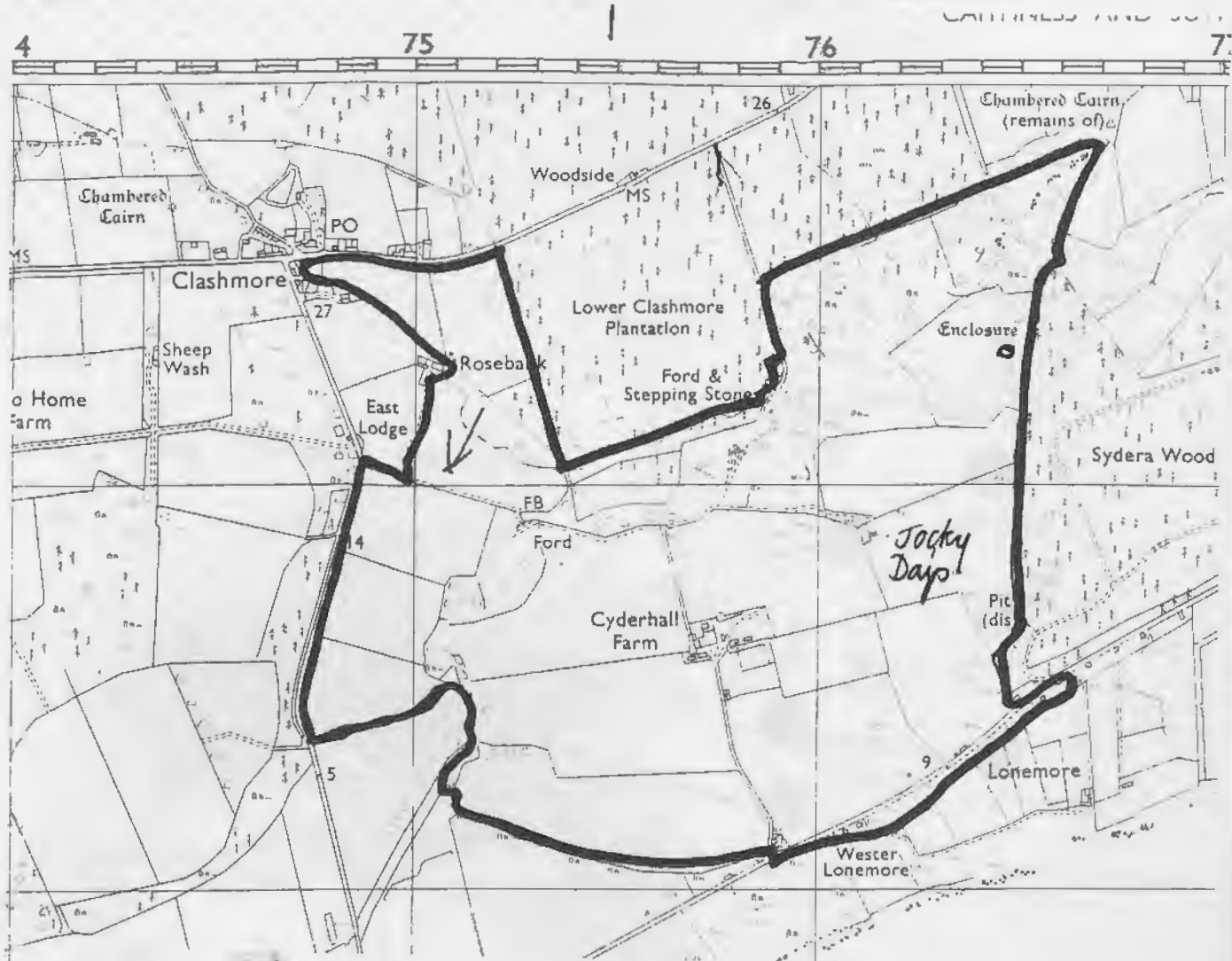


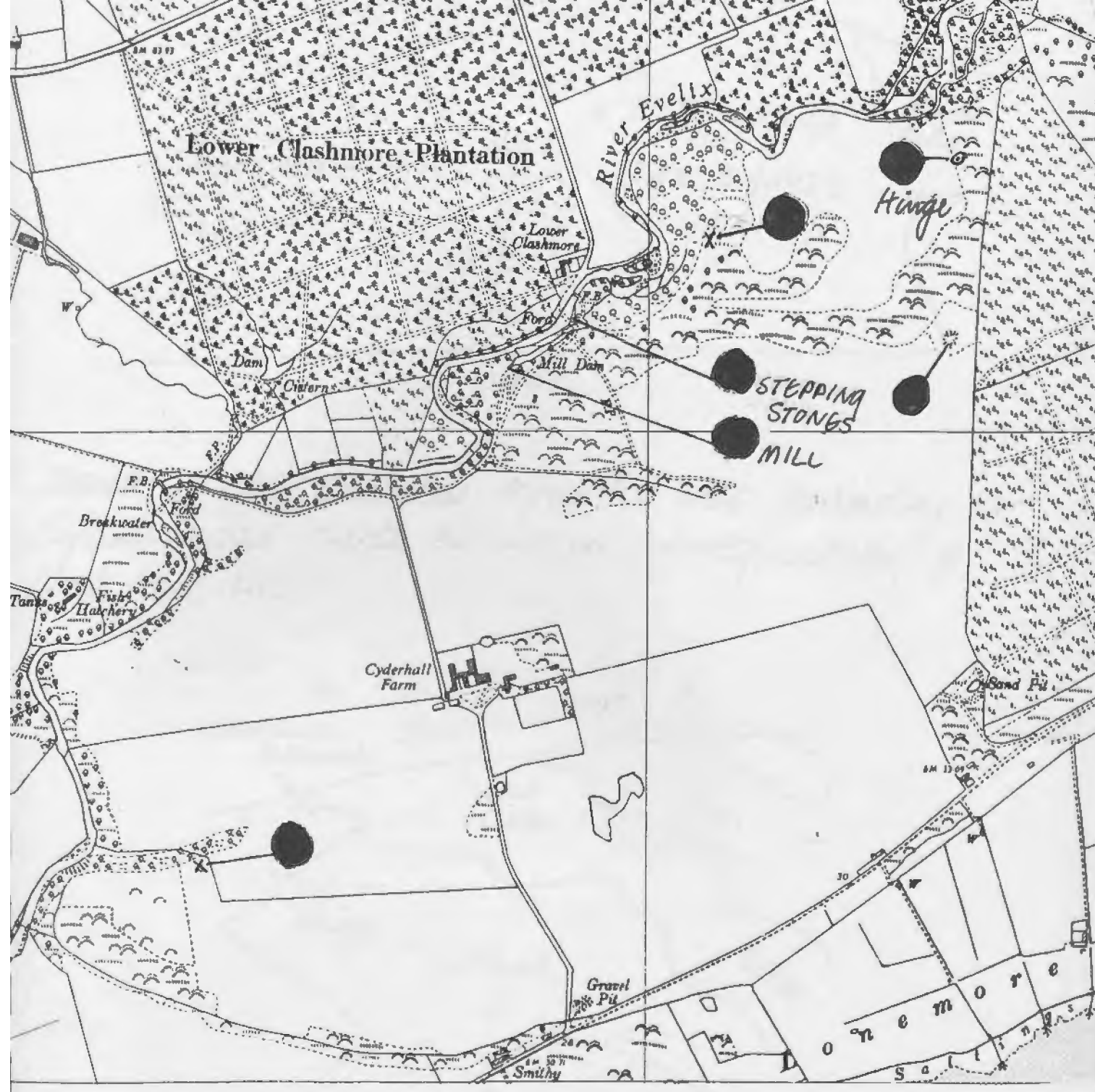


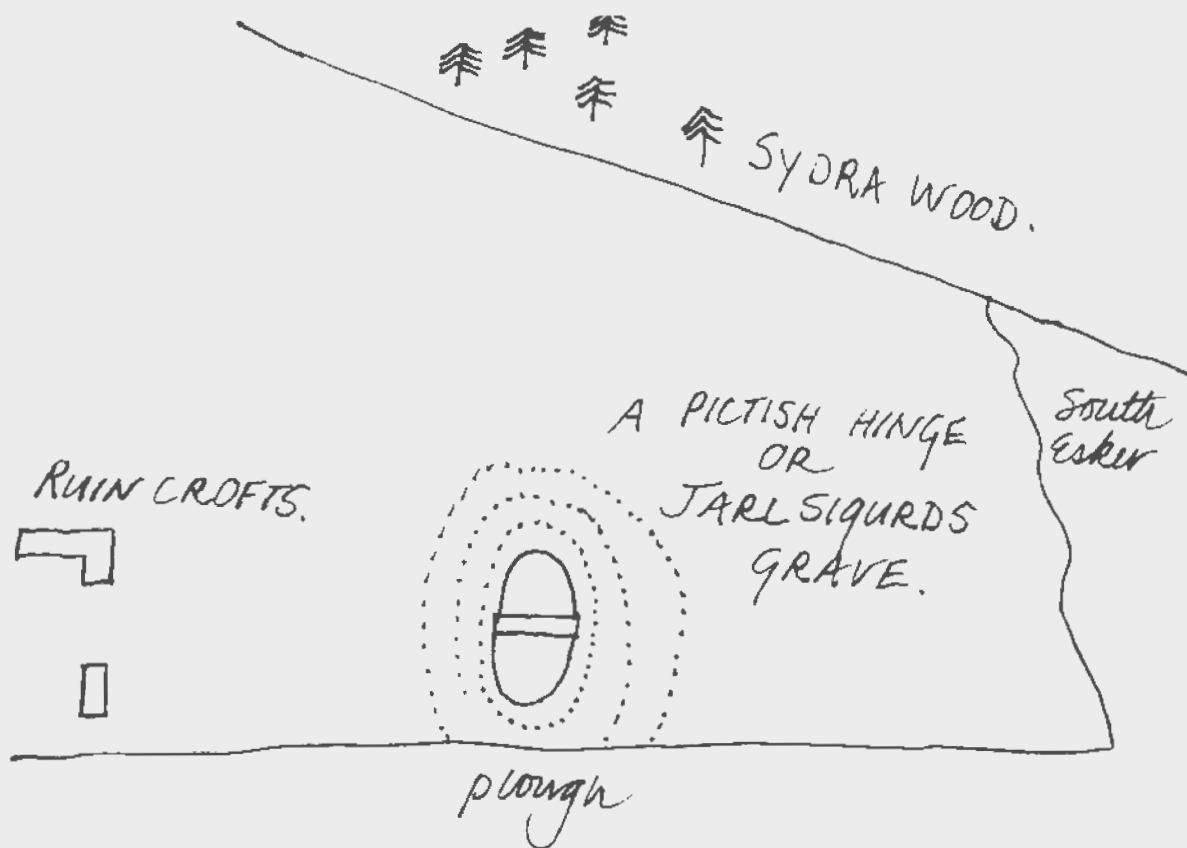
CYDERHALL FARM □ A HISTORY □



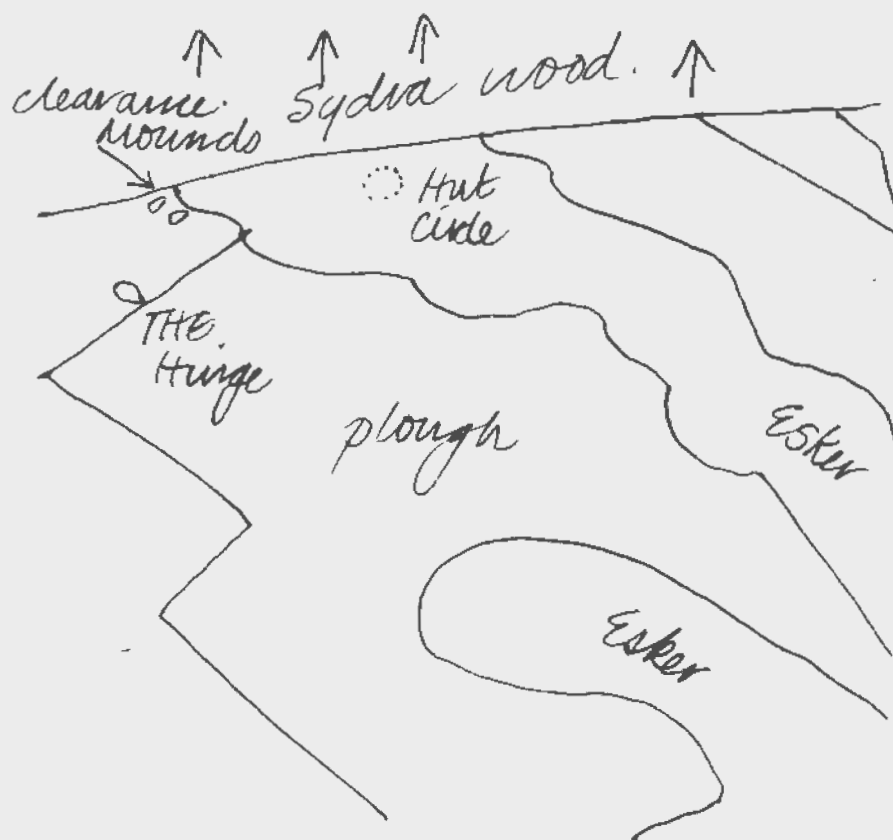
Cuthill Sands

CYDERHALL FARM AS IT IS AT
PRESENT.





South of the Skardies Along the west boundary of Sydra wood: cattle enclosure. fortification & look out post.



The farm I have chosen for my farm study is Cyderhall, about three miles West of Dornoch on the Lonemore Road, this was the old parliamentary road before the building of the Mound, when the Ferries where in use. So the farm had easy ~~ACCESS~~ to Tain, and Dornoch. There are signs of habitation in this area from the large number of hut circles . A rough estimate of up to 1,100 people lived here . Taking advantage of the south facing aspect, and sheltered from the North by small glacier deposits. The River Evelix, and the Firth nearby would have provided excelent fish, and shell fish, there are evidence of shell middens at Cuttle. Although most of the hut circles are now with in the Sydera wood,, there is evidence of hut circles and a Hinge on the most northerly aspect of the farm.

The name Cyderhall derives from Sidera. The first Norse Jarl established his authority on mainland Scotland was Thorstein the Red c.874. He was murdered by the people of Alba in 875, twelve years later Sigurd conquered Sutherland. The Orkneyinga Saga records Sigurd's encounter with Maelbrigda (Chief of Ross) at a meeting arranged to be