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WOODLAND CREATION AND MANAGEMENT SCHEME
Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and Walkover Survey
Glenborrodale Estate, Ardnamurchan, Argyll, Scotland

Summary

An archaeological desk-based assessment and walkover survey was carried out between the 13th and the 15th May 2011 on behalf of Miller Harris and Glenborrodale Estate, Ardnamurchan, Argyll in advance of a woodland creation and management scheme. The work was undertaken to assess the nature and extent of any archaeology likely to be affected within the area outlined for planting and regeneration and in order to inform recommendations for the protection and management of any sites recovered. The survey identified new sites of archaeological interest including shielings, enclosures, boundary walls, a track and a well. Caisteal Breac Dun was also revisited and recorded, although this structure was located outside the survey areas. Mitigation measures are proposed to safeguard the sites during the establishment of the woodland scheme.

1. Introduction

1.1 A desk-based assessment and walkover survey of the visible archaeological monuments surviving within the boundaries of a proposed woodland establishment scheme was carried out on the Glenborrodale Estate, Ardnamurchan, Argyll (see Fig.1) by West Coast Archaeological Services between the 13th and 15th of May 2011. The survey was requested by Miller Harris (Forestry Consultant) on behalf of Glenborrodale Estate, because the area proposed for the woodland development is located in a landscape with a potential for sites of archaeological significance.

1.2 The purpose of the desk-based assessment and archaeological walkover survey was to identify and record the location and nature of any archaeological features of interest prior to development, whilst assessing any potential adverse impacts and proposing an appropriate strategy of mitigation. The Scottish Planning Policy 2010 describes how archaeology should be managed when considering planning decisions and determining conditions for developments that have an impact on the historic environment.

2. Acknowledgements

2.1 We wish to thank the owners of Glenborrodale Estate and Miller Harris for commissioning the work, and for provision of accommodation by Laga Estate. Fieldwork was carried out by Steven Birch and Mary Peteranna, while mapping is reproduced by permission of ProMap license #LIG1044.
3. Site Location

3.1 The survey areas on the Glenborrodale Estate generally comprised rough upland pasture, with some areas of improved ground and stands of native woodland (see Fig. 1 – Areas 2, 3 and 4).

![Figure 1](image)

Figure 1 – Location maps showing the areas of survey at Glenborrodale (Areas 2, 3 and 4), and the survey area on the adjacent Laga Estate (Area 1)

3.2 The survey areas at Glenborrodale are bounded to the south by the B8007 road and to the north by an old track that traverses rugged ground leading towards the southern flanks of Leac an Fhidhleir. Survey Area 2 is generally composed of rugged and open ground with numerous rock outcrops, especially within the northern sector, and is dominated by a steeply-descending gorge containing a water course. Survey Area 3 runs from northeast to southwest close to the dun site of Caisteal Breac and also comprises open moorland-type ground. Finally, Survey Area 4 lies close to the settlement of Glenborrodale and includes improved ground with pockets of woodland, rhododendrons and an ornamental lake. Deer grass and poorly-drained ground dominates Areas 2 and 3, although there are small fertile pockets of ground, especially adjacent to stream courses. Bracken stands are numerous within the survey areas, while heather is also present on the higher, rough pasture.
4. **Archaeological and Historical Background**

4.1 During the mid-19th century, many of the small townships on the Ardnamurchan Peninsula were cleared to make way for larger sheep farms. However, some years after these events took place, around 1878 many of the sheep farms in the area were swept clean of sheep and were converted into a deer forest under the direction of Sir James Riddell (MacKenzie 1883:106). The present castle of Glenborrodale, which is located to the southwest of the survey areas, was built between 1898 and 1902 when Mr. Charles D. Rudd, a wealthy magnate who made his fortune in the diamond mines in South Africa, bought the estate and became the Laird of Ardnamurchan. Built by Sydney Mitchell for Charles Rudd, the building was constructed on the site of an earlier castle.

4.2 A survey of the Sites and Monuments Record suggests that little earlier archaeological survey work had taken place within the boundaries of the survey areas. The exception including the visits made to the dun at Caisteal Breac.

5. **Methodology**

The overall aim of this assessment was to identify and record any archaeological sites or features that might be affected by the proposed tree planting, regeneration and fence erection within the survey areas on the Glenborrodale Estate and to propose mitigation as appropriate to ensure that archaeological evidence is not unnecessarily damaged or destroyed.

5.1 **Desk-Based Assessment**

5.1.1 A desk-based assessment was conducted prior to commencement of the survey in order to assess the archaeological potential of the area based on previously recorded sites and any historical documentation.

5.1.2 A search was made of all relevant records from the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS – Canmore) and the Highland Historic Environment Record (HHER). Online aerial photographs were also checked for any relevant site information, along with cartographic sources.

