

Roinn na
Gaidhealtachd



Highland

Department of Planning
Director
Richard W. G. Cameron
R.I.B.A., M.R.T.P.I.

Highland Regional Council
Regional Buildings
Glenurquhart Road
Inverness IV3 5NX

Telephone (0463) 234121
Telex No. 75313
Facsimile (0463) 223201

Please ask for Mr Todd

Our ref. SU/1987/208/AT/AA

Extension No. 586

Your ref.

Date 2nd September, 1987.

Mr J.K. Bell,
Chairman,
Dornoch Heritage Society,
Rhian,
Evelix Road,
DORNOCH.

Dear Sir,

PROPOSED EXTRACTION OF GRAVEL
CYDERHALL, SKIBO, BY DORNOCH.

Further to your telephone conversation with Mr Todd on 1st September, 1987,
I have now forwarded a location plan of the above proposal to Dr. Crawford
at St. Andrews University.

I enclose a copy of the plan for your information. It is at a scale of 1:2500
and the grid reference for the site is NH 752 882.

I intend to report the application to the Planning Committee at its next meeting
on 16th September.

Yours faithfully,

Director.



Roinn na Gaidhealtachd



Highland

Department of Libraries and Leisure Services Highland Regional Council
Director Regional Buildings
H. W. Wilkinson, M.A. Glenurquhart Road
Inverness IV3 5NX

Telephone (0463) 234121
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Please ask for R Gourlay

Our ref.

Extension No. 447

Your ref.

Date 10.9.87

James K Bell Esq
Chairman
Dornoch Heritage Society
Rhian
Evelix Road
DORNOCH
Sutherland

Dear Mr Bell

I have arranged that access to the gravel extraction site at Cyderhall will be made for fieldwalking purposes to your Society during the period when top-soil is being stripped from the majority of the area. As a face will be cut first, this will not take place immediately, but some way into the process. The agents and contractors have undertaken to inform me in advance when the overburden is due to be stripped., and I have given them your name and those of Mr Robertson and Mrs Mackenzie, as accredited fieldwalkers. If I am able to come up myself, I shall certainly do so.

I will be in touch when the work is due to begin, but I think the features that we might expect are vestigial traces of prehistoric human activity, perhaps in the form of midden material, stone artefacts etc., and perhaps burial deposits. In addition, it is possible, though I think unlikely, that the Sidera glass works lay in this area - in which case glass slag and waste from furnaces might be met with.

I hope that the contractor will deal with me direct, or yourself, in the first instance should anything occur of interest prior to the stripping stage. In particular, any human remains should be reported to me at once so that the negotiations necessary with police and fiscal in these circumstances can be resolved quickly.

I will contact you again when the work is due. Meantime, you might like to make yourself known to the contractor on site, and perhaps keep an eye on the preliminary work. I have promised that interference to their programme will be kept to a minimum, and would be grateful if you could let me know at once if my presence is needed. I do hope the Society will be able to help with this, and look forward to cooperative ventures of this kind in the future.

Regards

Robert Gourlay
Archaeologist

Roinn na
Gaidhealtachd



Highland

Department of Libraries and Leisure Services
Director
H. W. Wilkinson M.A., M.I.L.A.M.

Highland Regional Council
Kinmylies Building
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Inverness
IV7 4BZ

Telephone 0463 234121
Telex 75313
Facsimile 0463 223201

Please ask for R GOURLAY

Our ref.

Extension No. 447

Your ref.

Date 29.2.88

Donald Omand
Dept of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies
Braal
HALKIRK
Cauthness KW12 6XE

Received 9/3/88

Dear Donald

I have been asked to reply to a letter you sent to Rod Gunson about dates from charred timbers found at Cyderhall. This got to me through Roger Mercer in Edinburgh - do not ask me precisely how! Anyway, the answer to the question is yes - they will be dated as part of the normal post-excavation work for the site. As the site has some stratigraphy, I am asking HBM for at least three dates, and I hope that we might have the samples looked at with a view to some dendrochronological work being carried out at the same time, although I am not very hopeful about this. The material will be going to the various specialists fairly soon, and I hope that Robert Pollock, who excavated the site, will be preparing a report for PSAS during the summer - so it should be out in two years!

Hope this helps both yourself and Mr Mitchell.

Regards

Bob

Robert Gourlay
Archaeologist

CYDERHALL SOUTERRAIN: ESTIMATE OF POST-EXCAVATION WORK

The following is an estimate of work required to produce a two-level report - a short version as discussed for publication, and a full archive report. The various plans and sections, also as discussed, are included. The section on Specialists Reports is somewhat tentative at present, but I hope to discuss this in detail with the various specialists concerned. However, as the overall quantities of material are small, the estimate given below should be reasonably accurate. I will forward more detailed estimates as soon as they are available.