south of the Dornoch Firth. Siguard did not trust Maelbrigda , and in stead of bringing 40 men as agreed, he brought 80. Maelbrigda who had kept to his side of the bargain, felt he was out numbered, he ordered an attack, was beaten. and killed. Siguard road home to Sidera delighted with his victory ~~CARRING~~ Maelbrigda's head on his saddle bow. On arriving a Sidera he spurred his horse forward, his leg was grazed by one of Maelbrigda's teeth , the wound quickly festered, and Siguard got blood poisoning which was fatal, he was believed to be buried at Cnoc Skardi, but no grave was ever found. During the second world war some Norweigan soldiers who were stationed near by began excavating the Hinge but once again nothing was found.

There is more reference to Cyderhall in Dr Benticks book about Dornoch. Siward Hoch was from the Norse meaning Sigurd's Cairn, or burial mound.

In 1275 Bishop Archibald and the Earl of Sutherland agreed that six Davachs of Cyderhall are included in the land allocated to the Bishop.

In 1557 Bishop Robert Stewart granted in fuefarm to the Earl of Sutherland certain church lands including Cyderhall. Part of the stipend assigned to John Grey as constable of Skibo were derived from the dues of Sydra. Towards the end of the sixteenth century the Gordons came into possession of Cyderhall. It is also recorded in Benticks book that the Earl of Sutherland in raising an army to fight with Charles 2nd, was provided with seven men from Sydra among others.

