Burn of Whilk Borrow Pits, Caithness
Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment

On Behalf of: SKM
160 Dundee Street
Edinburgh
EH11 1DQ
On Behalf of RWE npower Renewables Limited

National Grid Reference (NGR): ND 30000 38100 and ND 28000 41600

AOC Project No: 22031

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1 Non-technical Summary

1.1 AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by SKM acting on behalf of RWE Npower Renewables to undertake a Desk-Based Assessment of two proposed borrow pits (Borrow Pit’s 1 and 2) associated with the consented wind farm development at Burn of Whilk, East Clyth, Lybster, Caithness. The sites are within the local authority administrative area of Highland Council, which is advised on archaeological matters by Highland Council Historic Environment Team. The two borrow pits are located separately beyond the boundaries of the consented development. Centred on ND28000 41600 Borrow Pit 2 is located within a large commercial forestry plantation which is likely to have impacted severely on any archaeological remains which may have once been present (Puls 2011). Borrow Pit 1 by contrast is located at ND 30000 38100 south of the consented wind farm approximately 250m west of the coastline and adjacent to the A99. Borrow Pit 1 is includes a former quarry as does Borrow Pit 2. The former quarry at Borrow Pit 2 was previously used by the Forestry Commission for their operations.

1.2.1 Potential impacts on known or unknown buried archaeological remains in the case of this development proposal relate to the possibility of disturbing, removing or destroying in situ remains and artefacts during groundbreaking works on the site associated with mineral extraction and the laying of access tracks and related drainage works. The access track for Borrow Pit 1 will utilise the bed of the former Lybster to Wick railway (whilst Borrow Pit 2 will be accessed via existing forest tracks. Both these measures will limit, or possibly avoid completely any direct impacts beyond the borrow pits themselves.

1.2.2 The earthwork remains of a post-medieval crofting settlement were identified within the northern portion of proposed Borrow Pit 1 during the walkover survey. These remains, which include two building platforms, correlate with buildings shown on the 1877 Ordnance Survey map. Whilst the precise development plans are at present unknown it is clear that the potential for post-medieval remains being encountered during the course of development is high, indeed direct impact is certain if the areas containing the earthworks are to be quarried. The crofting remains are judged to be local significance, given that there are abundant remains of this type throughout the Highland region and that the remains surviving within the red line boundary are not the best examples of their type. As such it is not believed that preservation in situ is necessary. While preservation in situ is not regarded as necessary it is acknowledged that where impacts upon the croft cannot be avoided mitigation measures would be required. It is recommended that the remains be subject to a detailed programme of survey This survey would be followed by a limited programme of intrusive trial trenching to investigate any features of interest identified during the survey.

1.2.3 There is a low possibility of remains of Early Medieval, Norse or Late Medieval date being encountered during the excavation of either borrow pit. The site of Borrow Pit 2 has been severely impacted by modern forestry and quarrying and the potential for any in situ archaeological remains surviving is low although the possibility of residual lithic artefacts being encountered there is low to moderate.

1.2.3 It is advised that, further to the mitigation outlined above specific to the known crofting features in Borrow Pit 1, an archaeological watching brief may be required during the stripping of soil during the excavation of both Borrow Pit 1 and Borrow Pit 2 in order to record any previously unknown archaeological remains or artefacts. In addition, it is advised that the Highland Council Historic Environment Team will require a minimum of 10 working days notification prior to the initiation of each significant phase of monitoring work. Where any of the above works impact inadvertently on
archaeological remains, the advice of the Highland Council Historic Environment Team must be sought in respect of any requirement for further mitigation and/or specialist reinstatement.

1.2.4 Indirect impacts include potential visual effects on the settings of nearby Scheduled Monuments which given the sub-surface nature of mineral extraction is likely to be less than that assessed for the consented wind farm. Never-the-less some allowance has to be made into the potential for short term visual intrusion into the setting of the Hill o’ Many Stanes Scheduled Monument, resulting from the movement of machinery and heavy goods vehicles within its line of sight during the excavation of Borrow Pit 1. This indirect impact will be temporary and restricted to working hours during the extraction phase. It will in all probability have a minor impact on the setting of the monument. Once the construction phase of the wind farm is complete the areas of the borrow pits will be reinstated to a design agreed with the council and any indirect impacts upon setting will cease.

2 Introduction

2.1 Project Background

2.2.1 AOC Archaeology was commissioned by SKM acting on behalf of RWE Npower Renewables to undertake an archaeological walkover survey and Desk-Based Assessment of the archaeological implications of the excavation of two borrow pits during the construction of the consented Burn of Whilk Windfarm, East Clyth, Lybster, Caithness, Highland (Planning Ref. 10/03341/FUL). The site is within the local authority administrative area of Highland Council, which is advised on archaeological matters by the Highland Council Historic Environment Team. This Desk-Based Assessment collates and assesses existing information about the archaeology and built heritage of the site (and its adjacent environs) and determines as fully as possible from the immediately available evidence the nature, survival, quality, extent and significance of any archaeological and built heritage remains within the development areas.

2.2.2 AOC’s consultancy team have been involved in the Burn Of Whilk Wind Farm scheme since 2004, undertaking a number of walkover surveys and assessments of the potential impacts on cultural heritage. AOC’s previous work includes walkover survey of all non-forested land within the proposed site boundary which was undertaken to inform a Conservation Plan and subsequently assess turbine positions (AOC 2004). An additional walkover survey was undertaken to inform the Environmental Statement (AOC 2008) and confirm that observations made in 2004 were still applicable. More recently a desk-based assessment was prepared in 2010, studying the implications of an anometer mast and its associated access track within the forested part of the wind farm (AOC 2010).

2.2 Government and local planning policies

2.2.1 National Planning Policy Guidelines


The implications of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 with regard to local government planning policy are described within Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) (Scottish Government 2010), Scottish Historic Environment Policy (Historic Scotland 2011) and Planning Advice Notes (PAN) for Scotland. SPP, SHEP ‘Scottish Historic Environment Policy’ and PAN 2/2011 ‘Archaeology and Planning’ (Scottish Government 2011) deal specifically with planning policy
in relation to heritage. The planning guidance expresses a general presumption in favour of preserving heritage remains in situ. Their ‘preservation by record’ (i.e. through excavation and recording, followed by analysis and publication, by qualified archaeologists) is a less desirable alternative. SPP notes that with the exception of archaeology the historic environment can generally accommodate change that is ‘informed and sensitively managed, and [that it] can be adapted to accommodate new uses whilst retaining its special character’ (Scottish Government 2010, Para 111).

SHEP (Historic Scotland 2011) sets out the Scottish Executive’s policy for the sustainable management of the historic environment. Key principles of the policy note that ‘there should be a presumption in favour of preservation of individual historic assets and also the pattern of the wider historic environment; no historic asset should be lost or radically changed without adequate consideration of its significance and of all the means available to manage and conserve it’ (1.14.b).

2.2.2 The Highland Structure Plan
The Highland Structure Plan (2001) contains planning policies relating to archaeology that generally re-iterate the national planning policies. The following Structure Plan policies pertain to archaeological or cultural heritage issues.

**Policy BC1 Preservation of archaeological sites**
Archaeological sites affected by development proposals should be preserved, or, in exceptional circumstances where preservation is impossible, the sites will be recorded at developers’ expense to professional standards. Provision will be made in Local Plans for the appropriate protection, preservation and enhancement of archaeological sites.

**Policy BC2 Archaeology, tourism and education**
Sympathetically developed and well-managed proposals which increase the tourism potential of archaeological sites or increase public understanding and awareness through research projects will generally be supported.

**Proposal BC3 Archaeological Heritage Areas**
Local Plans will identify and zone areas of exceptional archaeological and historic interest, and make appropriate provision for the protection and interpretation of features of interest.

**Policy BC5 Listed buildings and Conservation Areas**
The Council will seek to preserve Highland’s buildings and groups of buildings of historic or architectural interest, some of which may be at risk from neglect, by the identification in Local Plans of opportunities for their productive and appropriate use.

2.2.3 The Highland Structure Plan Written statement (Chapter 2.15.8) states that:

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Certain areas of Highland are of exceptional archaeological and historic significance by virtue of the importance and number of features, density of monuments/sites and opportunities for interpretation. In recognition of this, key areas of concentration merit appropriate zonation in Local Plans as Archaeological Heritage Areas Examples include Hill of Warehouse/Yarrows.
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2.2.4 **The Caithness Local Plan**

The Caithness Local Plan adopted in September 2002, seeks to enhance the natural and cultural heritage of Caithness by protecting the integrity of landscape designations or areas, including protecting archaeological sites, landscapes, Listed Buildings and their settings.

