

INTERIM REPORT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS ON THE PITTODRIE ESTATE, ABERDEENSHIRE

SUMMER 2025



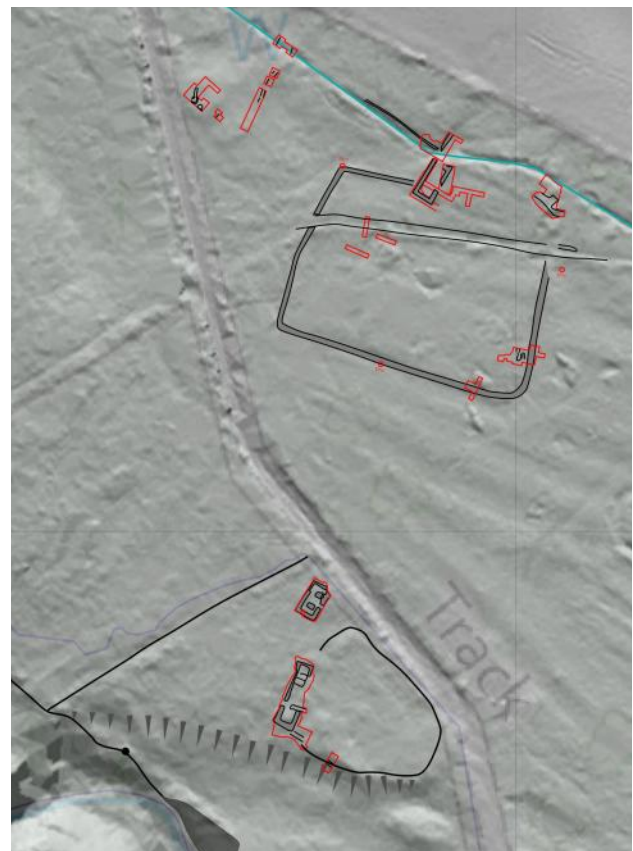
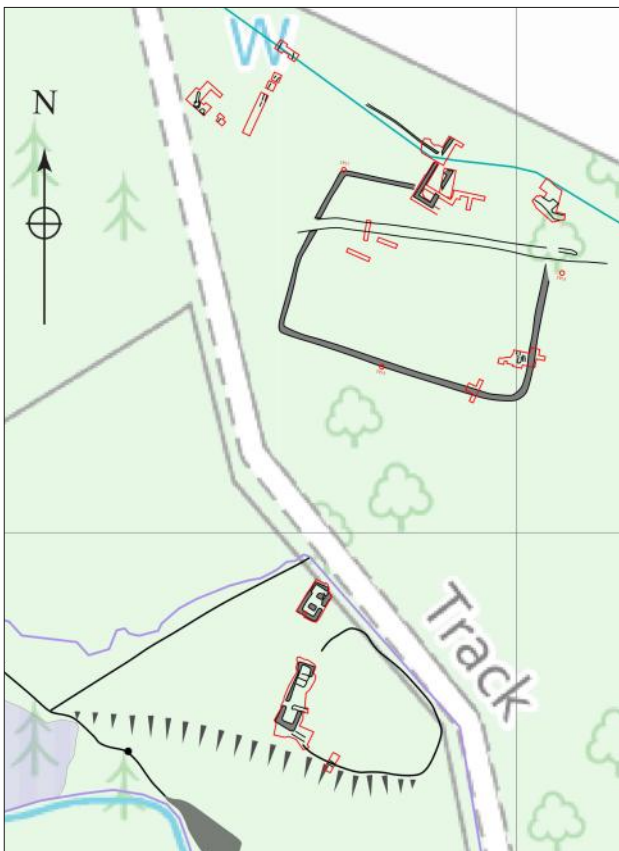
INTERIM REPORT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS
ON THE PITTODRIE ESTATE, ABERDEENSHIRE,
SUMMER, 2025

Iain Ralston and Colin Shepherd
with a report on the 'Pittodrie Bog' by Andrew Wainwright

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH AIMS

The 2025 season at Pittodrie saw a change from the usual format with the introduction of an extra 5 days training dig prior to the main event. This training dig was intended for complete beginners to archaeology or for others wishing to further develop their excavational skills. The site chosen continued last year's work on the side of the mound where a stone feature appeared to be encircling the slope and heading in the direction of the wooden structures discovered in 'the bog' last year. This training dig was well attended and provided much new and exciting evidence (spoiler alert!).

This introductory dig was followed quickly by the 'main event' that was the preparatory clearance for what, we hope, will be further seasons of intensive studies on this unexplored part of the hill, west of the 'Turnpike' (see Figures 1 and 2; Photo 1). But, of course, the mysterious 'bog' could not be ignored and further work continued there under the careful gaze of Andrew Wainwright. (Contrary to popular opinion, he will not be taking up permanent residence there.)



Figures 1 and 2. Plan of sites either side of the 'Turnpike'. First, showing sites in relation to baseline map and, second, LiDAR view with sites superimposed. Major archaeological features shown in black; trench edges shown in the red.

The work carried out this season formed part of the wider Bennachie Landscapes Project run jointly by the Bailies of Bennachie, the University of Aberdeen and various independent local researchers. More information on the Bailies of Bennachie and this project can be found at:

<https://www.bailiesofbennachie.co.uk>

Information about the Bennachie Landscapes Project and more information about the social history of the North-east in general can be found at:

www.bennachielandscapes.com



Photo 1. Drone photograph showing the site after clearance of the upper turf and vegetation layers. The iron-working structure lays to the left, its corner cut by the 'Turnpike's' dyke. The longhouse lays to the right with the small trench cutting the enclosure dyke shown in the top right corner. In the bottom right is a trench revealing what appears to be the remains of a further enclosure dyke. Photo courtesy Hugh Fraser.)

THE EXCAVATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The slight lumps and bumps that denoted the existence of the longhouse were first discovered by Barry Foster back in 2016. Only after the 2018 Bede House excavations and the production of the LiDAR images of the area did the full extent of the archaeology here begin to be realised. The longhouse was firmly in our sights but then came covid and then came Storm Arwen rendering the site clearly off-limits until it could be cleared of windblown trees. This occurred in early 2025 owing to the diligence of the new owners, Foresight Sustainable Forestry and their land managers at Pittodrie, RTS. Once cleared of trees, those parties kindly agreed and assisted in these excavations. Mention must also be made of the continuing work, east of the Turnpike, in the lands of Macdonald Hotels. As ever, we are indebted to them for their ongoing generous help and access to their lands.

Surprisingly, given the devastation across the area by Arwen and the subsequent forestry activity, the longhouse survived fairly intact. This was greatly aided by RTS working with us in order to mitigate as much damage as possible. Huge thanks are due them for that diligence. Ben Hudson of Tree Logic added his skills to the pre-excavation operations by surgically removing the remaining windblown tree-stumps that were overlying the longhouse itself. He did this with such precision that no further damage was occasioned.

