



The National Trust for Scotland

Ben Lawers Historic Landscape Project Schools Project 2003 and 2004

Kerrowmore Enclosure, Glen Lyon, Perthshire: Archaeological Evaluation



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0. SUMMARY

As part of the Ben Lawers Historic Landscape Project local school children took part in a survey and excavation of trial trenches on an enclosure site at Kerrowmore adjacent to the Meggernie Outdoor Centre. The site is located between Cladh Bhranno graveyard and Kerrowmore Farm. The eastern side of the site is straddled by a drystone field wall which runs northwards from the graveyard towards the farm. The enclosure is sub-oval in shape and measures 31m long, east to west, by 28m externally. The east and north sides of the enclosure are well-defined by a scarped edge c. 1.5m high. There is an entrance in the east 1.5m wide. The southern half of the interior is occupied by the rough outline of a rectangular structure 18m long, east to west, by c. 7m wide. A rectangular depression which runs down the north-east corner of the site measures c. 1m wide and is c. 5m long, north-south. It is possible that this represents a backfilled trench from a previous excavation although there is no record of such an investigation.

Two small trenches 4m long by 1m wide were excavated within the east side of the enclosure in May 2003. Trench 1 was excavated on the southern side of the entrance. No structural features were found but artefacts included an iron horseshoe. Trench 2 was opened across the southern side of the structure in the interior of the enclosure and located a 1m drystone wall faced both internally and externally. Finds from the interior included 19th century ceramics and iron nails.

Three small trenches 4m long by 1m wide were excavated in June 2004. Trench 3 was located on the slope of the bank that formed the west side of the enclosure. Trench 4 was excavated in the interior of the enclosure and Trench 5 was in the south-east corner.

Desk-based assessment showed that a rectilinear structure with an associated yard to the north occupied this spot in 1867 but had been abandoned by 1900. This structure, probably a long house, is most likely to be a rectangular feature recorded by plane table survey. Finds from the site generally indicate a 19th century date with iron objects, white and brown glazed ceramic, bottle and window glass and a horse shoe. The discovery of iron bloomery slag might suggest activity in the vicinity dating back to the medieval period while a flint scraper could be prehistoric. This evidence is in keeping with the range of sites located around Kerrowmore Farm and which would benefit from further research.



Fig 1 – Location map

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A small scale archaeological evaluation was carried out on the enclosure at Kerrowmore, near Bridge of Balgie, in Glen Lyon (NN 8174 6833, Fig. 1). The work was undertaken on 12th - 13th May 2003 and 14th - 15th June 2004 by Primary 6 and 7 pupils from Killin and Kenmore Primary Schools with the help of the pupils of Glenlyon Primary School. Fieldwork was supervised by Derek Alexander, West Region Archaeologist for The National Trust for Scotland (NTS), Debbie Jackson, NTS West Region Education Officer, and Dr John Atkinson of Glasgow University Archaeological Research Division (GUARD). The project formed part of the educational element of the Ben Lawers Historic Landscape Project (BLHLP).
- 1.2 The Ben Lawers Historic Landscape Project is an integrated, multi-disciplinary project to collect information on the important yet fragile historic landscape at Ben Lawers in order to inform sustainable management and conservation. The HLF funded elements will be completed within 3 years but form part of a wider 5-year project. The project provides a rare opportunity for community and public participation in archaeological fieldwork. As well as addressing national priorities in the study of medieval or later rural settlement in Scotland, the work will develop our thinking about 'cultural landscapes' and their value. The project includes a fusion of historical research and scientific studies and as well as archaeological field survey, excavation and underwater prospection. Products will include an Archaeological Action Plan, educational packages, exhibitions and interpretive materials, as well as academic and popular accounts of the results.
- 1.3 The site at Kerrowmore was brought to the attention of the author when staying at the Meggernie Outdoor Centre in 2002 during the fieldwork seasons of the Ben Lawers Historic Landscape Project. Although not within the defined area of the main project it was felt that the facilities at Meggernie and the ease of access meant the site was more suited to working with schools. Prior to the excavation work visits were made to the schools and the work of an archaeologist discussed. Pupils were given hands on tasks which covered the full range of archaeological techniques from desk-based research, to survey and excavation, the recovery of artefacts, their conservation, and the interpretation of results. The schools have also visited the BLHLP excavations at Kiltyrie in 2003, the Crannog Centre at Kenmore and the NTS longhouse at Moirlanich. Primary 6/7 pupils from Killin also visited some of the shieling sites where they did a range of role-play exercises. As a result of the previous education work the pupils were fully aware of the project and the work of archaeologists before they took part in the excavations at Kerrowmore.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation were relatively straightforward:

- To collate information on the history of the site at Kerrowmore and its immediate vicinity.
- To determine the nature and, if possible, the extent of any surviving archaeological deposits.
- To provide a hands-on learning experience for local school children.