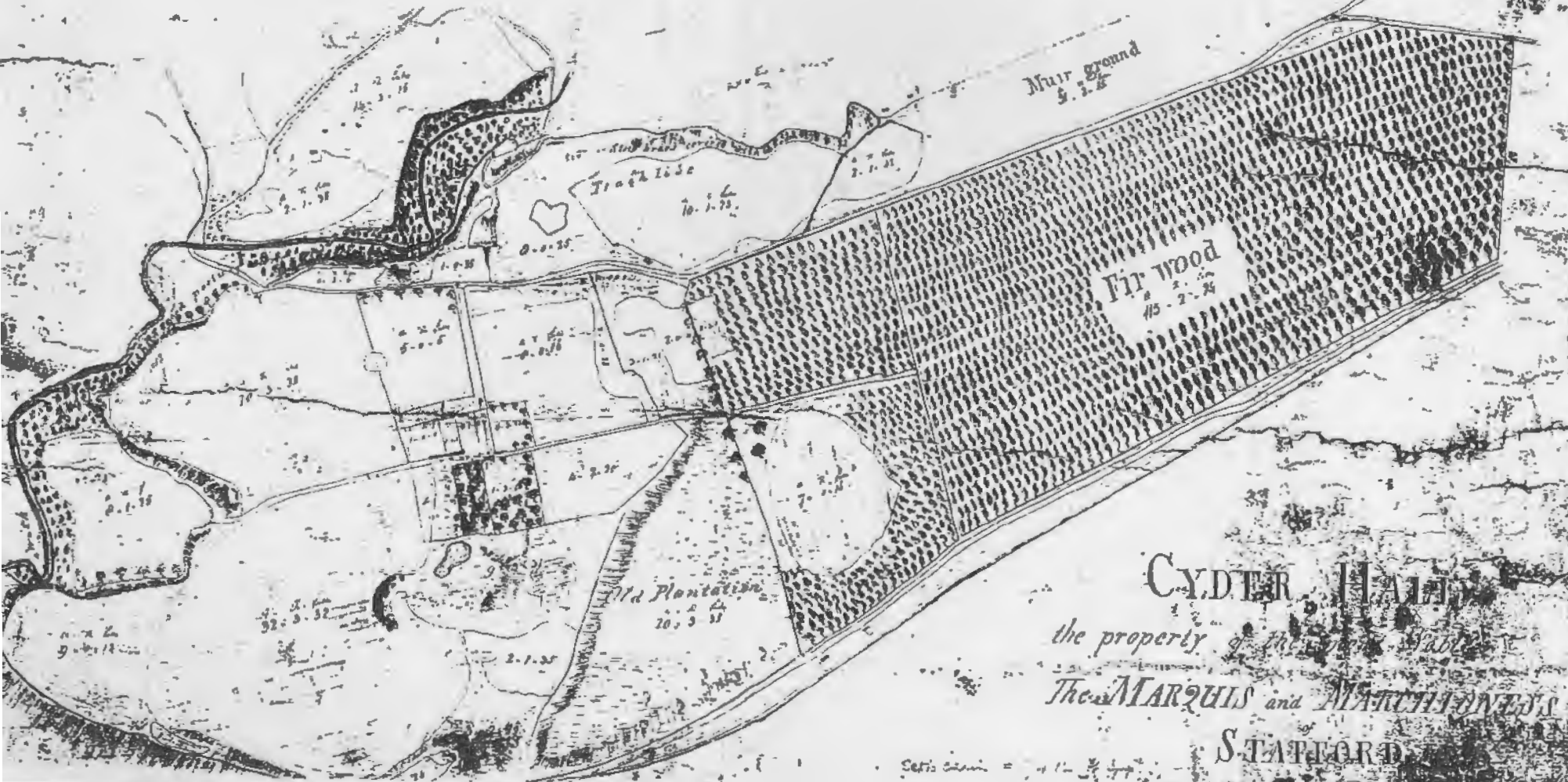
Sutherland Estate Management 1802-1816, compiled by A.J Adam. There are several further references to Cyderhall farm These were letters from Paterick Seller to Earl Gower. This was presumably just the beginning of the clearances, when the value of the land was being accessed. I quote (There is considerable wood upon the estate of Cyderhall some two miles west of Dornoch. It is fully as high, but not so old or so great as Balblair(Just out side Golspie)From which the quantity you mention might be got perhaps, but the land carriage could not be managed, any way I can see I wish this scarcity of wood may not interfere with your plans).

There is in another letter mentioning that various matters are in need of attention. The tenants on Cyderhall are bound to preserve all trees on the ground, presumably this means they can use fallen timber, but must not cut any trees down, also that all tenants must help to put in some time to the ~~MAINTAINING~~ of the banks of the River Evlix.(To raise and support a proper bulwark on the Evelix in all parts within the thirl of the mill. The tenant is bound to support and leave the houses in good condition and repair.

There is a letter dated 1811 from William Young factor to the Marchioness of Stafford. Stating that lands to be let on lease for 19 years to Teachleb Dalvery and Alex Ross, can not ~~INCLUDE~~ land that lies north of the burn, this is to go with moor ground, there are alder bushes of no value, and this he states would make excellent ground for new settlers, and to make this farm of Cyderhall more convenient. He also mentions that there is a croft to be reserved for the wood keeper.

[illegible]

PRECLEARANCE MAP



1811-1816

15 Cyderhall.

Tenants: 1. Captain William McCulloch in right of Lieutenant McKenzie. 2. — Rose, storekeeper.

Rent: 1. Crop 1811, Christmas 1811 to Candlemas 1812, 93 bolls 1 firloft 2 pecks bear; crop 1813, Martinmas 1811, £13 3s. od.; fox money £0 8s. 1½d. 2. Crop 1811, Christmas 1811 to Candlemas 1812, 3 bolls bear.

Duration: 1. 19 years expiring Whitsunday 1817. 2. at will.

Proprietor's interest: 1. Not ascertained as to houses and dykes.

Tenants' interest: 1. One year's rent on fences made within 7 years of commencement of lease and on plan approved by Dunrobin overseer.

Matters requiring immediate attention: 1. Tenant bound to preserve woods; tenant bound to maintain dwelling houses, offices, etc. to value at commencement of lease; said value to be ascertained.

16 Miln of Cyderhall, mill croft, multures and sequels, 1 boll pay of land and grass following same.

Tenant: Hugh Leslie, writer in Dornoch.

Rent: Crop 1811, Christmas 1811 to Candlemas 1812, 21 bolls meal; crop 1812, Martinmas 1811, £20 15s. od.

Duration: 19 years expiring Whitsunday 1817.

Proprietor's interest: Not ascertained; apparently none.

Tenant's interest: Value of miln, not exceeding £20.

Matters requiring immediate attention: Was any apprising of miln made at entry?

Matters requiring attention at removal: Same.

17 Dalvevie, Teachlybe.

Tenant: Hugh Leslie.

Rent: 22 bolls 2 firlots victual; £14 1s. 11d.

Proprietor's interest: Not ascertained.

Tenant's interest: Value of timber.

Remarks: As 8.

Some research on the history of Cyderhall was collected by Gordon Rule in 1964, which I have encoded.. Mr George Rule came from Roxburghshire to take over the large farm Sidera, known as Cyderhall from which the crofters had been cleared. George then married Janet Taylor the daughter of the Sheriff of Dornoch. Cyderhall was described by Loch the then factor to the Earls of Sutherland as being occupied by many small tenants and sub tenants,, the soil being excellent light and sandy, and suited well to the Norfolk rotation system. He goes on to describe the house and the homestead as just been completed, the house finished in stone and lime, and covered in Easdale slate.. This bit I find rather confusing, as he mentions an old garden full of fruit trees,,and I quote, several apples, pear and geen, also fine holly. Does this mean that there was an older house on this site. ?

Mr Loch in his letters to the Earl describes how Cyderhall was covered in small cottages, small fields, intercepted with heaps of stones, all this was cleared away, and the stone used to build dykes or roads. The tennants and sub tennants were removed to Dornoch Muir. He goes on to say that all has been ploughed up and the farm has begun to resume a regular shape and cultivation. The enclosures are proceeding and Mr Rule has a large portion under turnips. Further comments by Mr Loch describing his achievements(No other farm so completely occupied up to the old system, and none better fitted for the modern system of husbandry as the Norfolk system of rotation.). James Loch esq 1820.



There is a mention in the statistical account, of the crops produced in the Dornoch parish. Oats, bear, peas, potatoes, and some beans and rye, in 1758 potatoes were the main stay, for providing subsistence for the people in the third part of the year,, they go on to say that at this time there were no field turnips grown. After a good crop of potatoes, barley is grown with out a crop of manure, this is expected on the coast. But the oats produced are of very poor quality.

More reference to Cyderhall in the 1811-1816 Sutherland Estate Management papers. The tenant at that time was Captain William McCulloch in the right of Lieutenant McKenzie, and Rose the store keeper.

Also reference to the reinstating of the cleared crofters.