THE LONGHOUSE EXCAVATION

The aim of this season was to 'strip and plan' the longhouse as a precursor to further work after gaining a better idea of its extent and survival. It was assumed, from Barry's initial findings, that the structure comprised two or three units. There were indications of internal cross dividers but this was only partially clarified after the removal of the overburden. Longhouses (sometimes known as byre houses) are known for having one end used for human habitation and a byre end for animals. This was shown to be the case here and a more complete discussion of how this longhouse fits into the regional pattern has been reserved till the end of the report.

From the start it became obvious that the longhouse had adjoining areas of archaeological interest. Consequently, the planned excavation area was organised to meet the needs of the archaeology. In accordance with good archaeological practice, it is intended to completely excavate only parts of the footprint, leaving other areas intact for future generations. The management plan for the area, drawn up by RTS, is to take into account all archaeological remains and to manage the developing woodland accordingly. What follows is an account of the evidence that has been discovered during these initial preparatory works. Figure 3 shows the groundplan of the longhouse with the main features annotated.

As noted, the longhouse can be divided into an area for a family to live in and a byre end for agricultural stock and provisioning. The building was almost certainly of turf construction with a stone base to keep the turf off of the floor. Timber posts would have supported the roof, though no indication of their placement has so far been found. It is unknown whether the building had gables or had a hipped roof. The former is possible as a greater proportion of stone was found at either end of the building and a hearth, set against the end wall, hints at a 'hanging lumb' affixed to a gable end. However, the documentary evidence (discussed at the end) suggests a building to have been here for around two hundred years, which will have undergone many changes and alterations during that time.

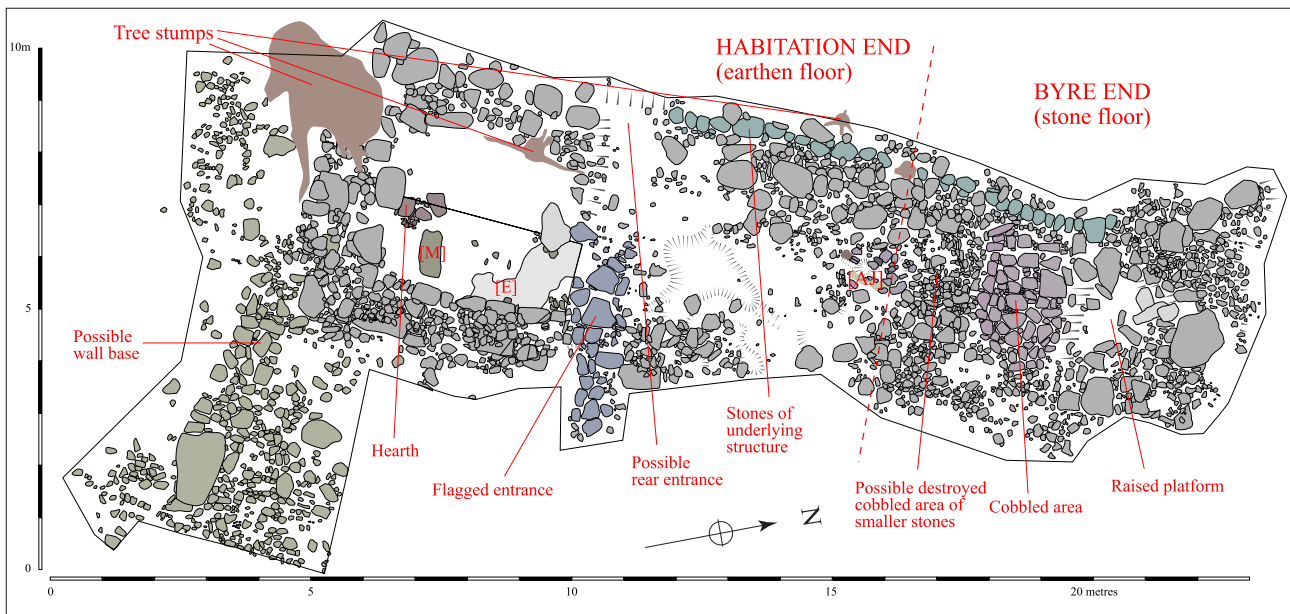


Figure 3. Plan of longhouse showing major features. (See text for key to individual letters.)

The hearth and southern living zone

The hearth comprised a setting of flat and fire-marked stones in the centre of the wall, with a 'hearth back' stone jutting into the room from the end wall. This would have helped to retain and reflect heat into the room. The hearth may have replaced an earlier one that appears to have survived beneath the later one, though further excavation is required to clarify that matter. Close to the fire, a large rectangular stone [M] orientated east to west lay embedded in the earthen floor. The purpose of this stone is currently unknown, but it may have provided a stable base for some artisanal activity.

An area of burning lay between the large stone [M] and the hearths, whilst iron metalwork fragments found nearby may be associated with hearth cooking pot type fittings or a 'sway' for hanging a cooking pot or kettle. Craft activity might also be suggested by the discovery of two spindle whorls - one with interesting markings - found within the stone tumble at this end of the house. (See Photo 2.) A mould for making lead pistol shot (Photo 3) suggests part-time occupation carried out on behalf of the laird - pistols not suggestive of possessions belonging to a relatively modest household. Furthermore, a sherd of fine porcelain lying immediately on top of the final occupation layer also speaks of a benign association between this humble household and the 'big house'.



Photo 2. Spindle whorl with interesting carvings.



Photo 3. Mould for making pistol shot.

Lying between the large stone [M] and the entrance-way lay an area of blackened soil beneath the final occupation layer. This eastern half of the southern living zone is designated to be excavated entirely, leaving the western half for future generations. During this preparatory year, this area was only excavated down to the underlying blackened layer, from whence samples were taken for environmental analysis and dating. Only with the benefit of that knowledge will excavation continue next year.

Entrance walkway

A series of large, well-bedded flagstones survived on the east side of the house, indicating the position of the entrance and dividing the living accommodation into two discrete parts. These extended beyond the house to create an external flagged entrance-way. The rear of the house appears to have had a further entrance, though the poor condition of the walls along this side make this less certain. However, a distinct hollowing of the occupation layer in this position suggests the former passage of feet. Again, it must be remembered that this building will have gone through many alterations and doorways may well have been blocked or opened-up at different periods.

Northern living zone

This central section of the longhouse suffered the greatest amount of disturbance both by Storm Arwen and prior to that event, probably during much earlier forestry activity when archaeological features were less accounted and more frequently destroyed.

A large boulder overlying the archaeology south of the entrance way in the middle of the house suggests a large machine had been operating and moved that stone to its final resting place. A similar boulder can be seen precariously balanced on the north end wall of the byre end. Similarly, the stones of the east wall of the longhouse were no longer *in situ* and had been moved some yards east of the house. The tumbled remains along the west side also speak of machine damage. This damage had nothing to do with the recent clearing operations. Storm Arwen had, however, blown over a large tree just north of the entrance way. The stump of this was meticulously cleared away by Ben Hudson. During the wind-blowing of the tree, its roots had torn up much of the archaeology and resulted in a large 'tree-throw' hole, illustrated by the hachures in Figure 3. Close by to the north, a smaller tree had fallen and charcoal was found adhering to its roots a foot or so below ground level. This may have been simply evidence of a recent fire or, more likely owing to its depth, of something earlier. Samples of charcoal were taken for carbon-dating prior to any further work being carried out in this area.

