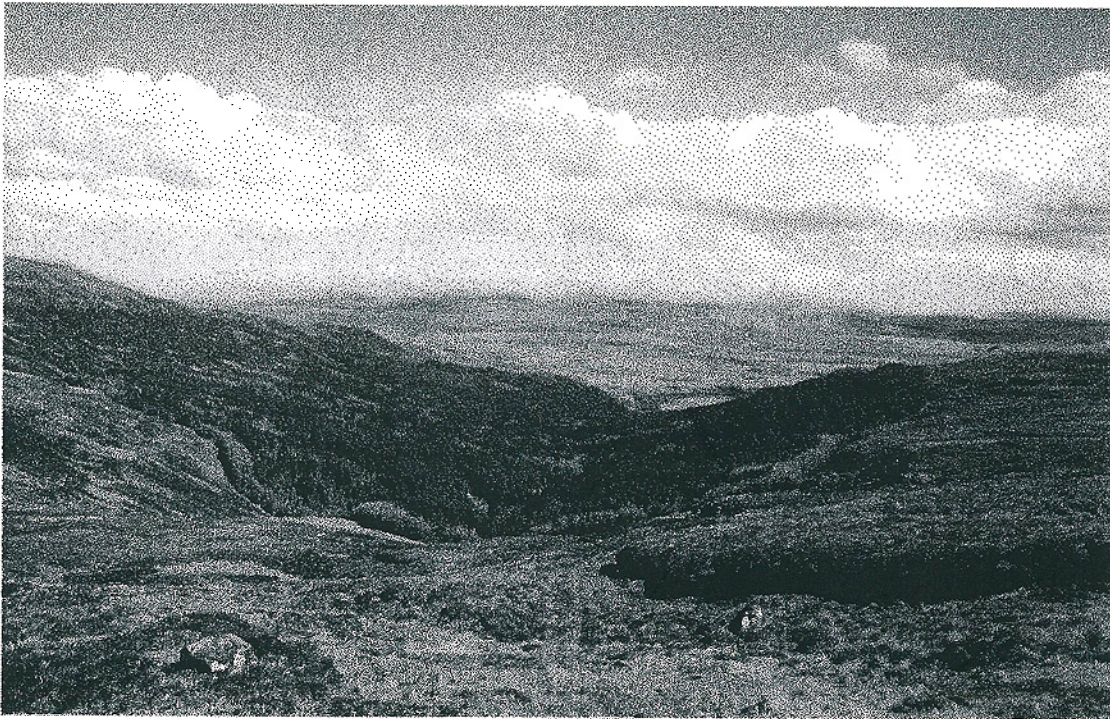


Scanned (Orbost survey) - 10
02/02/01 J.A. ✓

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY
OF THE
ORBOST ESTATE
1998**



Glen Varkasaig

For

Skye & Lochalsh Enterprise

By

Martin Wildgoose, assisted by George Kozikowski and Steven Birch

ORBOST ESTATE

Introduction

The Orbost Estate, acquired by SALE in November 1997, occupies the eastern half of a sea girt peninsula lying to the south-west of Dunvegan on the Isle of Skye. The estate's 4600 acres includes two of Skye's most famous and heavily visited landmarks, Healabhal Beag and MacLeod's Maidens. It also includes part of one of the finest coastal walks on the west coast of Scotland. The entire estate is currently managed as a single unit under a hill-farm regime, sheep ranching being the main enterprise. A small number of cattle are also kept. Within the bounds of the estate but outwith its ownership are two extensive areas of forestry. The Glen Bharcasaig Block (mature and ready for harvest) extends from Bharcasaig Bay westwards to the saddle below Healabhal Beag, and southwards to the Forse Burn. The Brandasaig/Idrigill block (newly planted) extends from the Forse burn to just north of the abandoned settlement of Idrigill. These forestry blocks are currently (May 1998) owned and managed by the Forestry Commission. They are currently the subject of a negotiated sale between The Forestry Commission and SALE.