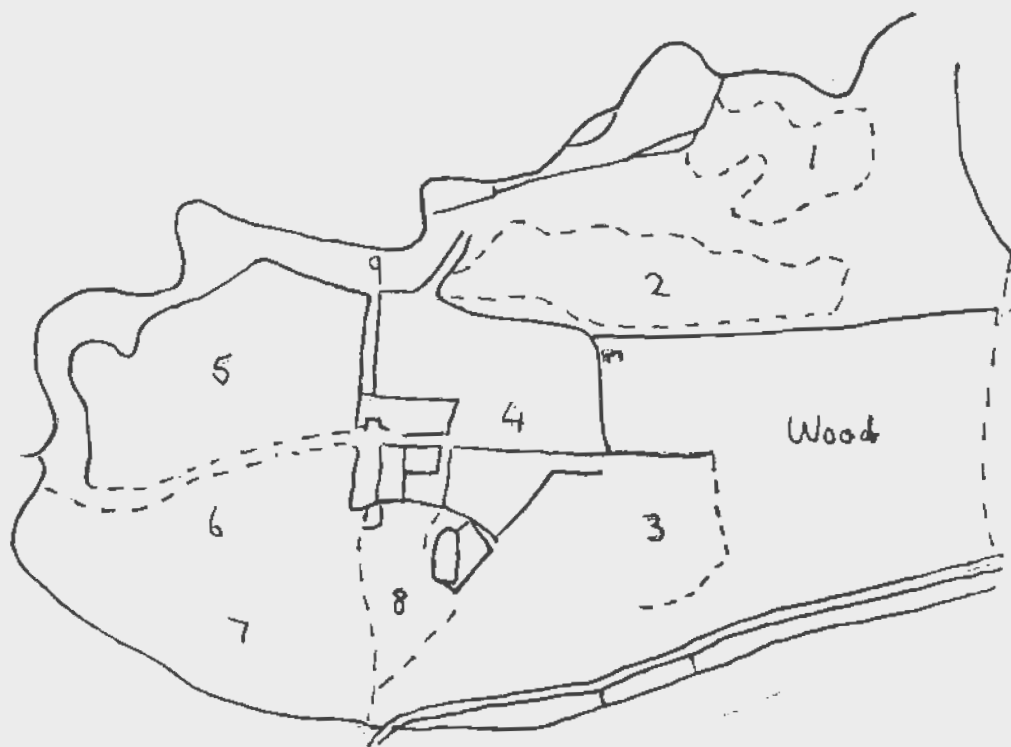
The most striking, however, was the development of muir settlement. This was done partly to meet immediate local needs, as at Achavandra, where ten existing tenants gave way in 1812 to Earl Gower's farm and a group of twenty settlers appeared on muir ground, and at Balvraid, which Young divided into three farms and a muir settlement. In these two instances it is possible to see something of what happened. Seven of the Achavandra tenants reappeared as muir settlers, and ten out of fifteen at Balvraid, while two others may have gone to the Achavandra settlement.

In the older settlements on Dornoch and Evelix muirs new settlers were in evidence from 1812 onwards in numbers too great to be explained by local needs. There were thirty-two settlers in all on Achavandra, Dornoch and Evelix muirs in 1812, and forty-one in the following year; in the same period the Balvraid settlers increased from twenty-three to twenty-seven. A filling-out of a pattern begun in 1807 is to be detected. But this should not be exaggerated. The overall total of settlers only increased from ten in 1807 to sixty-five in 1815. The settlements were surviving at the end of the period, but it is impossible to rate them more highly than that, and they were as yet contributing little in the way of rent, beyond a profusion of probably stringy and tough hens.¹ Young's operations had produced a temporary upsurge of settlement, some of it in all probability from outside the parish, but it would be unwise to see a highly developed programme in this.² The fact that at the close of his factory the tenants had still not received written titles indicates how provisional the process had so far been.

¹ In 1815 the settlers paid a total of £22 10s. 2d. (£7 of it paid by one tenant) and 58 hens.

² That Young had some principles in mind is shown by a letter he wrote to Loch on *11 Oct. 1815: 'With respect to the lands loted out for the people, the quantity depends on the age, circumstances and number of Children which each person has, as well as the Local situation for you know one good acre on the Coast Side is worth three in the Straths of Kildonan and Fleet. Some of the Skelbo and Proncy moor settlers have 20 acres others only 5, they get what they ask 7 years rent free under an obligation to improve the whole within that period, then at a rent to be fixed by men mutually chosen, or if they agree now at 2s. 6d. per acre. On the whole no fixed quantity of Land can be named it varies from one to 20 acres.'

[* This sign indicates that the letter in question is to be found in the Trentham Collec-



Sidera 196 acres.

[illegible]

Dates are for 1829-1869.