The floor of this end of the living zone was also made of beaten earth. Within this was an unusual feature [AJ]. Arguably, there may or may not have been a bit of cobbling associated with the

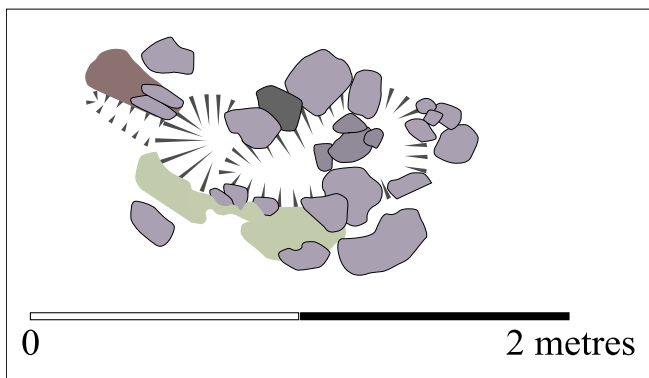


Figure 4. Plan of oval feature [AJ].

west side of this. The feature itself (Figure 4) will be more fully excavated next year. Primary excavation revealed a hollowed oval pit with evidence of a stone-lined base and stone-lining around the sides. One piece of local slate was incorporated into the sides. Along the east side, the wall of the hollow comprised what appeared to be fired clay and there was further evidence of burning at its southern end.

Against the external west side of the longhouse and incorporated into its west wall in the byre end was the underlying structure that appears to predate the longhouse itself. Its stones were smaller and more evenly-sized than the large earth basal stones of the longhouse. This suggests a more slight structure, which will be explored more fully next year.

The byre

Just beyond feature [AJ] was evidence of cobbling that appears to have formed the southern end of the byre. No partition dividing the byre from the living accommodation has yet been found, possibly suggesting a wooden structure. No obvious remains of wattle and daub were found. A wooden partition would have permitted the warmth from the animals to percolate more readily through the house. As with the north part of the living accommodation, the east wall had been badly damaged, presumably in the last half of the twentieth century. It is hoped that some of the basal stones can be recovered beneath the stone tumble that was cleared and recorded this season.

Adjoining the evidence for cobbling comprising small stones, on its north flank the floor was made of very well-laid cobbles of an altogether different quality and size. A kerb, one stone wide, divided these cobbles from the smaller ones to the south. This created a slight step with the better cobbles potentially creating a wide, sunken area, potentially helpful for 'mucking out'. Beyond these cobbles the floor rose appreciably to create a raised platform at the extreme north end of the building. Three or four surviving large, flat cobbles indicate that this area had also been well-floored but had suffered dereliction at some point in the past.

The longhouse itself is a rather odd shape. The southern living zone appears to be a fairly regular rectangle, but the building becomes more irregular the further north it extends. At the extreme north end it is not much more than half the width of the southern end. On the west wall behind the nicely cobbled surface the wall is barely as wide as the single width of stones identified as belonging to the earlier structure. Much more work is needed to clarify these first impressions.

The south-east extension

Extending eastwards from the south-east corner of the longhouse, though slightly offset, is what appears to be the foundation for another wall (Figure 3). The drone image - Photo 1 - appears to suggest that this may be on the same alignment as the small section of enclosure dyke explored further east (see below). However, this was a very narrow trench and not really wide enough to justify such a conclusion. Moreover, the possible wall base is remarkably well made and more reflective of the foundation for a building than a mere boundary dyke. Most perplexing of all was the presence of a massive boulder sat immediately on top of the foundation. This had not been recently moved and appears to have been deliberately positioned. It may be that this represents an aborted decision to build another structure, possible as an addition to the longhouse. The right-angle it makes with the longhouse, along with its potentially similar width, assuming the large stone to represent the prospective south-east corner, might make this a reasonable suggestion. Further clearance to the north of this feature may shed further light on its purpose. To the south, there is little room between it and a steep scarp to the former floodplain of the Rushmill Burn. Another interpretation, though, would see the 'foundation' to be a remarkably well-made path. Its very even nature certainly makes this a plausible suggestion. However, its purpose and positioning hard against the corner of the longhouse begs an explanation.

Finally, immediately south of the longhouse is what appears to be the remains of a cobbled surface. There is nothing intrinsically unlikely about this, though its very denuded state makes such an identification merely one possibility.

THE ENCLOSURE DYKE

Before Storm Arwen, the slight remains of an enclosure dyke were visible. These were marked in yellow tape prior to a thinning of the area that was cancelled. That was unfortunate as such an event would have minimised the effects of the storm. Little of the northern side can now be made out

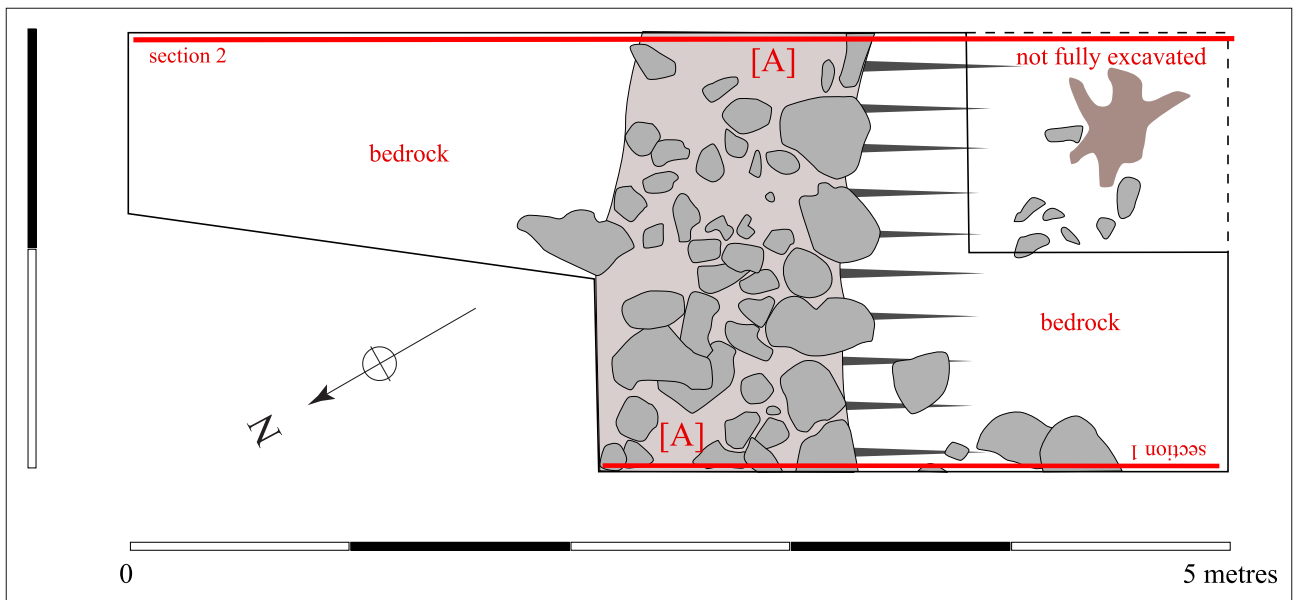


Figure 5. Plan of section across the enclosure dyke [A].