The archaeology of the estate has never been the subject of close study. A small number of sites have been added to the Sites and Monuments Record over the years (45), the majority being found by ACFA in 1989 (38) when ten members of this Glasgow based group carried out a Survey of the Duirinish peninsula.

The 1998 Archaeological Survey

Summary

The archaeological survey of the Orbost Estate involved the walk-over survey of the entire estate, an area covering some 26 x 1 kilometre OS grid squares. During the survey 94 previously unrecorded sites were located. In addition the 45 known sites were re-examined. The new sites included hut circles (5), cairns, shielings (215 in 39 distinct groups), an unrecorded settlement (Forse) and numerous abandoned houses, byres, enclosures and pens. The known sites included the cleared settlements of Bharcasaig, Brandarsaig and Idrigill and a number of previously recorded shieling groups.

The Survey

The survey was carried out between 13th of April and the 14th of May during a spell of exceptionally dry and very hot weather. All work was completed before the bracken had become a problem.

A written record of each site was kept on prepared recording sheets, (see example enclosed). The more visible sites were photographed, (colour print), and where it was thought appropriate sketch surveys were made.

The site numbering system begins with 01 and was kept as a continuous numerical progression throughout all phases of the survey.

The submitted site records have been deliberately presented with blank spaces, allowing for the inclusion of both photographs and plans should they become available at a future date.

The SMR number refers to the Sites and Monuments Record cards kept at the Dualchas Building in Portree.

Grid references have been presented both as an assessed position on the ground and as GPS (satellite) read ground positions.

Height OD is the height of the site above mean sea level.

Site condition

A sliding scale has been used to indicate the condition of each site, these are listed below.

- Well preserved** - All elements visible and in close to original condition.
- Ruinous** - All elements visible but some disturbance and collapse.
- Degraded** - Type of site still discernible- but remains badly disturbed.
- Very degraded** - Not possible to say with any certainty what remains represent.

Importance

The relative importance of each site has also been assessed.

N = National. **R** = Regional. **L** = Local. Blank = once recorded site is of little or no importance.

Vegetation

The vegetation of each site has been listed in order of area of ground cover (greater to smaller) at the time of survey, this may change with the seasons, as an example, sites with bracken will become totally covered and hidden from view between June and October each year.

N.B.

The deserted settlements of Bharcasaig (33), Biggeary (86), Brandarsaig (133) and Idrigill (136) were not surveyed in detail. Bharcasaig because it now lies beneath storm damaged conifer woodland and is currently inaccessible. Biggeary, Brandarsaig and Idrigill because their sheer size puts them beyond the scope of this survey. They have been here presented as single sites with the known number of houses, byres etc.

Survey name ORBOST 98 Survey no 88 Site No 105

Type of site shielings OS Sheet 23 NW
Condition well preserved SMR No -
Height OD 238m OS GR 2423 3910
Importance L GPS GR 2424 3901

Location On a natural terrace below a craggy outcrop, on the S-E flank of Beinn na Boineid. A small burn passes close to the north side of the site.

Vegetation Grass, moss, rushes, surrounded by heather

Description Compact group of stone & stone and turf single and multi-cell structures
(see over for plan and measurements.)