Fig 2 – Kerrowmore enclosure (middle) with Cladh Bhranno graveyard behind

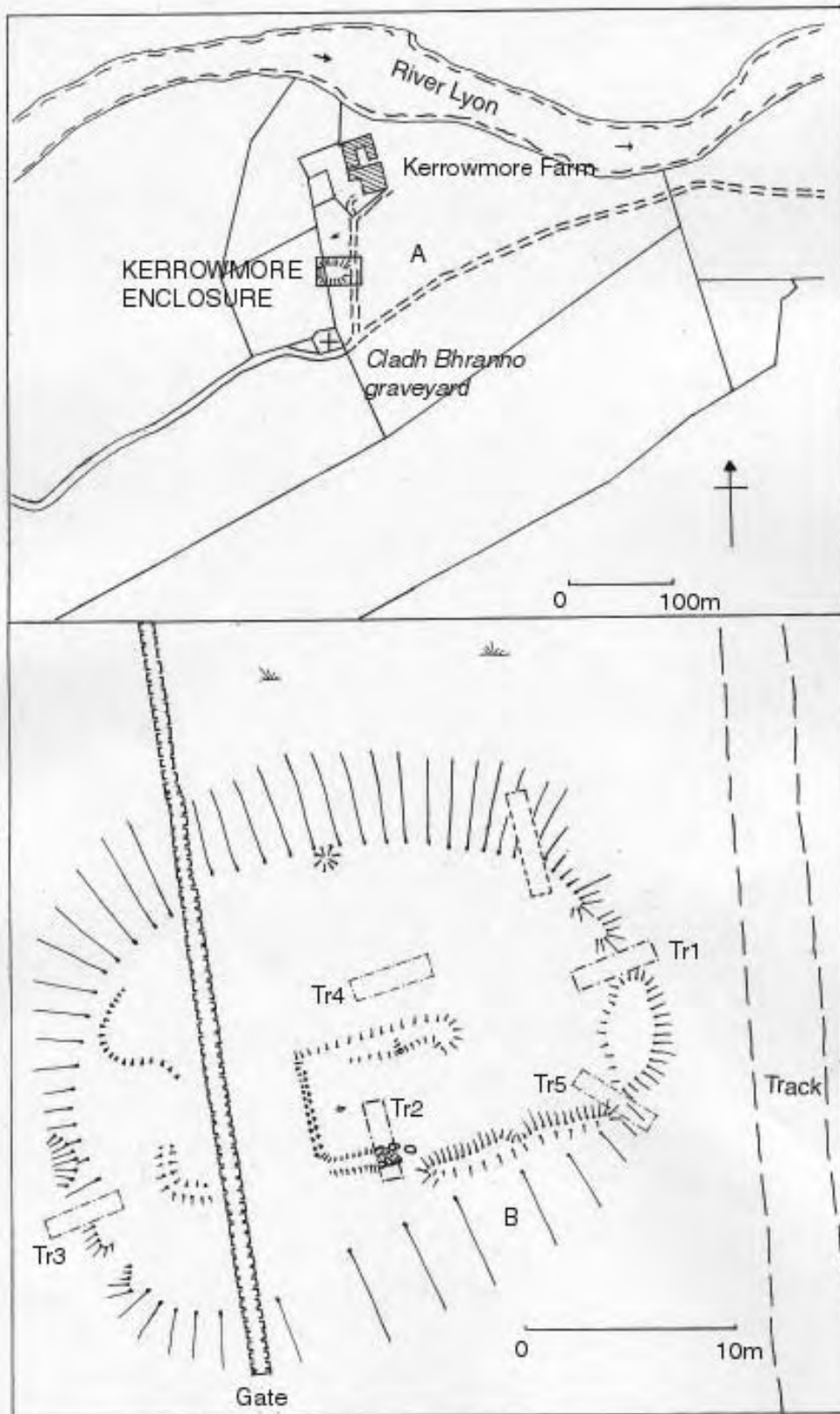


Fig 3 – Plan of Kerrowmore enclosure showing trenches

3. WORKING METHODS

3.1 Desk-based survey

3.1.1 A desk-based study was conducted. The following sources were consulted:

National Monuments Record for Scotland (NMRS). All relevant records were checked and bibliographic sources followed up on the CANMORE website www.rcahms.gov.uk. This work provided information on the range of sites and monuments in the general area.

Early map sources. Early map sources were examined including the First and Second Edition 6" to 1 mile Ordnance Survey coverage.