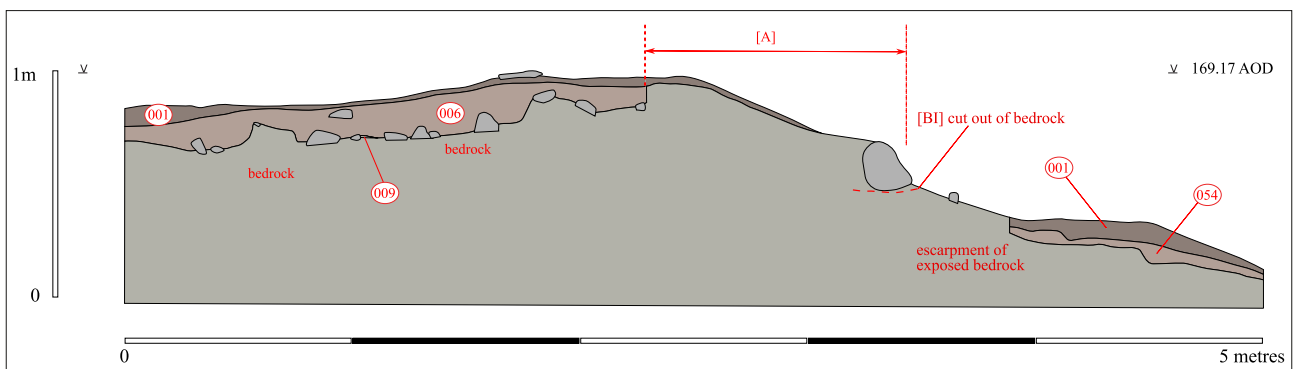


Figure 6. Section across the enclosure dyke showing bedrock and scarp down to the floodplain.



Photo 4. Showing the dyke on the edge of the scarp with the longhouse in the background.

although, over time and the settling of the disturbed ground, it may yet become more visible. Along its southern side, overlooking a scarp down to the floodplain, the feature survives better. A trench was placed across the dyke in order to characterise and record it. (See Figures 5 and 6.)

It appears that the friable bedrock was cut into in order to provide a more level setting for the basal stones of the dyke at the top of the scarp. The dyke appears, therefore, to have been positioned right on the edge of the scarp with the soil (006) running hard against it. Debris from cutting into the friable bedrock was found down the side of the scarp. Most of the stones from the dyke appear to have been robbed, probably as material for building the late 18th-/early 19th-century policy dykes that surround site. This appears to have been the fate of the Bede House and, probably, the more usable stones from the present sites.

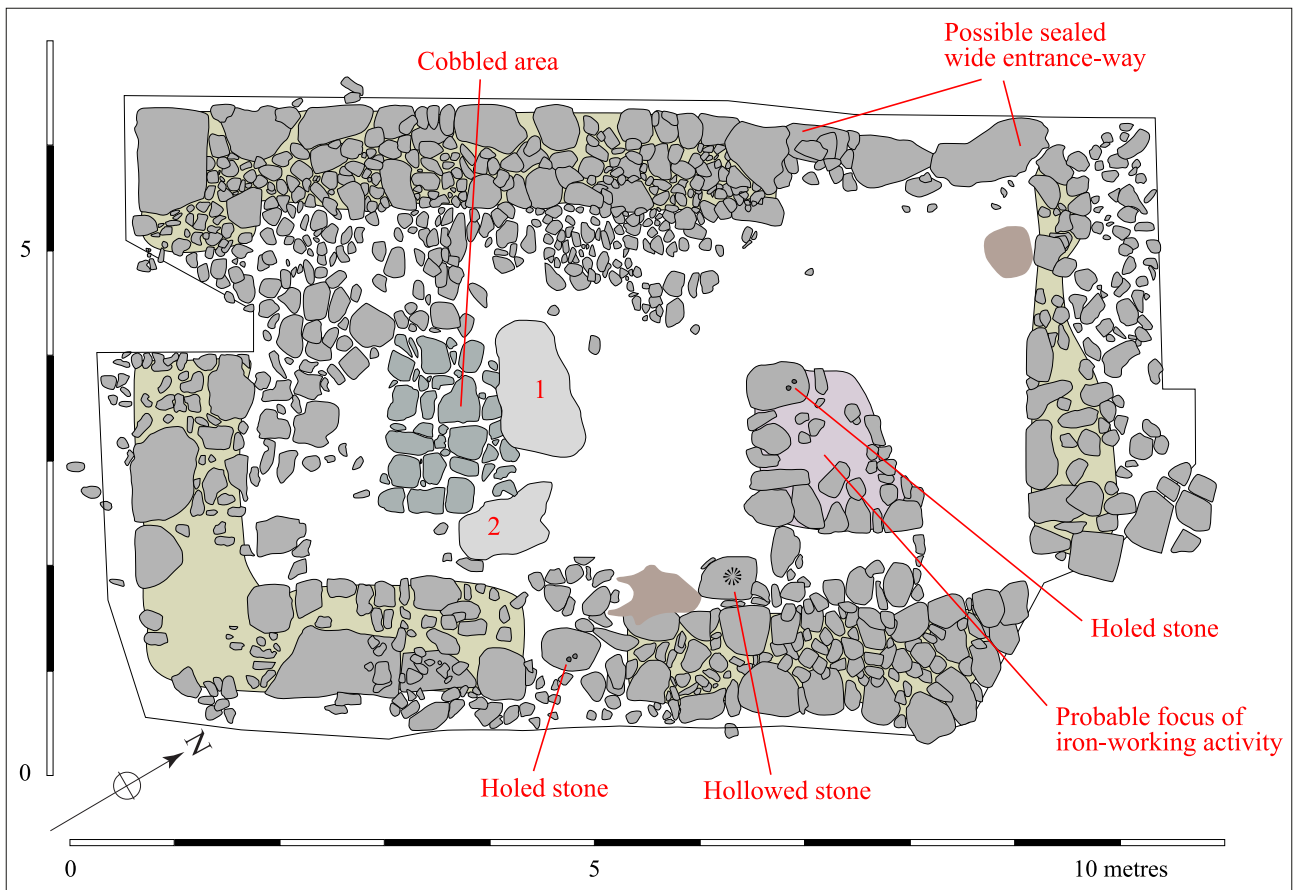


Figure 7. Plan of the structure seemingly associated with iron working.

THE METAL-WORKING SITE

A couple of large stones, sitting side-by-side and appearing to be artificially placed were investigated. Further stones emerged that resulted in the identification of a formerly unknown rectangular structure. As with the longhouse, a preparatory 'strip and record' strategy was implemented, resulting in a plan of the surviving features (Figure 7).