p = pasture

$$0 = 0 \text{ at } 1$$

T = Turnips

B = Barley

F = Follow

14 = Hay

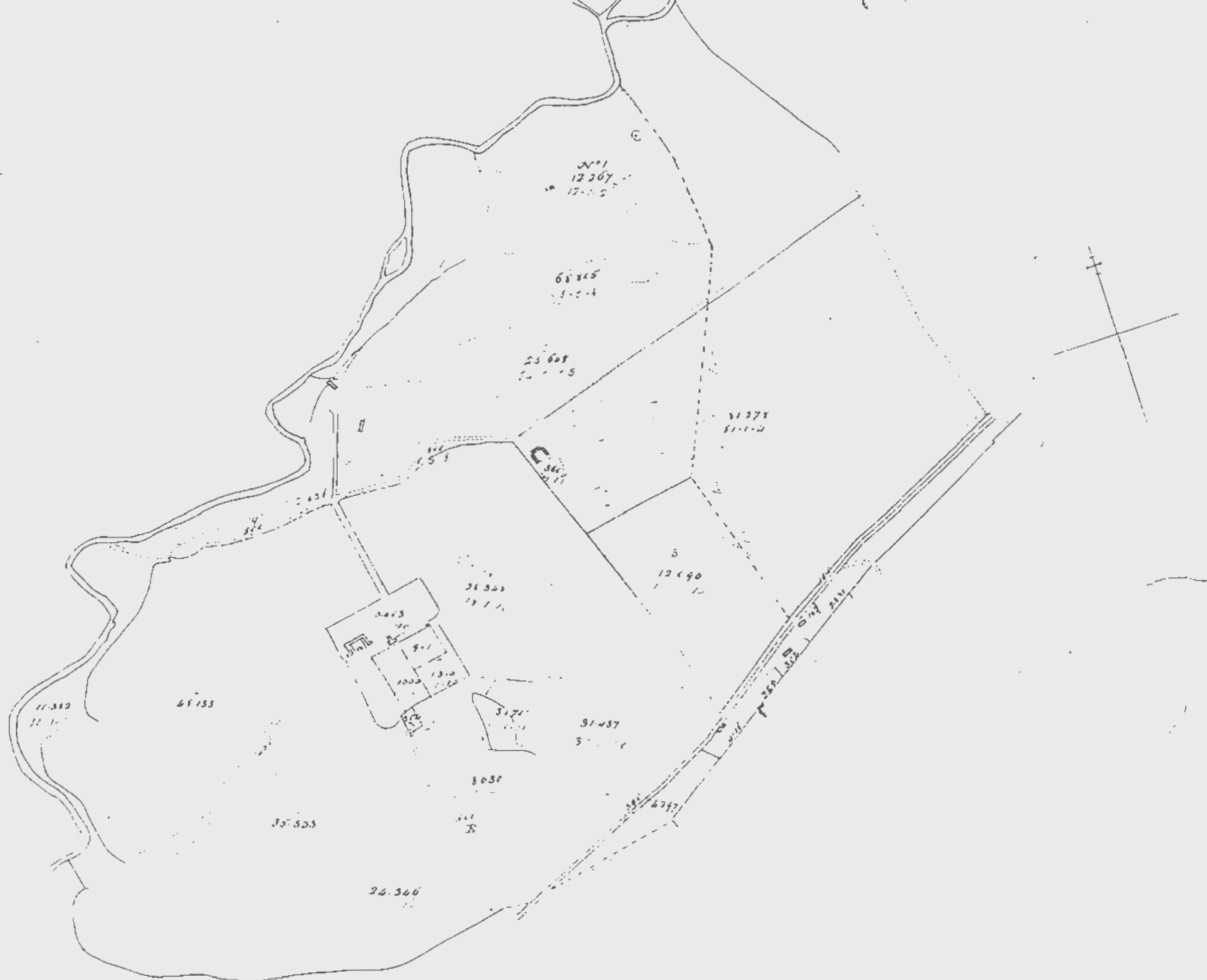
$w = \text{wheat}$

R = ~~rust~~ rye

pots = potatoes

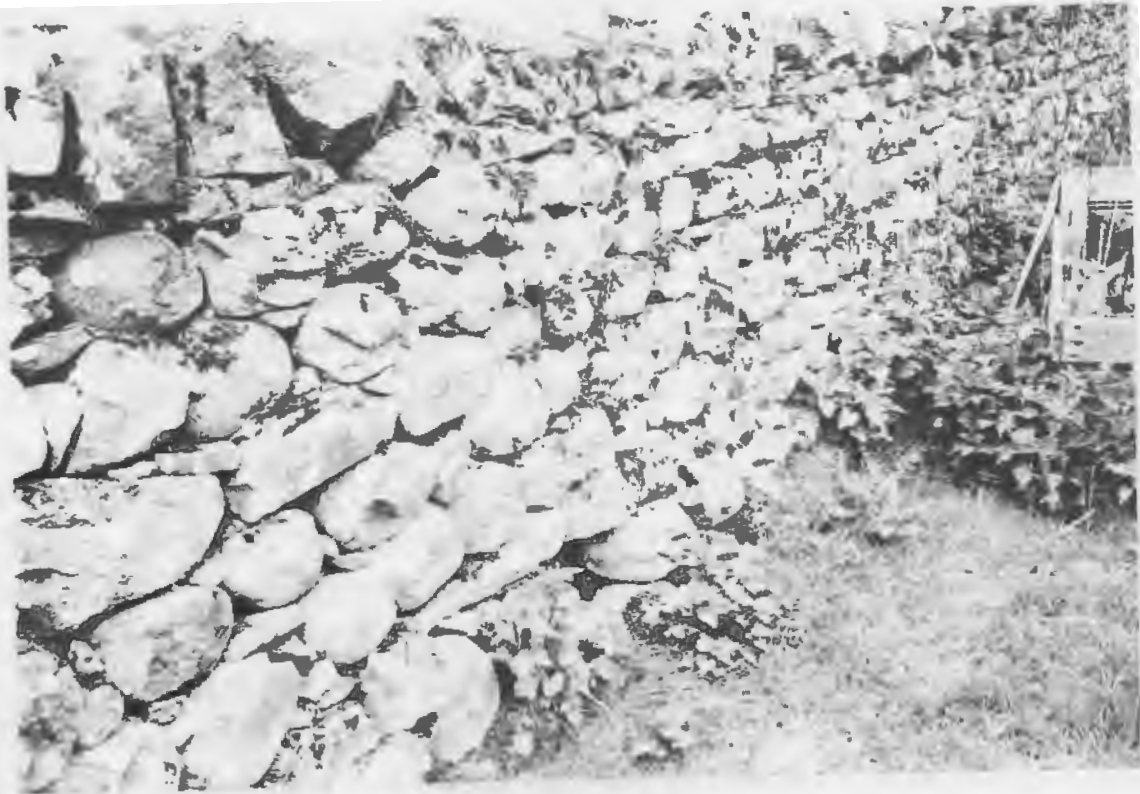
SIDERA

1829



of Imperial Chains

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110 120 130 140 150 160 170 180 190 200

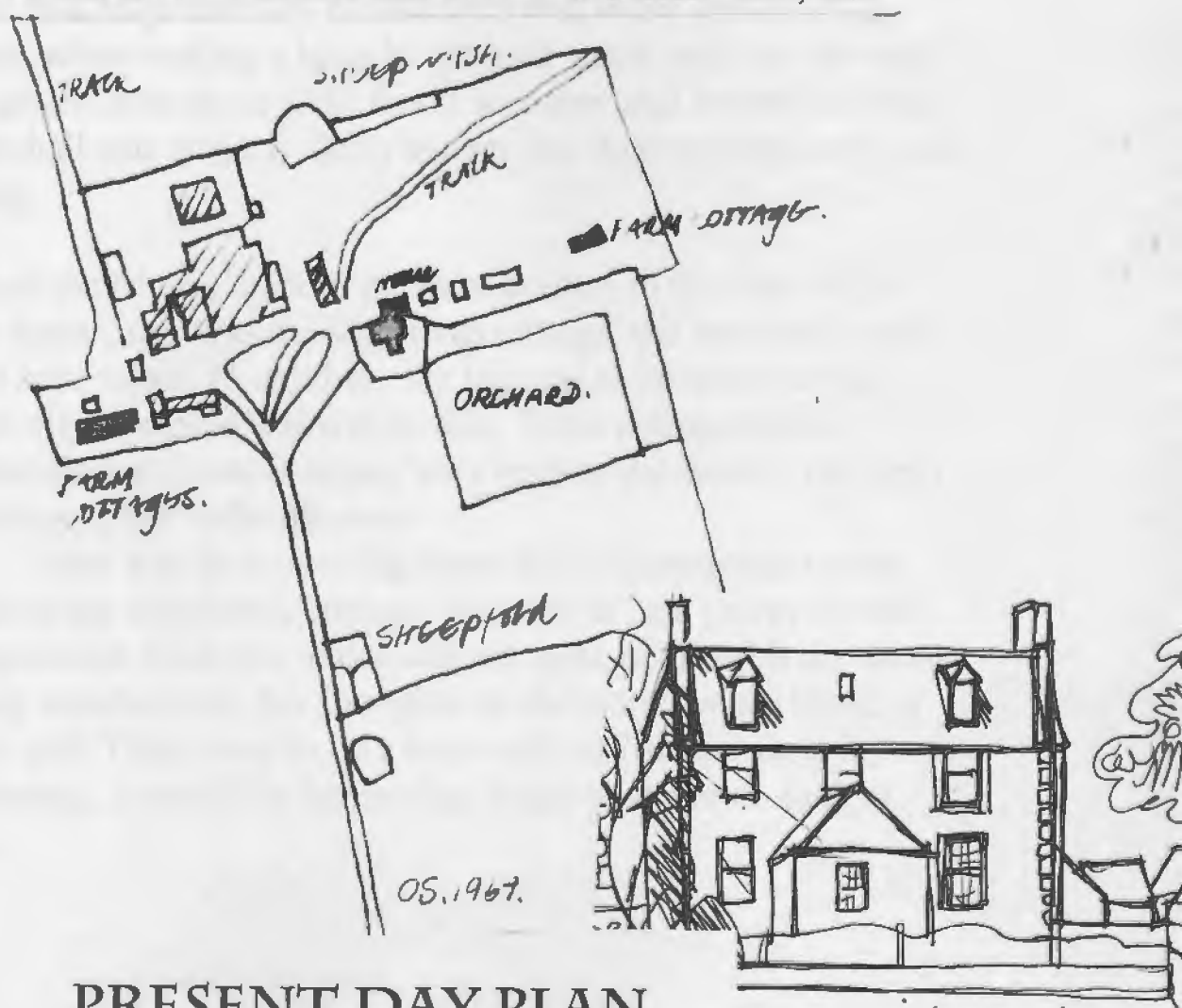


WALLS



Mr Gordon Munro, and his son Donald very kindly gave up some precious time to talk to me about Cyderhall. It was ~~bought~~ ^{RENTED} by Mr Gordon Munro's father in 1937. The ~~previous~~ owner had been MacLennan the butcher, who had gone bankrupt. When the Munro family took over there were no fences on the farm. At some time one of the estate factors, by the name of Whittock, had removed the roofs of some of the cottages on the farm to reduce the cost of rates. These ruins still stand. One known as Painters. The field beside the wood is known as Jocky Days. Before the clearances there were a number of small crofts, as mentioned before, on the farm, and after the improvements by the Sutherland Estate, the farm was let to Mr Rule. In 1895 the farm was sold to Skebo, who wanted it so they could have control of the river, and the salmon fishing. Skebo Estate made an artificial lake. Although there is a drawing of the farm buildings in Lochs book, there is a recent date on the farm steading, Mr Munro presumed that the original farm buildings had burnt down. There is a sad story about a Mr David Annat who came to work on the farm from Roxburghshire, and drowned him self in the mill pond.

I asked Mr Munro about the thrashing machine. We know from the illustrations that there was a horse mill, and



PRESENT DAY PLAN

when the new silo was being built huge stone slabs were found. Presumably the floor of the thrashing mill. There is evidence of the thrashing mill on the side of the steading, Mr Munro said the steam engine kept braking down, and eventually his father *became* fed up with this, and an electric thrashing mill was installed.

