

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SURVEY  
OF  
AREA TO BE AFFORESTED  
FOR  
MR CARRUTHERS  
AT  
KINTRADWELL  
NC 9208  
SUTHERLAND

Undertaken by Jill Harden  
July 1991  
For Historic Buildings & Monuments, Scotland

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

information and interpretation  
surveys and assessments  
training

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Dear Bob,

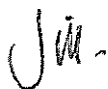
## **KINTRADWELL PRE-FORESTRY SURVEY**

Please find enclosed a copy of the report on the pre-forestry survey carried out at Kintradwell late last month. I have sent Richard three copies and Mr Carruthers will receive another, minus the recommendations at the end.

I trust that it is satisfactory, but if you should have any queries, please do not hesitate in contacting me.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



Jill Harden

## KINTRADWELL

### Introduction

The four small areas proposed for afforestation lie between 50m and 150m OD on a SE-facing slope which falls towards the narrow, fertile coastal plain at Kintradwell. They are outlined in brown on the attached plan. A series of electricity pylons traverses the hill side, whilst the lower voltage supply line cuts across the E part of the area in question. The blocks proposed for planting are each about 2 hectares in extent.

### The survey

An assessment of the area was made in late July. All of the hill slope is currently used as grazings for sheep and cattle. Most of the W-most area is grass covered with some small patches of bracken, the upper part being heather-clad. The area immediately NW of Braeval is under grass, the settlement itself is infested with bracken, whilst the area below the ruins supports a dense cover of reeds and thistles. At the E end of the survey area, the area N of pole line above Ballinreach is covered in heather. Much of the area S of the ruins at Ballinreach was so densely covered in gorse that it proved impossible to survey it in detail. The parts which are clear of gorse are covered in bracken and a little grass.

### **Method:**

The limits of the proposed plantings were pegged out and the areas then systematically walked over. Details of buildings and enclosure walls, previously surveyed by the OS and marked on the 1:2500 map, were checked using tapes. The remains from the agricultural use of the area, the clearance cairns and fields enclosed by dykes, were sketch plotted by pacing.

## Results:

The following features were recorded:

### Area 1: Settlement centred at NC 916082

Two rectangular structures were recorded at the W edge of this area, one of which had already been plotted by the OS.

That to the W is largely grass covered and measures c18m long by c5.8m wide across its walls, which are spread to c1m and stand less than 0.3m high. There is no obvious entrance, but there is an internal division at its E end creating an area c4m square within the walls.

That immediately to the E is buried under a large clump of gorse. It measures c11.5m long by 5m wide across its walls, which are spread to c0.8m and stand c0.3m high. No entrance could be seen because of the gorse, but there is an internal division at its E end creating an area c2.5m by 3.2m within the walls.

This latter structure abuts a low enclosure wall, which defines an area to the S and E of these structures. The wall is partly grass covered, spread to c 1.5m wide and stands c0.3m high.

Within the E half of the enclosure is another rectangular structure. Its low stone walls, spread to c0.75m and c0.2m high, define an area c11m long and c5.5m wide. The W side of the structure survives to c0.4m in height and is abutted by a grass covered corn-drying kiln. Its circular kiln is c1m in diameter, internally, with a straight flue c3m long and 0.6m wide. The remains of a low irregular wall run W-wards from this structure.

Across the hill slope above this small settlement are a few small clearance cairns generally c3m in diameter, c0.3m high and either grass or heather clad. At the E edge of the area surveyed are the indistinct remains of two stone walls. That to the W runs straight up hill, that to the E winds its way up the hill side, but both peter out at about the same point. Along the N edge of the survey area are three "platforms" which may have been stances for structures. They have been crossed by vehicular tracks and possibly used for feed stands quite recently. At the W edge of the area surveyed is the route of the old track up the side of the Kintradwell Burn. In places this is characterised by a slight hollow way to the W of the current track. Higher up the slope it passes to the E of today's track and makes a U-bend in its way up the hill.

## Area 2: Settlement at Braeval centred at NC 92070830

This series of structures and enclosures had already been plotted by the OS, [HRC SMR NC90NW034], although extra details were recorded during this survey. Four rectangular structures, in varying ruinous states, each have an enclosure abutting them to the N. Running W-E in front of the houses is a track, and immediately to the S is a large enclosure.