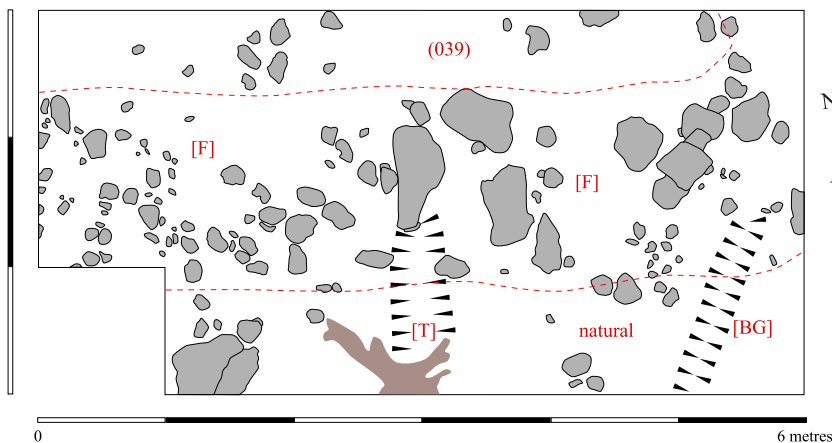
As with the longhouse, there are indications of major interventions with heavy forestry equipment at some point, probably during the mid twentieth century. Two large boulders (1 and 2 on the plan) had been moved mechanically to their resting position overlying a well-layed cobbled area. At the north end of the western side, a collection of fairly disordered stones appear to be blocking what may have been an earlier entrance way. If so, this entrance was wide enough to allow a small cart entry. The walls to either side of these disordered stones were all of the same type with kerbs of medium and large stones defining a wall of very even width. The 'blocking stones' were merely one stone in width. At the moment, therefore, the building appears to have consisted of a larger southern end with possible axis into a smaller 'annexe', originally entered from outside through the wide doorway. Alternatively, the building may have consisted of only one area with the probable focus for the iron-working activity slightly offset towards the north end of the building.

The interpretation of the building as being associated with iron-working arises from the large quantity of burnt material and slag recovered from the topsoil layers, focussed on the stone-made structure at the east end. A fair quantity of rusty iron was also gathered from the topsoil. Greater detail concerning these activities will hopefully be forthcoming next season. In the meantime, AOC have around 24 kilograms of the slag in their Edinburgh laboratories and will, hopefully be able to characterise its derivation more clearly before we begin again next year.



Photo 5. Drone shot of iron-working structure showing major features described in the text. (Photo courtesy of Hugh Fraser.)

One or two curious features were also encountered during the preparatory recording. One stone, on the east long side was seen to have two, probably, manufactured holes. The reason for the holes is still open to doubt. The stone appears not to be in its original situation and the gap in the wall line at this point suggests a possible door into the building. If this was not mysterious enough, another two-holed stone appears to have been incorporated into the structure forming the focus of the metallurgical activity. Whether or not it was related to that activity is unknown at present. Piling mystery on enigma a third stone was noted, possibly in a corner created by the south wall and the internal metallurgical structure. This had a beautifully-fashioned hollow that looks like a mortar. Again, whether this had any relationship to the iron-working needs further exploration. Photo 4, taken by drone, shows the features discussed above.



POSSIBLE ENCLOSURE DYKE

West of the south-west corner of the longhouse was the scattered remains of what appears to have been an almost completely removed enclosure bank and dyke (Figure 8). Only a few stones remained to show its direction, which was at roughly ninety degrees to the axis of the longhouse. The feature roughly followed the

Figure 8. Possible linear feature running west from the longhouse.

course of the scarp to the floodplain, though set a metre or so northwards. Of most note was how the spine of the bank dipped towards the north, against the lie of the land. In other words, if the feature was natural it should not have been hollow on that side. Moreover, the fill of the hollow was a peaty loam rather than the yellow sandy matrix of the bank, seemingly derived from the underlying natural. It may be that the peatiness and hollowed nature described reflects either agricultural activity alongside the bank or the poaching of the ground by stock. Either would produce the observed evidence.

THE PITTODRIE MOUND AND BOG

Pittodrie Mound

Trench 19 was the site chosen for the Bailies training dig and explored further the line of a stone scatter circling the mound that was recognised in the first season at Pittodrie (see Figure 9 for overview of features on the mound and the bog). In fact, the scatter did continue, though often in a very fragmentary state, probably owing to stone-robbing. Of particular interest was the observation that it appears to head in the direction of the features discovered in the bog (see below). It is unlikely that this is mere coincidence.