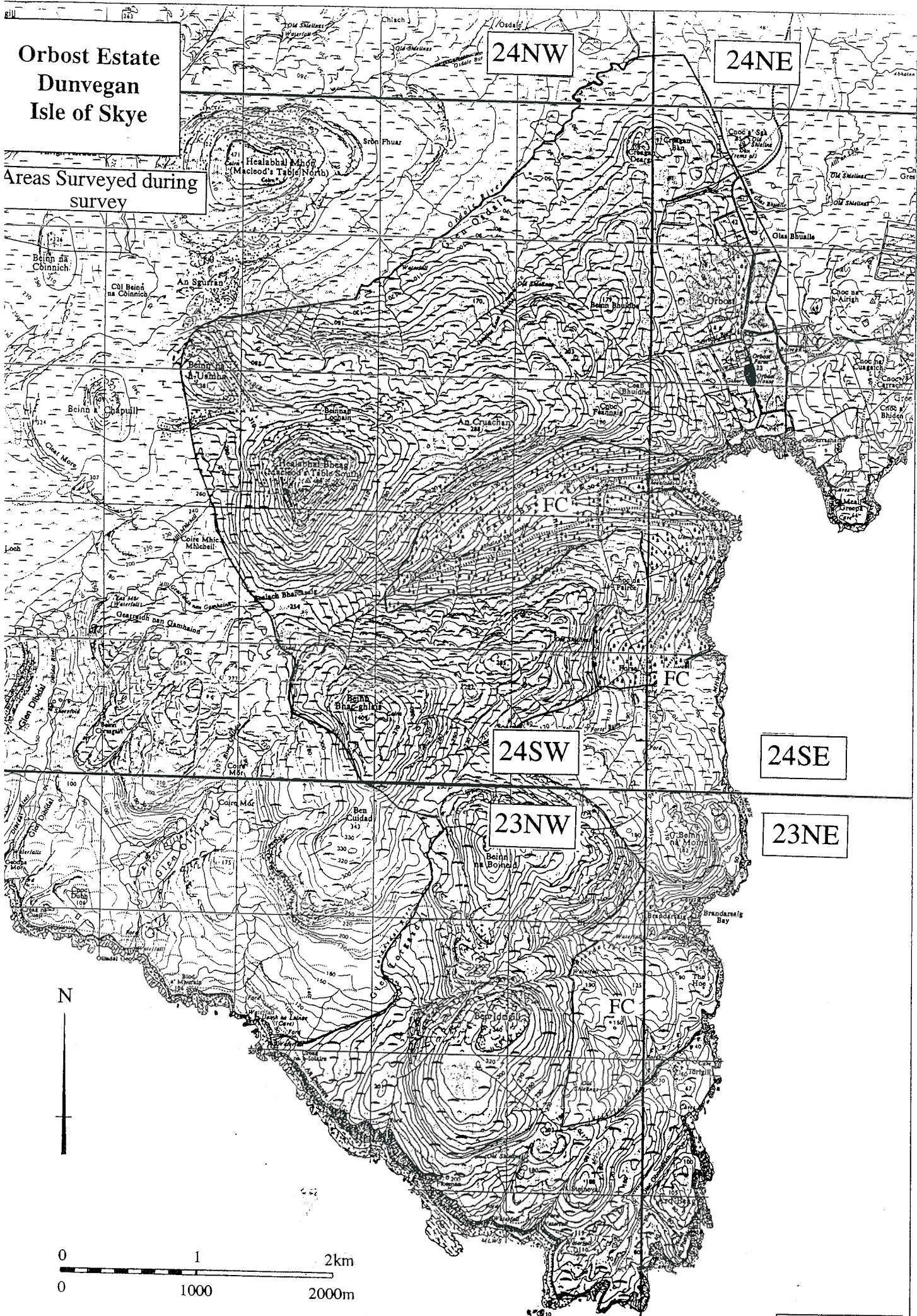
Management No active management needed

Surveyor's name M. Wildgoose Date 30.4.98 Photo No Film 3.27 Plan

Recorder Address

Orbost Estate Dunvegan Isle of Skye

Areas Surveyed during
survey



ORBOST ESTATE : ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

1998



LISTING OF SITES.