The council will encourage appropriate tourism and educational initiatives that derive local economic and community benefit from the many archaeological and historic features throughout Caithness. More specifically Hill of Warehouse/Yarrows, Camster Strath have potential in this regard for interpretation facilities which are sympathetic to the protection of cultural and historic interests. Measures to derive economic benefit including interpretation facilities, should respect that the integrity and sympathetic protection of the archaeological resource is of paramount importance’ (Local Plan, 23).

2.2.5 The Local Plan also contains a general planning policy which encompasses heritage ‘the Council will presume against development, particularly where there is significant damage to heritage, amenity or public health’ (Local Plan, PP3).

2.2.2 **Emerging Policy**

The Highland Wide Local Plan (Proposed) is currently in the final stages of the adoption process, and is scheduled to come into effect on the 5th of April 2012. It will update and replace elements of the Structure Plan and Local Plan. Policies included in the Highland Wide Local Development Plan (Proposed) (2010) pertinent to the built and archaeological heritage include:

**Policy 58 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage:** ‘All development proposals will be assessed taking into account the level of importance and nature of heritage features, the nature and scale of development, and any impact on the feature and its setting, in the context of the policy framework detailed in Appendix 6.2. The following criteria will also apply:

1. For features of local/regional importance we will allow developments if we believe that they will not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity and heritage resource.
2. For features of national importance we will allow developments that can be shown not to compromise the amenity and heritage resource. Where there may be any significant adverse effects, these must be clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance. It must also be shown that the development will support communities in fragile areas who are having difficulties in keeping their population and services.

For features of international importance (Natura 2000 (SPA, SAC) and Ramsar sites), developments likely to have a significant effect on a site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site for nature conservation will be subject to an appropriate assessment. Where we are unable to ascertain that a proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of a site, we will only allow development if there is no alternative solution and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature…Where we are unable to ascertain that a proposal will not adversely
affect the integrity of a site, the proposal will not be in accordance with the development plan within the meaning of Section 25(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.
2.3 Planning considerations pertaining to the site

2.3.1 Highland Council is advised on archaeological matters by their Historic Environment Team, who are responsible for determining the acceptability of impacts upon heritage and where appropriate the extent of mitigation that will be required. The teams Archaeological Officer Andrew Puls has requested that a short archaeological assessment be undertaken in order to assess the archaeological implications of the proposed burrow pits commenting that;

“Borrow Pit 2 is within an area of forestry within which archaeological remains are unlikely to survive. The location of Borrow Pit 1 is within an area of some archaeological potential, with relic field systems present on modern aerial images- a small number of buildings are depicted within this location on the 1st edition OS map. The archaeological assessment should include a brief discussion of archaeological potential and recommend appropriate mitigation, if and where appropriate” (Puls 2011).

2.3.2 In April 2011 Highland Council granted planning permission for the erection of 9 Turbines with a blade tip height of 116m and associated services including 8km of access tracks at Burn of Whilk, East Clyth / Mid Clyth Lybster, Highland (06/00676/ FULCA). Two of the planning conditions attached to the consent addressed archaeological and cultural heritage concerns:

15. “Development shall not commence until, a scheme for archaeological investigation and monitoring has been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority.

1) The archaeological scheme is a scheme setting out how site clearance and excavation works are to be carried out. This shall include the proposed mitigation in Section 5.7.2 to 5.7.9 of the Burn of Whilk Environmental Statement and:-

- Micro-siting of the access track to enable the preservation in situ of Sites 215 and 25;
- All known sites to be fenced off in advance of and during construction;
- Tree felling in the vicinity of Moss of Whilk (Site 145) to be conducted in such a way as to ensure that trees are felled away from the scheduled area, so as to avoid accidental damage;
- Following tree felling an archaeological survey will be conducted on all ground breaking works associated with the development.

ii) All site clearance or excavation works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved archaeological scheme.

Reason: In order to protect any features of archaeological importance.

16. Prior to the commencement of development but after tree felling a LiDAR laser scanning survey will be undertaken to ensure that the archaeological landscape that is to be impacted by the development is preserved by record. The area to be surveyed shall include the application area and the archaeological landscapes of the Loch of Yarrows and Warehouse Hill. The LiDAR survey shall be professionally interrogated and analysed with the core area also being subject to ground-truthing. The results of the survey and findings will be made fit for public publication and dissemination and shall be lodged with the Highland Historic Environment Record.
Reason: To enhance the understanding of the cultural heritage of the area and to enable the identification and preservation of previously unknown archaeological remains."
(Highland Council Decision Notice 06/00676/FULCA 14th April 2011)

2.3.3 In his comments on the current application Andrew Puls requests assurance that work on the borrow pits will not commence prior to the LiDAR survey being flown, arguing that it is important that the survey 'is completed prior to significant levels of disturbance associated with this development' (Puls 2011).

2.3.4 SKM submitted a scoping request to Highland Council in respect of the proposed borrow pits on the 27th of October 2011. Following consultation the Council determined that an Environmental Statement was not necessary in this instance (Highland Council 2011), although the Council's Archaeological Officer has requested that a 'short archaeological assessment be undertaken' (Puls 2011). This report is intended to satisfy that requirement.

2.4 Limitations of Scope

2.4.1 This assessment is based upon data obtained from publicly accessible archives as described in the Data Sources in Section 4.2 and records of previous assessments held by AOC Archaeology Group. National Monument Record data was downloaded from the National Monuments Record Scotland (NMRS) on the 23rd of January 2012 and this assessment does not include any records added after this date.

3. Aims and Objectives

3.1 The aim of this study is to identify the archaeological and cultural heritage value of the areas proposed for borrow pits associated with the Burn of Whilk Wind Farm, Caithness. The evidence presented and the conclusions offered will provide information to facilitate further discussions and decisions on the proposals and for the formulation of a mitigation strategy, should this be required.

4. Methodology

4.1 Standards

4.1.1 The scope of this Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment meets the requirements of current planning regulations set out in SPP (2010), SHEP 2011 and PAN2/2011 (2011).

4.1.2 AOC Archaeology Group conforms to the standards of professional conduct outlined in the Institute for Archaeologists’ Code of Conduct, the IfA Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology, the IfA Standards and Guidance for Desk-Based Assessments, Field Evaluations etc., and the British Archaeologists and Developers Liaison Group Code of Practice.

4.1.3 AOC Archaeology Group is a Registered Organisation of the Institute for Archaeologists. This status ensures that there is regular monitoring and approval by external peers of our internal systems, standards and skills development.
4.2 Data sources

4.2.1 The following data sources were consulted during preparation of this Desk-Based Assessment:

- National Monuments Record for Scotland (RCAHMS, Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh):
  For NMRS data, aerial photographs, archaeological and architectural photographs, NMRS maps, various archaeological and historical publications, and unpublished archaeological reports;

- National Map Library (National Library of Scotland, Causewayside, Edinburgh):
  For old Ordnance Survey maps (1st & 2nd Edition, small- and large-scale) and pre-Ordnance Survey historical maps;

- Historic Scotland (Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh):
  For scheduled ancient monuments data and listed buildings data;

4.3 Report structure

4.3.1 Each archaeological or historical site, monument or building referred to in the text is listed in the Gazetteer in Appendix 1. Each has been assigned a 'Site No.' unique to this assessment, and the Gazetteer includes information regarding the type, period, grid reference, NMRS number, HER number, statutory protective designation, and other descriptive information, as derived from the consulted sources.

4.3.2 Each archaeological or historical site, monument or building referred to in the text is plotted on the location map (Figure 1) at the end of the report, using the assigned Site Nos. The locations of the two proposed borrow pits are outlined on the map.

4.3.3 Features of potential archaeological or historical significance located within a 1km radius of the edge of the proposed development areas have been included in the assessment in order to assess the site’s cultural heritage context.

4.3.4 All sources consulted during the desk-based assessment, including publications, archived records, photographic and cartographic evidence, are listed amongst the References in Section 9.