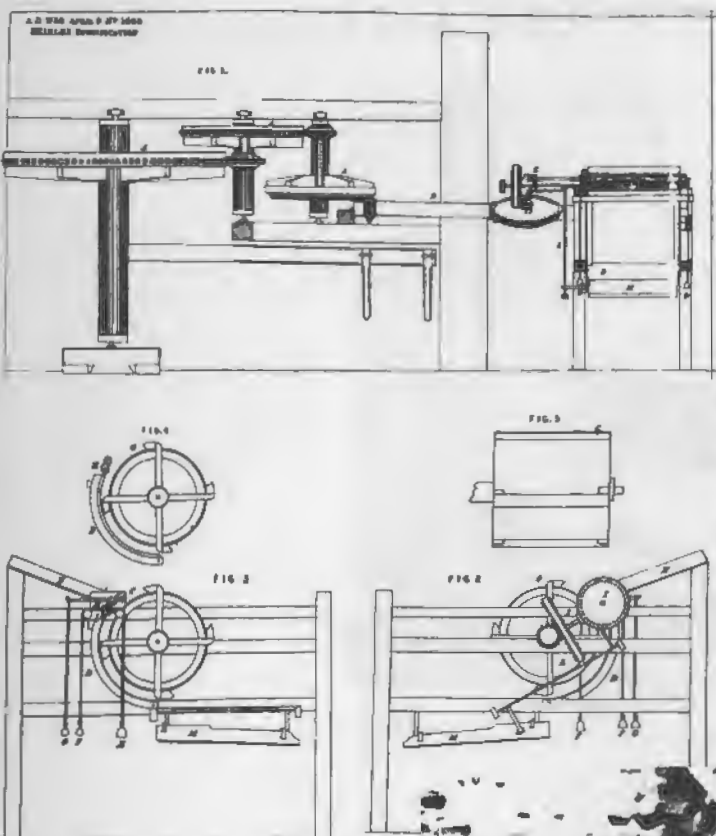
All this before the combine. The old stack yard was where the Dutch barn now stands, this is filled up with hay and straw for winter feed, once this is cleared in the spring, it is then filled up with lambing pens. The horse pond led down to the sheep wash, now all filled in. There were three pairs of horses at Cyderhall, but when the younger men were called up in the second worldwar the horses gradually went, as there was no one to work them. The first Fordie tractor was bought in 1937 for the sum of 100 pounds.

The farm house was built by the Sutherland estates in 1816, similar to the house at Ribbigale, the porch was added at a later date, and the Sutherland arms can be seen in side the roof of the porch. Mrs Munro related how her father in law cut down two huge monkey puzzle trees that were in front of the house, when making a lawn he planted grass seed in February, this grass came up so well, that it was then that he decided that Cyderhall was an early farm, so they did their sewing early each spring.

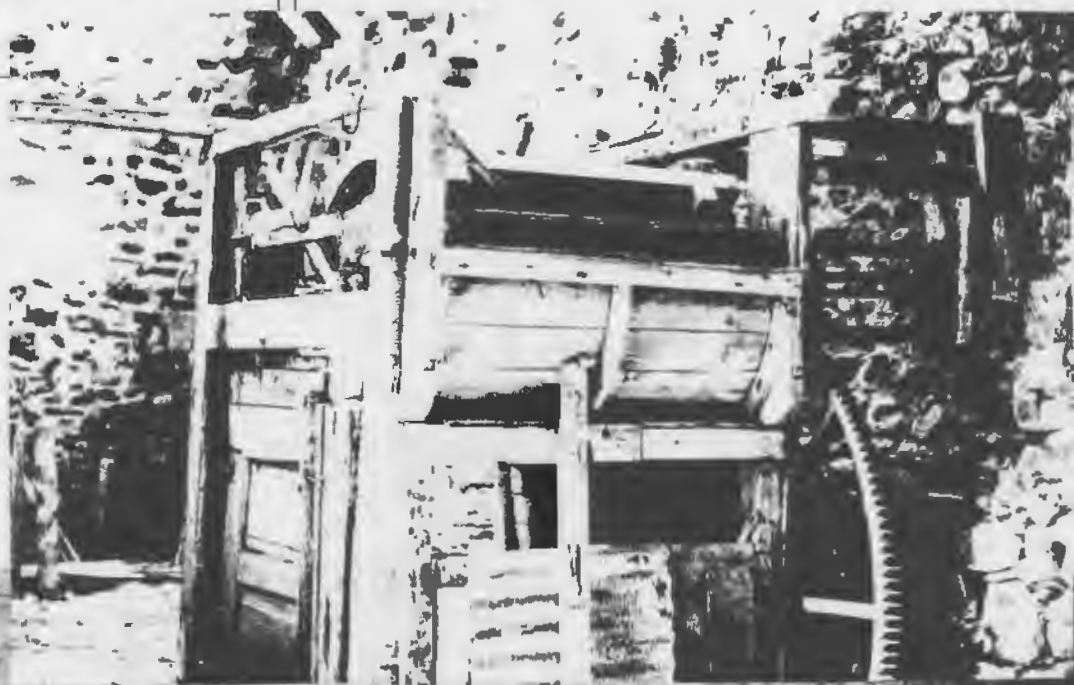
I asked the Munro's about the farm cottage to the East of the farm house, this was the shepherds cottage, the last family who lived here raised 10 children, the last one to be born was so small this its cradle was a shoe box. These cottages were condemned and new cottages were built to the west of the farm buildings, *just after the war.*

There was an interesting stone built construction to the south of the shepherd's cottage, believed to be a privy. Some unexplained windows, which did not quite tie up with the usual privy construction. My thoughts on the matter was a bone, or whin mill. There used to be a bone mill on Bilbster farm in Caithness, it would be interesting to get an expert to look at this.

