

Great Crowns of Stone

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The Recumbent Stone Circles of Scotland

Gazetteer and Appendices

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Edited by Stratford Halliday



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Gazetteer of Recumbent Stone Circles

This Gazetteer of recumbent stone circles contains 71 entries, a total that has been arrived at by a rigorous and critical evaluation of no less than 156 monuments that lay some claim to inclusion. Of these 71, all except five have been included on the strength of their visible remains, though in four cases only the flankers survive and there is no record of a recumbent having lain between them (Nos. 11, 27, 58 & 59). The five exceptions are made up of three circles where sketches by antiquaries suggest that recumbent settings formerly existed (Nos. 36, 52 & 70) and two where written accounts are so unambiguous that it would be perverse to exclude them (Nos. 4 & 32). The 85 sites that have been omitted are described in Appendix 1, each entry outlining what is known of the monument and the reasons why it has not been included. By far the majority can be rejected outright, patently being either monuments that belong to other categories, or in some cases no more than confused records and flights of fancy. Nevertheless, they include a number of stone circles, several of which enclose cairns and have been included in lists of recumbent stone circles drawn up by Burl (1970; 1976a; 2000) and Ruggles (1984; 1999). If nothing else, the present survey challenges the assumption that any such circle is a probable or possible recumbent stone circle. It places the burden of proof on the observation of the character of the circles in the field, and has confirmed the conclusions arrived at in a survey in Donside, namely that there are several strands to the megalithic repertoire in North-east Scotland and that not every stone circle surrounding a cairn or ring-cairn included a recumbent setting (RCAHMS 2007, 72, 78). Equally, not every cairn within a recumbent stone circle is a ring-cairn, and within the compass of the distribution of so-called Clava-type monuments not every stone circle enclosing a cairn is necessarily a Clava cairn. This stance will have inevitably omitted some examples of recumbent stone circles,

but our challenge to any critic is to go out and test the omissions. Take a circle such as Upper Auchnagorth (App 1.80), where one of the fallen stones might even be a flanker, and demonstrate whether there was once a recumbent setting here; the same may be said of several others.

Each entry in the Gazetteer follows roughly the same structure. The first line of the heading information contains the current name in Canmore, the online database of the National Collection (<http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk>), and also identifies the parish and modern council area. The plethora of other names that have been applied to the monuments in both the Gazetteer and Appendix 1 is supplied in the index to the printed volume. The second line of the heading provides the Canmore record number and the National Grid Reference, while in Appendix 1 there is also a third line to indicate the character of the monument described. In the Gazetteer the opening sentences deal with the topographical situation of the circle and where appropriate provide a gloss on its original composition. The paragraph of description that follows is generally based on field observation and relates largely to the monument as the visitor encounters it today, starting with the recumbent setting and moving through a commentary on the rest of the ring and any evidence of a cairn within the interior. All ring measurements are taken to the outer edges of the stones, or qualified where allowance has to be made for missing and fallen stones. Unshaped stones are notoriously difficult to measure and the figures quoted here are maxima, best understood as describing the smallest 'box' that can contain the outline of the stone. The numbers in the text identify individual upright and fallen stones on the accompanying plan. These are assigned clockwise from the west flanker (1), so that the stones of the recumbent setting are numbered 1, 2 and 3 respectively, regardless of whether any of them is missing; the remaining

orthostats are numbered from 4 upwards. With the exception of the excavated circles at **Berrybrae**, **The Nine Stanes** and **Tomnaverie**, the gaps for missing stones are not numbered. At **Aquhorthies** and **Colmeallie**, where there appear to be two sets of orthostats, lower case letters are used to distinguish between the stones of each set (eg 5a & 5b). Elsewhere, lower case letters have been used to identify fragments of broken stones, while capital letters are assigned to other stones regarded as significant.

The plans were surveyed with an alidade, tape and plane-table at a scale of 1:100 and are reproduced at 1:250 with true north at the top of the page. The detail is necessarily selective and is designed to highlight the principal architectural elements of each monument, rather than every loose stone or hollow. On many of the plans a toned disc has been employed to reconstruct the rough footprint of the circle, but this should be taken as no more than a visual aid, which is particularly useful where only a few of the orthostats survive. The elevations of the recumbent settings are presented alongside the plans, together with diagrammatic representations of the heights of the stones making up the ring and a representative profile of the ground surface drawn through the interior. The heights of the stones were measured with a theodolite along the chosen line and plotted at the same scale as the plan. The elevations were measured by hand from a local site datum established with a theodolite and also drawn in the field at a scale of 1:100 for reproduction at 1:250, as were the diagrams showing the ringstones. These diagrams are designed to show only the heights of the stones relative to one another and make no attempt to show their spacing.

Where the circle has been excavated in modern times (Nos. 1, 12, 26, 40, 49, 51, 62 & 67), the description is followed by a summary of the salient results of the investigation, and in some cases a reinterpretation. Thereafter, the text charts the history by which present knowledge has been accumulated, generally following a chronological structure and concentrating on the history of the monument itself, but on occasion in themed paragraphs dealing with a particular aspect of the record; a paragraph on the cupmarks at **Rothiemay** serves as an example. To save repetition, notably in respect of work relating to the astronomical significance of the circles, the history of fieldwork and recording is referenced and summarised in a chronological table appended to each entry. The notes these contain are necessarily brief and selective, and the reader is always advised to return to the original source for further clarification. The reports of Frederick Coles are a case in point, for though he was not always consistent in the data he collected, his descriptions usually include details of a ring's location, its condition, diameter and circumference, together with notes on the number of stones, the distances between them, their

size, shape, geology and colour, and sometimes even an estimate of the recumbent's weight. He also described whatever internal features he was able to resolve, while rounding out his observations with discussions on anything that he had managed to glean from local informants or earlier records. These included the results of past excavations and references to chance finds. The accompanying plans, profiles and sketches not only retain considerable charm, but are significant records of the monuments 100 years ago.

The extent of Coles' fieldwork is always clear, but that of others is sometimes more opaque. This is especially true of Aubrey Burl, whose fieldwork is almost certainly under-represented in the tables and often hidden in the references listed under Alexander Thom and Clive Ruggles (Thom, Thom and Burl 1980; Ruggles 1984; Ruggles and Burl 1985). As a consequence it is not always possible to determine whether discussions and interpretations appearing in Burl's syntheses are based entirely on his own observations or derived from fellow travellers. By contrast, most of John Barnatt's commentaries read as if they result from original fieldwork, but he is quite explicit in relating that in Scotland this was not the case (1989, 2, iii). Nevertheless, starting with Alfred Lewis and Frederick Coles, researchers have consistently generated lists of the monuments they considered to be recumbent stone circles; the appropriate references to these lists are appended to each description, but they are also summarised in Tables (p 4, p 222).

The major protagonists in the recording and interpretation of the circles – Coles, Burl and Ruggles – are usually referred to by their surnames, but elsewhere forenames are also supplied. In part this is to provide a more human face to the record gathered over the last two hundred years or so, but it also helps to link back into the communities who still inhabit the landscape around these monuments. Perhaps more than any other category, these stone circles have attracted the great and the good, from gentlemen and ministers to tenants, crofters and labourers. Many were born and educated in the North-east and even in this age of increased mobility their surnames are still to be found locally. Extensive use has been made of the census and other sources to confirm and clarify their identities. This in turn has thrown useful light upon their statements and whether they were reporting first hand or merely relaying memories and traditions handed down by earlier generations. If not always found to be accurate, at least their reports were honestly intended, cumulatively forming one of the most substantial bodies of antiquarian commentaries to be found anywhere in Scotland.

As Coles' great survey found at the beginning of the 20th century, so we have found at the beginning of the 21st. None of the monuments has been immune to continuing change, from the removal and addition

of orthostats to the dumping of field-gathered stones. The prospective visitor should not be surprised if they find that the monument has changed again since the plans presented here were drawn up in the field. This is partly the reason why the history of recording has been tabulated. Nowhere is this ongoing process clearer than at **Tomnaverie**, which has been extensively excavated since it was surveyed and is now restored to something approaching its final form. Likewise, large free-range chicken sheds have come to dominate the immediate environs of **Old Rayne**, but whereas in the fullness of time these will vanish, nothing can undo the damage recently sustained at **Castle Fraser**, where a stone on the east-south-east has been uprooted and snapped in the course of cultivation. And the circles continue to accrete large stones, most recently at **South Ley Lodge**, where an orthostat-like stone that has been ploughed up now lies against the back of the west flanker.

No	Name	Lewis 1900	Coles 1900–6; 10	Burl 1973	Burl 1976a	Ruggles 1984	Barnatt 1989	Ruggles 1999	Burl 2000
1	Aikey Brae	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
2	Aquhorthies	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
3	Ardlair	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
4	Ardtannes Cottages	–	A	–	–	–	–	–	–
5	Auchlee	–	–	–	–	–	Q	–	C
6	Auchmachar	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
7	Auchmaliddie	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
8	Balnacraig	–	–	C	C	C	C	C	C
9	Balquhain	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
10	Bankhead	–	C	C	C	Q	Q	Q	C
11	Bellman's Wood	–	C	Q	Q	–	Q	Q	Q
12	Berrybrae	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
13	Binghill	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
14	Blue Cairn of Ladieswell	–	–	C	C	Q	Q	Q	C
15	Braehead	–	C	C	C	Q	C	Q	C
16	Cairn Riv	–	C	C	C	Q	Q	Q	C
17	Cairnton	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
18	Candle Hill	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
19	Castle Fraser	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
20	The Cloch	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	C
21	Clune Wood	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
22	Colmeallie	–	–	C	C	C	C	C	C
23	Corrie Cairn	–	–	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
24	Corrstone Wood	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
25	Corrydown	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
26	Cothiemuir Wood	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
27	Druidstone	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
28	Dunnideer	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
29	Easter Aquhorthies	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
30	Eslie the Greater	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
31	Frendraught	–	–	C	C	C	C	C	C
32	Gaval	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
33	The Gray Stone of Clochforbie	–	C	C	C	C	Q	C	C
34	Hatton of Ardoyne	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
35	Hill of Fiddes	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
36	Hill of Milleath	C	C	C	C	C	Q	C	C
37	Inschfield	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
38	Kirkton of Bourtie	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
39	Loanend	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
40	Loanhead of Daviot	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
41	Loudon Wood	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
42	Mains of Hatton	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
43	Midmar Kirk	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
44	Millplough	–	C	C	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
45	Montgoldrum	–	C	Q	Q	Q	C	Q	Q
46	Nether Dumeath	–	–	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
47	Netherton of Logie	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
48	New Craig	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
49	The Nine Stanes	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
50	North Strone	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
51	Old Keig	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
52	Old Kirk of Tough	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
53	Old Rayne	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
54	Pitglassie	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
55	Potterton	–	–	C	C	C	C	C	C
56	The Ringing Stone	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
57	Rothiemay	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
58	St Brandan's Stanes	–	C	Q	Q	Q	C	Q	Q
59	South Fornet	–	C	C	C	Q	Q	Q	C
60	South Ley Lodge	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
61	Stonehead	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
62	Strichen House	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
63	Sunhoney	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
64	Tillyfourie	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
65	Tilquhillie	–	–	C	Q	C	C	Q	C
66	Tomnagorn	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
67	Tomnaverie	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
68	Tyrebagger	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
69	Wantonwells	–	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
70	Wester Echt	C	–	C	C	Q	Q	Q	C
71	Yonder Bognie	–	C	–	C	C	C	C	C

– = No reference

C = Classified as an RSC

Q = Classification as an RSC is qualified

A = Alternative classification, or unclassified

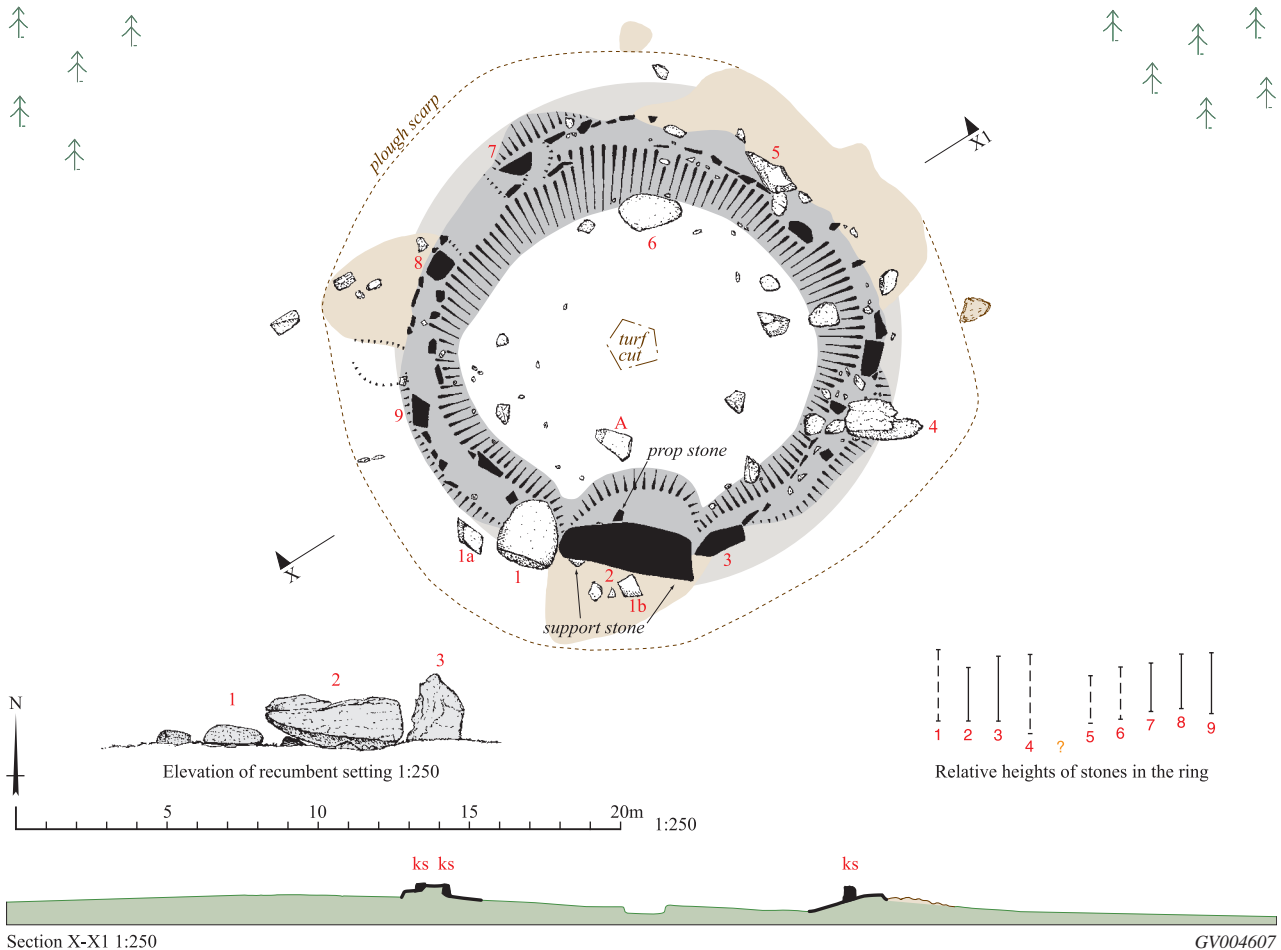
Table showing successive evaluations of the five authorities who have attempted to classify and list the rings now accepted as recumbent stone circles.

1 Aikey Brae, Old Deer, Aberdeenshire

NJ94NE 4 NJ 9588 4709

This recumbent stone circle, which is owned by Aberdeenshire Council, is situated in a grassy clearing on the south side of a coniferous plantation covering the summit of Parkhouse Hill. Measuring 16.5m from east-south-east to west-north-west by 15m transversely overall, it comprises the recumbent setting and at least six orthostats set in a ring-bank faced with kerbstones inside and out; a seventh orthostat is missing on the east-north-east, and the west flanker (1) and three of the orthostats (4, 5 & 6) are now prostrate. The recumbent (2), which has an uneven summit, stands on the south-south-west and measures up to 4.6m in length by 1.7m in height. It is held in place by three stones: one a long stone sleeper beneath its west end; the second a rounded boulder at its east end; and the third a substantial vertical slab placed at right angles to its rear, this last apparently to prevent the slab from toppling over. The west flanker (1) has fallen backwards across the ring-bank, and two fragments lying close by have been deliberately split from its foot (1a and 1b). One antiquarian source claims that in about 1880 its counterpart on the east (3), which is some 2.1m high,

was prostrate (Ferguson 1881, 105; see below), which might explain its present position set back from the leading edge of the recumbent with its inner face flush with the inner kerb of the ring-bank. Nevertheless, its foot is turned at an angle to project the arc of the kerb in a manner seen elsewhere, though in this case the outer kerb may have been carried round in front of it to the end of the recumbent. The orthostats of the circle are clearly graded from south to north, as can be seen on the west, where the tops of the three that remain upright (7-9) reduce in height from 2m to 1.6m, and the spaces between them close up from 4m to 3.2m. Excavations by Richard Bradley and Chris Ball in 2001 demonstrated that orthostats 8 and 9 had been inserted into the ring-bank on the west (Bradley 2005, 78-86), which in this sector measures between 1m and 1.5m in thickness over its kerbs. Elsewhere the ring-bank is spread up to 2.9m thick and 0.4m high, though no less than 44 kerbstones are still visible in their original positions and others lie displaced around the edge of the slightly dished interior. The excavation revealed that the kerbstones were set in trenches cut into the subsoil and probably alternated in colour from red to white; the ring-bank was made up of angular rock fragments and may have been divided transversely by other slabs





The recumbent stone circle is situated in open ground on the south side of the Parkhouse Hill plantation. SC1100316

(Bradley 2005, 78–86). Apart from the fallen orthostat on the north (6) and a scatter of smaller blocks, one of which (A) has been cut down from a larger stone and may be part of the missing orthostat, the interior is featureless. Oval on plan, it measures 12m from east-south-east to west-north-west by 10m transversely, and a patch of cobbles exposed in a small cutting for a campfire at the time of the survey has since been covered back over.

There is little doubt that Lachlan Shaw was referring to Aikey Brae when he wrote in the mid 18th century that *‘in the parish of Old Deer, there is a large circle, and within it lies a big stone, much in the shape of a boat’* (Robertson and Grub 1847, II, 406). Elsewhere, he refers to *‘above thirty little cells [that] might have been a convent of religious persons among the Druids’* on the slopes below. This supposed Druidical link became widely known and is referred to by the antiquaries Charles Cordiner (1780, 43–4) and George Chalmers (1887, I, 74), though in practice the cells were probably no more than the small bothies associated with the site of the old fair of Aikey Brae. They were robbed to build stone dykes in the 1770s,

but a particularly good description of these *‘mossy huts’* is provided by George Cruden, the local schoolmaster at the end of the 18th century (*Stat Acct*, xvi, 1795, 481–2). Cordiner’s brief note that *‘the three stones which had composed the altar, are of enormous size’* (1780, 43–4) implies that the recumbent setting was still intact in his day, and Cruden emphasised that Aikey Brae was the *‘most entire’* in the parish; these sentiments were repeated by Rev John Morison, the minister of Old Deer, in his brief description some 45 years later (*NSA*, xii, Aberdeenshire, 149–50). By then, however, only the recumbent and four other stones remained upright. A slightly later account by Rev John Pratt is based upon Morison’s, amending only a comment the latter had made about the spacing of the stones (1858, 107–8), but Pratt takes the opportunity of Aikey Brae to enlarge upon his ideas of the typical recumbent stone circle. Thus his description is preceded by a confusing reconstruction involving: *‘an inner and outer ditch, with a sort of intervening embankment carried round the circle, and at some considerable distance from it. To the east or north-east these ditches turn off so as to form a sort of avenue by which the circle was approached. In this avenue, and consequently outside the ring, a single stone commonly stood... Within the stone circle is the altar stone, always large, and lying flat, and not*



The view from the south-west. SC1097877

infrequently, as is the case at Parkhouse [Aikey Brae], considerably to the south of the centre of the circle.' (1858, 107–8).

Other than the recumbent, there is no evidence that any of these features ever existed at Aikey Brae and the OS surveyors in 1870 only quote from Pratt's description of the circle itself. Curiously, they attached a garbled précis of the reconstruction to the Name Book entry for **Rothiemyay**.

At about this time a small party spent a day excavating at Aikey Brae. Those present included Jonathan Forbes-Leslie, who exhibited a drawing of the circle to a British Association meeting at Edinburgh in 1871, and also Charles Dalrymple. The results were first reported by William Ferguson in *The Great North of Scotland Railway: A Guide*, which records that the circle was '*thoroughly and carefully examined for traces of sepulture. The central space was excavated to a depth of 6 or 8 feet, without a trace of evidence that the soil had ever before been disturbed*' (Ferguson 1881, 105). The notion that the whole of the slightly dished interior of Aikey Brae has been turned over to this depth is as preposterous today as it evidently was to Coles (1904, 270), and it is more likely that they examined the enclosing ring-bank and merely sank a deep pit at its centre – a low tump shown on the sections prepared in about 1888 by James Spence and described as '*a slight rise, as if of a mound broken into and scattered about*' (1890, 29, figs 3–4) is perhaps sufficient to confirm the point. Apparently the party also opened '*numerous small cairns*' in its immediate vicinity, which may account for the discovery of '*some charred substance a few yards outside the circle*' reported a few years later by Rev James Peter (1885, 377). More importantly, Ferguson, who had known the ring since his childhood in 1838, provides details of all the fallen stones, confirming that in 1880 the circle still had its full complement of ten. At that time, however, the fallen stones included the east flanker and he claimed that only three of the orthostats remained standing. There is nothing to

corroborate this statement, but he is absolutely specific on the point. In 1885, however, when both Peter and Rev John Milne described the circle, this flanker was upright, Peter's plan showing it in its present position set back from the leading edge of the recumbent (1885, 377, fig 6). Whatever doubt this may cast on Ferguson's observation, it is possibly evidence that the circle has undergone some restoration.

If this is so, however, it passed unnoticed by Christian Maclagan, who visited at about the same time, and was unknown to Peter and Milne. Peter's plan, which distinguishes the upright stones and reconstructs the positions of those that had fallen, includes measurements of the missing orthostat on the north-east, and both he and Milne recognised that the heights and spacing of the stones were graded. Spence prepared a separate plan and elevations shortly afterwards but, possibly misled by Milne, he seems to have miscounted the fallen stones, reconstructing the circle with an additional orthostat on the north-east quarter; nevertheless, he is the first to depict the ring-bank with its inner and outer kerbs. He also refers to stone-lined pits immediately outside the circle on the south and west, and a small cairn 13.5m to the north-east, subsequently identified by Richard Little of the OS in 1968 as the results of relatively recent disturbances. Spence later reproduced the earliest known photograph of the ring. Coles could add little more and, bar some additional kerbstones, his plan shows the circle much as it is today. Then, as now, there was some evidence of disturbance in the interior, and by that time the missing orthostat on the north-east had been removed and the fallen slab on the east-south-east (4) had been broken. He also noted that the interior below the surface was '*evidently made up, in parts at any rate, of a mass of small boulders*' (1904, 266).

Since the mid 19th century the circle had lain in a clearing in a plantation of conifers, though the plough-scar visible around it today indicates that this had been preceded by a period of cultivation. By the turn of the century the northern half of this plantation had reverted to rough pasture and the circle stood at the edge of a more mixed wood. In 1907, however, the year that Sir Norman Lockyer visited the circle, most of these trees had been felled, as can be seen from a photograph by James Ritchie, which shows only a few standing adjacent to the boundary dyke south of the recumbent setting. Amongst the tree stumps in the foreground, however, can be seen some larch and Scots Pine seedlings, and by the time of Right Reverend George Browne's visit in 1920, the outlook to the south was entirely shrouded with trees; indeed, the photograph reproduced by Browne was taken from within the circle, almost certainly because the trees had grown up all round the ring. The plantation has been restocked since then and the outlook to the south is now preserved in the clearing occupied by the stone circle. While Browne

had little to add about the circle itself, in 1928 Alexander Keiller noted graffiti on the stones and the presence of the long stone sleeper below the west end of the recumbent; outside the circle he also described a ‘*curious annexe of triangular form*’ (1934, 17), but this was probably the result of disturbance.

More recent fieldwork by Burl and Ruggles has tended to focus on the astronomical alignment of the circle, but in 2001 the present survey was prepared prior to the limited excavations carried out by Bradley and Ball. These were designed to test the relationship of the stone circle to the ring-bank in a Buchan-type ring and they duly demonstrated that the sequence of construction at Aikey

Brae conforms to that observed elsewhere. However, the radiocarbon dates – 2865±50 uncal BP (AA-49296; 1220–900 cal BC); 2855±45 (AA-49297; 1210–1170 or 1160–890 cal BC) – are anomalous, falling in the Late Bronze Age (Bradley 2005, 101–2). In the course of this work they also suggested that the character of the ring was ‘*handed*’, and that an asymmetry in the shape of the orthostats could be detected to either side of its north-north-east to south-south-west axis.

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1904, 304; 1910, 165; Burl 1970, 77; 1976a, 349, Abn 1; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 12; Barnatt 1989, 268, no. 6:1; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 12; Burl 2000, 419, Abn 1

Date	Personnel	Record
c1750	Lachlan Shaw	Note (Robertson 1847, II, 406)
c1780	Charles Cordiner	Note
c1795	George Cruden	Description (<i>Stat Acct</i> , xvi, 1795, 481–2)
c1840	John Morison	Description (<i>NSA</i> , xii, Aberdeenshire, 149–50)
c1858	John Pratt	Description (Pratt 1858, 107–8)
1870	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Aberdeenshire 1873, xxi.8); description (Name Book, Banffshire, No. 27, p 64)
c1871	Jonathan Forbes-Leslie	Description and lost drawing (NLS APS.1.79.129)
c1870s	Jonathan Forbes-Leslie Charles Dalrymple William Ferguson Thomas Ferguson James Russel James Russel (son)	Excavations (Ferguson 1881, 105; Peter 1885, 377)
c1881	Christian Maclagan	Ambiguous description and sketch plan (Maclagan 1881, 31, pl vii; RCAHMS SAS467; DC53027)
c1885	James Peter	Description and plan (Peter 1885, 374–7, fig 6)
c1885	John Milne	Description (Milne 1886, 11–12)
c1888	James Spence	Description and plan (Spence 1890, 28–30, figs 1–4); photograph (Spence 1896, 26)
September 1903	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and elevation (Coles 1904, 266–70, figs 5–8, 304)
1907	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2430)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 394, 399)
1920	George Browne	Description and photograph (Browne 1921, 96, pl xxxiv)
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1928, 16–17; 1934, 12, 14, 17; RCAHMS MS106/9)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1940s–50s	Angus Graham	Photograph (RCAHMS H94191po)
5 April 1968	Richard Little	OS: description and map revision
c1980	Aubrey Burl	Astronomical survey and guidebook description (Burl 1975, 7; 1980a, 199, no. 8; 1995 & 2005, 93, no. 90; 2005b, 38)
18 June 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 59, 66, 68–71; 1999, 213–15; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 29, 41, 47, 54)
2 August 2001	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44505)
2001	Richard Bradley Chris Ball	Excavation (Bradley and Ball 2001, 12; Bradley 2005)
6 April 2006	Nigel Ruckley Simon Howard David Herd Yves Candela	NMS: geological survey

2 Aquhorthies, Banchory-Devenick, Aberdeenshire

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Aquhorthies is not only one of the most impressive recumbent stone circles, but also one of the most complex, preserving a range of visible features that are rarely seen so clearly elsewhere, and indeed some that are otherwise unknown. It stands on a low rise tilted gently down to the east within a field 170m north of Aquhorthies Steading. Measuring a maximum of 25m from north to south by 23.5m transversely, in its final form the circle comprised at least eighteen stones set out along the leading edge of a platform encircling a well-defined ring-cairn; of that complement, only fourteen remain, and two of these are reduced to stumps (8a & A). The recumbent setting on the south-south-east is unusual for the forecourt in front of it, which is framed by two orthostats (A & B) set forward from

the projected circumference of the circle, the western of them being one of the stumps.

The recumbent block measures 2.75m in length by almost 1.4m in height and its summit is slightly domed, rising to its highest point a little west of centre. The east flanker is missing, but its neighbour on the west is a slender, top-heavy pillar some 1.55m in height, which stands back from the leading face of the recumbent and is turned slightly as if to trace the arc of the circle. At first sight the spacing and heights of the rest of the orthostats appear irregular and uneven, but detailed examination suggests that they represent two incomplete, interdigitated rings, each series of stones distinguishable by their relative sizes; the two framing the forecourt do not belong in either series and can be argued on other grounds to be additions to the original design. The major series, originally comprising eight stones, is now represented by six, namely 4, 6-7 and 9-11. These are graded to reduce in height and spacing from south to north, with the tallest almost 2.4m in height on the south-west (11), and the shortest only

View from the south-west. SC851557



1.1m in height on the north-north-east (7). Orthostat 9 on the north-west bears a possible cupmark 0.6m above the ground on its external face. The minor series had at least seven stones if the survivors on the east were matched symmetrically on the west, and possibly as many as nine if the gaps between the major series and the flankers were filled. It is now made up of only five (4a–8a), one of which is a stump (8a). By and large these are comparatively slender pillars in comparison to the stones of the major series; they are not so tall either, and yet they too are graded in height, stepping down around the north-east quadrant from about 1.5m on the east (4a) to 0.6m on the north (7a). The two slabs framing the mouth of the forecourt (A & B) conform to the spacing of the major series, but if the height of the eastern (B), a little more than 1.3m, was repeated on the west, they were not integrated conventionally into its grading. Their positions set forward from the circle emphasise the depth of the forecourt, and the breadth of the platform of cairn material to either side also expands to 5m and 6m on east and west respectively; a line of four small kerbstones that can be seen flush with its surface to the west of the forecourt (D), suggests that the expansion around the south side of the monument is probably an addition to an original platform only 3m broad. The displaced and set stones intermittently visible along the leading edge of the expanded platform and the forecourt, and also between the orthostats along the eastern margin of the circle, show that the platform at Aquhorthies was more formally defined than most of those recorded elsewhere.

The ring-cairn standing within the circle is polygonal on plan and measures 15.5m in diameter over a near continuous kerb of slabs and boulders. These are not consistently graded in size, but the smaller ones are on the north, while the largest is on the south and forges the link with the west flanker of the recumbent setting; as at nearby **Auchlee**, the kerb on the east-south-east includes a stone (C) that at 0.85m is much higher than any of its neighbours. The body of the ring-cairn is heavily robbed, so much so that most of the kerbstones stand proud of its surface, but the cairn material around the shallow depression defining the central court is about 0.5m deep; five slabs belonging to the kerb of the court remain in place, three on the north and two on the east. A sub-rectangular hollow on the north-east of the court (D) and a slab lying beside it have been identified as the remains of the cist containing an urn found here in the late 18th century, but the first description of the discovery of this burial placed it on the east side of the platform encircling the ring-cairn (see below).

Plainly visible from the old Aberdeen highway, Aquhorthies has long attracted interest as a landmark and an antiquarian curiosity, so it is no surprise that James Garden came here in 1692 to seek answers to John Aubrey's queries. His description in June of that year, however, is inextricably muddled with its close

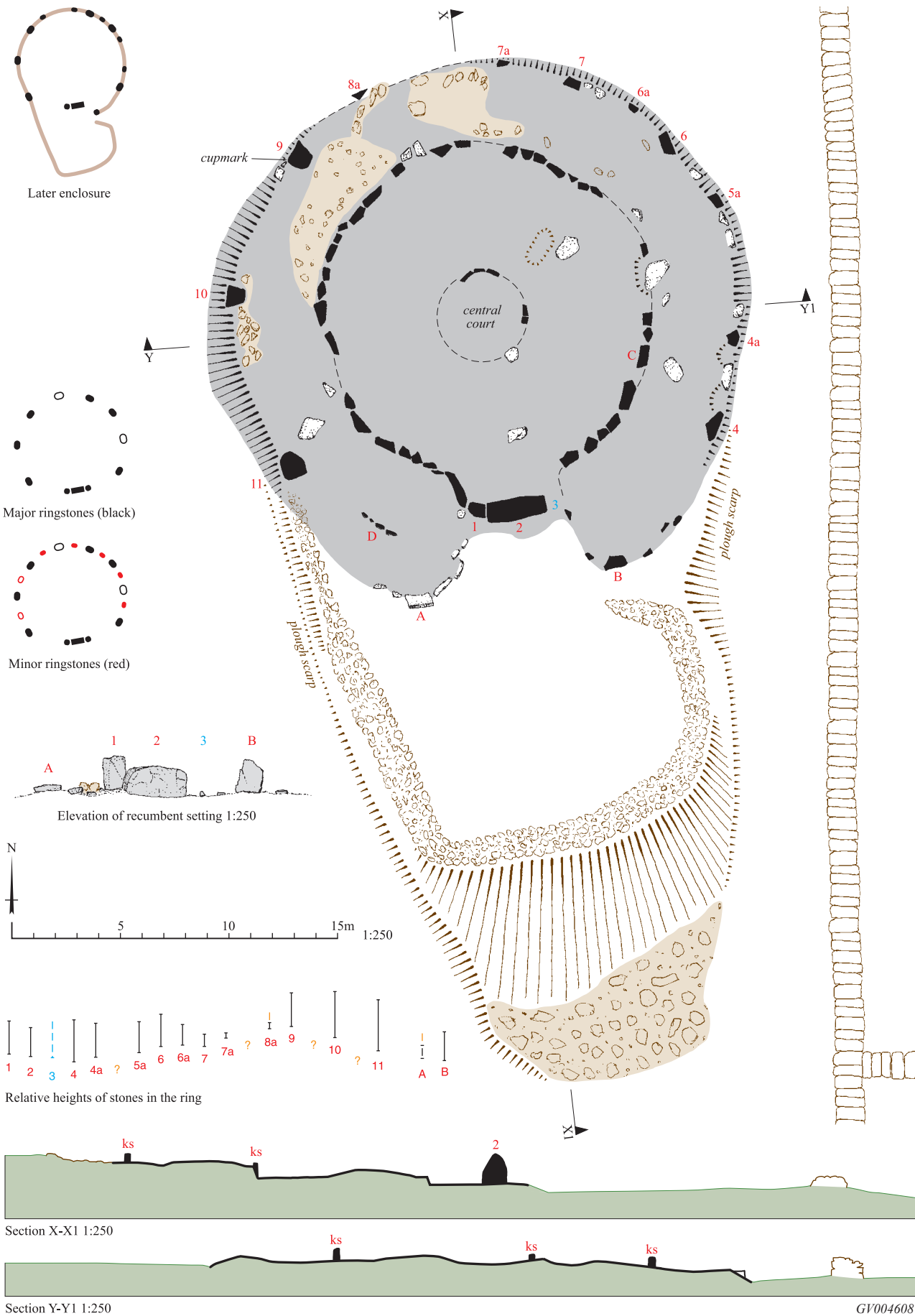
neighbour Old Bourtreebush (App 1.69), and as William Lukis realised as long ago as 1885 (1885, 305–8) it is impossible to be certain which is which:

'One of them has two circles of stones, whereof the exterior circle consists of thirteen great stones (besides two that are fallen and the broad stone toward the south) about three yards high above ground, and betwixt seven & eight paces distant on from another; the diameter being 24 large paces the interior circle is about 3 paces distant from the other and the stones thereof 3 foot high above ground ... The other Monument (which is fully as large if not larger ...) consists of three circles having the same comon center. The stones of the greatest circle are about 3 yards, and those of the two lesser circles 3 foot high above ground, the innermost circle 3 paces diameter and the stones standing close together' (Hunter 2001, 119).

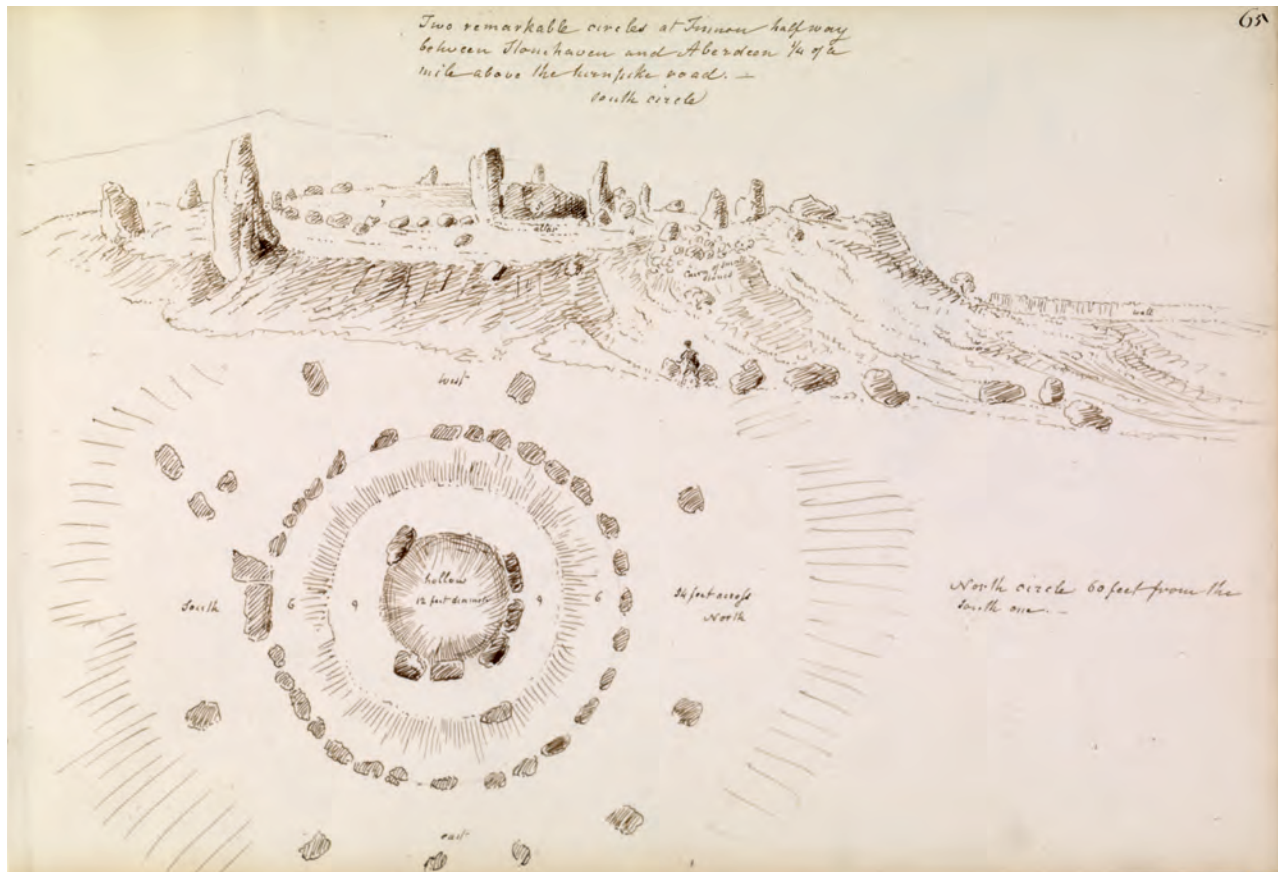
While the description of the recumbent suggests that the first monument is Aquhorthies, so too the three rings of the second, and neither can be reconciled happily with the shattered wreck of Old Bourtreebush, where there is no more than a low stony swelling to indicate that it has ever contained an internal cairn (see App 1.69). Furthermore, Garden's attempt in a letter of January 1793 to correct some errors in other details concerning religious rituals, has merely compounded the confusion, containing a passage that apparently implies that the second monument also had a recumbent: *'There is also another stone in the same circle & upon the same side of the monument [east] (standing nearest to the broad stone that stands on edge & looks toward the south)'* (Hunter 2001, 124).

No further commentary on Aquhorthies is recorded until that of the Rev George Morison, writing at the end of the 18th century. His description, however, is one of the more detailed in the *Statistical Accounts* and resonates with Garden's a century before: *'It consisted of three circles of stones within each other. The outer circle, which was about 45 feet [13.7m] in diameter, consisted of 12 large stones placed on end. The inner circles were composed of smaller stones, placed in the same manner; and between the two outermost upon the east side, there was a stone chest sunk in the earth about 3 feet [0.9m] long, and 1½ [0.45m] wide, which having been accidentally uncovered by a country man, he found an urn'* (*Stat Acct*, iv, 1792, 456).

In this case, however, a passing reference to a second circle *'A little farther down the hill, towards the SE'* makes it perfectly clear that he is referring to Aquhorthies rather than Old Bourtreebush. His diameter is a little adrift, but it is plain that much of the damage to the circle had already taken place by the end of the 18th century, if not a hundred years before. The central court, for example, must have been at least partly emptied to reveal its kerb, and discounting stumps there are even now only twelve orthostats. Although in this account Morison placed the site of the cist on



GV004608



Skene's sketch of the 1820s greatly exaggerates the height of the platform, but his plan gives a fair impression of the remains. SC730405

the platform between the orthostats and the ring-cairn, in a later description prepared in 1838 for the *New Statistical Account* he was to claim it was found in the centre (below).

In the meantime, in the 1820s, two roughly measured plans were prepared, one by James Skene, the other by James Logan, both in their different ways confirming the robbed state of the circle. Skene's plan is illustrative rather than accurate, for the most part regularising the circle rather than faithfully depicting individual stones in their correct positions, but he does show that the east flanker was missing. The perspective of the accompanying sketch is dramatised in a way that emphasises the platform encircling the ring-cairn, and the kerb of the latter is shown standing proud above the cairn material, which is apparently banked up around the central court. Confusingly, he appears to have annotated the sketch 'South circle', and on the north side of the plan he wrote 'North circle 60 feet from the South one', implying that a second circle lay a short distance to the north; possibly he was referencing a large stone with a hole in its surface that Garden claimed lay an equivalent distance to the east, or he had confused his compass points and meant the natural terrace enclosed by an old field-dyke on the south of the circle. In 1858 this terrace certainly confused a

group of later antiquaries, who debated whether stones had formerly stood around its edge. They also learned locally that excavations had been made there some fifteen or twenty years previously, roughly 1838–43 (Thomson 1864, 133–4). Skene shows some discarded boulders lying along the west side of this terrace, but he does not annotate them and makes no effort to give their disposition any form that might suggest the remains of an antiquity.

Logan provides an altogether more impressive rendering of the circle's plan and his use of longer shadows for the orthostats suggests that he recognised the status of the two stumps on the north-north-west (8a) and south-south-west (A), even if Skene's sketch and Morison's earlier count lead to the conclusion that these two stones had already been chopped down. Logan also captures the outwards projection of the ring-cairn at the rear of the recumbent setting and shows the four kerbstones that can still be seen embedded in the encircling platform on the south-south-west (D); and while the east flanker is missing, a large block lies between the recumbent and the central court, a position now occupied by a relatively small earthfast stone. In his description he draws attention to the grading of the circle and, as an aside to the difficulty of identifying any kerbstones between the orthostats, observes that 'Most of the exterior line of stones has been filled up, to constitute a fence' (1829a, 203). As at **Tyrebagger**, Logan screened this fence out of his plan, and nor does

it appear on Skene's sketch, though the latter shows a wall in the background, presumably the drystone field-dyke that runs past the circle on the east. Nevertheless, what are almost certainly the ruins of Logan's fence can still be seen extending along the lip of the terrace to the south of the circle and riding up onto the edge of the platform adjacent to orthostat 11 on the south-west. An earlier RCAHMS survey in 1984 interpreted the large stones between the orthostats on the east as part of the footing of this fence, but to all intents and purposes the rest has been removed, and the stones themselves may in any case belong to the kerb of the platform encircling the ring-cairn. There is clear evidence of robbing along the lip of the platform, probably for no other reason than to provide building materials for the construction of the adjacent field-dyke.

Given that the circle was so well-known and relatively speaking so well preserved, it was inevitable that it should be subjected to antiquarian exploration. Nothing is known of the excavations of 1838–43, but in 1858 Alexander Thomson of Banchory House records how he, James Dyce Nicol, Charles Dalrymple and several others supervised 'two or three active labourers, and the necessary tools' in a crude investigation, one of four that they managed to carry out on 30 September of that year. They emptied the central court, where they found some burnt bone and small fragments of pottery, together with charcoal and 'black unctuous earth', while in the body of the ring-cairn they uncovered 'a short, low wall of five stones ... ; and behind this again is a low bank of small stones and earth, perhaps only the result of a previous excavation' (Thomson 1864, 133–4). They also dug 'in front of' the recumbent, though it is not clear to which side this refers.

The OS surveyors who visited a few years later in 1865 consulted Thomson as a local authority and though a certain amount of confusion can be detected in the Name Book entries for the four stone circles that were then known in the area (Kincardineshire, No. 2, pp 103, 105, 109–10), they were probably correct to equate Aquhorthies and nearby Old Bourtreebush with the two circles cryptically attributed to the 'property of Auchlee, belonging to Mr Boswell of Kingcaussie' in the second description of the parish prepared by Morison; this claimed that the circle was 'composed of a double row of stones, in the centre of which a stone coffin was discovered many years ago, but containing neither urn nor bones' (NSA, xi, Kincardine, 182; see also **Auchlee**). The clue to solving this confusion in the names is provided by the Name Book itself, for the entry attached to the adjacent croft of Hillhead of Auchorthies places it on the 'Estate of Auchlee the property of Mr Boswell, Kingcaussie' (Kincardineshire, No. 2, p 104). Aquhorthies was part of Auchlee, and it was this correlation that led the surveyors to place the findspot of the cist at the centre of the circle rather than on the east where Morison first described it in the

Statistical Account (above). It probably also informed their description of the circle as 'two concentric rows of Standing Stones in an upright position', and on the preceding page 'There is also the appearance of a small circle at the centre' (Name Book, Kincardineshire, No. 2, pp 110, 109).

Following on from Thomson's excavations the circle seems to have attained much the same state that it is in today and the descriptions prepared in various degrees of detail by Christian Maclagan in the early 1870s, Robert Angus Smith in about 1879, William Lukis in 1884, Alfred Lewis in about 1888, Lieutenant-general Augustus Pitt-Rivers' assistants William Tomkin and Claude Gray in 1889 and finally Coles in 1899, are broadly in accord, though the quality of the plans that were prepared varies considerably, perhaps on account of the vegetation that grew up towards the end of the century. Maclagan, for example, fails to show the projection of the ring-cairn to meet the back of the recumbent setting, while the 'somewhat circular cells' she claimed to see in the central court and the 'gallery' that led out to the recumbent were surely imaginary. Smith's hurried observation of 'a square building about it made in later times' (1880, 305) almost certainly refers to Logan's fence, which is first depicted by Lukis in 1884. Based on Smith's measurements, in 1881 Sir Henry Dryden had constructed a rough and wholly misleading plan of Aquhorthies (RCAHMS SAS 39/10), which he had then sent to Lukis. The latter's own plan, surveyed some three years later, surpasses that of Logan in its accuracy, if not in detail, but the redrafting of part of the ring-cairn's kerb on the south-east reveals that he realised that all was not well with his measurements. Nevertheless, he noted how the recumbent was attached to the extruded kerb of the ring-cairn and not on the arc of the surrounding ring, and shows the later field-bank on the south of the circle extending up to the orthostats on the east-south-east (4) and south-west (11). Unfortunately the plan prepared in 1889 by Tomkin and Gray does not seem to survive, but the measured drawings of the stones of the circle and the central court are second to none. The quality of their work is the more remarkable for the unforgiving August showers that hampered their progress and the state of the vegetation. By the time James Ritchie photographed the circle in 1902 and 1904 some of the stones were shrouded in gorse and broom, which was almost certainly responsible for the wildly distorted plan that Coles drew up. The only notable feature of the plan is that it purports to show a stone forming the east projection of the ring-cairn's kerb behind the missing east flanker; nobody has observed a kerbstone here before or since. Aquhorthies was only the second circle that Coles visited as he set out on his great survey, and there is a sense in the footnotes explaining the plan that he was feeling his way into the subject. Had it fallen

later in the programme he might have been a little more perceptive, both in terms of the failings of his plan and also in the character of the stones. It fell to Alexander Keiller to recognise the unusual number of stones in the ring and the fact that their heights appeared to alternate (1934, 10).

The litany of skewed surveys was finally ended in 1955 by Alexander Thom, who demonstrated the essential circularity that underlay the planning and

construction of the monument. This, however, has not prevented the continued use of Coles' plan, though no amount of adaptation in the field can counteract its fundamental flaws (eg Burl 1970, 64, fig 3 and 1972, 26, fig 2).

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1900, 198; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 359, Knc 2; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 86; Barnatt 1989, 270, no. 6:7; Ruggles 1999, 188, no. 86; Burl 2000, 429, Knc 2

Date	Personnel	Record
1692	James Garden	Description (Garden 1770, 313–15 [1779, 315–16]; Gordon 1960, 4, 11–12, 18; Fowles and Legge 1980, 177–81; Hunter 2001, 119, 124)
1792	George Morison	Description (<i>Stat Acct</i> , iv, 1792, 456; <i>NSA</i> , xi, Kincardineshire, 182)
1820s	James Logan	Description and plan (Logan 1829a, 203, pl xxiv)
1820s	James Skene	Plan and sketch (RCAHMS KCD114/1/P, p 65)
30 September 1858	Dyce Nicol, Charles Dalrymple, James Nicolson, Captain James Burnett, Rev Harry Stuart & Alexander Thomson	Excavation (Thomson 1864, 133–4)
1865	OS surveyors	Stone Circle, Stone Cist found here (Kincardineshire 1868, viii.5); description (Name Book, Kincardineshire, No. 2, pp 110, 109)
c1875	Christian Maclagan	Description and plan (Maclagan 1875, 11, 72–3, pl xxvii; RCAHMS SAS467; DC53028)
September 1879	Robert Angus Smith	Description (Smith 1880, 305–6)
1 August 1884	William Lukis	Plan and description (Lukis 1885, 305–8; GMAG7829.52)
September 1885	Alfred Lewis	Description (Lewis 1888, 47–8)
23–5 August 1889	William Tomkin & Claude Gray	Description, plan, photographs, measured sketches and model (Thompson 1960, 109, 118; NA Work 39/3/36–43, 63; 39/8/78–80; 39/13/14–16, 152–61)
September 1899	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketches (Coles 1900, 145–9, 191, 196, 198, figs 5–8)
July 1902	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS KC284 & KC293)
October 1904		Photograph (RCAHMS KC295)
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1934, 10)
31 July 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
August 1955	Alexander Thom	Plan and notes (Thom 1967, 137, 147; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 226–7; RCAHMS DC4419; MS430/22; Ferguson 1988, 99)
1960s–90s	Aubrey Burl	Guidebook description (Burl 1970, 79; 1972, 26; 1995 & 2005a, 135–6, no. 165)
29 June 1981	Clive Ruggles	Astronomical survey and tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67–71, 74–5; 1999, 213–15, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 47, 51)
10 November 1983	Ian Parker & Jack Stevenson	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS 1984, 7; RCAHMS KCD154/1–2)
29 April 2003	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44655)
15 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

3 Ardlair, Kennethmont, Aberdeenshire

NJ52NE 4 NJ 5527 2794

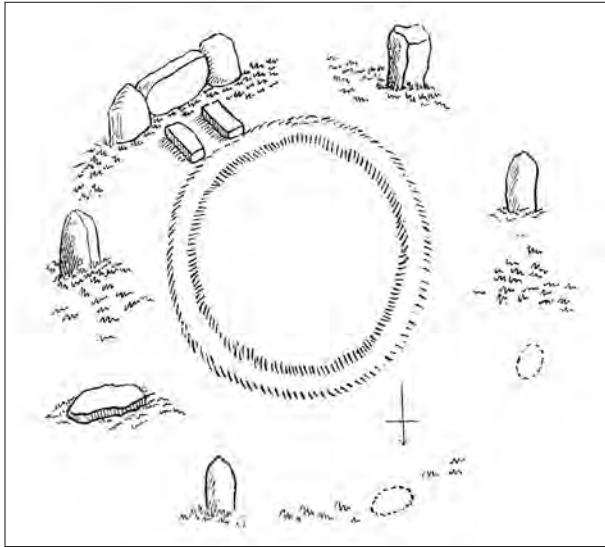
Commanding fine panoramic views, this recumbent stone circle occupies the summit of a hill 470m to the south-west of Ardlair farm. It stands upon an old headland in a swath of broad rig-and-furrow cultivation (NJ52NE 28) that was preserved when a plantation known as Ardlair Wood was set on the hilltop towards the end of the 18th century; the trees were cleared after the 1870s and the area within the plantation boundary has remained in rough pasture ever since. Measuring 11m in diameter, the circle probably comprised nine stones, of which eight remain, the missing stone being on the north-north-west. Only the recumbent setting and one orthostat on the south-west are still upright (8); another orthostat leans steeply (5), two have fallen (6 & 7), and the last lies cut down and displaced on the east-south-east (4). The recumbent (2), which measures 2.9m in length by 1.65m in height, is a rough block situated on the south-south-east of the ring, and has a pair of slabs set at right angles to its rear. The fractured character of the block suggests that it has been blasted, leaving the west end shattered and removing the east half of the outer face, though a few of the fragments may yet lie amongst the field-cleared stones gathered around its base. Such was the impact of the blast that only part of the recumbent's summit remains intact, enough to suggest that it may have been even, but insufficient to confirm whether it was originally horizontal. The blast probably threw the eastern of a pair of support stones forwards, causing that

end of the recumbent to slump. Like the recumbent, the west flanker (1), now only 1.5m high, has also lost part of its top, but otherwise the two flankers are of similar size and shape. Both are aligned with the front of the recumbent, but while the west flanker is turned to trace the arc of the circle, the east flanker is not. The latter, and the sole orthostat remaining upright (8), are about 1.7m high, suggesting the circle was graded to reduce in height from the south round to the shorter fallen stones on the north (5 & 6). The circle encloses a low mound of earth and stones measuring 8.5m from north-east to south-west by 7m transversely and 0.25m in height, though much of this is now obscured by field clearance, especially behind the recumbent setting, where only the upper sections of the pair of slabs set up at its rear are exposed. Both these stones have cupmarks on their upper surfaces, the single cup on the east slab being more visible than the two on the west.

Its position on the headland implicitly recognises that the circle was familiar to the farmers who tilled the adjacent rigs, but it is not until the closing decade of the 18th century that the circle enters the antiquarian record, on the first occasion by Rev George Donaldson, the minister of Kennethmont, who refers to it as '*a Druidical temple on Ardlair*' (*Stat Acct*, xiii, 1794, 77), and on the second in 1797 when it is annotated '*large Stones*' within a '*Plantation called the Standing Stone Hill*' on George Brown's plan of Earlsfield (RCAHMS E33891CN). An excavation at the circle which is said

Jonathan Forbes-Leslie's plate of Ardlair from 1866. SC1097860

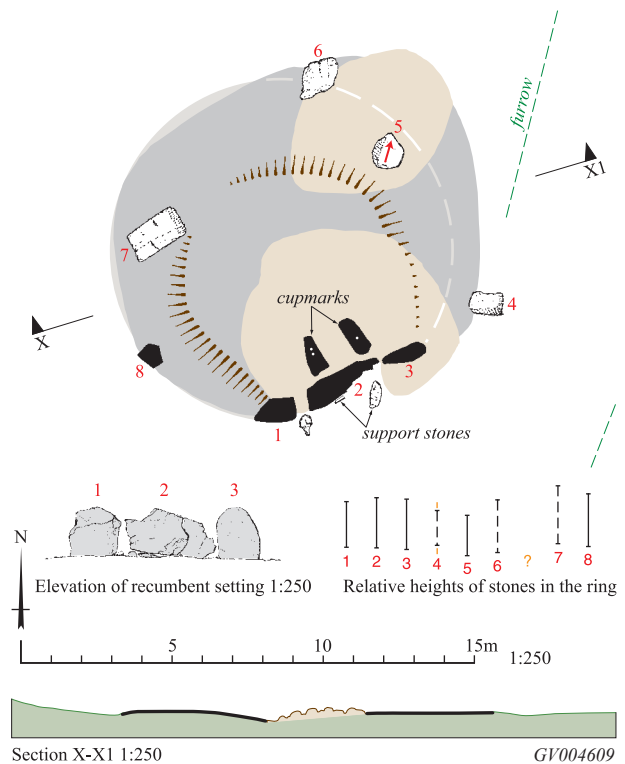




An isometric sketch by Dalrymple published by Anderson in 1886. SC1115817

to take place some twenty years later was recounted to Coles by Alexander Henderson, a former tenant of Holywell farm located at the foot of the hill to the south-south-west. This was undertaken in 1821 by Sir Alexander Leith-Hay, who recovered an urn within or close to the ring, though there is no other record of this discovery. Around 1855, Charles Dalrymple carried out further excavations, both at the recumbent stone circle and a low mound 11m to its north-west. A précis of his findings was published soon afterwards by John Stuart (Stuart 1856, xxii). The adjacent mound 'thirty [9.1m] feet in length, ten feet [3m] in breadth, and little more than a foot [0.3m] in height' was probably part of the old headland, but a pit uncovered at its centre was filled with dark loam and stones, some of which were burnt. A large stone about 1.5m long was laid across the north end of the pit 'forming the end of the hole at the surface, while below this stone it was built in with smaller stones' (*ibid*). What this feature is and how it relates to the ring, if at all, can only be resolved by further excavation, but an interpretation as the socket and packing stones of an outlying standing stone is possible.

Almost thirty years later, writing in 1884, James Gurnell counted nine stones here, but Dalrymple believed that the circle had comprised ten, and two of these had already been removed by his day to reduce it to the same eight stones that survive today. Possibly Gurnell had noted the stone that had been uncovered on the headland to the north, though this otherwise passes unnoticed by later visitors. It certainly does not appear on a sketch made at the time of Dalrymple's excavations and reproduced shortly after Gurnell's visit. Published by Joseph Anderson, this shows all but one stone upright, the exception being the heavily leaning orthostat 5 on the north-east, which is shown fallen (Anderson 1886, 110, fig 125). More importantly, the illustration reveals the 'low circular vallum' that Dalrymple describes



lying eccentrically to the ring, immediately north of the paired stones behind the recumbent. Dalrymple believed this 'inner circle' had been scraped up from within the interior, thus explaining his observation that the interior was slightly lower than the surrounding ground surface. With the benefit of hindsight, this ring-bank was probably the upcast from the earlier excavations, which in turn may explain why Dalrymple found so little within the interior. Nevertheless, at 'a spot on the side of the inner circle', according to Anderson near the southern side (1886, 110), there was a circular pit beneath 'two flat stones, each three feet in length and one foot in breadth, laid together lengthways, with their edges touching, like the ridge of a house'. The pit measured 'four feet [1.2m] in diameter, and upwards of two feet [0.6m] in depth, about a foot [0.3m] into the subsoil' (Stuart 1856, xxii); its fill of yellow loam contained some stones, charcoal and cremated bones. Some later researchers have interpreted this as a damaged cist (eg Barnatt 1989, 268), but it is safer to accept Dalrymple's description on its own merits.

Today, a thin veneer of cairn material survives within the circle, but it is difficult to rationalise this with the various descriptions of the interior provided successively by Dalrymple, Jonathan Forbes-Leslie, Christian Maclagan and Coles. A fine sketch by Forbes-Leslie, made not long after the excavation (1866, 1, pl xiv), suggests the presence of a shallow hollow behind the slabs at the rear of the recumbent setting, but the raised lip enclosing it does not conform to the line sketched by Dalrymple, instead extending from the recumbent setting round to the orthostats on the west (7 & 8), the



Some landowners considered a recumbent stone circle an ornament to their estate, and Brown's map of 1797 shows this ring enclosed within a plantation. © NTS

northern of which (7) had apparently fallen. This view corresponds more closely with Maclagan's schematic plan prepared in the early 1870s, which shows the orthostats standing at regular intervals along the outer edge of a bank some 3.6m broad, encircling a shallow hollow about 3.6m in diameter. In essence, this is how Coles depicts the interior. He recognised 'a wide, irregular, and nearly central depression ... showing the remnants of a slight ridge', and shows a hollow about 4.9m in diameter set slightly off centre immediately behind the two slabs at the rear of the recumbent, a position that accords well with Dalrymple's plan.

Forbes-Leslie's sketch also provides the first perspective of the recumbent, drawn from the north-west to show the rear of the recumbent setting at a time when the circle still stood in a clearing within dense woodland. It is difficult to be certain whether the recumbent is shown in the same condition as it survives today, though Coles believed that there had been attempts to break up the stone since 1866 and contended that Forbes-Leslie's sketch revealed that 'both its ends and top were very much more level and shapely' (Coles 1902, 558). Indeed, this comparison lies at the heart of a bitter dispute with Sir Norman Lockyer, who took the entirely opposite view (1909, 401–5).

Coles recognised the fire damage to the recumbent, which was earlier reported by Maclagan. She had noted that shepherds were using the recumbent as 'the back of a rude open-air fire-place, and boiling pots of tar upon it' and that 'the great stone is already splitting with the heat' (1875, 74). Shortly before her visit, the surrounding woodland had been cleared and the ground had presumably reverted back to pasture. The ragged and fractured surface at the back of the recumbent in Forbes-Leslie's sketch, however, argues that the stone was already damaged by 1866. Fire alone cannot be responsible for the slumping of the recumbent, and the present position of one of its support stones, lying displaced on the surface in front of its east end, must surely imply the use of explosives. Whether this is the damage recorded by Forbes-Leslie is less easy to determine, if only because the perspective of the sketch is not replicated in any later photographs. Having been in woodland since the late 18th century, there was no reason to clear the stone to make way for agricultural improvements any earlier in the century, and if it took place after the felling of the wood, Alexander Henderson was not prepared to admit to it in the face of Coles' enquiries. Through the first decades of the 20th century fires continued to cause damage to the recumbent, as Alexander Keiller observed in 1926 (1927, 10), and gorse began to invade the ring, shown in the succession of images by James Ritchie dating from 1901, 1905,

1906 and 1909, together with another taken in 1920 for the Right Reverend George Browne. These also demonstrate that the field-clearance now dumped around the recumbent is the product of more recent improvements to the surrounding pasture.

Browne was interested in the astronomical alignment of the circle, though he expressed some scepticism in the ideas that had been advanced by Sir Norman Lockyer. The latter had taken measurements at Ardlair in 1907 and had registered the recumbent's position in the south-east quadrant, but his proposals that the recumbent had been moved from a position '*facing the May sunrise, subjecting it to the action of fire, and placing it between two stones in the circle, so that its length would lie in the direction of that sunrise*' and that this had been carried out as '*acts of the solstitial priests*' (1909, 403) were presumably the reasons that Coles found his ideas so preposterous. Lockyer believed that the circle was associated with an avenue (1909, 401), and while this may simply refer to the two stones at the foot of the hill to the east-south-east (NJ52NE 3), it may also include the stone found by Dalrymple on the north-west, or even the standing stone that served

as '*the headstone of a grave 10 or 12 yards to the S.W. of the Circle*' remembered for Coles by Henderson – if this latter was not a misplaced memory of Dalrymple's discovery (Coles 1902, 559). Nevertheless, Lockyer's claim is almost certainly responsible for the subsequent attempts to identify outlying stones around the circle. Graham Callander, for example, comments on an '*outlying pillar stone*' (1935, 70), while in 1958 Alexander Thom not only noted the position of the two stones at the foot of the hill, but also four additional stones lying closer to the circle at distances ranging from 15m to 45m. Keith Blood of the OS noted the last of these, which was 1.8m long, and thought that this was probably Callander's '*pillar stone*'. The astronomical theme has continued to dominate the more recent research at the circle by Aubrey Burl and Clive Ruggles, who have also noted the topographical setting of the circle, in which the recumbent faces towards Knock Saul, a conspicuous peak 5.5km to the south-east.

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1902, 581; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 77; 1976a, 349, Abn 2; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 37; Barnatt 1989, 268, no. 6:2; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 37; Burl 2000, 419, Abn 2

Date	Personnel	Record
c1794	George Donaldson	Note (<i>Stat Acct</i> , xiii, 1794, 77)
1797	George Brown	Depiction (RCAHMS E33891CN)
1821	Alexander Leith-Hay	Excavation and discovery of an urn (Coles 1902, 557–9)
c1855	Charles Dalrymple	Excavation (Stuart 1856, xxii; Anderson 1886, 109–10)
1866	Jonathan Forbes-Leslie	Sketch (Forbes-Leslie 1866, 1, pl xiv)
1866	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Aberdeenshire 1870, xliii.7); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 46, p 56)
c1875	Christian Maclagan	Sketch plan and profiles (Maclagan 1875, 12, 74, pl xxviii; RCAHMS SAS467; DC53020)
1884	James Gurnell	Tabulated notes (Gurnell 1884)
August 1901	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2495)
September 1901	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketches (Coles 1902, 557–9, figs 72–3)
August 1905	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2467)
May 1906	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2468–9 & AB2511)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 401–5)
1909	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2654)
1920	George Browne	Fieldwork and photograph (Browne 1921, 81–3)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1926	Alexander Keiller	Description and plan (Keiller 1927, 10; RCAHMS ABD546; MS106/27, 2–3)
1935	John Callander	Note (Callander 1935, 70)
1958 & April 1962	Alexander Thom	Plan and notes (Thom 1967, 136, 144; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 182–3; RCAHMS DC4398; DC4761co, MS430/28 & 34; Ferguson 1988, 62)
1967	Keith Blood	OS: map revision description and plan
1960s–1990s	Aubrey Burl	Guidebook description (Burl 1995 & 2005a, 93, no. 91)
2 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Astronomical survey and tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 59, 66, 68–72, 74–5; 1999, 213–16; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 38–9, 46–7, 49, 50)
18 June 1998	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44473)
7 June 2006	Nigel Ruckley, Simon Howard & Diane Mirchell	NMS: geological survey

4 Ardtannes Cottages, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire

NJ72SE 34 NJ 7578 2041

Shortly before 1866 the remains of a recumbent stone circle were removed from the leading edge of a broad terrace on the hill to the north-west of Ardtannes Cottages. Its inclusion in the Gazetteer rests on the description of the recumbent itself, which was reported in that year to the OS surveyors (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 42, p 31) and subsequently published in more detail by Rev John Davidson, who wrote a history of Inverurie and the Garioch (1878, 3–4). The stone lay in the easternmost of three ‘Stone Circles’ shown on the 1st edition OS 25-inch map as pecked outlines, having been trenched and brought under cultivation by the tenant of Ardtannes, William Bisset. Bisset and Davidson are both cited as the authorities for the account in the Name Book. The common feature of each circle was an enclosing bank rather than a ring of standing stones, and in the case of the largest, which lay immediately west of the circle containing the recumbent, this was apparently about 0.9m in height (Davidson 1878, 3). Although nothing of the circles remained visible, the surveyors wrote: ‘*A very large stone, supported on two smaller ones, lay in Circle No. 3. Its longitudinal direction was east and west. Equidistant from the two supports, on account of the curvature of the stone underneath, it was just clear of the ground*’ (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 42, p 31). Captain Edward Courtenay added his own gloss, and a note reading ‘*Probably the “Altar Stone”.*’ is appended in the margin. Davidson provides a more detailed if confusing description, which includes observations made when Bisset trenched the circle:

‘... a careful artistic structure appeared in the small circle ... It was in the form of a saucer, nine feet [2.7m] wide and about one [0.3m] in depth, the circumference being of triangular stones dovetailed together so firmly, that the ordinary tramp pick was not sufficient to unsettle the fixture. They were bedded in finely wrought tough clay; and the bottom of the saucer was of small pebbles closely packed together in the same material, making a watertight basin.

Near by these stood upon four props a great stone, ten feet [3m] in length by five [1.5m] in breadth and four [1.2m] deep, shaped like a fishing cobble, having a broad end and a narrower point. The pillars kept it quite clear of the ground ... The erection stood on a prepared



The Ordnance Survey recorded the sites of three ‘stone circles’ in 1866, but only the eastern one had a recumbent. The other two were probably hut-circles. © NLS

base—a flat space neatly causewayed with pebbles, oval in form, and about the same length as the table, but wider (Davidson 1878, 4).

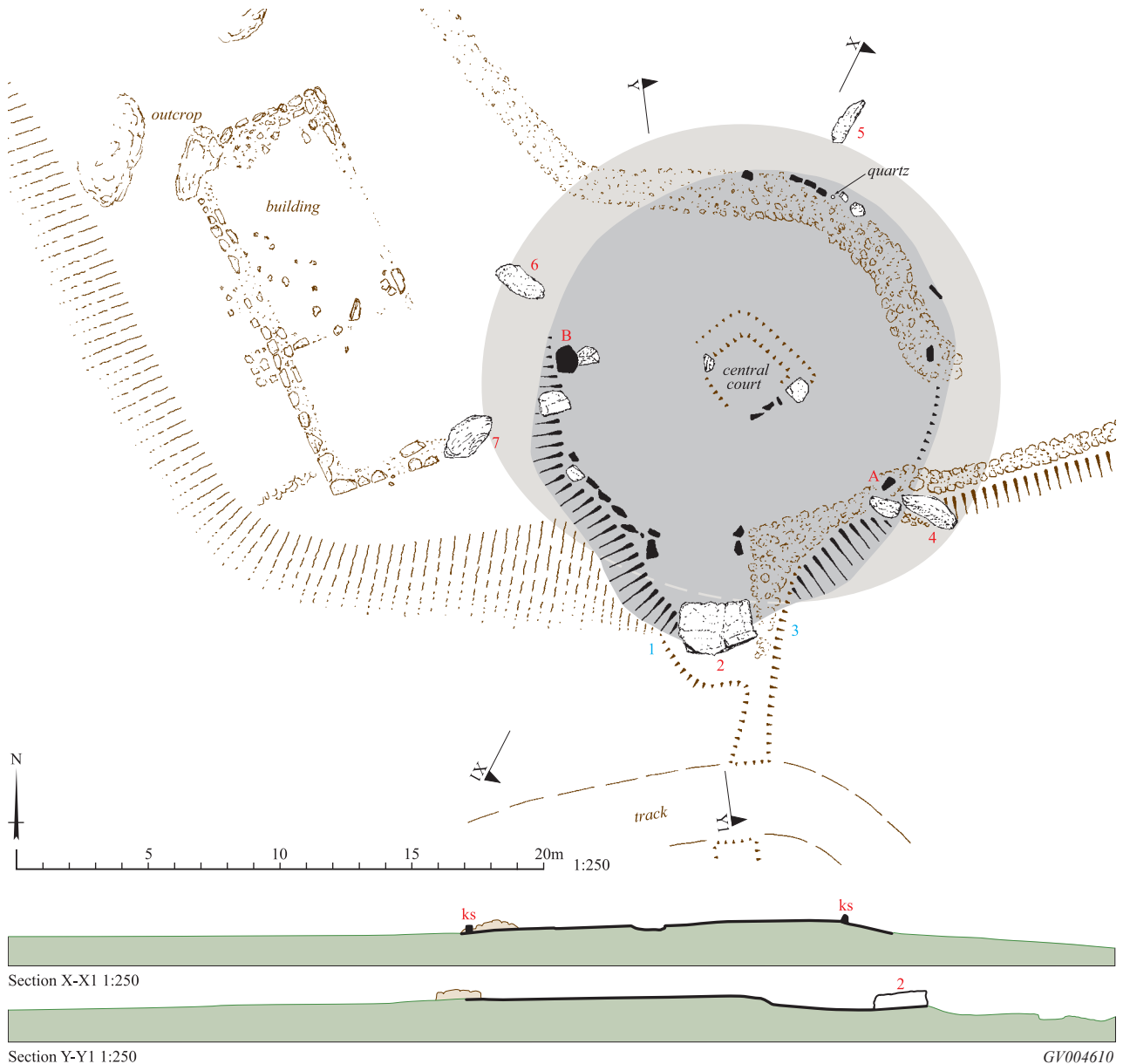
At this remove it is difficult to interpret some aspects of these accounts, though there can be little doubt about the character of the ‘Altar Stone’; its size and shape, its exposed support stones, and its alignment, are all typical features of recumbents in other circles. The bed of pebbles beneath it is likely to have been part of the platform surrounding an internal cairn, while the ‘saucer’ may have been a central court, its closely fitting kerbstones again a feature of courts seen elsewhere. In summary, there are sufficient elements recorded here to confidently identify Ardtannes as the remains of a recumbent stone circle, and probably one enclosing a ring-cairn. The apparent absence of any local memory of the flankers and the other orthostats simply indicates that it had been partly cleared many years before, perhaps in the late 18th century or the first decades of the 19th century when so many other monuments fell victim to tenant farmers improving their ground. Then the ring had been part of a wider landscape of hut-circles and clearance heaps. In addition to the other two ring-banks on the same terrace, a fourth had been removed about 240m to the east on Corsman Hill, where numerous small cairns extended back beneath the plantation that covers its summit. Davidson also refers to discoveries of flints and deposits of burnt stones in the fields below (1878, 3–4). By the time Coles passed through the district, little trace of any of these monuments remained, and though he knew of Davidson’s account he failed to make the link between the ‘great stone ... shaped like a fishing cobble’ and a recumbent. He concluded that the three circles marked on the map were more probably the remains of cairns rather than ‘true stone circles’ (1901, 224–5), so he omitted them from his survey.

Date	Personnel	Record
1866	OS surveyors	Site of Stone Circles (Aberdeenshire 1869, liv.8); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 42, p 31)
9 March 1964	Keith Blood	OS: description and map revision
7 March 1996	John Sherriff & Iain Fraser	RCAHMS: description
7 December 1999	Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description

5 Auchlee, Banchory-Devenick, Aberdeenshire
 NO89NE 4 NO 8904 9688

This grass-grown recumbent stone circle has been severely mauled by farmers and stone-robbers, but still retains many of its original features. Situated on a knoll on the south-south-east flank of the Hill of Auchlee, it measures about 20m in diameter, but the original complement of perhaps thirteen stones has been reduced to only five, comprising the recumbent and four felled orthostats. A ring-cairn within the circle is heavily robbed, probably to provide stones for a ruined building immediately to the west, while on the north, east and south tumbled field dykes can be seen riding up onto the line of its kerb. The recumbent (2), a slab on the south measuring 2.9m in length by 1.9m in breadth and 0.7m in thickness, has fallen forwards onto

its face and the relatively uneven summit now forms its south side. Both flankers are missing, and of the four surviving orthostats, one on the east-south-east (4) has fallen inwards and the others (5-7) outwards. The bulky character of 7 on the west-south-west, which has probably been incorporated into the building on the west as a cornerstone, seems out of character with the others, but there is no good reason to discount it from the ring. The lengths of the orthostats suggest that the circle was graded to reduce in height from south to north. The ring-cairn within the interior forms a mound up to 0.4m high and measures about 14.2m in diameter over a kerb of slabs and boulders. Eighteen remain in place and those on the south preserve the link with the recumbent setting. This is one of only two examples where the survey evidence can imply that the outward turn of the kerb is probably secondary (see also **Balnacraig**), and





Only the fallen recumbent stone was visible before the dense gorse was cleared in 2004. SC1115599

its original line can be seen apparently projecting behind the large kerbstone that forms the turn on the south-south-west. Although the kerbstones are not consistently graded in size, this last stone is the largest, and much bigger than those on the north-north-east, but unusually there are also two stones elsewhere along the kerb that are much taller than any of their neighbours. Situated on the south-east and west respectively, the first (A) is a relatively slender slab standing 0.85m high, while the second is a dome-shaped boulder 1m high (B); the latter is broken into at least two pieces, both of which exhibit a series of shot-holes. At the centre of the cairn, but not placed symmetrically to either the outward turn of the kerb or the present position of the recumbent, there are traces of a central court about 3m in diameter, marked out by a shallow robber trench and five kerbstones, the largest of which is also on the south.

Taken at face value, this is one of the two ‘*Druidical temples, very perfect*’ on the ‘*property of Auchlee, belonging to Mr Boswell of Kingcaussie*’ described by Rev George Morison, author of the parish entry in the *New Statistical Account* (xi, Kincardineshire, 182).

Alexander Watt certainly read the entry in this way and assumed the ring had been destroyed (1914, 30), but it is unlikely that this is what Morison intended. Indeed, circumstantial evidence demonstrates that, as the first OS surveyors believed, the two *Druidical temples* concerned were **Aquhorthies** and Old Bourtree Bush (App 1.69). Consequently the Auchlee circle escaped their attention and makes no appearance on either the 1st or 2nd edition of the OS 6-inch map. Nevertheless, lying in the rough pasture alongside the building on the west, it must have been known in the locality, if only as a quarry for stones. The building is not shown on the 1st edition of the map either (Kincardineshire 1868, vii) and is probably an early 19th century cottage that had already fallen into ruin. The cottage may have been associated with the unenclosed area of improved land that then lay to the east, between it and Auchlee steading. This was subsequently rationalised into the enclosed field that appears on the 2nd edition map (Kincardineshire 1904, xi.NW), bounded by the ruinous field dyke that can be seen riding onto the south-east flank of the internal ring-cairn. The circle itself was to remain forgotten until Patricia Howlett discovered it in 1975.

Barnatt 1989, 483, no. 6:a; Burl 2000, 429, Knc 1

Date	Personnel	Record
1975	Patricia Howlett Ian Ralston	Discovery and description (Ralston 1977, 19; Information from Richard Norris 2003)
30 November 1983	Stratford Halliday	RCAHMS: description and sketch plan (RCAHMS 1984, 8, no. 10)
8–9 March 2004	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44548)
27 July 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey
30 March 2009	Historic Scotland	Scheduled

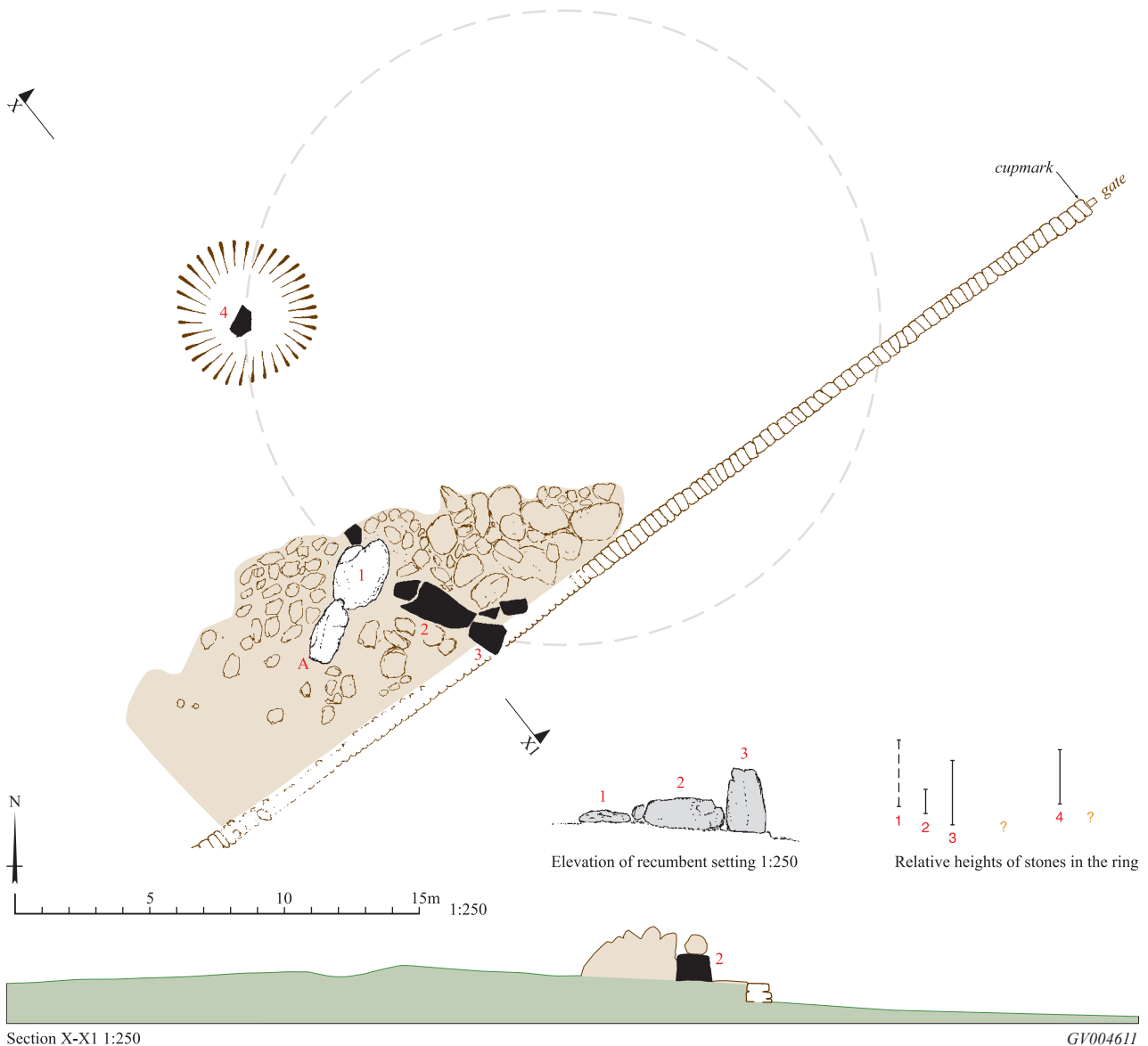
6 Auchmachar, Old Deer, Aberdeenshire

NJ95SW 11 NJ 9484 5024

The remains of this recumbent stone circle are situated on the south-east slopes of Knapperty Hill, which is better known for the Knapperty Hillock long cairn lying some 220m to the west-north-west. Indeed, the site of the circle falls roughly on the projected axis of the long cairn. Formerly comprising a ring of nine stones some 15m across (Peter 1885, 373–4; Coles 1904, 273–4), it has been severely damaged; the recumbent setting is now subsumed into a pile of boulders heaped up at the edge of a field and only one other orthostat remains in place (4). The recumbent block (2), which probably had a relatively even top, lies shattered into at least three pieces on the south-west of the ring, and the west flanker (1) is fallen, lying beneath one end of what is probably a displaced orthostat (A). The east flanker (3),

however, is still in place, standing about 2.4m high in the line of the field dyke immediately to the south-east. It is also the more slender of the two, set flush with the front of the recumbent and projecting the long axis of the setting. At the rear of the setting, three earthfast boulders can be seen, one adjacent to the fallen west flanker and two immediately behind the east flanker; measuring up to 1m in height, those on the east clearly forge a link with the east corner of the recumbent, indicating that they are probably kerbstones belonging to a ring-bank or an internal cairn (below). Many of the boulders built into the adjacent dyke were probably cleared from this, and one of them, set in the ground on the south-west side of a gateway to the north-east, bears a single cupmark measuring 50mm in diameter and up to 20mm in depth.