4.3.5 The archaeological implications of each borrow pit will be assessed separately.

5 Baseline Conditions

Context

It is a common feature of British archaeology that in upland and moorland environments the preservation of historic landscapes and archaeological monuments is better than in more economically viable areas. This is particularly true as elsewhere, increasingly intensive agriculture from the late medieval period onwards has levelled and removed upstanding remains in areas of better and more fertile soils.

The nature, and therefore use of the Caithness landscape has over time led to the creation of a multi-period Relict Landscape that would not have survived in the better quality and more intensively
worked landscapes of lowland Scotland. In the case of Caithness the quality and easy availability of good building stone has also contributed to the survival of structures.

5.2 Mesolithic to Iron Age (8000 BC – AD 450)

5.2.1 There are no recorded Mesolithic sites known within 1km of either of the proposed borrow pits. It is possible, however, that previously unknown sites exist within the area; for example the Statistical Account for the adjacent parish of Wick makes reference to the frequent discovery of flint arrowheads, albeit that the locations and dates of these lithic scatters are unknown.

5.2.2 During the Neolithic period agriculture was introduced to Scotland. The period also marks the adoption of pottery and monumental architecture. Caithness, during the Mesolithic and probably the Neolithic periods was not a marginal area. The sites and monuments constructed in the Neolithic compare favourably with the best examples of their types along the Atlantic seaboard of Europe. While no confirmed prehistoric field systems were identified during the assessment of the wider wind farm area, it is possible that some of the post-medieval field systems in the area may be older or contain older elements and that vegetation or peat growth has obscured such remains. The later Bronze Age introduced the complexity of trade routes for raw materials and finished materials and the geographical position of Caithness began to tell against it. Declining climate, especially following 1500 to 1000 BC exacerbated its growing marginality, covering much of the landscape with peat.

Borrow Pit 1

5.2.3 The Hill o’ Many Stanes (Site 21), a Scheduled prehistoric ritual monument, lies west of Borrow Pit 1. Of possible Bronze Age origin stone rows such as these are irregular lines formed by numerous small stones. While stone rows are physically unprepossessing their overall effect is impressive. It is unclear if they were constructed to demarcate astronomical alignments but that does not stop the visitor from imagining that such alignments may have existed. In general the sites do not appear to be associated with upstanding deposits or large cut features and therefore, apart from astronomical alignments and information on geology they do not seem to have much potential to inform archaeological research. Although enigmatic, multiple stone rows such as the ones at Hill o’ Many Stanes are unique to the far north of Scotland and help to form the specific cultural identity of the area.

5.2.4 A single undesignated fallen standing stone (Site 31) lies southwest of the Hill o’ Many Stanes.

5.2.5 The Scheduled remains of a possible broch (Site 28) are located south of the application site at Greenhill although this is now in a severely mutilated condition. The undesignated remains of a further two brochs (Sites 3 and 4) are located north of Borrow Pit 1.

5.2.6 Undesignated grass-covered mounds at Maclane (Site 34) and Braun (Site 36) are hard to date and may simply represent field clearance.

Borrow Pit 2

5.2.6 Two Scheduled Monuments lie within 1km of Borrow Pit 2. The first the Moss of Whilk (Site 11), located south of the proposed borrow pit, consists of a mound, an associated enclosure and a possible pen and is of uncertain date. Whilst a prehistoric date is possible, it may relates to post-medieval or later activity. The second Scheduled Monument (Site 17), at Toftgun north of the proposed borrow pit, was recorded as a broch when it was Scheduled in 1939, but has now possibly
been either destroyed, or at the very least severely impacted by modern commercial forestry. A RCAHMS survey in 2004 failed to locate it.

5.2.7 A single undesignated hut circle (Site 12) surviving south of the proposed borrow pit at Sidhean Fuar, is likely to be of late prehistoric Bronze Age or Iron Age date.

5.2.8 The nature of four mounds (Sites 15, 16, 19 and 20) underlying the modern forest is unclear and whilst they may be of prehistoric origin, at least two of the mounds in the area (Sites 18 and 24) are now believed to be natural.

5.2 Early Medieval (AD 450-900)

5.3.1 The Early Medieval Period marks the start of the historic period and does not represent a cultural change but rather a change in the available evidence with the first arrival of documents and maps. The end of the period is marked by the Norse incursions.

5.3.2 This period sees the emergence of the Picts, probably an amalgamation of the native Iron Age tribes to the north of the Forth, including the Northern and Western Isles. ‘Pictland’, as the territory is now called, came under increasing pressure from contemporary peoples, the Norse to the north, the Angles to the South and the Scots to the west. There are indications that Pictland was divided into two main groups to north and south of the Mounth with the political centre of the northern region lying around the Black Isle. A document from the 12th century describes seven Pictish kingdoms and records that Caithness was called Cat or Caitt, ‘cat people’ though the text’s precise meaning is debatable.

5.3.3 There are Early Medieval heritage assets known within 1km of both of the proposed borrow pits.

5.4 Norse (AD 900 – 1300)

5.4.1 Towards the end of the 9th century Caithness and the Northern Isles came to be dominated and settled by Norse incomers. For the next four centuries Caithness formed a mainland extension of the Norwegian earldom of Orkney. The Orkneyinga Saga, a Norse text derived from this period includes several references to Caithness and indicates struggles in this region between the native people and the Norse during the 10th century. Placename elements from within Caithness suggest that the Norse settled the region a couple of generations after their occupation of the Northern Isles. The archaeological findings support this, since the Norse pagan burials in the region tend to date from no earlier than the 10th century. The name Caithness itself comes from Old Norse, Katanes, meaning ‘headland of the cats’. This suggests that ‘cats’ was an element of the tribal name for the people of this area prior to Viking settlement. After Norse settlement in Caithness, the population of Sutherland to the south referred to Caithness as Gallaibh, meaning ‘the strangers’, a reference to the Norse incomers now residing there.

Borrow Pit 1

5.4.2 Two carved stone cross slabs (Sites 27 and 30) are located south east of the proposed borrow pit. One of these crosses (Site 27) located within Mid-Clyth’s graveyard is Scheduled.
5.5 Late Medieval (AD 1300 – 1600)

5.5.1 The start of this period marks the end of culturally distinct Norse influence in the area as it underwent incorporation into Scotland.

**Borrow Pit 1**

5.5.2 The remains of two castles, Halberry (Site 25) and Bulnacraig (Site 32), both associated with the Gunn family stand on coastal peninsulas. Neither are Scheduled Monuments.

5.6 Post-Medieval (AD 1600 – 1850)

5.6.1 This period marks the end of medieval society across Northern Scotland partly in consequence of the Jacobite rebellion which replaced the kinship system with outright ownership and the desire of landowners to increase the cash returns on their lands. The period also covers the Enlightenment and ends with the Highland Famine.

5.6.2 The majority of the farms, field banks and clearance cairns in the area probably date from this period. However, this simplifies a more complex picture; the New Statistical Account for Wick suggests that much of the northern and higher portion of the area studied for the original wind farm Environmental Statement chapter was wooded in the 17th century and that this was cleared to kill wolves. While it is not possible to confirm this account it does demonstrate that at the end of the 18th century much of this area was considered to have been an inhospitable place to live. The 17th and 18th century maps of the area, such as Pont (1580-1601) Blaeu (1654), Moll (1745) and Roy (1747-55; Fig. 2) indicate that the main foci of settlement were along the coast, and quite how far inland this settlement extended is unclear. The maps of Pont, Blaeu and Moll are largely schematic and are not reproduced in this report as neither application site can be specifically identified on them. Whilst Roy records buildings at Middle Clyth they appear to be set further inland than Borrow Pit 1 (Fig. 2).

5.6.3 From the end of the 18th century a series of agricultural improvements were put in place across Caithness. There are accounts of increased enclosure, draining of lochs, digging of drains, building of enclosures, planting of forests and ploughing up and liming of moor to produce crops. Additionally new types of leases, crops and stock were introduced as well as carts and new ploughs. These improvements were partly undertaken to strengthen the local economy but were mainly intended to increase cash returns for landowners.

