

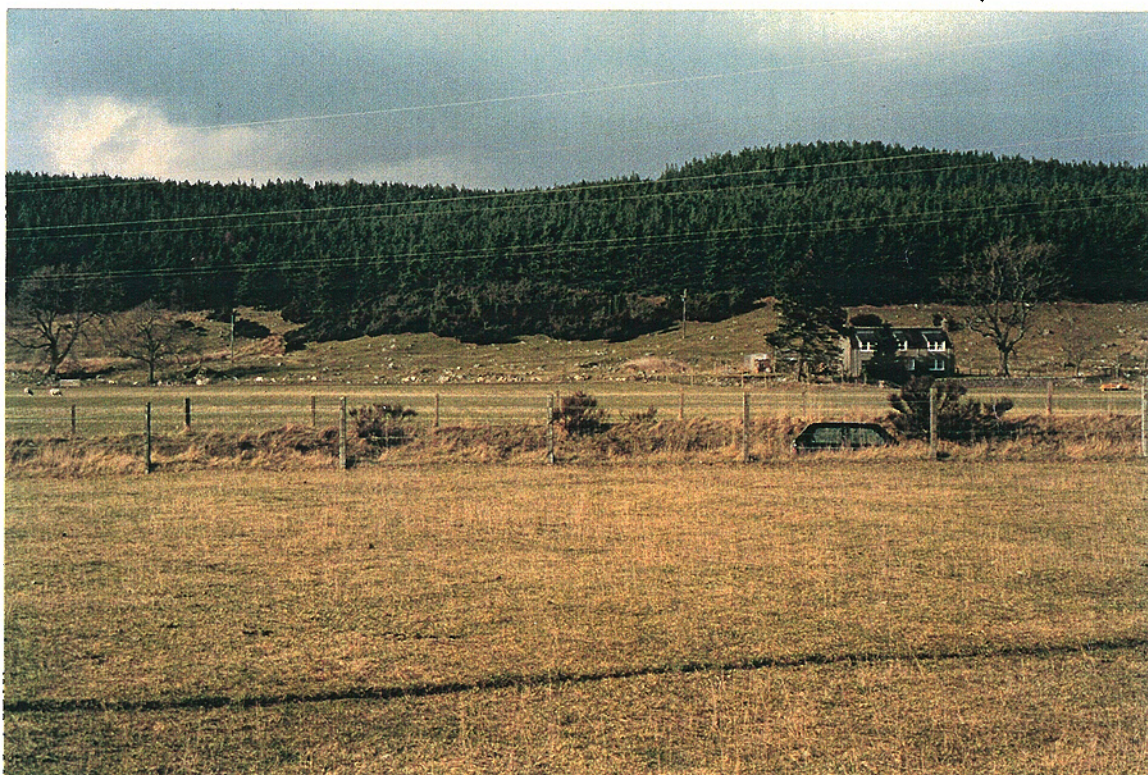
NH91NW0023 Report 91/BAS

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## **An Archaeological Survey of Balnacruie of Deishar Farm, Boat of Garten**

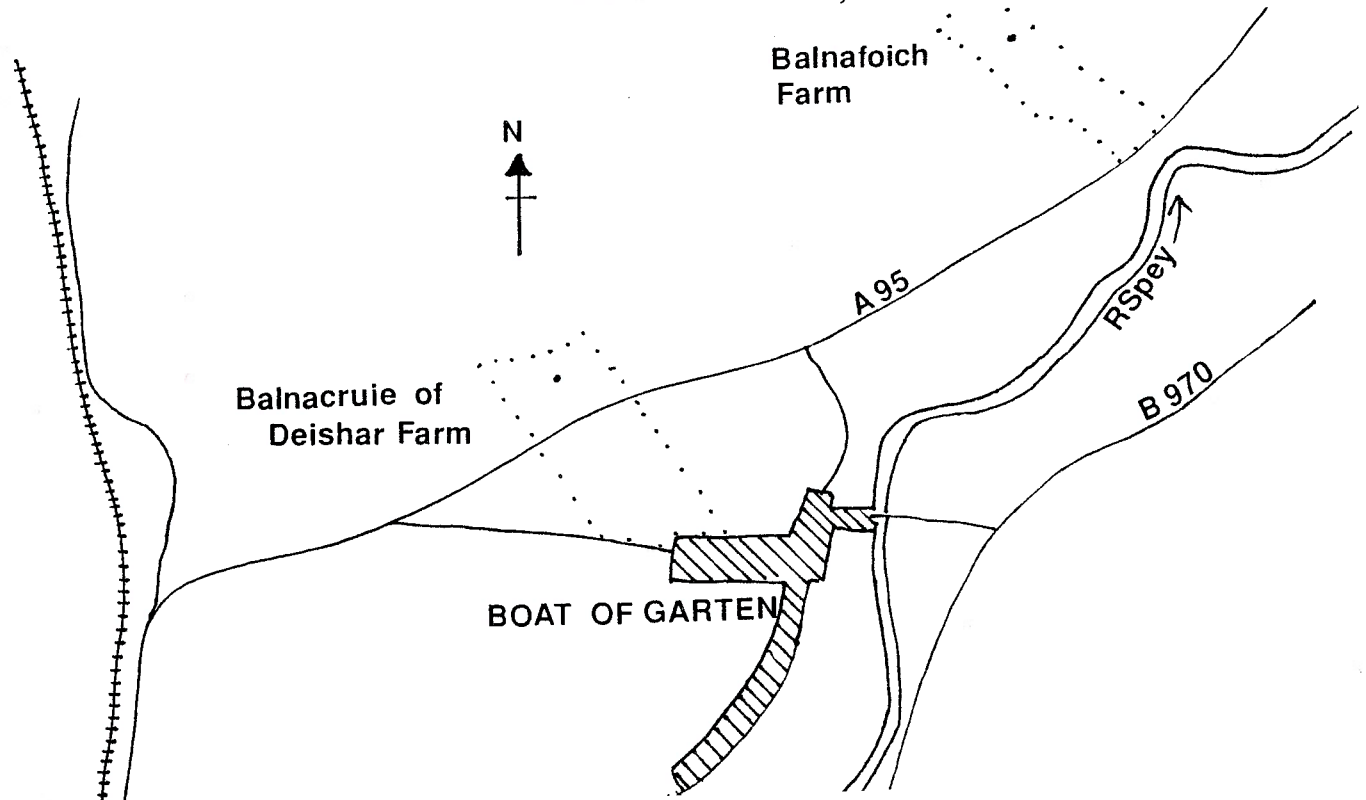
*with an assessment of the archaeological value of this farm and proposals to improve the management of this archaeological resource.*