From W to E the buildings are as follows:

c19m long and 5m wide across walls c0.75m thick which stand to a maximum height of 1.5m. The structure has been divided almost equally into three areas, but the S wall is now so ruined that only the entrance in the E end is visible. Its enclosure wall is at most c1.2m wide and c1m high, with a small rectangular structure c4m by c3m tucked into its NW corner. Along the outside of the N wall of this enclosure are the remains of a track which can be traced for a considerable distance W-wards into the bracken and gorse and E-wards along the wall of the next enclosure.

c11.5m long and 4m wide across walls c0.75m thick which stand to a maximum height of c1.4m. There are no obvious internal divisions, but the entrance, c0.7m wide, is centrally placed along its S wall. Its enclosure wall is c0.8m wide and c1.2m high. The track along the back appears to turn S to run between this enclosure and that to the E.

c10m long and 3m wide across very low grass covered walls c0.75m thick and 0.2m high. There is a possible entrance at the W end of the S wall. Its enclosure wall is c0.8m wide and 1.2m high constructed along its N side of large boulders, with gaps filled with small stones, its length being topped with turf.

c20m long and 6m wide across walls c0.75m thick which stand up to 1.8m high. The structure was originally c16.5m long and divided into two areas with an entrance surviving into the W room. An extension has been added to the E c3m square internally. Its enclosure wall is c0.8m wide and 1.2m high, and like that to the E has a drain running along the outside of its N wall.

The large enclosure to the S of this settlement has small structures in its NW and NE corners. Those to the NW abut the outside of the enclosure wall. There are two tiny rectangular structures, c3.2m by c1.6m and c3.2m by c5m, across walls no more than 0.4m high and c0.7m thick. Those to the NE abut the inside corner of the enclosure. That in the corner appears to be sub-circular in shape, c5m in diameter, whilst that to the W is c9m by c3.2m with an internal division.

On the hill side above the settlement are a few small clearance cairns.

### Area 3: Settlement at Ballinreach centred at NC 92650855

This series of structures and enclosures had already been plotted by the OS, [HRC SMR NC90NW034], although extra details were recorded during this survey. Two rectangular structures, in varying ruinous states, each have an enclosure associated with them.

From W to E the buildings are as follows:

c18m long and 4.2m wide across walls c0.75m thick which stand to a maximum of c1.5m high. There are two internal divisions creating W and E rooms which are 8m long within the walls. At each end are extensions; that at the W is c2m long and c6m wide, that at the E is set at an angle to the main axis of the structure and is c4m square. The ruined enclosure wall joins the NW corner of the building, whilst another wall runs off W-wards from its SW corner. A "terrace" has been created in front of the E half of the building.

c17.5m long and 4.6m wide across walls c0.75m thick which stand almost to their full height in places. The gables are almost complete, standing over 2m in height. An internal division creates a space c4m square at the W end of the structure. A "terrace" has been created along the full length of the building. Immediately to the SE is a sub-circular enclosure, surrounded by a drystone wall c1.6m high, with its ground level at least 1m above the field around it.

### Area 4: Field system N of Ballinreach centred at NC 92600865

The hill side above Ballinreach is covered in clearance cairns, as well as a few sub-circular structures and a couple of cairns with hollowed centres.

The cairns vary in size from c6m maximum dimension to c3.5m, and are up to c1.2m high. The cairns with hollowed out centres, marked [C] on the plan attached, are c5m in diameter and c0.8m high. The reason for the apparent excavation of the centres c2m in diameter is unknown but could have been for storage, or even for the captivity of newly born lambs with their prospective foster mothers.

The sub-circular structures [A] could either be the remains of hut circles or sheilings, covered in peat and heather.

A1 has been built on a slight platform, is c7m in diameter across walls spread to c0.7m and c0.25m high.

A2 is c6m in diameter across walls spread to c1.2m and c0.25m high. It has been constructed on a slight platform which has been cut into the slope of the hill.

A3 consists of two abutting structures both c5m in diameter across walls spread to 0.7m and 0.25m high. They are situated on a flat area of ground near the modern electricity pylon.

The sub-rectangular structures [B] are presumed to be the remains of sheilings.

B1 is c5m by c3.5m across walls covered in grass and heather spread to c0.8m and c0.2m high.

B2 is cut into the slope of the hill and measures c3.5m by c2m across walls c0.6m wide and 0.25m high.

### Recommendations

Area 1: To retain the integrity of the settlement and its associated track, the planting could be shifted slightly E and N. The boundary could then be the enclosure wall to the S and the old track to the W, marked in red on the plan.

Area 2: Braeval is a ruined settlement with an interesting arrangement of land divisions. The planting could be shifted N and W above the ruins, marked red on the plan.

Area 3: The proposed planting keeps S of the electricity pole line, but as presently marked on the plan affects the raised enclosure immediately SE of Ballinreach. It is suggested that the plan could be amended very slightly to take account of this feature.

Area 4: This hill slope is covered by part of an extensive field system of clearance cairns with a few small structures interspersed amongst them, not all of which are necessarily contemporary with each other. The field system extends W and E of the area surveyed, but was not looked at in any detail.

Jill Harden  
July 1991