

An archaeological watching brief.

**DRUMBUIE**

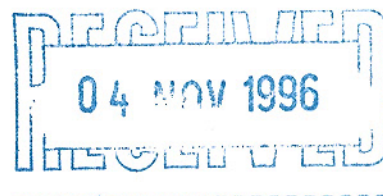
September 1996

By

Martin Wildgoose

for

The National Trust for Scotland



## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF. DRUMBUIE SEWER, SEPT. 1996.**

### **Summary**

An archaeological watching brief commissioned by The National Trust for Scotland in advance of the excavation of a new branch sewer. The site works being carried out for Mrs Charlene MacLeod of Drumbuie. ( NG 7755 3115 )

### **Introduction**

The line of the proposed sewer cut through the walls of a ruinous black house in the centre of the village of Drumbuie. The National Trust for Scotland, not wishing to destroy the building or the overall character of the village, required that the affected sections of walling be dismantled in advance of site works. The walls would then be rebuilt once the site works had been completed. The excavation of the sewer trench was also monitored for archaeological remains.

The watching brief and dismantling / rebuilding of the walls was carried out by Martin Wildgoose over 3 days in September 1996.

### **Method**

The affected sections of wall were dismantled by hand and stacked to one side of the proposed line of the sewer. The excavation of the trench was then monitored as the work progressed. The west face of the trench was recorded at a scale of 1:20, ( section ). Upon completion of the works the trench was back filled and allowed to settle for 3 weeks. The walls of the ruin were then rebuilt.

A photographic record was kept of the various stages of the work.

### **Results**

1. During the dismantling of the walls of the ruin it was noted that the bottom course rested directly on the old ground surface. There was no construction trench or prepared foundation.
2. During the clearing of collapsed walling from the interior it was noted that the collapsed material rested directly on the gravel subsoil. There appeared to be no floor levels within the structure. This was later confirmed during excavation of the sewer trench.
3. To the north side of the ruin the trench cut through the make-up of the access road to Mr Harper's house. This consisted of a spread of hard-core 2.8m wide and from 0.05 - 0.10m thick. Below the hard-core were two back filled trenches, running across the trench, containing clay sewer pipes. The southern pipe, ( 0.46m below present ground level ), was broken and no longer in use. The northern pipe, ( 0.42m below present ground level ), was that currently serving Mr Harper's house.
4. A slight rise in the ground, 2m to the south of the ruin, proved, upon cutting of the trench, to be the remains of a robbed out wall. The wall was originally 0.80m wide and ran in an east to west direction parallel to the south wall of the ruin.

5. Approximately 3.90m to the south of the ruin the trench cut through the remains of a small peat stack. This had not been visible prior to cutting of the trench.
6. Approximately 5.90m to the south of the ruin the trench encountered the clay sewer pipe currently serving Mr England's house. ( 0.40m below the present ground level.)
7. Finally, 10.40m to the south of the ruin, the trench cut through a complex build up of successive access roads to Mr England's House.

## Conclusions

There were no significant archaeological remains visible in the trench cut by the excavator. The subsoil consisted entirely of stratified alluvial gravel's lying directly on the underlying bedrock. The only features cut into this gravel were the foundations of an enclosure wall situated some 2.0m to the south of the ruin and the trenches for 3 sewer pipes. ( see section )

The evidence from the dismantled walls and the clearing of the interior indicate that the Black house had been constructed directly on the old ground surface. The interior had then been cleared of top-soil and the floor joists laid on supports ( pad stones ? ) placed directly on the gravel surface. It is possible that these were cleared away with the wall collapse prior to the cutting of the trench.

A small peat stack which once stood to the south of the black house may or may not be of contemporary date.

Martin Wildgoose  
18th October. 1996





1. **Drumbuie.** The ruin before dismantling of the walls. (scale = 2 meters)



2. **Drumbuie.** The ruin after dismantling of the walls. (scale = 2 meters)





3. **Drumbuie.** The trench excavated through the ruin. (scale = 2 meters)



4. **Drumbuie.** The remains of the robbed out wall . (scale = 2 meters)



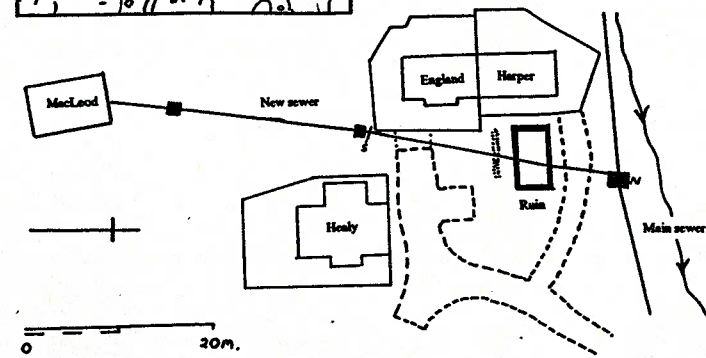
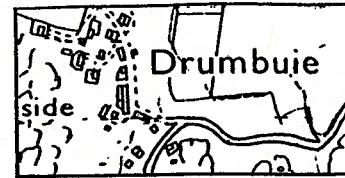


5. **Drumbuie.** The evidence for the peat stack. (scale = 2 meters)



6. **Drumbuie.** The ruin after rebuilding. (scale = 2 meters)





Drumbuie, October 1996 : Watching brief,

New sewer for Mrs Charlene MacLeod  
(Section : West face of trench)