Auchmachar was presumably one of ‘*upwards of a dozen druidical circles*’ in the parish of Old Deer





Ritchie's photograph of 1907 shows the surviving remains incorporated in the adjacent dyke and heaped in a pile. SC676641

mentioned at the end of the 18th century by George Cruden, the local schoolmaster (*Stat Acct*, xvi, 1795, 481), but by 1840 only four or five still remained, the others having been robbed for their stones or swept away when the ground was cleared for cultivation (*NSA*, xii, Aberdeenshire, 149–50). In the vicinity of Auchmachar alone the casualties of these operations included: a cairn on the 'Hill of Auchmachar' in which an urn containing some jet beads was discovered in the late 18th century (*Stat Acct*, xvi, 1795, 482); several small cairns containing burnt bones and urns removed about 1800 from the north slope of Knapperty Hill (NJ95SW 16); a cairn in which a cist and a cremation was discovered in 1839 between the Knapperty Hillock long cairn and the recumbent stone circle (NJ95SW 10); in addition to the upper portion of an urn in the Arbutnot Museum, Peterhead, which was found in 1840 'beside the stone circle' (Coles 1904, 273–5).

According to Rev James Peter, who described the remains of the ring in about 1884, Auchmachar had remained intact until the mid 1840s some forty years before (1885, 373–4). John Milne, however, who had lived for many years at Mains of Atherb and was one of Coles' most trusted local sources, placed the destruction at about 1850 and related that at least one of the taller stones, which was said to be over 3m high, was taken to repair a mill (Coles 1904, 273–5). Peter was told

the same story, adding that it was a threshing mill and that this particular stone was used as its keystone. He was also led to believe that the one surviving orthostat (4) had been spared as a cattle-rubbing stone. It stood until shortly before his visit at the angle of a field boundary previously mapped in 1870 by the OS surveyors (Aberdeenshire 1874, xiii). The recumbent was already shattered by the time of their visit, appearing blasted, but locally attributed to a fire set on its top one Halloween (Peter 1885, 373; Spence 1890, 45–6; 1896, 2). In this slightly fuller version of the mishaps that had befallen the circle, one of the stones had been taken for a bridge 'long since' (1885, 373–4), implying that there had already been some piecemeal demolition, but Peter's informant, who was probably the tenant, Alexander Still, had helped in the major clearance of the ring and pointed out where one of the other orthostats had stood; from this and the surviving stones Peter inferred that the ring was originally oval and concluded that Auchmachar had resembled **Loudon Wood**, where the circle is set out along a ring-bank; in a similar vein James Spence likened it to **Aikey Brae**, though his illustration of the recumbent setting is simply a reconstruction. No trace of a ring-bank can be seen today, but both Coles' plan and James Ritchie's photograph taken in 1907 show the site before it had become encumbered with the field clearance that now obscures the recumbent setting. Both apparently show the setting on a slightly raised tump, which on Coles' plan describes a shallow arc. Taken with the possible



The remains are now all but buried beneath field clearance. © NMS

kerbstones that have been identified (above), this tump is the remains of either a ring-bank or the rim of a robbed out internal cairn. The kerbstones can also be seen in Ritchie's photograph, which shows that the two behind the east flanker had been incorporated into the north-west face of the drystone dyke.

Fieldwork since has added little new information. Angus Graham photographed the stones amongst the

stooks of a harvested crop of oats and in 1956 they were surveyed by Alexander Thom. It is only since 1968, when Keith Blood of the OS took a photograph from almost exactly the same position as Ritchie, that the recumbent setting has been used as a dump for field-cleared stones.

Coles 1904, 304; 1910, 165; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 350, Abn 4; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 10; Barnatt 1989, 269, no. 6:5; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 10; Burl 2000, 419, Abn 4

Date	Personnel	Record
c1850	Tenant farmer	Major clearance (Peter 1885, 373–4; Coles 1904, 273–5)
c1884	James Peter	Description (Peter 1885, 373–4)
1870	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1874, xiii.15); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 68, p 21)
1888	James Spence	Description and profile (Spence 1890, 45–6, figs 19–20; 1896, 2)
September 1903	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketch (Coles 1904, 273–5, figs 11–12)
1907	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2428)
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1927, 13; 1934, 10)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1940s–50s	Angus Graham	Photograph (RCAHMS H94192)
April 1956	Alexander Thom	Theodolite survey and sketch plan (RCAHMS MS430/26)
17 April 1968	Keith Blood	OS: map revision and photograph
6 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 59, 66; 1999, 213, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 28)
31 March 2004	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44554)
6 April 2006	Nigel Ruckley, Simon Howard & David Herd	NMS: geological survey

7 Auchmaliddie, New Deer, Aberdeenshire

NJ84SE 1 NJ 8815 4484

The site of this recumbent stone circle falls on the summit of a hill, where two stones of white quartzite now lie prone beside a trackway running along the south-east boundary of a field; these almost certainly represent the recumbent and its west flanker. The recumbent (2), which is a roughly trapezoidal slab on plan, lies on its back and measures 3.15m in length by a maximum of 1.8m in breadth. Its summit, now the north side, is relatively uneven, and small facets around its edges suggest that the stone may have been shaped. Aligned roughly east and west, the recumbent setting evidently stood on the southern arc of the circle, but whereas the recumbent has fallen backwards, the surviving flanker (1) has fallen forwards and now lies displaced to the south-south-west; faceting around its

These magnificent white quartzite stones greatly impressed Coles and Keiller. There are no local sources known and the flat upper surface of the recumbent probably results from glacial transportation. SC1100308

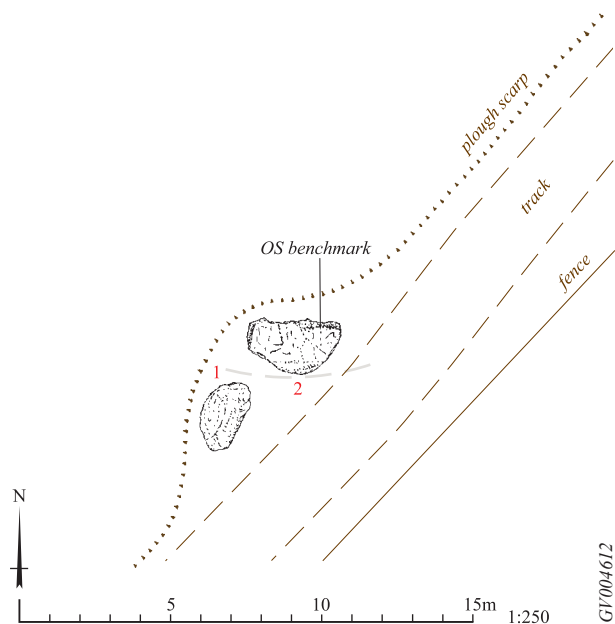
edges suggests that it too has been shaped. There is now little evidence of the ‘*slightest swelling*’ identified by Coles in the surface of the field to the north of the stones (1904, 264), but on the day of the survey small fragments of white quartz could be seen here in the ploughsoil.

This circle is probably the ‘*Druidical Temple*’ to the south of New Deer referred to at the end of the 18th century by Rev Hugh Taylor; though ‘*not yet all removed*’ (*Stat Acct*, ix, 1793, 191), the ground was already under cultivation and as likely as not the circle had already been reduced to the two stones present today. Certainly there can have been little sign of the rest of the circle when Rev John Pratt, presumably guided by Daniel Wilson’s more general discussion (1851, 117–18), declared the recumbent a fallen rocking stone (Pratt 1858, 220); some twenty years later it is annotated as such on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map. This shows both stones in their present positions and the recumbent, which has a benchmark carved close to the north-east corner of its upturned face, is



described in the accompanying Name Book entry as ‘*now sunk deep in the ground*’ (Aberdeenshire, No. 65, p 78). The name attributed to the recumbent by Pratt, namely the ‘*Muckle Stane of Auchmaleddie*’, evidently drew Coles to examine the stone for himself in 1903; like so many of the other circles in the neighbourhood, he was guided there by John Milne, who had lived many years at Mains of Atherb. Coles had no hesitation in identifying the two stones as the remains of a recumbent stone circle and he speculated that the numerous blocks of white quartz incorporated into the adjacent dyke might have derived from the east flanker or from other orthostats. He was struck by the white colour of the stones, describing it as ‘*brilliant*’ and ‘*conspicuous*’, but it was Alexander Keiller who elaborated their aesthetic quality, stressing that the ring ‘*must have presented a spectacle unparalleled for impressiveness*’ (1934, 20).

Coles 1904, 304; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 350, Abn 5; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 15; Barnatt 1989, 269, no. 6:6; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 15; Burl 2000, 419, Abn 5



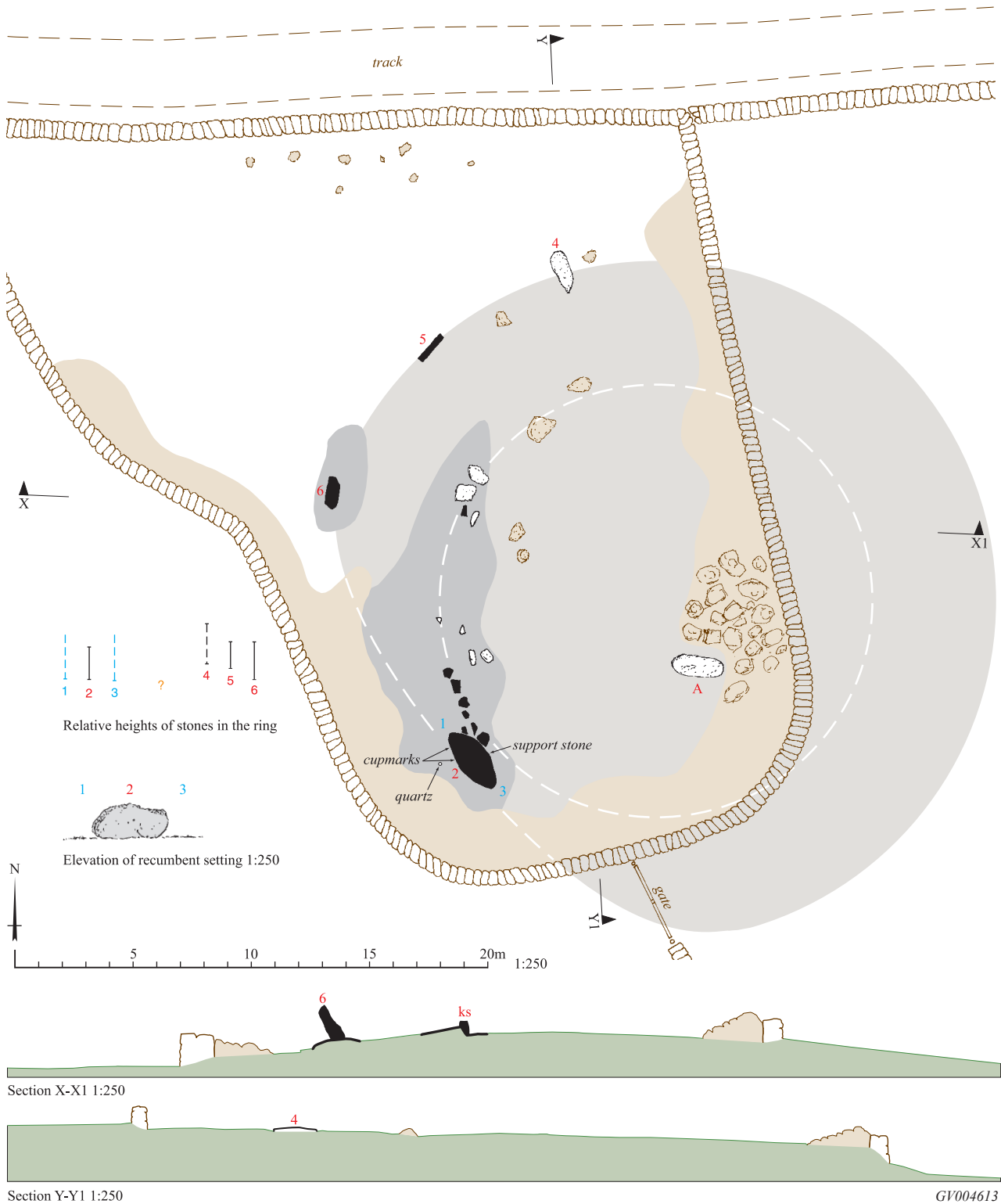
Date	Personnel	Record
c1793	Hugh Taylor	Note (<i>Stat Acct</i> , ix, 1793, 191)
c1858	John Pratt	Note (Pratt 1858, 220)
1870	OS surveyors	Rocking Stones (Aberdeenshire 1874, xx.12); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 65, p 78)
September 1903	Frederick Coles	Description and plan (Coles 1904, 262–4 fig 3, 304)
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1934, 20)
22 February 1973	Iain Sainsbury	OS: description and map revision
6 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 59, 66; 1999, 213, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 28, 30)
8 January 2000	Historic Scotland	Scheduled
21 August 2003	Kevin Macleod, John Sherriff & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44542)
6 April 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological analysis

8 Balnacraig, Lumphanan, Aberdeenshire

NJ60SW 5 NJ 6033 0353

Largely situated within a small plantation of Scots Pine, this heavily-robbed recumbent stone circle lies to the rear of a natural terrace near the south foot of Balnacraig Hill. Possibly measuring as much as 29m in overall

diameter, the circle formerly extended into the field on the south and east, and of an original complement of perhaps thirteen or fourteen stones, only the recumbent (2) and three orthostats (4–6), now remain, one of which is fallen (4). The recumbent (2), which stands on the south-west, is a rough boulder with an uneven summit and measures 3.05m in length by 1.4m in height; a



possible support stone lies displaced to its rear. There are two cupmarks near the centre of the recumbent's face and another two smaller, shallower examples a little further to the west. Both flankers are missing, but together with the recumbent they evidently formed a flattened facade on this side of the circle. The two remaining orthostats (5 & 6) measure about 1.15m and 1.5m in height respectively; in addition to the fallen stone on the north-north-west (4), a possible displaced orthostat (A) lies partly buried beneath the field-clearance on the east-south-east of the plantation. The internal cairn is reduced to little more than a spread of cairn material on the west side of the interior and a short run of at least eight kerbstones behind the recumbent. The projected line of the kerb passes close behind the recumbent, and the possible doubling of the kerb at this point may indicate two periods of construction, the second a subtle realignment to incorporate the setting into the kerb of the cairn.

Although not mentioned by name, Balnacraig is probably one of the 'druidical places of worship' in Lumphanan noted at the end of the 18th century by Rev William Shand in a footnote to his description of the parish for the *Statistical Account* (vi, 1793, 388). The circle was certainly known to his successor, Charles M'Combie, who was evidently interested in history and antiquities, and though it makes no appearance in his contribution to the *New Statistical Account* he is cited in 1867 by the OS surveyors in the entry for the circle in the Name Book (Aberdeenshire, No. 51, p 33). A list of names and monuments mentioned by Shand is also included at the end of this volume of the Name Book; an appended note records that amongst others they had consulted M'Combie, while against the Druidical places of worship the list logs 'only near Balnacraig' (*ibid*, p 66). By then the greater part of the circle had been broken up and what remained was incorporated into the small plantation, probably to protect it against further damage. According to the surveyors four of the stones were upright, and the 25-inch map apparently shows the recumbent, orthostats 5 and 6, and the stone marked A on



Ritchie's photograph shows the kerbstones of the cairn running immediately behind the recumbent stone, but a single boulder doubling the line may represent a second phase of construction linking it to the recumbent setting. SC681692

the present plan. The inclusion of A amongst the upright stones rather than the fallen stone on the north (4) is surprising, for it now lies well within the circumference of the circle. However, if the plantation was created to preserve the remains of the circle then there may also have been some limited restoration, at the very least involving the re-erection of this stone where it then lay, probably having been cleared from the east arc of the ring some time before. The circle was still under trees at the end of the century, which may explain why Coles failed to find it (1900, 171), but they had been brashed by the time James Ritchie visited in 1908 and he was able to take several photographs beneath the canopy, returning in 1917 to make a detailed record of the cupmarks on the recumbent. The grass was closely cropped at the time and in addition to the surviving orthostats he recognised the kerb of the internal cairn, but it was left to Alexander Keiller in 1926 to prepare the first detailed plan of the stones, and Keith Blood in 1968 to note the scatter of cairn material.

Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 350, Abn 9; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 76; Barnatt 1989, 271, no. 6:10; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 76; Burl 2000, 419, Abn 8

Date	Personnel	Record
c1793	William Shand	Note (<i>Stat Acct</i> , vi, 1793, 388)
1867	OS surveyors & Charles M'Combie	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1869, lxxiii.1); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 51, pp 33, 62)
August 1908	James Ritchie	Description and photographs (Ritchie 1918, 87; RCAHMS AB2493 & AB2931)
June 1917	James Ritchie	Photographs (Ritchie 1919, 67–9, fig 3; RCAHMS AB2456, AB2492 & AB4832)
1926	Alexander Keiller	Plan (RCAHMS ABD542/1; MS106/27, 25-6)
7 February 1968	Keith Blood	OS: description and map revision
5 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67, 72; 1999, 213, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 51, 56)
10 June 2003	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44537)
5 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

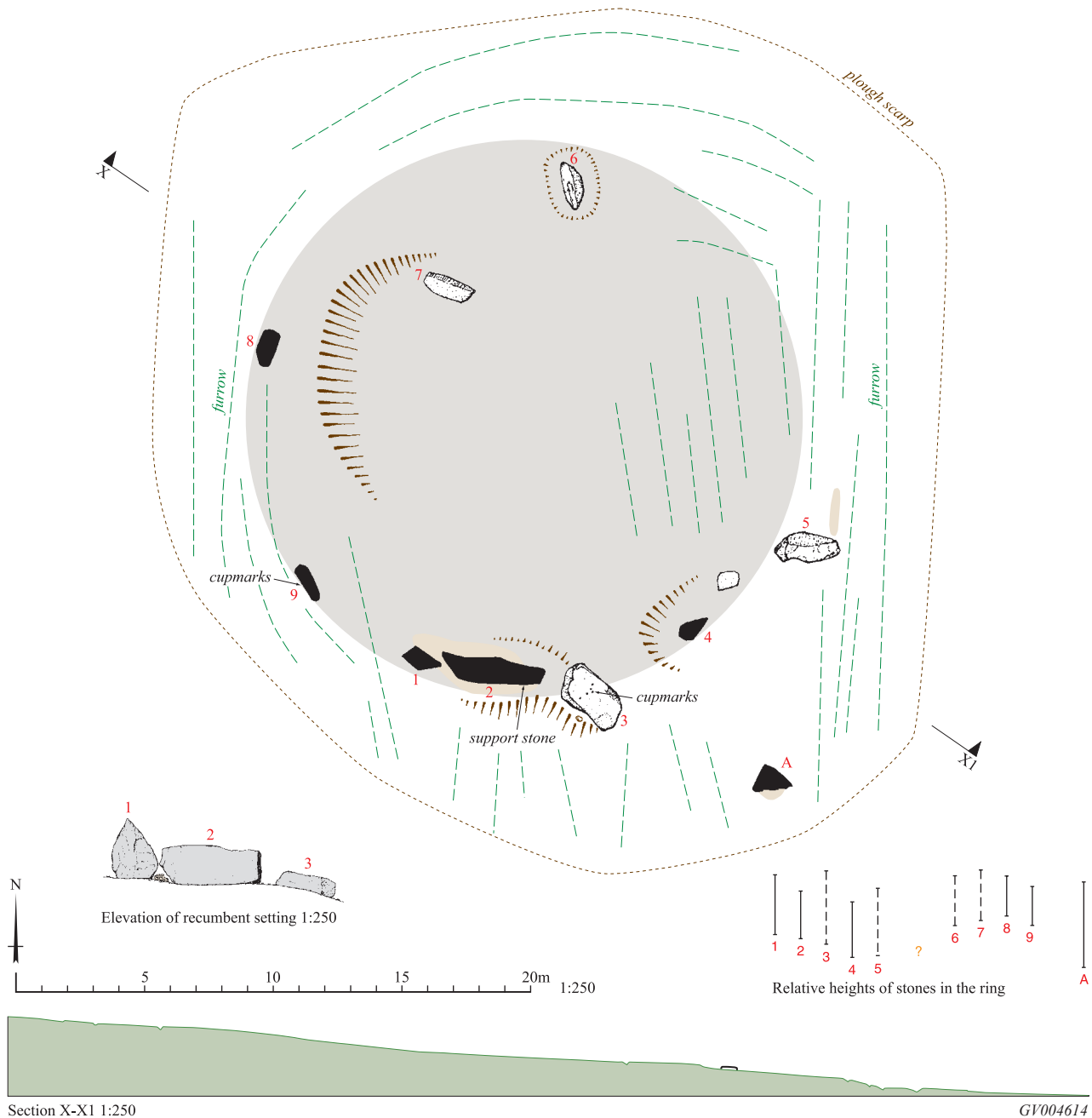
9 Balquhain, Chapel of Garioch, Aberdeenshire

NJ72SW 2 NJ 7350 2408

This recumbent stone circle stands on an island of uncultivated ground in the north-east corner of a field on the lower slopes of Gallows Hill. Measuring roughly 21m in diameter, it may have comprised as many as fourteen stones, though only nine are currently present, and two of these (6 & 7) have only been unearthed quite recently (first noted in Burl 2005c, 62). These last two aside, the rest are disposed around the south-west half of the perimeter, and five of them, including the recumbent and the west flanker, are still standing (1, 2, 4, 8 & 9). A tall, slender monolith of solid quartz standing outside the circumference on the south-east (A) is one of the

most striking features of the ring, leading Coles to exclaim that it ‘gleams out with a rare distinction and effect’ (1901, 232).

The recumbent (2) is an irregular block on the south-south-west of the ring and measures 4.05m in length and 1.75m in height. A shot-hole in its uneven summit is testimony to an attempt to break up the block, which mainly appears to rest upon a bed of small boulders, with a support stone just visible beneath the field-cleared stones at its east end. The west flanker (1) measures 2.3m in height, compared with 2.85m in length for its fallen pair on the east (3), so both would have stood a similar height above the recumbent, but whereas the western is leaf-shaped in profile, with a faceted outer face rising up into a point, the eastern is

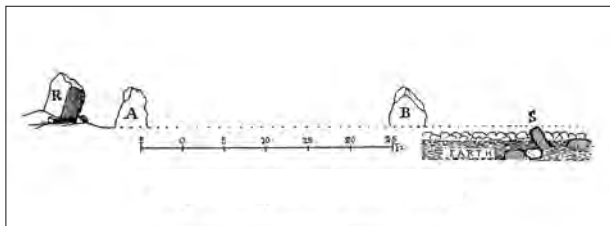




The view of Balquhain from the south-south-west. DP078437

an altogether more rectangular block. At least four cupmarks are visible on the upturned inner face of the east flanker, and no less than eighteen can be counted on the outer face of orthostat 9 on the south-west (below). At 1.5m in height, the latter and orthostat 8 on the west-north-west do not exhibit any evidence that this arc of the circle was consistently graded in height, while the disposition of the surviving stones around the southern half of the circumference suggests that the orthostats were evenly spaced elsewhere. Of the fallen stones, 5 has lain since the 1820s outside the ring on the east-south-east; 6 lies in the hollow from which it has been recently disinterred on the north-north-east; and 7, another recent addition, is lying in the north-west quadrant. The disinterring of orthostat 6 and the plough scratches into its upper surface suggest that other missing stones may have been deliberately buried, though the majority were probably broken up for use elsewhere (below). Within the interior the ground is gently dished, as can be seen from the surveyed section, but when Coles opened a trench extending towards the centre from a point close to the south end of orthostat 6 he uncovered a layer of stones that probably formed the base of an internal cairn (below).

The first mention of a stone circle at Balquhain comes at the end of the 18th century by Rev John Shand, author of the parish entry in the *Statistical Account* (xi, 1794, 504). Thereafter it seems to have become more widely known, and both James Skene and James Logan sketched the stones in the 1820s, the former producing an atmospheric pen and ink drawing from the east. The towering outlier forms the centrepiece of Skene's view, with the distinctive silhouette of the Mither Tap o' Bennachie as a backdrop on the left, and the seven stones that the circle was then reduced to on the right. This is probably the earlier of the two sketches, for whereas Skene shows orthostat 5 standing, Logan has it fallen, and describes how one stone had been '*lately overturned in consequence of some persons digging too near it*' (Logan 1829a, 201; pl xxiii). Though his plan is no more than a sketch, Logan estimated the circle's diameter correctly at '*about sixty [18m] or seventy feet [21m]*', and noted the support stone beneath the recumbent, which otherwise is only recorded by Coles (1901, 231, fig 38; 233, fig 40). Drawn from the north-west, however, he did not appreciate the spacing of the surviving orthostats, showing them in a symmetrical arrangement, with two evenly spaced to either side of the recumbent setting. This mistake passed uncorrected until Sir Henry Dryden's unpublished measured plan and elevation



Coles' cutting on the north disclosed traces of an internal cairn. SC1115351

of 1852, a remarkably accurate survey that stands in stark contrast to the extraordinary depiction achieved by Christian Maclagan. She not only contrived to site the outlier immediately in front of the recumbent, suggesting that it was the sole survivor of an outer ring, but placed one orthostat to the west of the setting and three to the east, the latter spaced out to the extent that the third was on the north side of the ring opposite the recumbent.

Logan could see no trace of any features within the ring and reported that the interior of the circle was already under plough. It is thus reasonable to suppose that the felling of most of the missing orthostats and the clearance of the cairn within the interior were carried out as part of general agricultural improvements in the vicinity. Indeed, if the stones on the north side of the ring (6 & 7) are displaced orthostats that have been ploughed up since Iain Sainsbury revised the antiquities on the OS map in 1973, then part of the clearance of the circle probably involved the burial of some of the larger stones in pits beneath the ploughsoil. The field-pattern surveyed by the OS in 1867 was certainly in existence by 1838, when Mains of Balquhain is shown on a contemporary estate map laid out in a series of irregular interlocking fields (AUL MS 3528/11). The circle then stood near the west corner of one of the fields, but if the adjacent boundaries incorporated any of the other orthostats, they have been recycled and redistributed since, for between 1870 and the turn of the century the entire landscape around Mains of Balquhain was reorganised. By 1900 a series of blocks of parallel-sided fields had replaced the earlier pattern, and where once the circle had stood in the west corner of one field, now it was in the north-east corner of another. That the circle should have survived this second reorganisation, apparently unscathed, suggests some interest on the part of the estate, but Coles' observation of what he took to be *'the great stones which once helped to complete this northern arc'* in the adjacent walls can be taken with a pinch of salt (1901, 236). Sainsbury noted several shot-holes in these stones and they are just as likely to derive from renewed clearance of other obstructions in the neighbouring fields in the course of this radical restructuring of the surrounding landscape. On the date of the present survey the lower stone of a saddle mill was noted in the wall to the north of the circle, a little over 20m from the corner of the field.

Even if the bigger stones in the dykes are not from the circle, it is likely that a considerable quantity of smaller material had been carted off from a cairn within the interior before the 1820s. Nothing could be seen of this cairn at the time of Coles' survey, as can be seen from James Ritchie's roughly contemporary photographs of the circle in pasture. Nevertheless, having prepared a description, plan and sketches, Coles probed beneath the turf for *'vestiges at least of some inner stone-setting'* (1901, 235). He found a buried stone 16.3m *'inwards from the face of the recumbent'* (*ibid*), probably only 1m south of where orthostat 6 now lies. He returned the following day with some friends to excavate a trench across this new discovery, not only uncovering a sloping slab 0.6m broad and 0.3m thick, but also a *'rough pavement of boulders'* (*ibid*, 236) below the old ploughsoil. His section suggests that they sunk their trench through the pavement into the subsoil, where they encountered a number of larger stones and slabs, and one of these to the north of the sloping slab is likely to have been part of orthostat 6. With the exception of a second stone a little further west, not far from where orthostat 7 now lies, they failed to locate any other earthfast slabs and Coles was forced to conclude that the *'disposition of these two stones, therefore, gave us no warrant for concluding that there had once existed an interior stone-setting, but it suggested that possibility'* (*ibid*). With the benefit of more recent work elsewhere, we can review this statement more optimistically. The trench probably revealed the base of an internal cairn, and the sloping slab that first drew his attention may well have been a kerbstone. With the excavation trench backfilled, however, and the interior back under cultivation by the time of the Right Rev Browne's visit in 1920 (1921, pl xxxiii), both of the earthfast stones described by Coles were lost to view. They do not appear on a plan Alexander Keiller drew up in 1927, there is no sign of them on Angus Graham's photographs of the stones among stooks of a harvested crop of oats, and nor do they appear on a later survey of 1957 by Alexander Thom. In 1973, however, Sainsbury noted two small stones protruding through the grass, probably close to where orthostat 6 subsequently turned up.

Coles was the first to report the carvings on the orthostats, identifying *'three cup-marks, one larger than the other two, and between them'* on the upper surface of the east flanker (3), which he believed was *'originally the side upright against the end of the Recumbent Stone'* (1901, 234). He also recorded six small cupmarks *'about midway from the ground'* on the outer face of the south-west orthostat 9, and drew attention to a few possible examples on the summit of the recumbent; subsequent researchers have rejected the latter. Ritchie was the first to make the link between the hollow on the recumbent's summit and a shot-hole, but he added to Coles' tally, counting at least four cupmarks on the

east flanker and twenty-five on the south-west orthostat, twenty-four of them apparently clearly visible on a photograph he took in 1911. This total has never been matched since, changing with the light at every visit; Angus Graham counted twenty-one, Sainsbury fifteen, and the present survey eighteen.

The cupmarks at Balquhain have also played a part in archaeo-astronomical research by Burl and Ruggles, who cite the ring to support their contention that such carvings are only ever found on the stones of the recumbent setting and on those immediately adjacent (Ruggles and Burl 1985, 55–7). They considered that: ‘*At Balquhain we appear to have cupmarks lying beneath the setting position of the Moon at both standstills*’ (1985, 56). Burl has extended this relationship with the moon still further, asserting that the east flanker was aligned on the southernmost rising of the moon, and the western end of the recumbent aligned on its setting, while the cupmarked orthostat on the

south-west marked the minor moon set (Burl 2005a, 95). Balquhain does not appear amongst the additional tabulated data Burl and Ruggles collected for the alignment of recumbents upon conspicuous hilltops, but the recumbent faces down towards Knockinglew, a hill rising above the farm of Middleton. Julian Cope has since argued that the recumbent ‘*was selected for its ability to mirror the contours of the near horizon*’ (1998, 383), though the points of reference he provides are Middleton and Dilly Hill, the latter lying away to the east and certainly a long way off the alignment of the recumbent setting. Burl, however, has recognised a similarity between a lump in the summit of the recumbent and the shape of Knockinglew (Burl 2005c, 59–62).

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1901, 248; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 350, Abn 10; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 62; Barnatt 1989, 271, no. 6:11; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 62; Burl 2000, 419, Abn 9

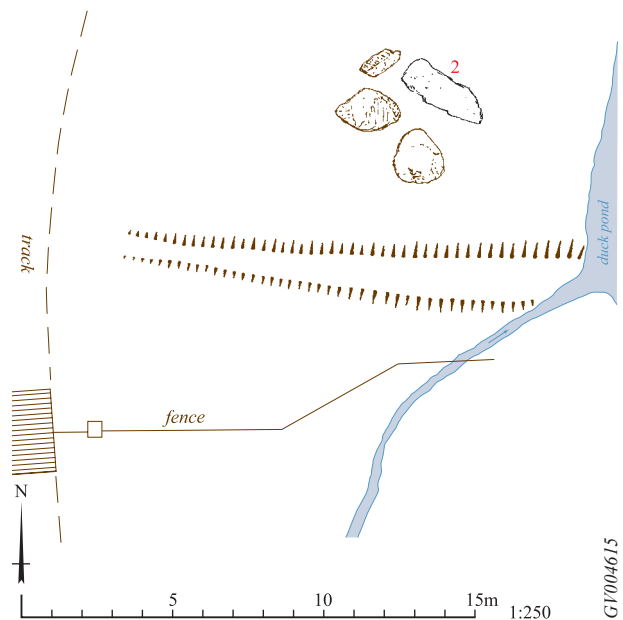
Date	Personnel	Record
c1794	John Shand	Note (<i>Stat Acct</i> , xi, 1794, 504)
c1820s	James Skene	Sketch plan and views (RCAHMS SAS465; ABD540/2/P)
c1820s	James Logan	Description, sketch plan and view (Logan 1829a, 201; pl xxiii)
1840	Henry Simson	Note (<i>NSA</i> , xii, Aberdeenshire, 564)
1852	Henry Dryden	Plan and elevation (GMAG7289.36 and 7289.44)
c1860s	Christian Maclagan	Sketch plan (Maclagan 1875, pl xxvii)
1867	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1870, xlv.14); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 10, p 70)
c1871	Jonathan Forbes-Leslie	Lost drawing (NLS APS.1.79.129)
September 1900	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketches (Coles 1901, 230–7, figs 37–43)
1904	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2466)
1911		Description and photographs (Ritchie 1918, 91–4, 116–17, 121; RCAHMS AB2530, AB2421 & AB2531)
1920	George Browne	Description and photographs (Browne 1921, 93–5, pl xxxiii)
1927	Alexander Keiller	Description and plan (Keiller 1934, 14, 17, 20; RCAHMS ABD534/1–4)
1940s–50s	Angus Graham	Photographs (RCAHMS H94194, H94195 & H94196)
14 April 1957	Alexander Thom	Plan and notes (Thom 1967, 136; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 172–3; RCAHMS DC4393; MS430/20; Ferguson 1988, 63)
11 July 1973	Iain Sainsbury	OS: description, photograph and map revision
4 March 1977	Scottish Development Department	Scheduled
c1980	Aubrey Burl	Astronomical survey, guidebook description and photographs (Burl 1970, 60, 65–6, 78; 1976a, 350; 1979a, 120–3; 1980a, 199, no. 9; 1995 & 2005a, 95–7, no. 95; 2005c, 59–65)
1981	Clive Ruggles	Not inspected (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67–71, 74–5; 1999, 98, 213–16, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 28, 51, 55–7)
1998	Julian Cope	Description (Cope 1998, 102, 383, 386)
26–7 August 1998	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44477)
12 July 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

10 Bankhead, Clatt, Aberdeenshire

NJ52NW 25 NJ 5293 2698

The site of this recumbent stone circle lies in an improved field on the low rounded hill to the west-north-west of Bankhead. Probably largely intact until the beginning of the 19th century, it was then cleared away and all that remained by 1866 were a number of large boulders incorporated into a stone dyke, including the lower section of the recumbent. The first description of the circle, however, written about 1842, was transposed by its author onto another site nearby (see below), and the details of its composition and character, and indeed of the number of circles in the neighbourhood of Clatt, have been shrouded in confusion ever since. Assuming that this description is now correctly correlated with Bankhead, the circle comprised the recumbent setting and at least seven orthostats, measuring some 23m in diameter and enclosing a cairn up to 0.9m high within the interior. The dyke incorporating the remaining stones has also been removed now, and since about 1981 the surviving fragment of the recumbent has lain with three other large boulders on the west side of a pond to the south of the farmhouse (NJ 53287 26784). Lying on its back, the recumbent (2) is a roughly trapezoidal block on plan, measuring 3m in length. The summit of the stone has been cut and blasted away to form its jagged south-west face, and at least two shot-holes and several wedge marks are preserved in the fractured edge. The other three stones here come from elsewhere on the farm.

The presence of a stone circle to the west of Bankhead was first recognised by John Home, who surveyed a map of the parish of Clatt in about 1771 and annotates a 'Standing Stone' on open moorland immediately north of a plot of cultivated ground (NAS RHP 260/2). Unusually, a second estate plan was drawn up before the end of the 18th century, prepared in 1797 by George Brown. Heralding the improvements of the 19th century, the landscape had already begun to change, but this plan portraying the newly laid out 'Inclosures of Steany Field and Bankhead' denotes 'Stones' at roughly the same spot as the earlier survey, marking them on the south side of a boundary between two arable fields (NTS Leith Hall MS). Unfortunately the next cartographic depiction is not until 1870 and the publication of the 1st edition of the OS large scale maps, by which time the landscape had changed out of all recognition and there are not sufficient identifiable features in common between the maps to allow the position of the stones to be pinpointed. Nevertheless, in 1866–7 the OS surveyors found 'a very large flat stone built into the wall on the south side of the site of stone circle' (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 14, p 27). They annotated it 'Supposed Altar Stone' and the pecked outline of a circle 17m across is shown in the field 25m to the north-north-east with an appendage on its



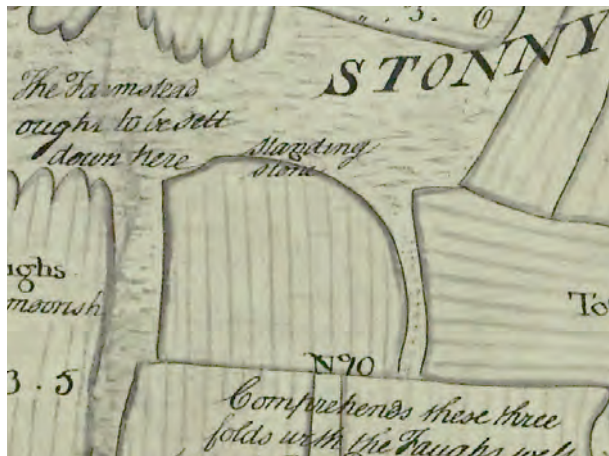
north-east labelled 'Site of' (Aberdeenshire 1870, sheet xliii). At the time of their visit in 1866 they were led to believe that the 'Altar Stone' had been taken from this circle, but their principal informant about the antiquities in the area, William Booth from Hillhead, could not recall when it was moved, nor seeing it anywhere but in the wall (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 14, pp 26–8). All he could tell them was that:

'About 60 years ago there existed here a very complete Stone Circle consisting of the usual upright stones placed around a circle 45 feet [13.7m] in diameter. When being removed shortly afterwards it was found to be paved to a depth of several feet with large stones. There was also a Causeway discovered leading from the Circle in a North Easterly direction' (*ibid*, p 26).

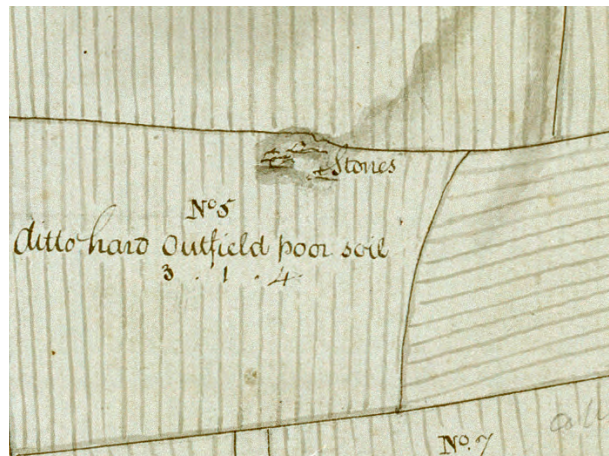
The entry dealing with the 'causeway' is more circumspect:

'This is supposed to be the site of a paved way or causeway... A very small portion only... was visible when the workmen were engaged in clearing away the Stone Circle, but Mr Booth is of the opinion from the nature of the ground that it led out in a North Easterly direction to the extent marked on the plan' (*ibid*, p 28). This distance is about 65m.

There can be no doubt that there was a stone circle hereabouts and that it enclosed a substantial cairn, while the survival of the recumbent in the wall indicates that it was a recumbent stone circle, but the presence of a causeway raises some doubts as to whether the pecked circle shown on the map was in fact its site. The description of another causeway leading to a Stone Circle nearby at Newbigging (NJ52NW 10) suggests a hut-circle with a souterrain rather than a megalithic structure (Gannon *et al* 2007, 70–1). If there was indeed a causeway at Bankhead, then this too may have been



The site of the recumbent stone circle is marked 'standing stone' on Home's map of c1771. © NAS



The annotation 'Stones' marks the site of the recumbent stone circle on Brown's estate map of 1797. © NTS

a souterrain attached to a hut-circle. In the case of Newbigging, Booth was one of the workmen involved and he reported to the OS surveyors that some '20 years ago', though as we shall see before 1842, they had 'come upon a circle about 40 feet [13.9m] in diameter beautifully paved with large stones, there was also a Causeway paved in the same manner leading in an easterly direction about 20 feet [6.95m] of it was visible... There were never any upright stones standing on this circle' (Name Book, No. 14, p 23). In the entry for the 'causeway' the description says 'it was composed of large uncut stones beautifully fitted together. So nicely fitted were they, that the workmen had great difficulty in getting their picks wedged in to separate them' (*ibid*, p 25). Booth was again of the opinion that this was a much longer structure, but probably for no other reason than he was attempting to provide a coherent explanation of the ancient features that made up his landscape. Thus he believed that this causeway extended 180m to the south-east to one of a number of groups of small cairns that he had also helped remove, discovering various burials in the process (*ibid*, pp 24–6; NJ52NW 11).

These discoveries at Newbigging clearly underpin part of a detailed account of some of the antiquities in the parish of Clatt written by Rev Robert Cook in 1842, though this places them rather earlier than Booth had told the OS surveyors. Cook, however, transposes a detailed description of a recumbent stone circle in this part of the parish upon the circle Booth had found with its causeway at Newbigging; in doing so he succeeded in misleading Coles (1902, 553–4). Having survived until about 1810, the circle described by Cook was partly cleared and by the 1840s 'only the supposed altar-stone and a few of the upright stones, which were placed in the circumference' remained (NSA, xii, Aberdeenshire, 851). In all probability Cook is referring to Bankhead, and he describes the circle in some detail:

'The stone supposed to have formed the sacrificial altar in the centre, was of large dimensions, consisting of 10 feet [3m] in length, 9 feet [2.7m] in breadth, and 4 feet [1.2m] in thickness. It was placed at an angle of about 45° with the dip in the direction of the meridian ... At each extremity, longitudinally, there stood a perpendicular stone of about 6 feet [1.8m] in height, vulgarly styled "the Horns of the Altar," and in the line of the circle, of about 25 yards [22.8m] diameter, there were placed, at equal distances, seven upright stones, from 5 to 6 feet [1.5–1.8m] in height. The whole space within the circumference was rudely paved with stones to a depth of about three feet [0.9m]' (*ibid*).

The OS surveyors gave the length of the recumbent at Bankhead as 3.7m, but they were mistaken and thirty-five years later Coles measured the stone at 2.95m, almost identical to the length given by Cook. By 1866, the stone had already been blasted and the OS surveyors observed the shot-holes along its north edge (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 14, p 27). Cook's diameter of just short of 23m, on the other hand, is significantly larger than the figure of 13.7m given by the OS surveyors (*ibid*, p 26), and again raises the question whether some other elements of the antiquarian record here have been conflated or transposed. Coles seems to have harboured a suspicion that the circle may have lain rather closer at hand than the circle shown on the map, largely on account of another stone used as 'the west gate-post in the gateway a few yards down the dike' (1902, 555) from the recumbent, the only other record of which is a photograph taken in 1967 by Richard Little of the OS. This, Coles suggested, 'may be one of the Standing Stones of the Circle yet in situ' (*ibid*), though the next sentence qualifies this idea by acknowledging that both stones seemed too far away from the location of the ring marked on the map 'to be taken as in their original positions' (*ibid*). James Ritchie's photograph taken shortly afterwards shows the base of the recumbent from the south, along with



Ritchie photographed the recumbent and other large blocks in the dyke from the south sometime after 1900. SC681758

another four boulders in the foundations of the dyke, two of them lying in the positions of the flankers on either side of the recumbent. This raises the possibility that, rather than moved, the recumbent earlier described by Cook as leaning, was simply pushed over where it originally stood and incorporated into the dyke. In essence, the site of the circle may lie between the line of the dyke and the circle shown on the map, the latter perhaps being no more than the remains of an adjacent hut-circle (cf **Ardtannes Cottages**).

It is sad to record that few have visited the site of this circle since Ritchie photographed the shattered remains in the dyke. In the 1920s, for example, neither the Right Rev George Browne nor Alexander Keiller sought it out, despite the latter's interest in its association with a causeway (Browne 1921, 147; Keiller 1934, 18). Any further progress with identifying the exact position of the circle and recovering evidence of its size and composition must rely on remote sensing and excavation.

Coles 1902, 581; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 350, Abn 27; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 35; Barnatt 1989, 459, no. 6:117; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 35; Burl 2000, 420, Abn 27a

Date	Personnel	Record
c1771	John Home	Standing Stone on estate map (NAS RHP 260/2)
1797	George Brown	Stones on estate map (NTS Leith Hall MS)
August 1842	Robert Cook	Description (<i>NSA</i> , xii, Aberdeenshire, 851)
1866–7	OS surveyors	Site of Stone Circle, Supposed Altar Stone and Site of Causeway (Aberdeenshire 1870, xliii.10); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 14, pp 26, 27)
September 1901	Frederick Coles	Description plan and section (Coles 1902, 554–5, fig 71)
1900s	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2949; Ritchie 1910, 209)
18 September 1967	Richard Little	OS: map revision and photograph
5 March 1996	John Sherriff & Iain Fraser	RCAHMS: description
24 June 1999	Adam Welfare & Kevin Macleod	RCAHMS: plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44439)
7 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

11 Bellman's Wood, Marnoch, Aberdeenshire

NJ65SW 4 NJ 6046 5041

Two slabs lying on a scarp forming the south side of a low natural swelling in the surface of the field due east of Bellman's Wood probably belong to a recumbent stone circle. No trace of the recumbent survives, but their positions on the south side of the swelling, coupled with their shapes, suggest that they are probably the two flankers. The setting would have stood on the crest of the scarp facing south-south-east, from where the

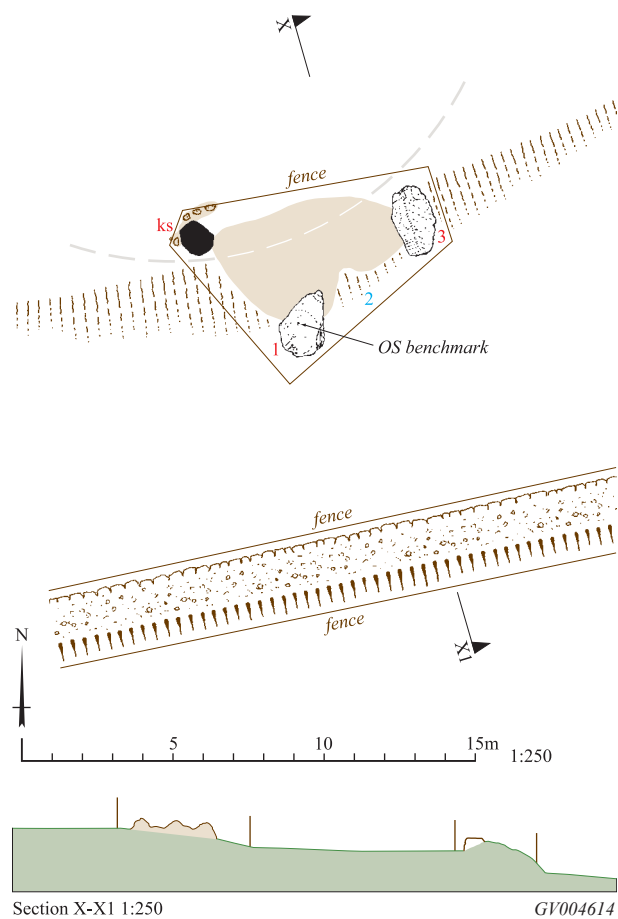
east flanker (3) has simply toppled forwards, while the western (1) has slipped down to the foot of the slope. They measure 2.3m and 2.4m in length respectively, and the eastern is markedly more slender than its pair. At the top of the scarp immediately behind and a little north-west of what was probably the original position of the west flanker, there is also an earthfast stone with the character of a kerbstone; if so, this is the sole evidence that there was ever a ring-bank or an internal cairn here.

When Ritchie photographed the remains of the recumbent setting c1905, the east flanker still remained upright. SC681944



The OS were the first to record the circle, in 1868–71 describing it as ‘*three remarkable stones*’ (Name Book, Banffshire, No. 22, p 9), but by then only the east flanker probably remained upright, for the position of an OS benchmark on the upper surface of the west flanker indicates that it had already fallen. This was how Coles found the stones thirty years later, and little has changed since, so much so that his plan and sketches, and the undated photographs taken by James Ritchie, seem to show the three stones in exactly the same disposition, though if this is correct the north point on Coles’ plan is awry. Coles had little doubt that the two larger stones were flankers and estimated from their spacing that the recumbent had been some 3m in length. Both his plan and Ritchie’s photographs show several other smaller stones around the possible kerbstone, but the only stones there now are almost certainly field-gathered. The east flanker, which was already leaning heavily to the south-south-east, remained upright until shortly after William Johnston of the OS visited in 1964; three years later Keith Blood found it fallen. The latter concluded that there was no visible evidence that the stones were flankers and a subsequent commentary has speculated that these are the remains of a four-poster stone setting rather than a recumbent stone circle (Barnatt 1989, 272) – an interpretation not endorsed by the present survey.

Coles 1906a, 206; Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 355, Bnf 1; Barnatt 1989, 272, no. 6:12; Ruggles 1999, 188; Burl 2000, 424, Bnf 1



Date	Personnel	Record
1868–71	OS surveyors	Stone circle (Remains of) (Banffshire 1871–4, xvi.13); note (Name Book, Banffshire, No. 22, p 9)
September 1905	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketches (Coles 1906a, 181–4, figs 17–20)
c1905	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS BN978 & BN979)
16 June 1927	Office of Works	Scheduled
15 September 1964	William Johnston	OS: description and map revision
24 August 1967	Keith Blood	OS: description
19 May 2005	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44573)
5 April 2006	Yves Candela, David Herd, Simon Howard & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

12 Berrybrae, Lonmay, Aberdeenshire

NK05NW 2 NK 0275 5716

This recumbent stone circle is situated amongst deciduous trees within a large grass-grown roundel near the north-east corner of an arable field to the north-north-east of Berrybrae. The circle now comprises the recumbent setting (1–3) and two orthostats (9 & 10) set on the line of an oval ring-bank, but excavations by Burl in 1975–8 uncovered the stump of another orthostat on the south-south-east (4) and the position of four others around the north-east half of the ring (5–8). The recumbent (2), which stands on the south-west, measures some 3.3m in length by 1.4m in height and the highest part of its rough and uneven top forms a central boss. The west flanker (1) is a large block standing 2.35m in height, but the east flanker (3) is reduced to a stump, with a detached fragment lying at its foot. Both are aligned with the leading edge of the recumbent, set at a slight angle to pick up the arc of the circle. As seen today, the heights of the stones on the west hint that the circle was graded to reduce in height from the tall west flanker (1); the orthostat on the north-west (9), however, was re-erected in 1976 and its present height may be misleading. The ring-bank, which forms a stony band from 1.6m to 3.5m in thickness by 0.25m in height, displays runs of inner kerbstones on the west-north-west and south-south-east respectively; the gently dished interior measures 11.6m from east-south-east to west-north-west by 9.2m transversely.

The final report from the excavations is still awaited, but the broad outlines of the results are contained within a series of short interim accounts (Burl 1975, 7; 1976a, 184–186; 1976b, 6; 1977, 4–5; 1978, 7–8; 1979a, 25–31, 124–5; 1995 and 2005a, 95–7). In these the excavator proposes two main phases of construction. In the first the ground surface was levelled up on the south to form a firm foundation for the circle, which comprised the recumbent setting and seven orthostats. These were set out around the perimeter of a rubble bank to form an oval ring measuring 13m from east-south-east to west-north-west by 10.7m transversely overall. Within the interior there were faint traces of what was interpreted as a heavily robbed ring-cairn, linked to the back of the recumbent by a platform of stones strewn with fragments of quartz. The ring-cairn measured 4.7m in overall diameter and had a poorly defined central court 1.4m across; two cremation deposits were discovered at its centre, and a third at its south-east edge. In the second phase, most of the orthostats were broken up and incorporated into a new wall superimposed on the earlier ring-bank and built with stones robbed from the ring-cairn. This was supported to the rear with a bank of clay, strengthened by pointed stakes and topped with small stones. Some sherds with affinities to grooved ware (Burl 1978, 8) were concealed within the wall, while a late Beaker



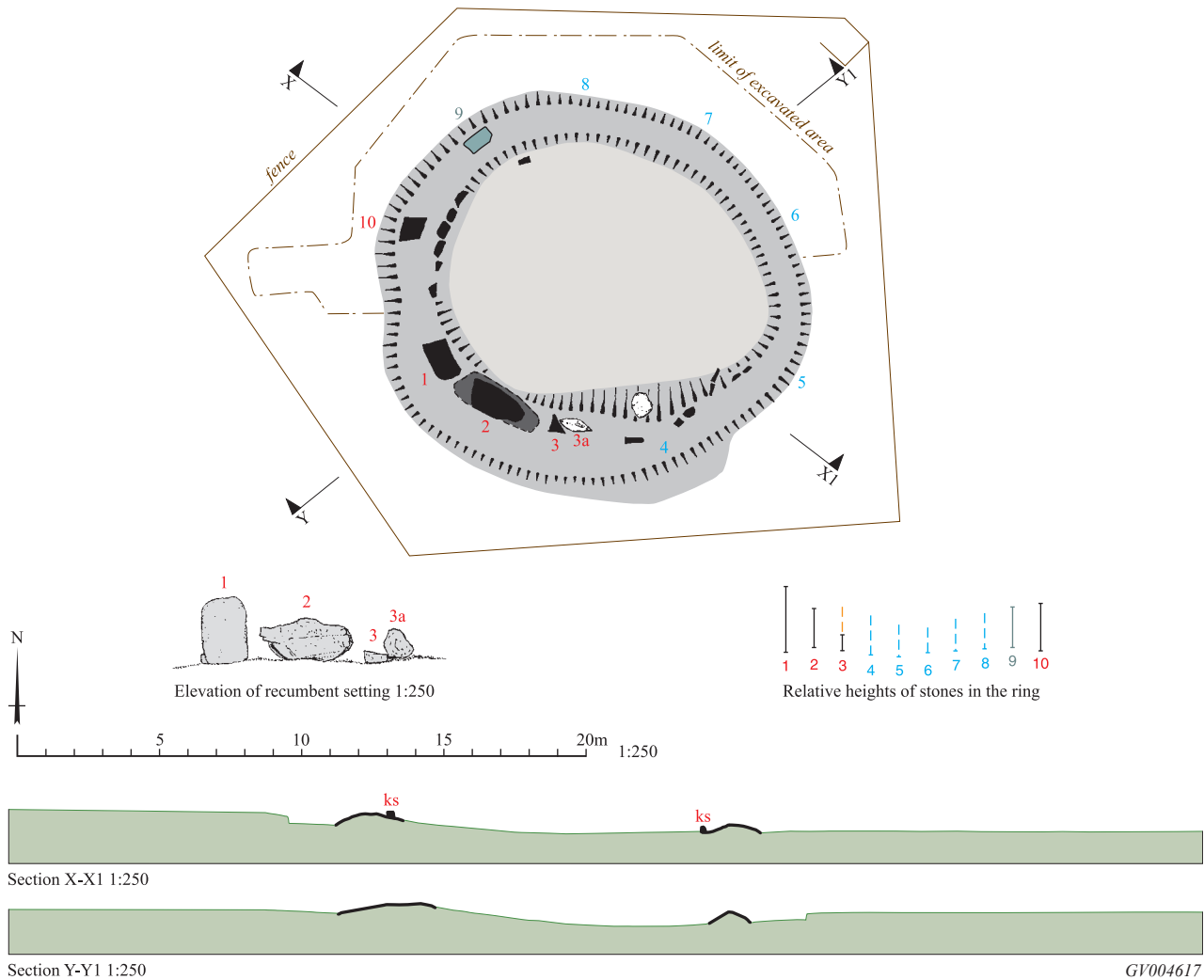
Coles' sketch of 1903 clearly indicates that the ground surface inside the ring-bank was higher than that outside. SC1115299

was retrieved from a context described as 'in the bank in a clay-filled pit' (Burl 1976b, 6); charcoal from this pit yielded radiocarbon assays of about 1825–1575 cal BC (Har–1849, 3450±80 BP; Har–1893, 3310±90 BP; Burl 2000, 144, 220). Other finds included sherds of undecorated coarse pottery, flints and burnt bones. Modern pits were located adjacent to each of the flankers and also at the centre of the ring.

The sequence recorded in the excavation at Berrybrae is unusual in the light of the results of more recent research excavations elsewhere (Bradley 2005), in particular the suggestion that the demolition of the circle and the erection of the wall backed by a clay bank took place in antiquity. It evidently struck the excavator as unusual, at a time when **Loanhead of Daviot** and **Old Keig** provided the only excavated comparanda. The retrospective description of its discovery runs:

'the base of a drystone wall appeared, its upper stones fallen outwards into a ditch that some eighteenth-century farmer had dug to drain off the rainwater that turned the site into a pond in wet weather. This wall... had been about a metre high, ... laid out in straightish sections of varying length, and was prevented from collapse into the interior by a wide, sloping bank of clay topped with little stones ... the builders had stabilized it by first driving down a hedgehog pattern of stakes into the ground and then packing clay down over them.' (Burl 1979a, 27).

The context of the Beaker is evidently crucial in this respect, but the description is more closely akin to agricultural enclosure banks constructed in the 18th and early 19th centuries and sometimes crowned with cut-and-laid hedges, rather than any more ancient enclosure yet recorded around a recumbent stone circle. In this light, this second main phase of construction is perhaps a later enclosure, constructed in the early 19th century to protect the circle from further damage. This fits with Coles' description of the bank and the level interior in 1903 (see below), which could equally describe the character of the surviving roundel at nearby **Netherpton of Logie**. In the case of Berrybrae, it can be surmised that a small enclosure around the stones was superseded by the larger wooded roundel depicted on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map. The



absence of any trace of rig-and-furrow within the larger roundel indicates that this was only laid out after the surrounding land had been improved, which probably accounts for the difference in height between the interior and exterior of the circle recorded by Coles. The freshly broken prehistoric sherds found secreted amongst the stones of the wall-face may be testimony to 19th century superstition rather than ancient ritual.

The earliest mention of Berrybrae is by Charles Gibbon, minister of Lonmay, who described it as ‘*a Druidical circle, which is very entire*’, adding that ‘*the centre stone is of great size, and (as well as several others composing the circle) must have been brought from a great distance*’ (NSA, xii, Aberdeenshire, 224). A little later it was noted as ‘*a very perfect circle*’ (Pratt 1858, 140), though neither this nor the earlier description is reliable evidence for the presence of any more than the five stones there today. In 1870, however, it must have been approaching its present state, for the OS Name Book records only ‘*5 large stones on the western side*’ (Aberdeenshire, No. 58, p

40). By this time it had become the centrepiece of the large decorative roundel of coniferous trees that appears on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map. Probably shortly after this Christian Maclagan visited the circle, which she initially thought was the remains of a cairn, but on her published plan she only shows the recumbent setting and the orthostat to its west (1875, 95, pl xxvii); these are depicted upright, though another more detailed plan and sketch shows that the east flanker had fallen (RCAHMS SAS467; DC53026). These unpublished drawings also show that orthostat 9 on the north-west was already fallen, and that two smaller stones were visible on the south-east. She believed the main stones making up these circles rested directly on the ground rather than in stone-holes, a proposition which she claimed could be demonstrated here, where ‘*any one may push his staff under the foundation of some of them as I did in an unsafe degree*’ (1881, 31–2). Some measure of disturbance in the interior had evidently taken place by this time, and in the course of a field trip to the circle Rev James Forrest was able to tell members



of the Buchan Field Club that calcined bones had been discovered there (Mitchell 1890, 82).

By the time Coles visited the circle the surrounding plantation was a mixture of coniferous and deciduous trees (Aberdeenshire 1902, viii). His plan shows a circular ring-bank and five stones, including the broken stump of the east flanker (3) and the fallen orthostat (4) that was re-erected in 1976 on the north-west (Coles 1904, 288–90, fig 24). The stones appeared to be spaced at regular intervals, and he estimated that the ring had originally comprised ten. He also recognised the inner kerb of the ring-bank, which was much more prominent than it is today; internally its crest rose about 0.65m above the level interior, while externally it was as much as 1.1m above the surrounding ground. An undated photograph by James Ritchie confirms Coles’

observations, although the tall summer grass conceals the kerbstones.

Subsequent fieldwork at Berrybrae includes Sir Norman Lockyer in 1907 and Alexander Keiller in 1928, though neither contributed any new observations on its structure. In 1969, however, Richard Little of the OS was the first to note that the ring was oval rather than circular. This was confirmed six years later by Burl (1975, 7; 1976a, 185 fig 30), and on the completion of his excavations in 1978 the ring was generally tidied and fenced. Since then fieldwork has followed Lockyer in exploring the astronomical orientation of the circle, first by Burl (1980a, 199) and then in 1981 by Ruggles.

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1904, 304; 1910, 165; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 350, Abn 11; Ruggles 1984, 58, no. 5; Barnatt 1989, 272, no. 6:13; Ruggles 1999, 185, no. 5; Burl 2000, 419, Abn 10

Date	Personnel	Record
c1842	Charles Gibbon	Note (<i>VSA</i> , xii, Aberdeenshire, 224)
c1858	John Pratt	Note (Pratt 1858, 140)
1870	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Aberdeenshire 1872, viii.10); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 58, p 40)
c1875	Christian Maclagan	Description (Maclagan 1875, 95, pl xxvii; 1881, 31–2; RCAHMS SAS467; DC53026)
1888	James Forrest	Note (Mitchell 1890, 82)
September 1903	Frederick Coles	Description (Coles 1904, 288–90, figs 24–5; 304)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 401, 405)
1900s	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2494)
31 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1928	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1928, 15; RCAHMS MS106/9)
1940s–50s	Angus Graham	Photograph (RCAHMS H94193)
10 January 1969	Richard Little	OS: description and map revision
1975–8	Aubrey Burl	Description, astronomical survey and excavation (Burl 1975, 7; 1976a, 184–6; 1976b, 6; 1977, 4–5; 1978, 7–8; 1979a, 25–31, 124–5; 1980a, 199, no. 24; 1995 & 2005a, 95–7, no. 95)
18 June 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 58, 66, 68–71, 74–5; 1999, 97, 213–15, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 25–6, 39, 47, 51, 54)
20 August 2003	Kevin Macleod & John Sherriff	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44540)
7 April 2006	David Herd, Simon Howard & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

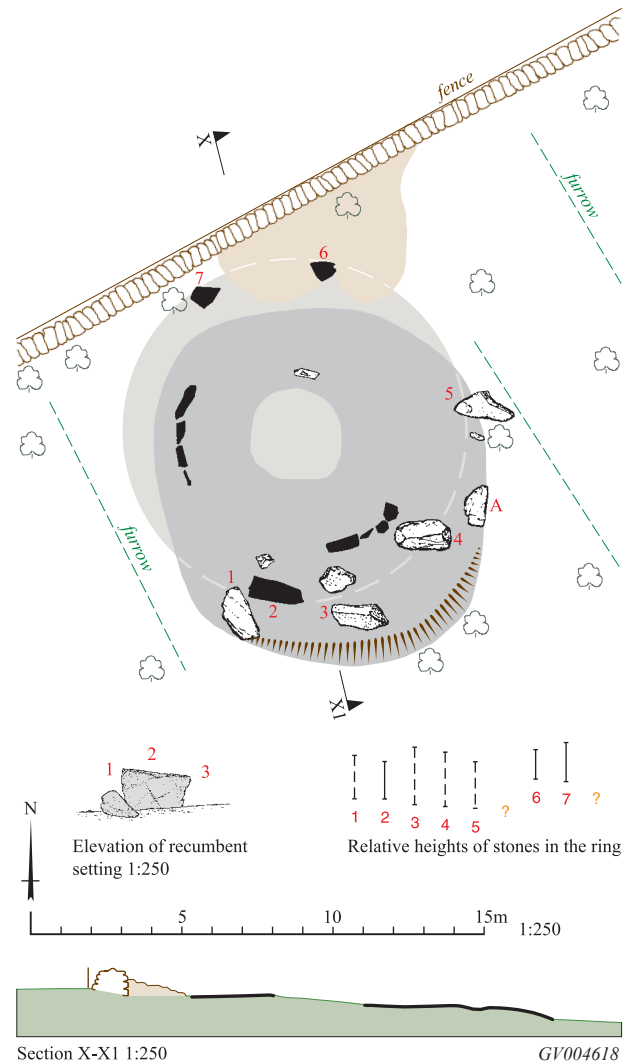
The remains of the recumbent stone circle are preserved within a fenced enclosure at the centre of this 19th century roundel. SC1099926

13 Binghill, Peterculter, Aberdeenshire

NJ80SE 16 NJ 8552 0237

Shrouded in leaf litter within the wooded policies of Binghill House, this small recumbent stone circle measures 11.3m in diameter and encloses a low cairn. Formerly comprising at least ten stones, only seven now remain, of which the flankers (1 & 3) and two orthostats are fallen (4 & 5). The recumbent (2) stands on the south-south-west and is a small block commensurate with the size of the circle. It measures about 2.3m in length by almost 1.2m in height, with its even summit sloping down towards the east. Of the two flankers (1 & 3), the eastern is the more slender; each measures a little over 1.9m, in length and comparison of the lengths of the other fallen orthostats on the south-east suggests that the circle was originally graded to reduce in height towards a missing stone on the north-east (6). The interior encloses a heavily robbed cairn measuring about 8m in diameter by 0.2m in height over a kerb of large boulders, eight of which remain in place. One of those in place, immediately north of the east flanker, is notably larger than those elsewhere, while one of possibly two displaced kerbstones lies between it and the flanker's socket, a position suggesting that the kerb of the cairn once turned outwards to embrace the recumbent setting. The other displaced kerbstone now lies on the east-south-east margin of the ring (A). A circular area some 3m in diameter at the centre of the cairn has previously been identified as a central court (see below), but it may be no more than a pit sunk into the body of the mound.

For want of any other surviving circles in the parish of Peterculter, Binghill has been identified with a ring referred to as *'the Old Chapel'* in James Garden's correspondence with John Aubrey in 1692 (Garden 1770, 315–6 [1779, 319]; Gordon 1960, 13n; Fowles and Legge 1980, 182–3; Hunter 2001, 120). The attribution is far from convincing, if only because Binghill is both inconspicuous in the landscape and some distance away from the line of the road from which Garden saw it. A more likely candidate is perhaps the site of a destroyed circle now on the north outskirts of Cults (NJ80SE 25), where the adjacent croft in the mid 19th century was named Abbot's Hall. Be that as it may, nothing is heard specifically of Binghill until the end of the 18th century, when James Watson, an Aberdonian advocate and an agricultural improver who enclosed the Binghill estate, related to Rev George Mark that *'in one of the plantations a Druid's Temple was discovered'* (Stat Acct, xvi, 1795, 364n). Lying at the edge of an area of rig-and-furrow, the circle may have been robbed before its discovery, for example to provide the boundary stone that can be seen beside the dyke about 40m to the west-north-west (NJ80SE 37; Keiller 1934, 17). Rev John Stirling had nothing to add for the *New Statistical Account* (xii, Aberdeenshire,



109), and it was not until the visit by the OS surveyors in 1864–5 that a description was prepared: *'A large circle about 60 links in diameter [12m], which can be distinctly traced on the ground. It appears to have been originally constructed of 11 large upright stones some of them 5 feet high (unhewn), 6 of which are now standing. The rest are lying near'* (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 71, p 63). Contrary to Coles' subsequent assertion that the map shows seven stones, only the six referred to in the description are depicted, albeit spaced evenly around the circumference of the ring. In common with OS practice elsewhere, the recumbent does not appear and we can perhaps conclude that the six comprise orthostats 6 and 7 still standing on the north, the toppled flankers (1 & 3) on the south, and stones 4 and 5 now lying on the east, of which 4 has fallen since Alexander Keiller prepared a plan in 1927.

Despite the heavy undergrowth at the turn of the century, vividly illustrated in James Ritchie's photographs taken in 1902, Coles identified all the main components of the circle visible today, including the kerb of the internal cairn. His plan is somewhat



The recumbent setting from the south-south-west. © NMS

awry on the west, where several of the kerbstones he shows are no longer visible, but there is a kerbed court at the centre, and he speculated that two stones set on edge a little further to its west might mark out another small setting. Following Coles' visit the circle seems to have descended into even denser vegetation, and a photograph taken in 1917 by Ritchie shows the interior liberally seeded with Scots Pines; but if they were still there in 1927 when Keiller prepared his plan he makes no comment. This plan corrects Coles' error and while

on the one hand it makes less of the central court, on the other it shows an arc of small stones following the circumference of the circle outside the kerb on the south-west; though these stones were not detected in 1998, they may lie buried beneath the leaf litter, possibly marking the edge of a platform encircling the internal cairn. Orthostat 4 on the south-east had fallen by the time William Johnson of the OS visited the circle in 1961, but little else has changed since Keiller's day.

Coles 1900, 198; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 350, Abn 12; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 84; Barnatt 1989, 272, no. 6:14; Ruggles 1999, 188, no. 84; Burl 2000, 419, Abn 11

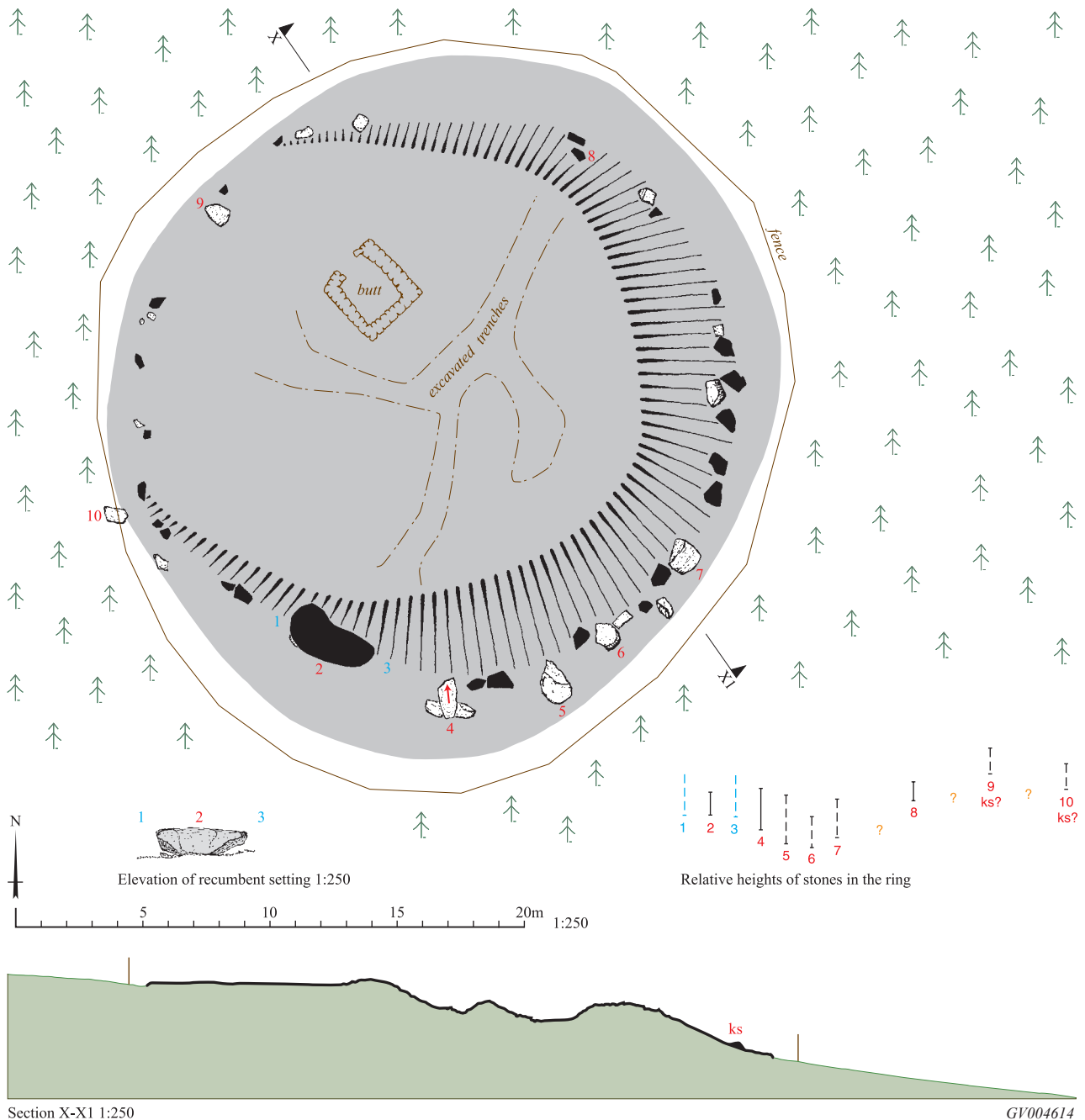
Date	Personnel	Record
1795	James Watson	Note (<i>Stat Acct</i> , xvi, 1795, 364n)
January 1840	John Stirling	Note (<i>NSA</i> , xii, 1840, Aberdeenshire, 109)
1864–5	OS Surveyors	Stone Circle (Aberdeenshire 1869, lxxxv.8); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 71, p 63)
September 1900	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sections (Coles 1900, 187–8; 1901, 189–91, fig 3)
July 1902	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2458, AB2459 & AB2460)
June 1917	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2463)
19 October 1927	Alexander Keiller	Description and plan (Keiller 1934, 10, 17; RCAHMS ABD543/1; MS106/27, 48)
20 November 1961	William Johnson	OS: description and map revision
10 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67–71, 74–5; 1999, 213–15; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 47)
9 November 1984	Jack Stevenson & Ian Smith	RCAHMS: description and photograph
26 February 1997	John Sherriff & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description
10 November 1998	Ian Parker, Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44492)
6 December 2005	Historic Scotland	Scheduled
24 July 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

14 Blue Cairn of Ladieswell, Logie Coldstone, Aberdeenshire

NJ40NW 4 NJ 4113 0633

The dominant feature of this recumbent stone circle is the large mound of stones within the ring. This stands within a post and rail fence in a clearing amongst the conifers of Balronald Wood and straddles the leading edge of a natural terrace on the steep south-east flank of Bonlee Hill. Unusually, the orthostats of the ring are interdigitated with the kerb of the cairn, which measures about 23m in overall diameter by up to 1.5m in height. This has led some to question whether it should be

included in the class (Ruggles 1984, 60; Barnatt 1989, 483), but there is no doubting the character of the recumbent block (2) on the south-south-west, albeit missing its flankers. This measures about 3.6m in length by 0.9m in height and its even summit is set roughly horizontal. Of the orthostats, four remain on the south-east, one leaning steeply (4) and the other three fallen (5-7). They were probably set out at intervals of about 3m and may have graded into the run of large kerbstones that demarcates the east side of the cairn. Elsewhere, a stumpy upright pillar (8) stands within the margin of the cairn on the north-north-east, while two slabs lying fallen on the north-west (9) and west-south-





Cormack's watercolour of 1942 shows the view from the recumbent stone circle before reforestation. © Valerie Parkinson

west (10) respectively may be small orthostats rather than kerbstones. The surface of the cairn is disfigured with crude excavation trenches dug in 1875 by Rev John Michie, but it preserves an asymmetric profile on the slope and is evidently built up on the east to create a level top; this may account for the presence of the larger kerbstones on the east, designed to retain the greater height of cairn material on the downslope side. Nothing can now be seen of a court that Michie describes at the centre of the cairn; measuring 3.65m in diameter within a kerb of upright stones and drystone masonry, it contained some sherds of pottery and a few sheep and deer bones.

Although the *Statistical Account* reports that there were 'Druidical fanes in different parts of the parish' (*Stat Acct*, ix, 1793, 512), the first record of Blue Cairn is in 1868 by OS surveyors, who cautiously annotated the map 'Remains of Supposed Stone Circle' (Aberdeenshire 1870, lxx). They reported that the 'tenant [John Forbes of Pittellachie] recollects having seen a number of upright stones standing round it, but they have all been removed for building purposes save one very large tabular stone on the west side of the circle, which might have been the Altar of the Temple' (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 56, p 55). Forbes, and a local Civil Engineer named Francis Henry,

who is also cited as an authority in the Name Book, believed that the stone circle had been converted into a cairn, an assessment of the sequence of construction subsequently refuted by Sir Alexander Ogston, who surveyed the ring in 1911 and argued exactly the opposite (below). As a result of Michie's excavations the cairn had been extensively disturbed by Ogston's day and is still scarred by four meandering trenches and the discarded upcast (Ogston 1931, 109). In 1877 Michie sent a brief account of his discoveries to Christian Maclagan, though following her lead elsewhere he believed he had disinterred a brooch (Maclagan 1881, 33; Michie 1910, 24–5).

Despite appearing on OS maps, the ring escaped Coles, but Ogston recognised that the cairn incorporated the essential components of a recumbent stone circle (1931, 108–10). His plan and description, however, were not to be published until 1931, and it is fairly clear that Alexander Keiller believed that it was he who was first to identify its character, citing Blue Cairn to illustrate the size of the cairns that may once have existed in other recumbent stone circles. Having been planted before the end of the 19th century, the circle was shrouded with trees all this time, as can be seen in a photograph of the recumbent taken in 1913 by Francis Eeles. By 1942 these had been cleared and a fine period watercolour taken by William Cormack shows the circle in an open setting looking out across the recumbent into the Howe of Cromar. Shortly after, in 1944, John

Craig found the circle in heather moorland and prepared a plan that shows the outlines of all the stones around the kerb much as they are today. Subsequent fieldwork has had little to add, though in 1968 Keith Blood of the OS suggested that the orthostat on the north-north-east (8) was a later addition; his reasoning is not explained but presumably relates to its position apparently within the line of the kerb. Ruggles and Burl have since included Blue Cairn in their assessments of astronomical alignments in recumbent stone circles and have drawn attention to the care with which the flat summit of the recumbent has been levelled.



Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 350, Abn 13; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 78; Barnatt 1989, 483, no. 6;c; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 78; Burl 2000, 419, Abn 12

Michie's trench is still visible behind the smallest orthostat (8). © Anna Edelsten

Date	Personnel	Record
1868	OS surveyors	Blue Cairn Remains of Supposed of Stone Circle (Aberdeenshire 1870, lxx.9); note (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 56, p 55)
1875	John Michie	Excavation (Maclagan 1881, 33)
1911	Alexander Ogston	Plan, description and photographs (Ogston 1931, 108–9, figs 72–4)
1913	Francis Eeles	Photographs (RCAHMS AB4912 & AB4913)
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1934, 7–8, 12)
1942	William Cormack	Watercolour (RCAHMS MS4010)
1944	John Craig	Plan, photograph & description (Craig 1950, 428–9, figs I–II)
4 September 1968	Keith Blood	OS: description, plan and map revision
2 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Astronomical survey and tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 57, 60, 67–8, 70–1, 74–5; 1999, 213–14, 238, 266; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 47)
3–4 June 1998	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44471)
4 May 2006	David Herd, Simon Howard & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

15 Braehead, Leslie, Aberdeenshire

NJ52NE 6 NJ 5926 2556

Only the recumbent remains of this stone circle. It stands at the south-west edge of a large stone-walled field, occupying a position on the crest of the ridge midway between the farms of New Leslie and Braehead. The recumbent, which faces south-south-west, is an irregular block measuring some 3.3m in length by up to 1.8m in height, and its summit rises gently towards the west-north-west. A support stone at its east-south-east end was partly buried at the time the drawn survey was carried out in 1999, but a more recent visit in 2007 found its upper portion fully exposed, though nothing can be seen of the cupmarks identified on its top by James Gurnell (two; 1884) and James Ritchie (four; 1918, 98–9). A large quartz boulder lies amongst the field-gathered stones behind the recumbent, where a faint swelling in the surface of the ground (see section) suggests the presence of an internal cairn.