5.6.4 An increase in the population of the area accompanied these various improvements. This population increase may simply have comprised people cleared from Sutherland. While there were clearances in Caithness it was a much more piecemeal affair than elsewhere in Scotland. It is likely that many cleared families found employment in the fishing industry which experienced a boom in the first half of the 19th century. The population of Latheron parish doubled between the late 18th century and the time of the New Statistical Account, largely due to the growth of herring fishing (Davidson 1845, 92). The effect of this population growth was to subdivide the landholdings to the point of uselessness and to make highly cramped and unhealthy living conditions. There is even mention of famine in the late 1830s because of failed harvests. The New Statistical Account mentions that in the mid-19th century peat was the major source of fuel (Davidson 1845, 113). A lack of detailed prior study increases the significance of the rural farming landscape of the 18th and 19th centuries.

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Borrow Pits 1 and 2

5.6.5 Whilst none of the sites identified within either assessment area can be said with certainty to pre-date 1850 it is possible, indeed likely, that some of the features recorded on the 1877 OS (Fig. 3) do so. These sites are, however, described in Section 5.7 as they were first documented post-1850.

5.7 Modern (post-AD 1850)

5.7.1 This period marks the aftermath of the Highland famine, the establishment of the Crofters Act of 1886 and the inexorable decline in Caithness’ population and industry. The area is first recorded in detail on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition 6 inch to the mile map of 1877 (Fig. 3) which shows the Area of Borrow Pit 1 as rough ground on the east bank of the Red Burn. Three small ‘clearings’ of improved ground are shown on the site; two of which are associated with small crofts or homesteads (Sites 38 and 39) recorded as roofed on the map. One of the crofts had a well (Site 40). A large outcrop of rock is shown in the southeast corner of the site adjacent to the burn.

5.7.2 Despite the famine and clearances the population of the area continued to grow through the 19th century. However, the population fell through the 19th and 20th centuries and this is reflected on the 1907 Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 6 inch to the mile map (Fig. 5) which shows that both the crofts at Borrow Pit 1 had been abandoned by this time. The Lybster to Wick Railway (Site 6), opened at the start of the 20th century, is shown north of Borrow Pit 1 on the map, with a station at Mid Clyth (Site 41). The early closure of the line in 1944 bears testament to the decline in population and economic activity within Caithness.

5.7.3 A range of sites are known within the vicinity of the borrow pits including a boiler (Site 1), two enclosures (Sites 2 and 9), a Free Church Manse (Site 5), a well (Site 7), two crofts and homesteads (Sites 8 and 26), a settlement (Site 10) a horse mill (Site 29) and a mill (Site 35). Two sets of peat cuttings (Sites 22 and 23) were identified by AOC during a walkover survey in 2010 (AOC 2010).

5.7.4 The site of Borrow Pit 2 is shown as undifferentiated moorland on both the 1877 (Fig. 4) and 1907 maps (not illustrated).

5.7.5 Following the war there was a general drive towards commercial forestry which it was hoped would ensure a strategic supply of woodland in times of war and secondly to help to repopulate more marginal areas of Scotland. The pace of this planting picked up from the 1960s and includes the Moss of Whilk area.

5.7.6 Modern mapping shows quarries at the locations of Borrow Pit 1 (Site 37) and Borrow Pit 2 (Site 13). The quarry at Borrow Pit 1 was started between the 1960 and 1968 Ordnance Surveys (Fig. 6), whilst the one at Borrow Pit 2 was excavated after 1977. A third disused quarry (Site 14) is located northwest of Borrow Pit 2.

5.8 Walkover Survey by Paul Humphreys

5.8.1 A walkover survey of the proposed location of Borrow Pit 1 was undertaken on the 16th of January 2012 by Paul Humphreys whose report is included as Appendix 2.

5.8.2 The proposed location of Borrow Pit 1 is bound to the west by the Red Burn and to the northwest by the disused Lybster to Wick railway line. From here the land rises to a low ridge then falls away towards the A99 coastal road which constitutes the south-western boundary. The north-easern
boundary comprises a C19 dry-stone wall that separates the unimproved land of the site from the adjacent improved pasture. The vegetation cover varies and includes areas of soft rush, coarse grasses, close-cropped heather moor and gorse scrub. The bedrock comprises roughly horizontally bedded middle old red sandstones that outcrop on the ridge crest. Seven distinct extant features (Features 1-7) were evident above the ground surface in positions which correlated with the two crofts recorded on the 1877 Ordnance Survey (Appendix 2, Figure 1).

5.8.3 Feature 1 (ND 3000 3833) (Site 42): Comprises an area which appears on aerial photographs to be narrow rig and furrow cultivation orientated NW / SE. The area is now waterlogged and has been heavily colonised by soft rush. Only one rig was identifiable at ground level (Appendix 2, Photo 1) and then only on the grounds of vegetational variation.

5.8.4 Feature 2 (ND 2997 3826 to ND 3010 3834) (Site 43): Comprises a ditch and turf and stone bank boundary. It is well defined towards the west becoming less so towards the east, where it eventually passes under the later dry-stone wall (Appendix 2, Photos 2 and 3). The 1st edition OS map suggest that the boundary may date to the early improvement period originally enclosing improved land that was later abandoned; an apparent entrance piercing the boundary was noted (Appendix 2, Photo 4).

5.8.5 Feature 3 (ND 3000 3823) (Appendix 2, Figure 2) (Site 38): Comprises a probable dwelling adjacent to a short section of turf and stone boundary (Appendix 2, Photos 5 and 6). The rectangular building, measuring circa 14 m long by circa 4 m wide, is divided by a curious double wall feature which may have severed as a storage or concealment area (Appendix 2, Photo 7). A small circular feature appeared to have been built into the south corner of the building. It had the appearance of a small corn drying kiln having an external flue (Appendix 2, Photo 8). The south-western wall of the building was poorly defined and it was not possible to detect an entrance. The building is depicted as roofed on the 1st edition OS map; there is no evidence for gable chimneys; it is concluded that the building probably dates to the late 18th or early 19th centuries. No evidence for accompanying structures were noted.

5.8.6 Feature 4 (ND 3010 3828) (Site 39): Comprises a small rectangular building circa 11 m long by circa 5 m wide. A small extension or build platform was noted extending from the SE gable (Appendix 2, Figure 3) (Appendix 2, Photos 9 and 10). The building is depicted as roofed on the 1st edition OS map; there is no evidence for gable chimneys. This building was thought to be later than that recorded at Feature 3 and probably dates to the mid 19th century.

5.8.7 Feature 5 (ND 3013 3814 to ND3010 3822) (Site 44): Comprises a ditch and bank boundary partially enclosing an area of relict rig and furrow visible on aerial photographs but not at ground level. The boundary is still well defined but currently obscured by dense gorse scrub and consequently could not be photographed.

5.8.8 Feature 6 (ND 33010 3829 to ND 3015 3828) (Site 45): Comprises a vestigial turf and stone boundary that pre-dates the dry-stone wall that constitutes the northeast extremity of the proposed borrow pit (Appendix 2, Photos 11 and 12).

5.8.9 Feature 7 (ND 3007 3823) (Site 37): Comprises a flagstone quarry not depicted on the 1st edition OS map and in consequence post-dating the survey date of 1871 (Appendix 2, Photo 13).
5.8.10 Conclusion

An archaeological walkover of known elements of a relict agricultural landscape was conducted to determine the current state of the archaeology. All the principle features save for Feature 6 were readily identified and recorded. Feature 6 was not well defined on the 1st edition OS map although a small section may be associated with Feature 4. Feature 6 may be earlier than other features of the site. The two areas relict cultivation visible in aerial photographs was poorly defined at ground level.

5.9 Aerial Photographic Evidence

5.9.1 A search of vertical images held by the RACHMS identified seven sorties containing photos of Borrow Pit 1. No search was undertaken for Borrow Pit 2 due to its location within a commercial plantation. The photographs studied are listed in Section 8.3.

5.9.2 The earliest sorties (106G_UK_0162 and CPE_UK_0181) taken in August and October 1946 show intact field boundaries at the extreme northern tip of the application site adjacent to the former railway. Although the station buildings are intact the railway track appears to have been lifted, suggesting that it was removed immediately after its closure in 1944, presumably so the metal could be recycled. The next image (OS_67_150) taken in 1967 shows a single crater like quarry hole in the centre of the site. The railway station had been demolished by 1967.

