Report of Archaeological Desktop & Walkover Survey
Achork, by Rogart, Highland.
Centred NC 770/045

Client: McGlade Forestry

By
Stuart Farrell
B.A A.I.F.A F.S.A.Scot.
April 2011
Non-Technical Summary

Stuart Farrell was commissioned by McGlade Forestry in March 2011 to undertake an archaeological desktop and walkover survey for a block of proposed woodland at Achork, by Rogart, Highland.

Work revealed a number of previously unrecorded archaeological sites to include structures.

A number of recommendations have been made in relation to the proposed scheme.
1. Introduction

This report is for an archaeological desktop and walkover survey conducted for McGlade Forestry for an area of proposed woodland at Achork, by Rogart, Highland.

The fieldwork was conducted on the 21st of April 2011.

2. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following for their help during the work:
- Mr. John McGlade of McGlade Forestry;
- Staff of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland;
- Staff of the National Monuments Record of Scotland;
- Staff of the National Library of Scotland, Map room;
- Mr. E Rutter, Archaeologist, for help with walkover survey.

Stuart Farrell
39a Park Street
Nairn
Highland
IV12 4PP
Figure 1 – Site Location. 1:25,000.
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Figure 2 – Site Plan (2) 1:15,000.
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Figure 3 – 1st Edition ordnance Survey Map of 1879.
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Figure 4 – Location of Archaeological Sites 1:15,000.
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Figure 5 – Aerial Photograph of 1964.
© Ordnance Survey/NMRS OS/64/228/213 of 2 Oct 1964.
Figure 6 – Areas Proposed for Exclusion of Archaeological Sites 1:15,000.
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3. Objectives

To conduct a desktop and rapid walkover survey to record any archaeological features to the block of proposed forestry. This survey to follow those guidelines as proposed by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA, 1999); and those of the Forestry Commission (FC, 1995).

4. Archaeological Survey

Desktop & Walkover Results
A desktop survey was conducted using the following sources:
- Highland Council Historic Environment Record;
- National Monuments Record of Scotland, Edinburgh;
- National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh (Maps);
- Local archives.

Map coverage was limited to the area of interest, as the 1st edition OS of 1879 was almost the same as the 2nd edition of 1907 and little survey work has been carried out in detail in the 20th century, with the next edition being 1970. Early historical maps of the area do not provide enough detail for the area of forestry. Aerial photographs held by the RCAHMS, Edinburgh were of limited use for 1946 and 1954 for being too high, but site were very noticeable on flight of 1964.

Some archaeological survey work has previously been conducted to the area of proposed forestry. Work by Cathy Dagg in 2001 to the W side of the proposed area revealed a platform and 2 field banks and peat tracks. The line of the overhead power line to the West edge of the scheme was surveyed by the CFA Ltd in 2006-2208 (EHG 3360) but details of this are yet to be put into the Highland Environment Record. To the North edge of the scheme (site 6) work by Richard Tipping of Stirling University in 1994 revealed tree stumps with evidence of cutmarks.

(From Dagg 2001)
The following archaeological sites were to be found in or close to the area of proposed woodland. Grid references on-site were obtained using a Garmin II GPS using OS data. Sites are as follows:

**HER** – Highland Council Historic Environment Record  
**NMRS** - National Monuments Record of Scotland  
**N/a** – not available  
Recommendations are given after each site.

1 – Achork  
**HER** – MHG 9442 & 38983  
**NMRS** – NC70SE 17  
Grid Ref: NC 755/048 (centred)  
**Type** – Field System, Hut Circles

Noted in HER and NMRS of ‘(A: NC 7550 0494) Hut Circle (NR), (B: NC 7557 0480) (C: NC 7561 0480) Hut Circles (NR), (NC 7574 0484) Field System (NR) OS 1:10,000 map, (1970).

A few hundred yards to the S of the hut circle and mounds (NC70NE 30), on rising ground to the E of Achork, is a large group of mounds at an elevation of 650 to 700 ft. One hut circle is visible, situated immediately E of the most northerly house and some 200 yards from it. It measures about 17 by 19ft internally, the bank some 4 to 5ft in width. The entrance in the SE is some 1ft 8ins across. RCAHMS 1911, visited 1909.

The only feature resembling the description and position of the hut noted by RCAHMS is a vague platform at NC 7548 0524 set into a SW-facing slope. There is a denuded bank around the SW arc and a wide gap in the SE which may indicate the position of an entrance, but the feature is too amorphous to classify with much certainty as a hut.

Centred at NC 755 048 on the lower SW slopes of the hill is a settlement of four hut circles including the three published by OS (A - C) and one other (D) discovered during recent field investigation. 

Hut 'A' is 6.5m in diameter between the centres of a denuded wall with an entrance in the SE. 'B' measures 10.0m in internal diameter, within a wall defined by an inner circle of intermittent stones on edge backed by rubble. The entrance is in the SE arc. Hut 'C', overlaid by a later shieling, is oval, measuring 9.5m N-S by 8.0m E-W between wall centres. The entrance is not apparent. 'D', greatly denuded, measures 8.0m in diameter between wall centres. No entrance is visible.