Rev John Harper, writing in the *Statistical Account* at the end of the 18th century, reported that there were two *Druidical temples* in the parish of Leslie, though by then neither was ‘*very entire*’ (viii, 1793, 518). Some forty years later, Rev James Peter knew of only one and this had been demolished to provide stones for the dykes (*NSA*, xii, Aberdeenshire, 1022). Apart from this

The large support stone at the east end of the recumbent in this undated image was thought by Ritchie to exhibit cupmarks. SC681804

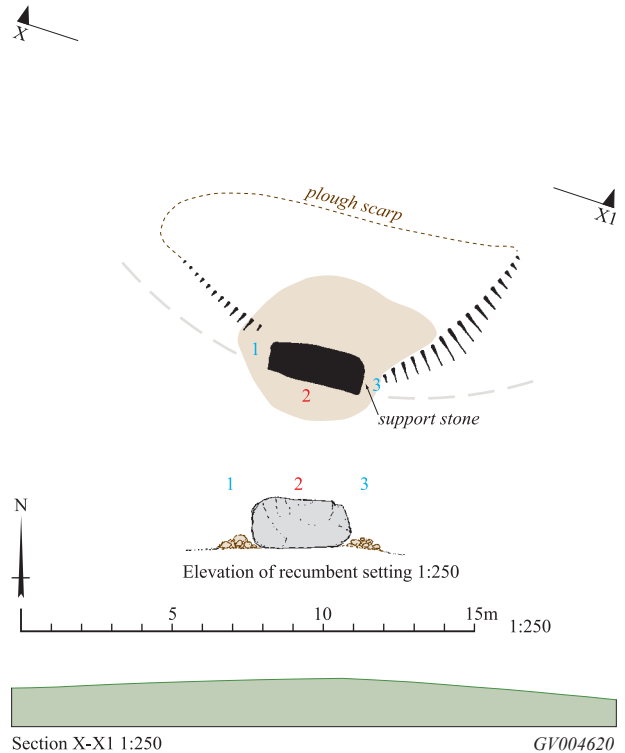
general commentary on the fate of antiquities in the face of the agricultural improvements, there are only two records of stone circles in the parish, Braehead being one and the Ringing Stone above Johnston the other (App 1.49). Peter is almost certainly referring to Braehead, for the OS surveyors who visited the stone in 1866 cited him as one of their authorities in the Name Book and ‘*Stone Circle (site of)*’ appears in the column for alternative spellings of the name (Aberdeenshire, No. 54, p 12). The main period when monuments were being demolished on the upper slopes of the ridge at Braehead was in the 1840s, involving the removal of at least three other large cairns to reveal various cists, urns and other burials, to say nothing of a small barrow cemetery nearby (see NJ52NE 9–14). In the case of the stone circle, however, the OS surveyors recorded that ‘*It is thought to be the remains of a Druid’s Altar, but even the oldest inhabitants do not remember of hearing any one say that they remembered of seeing any other stones about this place*’ (*ibid*). Captain Courtney, who signed off the Name Book, had little doubt and appended a sketch with his commentary noting the support stone at the east-south-east end and arguing that ‘*from its huge size, and its site, as well as general appearance... this stone is either a “Cromlech” or an “altar-stone” of a Druidical circle*’ (*ibid*); he favoured the former and on the map the stone was duly annotated ‘*Supposed Cromlech on Site of Stone Circle*’ (Aberdeenshire 1870, xliii). Andrew Jervise was rather luckier with his



informants, and at about the same date discovered that the recumbent was the sole survivor of a group of four stones (1879, ii, 334).

Subsequent visitors included Gurnell, Coles, Ritchie, Sir Norman Lockyer, Right Rev George Browne and Alexander Keiller, none of whom had any hesitation in identifying the stone as a recumbent. Coles is the most informative, providing measurements and depicting the support stone on his plan and perspective views, but he was almost more interested in a natural groove that encircles the block and had previously caught the attention of Courtney, Gurnell and Jervise (Coles 1902, 549–52, figs 66–8); he also notes the discovery of two more cists in the vicinity, one of which contained a Beaker. Ruggles has been more qualified in his acceptance that this is a recumbent stone circle (1984, 57), but in conjunction with Burl he has made a series of measurements and observations, also noting the way in which the block appears to face Knock Saul, a hill about 2.8km to the south-south-west.

Coles 1902, 581; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 350, Abn 15; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 44; Barnatt 1989, 273, no. 6:15; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 44; Burl 2000, 419, Abn 14



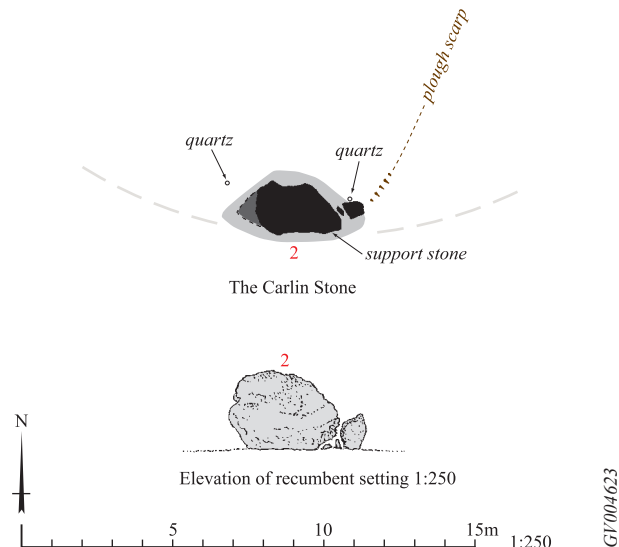
Date	Personnel	Record
c1840	James Peter	Note (<i>NSA</i> , xii, Aberdeenshire, 1022)
1866	OS surveyors	Supposed Cromlech on Site of Stone Circle (Aberdeenshire 1870, xliii.12); description and sketch (<i>Name Book</i> , Aberdeenshire, No. 54, p 12)
c1878	Andrew Jervise	Note (Jervise 1879, ii, 334)
1884	James Gurnell	Tabulated notes (Gurnell 1884)
September 1901	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketches (Coles 1902, 549–52, figs 66–8)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 393, 399)
1908	James Ritchie	Description & photograph (Ritchie 1918, 98–9 fig 9, 117, 121; RCAHMS AB550 & AB2966)
1920	George Browne	Note (Browne 1921, 85, pl xxx)
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Note (Keiller 1934, 21)
20 September 1969	Keith Blood	OS: map revision and photograph
7 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 57, 59, 66, 69–71, 74–5; 1999, 213, 215–16, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 30, 33, 49, 57)
22 June 1999	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44437)
7 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

16 Cairn Riv, Inverkeithny, Aberdeenshire

NJ64NE 4 NJ 6744 4659

The site of this recumbent stone circle, which formerly enclosed a large cairn, falls near the east corner of a field of improved pasture. Its position is now marked by little more than the large recumbent – the Carlin Stone – standing just off the crest of a minor rise on a long spur dropping down northwards from the Hill of Carlinraig. The circle may have measured in excess of 30m in diameter (Name Book, Banffshire, No. 19, p 29) and the recumbent is shown on the south-south-west of the pecked outline depicted on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Aberdeenshire 1872, xxii). The recumbent (2) faces south and is a block measuring some 3.6m in length by 2.6m in height; a small support stone is visible beneath its east end. Immediately adjacent on the east an upright stone some 1.2m high is set back from its leading edge; the front of this stone is turned at an angle to the axis of the recumbent and a small earthfast quartz-rich boulder lies immediately to its north. Although there is no swelling in the surface of the field to mark the position of the internal cairn attested in antiquarian accounts (below), the soil is stonier to the north of the recumbent than it is to the south.

Prior to its removal in about 1820 to build dykes on the neighbouring farm of Raecloch (Jervise 1879, ii, 277), the cairn enclosed by this circle was evidently a well-known landmark in the district, standing on the boundaries between the parishes of Turriff and Inverkeithny, the counties of Banffshire and Aberdeenshire, and the district of Buchan (Pratt 1858, 5–6). As reported to OS surveyors in 1867, it had contained ‘*upwards of a thousand tons of stones*’ (Name Book, Banffshire, No. 19, p 29) and measured 33m in diameter, though the outline they depicted on the map is no more than 27m in diameter. One of their sources, however, William Anderson of Backhill of Drachlaw, is presumably the same Mr Anderson who carried out excavations at the recumbent on behalf of Andrew Jervise and provided the latter with slightly different estimates of ‘*about thirty-two yards [29m] in diameter, and more than a thousand cart-loads of stones*’ (Jervise 1879, ii, 277). It was left to Coles to elicit from Peter Anderson, tenant of the farm in 1902 and William Anderson’s son, that the cairn had stood some 0.9m high (1903a, 122–4), though neither he nor his father, who was born in 1820, were old enough to remember the mound before it was removed. Several artefacts were also discovered in and around the circle, but all are now lost and it is difficult to determine exactly what was unearthed. In 1876 the OS surveyors were told that a length of gold chain and a gold ring had been found in the cairn, while Jervise was merely informed of a ‘*metal rod or spear*’ and a ‘*pocketful of flint arrow heads*’ (1879, ii, 277). He was first drawn to the site by the nearby discovery in 1866 of a pair of bronze armlets,



The OS map of 1872 reveals the recumbent stone circle as an important landmark on the parish boundary between Turriff and Inverkeithny. © NLS

jet and serpentine buttons, and ‘*an object resembling a font stone*’ (*ibid*); Some twenty years later, a third bronze armlet was mentioned to Coles, and he was shown a small perforated axe-hammer and a jet button, the latter given to him to present to the National Museum of Antiquities (Coles 1903a, 178). Despite the rich variety of finds from the vicinity, Jervise’s excavations here and at another small stone circle at Drachlaw (probably NJ64NE 6) were by his own admission ‘*not attended with much success*’ (*ibid*).

Coles’ interpretation of the Carlin Stone as a recumbent was based largely upon its size, the knowledge that it had been the largest of the stones, its position on the south side of a ring enclosing a low cairn, and the smaller stones set to either side. Even without any evidence that tall flankers completed the setting, his reasoning is no less persuasive today, taken together with the distinctive shape of the block and the presence of a support stone beneath its east end. Of the small stones Coles showed to either



The Carlin Stone from the south. SC1100309

side of the recumbent on his plan and in his sketches, the western has now been removed. Fortunately it is visible on James Ritchie's photograph taken in 1900, and can probably be seen on another taken by William Johnston of the OS in 1964. These show that it was tucked under the recumbent's rising west side, and thus was not the stump of a flanker. It seems more likely that it belonged to the kerb of the internal cairn like the adjacent stone on the east rather than forming part of

the recumbent setting. This is another of those sites where a 'causeway' has been noted, Jervise learning from Anderson that his father, George, 'remembered having seen traces of a road, about twelve feet broad and edged with slates, which led from Cairnrieve to the Drachlaw circle, and thence, at an angle, to another cairn upon the top of a hill, about half-a-mile from Cairnrieve (Jervise 1879, ii, 277)'

Coles 1903a, 142; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 350, Abn 21; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 16; Barnatt 1989, 274–5, no. 6:19; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 16; Burl 2000, 419, Abn 20

Date	Personnel	Record
c1820	Demolition	Note (Jervise 1879, ii, 277)
1858	John Pratt	Description (Pratt 1858, 5–6)
1867	OS surveyors	Site of Cairn Riv, Carlin Stone (Aberdeenshire 1872, xxii.8); description (Name Book, Banffshire, No. 19, p 29)
1870s	Andrew Jervise & James Hunter	Excavations (Jervise 1879, ii, 277)
1900	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS BN801)
September 1902	Frederick Coles	Description, plan & sketches (Coles 1903a, 122–4 figs 33–4, 142, 178)
16 June 1927	Office of Works	Scheduled
7 September 1964	William Johnston	OS: description photograph and map revision
1960s–90s	Aubrey Burl	Guidebook description (Burl 1995 & 2005a, 94–5 no. 93, 110–11)
2 May 2005	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44486)
3 May 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

17 Cairnton, Forgue, Aberdeenshire

NJ54SE 1 NJ 5859 4467

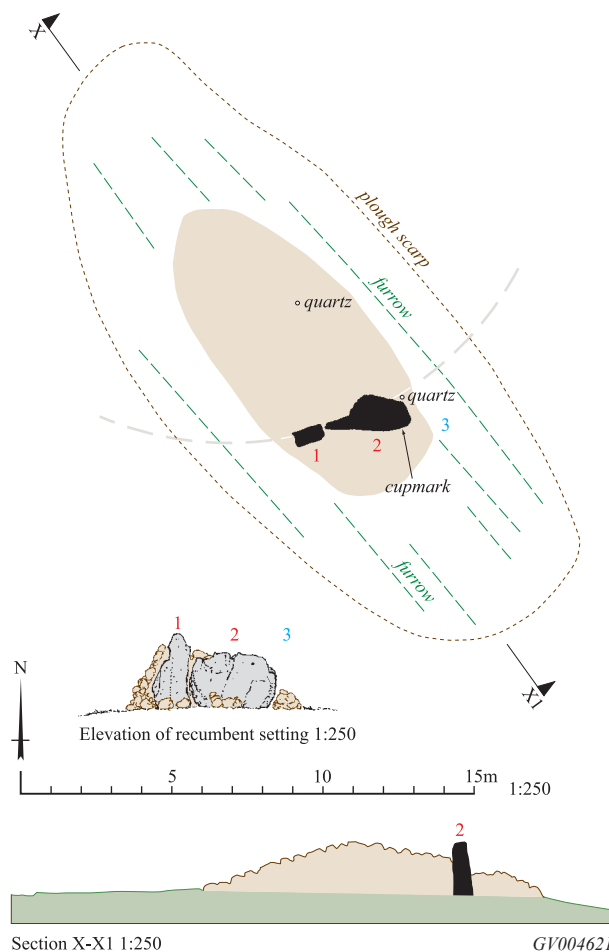
The site of this recumbent stone circle falls on a slight terrace on a south-east-facing slope, but only the recumbent and its west flanker remain in place, and these are subsumed into a large pile of field-gathered stones. The recumbent (2), which is a metamorphosed block of quartzite, faces south and measures 2.85m in length by 1.55m in height. The west flanker, a pillar some 2.25m high, stands slightly forward of the recumbent's leading face and the overall outlook of the setting may have been closer to south-south-east than south. Whether the recumbent is in its original position, however, is difficult to judge, for the rear of the stone has evidently been blasted, also destroying the west end of its relatively level summit. A possible cupmark can be seen close to the upper eastern corner of its leading face. The destruction of the rest of the circle evidently occurred long before OS surveyors recorded the two surviving stones in 1871 and it seems to have remained in the same condition from then until Eric Cameron of the OS reported the gathering mound of field-clearance in 1961. It was certainly unencumbered in 1902 when Coles prepared his plan and sketch, while James Ritchie's near contemporary photograph of the recumbent in 1906 shows that if anything material had been removed from



The recumbent setting, as photographed by Ritchie in 1906. SC676644

the front of the setting. In 1928 Alexander Keiller also visited the two stones, preparing a new plan but misaligning his compass rose; this may explain his error in equating the orientation of the recumbent here with those at **Aikey Brae** and **Loudon Wood** (Keiller 1934, 12).

Coles 1903a, 142; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 350, Abn 22; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 26; Barnatt 1989, 275, no. 6:20; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 26; Burl 2000, 419, Abn 22



Date	Personnel	Record
1871	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1874, xvii.12); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 31, p 9)
September 1902	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketch (Coles 1903a, 131–2 figs 41–2, 142)
April 1906	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2438)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1928	Alexander Keiller	Description and plan (Keiller 1928, 12; 1934, 12; RCAHMS ABD539; MS106/9)
2 October 1961	Eric Cameron	OS: description & map revision
31 July 1981	Clive Ruggles	Astronomical survey and tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 59, 66, 69–71, 74–5; 1999, 213, 215, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 30, 47)
9 November 1983	Jack Stevenson & Ian Smith	RCAHMS: description and photograph
6 April 2005	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44558)
3 May 2006	David Herd, Simon Howard & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

18 Candle Hill, Insch, Aberdeenshire

NJ52NE 10 NJ 5991 2997

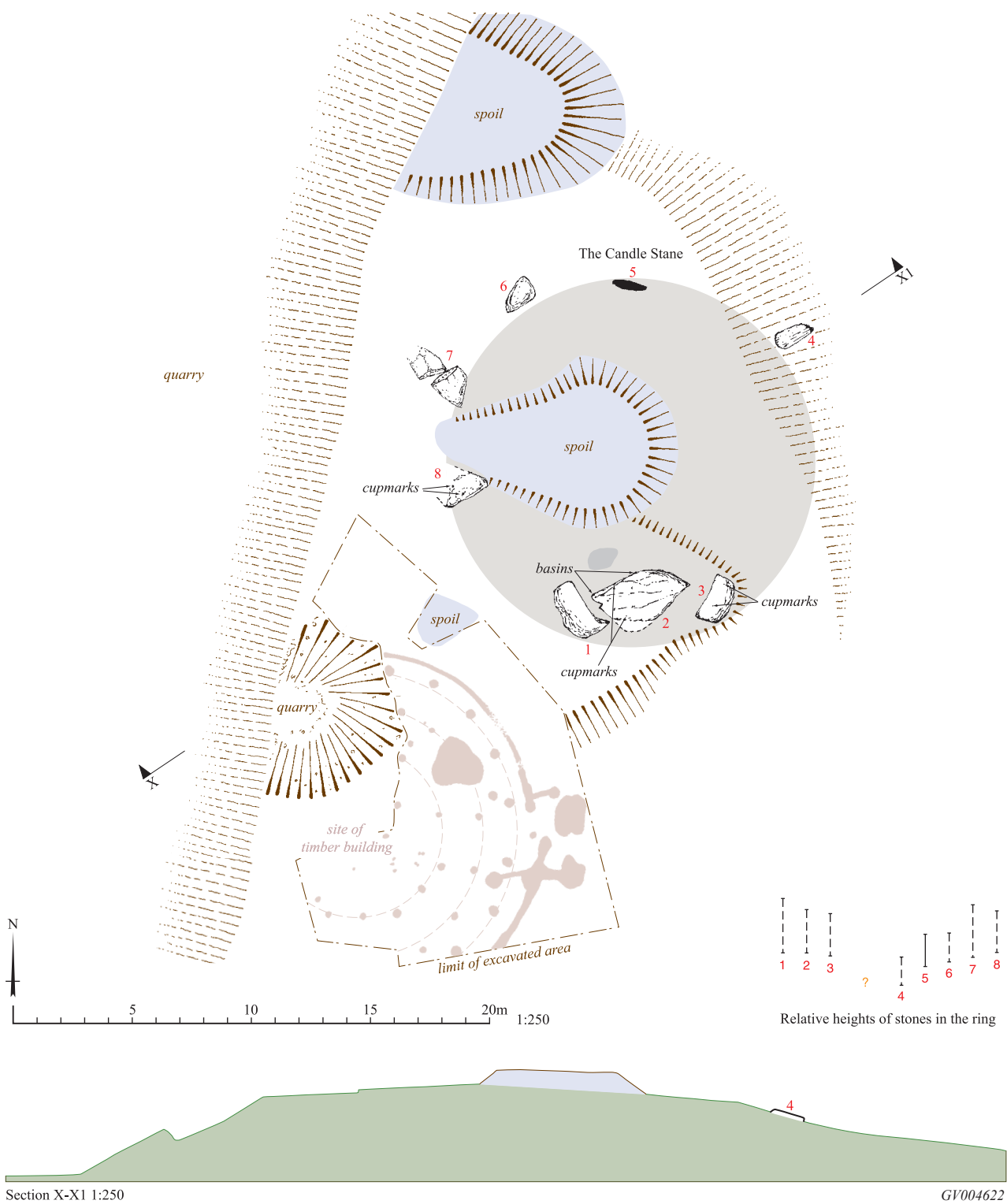
This recumbent stone circle occupies a prominent position a little to the south of the summit of Candle Hill, lying in a grass-grown clearing in the rowan and broom scrub on the east side of an old quarry. Only the Candle Stane itself (5) is still standing, but another seven stones, including the recumbent and its flankers, lie prone around the circumference of a circle 15.5m in diameter; the spacing of the stones indicates that there were originally at least nine, and possibly ten. The recumbent (2), which is on the south, is a roughly trapezoidal slab on plan and has fallen onto its back. It measures some 4m in length by 2m in breadth and its upturned face exhibits a single cupmark near the south-west corner. The even summit of the slab, which now forms its north-west edge, bears another faint cupmark and two broad basins. Both flankers (1 & 3) have also fallen backwards, but their shapes suggest that they would have appeared to arch over the ends of the recumbent when the setting was upright; the east flanker (3) exhibits two cupmarks on its upturned face. The north-west quarter of the ring is particularly well

defined, with the Candle Stane (5) on the north followed by an arc of three fallen orthostats (6–8) extending round to the west; the westernmost (8) exhibits two shallow cupmarks on its upper face. Another orthostat (4) lies displaced down the slope to the north-east. The interior is dominated by a spoil-tip from the adjacent quarry, but the presence of an internal cairn beneath it is probably denoted by the slight swelling in the ground detectable in the drawn profile and a small exposure of closely packed stones immediately north of the recumbent.

Writing in 1842 in the *New Statistical Account*, Rev Robert Cushny almost certainly had Candle Hill in mind when he referred to ‘*a good many remains of Druidical temples, all in elevated positions*’ in the parish of Insch (xii, Aberdeenshire, 751; see also Nos. 28, 37, 61 & 69). By 1867, however, the circle had been subsumed into the coniferous plantation that is shown clothing the summit of the hill on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map. The adjacent quarry, long disused, is also depicted, but passes unmentioned by the OS surveyors who recorded the circle. They reported that it comprised seven stones, and even then the Candle Stane was the only one that remained standing (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 41, pp 37–8); the eighth stone, on the north-east (4), was evidently lost beneath the trees

The view from the north-north-east. DP007360





and first appears with the revision of the 1:2500 map carried out in 1899. By then, some thirty years later, the tree cover had thinned, though Coles was confronted in 1901 by ‘vegetation of most luxuriant growth’ (Coles 1902, 543), as can be seen in James Ritchie’s photograph of the fallen recumbent and its west flanker probably taken within days of his visit. This probably explains why Coles not only missed the fallen orthostat

on the north-east (4), but also skewed his plan. Unaware of his error, he concluded that there were originally eight stones in the circle and failed to appreciate that the gap on the east was too large to be filled by a single stone. Perhaps more surprising, Coles failed to recognise the quarry for what it was, describing it as ‘an enormous trench’, and he consequently misconstrued the ramp of spoil dumped in the interior as a ‘well-

defined central cairn, depicting a symmetrical round mound at the centre of the ring. Ritchie subsequently corrected the identification of the *'trench'*, but not of the central cairn (1917, 34).

Candle Hill was one of the circles visited in 1907 by Sir Norman Lockyer, and a little later by Right Rev George Browne, whose photograph shows a further change in the vegetation on the ring; the undergrowth recorded by Ritchie is all gone, replaced by closely cropped grass and a few birch saplings; a conifer that had stood immediately in front of the recumbent is reduced to a stump (Browne 1921, 80, pl xxiv). With this change in the conditions, Alexander Keiller re-discovered the fallen orthostat on the north-east and depicts it on his plan of c1926. Observing the shape of the recumbent and its flankers, he argued in the accompanying description that the projecting foot on the east side of the west flanker revealed *'an exquisite piece of workmanship'*, in which the flanker would have also served as a support stone for the curved base of the recumbent in its *'scooped "bed"'* (Keiller 1927,

6–7; 1934, 14). His plan shows the stones in much the same positions that they occupy today and though a manuscript note announces his intention to revise the drawing there is no evidence he ever returned.

Despite this flurry of activity in the first three decades of the 20th century, the possible cupmarks on the east flanker (3) and the west orthostat (8) were only recognised with the visit of Keith Blood of the OS in 1967, and the true character of the spoil-tip within the interior not until the present survey. Later work has tended to follow Sir Norman Lockyer in examining the astronomical alignment of the circle, but renewed quarrying led in 1996–7 to an excavation by Kirsty Cameron immediately south-west of the circle. The excavation did not impinge upon the circle itself, but uncovered part of at least one Iron Age timber round-house some 15.5m in diameter (Cameron 1999, 359–72).

Coles 1902, 581; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 350, Abn 23; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 39; Barnatt 1989, 276, no. 6:23; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 39; Burl 2000, 419, Abn 23

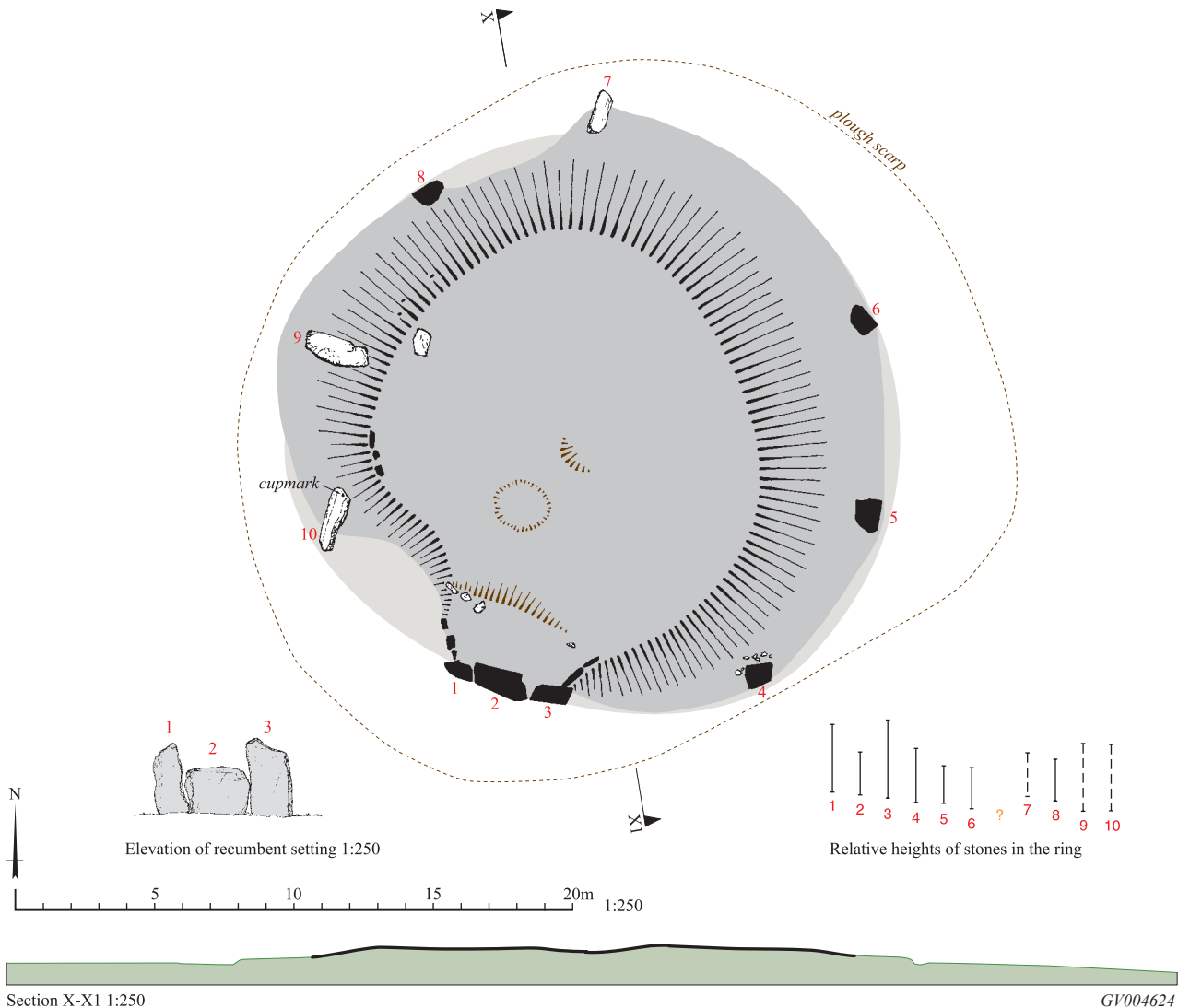
Date	Personnel	Record
1867	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1870, xliv.1); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 41, pp 37–8)
1899	OS surveyors	Map revision (Aberdeenshire 1900, xliv)
September 1901	James Ritchie	Photograph (Ritchie 1917, 34; RCAHMS AB2498)
September 1901	Frederick Coles	Description, plans, sections and sketch (Coles 1902, 540–5 figs 58–61, 581)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 396, 409)
1920	George Browne	Description and photograph (Browne 1921, 80, pl xxiv)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1926	Alexander Keiller	Description and unrevised plan (Keiller 1927, 6–7; 1934, 14; RCAHMS ADB548; MS106/27, 4–5)
21 September 1967	Keith Blood	OS: description and map revision
15 June 1981	Clive Ruggles	Astronomical survey and tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 59, 66, 68, 70–1, 74–5; 1999, 213–14; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 41, 47, 50)
2 April 1996	John Sherriff & Iain Fraser	RCAHMS: description and photographs
18 November 1996	Alan Leith, John Sherriff & Mathew Ritchie	RCAHMS: plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44467; Cameron 1999, 361)
7 July 1999	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and additions to plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44467)
6 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

19 Castle Fraser, Cluny, Aberdeenshire

NJ71SW 3 NJ 7150 1253

Standing on a low rise in an arable field 340m west-north-west of the West Lodge of Castle Fraser, this well-known recumbent stone circle measures about 20.5m in diameter. It originally comprised the recumbent setting on the south-south-west (1–3) and eight orthostats (4–10), but one of the latter is missing on the north-north-east and three others (7, 9 & 10) were lying prostrate at the time of the survey. Since then, in the spring of 2002, another orthostat (4) was knocked over in the course of cultivation and has been broken in two. The recumbent (2) is a block with an even summit and measures 2.25m in length by 1.55m in height. It fits snugly between the two flankers (1 & 3), which are 2.45m and 2.7m high respectively and appear to arc over the ends of the recumbent. The western is a relatively slender pillar standing flush with the front of the recumbent, whereas the eastern is a broader slab set back slightly and turned as if to trace the arc of the circle. The orthostats of the ring are evenly spaced, and though three stones

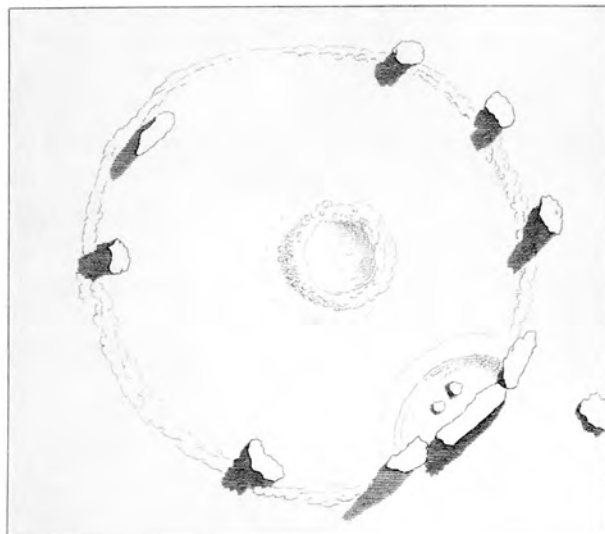
are fallen their lengths leave no doubt that they were designed to reduce in height from the flankers round towards the north-east. There is a single cupmark on the north tip of the orthostat lying on the west-south-west (10). Within the grass-grown interior a low flat-topped mound can be seen, spread by ploughing to a maximum of 20.5m from east-south-east to west-north-west by 19.5m transversely and 0.6m in height. Excavation in 1856 by Charles Dalrymple showed that this is the remains of a ring-cairn with a central court about 4m in diameter (below). Nothing is now visible of the court, but three outer kerbstones protrude through the lip of the mound on the west-south-west, and the tops of another three can be seen a little further round to the north. They lie on a projected circumference about 16m in diameter, while another five larger kerbstones immediately behind the flankers show that its kerb turned outwards on this side to embrace the recumbent setting. There are two shallow depressions on the flat top of the ring-cairn, the northern of which has four boulders lying loose around its lip. These can be seen in the ploughed surface in a photograph taken in 1903 by James Ritchie, which also



shows that the scarp that demarcates the north side of what is sometimes described as a raised platform behind the recumbent setting is an accident of plough damage to the rest of the mound, rather than a feature in its own right.

The first glimpse of the recumbent stone circle in its pre-improvement landscape at Castle Fraser is provided by an estate map of 1788 by Alexander Law, which shows the Druid Temple situated on the south side of a sub-rectangular field named Standing Stene Faughs; the two fields to the south are the Standing Stene Folds. Faugh in this context means fallow, while the folds refer to the process of tathing (manuring on the hoof within temporary enclosures), indicating that the circle lay within outfield lands which were not yet under permanent cultivation (Dixon and Gannon 2007, 216, 228). A strip of ground cutting across these fields to the north of the circle is preserved beneath a plantation, and displays the broad high-backed rigs that are characteristic of many pre-improvement field-systems (NJ71SW 66); the estate map suggests that these once extended southwards across the interior of the circle, as indeed does a sketch taken by James Logan in the 1820s.

Logan also prepared a plan and noted that only nine of the eleven stones remained (1829a, 201). The stone that must have stood on the north-north-east was already missing, and orthostat 9, which now lies prostrate on the west-north-west, is disconcertingly absent. A roughly contemporary oil painting of the circle by James Giles, titled *The Weird Wife* (1830; Ferguson 2001, 16–17) appears to show part of this stone, though it must be admitted that considerable licence has been taken with the perspective of the view, and its neighbour (10) on the west-south-west is not only fallen but well embedded in the ground. Returning to Logan's plan, his outlines of this latter stone and orthostat 7 on the north are more like their fallen shapes and it is possible that these were no longer upright at the time of his visit, despite the evidence provided by his sketch and the shading of the plan. Logan's depiction has also caused other confusion and shows what has been interpreted as a ring-bank lying inside the line of the circle on the east and outside it on the west (Mercer 1978, 273–5); comparing this feature with the present plan, it roughly accords with the tail of the internal mound, and this is probably what Logan was attempting to represent. The same convention is used to show two other features, the first being circular at the centre, from which it can be concluded that the central court had probably been dug into long before Dalrymple's excavations, and the second semicircular enclosing two small boulders immediately behind the recumbent. This latter is presumably the tump of cairn material that still survives behind the recumbent, which is so clearly delineated by a plough scar in Ritchie's later photographs. It is likely that this scarp separating the tump from the rest of the mound first formed as a result of one of the furrows of the earlier rig cutting across the



Logan's plan of the 1820s shows nine stones surrounding a cairn that has been disturbed at its centre and a lynchet behind the recumbent setting. SC1115814

interior. The final feature noted by Logan is a prostrate stone outside the ring on the south, which was probably no more than a cleared boulder; it does not appear on any subsequent plans and was presumably removed not long after.

Dalrymple commenced excavations in September 1856 (Fraser 2003, 16) and though there are four brief reports detailing his discoveries, the most complete is contained in a letter he sent to Colonel Charles Fraser, the owner of the Castle Fraser estate (Slade 1978, 269–72; Stuart 1867, xcv; Coles 1901, 199; 1904, 299–303). This was accompanied by a plan, which Gordon Slade examined in the muniments room of Castle Fraser, but it has not been located since (Slade 1978, 269). Slade also seems to have come across a plan of Dalrymple's excavations amongst notes by James Skene (*ibid*), though it has not proved possible to locate this drawing either. Quite why a drawing of Dalrymple's excavations should be found amongst Skene's notes is unexplained. Before the excavations had taken place William Skene, James' son, had made his father's sketchbook containing drawings of stone circles and sculptured stones available to John Stuart (Stuart 1856, xvi). This is probably the same sketchbook that forms part of the Society of Antiquaries manuscripts held by the Royal Commission (RCAHMS SAS464), but as far as is known its contents all date from the 1820s to the mid 1830s and do not include any drawings of Castle Fraser. Nor is there any evidence that James Skene maintained an interest in such matters into his later life. From 1838 he lived in Greece, returning in 1844, first to Leamington and then Frewen Hall, Oxford, where he died in 1864. Roger Mercer, helping Slade to complete his work on Castle Fraser, has published a re-drawn version of the plan that has been attributed to Skene (1978, 274, fig 7). This bears sufficient points in common with the plan that Coles re-drew from one that Dalrymple had sent to John



The snapped orthostat (4) is clearly visible, but another small boulder has been introduced as a stand-in for the missing orthostat on the north-east. SC797773

Stuart, conflating it with his own observations at the beginning of the 20th century (Coles 1904, 299–300, fig 30), that we can be confident that their sources are one and the same – an original plan by Dalrymple.

This plan purports to show only orthostat 7 fallen, but Dalrymple's letter to Colonel Fraser (Slade 1978, 269–72) explicitly states that of the ten surviving stones in 1856, three were then down, and though he does not indicate which these were, this effectively confirms the conclusion drawn from Giles' painting. A thin soil blanketed the interior, and below this *'the whole area of the Circle was found to be paved closely & firmly with small boulders'* (*ibid*), a description of cairn material that can be found in many accounts of this period. He does not elaborate the methods of excavation that he employed and the presence of the external kerb of the ring-cairn escaped his notice. At the centre, however, he uncovered a court about 4m in diameter and discovered that its kerb of close-set stones was founded on the subsoil with their flatter sides facing inwards. The kerb was evidently incomplete and was missing stones on both the east and west, confirming that the court had been dug into previously. Nevertheless, the court was filled to the top with cairn material, and beneath it there was a deposit of rich organic soil containing charcoal and small fragments of cremated bone. The sandy loam elsewhere beneath the ring-cairn was dotted with charcoal, *'which seemed to extend, everywhere, down to the subsoil'* (*ibid*). What were probably two small pits containing the usual *'black mould'* also came to light in the south-west quadrant of the cairn, though whether cut into the subsoil or into the top of the mound is not known. Dalrymple gives no indication of the height of the ring-cairn at that time, but the tump surviving behind the recumbent setting still stood 0.75m high; its upper part was earthen and covered

a layer of cairn material *'enclosed & intersected'* by lines of larger boulders, beneath which another organic soil containing large quantities of charcoal extended down to the subsoil; a small deposit of this sort was also discovered beneath a flat stone laid against the back of the recumbent immediately above the cairn material. The larger boulders to either side of the setting are presumably the kerbstones that can still be seen linking it to the internal cairn, but it is not clear whether those forming the concentric lines lying roughly parallel to the rear include an earlier course of the ring-cairn's kerb, repeating the sequence of construction found by Richard Bradley in the excavation of **Tomnaverie**, or whether it is simply a representation of the heavy stone work often found at the rear of a recumbent.

In his examination of the rest of the circle he discovered that the falling ground on the south-west had been levelled-up with *'a sort of rude step of stone'*. This description recalls the rubble levelling found at both **Loanhead of Daviot** and **Tomnaverie**, though his recognition of such a feature would be remarkable. Perhaps more likely he had observed part of a platform skirting the ring-cairn, which as found elsewhere is likely to have formed a deeper band of rubble on the downslope side; in this instance any encircling platform may have been better preserved in this sector, lying towards the edge of the headland of the tathe fold shown on the estate map of 1788. Other hints at the presence of such a platform are found in his description of several of the orthostats (5, 6 & 7), around each of which there was a *'tumulus, of earth over a layer of small boulders'*. In the case of the fallen orthostat 7, it was embedded in this material and its underside was almost at the level of the subsoil. Describing these as tumuli is of interest in itself, because although Dalrymple believed the interior had never been cultivated, small mounds of material surviving around the bases of orthostats is evocative of many of the circles that James Ritchie later photographed under plough, and is directly paralleled at **Loanhead of Daviot**. Beneath the *'tumulus'* around orthostat 7 at Castle Fraser, on the outside of the ring (contra Anderson 1886, 110–11), Dalrymple found eight small deposits of *'black mould and charcoal'*, in seven of which there were also sherds of pottery; the latter can probably be equated with the three sherds of Late Bronze Age plainware and a large number of pieces of daub bearing wattle impressions from the excavations that were recently rediscovered at Castle Fraser (Fraser 2003, 16). It is intriguing that a fragment of daub should also have been recovered at Tomnaverie (Bradley 2005, 35–6); like these, it is quite unknown what it was used for. The relationship between the stones of the circle and this putative platform cannot be determined. The levelling up of the ground on the south-west to *'the level of the rest of the*



Law's estate map of 1788 shows the recumbent stone circle was once situated on the south side of a field within a rig-system. © AUL

circle, so as to make it pretty level throughout' might be taken to imply that the recumbent setting rested on this material, though there is no hint of it today, and we can but note his observation that 'black mould, and charcoal' extended beneath orthostats 5 and 6 on the east and east-north-east respectively.

The OS surveyed the ring some ten years later in 1864–7, but they only observed '8 unhewn stones' (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 15, p 40), and did not include the fallen orthostats 9 and 10 in their tally. Extraordinarily there is no reference to the excavation, though they visited the castle and examined an estate map of 1846, and also consulted Alexander Watt, the local antiquary in Kintore. The interior of the circle seems to have escaped cultivation in the late 19th century but had gone back under plough the year before Coles' visit in 1900. This probably accounts for the errors in his plan, which was taken in a standing crop of cereals, and he did not detect the low mound within the interior, nor any trace of the central court. Subsequent enquiries elicited a sketch from Alexander Simpson, the schoolmaster at Monymusk, and this led him to add what he believed were five inner kerbstones to his plan, together with low mounds around and linking the standing orthostats (Coles 1901, 197–201, fig 11). A few years later he adapted this drawing in the light of the plan Dalrymple had supplied to Stuart,

which was accompanied by notes that are almost identical to those sent to Colonel Fraser (Coles 1904, 299–303, fig 30). Doubtless he would have adapted it still further had he had access to James Ritchie's photographs taken in 1902 and 1903, which show the swelling of the internal cairn and the plough-scar cutting across it to the rear of the recumbent. He might also have realised that four loose stones that can be seen in the centre of the interior form such a tight arc that they were unlikely to be kerbstones delineating the central court.

Subsequent work at the ring in the 20th century has had little to add. Coles was followed in 1907 by Sir Norman Lockyer examining the astronomical alignment of the circle, and in 1920 by Right Rev George Browne. The latter provides a new photograph showing that field clearance was building up behind the recumbent, and he also drew attention to the asymmetrical foot of the west-south-west orthostat (10) more than a decade before Kilbride-Jones was to expand on the significance of this feature (Browne 1921, 63–5; Kilbride-Jones 1934, 88). Alexander Keiller took yet another photograph in c1923, but added nothing to the record; nor did Alexander Thom, who resurveyed the ring in 1955. The first new set of data comes with the tabulated observations and measurements of Burl and Ruggles exploring the circle's astronomical alignment and its relationship to the surrounding topography. In particular they have noted the care with which the

summit of the recumbent has been levelled and the way the setting faces towards the Hill of Fare 10km to the south-south-west.

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1901, 248; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 350, Abn 25; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 66; Barnatt 1989, 276, no. 6:24; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 66; Burl 2000, 419–20, Abn 25

Date	Personnel	Record
1788	Alexander Law	Depiction (AUL MS 3470/27/230; RCAHMS MS1205/8)
1820s	James Logan	Description, plan, sketch (Logan 1829a, 201, pl xxiii)
1830	James Giles	Oil painting on canvas The Weird Wife (RSA Diploma Coll)
3 September 1856	Charles Dalrymple	Excavation, description and plan (Slade 1978, 269–72; Stuart 1867, xcv; Coles 1901, 199; 1904, 299–303)
1864–7	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Aberdeenshire 1869, lxiv.10); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire No. 15, p 40)
September 1900	Frederick Coles & Alexander Simpson	Description and plan (Coles 1901, 197–201; 1904, 299–303, fig 30)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 394, 399)
1920	George Browne	Photograph, plan and description (Browne 1921, 63–5, pls i & xi)
October 1923	Alexander Keiller	Photograph and description (Keiller 1927, 3–4; RCAHMS AB4818PO; MS106/24; MS106/29, 4–8)
August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
9 August 1955	Alexander Thom	Plan and notes (Thom 1967, 136; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 198–9; RCAHMS DC4407; MS430/17; Ferguson 1988, 63)
11 January 1965	Robert Dickson	OS: description and map revision
c1980	Aubrey Burl	Astronomical survey and guidebook description (Burl 1980a, 199, no. 19; 1995 & 2005a, 96–7, no. 97)
5 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67–71, 74–5; 1999, 213–16; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 25–6, 29, 30, 41, 49)
15–16 October 1998	Ian Parker, Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44485)
c2002	Gavin Macgregor	Colour survey (MacGregor 2002, 145–7)
14 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

20 The Cloch, Benholm, Aberdeenshire

NO76NE 1 NO 7812 6794

This recumbent stone circle is situated in improved pasture on the east shoulder of the broad summit of Cloch Hill. Now comprising a large slab (2) standing in the kerb on the south-south-east of a heavily robbed cairn about 17.5m in diameter and 0.5m high, there is no sign of a surrounding circle of orthostats. The slab, however, which measures 2.55m in length by 2m in height and has a roughly horizontal top, is of sufficient size that there can be little doubt that it should be considered alongside circles with recumbent settings. Although set up on the south-south-east of the cairn, its long axis lies north-east and south-west and the slab thus faces SE; the graffito 'JP' is cut into its summit. According to the OS surveyors in 1863, 'a large boulder [stood] at each end of' the slab (Name Book, Kincardineshire, No. 4, pp 33, 35–6), but it is unclear whether this refers to a memory of a pair of flankers once standing to either side or simply to the existing kerbstones. To judge from the kerbstones on the south-east, of which only a stone 1m high remains upright, the kerb was graded to increase in size and height towards the recumbent and its flanking stones; like the **Blue Cairn**, other orthostats may have stood on the line of the kerb.

This Cloch was once a landmark for the fishermen of Johnshaven. © HS Archive

The Cloch was only recognised as the remains of a recumbent stone circle following a visit by Keith Blood of the OS in 1967, but the stone itself was a well-known landmark long before, particularly for the fishermen of Johnshaven (Name Book, Kincardineshire, No. 4, p 33). It was first mentioned at the end of the 18th century, when the Rev James Scott described it as 'a rough stone, in the circumference of a stony circle' (*Stat Acct*, xv, 1795, 238) and he also noted how it leant backwards into the interior – the posture in which it is found today. Scott also speculated that the slab had been brought from some distance, if only because he knew of only one place in the south of the parish where this type of rock outcropped and this lay near the shore. Had the first OS surveyors depicted the cairn, Coles might have paid a visit when he was in the neighbourhood in 1902, but it was simply annotated a *Standing Stone* on the map and thus escaped his notice. Indeed, no detailed plan was prepared until 1982, when the surrounding area was surveyed by RCAHMS investigators. They treated it as a cairn with a large stone in a well-built kerb, rather than a recumbent stone circle (see also **Millplough**). This plan was reproduced by Gordon Barclay and Clive Ruggles, who reviewed the evidence on the ground in 1998 (1999, 15–17) and concluded that it was indeed a recumbent stone circle. They also proposed that a large burial cairn in a false crested position on the east flank of Bridgeton Hill some 540m to the south, which cannot be seen from the Cloch, may have been deliberately

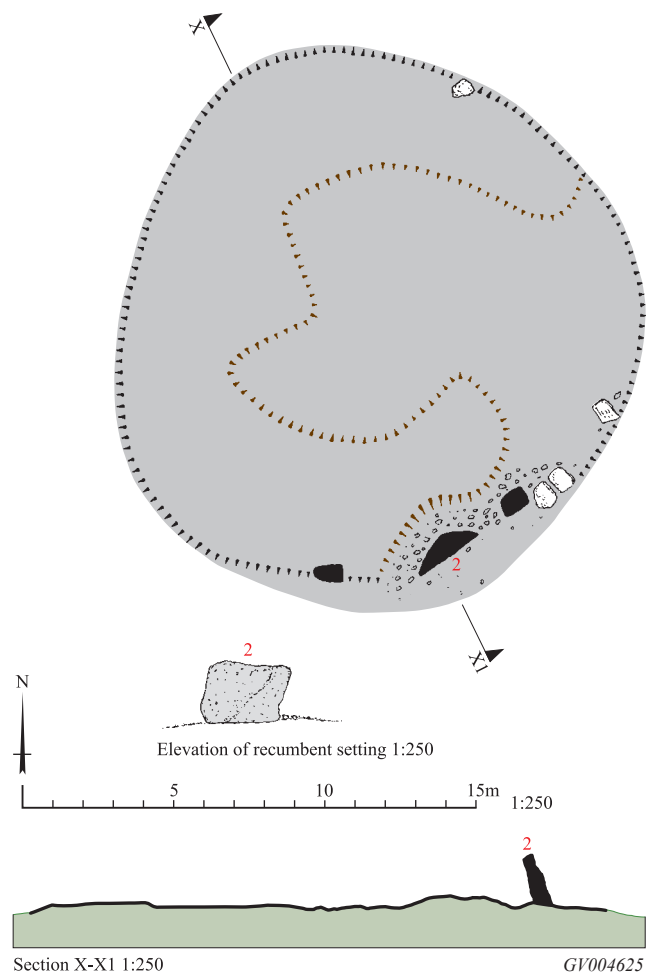


hidden from it. While there is no doubt that the two are not intervisible, the Cloch is also on a false crest and the siting of both may have had more to do with their visibility from the lower ground to seaward than any relationship to each other.

Ruggles 1999, 188; Burl 2000, 429, Knc 6



The raked recumbent from the east. SC1216989



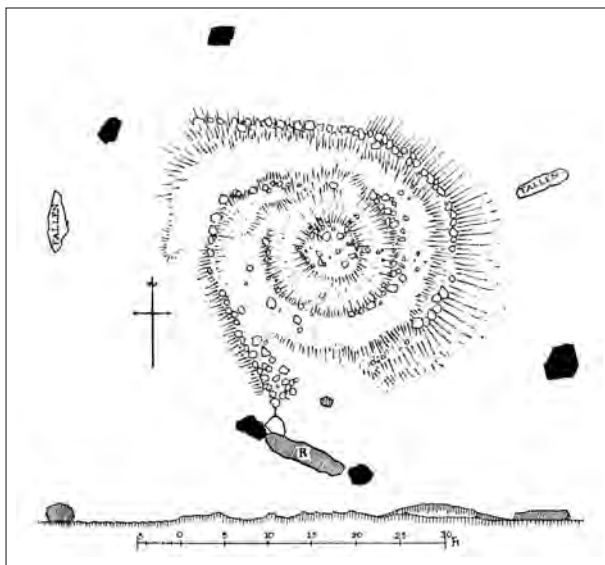
Date	Personnel	Record
1795	James Scott	Description (<i>Stat Acct</i> , xv, 1795, 238)
30 September 1863	OS surveyors	The Cloch, a Standing Stone (Kincardineshire 1868, xxiv.16); description (Name Book, Kincardine, No. 4, pp 33, 35–6)
21 December 1967	Keith Blood	OS: description and map revision
11 November 1983	Stratford Halliday, Ian Parker & Alan Leith	RCAHMS: description and plane table survey (RCAHMS KCD153; RCAHMS 1982, 9)
21 October 1991	Historic Scotland	Scheduled
August 1998	Gordon Barclay & Clive Ruggles	Plan and description (Barclay and Ruggles 1999, 15–17)
9 May 2005	Ian Parker & Angela Gannon	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44564)
12 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

21 Clune Wood, Durris, Aberdeenshire

NO79SE 2 NO 7946 9495

Occupying a low rise in a grass-grown clearing within the southern margin of Clune Wood, this recumbent stone circle stands side by side with a ring-cairn in a position that before the trees grew up commanded extensive views out across lower Deeside. Roughly oval on plan, the circle measures 17.5m from east-north-east to west-south-west by 16.7m transversely and retains its full complement of nine stones, though these are not disposed strictly symmetrically to either side of an axis drawn at right-angles through the recumbent. The recumbent (2) is a boulder measuring 2.95m in length by 1.05m in height, with its relatively uneven summit tilted down towards the west. The two flankers (1 & 3), which stand 1.55m and 1.3m high respectively, are of a similar shape and are set back slightly from the leading edge of the recumbent, but while the western extends its alignment, the eastern is turned slightly as if to trace the arc of the circle. Of the rest of the stones, two are fallen (5 & 9) and one is reduced to a stump (6), but they are relatively evenly spaced and are roughly graded to reduce in height northwards from the orthostats to either side of the recumbent setting (4 & 9). The fallen orthostats on the east-north-east (5) and the west-south-west (9) have been deliberately felled, the former showing signs that it has been split lengthwise, and the latter exhibiting a string of eight rectangular sockets sunk in preparation for its reduction. A stone lying beside the stump of orthostat 6 may belong to its missing upper section. The interior contains a polygonal cairn measuring 15.3 from east to west by 13.9m transversely and up to 1m in height, but this is also encircled by a stony platform that extends out well beyond the ring. The main body of the cairn projects

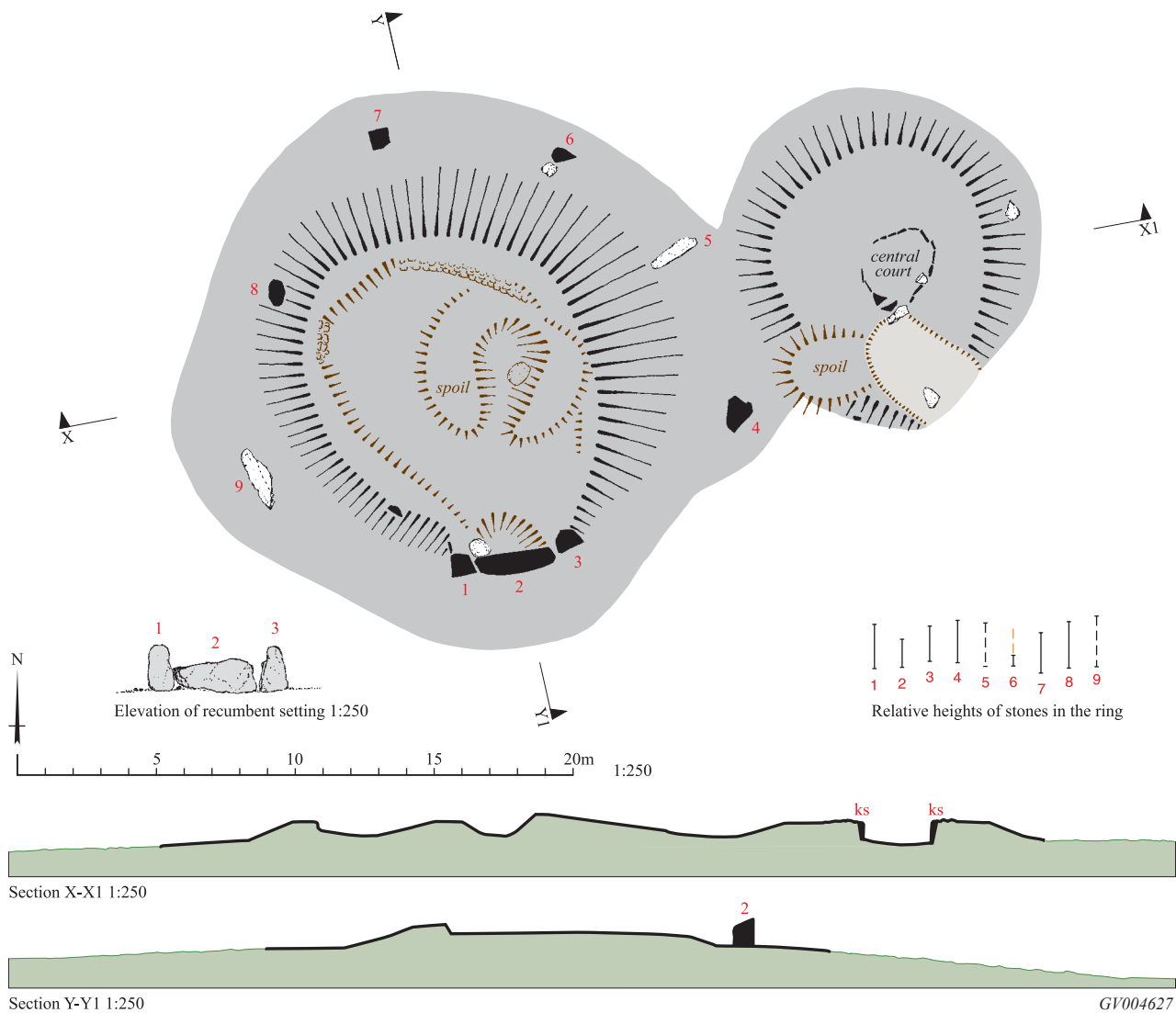
The dense vegetation that hampered Coles in 1899 probably accounts for the inaccuracies of his plan. DP078406



outwards on the south-south-east into the back of the recumbent setting, with one possible kerbstone visible immediately behind the west flanker and another a little further round to the west. The cairn has been heavily disturbed, notably by the construction of a small walled enclosure and the digging of two large pits, one at the centre and the other behind the recumbent. Presumably sunk in search of treasure, a large slab lies in the bottom of the pit at the centre, while the other reveals a foundation of large boulders behind the recumbent. The wall of the overlying enclosure, which displays an internal batter, lies eccentrically to both the perimeter of the cairn and the surrounding circle, and is probably no more than the 'ree' (fold or stock enclosure) referred to in the circle's traditional place-name (see Smith 1880, 299–300).

The adjacent ring-cairn, which lies immediately to the east-north-east, measures 10.5m in diameter by 0.7m in height. A single earthfast stone on its south-south-west margin may belong to an outer kerb, but nothing else of this is visible, unless two loose boulders on the edge of the cairn are displaced kerbstones, the one on the south-south-east lying in the bottom of a shallow trench that has been driven into the body of the mound. The central court measures 2.8m from north-east to south-west by 2.3m transversely within an almost continuous kerb of graded boulders that increase in size and height towards the south-west.

Shrouded in trees, it is hardly surprising that the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map shows only the stone circle, but the surveyors who visited the ring in 1864–5 cited Rev James Duirs as one of their sources, from which it can be reasonably speculated that this is one of the 'Druidical temples ... in the parish, but none in a perfect state' mentioned by his predecessor, Robert Copland, in the *New Statistical Account* (xi, Kincardineshire, 173); Duirs had started out in the parish as the schoolmaster in Copland's day, so he may well have known at first hand which were being referred to. If so, the removal of stones for building materials noted by the OS surveyors may have taken place before Copland wrote in 1838. Describing it as a circle of the 'common concentric kind' (Name Book, Kincardineshire, No. 7, p 27), the surveyors almost certainly recognised the internal cairn, but the adjacent ring-cairn was to pass unnoticed until James Ritchie photographed the court in 1904. Possibly it was seen but simply not recognised for what it was, perhaps being mistaken for another pen. Robert Angus Smith certainly saw the other small cairns that can still be found beneath the trees when he visited the circle in 1873 (1880, 295–6). He summed the ring as: 'five stones standing in their places, one lying, one fallen or knocked down, and a piece blasted off – making seven; one place is empty' (1880, 299). This contradicts the count of nine stones in a manuscript provided to him by William Brown, as Sir Henry Dryden realised when he attempted to construct a plan based upon their



measurements shortly afterwards (RCAHMS SAS 39/9). With the benefit of an independent survey, it can now be demonstrated that Brown took his sequence of measurements working clockwise from orthostat 4 on the east and missing out the broken stump on the north-north-east (6), while Smith missed out the prostrate stones on the north-east and south-west (5 & 9).

As can be seen from Ritchie's photographs taken in 1904, the dense plantation and undergrowth continued to obscure the circle, to the extent that Coles commented that no two stones were completely visible one from another. He was forced to fall back on his compass to obtain a plan, which probably accounts for why he failed to find the stump on the north-north-east (6) and imparted a curious spiral shape upon the cairn, apparently reversing the hachures of the pit sunk into its centre and misaligning the traces of later walling visible today. In fairness, Coles could see little more than what he thought was evidence of quarrying and disturbance within the interior, and did quite well to find the various rows of stones that appear on his plan. It was left to

Ritchie to provide the first description of the cairn. He had returned in 1917, by which time the trees had been cleared. He was able to identify the full complement of nine stones in the ring and drew attention to four ragged hollows on the outer face of the recumbent, though he rejected them as cupmarks (1919, 72). It was on this occasion that Ritchie first described the adjacent ring-cairn, drawing the parallel with another well-defined example at Sundayswells. Alexander Keiller subsequently made the link to the smashed cairns visible within so many of the recumbent stone circles and cited Raes of Clune as a typical example (1934, 7).

The trees may well have come off shortly after Ritchie's first photographs were taken, round about the time of Sir Norman Lockyer's visit in 1906. The latter makes no mention of the trees, which would certainly have impeded his observations, and the reason he gives for not taking any astronomical measurements is that he believed the recumbent had been disturbed (Lockyer 1909, 381, 410). Be that as it may, the preparation of a new plan for him by Thomas Braid, the factor of

the Durriss Estate, is perhaps the most likely occasion for their removal. The plan itself is lost and no others were prepared until 1962. In that year Alexander Thom surveyed the circle and the inner setting of the ring-cairn, but he omitted the fallen orthostat on the west-south-west (9), and the circle he best-fitted to the upright stones (1, 4, 7 & 8) bears little relationship to the monument itself, laid out with no regard to its flattened facade on the south. Others have evidently followed this plan, such as that for a Grampian Regional Council leaflet, which combines elements of Thom's depiction with a fine plan of the ring-cairn drawn up in 1957 by Audrey Henshall, while for comparative purposes Burl seems to have adapted Coles' drawing

(1972, 26), not only omitting the stump Coles left off on the north-north-east (6), but also the orthostat on the north-north-west (7). Ruggles independently collected a range of measurements here in 1981, but he too used an existing plan to explore the astronomical alignment of the circle and its setting. In conjunction with Burl, he subsequently noted the uneven shape of the recumbent's summit and calculated that the axis drawn through the setting falls on Strathgyle, one of the summits on the ridge rising up into Cairn-mon-earn some 2km to the south-south-east.

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1900, 198; Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 360, Knc 15; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 92; Barnatt 1989, 298–9, no. 6:79; Ruggles 1999, 188, no. 92; Burl 2000, 429, Knc 18

Date	Personnel	Record
c1838	Robert Copland	Note (<i>NSA</i> , xi, Kincardineshire, 173)
1864–5	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Kincardine 1868, vi.12); description (Name Book, Kincardine, No. 7, p 27)
c1868	William Brown	Note and measurements (Smith 1880, 295–6)
1873	Robert Angus Smith	Description (Smith 1880, 299–300)
September 1899	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketch (Coles 1900, 153–5, figs 12–13)
July 1904	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS KC299, KC303 & KC305)
1 October 1906	Norman Lockyer	Note (Lockyer 1909, 381, 410)
June 1917	James Ritchie	Description and photographs (Ritchie 1919, 71–3, figs 4–5; RCAHMS KC297, KC306 & KC337)
31 July 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1934	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1934, 7)
23 June 1957	Audrey Henshall & James Wallace	Description, plan and photograph of adjacent ring-cairn (Henshall 1963, 400–1 fig 105, 443, pl 5B)
20 April 1962	Alexander Thom	Plan and notes (Thom 1967, 137; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 232–3; RCAHMS DC4424; DC4759co; MS430/34; Ferguson 1988, 100–1)
1960s–90s	Aubrey Burl	Sketch plan (Burl 1972, 26)
4 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67–71, 74–5; 1999, 213–16; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 44, 47, 49, 51)
February 1984	Stratford Halliday	RCAHMS: description (RCAHMS 1984, 9)
8–9 April 2003 & 11 May 2005	Kevin Macleod, Ian Parker, Angela Gannon & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44534 & DC44587)
22 July 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

22 Colmeallie, Edzell, Angus

NO57NE 3 NO 5655 7812

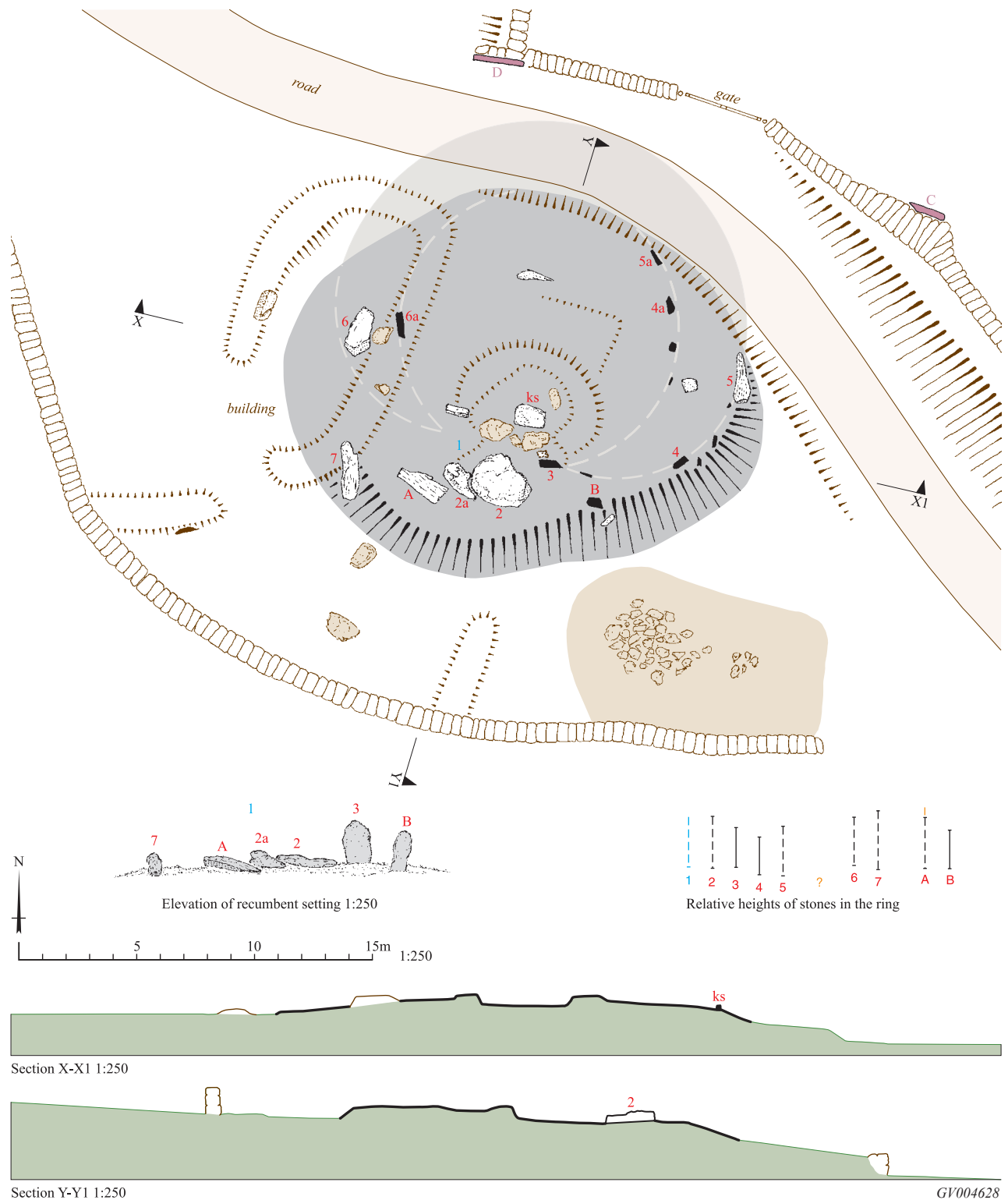
This recumbent stone circle is situated on the north side of the valley of the North Esk, standing on the leading edge of a knoll to the south of the farm road up to Colmeallie. It has been heavily damaged and only five orthostats remain upright, one of them being the east flanker (3), but the broken recumbent (2 & 2a) and at least four other large stones (5–7) lie on the skirts of a stony mound that extends well beyond the projected circumference of the circle; two more slabs probably from the circle are built into dykes on the north and east-north-east respectively (D & C), and others are known to have been reused elsewhere (below). Despite the damage, the disposition of the surviving stones suggests that it was probably a composite monument comprising two roughly concentric rings of orthostats, the outer measuring about 17m in overall diameter and the inner 11.5m. The surviving east flanker (3) shows that the recumbent setting formed part of the inner circle, which was probably set out along the kerb of a central cairn, though it is now impossible to distinguish the cairn material within the line of the kerb from the rest of the surrounding mound. In this position, the recumbent setting stood well within the projected circumference of the outer circle, probably fronted by a shallow forecourt with its mouth framed by two orthostats, the eastern of which is upright (B) and the western fallen (A). The west flanker (1) of the setting is missing, but the recumbent (2) lies where it has fallen on its face and is broken into two unequal pieces; the larger piece measures up to 2.8m in length by 2.25m transversely and its south-south-west edge preserves the gently domed shape of the summit. The east flanker (3), which is no more than 1.65m high and thus probably shorter than the recumbent, faces due south rather than south-south-east, apparently tracing the arc of the inner circle, of which as many as three orthostats are still in place, one being a stone 1m high on the west-south-

west (6a) and the other two 0.8m (4a) and 0.4m (5a) high respectively on the east-north-east; in contrast to the two surviving kerbstones of the central cairn, which protrude no more than 0.25m above the cairn material, each of these stones rises to a pointed top, and comparison of their heights indicates that the inner circle was graded to reduce in height northwards from the flankers. The outer circle has been reduced to six stones, two of which are those at the mouth of the forecourt (A & B). As at **Aquhorthies**, these stones may be additions to the design and it is noticeable that the foot of the eastern (B) is set askew any circumference projected by the axis of its neighbour (4). Furthermore, a single kerbstone that can be seen behind this upright is set at an angle that suggests the line of a heavily flattened facade springing from orthostat 4 on the east-south-east, rather than the edge of the forecourt; another three kerbstones roughly extend the arc northwards to the fallen stone on the east (5). Such an arrangement is strongly reminiscent of **The Nine Stanes**; there the recumbent setting also stands back on the edge of the internal cairn, but without any evidence of a forecourt. The cairn at Colmeallie has been heavily disturbed, not least by a large pit about 4m across sunk behind the recumbent, but the reduction of the body of the whole mound to its present low profile, now measuring 20.5m from east-south-east to west-north-west by 16.6m transversely and 0.5m in height, is of some antiquity and evidently predates the construction of the overlying building on the west; orthostat 6 now lies within the interior of this building and was possibly only moved into its present position after the building was abandoned.

Rev Andrew Hutton, the minister of Edzell, was the first to draw attention to the circle at Colmeallie, writing at the end of the 18th century when it was probably rather better preserved, but his description runs as if there were two separate circles: '*Two of these are*

Jervise's sketch indicates that the circle had probably reached its present state by the mid 19th century. © NLS





found...within a few yards of one another. They consist of tall upright stones, inclosing elliptical spaces; the largest about 45 feet [13.7m] by 36 [11m], the smallest somewhat less. There is in one the appearance of a small portico or entrance' (Stat Acct, x, 1794, 103n). A précis of the same description appears in the parish entry for the *New Statistical Account*, which was drafted by Hutton

and subsequently revised by his successor, Robert Inglis (xi, Forfarshire, 623), and it was left to Andrew Jervise to clarify that the two rings were concentric and formed part of a single structure (1853, 88). By then the circle had probably reached its present state and the sketch on the fold-out map engraved in 1853 to illustrate the first edition of his *Lands of the Lindsays in*

Angus and Mearnshire is almost precisely reproduced by a photograph taken a little over a century later by James Davison of the OS, not only showing the three upright stones on the south-east quarter in their correct positions, but also the tip of the fallen recumbent. Repeating the measurements given by Hutton, which roughly correlate with the distances from orthostat 4 to 6a, by 5a to B respectively, Jervise counted between ‘fifteen and twenty stones, including three large slabs in the centre, which are supposed to have formed the altar’ (1853, 88). This figure is not far off what can now be seen, and the three slabs of the ‘altar’ may well be a description of the two pieces of the recumbent and the fallen orthostat A adjacent to them. Apparently a recent tenant had robbed and blasted stones in the ring as and when they were required for building material. Apart from those in the adjacent dykes, one large block was carried off for reuse in a cart-shed, now a roofless shell to the north of the range immediately east of the old farmhouse (NO 5654 7821), where it forms the south end of the east wall.

OS surveyors visited the circle in 1862, and by way of description simply quoted Hutton and Jervise, as did the local historian Alexander Warden (1882, iii, 226–7). Its character as a recumbent stone circle was not recognised until much later in Alexander Keiller’s synthesis (1934, 1). The first plan, however, was not prepared until 1972, drawn up by Alan Ayer and Iain Sainsbury of the OS. Then, as now, the disposition of the stones proved puzzling, and their hypothetical reconstruction placed orthostat 6a in the outer ring, and they speculated that the east flanker (3) had been re-erected, presumably in the belief that the recumbent



Upright and fallen stones on the south side of the circle. © NMS

had fallen onto its back, rather than forwards onto its face. Subsequent work has focused on the astronomical alignment of the circle, principally by Burl and Ruggles, who noted that the recumbent setting faced towards the Craig of Shanno, a spur rising on the west flank of Glen Esk some 2.2km to the south-south-west. In 1998 Ruggles returned to the ring with Gordon Barclay and carried out a more detailed survey of some of the earthfast and fallen stones. They recognised that the east flanker was in situ, set up on the kerb of the central cairn, but contrary to the interpretation offered here, suggested that stone A was its missing western partner.

Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 354, Ang 4; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 96; Barnatt 1989, 277, no. 6:26; Ruggles 1999, 188, no. 96; Burl 2000, 423, Ang 7

Date	Personnel	Record
c1794	Andrew Hutton	Description (<i>Stat Acct</i> , x, 1794, 103n; <i>NSA</i> , xi, Forfarshire, 623)
1853	Andrew Jervise	Description (Jervise 1853, 88)
1862	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Forfarshire 1865, xiii); note (Name Book, Forfarshire, No. 40, pp 17–18)
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Note (Keiller 1934, 1)
28 August 1933	Office of Works	Scheduled
28 July 1958	James Davison	OS: photograph
10 August 1972	Alan Ayer & Ian Sainsbury	OS: description, plan and map revision
c1980	Aubrey Burl	Astronomical survey (Burl 1980a, 199, no. 30)
9 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67–8, 70–1, 74–5; 1999, 213–14, 216, 266; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 41, 49)
August 1998	Gordon Barclay & Clive Ruggles	Description, plan and photographs (Barclay and Ruggles 1999, 12–15, figs 2 & 3)
10–11 March 2004	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plan (DC44591)
24 July 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

23 Corrie Cairn, Tullynessle and Forbes, Aberdeenshire

NJ52SE 13 NJ 5522 2052

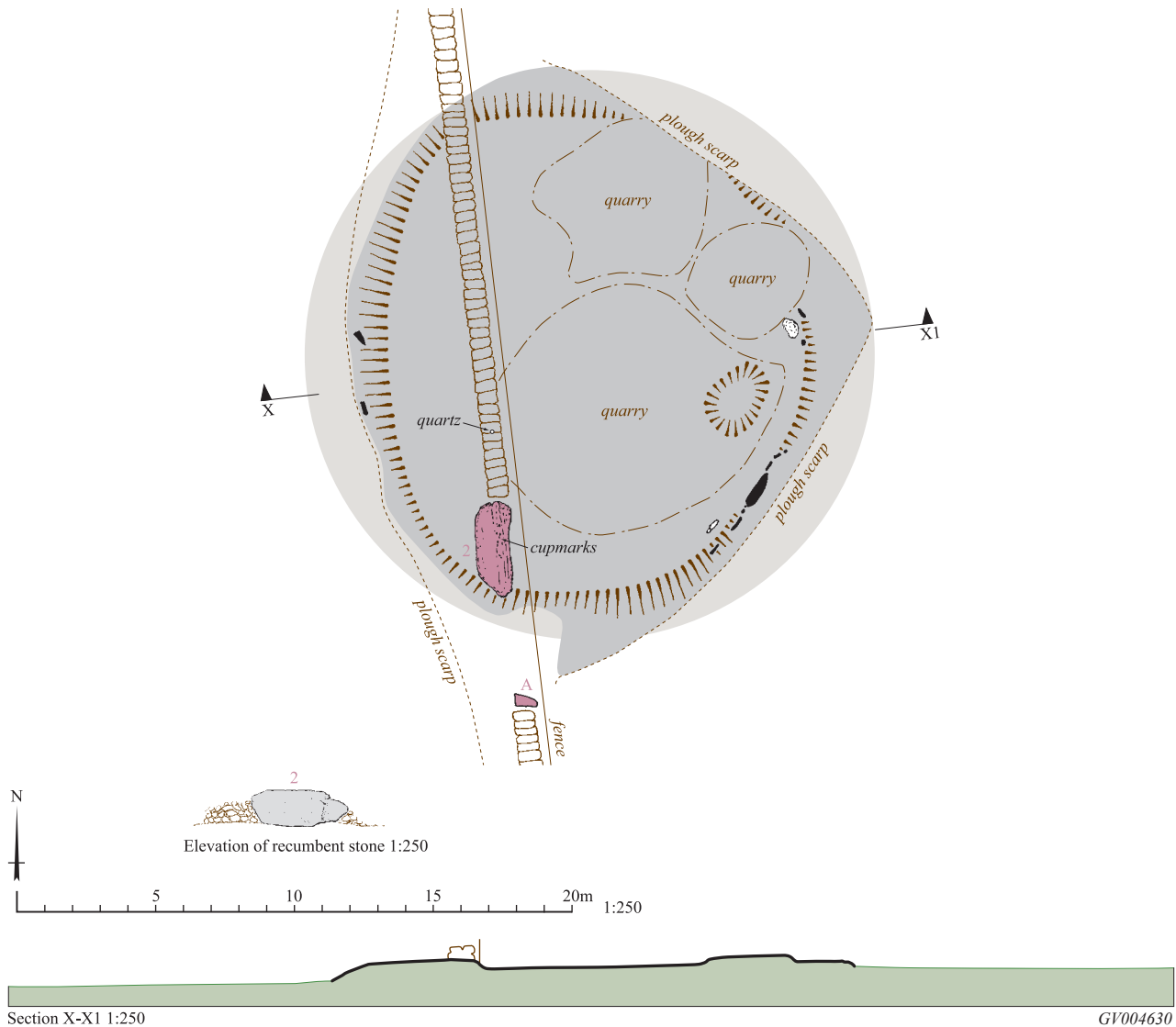
Now reduced to little more than a heavily quarried mound, it is only the presence of a large elongated boulder, the recumbent (2), built into an old dyke that allows this to be identified as the remains of a recumbent stone circle. The mound stands on the leading edge of a natural terrace on the crest of the spur descending south-south-east from Drumbarton Hill above Terpersie. The dyke incorporating the recumbent, now somewhat dilapidated and strengthened with a wire fence, traverses the mound from north to south, dividing it into two, the larger part lying on the east. The recumbent (2), a massive block measuring about 3.5m in length by 1.55m in height, has a relatively even summit bearing at least nine small cupmarks. It is probably fairly close to its original position on the south-south-west, with its west end dragged round into the line of the wall immediately north of a gateway; as a result it now faces due west. The shape of the boulder leaves little doubt that this is a recumbent, though there is no record of it standing between a pair of flankers, and, with the exception of a displaced stone (A)

A dyke cutting across the heavily robbed cairn incorporates the recumbent and an orthostat to form a gateway. DP007353

forming the south side of the gateway. To the north, the foundation of the dyke preserves the flat-topped profile of the mound, which is evidently the remains of a low cairn that has been heavily quarried. Now measuring 20m from north to south by 16.5m transversely and 0.5m in height, the eleven earthfast kerbstones visible around its margin suggest an original diameter a little over 16m, though the cairn may be polygonal on plan if the straight line adopted by the kerb on the south-east is repeated in other sectors.

The character of the Corrie Cairn seems to have eluded antiquaries, even when it was excavated in 1864 after the farmer had started quarrying the mound for stones for his land drains. This suggests that most of the orthostats from the ring had been carried off long before, casualties perhaps of the agricultural improvements that Rev William Paull, the local minister, had written about in 1840 in the *New Statistical Account* (xii, Aberdeenshire, 449). With one exception, he wrote, all the *Druidical temples* in the parish had been removed. However, cited as an authority by the OS surveyors preparing the Name Book entry for Corrie Cairn about 1866, there is no hint that he believed that this was one of them. Perhaps tellingly, the OS surveyors' only reference to the recumbent was that 'one large block of stone was lying near the





cairn, but what it was used for is not known' (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 88, p 53), and none of their informants proffered any local tradition of a stone circle at this spot. Nevertheless, an estate plan of 1840 they consulted names the cairn and shows two stones, one on the north-east and the other on the south-west (NAS RHP 14754), and John Stuart, who supervised the excavations in 1864 with Sir Henry Gordon and James Chalmers, reported that: 'A huge pillar, about 11 feet high [3.3m], had stood on the west side, but it had been overthrown, and after lying on its side was removed out of the line into a dyke' (Stuart 1868, 24). The stone forming the gatepost (A) had apparently stood just outside the cairn on the east. Stuart may have recorded a memory of the great block lying horizontally before it was moved into the wall, but it was probably no more than his supposition that it had ever stood upright.