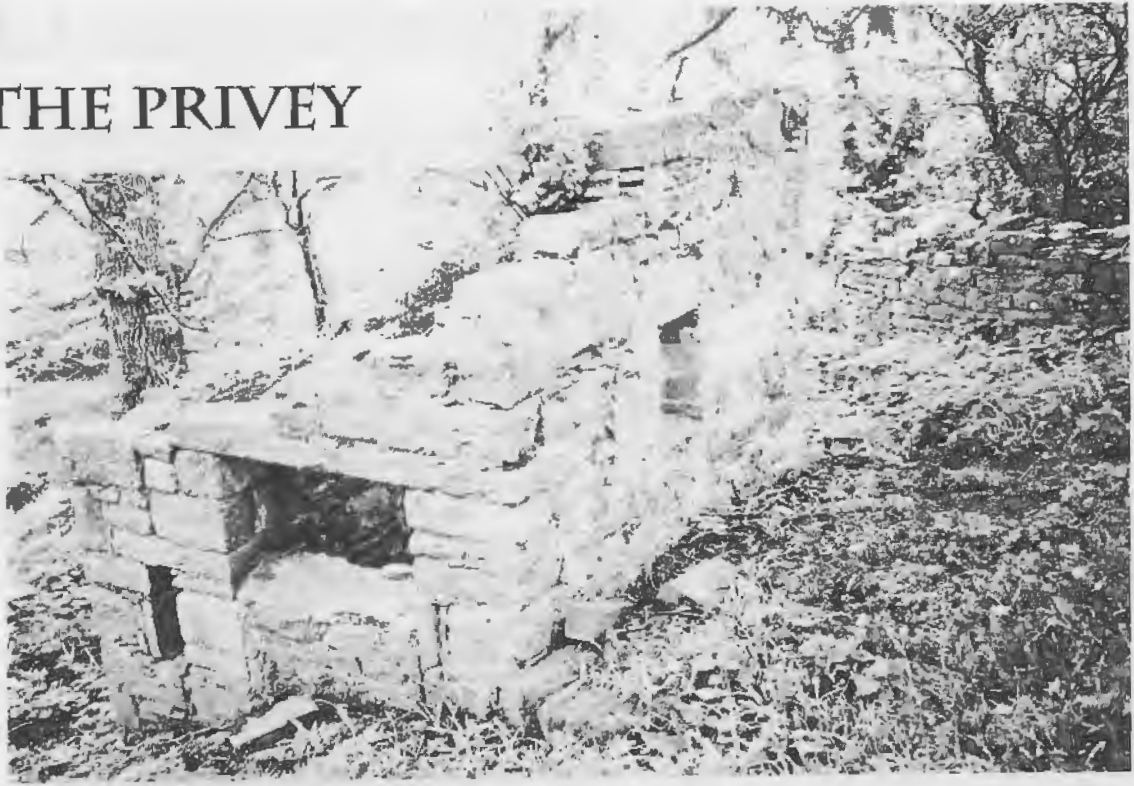
THRASHING



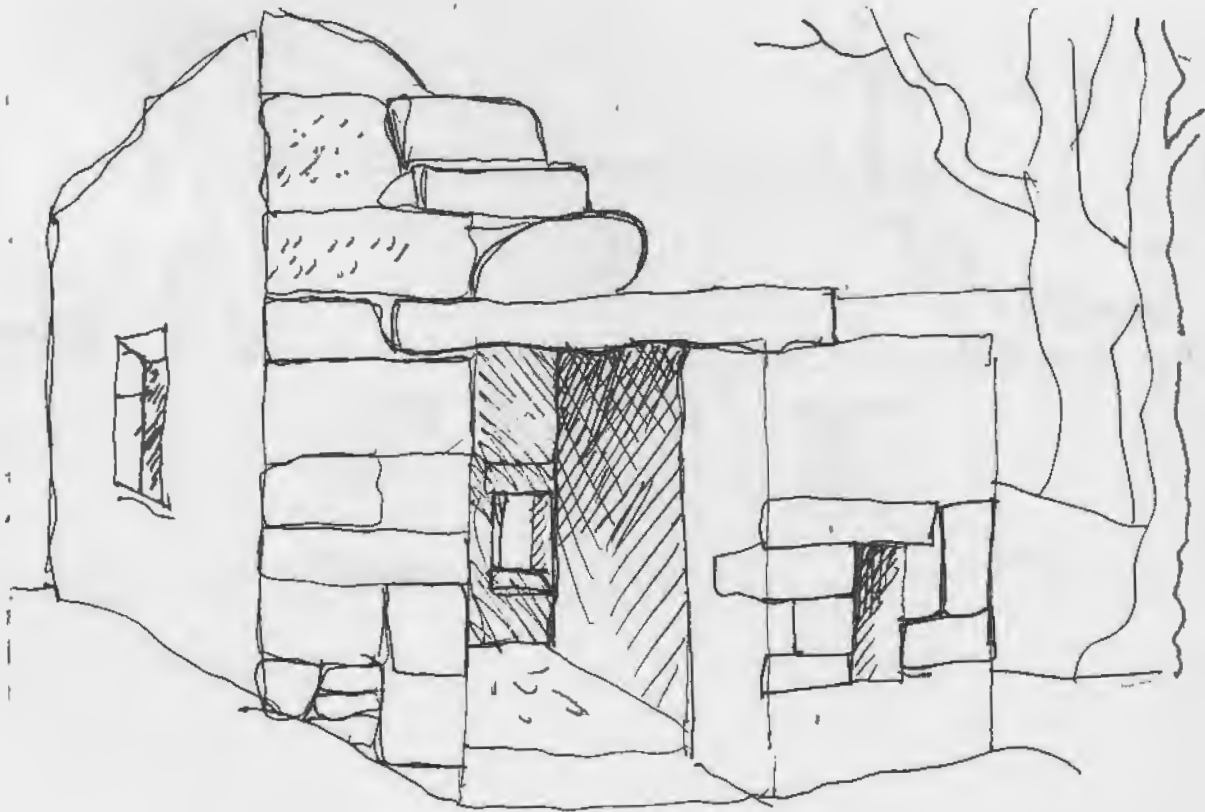
SITE OF THRASHING MILL
BOLD HORSE MILL



THE PRIVEY



BACK



FRONT

THE SHEPHERDS HOUSE





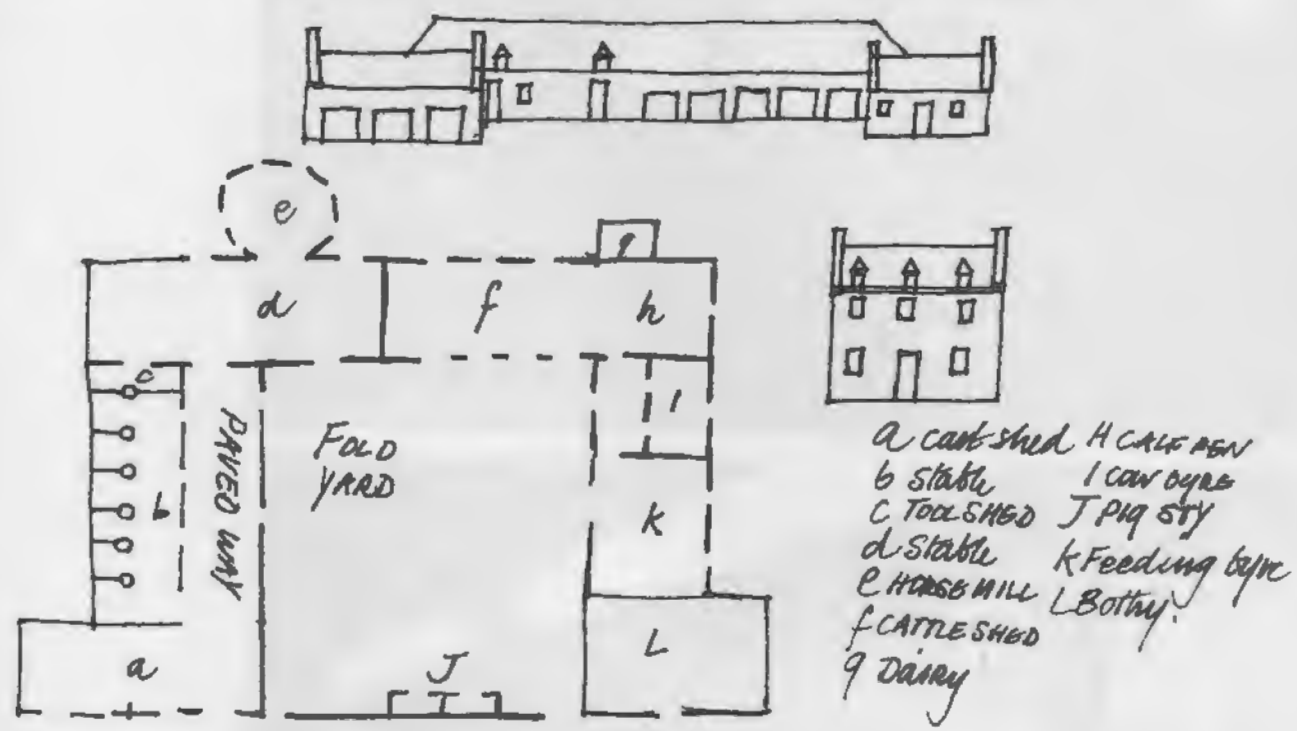
HORSE POND.



SHEEP DIP



BOTHY
TO-DAY.



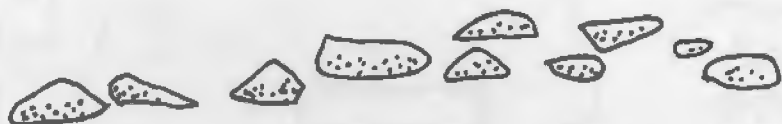
Bothy window



MIDDLE STEADING ADDED LATER 1865.
NOT ON LOCHS ORIGINAL PLAN.

THE MILL

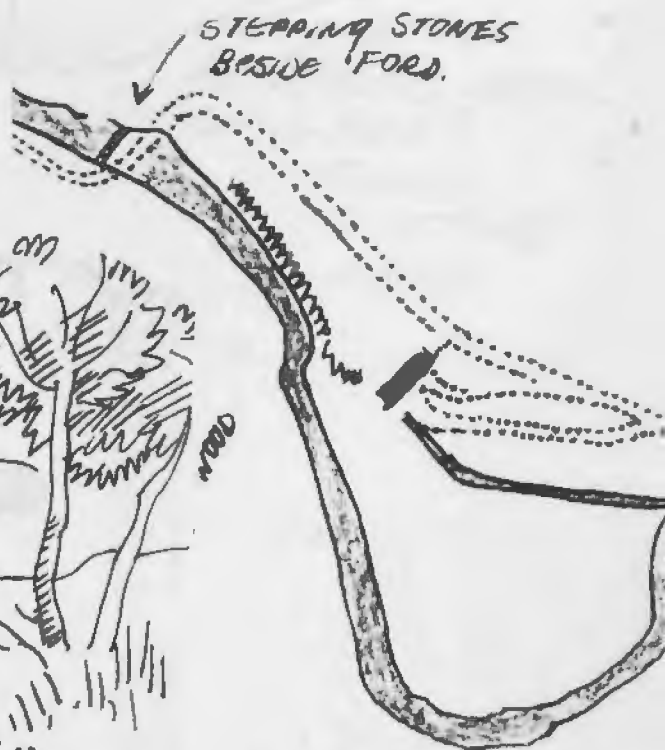
The mill is now in a very ruinous state, but the old 1964 os map shows the lade course, now filled in. Mr Robertson had done a fine drawing which I now present. There were interesting wooden structures lying around, would these have been part of the lade?



STEPPING STONES.