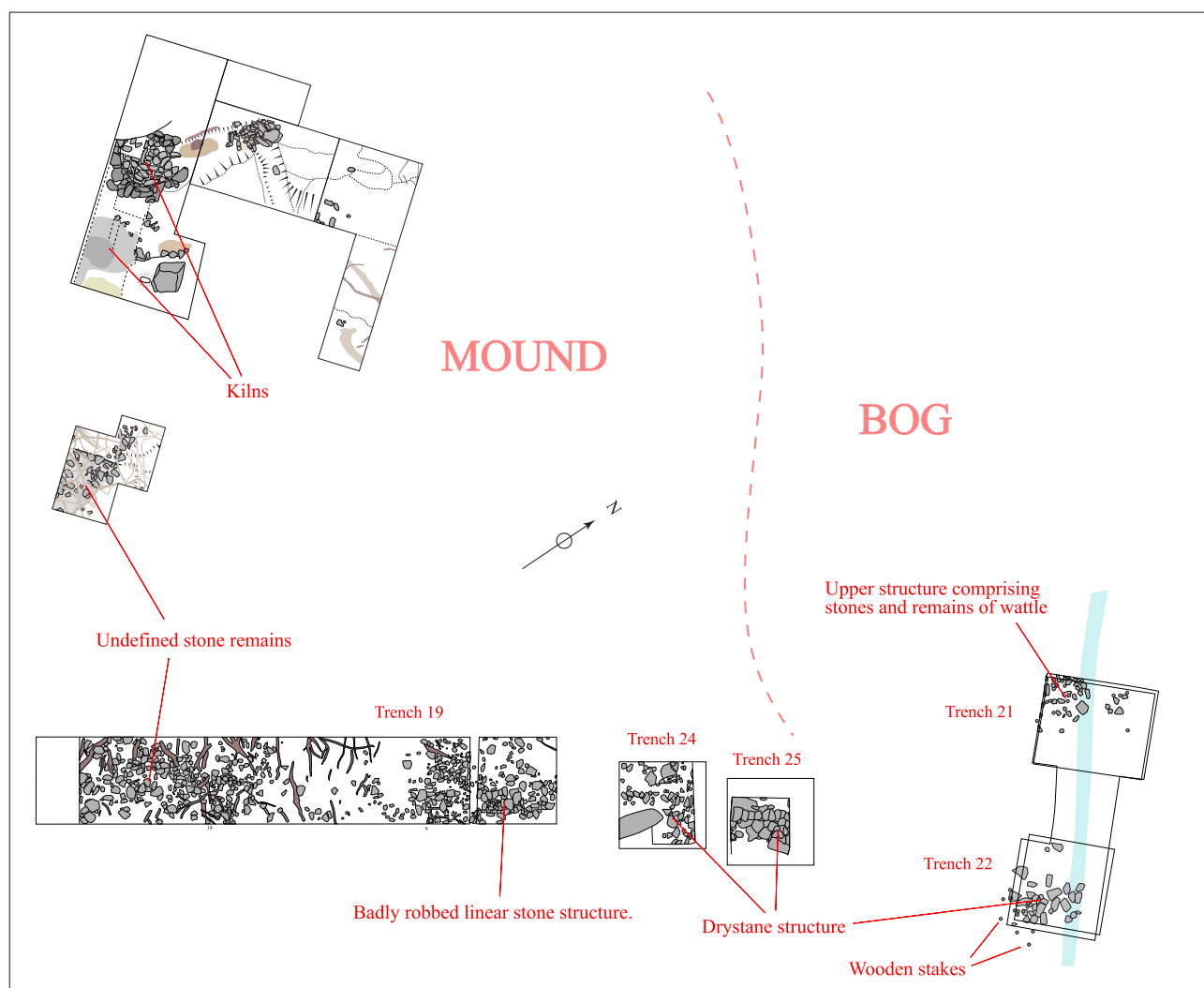


Figure 9. Showing all trenches on the mound and in the bog.

It can now be seen that the features discovered in Trench 19 need to be considered alongside those found in the bog in Trenches 21 and 22. Trenches 24 and 25 appear to define this interface between dry ground and bog. It is hoped to extend these trenches next season in order to reveal more of these slightly mysterious features.

THE BOG AND ITS INTERFACE WITH THE MOUND

Andrew Wainwright

The substrate to the lower feature [ACI] (see Figure 10) is a smooth grey clay, which is present at the base of most sections and, where sampled with the soil auger, it is at least a metre thick. Above this is a yellow to orange sandy gravel which is often restricted to the lower side of any feature. Feature [ACW]/[ACI] is a well-constructed drystone structure visible in Trenches 24, 25 and 22 (Photo 6). This has a matrix of a grey sandy clay which may have originated in the initial construction or could have been added later by infiltration. In the first two trenches it survives in a reasonably good fashion, but in Trench 22, it is rather less well preserved and has clearly suffered destruction. Trenches 24 and 25 are at the edge of the bog and so are on firmer ground than Trench 22 on water-saturated

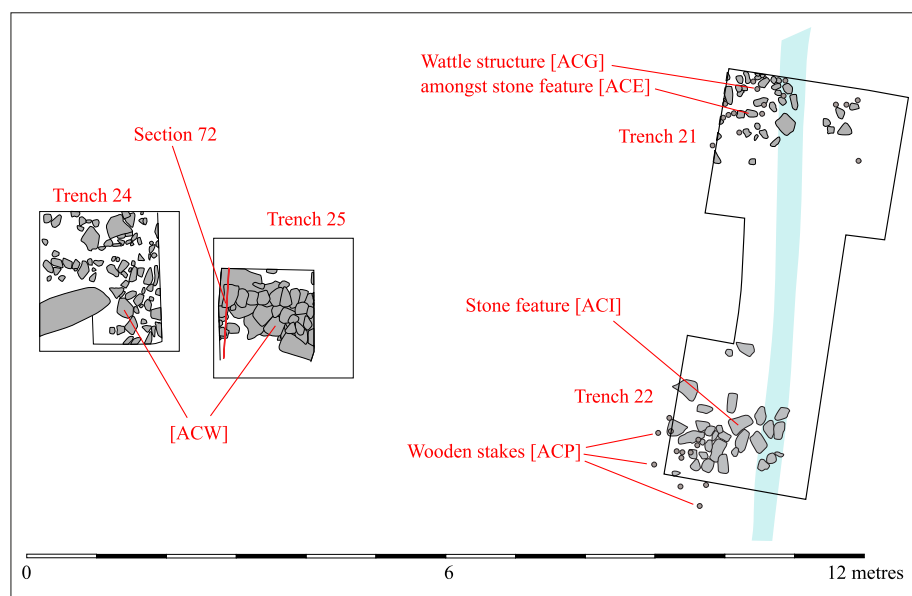


Figure 10. Trenches associated with the Bog.

soft clay. The structures may have been robbed in the area of Trench 24, being on dryer land than in Trench 25 and, in Trench 22, may have suffered water degradation. This may suggest that [ACW] was robbed after the formation of the bog. The whole area of excavations is covered by peat with a high water content and very little cohesion. In all sections the peat clearly passes over the structures and so is younger.

In Trench 21, which is up-slope from Trench 22, feature [ACG]/[ACE] is not represented by any significant stone structure but predominantly by wooden stakes stuck in the clay. Initially, it looked as though stakes had been set in the clay in a rough grid pattern with stones in a sandy clay matrix filling the spaces between. However, as excavation proceeded both up and down slope more similar stakes were seen. In Trench 25 similar stakes

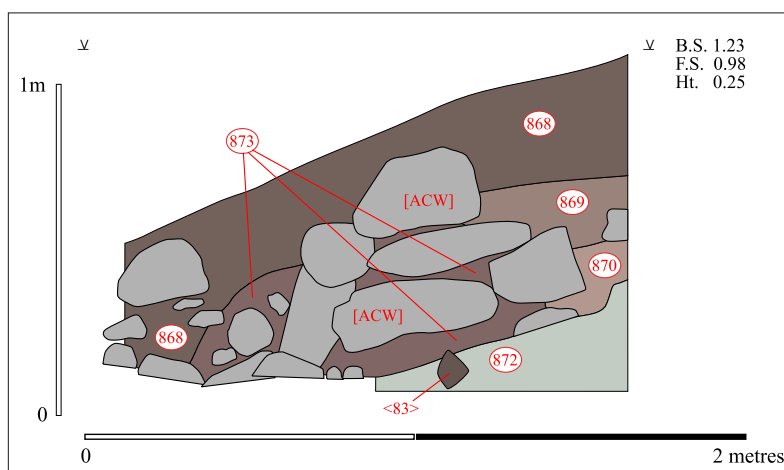


Figure 11. Showing stone feature with overlying peat (868).



Photo 6. Trench 25 showing drystone structure.



Photo 7. View across Trenches 25, 24 and 19 showing the seemingly continuous spread of stones.

were also seen, but these were definitely not set within the stone structure but in the clay below it. (See Figure 11; <83> is one of the stakes).

The stakes were of two size ranges, the thicker ones were about 30mm in diameter and the thinner ones about 15mm. They were usually fairly straight and would have been easily pushed into the clay subsoil. However, some were more difficult to explain as simple stakes. One was forked with the side piece pointing down and another had grown around a stone. Some of them were sent to AOC for analysis and two of these were then chosen for radiocarbon-dating. AOC identified them as birch stems rather than roots and classified as posts and withies. The dates of both were very similar and fell between AD 210 and 350 - early Pictish.