on shp file



*Balnacruie of Deishar Farmhouse viewed from the South*

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**Fig 1** Location of *Balnacruie of Deishar Farm, Boat of Garten*

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## **Introduction**

The author was commissioned by **Historic Scotland** to carry out an archaeological survey at *Balnacruie of Deishar Farm* as part of a pilot study into the feasibility of using such surveys for the management of the archaeology. This pilot study was concentrated in the Cairngorm Straths Environmentally Sensitive Area where active management proposals are already being drawn up to manage the the historic and natural landscapes. This report is therefore both a record of the surviving archaeological remains and a discussion of proposals to preserve these remains.

## **Present Management**

The farm is held under a tenancy from the Reidhaven Estate and is operated in conjunction with *Kinchurdy* and *Balnafoich Farms*, [these farms are described separately]. No farm buildings have been erected in recent years and the farm house is currently occupied by a keeper who also keeps dogs and ferrets adjacent to the house.

There are some rabbits on this farm particularly on the sandy soils at the south end of the farm and though rabbits are evident among the whins and juniper scrub at the north end, the presence of a keeper undoubtedly prevents these from becoming a major threat to the farm.

## **Survey method**

After an initial deskbound survey of the HRC Sites & Monuments Record, the earlier OS and Roy maps and accessible records in Inverness library, the area of the farm as outlined on **Fig 2** was examined in the field. Summary descriptions and photographs were taken of all archaeological features as have been listed in the appendix. The survey was carried out in dry, clear and cold weather. The whole farm was examined though the juniper scrub prevented some areas at the North of the farm from being fully examined..

## **Archaeological and Historical Background**

No prehistoric features have been recorded on this farm, though the presence of burial cairns in the wood to the North (in particular one at grid reference NH 9280 2012) and two hut circles near the primary school show this area has been settled since prehistoric times. It is likely that early settlers were attracted to the easily worked soils to be found here..

Since the first OS map surveyed in 1867-71 the site of the medieval chapel and graveyard of *Deshar* has been placed on this farm at NH 9298 1982. However no remains are visible here other than the overgrown remnants of an old dyke [*see Appendix*] and it is unclear why the OS surveyors sited it here. In 1875 the site was visited by an a noted antiquarian (Mitchell A 1875 *Proc Soc Antiq Scot J 10*, p671) and he reported '*the site of the old church being at a place called both Chapeltown and Bail an-chaiheil. The name of no saint has kept hold of the place and I found the burial ground under crop. Fuaran Fiontag or the Well of Virtue, famed for curing toothache, is situated nearby.*'

As there are two settlements of Chapleton recorded to the South West it seems more likely that the chapel was sited on one of these farms. No buildings can be traced on the site marked, the only visible feature in this area being a heavily overgrown dyke (*see Appendix I*).

The earliest map of the area, that of General Roy dated to c1750, shows extensive settlement at *Deshar*, though nothing to the West between *Docharn* and *Deshar*. The farms here are likely to be joint stockfarms and there may be more specific information on them listed in Seafeld Estate Rentals. The first census of 1841 does not distinguish individual settlements, listing 12 households at *Deshar*, so it is not possible to separate the inhabitants of *Ballinluig* from those at *Balnacruie*. The settlement at *Ballinluig*, to the West of *Balnacruie*, was shown as occupied in 1871, but was abandoned, unnamed, by 1901.