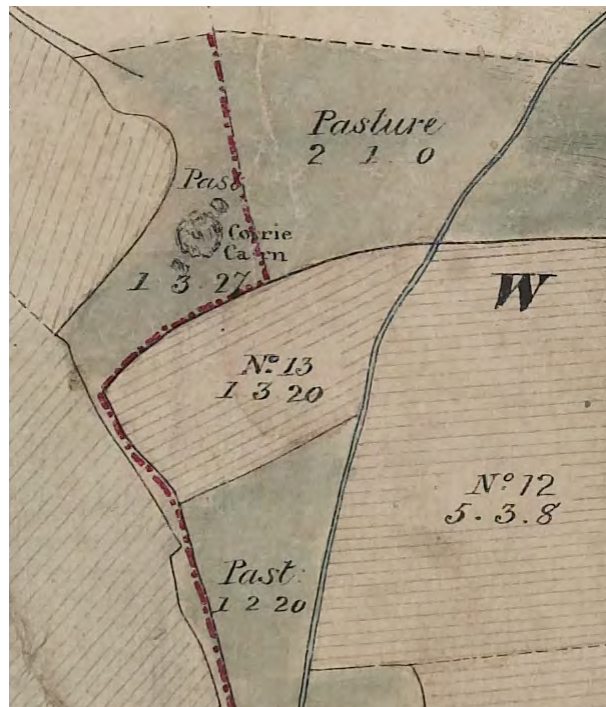
His description of the cairn itself is on surer ground: 'a circular structure, about 52 ft across [15.8m], formed

of small boulders, which rested on a foundation of large stones on the outside... About eight feet [2.4m] from the outside, the cairn was formed into a ridge all round, somewhat higher than the general surface, and from this it sloped downwards to the centre, which appeared depressed' (*ibid.*, 24). Assuming that they were not observing an earlier quarry into its centre, a possibility given that stones would have been required already to build the dyke, the excavators appear to have recognised a ring-bank in the body of the mound, retained externally by the kerb visible today. Within the central court 'great deposits of black charred earth and stones were found, with small fragments of an urn ... [and] many small fragments of white quartz' (*ibid.*, 25), which he identified as probably a funerary pyre (Stuart 1867, lix-lx). In dismantling the ring-bank they found at least eight separate burials, including three slab-built cists, which lay on the north, east and west respectively, the last containing a small 'urn' lying on its side at one

end. On the south side of the cairn they uncovered three slab-lined pits containing inurned cremations; the upper part of one of the urns, a Food Vessel Urn, is preserved in the National Museum of Antiquities (NMA 1892, 163, EA 21; Abercromby 1912, 123, pl 101, No. 53; Cowie, 1978, 104, 152). Two deposits of unburnt bones were discovered in small cavities above flat slabs near the easternmost cist. The Name Book entry broadly confirms Stuart's account, but it provides two dimensioned sketches of what appear to be Beakers with herringbone decoration.

Taking the classifications appearing on OS maps as his principal guide, Coles made no attempt to visit Corrie Cairn, while forty years later in 1943 Angus Graham and Gordon Childe unaccountably failed to locate the mound (RCAHMS MS36/1/17). Not until a visit in 1967 by Keith Blood of the OS was it recognised as the remains of a recumbent stone circle. By then a small cist photographed in 1955 on the south-south-east was no longer visible; it is not clear whether this was one of the burials recorded by Stuart.

Burl 1970, 68, 73, 79; 1976a, 350, Abn 31; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 51; Barnatt 1989, 484, no. 6; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 51; Burl 2000, 420, Abn 30



Walker's estate plan shows two large stones were present in 1840. © NAS

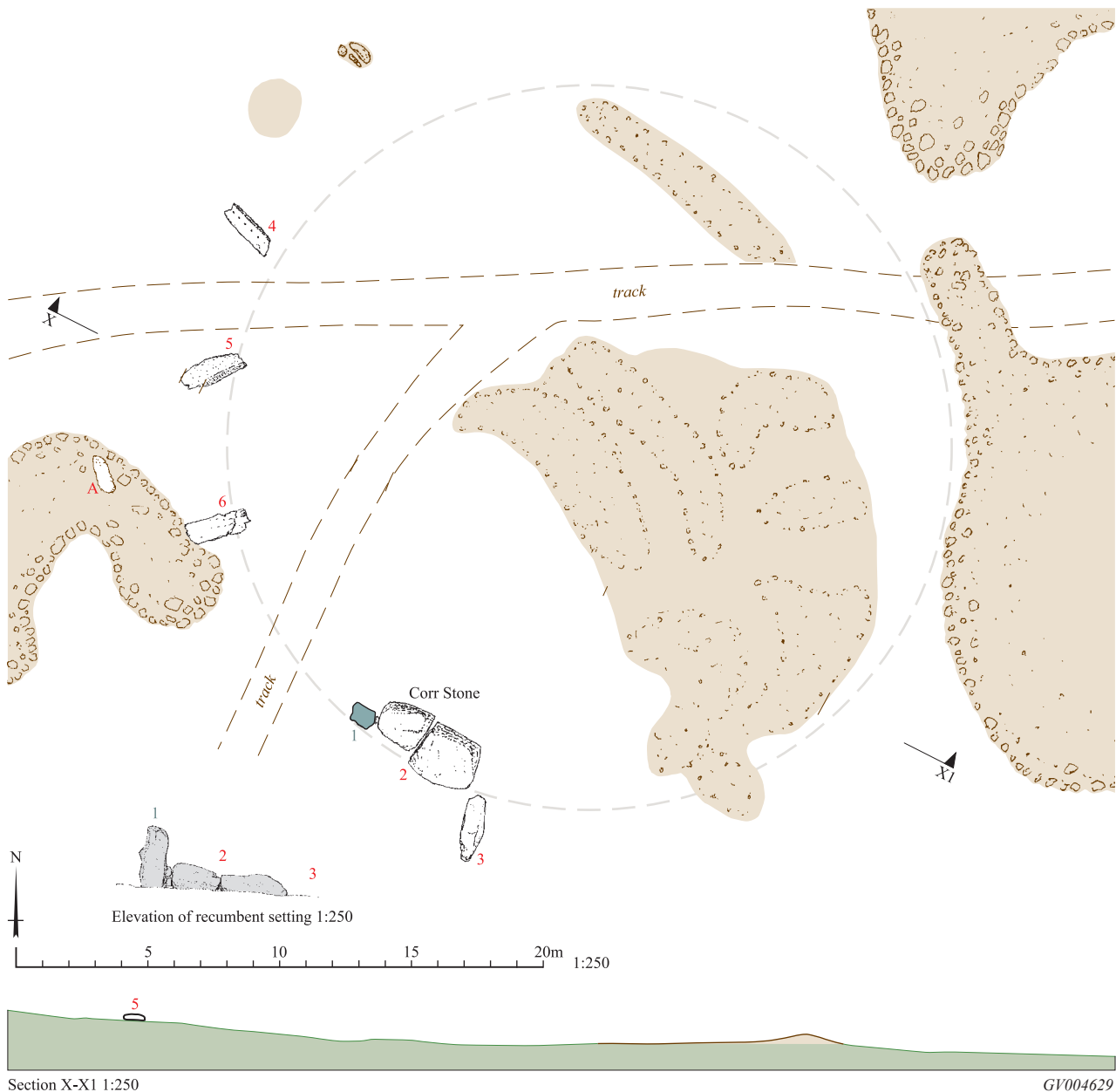
Date	Personnel	Record
1840	David Walker	Depiction on a plan of Knockespock Estate (NAS RHP 14754)
1864	Henry Gordon, James Chalmers & John Stuart	Excavation and description (Stuart 1868, 24–5; Stuart 1867, lix–lx).
1866–7	OS surveyors	Corrie Cairn: Stone Cists, Urns, and Human Remains found here (Aberdeenshire 1869, lii.11); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire No. 88, p 53)
1955	Small scales reviser	OS: photo of cist
18 September 1967	Keith Blood	OS: description and map revision
7–8 June 1999	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44498)
12 July 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

24 Corrstone Wood, Auchindoir and Kearn, Aberdeenshire

NJ52NW 2 NJ 5101 2711

This recumbent stone circle is situated within a deciduous plantation on the summit of the hill above Mains of Druminnor. The traces of rig-and-furrow visible in the plantation to the south-west of the circle show that it once stood in farmland, but the ground had been enclosed and planted with conifers by the mid 19th century and now provides a convenient spot for dumping field-gathered stones. One of the heaps occupies a substantial part of the interior of the circle, which measures up to 28m in diameter if the six surviving stones on the western quarter are a reliable guide. They include the recumbent and its flankers on the south-south-west, but only the west

flanker is upright and this was re-erected in the summer of 1799 (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 6, p 85). The recumbent stone (2) has fallen onto its back and now lies in two unequal pieces; before being split it measured about 4.1m in length by up to 1.95m in breadth and would have been an imposing slab when it was upright. The flankers are of similar sizes, the western (1) measuring 2.25m in height, as against the eastern's (3) length of 2.6m. The three orthostats lying on the west (4-6) have also fallen forwards, each measuring over 2m in length, but in their present positions it is no longer possible to tell whether their height and spacing were originally graded. Nevertheless, taken at face value they indicate a relatively large circle comprising the recumbent setting and at least fourteen orthostats. The row of six rectangular wedge sockets cut by stone breakers along the length of orthostat 4 clearly



demonstrates the fate of the missing stones, though what may have been one of them (A) lies on a heap of stones and boulders to the west of the circle.

Although several ‘*Druidical places of worship*’ were known to the Rev Benjamin Mercer, the minister of Kearn, at the end of the 18th century (*Stat Acct*, xi, 1794, 197), the first elaboration of any details of the circle in Corrstone Wood was in 1866 by OS surveyors. They counted only five stones, all prostrate except for the re-erected west flanker, which was adopted as a triangulation point. The wood took its name from the recumbent, which was annotated as the Corr Stone, named according to the surveyors on account of its ‘*coarse*’ shape, but overruled by Captain Edward Courtney in favour of a Gaelic derivation meaning ‘*great*’ or ‘*excellent*’ (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 6, p 85). In 1884 James Gurnell also found five stones and it was left to Coles, who was the first to record the wedge sockets on orthostat 4, to locate an additional orthostat. By the time Alexander Keiller visited the circle about 1927 the understorey of the plantation was so dense that he could count only four stones and his efforts to prepare a plan ended in defeat. Neither Coles nor Keiller make any mention of the heaps of stones that now shroud the site of the circle and it is likely these are recent additions, possibly since Richard Little of the OS revised the depiction on the map in 1967. Since then Ruggles and Burl have observed that the summit of the recumbent was probably flat, and they have calculated that the setting faces through a gap in



The west flanker was re-erected by parishioners in 1799. SC1115644

the hills towards Morven, a summit on the watershed between Donside and Deeside some 27km to the south-south-west.

Coles 1902, 581; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 350, Abn 32; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 33; Barnatt 1989, 277, no. 6:27; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 33; Burl 2000, 420, Abn 31

Date	Personnel	Record
1867	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of), Corr Stone (Aberdeenshire 1867, xliii.5); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 6, p 85)
1884	James Gurnell	Tabulated notes (Gurnell 1884)
September 1901	Frederick Coles	Plan and sketch (Coles 1902, 560–1 figs 74–75, 581)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1927, 3)
April 1962	Alexander Thom	Sketch plan (Thom 1967, 136; RCAHMS MS430/34 & 107)
20 September 1967	Richard Little	OS: description, photographs and map revision
2 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 66, 69–71, 74–5; 1999, 213, 215–16 ; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 46, 49)
5 March 1996	Iain Fraser & John Sherriff	RCAHMS: description
27 October 1998	Angela Gannon, Kevin Macleod, Ian Parker & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44490)
7 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

25 Corrydown, Auchterless, Aberdeenshire

NJ74SW 11 NJ 7068 4446

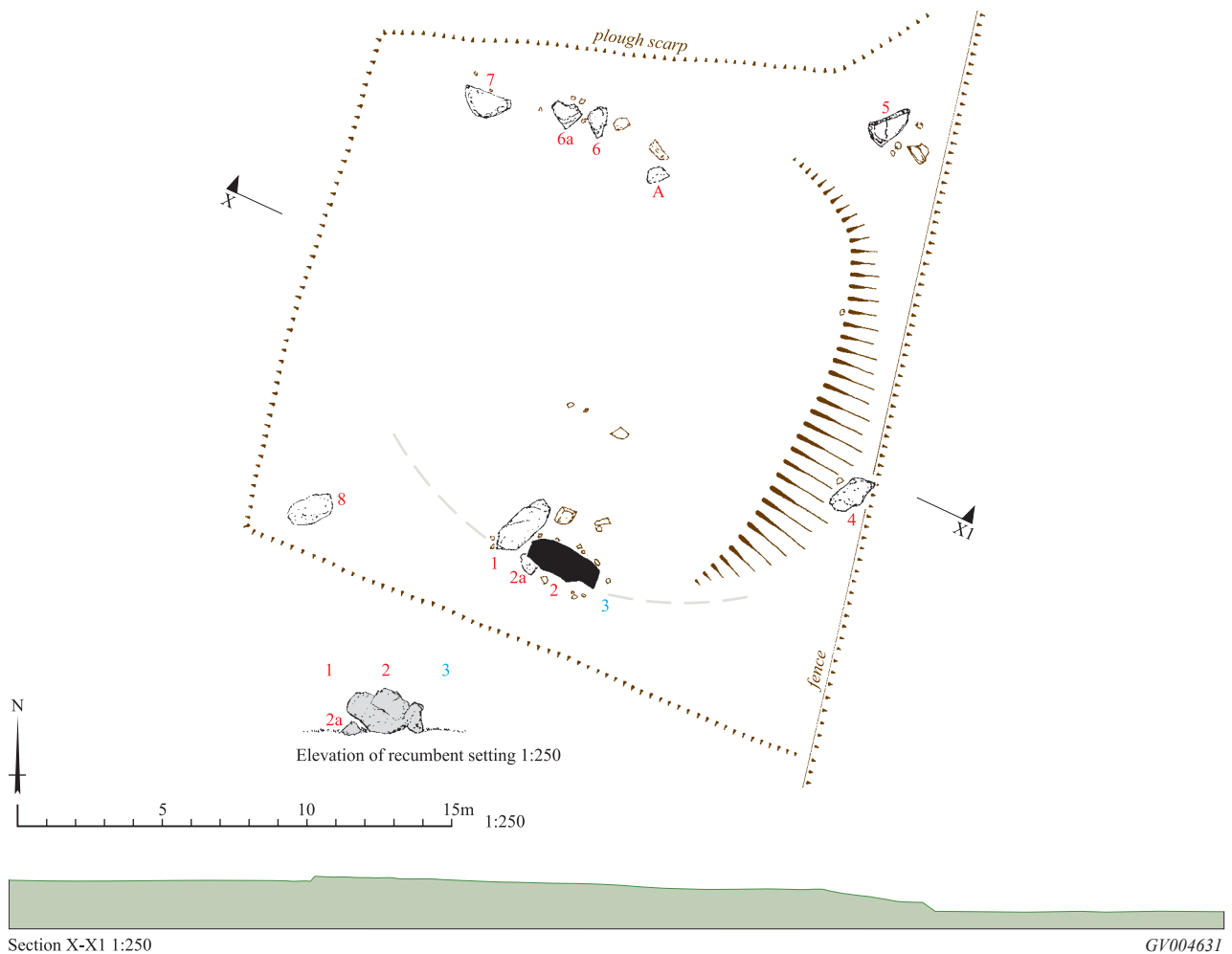
This recumbent stone circle is situated on the east side of an arable field, just below the summit of a broad flat-topped spur overlooking the Burn of Howemill. The circle now comprises at least six stones, but only the recumbent is still in its place. The rest are not only fallen, but most are also displaced, lying close to the corners and edges of a trapezoidal patch of rough ground that is left unploughed. The diameter of the circle can no longer be determined with any certainty, though in 1902, with the help of the tenant who had moved some of the stones, Coles estimated that it had been about 23m. The alignment of the recumbent indicates that it stood on the south-south-west of the ring. The block measures about 2.55m in length by 1.45m in height, and its jagged summit indicates that it has been blasted; a boulder immediately in front of its west end may be a fragment of it. The west flanker (1) measures 2.35m in length and has fallen backwards to lie across its own socket; the east flanker, which in 1902 was lying prostrate a short distance from the recumbent, has been removed. Of the other fallen stones, orthostats 4 and 5, the broken fragments of 6, and probably 8, are still in the same positions that Coles found them, but 7 has evidently been moved. The uneven interior has been cultivated and what is probably the edge of an internal cairn is visible on the east, forming a low scarp adjacent to the fence. The field around the circle is littered with pebbles and fragments of quartz.

Rev George Dingwall reported in 1840 that *‘the remains of Druidical circles are pretty numerous in*

different parts of the parish’, but he had a genuine Roman camp at Glenmailen to exercise his imagination and it is perhaps not surprising that he chose to describe the three kerb cairns at nearby Logie Newton rather than any of the circles lying further afield (NSA, xii, Aberdeenshire, 287). As a result the OS surveyors were the first to record Corrydown in any detail, describing it in 1869–71 as a *‘small patch of uncultivated ground with a number of Gray Stones; supposed to be a Druidical circle’* (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 7, p 20). Presumably none of the orthostats in the ring was still upright and they were sufficiently displaced that it no longer resembled a circle. Certainly this is the impression conveyed by the incoherent depiction of the seven stone symbols on the 1:2500 map they prepared, though in 1902 Coles assumed that it was the current tenant, Alexander Shand, who had tumbled them. More likely he had simply shifted the fallen stones to open up access for a plough team from the west. In doing so, however, he had *‘noticed there were quantities of pebbles bedded into soil which was unlike the soil of the adjacent fields’* (Coles 1903a, 110–11); presumably this was cairn material, though it cannot be detected in James Ritchie’s photographs of the interior under cultivation in 1919. In Coles’ day orthostat 7 lay further out into the field to the east, and he elicited that Shand was responsible for moving the fragments of 6. Coles also observed that the recumbent setting stood upon a marked bank, but he was unable to trace it round the rest of the circumference and it was probably either

The recumbent setting from the west. SC1115670





created in the demolition of the internal mound or otherwise by ploughing to either side of the recumbent. The interior was still under cultivation when Alexander Keiller visited the circle in 1928, but by the time Alan Ayer of the OS recorded the remaining stones in 1973 it had been returned to a patch of rough grass. Ayer estimated the diameter at about 19m, but this represents no more than the diameter of a circle intersecting the present positions of most of the stones (1–5 & 7);

nevertheless, this may indicate that 7 had been pulled back into the ring by the 1970s. Although the circle itself has been taken out of cultivation, the surrounding field is regularly ploughed and its surface has now been lowered by between 0.2m and 0.3m below that of the interior.

Coles 1903a, 142; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 350, Abn 33; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 17; Barnatt 1989, 278, no. 6:28; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 17; Burl 2000, 420, Abn 32

Date	Personnel	Record
1869–71	OS surveyors	Stone Circle Remains of (Aberdeenshire 1873, xix.13); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 7, p 20)
September 1902	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketch (Coles 1903a, 109–12 figs 24–5, 142)
1919	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2900 & AB2901)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1928	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1928, 7; RCAHMS MS106/9)
17 January 1973	Alan Ayer	OS: description, photograph and map revision
1 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Astronomical survey and tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 64, 66, 68–71, 74–5; 1999, 213–16; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 49)
28 October 2003	Angela Gannon & Ian Parker	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44544)
3 May 2006	David Herd, Simon Howard & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

26 Cothiemuir Wood, Keig, Aberdeenshire

NJ61NW 1 NJ 6171 1980

The recumbent setting of this stone circle is one of the most impressive, standing in a ride cutting through the coniferous plantation that cloaks the broad summit of a low hill. Measuring about 20m in diameter, the circle encloses a well-preserved cairn and originally comprised up to thirteen stones, though only eight now remain. Of these the recumbent setting (1–3) and those on the south-east (4), north-north-east (5) and west-south-west (8) are upright, one on the west-north-west (7) leans steeply outwards, and another on the north-west (6) has fallen. The recumbent boulder (2) is situated on the south-south-west of the ring and measures 4.15m in length and 1.25m in height. Its summit is relatively even, rising gently towards the east, and on the outer face there are at least two possible cupmarks, situated to the west of the natural indentations known as the Devil's Hoofmarks (see below). The two flankers, which are the tallest stones in the ring, are of roughly the same height, standing up to 2.7m high, but whereas the eastern is a slender square-sectioned pillar splaying from its foot to a flat top, the western tapers upwards to a blunt point (Bradley 2005, 67). This contrast in their shapes is repeated in the way they are placed, for while both are set back from the leading edge of the recumbent, the western projects the long axis of the setting, and the eastern, which is also fitted so tightly to the end of the recumbent that it leans inwards, is turned slightly as if to trace the arc of the circle. The ring appears to have been graded to reduce in height and spacing from the flankers on the south-south-west round to the north-north-east, each of the surviving orthostats standing within the margins of a flat-topped polygonal cairn. The cairn measures up to 22m in diameter and 0.8m in height; around the eastern half the edge of the mound forms a fairly sharply defined scarp, but this has been flattened out on the west by the passage of an old track. Two kerbstones protrude through the body of the mound on the north-east, while a roughly rectangular slab lies at the centre.

Cothiemuir Wood is one of the three recumbent stone circles investigated by Richard Bradley (2005, 53–77), who in 2001 excavated three small trenches here with the primary objective of demonstrating the relationship between the orthostats of the circle and the internal cairn. A complex structural history was uncovered, though analyses of samples from the old land surface beneath the monument suggest relatively little disturbance had taken place before construction commenced. The traces of burning noted were thought to be no more than the clearance of vegetation, while the magnetic susceptibility anomalies in the subsoil from one of the trenches and the discovery of some burnt stones in the fill of an old excavation at the centre, are by no means compelling evidence that this was the site



The recumbent stone circle appears in a clearing in a plantation on Home's estate map of 1771. © NAS

of a pyre (*ibid*, 65). The first component of the mound to be constructed was probably a ring-bank, measuring 16m in diameter over an outer kerb of upright stones that on the north were placed directly onto the surface of the ground and alternated red and grey in colour. The inner kerb, which was only uncovered on the south, was less formal, comprising a ragged band of larger stones, and the diameter of the court is estimated at about 10m. Where the outer kerb was examined on the north, one of the kerbstones had fallen outwards and a repair had been effected by the insertion of three smaller kerbstones on top of it. This collapse and repair indicates that the buttress or platform of loose rubble piled up outside the kerb was not only an addition to the ring-cairn, but that some time elapsed before it was deposited. From this same area, a concentration of worked quartz and rock crystal was discovered immediately outside the kerb beneath the platform (*ibid*, 57). Behind the recumbent setting, the rubble forming the buttress was more compact than had been found on the north and it was indistinguishable from that of the ring-cairn, but here the kerb had been extracted and its line was marked by a robber trench. Contrasting with the treatment of the kerb on the north, pairs of packing stones had been used to wedge the kerbstones in place between the two deposits of cairn material, possibly suggesting the kerb was more substantial around this side of the cairn. The presence of this robber trench preserved in the cairn material



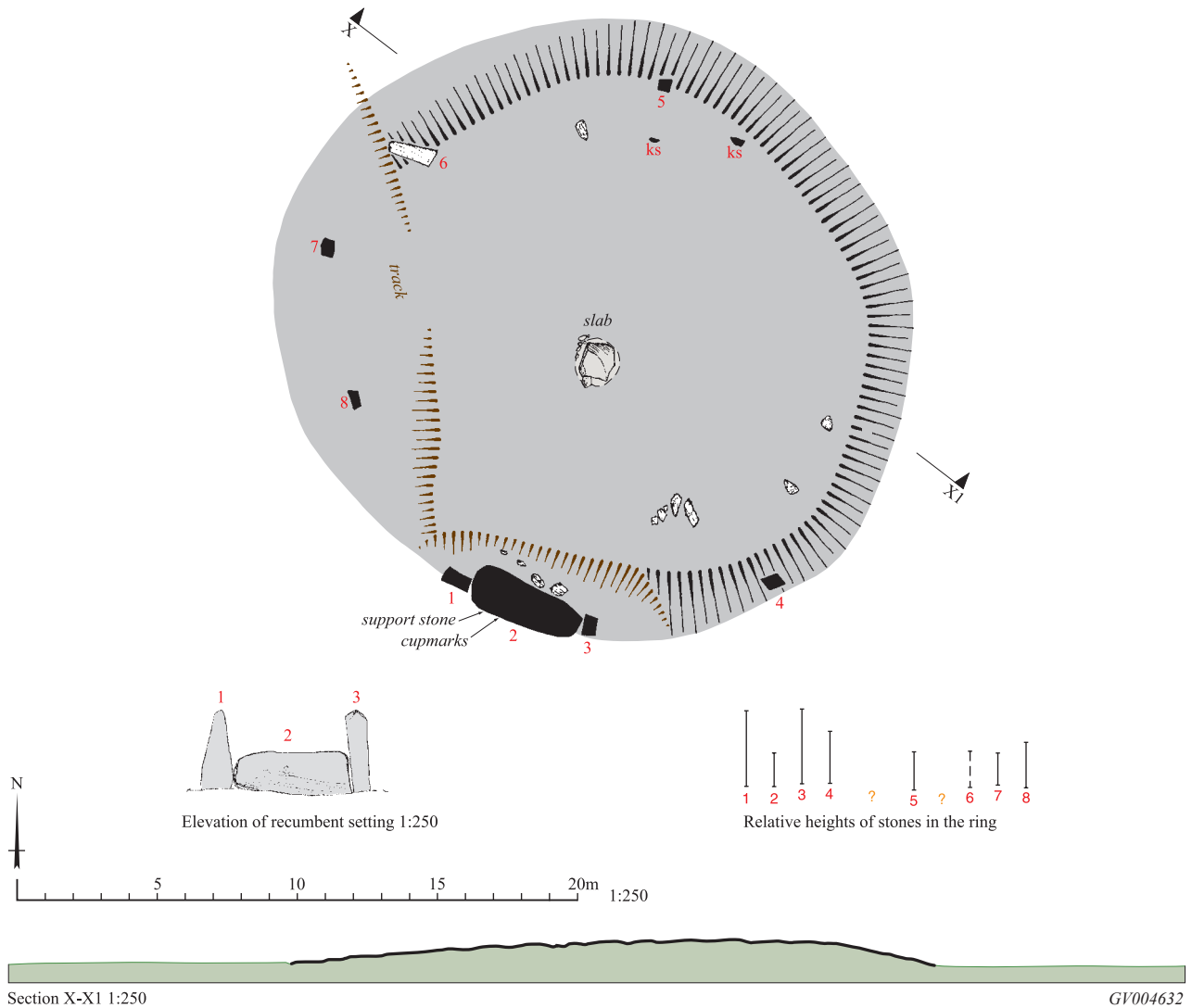
The recumbent with 'the Devil's Hoofmarks' at its centre is framed by the contrastingly shaped flankers in Ritchie's photograph of 1910. SC637201

also implies the lapse of time between the building of the platform and yet another phase of construction work, though what the stones were used for is not known; in this case there is no evidence that the kerb was re-aligned to embrace the recumbent setting, as was found, for example, at **Tomnaverie**. Nevertheless, at some stage the interior of the ring-bank was infilled with boulders and then the whole mound, including the buttress, was sealed by a capping of smaller rounded stones (*ibid*, 61). The monument was completed with the addition of the circle, and both the stone sockets that were examined, belonging to the west flanker (1) and the north-north-west orthostat (5), cut through the platform and its capping. The significance of the rectangular slab lying at the centre is not known, though it was shown to lie above an area of disturbance.

The date at which this disturbance took place is not recorded, but there are good grounds to suspect that this is the circle mentioned in 1692 by James Garden in the first of his letters to John Aubrey. Here, Garden relates, '*some persons who are yet alive, declare that many years since, they did see ashes of some burnt matter, digged out of the bottom of a little cercle (sett about with stones standing closs together) in the center*

of on of these monuments which is yet standing near the Church of Keig in the shire of Aberdene' (Hunter 2001, 121). Coles mistakenly assumed that Garden was referring to the new rather than old parish church, and made the correlation with the recumbent stone circle at **Old Keig**, but at this date there was only one church in the parish and Cothiemuir Wood is rather closer to it (Burl 1995, 98; 2000, 215; Bradley 2005, 54).

The first depiction of the circle appears on an estate map of Castle Forbes by John Home in 1771 and shows it in dense woodland. The scale is insufficient to disclose much detail, but the map clearly portrays the recumbent setting and five orthostats around the west half of a cairn annotated *Standing Stones*. Lost amongst the trees, there is no further record of the circle for almost 60 years, but in 1827 James Skene produced two fine sketches, one of the recumbent setting from the south-east, showing deciduous trees crowding in upon the circle, and the other a bird's-eye view taken from the north-north-east. This latter shows only seven of the stones (1–5 & 7–8); stone 6 on the north-west is apparently absent. In the centre, however, the rectangular slab can be seen above a dark cavity, and a small '*cairn*' lies between it and the recumbent. While it is tempting to believe that this slab was discovered during an excavation of the central area, perhaps covering a cist, it may be no more than an antiquarian



restoration of something that was thought to be appropriate for the interior of a stone circle in the 18th or early 19th century – a sacrificial stone for example (cf Broomend of Crichton North, App 1.12). This would certainly accord with Major Thomas Youngson's and Rev Alexander Low's allusion to the slab as an altar in a detailed description for the parish entry in the *New Statistical Account*. Written some ten years after Skene's visit, this provides a useful supplement to his sketch of the interior, referring to 'a quantity of loose stone, and near the centre a slab of 4 or 5 feet square, covering a small pit open on the south side' (NSA, xii, Aberdeenshire, 947). The presence of loose stones is in itself a hint at some disturbance and Skene's cairn is perhaps best regarded as the upcast from an excavation at the centre. Further evidence of disturbance, is implied by the scatter of loose stones on Skene's sketch of the recumbent and an annotation reading: 'some Deer bones were found under this stone'. It also shows the long rectangular support stone that is still visible propping up the west end of the recumbent.

Despite the apparent detail of Skene's sketch plan, it does not show all the stones described by Youngson and Low, who counted a total of twelve, of which the recumbent, its two flankers and three orthostats were upright; another two had fallen and four others lay broken (NSA, xii, Aberdeenshire, 946–7). The upright orthostats are presumably those surveyed by the OS in 1867, the 1st edition of the 25-inch map showing the recumbent setting and stones 4, 5 and 8 (Aberdeenshire 1870, liii.10), even though Skene's earlier sketch purports to show the stone that currently stands on the west-north-west (7); the map also shows a track crossing the ring from east to west immediately behind the recumbent setting. The accompanying Name Book entry is simply a reproduction of Youngson's and Low's account, but one of the authorities cited by the surveyors is James Rait, the ground officer at Castle Forbes (Aberdeenshire No. 43, p 41), who in 1868 prepared a drawing of the circle and took measurements. Initially he supplied these to Dr William Brown, who in turn passed them to Robert Angus Smith, though the latter



Ritchie's fine study captures the recumbent stone circle in 1908. SC679899

did not publish any of the details (Smith 1880, 309). A plan by Rait was also the source for a sketch plan drawn up in 1881 by Sir Henry Dryden and is referred to by Coles (1901, 217). Making no distinction between those stones standing and those fallen, Dryden's sketch shows the circle much as it is today and a note written within the interior reads: *'the whole area inclosed is elevated about 1/0 or 1/6 [0.3m–0.45m] above the open ground & the ring in which the stones are is the most elevated part'* (RCAHMS SAS39/1). This note, derived from Rait's observations, explains why Dryden shows the perimeter of the cairn with two concentric lines as if it is a ring-bank, though today there is no hint that the material that formed the buttress outside the kerb of the internal cairn was ever piled higher than the rest of the mound.

Coles also seems to have consulted Rait's original drawing (*ibid*, 217), but makes no attempt to depict the internal cairn on his plan; other than suggesting that the slab at the centre is the displaced coverstone from a cist (*ibid*, 215), he makes no comment about the interior. Stone 6, which first appears on Dryden's sketch and is presumably one of the fallen stones described by Youngson and Low, is shown in roughly the same position it occupies today (Coles 1901, 214, fig 23) and the support stone beneath the west end of the recumbent

also caught his eye. The intervals between the stones led him to conclude that there had originally been twelve in the ring, with one of them missing from the north-north-west and three from the eastern arc, but it was left to Alexander Keiller in 1926 to recognise that the spacing of the stones decreases from south to north (1934, 11). None of these plans, however, show the orthostats that Burl depicted on the east-north-east and north-east respectively in a drawing evidently based upon Coles' plan (Burl and Ruggles 1985, 31); nor do they appear on a plan drawn up five years earlier in 1973 by Iain Sainsbury of the OS. No trace of them was detected during the present survey.

James Ritchie first visited Cothiemuir four years after Coles prepared his plan and went on to make two more visits in 1908 and 1910, taking photographs on each occasion. In his earliest pictures the circle is still hemmed in with saplings, but many of these were removed shortly afterwards, probably by 1907 when Sir Norman Lockyer took a series of measurements here (1909, 394–5). Thereafter the circle remained clear of woodland, as can be seen in photographs taken in 1920 for Right Rev George Browne, though by 1926 Keiller not only noted that new trees had been planted up to its edge on one side, but complained of invading heather and gorse (1927, 9). On his first two visits Ritchie was capturing general views of the circle, presumably returning in 1908 because he had heard that more of

the trees had been cleared. In his last visit, however, he photographed the external face of the recumbent and the hollows known as the Devil's Hoofmarks. He recognised that these were natural, and noted that weathering had formed numerous other small hollows elsewhere on the surface of the stone (Ritchie 1926, 306). The present survey has concluded that two of these to the west of the Devil's Hoofmarks are possibly artificial cupmarks, but the presence of so many natural hollows councils extreme caution in their interpretation. Burl, however, considers that some of those near the west end of the outer face, variously put at '*eight or more*' (1980, 196) and three or four (Ruggles and Burl

1985, 57, Table 9; Burl 2000, 227), are cupmarks. Furthermore, he cites them to reinforce his argument for a link between recumbent stone circles and lunar events, suggesting that in this case they mark an alignment on the major moonset (1980, 196; 2000, 227; the Devil's Hoofmarks are transposed onto the west end of the recumbent in Burl 1995, 98; 2005a, 98). Other writers appear to confirm his observation (eg Shepherd 1986, 146; 1996, 152), but close examination of the western end of the recumbent during the present survey has failed to detect any trace of artificial marks.

Coles 1901, 248; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 351, Abn 35; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 48; Barnatt 1989, 278, no. 6:29; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 48; Burl 2000, 420, Abn 34

Date	Personnel	Record
1692	James Garden	Note (Garden 1770, 318 [1779, 320]; Gordon 1960, 15; Fowles and Legge 1980, 186–7; Hunter 2001, 121)
1771	John Home	Estate map of Putachie (NAS RHP 859)
2 May 1827	James Skene	Sketches (RCAHMS SAS464; ABD545/2 & 4)
1842	Thomas Youngson & Alexander Low	Description (<i>NSA</i> , xii, Aberdeenshire, 946–7)
1867	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Aberdeenshire 1870, liii.10); note (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 43, p 41)
October 1868	James Rait	Lost plan copied by Sir Henry Dryden in 1881 (RCAHMS SAS39/1; DC11867; Smith 1880, 309)
1870s	Christian Maclagan	Note (Maclagan 1875, 74)
September 1900	Frederick Coles	Plan and sketch (Coles 1901, 214–17, figs 23–4)
June 1904	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2411 & AB2414)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 394, 399)
1908	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2413 & AB2470)
1910	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2474; Ritchie 1918, 116; 1926, 306)
1920	George Browne	Photographs (Browne 1921, 77–8, pls xxi & xxxiii)
31 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
11 October 1926	Alexander Keiller	Description and plan (Keiller 1927, 9; 1934, 11; RCAHMS ABD545/1; MS106/27, 21–2)
8 August 1973	Iain Sainsbury	OS: description, plan and map revision
20 August 1976	Keith Blood	OS: photograph
1978 & c1980	Aubrey Burl	Astronomical survey and plan based on Coles, and guidebook description (Burl 1980a, 199, no. 18; 1995 & 2005a, 98, no. 98; Ruggles and Burl, 1985, 31, fig 8)
1 July 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 59, 66, 68–71, 74–5; 1999, 94, 213–16, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 28–9, 31, 47, 51, 57);
14 April 1998	Kevin Macleod, Ian Parker, John Sherrif & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44468)
2001	Richard Bradley, Sharon Arrowsmith & Tim Phillips	Excavation, plans and photographs (Bradley 2000, 11; 2005, 53–77)
2002	Gavin MacGregor	Stone colour survey (MacGregor 2002, 149–50)
12 July 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

27 Druidstone, Premnay, Aberdeenshire

NJ62SW 4 NJ 6153 2219

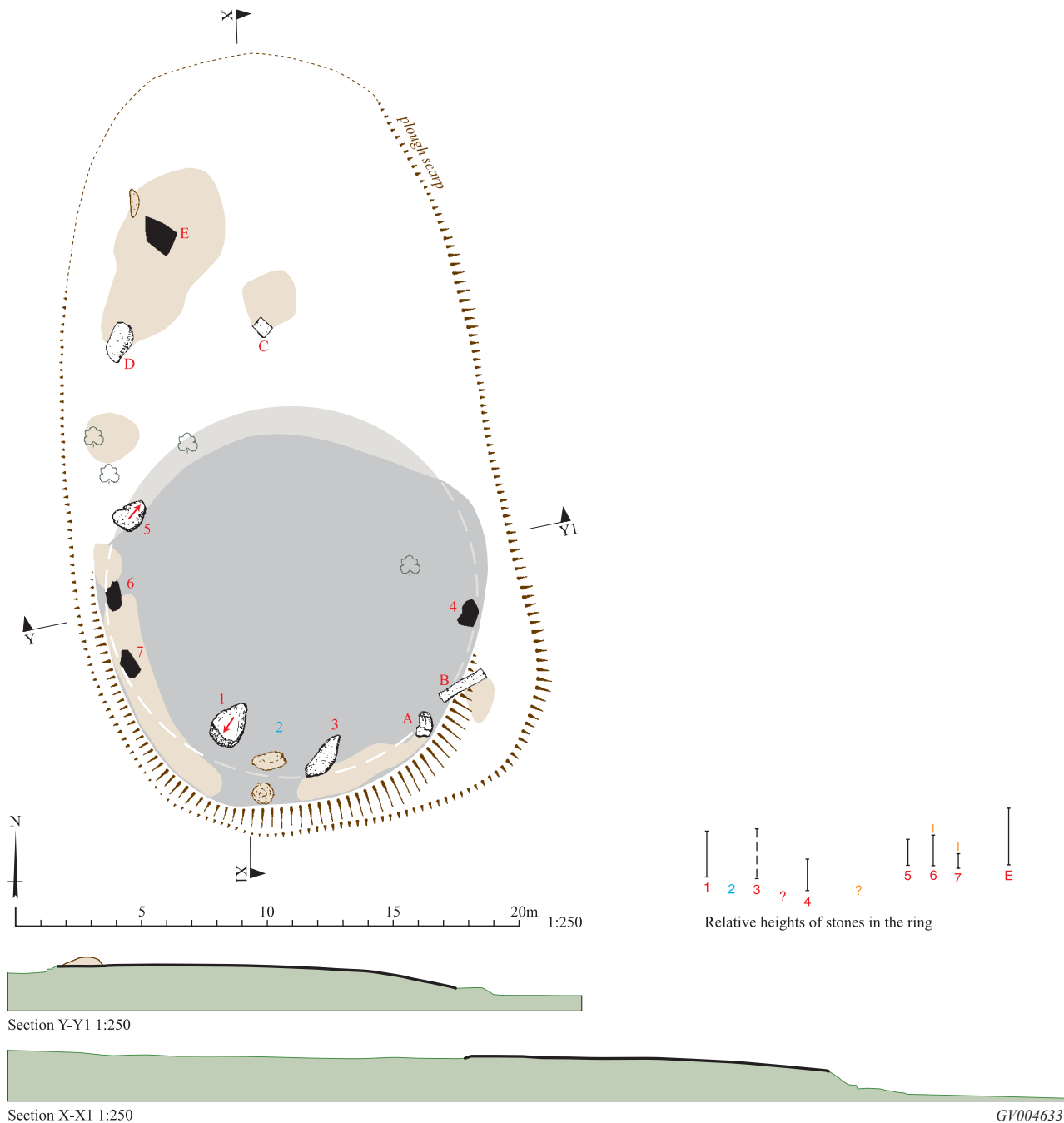
This recumbent stone circle is situated at the south end of an overgrown and dilapidated enclosure that shelters three stunted trees behind Druidstone Croft; a lone outlier stands at the north end of the enclosure. The circle, which occupies the leading edge of a south-east-facing terrace, measures 14.5m in diameter and comprises at least six stones, made up of the two flankers, one leaning heavily (1) the other fallen (3), and four orthostats (4–7); one of the latter has also fallen (5) and two are reduced to stumps (6 & 7). The recumbent stone (2) does not survive, though a cleared boulder has been dumped between the two flankers; lying about 3m apart, these face south-south-west. Several other boulders occur along the circumference of the circle, including an earthfast fragment (A) leaning steeply to the north-north-east and a long dressed block (B) exhibiting a row of wedge sockets sunk along the north edge of its upturned face. The orthostats around the north half of the ring have been removed, but a squared block (C) with a shot-hole in its upturned surface lying discarded to the north, and a larger slab nearby (D), may be fragments of the missing stones. Within the interior there is a cairn about 0.6m high and several chunks of

The shattered remains of the recumbent stone circle from the east. SC1115529

white quartz can be seen amongst the cleared stones around its western margin. The outlying monolith to the north-north-west (E) is an impressive pillar measuring about 2.25m in height.

Druidstone has been equated since the mid 19th century with the standing stones near ‘Albaclanenauch’, which are mentioned in a charter of doubtful authenticity attributed to Malcolm III (Robertson 1843, 171–2; Low 1866, 220–2; Barrow 1960, 162–3) which purports to grant the lands of Keig and Monymusk to the Cathedral Church of St Mary of Monymusk. Alexander Laing, writing one of the first tourist guides to the district, knew nothing of this, but refers to the recumbent stone circle and its outlier as ‘*the grand temple ... [of a] ... Druidical City, surrounded with a ditch*’ (1828, 277–8), the Druidical City being a group of hut-circles or circular enclosures situated a little way to the north (NJ62SW 6); in his mind at least, temple and city were connected by ‘*a walk about 57ft [17.4m] in length*’ (Laing 1828, 277–8). This and an account written by Rev Alexander Low in 1865, after the probable hut-circle group had been removed, are fairly confused, the latter referring to Laing’s ‘*walk*’ as ‘*a causeway leading to an altar stone at the centre...; and the causeway was probably about twelve feet [3.6m] wide, and of a considerable length*’ (1866, 221). Some of the causeways referred to by antiquaries elsewhere in Aberdeenshire are almost





certainly the remains of shallow souterrains (Gannon *et al* 2007, 70–1), while others may have been ancient field banks. Quoting Laing’s description in the entry in the Name Book (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 75, pp 51, 59), the OS surveyors in 1865–7 had little to add, depicting seven pecked circles on the map, five of them in a row 85m to the north-west of the recumbent stone circle, one 45m north-north-east, and the seventh immediately west. They reported that ‘*the stones have all been removed except one large one*’ (*ibid*), namely the outlier. This, they believed, stood on the circumference of a ring up to 27m in diameter, along with the surviving stones on the west arc of the recumbent stone circle,

though they recognised that this ‘*did not strictly form part of the circle*’ (*ibid*). To emphasise the size of the missing recumbent they were also told that seven land rollers had been fashioned from it, though in 1884 James Gurnell more plausibly noted that a single roller was made from one of the pieces. He placed its destruction some 40 years before, at roughly the same time that the tenant Coles spoke to, James Souter, had come to the farm. Souter, however, was not responsible for the damage and reported that it was one of his neighbours who had broken up the stone; But subsequently this action precipitated a provision in the lease of Druidstown by which the ring was to be protected.

Coles recognised the outlier for what it is, but his plan and its measurements are evidently skewed and mislabelled (1901, 237–9, fig 44). He identifies the wrong pair of stones as the flankers in the recumbent setting. He does not depict the slab lettered (D) on the present plan, though the 2nd edition of the OS map gives the impression that it had by then arrived in its present position, if not long before (Aberdeenshire 1901, liii). Once allowance is made for the skewing of the plan, it is clear that the circle was much as it is today and Coles recognised that its north side was marked by the edge of the internal cairn. The only discrepancy concerns a fallen orthostat he shows on the south-east, but does not mention in his description. James Ritchie's photograph taken some four years later from the east (RCAHMS AB 2505) shows no trace of a stone in the position Coles indicates, but the small stone lettered (A) on the present plan is apparently visible on the left of the picture. Subsequent plans by Alexander Keiller in 1926 and Iain Sainsbury of the OS as recently as 1973 show a much longer stone in this position, measured by Sainsbury at some 2.1m in length, lying roughly parallel to the east flanker; both plans have its long axis lying a little east of north. Such a stone is no longer visible, unless A, which is earthfast and leans steeply to the north-north-east, is merely its top. At any rate, this missing stone is unlikely to be the cut block lettered B, which not only seems to be a different shape, but now lies on a different alignment closer to orthostat 4. This block was certainly not in its present position when Ritchie photographed the circle in 1904, nor is it shown by either Keiller or Sainsbury. At face value, this may indicate that it has been dumped at the edge of the circle more recently. Unfortunately, Keiller was more concerned to praise the efforts of the tenant in maintaining the circle than to describe its stones



The outlier to the north-north-west of the recumbent stone circle. SC1216990

(1927, 7–8). He was evidently not wholly convinced Druidstone was a recumbent stone circle and he was equally sceptical that the stone on the north could be properly termed an outlier, as it was not in the position he expected (1934, 17).

Coles 1901, 248; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 351, Abn 43; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 47; Barnatt 1989, 280–1, no. 6:34; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 47; Burl 2000, 420, Abn 42

Date	Personnel	Record
1828	Alexander Laing	Description (Laing 1828, 277–8)
1865–7	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1870, liii.1); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 75, p 59)
1865	Alexander Low	Description (Low 1866, 221)
1884	James Gurnell	Tabulated notes (Gurnell 1884)
September 1900	Frederick Coles	Description and plan (Coles 1901, 237–9, fig 44)
May 1904	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2505–6, AB2898 & AB2968)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1926	Alexander Keiller	Description and plan (Keiller 1927, 7–8; 1934, 17; RCAHMS ABD533/1–4; MS106/27, 15–17)
7 August 1973	Iain Sainsbury & Ian Telfer	OS: description, plan and map revision
17 August 1976	John Macrae	OS: visit
7 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 59, 66, 68, 70–1, 74–5; 1999, 213–14)
6 July 1999	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44503)
12 July 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

28 Dunnideer, Insch, Aberdeenshire

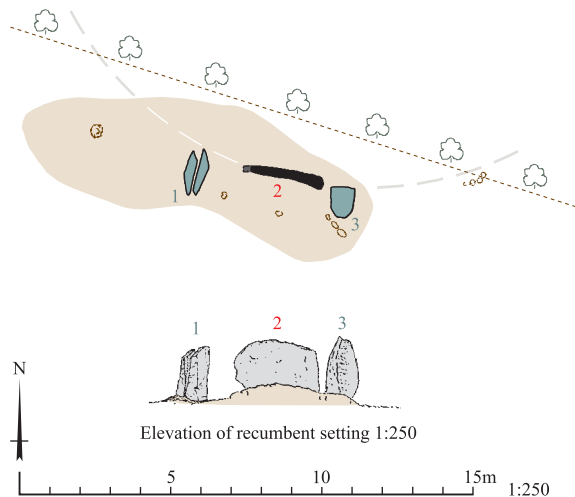
NJ62NW 4 NJ 6086 2844

The recumbent and two re-erected flankers are all that can now be seen of a recumbent stone circle situated in improved pasture on the ridge that extends west from the foot of the Hill of Dunnideer. Standing immediately south of an old hedge line towards the north shoulder of the ridge, the ground rises gently to a local summit some 20m to the south. The recumbent (2) is a relatively thin slab measuring 2.85m in length by 1.9m in height and presents its smoother face towards the south-south-west. Neither flanker is in its original position, both projecting forwards from the leading edge of the recumbent and at right-angles to its long axis, the western (1) also displaced 1m to the west. The latter stands witness to the destruction of the circle. It has not only lost its top, exhibiting a shot-hole on the fracture, but the plough scratches visible along the south edge of its east face attest the encroachment of cultivation when it was prostrate. Since its re-erection the stone has sheared naturally into two halves.

Both flankers have been re-erected incorrectly. © NMS

The earliest reference to this ring occurs in John Leslie's *Historie of Scotland*, where in glossing a folk etymology of the place-name Dun d' he adds: '*Is thair lykwyse a wondirful gret croune of stanes, quhilke rings agane, na vthirwyse than wt ane echo in brasse or coppir. That thair sumtyme was a certane temple of ane Idol the commoune speiking is.*' (Leslie 1578, 30–1; Cody 1888, 1, 48). The comparison with a crown suggests that the ring was still largely intact at that time. Leslie also recalled a folktale (by way of Hector Boece) that proclaimed that even the teeth of the sheep that fed on the grass here appeared as if they were overlaid with gold. Thereafter the circle escapes any mention until the 1820s, when James Skene sketched the stones from the east-north-east. The greater part of the circle had probably been removed by that time and his sketch shows only the recumbent standing upright, with the east flanker fallen and the west flanker leaning steeply to the north-west; what may be another fallen orthostat on the south-west is shown in the background. By 1867, however, only the recumbent and its flankers were left, and the OS surveyors simply reported that some other stones had been removed a few years before (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 41, p 60).





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The surrounding ground remained in cultivation until shortly before 1901, when Coles discovered that the surviving stones had been incorporated into a small coniferous plantation. At that time both flankers lay flat, partly concealed beneath a mound of weeds and detritus piled up on the south side of the recumbent. This can be seen in James Ritchie's photograph of 1906, which is

deliberately composed to evoke Skene's earlier sketch. This view also shows how the young plantation, about which Coles and later Alexander Keiller complained (Keiller 1927, 7), had started to impinge upon the stones. Aerial photographs show that the plantation was felled between 1946 and 1954 (106G/scot/UK 130, 5249; 540/RAF/1419, F22, 0286) and the ground has now reverted to agriculture. With the rehabilitation of the land, the mound of material piled up in front of the recumbent has been largely removed and the two flankers have been re-erected in their present positions. This had certainly taken place by 1969, when Richard Little of the OS visited the circle, though the present owner, Mr Brian Mackie of Dunnydeer, believed that his father had re-erected the west flanker in about 1976. Despite its sorry state, Ruggles has used a compass here to examine the astronomical alignment of the setting. More recently still, Julian Cope has suggested that the top of the recumbent mimics 'the shape of the hill behind it' (1998, 386), in this instance the Hill of Dunnydeer, though this lies well to the south-east of the ring and cannot be seen by looking over the recumbent.

Coles 1902, 581; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 351, Abn 44; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 42; Barnatt 1989, 281, no. 6:35; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 42; Burl 2000, 420, Abn 44

Date	Personnel	Record
c1578	John Leslie	Note (Leslie 1578, 30–1; Cody 1888, 1, 48)
1820s	James Skene	Sketch (RCAHMS ABD509/1p)
1867	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1870, xlv.5); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 41, p 60)
September 1901	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketches (Coles 1902, 537–8, figs 54–5, 579)
April 1906	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2424)
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1927, 7)
9 October 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
4 March 1969	Richard Little	OS: description and map revision
7 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 59, 66, 72; 1999, 213, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 30, 41)
3 April 1996	John Sherriff & Iain Fraser	RCAHMS: description and photographs
15 October 1998	Kevin Macleod, Robert Mowat & John Sherriff	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44425)
6 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

29 Easter Aquhorthies, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire

NJ72SW 12 NJ 7323 2079

This recumbent stone circle, which is tightly enfolded within a small fenced and walled enclosure, stands on a gentle east-facing slope about 300m north-west of East Aquhorthies; held in Guardianship, the enclosure is mowed and regularly maintained, with easy access from a car park nearby. The circle measures 20m from east-south-east to west-north-west by 18.5m transversely overall and is one of the few with its full complement of stones, comprising the recumbent setting on the south-south-west and nine orthostats. The recumbent (2) measures about 4m in length by 1.55m in height, and its spectacular leading face is shot with white sheets of quartz and slickensides. An OS benchmark cut just below its relatively even summit roughly midway along this face was considered by Alexander Keiller an act of vandalism that had probably encouraged the graffiti carved into the inner faces of two of the orthostats (9 & 10). Behind the recumbent, two large slabs are set on edge at roughly right-angles to it and flush with its ends. The two flankers, standing 2.5m and 2.15m high respectively, are the tallest stones in the ring, both of them aligned with the front of the recumbent and turned slightly to trace the arc of the circle. The western (1), which is not only slightly taller than its eastern neighbour (3) but also more slender, displays three cupmarks near the foot of its outer face, with a possible fourth a little further to the west. The nine evenly spaced orthostats are graded in height, their tops descending consistently from the flankers on the south-south-west to

a slab little more than 1m high on the north-east (7). The visual impression presented by the interior of the circle is heavily influenced by the later enclosure, which has a thick bank behind its external stone face. At least five of the orthostats stand in the tail of this bank, which creates the allusion that the interior is dishd. This is far from the case, as can be seen from the section. This clearly shows that there is a low mound about 0.25m high within the interior. It is almost certainly the remains of an internal cairn.

This stone circle must always have been well known locally, so it is not surprising that the twelve stones making up the ring are shown upon an estate plan of 1769 in the corner of a field named ‘*Standing Stone Folds*’ (AUL MS3528/9). Thereafter, it escapes mention until 1838, though it is possible that Rev William Davidson, the minister of Inverurie, had Easter Aquhorthies in mind when he wrote that there was an ‘*ancient Druidical temple in the parish, but nothing very remarkable about it*’ (*Stat Acct*, vii, 1793, 335), the other candidates being Brandsbutt (App 1.9) and **Ardtannes Cottages**. In 1838, however, the circle makes its appearance on another estate plan (AUL MS3528/11), and yet again in 1847 (Beattie 1847), though the latter is probably largely derived from the survey of 1838. Both depict a ring of only ten stones, which is one of the few fixed points in a landscape that had changed out of all recognition over the previous fifty years or so (see RCAHMS 2007); what appears to be an additional stone on its north on the 1847 plan is probably no more than an ink blot. More

The view looking west to the Mither Tap of Bennachie. SC712490





In 1769 Home shows the recumbent stone circle standing at the corner of a field in the pre-improvement landscape. © AUL

importantly, the wall of the roundel protecting the circle had yet to be built (contra RCAHMS 2007, 67, fig 5.30), but the stone dykes of the modern field-pattern were in place, accommodating the circle in a bulge in the line of the dyke on the northern margin of a trackway leading between the fields to the policies of the House of Aquhorthies. The roundel was built at some point in the twenty years that elapsed before the OS surveyors recorded the ring in 1866–7. It entailed the demolition of a length of the wall on the south side of the track to allow uninterrupted passage past the stones. The circle seems to have had an established position in local lore at this time, for the brief description in the Name Book detailing the stones and the ‘*kind of altar*’ continues: ‘*It has been remarked that no two of the stones are of the same material, and it is said that stone of the kind of which the horizontal one is composed, cannot be got on Fetternear estate*’ (Aberdeenshire, No. 42, p 19).

Shortly after this the circle began attracting much wider attention, beginning in 1870 with a lightly romanticised watercolour by Lady Sophia Dunbar (RCAHMS MS1992/527). In the following year Jonathan Forbes-Leslie is known to have exhibited two drawings of it to a meeting of the British Association at Edinburgh, though both are lost. More than anything else, it was probably Christian Maclagan’s reconstruction of the ring as a broch-like building and Rev John Davidson’s reference to it as ‘*still entire*’ that brought the monument to the attention of a wider public (Maclagan 1875, 10–11, 73, pls xxvii and xxviii; 1881, 31, 33; 1894, pl i; Davidson 1878, 4); and by 1884 it was sufficiently well known to have persuaded even General Augustus Pitt-Rivers to pay a visit. Five years later, his assistants, William Tomkin and Claude Gray, returned to take measurements, sketches and photographs in preparation for the construction of a model now in Salisbury Museum. These photographs have not



In 1847 Beattie shows the recumbent stone circle before it was enclosed by a roundel, but an unfortunate blot on the map could be easily mistaken for a fallen stone. DP064201

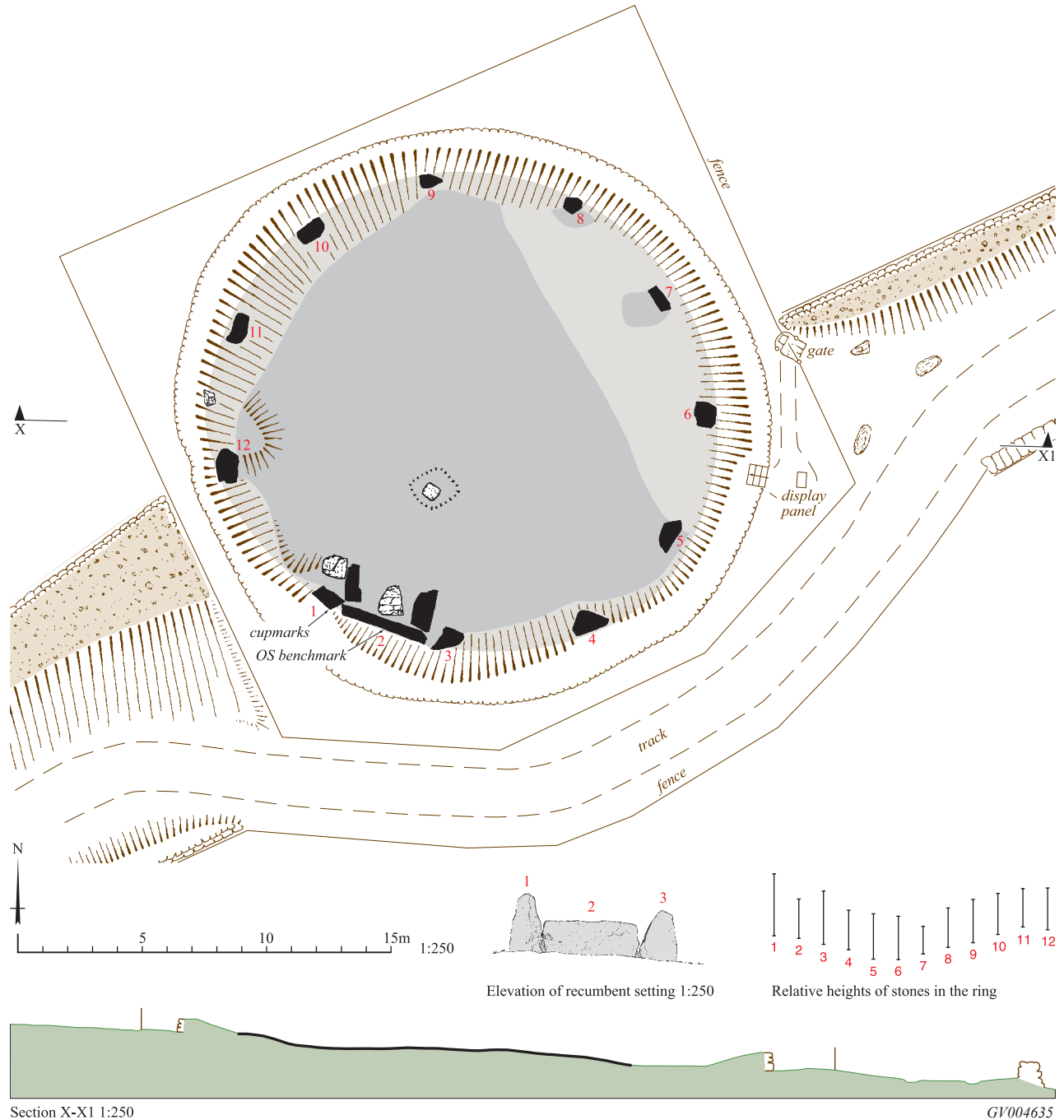
survived and the first published print of the ring was not reproduced until 1899 (Munro 1899, pl xiii).

Coles surveyed the ring in 1900, enthusing about its condition in a colourful introduction to his description. He believed that the stones stood ‘*upon a low ridge of small boulders*’, though it is not clear how this related to the tail of the earthen bank at the back of the enclosing wall. Unfortunately he screens the wall and its bank out of his plan and elevations, showing only a narrow bank doglegging between the stones (Coles 1901, 225–9, figs 34–5). As a result it is difficult to know whether he was simply misled by the later bank, or whether subsequent intervention in the maintenance of the enclosure has hidden a rim of cairn material at the edges of the ring. James Ritchie’s photographs of the recumbent taken a few years later from within the interior reveal no hints of its presence and the heights of the stones recorded by Coles are within a few centimetres of those recorded during the present survey. Within the interior, however, he recognised the low mound of the cairn, which rose ‘*so equal from all arcs of the circle as to suggest the pleasing conjecture that the area has never been disturbed*’ (1901, 229). Coles was the first to provide a more detailed appraisal of the geological characteristics of the stones of the circle, contrasting the pinkish colour of the recumbent with the grey granite of the flankers and drawing attention to the orthostat of red jasper on the east-north-east (5).

The control of the ground cover within the ring seems to have lapsed following Coles’ visit. Ritchie’s photographs show that a certain amount of undergrowth had begun to invade the circle and by the time Right Rev George Browne visited in 1920 it was ‘*filled with a forest of whin bushes as high as our heads*’ (1921, 70). Nevertheless, this did not prevent the continuing stream

Easter Aquhorthies from the south-west. DP083020





of visitors, which included Sir Norman Lockyer in 1906, and Alexander Keiller in 1927. Keiller re-planned the circle and prepared a fine scaled profile of the stones; depicted against a level ground surface, the grading of the stones is undetectable, and he unwittingly demonstrated the subtlety of the builders' approach to grading, using smaller and larger stones at various positions on a slope to achieve the impression that the stones reduce in size from south to north. But, contrary to Coles' view, he also recognised that the interior was by no means pristine and conjectured that the cairn might have been robbed to provide the raw material for the surrounding enclosure. The flat stone visible in a hollow to the north-east of the recumbent, he suggested, might be an exposed cist cover.

While Coles had noted that the ring was not strictly circular, it was left to Alexander Thom in 1957 to demonstrate the reason why. The recumbent setting he observed lies within the circumference (Thom 1967, 136, 143 fig 12.3), a feature that recurs elsewhere, and he also argued that the spacing of orthostats was intended to be equal (Thom and Thom 1978, 22–3). Thom paved the way for later researchers pursuing not only astronomical alignments, but also several other phenomena, drawn to Easter Aquhorthies by both its accessibility and its state of preservation. Burl was amongst the first, noting that the summit of the recumbent is not precisely level (1979a, 32) and going on to employ a theodolite in yet a further series

of measurements (1980a, 199). He was followed in 1981 by Ruggles. Between them they have collected a wide range of measurements and observations here, including the orientation of the recumbent towards the Hill of Fare. Coles' earlier observations also stimulated Burl to examine the colour of the stones more closely and he suggested that colour had been employed slightly differently to either side of an axis drawn north-north-east and south-south-west (Burl 1988a, 48; 1995 and 2005a, 100). As the most recent geological survey has discovered, colour and indeed rock type data suffer from the twin disadvantages of lichen and accreted grime. After the stones at Easter Aquhorthies had been cleaned in preparation for the cast used in the Symbols of Power exhibition at Edinburgh in 1985 (Bryce *et al* 1991), it became

clear that the colouring was more subtle than Burl had supposed (Lynch 1998, 66–7) – an opinion that has been reinforced by more recent work by Gavin MacGregor, who has identified yet greater complexity in both this and the texture of the stones (MacGregor 2002, 147–8). More recently still Aaron Watson and David Keating have explored the acoustic properties of the ring, showing that in its present form the architecture influences the distribution of sound across the interior (Watson and Keating 1999, 326–7; Watson 2006, 14). Whether this would have held true before the central cairn was robbed and the enclosing roundel was constructed is open to question.

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1901, 248; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 351, Abn 47; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 63; Barnatt 1989, 281–2, no. 6:37; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 63; Burl 2000, 420, Abn 46

Date	Personnel	Record
1769	John Home	Depiction on estate plan (AUL MS3528/9)
c1793	Rev William Davidson	Note (<i>Stat Acct</i> , vii, 1793, 335)
1838	David Walker & James Beattie	Depiction on estate plan (AUL MS3528/11)
1847	James Beattie	Depiction on estate plan (Beattie 1847, no. 13)
1866–7	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Aberdeenshire 1869, liv.6); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 42, p 19)
c1871	Jonathan Forbes-Leslie	Lost sketches (NLS APS.1.79.129)
1870	Lady Sophia Dunbar	Watercolour (RCAHMS MS1992/527)
1870s	Christian MacLagan	Description, plan and elevations (MacLagan 1875, 10–11, 73, pls xxvii & xxviii; 1881, 31, 33; 1894, pl i)
1884	General Pitt-Rivers	Description (Thompson 1960, 106, 112 and pl x; NA Work 39/12/44–6; 39/15/51, 56–7)
1889	William Tomkin & Claude Gray	Sketches and photographs (Thompson 1960, 109, 118, pl x; NA Work 39/3/44–50; 39/8/73–6; 39/11/7, 10–11; 39/13/16, 114–51)
September 1900	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketches (Coles 1901, 225–9, figs 35–6)
December 1902	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2417 & AB2666; also undated AB2497)
29 September 1906	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyear 1909, 380, 383–4)
November 1908	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2499 & AB2547)
1920	George Browne	Description, plan, photograph (Browne 1921, 69–70, fig 3, pl xii)
31 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
11 October 1927	Alexander Keiller	Description, plan, profile and photograph (Keiller 1927, 8–9, 45–6; 1934, 8, 9; RCAHMS ABD532; MS106/27, 45–6; AB4025PO)
1930s	J Ruxton	Photographs (RCAHMS AB5847 & AB5848)
1940s–50s	Angus Graham	Photographs (RCAHMS H94197, H94198 & H 94199)
April 1957	Alexander Thom	Plan and notes (Thom 1967, 136, 143 fig 12.3; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 162–3; RCAHMS DC4387 & DC4763co; MS430/20; Ferguson 1988, 63)
9 September 1963	Ministry of Works	Taken into Guardianship
16 July 1973	Iain Sainsbury	OS: description and map revision
c1980	Aubrey Burl	Astronomical survey and guidebook description (Burl 1970, 78; 1980a, 199, no. 13; 1988a, 48; 1995 & 2005a, 100, no. 102)
1 July 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 63, 67–71, 74–5; 1999, 92, 94, 213–16, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 28–9, 34, 41, 49–50, 51)
24–6 August 1998	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44476)
2001	Sharon Arrowsmith & Chris Ball	Plan (Bradley 2005, 3)
11 July 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

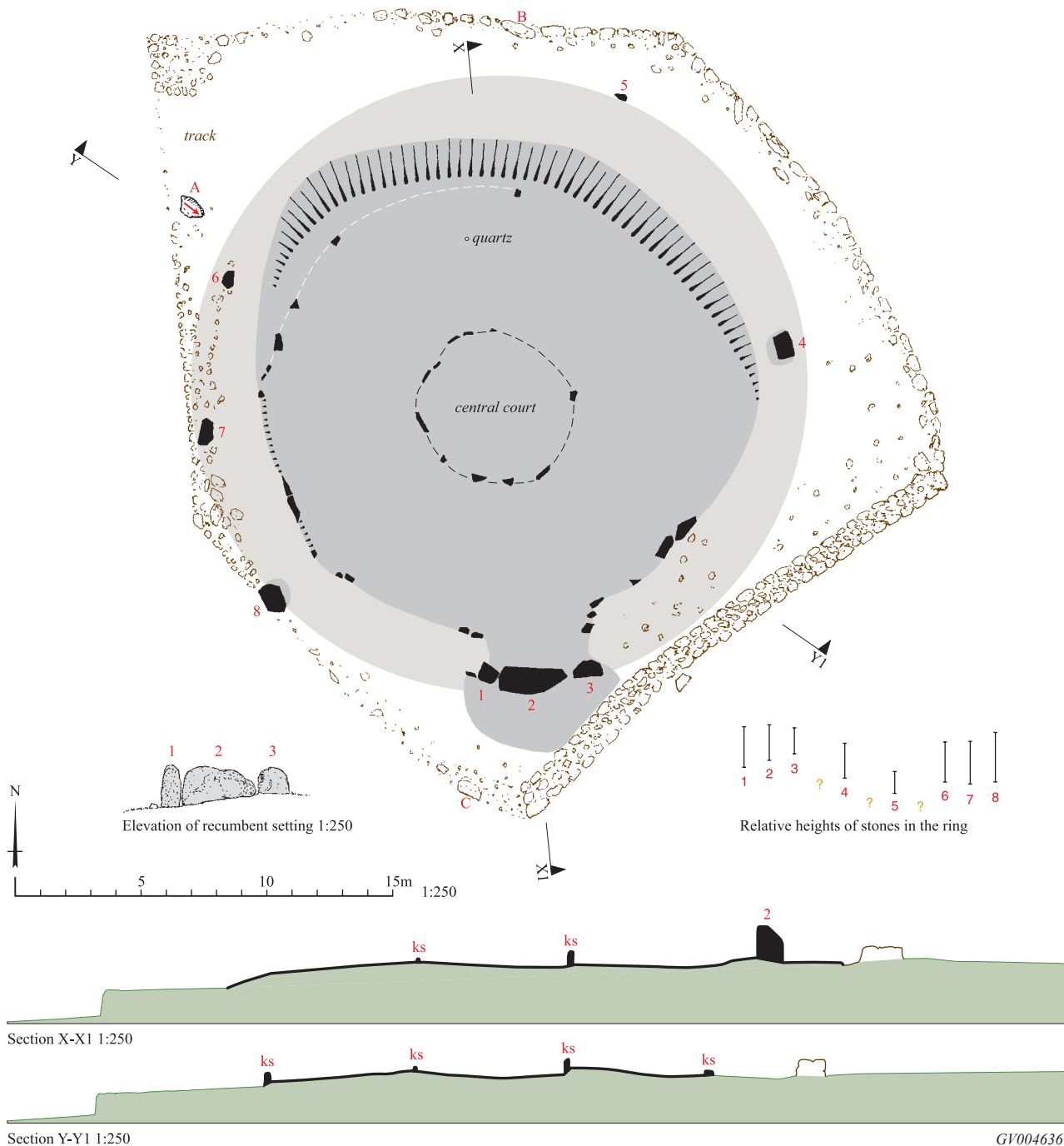
30 Eslie the Greater, Banchory-Ternan, Aberdeenshire
 NO79SW 2 NO 7171 9159

Situated in a small patch of rough ground, this recumbent stone circle lies in the improved pasture on the east side of the saddle between Knock Hill and the ridge rising eastwards to Mulloch Hill. The general trend of the ground falls away to the north-west and the circle is set astride a natural N-facing scarp. Measuring about 24m in diameter, it originally comprised twelve stones, but four of the orthostats are now missing and the ring-cairn within the interior is also heavily robbed. The recumbent (2) lies on the south-south-east of the ring, though the setting itself faces south. A rough boulder with an uneven summit sloping down to the east, it measures 2.9m in length, and at 1.4m in height it is not much lower than its flankers. The western flanker (1), which has lost a fragment off the back of its top, is a slender pillar 1.6m high, contrasting with its broad, squat neighbour 1.05m high on the east (3). Both are set back from the leading face of the recumbent and turned slightly as if to trace the arc of the circle. The five orthostats surviving upright (4–8) indicate that the stones are set out at intervals of between 5m and 6m, and are consistently graded to reduce in height northwards to a stone only 0.9m high on the north-

Ritchie's photograph of 1902 looks south across the rubble partly filling the central court. SC680207

north-east (5). In addition to these five there is an orthostat immediately outside the circle on the west-north-west (A). Canted over to the north-west, but with its south-east end still embedded in the ground, it was almost certainly once upright in this position, where it has been for at least 140 years (see below); that said, its north edge appears to have been split lengthwise, and it is possibly one of the missing orthostats of the ring that has been re-erected. The ring-cairn within the interior now forms a flat-topped mound up to 0.8m high. It measures roughly 18m in diameter over an outer kerb of slabs and boulders that turns outwards on the south-south-east to meet the back of the recumbent setting; with the skewed position of the recumbent, the east arm of the projecting kerb is almost twice as long as the west arm. The central court is 6m in diameter and, in contrast to the outer kerb, the eleven remaining stones of its kerb appear to be graded to increase in height towards the south. Excavations in 1873 revealed a masonry cist in a pit at the centre of the court (see below). The only other feature of note is a small slab almost flush with the ground immediately adjacent to the west flanker. It has the appearance of a kerbstone and in this position hints at the presence of a platform of cairn material between the ring-cairn and the surrounding circle, though no such feature can now be detected beneath the field clearance that is strewn around the margins of the ring.





Situated only 4km east of Templeton, it is likely that Eslie the Greater was one of the circles that James Garden had in mind when he wrote to John Aubrey in 1692, confidently deriving the etymology of that name ‘from two or three of this kind of monuments that stand upon the bounds of it’ (Fowles and Legge 1980, 182–3). Nothing more is heard of the circle until 1842, when Rev William Anderson wrote a general description of the three in the neighbourhood – Eslie the Greater, **The Nine Stanes** and Eslie the Lesser (App 1.36). He was evidently familiar with them, observing ‘the largest about 25 yards [22.8m] in diameter; and the

others about 15 [13.7m]’, and continuing: ‘In each, the remains of an inner circle are visible, within which is a small cairn, and in all, the outer circles are tolerably complete, containing what is called the altar stone, placed due south, and of nearly the same dimensions in each, 8 feet [2.7m] long, and 4 high [1.2m]’ (NSA, xi, Kincardineshire, 336). He also recognised that the stones of which they were composed – mainly schists – were all found in the immediate vicinity. Some twenty years later in 1864 the OS surveyors were more cursory in their comments, merely referring to a ‘A druidical circle consisting of six upright stones’ (Name

Book, Kincardineshire, No. 3, p 147), but it is clear that by then the circle had been reduced to its present complement. Unaccountably, however, their depiction on the OS 25-inch map omits the recumbent setting, and yet the cowped stone on the west-north-west (A) is clearly numbered in their six and was presumably standing erect. By then the circle was already surrounded by an improved field, which probably belonged to the ruined croft depicted 170m away to the west-south-west.

That the recumbent setting was in place is confirmed by Robert Angus Smith, who published a description made in 1868 by William Brown, an Edinburgh surgeon (Smith 1880, 302–3). This rather vaguely describes ‘about ten’ stones, though Brown’s measurements do not reconcile with those of the surviving stones. Nevertheless, it mentions the recumbent, or as he saw it ‘*the large flat stone*’ on the south. Even if he did not recognise the ring-cairn as such, he describes the central court: ‘*an inner circle, consisting of about twelve stones*’ (*ibid*); given that only eleven kerbstones are currently visible, this suggests that the ring-cairn had also been reduced to its present state by this time. In 1872 Brown had a young surveyor by the name of George Carfrae prepare a plan, but though this was sent to Smith he did not reproduce it and it is now lost. Smith himself did not visit the ring until 1873, going in company with several workmen and his friend and fellow chemist Dr James Young, who owned the Durris Estate. His description is fairly confusing, but he recognised the kerbs of the ring-cairn within the circle and its connection to the recumbent setting, and also mentions the stone on the west-north-west (A), which he interpreted as the sole survivor of yet another concentric ring. To Smith’s eye, however, the inner court was not at the centre, and for this reason he designated the outer kerb of the ring-cairn as the ‘*western*’ circle and the court as the ‘*eastern*’ circle.

Not realising that the court was bounded by a continuous kerb, Smith ‘*opened*’ an area about 2.4m across in its centre, clearing it ‘*with more or less care*’ down to a hard pan at a depth of 0.6m below the surface. This disclosed around the edges of their excavation three or four marks, ‘*in some places quite black, extended so as to be the length of a not tall human*’ (1880, 302), together with fragments of bone, which they interpreted as ‘*three or four bodies laid so as to form a circle*’ (*ibid*). Discovering that the pan was not continuous across the bottom of their trench, they dug another 0.75m deeper at the centre, uncovering a pit about 1.8m in length in which they found a ‘*stone kist, if we may call it one, built of common boulder stones, little more than half a foot, i.e. from 8 to 10 inches [0.2m–0.25m] in diameter*’ (*ibid*); this too contained ‘*black marks*’ and bone fragments. This structure was evidently not a typical slab-built cist and it is not altogether clear whether he intended the reader to

understand that he was describing the diameter of the stones or that of the interior. Equally, the interpretation of the marks around the edge of the excavation was to some extent based on the assumption then current that recumbent stone circles were burial monuments, and it is perhaps more likely they had observed parts of a continuous, and probably natural, surface beneath the cairn, which in the limited space between the edge of their excavation and the sides of the pit, may have appeared in three or four separate patches. The structure evidently lay below this surface and the relatively soft character of the fill led Smith to believe it had been opened previously; with the evidence of stone-robbing, this may well be so.

The problems of reconciling Brown’s measurements of the circle emerged even as they were published and led Sir Henry Dryden to commission a survey from Archibald Crease in 1880. Despite receiving a dimensioned sketch from him, Dryden was still unable to reconstruct the plan, and his frustration is plain from the comment that concludes his notes: ‘*The measures he sent did not agree and made confusion greater*’ (RCAHMS SAS39/4). In fairness to Crease, comparison of his measurements with the modern plan shows that with the exception of those relating to the north-west quadrant most of them are correct. Part of Dryden’s confusion probably stemmed from Crease’s sketch plan, for his reconstruction places the outer kerbstones on the south side of the ring-cairn onto the circumference of the circle, and explains why he was at a loss as to why Smith’s description mentioned two inner rings but the plan showed only one. This puzzle was resolved in 1884 by William Lukis, whose visit was foreshortened by a thunderstorm that made a deep and lasting impression upon him (1885, 309–10). Metrically accurate, his plan stands comparison with any since, and shows the inner and outer kerbs of the ring-cairn, the recumbent setting and the five surviving orthostats in their correct positions, together with what he presumably considered to be a displaced stone on the west-south-west. This also appears on Coles’ hopelessly skewed plan but is apparently now lost beneath field-clearance. Had the thunderstorm not intervened, we can only guess that he would have completed the northern quarter in a little more detail to show stone (A) on the west-north-west and possibly two stones Coles believed were fallen orthostats on the north and north-west respectively. The stone on the north is almost certainly the easternmost of a row of stones Crease had depicted and is recognisable on the present plan as a cleared boulder some 1.4m in length (B) lying at the edge of the field. For all the metrical faults of Coles’ plan, which like that of **Aquhorthies** seems to suffer from a compound error in his measurements that cumulatively distorted the depiction of the eastern half, his is the first coherent description of the circle, observing such details as the

grading of the inner kerb and the similar stature of the recumbent and its flankers. This unusual feature of the setting is captured on James Ritchie's photographs of 1902 and 1907, one of which also shows another stone Coles thought might be a displaced orthostat (C) lying in front of the recumbent setting (RCAHMS KC285).

Ritchie's second visit was in the same year that Sir Norman Lockyer took some measurements at the circle, and the search for astronomical alignments in its design has been the subject of most of the work here since, led by Alexander Thom. Thom surveyed the ring in 1955, plotting many of the kerbstones of the ring-cairn though not the cairn itself, and proposed that the orthostats were laid out in the shape of an egg (1961b, 295, 300; 1967, 68–9). He commented that the flankers lay eccentrically within this circumference, but failed to recognise that the facade formed by the recumbent

setting was flattened, an architectural device quite at odds with his geometrical construction. Ruggles found fault with aspects of Thom's astronomical observations, mainly because they seemed to rely on the outlying stone on the west-north-west (A) as a foresight (1981, 167–8), and Richard Atkinson lent further weight to these objections by suggesting that its anomalous position in any case indicated that it was probably displaced (Atkinson 1981, 206). Ruggles returned in 1981 to record other measurements with a theodolite, and he and Burl also tabulated a range of data here, noting that the setting faced towards the western summit of Shillofad, a ridge forming the horizon 3km to the south.