5.9.3 The quarry is conspicuous on a 1970 vertical aerial photograph (OS_70_303) which shows a fresh access track running to it from the A99, suggesting that it was being worked at that time. The site is shown in greater detail on OS_98_188, taken from a low level in June 1995, which shows the abandoned quarry in the centre of the field. Cultivation remains (Site 42) located at the northern end of the application site are of unknown date, however they are clearly overlain by the railway and must therefore pre-date it. A boundary (Site 43) is shown defining the southern extent of the cultivation. This was identified on the ground during the walkover survey and found to be a turf and stone bank. Further cultivation remains are shown in the eastern corner of the site and immediately south of the Red Burn. Site 42 is also shown on OS_67_150.

5.9.4 A search was made of the RACHMS library for oblique images of the application site, taken for the purposes of archaeology. None were found

6 Assessment of Impacts

6.1 Direct Impacts

6.1.1 Potential impacts on known or unknown buried archaeological remains in the case of this development proposal relate to the possibility of disturbing, removing or destroying in situ remains and artefacts during groundbreaking works on the site associated with mineral extraction and the laying of access tracks and related drainage works. The access track for Borrow Pit 1 will utilise the bed of the former Lybster to Wick railway (Site 6) whilst Burrow Pit 2 will be accessed via existing forest tracks. Both these measures will limit, or possibly avoid completely any direct impacts beyond the areas of the borrow pits themselves.

6.1.2 The archaeological assessment for the wind farm (AOC 2008) demonstrated that the proposed development area is located on the periphery of a rich prehistoric landscape of which the Hill o’ Many Stanes (Site 21) and the Moss of Whilk (Site 11) are the nearest outliers. Whilst the potential
for further prehistoric discoveries being made during excavation of the borrow pits cannot be discounted, the absence of prehistoric field systems suggests that the prehistoric landscape may have consisted of distinct separate monuments, at least one of which, the Hill o’ Many Stanes was ritual in nature. Whilst the overall potential for prehistoric remains to be encountered at either borrow pit is low, residual lithic artefacts could be encountered.

6.1.3 There is a low possibility of remains of Early Medieval, Norse or Late Medieval date being encountered during the excavation of either borrow pit.

6.1.4 Paul Humphreys identified earthworks extending across the northern portion of Borrow Pit 1 during the walkover survey (Appendix 2). These remains, which include two building platforms (Sites 38 and 39), correlate with the crofting settlement shown on the 1877 Ordnance Survey. Whilst the areas of quarrying with in the borrow pit boundaries are at present unknown it is clear that the potential for post-medieval or immediate post-clearance remains being encountered during the course of development is high, indeed direct impact is certain if the areas containing the earthworks are to be quarried. The crafting remains are of local significance. Being greatly denuded they are not the best surviving of examples of their type, furthermore crofts are a common feature throughout the Highland region.

6.1.5 The site of Borrow Pit 2 has been severely impacted by modern forestry and quarrying and the potential for any in situ archaeological remains surviving is low, although the possibility of residual lithic artefacts being encountered in this location is low to moderate.

6.2 Indirect Impacts

6.2.1 Indirect impacts include potential visual effects on the settings of nearby Scheduled Monuments. Given the sub-surface nature of mineral extraction impacts are likely to be less than those assessed for the consented wind farm. Never-the-less some allowance has to be made for the potential for short term visual intrusion into the setting of the Hill o’ Many Stanes Scheduled Monument, resulting from the movement of machinery and heavy goods vehicles within its line of sight during the excavation of Borrow Pit 1. This indirect impact will be temporary and restricted to working hours during the extraction phase. It will in all probability have a minor impact on the setting of the monument.

6.2.2 Borrow Pit 2 is located within commercial forestry which will shield it from view and prevent any visual impact on the setting of any of the Scheduled Monuments located within the forest such as the Moss of Whilk.

6.2.3 Beyond the application sites indirect impacts will be restricted to the movement of goods vehicles. Following completion of the construction phase of the wind farm the areas of the borrow pits will be reinstated to a design agreed with the council and any indirect impact upon setting will cease.

7 Mitigation

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 National planning policies and planning guidance (SPP2010; PAN 42), as well as the local plan policies (Local Plan 2002, Structure Plan 2001) outlined in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 of this report, require a mitigation response that is designed to investigate the potential for archaeological sites within the
development areas and thence allow the preservation or recording of any significant remains. The preferred policy of national and local curators is that sites and monuments should be preserved *in situ* but that where this is not possible, recording, analysis and publication of sites and monuments may prove an acceptable alternative in some cases.

### 7.2 Mitigation of Direct Impacts

#### 7.2.1 Post-medieval settlement remains including two building platforms were identified on the proposed site of Borrow Pit 1. These remains have been judged to be of local importance and it is not believed that preservation *in situ* would be required. Any remains which can be avoided during quarrying should be clearly fenced off prior to the commencement of groundworks. Where impacts cannot be avoided it is recommended that the remains be subject to a detailed programme of survey. Survey should be followed by a limited programme of trial trenching to investigate or clarify any features of interest. Survey and trenching should be carried out prior to the commencement of quarrying in order to mitigate loss of the crafting features. It is suggested that the site be surveyed in detail at an early stage so that the potential impact of the quarrying on the remains can be accurately assessed and detailed provision made for any further mitigation that may be required.

#### 7.2.2 It is advised that an archaeological watching brief may be required during the stripping of soil during the excavation of both Borrow Pit 1 and Borrow Pit 2 in order to record any previously unknown archaeological remains or artefacts. In addition, it is advised that the Highland Council Historic Environment Team will require a minimum of 10 working days notification prior to the initiation of each significant phase of monitoring work. Where any of the above works impact inadvertently on archaeological remains, the advice of the Highland Council Historic Environment Team must be sought in respect of any requirement for further mitigation and/or specialist reinstatement.

### 7.3 Mitigation of Indirect Impacts

#### 7.3.1 The *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* indicate that the purpose of mitigation is to reduce the impacts by ‘…employing strategies of avoidance, remediation and compensation.’ Mitigation of visual impacts is usually achieved by hard and, or, soft landscaping but in an open moorland landscape, such ‘solutions’ might prove as large an intrusion as the original visual impact. Furthermore, to achieve their screening effect, the landscaping would almost certainly be sited close to the monuments and would create a significant risk of damaging *in situ* archaeological remains. Thus, the sites and monuments in the viewshed of Borrow Pit 1 are vulnerable to visual impacts and to the physical and visual impacts that might arise from the traditional methods of mitigation.

#### 7.3.2 It is therefore recommended that the site of Borrow Pit 1 be sensitively reinstated following the completion of extraction activities to avoid any long term permanent visual impact upon the setting of the Hill o’ Many Stanes.
8 References

8.1 Bibliographic references

AOC Archaeology Group 2004 *Burn of Whilk, Wind Farm Conservation Plan.*

AOC Archaeology Group 2008 *Burn of Whilk, Wind Farm, Caithness: Archaeological Assessment,* unpublished report.


Her Majesty’s Stationery Office 1979 *The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (AMAAA).*

Highland Council 2001 *The Highland Structure Plan.*

Highland Council 2002 *The Caithness Local Plan.*

Highland Council 2010 *Highland Wide Local Development Plan (Proposed 2010)*

Highland Council 2011, *Decision Notice 06/00676 FULCA 14th April 2011 (Burn of Whilk Windfarm Permission)*


Historic Scotland 2011 *Scottish Historic Environment Policy.*

Puls, A 2011 Re: *Screening Request Application 11/03947/SCRE Two Borrow Pits Related to Burn of Whilk Wind Farm* (Email to Ken McCorquodale).


Scottish Government 2010 *Scottish Planning Policy.*


8.2 Cartographic references

Pont, T 1580-1601 *Cathenesia*.

Blaeu, Joan 1654 *Cathenesia*, Amsterdam.

Moll, Herman 1745 *The Shires of Caithness and Sutherland. With Strathnavern, which is part of Sutherland Shire*, London, Bowles & Bowles.

Roy, 1747-55 *Military Survey of Scotland*.

Ordnance Survey 1877 *Caithness-shire* Sheet XXIX, scale 1:10,560.

Ordnance Survey 1877 *Caithness-shire* Sheet XXXIV, scale 1:10,560.

Ordnance Survey 1907 *Caithness-shire*, scale 1:10,560.