PREPARATION OF REPORTS: ROBERT POLLOCK

No.	Details	Days	Cost
1.	Archive Report (Phase Site, Context Descriptions, Typing)	10	380.00
2.	Phase Plans	2	76.00
3.	Publication Report	4	152.00
4.	Publication Plans & Finds Drawings	2	76.00
5.	Photographic Record/Index	1	38.00
TOTAL:			722.00

PREPARATION OF SAMPLE MATERIALS (To be carried out first)

1.	Sample preparation/Matrix/Boxing/Background Information	5	190.00
2.	Fine sieve Souterrain floor samples	1	38.00
TOTAL			228.00

SPECIALISTS EXAMINATION OF MATERIALS

1. C14 Dates. Five samples have been identified by yourself and the Excavator as desirable for dating. These are:
- Phase 1 structure (destruction level). Charcoal. Context (350)
 - Phase 2 Structure (destruction level). Charcoal. Context (329)
 - Charcoal from post hole in Gully feature. Context (343)
 - Carbonised grain from unstratified pit adjacent to roundhouse. Context (200)
 - Bone from souterrain pit. This may be insufficient for dating. Context (119)

No costs have been included for radiocarbon determinations, as agreed.

2. Wood species: All samples are considered to be identifiable. Description and weight of samples, with Context Nos as follows:
- Context (329) 2 lengths of timber. Weight c.1Kg. Possibly suitable for Dendro work.
 - Context (316) 1 length. Weight c.1Kg. Possibly suitable for Dendro work.
 - Context (327) Weight c.2Kg.
 - Context (343) Weight c.1Kg.
 - Context (350) Weight c.500g. (NB: ALL SAMPLES ARE CARBONISED)

- | | | |
|--|---|-------|
| 3. Grain: Identification of Species. (c.2Kg available) | 1 | 38.00 |
| 4. Bone: 33 fragments from 9 contexts. | | |
| Teeth: c.25 fragments from 7 contexts. | 1 | 38.00 |

5. Stone: Three pieces as detailed.
a. Quartz flake, Context (307)
b. Flint leaf-shaped arrowhead (half). Context (331)
c. Flint/Chert flake. Context (331) 1 38.00
6. Shell: Context (119). Snail or sea shell from fill of Souterrain pit. If land snail, would indicate collapsed Souterrain lay open.
7. Pottery: Two sherds + fragments from 2 well-stratified contexts (310 - upper W fill of Gully) and (122 - souterrain construction level). 1 38.00
8. Soil Analysis: This work is necessary for a full understanding of the fills of the souterrain and associated structures. All samples are of adequate quantity. Those for which analysis is suggested are outlined below:
- a. Souterrain Floor Level (Context 121). 20 grid-located samples to give information about use/function of the souterrain.
 - b. Souterrain Pit, bottom fill (Context 119). Information on function of pit.
 - c. Gully/proto-Souterrain cut feature fill (Context 348). Required to identify possible function of this feature.
 - d. Roundhouse internal Grey Silt deposit (Context 327). This is the deposit which derives from turf = roofing material of structure.
 - e. Sequence of samples from large pit section (Context 400). This is the large pit divorced from the main site, and therefore not stratigraphically related to it. However, there may be possible organic survival. A box section was also taken. This is not absolutely essential to understanding the site, but may have other benefits.
- Not estimated at present.
-

MATERIALS FOR REPORT PRODUCTION AND SAMPLE PREPARATION.

- a. I roll Permatrace.
- b. Folders and other stationery.
- c. Finds boxes (can CEU supply?)
- d. Necessary photocopying charges.
- e. Polythene Bags.
- f. Acid-free tissue for packing.

It may be that CEU can supply most of these requirements. They have therefore not been costed at this stage.

Please let us know if you require any further information at present. A full estimate can be provided when detailed requirements of Specialist's time has been computed.

Robert Gourlay
Robert Pollock

2nd March, 1988.

105/5.

1 Ballicherry Cottages
Balblair
Conon Bridge
Ross shire
IV7 8LH
Tel. Poyntzfield 367

15TH MARCH 1988

Dear Dr Robertson

Thanks for your recent letter and for the copy of your report, which, with your permission, I will lodge with the rest of the site record at the NMR in Edinburgh.