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1900, 198; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 360, Knc 8; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 90; Barnatt 1989, 282, no. 6:39; Ruggles 1999, 188, no. 90; Burl 2000, 429, Knc 11

Date	Personnel	Record
1692	James Garden	Note (Garden 1770, 316 [1779, 318]; Gordon 1960, 13–14; Fowles and Legge 1980, 182–3; Hunter 2001, 120)
October 1842	William Anderson	Description (<i>WSA</i> , xi, Kincardineshire, 336)
1864	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Kincardineshire 1868, xi.1); note (Name Book, Kincardineshire, No. 3, p 147)
1868	William Brown	Description (Smith 1880, 302–3)
1872	George Carfrae	Lost survey (Smith 1880, 303)
1873	Robert Angus Smith	Excavation and description (Smith 1880, 301–3)
1880	Archibald Crease	Sketch plan and measurements (RCAHMS SAS39/4)
12 August 1884	William Lukis	Plan and notes (Lukis 1885, 309–10; GMAG7829–27)
September 1899	Frederick Coles	Description, plan, section and sketches (Coles 1900, 161–6, figs 18–20)
July 1902	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS KC286 & KC291)
1907	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS KC285)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 394, 399)
17 July 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Note (Keiller 1934, 12)
August 1955	Alexander Thom	Plan and notes (Thom 1961b, 295, fig 5; 1967, 68–9, 119, 136; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 200–1; RCAHMS DC4408; MS430/22; Ferguson 1988, 99)
1960s–90s	Aubrey Burl	Guidebook description (Burl 1995 & 2005a, 138, no. 169)
4 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Astronomical survey and tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 63, 67–71, 74–5; 1999, 213–16, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 26, 33–4, 49, 51)
8 April 1984	Stratford Halliday	RCAHMS: description (RCAHMS 1984, 9)
10 April 2003	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44588)
24 July 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

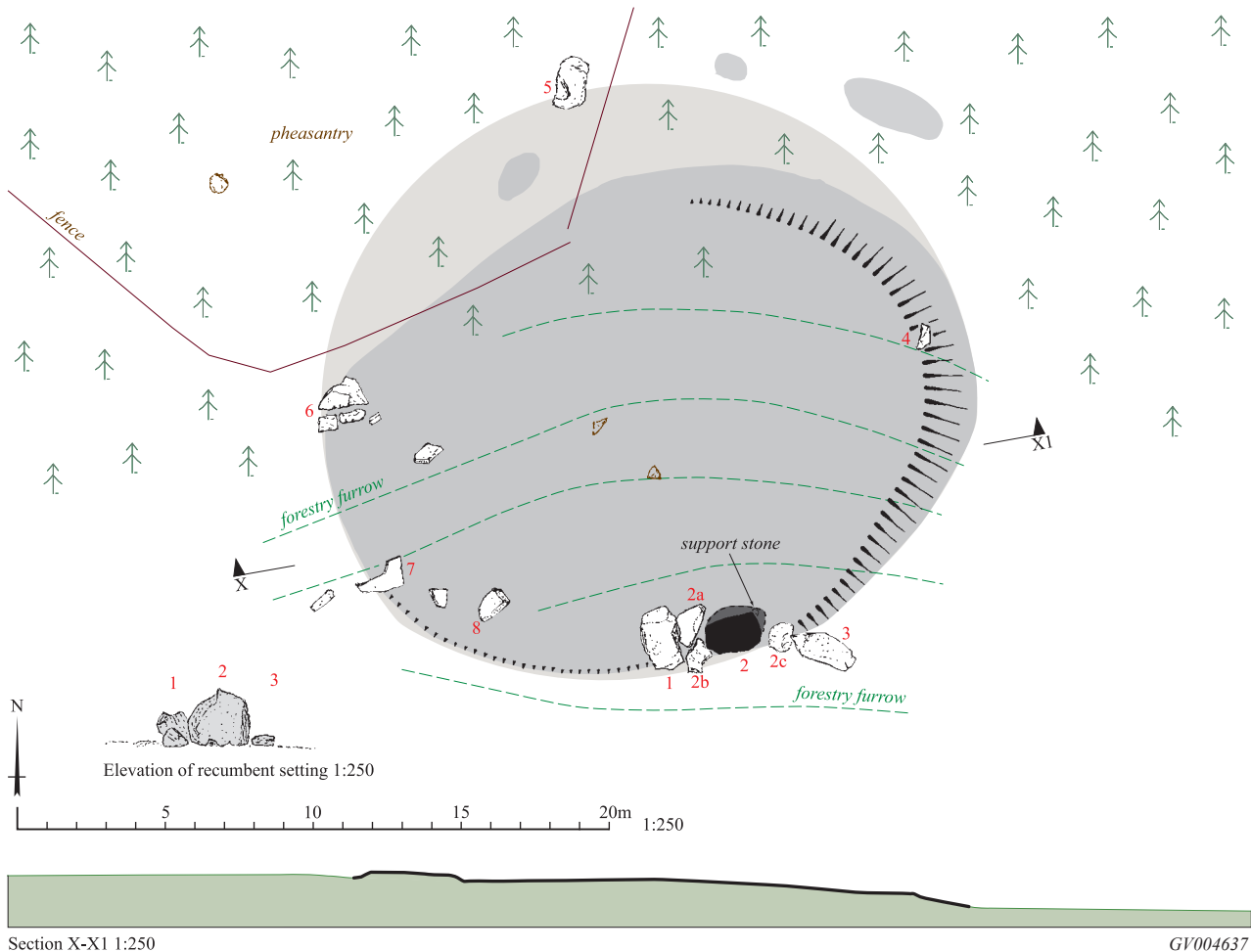
31 Frendraught, Forgue, Aberdeenshire

NJ64SW 6 NJ 6109 4285

This recumbent stone circle stands on a gentle north-east-facing slope at the edge of the dense plantation of conifers that clothes the summit of Bogcoup. Lying immediately west of a trackway, most of the trees in the immediate vicinity have been cleared, though in its turn this has allowed grass and bracken to spring up. Slightly oval on plan, the ring measures about 22m from east-north-east to west-south-west by no more than 20m transversely overall; including the recumbent and its fallen flankers on the south-south-east, it comprises at least six stones (1–3 & 5–7). The recumbent block (2) now measures 2.35m in length by 1.85m in height, but three large fragments have been broken off it (2a–c), two lying at its foot on the west and one on the east; despite the damage, the east end still retains part of its domed summit. The flankers have fallen and measure 2.1m and 2.25m in length respectively, and whereas the latter (3) is a relatively slender stone, its western neighbour (1) is a much broader and thicker slab. When they were upright, however, both would have appeared to curve inwards over the ends of the recumbent. Of the other orthostats of the ring, only the fallen stone

some 1.7m in length on the north-north-west (5) is still intact, while two others, on the west (6) and south-west (7) respectively, have been broken up, the fractured shot-holes in the south edge of 6 and in one of its adjacent pieces betraying their fate. Another two fragments lying on the east-north-east (4) and south-south-west (8) may come from other orthostats. Although it is not possible to estimate the number of orthostats in the circle, the difference in length between the flankers and the fallen stone on north-north-west (5) indicates that they were probably graded in height. Within the interior there are traces of an internal cairn, now largely reduced to a stony swelling on the south-west and a low scarp around the east; the old forestry furrows scored across the circle have also revealed several patches of stones within the interior.

In 1761 an anonymous writer in the *Edinburgh Magazine* described the stones of this ring as the largest of those found in the oblong and circular settings of standing stones that then existed in the parish of Forgue (Anon 1761, 14; see also **Cairnton, Yonder Bognie & App 1.11**). Thereafter the circle sinks from view, probably covered in the general references to *Druidical temples* in the parish that appear in the *Statistical Accounts* (*Stat Acct*, xii, 1794, 288; *NSA*,





The ruins of the recumbent setting from the east. SC1097868

xii, Aberdeenshire, 601), but more importantly lost in the mixed plantings on the hills behind Fren draught House. There the stones passed unnoticed when the OS surveyed the area in 1871 (Aberdeenshire 1873, xxvii), and consequently Coles did not visit them when recording other circles in the neighbourhood, though on writing to the minister, Rev James Brebner, he became aware of the circle's existence (Coles 1903a, 107–8). It was this that probably spurred James Ritchie to seek out the dilapidated remains beneath the trees in 1915. With the exception of the orthostat on the north-north-west (5), which was still standing, Ritchie's description and photographs show that most of the damage to the stones of the circle had already occurred by this time.

Indeed, his enquiries locally revealed that the shattered orthostats on the west had been broken up to supply lintels about seventy years earlier (c1850), only to be abandoned once it was discovered that the rock was not up to the task. Ritchie estimated that the diameter of the ring had been at least 85ft (25.9m), but unless the stone on the north-north-west has been displaced by as much as 5m he was surely mistaken; in the gloom beneath the trees he may have misread a tape measurement of 65 feet (19.8m), which accords with the present position of the stone from the recumbent. It was left to Iain Sainsbury of the OS in 1973 to identify traces of the internal cairn beneath the undergrowth.

Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 351, no. 50; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 27; Barnatt 1989, 283, no. 6:41; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 27; Burl 2000, 420, no. 50

Date	Personnel	Record
1761	Unknown	Note (Anon 1761, 14; Robertson 1847, i, 324)
June 1915	James Ritchie	Description and photographs (Ritchie 1917, 30–4; RCAHMS AB2445, AB2521 & AB 2894)
9 January 1973	Iain Sainsbury	OS description and map revision
29 October 2003	Angela Gannon & Ian Parker	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44545)
13 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

32 Gaval, Old Deer, Aberdeenshire

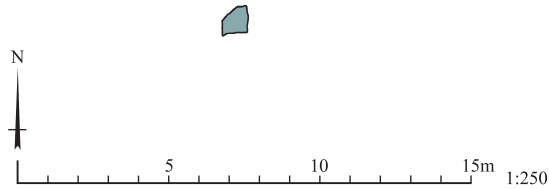
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A single boulder set upright on a low rise 230m south-west of Gaval marks the site of this recumbent stone circle, though details of its architecture and plan are scarce and the commentaries recording its destruction by Rev James Peter (1885, 376) and Rev Andrew Chalmers (1903, 11) are retrospective. Peter claimed that the circle had survived relatively intact until the mid 1840s, and Chalmers went so far as to suggest that it had been *'more complete'* than **Aikey Brae**. Thereafter the stones were cleared away until according to Coles' informant, John Milne, who had lived for many years at Mains of Atherb, there were

four left (Coles 1904, 280–1), one of which was a massive recumbent. In about 1868 the recumbent was blasted, apparently by apprentice masons working nearby (Peter 1985, 376), and shortly after, probably in 1870, the OS surveyors reported: *'One stone is still there, but has fallen down; the Altar Stone was blasted about 2 years ago and weighed about 30 to 40 tons'* (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 82, p 11). Curiously, however, they depicted two stones some 30m apart on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Aberdeenshire 1874, xiii); the northern roughly coincides with the position of the present stone, and the southern presumably represents the blasted residue of the recumbent. The present long axis of the surviving stone, however, lies north-east and south-west, and in its current position cannot have stood on the north side of the circle. While this led Coles

The orthostat re-erected as a rubbing stone. SC1097557

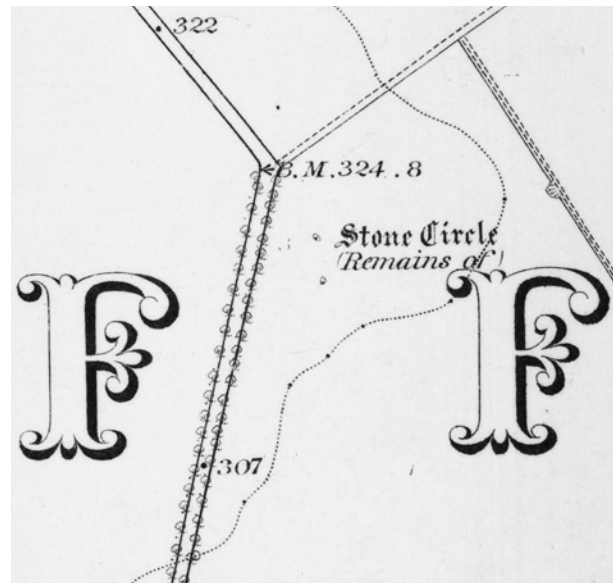




GI/004638

to suggest that the circle lay to the east, the evidence of the OS surveyors should probably be preferred; in effect, its axis confirms that the stone was re-erected as a rubbing stone after 1870 and, if Peter is correct, before 1885. Coles noted that the fragments of the other stones had been simply dumped in the angle between the road and the farm track to the north-west, where they were later seen by Keiller. However, they have since been removed.

Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 351, Abn 53; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 9; Barnatt 1989, 285, no. 6:45; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 9; Burl 2000, 420, Abn 53



The two stones plotted by the Ordnance Survey in 1870. DP079147

Date	Personnel	Record
1840s	Unknown	Demolition (Peter 1885, 376)
1870	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1874, xiii.12); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 82, p 11)
September 1903	Frederick Coles	Description (Coles 1904, 280–1)
1900s	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2895)
31 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1928	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1928, 17; RCAHMS MS106/9)
17 April 1968	Richard Little	OS: description and map revision
6 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observation (Ruggles 1984, 59)
21 August 2003	Kevin Macleod & John Sherriff	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44543)

33 The Gray Stone of Clochforbie, King Edward, Aberdeenshire

NJ75NE 1 NJ 7968 5863

The site of this recumbent stone circle is marked by a single large boulder, which lies close to the north-east boundary of an arable field on the west-south-west shoulder of the low hill overlooking Nether Clochforbie. The overall shape of the boulder, which is an irregular pentagon in plan measuring 3.65m in length, is typical of recumbents, but it has fallen onto its back so that what was its relatively flat summit now faces north-east and its keeled base south-west. A stone sleeper wedged beneath its south-east end may be one of the original packing stones, though probably not in its original position (below). Of the rest of the circle there is little trace, except a barely perceptible plateau stretching back beneath the road to the north-east of the recumbent, while small fragments of white quartz in the ploughsoil possibly indicate the former presence of an internal cairn. Such

a large stone in a relatively stone-free district is always likely to have been considered remarkable and as early as the 14th century AD it is recorded in the place-name ‘*Clochorby*’ (Alexander 1952, 36; Webster 1982, 480–2; Thomson 1984, 106–7, 621). Otherwise it is first noted in 1870–1, appearing on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map, where it is annotated as the remains of a stone circle. Coles identified the stone as a recumbent on the basis of ‘*its horizontal position, its bearing by compass, and its ponderous proportions*’ (1904, 291–3, 304), though his sketch shows the boulder upside down and the contemporary map depiction shows it lying north and south (Aberdeenshire 1902, vi); it was presumably rolled out of position when the remainder of the circle was removed some time before 1870. By 1910, however, an attempt had been made to restore the recumbent to its correct position, and James Ritchie photographed

The recumbent stone was upside down when Coles sketched it in 1903 and restored when photographed by Ritchie in 1910. SC1115301 & SC676645

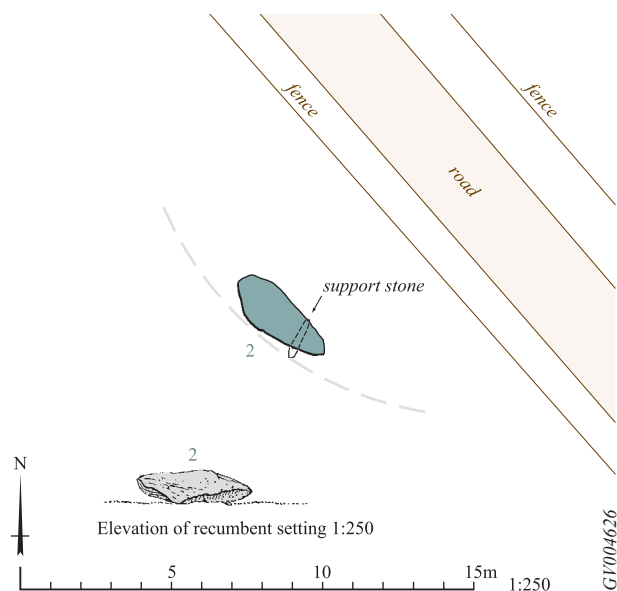




The recumbent where it lies today. SC1097792

it from the south with its top level. This evidence that the stone had been moved appears to contradict a piece of folklore about the stone that Ritchie also recorded. A bull's hide filled with gold, so the story went, was hidden beneath it 'but the great efforts made to shift the stone proved fruitless, and a warning voice having been heard from beneath the depths of the stone to command "Let be!" the advice was taken and the stone has remained undisturbed ever since' (Ritchie 1926, 309). Undisturbed or not, in this position Alexander Keiller had no doubt that the boulder was a recumbent, declaring that this was quite apparent 'to the experienced eye' (1934, 21), a view with which Keith Blood of the OS concurred in 1965. The latter's photograph taken from the north-east shows that at that time the stone was still upright, but the sleeper seems to be lying on its side.

Coles 1904, 304; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 350, Abn 29; Ruggles 1984, 58, no. 3; Barnatt 1989, 277, no. 6:25; Ruggles 1999, 185, no. 3; Burl 2000, 420, Abn 28.



Date	Personnel	Record
1870–1	OS surveyors	Gray Stone, Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1874, vi.9); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 50, p 70)
1903	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketch (1904, 291–3, figs 27–8; 304)
1910	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2453)
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1934, 21)
9 February 1965	Keith Blood	OS: description, photograph and map revision
1 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 58, 64, 66; 1999, 213, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 30)
2 April 2004	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44556)
6 April 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

34 Hatton of Ardoyne, Oyne, Aberdeenshire

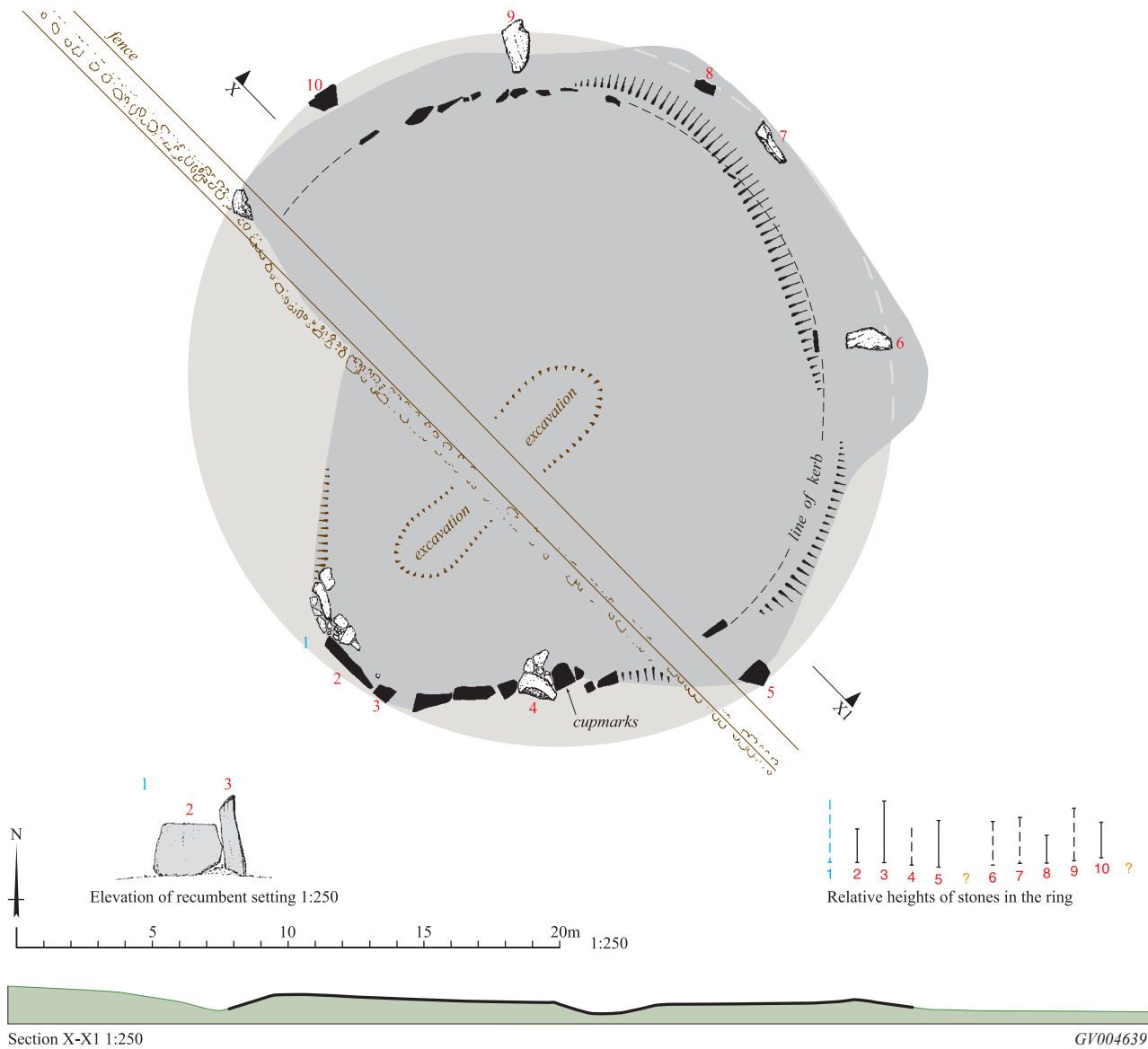
NJ62NE 7 NJ 6598 2676

This recumbent stone circle is situated in the saddle between Candle Hill and Roup Law, a position that looks south-west across the valley of the Gadie Burn to the north slopes of Bennachie. The circle falls on a march that doubles as the boundary between two fields of improved pasture and is crossed by both a tumbled stone dyke and two wire fences. Originally comprising at least thirteen stones and measuring overall about 25m from north-east to south-west by 27m transversely, nine remained on the day of the survey in July 1998, made up of the recumbent (2), its east flanker (3) and seven orthostats (4–10). Since then an additional stone has been set up within the circle adjacent to the south side of the march (not shown on the plan). The recumbent (2), which stands on the south-west, is a modest slab with an even summit and measures about 2.45m in length by 1.95m in height. The west flanker is missing, but the east flanker (3) remains standing, a slender pillar 2.8m high slumped against the recumbent; its foot is aligned with the leading edge of the recumbent, and it rises into a point which appears to turn outwards, giving the setting a distinctive and immediately recognisable silhouette. Of the seven surviving orthostats, three are erect (5, 8 & 10), two have fallen close to their original positions (6 & 9) and two are displaced (4 & 7). Both the last two have been cut down, the one lying on the line of the kerb of the internal cairn on the south of the ring (4) exhibiting a shot-hole on one edge. Despite the damage to the circle, the heights of the flanker and the three orthostats that remain upright indicate that the circle was probably graded, reducing in height, though not spacing, from south-west to north-east. The flat-topped cairn within its interior is about 0.6m high and has measured about 22m in diameter over a graded kerb, though the present outline of the mound is heavily distorted on the north-east and west by stone robbing. Nevertheless, at least twenty earthfast stones of the kerb are visible, principally on the north and south; they increase in size towards the recumbent setting, where the last two surviving on the east are massive boulders roughly 1m high. These two stones diverge from the projected line of the kerb to meet the recumbent setting, though whether this is a deliberate reconfiguration of an earlier line cannot be determined without excavation. A large kerbstone immediately east of the displaced orthostat on the south (4) exhibits two shallow cupmarks on its outer face. Among the irregularities in the surface of the cairn there is a lozenge-shaped depression extending from the centre towards the recumbent and traversed by the tumbled stone dyke. Measuring 10m from north-east to south-west by 3m transversely and 0.6m deep, this probably marks the position of one of the excavations made in about 1855 by Charles Dalrymple (see below).



The outline of the narrow shelter belt that took in the greater part of the recumbent stone circle is clearly visible from the air. SC1099924

The presence of ‘two Druidical temples’ in the parish of Oyne was noted by Rev Alexander Cushny in the *Statistical Account* (xv, 1795, 109), but no detailed record of the circle at Hatton of Ardoyne was made until the 1820s, when James Skene sketched a rough plan and a view from the west-south-west. Although dramatised by the inclusion of the towering mass of Bennachie – a vista that cannot be seen from this perspective – the drawing shows that the ring then consisted of the recumbent (2) and six upright stones (3–5, 8–10), one of them the east flanker. The large kerbstones on the south are annotated ‘solid dyke’ in the sketch and ‘wall’ on the plan, the latter also applied to a matching set of kerbstones extending away from the vacant position of the west flanker. Though there is no hint of it on Skene’s sketch, the 1st edition of the OS 1:2500 map shows that by 1867 the recumbent and the adjacent arcs of the kerb had been incorporated into the boundary that now traverses the circle. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that Skene is using these annotations to describe the character of the kerb rather than its function on this boundary. As with some of Skene’s other sketches (eg **Old Rayne**), however, there are discrepancies with the later depiction by the OS surveyors, who recorded that the circle comprised ‘six large upright boulder stones, and one lying down’ (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 70, p 19); in their case, the orthostat shown by Skene standing outside the kerb on the south (4) is missing, while the fallen orthostat on the east (6), which is not shown by Skene, was apparently upright. Further confusion is created by Christian Maclagan (1875, pl xxx), for while she appears to depict orthostat 6, her stylised plan of the circle and its internal cairn also purports to show both orthostat 4 and yet another orthostat symmetrically placed on the opposite side of the recumbent setting; if this was not enough, she reinstates the west flanker, which had been missing since before the 1820s. Suffice it to say that the disposition of surviving stones suggests that the OS



depiction is probably the most reliable of the three, though it is tempting to place the felling of orthostat 4 between the 1820s and 1867.

Charles Dalrymple, who believed that the circle had originally comprised twelve stones but noted that only seven remained, excavated here in about 1855 with one of his elder brothers, Sir James Dalrymple Horn Elphinstone, the owner of the Westhall estate (Name Book, Aberdeenshire Book, No. 70, p 19). As with his other excavations undertaken on behalf of John Stuart, the results were published with the latter's work on sculptured stones soon afterwards (1856, xxii–iii). They discovered 'two concentric circles within it, raised one above the other like steps' (*ibid*), the outer of which measured 21m in diameter and corresponds with the kerb visible today; the kerbstones were generally set with their flatter faces outwards and, exposing anything from a few centimetres to 0.45m at the top, were found to go down a maximum of 0.6m below the surface

of the cairn. The interpretation of the inner kerb, measuring 19.5m in diameter, is more difficult. Many of its stones had been robbed, but those that survived were evidently much smaller and did not penetrate far below the surface of the cairn. Rather than seeing this as the inner kerb of a narrow ring-bank only 0.75m thick, Dalrymple's allusion to 'steps' hints that they formed the edge of an inner tier of cairn material rising above the top of the main kerb. This is perhaps evidence that the tiered effect of a kerb and an external platform found by excavation at **Tomnaverie** was on occasion repeated at a higher level in some of the cairns. Excavations in the centre, presumably marked by the hollow that is still visible, revealed a 'grave' oriented north-east and south-west and measuring 1.5m in length by 0.5m in breadth and 1.2m in depth. A cremation on a bed of small boulders was discovered on the floor of this pit and there were 'small fragments of an urn, burnt very red' (*ibid*) at either end. The description of the earthen fill –



The recumbent setting from the south-west. © NMS

'for about half the depth, was black loam, and underneath ... yellow light loam, ... covered with another layer of small boulders, above which was the surface soil and vegetation' (*ibid*) – probably indicates that the pit was cut from the top of the mound, though evidently it was not re-filled with cairn material. Similar sherds to those located in the central pit were found in a separate deposit about 1.2m to the north-east. The only other feature noted was a second pit discovered between the foot of the north-north-east orthostat (8) and the outer kerb of the cairn; measuring 1.8m in length by 1.2m in breadth and 0.75m in depth, it contained only a charcoal-rich deposit, intermixed with a clay soil and burnt stones. The pottery sherds may have been donated to the National Museum, along with other finds from Dalrymple's excavations (*Proc Soc Antiq Scot* 2, 1857, 429), but there is no record of them, and Burl's and John Barnatt's statements that they were Beaker cannot be substantiated (Burl 1976, 351; 2000, 421; Barnatt 1989, 286).

At some date in the last decades of the 19th century the landscape around the circle was redesigned. Where once its southern arc had been incorporated into the march boundary, by 1900 a fence cut straight across the interior, roughly following the line of the dilapidated footing of the stone dyke that can be seen today (Aberdeenshire 1901, xlv.SE). The fence was noted by Coles and caught on camera a few years later by James Ritchie (RCAHMS AB2496). Maclagan's sketch depicts

the older march as a drystone wall butting against the recumbent setting (1875, pl xxx), but by 1900 any such stonework had been removed from the kerb, and Ritchie's photograph of March 1904 shows only a broken down wood and wire fence following the earlier line. The strip of rough pasture on which the circle had stood was by now planted up with conifers, forming a shelterbelt running down the north-east side of the march to a large planting on Candle Hill. The improved ground on this side of the boundary had also been formalised into enclosures. These were probably bounded with wire fences, which can be seen in the background of another of Ritchie's photographs (RCAHMS AB2500), but may also have included the eroded field banks that partly enclose the site of the circle. The circle itself was left in a clearing and by the time Coles reached it in 1900 the interior was heavily overgrown.

Despite the vegetation and working single-handed in inclement weather, Coles prepared his customary plan, reporting that the ring then consisted of nine out of a possible thirteen stones. By now the orthostat on the east (6) had fallen, but he believed that the cut up fragment of orthostat 4 was only *'partly fallen'* and thus still in its correct position; in his tally he erroneously interpreted a boulder next to the recumbent as the stump of the west flanker, assuming that the other stones lying round and about were other fragments of it. The ground between there and orthostat 10 was also strewn with fragments which he suggested

came from blasting the missing orthostats in this sector, though Skene's sketch indicates both were removed before the 1820s. More likely they were either the remains of the kerb or the old march dyke on this side of the cairn. In any case they have since been cleared to make way for the plough, which has cut back into the body of the cairn parallel to the west edge of the field.

Coles felt that the orientation of the recumbent setting was unusually far to the south-west, a point that Alexander Keiller also picked up on. The latter attempted to prepare a plan in about 1926 but never finished it, probably defeated by the dense vegetation that continued to plague the clearing in the trees and appears in the background of Right Rev George Browne's photograph of the recumbent setting taken in 1920. This also shows graffiti scratched upon the exterior of the two stones (1921, pl xxx). It was not until Keith Blood of the OS revised the depiction in 1969 that it was recognised that the fragment of orthostat 4 lying on the line of the kerb on the south was displaced, but he believed that this and many of the other stones gathered here had been built into a more recent wall linking the march dyke to the east flanker.

More recently work has concentrated on the astronomical alignment of the circle, a theme first taken

up here in 1907 by Sir Norman Lockyer. As part of these studies Burl and Ruggles have made numerous observations and measurements, in particular noting the level summit of the recumbent and the fact that it is not oriented upon the dominant topographical feature in the foreground, namely the Mither Tap o' Bennachie (Ruggles and Burl 1985, 47, 50). Julian Cope has since argued that, rather than the Mither Tap, the level top of the recumbent mirrors the profile of the skyline extending to its west (Cope 1998, 20–1, 103).

The erection of the stone on the south of the march in about 2004 was reported by David Trevarthen. On enquiry he discovered that the previous owner was returning this stone whence it had come, having been taken by his grandfather or great grandfather to shore up the corner of a barn at Knowehead. The countersunk socket and bolt holes for an iron bracket also tell of another life, perhaps as a gatepost. If the stone was ever an orthostat here it has passed unnoticed in the archaeological researches on the circle, unless it was one of the fragments that Coles observed strewn in the west sector of the cairn.

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1901, 248; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 351, Abn 58; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 56; Barnatt 1989, 286, no. 6:50; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 56; Burl 2000, 421, Abn 59

Date	Personnel	Record
1820s	James Skene	Sketch and plan (RCAHMS SAS464)
c1855	Charles Dalrymple	Excavations (Stuart 1856, xxii–xxxiii)
1867	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Aberdeenshire 1870, xlv.11); note (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 70, p 19)
c1875	Christian Maclagan	Description, plan and sketch (Maclagan 1875, 12, 77, pl xxx; RCAHMS SAS467; DC53021)
September 1900	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketch (Coles 1901, 241–6, figs 47–8)
March 1904	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2496 & AB2500)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 401, 405)
1920	George Browne	Description and photograph (Browne 1921, 85, pl xxx)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1926	Alexander Keiller	Description and plan (Keiller 1927, 14; 1934, 12; RCAHMS ABD540/1; MS106/27, 8)
13 March 1969	Keith Blood	OS: description and map revision
c1980	Aubrey Burl	Astronomical survey and guidebook description (Burl 1979a, 24; 1980a, 199, no. 25; 1995 & 2005a, 100, no. 103)
15 June 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67–71, 74–5; 1999, 213–15, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 38–9, 47, 50)
2 July 1998	Ian Parker, Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44474)
c2004	Harvey Ross & William Duncan	Erection of a returned stone
13 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

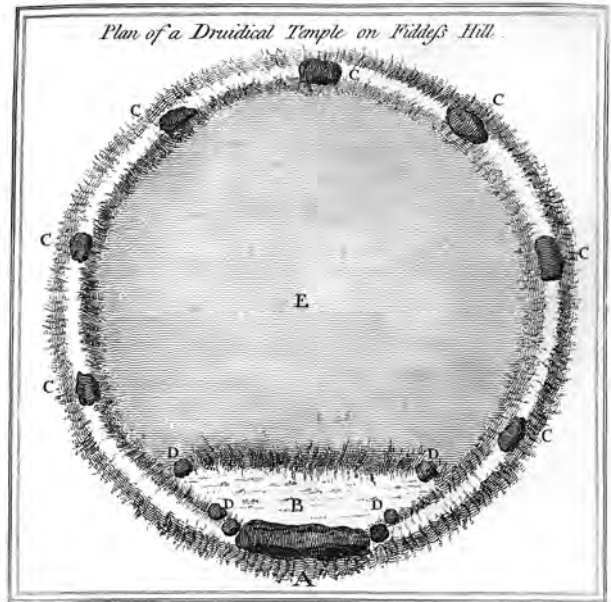
35 Hill of Fiddes, Foveran, Aberdeenshire

NJ92SW 1 NJ 9350 2432

Reduced to only the recumbent and its west flanker, what little remains visible of this stone circle is now largely buried by field clearance a little south of the summit of the Hill of Fiddes. The recumbent block (2) faces south-south-west, measuring 2.8m in length by up to 1.5m in height, and its uneven summit rises to a point just west of its centre. The surviving flanker (1) leans slightly forwards and is about 1.2m high. Nothing else is visible, other than a deep bed of field-gathered stones extending back across the interior.

The present condition of the circle is sadly ironic, given that in 1777 James Anderson described it as ‘still very entire’ and prepared a measured sketch plan of its features to illustrate this class of monument. The plan has no scale but it is accompanied by an unambiguous description:

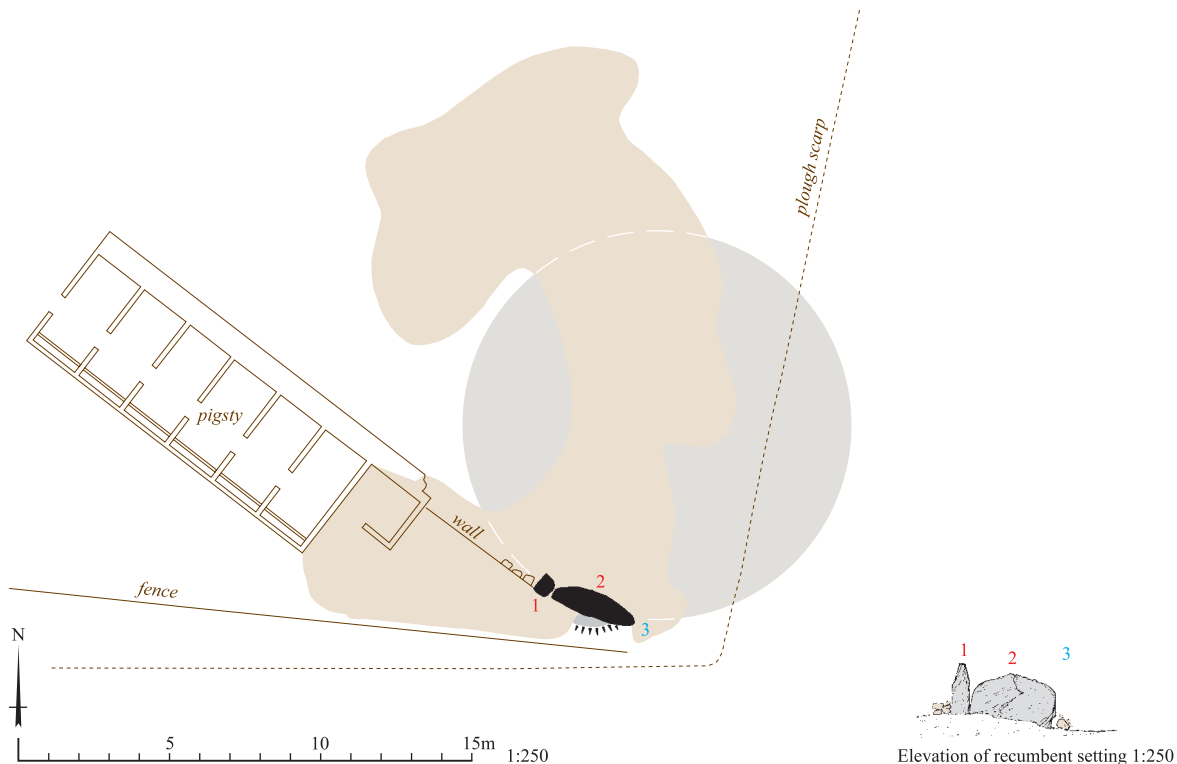
‘This particular temple, 46 feet [14m] in diameter, consists of nine long stones... placed on end in a circular form, at distances nearly equal, though not exactly so. The area within the circle is smooth, and somewhat lower than the ground around it. By this means, and by a small bank carried quite round between the stones, which is still a little higher than the ground about it, the circular area has been very distinctly defined. Between two stones that are nearest the meridian line, on the South side of the area, is laid on its side, a long stone, at each end of which are placed two other stones smaller than any of those that form the outer circle. These are a little within the circle, ... and still farther, within the circular line, are placed two



Anderson's depiction of 1777. SC898654

other stones ... Behind the large stone the earth is raised something more than a foot higher than the rest of the circular area’ (1779, 246–7, pl xxi)

The plan he drew appears akin to Buchan rings such as **Aikey Brae**, comprising the recumbent setting and seven orthostats set out around a low ring-bank enclosing an open interior. However, the sketch of the features on the south side of the interior suggest a different design, and it is possible that the stones Anderson observed here formed part of the kerb of the sort of low internal cairn commonly found turning out to meet the back of the recumbent setting in other rings.



GY004640



If so, the internal cairn had been robbed long since, perhaps explaining Anderson's perception that the interior was slightly sunken. Within a few years the rest of the circle was all but destroyed and by the time the Rev William Duff came to prepare the parish entry for the *Statistical Account*, the damage had been done; he could do no more than append a footnote that '*There were in the parish 2 druidical temples, one of which was very complete, but both are now entirely destroyed*' (vi, 1793, 67n).

The circle was not entirely lost to local memory and in the mid 19th century Charles Temple was able to recount that '*a good few stones existed some years ago... but, with the exception of one stone left for the cattle to rub against, I think no vestige now remains*' (1862, 65–6). That any stones survived in place can probably be attributed to the construction of a wall that incorporated them into the south-west corner of a large trapezoidal field to the east of Hill of Fiddes steading. The OS surveyors identified the recumbent and the

Ritchie photographed the inner side of the recumbent setting in 1910 before it became hidden by field clearance. SC678921

flanker in the wall, but they went on to allege that it had comprised only seven stones, three less than shown on Anderson's plan (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 32, p 16). Many of the other stones from the circle were almost certainly built into the wall and some thirty years later Coles showed two '*great stones*' on his plan close by the flanker on the west and mentioned that others on the east were '*both more massive and more numerous*' (1902, 511, fig 26). The existence of these stones was also noted by Alexander Keiller (1928, 14), and in 1964 Robert Dickson of the OS took a photograph of the recumbent showing one of them on the west, now lost in the mass of field clearance. The wall to the east has been removed and there is sadly no photographic evidence of its fabric.

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1902, 580; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 351, Abn 60; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 80; Barnatt 1989, 287, no. 6:52; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 80; Burl 2000, 421, Abn 61

Date	Personnel	Record
1777	James Anderson	Plan (Anderson 1779, 246–8, pl xxi)
1793	William Duff	Note (<i>Stat Acct</i> , vi, 1793, 67n)
1862	Charles Temple	Note (Temple 1862, 65–6)
1866–7	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1870, xlvii.15); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 32, p 16)
April 1910	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2525)
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1928, 14; 1934, 16)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
20 March 1964	Robert Dickson	OS: description, photograph and map revision
22 June 1965	Ian Scott	OS: revised description
8 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Astronomical survey and tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67; 1999, 213)
28 January 1997	John Sherriff & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description
28 April 1999	Alan Leith, Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44494)
5 May 2006	David Herd, Simon Howard & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

36 Hill of Milleath, Cairnie, Aberdeenshire

NJ44SE 9 NJ 4679 4294

This ring, which was destroyed in the late 1860s, can be identified as a recumbent stone circle on the strength of descriptions by John Stuart (1854a, 141) and Robert Sim (1865, 145–50), and a plan taken by Christian Maclagan (1875, pl xxvii), the latter depicting the recumbent setting and four orthostats with a beguiling clarity that is largely absent from the earlier descriptions. Fortunately the OS surveyors visited not long after its destruction and with the help of the tenants of Gingomyres, Smallburn and Drumdelgie were able to locate its site in what was by then improved pasture on the east side of the saddle between Black Hill on the north-west and Hill of Milleath on the south – an area now cloaked in a forestry plantation.

The two descriptions are diametrically opposed in style, and sometimes conflicting in detail, Stuart's being no more than a brief note and Sim's a long rambling account prefaced by a romantic verse. Nevertheless, they share enough points in common to elucidate the principal features of the circle, though to some extent both are describing a monument that was already partly robbed, as Sim certainly recognised. Both observed that the stones of the circle variously stood and lay between two concentric stony banks, the outer of which was broken by what they believed was an entrance, though this may have been no more than an access for the stone-robbers' carts; Sim describes the gap as about 4.5m wide and places it on the east, while Stuart puts it on the 'south or south-east'. Sim also provides other measurements, recording that the enclosure formed by the outer bank was some 30m in diameter, while the inner was a little under 10m. These measurements neatly bracket the diameter of 23.7m that Maclagan's plan supplies for the stone circle alone. Details of the latter are more confused. Stuart mentions that only 'three or four' of the stones remained, though it is not entirely clear whether this included the only stone that he describes in detail: 'A large stone, which had been supported on other three, but has now fallen, lies partly on the ground, and is opposite to the opening to the south or south-east. It is 12 feet [3.6m] long, 6 feet [1.8m] deep, and 14 inches [0.35m] broad' (1854a, 141). Sim provides a little more information and also draws attention to this same large slab:

'Betwixt the two circles, and especially in the southern half, lie several stones, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 feet [0.9–2.1m] long, and of various breadths and thicknesses ...; and on the north-east portion, and about equidistant from both circles, stands a very large angularly shaped stone ... But the most striking object, ... is what has been called "the Table" or "Altar-stone," of a close bluish granite like those around ... This stone ... is 13½ feet [4.1m] long, 6 feet [1.8m] broad, and 1 foot [0.3m] thick ... This stone now lies



Maclagan's sketch published in 1875. DP037788

where it unquestionably had originally been placed, nearly opposite the entrance, and on the verge of the inner circle, having been hurled down, ... from three blocks of stone which had been its pedestal, and is now leaning against two of these in an oblique position, with one of its lateral edges resting on or rather in the ground ...' (1865, 148).

Both Stuart and Sim conceived of this slab as the slipped capstone of a cromlech, or chamber, a concept that is encountered in the descriptions of several other recumbent stone circles at this time, and there is no reason to doubt that in this case they are describing the remains of a recumbent setting with its recumbent still in place. At first sight, the positioning of the slab 'opposite the entrance' might be construed as the northern side of the ring, but the use of the word 'opposite' in this context merely means that it was facing the gap in the bank outside it, and thus stood somewhere on the south-east quarter. Furthermore, set on the line of the inner of the two banks, in contrast to the sole orthostat remaining upright, which stood between them, this arc of the circle was probably flattened. This feature is entirely missing from Maclagan's depiction, but this is stylised to the extent that it shows a typical recumbent setting on the south-west, expressing an orthodoxy that she seems to have accepted without question.

The final detail that Stuart refers to is a flat stone that had lain at the centre of the inner circle, beneath which the Rev William Cowie, minister of the parish of Cairnie 1826–58, found 'a layer of charcoal and bones of animals' (Stuart 1854a, 141). Delving with his walking stick, Sim also turned up small fragments of burnt bones.

James Macdonald, writing 20 years after the circle's destruction, refers to the 'recumbent stone' (1891, 191), but in this he may simply have been following Maclagan, who is surely the source of Hill

of Milleath appearing in Alfred Lewis' list of circles with '*altar stones*' (Lewis 1900, 72). A visit by Coles in 1905 confirmed that it had been removed, although he '*found over sixty great blocks, their fractures all comparatively recent*' amongst the stones built into the neighbouring dyke (Coles 1906a, 185–6). At nearby Blackhill he was told that the circle was destroyed by '*one Dick, farmer at Gingomyres*' (*ibid*, 185) in about 1875, that it had measured some 60 feet (18.3m) in diameter, and the recumbent was 4 feet (1.2m) thick. Memory can play tricks with time; according to census information William Dick, a limestone quarrier, was the tenant of Smallburn 1861–81, the remembered date of its destruction is clearly wrong, the thickness of the recumbent is at variance with either the breadth or the thickness supplied by Sim, and Maclagan's measurement of the diameter should probably be preferred.

In summary, this circle comprised a ring of orthostats measuring some 24m in diameter, with a

recumbent slab set back from the circumference on the line of the inner ring-bank somewhere on the south-east quarter. Despite Maclagan's depiction of the recumbent setting, there is no unequivocal evidence that either flanker was present in the 1850s or 60s, though the recumbent was evidently canted back against two stones that must have been of some size to catch Stuart's and Sim's attention. The inner ring-bank may have marked the edge of an internal cairn, while the outer possibly formed the leading edge of a surrounding platform, though at 30m in overall diameter this extended much further beyond the ring of orthostats than has been recorded anywhere else. The interpretation of the inner as the lip of a robbed cairn may account for Stuart's observation of the rich green vegetation in the interior, which he contrasted with the '*barren, moor-like appearance*' outside.

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1906a, 206; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 351, Abn 54; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 29; Barnatt 1989, 285, no. 6:46; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 29; Burl 2000, 420, Abn 54

Date	Personnel	Record
Pre 1853	William Cowie	Excavation (Stuart 1854a, 141)
1850s	John Stuart	Description (Stuart 1854a, 141)
c1865	Robert Sim	Description (Sim 1865, 145–50)
Late 1860s	William Dick	Demolition (Coles 1906a, 185)
Pre 1871	Christian Maclagan	Plan (Maclagan 1875, pl xxvii)
1871	OS surveyors	Site of Stone Circle (Aberdeenshire 1874, xxv.3); note (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 12, p 111)
September 1905	Frederick Coles	Visit (Coles 1906a, 185–6)
30 November 1972	Alan Ayre	OS: visit
21 March 1990	Stratford Halliday	RCAHMS: visit

37 Inschfield, Insch, Aberdeenshire

NJ62NW 6 NJ 6233 2934

The remains of this recumbent stone circle stand at the south end of a low ridge in an arable field midway between Inschfield and Nether Boddam. Only three stones now remain, comprising the recumbent and one of its flankers on the south-west (2–3) and a single fallen orthostat on the north-north-east (4); lying on opposite sides of the ring, these indicate an overall diameter of about 23.5m. The slab forming the recumbent (2) has fallen onto its back and broken into two pieces, now lying with its even summit to the north-east and its curved base to the south-west; when whole it measured 4.15m in length by up to 2.4m in breadth. The surviving flanker (3) stands at the east end of the recumbent and rises to a point at a height of 2.85m; a smooth facet at its north-east corner may have been used as a whetstone. The fallen orthostat on the north-north-east side of the ring (4), one of at least four still standing in 1876 (see below), is rather smaller than the flanker and measures 1.95m in length. The interior is still largely under cultivation, its only feature being a shallow hollow extending north-east from the recumbent and roughly bounded to either side by plough scars. Pieces of quartz have been gathered up with the field-cleared stones dumped around the recumbent setting and the fallen orthostat.

The Inschfield circle must have been numbered amongst the *Druidical temples* noted in 1842 on various hills in the parish of Insch (*NSA*, xii, Aberdeenshire, 751; see also Nos. 18, 28, 61 & 69), but it escaped any detailed description until the visit of the OS surveyors in 1867. By that time, the majority of the orthostats had probably been removed, but there were ‘*five of the stones still standing & 1 lying down*’ (Name

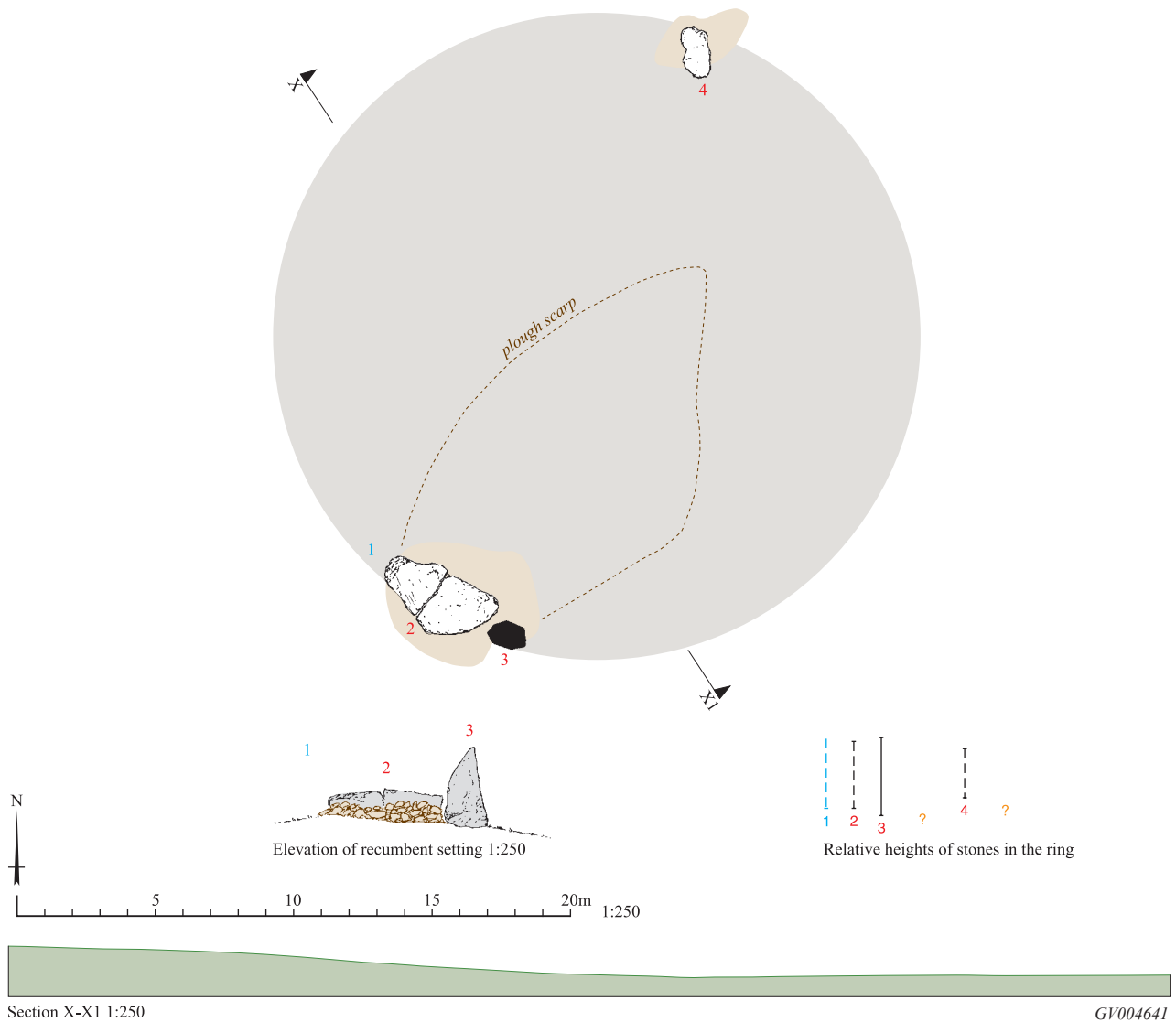
Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 41, p 44). The accompanying depiction on the 1:2500 map not only shows the recumbent (the lying stone) with the east flanker on the south-west and the fallen orthostat on the north-north-east (4), but also another two orthostats on the west and one on the north-east. After the lapse of some thirty years a visit by members of the Banffshire Field Club in 1899 revealed that these additional stones were removed. Both Coles and James Ritchie recorded the remains of the circle in September 1901, the latter’s photograph capturing the bleak and rather desolate scene. Nevertheless, the north-north-east orthostat (4) was still upright, if leaning, and remained standing until after Right Rev George Browne visited the circle in 1920. The anonymous reporter of the visit by the Banffshire Field Club had estimated the diameter of the circle at 21 yards (19.2m), but for reasons best known to himself, Coles was reluctant to accept that the distance from orthostat 4 to the recumbent represented the diameter of the ring, preferring a measurement of 90ft (27.4m) that he had mis-scaled from the 1:2500 map, and one that persisted into Browne’s description. Alexander Keiller evidently appreciated the problem and was at pains to point out that the north-north-east orthostat was the only sure guide to the ring’s diameter (1927, 8). By the time that Alexander Thom surveyed the stones in 1957 this orthostat had fallen.

Subsequent work here in 1981 by Ruggles examined the astronomical alignment of the circle. Moreover, in conjunction with Burl, he noted that the recumbent setting faced Satter Hill, which rises out of the hills in the middle distance around Auchleven. The setting certainly does not face Dunnideer, the most prominent landmark in this part of the Garioch, though Julian Cope has since argued that the recumbent mirrors its shape (1998, 102). This, however, can only refer to the stone in its fallen state.

Coles 1902, 581; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 352, Abn 66; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 40; Barnatt 1989, 288, no. 6:57; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 40; Burl 2000, 421, Abn 67

Graham’s view to the Hill of Dunnideer from the north-east taken in the 1940s–50s shows the orthostat still standing. SC1097291





Date	Personnel	Record
1867	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1870, xlii.2); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 41, p 44)
12 August 1899	Unknown	Note (Trans Banffshire Field Club 1899, 41)
September 1901	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2502)
September 1901	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and elevation (Coles 1902, 547–9, figs 63–5)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 394, 399)
1920	George Browne	Description and photograph (Browne 1921, 80–1, pl xxv)
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1927, 8)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1940s–50s	Angus Graham	Photograph (RCAHMS H94200)
April 1957	Alexander Thom	Theodolite survey and notes (Thom 1967, 136; Thom, Thom & Burl 1980, 178–9; RCAHMS DC4395; MS430/20; Ferguson 1988, 64)
4 March 1969	Richard Little	OS: description and map revision
13 June 1981	Clive Ruggles	Astronomical survey and tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 59, 66, 69–71, 74–5; 1999, 213, 215–16; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 46, 49, 50)
24 June 1999	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44438)
6 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

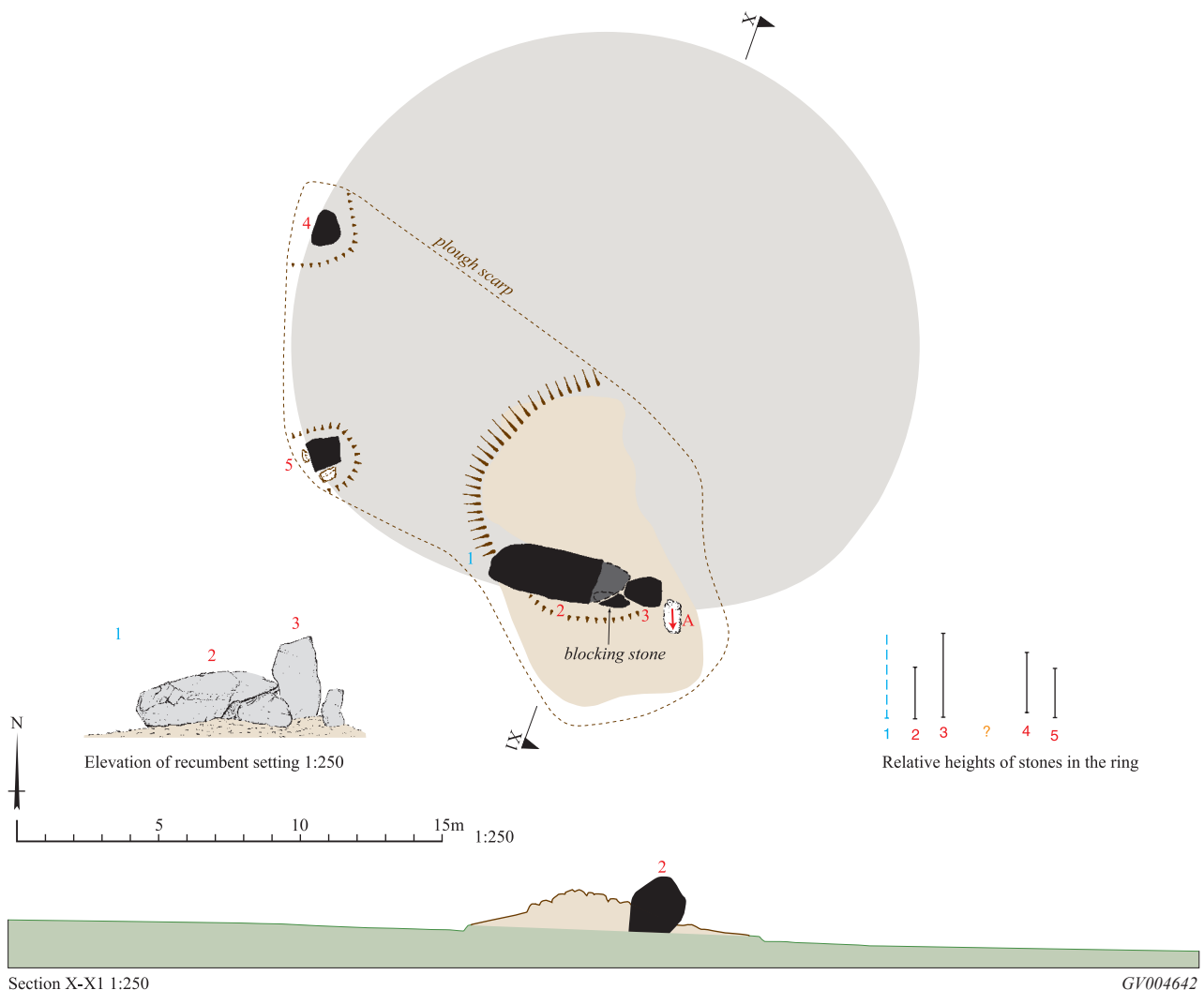
38 Kirkton of Bourtie, Bourtie, Aberdeenshire

NJ82SW 2 NJ 8009 2488

The surviving stones of this recumbent stone circle stand in an arable field on the spur some 300m to the west-south-west of the Old Manse at Kirkton of Bourtie. Originally measuring about 22m in diameter, it probably comprised ten or eleven stones, of which only four now survive, namely the recumbent on the south-south-west (2), its east flanker (3), and two upright orthostats on the west (4 & 5). The recumbent (2), which measures 4.9m in length by 1.9m in height, is an irregularly shaped boulder with a gently domed summit and does not appear to be set horizontal, dipping markedly towards the west-north-west to rest on a foundation of small boulders. At the opposite end a blocking stone can be seen filling the triangular gap between it and the east flanker (3). The latter stands 2.95m high and is much taller than either of the surviving orthostats on the west-north-west (4) and west-south-west (5), but at 2.1m and 1.75m high respectively these are not graded to reduce in height from south to north. Apart from field clearance, nothing can be seen within the interior, though what was probably the

base of an internal cairn was noted in the 19th century (see below).

Writing the parish account at the end of the 18th century, Rev Thomas Shepherd refers to 'three *Druïdical circles here, two of them pretty entire*', and lying so close to the manse it is likely that Kirkton of Bourtie was one of them (*Stat Acct*, ix, 1793, 436). Almost fifty years later, however, only two remained, namely Kirkton of Bourtie and Sheldon, of which the latter was described as being in 'a state of considerable preservation' (*NSA*, xii, Aberdeenshire, 622). The circle at Kirkton of Bourtie was probably already reduced to its present state and when the OS surveyors visited in 1867 they found only 'four very large stones three of them standing and one fallen' and reported that 'No one [in] the parish remembers having seen it in any other condition than at present, excepting that it was at one time rudely paved' (*Name Book*, Aberdeenshire, No. 10, p 36). They measured the length of the recumbent as if it was its height and evidently assumed that the stone had simply fallen, while the memory of the 'rudely paved' interior almost certainly recalls the removal of an internal cairn.



Little had changed by 1901 when James Ritchie photographed the stones standing amongst potato drills a few months before Coles carried out his survey. Coles estimated the ring's original diameter at 60ft (18.3m) and drew attention to the blocking stone, though he was mistaken in suggesting that it was a fragment split from the underside of the recumbent. His plan (1902, 514, fig 30) shows the recumbent on a low tump, which is also discernible on Ritchie's photograph, and there were also two stones apparently on edge '*rising a few inches above ground*' immediately behind the east flanker; neither appears on his perspective view (*ibid*, 515, fig 31) and he makes no comment as to whether he believed they were kerbstones belonging to an internal cairn. Both are now lost beneath the field clearance that has accreted around the setting, while another stone that Coles depicts, the small earthfast boulder leaning north immediately south-east of the east flanker (A on the present plan), is probably no more than a cleared boulder, despite having the appearance of a set kerbstone on the photograph later published by Right Rev George Browne (1921, pl xvii).

Coles appreciated that this was an unusually large recumbent, and the sheer size of the boulder clearly impressed Alexander Keiller, who remarked that its tall east flanker was '*a worthy companion to such a Recumbent Stone*' (1934, 13). Keiller, however, was more concerned that the surviving stones were being damaged by cattle and that the interior of the circle remained under plough (1928, 9). In 1964 when Keith Blood of the OS photographed the recumbent there was



The long summer grass obscures the field clearance. © Dorothy Leeming

relatively little clearance visible, but by the time it was next photographed in 1976 field-gathered stones were beginning to pile up behind the setting and the north-east part of the circle was still regularly ploughed in 1999. Later work has followed a familiar pattern, with a plan prepared in 1957 by Alexander Thom and the amassing of numerous observations and measurements by Burl and Ruggles. Burl considered that a scatter of stones within the interior was residual cairn material, though the section taken in 1999 offers little promise that anything of the internal cairn now survives. He has also drawn attention to the character of some of the stones in the adjacent field wall (Burl 1995 and 2005a, 101), including at least two small uprights in the wall on the east side of the field which might be robbed kerbstones. Most recently George Currie has reported a possible cupmark on the recumbent (2007, 12).

Coles 1902, 580; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 352, Abn 67; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 61; Barnatt 1989, 306, no. 6:58; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 61; Burl 2000, 421, Abn 68

Date	Personnel	Record
May 1842	James Bisset	Note (WSA, xii, Aberdeenshire, 622)
1867	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1870, xlvi.13); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 10, p 36)
September 1901	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketches (Coles 1902, 513–16, figs 30–2)
May 1901	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2507)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 394, 399)
1920	George Browne	Description and photograph (Browne 1921, 72, pl xvii)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1928	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1928, 9; 1934, 13; RCAHMS MS106/9)
1940s–50s	Angus Graham	Photographs (RCAHMS H94201)
April 1957	Alexander Thom	Plan and notes (Thom 1967, 136; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 164–5; RCAHMS DC4388; MS430/20; Ferguson 1988, 64)
5 March 1964	Keith Blood	OS: description and map revision
1960s–90s	Aubrey Burl	Guidebook description (Burl 1970, 60, 76,78; 1976a, 168, 174, 352; 1995 & 2005a, 101, no. 105; 2000, 101)
2 July 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67, 69–71, 74–5; 1999, 213, 215; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 47, 50, 51)
22 March 1996	John Sherriff & Iain Fraser	RCAHMS: description
29 April 1999	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44495)
11 July 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

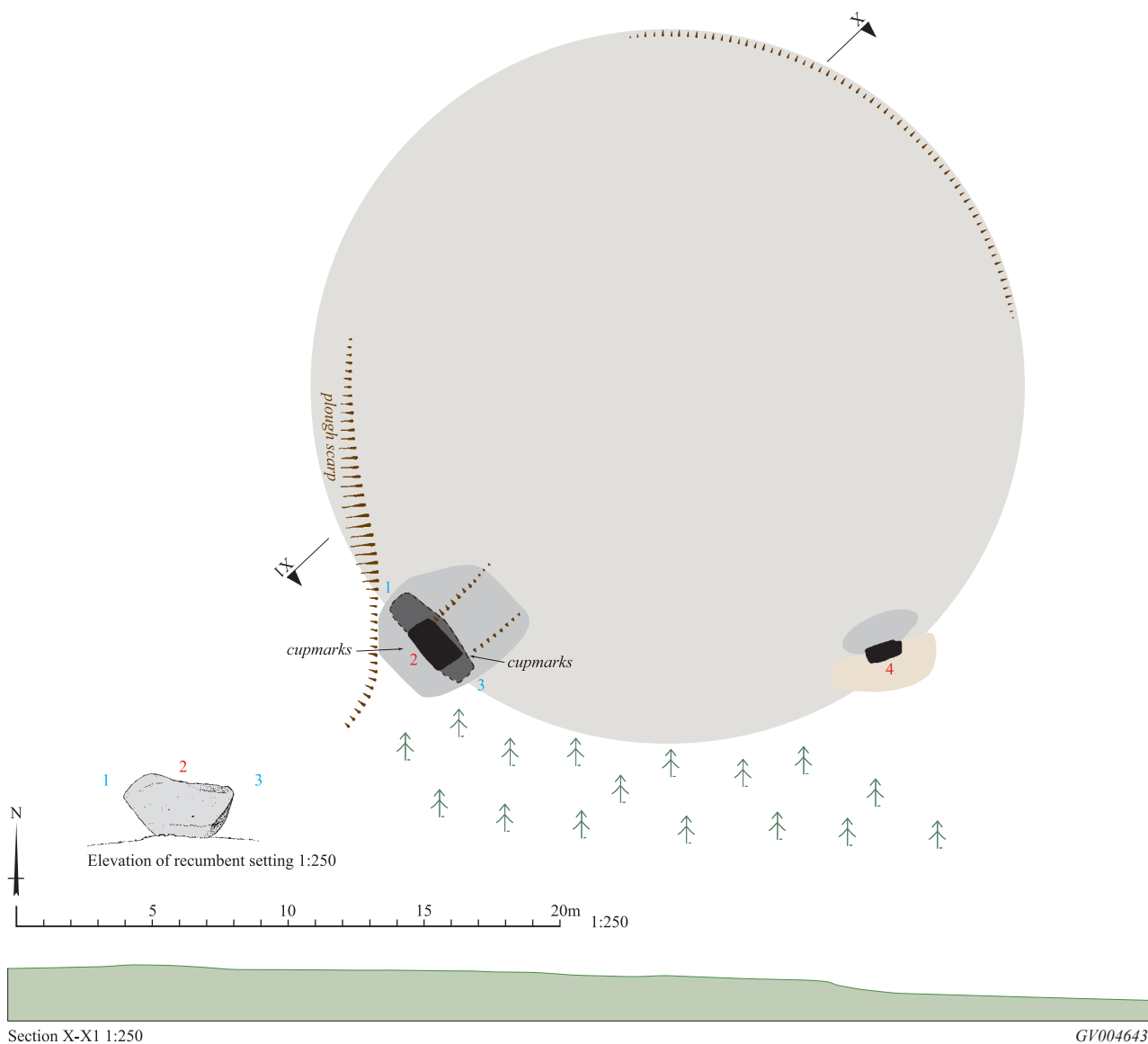
39 Loanend, Premnay, Aberdeenshire

NJ62SW 1 NJ 6049 2421

Only the recumbent and a single orthostat remain of this stone circle, standing in improved pasture immediately north of a small coniferous plantation a short distance south-east of the summit of Hawk Hill. The recumbent (2), situated on the south-west, is a massive boulder measuring 4.15m in length by up to 2.25m in height, but it tapers downwards into its base, which is largely free of soil and now appears to rest precariously upon some cobbles, with only a few small packing-stones pinning it upright. Its summit is uneven (pace Ruggles and Burl 1985, 49), rising into a pronounced dome towards its north-west end, and bears two cupmarks near the mid-point; there is also a possible cupmark near the centre of its outer face. Both flankers are missing, but the shape of the recumbent would have dictated the use of blocking stones to complete the facade. The

sole remaining orthostat (4) stands 1.6m high on the south-east. The circle probably measures about 25m in diameter and the uneven interior is delineated on the north-east by a low scarp that is likely to coincide with its perimeter.

The site of the circle is annotated *Standing Stones* on a plan of the Mains of Leslie dating to 1758, and then again on George Brown's plan of 1797. The earlier plan shows them within an oval enclosure encircling the top of the hill (NAS RHP 5199/4), and the land round about is all labelled *Faulds*, probably indicating that it was used for outfields and enclosed with temporary tathe folds (see Dixon and Gannon 2007, 216–18). In the 19th century the hill was thought to have been wooded at one time, taking its name from the hawks that lived amongst the trees (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No.75, p 23), and the enclosure shown on the earlier map may have been a wood boundary. Nothing of this appears on Brown's plan, which shows a tongue of rough pasture



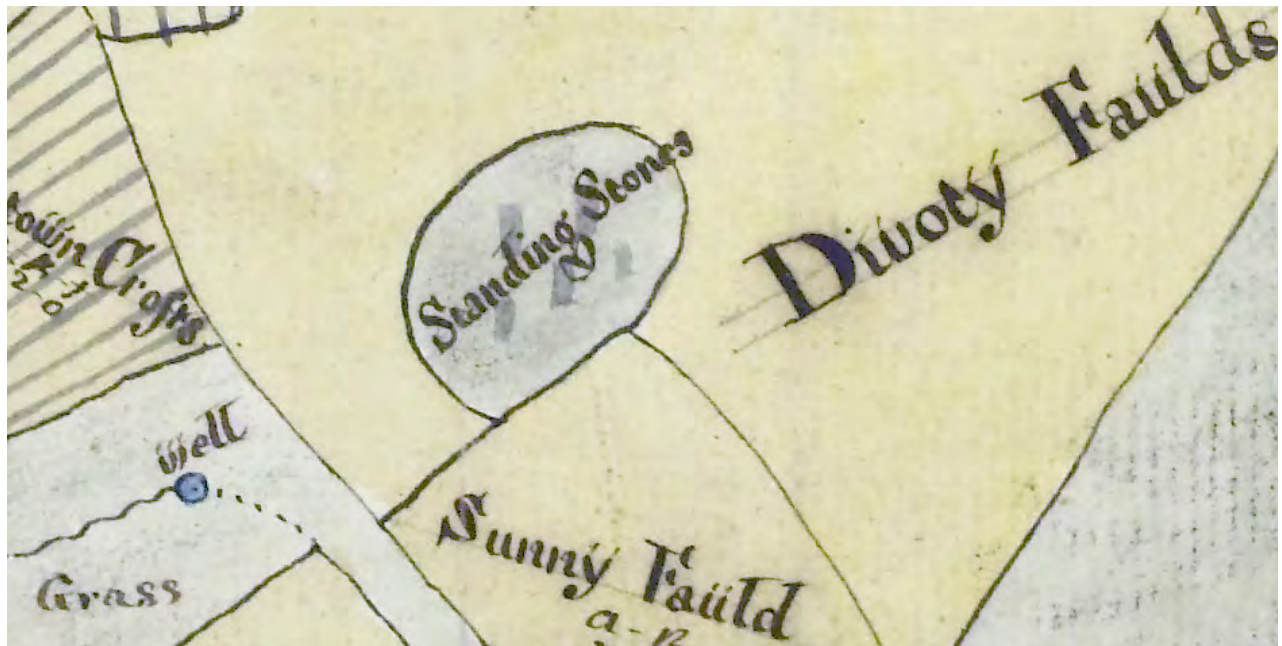
running up onto the hill between a series of enclosed outfields. These were swept away when the land was improved and nothing more is heard of the circle until the OS surveyors prepared the 1st edition of the large scale maps in 1866–7. Despite James Gurnell's note that in 1884 there were three stones, by the time the surveyors visited it had been reduced to the two stones that remain today, and the Name Book notes that three others had been removed in the 1840s by the farmer at Loanend. Trenching the ground beneath one of them he found an 'Urn' containing a cremation, but this stone, it seems, he had already moved once before; the location of this urn-burial is plotted on the map some 20m east-south-east of the circle, though the vessel itself did not survive the discovery (*ibid*; NJ62SW 21). Two of the stones removed may have been the flankers, for the tenant, Francis Brown, told Coles some thirty years later in 1900 that these had survived into his father's time, but they '*sank down and lie buried in the deep sand below, which was being worked for building*' (Coles 1901, 240). Quite what Coles meant by this cryptic comment is unclear; indeed it is quite possible that he was merely relating what he had been told and did not fully understand it himself. The closest quarry, which lies 90m to the south-west, probably dates from between

1870 and 1900 (NJ62SW 179) and no others are known nearby; possibly his informant meant that the stones were deliberately buried where they had stood rather than removed.

Coles was the first to observe the cupmarks on the summit of the recumbent, and James Ritchie subsequently recorded them in greater detail (1918, 98, 121), visiting the circle on at least two occasions and taking photographs in 1904 and 1908. The first shows the recumbent standing on a low tump created by the ploughing round about, with what was presumably a temporary stockade of upright posts standing immediately to its rear (RCAHMS AB2504); in the second the stockade has gone, revealing a more substantial stony mound immediately behind the stone. In contrast to the loose field-gathered stones that had been piled around the front of the recumbent over the intervening four years, and indeed against the orthostat in the background, this mound is grass grown and was perhaps the remains of the internal cairn (RCAHMS AB2503). Alexander Keiller was less optimistic when he visited some time later and concluded that short of

Ritchie's photograph of 1908 shows the stony mound behind the recumbent. SC678708





removing the last two stones no further damage could be done to the circle. Certainly cultivation has continued across the interior ever since, not only leading to the removal of the clearance that had accrued by 1908, but also exposing the recumbent to its very base; only the merest trace of any cairn material can now be seen embedded in the soil around its base. Nevertheless, the survival of the recumbent has allowed Ruggles and Burl to include it in their tabulated data, where they have calculated that the recumbent faces a spur of Satter Hill,

An estate map of 1758 depicts five ghostly shapes within the enclosure annotated 'Standing Stones'. © NAS

presumably Wood Hill 1.2km to the south-west, though as a lower spur of a much more conspicuous summit this hardly supports the idea that such orientations are of any significance (Ruggles and Burl 1985, 49).

Coles 1901, 248; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 352, Abn 69; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 46; Barnatt 1989, 291–2, no. 6:60; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 46; Burl 2000, 421, Abn 70

Date	Personnel	Record
1758	Anon	Depiction on estate plan (NAS RHP 5199/4)
1797	George Brown	Depiction on estate plan (NTS Leith Hall)
1866–7	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1870, xlv.13); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 75, p 23)
1884	James Gurnell	Tabulated notes (Gurnell 1884)
September 1900	Frederick Coles	Description, plan, section and sketch (Coles 1901, 239–41, figs 45–6)
May 1904	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2504)
1908	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2503)
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1927, 14; 1934, 12–13)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
7 August 1973	Iain Sainsbury	OS: description, photograph and map revision
17 August 1976	John Macrae	OS: map revision
c1980	Aubrey Burl	Astronomical survey (Burl 1980a, 199, no. 35)
7 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 59, 66, 69–71, 74–5; 1999, 213, 215–16, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 39, 49, 57)
6 November 1996	John Sherriff & Iain Fraser	RCAHMS: description
10 June 1999	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44500)
12 July 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

40 Loanhead of Daviot, Daviot, Aberdeenshire

NJ72NW 1 NJ 7477 2885

A Guardianship monument, this recumbent stone circle lies within a fenced and mown enclosure at the southern end of the ridge above Daviot, though a low rise and the trees to the south of the circle mask the view of the village itself. Today the circle comprises the recumbent setting and a complete ring of eight stones some 21m in diameter, within which there is a low kerbed cairn with a open central court. It should be borne in mind, however, that this projection of the archetypal recumbent stone circle is in part the product of heavy restoration following the excavations of 1934–5 by Howard Kilbride-Jones (1935; 1936), which in 1989 was further modified by the removal of the stones to create the central court.

The recumbent setting stands on the south-south-west of the ring, though it does not face in this direction and is skewed round to the south. The recumbent (2) has split lengthwise along a natural plane of weakness and now gives the appearance of two slabs, one set in front of the other, with the taller at the rear about 1.8m in height; the original block measured 3.4m in length and had a relatively even summit rising slightly towards the west. The two pieces rest in a bed of boulders that extends laterally around the two flankers, both of which have suffered at the hands of stone breakers but are now

The recumbent stone circle and the enclosed cremation cemetery as restored in 1989. DP078438

restored. The top of the western (1), which is the more slender, still lay nearby at the outset of the excavations in 1934 and has been put back in its rightful place, while the then fallen east flanker (3) has been re-erected in its original socket; two chiselled hollows can be seen just below the point where the latter's top has been broken off. Both flankers are set back from the face of the recumbent and the eastern bears a single cupmark a little above the ground surface on its inner face. Of the rest of the ring, four orthostats (7–10) on the north quarter were re-erected following the excavations, and a fifth on the west-south-west (11) has been heavily repaired. One of the re-erected orthostats is only a stump (9), otherwise the smallest is 1.4m high on the north-north-east (7), and the tallest, at 2.2m, is the west flanker. Around the east the orthostats are consistently graded to decrease in height from south to north. This is not the case on the west, but here the builders have utilised the slope rising outside the circle to create the same impression. In addition to the cupmark on the east flanker, the adjacent orthostat on the south-east of the circle (4) has twelve shallow cups on its inner face, and its neighbour to the north-north-east (5) has two on its outer face. The cairn standing within the circle is polygonal on plan, measuring 16m in diameter and up to 0.3m in height, but it has been entirely reconstructed and it is difficult to tell which of the stones still remain undisturbed. Thus, of the near continuous kerb of earthfast stones recorded on the excavation plan, which tend to increase in size towards the recumbent, only 38 around the south half



can be identified. In the same vein, a foundation of heavy stones visible immediately behind the recumbent setting is a reconstruction. As originally re-built the veneer of cairn material extended the full diameter of the cairn, but in 1989 an open space some 4.3m in diameter was cleared at the centre, creating the firm impression that this is a ring-cairn, though there is no clear evidence that the cairn ever had an internal court (see below). The kerb on the south-south-east of the cairn displays two lines, the inner springing from two points to either side of the recumbent setting (a & b) and extending behind the recumbent, and the outer linking directly to the east end of the recumbent (see discussion below). Beyond the kerb there was probably once an outer band of cairn material forming a platform extending out beyond the ring of orthostats, though most of its stones had been removed prior to the excavations. Stony patches belonging to this platform are visible adjacent to the west flanker and six of the orthostats (4, 5, 6, 8, 9 & 10).

Other components of the monument were only revealed in the course of the excavations, and in the light of more recent work elsewhere these are worth describing and discussing in more detail. Kilbride-Jones stripped the entire circle and its cairn, removing a considerable body of soil to a depth of over 0.6m on the north-east and from 0.3m to 0.45m on the south; at a depth of 0.2m a layer of iron pan had formed within this soil. The pan was encountered everywhere except on the most heavily robbed sectors of the underlying cairn on the north and north-west, leading Kilbride-Jones to conclude that the robbing of the cairn had taken place after its formation. The iron pan is described in the report as a '*secondary floor*', and there is a clear implication that Kilbride-Jones believed that it was partly formed by trampling. A total of 127 abraded sherds of pottery of probable Late Bronze Age date were found resting on this surface, but rather than being deposited in this position they were probably concentrated at this level as a result of worm-sorting of the loam above. The overall depth of this soil deposit is remarkable and the marks on the recumbent visible on photographs contained within the report (1935, figs 1 & 3) indicate that parts of the mound rose above the ground surface on the upslope side. This probably discounts its origin as a colluvial deposit and may point to a deliberate capping of the monument.

On the north and north-west the cairn had been robbed down to another compacted surface, again probably natural, which was found beneath most of the ring. In this sector shallow sockets marked the line of the kerb, but elsewhere 53 kerbstones remained in place, graded in size, with the largest of them on the south standing up to 0.8m high and the smallest on the north about 0.45m high. On the east-north-east a shallow hollow in the slope had been levelled up with a layer of rubble and covered over with soil prior to

the construction of the cairn. The cairn material was relatively undisturbed around the south side, in at least two places rising to a height of 0.6m high, and within the body of the cairn in the south-east quadrant there was a '*Crescent*' of large stones up to 0.6m long set up mainly on end; they formed up to four rough rows and the tallest protruded through the top of the cairn material. Beneath the north end of this feature the stones were embedded in a black greasy deposit containing numerous fragments of calcined bone, below which the ground surface was burnt bright red over an area measuring 2.7m in length by 1.8m in breadth. Kilbride-Jones concluded that the construction of the cairn had followed rapidly after the firing of a pyre. The stones of the crescent also covered a small pit containing a single sherd, a piece of charcoal and a fragment of burnt bone.

At the centre of the cairn, roughly equating with the space left open today, Kilbride-Jones discovered what was either an open court or a large pit. This was filled to the top of the cairn with dark earth and covered over with a single layer of stones; presumably, it was sealed beneath the deposit of soil that seems to have capped the whole monument. If an open court, it lacked any formal kerb, and with its bottom sunk through the compacted surface beneath the cairn, it was more probably a large flat-bottomed pit dug through the cairn, though within its compass there were no less than thirteen deeper hollows in the subsoil. The fills and stratigraphy of these hollows are not elaborated in the report, other than to record that one at the centre contained a sherd of Beaker (Kilbride-Jones 1935, pl II, pit C), and it cannot be demonstrated whether they were simply irregularities in the bottom of the overall pit, minor pits sunk into its floor, or the truncated bases of earlier pits. The sherd of Beaker perhaps favours this last interpretation, though the sherd might equally have been residual from earlier activity, while the discrete distribution of the hollows around the edge (*ibid*, pits A, D, G, H & F) might indicate one or other of the first two explanations. Ian Shepherd suggested that four of the hollows at the centre (Kilbride-Jones 1935, pl II, pits J–M) might have held the posts of a small mortuary house (1986, 156), but the rectangular setting of four upright stones discovered in the interior of the ring-cairn on the Sands of Forvie provides a more likely parallel (Kirk 1954), and like that setting the four hollows are laid out along axes lying roughly north-west to south-east and north-east to south-west. The basal deposits filling all these hollows lay beneath a charcoal-rich level 50mm thick in the fill of the overall pit. A firespot on the east side was probably the source of most of the charcoal at this level, from which Kilbride-Jones not only recovered most of the Late Bronze Age coarse pottery sherds from the central area, representing at least three vessels broken in situ, but also some 2.3kg of cremated bones.

Outside the kerb of the cairn he found a series of stony areas, mainly concentrated around each of the

orthostats. He considered that these were discrete accretions of stones and termed them ‘*minor cairns*’, identifying several recurring features, namely rough kerbs of larger stones surviving in several places, a large stone lying close to or against the inner face of the orthostat, deposits of soil beneath the ‘*minor cairn*’ on the inner side of the orthostat, and in three instances complete Late Bronze Age vessels crushed beneath the stones, one of them associated with a cremation. None of these features is conclusive evidence that any of these collections of stones were built as such. Indeed, the evidence of stone-robbing observed around the edges of most of them and comparison with other recumbent stone circles suggests otherwise, leading to the conclusion that these are more likely to be relics of a heavily robbed platform enclosing the central cairn (eg **Tomnaverie**, **Sunhoney**). This would explain why the levelling material on the east-north-east was found only under the cairn and appears exposed beneath the kerbstones on a photograph accompanying the report (1935, 169, fig 1); such an arrangement could hardly have provided a stable foundation for the kerb.