3.2 Survey work

3.2.1 A plane table and alidade were used by the school children to measure and plot the whole enclosure. The large area on the east side of the stone dyke was planned in 2003 and the smaller area on the west was added in 2004.

3.3 Trial Trenching

3.3.1 A total of five trenches were excavated in the enclosure. Prior to the excavation work starting the trenches were de-turfed and the turf piled to one side. The children excavated the uppermost deposits using trowels and hand shovels. The earth was removed in buckets and spoil heaps located adjacent to each trench and placed on polythene. It should be emphasised that given the short length of time spent on the excavation work only the uppermost deposits, mostly derived from topsoil, were investigated and that deeper stratified features and layers were not disturbed.

3.3.2 Photographs were taken during the fieldwork by a range of people from teachers, pupils and archaeologists. These photographs have yet to be collated and there is no Photograph List in the Appendices.

3.3.3 On completion of fieldwork all trenches were backfilled and the turf was replaced.

3.4. Archiving

3.4.1 The primary archive will be deposited with the NMRS.

4. DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT RESULTS

4.1 General

4.1.1 A basic desk-based assessment was undertaken and included examination of information held in the NMRS and old maps.

4.2 NMRS

4.2.1 The NMRS lists a number of sites in the vicinity of Kerrowmore Farm the most notable of which is Cladh Bhranno burial ground (NN54NE 3). To the east there are the remains of a circular homestead (NN54NE 1) while on the wooded hillside to the south-east are traces of a sheepfold and shielings (NN54NE 16).

4.2.2 The burial ground is located 150m south of the farm immediately adjacent to the track which leads along the southern side of the glen. It is surrounded by a stone wall up to 1.5m high. The interior contains a large number of gravestones and it is still in use although there is only one space left (Rab Potter pers comm). Two unusual graveslabs have already been identified (Robertson 1991). One was a possible Early Christian slab bearing an incised cross with arms very much thicker than the shaft. The other is a medieval grave-slab with an incised form of a two-handed sword or claymore with down-turned quillons and rounded pommel. Recent clearance of turf in the graveyard has revealed large numbers of horizontal slabs, in rows, side by side, but only one or two of these have any carvings and most seem to be more recent in date. There is a small niche in the eastern wall of the graveyard and a rough stone font close to the entrance. A detailed survey of the graveyard would indeed be useful.

4.2.3 Other sources suggest that there was a chapel dedicated to an 8th century saint St Eonan (St Adamnan) close to the Bridge of Balgie. Indeed the placename of the island in the middle of the river to the west of the bridge is Eilean Eonain. The exact position of this chapel site is unknown (NN54NE 7) as seemingly it was demolished in the 14th century when a new chapel was built in the graveyard Cladh Bhranno (Campbell 1886, Stewart 1928). This new chapel in the graveyard seemingly stood until 1777. An iron bell which supposedly belonged to the original chapel of Saint Eonan was kept in the niche in the wall at the graveyard of Cladh Branno until it was moved to the church at Innerwick (built 1828?) where it can still be see today (Fig 4). Such iron bells appear to have belonged to the 8th century AD and were associated with the activities of Columban monks (Bourke 1984). There are 14 iron hand-bells known from Scotland and there is a pronounced concentration of three in Glen Lyon: one at Kerrowmore, one at Fortingall and another from Balnahannait (Bourke 1984, 467).

4.2.4 Recent clearing of a field drain on the east side of the track that leads from the graveyard to Kerrowmore Farm (Fig 3 point A for approx position) has revealed a fragment of a stone, hexagonal on the outside and curved in the interior (Judith

Potter pers comm). This worked stone appears to be the fragment of a font (Fig 18) and may have belonged to the chapel built in the graveyard.

- 4.2.5 The NMRS did not list any sites or discoveries in the area of the proposed excavation between the graveyard and Kerrowmore farm. Mention is made of a possible stone circle (NN54NE 6) which was seen around 1848 close to the graveyard at Cladh Bhranno (Campbell 1888, 22), although no trace of this now survives and just how close it was to the graveyard is unclear.