### Discussion

The remains at *Balnacruie* and *Ballinluig* all appear to be late 18th or early 19th century in date and represent the remains of the common farm system practised before the introduction of a single tenant farms. The surviving remains may well mask remains from earlier medieval settlement, especially if there was a chapel nearby.

The survival of the enclosure dyke and the varied remains behind this mean that *Ballinluig* is a particularly well-preserved complex of buildings and enclosures dating to before the main period of agricultural improvements. They include buildings not marked on the 1st OS edition survey and are important survivals as similar remains do not survive in the neighbourhood. The two *Chapeltons*, *Glebe of Deishar* and *Dochlaggie* have all been redeveloped in recent years

The boundaries of the earlier farm system possibly survive in the field boundaries that are aligned NW/SE rather than the modern NNW/ESE alignment. More of these NW/SE boundaries are shown on the earlier maps and the possible remnant field system seen at NH 935 193 is also on this alignment. The rest of this farming system has disappeared in the modern farm.

In the rough ground to the North West of Boat of Garten there is no evidence for early settlement and the buildings shown on the 1st edition OS map are poorly preserved. The vegetation cover is very thin here either being removed as turf by the inhabitants of Boat of Garten or being overgrazed by sheep and rabbits in the past. Apart from the ruinous limekiln at NH 9355 1935, few archaeological features can be identified here.

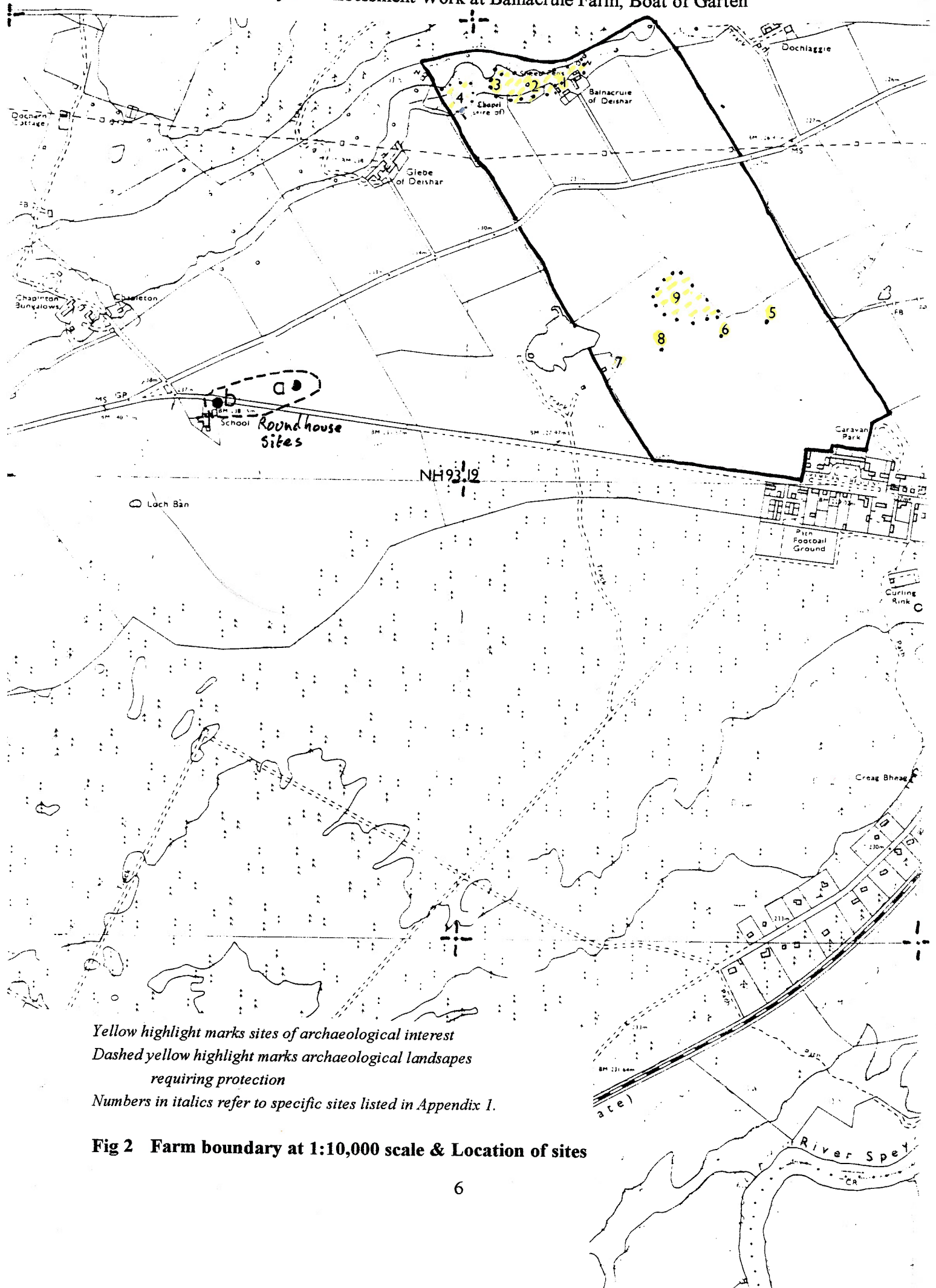
### **Management Proposals**

The following general suggestions are put forward for both the preservation and the better presentation of the surviving archaeological landscapes. It is a condition of the ESA Grant Scheme that all identified archaeological sites should be protected and the requirements needed to protect individual sites are listed with the site descriptions in Appendix 1. Tier 2 conditions where an active management is required are included in these proposals, though it is recognised that these will not necessarily be implemented.