I heard today from Bobly that SDD have agreed to the ^{best} excavation budget I asked for, and I will probably start the writing-up soon. The report will be published in 'Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland', and a longer and more detailed report will be lodged in the archive (NMR).

Before answering your specific queries, I should let you know that the report on the site which you have seen is not meant to be definitive, but was written mainly to persuade the Council that we had to produce some money for a publication report and C14 dates. It is very general, and the conclusions may be changed.

- 1) The six shallow postholes you mention are on Plan 5.
- 2) Antonian postholes as well as butterny members? as you

suggest, cross-poles would have existed a few feet above the ground - these would have left no trace in the archaeological record.

- 3) the large hole cut through the floor of the roundhouse primary level I don't understand, but the stones seem to have been displaced bushes.
- 4) the hole in the middle of the hoto-souterrain may have been a grain pit, the grain in which was never burned, and so would not be preserved. The analysis of samples should answer this question.
- I hope these notes help. I will get a copy of the full report to the Heritage Society when it is finished.

If I could ask a favour of yourself or Mr Bell, could you send me a list of all the Heritage Society members who came to help out during the excavation? I made a list at the time but I am sure it is not complete. Thanks.

I hope you have managed to decipher my writing. I enclose a copy of the bydeball costing, for your interest.

I would like to thank yourself and Mr Bell again for the assistance you gave during the excavation, I admire your dedication to your heritage and I will always be in your debt for you help over the 4 weeks.

Best wishes

Robert Pollard

"TORRANNOF"

106/12

Doonoch

Sutherland

IV 95 3HR.

19/3/88

Dear Mrs Pollock.

Thank you for your very kind letter of 15th inst, and for the elucidation of the various points I put. We are thrilled to hear the news that STD had accepted your budget, and most sincerely hope that money will be forthcoming for the Carbon¹⁴ dating — this would be wonderful.

I am leaving for Glasgow on Monday, and I have asked Mrs Bell to give you the details of the Heritage Society members who, from time to time, helped with the work. This function, indeed, is what we see the Heritage Society as providing, though it would be inevitably loose-knit and sporadic, and mostly at week-ends.

With regard to the attempt at a descriptive write-up of your work I made for our Society, yes we are very happy for you to use it in any way advantageous to the project, so long as it is recognised as a Doonoch Heritage Society contribution — but it is very non-professional!

It was a pleasure, and quite a thrill, to have had the good fortune to work for a professional Archaeologist, and you were amazingly tolerant of your enthusiastic laity. It was wonderful to have things explained, so kindly and forbearingly, and to begin - with your encouragement - ourselves to try to "see into" what had gone so long before, though we must have been a bit of a trial to you, if not a positive pain in the neck (or perhaps, the back!).

Our appetite whetted, we have turned to extend our survey of the Loch have evictor sites - with the amazing luck of help from the engineers of Sir William Halcrow firm building the Mound Bridge, and their lover theodolite! So we should be able to turn out a reasonable spiel on that in due course.

Many thanks, indeed

Yours sincerely

Stuart Pat Robertson

NEWBIGGING

CARNWATH

LANARK

ML11 8NB

23/10/88

Dear Mr Bell

I am sorry about the delay in sending the slides which was caused by the fact I have not yet received the copies I made back from Fuji (after $3\frac{1}{2}$ weeks).

Consequently (as November 1st is approaching) I have enclosed the originals of some of the best slides from the site archive. I hope these will be useful to you.

Since they are the originals, could you please send them back to me at the above address when you are finished with them? You can keep the black and white slides, which are copies. When I get the colour copies back from Fuji I will forward these to you. I really need the originals back to avoid the need to remember and relabel relabel relabel them, or else I wouldn't bother.

You may be interested to know that I sent in a report about Lydehall to 'Discovery and Excavation in Scotland' so there may be some feedback when that is published next year.

I saw Bob Goulay just before I finally left the Black Isle and apparently the excavation of the hillfort at Bogart in Sutherland is going to take place, possibly done by a man called Alan Rodley who is a very good digger and very approachable - perhaps you know about this already.

I hope to have the full archive ^{of Lydehall} report done by December - this is a full description of each context along with the full phase plans, so I will get a copy to you when it is done.