Key

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>* plan of site.
 + previously recorded structure.
 R Potential Regional importance.
 ? Unsure of importance.</p> | <p>P Photograph
 N Potential national importance.
 L Local importance.
 - Considered to have no importance.</p> |
|---|---|



Vol. 1

Site No.	Description		Map	OS grid ref.	Import.
01.	Settlement.	P	24NW	NG 2448 4507	L 
02.	Hut circle, shieling	P	"	NG 2508 4516	NRL 
03.	Shielings (3)	P	24SW	NG 2432 4470	L
04.	+Shielings (2)	P*	"	NG 24284456	L
05.	Pen	P	"	NG 2460 4436	L
06.	Pen		"	NG 2377 4425	L
07.	+Shielings (12)	P*	"	NG 2420 4415	L
08.	+Shielings (2)	P	"	NG 2455 4400	L
09.	Shieling	P	"	NG 2500 4430	L
10.	Bothy	P	"	NG 2189 4327	L
11.	Shielings (13)	P*	"	NG 2190 4325	L
12.	+Shielings (2)	P	"	NG 2247 4333	L
13.	+Pen	P	"	NG 2250 4327	L
14.	+Shielings (2)	P	"	NG 2286 4365	L
15.	Shieling	P	"	NG 2295 4365	L
16.	+Shieling ?	P	"	NG 2292 4335	L
17.	+Shielings (5)	P*	"	NG 2305 4360	L
18.	+Shielings (22)	P*	"	NG 2316 4336	L
19.	Shielings (3)	P	"	NG 2335 4355	L
20.	Pen	P	"	NG 2278 4335	L



Site No.	Description		Map	OS grid ref.	Import
21.	+Shielings (20)	P*	"	NG 2400 4370	L
22.	+Shielings (5)	P	24SW	NG 2499 4377	L
23.	Shieling	P	"	NG 2449 4332	L
24.	Shieling	P	"	NG 2494 4344	L
25.	Hut circle	P	"	NG 2490 4332	NRL
26.	Shielings (3)		"	NG 2490 4332	L
27.	Shieling	P	"	NG 2479 4325	L
28.	+Farmstead	P*	"	NG 2485 4325	NRL?
29.	Shielings (2)	P*	"	NG 2465 4318	L
30.	Cairn		"	NG 2417 4317	L
31.	Hut circle	P	"	NG 2486 4260	NRL
32.	Farmstead		"	NG 2471 4235	L
33.	+Settlement		"	NG 2470 4220	L
34.	Settlement	*	"	NG 2443 4235	L
35.	Farmstead	*	"	NG 2444 4226	L
36.	Cairn ?	P	"	NG 2461 4210	NRL?
37.	Cairns?	P	"	NG 2424 4202	NRL?
38.	+Shielings (2+)	P*	"	NG 2427 4255	L
39.	+Shielings (3)	P	"	NG 2430 4255	L
40.	+Shieling	P	"	NG 2385 4225	L
41.	+Shielings (3+)		"	NG 2365 4222	L
42.	Stone settings (2)	P	"	NG 2336 4212	L
43.	Shielings (2)	P	"	NG 2314 4200	L
44.	Shielings (3)		"	NG 2335 4196	L
45.	+Shielings (33)	P	"	NG 2317 4170	L
46.	Shelters, cairns	P	"	NG 2248 4221	L
47.	+Cairns (?)		"	NG 2250 4170	?
48.	Shielings (5)		"	NG 2280 4165	L
49.	Shielings (9)	P	"	NG 2281 4148	L
50.	Shielings (3)	P*	"	NG 2266 4110	L
51.	Pen	P	"	NG 2332 4108	L
52.	Shielings (11)	P*	"	NG 2367 4127	L
53.	Shieling	P	"	NG 2424 4114	L
54.	+Shielings (8)	P*	"	NG 2436 4100	L
55.	Settlement	*	"	NG 2498 4103	L
56.	Shieling	P	"	NG 2455 4090	L