1. The main area to be protected lies at the North of the farm where there is a continuous stretch of settlement remains from *Balnacruie* to the former settlement at *Ballinluig* (see Fig 4). Already some damage has occurred here from the wearing of tracks and the dumping of materials and it will need sensitive management to preserve the surviving remains. Arrangements should be made so that continued access to this area is not to the detriment of the archaeology.
2. The existing grazing regime is not a threat to the surviving remains and indeed should be encouraged as it prevents the sites being hidden by tree and shrub regeneration.
3. It remains uncertain whether there are significant archaeological remains in the area of the reputed chapel site. However caution is recommended here as surviving features may be slight and thus sensitive to disturbances from human action such as drainage channels or from natural processes such as tree regeneration. Some consideration should be given to the removal of the scrub woodland in this area.
4. Though all archaeological features are protected under the ESA scheme, the area at the South end of the farm is poorly preserved and it is suggested to the Regional archaeologist that only the lime kiln at NH 9355 1335 should be positively protected. The present farming regime should permit the survival of the remaining features provided that the rabbit population can be controlled.

Jonathan Wordsworth MA, MIFA, FSA Scot  
18th March 1996

# Archaeological Survey and Assessment Work at Balnacruie Farm, Boat of Garten

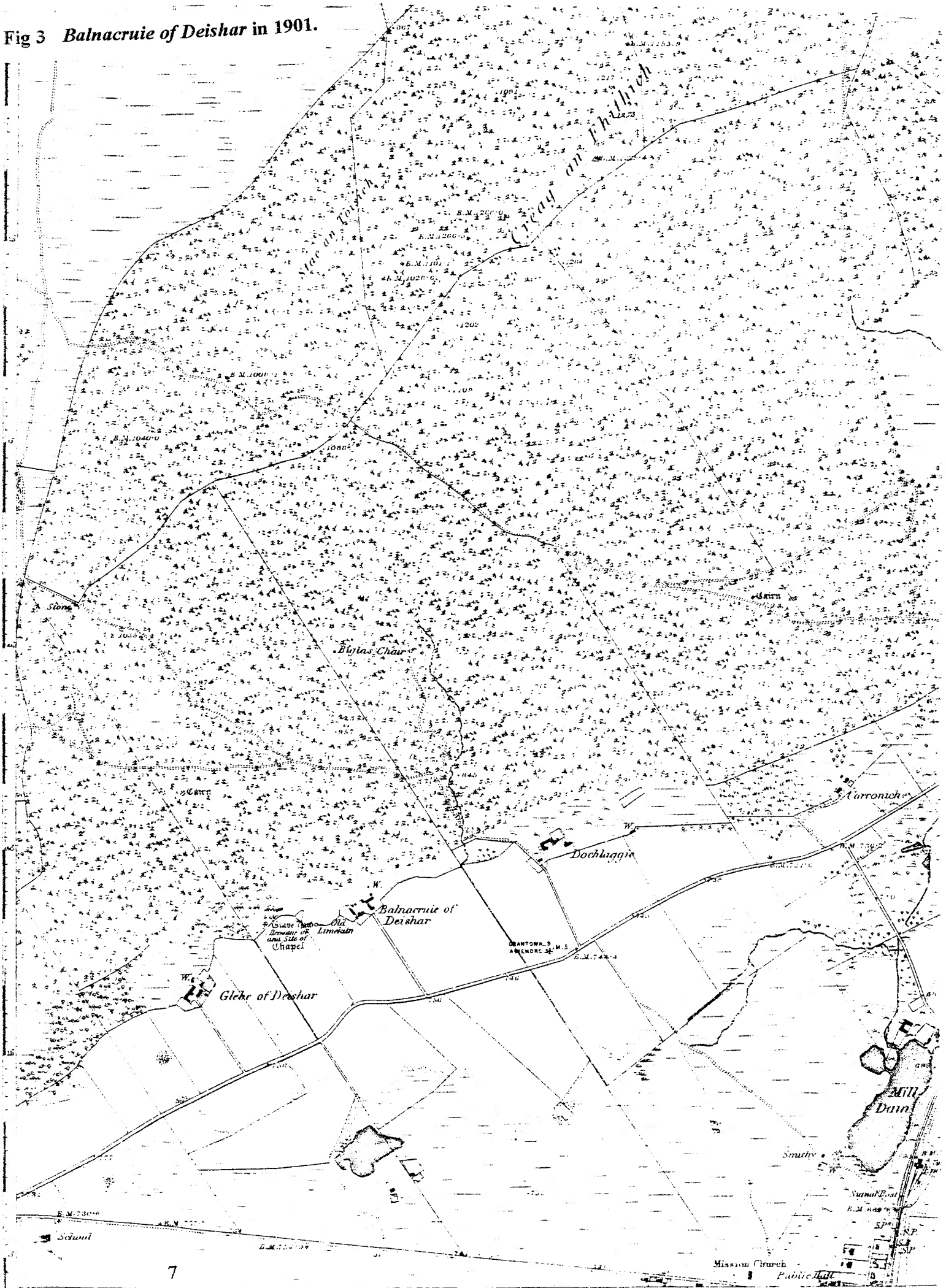


*Yellow highlight marks sites of archaeological interest*  
*Dashed yellow highlight marks archaeological landscapes requiring protection*  
*Numbers in italics refer to specific sites listed in Appendix 1.*

**Fig 2 Farm boundary at 1:10,000 scale & Location of sites**

Archaeological Survey and Assessment Work at Balnacruie Farm, Boat of Garten

Fig 3 *Balnacruie of Deishar in 1901.*



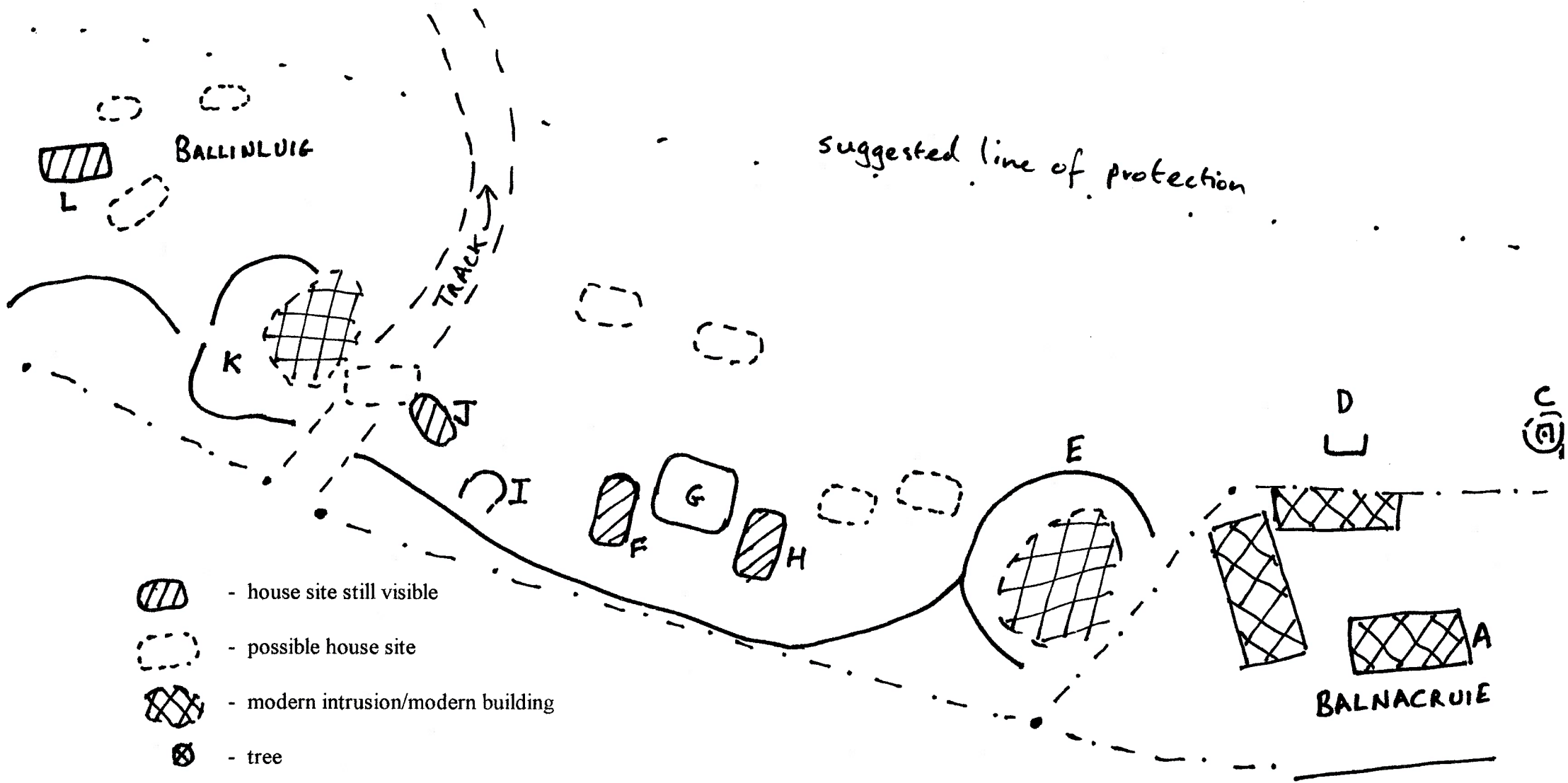


Fig 4 Sketch plan of former settlements at *Balnacruie* and *Ballinluig*  
Not to scale