5.2 **Walkover Survey**

5.2.1 The area of the proposed woodland creation and management scheme was walked over and surveyed between the 13th and 15th May 2011, during a period of fine, sunny weather, but including some heavy showers of rain. Conditions on the ground for the walkover survey were good, although wet underfoot in parts, with good visibility and light levels. Stands of heather and tussock-covered ground, along with stands of bracken and long deer grass resulted in some difficulty in identifying archaeological features in some areas of the landscape.

5.2.2 Archaeological sites were recorded individually including using high-resolution digital photography where possible, while sketch survey drawings were produced where necessary. The individual site locations were plotted using DGPS technology and ArcPad software on a handheld Windows Mobile-based computer. Details relating to the individual recovered sites and monuments can be found in the Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites in Appendix 1.
5.2.3 Survey and recording methods from the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) were employed and all work was conducted in strict adherence to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Code of Conduct.

6. Results

The following sections present the results of the desk-based assessment and walkover survey.

6.1 Desk-Based Assessment

A desk-based assessment was carried out in advance of the walkover survey in order to assess the archaeological potential of the area based on previously recorded sites and any historical documentation.

6.1.1 Cartographic Sources

6.1.1.1 Mapping held at the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh was checked on-line and produced the following results.

6.1.1.2 William Roy’s Military Map of Scotland – 1747-55

Roy’s Military Map shows the township of Glen Borrodale close to its present location, adjacent to the shores of Loch Sunart. No evidence of settlement is shown within the survey areas.

6.1.1.3 John Thompson’s Atlas of Scotland, 1832

Thompsons map provides little detail to the settlement at Glenborrodale, which is referred to as Glenbergaadal on the map.

6.1.1.4 Ordnance Survey First Edition Six-inch to the Mile (Argyllshire 1875, Sheet xxv)

This map shows no archaeological structures or features within survey Areas 2 and 4 on the Glenborrodale Estate, although an enclosure or sheepfold is shown at a point between Area 3 and Area 4 (possibly Site 5 in Appendix 1) and an enclosure within the northwest corner of Survey Area 3 (Site 4 in Appendix 1).

6.1.1.5 Ordnance Survey One-inch to the Mile First, Second and Third Edition Sheets (Sheet 52)

This sequence of maps provides little additional detail with regards to archaeological structures and features within the survey areas at Glenborrodale. The 3rd Edition map sheet (1908) does show the ornamental pond within survey Area 4 and the track bounding the northern edge of survey Area 2, suggesting that both features were probably constructed at a similar time to the building of Glenborrodale Castle.

6.1.2 Highland Historic Environment Record (HHER)

A full search of the Highland Council Historic Environment Record (HHER) produced only one known site, which is located close to the western boundary of survey Area 3.
6.1.2.1 **MHG144**

**Dun, Caisteal Breac**

Supposedly the site of an old castle built by a band of free-booters, the remains of the dun can be faintly traced on the ground. The name signifies 'The Speckled Castle'. Caisteal Breac, a dun situated on a knoll with an extensive view. It is sub-circular on plan, measuring about 14.0m from E to W by 11.0m within a tumbled wall. The base course of the outer face can be seen intermittently except in the NE, and that of the inner face is occasionally visible, giving a wall thickness of 2.2m. The entrance is not evident.

About 1960 Mr J S Thompson (now deceased) excavated a trench through the wall in the SE arc and across the interior, but no finds were reported.

Visited by Ordnance Survey in 1970.

During a visit to the site by the Royal Commission in 1972, the following details are provided about the dun:

*Dun, Caisteal Breac*: This dun is situated at a height of approximately 90m OD on the rocky boss that crowns the summit of a hill about 500m NE of Glenborrodale village. The ground falls away steeply on all sides except the N, where there is a more gradual descent to an area of broken moorland. The dun is an irregular oval on plan and measures about 12.2m by 11.5m internally. Its wall is now reduced to a bank of debris, not more than 0.6m high, in which several stretches of outer and inner face can be seen in situ, ranging from 1.8m to 2.7m on the N, where both faces have been preserved, and probably exceeding 4m on the NE and S. The position of the entrance is probably indicated by a gap, 1.8m wide, on the NNW side. This dun lies on a natural hillock overlooking Glen Borrodale. The site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument ï No.7799.
6.2 Walkover Survey Results

The walkover survey revealed 9 archaeological sites, most of which most likely relate to post-
medieval use of the landscape including transhumance activities. However, the prehistoric site
of Caisteal Breac Dun was visited, which lies just outside the boundaries of survey Area 3. The
Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites (see Appendix 1) provides details of the individual sites
recovered during the survey.