Site No.	Description		Map	OS grid ref.	Import
57.	+Shielings (3)		24SW	NG 2498 4071	L
58.	Pen	P	"	NG 2487 4067	L
59.	Pens (2)	P	"	NG 2430 4033	L
60.	+Shielings (12)	P*	"	NG 2400 4030	RL
61.	?	P	"	NG 2427 4060	?
62.	Pen	P	"	NG 2382 4072	L
63.	Shieling	P	"	NG 2331 4015	L
64.	Cairn	P	"	NG 2309 4047	-
65.	Cairn	P	"	NG 2291 4048	-
66.	Shielings (11)	*	"	NG 2300 4085	L

Vol. 2

67.	+Hut circle,shieling	P	24SE	NG 2502 4498	NRL
68.	+Settlement	P*	"	NG 2549 4468	L
69.	Shielings (2)	P	"	NG 2542 4445	L
70.	+Pen	P	"	NG 2537 4440	L
71.	Pen	P	"	NG 2543 4364	L
72.	Kerb cairn?	P*	"	NG 2556 4368	NRL
73.	Gateway	P	"	NG 2562 4358	L
74.	Dam and sluice	P*	"	NG 2531 4326	L
75.	Bridge abutments		"	NG 2545 4328	L
76.	+?		"	NG 2540 4326	L
77.	House (part)		"	NG 2569 4327	L
78.	+House (founds)	P	"	NG 2514 4320	L
79.	Well		"	NG 2550 4310	L
80.	+House & byre	P*	"	NG 2540 4297	L
81.	Farmstead	P*	"	NG 2527 4290	L
82.	?		"	NG 2548 4294	?
83.	Shieling?	P	"	NG 2556 4282	L
84.	House (founds)	P	"	NG 2569 4289	L
85.	+House (founds)	P	"	NG 2512 4258	L
86.	+Settlement	P*	"	NG 2565 4265	L
87.	Settlement		"	NG 2592 4270	L

Site No.	Description		Map	OS grid ref.	Import.
88.	Farmstead	P	24SE	NG 2501 4235	L
89.	?		"	NG 2505 4230	?
90.	Foundations of ?	P	"	NG 2518 4225	?
91.	Bridge	P	"	NG 5519 4224	RL
92.	Farmstead	*	"	NG 2516 4213	L
93.	Bothy		"	NG 2526 4186	L
94.	Hut circle		"	NG 2527 4157	NRL
95.	Cairn	P	"	NG 2527 4131	NRL?
96.	Pen		"	NG 2521 4117	L
97.	Pen	P	"	NG 2501 4085	L
98.	Shielings (4)		"	NG 2530 4080	L
99.	Bothy	P*	"	NG 2542 4100	L
100.	Shieling	P	"	NG 2549 4093	L
101.	Shieling	P	"	NG 2522 4035	L
102.	Shieling		23NW	NG 2422 3994	L
103.	Cairns (2)	P	"	NG 2386 3960	-
104.	Pen	P	"	NG 2364 3937	L
105.	Shielings (6)	*	"	NG 2423 3910	L
106.	Shielings (10)	P*	"	NG 2430 3902	L
107.	Shielings (3)		"	NG 2447 3902	L
108.	Shieling	P	"	NG 2495 3936	L
109.	Pen	P	"	NG 2487 3925	L
110.	Pen?		"	NG 2465 3890	L
111.	Shieling	P	"	NG 2441 3895	L
112.	Shielings (3)	P	"	NG 2449 3877	L
113.	Pen	P	"	NG 2436 3875	L
114.	+Shielings (6)	P*	"	NG 2436 3850	L
115.	+Shielings (14)	P*	"	NG 2330 3827	L
116.	Cairn		"	NG 2390 3808	-
117.	Pen	P	"	NG 2440 3803	L
118.	Shieling		"	NG 2485 3830	L
119.	Shieling	P*	"	NG 2475 3770	L
120.	+Shielings (8)	P	"	NG 2445 3778	L
121.	Pen	P	"	NG 2320 3761	L
122.	+Shielings (8)	P	"	NG 2398 3731	L