# Archaeological Survey and Assessment Work at Balnacruie Farm, Boat of Garten

## Appendix 1 *List of Features/Areas of Archaeological Interest*

Site No.: 1

Site Name: Balnacruie

NH91 NW00023

Site Type: Farm settlement

NGR: NH 932 199

**Description:** The surviving farmhouse is the remnant of a formerly extensive range of buildings as can be seen on Figs 3 & 4. The farmhouse itself appears to have been built or rebuilt between 1871 and 1903, as it was not shown in its present form on the earlier OS map. To the NE of the farmyard was an L-shaped range of buildings, presumably barns that no longer survive and this area is currently used as a fank. To the North of this 2 small buildings, B & C, still survive in fragmentary form. Building C may have been a horse mill. Further West was D, another small structure, possibly a lime kiln, though not listed as such on the OS map. Enclosure E, probably a stock pen, may have formed the West boundary of Balnacruie Farm.

**A** Farmhouse currently occupied. Probably rebuilt to its present form in the late 19th century on the site of an earlier building.

**B** Rectangular structure built with mortared masonry 5m by 6m. Purpose unknown but thought to be a shed or store. Fairly ruinous

**C** The drystone footings of an oval building 8m by 4+m survive in places here. In the centre is a rectangular hollow 1.2m by 1.5m within another chamber 3m by 3m. It is thought this might be the foundations for a horse mill.

A small tree is growing in the centre of this feature and a larger one is established on the SE side. Between B & C are the remains of a concrete sheep dip now partially decayed

**D** The small kiln located here was not measured due to the hysteria of the dogs kennelled alongside! The kiln has been loosely filled in with stones. It was probably another lime kiln though it is not recorded as such on the OS maps. It is in good condition but a ferret tunnel has been built into the West side of this feature..

**E** The North end survives of a D-shaped enclosure shown on both OS maps. Its surviving diameter is 15m. The interior has been partially filled with a dump of stones and soil, probably derived from the demolition of buildings further to the East

**Management Options:** *The surviving buildings to the North of the modern sheep fence should be protected from the dumping of materials and destruction caused by digging or vehicle access. The present grazing regime prevents the site being swamped by regeneration though the trees growing on/near site C should be removed. The site should be monitored for invasion by juniper scrub from the North.*

## Archaeological Survey and Assessment Work at Balnacruie Farm, Boat of Garten

**Site No.:** 2  
**Site Name:** Ballinluig/Balnacruie  
**Site Type:** Farm settlement  
**NGR:** NH 9315 1990

NH93150024

**Description:** The stone footings of two longhouses F & G, 10m by 4m, lie to the South of a rectangular enclosure H, 10m square. The sites of other buildings are suggested by roughly rectangular hollows on both sides of the modern track as shown on Fig 4. The South boundary is formed by an irregular earth and stone dyke as shown on the earlier OS maps. This is partly masked by field clearance stones dumped over the fence.

None of the buildings is shown on the early OS map series and they must be presumed to have been abandoned long before 1870.

They represent the remains of a small farm/croft between Ballinluig and Balnacruie a

**Management Options:** *This site lies immediately West of the settlement at Balnacruie and should be managed together with it. As with site 1, the present grazing regime is preserving this site. The boulders by the fence should be moved but this would have to be done without damage to the buildings and the enclosure.*

**Site No.:** 3  
**Site Name:** Ballinluig  
**Site Type:** Farm settlement  
**NGR:** NH 931 199

NH93150025

**Description:** As shown on Fig 4, a limekiln, I, appears to separate Ballinluig from the unnamed settlement at site 2. The kiln was a rounded rectangle 1.25m wide by c3m long. As can be seen from the photograph it has been filled in with farm rubbish which has recently been cleared out. The two houses, J, shown to the West on the 1st OS edition, can only be partly traced on the ground, possibly because this is now an access route from the field to the hill behind. There is some vehicle erosion in this area (see photograph).

The boundary wall seen at site 2 continues from the kiln to link with a D-shaped enclosure, K, with an entrance to the West as shown. The East side of the appeared to have been partly filled in with stone rubble, though this may only be caused by the collapse of the enclosure wall on this side. There is a dump of mossy wood and strong nettle growth to the North East suggesting there has been some disturbance in this area. On the West side near the entrance some stones from the enclosure wall have been recently dislodged. (see photograph). The base of this enclosure is very wet. If the chapel site is correctly placed on the OS map, this might be the site of the *Fuaran Fiontag*.

2 buildings, L, were shown roofed on the 1st OS map to the North West of this enclosure at cNH 930 159. One of these was still roofed in 1903 and its footings measure 5m by 11m internally with walls 0.6m thick except at the West end where it was 1m thick. This presumably held the chimney. The other building could not be clearly seen, though various scoops may mark the site of smaller structures.