8.2 Aerial photographs consulted

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Figure 1: Burn of Whilk Borrow Pits and Access

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale map with permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Officer. Crown Copyright. AOC Archaeology Group, Edgefield Industrial Estate, Loanhead, Midlothian, EH20 9SY. OS Licence No.: 100016114
(c) AOC Archaeology 2012
Figure 2: Extract from William Roy’s Military Survey showing the approximate location of Borrow Pits 1 and 2

- Approximate Location of Borrow Pit 1
- Approximate Location of Borrow Pit 2

Reproduced by kind permission of the National Library of Scotland
Figure 3: Extract from Ordnance Survey Map of 1877 Showing the location of Borrow Pit 1

Site location
Figure 4: Extract from Ordnance Survey Map of 1907 showing the location of Borrow Pit 1

Site location
Figure 5: Extract from Ordnance Survey Map of 1907 showing the approximate location of Borrow Pit 2

- Approximate Location of Borrow Pit 2
Figure 6: Extract from Ordnance Survey Map of 1968-69, showing the location of Borrow Pit 1
Burn of Whilk Borrow Pits

Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

Appendix 1: Site Gazetteer
Site No: 1
Site name: East Clyth
Type of site: Boiler
Status: Unprotected
Easting/ Northing: 330310 939290
NMRS no: na
Hooper Site No: na

Site No: 2
Site name: East Clyth
Type of site: Enclosure
Status: Unprotected
Easting/ Northing: 330400 939200
NMRS no: na
Hooper Site No: na
Description: Rectangular enclosure located on the 1st edition (1871) map, not present on the 2nd edition (1907) and current (2004) Revisions.

Site No: 3
Name: East Clyth
Type of site: Broch
Status: unprotected
Easting/ Northing: 329950 929230
NMRS no: ND23NE 11
Hooper Site No: na
Description: A small artificial knoll - the remains of a Pictish dwelling (ONB 1872). The remains of a broch, now visible as a low, turf-covered sub-circular mound with a slightly concave centre, 1.0m high and some 20.0m in diameter, situated on near-level ground on the NE bank of a burn. Soil erosion has revealed a heavy stone content, but no definite traces of wall faces can be seen, save possibly on the NW side, where a single course of stones protrudes through the turf, forming a horseshoe shape, 2.0m across, indicating a mural cell.

Site No: 4
Name: Gunn’s Hillock, East Clyth (The Burnt Ha).
Type of site: Broch
Status: unprotected
Easting/ Northing: 330290 939040
NMRS no: ND 33 NW 2
Hooper Site No: na
Description: OS 6" map, (1971) The remains of a broch known as "Gunn's Hillock" or "The Burnt Ha", now represented by a mound. Since it has to some extent been broken into and cottages have been erected on top
of it, there are no measureable details. A vessel of rough sandstone 9
1/2 ins long by 6 1/4 ins broad by 4 3/4 ins deep, with an oval cavity 5
5/8 ins long by 4 1/4 ins broad and 3 3/8 ins deep, flat at the bottom,
from this site was donated to the National Museum of Antiquities of
Scotland (NMAS) by Curle in 1911 (Accession no: GA 957)
(RCAHMS 1911)
An amorphous grassy mound, heavily mutilated by later building, as
described by the RCAHMS (1911). The only evidence to suggest a
broch is its size and topographic position. No name is known locally.

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<td>Description:</td>
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| Site name: | East Clyth |
| Type of site: | Enclosure |
| Status: | Unprotected |
| Easting/ Northing: | 329600 939100 |
| NMRS no: | na |
| Hooper Site No: | na |
| Description: | Small rectangular enclosure aligned north east to south west located on the 1st edition (1871) Ordnance Survey. The enclosure is not present on the 2nd edition (1907) map or current (2004) revision. |

| Site No: | 10                         |
| Site name: | Swineymuck |
| Type of site: | Settlement cluster |
| Status: | Unprotected |
| Easting/ Northing: | 329870 939050 |
| NMRS no: | na |
| Hooper Site No: | na |
| Description: | Two roofed buildings, one aligned east to west and one aligned north to south, there is an enclosure to the east of this settlement cluster located on the 1st edition (1871) Ordnance Survey. The buildings and enclosure all appear on the 2nd edition (1907). The enclosure and the building aligned NE to SW remain on the current (2004) revision. |

| Site No. | 11                        |
| Name: | Moss Of Whilk |
| Type of site: | Mound; Enclosure |
| Status: | SAM No. 5799 |
| Easting/ Northing: | 328520 940930 |
| NMRS no: | ND24SE 8 |
| Hooper Site No: | n/a |
| Description: | A turf-covered stony mound about 21.0m in diameter, and 1.5m maximum height, of uncertain classification. Some 20 metres to the NE is a sub-oval enclosure measuring 17.0m x 13.0m within a peat-covered stone wall of indeterminate width. A few displaced blocks are exposed in the SW arc. This site bears some resemblance to the 'Green Hill of Clayton' (RCAHMS 1911). |

| Site No. | 12                        |
| Name: | Sidhean Fuar |


**Site No:** 13  
**Site name:** Sidhean Fuar  
**Type of site:** Quarry  
**Status:** Unprotected  
**Easting/ Northing:** 328300 941430  
**NMRS no:** na  
**Hooper Site No:** na  
**Description:** This quarry, which is situated deep within Camster Forest, was probably opened in the late 1970s/early 1980s to provide gravel and stone for roads within the woodland. The quarry is not shown on either the 1st or 2nd edition of the OS 6-inch map (Caithness 1877, sheet xxix; 1907, sheet xxix) and it is not visible on an RAF vertical aerial photograph taken in May 1946 (106G/SCOT/UK.76 print 4290). Roughly subrectangular on plan, the quarry measures about 65m from NE to SW by 35m transversely and it has been dug into the slope on the NW to a depth of 2.5m.  
(YARROWS04 940)  
Visited by RCAHMS (ATW) 10 September 2004.

**Site No:** 14  
**Site name:** Sidhean Fuar  
**Type of site:** Quarry  
**Status:** Unprotected  
**Easting/ Northing:** 328100 941580  
**NMRS no:** na  
**Hooper Site No:** na  
**Description:** A 'disused quarry' is first located at this location on the 1988 revision of the Ordnance Survey and is still recorded on the present revision.

**Site No:** 15  
**Name:** Sidhean Fuar (Alternative Names: Toftgun 12)  
**Type of site:** Mound  
**Status:** unprotected  
**Easting/ Northing:** 328380 941740  
**NMRS no:** ND24SE 31
Site No. 16
Name: Sidhean Fuar (Alternative Names: Toftgun 11)
Type of site: Mound
Status: unprotected
Easting/ Northing: 328400 941760
NMRS no: ND24SE 30
Hooper Site No: na
Description: A round peat mound, 12m in diameter and 0.5m high lying on a ridge and covered with heather (Mercer 1980), Site TOF 11.

Site No. 17
Name: Toftgun
Type of site: Broch
Status: SAM No. 591
Easting/ Northing: 327980 942410
NMRS no: ND24SE 6
Hooper Site No: na
Description: An amorphous turf-covered mound about 22.0m in diameter and 1.2m maximum height, surmounting the end of a low ridge. Probably a robbed broch although no structural details survive. On the edge of the mound in the S are three or four earthfast slabs on edge, but it cannot be ascertained if these are the remains of outbuildings as identified by RCAHMS in 1911. Also visited by Mercer (1980) Site TOF 2.

This possible broch was not found on the date of visit. Its reported location lies in an area of Camster Forest that was deep-ploughed before planting and is now blanket ed with conifers.

(YARROWS04 946)
Visited by RCAHMS (ATW) 11 September 2004

Site No. 18
Site name: Toftgun 13
Type of site: Natural Feature
Status: Unprotected
Easting/ Northing: 327300 941050
NMRS no: ND24SE 32
Hooper Site No: na
Description: A grass and heather-covered, sub-rectangular mound, 26 by 23m and 2m high at the E end.
This peat mound is situated on a S-facing slope within Camster Forest. The mound measures 3m in diameter by 0.4m in height and has been damaged by deep forestry ploughing. (YARROWS04 952).

