one previously unrecorded sheepfold and a structure. A possible building, identified in the desk-based survey, was not confirmed by the walkover survey.

It is recommended that the features identified within the scheme area be excluded from the scheme, with exclusion zones appropriate to the feature.

1. Introduction

This report is for an archaeological desktop and walkover survey conducted for McGlade Forestry Ltd for an area of proposed forestry at Ledmore, by Elphin, Sutherland, Highland.

2. Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following for their help during the work:

- Mr. John McGlade of McGlade Forestry Ltd;
- Staff of the Highland Council Archives, Inverness.

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Figure 2 – Site Location.
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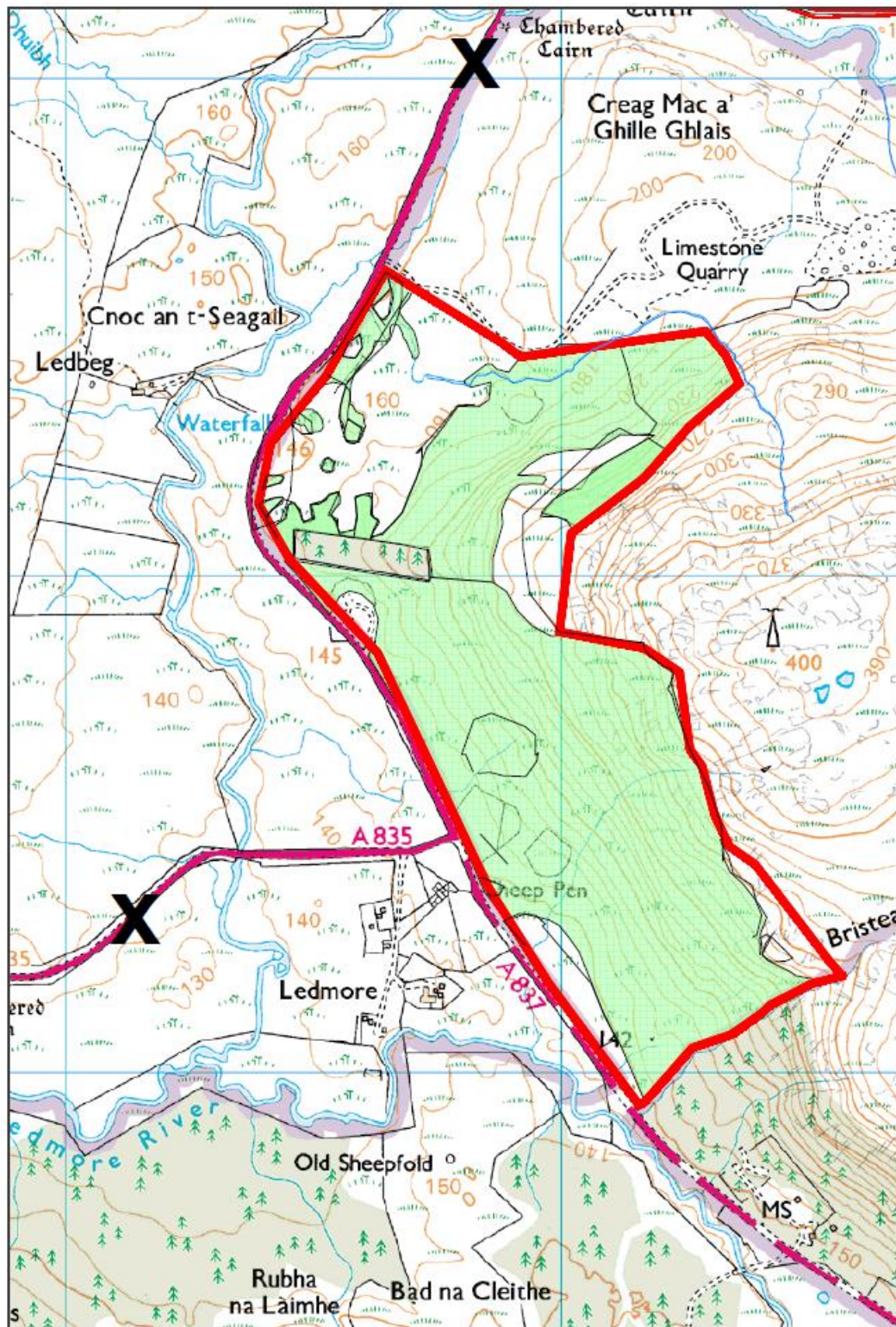
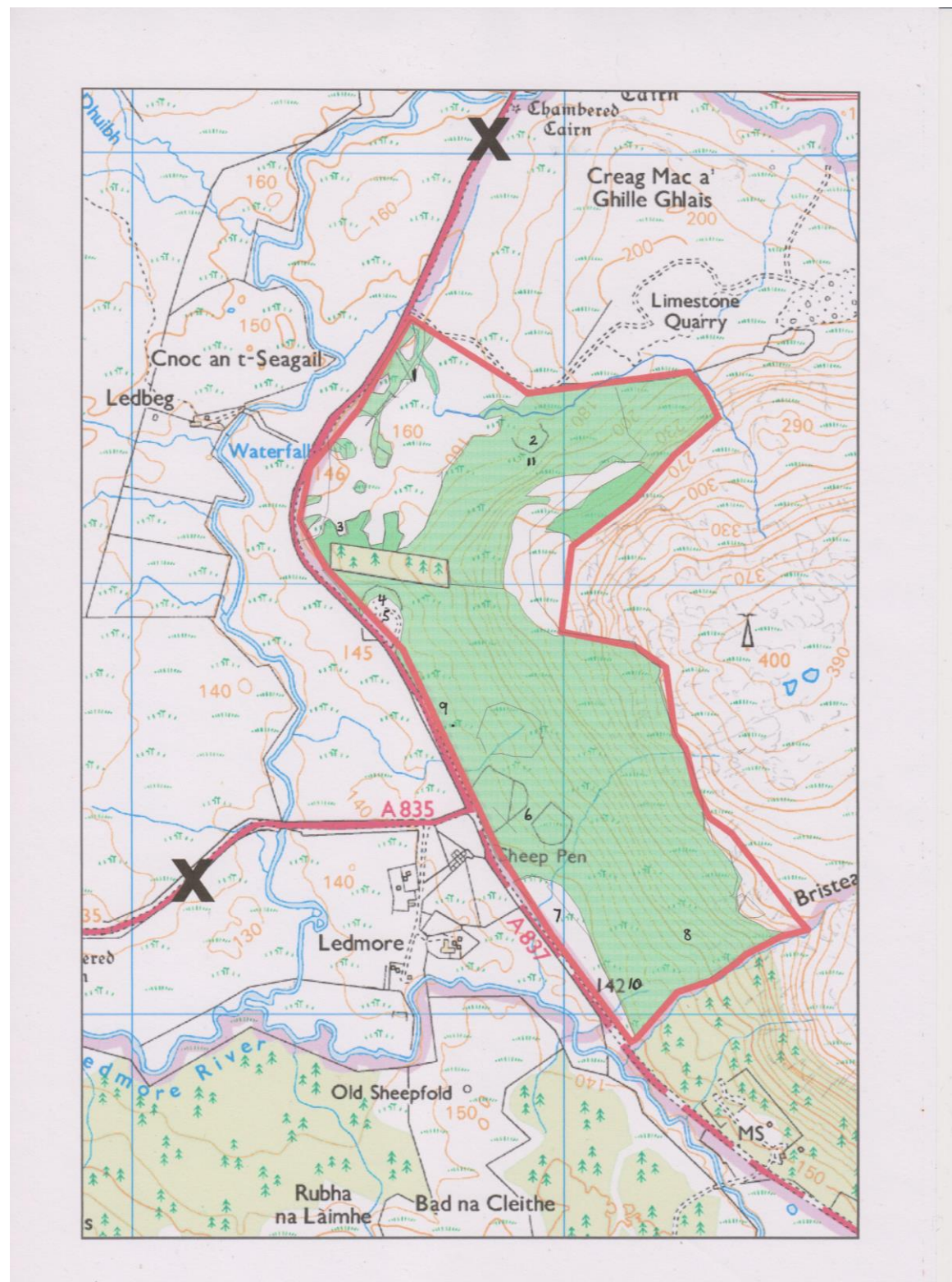