Fig 4 – The 8th century AD hand bell from Cladh Bhranno graveyard now in Innerwick Church

4.3 Cartographic sources

- 4.3.1 The First edition Ordnance survey map (OS 1867) clearly shows the farm at Kerrowmore as a T-shaped farm house with steading to the north (Fig 5). It also marks the 'Grave Yard' to the south. Between the graveyard and the farm there is a field boundary and on the east side of this there is a square enclosure the southern side of which is formed by a roofed rectangular structure. This enclosure matches very closely with the field remains.
- 4.3.2 The Second edition Ordnance survey map (OS 1900) shows a slightly different picture (Fig 6). Kerrowmore Farm has expanded, the graveyard, while still there is not annotated, and the enclosure and building on the east side of the field boundary have disappeared. It is likely that the structure had been abandoned and possibly demolished some time in the second half of the 19th century when many other farms were also abandoned, for example the one to the south-west that was also marked on the 1st edition OS map. It is possible that the stone from the structure was used in the re-building and extending of the farm at Kerrowmore. The 2nd edition map does indicate two small enclosures against either side of the field boundary just to the north of the graveyard. Both are marked as unroofed and are likely to be small pens rather than buildings.
- 4.3.3 The map evidence therefore indicates that there was a small building, probably a house with an associated kailyard, on the site in 1867 but that this had been abandoned by 1900. It is likely that this building dates back to at least the start of the 19th century but whether there was an earlier settlement on the site remains unclear. The range of archaeology in the surrounding area suggests that there could easily have been Medieval, Early historic and even Prehistoric activity on the site.