Previously, in 2024, a peat core had been collected by Ed Schofield from the bog above Trench 21 and the pollen and spores examined (Schofield in Ralston & Shepherd, 2025, 203-206). Although small amounts of sedges and other wetland species were identified no aquatic plants were recognised. From this it was concluded that the presence of a mill pond at that time could not be supported, i.e. for the period of the kilns and subsequently. Two local pollen assemblages were recognised: the younger is dominated by woodland species with a dominance of Scots pine with less beech, birch and ash. The earlier assemblage is representative of more open landscape with grasses, heather and cereals, though still with some Scots pine, alder, birch and hazel.

It can now be shown from the sections that the peat is younger than

both features discovered in the bog. A date for the start of the peat development would, presumably, give a date for the final disintegration of the structures in the bog. The pollen core suggests this is unlikely to have occurred much before 1600, if not later. The stakes are now known to be early Pictish, but the chronology of the stone structures is, as yet, unknown.

THOUGHTS ON THE LANDSCAPE SETTING OF THE PITTODRIE STRUCTURES

Colin Shepherd

A more complete landscape history of the Pittodrie sites can be found in Shepherd *et al*, 2025. All that is discussed here are the extra pieces of detail added by this season's excavations and placed in their historical context.

What has become apparent from the initial excavations carried out this season, is that this was a very busy landscape in which families lived and worked. McConnochie (1890, 27) used the Gaelic term 'clachan' to describe what he had heard about the structures that are now slowly coming into focus. Whilst I would take issue with employing a Gaelic word for this Pictish/Scottish landscape the term does draw attention to the sense of communal activity revealed by these excavations.

The longhouse is a type of structure referenced widely across the North-east on estate plans. The Pittodrie house falls within the shorter range of these buildings that can extend to lengths many times that of their widths (Shepherd, 2021, 148; 155). Shepherd's Lodge on the Colony would seem to be a late version of this type (Oliver *et al*, 2016, 361). Pittodrie is the first excavation of such a pre-modern (post 'improvement') structure from the lower lands of Aberdeenshire and little comparative evidence is, therefore available. Strangely, however, the author's own house was such a dwelling, as shown by an estate plan of the area, but was truncated and turned into a small stone-built cottage in the 19th century. It was, at that time, known as 'The White House', presumably to differentiate it from older type of structures in the locality. Its original size was remarkably similar to that of the Pittodrie house and both had a beaten earth living end floor and a cobbled byre end. So, this may not have been unusual. The Pittodrie house is very irregular in shape and this can also be evidenced from estate plans and other longhouses, surviving as mere lumps in the ground, in the Clashendarroch Forest. They look identical to how the Pittodrie house looked prior to excavation and would, presumably, yield similar evidence were they to be excavated.

What is undoubtedly a 'first' for Pittodrie is the apparent evidence for an earlier structure on the same site. How much of that survives will have to await further work. Documentary evidence for the settlement stretches back to a rental of 1636 (MS 3043.70). It is assumed that the longhouse is the Rush Miln Croft mentioned there and in a subsequent rental of 1771 (MS 2392). It is likely that it was built prior to its first recorded mention. This would place it around 1600, if not earlier. The intriguing question, therefore, concerns the date of the underlying structure. This appears not to have been a longhouse and may have been a simpler rectangular structure, perhaps like one excavated by AOC at Kintore (Kilpatrick, 2017). Further structural features close to the longhouse, as discussed above, speak of a complicated development sequence. As the documentary evidence suggests this 'croft' was in existence for a minimum of two hundred years, this should not occasion much surprise.

What was of surprise, however, was the appearance of the formerly unknown 'metal-working' structure a few yards away from the longhouse. Clearly, much work needs to be carefully carried out in order to properly understand this building. At the moment, it seems clear that it was used as an 'industrial' site. The apparent blocked entrance, wide enough for a cart, re-enforces that notion but also points to a structure that, like the longhouse, underwent a number of alterations through its life. That some of its time was spent in the working of iron appears to be in no doubt. Whether it was used for any other purpose during its life awaits further work. What is relevant is that any smithing activity would require a source of fuel. Prior to the 1500s there is every likelihood that a plentiful supply of timber would have been at hand. The slightly greater width of this building similarly suggests a time when large building timber was more abundant. The widths of modest buildings from the 1700s and 1800s reflects its lack of local availability during those times.

Supporting the suggestion that this building may predate the 1600s, is the lack of reference to smithing or iron-working in either of the rentals. Furthermore, no mention is made of a mill that may have led to the naming of the burn as the 'Rush Mill' burn. It has been suggested by Colin Miller (pers. comm.) the lack of mention of smithing may be due to the operation being run for and on behalf of the laird, i.e. it was not a leased operation. This is a possibility. It is unlikely that the same would apply to a mill, as the documentary evidence supports the notion that these were inevitably leased for a high price - the local people being legally required to use the lord's mill. In other words, the archaeological and documentary evidence suggests a limited history for the buildings under study and for the presently unrecognised Rush Mill that stretches back well before the 1600s. This depth of chronology has also been demonstrated by the OSL dates recovered in previous season's work (Kinnaird in Shepherd & Ralston, 2025, 206-7).

Talk of absent mills and mill ponds brings us neatly on to Andrew's soggy excavations in the bog. The evidence, as rehearsed by Andrew Wainwright above, makes it clear that no mill pond existed after around 1600. However, there appears to have been possibly two dramatic landscape changes that occurred resulting, firstly, in the creation of the bog and, secondly, two distinctive pollen sequences split by a period of no pollen accretion.

The documentary evidence relates to two known landscape changes, both involving woodland creation. The first was when the woodlands recorded on Roy's map of c.1745 and recorded in greater detail in the 1771 rental, were planted. The second was when the new policies were laid out around 1800. This involved the extensive robbing of archaeological structures in order to build the series of drystone dykes still in evidence along the 'Turnpike' and more generally across the landscape. It is likely, but not certain, that the 1800 episode saw the canalisation of the Craigwell Burn. Clearly, this will have impacted the bog and may have been responsible for the break in the pollen record. It is only after this break in the pollen sequence that beech is recognisably present. Bede House Park and Craignathunder were both described as fir plantations in the 1771 rental. Presumably, in this instance, signifying Scots pine.

If, therefore, both pollen sequences contain Scots pine, but only the later one contains beech, we can tentatively date the later sequence to about 1800. The first sequence, containing pine must relate to a period after the planting of the 'fir plantations'. These became more common across the region after 1700. Therefore, we might suspect that the creation of the bog and the destruction of the earlier features may belong to a roughly similar period. But, what was the purpose of the earlier structures? Simply because we can suggest that the present bog could not have existed much earlier than the later 1600s, does not imply that an earlier mill dam might not have been in existence prior to that. In other words, we cannot write-off the potential existence of a mill dam. After all, there would still have been a hollow in the hillside, fed by a highly productive well and fronted by some forms of stony bank(s). Also, given the fact that wooden stakes survived from Pictish times, it must also be assumed that the ground remained water-logged since that period. What can categorically be stated, is that any such dam would not have existed during the last hundred years or more of the 'clachan's' existence. Its absence from the 1636 rental suggests, if such a dam had existed, it would have been gone even by that time.