Best wishes

Robert Pollock

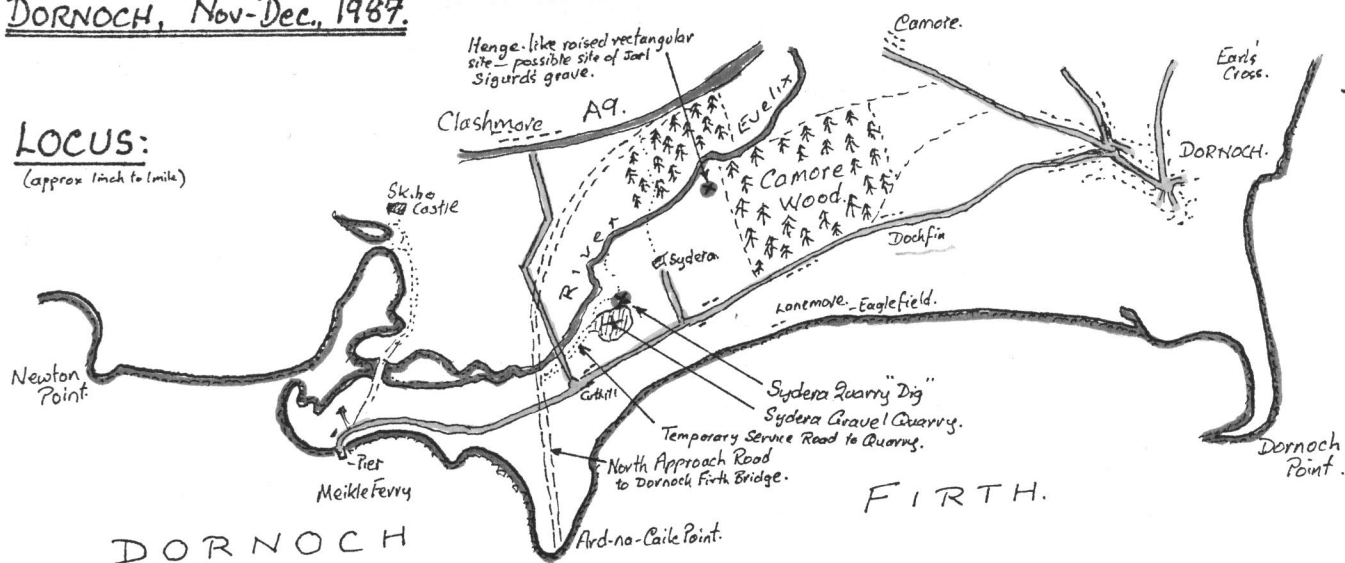
Postages 75p. + recorded delivery.

SYDERA GRAVEL QUARRY SOUTERRAINE

DORNOCH, Nov-Dec, 1987.

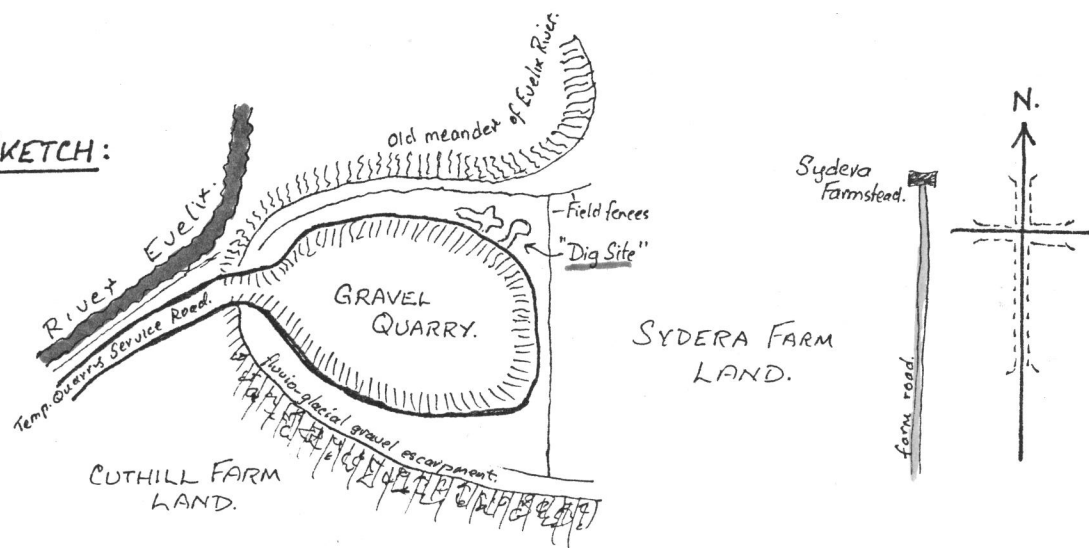
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(approx 1 inch to 1 mile)