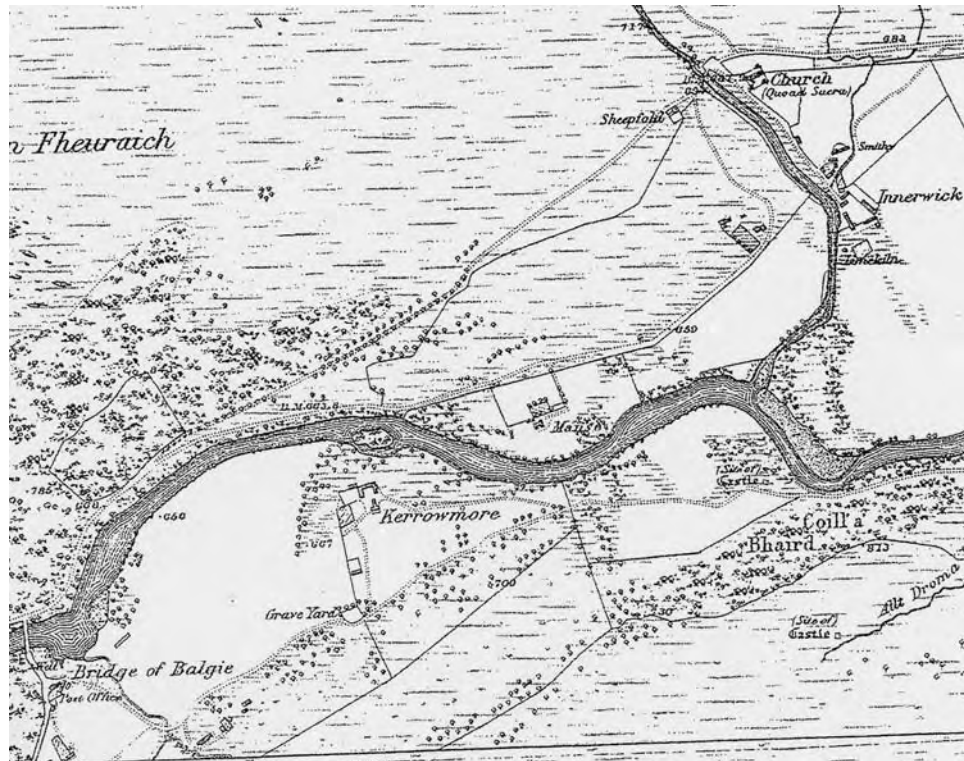


Fig 5 – 1st edition OS map 1867

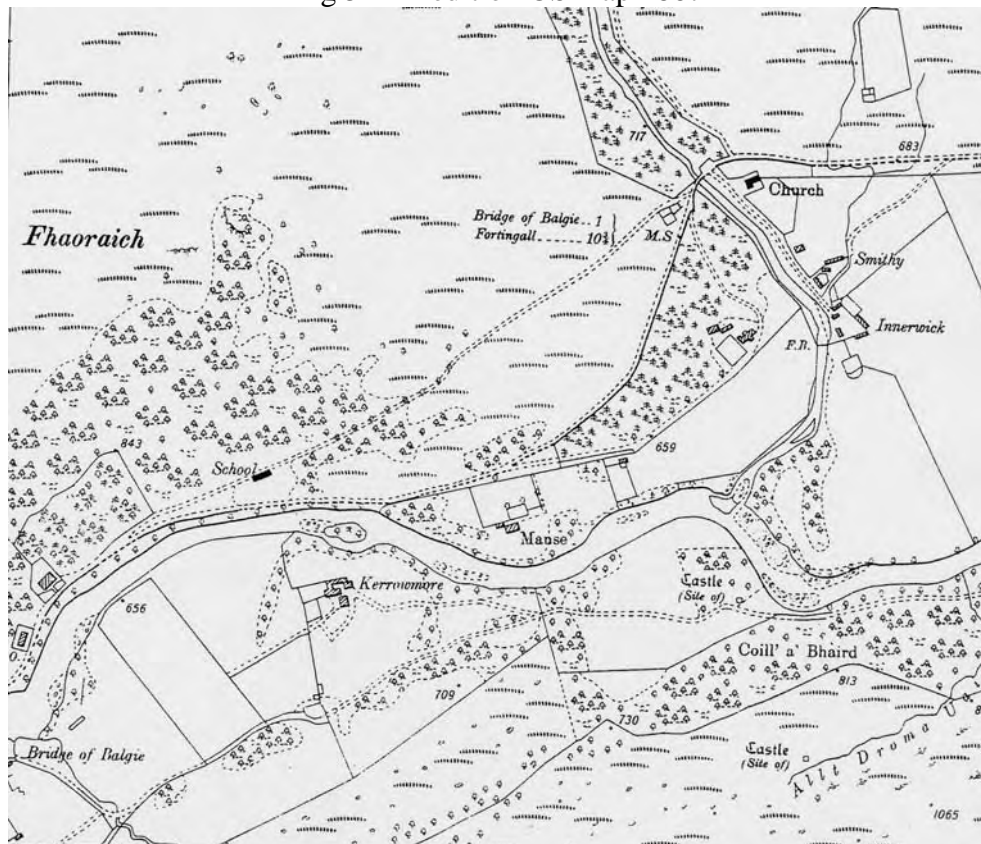


Fig 6 – 2nd edition OS map 1900

5. SURVEY RESULTS

5.1 Kerrowmore Enclosure

- 5.1.1 The enclosure was surveyed using a standard plane table and ruler alidade. The field drawing was plotted at a scale of 1:50 with the eastern half of the enclosure being surveyed in 2003 and the smaller western part being completed in 2004. An overall plan of the entire enclosure and trenches was produced at a scale of 1:100.



Fig 7 – Undertaking plane table survey 2003

- 5.1.2 The results of the plane table survey can be seen on Figure 2. The eastern side of the site is straddled by the drystone field wall which runs northwards from the graveyard towards the farm. The enclosure is sub-oval in shape and measures 31m long, east to west, by 28m externally. It lies 4m to the west of the track that runs towards Kerrowmore and there is a noticeably boggy area to the north. On the remaining sides the site is surrounded by thick grass.
- 5.1.3 The east and north sides of the enclosure are well-defined by a scarped edge c. 1m high. There is an entrance in the east 1.5m wide. The southern half of the interior is occupied by the rough outline of a rectangular structure 18m long, east to west, by c. 7m wide, externally. The western end of this structure is clearly defined by

a stepped stone feature. It seems likely that this foundation represents the remains of the rectilinear structure visible on the 1st edition OS map of 1867.

- 5.1.4 On the east side of the drystone dyke the ground is noticeably higher perhaps as a result of having stone field clearance dumped on to the surface. Certainly there is a lot of stone just below the turf at a number of points. One area of stone appeared to form an L- shaped bank which may or may not be associated with the structure on the west side of the dyke.
- 5.1.5 A rectangular depression which runs down the north-east corner of the site measures c. 1m wide and is c. 5m long, north-south. It is possible that this represents a backfilled trench from a previous excavation although there is no record of such an investigation.
- 5.1.6 At the end of the 2004 work, differential grass growth seemed to show a possible rectangular hollow at the south-eastern side of the enclosure (Fig 3 – marked B). This feature might represent the remains of an earlier structure but was not planned and would need to be the subject of future work.

6. TRIAL TRENCHING RESULTS

6.1 Trench 1

- 6.1.1 Trench 1 was excavated in May 2003 and was 4m long, east-west, by 1m wide. It was located in the entrance way to the enclosure. Underneath the topsoil and turf (001) there was a loose medium – dark brown gravelly silt which contained a range of artefacts. No definite surface was located and excavation did not proceed below around 15cm.
- 6.1.2 The artefacts recovered from Trench 2 included small pieces of iron wire (SF 5) and nails (SF6). In addition a complete iron horseshoe was found (SF3). Two sherds of brown glazed earthenware (SF 2) and a shard of green bottle glass (SF 7) were also found.