Extending along the SW slopes of the hill between hut 'D' and the RCAHMS "hut" is an extensive and well-preserved field system comprising stone clearance heaps, lynchets and low field walls; some of the latter may be contemporary with later clearance. Visited by OS 3 March 1966 and 17 November 1975,'

Cairns shown as 'Tumuli' on 1st edition OS map of 1879 (See figure 3). 2nd edition OS of 1907 shows same. Named as ‘Sithean Glas an Uanain’ on 1st edition OS which is recorded in the Ordnance Survey Name Books (Book 34, page 68) as follows: ‘This names applies to a hill situated about one half mile to the West of Loch na Fuarlaaiche (Farlery). The north side of this hill is thickly studded with tumuli. It signifies the “tumulus of the lamb’s hollow”’. Well evident on aerial photograph of 1964 (see figure 5).

Work by Cathy Dagg in 2001 revealed the following features:
- Hut circle at NC 7550/0494
- Hut circle at NC 7541/0499
- Extensive area of clearance cairns to SW
- Field Boundary Bank NC 7555/0534 to NC 7555/0529
- Platform 8m in diameter with bank to SW, possible Hut circle at NC 7548/0522
- Field Boundary Bank at NC 7552/0504 c12m in length
Walkover reveals extensive area of cairns especially along hillside extending back towards and under pylon line; small stretches of field walls particularly in area to West of water main (NC76726/04443) (marked on OS map as field boundary) to the East of this are a few mounds but they are natural. Features found were as follows:

- Hut Circle at NC 75637/04745 at 650ft (EPE 14ft) looks more rectangular rather than circular c8.7m by 4.5m with walls 0.7m wide and up to 0.3m high with no sign of doorway.
- Enclosure at NC 75614/04728 at 620 ft (EPE 20ft) c35m in diameter of large and small stones, partly on slope with double width walls giving evidence that it would have been topped with turf possibly associated with the hut-circle/later structure noted above.
- Possible Structure at NC 75653/04693 at 625ft (EPE 13ft) 5m in diameter possibly robbed-out to build enclosure.
- Structure or possible Hut Circle at NC 75696/04676 at 635ft (EPE 15ft) c.8m in diameter, possibly later structure atop.
- Structure or possible Hut Circle at NC 7557/04696 at 640ft (EPE 10ft) 6m in diameter with clearance cairn on west side, number of cairns in vicinity 2-3m in diameter and 0.5m high.
- Hut Circle at NC 75616/04799 at 650ft (EPE 11ft) 11.7m in diameter with walls 1.7m wide and up to 0.5m high with no visible entrance.
- Field wall NC 75712/04874 to 75699/04892 1m wide and up to 0.4m high.

Recommend that area of sites (see figure 6) of the large part of this proposed area at the West edge of the scheme ie to the East of the water main be monitored under direct archaeological supervision with hand-planting only being conducted with 20m buffer zones around the main features, with no planting to occur on any mounds or banks.

2 – Loch Farlary
HER – MHG 10510 & 41270
NMRS – NC70SE 29
Grid Ref: NC 766/043 (centred)
Type – Hut Circles, Clearance Cairn

Noted in NMRS and HER of ‘NC 7667 0438; NC 7672 0445. Two hut circles 'A' and 'B' respectively. 'A', of unusual definity though peat-overgrown, is 13.0m in diameter between wall centres. An earthfast stone slab 0.7m high edges the W side of a well-defined entrance gap in the S.
'B', ill-defined and obscured by peat, is 11.0m NW-SE by 9.5m between centres of a wall, much depleted around SE arc. The wall appears to expand to 5.0m at a probable entrance gap in the S though this effect could be due to tumble. About 20.0m to the NE of hut 'B' an arc of peat-overgrown rubble and a large slab on edge in the S arc may indicate the remains of a hut with portal stone.
Contemporary cultivation is marked by one or two stone clearance heaps around hut 'B'. Visited by OS 11 August 1975.'

Single hut-circle visible on aerial photograph of 1964 (214).

Walkover reveals the following:
A – Hut Circle well defined at NC 76686/04378 at 683ft (EPE 14ft) (see cover) 15.8m in overall diameter with walls up to 4m wide and 1m high with entrance well defined by upright stones to South.
B – Hut Circle not very discernible at NC 76726/04443 at 691ft (EPE 15ft) only visible due to slight rise and fall in heather, though entrance visible to SE. 11m in overall diameter with bank 1.5-2m and 0.4m high. Couple of mounds to NW.