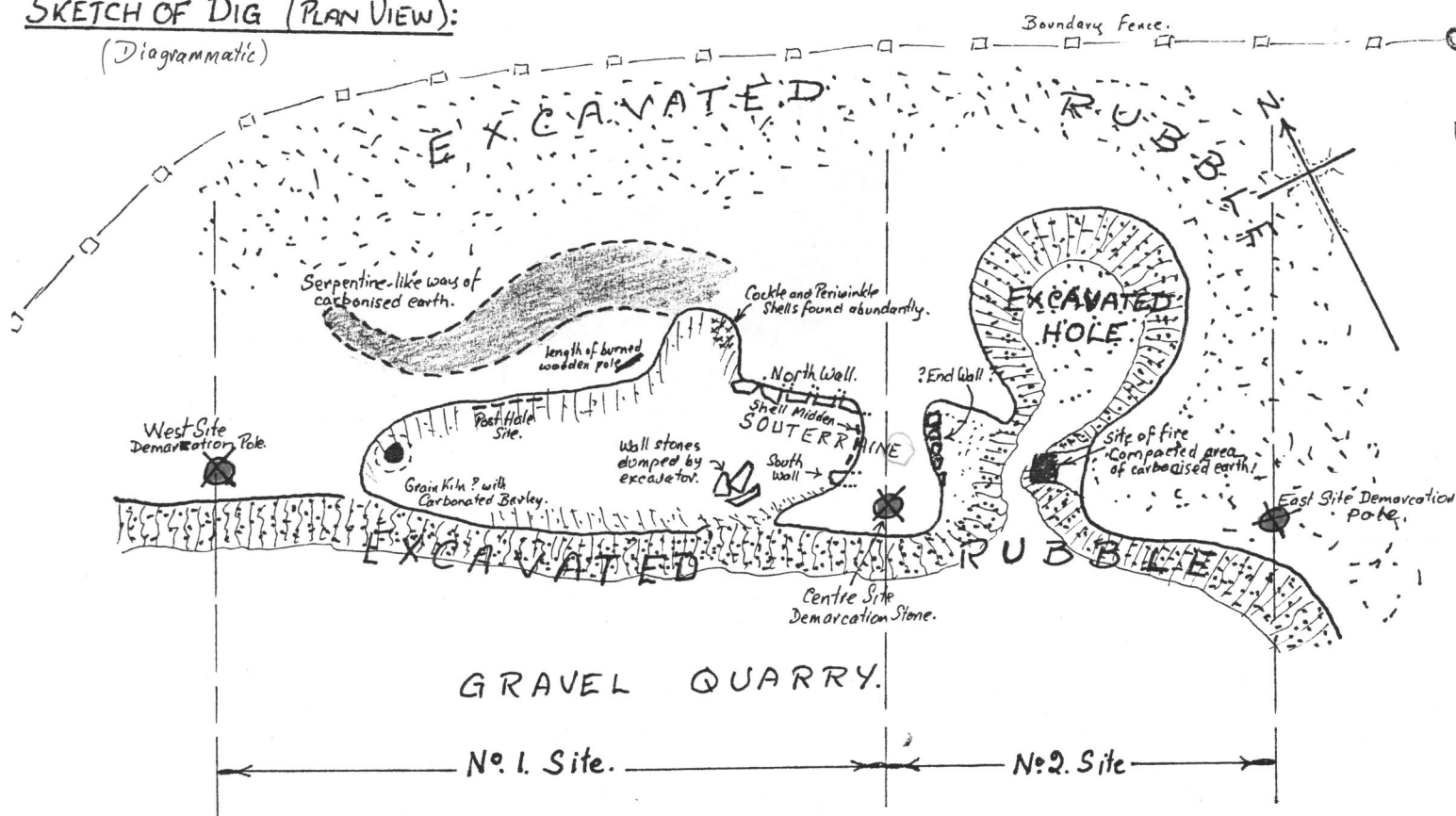
SITE IDENTIFICATION SKETCH:

(Diagrammatic)



SKETCH OF "DIG" (PLAN VIEW):

(Diagrammatic)



Note: Three Site Demarcation Poles were driven to identify the area of the "Dig." Arbitrarily these were used by the Society to divide the site into two portions for description sake. The West site (No. 1 Site) was the major site, first dug, and the East Site was regarded as No. 2 Site, of less concentrated interest.

SYDERA FARM GRAVEL QUARRY DIG, DORNOCH.

(THE SOUTERRAIN SHAFT AND ADIT, AND ? LATRINE PIT?)

Diagrammatic Sketch indicating Relationship of Physical Features,
with measurements. (Not to Scale).