Fig 8 – Excavating the eastern end of Trench 1

6.2 Trench 2

- 6.2.1 Trench 2 was excavated in May 2003. It was 4m long, north-south, and 1m wide. It was positioned across the line of an east-west stoney bank thought to be the southern wall of a rectilinear structure. Below the turf and topsoil (001) there was a faced, rubble-built, stone wall (003). This wall was 1m wide and had an inner and outer face with a smaller rubble core. To the south of the wall (exterior?) there was an area of collapsed rubble (002). In the interior there was a medium brown gravelly silt deposit (004) which was not completely excavated but was up to 0.2m deep.
- 6.2.2 The majority of the finds in this trench came from north of the wall in the topsoil deposit (001). These consisted of a sherd of brown-glazed pottery (SF 9), a wooden handle of a knife (SF 10) and a sherd of a white-glazed dairy bowl (SF7). There were also a range of iron objects including nails (SF 1), the heel plate from a shoe (SF 2) and pieces of iron wire which may be thatch pins (SF 3). On the south side of the wall in topsoil above the tumbled stone (002) were further iron objects including a nail (SF4) and 12 sherds of a white-glazed ceramic plate with blue decoration (SF .6)



Fig 9 -Trench 2 – Excavating Trench 2 in May 2003, from south east

6.3 Trench 3

- 6.3.1 Trench 3 measured 4m long, SW-NE, by 1m wide and was positioned down the bank of the western side of the enclosure. Under the turf and topsoil (001) at the eastern end of the trench was a concentration of stones (002) which must form the bank of the enclosure. This bank was not excavated further. At the south-western end of the trench the soil deposit was much deeper (003) and was excavated to a depth of 20cm.
- 6.3.2 The artefacts recovered from this trench include over 20 fragments of an iron strap or bracket, a couple of pieces of white-glazed ceramic and a shard from a green glass bottle. There was also a fragment of burnt bone, probably animal bone. The iron bracket was found at the eastern end of the trench on top of the stoney bank (002).



Fig 10 – Trench 3 from north-east

6.4 Trench 4

- 6.4.1 Trench 4 measured 4m long, SW-NE, and 1m wide. It was located in the centre of the enclosure to the north of the visible remains of the rectilinear structure. Underneath the turf and topsoil (001) was a mixed deposit of medium brown gravelly silt. No definitive features were located although excavation only progressed to a depth of c 15 cm.
- 6.4.2 The artefacts recovered from this trench included 6 sherds of white-glazed ceramic and 5 sherds of brown-glazed ceramic, possibly from a tea pot. There were also 5 shards of green bottle glass, probably a wine bottle, and three shards of clear window glass. Over 20 small pieces of charcoal were also recovered but whether or not these represent clearings from a hearth within the building to the south is unclear. Evidence for some iron working in the vicinity was found in the form of 6 small lumps of iron slag and it is possible that the charcoal may also have been a result of bloomery working close by. While most of this material fits well with the 19th century date for the structure, the discovery of a worked flint flake, made into a scraper, could suggest prehistoric activity in the area.



Fig 11 – Trench 4 from east

6.5 Trench 5

- 6.5.1 Trench 5 measured 4m long by 1m wide and was aligned NW-SE over the south-eastern corner of the enclosure. Cleaning the topsoil (001) away revealed a stoney bank (002) towards the SE end of the trench which appears to be the corner of the rectilinear structure recorded by the survey work and trial trenched further to the west by Trench 1. Just to the inside (NW) of the stoney bank was a darker linear feature running across the trench (003). The NW end of the trench contained a mixed deposit of medium brown sandy silt with stones (004).
- 6.5.2 The artefacts recovered from this trench included a collection of small iron nails possibly from some timber structural elements from within the building. Other finds includes a couple of shards of window glass, 1 shard of clear bottle glass and 2 small fragments of white-glazed ceramic.



Fig 12 – Trench 5 from north-west

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The archaeological evaluation at Kerrowmore has highlighted the depth of history around the farm but more research could be undertaken. The excavation work on the enclosure has simply scratched the surface, quite literally, and more extensive and longer excavation would undoubtedly better characterise the nature and date of the site. In particular a plan of the possible rectangular structure located this year at the SE corner will need to be made. Further work could be undertaken to expand the desk-based survey. Aerial photographs may prove useful for identifying any buried remains while any early maps of Meggernie estate might provide further insights.
- 7.2 Away from the enclosure a great deal more work could be done to record the graveyard. A plan of the graveyard layout would be useful as would detailed drawings and photographs of the main carved gravestones and the recently discovered fragment of font. Further afield both the homestead, to the east, and the abandoned farmstead to the west would merit survey work.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The local primary schools' archaeological work at Kerrowmore enclosure has undoubtedly added to our knowledge of the site. The plane table survey has given us the first measured plan of the site and the excavation has already uncovered an intriguing range of artefacts. In general the survey and finds are consistent with the OS map evidence for a long house, aligned east to west, on the site in 1867 but abandoned by 1900. The presence of iron slag might suggest earlier, medieval, activity in the vicinity which would not be surprising given the proximity of the medieval graveyard. The discovery of a flint scraper could also suggest that there was prehistoric activity nearby and the reference to a stone circle supports this.

9. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- 9.1 This work would not have been possible without the Ben Lawers Historic Landscape Project which is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, The Russell Trust and The National Trust for Scotland. The education programme for the local schools as part of the project was developed and organised by Debbie Jackson NTS West Region Education Officer. Dr John Atkinson of GUARD helped organise and supervise both the 2003 and 2004 excavations. Kirsteen McLellan and Aileen Maule from GUARD helped supervise the 2004 fieldwork. The excavation could not have taken place without the staff and pupils of Killin, Kenmore and Glenlyon Primary Schools. Permission to excavate at Kerrowmore was given by the landowner of Meggernie Estate, Mrs Malim. In particular thanks are due to Rab and Judith Potter and their daughter Meghan for their help, encouragement and hospitality during this work and all the other field seasons of the Ben Lawers Historic Landscape Project.

10. REFERENCES

10.1 Bibliographic Sources

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Campbell, D 1888 *The book of Garth and Fortingall: historical sketches relating to the districts of Garth, Fortingall, Atholle and Breadalbane.*

Robertson, N M 1991 'Cladh Bhranno burial ground', entry in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 1991, 71.

10.2 Cartographic Sources

Ordnance Survey 1867 Perthshire, Sheet XI, 6 inches to 1 mile.

Ordnance Survey 1900 Perthshire, Sheet XI.11, 6 inches to 1 mile.

APPENDIX 1 – CONTEXT LIST

Trench	Context	Description
1	001	Topsoil
1	002	Medium /dark brown gravelly silt (part exc)
2	001	Topsoil
2	002	Rubble (unexc)
2	003	Stone wall
2	004	Medium brown gravelly silt (part exc)
3	001	Topsoil
3	002	Stoney bank
3	003	Sandy silt (part exc)
4	001	Topsoil
4	002	Medium brown gravelly silt (part exc)
5	001	Topsoil
5	002	Stoney bank (unexc)
5	003	Dark linear feature (unexc)
5	004	Medium brown sandy silt with stones (unexc)

APPENDIX 2 – DRAWINGS LIST

Dr No	Description/contexts	Date	Scale
1	Plane table survey – east side of wall	13/5/2003	1:50
2	Plane table survey – west side of wall	15/6/2004	1:50
3	Plane table survey – Kerrowmore enclosure	15/6/2004	1:100

APPENDIX 3 - FINDS LIST

SF No	Trench	Context	No	Description
1	1	001	1	Body sherd white glazed white earthenware
2	1	001	2	Rim sherds of brown-glazed orange earthenware
3	1	001	1	Iron horseshoe
4	1	002	1	Iron bracket and nail
5	1	002	4	Small pieces of iron wire
6	1	002	2	Fragments of square sectioned iron nails
7	1	001	1	Shard of green bottle glass
1	2	001	2	Iron nails fragments
2	2	001	1	Iron heel plate and tack from shoe
3	2	001	4	Pieces of iron wire (possible thatch pins)
4	2	001	1	Iron nail fragment
5	2	001	10	Fragments of iron object
6	2	001	12	Sherds of white-glazed white earthenware plate with blue and white transfer printed

				decoration
7	2	001	1	Rim sherd of red earthenware bowl with white-glazed interior.
8	2	001	1	Iron bracket?
9	2	001	1	Sherd of brown-glazed red earthenware
10	2	001	1	Wooden handle of knife? With iron strapping along top and bottom. Knife blade broken off.
	3	001	20	Fragments of flat iron strap/bracket
	3	001	1	Fragment of iron nail
	3	001	1	Fragment of burnt bone
	3	001	1	Shard from neck of green glass bottle
	3	001	2	Fragments of white-glazed white earthenware
	4	001	6	Small lumps of iron slag
	4	001	2	Small fragments of slate
	4	001	6	Sherds of white-glazed white earthenware
	4	001	5	Sherds of brown-glazed white earthenware, some decorated with bosses perhaps a Tea Pot
	4	001	3	Shards of clear window glass
	4	001	5	Shards of green bottle glass including 2 base shards
	4	001	20	Small pieces of charcoal
	4	001	1	Patinated flint scraper
	5	001	6	Fragments of small iron nails
	5	001	2	Pieces of charcoal
	5	001	2	Pieces of cinders
	5	001	2	Shards of clear window glass
	5	001	1	Shard of clear bottle glass
	5	001	3	Fragments of white-glazed white earthenware
	5	001	1	Lump of quartz