Two sets of structures, excavated by Andrew, appear to have stretched across the line of the Craigwell Burn, the upper one giving at least an outward appearance of being 'dam-like'. Extensive clay was noted during these excavations, as might be used to line a mill dam although, as Andrew notes, the stone feature [ACW] never seems to have had a close association with any such clay. One final thought involves the construction of the hospital in the mid part of the 17th century (Miller, 2019, 87-103) and the creation of the fir plantations, assumed to have occurred slightly later. The garden walls of the hospital articulate with the dykes constructed around the plantations. Arguably, the creation of the hospital and plantations may have occurred at the same time as a complete

landscape modification. This would make the plantations early, but not impossibly so. A source for clay was required for the bonding material of the hospital, such as might have been found in a conveniently-placed if no-longer used mill dam. But, even before this, a source of clay was also required for the bonding of the early 17th-century kiln and, presumably, also in the construction of its domed, wattle and daub roof. Such clay extraction may have drained a pond and made conditions right for the development of a subsequent bog. This is, of course, pure speculation but may be worthy of consideration as a hypothesis to test as explorations continue.

SMALL FINDS AND SAMPLES

The following is a brief synopsis of the artefacts and their contexts. Full databases along with a downloadable copy of this report can be found at:

www.bailiesofbennachie.org.uk/bennachie-landscapes-project

Longhouse Living End

Unstratified:	Slate fragments, flat clear window class, green bottle glass, pottery sherds
(001):	Pottery sherd, donkey or small horse hoof clipping
(002):	Spindle whorls, pistol ball mould, slate fragment, pottery sherd
(003):	Slate chopping board with cut marks, slate fragments, pottery sherds (late 18th-20th c.), iron object
(005):	Green bottle glass shards, pottery sherds (late 18th - 20th c.)
(010):	Green bottle glass shards, square iron object with hole in centre
(013):	Green bottle glass shard, fine porcelain pottery sherd, iron hooked object
(016):	Blue bottle glass shard (late 18th - 19th c?)
(017):	Green bottle glass shard, iron hook-like object
(020):	Quartz flakes
(028):	Quartz flakes
(030):	Quartz flake
(040):	Monocle or spectacle lens
(041):	Green bottle glass shards, pottery sherds (late 18th - 20th c.), pottery sherd (late 18th-19th c?), pipe bowl fragment
(044):	Green bottle glass shard, pottery sherd (late 18th - 20th c.)
(050):	Flat iron object (piece of cauldron?)

Longhouse Byre End

Unstratified:	Flint scraper (Neolithic?), burnishing stone?, pottery sherd (19th-20th c?), iron object (circular/conical in shape with two square nail? shanks protruding)
(003):	Shotgun metal cartridge end
(005):	Green bottle glass, pottery sherds (late 18th - 20th c?), flat iron object (from cauldron?)
(007):	Iron object (sickle blade and tang fragment)
(090):	Green bottle glass
(011):	Monocle or spectacle lens
(012):	Pottery sherd (late 18th - 20th c.)

Enclosure Dyke

Unstratified:	Flat iron object (from cauldron?)
(006):	Green bottle shard, pottery sherds (late 18th - 20th c.), circular glass fragment (from lamp chimney?)

Iron-working Structure

- Unstratified: Pottery sherd (19th -20th c?), flat window? glass with green tinge, blue bottle glass (late 17th - 18th c?), slate fragment, iron object
- (018): Small clear very thin curved glass fragment, green bottle glass, pottery sherd (19th - 20th C?), heat damaged stone, slate fragment, large iron slag lump, flat iron object (from cauldron?)
- (019): Large iron slag lump, green bottle glass, clear bottle? base shard fragment, pottery sherds (19th - 20th c?), stone fragment with band (flint?), slag lump, shotgun metal cartridge end, thin copper alloy object, flat iron objects (cauldron fragments?), large slag lumps, iron object (cauldron wall fragment with side lug handle?)
- (042): Iron object
- (045): Very small slag drops/beads, copper alloy knife handle, green bottle glass, slate fragments, iron objects, flat iron object with thin tapering copper alloy sheet metal, gritty grey clay with vulcanised (glazed green/yellow) surface
- (046): Green bottle glass, curved clear glass fragments (possibly from a drinking glass!), thin strips of copper alloy with rivet holes? and textile adhering
- (052): Slate fragment, iron objects

Possible Enclosure Dyke

- (037): Green bottle glass
- (038): Iron object

Pittodrie Mound

- Unstratified: Green bottle glass
- (869): Green bottle glass, pottery sherd (19th - 20th c?), slate fragment
- (988): Flat iron object (cauldron? fragment), green bottle glass, pottery sherds (18th-20th c?), shotgun metal cartridge cap
- (989): Pottery sherd (17th - 19th c?)

Pittodrie Bog

- (869): Green bottle glass, pottery sherd (late 18th - 20th ?), slate fragment

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APPENDICES

A high resolution pdf copy of this report, along with a complete inventory in XL format, of Contexts, Features and Small Finds can be found at:

www.bailiesofbennachie.co.uk/bennachie-landscapes-project

SOURCES

MS 2392 = (1771) Rental Book of the Pittodrie Estate, UoASC.

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Read the previous 'Pittodrie Estate Excavations' interim reports online at:

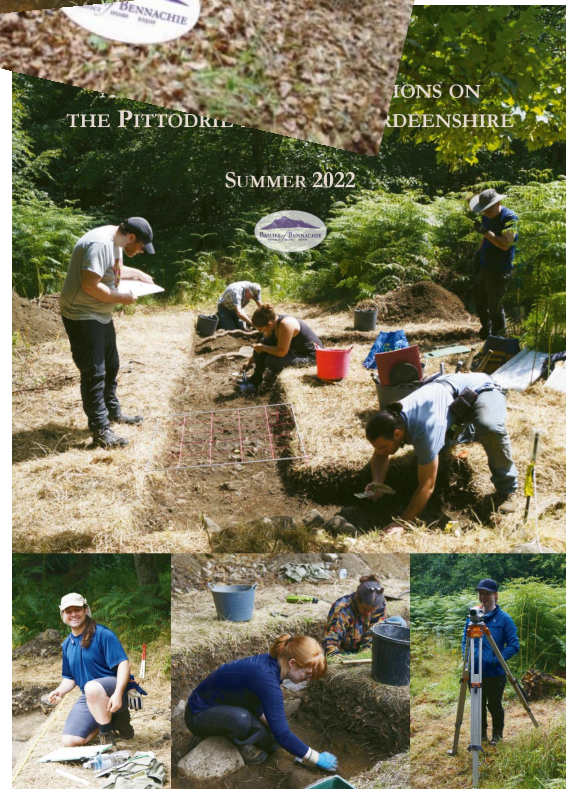
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