The relationships of the orthostats to the remains of this platform are difficult to demonstrate today. Kilbride-Jones only investigated the sockets of the four that had fallen. These were between 0.35m and 0.45m in depth, and may have been sufficient to hold the stones upright, but if the published drawing of the socket of orthostat 10 on the west of the circle is a faithful rendering (1935, 188, fig 8), the stone packing protruded above the top of the soil layer. This suggests that the sockets for the orthostats were cut from a higher level and probably through the platform, a sequence of construction familiar from more recent excavations elsewhere (Bradley 2005). The fifth socket he excavated, which belonged to the east flanker, was so shallow (75mm) that the report opined that the stone had merely sunk into the subsoil under its own weight and had been leant against the recumbent for support. More likely, its socket was largely in the encircling platform, which here has been entirely robbed away; the photograph of the surviving stonework around the west flanker gives this impression (Kilbride-Jones 1935, 180, fig 4) and the platform was evidently sufficiently thick in this part of its circuit to contain the greater part of its socket. This explanation, however, places the erection of flankers in a later stratigraphic context than the recumbent. The evidence for this relationship was discovered at the rear of the east end of the recumbent and is described in detail in the report.

The area of the cairn behind the recumbent slab was evidently extensively disturbed, particularly at its west end. On the east, however, the outer line of the kerb was intact, extending behind the east flanker to the end of the recumbent, and behind the recumbent itself most of the inner line also remained in place. Between the inner line and the recumbent there was a deposit of large

stones described by Kilbride-Jones as a ‘*fender*’, which he believed was intended to hold the cairn material back from the recumbent. While the kerbstones rested on the surface beneath the cairn, however, the ‘*fender*’ overlay a close-packed layer of stones that he termed a ‘*carefully laid paving*’. Two Late Bronze Age sherds were recovered from the top of this layer of stones. Comparison with the sequence recovered at Tomnaverie suggests that this layer of stones, lying outside the inner line of kerbstones, is likely to belong to the platform encircling the cairn. But whereas at **Tomnaverie** the recumbent was inserted into the platform and the kerb was reconstructed to link the setting to the cairn, here at Loanhead of Daviot the stones of the pavement were apparently laid on a layer of soil some 0.3m deep, which in its turn sealed the hollow that had been dug out to receive the recumbent; a sherd of Beaker was recovered from the upper fill of this hollow. Kilbride-Jones is specific on this point (1935, 178–9) in what is a remarkably detailed and acutely observed report, and it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the recumbent here is one of the earliest features in the sequence of construction (contra Bradley 2005, 100–1). If the layer of soil sealing the socket formed part of the encircling platform, it simply emphasises the significance of his observation. If, however, it is a natural formation, it implies that a considerable period of time may have elapsed between the erection of the recumbent and the construction of the platform encircling the cairn, and thus before the erection of the flankers and the orthostats. This more complex sequence of events possibly explains why the outer line of the kerb of the cairn seems to have been realigned to extend behind the east flanker to the back of the recumbent. It offers the possibility that when the cairn was first reconfigured the recumbent was freestanding, and it was only after the recumbent had been incorporated into the line of the kerb that the flankers were set in place. This too might explain the large kerbstone set beside the east side of the eastern flanker, inserted after its erection to project the line of the kerb into the setting.

This reinterpretation of the sequence not only contradicts Kilbride-Jones’s view of the relationship between the cairn and the circle, but also the relationship between the recumbent and its flankers. Based on his hypothesis outlining a practical and efficient technique for the erection of a monolith, the shape of the east flanker indicated to him that it had been erected from the position of the recumbent; as a result, he was forced to postulate that the flankers had been erected first and simply propped upright while the recumbent was set in place, the final act being to lean them back against the massive slab. While not impossible technically, such a difficult and dangerous operation is inherently unlikely. In any case, as we have seen, his description of the stratigraphy suggests that it is incorrect.

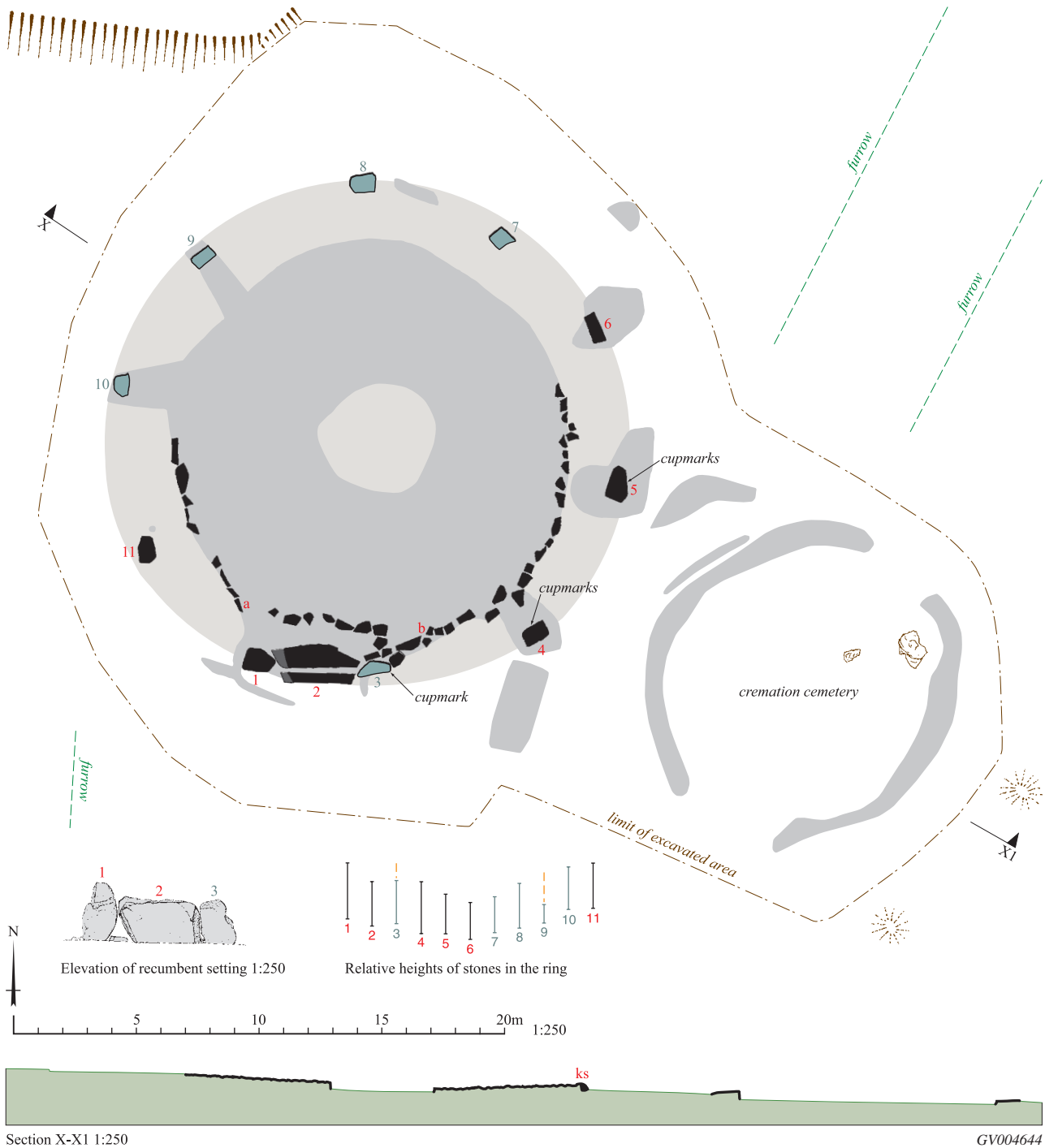
In the light of this critical review of Kilbride-Jones' excavation report and the evidence drawn from more recent excavations elsewhere, it remains to consider the overall sequence of activity that took place at Loanhead of Daviot. This starts in the Neolithic and is represented by a residual scatter of sherds; these were found in several contexts, ranging from the socket of a fallen orthostat to the stones forming the platform adjacent to orthostat 6. Amongst the earliest of the dug features that can be identified is the shallow scoop in which the recumbent stands on the south-south-west. Indeed, if the cairn and the encircling platform are contemporary, as was found at **Tomnaverie**, the recumbent is probably the first component of the monument to be set in place; the sherd of Beaker found in the fill of its socket provides a terminus post quem. There are another sixteen fragments of Beaker scattered about the circle, mainly occurring in the soil that underlay the remains of the platform, but also including two from the central area, one of which was in what may have been a small central pit. Like the Neolithic sherds, these are as likely to be residual, apparently sharing a number of contexts with Late Bronze Age sherds and, in the case of the sherd adjacent to orthostat 6, ostensibly from beneath a spread of stones from which one of the Neolithic sherds was recovered. Kilbride-Jones accounted for these juxtapositions by a simple mechanism, suggesting that stones had been lifted to allow the later sherds or pots to be inserted, though no evidence is presented that this was the case; on stratigraphic grounds the sherds of Beaker represent no more than a terminus post quem for the construction of the cairn.

Prior to its construction, at least one pit had been sunk into the hard reddish-brown surface under the body of the cairn. This lay on the south-east, beneath the stones of Kilbride-Jones's '*Crescent*', which partly overlay the site of a pyre; this had burnt the ground bright red and may have represented several firings. The stones that made up the '*Crescent*' were laid directly into the remains of the pyre. On analogy with **Cothiemuir Wood** Bradley has suggested that the '*Crescent*' formed part of a bank of rubble marking the margin of a central court, but there is no hint in the rest of the cairn of such a feature and there is no evidence that any part of the cairn was left open. Most of the finds from the cairn come from the large pit sunk through its centre. As far as the '*Crescent*' is concerned, most of its stones were set up on end, forming a deliberate and limited piece of construction, and it is as likely to represent an act of closure over the site of the pyre before or during the construction of the cairn. Be that as it may, the cairn was probably constructed with an encircling platform, and its graded outer kerb was not linked directly to the recumbent. Subsequently the kerb was re-aligned to embrace the recumbent, though the evidence for this has survived only on its east. The space between the earlier line of the kerb and the

recumbent was also infilled with the stones of the '*fender*', a feature that recalls the heavy stonework often encountered in this position elsewhere (eg **Castle Fraser**). The Late Bronze Age sherds lying on the platform behind the recumbent may have reached this position as a result of disturbance and cannot be relied upon for a terminus post quem for this phase of construction.

Finally the flankers and the orthostats of the circle were probably erected on the leading edge of the platform, thus completing the suite of features that characterise a recumbent stone circle. The east flanker was inserted immediately in front of the re-aligned kerb and a single kerbstone was added on its east to carry the line of the kerb to the edge of the setting. The date at which this took place is uncertain. Evidence from **Tomnaverie** places a comparable stage of construction relatively early in the Bronze Age, but the Late Bronze Age radiocarbon dates from **Aikey Brae** counsel against making this assumption, particularly as the monument at Loanhead of Daviot was the focus for considerable Late Bronze Age activity. The majority of the pottery recovered from the fill of the large pit sunk into the centre of the cairn, for example, dates from the Late Bronze Age and involved a fire, deposits of cremated bones and three complete vessels broken in situ. Another three complete vessels were found crushed amongst the make-up of the platform encircling the cairn, and one of these, placed immediately outside orthostat 9, probably held a cremation.

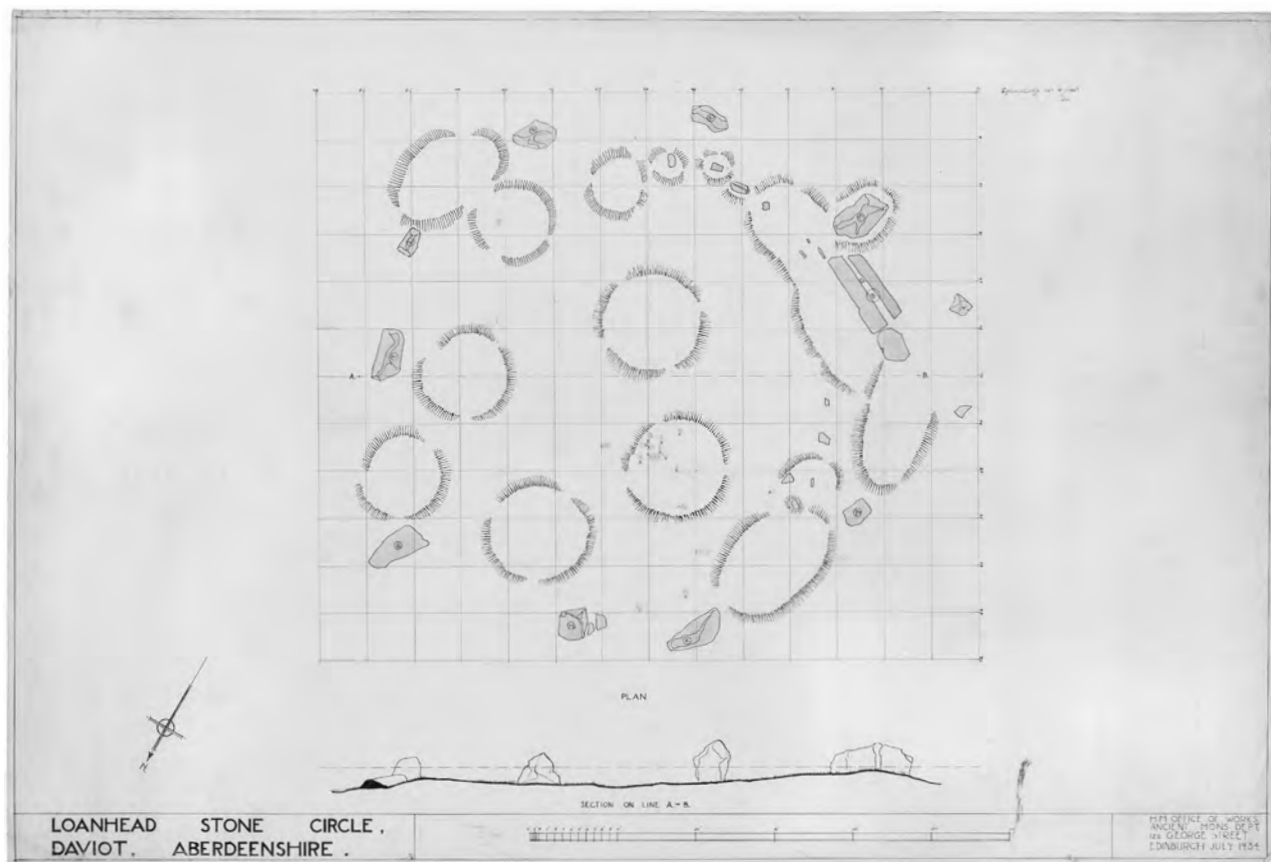
Funerary and ceremonial activity, however, was not confined within the bounds of the recumbent stone circle, and Kilbride-Jones also uncovered a more extensive cemetery lying immediately to the east-south-east (Kilbride-Jones 1936). One element of this cemetery, a cist containing a deposit of cremated bones accompanied by an Accessory Vessel, was uncovered beneath a spread of stones immediately beyond the platform encircling the cairn of the recumbent stone circle. It was apparently separated from the platform by a line of larger stones, but there is little sign that this was a cairn with a formal kerb, and its stratigraphic relationship with either the platform to the north-west or the foundation trench of a timber wall enclosing a cremation cemetery on the south is far from clear. However, the cist lies in a gap in the line of this timber wall and on these grounds alone Kilbride-Jones argued that it was the earlier. Measuring a little over 10m in diameter, with opposed entrances on the north-east and south-west, the interior of the enclosure had been the site of successive pyres and contained the cremated remains of at least 31 individuals disposed amongst twelve urns and thirteen pits. The simplest of the urns was a plain bucket-shaped vessel, but the group included Collared Urns and heavily decorated Food Vessel Urns, indicating a wide range of dates in the



2nd millennium BC. The wall of the timber enclosure had been burnt down.

Loanhead of Daviot is probably one of the two ‘Druid temples’ in the parish noted at the end of the 18th century (*Stat Acct*, vi, 1793, 86) – the other being on the south side of Daviot churchyard (App 1.29). By this time the recumbent was probably already split and the four fallen orthostats around the north (7–10) were lying prone, though the felling of these stones seems to have taken place over a protracted period. One (8) was embedded in the podsolised deposit identified by Kilbride-Jones as a ‘secondary floor’ and may have

fallen before its formation, another lay on its surface (10), and a third (7) on the overlying earthen field bank that rode over the north-east flank of the ring. The removal of most of the encircling platform in this sector had already taken place prior to the construction of this bank, which in all likelihood is post-medieval in date. The robbing of the northern part of the internal cairn also took place after the formation of the ‘secondary floor’, probably in about 1863 (see below), but the removal of the platform may have been a more haphazard process, possibly the result of stone clearance as cultivation impinged upon the monument; certainly



the abraded character of the sherds recovered from the surface of the 'secondary floor' suggests that this soil had been cultivated.

A drawing of the circle was prepared by Jonathan Forbes-Leslie, though sadly it is now lost, and at about the same time the ring was depicted on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map, standing within a mixed plantation. Unaccountably the OS surveyors noted only nine stones, but they reported that some four years earlier, in about 1863, it had been quarried for building stone. This was the occasion that a 'stone ladle' (now lost) had been found and this was presumably when the robbing on the north side of the cairn took place. Some ten years after the visit of the OS Andrew Jervise published a slightly fuller account, correctly noting that it comprised eleven stones, and it is he who first discovered the cupmarks on the south-east orthostat (4), though he mistakenly placed the stone on the west of the ring; he also observed two heaps of stones within the circle, one near the centre and the other on the north-west, but these were probably no more than spoil from the earlier quarrying operations.

As with so many of the circles, the first detailed record was prepared by Coles, who in 1901 found it in a secluded mossy glade amongst the trees. Whereas the earlier descriptions had not distinguished between upright and fallen stones, Coles' plan shows the circle as it then was, with the east flanker and four orthostats around the north lying prone and eight of the kerbstones of the central cairn protruding from a low bank. He

A 1934 plan by the Office of Works before Kilbride-Jones' excavation. DP038532

evidently did not appreciate the depth of soil covering the rest of the circle, and was more struck by the split recumbent, or 'the novelty of the double Recumbent Stone' as he described it (1902, 517–18). As can be seen in James Ritchie's photographs taken in 1901 and 1906, only the upper part of the cleft between the two parts of the slab was then exposed and, unable to match the fractures to either side, Coles rejected a natural explanation. Apart from Sir Norman Lockyer's visit in 1907 to explore the astronomical alignment of the circle, debate following Coles' survey focused on the recumbent. Ritchie (1918, 96) and Alexander Keiller (1927, 4) opted for a natural split in the stone, while Right Rev George Browne argued for deliberate construction (1921, 70–2, pls xiii–xiv); this dispute was finally laid to rest by Kilbride-Jones (1935, 170, 180–1). One of the photographs published by Browne (1921, pl xiv) shows that several boulders had been dropped into the cleft since Ritchie's photograph of 1906, a reminder of the process of minor change that continues to take place at so many stone circles.

Little further information came to light in this period leading up to the excavation of the circle in 1934–5. Keiller, for example, who described Loanhead of Daviot as one of the best-preserved rings in Aberdeenshire, prepared a new plan in 1927, while in 1933, the year that the site was accepted into Guardianship, Peter

Hardie, a local schoolteacher, also made a rough plan and a measured sketch of the broken west flanker (Donaldson 1999, 3). Keiller's plan shows a few additional kerbstones and is accompanied by a scaled profile of the orthostats viewed from inside the ring, from which he deduced (erroneously) that the spacing between the stones increased towards the recumbent setting; the 'ditch' outside the circle that he mentions in his description does not appear on this plan and it is not known to what he was referring (1934, 17). Soon afterwards, the Ancient Monuments Department of H M Office of Works invited Kilbride-Jones to undertake an excavation in advance of the site's restoration, prior to which yet another plan was drawn up. This did not make it into the published report, but it is of considerable interest in that it is the first plan to attempt to show something of the surface topography of the monument, depicting a series of mounds within the ring, and a cross-section suggesting a slightly dished appearance.

The excavation and restoration of Loanhead of Daviot make it one of the most visited recumbent stone circles, but the remedial work has to some extent compromised the remains as a source of data

for subsequent workers. As we have seen, half the stones have been re-erected, the cairn is largely reconstructed, and the central court is a relatively recent introduction. Nevertheless, Alexander Thom prepared yet another plan in 1962 and recorded the grading of the kerbstones, and he also plotted a series of sightlines onto outlying pieces of stone, though in each case these are no more than exposures of outcrop or featureless boulders. Subsequently in 1981 Ruggles collected a range of measurements here and with Burl noted the orientation of the recumbent setting towards the summit of Knockinglews, a low hill to the west of Inverurie. Most recently Gavin MacGregor has considered the complexity of the colour and texture of the stones with regard to their potential architectural and cultural significance (2002, 150–1). Doubtless the stones will continue to attract researchers and despite the extent to which it has been restored there is probably still scope for further excavation to answer some of the questions that this review has thrown up.

Coles 1902, 580; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 352, Abn 70; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 59; Barnatt 1989, 289–91, no. 6:59; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 59; Burl 2000, 421, Abn 71a

Date	Personnel	Record
1793	Robert Shepherd	Note (<i>Stat Acct</i> , vi, 1793, 86)
1842	Thomas Burnett	Note (<i>NSA</i> , xii, Aberdeenshire, 822)
1866–1871	Jonathan Forbes-Leslie	Note and lost drawing (Forbes-Leslie 1866, i, 215; NLS APS.1.79.129)
1867	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Aberdeenshire 1870, xlv.3); description (<i>Name Book</i> , Aberdeenshire, No. 24, p 25)
c1879	Andrew Jervise	Description (Jervise 1879, ii, 414–5)
September 1901	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketches (Coles 1902, 517–21, figs 35–7)
June 1901	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2534)
April 1906	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2532–3 & AB2535)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 394, 399)
May 1917	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2683)
1920	George Browne	Description and photographs (Browne 1921, 70–2, pls xiii–xiv)
31 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1926–7	Alexander Keiller	Description, plan and profile (Keiller 1927, 4; 1934, 11, 17; RCAHMS ABD530; MS106/27, 11–13)
1933	Peter Hardie	Plan, sketch and measurements (Donaldson 1999, 3)
6 March 1933	Office of Works	Taken into Guardianship
1934–5	Howard Kilbride-Jones	Pre-excavation plan, excavation and description (Kilbride-Jones 1935; 1936; RCAHMS DP038532)
22 April 1962	Alexander Thom	Plan and notes (Thom 1967, 61, 136; Thom and Thom 1978, 22–3; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 190–1; RCAHMS DC4402–3; MS430/34; Ferguson 1988, 64)
11 March 1969	Richard Little	OS: visit and map revision
1960–1990	Aubrey Burl	Guidebook description (Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 352; 1995 & 2005a, 101–2, no. 106; 2000, 221, 421)
2 July 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67–71, 74–5; 1999, 94, 98, 213–16; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 26, 29, 33, 40, 46, 49, 50–51, 55–7)
1989	Gordon Barclay & Ian Shepherd	Stones removed from the centre of the cairn
21 July 1999	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44504 & DC44712)
10 July 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

41 Loudon Wood, Old Deer, Aberdeenshire

NJ94NE 1 NJ 9609 4973

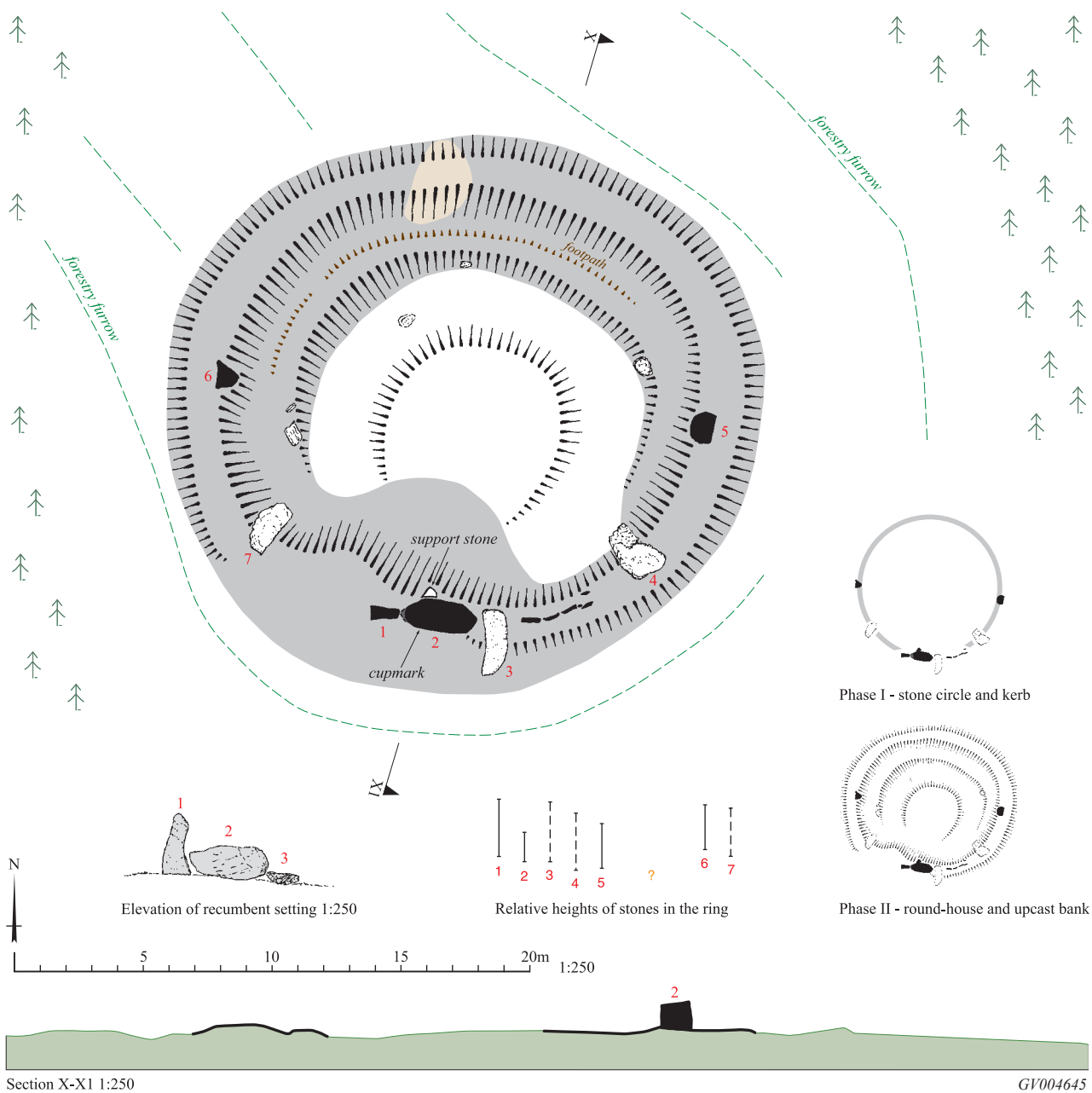
This recumbent stone circle is situated in a grass-grown clearing amongst the conifers of Loudon Wood. It now comprises the recumbent setting and only four orthostats, two of which are fallen (4 & 7), set around the southern half of an oval ring-bank measuring 23m from east-south-east to west-north-west by about 20m transversely overall; formerly there were probably another three or four stones around the north. The orthostats evidently stood along the inner edge of the ring-bank and the circle itself measures only 19.6m by about 17.5m overall. The recumbent (2), which lies on the south-south-west, measures 3.2m in length by up to 1.15m in height and a stone sleeper can be seen beneath the back of its west end. The relatively even summit of the recumbent dips at its west end towards the adjacent flanker, and a possible cupmark can be seen a little west of its highest point. The west flanker (1) stands some 2.2m in height and arcs over the west end of the recumbent, while its fallen pair on the east (3) is evidently of similar size and shape. The foot of the west flanker is roughly aligned with the front of the recumbent to extend the long axis of the setting. Despite

The recumbent setting from the south-east. © NMS



the fallen and missing stones, the heights of the orthostats appear to have been graded, with the tallest occurring on the south. The stony ring-bank in which the orthostats stand measures up to 3.5m in thickness by 0.4m in height, and the tops of a row of kerbstones can be seen protruding through its crest immediately east of the fallen east flanker. In its present form the ring-bank is more substantial than is usually found in Buchan rings (eg **Aikey Brae**), but it is likely that these stones belong to the outer kerb, which was subsequently encased within a thicker bank when the interior was dug out to provide the stance for a later timber round-house. Evidence of this later occupation is provided by a shallow ring-ditch measuring about 13.5m in diameter, which lies concentrically within the bank (cf **Strichen House**); its entrance is probably on the south-west at a heavily degraded sector of the ring-bank immediately west of the recumbent setting.

Loudon Wood is presumably one of 'upwards of a dozen druidical circles' in the parish of Old Deer mentioned at the end of the 18th century by George Cruden, the local schoolmaster (*Stat Acct*, xvi, 1795, 481), but by 1840 all but four or five had been removed 'for the sake of the stones, or to clear the way for cultivating the ground they occupied' (*NSA*, xii, Aberdeenshire, 149–50). Incorporated into an extensive area of woodland on the west side of the



policies of Pitfour House, Loudon Wood was spared this fate, and in 1870 surveyors from the OS described it as the second best preserved in the parish after **Aikey Brae**. By then the orthostats around the north half of the circle were probably already missing and the surveyors went on to describe it in the following terms: ‘*There is three stones standing ... and the same number lying on the ground. The altar stone stands on the sides of the circle. The stones stand about 6 or 7 feet [1.8m–2.1m] above the ground*’ (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 68, p 31). About fifteen years later Rev James Peter prepared a more detailed record, with a plan of the stones and a sketch of the recumbent setting from within the interior and it was he who first realised that the ring was oval, subsequently noting the curved profiles of the

flankers in relationship to the ends of the recumbent. By contrast, James Spence attempted to fit the stones to a circular plan. Neither identified the enclosing ring-bank, however, which is first shown by Coles, with the fallen orthostat on the south-east (4) apparently lying outside its line and some way from where the stone now lies. This is not so clear on Ritchie’s photograph of 1907, which shows the circle in a clearing in a fairly open wood rather than the dense woodlands described by Coles. Subsequent fieldwork has included visits and surveys by: Sir Norman Lockyer in 1907; Right Rev George Browne in 1920; Alexander Keiller in 1928; Richard Little of the OS in 1968; Burl in the late 1970s; and Ruggles in 1981. Over this period the character of the circle has probably remained much as it was



when Coles recorded it, though the surrounding plantations have been re-stocked with dense conifers on several occasions. Keiller was the first to observe the kerbstones in the ring-bank and the long stone sleeper beneath the west end of the recumbent, while Burl and Ruggles, following on from Lockyer, have explored the astronomical alignment of the circle; in particular they have noted the care with which the recumbent

James Spence arranged the stones around a circular template in 1888. SC1101811

has been set horizontal, the shape of its summit, and its orientation in relation to a conspicuous peak on the horizon, in this case the Hill of Dens.

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1904, 304; 1910, 165; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 352, Abn 73; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 11; Barnatt 1989, 292, no. 6:61; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 11; Burl 2000, 421, Abn 74

Date	Personnel	Record
1870	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Aberdeenshire 1874, xiii.16); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 68, p 31)
1885	James Peter	Description, plan and profile (Peter 1885, 374–5, figs 4–5; 1886, 1222)
1888	James Spence	Sketch plan (Spence 1890, 44, fig 5)
September 1903	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketch (Coles 1904, 270–2, figs 9–10)
1907	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2487)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 393, 399)
1920	George Browne	Description and photograph (Browne 1921, 95–6, pl xxxiii)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1928	Alexander Keiller	Description (1928, 18; 1934, 10, 12, 14–15; RCAHMS MS106/9)
5 April 1968	Richard Little	OS: description and map revision
c1980	Aubrey Burl	Astronomical survey and guidebook description (Burl 1975, 7; 1979a, 31; 1980a, 199, no. 10; 1995 & 2005a, 103, no. 108)
18 June 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 59, 66, 68–71, 74–5; 1999, 213–16; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 29, 49, 54)
30 March 2004	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44553)
6 April 2006	Yves Candela, David Herd, Simon Howard & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

42 Mains of Hatton, Auchterless, Aberdeenshire

NJ64SE 6 NJ 6993 4254

This recumbent stone circle is now enclosed with a wire fence. It occupies a position in a field on the gentle slope dropping away to the south-east from the summit of the low hill north-west of Mains of Hatton. Measuring roughly 23m from east-north-east to west-south-west by 21m transversely overall, it is oval on plan and originally comprised at least twelve stones, nine of which remain, though all but two of these are now lying prone. The recumbent (2), which is on the south-south-east, measures about 2.1m in length and is one of the two stones still in place, but its summit has been broken off and it now stands only 1.15m in height. One of the fragments from the summit lies nearby on the west-north-west (2a) and has been a gatepost, the stumps of two square-sectioned iron fittings in its west face betraying its use (see below); a smaller fragment (2b) has been split off the back of the recumbent's west end. Both the flankers have suffered similar attention, but while the eastern of the pair (3) has merely lost its north end, the western (1) has been reduced in every dimension and now lies displaced to the south of its original position. Three other large stones lie prostrate around the recumbent setting, though the geological

survey indicates that none of them is derived from the recumbent or either of its flankers. One (B) has been tailored as a second gatepost and has a bolt-hole visible immediately west of the spectacular veneer of quartz on its north face. The other two are also quarried fragments, the one lying west of the setting (A) exhibiting a possible fractured face on its east, and the other, a boulder of orange and milky quartz on the north-east (C). A shot-hole is visible in a small fragment (not labelled on the plan) between the two detached fragments of the recumbent. Of the six orthostats in the ring, only the stump on the west-north-west (8) is in its socket, but the circle was almost certainly graded (cf Barnatt 1989, 292), both the height and spacing of the orthostats reducing from south to north. Like the recumbent setting, the orthostats are mainly grey in colour, the exception being a stone of rose quartz on the north-north-east (6). The interior gives the impression that it is slightly dished, but this is imperceptible on the sections and may simply be the result of cultivation in and around the stones.

Mains of Hatton is presumably one of the numerous *Druidical circles* in the parish of Auchterless referred to in 1840 by the Rev George Dingwall (*NSA*, xii, Aberdeenshire, 287) and it was evidently well known in the district, if only for a tradition attached to the two gateposts lying beside the recumbent setting. The story is reported in about 1869–71 by both the surveyors of the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map and James Forrest,

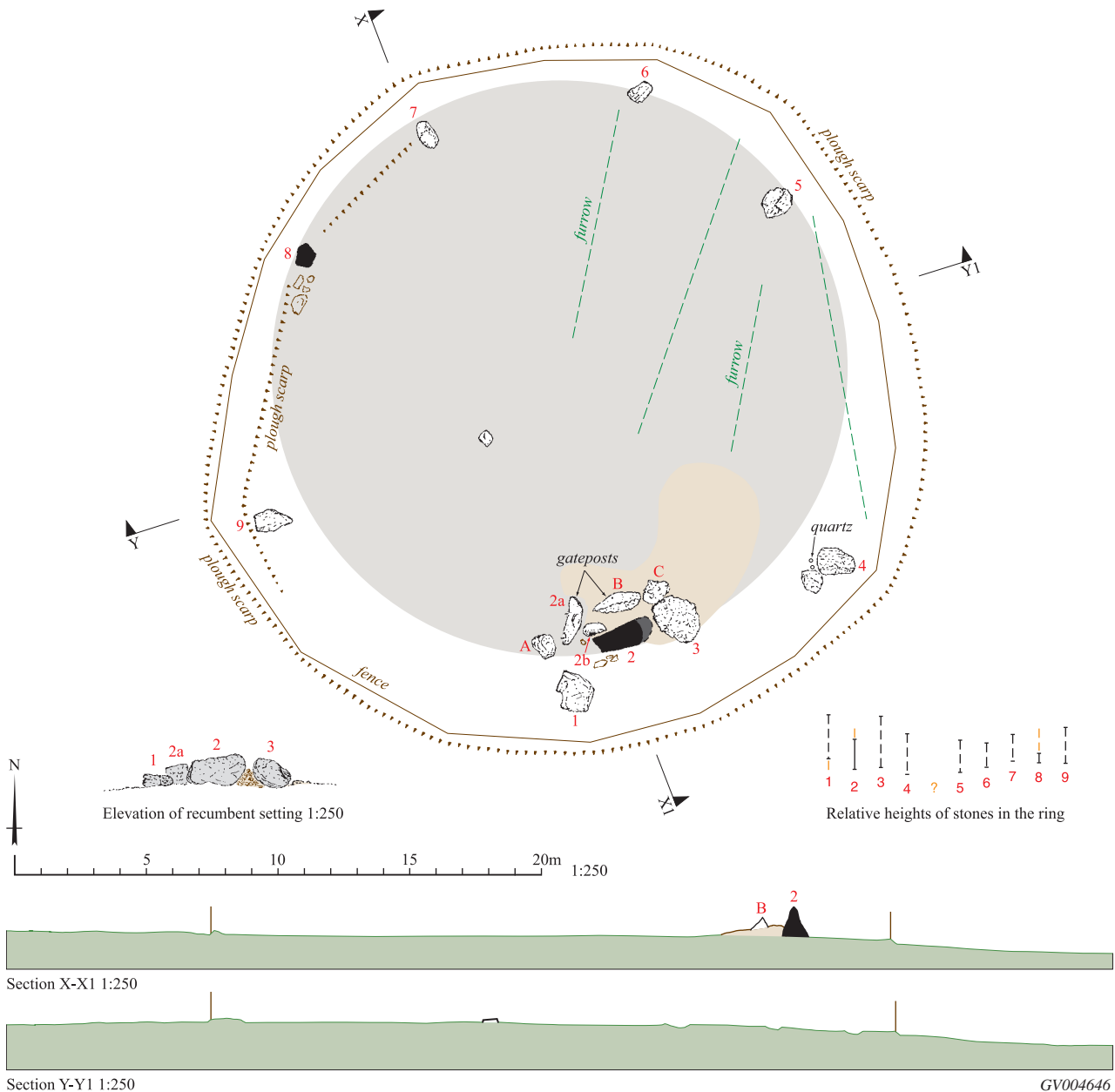
Ritchie's view of the recumbent setting taken in the early 1900s from the south-east shows how closely the plough approached the stones. SC681617



the schoolmaster in Auchterless, who had himself been in correspondence with the OS (1872, 157). The story was told to the OS surveyors by William Chapman of Mains of Hatton, James Duguid of Arnhead, and Alexander Wilson of Manor Place Hatton, who related that *'about 80 years ago two of these stones were removed to Manor Place, Hatton, and put up for gates posts, but had to be brought back again in consequence of the great noise heard at night'* (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No.7, p. 51). In Forrest's version the ring had an *'ugly reputation'* and *'any one who dares to take away a stone from it will be haunted, and have no peace nor luck until he restores it to its place'* (1872, 158). Whether this tradition existed before the removal of the two gateposts cannot be determined, but *'so many accidents occurred in consequence of this sacrilege'* that they had to be returned. Forrest was sceptical, as befitted

his profession as a schoolmaster, speculating that the two stones had been discarded simply because they had not made very good gateposts, but there can be no doubt that local belief was sufficiently strong for the farmer to take the trouble to return the two stones whence they had come. Furthermore the story persisted, so much so that some fifty years later James Ritchie could elaborate the tale, relating that horses had been reluctant to pass through the gate, and that whereas two horses had struggled to bring the stones down the hill only one was needed to take them back (1926, 305). The horses were perhaps simply spooked by the splashes of white quartz on the gateposts, but such is the power of superstition.

The circle had reached its present state by 1902, when the conflicting depictions appearing on successive editions of the OS maps and the *'confused assemblage of stones'* around the recumbent led Coles to write



to the tenant farmer, Robert Chapman. This elicited the information that the stones had not been moved in living memory, though the circle had been taken into cultivation recently, a state of affairs graphically revealed by Ritchie's photographs showing the interior under plough. Despite ploughing up to and all round the fallen orthostats, the tenant believed that the ring looked much the same as ever; to him it had '*always been rather hollow in the centre, and never showed the appearance of a planned work*' (Coles 1903a, 114), and the few stones that had come to light within the

interior had been cast around the recumbent setting. Looking at Ritchie's photographs it is clear that more field clearance has accrued to the north-east of the recumbent setting since then, and at some time between the preparation of Alexander Thom's plan in 1962 and the visit by Iain Sainsbury of the OS in 1973 a masonry water tank was constructed immediately north of the setting. This was removed in 1992.

Coles 1903a, 142; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 352, Abn 74; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 20; Barnatt 1989, 292, no. 6:62; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 20; Burl 2000, 421, Abn 75

Date	Personnel	Record
1869–71	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1873, xxviii.1); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No.7, p 51)
c1871	James Forrest	Description (Forrest 1872, 158)
c1886	Rev John Milne	Description (Milne 1886, 13)
September 1902	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketch (Coles 1903a, 112–15, figs 26–7)
1900s	James Ritchie	Photographs and folklore (Ritchie 1926, 305; RCAHMS AB2923–4po)
1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1928	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1928, 8; RCAHMS MS106/9)
April 1962	Alexander Thom	Theodolite survey and notes (Thom 1967, 136; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 188–9; RCAHMS DC4401 & DC4762co; MS 430/34; Ferguson 1988, 64)
3 January 1973	Iain Sainsbury	OS: description, photograph and map revision
3 May 2005	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44487)
3 May 2006	David Herd & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

43 Midmar Kirk, Midmar, Aberdeenshire

NJ60NE 3 NJ 6994 0649

This is one of the best-known recumbent stone circles, standing encircled by a gravel path in the burial-ground beside Midmar Kirk. It is set upon the leading edge of a slight terrace facing southwards opposite the towering north flank of the Hill of Fare. Measuring 17m in diameter, the ring originally comprised about eleven stones, of which the recumbent setting and five orthostats remain, though one of the latter has been re-erected (8). The recumbent boulder (2), which measures 4.4m in length by up to 1.05m in height, is situated on the south-west side of the ring and rests upon at least three support stones. Its relatively even summit has been carefully levelled, but is disfigured by graffiti; this includes some sets of initials, at least one date (1864) and several symbols akin to mason's marks, though their large size preclude them from being genuinely medieval. Of the two flankers (1 & 3), which are 2.45m and 2.35m high respectively, the western is the more slender, but both present a similar profile to the south-west, appearing to arch over the ends of the

recumbent. These are the tallest stones in the ring, while the shortest of the other orthostats is on the east-north-east (6). The two on the southern arc of the circle (4 & 5), however, are not consistently graded in height, nor are there sufficient stones in place to determine whether the spacing of the ring closed up from south to north. In this respect the north-north-west orthostat (8), which has not only been repaired but also re-erected, is probably not standing in its original position. The manicured remains of a cairn form a scarp 0.3m high around the southern arc of the ring, extending about 1m outside the recumbent setting and the southernmost orthostat (4); the graded surface behind the setting suggests that a substantial body of cairn material may survive beneath the grass and gravel, though it is difficult to determine its original form and extent. If the two earthfast stones behind the west flanker and a third behind its companion on the east are kerbstones, then the setting was probably incorporated into the kerb of a cairn standing within the interior, while the scarp extending beyond the setting and the southernmost orthostat suggest the presence of on an encircling platform of cairn material.

John Ogilvie, the minister of Midmar and a well-known poet, refers to 'three Druidical fanes' in the parish, of which this one was 'remarkably large'

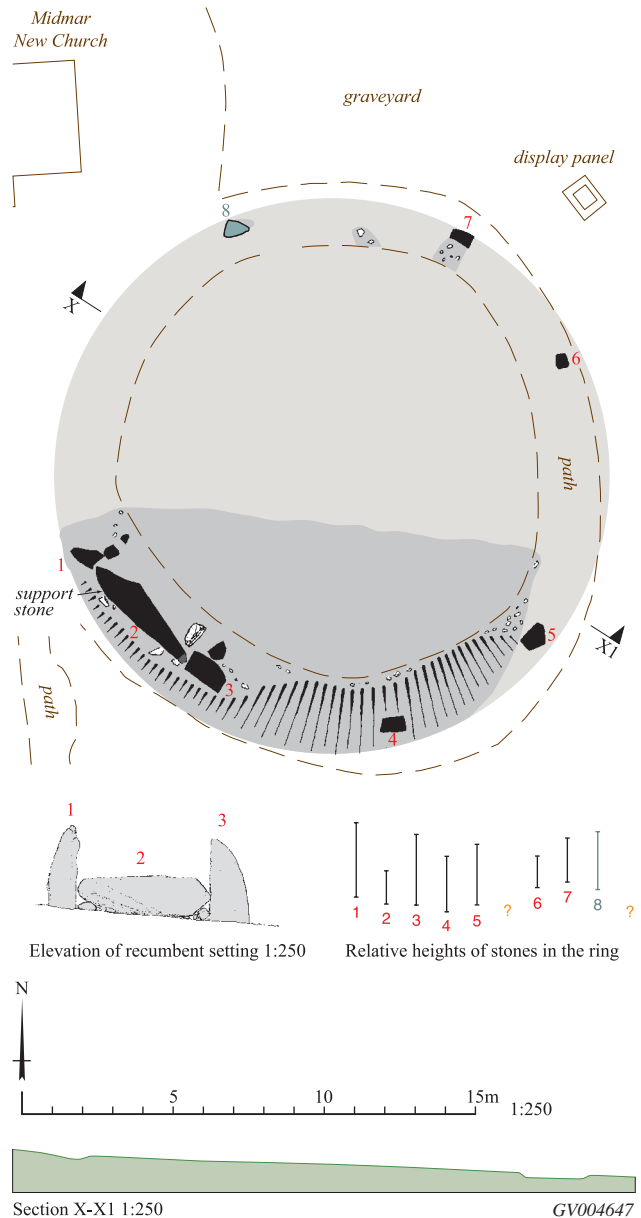
The view from the north-north-west. SC717450



(*Stat Acct*, ii, 1792, 519). As the incumbent when the new church was built here in 1787, this choice of site will have appealed to his poetic and religious imagination, although the decision was at the inconvenience of the parishioners who lived in the north of the parish (*NSA*, xii, Aberdeenshire, 633). An unsigned sketch, thought to date from 1825–50, illustrates the recumbent setting from within the circle, apparently when it looked out onto open country (*Soc Antiq London*, *Primaevae Antiquities* 60.4), and the appended notes record that the rest of the circle had been reduced to only four orthostats. This was confirmed by the OS surveyors who visited the circle in 1865. A fine lithograph of the setting was published in the following year by Col Jonathan Forbes-Leslie and reproduces much the same view as the sketch (1866, 1, pl xv), raising the possibility that they were both by the same hand. Certainly the description of the flankers on the sketch as the ‘Horns of the Altar’ resonates with Forbes-Leslie; the only other person to have drawn this biblical allusion is Rev Robert Cook of Clatt (see **Bankhead**). By 1865 the churchyard had been enclosed and planted with trees, in contrast to the scene depicted in either the sketch or the lithograph. This perhaps implies a certain amount of artistic licence, particularly as the plan of the churchyard enclosure gives the impression that it pre-dates the surrounding field-pattern (Aberdeenshire 1869, lxxiii).

Coles paid a hurried visit in 1899, when the stormy conditions prevented any more than the most cursory of inspections. Thus his customary plan and elevations were substituted by a drawing based upon an earlier sketch plan by Christian Maclagan (1875, pl xxvii) and measurements supplied by the minister, Rev Edward Lumsden, while his tiny sketch of the recumbent setting bears little comparison to the stones themselves. By the time of Coles’ visit the trees had grown up within the churchyard, as can be seen in James Ritchie’s photographs of 1902, and in 1906 these were to hinder Sir Norman Lockyer’s attempt to take astronomical measurements here (1909, 380).

In 1914, however, the churchyard was converted into a burial-ground, entailing the felling of the trees and the replacement of the turf within the circle with gravel (Browne 1921, 43, 60–3). It was Right Rev George Browne’s opinion that the circle was ‘*completely tidied up*’ at this time, but comparison with Ritchie’s photographs suggest that interventions within the interior were relatively minor and did not extend to much more than the removal of the turf and the spreading of gravel. This is the most likely occasion when the stone on the north-north-west (8) was repaired and re-erected, appearing in one of Browne’s plates (1921, pl x). Orthostat 5 on the east-south-east may have been straightened also, but there is no reason to believe that these works involved the removal of any great quantity of cairn material from



the interior. The circle has certainly been maintained in this state ever since, though the interior was re-turfed some time before 1968.

It was left to Alexander Keiller in 1926 to prepare the first detailed survey of the circle, accompanied by a fine scaled elevation of the stones unfolded along a horizontal baseline to show the distinctive profile of the recumbent setting. He too was the first to note the graffiti on the recumbent, with what he believed was an OS benchmark (remonstrating that it might have encouraged the later graffiti) but which is one of the symbols akin to mason marks. His plan, as with one drawn up in 1943 by Angus Graham during the RCAHMS Emergency Survey, has remained unpublished, with the result that Alexander Thom’s plan, with its vignette of the recumbent setting, is the first detailed survey to see the light of day (1967, 146). As elsewhere, this and subsequent work by Burl and Ruggles has focused on the astronomical



interpretation of the ring, though the presence of the Hill of Fare blocking the sightlines to the south has forced the adoption of a more complex astronomical hypothesis (Burl 1995, 104). They have also noted the way in which the summit of the recumbent has been carefully levelled on the sloping ground and the way in which it faces the hilltop of Torminade, a low spur projecting from the foot of the Hill of Fare 1km distant

Graffiti on the summit of the recumbent. SC1175732

on the opposite side of the valley. Burl's suggestion that the flankers here are artificially shaped is not borne out by the recent geological survey.

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1900, 198; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 352, Abn 76; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 71; Barnatt 1989, 293, no. 6:64; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 71; Burl 2000, 421, Abn 78b

Date	Personnel	Record
1792	John Ogilvie	Note (<i>Stat Acct</i> , ii, 1792, 519)
1825–50	Unknown	Sketch and note (SAL <i>Primaeval Antiquities</i> , 60.4)
1866	Jonathan Forbes-Leslie	Sketch (Forbes-Leslie 1866, i, pl xv)
1865	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1869, lxiii.9); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 62, p 20)
1875	Christian Maclagan	Sketch plan (Maclagan 1975, pl xxvii)
September 1899	Frederick Coles	Description and plan (Coles 1900, 179–81, fig 31)
July 1902	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2432 & AB2528)
28 September 1906	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 380)
1920	George Browne	Description and photographs; plan prepared by Fyvie and Geddes of Aberdeen University (Browne 1921, 43, 60–3, pls ix–x)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
21 October 1926	Alexander Keiller	Description plan and profile (Keiller 1927, 11; 1934, 14; RCAHMS ABD547; MS106/27, 29–31)
1930s	J Ruxton	Photograph (RCAHMS AB5845)
15 July 1943	Angus Graham	Description and plan (RCAHMS Emergency Survey 1942–3, A1.1 Sur; MS36/1/23–4)
21 April 1962	Alexander Thom	Plan and notes (Thom 1967, 135, 137, 142, 146, fig 12.6; Thom, Thom, and Burl 1980, 222–3; RCAHMS DC4417; MS430/34; Ferguson 1988, 65)
7 February 1968	Richard Little	OS: description, photograph and map revision
c1980	Aubrey Burl	Astronomical survey, guide book description and photographs (Burl 1970, 60, 63, 69, 78; 1976, 12, 168, 175, 352; 1979a, 25, 145; 1980a, 199, no. 22; 1995 & 2005a, 103, 104, no. 109)
17 June 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67–72, 74–5; 1999, 94, 97, 213–16, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 25, 29, 38–40, 46, 49, 54)
16 April 1998	Kevin Macleod, Ian Parker, John Sherriff & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44469)
2002	Gavin MacGregor	Colour survey (MacGregor 2002, 148–9)
7 April 2006	Yves Candela, David Herd, Simon Howard & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey
5 August 2008	John Borland	RCAHMS: drawing

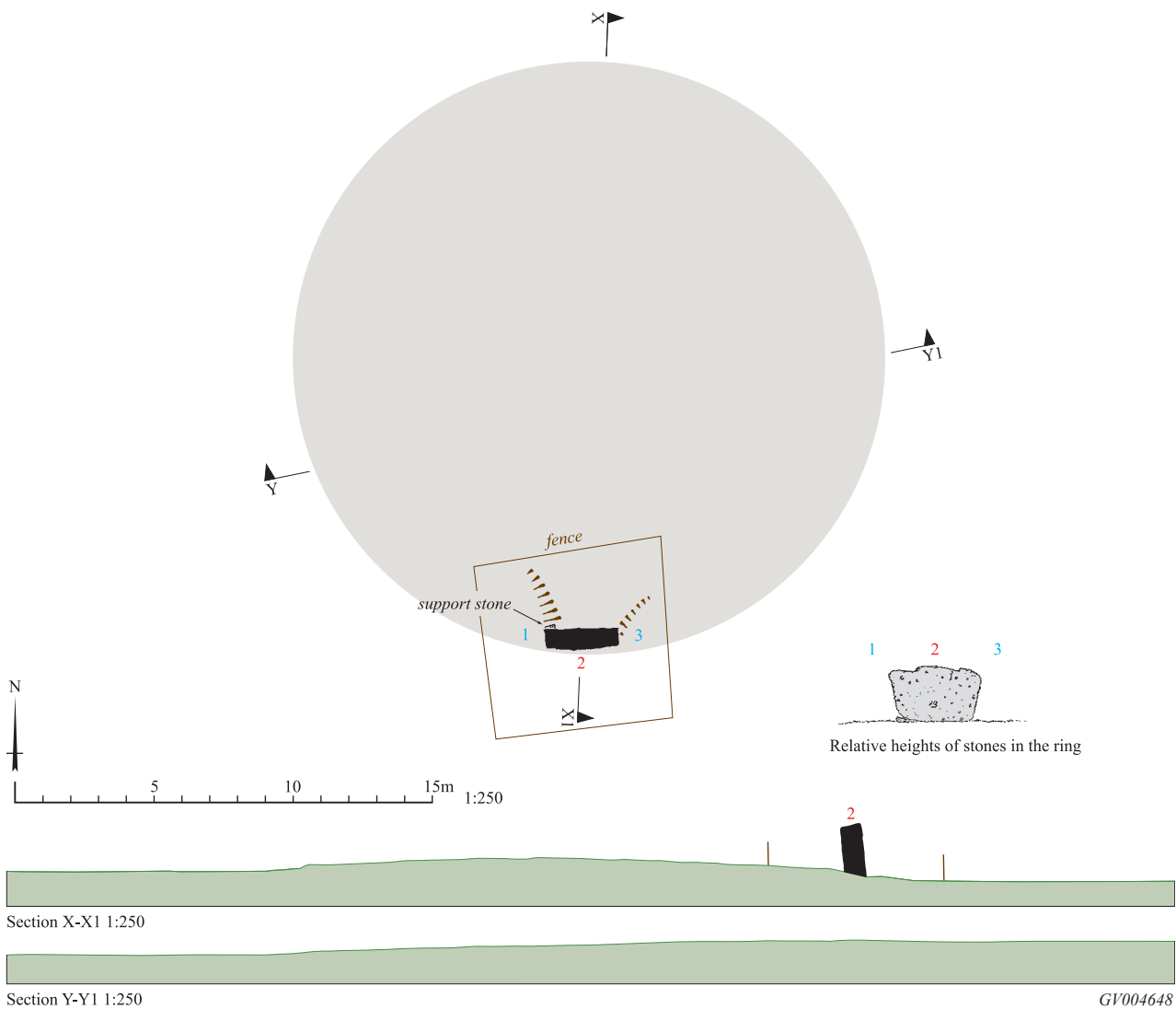
44 Millplough, Arbuthnott, Aberdeenshire

NO87NW 6 NO 8191 7544

The last remains of this recumbent stone circle, comprising little more than the recumbent itself and a low stony swelling in the surface of the field in which it stands, are situated on a gentle south-facing slope 480m north-north-east of Millplough. The recumbent, which has an uneven summit, is a slab of conglomerate measuring 3.2m in length by 1.95m in height and 0.7m in thickness, and its north-west corner rests upon a support stone. It faces roughly south and stands on this side of the swelling, which can be seen clearly in the measured profile to the rear of the recumbent; measuring some 20m in diameter, the swelling is probably a spread cairn and is up to 0.5m high.

The circle had been reduced to this state by 1863 and on the 1st edition of the 6-inch map the OS surveyors annotated the recumbent and a second stone about 200m to the west-south-west (App 1.59) *Standing Stones*. A small measured sketch of the

recumbent appears in the Name Book, which also records a local tradition that ‘a King was slain there’, though the surveyor favoured the alternative explanation that it had originally formed part of ‘some *Druidical Cairn or Temple*’ (Name Book, Kincardineshire, No. 1, pp 37–8). Coles was in no doubt that this was the remains of a recumbent stone circle, and observed that in common with recumbent settings elsewhere the slab stood on a low stony tump, though this had been ‘*sharply rounded off by the plough*’ (1903b, 197). By the time Keith Blood of the OS visited the stone in 1967 this tump had largely disappeared, but he noted that the stone was set in a false crest position, and commented that it was a good site for a cairn. In 1982 RCAHMS investigators concurred with this view and compared Millplough to **The Cloch** nearby, preferring to see it as one of a local group of cairns characterised by well-built kerbs incorporating a single large stone (1982, 12), rather than as one of the southernmost recumbent stone circles. This was to some extent rectified by Gordon





The recumbent stone with Clive Ruggles acting as a scale. © HS Archive

Barclay and Clive Ruggles, who reassessed the slab in 1998 and stressed that its impressiveness, orientation and outlook were consistent with those in many recumbent stone circles, although they went on to argue that there was no evidence that there had ever been an accompanying circle here (1999, 17–18). Standing in the midst of a field that was already heavily improved

when the first record was prepared in 1863, such a case cannot be argued at Millplough with any conviction. The present survey has consistently shown that many recumbent stone circles had been robbed to a greater or lesser extent before the end of the 18th century, and most of the rest in the first half of the 19th century.

Coles 1903b, 196–8; Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 360, Knc 12; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 95; Barnatt 1989, 86, 293, no. 6:65; Ruggles 1999, 188, no. 95; Burl 2000, 429, Knc 15

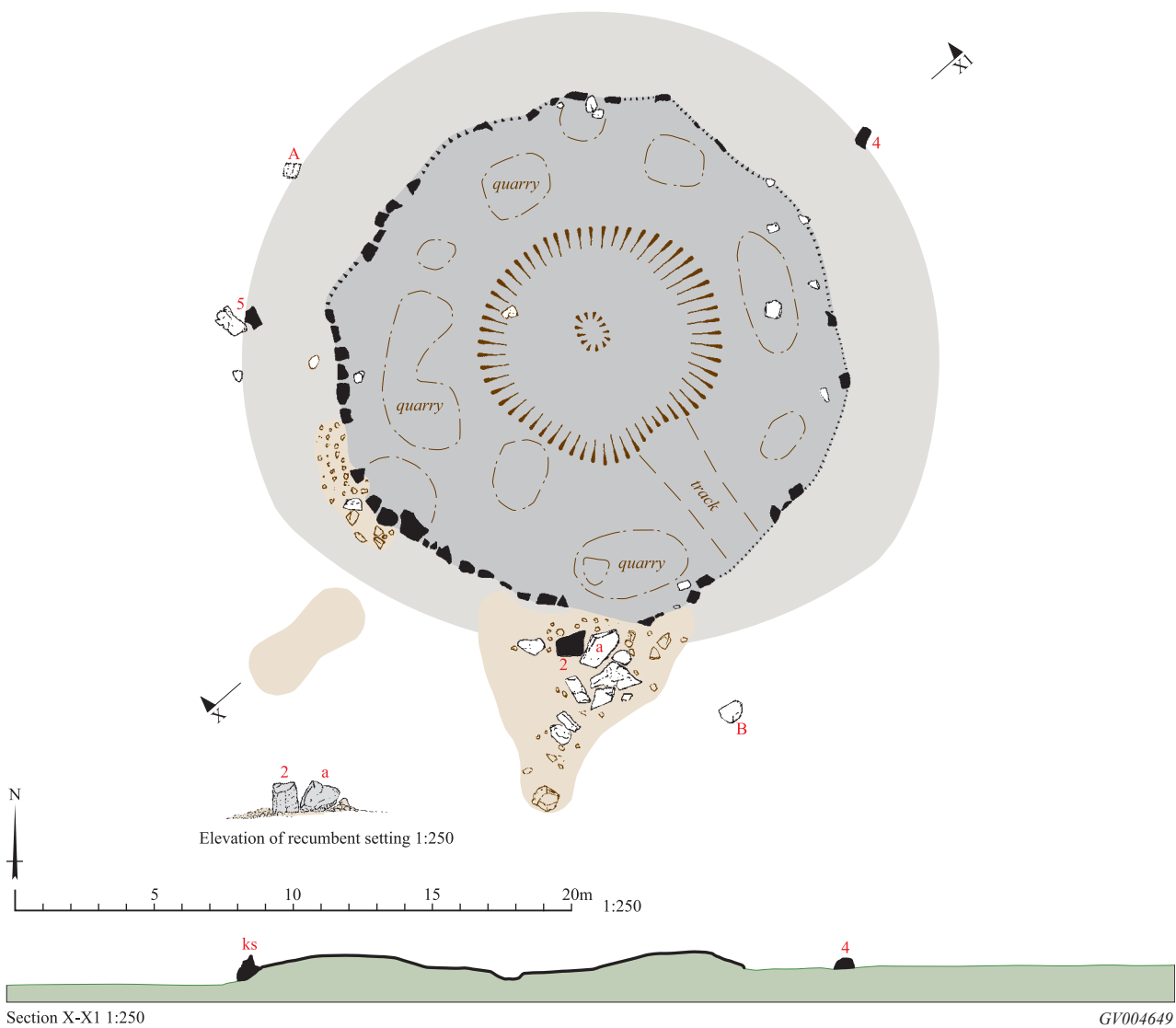
Date	Personnel	Record
1863	OS surveyors	Standing Stone (Kincardineshire 1868, xxi.9); note (Name Book, Kincardineshire, No. 1, pp 37–8)
September 1902	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketch (Coles 1903b, 196–8, fig 4)
18 December 1967	Keith Blood	OS: description and map revision
4 April 1982	Stratford Halliday & Jack Stevenson	RCAHMS: description (RCAHMS 1982, 12, no. 56)
August 1998	Gordon Barclay & Clive Ruggles	Description and photographs (Barclay and Ruggles 1999, 17–18)
9 March 2004	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44549)
12 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

45 Montgoldrum, The Camp, Arbutnot, Aberdeenshire

NO87NW 5 NO 8166 7720

This recumbent stone circle, which lies within a scatter of small cairns in a patch of rough pasture and gorse (NO87NW 21–2), is set about 35m south-west of the summit of Camp Hill, which is itself occupied by a large, heavily robbed cairn (NO87NW 4). The most prominent feature of the circle is the kerb of the internal cairn, so much so that opinion has varied as to whether these are the remains of a recumbent stone circle (below), but there is no doubting the character of the blasted recumbent block, while the stumps of two small orthostats on the north-east (4) and west (5) respectively are probably testimony to a surrounding circle, albeit of relatively modest stones. Set about 2.5m outside the kerb of the cairn, these indicate an overall diameter of about 23m, with the recumbent (2) lying shattered into at least eleven fragments on the south. A block of black

diorite with veins of white and pink quartz, one of the larger fragments remains earthfast and may well belong to the bottom of the stone's west end. At least five of the fragments exhibit shot-holes and their fractured surfaces are sufficiently recognisable that it is clear that they can be pieced together into a single stone. The flankers are missing, if indeed they were ever present, and in addition to the two stumps there are also loose stones lying in the equivalent positions on the north-west and south-south-east (A and B). A stone about 1.3m in length lying adjacent to the stump on the west (5) is possibly its broken top, though it is not immediately clear how they may have fitted together. The internal cairn is polygonal on plan, measuring about 18m across over a kerb that is near continuous around the south-west quarter and intermittently preserved elsewhere; 41 kerbstones remain in place, the largest of them standing up to 0.8m high on the south-west. Within the kerb the rounded cairn material forms a band up to 0.8m high; this is scarred with





The view over blasted fragments of the recumbent. DP078419

minor quarries and encloses a hollow 8.5m in diameter at the centre, giving the impression of a ring-cairn with an inner court. This hollow has long been a feature of the cairn, implicit in the first descriptions in the 19th century (below), but there is no trace of an inner kerb and if the break in the cairn material leading into it on the south-east is a trackway then it is perhaps no more than another quarry; a sub-rectangular pit has been dug into its floor a little north of the centre.

This appearance of an enclosure guided the first OS surveyors to annotate the circle *Camp* on the 1st edition of the 25-inch map (Kincardineshire 1868, xxi) and finds parallels in their treatment of some hut-circles and small enclosures elsewhere in the North-east (see for example RCAHMS 2007, 82, fig 6.4). Despite its relatively small size, the stones of the kerb led one of them, Corporal B Render RE, to write in the Name Book that it had been ‘*very strongly built*’ and he had no doubt that it had ‘*been erected for defence*’ (Kincardineshire, No. 1, p 22). As a consequence of this attribution David Christison visited Montgoldrum in one of his surveys of forts and earthworks, only to include it in a list of ‘*dubious works*’ (1900, 107). Confronted with the ‘*irregularly circular mass of stones about 60ft. diameter*’ (*ibid*), he not only realised that the kerbstones that had so impressed the OS surveyor were ‘*not suitable for building*’ (*ibid*), but also recognised on the south the ‘*huge block, apparently pulled from its*

place and blown up’ (*ibid*). By chance Coles had also visited the circle recently and provided him with the alternative explanation that it was no more than a ruined cairn.

For the same reasons that Christison had visited Montgoldrum, initially Coles had not, and he was only drawn to the site in 1900 as a result of correspondence with Hercules Linton, a surveyor, shipbuilder and antiquary who hailed from nearby Inverbervie. At the time of this visit he had not long embarked upon his survey of stone circles and he had relatively little local knowledge to temper his assessment. Thus, it is not surprising to find that he had revised his opinion by the time he published a plan and description three years later, concluding: ‘*I incline to agree with what Mr Linton suggested, namely, that the structure was originally a Stone Circle ... and from its position on the S.W. arc the great diorite block, now ruined, might well have been the Recumbent Stone*’ (1903b, 194–5).

Since this date visitors have described it variously as a cairn and a stone circle. In 1956, for example, Kenneth Steer of RCAHMS preferred to classify it as a plundered cairn, with the blasted block an associated ‘*standing stone*’. Ten years later, Keith Blood of the OS opted for a probable recumbent stone circle, and drew attention to the previously unrecognised stones of the possible circle, though his placing of one on the east is surely a mistake for that on the west. Fifteen years on, RCAHMS staff engaged on a general survey of the area and reclassified it as a cairn, seeing it as one

of a tight local group characterised by well-built kerbs incorporating a large stone on the south arc (see also Nos. 20 & 44 and App 1.59). Since then the pendulum has swung again. Burl and Ruggles have both included The Camp in their lists as a possible recumbent stone circle, and in 1998 the latter surveyed it with Gordon Barclay, arguing that the orientation and outlook were consistent with many other recumbent stone circles and that there was a local group in southern Kincardineshire,

including **The Cloch** and **Millplough**, where the recumbent was not apparently accompanied by a ring of orthostats (1999, 18–19). As we have seen, at Montgoldrum the present survey is inclined to give the evidence of a surrounding circle the benefit of any doubt until such times as it is proved otherwise.

Coles 1903b, 193–6; Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 360, Knc 4; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 94; Barnatt 1989, 275–6, no. 6:22; Ruggles 1999, 188, no. 94; Burl 2000, 429, Knc 5

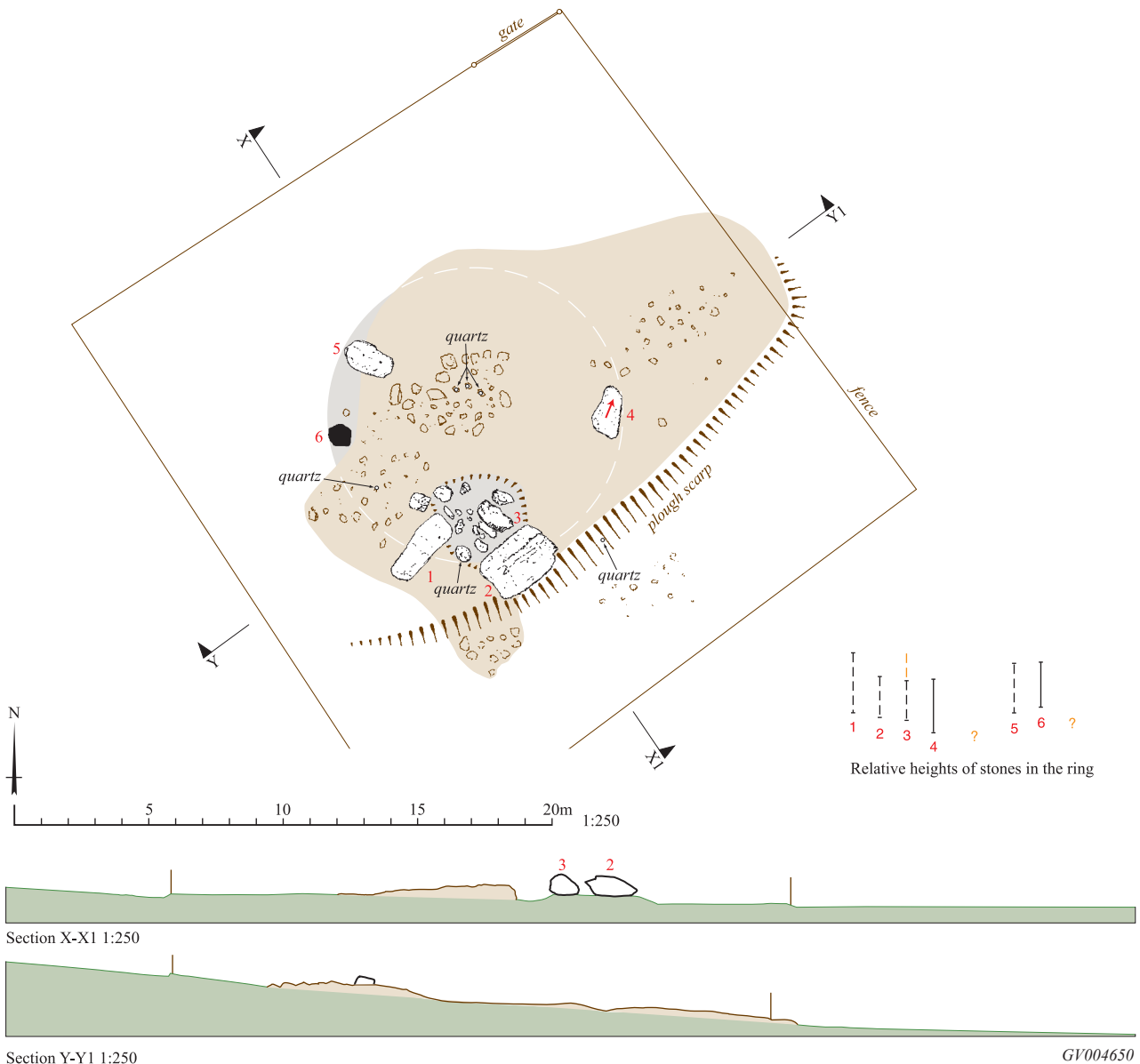
Date	Personnel	Record
1863	B Render	Camp (Kincardineshire 1868, xxi.5); description (Name Book, Kincardineshire, No. 1, p 22)
1900	David Christison	Description (1900, 107)
June 1900	Frederick Coles	Description and plan (1903b, 193–6, fig 1)
13 September 1956	Kenneth Steer	RCAHMS: description for Survey of Marginal Lands
18 December 1967	Keith Blood	OS: description and map revision
9 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67–8, 70–1, 74–5; 1999, 213–14, 238, 266; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 47)
10 March 1982	Jack Stevenson & Robert Mowat	RCAHMS: description (RCAHMS 1982, 12, no. 58)
15 October 1990	Historic Scotland	Scheduled
1998	Gordon Barclay & Clive Ruggles	Plan and description (Barclay and Ruggles 1999, 18–19)
12 April 2005	Angela Gannon & Ian Parker	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44561)
12 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

46 Nether Dumeath, Glass, Aberdeenshire

NJ43NW 7 NJ 4253 3786

The remains of this recumbent stone circle lie within a fenced enclosure near the leading edge of a terrace low down on the north-east flank of the Hill of Dumeath due south of Nether Dumeath. A relatively compact monument measuring about 11m in diameter, in 1870 it was said to have comprised twelve stones (Name Book, Banffshire, No. 15, p 7), but of the six stones that now remain, four are prostrate, including the recumbent setting, and of the other two one is leaning so heavily that it can barely be counted upright (4). The recumbent (2), which lies on the south, is a roughly rectangular slab on plan and measures 2.75m in length by 2.1m in breadth. It has fallen onto its face, and its west end has probably been dragged round to the south-east to lie on the lip of a well-developed lynchet formed where

cultivation on the lower side of the circle has cut into the slope. The summit of the slab, now its south-east edge, appears to have been uneven. Immediately to the north-west a shallow pit can be seen, partly filled with field-cleared stones and fragments of the cut-up east flanker (3); the foot of the west flanker (1), which has probably toppled forwards, overhangs the south-west edge of this pit, and there is a circular shot-hole in its upper face; measuring some 2.8m in length, its shape suggests that it would have appeared to curve over the west end of the recumbent when the setting was intact. The positions of the two orthostats on the east-north-east (4) and west (6) allow the diameter of the ring to be projected with some confidence, indicating that the prostrate orthostats on the west-north-west (5) is probably lying close to its original position; there are two shot-holes in its upturned face. Most of the stones of the circle are probably schists, but whereas





The shattered remains of the recumbent stone circle from the west-north-west.
© NMS



The recumbent from the south-east. DP078420

the recumbent and at least one of the flankers are light grey in colour, the two orthostats still in their sockets (4 & 6) are green; both have their smoother sides facing outwards. Despite some uncertainty arising from the extensive damage, the sizes of the remaining stones indicate that they were graded to reduce in height from south to north. The interior is obscured by field-clearance, amongst which are several pieces of quartz. In addition, a large white quartz boulder is visible at the south-west edge of the pit behind the recumbent. The circle had already suffered some demolition by 1869–70, and the first OS surveyors reported that four of the twelve stones had been removed for building work. Nevertheless, eight apparently remained, of which two were still upright, though only six stones appear on the 1:2500 map. The reason for this discrepancy is not clear, unless the two upright stones were mistakenly counted twice. At any rate, some 20 years later James Macdonald described only six stones, believing that another four or five had been removed. Macdonald was sufficiently familiar with the remains of the circle on the ground to assess its circumference at about 40 yards (36.5m), which roughly correlates with its diameter. He

also identified the shot-holes in the fallen stones (1891, 128), but gives no hint that any further destruction had taken place recently. More likely the circle had survived more or less unchanged since the demolition reported by the OS surveyors. Nevertheless, the owner of the estate, William Grant of Beldorney, believed that the circle had been destroyed and informed Coles by letter that the stones had all been removed with the help of explosives (1906a, 184). Had he visited the circle, Coles would unquestionably have recognised its character, but with this assurance he spent his time elsewhere and, misquoting Macdonald, came to the conclusion that this had been a small circle of ten orthostats (1906a, 185). It was left to Richard Little of the OS to identify the recumbent setting in 1967, but he counted a seventh stone amidst the field-clearance that had already accrued within the interior and along the lynchet on the east. Again, the reason for this discrepancy is not known, but there is certainly no trace of an additional stone today.

Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 352, Abn 82; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 31; Barnatt 1989, 294, no. 6:67; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 31; Burl 2000, 421, Abn 85

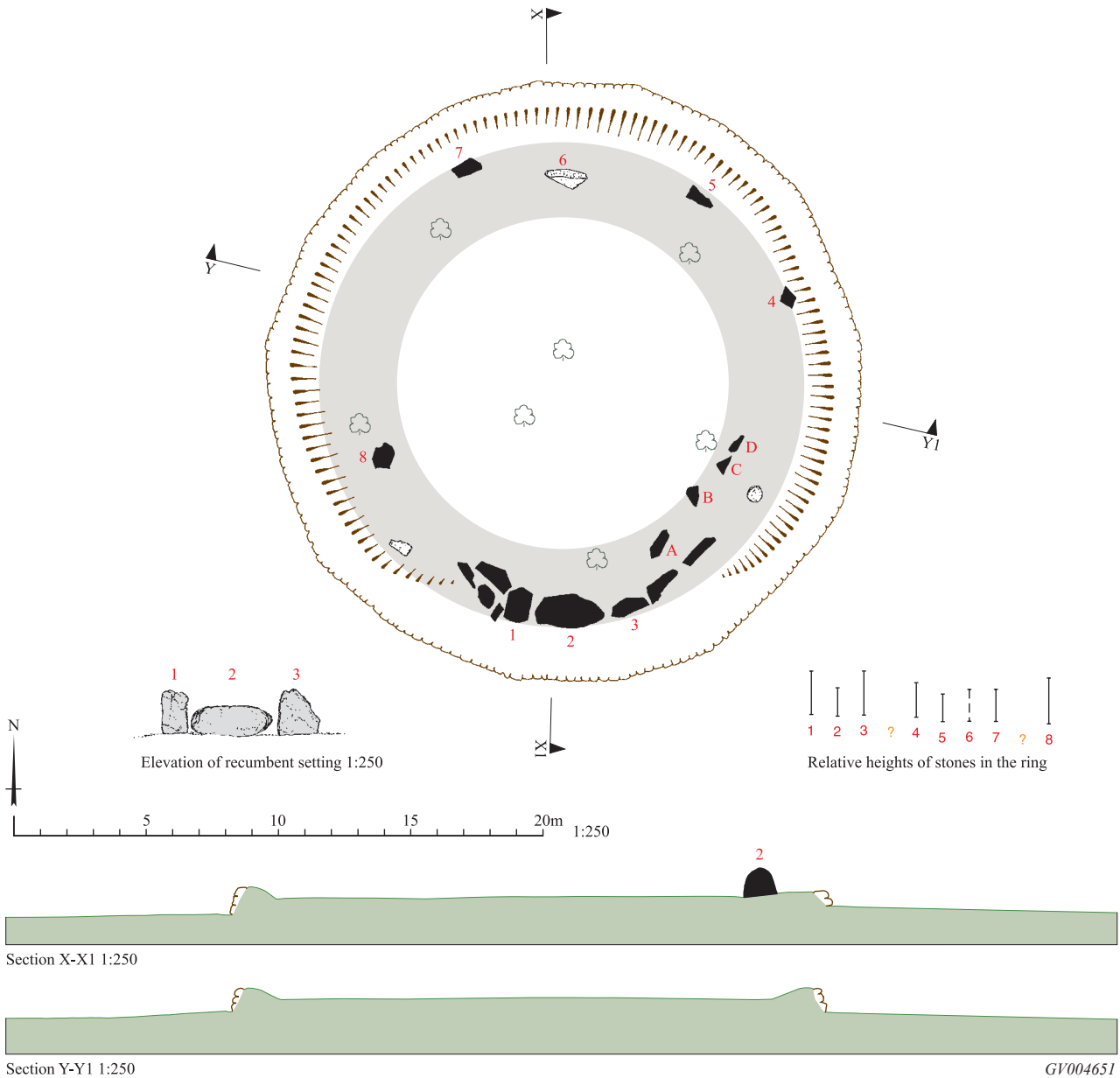
Date	Personnel	Record
1869–70	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Banffshire 1872, xxvi.13); description (Name Book, Banffshire, No. 15, p 7)
c1891	James Macdonald	Description (Macdonald 1891, 128)
9 October 1967	Richard Little	OS: description, photograph and map revision
4 May 2005	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44488)
5 April 2006	Yves Candela, David Herd, Simon Howard & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

47 Netherton of Logie, Crimond, Aberdeenshire

NK05NW 3 NK 0434 5722

Partly restored, this recumbent stone circle stands to the north-north-west of Netherton farm, in a roundel of deciduous trees on gently sloping ground that drops away to the north-east. The circle measures about 17m in overall diameter and, including the recumbent setting on the south, eight stones remain, though one on the north is fallen (6). The recumbent (2), which measures about 2.9m in length by 1.1m in height, has a gently convex summit and its west end appears to rest upon a firm bed of stones. The flankers stand about 1.65m high, but they present contrasting shapes, the western (1) being a thick block, and the eastern (3) a broader and thinner slab; both are aligned with the leading edge of the recumbent, but set at a slight angle to pick up the arc of the circle. In its original form the remainder of the ring probably

comprised seven stones and was evidently graded to reduce in height from south to north, the tallest of the five surviving stones being on the west-south-west (8) and the shortest on the north-east (5). Allowing for missing stones on the south-east and west-north-west, the spacing of the stones also appears to reduce towards the north. However, the orthostat on the west-south-west (8) stands well within the projected arc of the circle and may well have been re-erected. Other hints at a certain amount of restoration work here are provided by the roughly parallel lines of stones leading away from the flankers, though some of those on the east were present by 1870 (below). Most are low boulders typical of kerbstones, but the four forming the inner line on the east (A–D) are spaced slabs set on end, which neither conform to nor project the arc of the circle; those on the west are aligned on the position of the probably re-erected west-south-west orthostat (8). Restoration would explain the inauthentic quality of



these lines of boulders and slabs, which may be no more than a poorly executed attempt to mimic the kerbstones associated with the ring-banks typical of other Buchan rings. In this case there is certainly no evidence of a ring-bank associated with these stones, nor of any cairn material within the level interior of the roundel, though this stands some 0.6m above the surrounding fields.