Fig 13 – Top = Trench 2, SF10, knife handle, Bottom = Trench 2, SF2, heel plate



Fig 14 – Trench 1, SF3, iron horseshoe

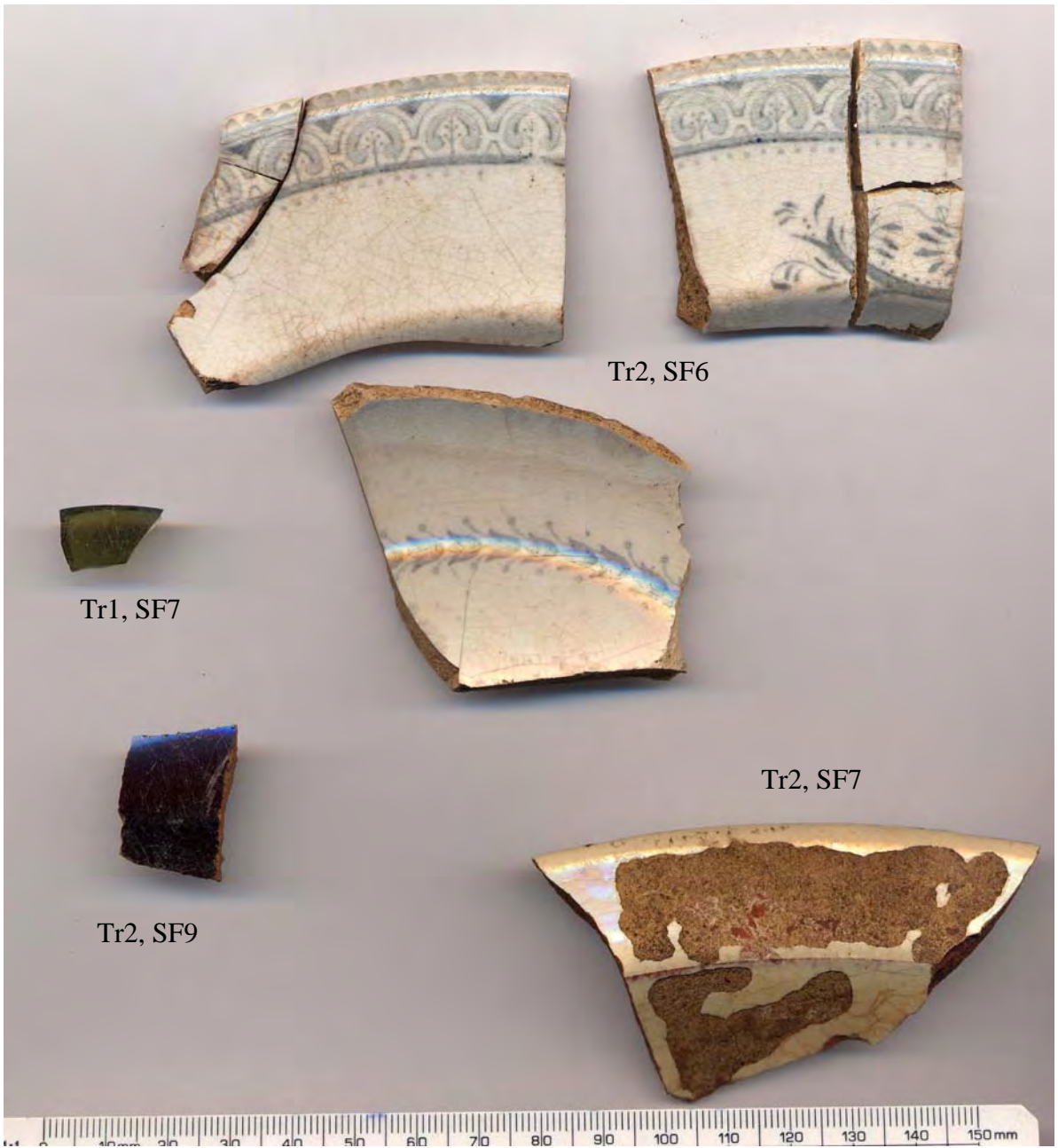


Fig 15 – Trench 1, SF7, and Trench 2 SF 6, 7 & 9



Fig 16 – Trench 4 flint scraper (back view)



Fig 17 – Trench 4 flint scraper (front view)



Fig 18 Fragment of font found in drainage ditch (scale 30cm)



Fig 19 (above) and Fig 20 (below)
Excavating Trenches 3 & 4 in June 2004



Photos on this page taken by school pupils.