The boundary wall continues to survive on the outside of the modern fence on the line shown on Fig 4.

**Management Options:** *As with sites 1 & 2, the present grazing regime is preserving this site from being covered by regeneration. Care must be taken to prevent further damage by vehicle tracks and the dumping of rubbish and stones. The rushes could be burnt to encourage heavier grazing around enclosure K. The rubbish around and within kiln I ought to be cleared away and may in any case be seen as a hazard to stock.*

## Archaeological Survey and Assessment Work at Balnacruie Farm, Boat of Garten

Site No.: 4

Site Name: Deishar

NH91NW0009

Site Type: Reputed medieval chapel & graveyard

NGR: NH 9298 1982

*Description:* This is recorded on all the OS maps as Grave Yard (Remains of and Site of Chapel). As is discussed above there are no remains visible here and it is possible that it should be sited elsewhere. The area around here is heavily overgrown with juniper and birch scrub. There is a boulder and earth dyke as shown on the current OS map extending 30m North East from the present farm boundary and some 60m North of the old boundary wall. Rather than bounding a graveyard, it would appear to mark an enclosure to the North as the ground appears more fertile here.

*Management Options:* It is still possible that the remains of the chapel and graveyard lie hidden here and any groundworks such as ditch cutting, that are undertaken here must be done with care. Clearance of the scrub may reveal remains not currently visible.

The old dyke, as can be seen in the photograph, is partly overgrown with juniper scrub and it would be desirable to clear this away from the wall. It is recognised that there may be a conflict with nature conservation interests in this area.

According to the 1875 account the graveyard was in arable ground, therefore ploughing and other soil disturbance in the North West corner of this field must be carried out with care.

Site No.: 5

Site Name:

NH91NW0090

Site Type: Building

NGR: NH 9365 1935

*Description:* A roofed building within a small enclosure was shown here in 1871. No building was shown here in 1903, though the enclosure still survived. It is not clear what the building was used for, though it was perhaps part of a small farm. It may not be a particularly ancient structure, possibly being contemporary with site 7 which it is suggested was built by a railway worker in the 1860s. The probable site of this building is shown on photograph.

The wall line of the enclosure survives as a thin spread of stones. There are considerable quantities of stones cleared from the field to the North and dumped in the vicinity.

*Management Options:* This should be kept clear of future stone dumps. No positive action is suggested here.

Site No.: 6

Site Name:

NH91NW0026

Site Type: Limekiln

NGR: NH 9355 1935

*Description:* A limekiln in rather poor repair is located here. The limekiln is marked but not titled on the earlier OS maps. A gully runs from the kiln but is more probably connected with a drainage channel from the lochan to the West rather than being an integral part of the kiln.

It is not clear to what farm this kiln belonged. It was probably built in the late 18th/early 19th century when the Grant estates were actively encouraging their tenants to lime their fields. The neighbouring structures at sites 5 & 7 are thought to be much later in date than this feature.

*Management Options:* This feature should be preserved and it may require some stone clearance to make it more visible. As it is located close to Boat of Garten, it must be considered whether greater exposure would make it more susceptible to vandalism.

## Archaeological Survey and Assessment Work at Balnacruie Farm, Boat of Garten

Site No.: 7

Site Name:

Site Type: Structure

NH91N60027

NGR: NH 9327 1925

*Description:* The unroofed building shown here has recently been demolished. All that remains are the machine-made bricks for its chimney. Though a building was shown here in 1871 it may not have been the one recently demolished as this was probably a tarred timber building like the one surviving to the West at NH9323 1920. Alternatively it had been built just before the 1871 survey perhaps by a worker on the railway (*see also site 5*).

Traces of an enclosure survive around this building.

Neither the building nor the enclosure are considered to date to much before the 1871 survey. They were possibly built by a worker on the railway or at the sawmill which was shown at NH 932 192 on the earlier OS map.

*Management Options:* This area should be protected from stone dumping and the cutting of tracks. No positive action is suggested.

Site No: 8

Site Name:

Site Type: ?structure

NGR:

*Description:* An L-shaped rickle of stones 9m long E/W by 6m long N/S may mark the remains of a building or a small enclosure. No feature is recorded here on the earlier OS maps.

It lies immediately North of an old track that lead past sites 7 & 5 to Milton and Boat of Garten and some 15m South of a drainage ditch that leads East out of the former lochan. This ditch was shown on the 1st OS survey.

Its poor preservation means that it is difficult to interpret this feature.

*Management Options:* As this is not an area of active cultivation and well-removed from the usual areas of stone dumping it does not appear to be under any major threat other than vehicles driving over it. Tractors and other vehicles should be encouraged to avoid it.

Site No: 9

Site Name:

Site Type: Field system

NH91 N60029

NGR: NH 934 194 (centred)

*Description:* A strip of ground to the East of the now drained lochan and North of the former drainage ditch has recently been cultivated as shown in the photograph. Strips left between the ploughings and used to heap field clearance stones may be the residue of a former strip system of cultivation. This is a tentative interpretation but if correct would be an important survival of the field system associated with Ballinluig and Balnacruie. The ground here appears to be stonier than the area to the North which may explain why cultivation was previously abandoned here

*Management Options:* This field system could be preserved by following existing ploughing practice and leave the stony headlands unploughed.