The circle was first noted by James Keith in a description of the parish dating to 1722, where he refers to ‘*some stones of a large size fixed in the ground in an oval form*’ that were situated between the church and the house of Logie (Mitchell 1906, i, 67). Over a century later, in 1842, Alexander Boyd, the minister of Crimond, again stressed their unusual size for the locality and described them as ‘*of gigantic proportions*’ (NSA, xii, Aberdeenshire, 709). Subsequently Rev John Pratt considered the circle to be ‘*in a high state of preservation*’ (1858, 145–6), a view with which Jonathan Forbes-Leslie also seems to have concurred (1866, i, 215), but no detailed descriptions were prepared before 1870, when the ring was depicted by the OS surveyors. By then it had been enclosed within the roundel and comprised fifteen upright stones, including ‘*four forming a double row*’ immediately east of the recumbent setting (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 21, p 8). This suggests that any restoration work had already taken place, the most likely occasion being with the construction of the roundel, but if so it seems to have remained unknown to any of the writers in the 19th century. Christian Maclagan shows nothing of these stones on an unpublished sketch plan she prepared, which has the recumbent setting and fourteen evenly spaced orthostats set round the circumference, and her text simply quotes

Boyd (1875, 93). Only the Rev James Forrest gives any hint of local knowledge that the ring had been dug into; guiding a party from the Buchan Field Club to the circle, he referred to the discovery of calcined bones both here and at Berrybrae (Mitchell 1890, 82).

By 1900, shortly before the circle was visited by Coles, the roundel had been incorporated into a wall forming part of a new field-system around Netherton (Aberdeenshire 1902, viii.SE). Coles recognised that the circle must have suffered interference, but he was also partly misled by an error in his survey that placed the orthostat on the north-north-west (7) beyond the circumference of the ring. Nevertheless, he clearly had his suspicions about the lines of stones leading from the flankers, unequivocally accepting only the three closest to the east flanker, which he likened to the kerbstones at **Hatton of Ardoyne** and **New Craig**, and those delimiting the ring-banks of other Buchan circles nearby. He also noted the grading of the circle and stressed that the smallest and shortest stones were on the north and north-east.

Visits by James Ritchie in 1908 and Alexander Keiller in 1928 have little to add, and in 1969 Robert Loader of the OS found that the short stone on the north (6) had fallen; he also reached the conclusion that all except two of the kerbstones (probably those extending in a line from the east flanker) were restorations. Fieldwork by Burl and Ruggles since then has concentrated on the astronomical alignment of the circle, but they have also made other observations, paying particular attention to the shape of the recumbent and the care with which it has been levelled.

Coles 1904, 304; 1910, 165; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 352, Abn 83; Ruggles 1984, 58, no. 6; Barnatt 1989, 294, no. 6:68; Ruggles 1999, 185, no. 6; Burl 2000, 421, Abn 86

Date	Personnel	Record
1722	James Keith	Note (Mitchell 1906, i, 67)
c1842	Alexander Boyd	Note (NSA, xii, Aberdeenshire, 709)
c1858	John Pratt	Note (Pratt 1858, 145–6)
c1866	Jonathan Forbes-Leslie	Note (Forbes-Leslie 1866, i, 215)
1870	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Aberdeenshire 1872, viii.11); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 21, p 8)
c1875	Christian Maclagan	Sketch plan (RCAHMS SAS467; DC53022)
1888	James Forrest	Note (Mitchell 1890, 82)
September 1903	Frederick Coles	Description, plan, profiles and sketches (Coles 1904, 284–8, figs 21–3)
1908	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2494)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1928	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1928, 10–11; RCAHMS MS106/9)
13 January 1969	Robert Loader	OS: description and map revision
c1980	Aubrey Burl	Astronomical survey (Burl 1980a, 199, no. 31)
6 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 58, 66, 68–71, 74–5; 1999, 213–15; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 29, 46, 54)
19 August 2003	Kevin Macleod & John Sherriff	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44539)
6 April 2006	David Herd, Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

48 New Craig, Daviot, Aberdeenshire

NJ72NW 3 NJ 7455 2966

What little remains of this recumbent stone circle is situated at the south-west corner of a shelter belt that runs up onto the shoulder of the low hill due west of New Craig, one of several local summits that form a ridge extending southwards to the village of Daviot. Lying to the south-east of the summit, the circle is intervisible with **Loanhead of Daviot** some 830m to the south-south-east. The recumbent setting (1–3) has been incorporated into the corner of the plantation boundary, which to either side comprises an external stone face backed by a thick earthen bank, though the latter is covered to the north by a dump of field-cleared boulders. The interior of the circle is scarred by surface quarrying and there is no reason to believe that either of the two orthostats on the north-east quarter, one fallen and the other re-erected, 19m and 22m respectively behind the recumbent, is close to its original position. Nevertheless, the scale of the recumbent setting on the south-south-west of the ring suggests a diameter of at least this order, if not larger. The recumbent block (2) measures about 4.1m in length by 1.85m in height, but attempts to break it up have split the stone from top to bottom and have left the summit broken and jagged. The east flanker (3), which at 3m in height is the taller and more slender of the pair, apparently rests directly on the present ground surface and is slumped against the recumbent; while it is assumed to be in its original position, with its face aligned on the front of the recumbent, the west flanker is differently set, standing

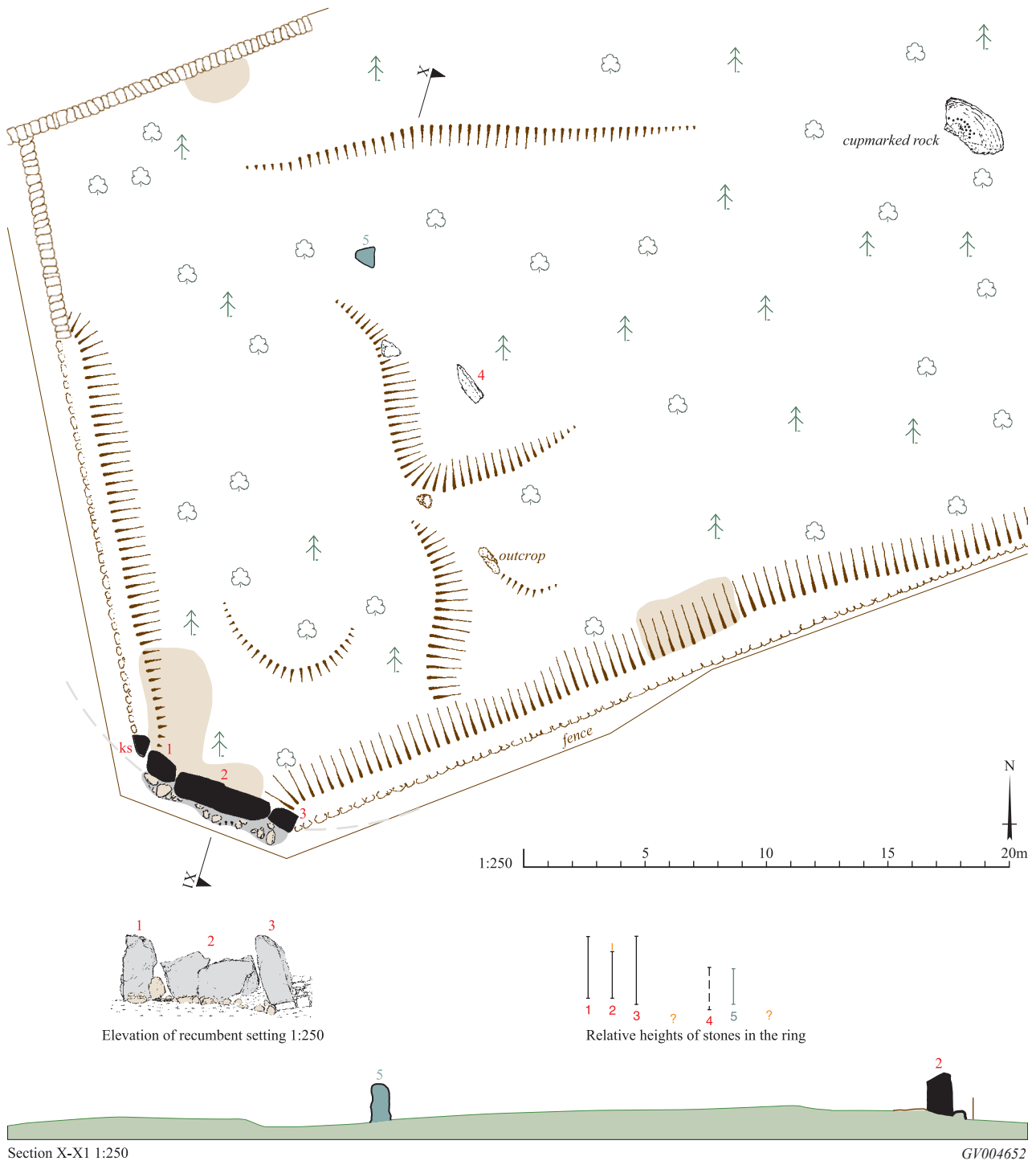
back slightly from this line. No trace of a cairn can be seen within the interior of the circle, but what may be a kerbstone about 1.3m high stands adjacent to the west flanker. Its position is not typical of those more commonly found on the kerbs of internal cairns, but it is firmly set in the ground and the face of the adjacent dyke is butted up against it. A stone axe said to derive from the ring forms part of the Ridgeway Bequest in the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (CUMAA: 1927.566; NJ72NW 3.01).

In addition to the stones of the circle, a large erratic boulder lies amongst the trees some 20m down the slope to the east-north-east (NJ72NW 4). Measuring about 2.7m in length by 1.2m in breadth and 1m in height, there is no evidence that this stone has ever been set upright (contra Ritchie 1918, 96), but it has at least thirteen cupmarks ranged around a natural hollow on the south-west side of its upper surface.

New Craig is probably one of the two rings that the Rev Thomas Burnett noted in 1842 on the Mounie estate (*NSA*, xii, Aberdeenshire, 822), the other being **Loanhead of Daviot**. By the time the OS surveyors visited in 1867, however, it had evidently been reduced to much the condition it is in today. Indeed, apart from the ‘*three large stones (two of which are standing and the other lying down) about 7 feet in height*’, they reported that ‘*no one in the parish remembers having seen this circle otherwise than in its present state*’ (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 24, p 20). Other

Ritchie's undated photograph shows the recumbent setting and the possible kerbstone at the corner of the shelterbelt. DP043106





antiquaries visited the circle at about this time. They include Jonathan Forbes-Leslie, who is known to have exhibited a drawing of the ring to a British Association meeting at Edinburgh in 1871, and Andrew Jervise. The latter styled it the ‘most remarkable’ in the district, continuing:

‘The principal stone is called The Queen’s Chair, possibly from a hollow near the middle, and is about 9 feet [2.7m] in length by about 6 in [0.15m] depth, and weighs from 8 to 10 tons. In common with some of the

other stones, it exhibits a number of cup marks’ (Jervise 1879, ii, 414).

In its brevity, however, this passing note has created some confusion amongst later visitors, many of whom assumed that Jervise’s ‘principal stone’ was the recumbent. James Ritchie, for example, vainly searched for the cupmarks upon the fractured summit of the recumbent, whereas Jervise was almost certainly describing the cupmarked erratic lying to the east-north-east of the circle. The point is of some importance, for

the blasting of the summit of the recumbent, variously ascribed to a vandal shooting at it (Coles 1902, 522) and a mason breaking up the stones (Ritchie 1918, 94–5), might otherwise be placed after Jervise’s visit, rather than where it more probably belongs with the general demolition and clearance of the circle long before 1867. Jervise also noted that other cupmarked stones taken from this hill had been incorporated into the old farmhouse of New Craig, but these have not been identified. More recently George Currie has reported a heavily cupmarked rock outcrop midway between New Craig and **Loanhead of Daviot** (Currie 2006, 17).

Ritchie first photographed the recumbent setting at New Craig in June 1901, and Coles carried out a detailed survey in the following September, locating three other stones in the woodland to the rear; two of these are the orthostats 4 and 5, and the third a loose stone lying between them. He also identified an earthfast block at the back of the recumbent, which he likened to slabs at **Easter Aquhorthies** and **Ardlair**, but his plan does not show it at right-angles to the recumbent and it is unlikely to have served the same purpose; unfortunately it is no longer visible. Ritchie’s photograph shows the way in which the setting was incorporated into the dyke, with a neat panel of drystone masonry plugging the gap between the west flanker and the recumbent. One winter’s day on another occasion he

photographed the hollows on the west side of the west flanker, probably when he was preparing his paper on cupmarks on stone circles and standing stones (Ritchie 1918, 94–6, 121). Concluding that they were all natural, he concentrated his attention on the erratic boulder to the east-north-east, which he suggested had been an outlying standing stone; where Coles had identified seven cupmarks, Ritchie found nineteen, and the present survey only thirteen.

Subsequent fieldwork at the circle by Sir Norman Lockyer in 1907, and Right Rev George Browne and Alexander Keiller in the 1920s, added little further information and more recently surveys by Burl and Ruggles have followed Lockyer in exploring the astronomical alignment of the ring. Amongst the other observations they have made is that the recumbent setting faces towards a distant peak above a flatter foreground (1985, 46); in this instance, however, the peak in question is Mount Battock (778m OD), a barely visible summit on the horizon some 49km to the south-south-west and otherwise notable as the spot where the boundaries of the old counties of Aberdeen, Angus and Kincardine all met.

Coles 1902, 580; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 352, Abn 84; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 58; Barnatt 1989, 294, no. 6:69; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 58; Burl 2000, 421, Abn 87

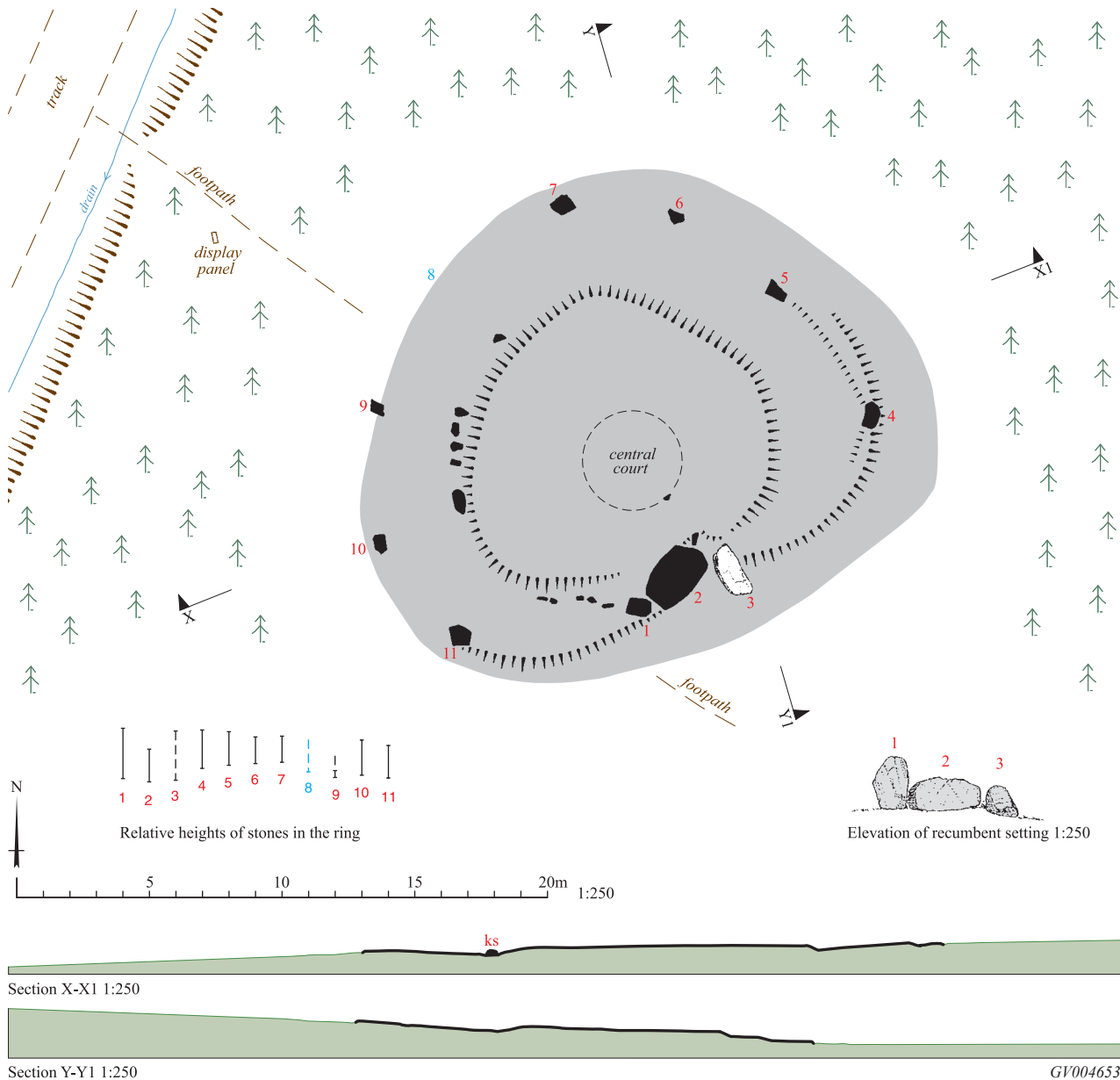
Date	Personnel	Record
1842	Thomas Burnett	Note (<i>NSA</i> , xii, Aberdeenshire, 822)
1867	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1870, xlv.3); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 24, p 20);
1871	Johnathan Forbes-Leslie	Lost drawing (NLS APS.1.79.129)
c1879	Andrew Jervise	Description (Jervise 1879, ii, 414)
June 1901	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2536; AB2951 & AB2548)
September 1901	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketch (Coles 1902, 521–4, figs 38–9)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 394, 399)
1920	George Browne	Description and photographs (Browne 1921, 72, pls xv and xvi)
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1927, 4; 1934, 12)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
28 February 1969	Richard Little	OS: description and map revision
c1980	Aubrey Burl	Astronomical survey (Burl 1980, 199, no. 12)
15 June 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67, 69–71, 74–5; 1999, 213, 215–16; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 41, 46, 49–50, 51)
c1995	Unknown	Orthostat re-erected (information from Shirley Harrison)
27 April 1999	Alan Leith, Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44493)
10 July 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

49 The Nine Stanes, Garrol, Banchory-Ternan, Aberdeenshire

NO79SW 8 NO 7233 9122

Standing within a clearing in Mulloch Wood, this is one of the best-known recumbent stone circles, though its location on the north side of the saddle between Mulloch Hill and Garrol Hill is largely hidden by the trees. Known as the Nine Stanes, its name is a misnomer, acquired some time after the removal of one of the orthostats on the north-west (8) and the reduction of another to a stump (9); its true complement was eleven. The recumbent setting forms the centrepiece of a flattened facade on the south-east of the circle, which measures roughly 18.5m from north-east to south-west by 15.5m transversely. Slewed round to face south-east, the recumbent (2) is a block measuring 2.55m in length

by 1.25m in height and its uneven summit dips towards the centre. The flankers are of a similar size and shape, and the western (1) stands 1.9m high, compared with a length of 2.05m for its fallen neighbour on the east (3). The western, however, is set markedly askew to the axis of the recumbent, and is turned as if to pick up the circumference of the internal cairn rather than that of the ring of orthostats. Six orthostats remain upright (4–7 and 10–11), while the stump on the west-north-west (9) is fractured into three pieces; the latter and the socket of the missing stone on the north-west (8) were revealed by excavations carried out in 1904 by Coles. Set out along the lip of a low stony platform, the stones on the east are consistently graded to reduce in height and spacing from south to north, the shortest being 1m high on the north-north-east (6). This pattern is not so clear on the west, where the stones are more evenly



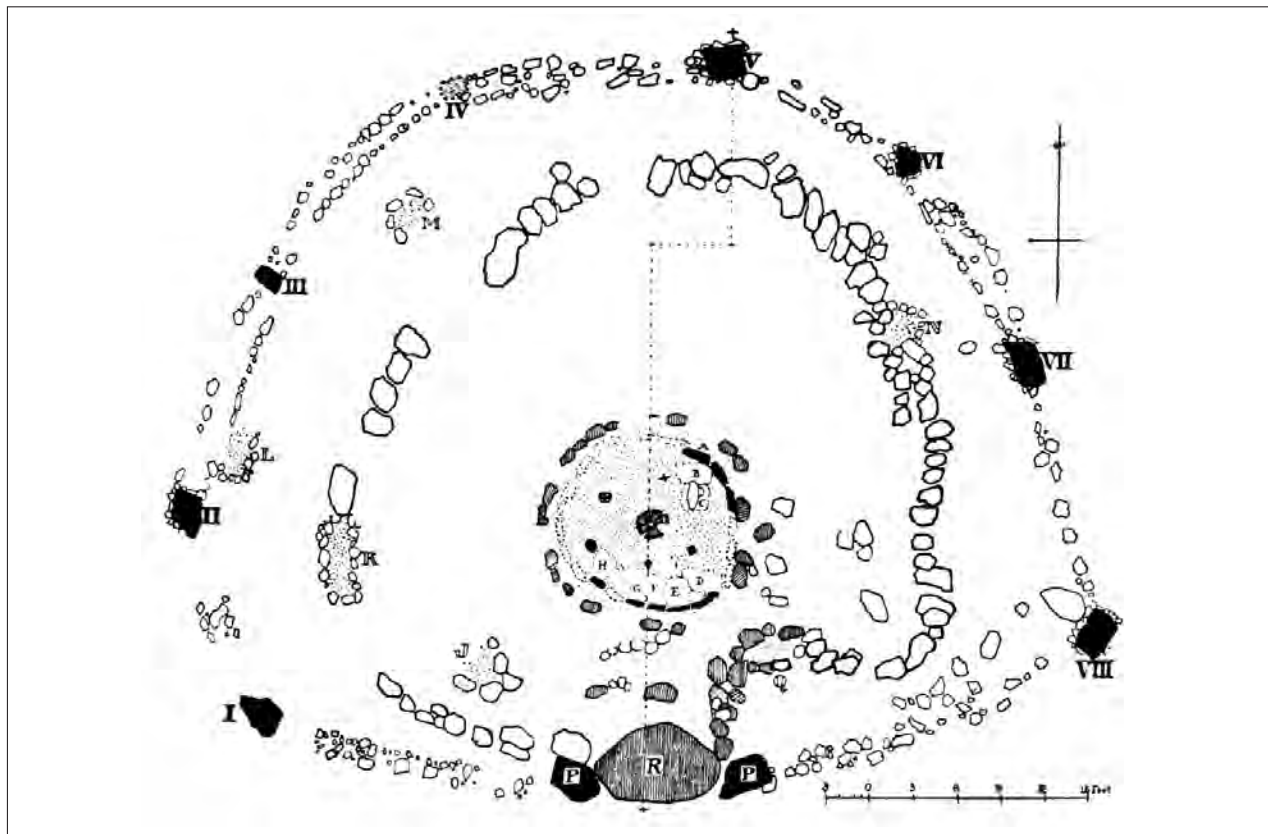
spaced, and orthostat 11 on the south-west is shorter than either of its neighbours. On the east-north-east the lip of the platform rises into a low bank, though whether this is an original feature or the result of restoration following Coles' excavations is unknown. Around most of the circumference he uncovered 'a double row of smallish earth-fast stones' (1905, 200) and in some places the gap between them was filled in with smaller stones. While he concluded that this was the remains of an old dyke, he advanced no evidence to determine its stratigraphical relationship to the orthostats standing along its line (*ibid*, 193, fig 1). Nevertheless it is likely to be an ancient component of the circle.

Within the interior there is a low mound measuring 12.5m from east to west by 11m transversely and 0.25m in height. Completely excavated by Coles, this measures about 12.8m in diameter on his plan over a near continuous kerb of rough boulders that increased in size towards the recumbent setting, though it followed an unusual and irregular course on the south-east; only twelve of the kerbstones are now visible, all bar one on the west side of the cairn. At its centre there was a court, bounded by two rings of kerbstones, which he depicted concentrically, set little more than 0.15m apart. Coles measured the diameter of the larger at 3.8m within an intermittent ring of squat boulders about 0.3m

high. Measured from the plan, the smaller was 3.1m in diameter, and it had been furnished with a kerb of much taller close-set slabs up to 1.1m high, though most of them had been robbed, leaving one upright, another leaning, and six lying on the ground. The single stone now visible belongs to the south-east arc of this taller ring. At face value, these two kerbs probably represent successive phases of construction, and with two stones of the smaller, inner ring still in their sockets when Coles commenced his excavation, this was probably the later. Five deposits of burnt bones were found within this court: one filled a stone-lined, funnel-shaped pit some 0.65m in diameter by 0.25m in depth at the centre; three were in shallow hollows scooped into the subsoil (on the south-east, south and south-west respectively); and the fifth lay on a flat stone on the north-west. Sherds of coarse pottery were found in a separate deposit on the north-north-east (NMA EP 25). The stratigraphic relationships of these various deposits are uncertain. In Coles' defence stone-robbing had probably disrupted most of the deposits around the edges of the court, but his description of the stratigraphy is tantalisingly inadequate: 'None of these latter [cremation] deposits was more than a few inches below the surface of the subsoil. The upper edges of the central pit were about flush with that surface, and the whole of this flattish central space ... was at a lower level than the thick squat stones ... which inclosed it' (1905, 195).

Ritchie's 1904 photograph of the central court undergoing restoration. SC681340





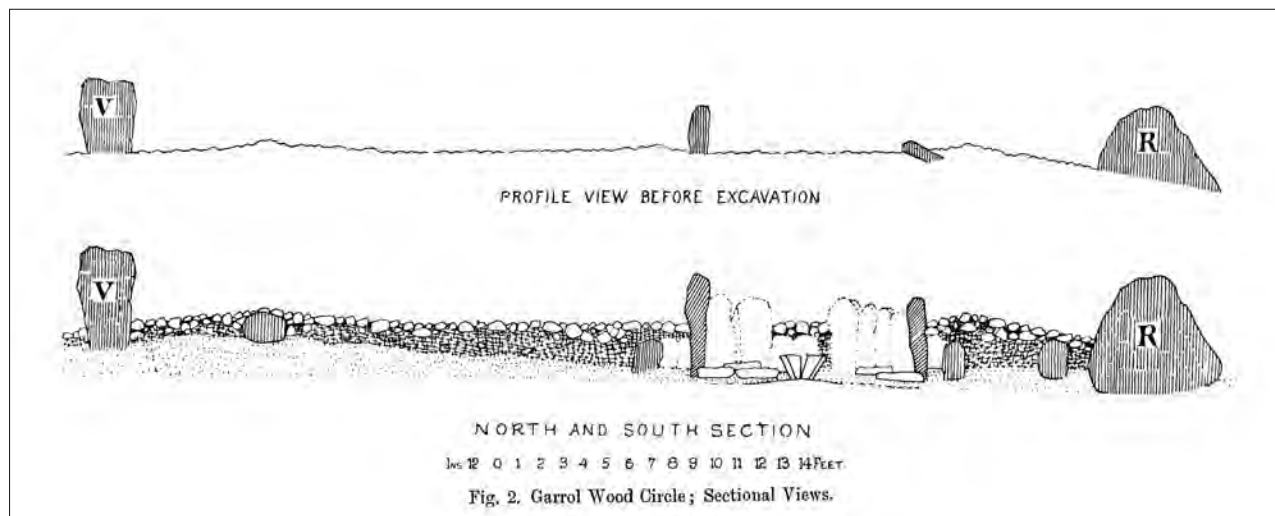
Coles' 1904 plan of the excavation. DP078423

Unfortunately his section (1905, 194, fig 2) suggests that the tops of the stones lining the central pit were some 0.3m above the foot of either kerb, which is difficult to reconcile with his description of its relationship to the subsoil or the photographic record he commissioned from Andrew Turner of Banchory (RCAHMS KC788).

Nevertheless, if Coles' section is a fair representation of the levels at which these various elements were found, a broad sequence for the construction of the cairn and the deposits within the court may be proposed. Nothing is known of any pre-cairn activity, though the surface of the subsoil and rock beneath it seems to have been fairly rough and irregular. In its first phase the cairn enclosed a relatively shallow court. Though Coles does not describe the cairn material as such, the section depicts the lower part of the mound with a hatched symbol that laps over the top of the inner kerb but is nowhere more than 0.4m high; possibly this is the 'accumulation of black mould' (1905, 200) beneath the stones that were removed to the rear of the recumbent, which he mentions in the text and in a footnote. A shallow skim of the same material is also shown making up the lower part of the platform outside the outer kerb of the cairn. From this it can be deduced that the first ring-cairn appears to have been a relatively low flat-topped mound with rough boulder kerbs inside and out, and an encircling platform. With the exception of the south-east quadrant, the plan of the ring-cairn

is fairly regular, but on the south-east it is curiously misshapen, apparently doglegging into the back of the recumbent at right-angles to the axis of the setting, a complete contrast to the tangential arrangement on the west. While the arrangement behind the east end of the recumbent accords with what Coles had observed elsewhere, it may also have been the product of the way he excavated the interior of the circle. This involved carefully removing all the soil and smaller stones to reduce the body of the mound to its largest components; the shape on the south-east may be the residue of this process, mainly comprising stones variously left behind, displaced and discarded when the mound was robbed. All the other 'settings' of stones he discovered proved sterile, and several on the lines of the kerbs are clearly the result of stone-robbing.

No burial deposits can be attributed to the first phase of the cairn and it is not known whether the court was filled in before the next major phase of construction, in which the new kerb of the court was inserted and the mound was seemingly capped with a layer of heavier stones. This increased the general height of the cairn and, if the length of the stones forming the new inner kerb serves as a guide, it may have stood as much as 1m high. On the section the capping is shown covering the outer kerb of the ring-cairn and extending out to the ring of orthostats. The floor of the later court appears to have been sunk below the level of its predecessor, and this probably provides the stratigraphic contexts for most of the cremation deposits, though the three in scoops in

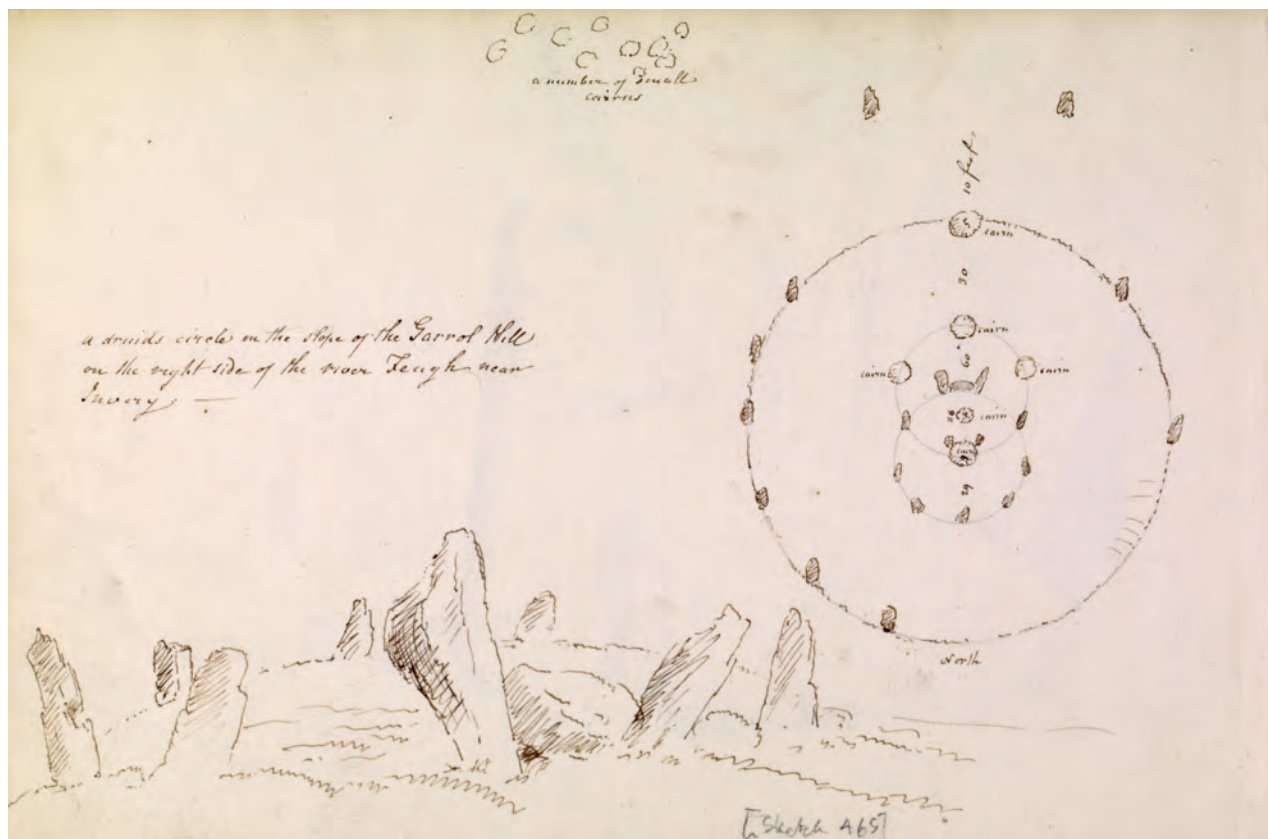


the subsoil were possibly in truncated pits associated with the earlier court. The sherds of pottery also lay at this level. The cremation in the central pit, however, is presumably later, if only because the top of its funnel-shaped stone lining rose about 0.3m above the floor of the court, suggesting that it was inserted after the court had been partly filled. Seven of the kerbstones lay on the floor of the later court, some of them with moss and lichen still adhering to their surfaces, so there can be little doubt that later stone-robbers cleared the deposits around the kerb down to the level of the subsoil.

At what point in this sequence the recumbent setting and the orthostats of the circle were erected is difficult to determine. Realising that the setting stood well back from the projected circumference of the circle, Coles dug in front of the recumbent, and found nothing. He also delved beneath it, leading him to conclude that the massive block was set directly into the subsoil and onto rock outcrop, but it is by no means certain that this was really the case. Likewise the sockets of the orthostats seem to have penetrated quite deeply into the subsoil, though he cryptically reports *‘that in no instance were their bases found to be more than 16 inches [0.4m] into the subsoil’* (1905, 200). Nevertheless, he believed that one of the outer kerbstones of the ring-cairn was wedged beneath the west flanker, and Andrew Turner’s contemporary photographs reveal this to be a particularly thin slab lying horizontally. Interpreted in the light of Richard Bradley’s excavations at **Tomnaverie**, this could be taken as evidence that the circle was built upon the skirts of the first phase cairn, and the lower of the stones shown in Coles’ section at the foot of the inner face of his Stone V might be evidence unwittingly recorded of the packing of a socket cut through the encircling platform. This circumstantial argument should not be stretched too far, but the point can probably be resolved by further excavation. In its final form, however, the circle and the cairn formed a much more substantial monument than the visitor encounters today.

Coles’ 1904 profile and section. SC1115028

The Nine Stanes is probably one of the three circles not far from Templeton that James Garden referred to in a letter to John Aubrey in 1692 (see also **Eslie the Greater** & App 1.36), but as so often happens with these early references no more is heard until the 19th century. In this case it was James Skene who marked his visit in the 1820s with a sketch of the ring from the south-west, together with a roughly measured plan. The sketch of the recumbent setting is instantly recognisable, with the east flanker already leaning outwards as Coles found it seventy years later. Six of the orthostats can be seen set out around the circumference of the ring, while a seventh (orthostat 5 on the east-north-east) is hidden behind the top of the east flanker. This, of course, only makes ten stones, and though these are shown evenly spaced on the accompanying plan it seems likely that either the north-west orthostat (8) was already missing, or its neighbour on the south, orthostat 9, was then a stump. One small ‘cairn’ 2.7m across, with two stones at its edge, is shown at the centre and almost certainly represents the kerb of the inner court, while a second cairn appears between the court and the recumbent; depicted in this way they suggest exposures of cairn material and thus disturbance within the interior (below). Three other cairns are drawn in front of the recumbent setting, one of them on the southern arc of the circumference of what Skene perceived as a much larger enclosing stone circle, with six orthostats standing around the east and another two on the west. Two more standing stones are shown beyond this, one each side of an axis drawn from the centre through the recumbent, while a cluster of small cairns lay further out on the moor beyond them. Skene had the advantage over subsequent visitors that the circle was still in moorland and had not yet been planted with conifers, but there is little now to substantiate these elements of his plan and it is notable that the Rev William Anderson makes no comment about such elaborations in his



Skene's elaborate 1820s sketch is not borne out by other accounts. SC730306

generalised description of the Nine Stanes and the two Eslie monuments (**Eslie the Greater** & App 1.36) some twenty years later. Nevertheless, in the 1950s Alexander Thom claimed two outlying stones in the course of his survey of the circle, lying 25m north-east and 23m south-east of its centre respectively. The first is trapezoidal in shape, measuring about 1.2m in length, and lies at the edge of the plantation, where it appears to have been unearthed by a forestry plough; the second is a roughly rectangular boulder 1.7m long by 1.2m high that is partly embedded in an old field bank running north from the road. While there is no reason to connect either with a megalithic monument, they do lend some substance to Skene's observations.

By the time the OS surveyors came to the circle in 1864 the southern flank of Mulloch Hill above the improved fields had been planted with trees, and these would hinder any further observation until they were cleared in 1904 for Coles' excavation. Despite the difficulties, the OS surveyors reported nine upright stones. Had they adopted their usual practice of discounting the recumbent as an upright, it might be concluded that only one of the orthostats on the north-west was missing, but the measurements of the stones recorded in 1868 by William Brown and published by Robert Angus Smith (1880, 301), roughly tally with those Coles took in 1899, extending anticlockwise from the west flanker, including the recumbent, and omitting

the stump. Thus, Smith was mistaken in claiming that in 1873 there were nine standing stones in addition to the recumbent, though he noted traces of the central court, commenting that '*the centre is disturbed and nothing is left*' (1880, 301). Without the benefit of an independent survey, Brown's measurements are incomprehensible, as Sir Henry Dryden found, particularly as the sequence of heights and girths bears no relationship to the sequence of distances between the stones. Dryden commissioned further measurements from Archibald Crease but the latter evidently struggled amongst the trees. He not only missed orthostat (7) on the north, but his distances are rather less accurate than Brown's, and it is likely that they were not measured with a tape but '*stepped*', an expression Smith used to describe his technique for taking a diameter in 1873; to Dryden, had he known, this would have been anathema.

The conditions had not improved by the time of Coles first visit at the turn of the century and he resorted to his compass to generate a plan. In the light of James Ritchie's photographs of the recumbent setting taken beneath the trees in 1902, Coles' plan is a tour de force, not only placing the nine stones then visible in about their correct positions, but also identifying two of the tall kerbstones of the central court in the general disturbance within the interior. He was able for the first time to appreciate the position of the recumbent within the projected circumference of the circle, though he could no more explain it than the Rev John Milne, who later attributed the flattened arc to the presence of boggy

ground beyond the stones (1912, 10). Retrospectively, albeit at the remove of a century, Coles' depiction of a mound at the rear of the recumbent probably explains the feature drawn in this position on Dryden's sketch plan, and perhaps Skene's conventions of two cairns within the interior, particularly as the latter also showed two stones on the edge of the central one. If this is the case, most of the robbing of the central court may have taken place by the 1820s, and certainly no later than the subsequent construction of the dyke enclosing the plantation.

With the clearance of the trees for Coles' excavation, Sir Norman Lockyer was able to take measurements at the Nine Stanes in 1907. The astronomical theme of

his approach was subsequently taken up here in 1955 by Alexander Thom and, more recently, by Ruggles and Burl. Thom's survey is also of interest for it provides the first intimation that the heavily leaning east flanker, which Coles had been very careful not to undermine, had finally fallen, though when this took place is not known. Amongst the measurements and observations that Ruggles and Burl collected is that the direction in which the recumbent setting faces falls upon one of the lesser summits on the ridge dropping down from Monluth Hill to Hill of Blacklodge, some 3km to the south-east.

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1900, 198; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 360, Knc 10; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 91; Barnatt 1989, 284, no. 6:43; Ruggles 1999, 188, no. 91; Burl 2000, 429, Knc 13

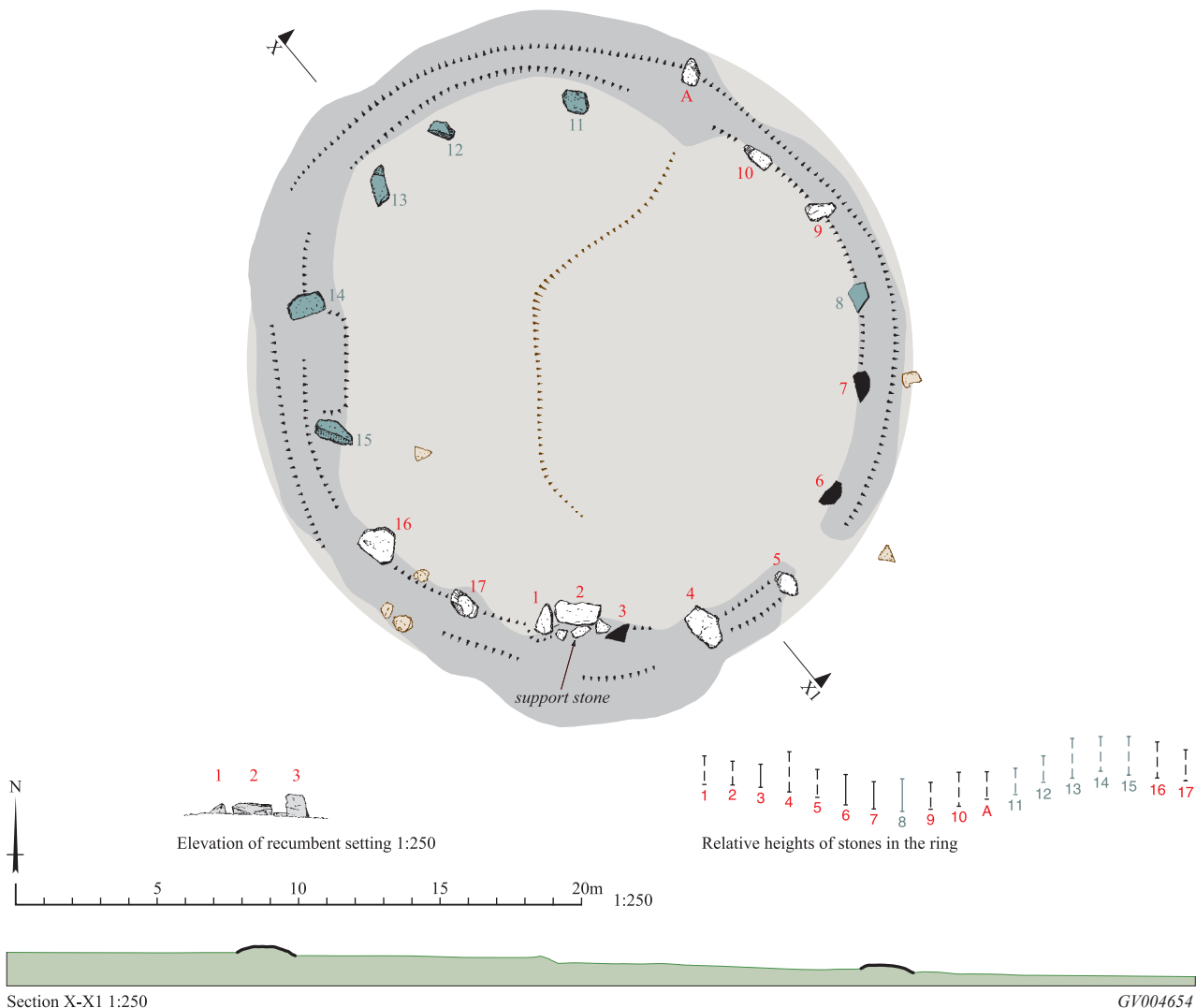
Date	Personnel	Record
1692	James Garden	Note (Garden 1770, 316 [1779, 318]; Gordon 1960, 13–14; Hunter 2001, 120)
1820s	James Skene	Plan and sketch (RCAHMS KCD113/1)
October 1842	William Anderson	Description (<i>NSA</i> , xi, Kincardineshire, 336)
1864	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Kincardineshire 1868, xi.5); note (Name Book, Kincardineshire, No. 3, p 149)
1868	William Brown	Description (Smith 1880, 301)
1873	Robert Angus Smith	Description (Smith 1880, 300–1)
1880	Archibald Crease	Sketch plan drawn up by Sir Henry Dryden in 1881 (RCAHMS SAS39/8)
September 1899	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketches (Coles 1900, 157–62, figs 16–17)
July 1902	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS KC287 & KC289)
Spring 1904	Frederick Coles Andrew Turner James Ritchie	Excavation, plan, section and photographs (Coles 1905) Photographs (RCAHMS KC788–90) Photographs (RCAHMS KC308–9, KC310–14, KC292 & KC 792–3)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 405)
c1912	John Milne	Note (Milne 1912, 10)
17 July 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1934, 15–16)
10 August 1955	Alexander Thom	Plan and notes (Thom 1967, 136; 1961a, fig 5; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 204–5; RCAHMS DC4409; MS 430/22; Ferguson 1988, 100)
1960s–90s	Aubrey Burl	Guidebook description and sketch plan (Burl 1972, 26, fig 2; 1995 & 2005a, 138–9, no. 171)
4 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Astronomical survey and tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67–71, 74–5; 1999, 213–16; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 38, 47, 49, 51–2)
25 March 1984	Stratford Halliday	RCAHMS: description (RCAHMS 1984, 10, no. 22)
11 June 2003	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44588)
23 July 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

50 North Strone, Alford, Aberdeenshire

NJ51SE 2 NJ 5844 1389

This unusual recumbent stone circle stands at the top of a long slope dropping away to the north-east at the eastern end of Strone Hill. Excavated and partly restored at the behest of Miss Maria Farquharson of Haughton House, Alford, at the end of the 19th century, the circle is once again ruinous and only the east flanker (3) and three stones on the east arc (6–8) remain upright. Nevertheless, it measures about 18.5m in diameter and has comprised at least seventeen, or possibly eighteen (A), evenly spaced stones, apparently set out along the inner edge of a low stony bank 1.5m thick and no more than 0.2m in height. Unlike other recumbent stone circles, where the stones are typically large and imposing, here they are all comparatively small, not least the recumbent (2), a roughly rectangular block of dark pink aplite on the south, which measures only 1.5m in length and when upright would have stood no more

than 0.8m high. This has fallen onto its back to expose a long support stone jutting forwards at an angle close to its east end; the block's uneven summit now forms its north side. The west flanker (1), which has been the more slender of the two, has also tumbled backwards, but the south face of the upright east flanker (3) indicates the position of the leading edge of the setting. Like the recumbent, and indeed most of the orthostats, both flankers are of dark pink aplite. At 1m in length and 0.75m in height respectively, both have been much the same height as the recumbent, though the roughly square top of the west flanker has led Burl to suggest that a stone now lying between it and the east end of the recumbent may have been its tip (2005a, 104). The remainder of the ring is made up largely of fallen blocks between 0.9m and 1.4m in length, and the only three orthostats that remain standing (6–8) are between 1m and 1.15m high. In this condition it is difficult to gauge whether the stones of the circle were consistently graded in height, but the shorter stones appear to be on the



north arc. The enclosure in which they are set is slightly oval on plan, measuring 23m in maximum diameter overall, and the bank reaches its greatest thickness in front of the recumbent setting.

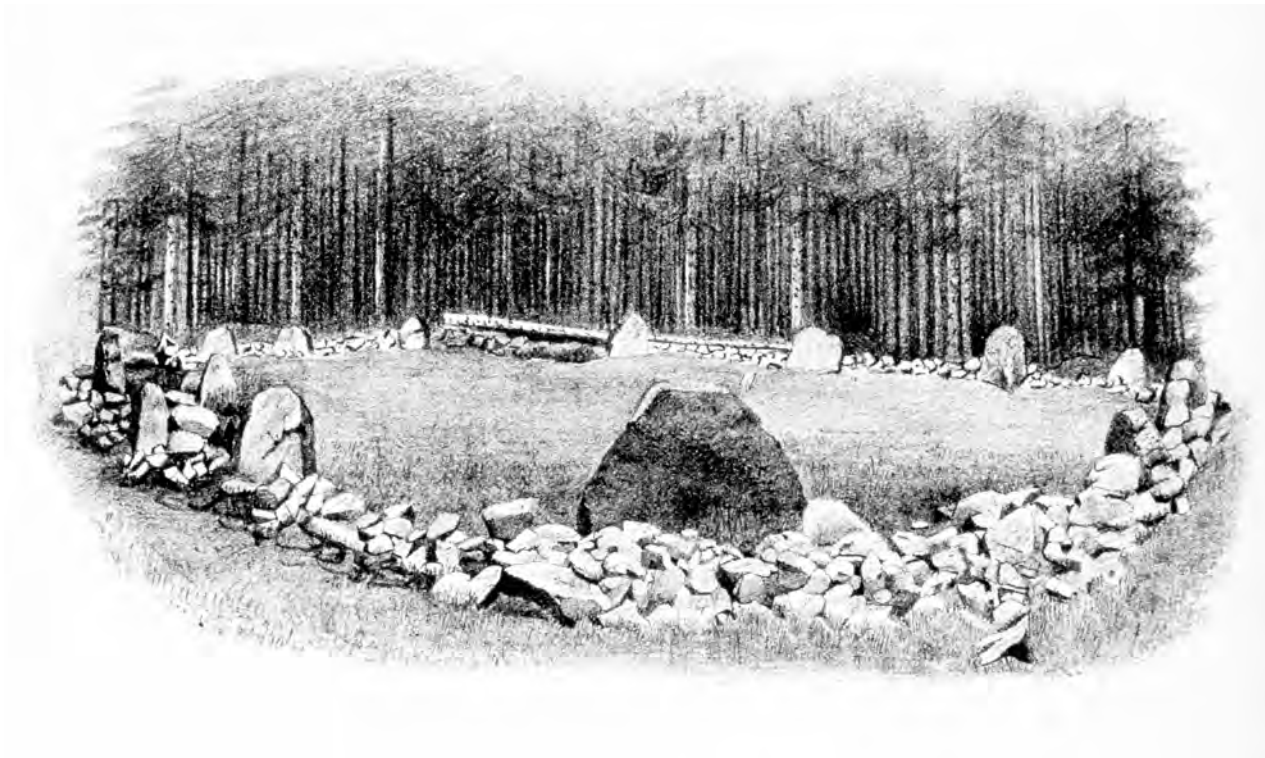
The original form of the enclosing bank, and indeed of the whole circle, is almost impossible to deduce from what is visible today. Nevertheless, excavations carried out in 1896 for Miss Farquharson, and reported by Alexander Munro in *Scottish Notes and Queries* in May 1997 provide some limited insight into the character of the interior. Munro noted that ‘*traces were discovered which lead to the belief that inside the outer circle there was another composed of smaller stones ... The whole space enclosed was originally paved with rough stones set close together; but ... the greater part of this paving had been broken up at some previous date*’ (Munro 1897, 177); this suggests that the interior was once packed solidly with stones and boulders, while the mention of an inner circle of smaller stones hints at the former presence of a kerb. At the very least there was probably a veneer of cairn material within the line of the bank, the last remnant of which is possibly represented by a sub-rectangular stony area between two of the fallen orthostats on the west (14 & 15), but equally there may once have been a more substantial kerbed cairn surrounded by a platform. The interior had been robbed long before the restoration, and the seven ‘*graves*’ lying east and west that were found when the interior was levelled in 1896 had apparently been disturbed previously. While some contained the ‘*outlines of skeletons*’, one was accompanied by part of a decorated vessel and another, in a circular pit, by two pieces of flint. The illustration accompanying Munro’s account clearly shows the levelled interior, but the bank is drawn as a band of bare rubble, completely free of vegetation and soil. Significantly, perhaps, Munro does not mention it, raising the possibility that the bank is no more than a landscaping feature of the restoration, effectively tidying away loose stones to the outside of the circle. At a practical level this would have helped to define the monument for visitors, but it may also represent an attempt to convey what was thought to be the circle’s original character, with the upright stones set out along its inner edge to form an arena and the recumbent lying flat to serve as an altar. Whether real or imagined, James Ritchie’s photograph of the recumbent setting shows that the bank quickly grassed over in the clearing in the trees, and to a greater or lesser extent it has been shown on every plan that has been prepared since (below).

By the time of the restoration the circle had been in dense woodland for many years, so much so that in 1866–7 the OS surveyors could find only ‘*five upright stones unhewn*’ (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 5, p 5), depicting two of them on the east and an arc of three on the south; ‘*This is supposed to be the remains of a Druidical place of worship*’ (*ibid*)



The view from the north. DP007341

one of them wrote in the Name Book, his scepticism perhaps a reflection of the size of the stones as much as anything else. The depiction is not sufficiently precise to demonstrate which of the stones they found, but it must have included both flankers (1 & 3) and two of the three presently standing on the east (6–8), the fifth being one of the stones to either side of the setting (16/17 or 4/5). It is equally uncertain which of the stones were re-erected when Miss Farquharson ‘*had the whole space cleared, some trees removed, and the stones placed upright*’ (Munro 1897, 177). Coles, who corresponded with her, believed it was only the five forming the north-west quarter (11–15), but Munro claimed that of the sixteen orthostats in the circle ‘*about half ... had been knocked over; and were half hid in the under-growth*’ (*ibid*); certainly they are all shown upright in the accompanying illustration, though within a few years in 1901 Coles found the two on the south-east (4 & 5) prostrate. He too counted sixteen orthostats, but in 1927 Alexander Keiller re-planned the ring and plotted an additional prone stone on the north-north-east (A), which fills what otherwise appears to be a gap in the ring. By then most of the re-erected stones were again prostrate and only six remained upright, including the two flankers (1, 3, 6–7, 14 & 17). In his opinion the damage had ‘*taken place within very recent years*’ and was ‘*largely due to the fact that cattle are now allowed to wander at leisure among the stones*’ (Keiller 1927, 2–3). Curiously orthostat 8, which is one



It is difficult to know whether this illustration accompanying Munro's description of 1897 depicts the stone circle as it was, or as he thought it should have been. SC1115878

of those now upright on the east-north-east, was then fallen, implying that some further remedial work took place here between 1927 and the visit by Richard Little of the OS in 1968. He found that the general attrition had continued, felling the west flanker and two other orthostats (1, 14 & 17), and reducing those upright to

the four still standing. Despite this litany of disturbance at the circle, Burl has asserted that the 'recumbent is well-aligned on the major southern moonset' (2005a, 105), and he and Clive Ruggles have noted that the setting faces Mill Maud, a conspicuous peak some 7.25km to the south-south-west (Ruggles and Burl 1985, 49).

Coles 1902, 580; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 352, Abn 85; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 54; Barnatt 1989, 295, no. 6:71; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 54; Burl 2000, 421, Abn 88

Date	Personnel	Record
1869	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1869, lxii.12); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 5, p 5)
1896	Maria Farquharson	Excavation and reconstruction (Munro 1897, 177)
September 1901	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketch (Coles 1902, 493–6, figs 7–8)
1900s	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2917)
21 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1927	Alexander Keiller	Description and plan (Keiller 1927, 2–3; 1934, 12–13; RCAHMS ABD529)
17 September 1968	Richard Little	OS: description and map revision
c1980	Aubrey Burl	Astronomical survey and guidebook description (Burl 1980a, 199, no. 29; 1995 & 2005a, 104–5, no. 110)
14 June 1981	Clive Ruggles	Astronomical survey and tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 59, 67–71, 74–5; 1999, 213–16, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 28, 33, 44, 47, 49–50)
6 September 1994	Steven Boyle & Robert Shaw	RCAHMS: description and plane table survey (DC32834)
25–6 May 1999	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (DC44468)
12 July 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

51 Old Keig, Keig, Aberdeenshire

NJ51NE 2 NJ 5965 1939

The imposing recumbent at Old Keig is one of the most enduring images of recumbent stone circles, not only embodying the scale of engineering required to build these monuments, but also the history of their exploration. Incorporated into a shelterbelt dropping down the crest of the south-south-west spur of the Hill of Airlie, it is situated on a minor rise immediately north of a track cutting through to link the fields to either side. While the fields are improved and featureless, within the narrow strip of woodland part of an earlier rig-system is preserved, the individual rigs descending the slope as a flight of low lynchets or terraces to either side of the circle. By the time it had been incorporated into the plantation the circle had been reduced to the recumbent setting on the south-south-west (1–3) and a single orthostat on the south-south-east (4), but as a result of the excavations initiated by Gordon Childe in 1932 (1933; 1934) three other fallen orthostats were identified, one of which can be seen lying on the east (5) and the other two on the north (6–7). The size of the circle is commensurate with that of its recumbent and is about 27m in diameter. The massive recumbent (2) measures some 5.45m in length by 1.75m in height, with an even summit set roughly horizontal. The flankers (1 & 3) stand about 2.2m and 2.3m high respectively and present very different profiles on the facade of the setting, the western being a relatively slender pointed slab and the eastern broader and sub-rectangular. In both cases they stand back from the leading face of the recumbent, but whereas the west flanker extends the alignment of the recumbent, the east flanker is turned slightly to trace the arc of the circle. With so many of the orthostats fallen and missing it is difficult to demonstrate that the stones of the circle were graded, but there is no doubt that the top of the sole orthostat remaining upright (4) is lower than its neighbouring flanker and there was probably a reduction in height to the fallen slab adjacent to it on the north (5).

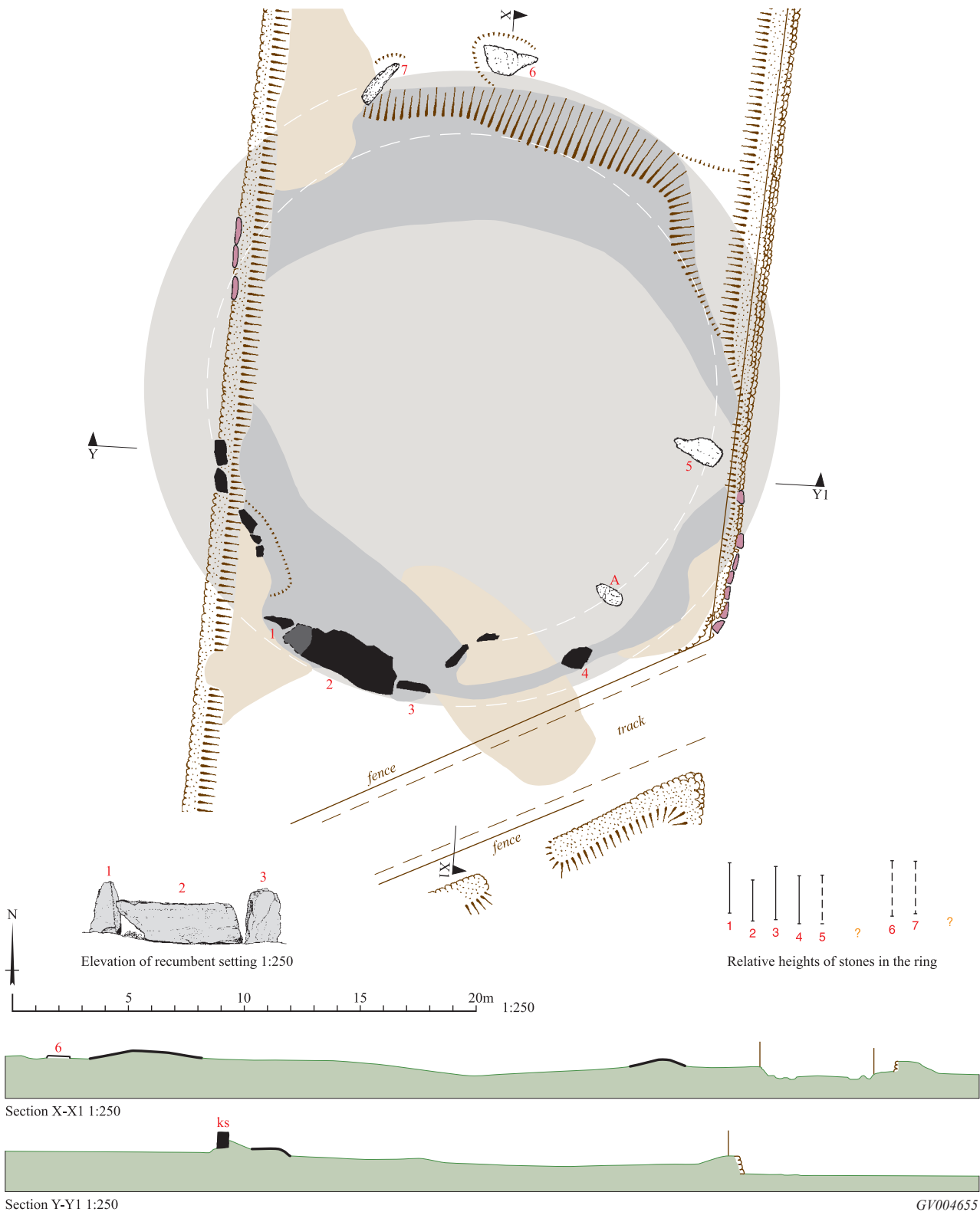
Within the interior there is a heavily robbed cairn, now largely reduced to bands of rubble extending across the plantation on the north and south-west and spread up to 26m across from north-north-east to south-south-west. The seven kerbstones visible in the south-west quadrant, coupled with at least another thirteen Childe discovered, most of them lying prostrate beneath the turf on the south and north, indicate that the cairn measures about 22m in diameter, expanding to 24m on the south-south-west where the kerb turns out to meet the rear of the recumbent setting; a prostrate slab within the ring on the south-east (A) is one of the fallen kerbstones uncovered by Childe, and what are probably another ten have been incorporated into the dykes of the plantation. The seven that remain in place are not evenly graded in height, but the slabs about 1m broad



Logan's plan of the 1820s omits the shelterbelt, but otherwise the circle was little different when excavated by Childe. SC1115777

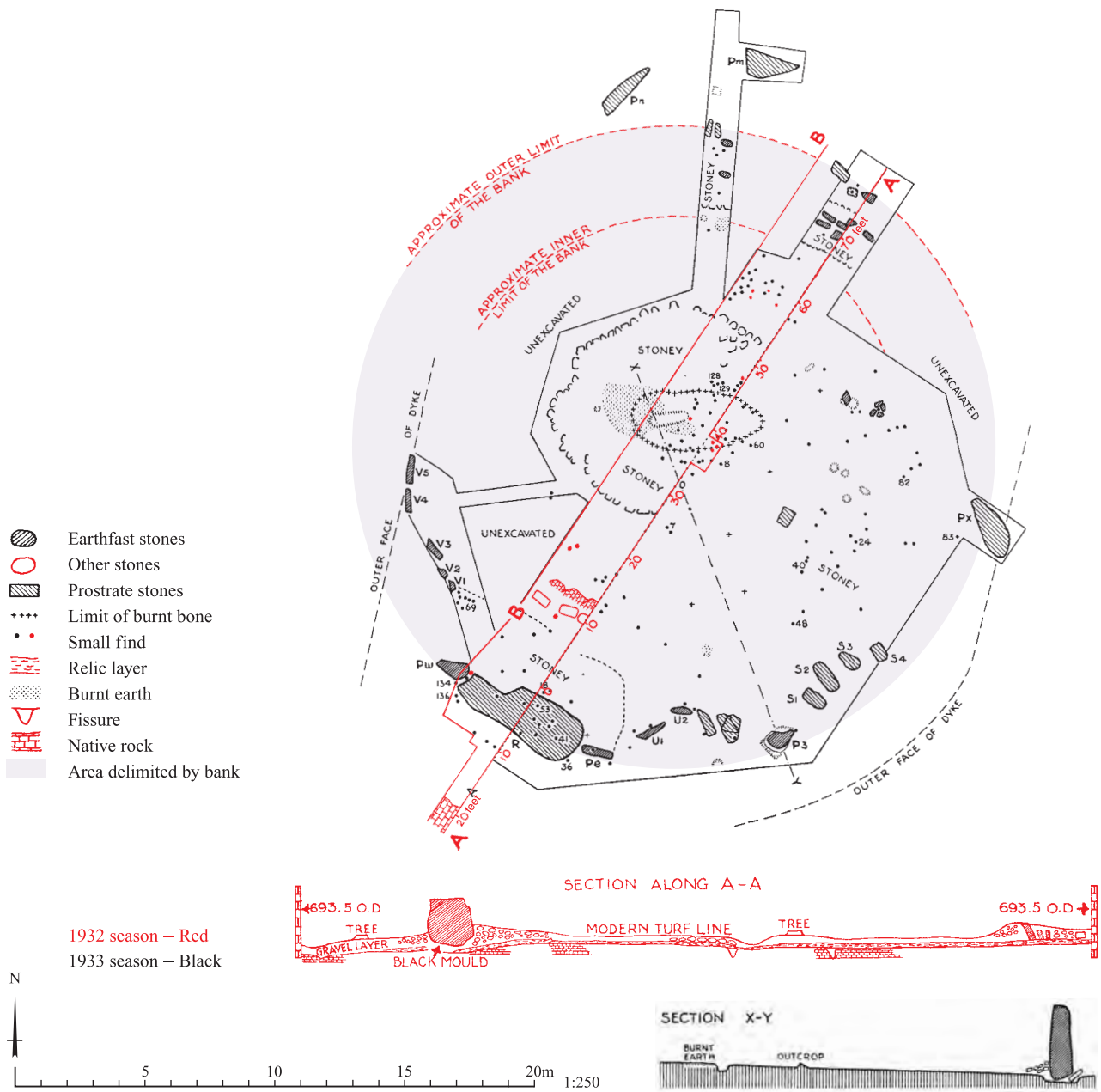
and 1.2m high immediately behind the east flanker are significantly larger than those in the order of 0.75m high noted during the excavation on the north side of the ring; there can be little doubt that the kerb adjacent to the recumbent was an impressive setting of stones in its own right. In so far as Childe could detect, the cairn material had formed a ring-bank about 16.8m in internal diameter, though it is not clear from his account whether any of the large stones he found towards the edge of the bank on the south-west and north were the remains of a formal inner kerb; it is perhaps more likely that this was simply an edge created by the pattern of stone-robbing (but see below). Nevertheless, a low mound of cairn material a little over 8m across survived in the centre and beneath this Childe discovered a patch of burnt ground measuring almost 4m by 2m and, eccentrically to this, a spread of cremated bones and pottery, the latter representing up to three separate vessels; an elongated pit had been cut through the burnt patch. Two other smaller areas of burning were identified in the area within the surviving bank of cairn material.

The interpretation of the results of Childe's work at Old Keig poses numerous problems and questions, some of which can probably be resolved by further investigation in the portion of the circle that remains unexcavated. Initially designed to establish the chronological horizon of recumbent stone circles, in the first season Childe simply cut a trench across the ring at right-angles to the recumbent (1933), while in the second he mainly uncovered an area in the south-east half of the interior (1934). He did not expect to retrieve a coherent structural sequence on account of the severity of the damage that had taken place, but nevertheless he recovered a certain amount of stratigraphical information that had a bearing on his perception of the



chronology of its construction, in particular the sherds of pottery incorporated into a compacted layer that was encountered almost everywhere within the ring. Most of this pottery, which he believed was Iron Age, is now regarded as probably Late Bronze Age in date (Bradley and Sheridan 2005, 277–8) and was found

scattered throughout this layer and indeed beneath the recumbent, in the socket of the east flanker and probably those of the tall kerbstones immediately behind it. The assemblage also includes sherds of Beaker from the north-east sector of the interior. Childe believed the compacted layer was an archaeological deposit, created



A composite of Childe's successive plans of 1933-4. SC1115836

by trampling in the course of the construction of the monument, but Richard Bradley is surely correct that this was a natural podsol formed after the construction of the cairn (2005, 101; cf **Loanhead of Daviot**); it is implicit in the way Childe describes the layer, apparently sealing sockets but also containing and lying beneath some of the packing stones. This is not to deny the individual positions of the sherds of pottery that were recovered from it, so much as their context in this layer has no chronological significance. Each find must be treated as potentially a separate context, some probably relating to pre-cairn activity and the

construction of the monument, but others to subsequent activity, such as pits sunk through the cairn in prehistory and possibly, in addition, some redistribution of material when the cairn was robbed in the modern era (see below).

In many respects the monument uncovered by Childe in the 1930s was that noted by James Logan in the 1820s (1829a, 201, pl xxiii). Even then the ring had been reduced to the recumbent setting and the orthostat to its east (4), but Logan was sufficiently astute to recognise the remains of the internal cairn, 'a vallum of loose stone' which he shows on the projected line of the orthostats. How this relates to the features visible today is uncertain, particularly as for the sake of clarity



*Colossal stones were used in the construction of this recumbent stone circle.
SC1175569*

he may have screened the plantation and its boundaries out of his plan and perspective view. Nevertheless, he shows the two kerbstones behind the east flanker, and also what was probably the uppermost of the three that Childe found stacked beside orthostat 4, while at its centre a small mound of stones can be seen. If not already planted, the shelterbelt was certainly established by the time Rev Alexander Low and Major Thomas Youngson described the stones in 1842 (*NSA*, xii, Aberdeenshire, 947) and may have contributed to their underestimate of its diameter at 66ft (20m), which is simply the distance between the plantation dykes. Nevertheless, their description of the surviving stones is quite perceptive and identifies the contrasting shapes of the two flankers. Sir Arthur Mitchell is known to have made a sketch and notes here twenty years later in 1862 (Coles 1901, 211, 212–13), but by then the trees had probably grown up and it is notable that the OS depiction prepared shortly afterwards in 1866 makes no attempt to show any of the stones in detail and draws the line of the circle within the bounds of the plantation. Christian Maclagan, on the other hand, prepared a competent enough sketch of the recumbent setting, but her plan showing three concentric rings can be no more than the product of her imagination (Maclagan 1875, pl xxvii).

By the time Coles visited the ring in 1900 the understorey of the plantation had thinned out, as can be seen in James Ritchie's photograph taken in 1904. The thick mat of grass prevented him from detecting the remains of any cairn material and his plan shows the stones much as Logan before him, adding the three kerbstones visible to the north-west of the recumbent but curiously making no commentary on any of the kerbstones themselves. He was more impressed by the size and character of the recumbent, which he noted lay on a bed of cobbles, and observed two fragments split from its rear by frost; Childe subsequently mentions only one (1933, 41). Confusingly, Coles failed to find any trace of a 'hollow or trench round the circle', an observation he attributes to Mitchell quoting the *New Statistical Account*, though the latter makes no mention of such a feature. More likely this refers to Logan's term 'vallum', but it was to lead Childe to extend his trenches to search for an enclosing ditch. Subsequent fieldwork prior to Childe's excavations had little to add to what was known. The trees growing within the circle had been felled by the time Ritchie took new photographs in 1908 and it is possible that they had already been removed by 1907 when Sir Norman Lockyer took his measurements here. Right Rev George Browne published another photograph in 1920 and evidently recognised the significance of the kerbstones in a commentary about careful planning and a circle within

a circle (1921, 78–9), whereas Alexander Keiller seems to have mistaken the taller ones on the east as re-erected orthostats incorrectly placed (1927, 9).

Most of the recent work that has taken place at Old Keig has revolved about its astronomical alignment, led by Burl and Ruggles. Together they have collected a wide range of observations and measurements, noting the care with which the top of the recumbent has been levelled and calculating that the axis of the setting falls upon the summit of Mount Keen (939m OD), a peak some 37km away on the watershed between Glen Tanar and Glen Esk, and forming the march between Aberdeenshire and Angus. Old Keig has also been one of the circles where Gavin MacGregor has explored the complexity of the colour and texture of the stones with regard to their potential architectural and cultural significance (2002, 150).

In the light of his work at **Aikey Brae, Cothiemuir Wood** and **Tomnaverie**, Bradley has presented a tentative reinterpretation of the construction of Old Keig in two main phases, the earlier represented by a ring-cairn with a central court about 6m across, the later by the addition of the megalithic ring, the filling of the central court and the reconstruction of the kerb on the south-south-west of the ring-cairn to turn out to incorporate the recumbent setting (Bradley *et al* 2002, 847–8; Bradley 2005, 100–1); the extent of the spread of cremated bones discovered in the centre of the interior is treated as a later intruded pit. In one sense this reconstruction is certainly correct, for the identification of the compacted layer as a pedological formation indicates that the sockets of the various set stones were cut from much higher than Childe had recognised, in the cases of both flankers and orthostat 4 through cairn material that was already in place; of the latter Childe describes packing above the podsol that ‘*merges into the stony bank*’ (1934, 379). Childe believed that the recumbent was set in a shallow scoop that cut the gravel beneath the podsol, and the photograph of the recumbent adjacent to the packing of the east flanker (Childe 1934, 376, fig 3) suggests that it is seated at a much higher level. These observations indicate that there was a much wider platform of cairn material reaching beyond the kerb of the internal cairn at the time that the stone circle was erected, and it is possibly this that Logan depicted (above). These features are entirely consistent with the sequence of construction found at **Tomnaverie** and elsewhere.

The evidence that the internal cairn was extended from a ring-cairn is not so easy to sustain. The tentative reconstruction of the earlier ring-cairn takes the rough kerb of Childe’s central cairn to define its inner court, and proposes that a row of boulders exposed in the first season of excavation some 3m behind the recumbent marked the line of its outer kerb. Neither is particularly convincing, especially if the form of the monument encountered by Childe – the ring-bank and the central

cairn – was largely determined by later stone-robbing rather than prehistoric construction. The longer stones marking the edge of the residual mound at the centre were apparently on end, but they leant inwards onto boulders in the centre and are as likely to represent undisturbed cairn material laid in this way. Were these stones part of an informal kerb around a central court they would probably have leant in the opposite direction, and if they are considered to be the fill of the court that has fortuitously survived the stone-robbing, Childe failed to detect any trace of an inner kerb outside them. Likewise, the boulders exposed on the south-south-west in the narrow trench dug in the first season lie well within the projected line of the kerb at the edge of the area probably robbed of stones and it is surely more significant that Childe omitted them from his revised plan when no trace of an equivalent line was found in the larger area he opened to the east; unfortunately the stones are not recognisable on relevant pictures in the archive of surviving photographs. In so far as can be determined 75 years after the excavation, there is no evidence that the cairn had an inner court, or if it did the court was much broader and more closely identified with the inner edge of the bank of cairn material recorded by Childe. That said, the course of the outer kerb on the south-south-west strongly suggests that it has been re-aligned to incorporate the recumbent setting. To judge from the size of the kerbstones, the cairn was a substantial body of stones and may have been at least 1m high at the centre.

While the detail of this interpretation is slightly different, the broad outline of the sequence of events is similar to that recorded elsewhere, with a recumbent stone circle erected on the skirts of a cairn or ring-cairn. The evidence for the chronology is more ambiguous, as it has been ever since the 1930s when it is clear that Childe and Howard Kilbride-Jones disagreed about the significance of the Beaker sherds (Childe 1935, 176; Kilbride-Jones 1994, 139). The nub of the argument concerns whether the Beaker sherds were securely stratified in a primary context (Henshall 1963, 39). As we have seen, that context – the compacted layer – cannot be regarded as secure, though the presence of Beaker accords with what is now assumed to be the most likely period for the construction of these monuments in the Early Bronze Age. The contexts of the sherds that are now regarded as Late Bronze Age are more of a problem, for these were embedded in the podsol almost throughout the interior, and were also found under the recumbent and in the tops of the sockets of most of the set stones that remained in place; in the case of the east flanker a single sherd was recovered from the bottom of its socket. The dating of this sort of pottery to the Late Bronze Age is supported here by a radiocarbon date of 1130–830 cal BC (Gra-21696; 2820±50 cal BP) from the spread of cremated bone that was discovered with fragments of three vessels at the

centre (Sheridan 2003, 169; Bradley and Sheridan 2005, 277–8). How any of this material came to rest where it was found is less clear. One mechanism that must be considered briefly is the robbing of the cairn over the last few hundred years. In practice this is probably the least likely, for the kerbstones discarded in this process and the fallen orthostats were lying on the compacted surface, and if the sherds were re-deposited at this time they too would be above or on the surface of the podsol rather than embedded in it. The sherds, therefore, were either intruded into an existing monument or they represent residual material lying about before the monument was constructed. If intruded, the scatter of sherds is so widespread that it implies that the cairn material at the centre was probably not piled up to the

level of the surviving kerbstones, a height of 1m or more. If, on the other hand, the sherds are residual, as those in several of the sockets might suggest, the pottery either has a much wider date range than is now believed (pace Bradley and Sheridan 2005, 277–8) or the cairn and its recumbent stone circle were constructed over a millennium after the general pattern of dates from Bradley's excavations at **Tomnaverie** (2005). Uncomfortable though the latter conclusion might be, the contexts of some of the sherds here are comparable to those of the two Late Bronze Age radiocarbon dates from Aikey Brae (Bradley 2005, 81, 86, 101).

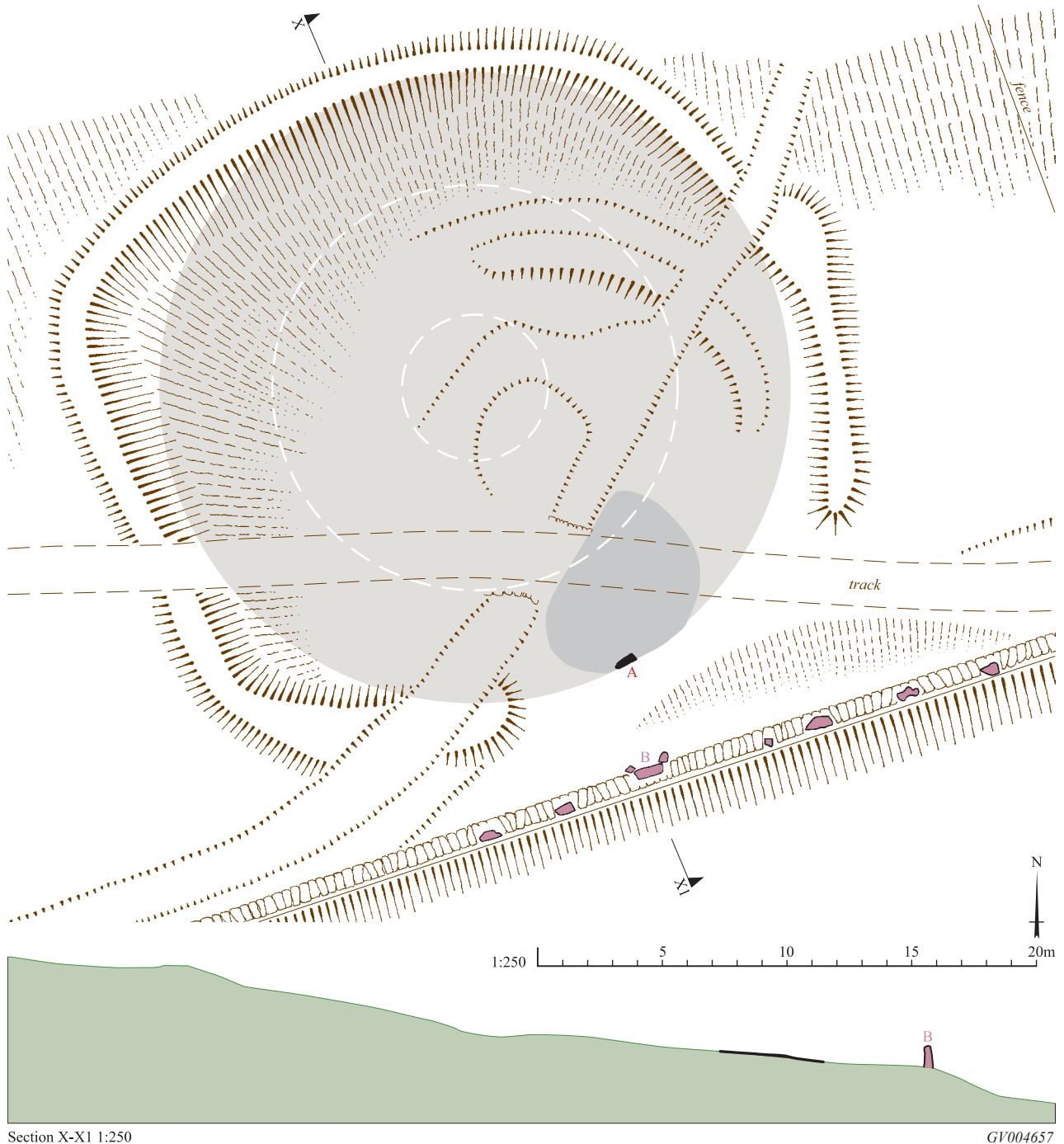
Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1901, 248; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 352, Abn 86; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 49; Barnatt 1989, 296, no. 6:73; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 49; Burl 2000, 422, Abn 89

Date	Personnel	Record
1820s	James Logan	Plan (Logan 1829a, 201, pl xxiii)
c1842	Thomas Youngson & Alexander Low	Description (<i>WSA</i> , xii, Aberdeenshire, 947)
1862	Arthur Mitchell	Lost sketch and notes (Coles 1901, 211, 212–13)
1866	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1870, xliii.9); description (<i>Name Book</i> , Aberdeenshire, No. 43, p 34)
c1870	Christian Maclagan	Plan and sketch (Maclagan 1875, 73–4, pl xxvii)
September 1900	Frederick Coles	Description plan and sketches (Coles 1901, 211–14, figs 20–22)
June 1904	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2415)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 393, 399)
1908	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2482 & AB2688)
1920	George Browne	Description and plan (Browne 1921, 78–9, pl xxii)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1926	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1927, 9; RCAHMS MS106/27, 18–19)
1932–33	Vere Gordon Childe	Excavation and photographs (Childe 1933; 1934; 1935, 176; notebook UCLCA/IA/A/5 (1933 only, photocopy at RCAHMS); RCAHMS AB3800–26 & AB4131–38)
12 September 1968	Robert Little	OS: description, photograph and map revision
c1980	Aubrey Burl	Astronomical survey, guidebook description and photographs (Burl 1970, 78; 1979a, 32, 138–9; 1980a, 199, no. 21; 1995 & 2005a, 105, no. 111)
12 June 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 59, 68–71, 74–5; 1999, 213–16, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 28–9, 38, 46, 49)
15 June 1998	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44472)
8 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

52 Old Kirk of Tough, Cluny, Aberdeenshire
 NJ60NW 1 NJ 6250 0928

What was probably once a fine recumbent stone circle enclosing a ring-cairn has been reduced to little more than a single upright stone (A) on a south-facing terrace just above the improved fields dropping down to Whiteside. Apart from the stone, all that can be seen is a ragged bank some 4m in thickness by 0.4m in height, which encloses an area about 25m across. This probably roughly marks the perimeter of the

circle, either representing a rim of undisturbed cairn material that extended beyond the ring of orthostats or simply perhaps rubble discarded when the circle was demolished (see below); the latter explanation may account for the low stony scarp visible in the north-east quadrant of the interior. The stone itself is 1.25m high and stands in a gap in this bank on the south-south-east, where there is also a small patch of compacted stony ground that may be the last remnants of cairn material. Some of the stones were carried off to a croft at Denwell (Coles 1900, 172–3), but others were incorporated



Section X-X1 1:250

GV004657



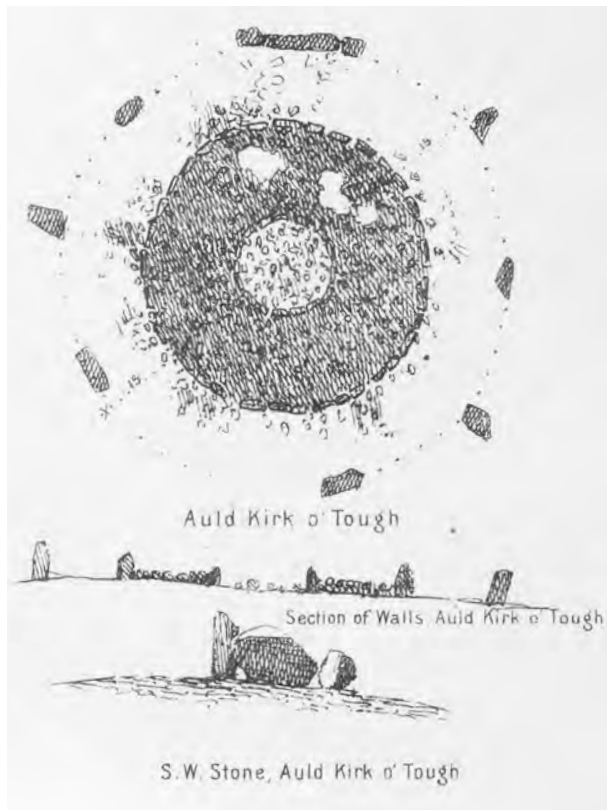
Ritchie's photograph of 1904 shows the two fragments of the supposed recumbent in the dyke behind the orthostat. SC678929

into the adjacent dyke, including one large slab (B) measuring 1.25m in length by 1m in height and 0.35m in thickness, which bears a passing resemblance to the stone in the recumbent setting sketched by Christian Maclagan (1875, pl xxvii; and below). A small cup-and-ring marked stone noted by James Ritchie close by the surviving upright (A) is now lost (1918, 90–1, 121).