Recommend that site be excluded from proposed scheme and to be given 20m wide exclusion area.
3 – Loch Farlary
Alt Name: Loch Salachaidh
HER – MHG 9434
NMRS – NC70SE 31
Grid Ref: NC 769/041
Type – Field System, Hut Circles

Noted in NMRS and HER of ‘A settlement of seven huts (‘A’ - ‘G’) falling within a contemporary field system marked by numerous stone clearance heaps, and vestiges of a field wall near hut ‘G’. ‘A’ - ‘E’ are circular and measure between 8m and 11m between the centres of walls, in the main overgrown with peat. All have entrances in the S arc. ‘F’ is 13.5m in diameter between centres of a wall denuded except for two portal stones, 1.0m apart and 0.3m high, in the S arc. ‘G’, oval and the best preserved is 13m NNW - SSE by 11m between wall centres, with an entrance gap in the SSE where the wall spreads to 5m. Surveyed at 1:10,000. Visited by OS 11 August 1975.’

2 Hut-circles and a few cairns visible on aerial photograph of 1964 (214).

Walkover reveals the field system as noted by OS as not to be as extensive as planned; quite a few of the proposed mounds are natural or over boulders rather than clearance heaps. Most of the Hut circles were not located, though the following were:

- Hut Circle at NC 76868/04114 at 695ft (EPE 12ft) (Either A/B) 14.3m in overall diameter with bank 2.4m wide and 0.8m high with possible entrance to S.
- Clearance Cairn at NC 76900/04057 at 694ft 2m diameter and 0.2m high
- Structure at NC 77092/03905 at 721ft (EPE 13ft) 3m in diameter with wall 0.5m wide.
- Hut Circle at NC 77109/03820 at 715ft (EPE 18ft) (site G) 15.8m in overall diameter with bank 4m wide and 1m high with entrance to S with porch at entrance 2m by 3m with few clearance cairns to N.
- Enclosure at NC 77136/03830 at 732ft (EPE 13ft) 8-shaped c35m by 20m only visible due to heather being burnt off, probably associated with site G.
- Clearance Cairn at NC 77188/03908 at 787ft (EPE 13ft) 2m in diameter and 0.6m high.
- Clearance Cairn at NC 77181/03947 4m in diameter and 0.5m high.
- Clearance Cairn at NC 77190/04013 2m in diameter and 0.5m high.
- Possible Hut Circle D has rise and fall of heather but no evidence for structure.

No sign of hut circle in area as marked C or those marked E & F. A few flat areas in heather but none discernible as hut circles.

Recommend that sites be excluded from proposed scheme and to be given 20m wide exclusion area.

4 – Loch Farlary
HER – MHG 9433
NMRS – NC70SE 30
Grid Ref: NC 7703/0440
Type – Hut Circle

Noted in NMRS and HER of ‘A hut circle measuring 9.0m in diameter between centres of a peat-overgrown wall, with an entrance in the SE. There are no indications of contemporary cultivation. Surveyed at 1:10,000. Visited by OS 11 August 1975.’

Walkover reveals no trace of hut-circle at this location, area of former peat cuttings only.

No recommendations to be made.

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5 – Kinloch
HER – MHG 11116
NMRS – NC70SE 32
Grid Ref: NC 7701/0369
Type – Hut Circle

Noted in NMRS and HER of ‘NC 7701 0369. Set into a W-facing slope, is an oval hut measuring 12.5m NE-SW by 11.0m between wall centres, with an entrance in the SW. There are no indications of contemporary cultivation. Surveyed at 1:10,000. Visited by OS 11 August 1975.’

Visible on aerial photograph of 1964 (214).

Walkover reveals site well away from proposed fence line.

No recommendations to be made.

6 – Loch Farlary
HER – NHG 13310
NMRS – N/a
Grid Ref: NC 7745/0495
Type – Findspot

No notes in HER. Associated report by R Tipping on tree stumps with evidence of cut-marks found here in peat cuttings in 1994. Work was published in 2007.

No recommendations to be made, area outside boundary.

5. Conclusions

Overall most of the sites revealed relate to a former prehistoric farming landscape, of hut-circles, clearance cairns and some evidence of fields, date unknown. It is recommended that the large part of this proposed area at the west edge of the scheme be monitored under direct archaeological supervision with hand-planting only.

The other areas of proposed planting form a series of areas of deep heather covered ground with the open areas being wet ground of grass and marsh.

Any unexpected archaeological discoveries made during forestry operations should be notified to the Highland Council Archaeology Unit.

6. Archive
A copy of this report is to be deposited in the National Monuments Record of Scotland in Edinburgh.
7. Discovery & Excavation in Scotland
A short summary of the results of this project will be submitted to the Council for Scottish Archaeology’s publication *Discovery & Excavation in Scotland*.

8. References


National Monuments Record of Scotland CANMORE database for NC70SE.

Ordnance Survey Name Sutherland Book 34 page 68.


Maps Consulted

Ordnance Survey 1st edition 6inch-mile sheet 96 Sutherland of 1879 surveyed 1872.

Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 6inch-mile sheet 96 Sutherland of 1907 revised 1904.

Ordnance Survey map NC70SE of 1970 1:10,000 revised 1966-69.

Aerial Photographs Consulted

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Top - Plate 1 – View of Hut Circle site 2B facing N – scales 2m.
Bottom - Plate 2 – View of Hut Circle site 3 (A/B) facing NW – scale 2m.
Top - Plate 3 – View of possible Hut Circle site 3D facing NW.
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