Figure 3 –Location of Archaeological Sites.
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3. Objectives

To conduct a desktop and walkover survey to record any archaeological features to the area of proposed forestry. This survey to follow those guidelines as proposed by the Institute of Field Archaeologists and those of the Forestry Commission (FC, 2011).

4. Archaeological Survey

Results

The walkover survey took place on 20th June 2016 in conditions of good visibility.

The area of proposed forestry is on a predominantly South-west-facing slope situated to the east side of the River Ledbeg with the ground rising to 350m above sea-level rising to the East edge of the scheme.

Archaeological survey work has previously been conducted to the proposed area of forestry, with work by R Mercer of Edinburgh University in 1978, by the Ordnance Survey in 1980 and by the Assynt Hidden Lives Project in 2009.

The results of the walkover survey are set out below in the same order and using the same numbering sequence as the desk-based survey.

Recommendations for mitigation are given in italics after each site.

HER – Highland Environmental Record

NHRE – National Record of the Historic Environment

1 – Ledbeg

HER – MHG 45703, 13105

NHRE – NC21SW 20

Grid Ref: NC 24647/13486

Type – Field System (possible), Wall

Noted in HER and NHRE of 'NC 2466 1344: Mound, grass-covered, 50m in diameter surrounded by wall; associated with a rectangular enclosure. A grass-covered curving wall 30 x 50m by 0.3m high (NC 2496 1336). R Mercer, Ledmore Survey nos.8, 15 1978.

Abandoned early modern land use. Visited by OS September 1980. What may be a field-system comprising two incomplete, conjoined enclosures is depicted on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Sutherland 1878, sheet lxxxii). Some lengths of wall are shown on the current edition of the OS 1:10,560 map (1967). Information from RCAHMS 19 September 1995.

The remains of a field system comprising a turf bank which surrounds the north, south and east sides of a grassy knoll. The bank is aligned N-S and stands up to 0.3m high with no discernible entrance. Assynt's Hidden Lives Project 2009.'

Walkover reveals turf banks up to 0.5m high, though denuded in places, forming part of a field system, banks spread up to 1.5m wide, though bank to N is up to 0.8m high.

To be excluded from scheme and 10m exclusion area put in place from banks. Hand planting within.

2 – Ledmore

HER – MHG 13106

NHRE – NC21SW 44

Grid Ref: NC 24965/13328

Type – Field Boundary

Noted in HER and NHRE of 'This site is located on the lower slopes of a very steep hill, in terrain which slopes fairly gently from SE to NW and is situated within rough heather and bracken moorland. The site consists of long, rounded, earthen turf-covered banks, forming three sides of an enclosure. The banks are fairly well-preserved surviving to a height of up to 0.7m and approximately 0.8-1m wide at base with quite steeply sloping sides in places. The banks run on the north side for a length of about 70m, the west side for about 30m, and on the west side curving towards the south for a length of 80m. A very large gap/entrance (?) is present between the ends of the west and east banks but it is unclear whether this derives from post-abandonment disturbance. Assynt's Hidden Lives Project 2009.'

Not shown on 1st edition OS of 1878 or 2nd edition OS of 1906 or OS 1:10,000 of 1967.

Walkover reveals possible bank to W making this a probable enclosure rather than a field system though it rises to a natural mound to centre – most likely field system. No evidence for any structures within. Bank is about 1m high and up to 2m wide but denuded to the S covered mostly with bracken at time of visit.

To be excluded from scheme and 10m exclusion area put in place from bank. Hand planting within.

3 – Ledbeg River

HER – MHG 13107

NHRE – NC21SW 38

Grid Ref: NC 24492/13148

Type – Settlement (possible)

Noted in HER and NHRE of 'At the site of the existing NGR are the last remains of a destroyed settlement. It consists of a small, rectangular structure 7m x 5m x up to 0.3m high, aligned N-S, set at the west end of a grassy knoll 29m x 14m, aligned E-W. The structure appears to have been turf-built; the location of the entrance is not apparent. Assynt's Hidden Lives 2009.'

Not shown on 1st edition OS of 1878 or 2nd edition OS of 1906 or OS 1:10,000 of 1967.

Walkover reveals rectangular building situated on the NW side of a grass knoll. Aligned NE-SW with no discernible entrance. 7m by 3.5m denuded in places with walls spread to 0.9m and up to 0.3m high.

Building to be excluded from scheme and 20m exclusion area put in place.

4 – Ledbeg

HER – MHG 13111

NHRE – NC21SW 19

Grid Ref: NC 24578/12970

Type – Enclosure

Noted in HER and NHRE of 'NC 2458 1296: A grass-covered, circular, banked enclosure, 30m in diameter. R Mercer, Ledmore Survey No. 13, 1978.

Early modern land use. Visited by OS 1 September 1980.

An enclosure or field is shown on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Sutherland 1878, sheet lxxxii) and is depicted on the current edition of the OS 1:10,560 map (1967). Information from RCAHMS 19 September 1995.

To the north of the Ledbeg junction, at the east side of the A837 there are the remains of an enclosure. Constructed of a turf bank it is up to 40m x 32m x 0.8, aligned E-W. The western side is largely truncated by the N-S track and there is no discernible entrance. Assynt's Hidden Lives Project 2009.'