6.2.1 Prehistoric Period

6.2.1.1 Although located outside and to the west of the boundaries of survey Area 3, the dun at
Caisteal Breac was visited and recorded (Site 3a). The site is discussed in some detail within
the entry in the Highland Council Historic Environment Record (HHER). The trench from the
earlier excavations can still be clearly seen within the interior of the dun, while a stone-built
shieling has been constructed within the thickness of the wall within the south side of the
structure (see Site 3b in Appendix 1). A sub-circular drystone twinning pen has also been built
in the northwest quadrant of the dun (see Site 3c in Appendix 1). Otherwise, the site is as
described within the HHER entry.

6.2.2 Historic Period

6.2.2.1 The remaining sites identified during the walkover survey most likely relate to the use of the
landscape during the post-medieval period and include shieling huts (Sites 1a, 1b and 3b), stock
closures and sheep fanks (Sites 4 and 5), boundary dykes and walls (Sites 7, 8 and 9), a track
(Site 6) and a possible well (Site 2). Transhumance activities are well known in the Scottish
Highlands and Islands, where shielings were utilised to manage domestic stock and utilise
upland pastures and areas of marginal ground. The sheep fanks and enclosures were most likely
constructed when the area was cleared of the tenants and the land given over to a sheep farm.
However, the sheep fank that appeared on earlier cartographic sources (1875) has been heavily
robbed of its stone leaving behind a low grass and stone bank (Site 5).

6.2.2.2 The field dykes and walls, most of which are poorly-preserved in the landscape, are more
difficult to date. They obviously represent the division and partitioning of the better quality
ground, either to grow cereal crops or to set-aside good pasture for cattle. However, no
evidence for rig and furrow was identified within the survey areas on the Glenborrodale Estate.

7. Discussion

7.1 The walkover survey recovered nine archaeological sites, most of which are located in survey
areas 2 and 3, comprising structures and features associated with settlement, transhumance
activities and the later use of the land as a sheep farm.

7.2 Roy’s Military Map of 1747-55 shows a scatter of settlement along the shores of Loch Sunart,
to the south of the survey areas, but the map provides little detail to the earlier use of the
landscape.

7.3 The majority of the sites recovered comprise shielings and boundary dykes and walls, the latter
forming field systems and enclosed areas of ground. However, considering the relatively good
quality of some of the ground within the survey areas, few sites were found. It is possible that
many earlier field walls and structures have been completely robbed away by later activities on the estate, especially after the ground was converted into a deer forest around the 1890s.

7.4 The sheepfold recorded within the survey area (Site 5), which was clearly shown on the Ordnance Survey 1st Edition map in 1875, most likely relate to the later agricultural activities on the estate after the people had been cleared from the land to make way for sheep.

7.5 Although now heavily degraded, the dun of Caisteal Breac is still a site of National importance, hence the scheduled status. This comprised one of several potential prehistoric structures that overlooked Loch Sunart, although such buildings may also have been used during later periods of history.

Plate 3 – The shieling hut (Site 3b) built within the wall on the south side of Caisteal Breac (Site 3a), looking NW

8. Recommendations

8.1 A buffer zone of at least 50 metres should be retained around the dun of Caisteal Breac (Site 3a), in order to protect any potential buried archaeology associated with this site, if planting is planned within this area of the estate at any stage in the future.

8.2 At least a 10 metres buffer zone should be maintained around any individual buildings and structures including shielings (Sites 1a and 1b), the sheepfold and enclosure (Sites 5 and 4), while any new tree growth within these buffer zones should be managed. If any development is proposed in the future in the vicinity of the possible well (Site 2), a buffer zone of at least 10 metres should be retained around the structure.
Figure 2 – Map of the survey areas showing the distribution of archaeological sites and features including sites recorded outside of the proposed survey areas
8.3 A 5 metres buffer zone should be maintained to each side of boundary walls, while any new tree growth within these buffer zones should be managed.

8.4 Access tracks for vehicles and the erection of any new fence lines should also respect the recommendations set out above.

Plate 4 – Stone-built enclosure (Site 4) located in the NW corner of survey Area 3

9. References


10. Web-Based Sources


Gazetteer for Scotland – http://www.scottish-places.info

West of Scotland Archaeology Service Sites and Monuments Record – http://www.wosas.net

General background information found at http://www.electricscotland.com/history/clearances
## Appendix 1 – LAG11: Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites

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<tr>
<th>Site No.</th>
<th>Site type</th>
<th>Site name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Alignment</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Ht OD</th>
<th>Easting</th>
<th>Northing</th>
<th>Photo No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a</td>
<td>Shieling</td>
<td>Glen Borrodale</td>
<td>Bracken, grass and heather-covered drystone shieling measuring 4.5m NW-SE by 4m over walls 0.7m wide and up to 0.3m high.</td>
<td>NW-SE</td>
<td>Very degraded</td>
<td>Post Medieval</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>161527</td>
<td>762378</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>1b</td>
<td>Shieling</td>
<td>Glen Borrodale</td>
<td>Bracken, grass and heather-covered drystone shieling measuring 5m E-W by 4m over walls spread to 0.7m wide and up to 0.3m high.</td>
<td>E-W</td>
<td>Very degraded</td>
<td>Post Medieval</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>161532</td>
<td>762334</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Well</td>
<td>Glen Borrodale</td>
<td>Under grass and rush is a subcircular stone-built structure measuring 4m in diameter over walls spread to 0.7m wide and up to 0.3m high. At the interior is a pit filled with standing water.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Very degraded</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>161221</td>
<td>761655</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>Dun</td>
<td>Caisteal Breac</td>
<td>On a prominent knoll under grass, bracken and heather are the rubble remains of a dun with two later structures in the interior. The structure, with possible SE entrance, measured 18m NW-SE by 17m over walls spread to 2.2m surviving up to 2.5m high.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Degraded</td>
<td>Iron Age</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>161282</td>
<td>761563</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>Shieling</td>
<td>Caisteal Breac</td>
<td>Sub-circular drystone shieling located in S side of dun and constructed out of dun rubble. It measures 4.5m NW-SE by 4m over walls 0.7m wide and standing up to 0.8m high.</td>
<td>NW-SE</td>
<td>Degraded</td>
<td>Post Medieval</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>161284</td>
<td>761550</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>3c</td>
<td>Pen</td>
<td>Caisteal Breac</td>
<td>Sub-circular drystone twinning pen located in NW side of dun. It measures 1.5m E-W by 1m over walls 0.5m wide and 0.6 high.</td>
<td>E-W</td>
<td>Degraded</td>
<td>Post Medieval</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>161281</td>
<td>761561</td>
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<td>Alignment</td>
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<td>Period</td>
<td>Ht OD</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Enclosure</td>
<td>Caisteal Breac</td>
<td>Located at the SW corner of plantation is a drystone enclosure under grass and bracken with walls 0.7m wide and up to 0.6m high. The structure measures 46m N-S by 40m and there are trees planted within the interior.</td>
<td>N-S</td>
<td>Degraded</td>
<td>Post Medieval</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>161433</td>
<td>761602</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Enclosure</td>
<td>Glen Borrodale</td>
<td>Grass and bracken-covered stone/ turf enclosure built on SW side of robbed-out boundary wall. The remains are very indistinct—the walls appear spread to 2.5m wide and 0.3m high.</td>
<td>NE-SW</td>
<td>Very degraded</td>
<td>Post Medieval</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>161242</td>
<td>761276</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Track</td>
<td>Glen Borrodale</td>
<td>Grass-covered track with some cobbling measures 2-2.5m wide. Track is partially revetted in sections on down-slope side. It appears on the 3rd Ed OS map leading to Acharacle.</td>
<td>E-W</td>
<td>Degraded</td>
<td>Post Medieval</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>161481</td>
<td>762796</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dyke</td>
<td>Glen Borrodale</td>
<td>Grass- and bracken-covered stone and turf boundary wall standing up to 0.7m high with walls spread to 1m wide.</td>
<td>E-W</td>
<td>Very degraded</td>
<td>Post Medieval</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>161015</td>
<td>762452</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Dyke</td>
<td>Glen Borrodale</td>
<td>Heather and bracken-covered stone and boulder boundary wall standing up to 0.9m high with walls spread to 1.2m wide.</td>
<td>NW-SE</td>
<td>Degraded</td>
<td>Post Medieval</td>
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<td>161301</td>
<td>762224</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Dyke</td>
<td>Glen Borrodale</td>
<td>Moss- and bracken-covered drystone wall in a very degraded condition, walls surviving up to 0.6m high and 0.8m wide</td>
<td>N-S</td>
<td>Very degraded</td>
<td>Post Medieval</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>161399</td>
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Caisteal Breac dun in the distance, from Survey Area 2</td>
<td>MKP</td>
<td>14/05/2011</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Caisteal Breac dun in the distance, from Survey Area 2</td>
<td>MKP</td>
<td>14/05/2011</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>WNW</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Panorama of Caisteal Breac dun, showing the shieling overlying dun rubble</td>
<td>MKP</td>
<td>14/05/2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rubble remains of Caisteal Breac dun, showing the shieling overlying dun rubble</td>
<td>MKP</td>
<td>14/05/2011</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>W</td>
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<td>W side of Caisteal Breac dun, with Glen Borrodale in background</td>
<td>MKP</td>
<td>14/05/2011</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>SW</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>View down Glen Borrodale from the dun Site 3; Survey area 4 is in the centre right of photo</td>
<td>MKP</td>
<td>14/05/2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Drystone enclosure under grass and bracken located at the SW corner of a plantation</td>
<td>MKP</td>
<td>14/05/2011</td>
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