Site No.	Description		Map	OS grid ref.	Import
123.	Shieling?	P	23NW	NG 2480 3706	L
124.	Pens (2)	P	"	NG 2459 3686	L
125.	Shielings? (6)	P	"	NG 2395 3700	L
126.	Pen	P	"	NG 2359 3862	L
127.	Shieling	P	23NE	NG 2559 2981	L
128.	+Shielings (4)	P*	"	NG 2555 3968	L
129.	Pen	P	"	NG 2552 3958	L
130.	Shieling?		"	NG 2550 3940	L
131.	Shieling?		"	NG 2548 3930	L
132.	Shieling/pen	P	"	NG 2538 3930	L
133.	+Settlement	P	"	NG 2505 3895	RL
134.	House (found)	P	"	NG 2503 3813	L
135.	House (ruin)	P	"	NG 2506 3807	L
136.	+Settlement	P	"	NG 2525 3795	RL
137.	Bothy's (2)	P	"	NG 2513 3756	L
138.	+Fank	P*	"	NG 2515 3691	L
139.	+Pen	P	"	NG 2511 3675	L

End

Site No.	Description		Map	OS grid ref.	Import
100042 123.	Shieling?	P	23NW	NG 2480 3706	L
43 124.	Pens (2)	P	"	NG 2459 3686	L
44 125.	Shielings? (6)	P	"	NG 2395 3700	L
45 126.	Pen	P	"	NG 2359 3862	L
E0007 127.	Shieling	P	23NE	NG 2559 3981	L
8 128.	+Shielings (4)	P*	"	NG 2555 3968	L
9 129.	Pen	P	"	NG 2552 3958	L
10 130.	Shieling?		"	NG 2550 3940	L
11 131.	Shieling?		"	NG 2548 3930	L
12 132.	Shieling/pen	P	"	NG 2538 3930	L
0003 133.	+Settlement	P	" CLR	NG 2505 3895 →	RL X
13 134.	House (founds)	P	"	NG 2503 3813	L
14 135.	House (ruin)	P	"	NG 2506 3807	L
E000 136.	+Settlement	P	"	NG 2525 3795	RL X
15 137.	Bothy's (2)	P	"	NG 2513 3756	L
E0004 138.	+Fank	P*	" (incorrect)	NG 2515 3691	L (?) *
16 139.	+Pen	P	"	NG 2511 3675	L

End

Site No.	Description		Map	OS grid ref.	Import
E0030 57.	+Shielings (3)		24SW	NG 2498 4071	L
100 9358.	Pen	P	"	NG 2487 4067	L
94 59.	Pens (2)	P	"	NG 2430 4033	L
10003 60.	+Shielings (12) (B.B)	P*	"correct	✓ NG 2400 4030	RL
10095 61.	? structures	P	"	NG 2427 4060	?
963 62.	Pen	P	"	NG 2382 4072	L
97 63.	Shieling	P	"	NG 2331 4015	L
98 64.	Cairn	P	"	NG 2309 4047	-
99 65.	Cairn	P	"	NG 2291 4048	-
100 66.	Shielings (11)	*	"	NG 2300 4085	L

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E 0047 67.	+Hut circle, shieling	P	24SE	NG 2502 4498	NRL
0025 68.	+Settlement	P* CGR B.B	"	NG 2549 4468	L
0048 69.	Shielings (2)	P	"	NG 2542 4445	L
69 70.	+Pen	P	"	NG 2537 4440	L
50 71.	Pen	P	"	NG 2543 4364	L
51 72.	Kerb cairn?	P*	"	NG 2556 4368	NRL
52 73.	Gateway	P	"	NG 2562 4358	L
53 74.	Dam and sluice	P*	"	NG 2531 4326	L
54 75.	Bridge abutments		"	NG 2545 4328	L
55 76.	+? structure?		"	NG 2540 4326	L
56 77.	House (part)		"	NG 2569 4327	L
57 78.	+House (founds)	P CGR	"	→ NG 2514 4320	L
58 79.	Well		"	NG 2550 4310	L
E0029 80.	+House & byre	P*	"	NG 2540 4297	L
0017 81.	Farmstead	P* — CGR	"	→ NG 2527 4290	L
0059 82.	structure?		"	NG 2548 4294	?
60 83.	Shieling?	P	"	NG 2556 4282	L
61 84.	House (founds)	P	"	NG 2569 4289	L
E0023 85.	+House (founds)	P — CGR	"	→ NG 2512 4258	L
0024 86.	+Settlement	P* — CGR	"	→ NG 2565 4265	L
0062 87.	Settlement		"	NG 2592 4270	L