Single enclosure shown on OS 1:10,000 of 1967.

Walkover reveals bank of enclosure (mostly covered in bracken at time of visit) up to 1m high and up to 3m wide, very discernible. No evidence for any structure within.

Site to be excluded from scheme and 10m exclusion area put in place banks. Hand planting within.

(Same site may be recorded as below)

5 – Ledmore

HER – MHG 13111

NHRE – NC21SW 39

Grid Ref: NC 24564/12945

Type – Enclosure

Noted in HER and NHRE of 'Located on gently sloping ground overlooking the Ledmore River to the south-west there is an earthen bank enclosure (previously listed as a sheepfold). It encloses an area measuring 150m by 100m, standing to 1m and 2m in width. The enclosure is surrounded by heather moorland but itself surrounds an area of bracken and grass. There are no visible entrances although one may be obscured by one of the many truncated areas. The enclosure is also truncated by the A837 on its south-west end and a modern track to the east. Assynt's Hidden Lives 2009.'

See above.

6 – Ledmore

HER – MHG 13110, 13109

NHRE – NCNC21SW 22

Grid Ref: NC 24897/12456

Type – Field System, Sheepfold

Noted in HER and NHRE of 'A grass-covered field system. R Mercer, Ledmore Survey No.11, 1978.

NC 2478 1256: A grass-covered circular sheepfold 17m in diameter. R Mercer, Ledmore Survey No.12, 1978.

Early modern land use. Visited by OS 1 September 1980.

A field-system comprising at least two enclosures is shown on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Sutherland 1878, sheet xci), and on the current edition of the OS 1:10,560 map (1967). Information from RCAHMS 20 September 1995.

Situated in heather moorland, enclosed by two earthen banks are areas of improved ground. The most westerly enclosure is sub-rectangular with its SW end truncated by the road. It is 100m long, aligned NNE-SSW, with a subdivision running N/S across its eastern side. The eastern enclosure is L-shaped, 50m long, aligned NE/SW with a subdivision running N/S through its W side. Both enclosures have overgrown earthen banks which are 2m wide and up to 1m high. There are no obvious entrances to either enclosure although there are a number of eroded/damaged areas on both. Assynt's Hidden Lives Project 2009.'

Walkover reveals large enclosure to W to have banks 3m wide and up 1m high, very discernible in bracken but denuded in places, whilst the 2nd to E has banks up to 0.9m high and 2m wide. No evidence for any structures within.

To be excluded from scheme and 10m exclusion area put in place from banks. Hand planting within.

7 – Ledmore

HER – MHG 13108

NHRE – NC21SW 22

Grid Ref: NC 2496/1223

Type – Possible Shielling Hut

Noted in HER and NHRE of 'Shieling. Dimensions: 9.0m by 11.0m. Height: 2.50m. Sub-rectangular. Pile of stones with slight hollow in the middle. Overgrown with grass and fern. Elevation: 145m (475') OD. R Mercer 1978.

A pile of stones slightly hollowed in the centre and overgrown with grass. It is oval measuring 11.0m by 9.0m by 2.5m high, and may be either a shieling or a cairn. Apparently glacial, one of several moraines in the area. OS visited 1 September 1980.

Visited by the Assynt's Hidden Lives project in December 2009. Situated to the south-west of Ledmore Farm are two rectilinear structures. Both structures have three partially visible sides with overall dimensions of 10m by 10m, defined by earth and stone banks 1m wide and up to 0.4m high. The site also has a curvilinear bank to the SW of the structures. The A837 has truncated the series of features at the north end of the site. They may represent ancillary structures associated with Ledmore Farm.

Not shown on 1st edition OS of 1878 or 2nd edition OS of 1906 or OS 1:10,000 of 1967.

Walkover reveals natural mounds only, as noted by OS, not features but natural mounds only.

No recommendations to be made.

8 – Brisdeah A'chnoic

Allt Name – Cnoc Na Stroine

HER – MHG 13041

NHRE – NC21SE 9

Grid Ref: NC 253/122

Type – Shielling Hut(s) (possible)

Noted in HER and NHRE of '(Centred NC 253 122) A group of eleven shielings with associated walls. The shielings range in length from 3-5m and in width from 2-4m. R Mercer 1980.

There are no shielings or associated walls in the given locality or its neighbourhood. The general area is a steep, grassy hillside bearing no indication of any land use. (Probably an incorrect map reference for additional sites in the area of NC21SE 12-13, i.e. NC 267 111.) Visited by OS 14 August 1980.