Visited by RCAHMS (ATW) 11 September 2004.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site No.</th>
<th>19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Hill Of Yarrows (Alternative Names: Toftgun 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of site:</td>
<td>Mounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status:</td>
<td>unprotected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easting/ Northing:</td>
<td>328950 942350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMRS no:</td>
<td>ND24SE 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooper Site No:</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>A round peat mound 5m in diameter and 0.3m high covered with heather and grass (Mercer 1980), Site TOF 8.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site No.</th>
<th>20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Hill Of Yarrows (Alternative Names: Toftgun 14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of site:</td>
<td>Mound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status:</td>
<td>unprotected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easting/ Northing:</td>
<td>329140 942120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMRS no:</td>
<td>ND24SE 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooper Site No:</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>A round, heather-covered peat mound, 25m in diameter and 1.5m high, with a stone, 0.5m high, standing in the centre (Mercer 1980), Site TOF 14.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site No:</th>
<th>21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site name:</td>
<td>Hill O’Many Stanes, Clyth (Mid Clyth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of site:</td>
<td>Stone Rows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status:</td>
<td>SAM 90612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easting/ Northing:</td>
<td>329500 938400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMRS no:</td>
<td>ND23NE 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooper Site No:</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>Twenty-two rows of standing stones, on the S slope of the Hill o’ Many Stanes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dryden (Anderson 1886), in 1871, noted 250 of which 192 remained erect in 1910.

The stones are generally thin slabs set with their faces looking across
the rows and packed at the base with smaller stones. The largest are about 3 ft high, 3 ft wide and 15 to 18 ins thick.

To the E of the easternmost row, one or two protruding stones suggest that the monument may originally have extended further in that direction (Feachem 1963); (Anderson 1886); (RCAHMS 1911). As described above. The stones radiate from the top of a rocky knoll to the N, an ideal position for a cairn, though there is no sign of one. That there have been rows immediately to the E is proved by the presence of small hollows edged with packing stones, although the stones themselves have disappeared.

### Site No. 22
- **Name:** None available
- **Type of site:** Peat cuttings
- **Status:** Unprotected
- **Easting/ Northing:** 329250 941340
- **NMRS no:** n/a
- **Hooper Site No:** n/a
- **Description:** A group of peat cuttings, generally subrectangular in plan, was identified within a forestry clearing at the Moss of Whilk during walkover survey by AOC Archaeology in November 2010. The cuttings were seen to extend over an area of approximately 150 m east/west by 100 m north/south. The cuttings were labelled ‘A’ to ‘F’ during the survey and most commonly lay on a WNW/ESE orientation, although block ‘B’, to the south-west, was oriented roughly north/south.

### Site No. 23
- **Name:** None available
- **Type of site:** Peat cuttings
- **Status:** Unprotected
- **Easting/ Northing:** 329250 941340
- **NMRS no:** n/a
- **Hooper Site No:** n/a
- **Description:** A group of peat cuttings, generally subrectangular in plan, was identified within a forestry clearing at the Moss of Whilk during walkover survey by AOC Archaeology in November 2010. The cuttings were seen to extend over an area of approximately 150 m east/west by 100 m

### Site No. 24
- **Name:** Toftgun 10
- **Type of site:** NATURAL FEATURE(S)
- **Status:** Unprotected
- **Easting/ Northing:** ND 328580 942340
NMRS no: ND24SE 28
Hooper Site No: n/a
Description: A group of five round peat mounds, 3m in diameter and 0.2m high, lying on a ridge and covered with heather, grass and moss. R J Mercer 1980.

These five mounds were not found on the date of visit. Their reported locations lie in an area of Camster Forest that was deep-ploughed before planting and is now blanketed with conifers.

(YARROWS04 947)

Visited by RCAHMS (ATW) 11 September 2004.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site No.</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Halberry Castle LAT 225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of site:</td>
<td>Castle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status:</td>
<td>Unprotected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easting/ Northing:</td>
<td>ND 330110 937710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMRS no:</td>
<td>ND33NW 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooper Site No:</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>(ND 3011 3771) Halberry Castle (NR) (remains of) OS 6&quot; map, (1971)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The foundation of a rectangular keep, 44 by 28ft, which is said to have belonged to the Crowner Gunn in the 15th century. The promontory on which it stood has been crossed at the neck by a rock-cut ditch about 25ft wide.

RCAHMS 1911.

Halberry Castle is the turf-covered footings of a tower, 19.0 by 6.0 by 0.6m high, defended on the landward side by a deep ditch spanned by a causeway. The ditch appears to have been mutilated by quarrying at its NW end. From a point 4.0m NW of the tower, there is a low turf-covered wall running N across the promontory forming a second line of defence, the gap between the wall and tower being the entrance.

Between the tower and the ditch are the vague footings of a rectangular building, 8.0 by 4.5m, which is probably contemporary with the tower. Name but not date verified. Resurveyed at 1:2500.

Visited by OS (N K B) 11 May 1967.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type of site</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Easting/ Northing</th>
<th>NMRS no</th>
<th>Hooper Site No</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Crofthouse</td>
<td>Croft house</td>
<td>Unprotected</td>
<td>329681 937529</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Croft house recorded on 1st ed OS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Mid Clyth Graveyard Cross Slab</td>
<td>Chapel, Cross Slab</td>
<td>Scheduled Ancient Monument No. 614</td>
<td>329560 937230</td>
<td>ND23NE 4</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Croft house recorded on 1st ed OS The remains of a Roman Catholic chapel, in good preservation, the walls about 3ft high. Name Book 1871. A tall grey slab, 6ft 6ins high by 1ft 9ins by 6ins, with a Celtic cross incised on its SW face, stands near the centre of Mid Clyth graveyard. (See also ND23NE 5.) RCAHMS 1911. There are no remains of the chapel to be seen. The grave yard is still in use. The cross slab, as described by the RCAHMS, is at ND 2955 3724. Surveyed at 1:2500. Visited by OS (AA) 5 May 1967. Chapel (NR) (site of) Cross Slab (NR) OS 1:10,000 map, (1977). The chapel was not located, the graveyard is still in use, and the cross-slab is largely moss-covered. C E Batey 1982.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Greenhill, Mid-Clyth</td>
<td>Broch (Possible)</td>
<td>Scheduled Ancient Monument No. 557</td>
<td>329450 937320</td>
<td>ND23NE 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Type of site</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Easting/ Northing</td>
<td>Highland HER no</td>
<td>Hooper Site No</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Greenhill, Horse Mill</td>
<td>Horse Mill</td>
<td>Not Designated</td>
<td>329410 437280</td>
<td>MHG13670</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>A grass-covered hillock, 15ft high and about 110ft in overall diameter, containing the remains of a broch. No building is visible, and part of the broch, near the top, seems to have been removed. RCAHMS 1911. This is now a severely mutilated mound, with no identifiable features.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Mid Clyth, Roadside Farm, Cross Slab</td>
<td>Cross Slab</td>
<td>Not Designated</td>
<td>329410 437280</td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>A cross-incised slab, 3ft 5ins by 1ft 11ins by 5ins, was found many years before 1910 built into a stone dyke. It is now used as a cover on the top of the wall around the well containing the machinery of a horse mill, at the back of the farmhouse of Roadside, Mid Clyth. RCAHMS 1911, visited 1910. This cross-inscribed slab, as described and illustrated by the RCAHMS, was removed from the horse mill at ND 2941 3728 when the mill was destroyed in 1930, and built into the corner of a new byre at ND 2939 3728 (information from A O Sinclair, Greenhill, Mid Clyth, Caithness). Its original position cannot be ascertained, but it probably came from the graveyard 180 m to the E, where a similar stone (ND23NE 4) stands on the site of a Roman Catholic chapel. Surveyed at 1:2500.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Hill O’ Many Stones, Mid Clyth</td>
<td>Standing Stone</td>
<td>Not Designated</td>
<td>329410 437280</td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Easting/ Northing: 329400 938300
NMRS No: ND23NE 12
Hooper Site No: n/a
Description: (ND 294 383) A fallen standing stone, 2.7m long, lies 46m W of ND23NE 6 on a ridge.

E W MacKie 1975.

Site No. 32
Name: Gunn’s Castle, Bulnacraig
Type of site: Castle
Status: Not Designated
Easting/ Northing: 330740 938570
NMRS No: ND33NW 3
Hooper Site No: n/a
Description: The ruins of a small rectangular keep about 37 by 23ft with walls some 3ft thick, on a peninsular rock isolated by a wall built on a rock shelf. Immediately outside the building at the NE angle is a circular depression, some 9ft in diameter and 2 to 3ft deep, probably indicating a well. The castle was a stronghold of the Gunns.

T Sinclair 1890; RCAHMS 1911.