TO DO

Site No.	Description	Map	OS grid ref.	Import
W0006 21.	⊕ Shielings (20)	P* J. BIB. "	✓ NG 2400 4370	L
W0015 22 (NEW)	⊕ Shielings (5) (3 smRP sites near SW		NG 2499 4377	L
11 23.	Shieling	P	"	L
67 24.	Shieling	P	"	L
68 25.	Hut circle	P	"	NRL
69 26.	Shielings (3)	"	"	L
70 27.	Shieling	P	"	L
W0016 28.	⊕ Farmstead	P*	" C. GR →	NG 2485 4325 NRL?
W0071 29.	Shielings (2)	P*	"	NG 2465 4318 L
72 30.	Cairn	"	"	NG 2417 4317 L
W0073 31.	Hut circle	P	"	NG 2486 4260 NRL
74 32.	Farmstead	"	"	NG 2471 4235 L
W0004 33.	+ Settlement J. BIB. + CORRECT.	"	"	NG 2470 4220 L
W0075 34.	Settlement	*	"	NG 2443 4235 L
76 35.	Farmstead	*	"	NG 2444 4226 L
77 36.	Cairn ?	P	"	NG 2461 4210 NRL?
78 37.	Cairns?	P	"	NG 2424 4202 NRL?
W0037 38.	+ Shielings (2+)	P* CCR. BIB	→	NG 2427 4255 L
W0079 39.	+ Shielings (3)	P	"	NG 2430 4255 L
W0080 40.	+ Shieling	P CCR. BIB	→	NG 2385 4225 L
81 41.	+ Shielings (3+)	CCR BIB	"	NG 2365 4222 L
W0082 42.	Stone settings (2)	P	"	NG 2336 4212 L
83 43.	Shielings (2)	P	"	NG 2314 4200 L
84 44.	Shielings (3)	"	"	NG 2335 4196 L
W0008 45.	+ Shielings (33)	P CCR. BIB	→	NG 2317 4170 L
W0015 46.	Shelters, cairns	P	"	NG 2248 4221 L
W0007 47.	+ Cairns (?)	BIB ONLY	" correct ✓	NG 2250 4170 CR ?
W0085 48.	Shielings (5)	"	"	NG 2280 4165 L
W0009 49.	Shielings (9)	P CCR	→	NG 2281 4148 L
W0017 50.	Shielings (3)	P*	"	NG 2266 4110 L
W0089 51.	Pen	P	"	NG 2332 4108 L
89 52.	Shielings (11)	P*	"	NG 2367 4127 L
90 53.	Shieling	P	"	NG 2424 4114 L
W0002 54.	+ Shielings (8)	P* CCR / BIB	→	NG 2436 4100 L*
W0091 55.	Settlement	*	"	NG 2498 4103 L
92 56.	Shieling	P	"	NG 2455 4090 L