Nothing of archaeological interest was recorded at this location. Assynt's Hidden Lives Project 2009.'

Not shown on 1st edition OS of 1878 or 2nd edition OS of 1906 or OS 1:10,000 of 1967.

Walkover reveals no indication of structures or any evidence of former grazings typically associated with shielings, area of natural ground.

No recommendations to be made.

9 – Ledmore

HER – N/a

NHRE – N/a

Grid Ref: NC 24716/12687

Type – Sheepfold

Shown on 1st edition OS of 1878 as 'Stell'. Same shown on 2nd edition OS of 1906. Not shown on OS 1:10,000 of 1967.

Walkover reveals only a small arc of stone footings to the N side and a few to E and a large boulder to S measuring 16m in diameter. Covered in rushes.

This may be the sheepfold noted previously under site 6 which was not located as plotted in HER.

To be excluded from scheme and 10m exclusion area put in place.

10 – Ledmore

HER – N/a

NHRE – N/a

Grid Ref: NC 2510/1205 (centred)

Type – Building

Square unroofed building shown on 2nd edition OS of 1906. Not shown on 1st edition OS of 1878 or OS 1:10,000 of 1967.

Walkover reveals area of cleared ground under grass but with no evidence of a structure.

No recommendations to be made.

11 – Ledmore

HER – N/a

NHRE – N/a

Grid Ref: NC 24915/13276

Type – Structure

Walkover reveals possible rectangular structure of large stones 3m by 2m by 1.1m high. Not shown on any OS map. Sits just to the SE of site 2 and may be associated with it – possibly a shieling.

To be excluded from scheme and 10m exclusion area put in place.

5. Conclusions

The enclosures or sheepfolds recorded relate to former farming landscapes, in particular for sheep, the area forming part of the large sheep farms of Ledmore or Ledbeg established by the Sutherland Estate with small tenants being cleared in the early 19th century.

All the significant elements would be effectively protected by the establishment and enforcement of exclusion zones as proposed.

6. Archive

A copy of this report is to be deposited in the National Record of the Historic Environment in Edinburgh.

7. Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

A short summary of the results of this project will be submitted to the Council for Scottish Archaeology's publication *Discovery & Excavation in Scotland*.

8. References

Forestry Commission (2011) Forests and historic environment – UK Forestry Standard Guidelines. Forestry Commission. Edinburgh.

Highland Council Historic Environment Record entries MHG 45703, 13105, 13106, 13107, 13111, 13110, 13109, 13041 and 13108.

IFA (1999) By-laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. Reading.

National Record of the Historic Environment CANMORE entries for NC21SW and NC 21SE.

Maps Consulted

Ordnance Survey 1st edition 6inch-mile sheet 82 Sutherland of 1878 surveyed 1875.

Ordnance Survey 1st edition 6inch-mile sheet 91 Sutherland of 1878 surveyed 1875.

Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 6inch-mile sheet 82 Sutherland of 1906 revised 1903.

Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 6inch-mile sheet 91 Sutherland of 1906 revised 1903.

Ordnance Survey 1:10000 NC21SW and NC21SE of 1967.

Ordnance Survey 1:10560 NC21SW and NC21SE of 1966.

Top - Plate 1 – View of Site 4 facing SE.

Bottom - Plate 2 – View of site 3 facing NE.



Top - Plate 3 – View of Site 1 facing NE.

Bottom - Plate 4 – View of Site 1 facing SW.



Top - Plate 5 – View of site 2 facing NE.

Bottom - Plate 6 – View of site 11 facing SE.



Top - Plate 7 – View of Site 6 facing SE.

Bottom - Plate 8 – View of site 11 facing SE.



LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Highland
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Ledmore, by Elphin
PROJECT CODE:	-
PARISH:	Assynt
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Stuart Farrell
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	-
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Survey
NMRS NO(S):	NC21SW 20, 44, 38 and 19.
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Field Boundaries, Enclosures, sheepfold
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NC 2490/1285 (centred)
START DATE (this season)	20 June 2016
END DATE (this season)	20 June 2016
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	n/a
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>A walkover survey was undertaken in June 2016 for an area of proposed forestry to the East of Ledmore Junction. Work revealed two unrecorded features –</p> <p>NC 24915/13276 – Possible shieling</p> <p>NC 24716/12687 – Sheepfold (remains of)</p> <p>Full Report submitted to NRHE.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	n/a
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	To be deposited with NRHE