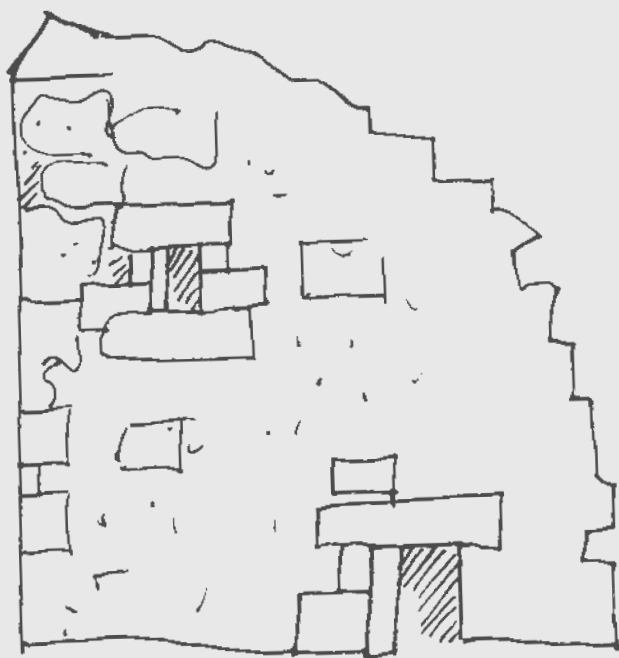
Just above the mill race is a ford, and stepping stones, once again I have consulted with Dr Robertson who suggested Viking origin. I have included a small sketch of the stones, and also showed them on the map.

STEPPING STONES

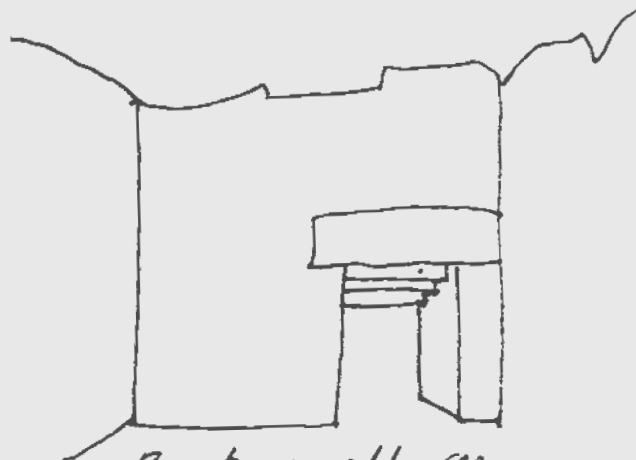


*MILL IN ITS
RELATIONSHIP TO RIVER
AND OLD FOOT PATHS.
05.1967.*

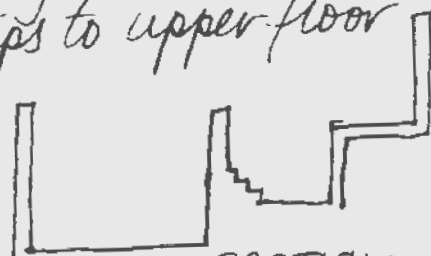
MILL CONTINUED



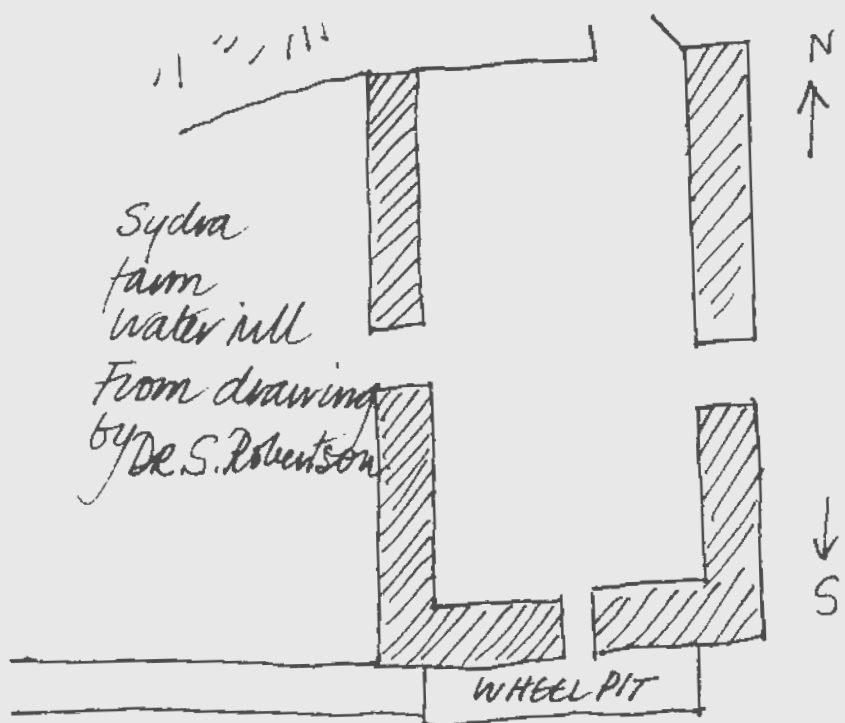
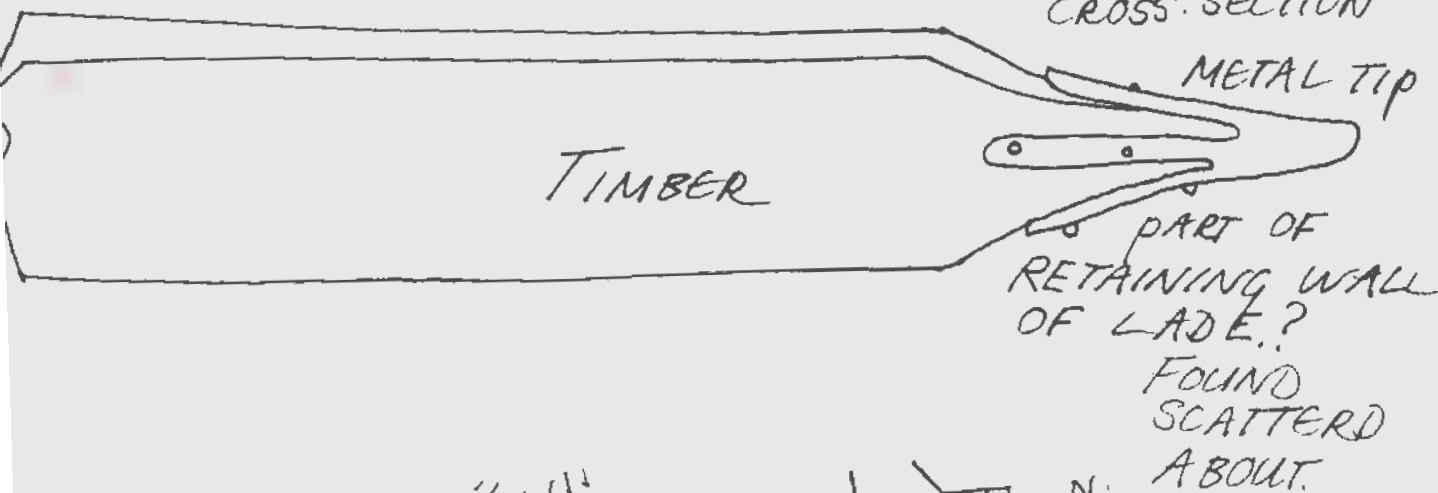
Remains of south wall



Back wall on ground level
showing under side
of steps to upper floor



CROSS SECTION





O.S. MAP 1874



YDERHALL FARM BUILDINGS AT PRESENT. INTERESTING WHAT HAS SURVIVED



The field systems have changed, and the farm has increased in size, the present field system presented by the Department, shows more division, and more land taken in. It could be noted that in the 1874 map quite a lot of land was still under timber. Mr Munro said that the steadings had not changed, except that a roof had been put over the yard, and more buildings added, but the original *buildings were still intact.*



This has been an interesting farm to study, as there has been continuous habituation through the ages. Perhaps because as I said at the beginning it is in such a very good geographical location.

I would like to thank the following people who have been such a help.

Dr Struan Robertson.

The Munro family.

My references have been:

Dr Benticks Book on Dornoch, Dornoch Library. 1926

JAMES Lochs Book on Estate Management, 1820, kindly shown to me by Mr William Skinner.

Report by G. Rule on his family history, lent by the Munro family.

The rural architecture of Scotland, lent by Mrs Robertson.

CORRECTION FACTOR WAS WHITTET NOT WHITTOCK.

Sutherland Estate Management 1802-1816 by RJ.Adam.

Inverness Library.

O.S map Sutherland sheet CXII Highland Council Archive. 1874.

COPIES OF OLDER MAPS. LENT BY. DR. S. ROBERTSON.
ROTATION OF CROPS. LENT BY MUNRO FAMILY