The turf-covered footings of a tower, 0.5m high, known locally as 'Gunn's Castle' (information from G Sutherland, Bridgend, East Clyth, Caithness) generally as described by the RCAHMS except that the outer wall to the SW has been destroyed by erosion, and the alleged wall is probably a natural sink-hole caused by drainage through a rock fault. Date not ascertained.

Visited by OS (N K B) 10 April 1967.

Site No. 33
Name: Maclane
Type of site: Structure
Status: Not Designated
Easting/ Northing: 330670 938860
NMRS No: ND33NW 7
Hooper Site No: n/a
Description: A post-medieval to modern possible croft or enclosure comprising a single-roomed structure, 9.5 by 5m with a wall thickness averaging 0.75m, and a possible entrance in the E. The walls are greatly reduced and partly grass covered.

C E Batey 1982.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site No.</th>
<th>34</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Maclane, Lat 223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of site:</td>
<td>Mound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status:</td>
<td>Not Designated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easting/ Northing:</td>
<td>330630 938850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMRS No:</td>
<td>ND33NW 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooper Site No:</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>An oval, grass-covered mound of small stones spread to 11 by 10m, perched on the edge of a steep scarp. Of unknown period, this could be a carefully-built field clearance heap of unusual type. C E Batey 1982.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site No.</th>
<th>35</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Braun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of site:</td>
<td>Mill (Possible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status:</td>
<td>Not Designated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easting/ Northing:</td>
<td>330760 938990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMRS No:</td>
<td>ND33NW 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooper Site No:</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>The remains of a rectangular structure, 6.4m NE-SW by 5m with a wall 0.7m in average thickness, with traces of a possible dam, 9.6 by 3.7m and channels on the SW side. The walls are greatly reduced with extensive rubble spreads, particularly in the dam. Possibly a post-medieval to modern croft or mill. C E Batey 1982.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site No.</th>
<th>36</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Braun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of site:</td>
<td>Mound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status:</td>
<td>Not Designated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easting/ Northing:</td>
<td>330760 939170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMRS No:</td>
<td>ND33NW 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooper Site No:</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>An oval mound of small stones, grass-covered, measuring 4.8 by 3.8 by 1m in maximum height. Possibly field clearance of unknown period. C E Batey 1982.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site No.</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Borrow Pit 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of site:</td>
<td>Quarry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status:</td>
<td>Not Designated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easting/ Northing:</td>
<td>330070 938230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMRS No:</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooper Site No:</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>Modern flagstone quarry recorded during walkover survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site No.</td>
<td>Name: Borrow Pit 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site No.</td>
<td>名字: Borrow Pit 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site No.</td>
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<td>Site No.</td>
<td>Name: Borrow Pit 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site No.</td>
<td>Name: Borrow Pit 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site No.</td>
<td>Name: Borrow Pit 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Type of site: Boundary
Status: Not Designated
Easting/ Northing: 329970 938260 to 390100 938340
NMRS No: n/a
Hooper Site No: n/a
Description: Ditch and stone bank boundary identified during the walkover survey

Site No. 44
Name: Borrow Pit 1
Type of site: Boundary
Status: Not Designated
Easting/ Northing: 330130 938140 to 330100 938220
NMRS No: n/a
Hooper Site No: n/a
Description: Ditch and bank boundary identified during the walkover survey

Site No. 45
Name: Borrow Pit 1
Type of site: Boundary
Status: Not Designated
Easting/ Northing: 330130 938290 to 330150 938280
NMRS No: n/a
Hooper Site No: n/a
Description: Turf and stone boundary identified during the walkover survey
Burn of Whilk Borrow Pits

Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

Appendix 2: Site Walkover Survey

Paul Humphreys, January 2011
Notes on Archaeological Walkover Survey – Borrow Pit 1, Mid Clyth, Caithness

Introduction

An archaeological walkover survey of an area of rough pasture at East Clyth, Caithness identified as a potential borrow pit, was conducted on behalf of AOC Archaeology Ltd. Highland Council had identified that a relict agricultural landscape visible on the 1st edition ordinance survey and aerial photographs may still be extant; the brief being to record, primarily by photography, any surviving features. The survey was conducted on 16th January 2012; the weather was clear and cold with a low sun and virtually no wind.

Figure 1 – Feature ID (Ordnance Survey 1st Edition, 1877)
Reproduced by kind permission of the National Library of Scotland
Figure 2 – Feature 3 plan
Findings

The site concerned is depicted in red on Figure 1. The area is bounded to the west by the Red Burn and to the North West by the disused Lybster to Wick railway line. From here the land rises to a low ridge then falls away towards the A99 coastal road which constitutes the South Western boundary. The North Eastern boundary comprises a C19 dry-stone wall that separates the unimproved land of the site from the adjacent improved pasture. The vegetation cover varies from areas of soft rush, coarse grasses, close-cropped heather moor and gorse scrub. The bedrock comprises roughly horizontally bedded middle old red sandstones that outcrop on the ridge crest.
Feature 1 (ND 3000 3833): Comprises an area what appears on aerial photographs to be narrow rig and furrow cultivation orientated NW / SE. The area is now waterlogged and has been heavily colonised by soft rush. Only one rig was identifiable at ground level (Photo 1) and then only on the grounds of vegetational variation.

Feature 2 (ND 2997 3826 to ND 3010 3834): Comprises a ditch and turf and stone bank boundary. It is well defined towards the west becoming less so towards the east, where it eventually passes under the later dry-stone wall (photos 2 and 3). The 1st edition OS map graphics suggest that the boundary may date to the early improvement period originally enclosing improved land that was later abandoned; an apparent entrance piercing the boundary was noted (photo 4).

Feature 3 (ND 3000 3823): Comprises a probable dwelling adjacent to a short section of turf and stone boundary (photos 5 and 6). The rectangular building, measuring roughly circa 14 m long by circa 4 m wide, is divided by a curious double wall feature which may have severed as storage or concealment (photo 7). A small circular feature appeared to have been built into the south corner of the building. It had the appearance of a small corn drying kiln having an external flue (photo 8). The South Western wall of the building was poorly defined and it was not possible to detect an entrance. The building is depicted as roofed on the 1st edition OS map; there is no evidence for gable chimneys; it is concluded that the building probably dates to the late 18th or early 19th centuries. No evidence for accompany structures were noted.

Feature 4 (ND 3010 3828): Comprises a small rectangular building circa 11 m long by circa 5 m wide. A small extension or build platform was noted extending from the SE gable (Figure 3) (photos 9 and 10). The building is depicted as roofed on the 1st edition OS map; there is no evidence for gable chimneys. This building was thought to be later than that of feature 3 and probably dates to the mid 19th century.

Feature 5 (ND 3013 3814 to ND3010 3822); Comprises a ditch and bank boundary part enclosing an area of relict rig and furrow visible from aerial photographs but not at ground level. The boundary is still well defined but currently obscured by dense gorse scrub and consequently could not be photographed.

Feature 6 (ND 33010 3829 to ND 3015 3828): Comprising a vestigial turf and stone boundary that pre-dates the dry-stone wall that constitutes the North East extremity of the proposed borrow pit (photos 11 and 12).

Feature 7 (ND 3007 3823): Comprises a flagstone quarry not depicted on the 1st edition OS map and in consequence post-dating the survey date of 1871 (photo 13).

Conclusion

An archaeological walkover of known elements of a relict agricultural landscape was conducted to determine the current state of the archaeology. All the principle features save for feature 6 were readily identified and recorded. Feature 6 was not well defined on the 1st edition OS map although a small section may be associated with feature 4. Feature 6 may be earlier than other features of the site. The two areas relict cultivation visible in aerial photographs was poorly defined at ground level.
Photo 1 – Feature 1; Relict rig and furrow looking NW

Photo 2 – Feature 2; boundary looking NE from Red Burn
Photo 3 – Feature 2 boundary continuation looking NE

Photo 4 – Feature 2; entrance through boundary looking SE
Photo 5 – Feature 3; possible dwelling looking NW

Photo 6 – Feature 3; turf and stone boundary looking NW
Photo 7 – Feature 3; double wall feature looking NE

Photo 8 – Feature 3; possible kiln looking NNE
Photo 9 – Feature 4; Small rectangular building looking ESW

Photo 10 – Feature 4; extension / platform looking WNW
Photo 11 – Feature 6; vestigial turf and stone boundary looking SE

Photo 12 – Feature 6; continuation of vestigial turf and stone boundary looking E
Photo 13 – Feature 7; quarry looking SE