Site No.	Description		Map	OS grid ref.	Import.
0063 88.	Farmstead	P	24SE	NG 2501 4235	L
64 89.	? structure		"	NG 2505 4230	?
65 90.	Foundations of ?	P	"	NG 2518 4225	?
66 91.	Bridge	P	"	NG ² 519 4224	RL
67 92.	Farmstead	*	"	NG 2516 4213	L
68 93.	Bothy		"	NG 2526 4186	L
69 94.	Hut circle		"	NG 2527 4157	NRL
70 95.	Cairn	P	"	NG 2527 4131	NRL?
71 96.	Pen		"	NG 2521 4117	L
72 97.	Pen	P	"	NG 2501 4085	L
73 98.	Shielings (4)		"	NG 2530 4080	L
74 99.	Bothy	P*	"	NG 2542 4100	L
75 100.	Shieling	P	"	NG 2549 4093	L
76 101.	Shieling	P	"	NG 2522 4035	L
0021 102.	Shieling		23NW	NG 2422 3994	L
25 103.	Cairns (2)	P	"	NG 2386 3960	-
26 104.	Pen	P	"	NG 2364 3937	L
27 105.	Shielings (6)	*	"	NG 2423 3910	L
28 106.	Shielings (10)	P*	"	NG 2430 3902	L
29 107.	Shielings (3)		"	NG 2447 3902	L
30 108.	Shieling	P	"	NG 2495 3936	L
31 109.	Pen	P	"	NG 2487 3925	L
32 110.	Pen?		"	NG 2465 3890	L
33 111.	Shieling	P	"	NG 2441 3895	L
34 112.	Shielings (3)	P	"	NG 2449 3877	L
35 113.	Pen	P	"	NG 2436 3875	L
36 114.	+Shielings (6)	P*	"	NG 2436 3850	L
0013 115.	+Shielings (14)	P*	" - CGR	NG 2330 3827	L
37 116.	Cairn		"	NG 2390 3808	-
38 117.	Pen	P	"	NG 2440 3803	L
39 118.	Shieling		"	NG 2485 3830	L
40 119.	Shieling	P*	"	NG 2475 3770	L
0003 120.	+Shielings (8)	P	"	NG 2445 3778	L
41 121.	Pen	P	"	NG 2320 3761	L
0002 122.	+Shielings (8)	P	"	NG 2398 3731	L

ORBOST ESTATE : ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

1998



LISTING OF SITES.

Key

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| * | plan of site. | P | Photograph |
| + | previously recorded structure. | N | Potential national importance. |
| R | Potential Regional importance. | L | Local importance. |
| ? | Unsure of importance. | - | Considered to have no importance. |

Vol. 1

Site No. Description Map OS grid ref. Import.

4NW 0052 X 1 160049	01. Settlement.	P	CGR. 24NW	NG 2448 4507	L	
	02. Hut circle, shieling	P	"	NG 2508 4516	NRL	
W0051	03. Shielings (3)	P	24SW	NG 2432 4470	L	
04. N4 24 S W0052	+Shielings (2)	P*	"	NG 24284456	L	
05. N4 24 S W0053	Pen	P	"	NG 2460 4436	L	
W0054	06. Pen		"	NG 2377 4425	L	
SS	07. +Shielings (12)	P*	"	NG 2420 4415	L	
St	08. +Shielings (2)	P	"	NG 2455 4400	L	
FOO41	09. Shieling	P	"	NG 2500 4430	L	
W 57	10. Bothy	P	"	NG 2189 4327	L	
W0058	11. Shielings (13) MAP	P*	"	NG 2190 4325	L	
S9	12. +Shielings (2)	P	"	NG 2247 4333	L	
60	13. +Pen	P	"	NG 2250 4327	L	
W0042	14. +Shielings (2)	P	"(corrected)	NG 2286 4365	L	
W0061	15. Shieling	P	"	NG 2295 4365	L	
W0062	16. +Shieling ?	P	"	NG 2292 4335	* L ?	9 FRONT
W0067	17. WDG R +Shielings (5)	P*	"	NG 2305 4360 X	L	
W0019	18. WDG R +Shielings (22)	P*	"	NG 2316 4336 X	L	
0063	19. Shielings (3)	P	"	NG 2335 4355	L	
64	20. Pen	P	"	NG 2278 4335	L	