Archaeological Survey and Assessment work at Balnacruie Farm, Boat of Garten



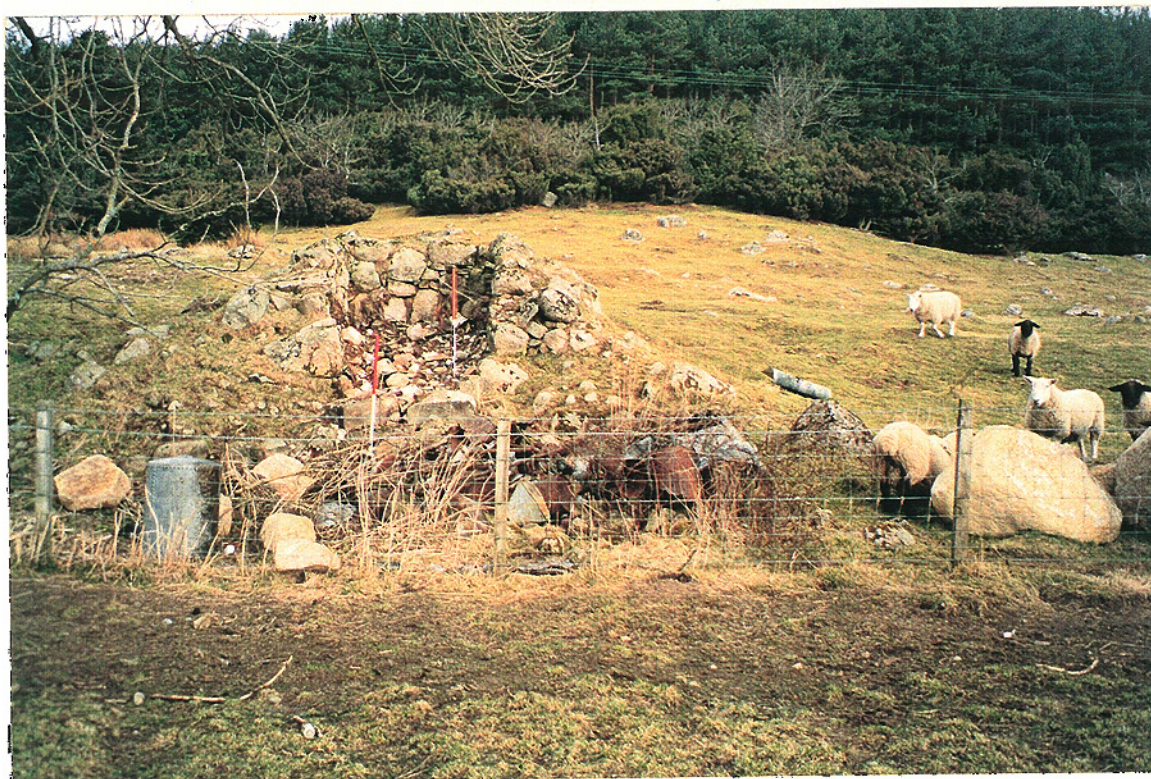
**Fig 5(i) Feature c at Balnacruie - ?Horsemill**  
**Looking South East Note trees growing and adjacent to the site**



**Fig 5 (ii) ?Limekiln, Feature D at Banacruie**  
**Looking North West through fence of dog kennel**



**Fig 6 (i)** Ranging poles mark sites of Houses F & H Note stone rubble by fence  
Looking South West to Kiln I and Glebe of Deishar Farm



**Fig 6 (ii)** Limekiln I with associated rubbish  
Looking North

Archaeological Survey and Assessment work at Balnacruie Farm, Boat of Garten



**Fig 7(i)** House site J marked by ranging poles  
Note wear on track in centre right of picture  
Looking North West from Limekiln I



**Fig 7 (ii)** Enclosure K with ranging poles at entrance and possible line of East wall.  
Note tree on line of dyke to right of picture  
Looking North East



**Fig 8 (i)** Enclosure K with disturbed stones of wall  
Ranging rod marks entrance shown in Fig 7(ii)  
Looking North North West towards House Site L



**Fig 8 (ii)** Dyke at site 4 with juniper scrub  
Looking South West





**Fig 9(i)**      **Remnant of Enclosure at site 5**  
**Looking North**      **Note rabbit burrow in front of wall**



**Fig 9(ii)**      **Limekiln at site 6 as surviving**  
**Looking North East to Dochlaggie Farm**

Archaeological Survey and Assessment work at Balnacruie Farm, Boat of Garten



**Fig 10(i)** Possible house at site 8 with drain from lochan on left and track to right  
Looking South East to Limekiln at site 6



**Fig 10(ii)** ?Remnant Field system at site 9  
Looking South to Limekiln at site 6