Despite the general problems that arise over the accuracy of Maclagan's depictions elsewhere, her plan is the primary source for the character of the circle before it was robbed. Alexander Urquhart, writing at the end of the 18th century singled out the Old Kirk of Tough as one of several *Druidical temples* in the parish (*Stat Acct*, viii, 1793, 269), and Rev James Gillan reported that it was the largest, also remarking upon its secluded position (*NSA*, xii, Aberdeenshire, 613), but neither provides any detailed observations. And by the time the OS surveyors visited some fifteen years later in 1865–6 the monument had been reduced to its present state: 'An ancient stone circle, consisting at present of a rough standing stone on its southern arc ... the remainder of this circle is sharply defined by a bank of earth and stones' (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 15, p 10). This bank seems to be the 'enclosure' depicted on an earlier estate plan drawn up in 1834 by

George Stephen, though he shows no hint of any stones standing within its interior.

Maclagan's sketch plan, however, is unambiguously labelled Auld Kirk o' Tough (1875, pl xxvii) and without conclusive evidence to the contrary it would be churlish to deny the circle's inclusion within the Gazetteer. The plan depicts a circle of eleven stones, comprising the setting on the south-west and eight orthostats, of which one on the north-east is missing and another three elsewhere apparently fallen. Within the interior she shows a ring-cairn with continuous kerbs inside and out, though the lack of any formal link into the back of the recumbent setting raises some doubts about the veracity of this aspect of her depiction. The section indicates that the central court had been largely emptied out already, and she mentions that other pits had been sunk into the ring-bank, two of them appearing on the plan behind the recumbent (1875, 7). The only legible measurement upon the published plan places the ring-cairn some 4.5m within the circle, which subsequently caused Coles to mis-scale its diameter (1900, 173), but those on the original drawing (RCAHMS SAS467) reveal that the central court was 5.8m in diameter and the bank of the cairn 5.2m in thickness over the inner and outer kerbs; this gives overall diameters of 16.2m for the ring-cairn and 25m for the circle, the latter measurement roughly that of the area within the bank shown on the present plan.



Maclagan's sketches published in 1875 were apparently taken before the monument was robbed by John Craigie of Denwell. DP037791

Coles describes this bank as a 'ridge', a term that he employs elsewhere for the residual stony foundations in which the stones of circles often appeared to stand. Implicitly he believed that the bank at Old Kirk of Tough was undisturbed and in addition to the surviving orthostat on the south-south-east, he shows eleven smaller earthfast stones along its line (Coles 1900, 172, fig 26). Observing the straight section in the bank on the south-south-west, he proposed this as the location of the recumbent setting. Whereas now parts of this bank are shrouded in gorse, then it was visible as a stony band under short heather, as can be seen in one of James Ritchie's photographs taken in 1904. The invasion of gorse and broom since then has increasingly impeded observation and interpretation, so much so that when Angus Graham visited in 1943, evidently unaware of the history of the stone circle, he thought it was the perimeter of a small homestead enclosing a hut-circle. In the preparation of the present plan the bank was initially interpreted as the remains of an enclosure, but in 1968 Keith Blood of the OS suggested that it was simply discarded rubble from the robbing of the ring. In other examples of large robbed cairns the rejected stones are more typically found in irregular piles across the interior. Where a stony lip remains, this often represents the original perimeter of the cairn, probably left behind because the stones were embedded in the turf and generally more



The stony bank appears to be shown on Stephen's map of 1834. © NAS

difficult to extract. Reconsideration of the bank at Old Kirk of Tough raises this possibility here too. Until proven otherwise, it is best regarded as the leading edge of an irregular artificial platform that formerly extended out beyond the circumference of the ring in the manner that can be seen at several other recumbent stone circles, for example **Loanhead of Daviot** and **Colmeallie** to name but two.

The slabs and boulders that have been incorporated into the dyke on the south have also been subject to debate. Coles had paid little attention to them, but Right Rev George Browne noted the largest (B) and reproduced another of Ritchie's photographs to illustrate his point (1921, pl xxix). This shows the slab (B) standing in the dyke behind the surviving orthostat (A), and in drawing attention to it he seems to have intended the reader to understand that it was the recumbent. Unfortunately his text confuses left and right and implies that the small orthostat (A) is the recumbent (1921, 84). At the time of Ritchie's visit what seems to have been a fragment broken off the slab's west end was also set in the wall adjacent, giving the slab an overall shape more akin to Maclagan's sketch of the recumbent. This is more difficult to judge today, for the fragment is now missing, having been moved when the wall was rebuilt before Graham's visit in 1943. Graham, as we have seen, was unaware that this was the site of a recumbent stone circle, and viewed the two stones as the in situ

remains of some kind of setting, though his notes are fairly circumspect to reflect a story the farmer had heard that neither was in its original socket. Certainly the surviving orthostat is much smaller than those usually found in this sector of a recumbent stone circle and its erection as a rubbing stone would come as no surprise. If the slab in the dyke is the recumbent, however, it provides a rough scale for Maclagan's sketch and, contrary to her plan, suggests that the recumbent setting

was relatively small. Without excavation to resolve these and other questions about the architecture and design of the ring, further assessment of the circle is pointless, and any attempt to take astronomical measurements here is certainly doomed to failure (Ruggles 1984, 60, 72).

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1900, 198; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 350, Abn 6; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 74; Barnatt 1989, 269, no. 6:4; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 74; Burl 2000, 419, Abn 6

Date	Personnel	Record
c1793	Alexander Urquhart	Note (<i>Stat Acct</i> , viii, 1793, 269)
1834	George Stephen	Estate map (NAS RHP 235)
c1842	James Gillan	(<i>NSA</i> , xii, Aberdeenshire, 613)
c1853	John Stuart	Note (Stuart 1854a, 142; 1856, xiii)
Pre 1865	Christian Maclagan	Description, plan and sketches (Maclagan 1875, 7, 97, pl xxvii; RCAHMS SAS467; DC53020)
1865–6	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) called Old Kirk of Tough (Aberdeenshire 1869, lxxii.2); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No.15, p 10)
September 1899	Frederick Coles	Description and plan (Coles 1900, 171–3, fig 26)
July 1904	James Ritchie	Description and photographs (Ritchie 1918, 90–1, 121; RCAHMS AB2520 & AB2529),
1920	George Browne	Description and photograph (Browne 1921, 84, pl xxix)
16 July 1943	Angus Graham	RCAHMS: description and photograph (RCAHMS AB30; Emergency Surveys)
7 February 1968	Keith Blood	OS: description and map revision
c1980	Aubrey Burl	Astronomical survey (Burl 1980a, 199, no. 27; rejected in Ruggles 1984, 72)
7 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Visit (Ruggles 1984, 60)
11–12 November 1998	Kevin Macleod, Ian Parker & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44429)
5 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey
7 February 2008	Historic Scotland	Scheduled

53 Old Rayne, Rayne, Aberdeenshire

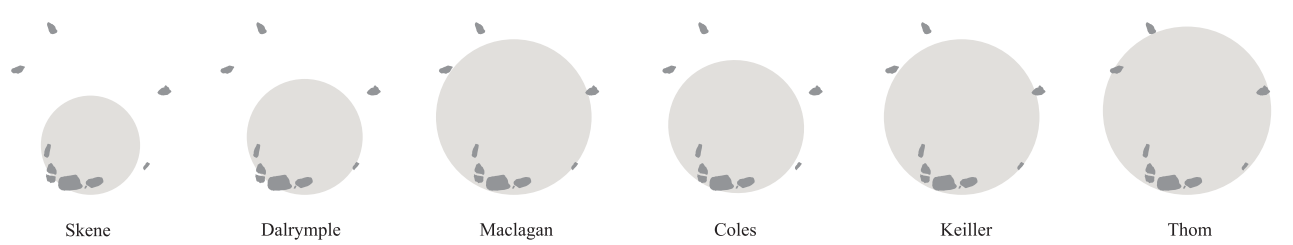
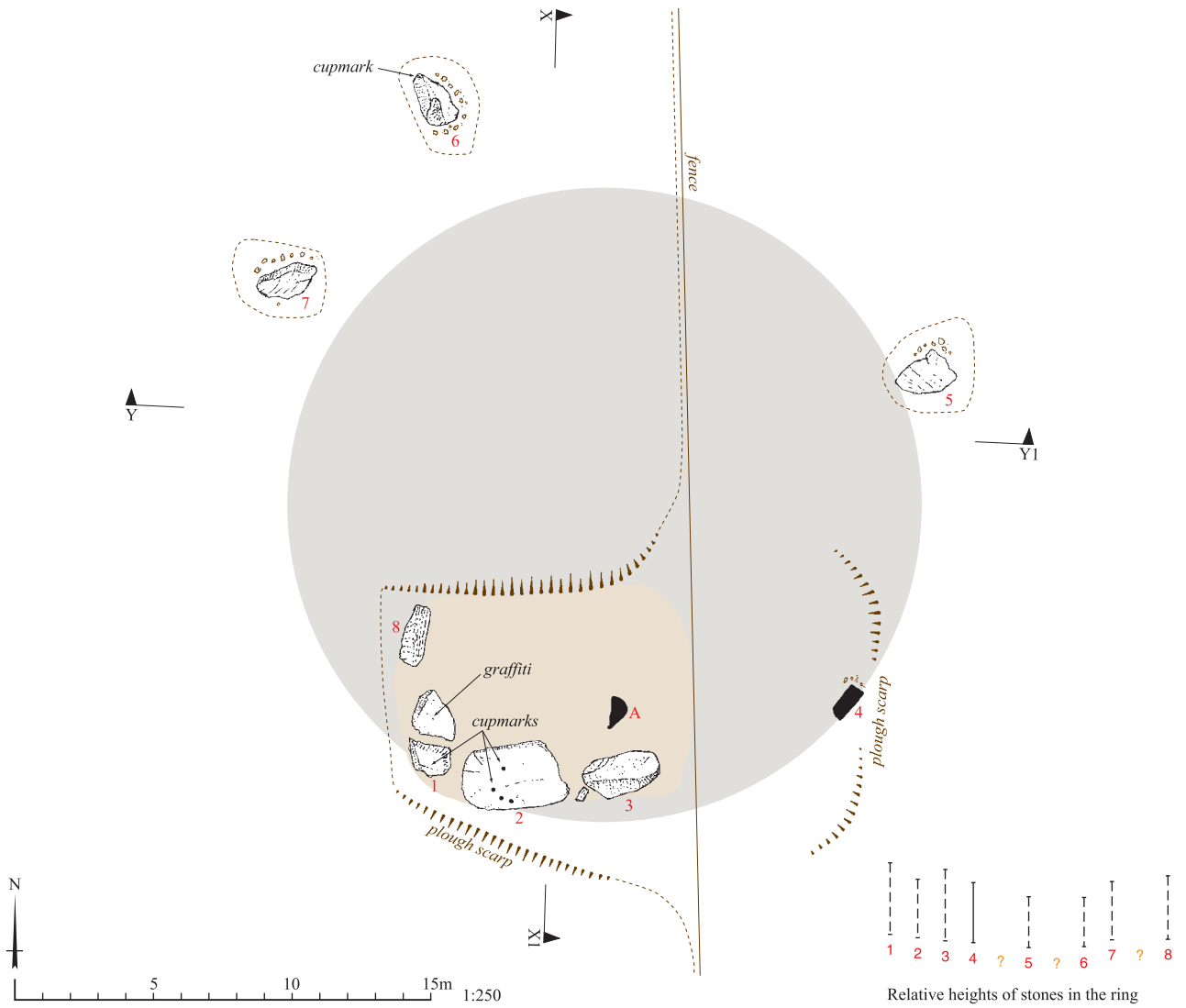
NJ62NE 1 NJ 6798 2798

The wreck of this recumbent stone circle lies on the north-east side of the public road a little to the east side of the summit of Candle Hill, a low ridge overlooking the River Urie to the south-east of Old Rayne. In the early 19th century, when James Skene measured it, the circle comprised at least ten stones, but today only eight remain, all but one lying flat around the edges of a low swelling some 26m across. The recumbent (2), a large trapezoidal slab measuring up to 3.85m in length by 2.1m in breadth, has fallen onto its back on the south side of the ring and what was its even summit now forms the north side. There is at least one weathered cupmark near the centre of its upturned face, while three possible examples are arranged in a rough arc near its

south side and would formerly have been at the foot of the stone; the only other cupmarks on the ring are three faint examples on the southern fragment of the west flanker (1) and another on the tip of the orthostat on the north-north-west (6). The two flankers, both of which are now about 2.75m in length, have suffered at the hands of stone-breakers and are lying prostrate (1 & 3). Indeed, the western has been split into at least two pieces since 1901 and comparison with the measurement of 3.3m in overall length taken by Coles in that year suggests that other pieces may be missing; work on removing a further fragment from the west edge of the south section was evidently abandoned before the task was completed. The north section exhibits the deeply cut initials GF. A wedge-socket at the east end of the eastern flanker (3) suggests that this too has been cut down. The single orthostat that remains standing is on the south-east (4) and has had a lucky escape, as can be seen from the iron wedges embedded

The view from the south-south-west. DP007983



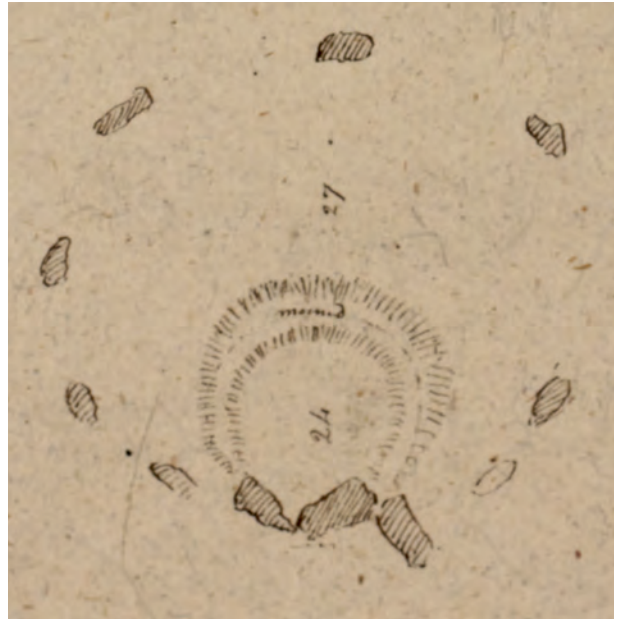


The diameters of the ring recorded in the past, 1:1,250

in several of the fissures in its outer face; moreover, its profile shows that at least two large chunks of rock have been removed from its west-south-west side. Of the other four orthostats (5–8), at least one (8) is displaced, now lying immediately north of the west flanker, and it is not clear how close to their sockets the other three lie. The earliest record of the diameter of the circle by James Skene is in the order of 15.5m, while Charles Dalrymple put it at about 18m, both considerably less than the circle of 26.5m that best fits the stones in their present positions. This bigger diameter, however, coincides with a swelling in the surface of the field revealed by profiles measured across the ring, particularly that from north to south (X–X1). Despite the complete absence of any cairn material in the ploughsoil in the interior of the circle, this swelling is likely to be an artificial mound, within which Charles Dalrymple discovered a large central pit. The stones of the circle apparently stood upon the skirts of this mound (see discussion below). The purpose of a deeply embedded boulder (A) behind the east flanker is not known. It possibly belonged to a later structure that once incorporated the recumbent setting (below).

The first references to most stone circles date from the 18th and 19th centuries, but Old Rayne probably makes its appearance in the record of a court held in the 14th century by William, Earl of Ross, Justiciary of Scotland, who on 2 May 1349 heard a case against William of St Michael ‘*apud stantes lapides de Rane en le Garuiach*’ (Innes 1845, i, 79–81; Browne 1921, 90–3). The first detailed note of the stones, however, was not prepared until the 1820s, when Skene drew his sketch showing the recumbent setting and at least seven orthostats. Each of these stones is hatched in, but for some reason another stone is drawn in outline immediately east of the east flanker. There are no annotations to explain why its treatment should have differed from the rest, and the gap in the circle on the east suggests that Skene was not speculatively completing the circle, though the additional stone is placed symmetrically to one on the west of the setting. As is so often the case, these simple illustrations have a beguiling clarity that is not borne out by later plans and the present disposition of the stones. Nevertheless the recumbent setting had clearly collapsed, with the eastern flanker fallen forwards and the western sideways, and a bank is shown enclosing an area 7.3m across immediately to its rear. A little bigger than the area now delineated by plough scars and covered with field-gathered stones, the depiction recalls Dalrymple’s sketch of **Ardlair**, and there it probably represented the upcast from an earlier excavation.

About 1855 Dalrymple was himself drawn to excavate at Old Rayne on behalf of John Stuart, no doubt chosen on account of its proximity to his family’s home at Westhall, though he had probably also read Daniel Wilson’s commentary on the use of the circle for a court (1851, 113). Dalrymple did not publish the



Skene's 1820s sketch appears to show the upcast of a large excavation behind the recumbent setting. SC730423

results of his work, but two epitomes subsequently appeared, one by John Stuart shortly after and the other by Coles, who had access to Dalrymple’s notes (Stuart 1856, xxi; Coles 1902, 528–31). Dalrymple reported that the ring had comprised twelve stones, of which only nine then remained, presumably the same nine stones appearing on the schematic depiction drawn up by the OS surveyors twelve years later. In 1855 only three of these were still upright, and of the other six one was ‘*strangely displaced*’, possibly referring to the posture of the east flanker shown by Skene. It is certainly this part of the circle that is most distorted on the OS depiction, but it is equally difficult to make direct comparisons between the various sources in other sectors of the ring. One gap the OS surveyors showed suggests that by then, and probably by 1855 too, a stone had been removed from the north-east quarter of the circle between orthostats 5 and 6, while another stone lay where it was subsequently recorded by Coles between 4 and 5, ostensibly in the gap on the east sketched by Skene; another of Skene’s stones on the west had also gone. According to the notes quoted by Coles, there was a local memory that the three stones of the recumbent setting and a fourth nearby, possibly orthostat (8), had been incorporated into a rectilinear drystone structure. Coles glossed this by reference to the medieval court record, but unless the bank recorded by Skene was the ruin of this structure it had already disappeared by the time Dalrymple carried out his excavations.

The two descriptions of what Dalrymple found largely complement each other, though there are minor variations between them. He dug around the orthostats, variously reporting that: ‘*Each pillar stands on a small*



cairn of stones sunk into the ground' (1856, xxi); and 'each being wedged up with smaller stones sunk into the ground' (Coles 1902, 530). Given that the mound upon which the stone stood seems largely earthen, he was presumably describing the packing of the sockets rather than the fragments of a robbed platform (cf **Castle Fraser, Loanhead of Daviot**). At the centre of the circle, 'about two and a half feet [0.75m] below the surface, was found a pear-shaped collection of stones, about nineteen feet [5.8m] long, ten feet [3m] broad at the square end, and penetrating about two and a half feet [0.75m] below the surface, and a foot [0.3m] into the subsoil' (Stuart 1856, xxi). Coles, possibly with the advantage of an original sketch amongst Dalrymple's notes, describes this more simply as 'an oblong deposit of stones... [that]... went down to a depth of 2½ feet [0.75m] below the surface' (1902, 530). Again, the earthen character of the rest of the mound suggests that he had identified the fill of a large pit sunk into the centre. This was also a relatively early feature, for both accounts are agreed that a small pit lined with drystone masonry had been sunk into the centre of this deposit; tapering downwards from its mouth, it measured 0.6m in maximum diameter by 0.75m in depth and was covered over with boulders. The fill contained organic material, burnt bone, charcoal, three sherds of burnt pottery and a fragment of a stone wrist-guard. The sherds have been recently identified as Beaker, with which wrist-guards are commonly associated (*Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, ii, 1857, 429; NMAS 1892, 67; Sheridan 2003, 167), and a radiocarbon assay on the cremated human bone has yielded a date of 3690±45 uncal BP (Gra-23982, 2340–1950 BC). More small deposits of burnt bones were scattered around this central pit, all within 0.6m of it. In addition, Coles describes another pit, measuring a little over 1m in diameter and 1.5m

The recumbent stone circle from the north-west with the Mither Tap o' Bennachie in the distance. SC851567

in depth, which lay between the east flanker (3) and the south-east orthostat (4). This penetrated the rocky subsoil at a depth of 1m, but contained only a sandy loam, a small quantity of organic material and a few burnt stones. A fragment of bronze is also recorded from the circle, but its context is unknown (NMA 1892, 184).

Shortly after the OS surveyors prepared their first depiction of the circle, Christian Maclagan published her own plan of Old Rayne showing ten stones set out at relatively regular intervals in a ring 24.4m across (Maclagan 1875, pl xxvii). In common with so many of her other plans this is patently idealised and schematic, and bears little relationship to the circle as it then was. Nevertheless, the diameter of 24.5m on her plan is much closer to more recent estimates than those of Skene and Dalrymple. Coles calculated that the ring measured 22.8m from north-east to south-west by 21.3m transversely and was clearly confused by the discrepancy with his predecessors' measurements, his explanation being that Dalrymple's excavation had resulted in considerable disturbance. Coles' confusion, however, runs deeper than this, for although he accepted Dalrymple's statement that the circle originally comprised twelve stones, he miscounted the stones and spaces on his plan and identified the positions of only eleven, one of which he located beneath the surface of the field on the north-east by bosing with his stick. Even then the south-east orthostat (4) was the sole stone remaining upright, and with the exception of the small stone lying between orthostats (4) and (5), which was removed some time after 1969, the rest of the stones were disposed in much the same positions that they occupy today. He also reported the tenant's discovery of

‘*a stone cup minus the handle*’ some five years earlier while ploughing in front of the recumbent setting.

While most of the damage to the circle had probably taken place by the 1870s, a further attempt to break up the west flanker took place between 1901 and 1926, when Alexander Keiller made a plan of the circle. Refining the date of this vandalism is more difficult, but a photograph of the north end of the flanker published by Bishop George Browne in 1921 appears to show a fresh fracture (1921, pl xxxii), and another published by James Ritchie in 1916 possibly shows the stone complete (1916, 282). Despite drawing the shapes of the stones in some detail, Keiller failed to note the cupmarks on the recumbent, though the lower ones may have been partly hidden beneath the turf. They were identified soon afterwards by Graham Callander (1935, 71; Kilbride-Jones 1935, 194n), but it was not until 1969 that Keith Blood of the OS recognised the single cup on the tip of north-north-west orthostat (6).

Keiller had estimated the diameter of the circle at about 24.4m, but the largest diameter was calculated thirty years later in 1957 by Alexander Thom, based on the circumference of a circle that best fitted the positions of all the surviving stones. With so many of them fallen, this is probably an overestimate, but it remains puzzling that the measurements offered by Skene and Dalrymple should be so much smaller. Superimposed upon the swelling in the surface of the field and revealed by the profiles measured during the present survey, these

would put the sockets of most of the orthostats towards the top of the swelling, whereas the single surviving upright on the south-east (4) is towards its foot. This mound is an equally puzzling feature of the circle, not least in the sense of whether or not it is artificial, but also in the character of the deposits that Dalrymple uncovered at the centre. Excavation will be required to confirm the point, but the depth to the subsoil recorded in 1855, about 0.45m, roughly coincides with where the projected level of the ground surface to either side of the swelling now falls. However, the pit discovered on the south-east encountered the rocky subsoil about 1m below the surface, suggesting an even greater depth of mound material here. On balance, the mound is probably artificial, and if the hollow in the top of the north and south section (X–X1) is any guide to the position of Dalrymple’s central feature, then the present positions of the surviving stones around the foot of the swelling do not lie as far from their original sockets as might otherwise be suggested. If this interpretation is correct, the sockets of the orthostats observed by Dalrymple were almost certainly cut into the skirts of an artificial mound, revealing a similar sequence of construction to that observed by Richard Bradley in his excavations at **Aikey Brae, Cothiemuir Wood and Tomnaverie**.

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1902, 581; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 352, Abn 87; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 55; Barnatt 1989, 297, no. 6:74; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 55; Burl 2000, 422, Abn 90

Date	Personnel	Record
2 May 1349	Court held	Place (Innes 1845, i, 79–81)
1820s	James Skene	Sketch (RCAHMS SAS464)
c1840	Alexander Cushny	Note (<i>NSA</i> , xii, Aberdeenshire, 425)
c1855	Charles Dalrymple	Description and excavation (Stuart 1856, xxi; Coles 1902, 527–31)
1867	OS surveyors	Stone Circle, Remains of Urns found here (Aberdeenshire 1870, xlv.8); note (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 77, pp 75–6)
c1875	Christian Maclagan	Sketch plan (Maclagan 1875, pl xxvii)
September 1901	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketches (Coles 1902, 527–31 figs 44–6, 581)
c1915	James Ritchie	Photograph (Ritchie 1916, 282)
1920	George Browne	Description and photographs (Browne 1921, 90–3, pl xxxii)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
4 October 1926	Alexander Keiller	Description and plan (Keiller 1927, 13; RCAHMS ABD531; MS106/27, 6–7)
c1935	Graham Callander	Description of cupmarks (Callander 1935, 71; Kilbride-Jones 1935, 194n)
1940s–50s	Angus Graham	Photograph (RCAHMS H94202)
13 April 1957	Alexander Thom	Plan and notes (Thom 1967, 136; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 176–7; RCAHMS DC4394; MS430/20; Fergusson 1988, 65)
11 March 1969	Keith Blood	OS: description and map revision
1960s–90s	Aubrey Burl	Guidebook description (Burl 1995 & 2005a, 105–6)
23 June 1999	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44502)
11 July 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

54 Pitglassie, Auchterless, Aberdeenshire

NJ64SE 8 NJ 6862 4348

Largely cleared away into a heap in the mid 19th century, this recumbent stone circle has now been reduced to little more than the recumbent and what may be its prostrate east flanker, which lie on a slight terrace on a gentle east-south-east-facing slope. At the time of its demolition, the circle may have comprised as many as twelve stones and measured about 18m in diameter (Coles 1903a, 109, 117). There was probably once a cairn within its interior. The recumbent block (2) faces south-south-east and measures 2.45m in length by 1.25m in height. Its summit is slightly convex, but rises into a low lump at the east end. The east flanker (3), if

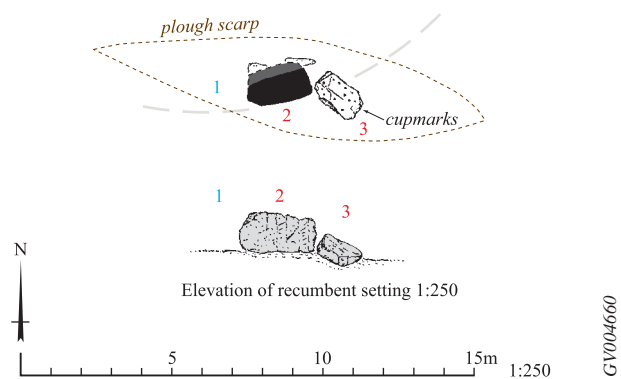
Ritchie's undated photograph shows the heap into which the stones had been cleared by the late 19th century. SC681780

indeed this stone was originally part of the recumbent setting (see below), bears at least fifteen shallow cups on its upturned face. Largely hidden beneath the soil to the rear of the recumbent there are at least two roughly rectangular blocks that might also have belonged to the ring.

The circle at Pitglassie is presumably one of those in the parish of Auchterless referred to in 1840 by Rev George Dingwall (*NSA*, xii, Aberdeenshire, 287), but by the time the OS surveyors visited it in 1870–1 the orthostats had all been cleared and they found ‘(six or eight) of large stones piled together in an oblong form’ (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 7, p 4). Their description cryptically continues: ‘underneath those, may be observed, a similarly shaped mound, bearing greatly the appearance of a Grave, – externally –’ (*ibid*) and it is this that is presumably marked with a pecked outline measuring some 10m by 7m at scale



on the 1st edition of the OS 1:2500 map. Under the column for alternative names they recorded ‘*Druid’s Altar*’ (*ibid*). All traces of the underlying mound, which was probably the residue of an internal cairn, had been ploughed away by 1902 and Coles could only record ‘*one more of the distressing amorphous heaps of stones, once – and that not so very long ago – the stately members of a circle*’ (1903a, 109). He recognised that the recumbent was probably still in its place, together with the possible east flanker adjacent to it, and counted another ten large stones piled up around them; there were also several small quartz boulders in the heap. It was only in talking to John Morrison, the farmer at Feith Hill, that he gathered that the ring had been some 18m in diameter (1903a, 117). Its sorry appearance at this time is captured by two of James Ritchie’s photographs. These show the recumbent in roughly its present position, with the cupmarked east flanker apparently embedded in the ground adjacent to it but leaning back into the stone heap; in this position it is difficult to be certain that this stone truly belongs to the recumbent setting. The



east flanker still lies in roughly the same position, but since then it has fallen and then been dragged forwards, perhaps when the rest of the orthostats were finally cleared away. This had taken place by 1973, as can be seen in a photograph taken by Iain Sainsbury of the OS.

Coles 1903a, 140; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 352, Abn 88; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 19; Barnatt 1989, 297, no. 6:75; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 19; Burl 2000, 422, Abn 91

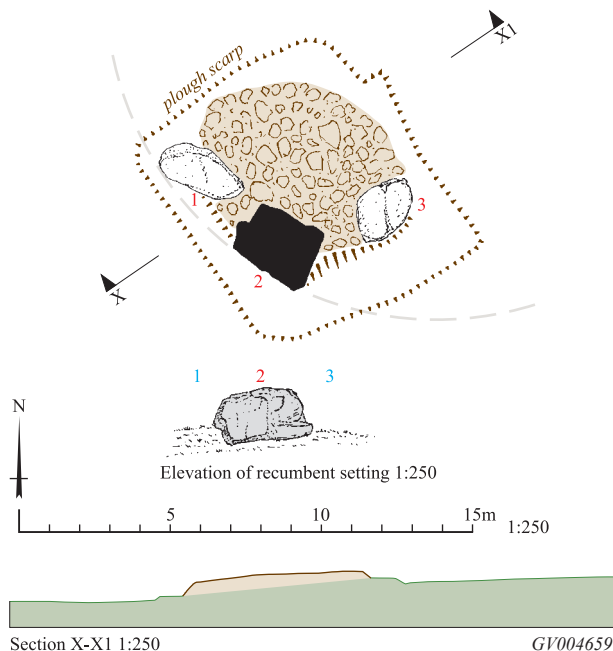
Date	Personnel	Record
1870–1	OS surveyors	Stone Circle Remains of (Aberdeenshire 1874, xviii.16); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 7, p 4)
September 1902	Frederick Coles	Description (Coles 1903a, 109, 117, 140)
1900s	James Ritchie	Photographs and note of cupmarks (Ritchie 1918, 99, 121; RCAHMS AB2871 & AB2950)
30 January 1927	Office of Works	Scheduled
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1934, 12)
17 January 1973	Iain Sainsbury	OS: description, photograph and map revision
6 April 2005	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44559)
3 May 2006	David Herd, Simon Howard & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

55 Potterton, Belhelvie, Aberdeenshire

NJ91NE 7 NJ 9529 1636

Standing in an arable field on the summit of the rising ground to the north-east of Potterton House, the remains of this recumbent stone circle comprise the three stones of its setting. The recumbent (2), which faces south-south-west, is a roughly rectangular block with an uneven summit and measures 3m in length by 1.7m in height; the west half of its outer face is smooth, but the east half bears a deep scar where a large fragment has been struck off. Both flankers are fallen and lie displaced to either side. They measure 3m and 2.6m in length respectively, the longer west flanker (1) also being the more slender of the pair. Ploughing in the vicinity has left the setting and the field-clearance piled behind it on a low tump raised slightly above the surface of the surrounding field.

The circle may be one of those mentioned in Rev Alexander Forsyth's account of Belhelvie parish. Written about 1840, this records that *'there were two or three of what are called Druidical circles on the moor lands of this parish, about thirty years ago'* (NSA, xii, Aberdeenshire, 244). By then, however, all were under cultivation and he continues *'not a vestige of any of them remains. One of them was large and very entire'* (*ibid*). For what it is worth Roy's Map (1747–55, sheet 141) shows the area in which the circle lies in rough moorland and the ground at the foot of the hill to the south remained uncultivated into the 20th century. Curiously, the circle itself does not appear on either the 1st or the 2nd edition of the OS large scale maps and consequently escaped Coles' attention. The surviving stones, however, were evidently well known locally, and they continue to be called the Temple Stones. This is presumably how James Ritchie came to hear of them, capturing two images in 1909 that show the setting already isolated upon its tump. By then both flankers had fallen, but the recumbent's outer face had yet to sustain any damage. The western flanker has been moved since and now lies face down concealing the two cupmarks he photographed *'near the centre of its outer face'* (Ritchie 1918, 91). In his description he noted a fourth stone almost 1.4m in length *'at the base of the recumbent stone, at right-angles to it and within the circle'* (1917, 36), which he initially compared with the stones set behind the recumbents at



Ritchie's photograph of the recumbent setting taken in 1909. SC681756

Ardlair and Easter Aquhorthies, before concluding that it was more likely to be a cleared orthostat. This stone can be seen on one of his published photographs (*ibid*, fig 7) but had been removed by the time Eric Cameron of the OS visited the stones in 1961. By then the west flanker had also been rolled over, and three other large boulders lay amongst the stones behind the setting, though these too have now disappeared.

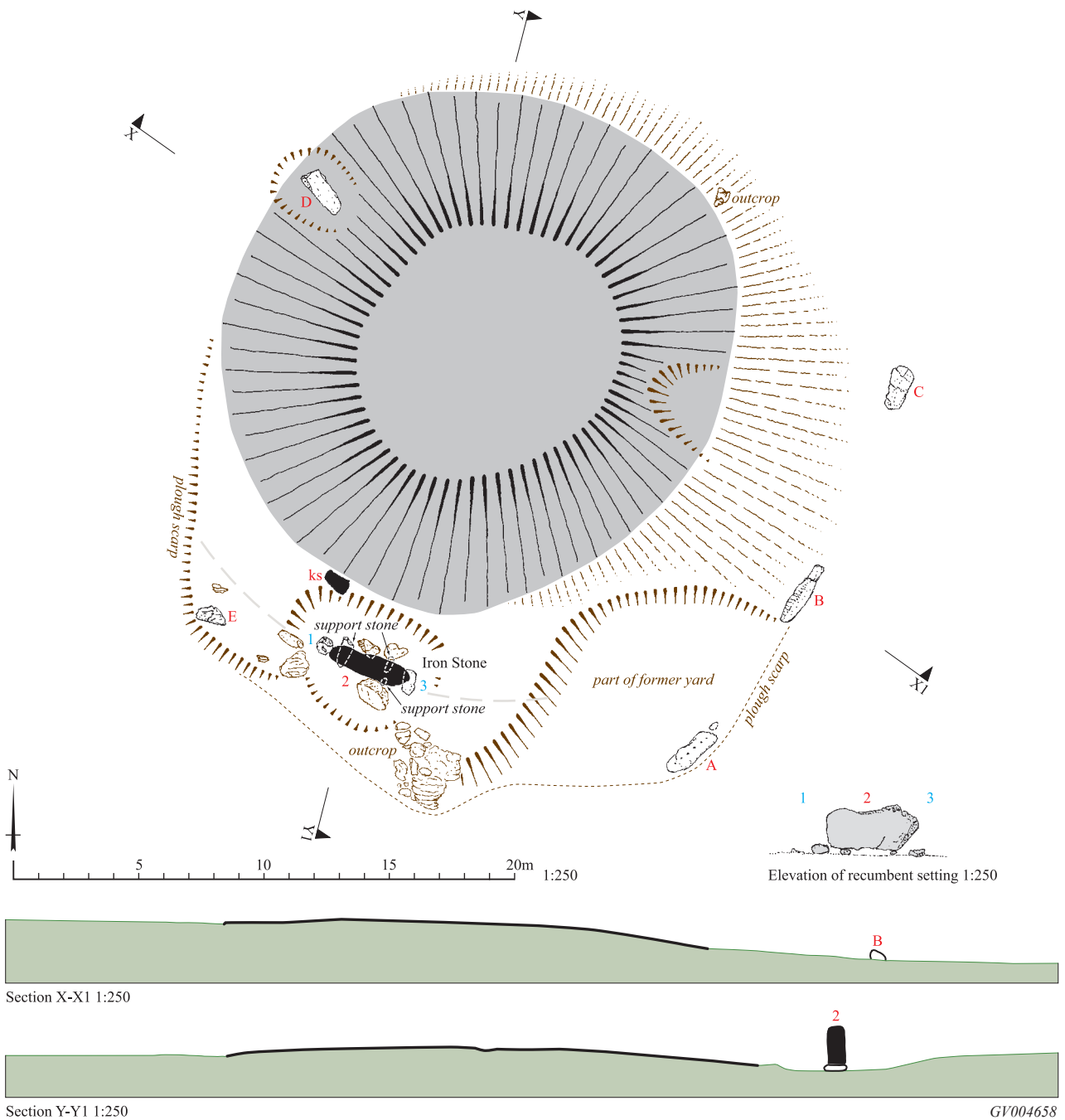
Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 352, Abn 89; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 81; Barnatt 1989, 297, no. 6:76; Ruggles 1999, 188, no. 81; Burl 2000, 422, Abn 92

Date	Personnel	Record
1909	James Ritchie	Description and photographs (Ritchie 1917, 36–8, figs 6–7; 1918, 91, 121; RCAHMS AB2426 & AB2948)
16 October 1961	Eric Cameron	OS: description, photograph and map revision
6 July 1973	Scottish Development Department	Scheduled
19 Feb 1996	Iain Fraser & John Sherriff	RCAHMS: description
14 May 1999	Ian Parker & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44434)
5 May 2006	David Herd, Simon Howard & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

56 The Ringing Stone, Cairnie, Aberdeenshire
 NJ54NW 12 NJ 5316 4545

This grass-grown recumbent stone circle occupies a low rise on the north-east spur of the Hill of Cormalet, a prominent position overlooking the valley of the River Deveron and its confluence with the River Isla. The circle itself has been reduced to no more than five stones, of which the recumbent is the only one still standing, but within the interior there is a cairn measuring about 20m in diameter by up to 1m in height. The recumbent block (2) stands on the south-south-west and measures about 3.5m in length by 1.7m in

height. Its summit is uneven, rising into pronounced peaks at either end, and exhibits three long striae that may have been incised with a sharp implement. These contrast with a series of concentric grooves on the stone's inner face that are clearly natural (Coles 1902, 572-3; Ritchie 1918, 111-12). Poaching and subsequent erosion around the foot of the stone has exposed one long stone sleeper beneath its west-north-west end and two shorter blocks supporting its east-south-east end. Both flankers are missing, and of the other stones lying around the perimeter of the internal cairn, only that on the north-west (D), is certainly an orthostat of the circle (see below), now situated in the bottom of an eroded



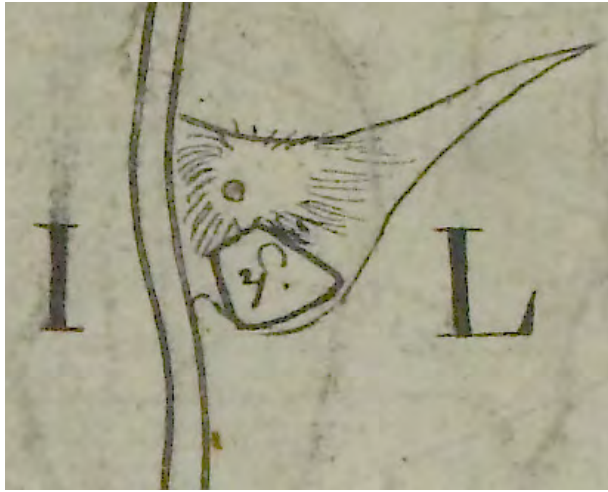


This view from the south shows cattle feeding stances by the ring. DP007990

hollow. The position of the recumbent suggests that the ring of orthostats lay some 2m beyond the edge of the internal cairn, which on the east tails off into a low natural scarp. A single possible kerbstone can be seen on the edge of the cairn to the rear of the recumbent, but a second previously noted adjacent to it is no longer visible (Coles 1902, 573). On the day of the survey a fist-sized quartz pebble was observed in churned soil 3m east of the recumbent.

A large stone is apparently shown at this location on an estate plan of 1779 by Thomas Milne (NAS RHP 2307), but the first person to mention the existence of a stone circle is John Stuart (1867, 63). Shortly after in 1871 the OS surveyors provided a description, reporting that *'the stones of this circle have been removed with the exception of four'* (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 12, p 89). Even then, only the recumbent remained in place, a local curiosity in its own right that was known as the *'Iron Stone'* on account of the ringing sound it made when struck. The accompanying depiction on the contemporary 1:2500 map places the other three stones on the south-east, north-west and west-south-west of the circle respectively, probably equating with stones A, D and E on the present plan, though A has been moved since and it is difficult to reconcile the present

configuration of the stones with the evidence of either the map or the plan prepared in 1901 by Coles (1902, 572, fig 85). Coles' topographical depiction of the cairn is clearly awry, but scaled measurements from the recumbent to the three stones that he shows roughly tally with the distances to A, B and D; these identifications are borne out to some extent by the dimensions of the stones he recorded, and A and B appear in their present positions in one of Ritchie's photographs probably taken in 1909. Stone A, therefore, was moved between 1871 and 1909 and stone B is an addition between 1871 and 1901. Stone C has arrived in its present position since 1958, when Alexander Thom drew up a plan of the circle, and this is the stone that Keith Blood of the OS thought had been recently placed in 1964. The source of the large stones that have been added is uncertain, though in the case of stone C it is likely to be the one that Thom marked on his plan as a possible outlier about 10m to the north of the circle; certainly there is no stone in this position now. The movement of this stone serves as a warning against any assumption that large stones that turn up upon the sites of stone circles originate as fallen orthostats. Here there is not only a prominent outcrop immediately south of the recumbent, but the 1st edition of the OS 25-inch map shows stone symbols throughout the improved field to the south-east of



Milne's plan of 1779 shows the recumbent stone above a small yard. © NAS

the circle. The smoothed ground that the visitor now encounters all around this circle was manufactured by a long drawn out process of improvement, which has progressively cleared the outcrops and stray boulders that probably once littered this hillside. It is this same process which is responsible for the demolition of the

circle. The fallen orthostat on the north-west (D) bears some evidence of this work and looks as if it has been split, while stone A, if it is indeed an orthostat, has a row of six wedge-holes running down its length. This stone probably lies in the middle of what is shown on the estate plan of 1779 as a small enclosed yard; the scarp cut into the slope below the south-east flank of the cairn probably marks the back of this enclosure. No trace of the rest of this enclosure is visible, though traces of broad reverse-S rig-and-furrow can be seen on the slope below it. Be that as it may, the circle was probably largely in its present state by 1901, as can be seen in Ritchie's photographs, which show the support stone exposed beneath the recumbent. Apart from the arrival of stone C, the only other major change that can be detected is the loss of the second kerbstone behind the recumbent, which had already gone by Blood's visit in 1964. Subsequent fieldwork here has focused on the astronomical alignment of the circle, but Ruggles and Burl also noted the orientation of the recumbent towards the prominent summit of Tap o' Noth on the skyline to the south-west.

Coles 1902, 581; Burl 1970, 77; 1976a, 349, Abn 3; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 24; Barnatt 1989, 268–9, no. 6:3; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 24; Burl 2000, 419, Abn 3

Date	Personnel	Record
1779	Thomas Milne	Estate plan (NAS RHP 2307)
c1867	John Stuart	Note (Stuart 1867, 63)
1868–71	James Hoyle	Stone Circle (Remains of) and Iron Stone (Aberdeenshire 1874, xvii.10); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 12, p 89)
September 1901	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketches (Coles 1902, 571–4, figs 85–7; 581)
1909	James Ritchie	Photographs (Ritchie 1918, 111–12; RCAHMS AB3006, AB2865 & AB2929)
1928	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1928, 10; 1934, 13–15, 20; RCAHMS MS106/9)
19 December 1934	Office of Works	Scheduled
23 September 1955	T G Reeves	OS: description and small scale map revision
1958	Alexander Thom	Plan and notes (RCAHMS DC4396; MS430/28; Ferguson 1988, 65)
5 February 1964	Keith Blood	OS: description and map revision
1960s–90s	Aubrey Burl	Guidebook description (Burl 1995 & 2005a, 93–4, no. 92)
31 July 1981	Clive Ruggles	Astronomical survey and tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 59, 66, 68–71, 74–75; 1999, 213–16; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 47, 49, 57)
5 April 2005	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44557)
5 April 2006	Yves Candela, David Herd, Simon Howard & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

57 Rothiemay, Rothiemay, Aberdeenshire

NJ54NE 6 NJ 5508 4872

This recumbent stone circle is situated within a gently sloping arable field roughly midway down the south-east spur of Mannoch Hill, a low summit due north of Milltown of Rothiemay. The circle, which measures 28m in overall diameter, may have comprised from twelve to fourteen stones, but it is now reduced to only five, one of them the heavily cupmarked recumbent slightly askew the circumference on the south-west (2). This is a roughly rectangular block in profile, measuring about 4.3m in length by up to 1.8m in height, and a possible stone sleeper emerges from beneath the front of its west end. The relatively even summit of the recumbent, which has a raised lump at its east end, bears at least nineteen cupmarks, while its rear is the most heavily cupmarked rock surface in any recumbent stone circle, possibly with as many as 107 cups, ten of which have single rings (see below). With the flankers

The view from the south-south-east. SC1099937

and so many other orthostats missing it is impossible to demonstrate that the circle was graded in height, but the tallest of the four surviving orthostats, which exhibits at least four cupmarks on its outer face, is now on the south-south-east (4) and the shortest on the west-north-west (7). The featureless interior has been intensively cultivated.

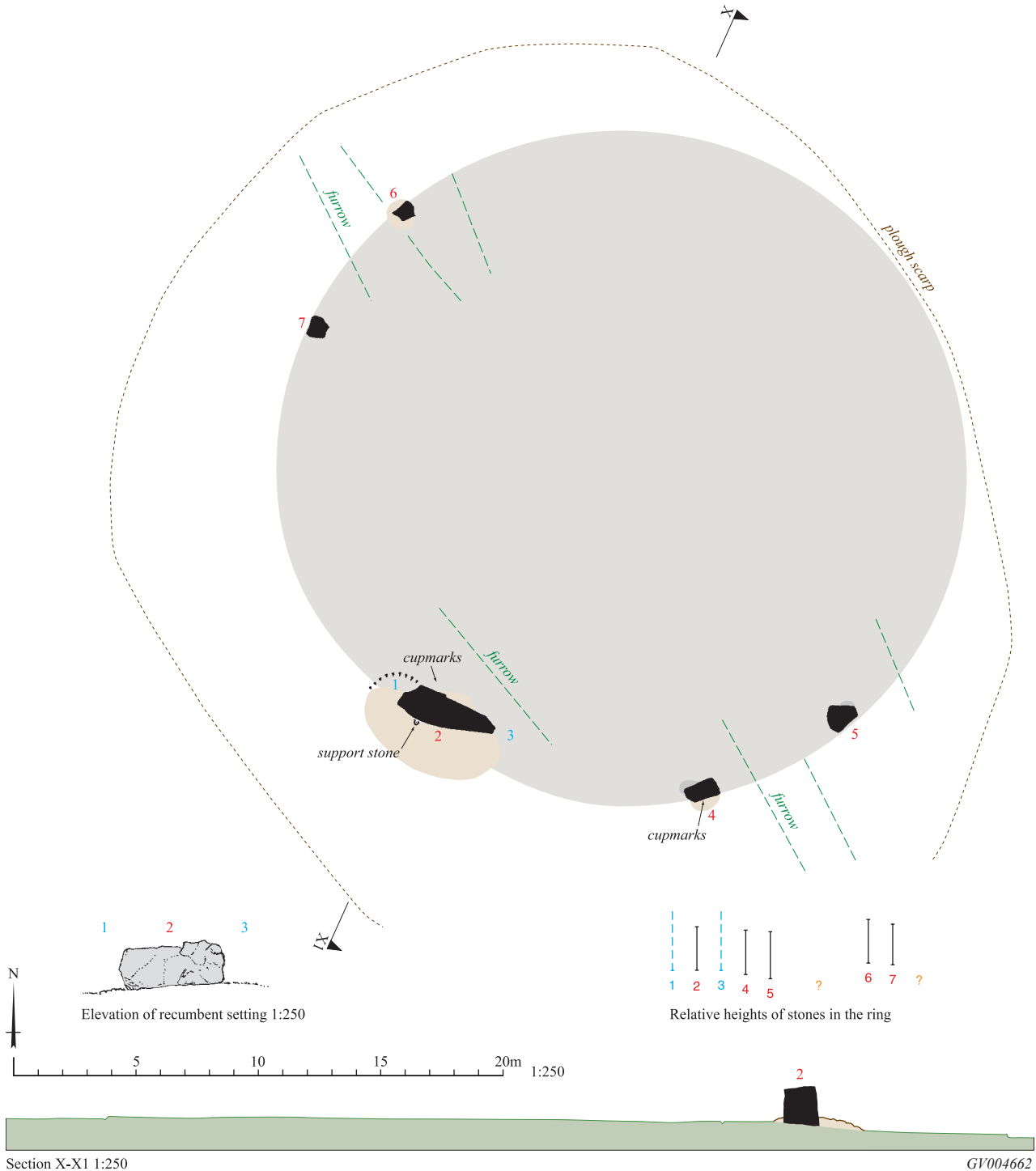
At the end of the 18th century Rev James Simmie, minister of the parish of Rothiemay, noted that the circle was '*preserved entire*', despite lying '*in the middle of a beautiful and fertile field*' (*Stat Acct*, xix, 1797, 392). This field was evidently one of the uncultivated parks shown in General Roy's depiction of the policies of the House of Rothiemay (1747–55, sheet 29.2/3), which can be detected in the layout of the fields and plantations shown on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Aberdeenshire 1873 xxi), and indeed in the field pattern at the present day. The circle seems to have remained relatively undisturbed until about 1845, when, according to James Gurnell writing some 40 years after the event, the missing stones were removed by a farm bailiff; further destruction was only averted by



the intervention of the landowner, which led to two of the robbed stones being discarded at the gateway into the field (Gurnell 1884; Ritchie 1918, 104–8). In 1964 Robert Loader of the OS duly located two stones here, though he was not entirely convinced that they were the robbed orthostats from the circle. Be that as it may, by the mid 1860s the circle had been reduced to five stones, which are described by Dr Black who visited the circle on behalf of Sir James Simpson and recorded the cupmarks on the recumbent and orthostat 4. Simpson was carrying out a systematic survey of cup-and-ring

markings in Scotland and he illustrated the heavily cupmarked recumbent with a plate sketched from a photograph (1866, 13–14 & pl iii); though missing, this must have been one of the earlier photographic images to be taken of any recumbent stone circle. Shortly after this, in 1871, a drawing of the ring was exhibited by Jonathan Forbes-Leslie to a British Association meeting held in Edinburgh, but sadly this is no longer extant either (NLS APS.1.79.129).

The surviving stones of the circle were surveyed by the OS in 1870 and described in a confusing account in





Ritchie patiently waited for dawn to capture this fine image of the cupmarkings on the back of the recumbent stone in 1905. SC680111

the Name Book, much of which was culled from Rev John Pratt's reconstruction of the typical features of a recumbent stone circle that prefaced his description of **Aikey Brae** (1858, 107–8). Nevertheless, the Name Book description is quite detailed:

'The remains of a circle of great blocks of stones irregular and of unequal height... There are now remaining only four upright stones about 6 feet high and about 4 feet thick. And within the stone circle is the altar stone a large stone laying flat considerably to the south of the centre of the circle' (Banffshire, No. 27, p 64).

The authorities cited for the account were William James Taylor Esq of Rothiemay House, an estate map of 1782 that has not been located, and the *Statistical Account*; the entry also includes 'Druidical Temple (Remains of)' in the column for alternative spellings of the name. The circle was evidently known in the district as an ancient Druidical curiosity and as such had probably been deliberately preserved to enhance the policies of the house.

The position of the recumbent evidently puzzled Coles when he visited the circle in 1902. At the time of his visit the field was under a cereal crop, which caused him some difficulty constructing a plan (Coles 1903a, 133–7). Not only was some of the crop growing exceptionally high, but in places it had been flattened by the elements. As can be seen from James Ritchie's photographs taken in 1904, the whole of the circle

was under cultivation, inside and out (eg RCAHMS BN1220). Nevertheless, on the basis of the flawed plan he obtained, Coles calculated that the circle comprised twelve stones and that the recumbent fell well within its circumference. In turn, this led him to conclude that the recumbent must have been placed on the circumference of an 'inner ring', like that at **Aquhorthies** in Kincardineshire, an idea that was reinforced four years later, when he learned that one of the stones discarded near the gate had supposedly been situated south of the recumbent's east end (Coles 1906, 180–1); he marked its position in manuscript in his copy of the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries* (held by RCAHMS). It was left to Alexander Thom some sixty years later to demonstrate that the west end of the recumbent lay on the same circumference as the orthostats.

The cupmarkings at Rothiemay have attracted as much attention as the circle itself, in particular those decorating the back of the recumbent, though the number of cups and rings has tended to vary with every report. Black counted between ten and twelve on the recumbent's summit, and fifty to sixty on its back, of which two were ringed (Simpson 1866, 13–14 & pl iii), but the next counts, by Gurnell about 1884, were twelve and only forty respectively. About 1900 Dr William Cramond could make out only fourteen, and in 1902, without the aid of Simpson's plate, Coles counted but seven on the top and twenty on the back, leading him to solicit a rubbing by the local schoolmaster, James Geddes. Coles published the results of this re-examination in a separate paper, identifying

sixty plain cups and another four enclosed with single rings, though his illustration depicts only fifty-six all told (Coles 1903b, 227–8, fig 30). As James Ritchie observed, the rubbing only covered part of the stone, and to improve this record he spent most of one night in June 1905 beside the stone awaiting the slanting rays of the morning sun. His patience was rewarded with an image upon which he was able to count no less than 107 cups, four of them accompanied by rings (RCAHMS BN797). He also observed twelve cups upon its summit and seven on orthostat 4 to the south-east (1918, 104–8, 117–19, 121). However, the present survey identified at least nineteen cupmarks on the summit and exactly one hundred were counted on its rear, of which at least ten are surrounded by single rings.

Following on from Thom, fieldwork by Ruggles and Burl has focused on the astronomical alignment

of the circle, but they also observed the shape and orientation of the recumbent in relation to a conspicuous peak on the horizon, in this case Hillhead of Avochie. More recently, in 1998, a geophysical survey was carried out, though the results are difficult to evaluate and the interpretation of a possible inner and outer ring of stone-holes (Aspinall 2006) does not fit comfortably with current knowledge of the architecture of these monuments. Nevertheless, the anomalies that were identified may represent an internal cairn and the positions of several missing orthostats, while the presence of two rings might just conceivably explain the skewed position of the recumbent.

Coles 1903a, 142; 1910, 165; Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 355, Bnf 10; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 23; Barnatt 1989, 300, no. 6:82; Ruggles 1999, 185, no. 23; Burl 2000, 425, Bnf 13

Date	Personnel	Record
1796s	James Simmie	Note (<i>Stat Acct</i> , xix, 1797, 392)
c1845	Farm bailiff	Major demolition (Ritchie 1918, 104–8)
1860s	Dr Black	Description noting cupmarks (Simpson 1866, 13–14, & pl iii taken from a photograph)
1870	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1873, xxi.3); description (Name Book, Banffshire, No. 27, p 64)
1884	James Gurnell	Tabulated notes (Gurnell 1884)
c1900	William Cramond	Description (Cramond 1900, 4–5)
September 1902	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketches (Coles 1903a, 133–7, figs 43–5, 142)
1902–3	James Geddes	Rubbing of cupmarks (Coles 1903b, 227–8, fig 30)
April 1904	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS BN877, BN1083, BN1220 & BN1219)
June 1905	James Ritchie	Description (Ritchie 1918, 104–8, 117–19, 121; RCAHMS BN797 & BN1081)
1920	George Browne	Description and photograph (Browne 1921, 83–4, 160–2, pl xxviii, lx, lxi)
16 June 1927	Office of Works	Scheduled
1958	Alexander Thom	Plan and notes (Thom 1967, 137; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 238–9; RCAHMS DC4427; MS 430/28; Ferguson 1988, 85)
5 February 1964	Robert Loader	OS: description and map revision
16 January 1968	Keith Blood	OS: visit
1960s–90s	Aubrey Burl	Guidebook description (Burl 1995 & 2005a, 119, no. 134)
13 June 1981	Clive Ruggles	Astronomical survey and tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 59, 66, 68–71, 74–5; 1999, 213–16; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 40, 46–7, 49, 55, 57)
1998	Arnold Aspinall	Geophysical survey (RCAHMS MS992/1; Aspinall 1998; 2006)
1 April 2004	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44555)
5 April 2006	Yves Candela, David Herd & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

58 St Brandan's Stanes, Boyndie, Aberdeenshire

NJ66SW 1 NJ 6075 6105

These two upright stones are probably the remains of a recumbent stone circle occupying a slight terrace on the gentle north-north-east facing slope dropping down above Templeton. The two stones stand some 2m apart and are probably the flankers of the recumbent setting, though the recumbent itself has been removed. Nevertheless, the placing of the stones (1 & 3), with their more regular sides facing south-south-west and sloping back towards the north-north-east, indicates that the setting stood on the south-south-west arc of the circle. The west flanker (1), which at 1.7m in height is some 0.25m shorter than its neighbour, presently exhibits six large cupmarks upon the lower part of its rear face, although six others are concealed by the field clearance gathered around its foot (see below). An earthfast stone (C) 0.85m high set immediately behind the east flanker is probably the sole surviving kerbstone of an internal cairn – a thin veneer of cairn material

survives immediately to the rear of the setting and presumably extends beneath the field-gathered stones piled around the two flankers, but the rest has been cleared in the course of cultivation. At least one of the stones on this heap is probably a displaced orthostat (A), and it is possible that a smaller stone (B) is yet another.

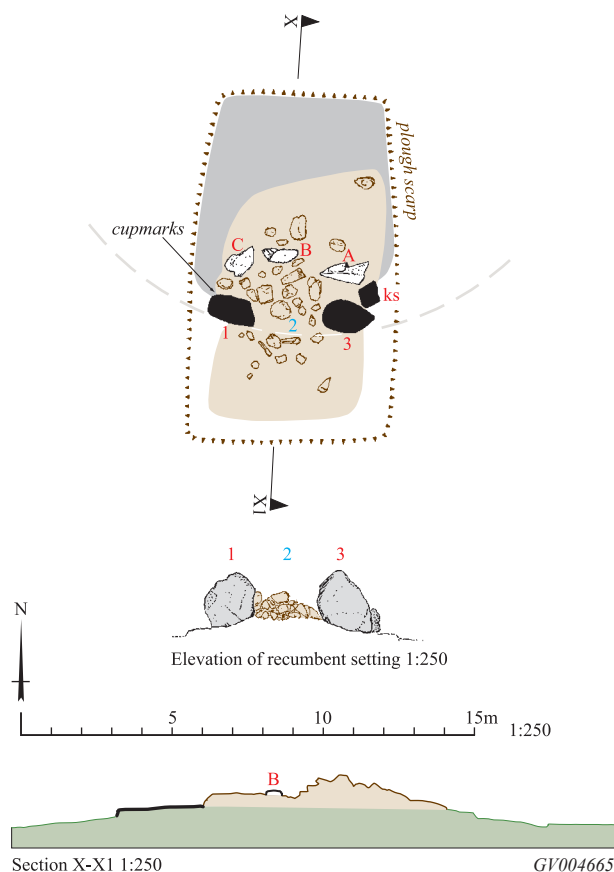
The first record of this circle is by the minister of Boyndie, Rev Alexander Anderson, who in 1842 related that '*a number of large stones, not, however, circularly disposed*' (NSA, xiii, Banffshire, 225) were situated on rising ground known as Lodgehills to the south of a '*Druidical circle*' at Bankhead (since removed, see NJ66SW 4). An urn containing coins had been found beneath one of the stones, presumably when some of them were being cleared from the ground, and by the 1860s Dr Black reported to Sir James Young Simpson that it had been reduced to three stones – two upright, one fallen, and with the west upright bearing twelve

Field clearance now occupies the place of the recumbent. DP078426



cupmarks (Simpson 1866, 14; Cramond 1884, 93). The stones were annotated with their traditional name, *St Brandan's Stanes*, on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map shortly afterwards in 1866–7. It was left to Coles to identify them as the remains of a recumbent stone circle. He had learned from the tenant that the farm had received the name Templeton after these stones, and recognised that the two erect 'pillars' were probably the flankers. By the time of his visit, field clearance had already accumulated around the stones, but his plan (1906a, 172, fig 7) shows four slabs lying to the north of the two flankers, of which three can still be identified (A, B & C), together with the smaller upright block (ks) behind the east flanker. This he interpreted as 'the beginning of an inner setting so frequently found in circles of this type' (*ibid*). Although Coles found only eight of the cups on the west flanker (1906a, 174, fig 9), James Ritchie managed to identify and photograph all twelve the following year. Surveyors from the OS visited the stones in 1955, 1961 and 1968. A sketch plan prepared on the first of these visits shows two additional stones between the flankers, but these do not appear to be of any significance. In addition, some large broken stones noted in 1968 by Keith Blood at the corner of a dyke to the north-east are no longer present.

Coles 1906a, 206; Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 355, Bnf 11; Ruggles 1984, 58, no. 2; Barnatt 1989, 300, no. 6:83; Ruggles 1999, 185, no. 2; Burl 2000, 425, Bnf 14



Date	Personnel	Record
c1842	Alexander Anderson	Note (<i>NSA</i> , xiii, Banffshire, 225)
c1866	Dr Black	Description of cupmarks (Simpson 1866, 14)
1866–7	OS surveyors	<i>St Brandan's Stanes</i> (Aberdeenshire 1871, x.1); description (<i>Name Book</i> , Banffshire, No. 7, pp 62–3)
c1884	William Cramond	Note of cupmarks (Cramond 1884, 93)
September 1905	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketches (Coles 1906a, 172–5, figs 7–9, 206)
June 1906	James Ritchie	Description and photographs (Ritchie 1918, 104–5, 117, 121; RCAHMS BN799 & BN 977)
16 June 1927	Office of Works	Scheduled
8 September 1955	S L J Easton	OS: description and sketch plan
27 September 1961	William Johnston	OS: description
26 January 1968	Keith Blood	OS: description
18 May 2005	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44571)
5 April 2006	Yves Candela, David Herd & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

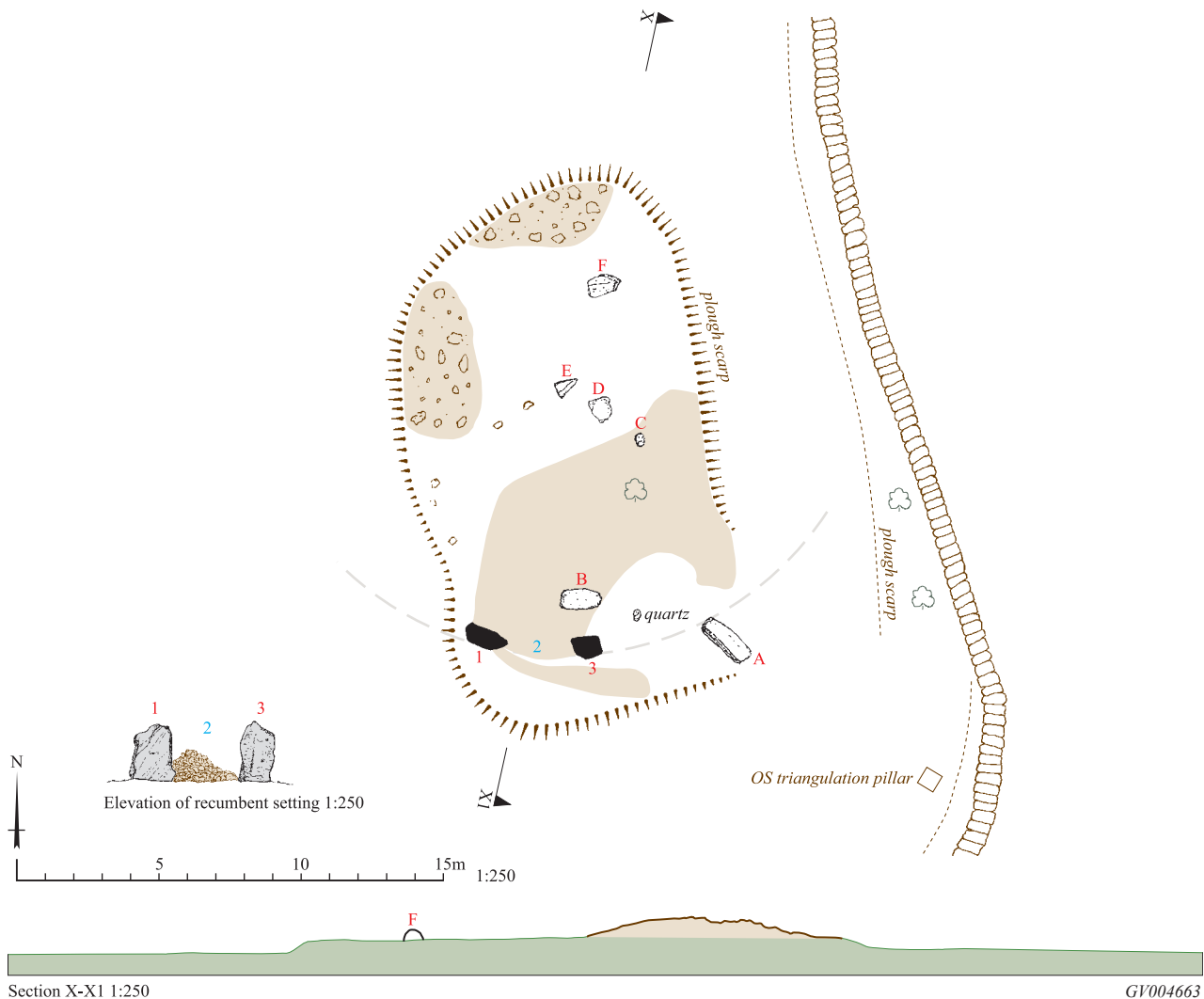
59 South Fornet, Skene, Aberdeenshire

NJ71SE 1 NJ 7829 1097

This recumbent stone circle has been reduced to little more than the flankers of its recumbent setting and a single fallen orthostat. These are situated in the field immediately west-north-west of the OS triangulation pillar on the east-north-east side of the broad summit of the hill above South Fornet. Formerly a plantation in the improved landscape (Aberdeenshire 1869, lxiv), the ground reverted into pasture following the removal of the trees about 1920. The flankers now stand at the south end of a low tump strewn with field-gathered stones. This has been trimmed by the ploughing that has taken place around it. The recumbent stone does not survive and there is no record of its existence (see below), but the positions of the flankers (1 & 3) show that it was probably of modest proportions, measuring no more than 2.2m in length and facing just west of south. The flankers are both impressive stones standing about 1.95m high, the western (1) being a relatively broad slab with a striking band of quartz extending up its east edge, and the eastern (3) a more slender pillar but with

sheets of quartz all over its south face. Both are turned slightly, apparently tracing the arc of a circle about 10m in diameter, and, like so many other pairs of flankers, their tops rise obliquely inwards in a way that would have created the impression that they lent over the ends of the recumbent. Both are also disfigured by graffiti. The rectangular block embedded in the ground due east of the setting (A) is scarred with plough scratches on its upper surface and has probably been cut down from one of the orthostats. Another stone (B) lying behind the east flanker appears to have been split from a larger rock, and several more (C–F) are also reduced fragments, one of them (C) exhibiting a shot-hole on one edge.

South Fornet may be one of the two ‘*Druidical temples, pretty entire*’ noted at the end of the 18th century in the *Statistical Account* (iv, 1792, 62), and again in 1843 without additional comment in the subsequent survey (*NSA*, xii, Aberdeenshire, 1098), but the stones are not described in any detail until the arrival of OS surveyors in the district in 1864–7. By then the remains of the circle had been taken into the southern margin of a shelterbelt crowning the top of the hill, but the surveyors reported that it comprised ‘*three irregular blocks, two*



of which are standing upright and one lying on its side slightly imbedded in the ground' (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 79, p 5); having elaborated the measurements of the two flankers and their prostrate neighbour, they continued: 'the cause given for its fallen position is that some years ago the workers on the estate were proceeding with its removal for building purposes until stopped by the proprietor' (*ibid*).

The ring was still in woodland when Coles visited in 1901, though James Ritchie's photograph taken a few years later in 1904 shows that the ground was relatively open beneath the trees. Coles had no hesitation in classifying the two stones as flankers, and saw no need to explain his reasons, but he believed that they belonged to the setting of a much larger circle, suggesting that a slab of stone some 26m to the north-east might mark its far side. He was followed by Alexander Keiller, who in a resurvey of the circle in 1926 depicted a low outward-facing scarp enclosing a roughly circular area that embraced both this slab and the flankers; he later interpreted this as marking the line of a kerb along which the orthostats had stood (Keiller 1934, 10). No trace of such a feature has been observed here since, nor of the slab on the north-east. Coles saw only a small ill-defined mound rising up to 1.2m in height immediately behind the flankers, along with a shallow trench he put down to later disturbance, but these are now buried beneath the later clearance. With the exception of the fallen orthostat on the south-east (A), none of the stones now lying here can be correlated with the cut down fragments described by Coles, nor indeed with the scatter Keiller depicted. Most have probably been cleared into their present positions more recently, stone B by 1964 when Robert Dickson of the OS suggested that it was a displaced orthostat.

Other visitors to the ring have included Sir Norman Lockyer in 1907 and Right Rev George Browne in 1920, the latter providing a photograph showing the



Ritchie's photograph of 1904 shows an empty space where the recumbent once stood. SC679068

two flankers poking up through a mass of cut branches from the recently felled wood. More recently, in 1955, Alexander Thom made yet another measured survey, though the readings were never drawn up into a plan, and in 1981 Ruggles examined the astronomical alignment of the circle and its topographical setting. Ruggles, however, expressed a note of scepticism on account of the missing recumbent and raised the possibility that the two stones belonged to some other form of setting, such as a four-poster (1984, 57, note q); John Barnatt, while accepting the two upright stones are probably flankers, suggested a two-stone setting as an alternative. The presence of the fallen orthostat to the east clearly belies the latter suggestion, while the other probable fragments of orthostats and the typical features of a pair of flankers – their profile in the facade, the contrast between the relatively smooth south faces and the rougher north faces, their orientation and the spectacular mineral inclusions – combine to affirm that these are the remains of a shattered recumbent stone circle.

Coles 1902, 580; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 353, Abn 97; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 68; Barnatt 1989, 301, no. 6:86; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 68; Burl 2000, 422, Abn 100

Date	Personnel	Record
1864–7	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Aberdeenshire 1869, lxiv.16); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 79, p 5)
September 1901	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketch (Coles 1902, 496–7, figs 9–10)
May 1904	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2556 & AB4835)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 393–4, 399)
1920	George Browne	Description and photograph (Browne 1921, 76, pl xx)
20 October 1926	Alexander Keiller	Description and plan (Keiller 1934, 10; RCAHMS ABD537; MS106/27, 32)
9 August 1955	Alexander Thom	Survey measurements (RCAHMS MS430/17)
8 January 1964	Robert Dickson	OS: description, photograph and map revision
30 June 1981	Clive Ruggles	Astronomical survey and tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 57, 60, 67, 69–71, 74–5; 1999, 213, 215, 266; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 47, 50)
24–5 May 1999	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44496)
14 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey
16 February 2009	Historic Scotland	Scheduled

60 South Ley Lodge, Kintore, Aberdeenshire

NJ71SE 3 NJ 7667 1325

This recumbent stone circle has been reduced to the three stones of its setting, which stand on the leading edge of a low north-east-facing scarp near the foot of the east flank of Knock Hill. The recumbent (2), which faces south-south-west, is a slab measuring 2.5m in length and has a relatively even summit 1.2m high. The flankers stand 1.65m and 1.85m high respectively and are aligned with the leading face of the recumbent. The western (1) is a relatively slender pillar, whereas its neighbour (3) rises from a broader base to a pointed top. The shape of the latter fits quite snugly with the east end of the recumbent, but the narrow gap in the facade at its foot and the rather larger gap between the recumbent and the west flanker are filled with small blocking stones.

The OS surveyors mapped these stones in 1864–7, and instead of annotating them ‘*Stone Circle*’ simply used the term *Standing Stones*. Nevertheless, they reported in the Name Book that the stones were ‘*very probably the remains of a Druidical Temple*’ (Aberdeenshire, No. 51, p 62), and the ‘*Druidical*’ attribution was also applied to a scatter of standing stones in the surrounding fields, most of which are more likely to be rubbing stones set up to keep the cattle off the dykes. This raises a suspicion that the authorities

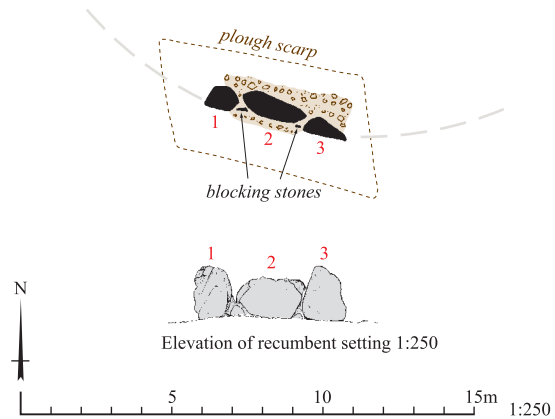
upon whom they relied for the identification of these antiquities, which included Alexander Watt, the author of a parish history of Kintore (1865) and Dalrymple’s assistant in the excavation campaign of 1855–6, were a little wanting in their ability to distinguish between a genuine prehistoric monument and a more recent antiquarian folly. In this case, placed in a highly visible spot adjacent to the road, the stones of the setting are relatively modest, which would have lent itself to a reconstruction, and Coles commented upon what he considered to be the unusually wide gaps between the flankers and the recumbent. If a folly, however, no hint has come down in any of the local sources and it is entirely faithful in its construction, including the use of the blocking stones to complete the facade. Coles makes no reference to the latter, but shows them on his plan (1902, 500, fig 13), and they are also clearly visible on one of James Ritchie’s photograph taken in 1904 (RCAHMS AB2444). Shortly after, in 1907, Sir Norman Lockyer took measurements here exploring his astronomical theories, but this and subsequent visits by Right Rev George Browne and Alexander Keiller have little to add to Coles’ record. Alexander Thom, however, who surveyed the remains in 1957, attempted to establish by probing whether other components of the ring lay buried, drawing one speculative diameter

The recumbent setting from the south-south-west SC1097763



of 16.5m based on the top of a stone exposed at that time due north of the setting, and a second larger arc of 29.6m on what he postulated might be another four buried on the east. Apart from the setting itself, nothing can be seen today on either diameter, though a brief visit in 2007 discovered a plough-scarred slab recently piled behind the west flanker. Burl and Ruggles focused their work here on the shape and alignment of the setting, and it is one of the monuments from which they observed that the alignment of the setting evidently ignores the Mither Tap o' Bennachie, despite the hill being the most conspicuous landmark in the surrounding country.

Coles 1902, 580; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 353, Abn 98; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 67; Barnatt 1989, 301, no. 6:87; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 67; Burl 2000, 422, Abn 101



Date	Personnel	Record
1864–7	OS surveyors	Standing Stones (Aberdeenshire 1869, lxiv.12); description (Name Book Aberdeenshire Book No. 51, p 62)
September 1901	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketch (Coles 1902, 500–1, figs 13–14)
June 1904	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2440 & AB2444)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 393, 399)
1920	George Browne	Description and photograph (Browne 1921, 73, pl xviii)
1923–October 1924	Alexander Keiller	Description and photograph (Keiller 1934, 13; RCAHMS AB4824po; MS106/24; MS106/29, 34-6)
3 August 1957	Alexander Thom	Plan and notes (Thom 1967, 137; Thom, Thom, and Burl 1980, 218–19; RCAHMS DC4415, 4764co; MS430/27; Ferguson 1988, 66)
30 June 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67, 69–71, 74–5; 1999, 213, 215, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 30, 47, 50)
14 October 1998	Kevin Macleod & John Sherriff	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44483)
13 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey
25 September 2007	Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description
26 March 2009	Historic Scotland	Scheduled

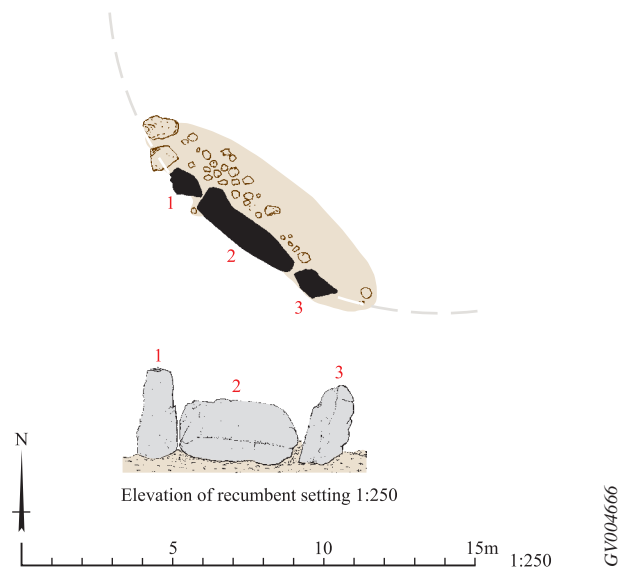
61 Stonehead, Inch, Aberdeenshire

NJ62NW 5 NJ 6010 2869

The recumbent setting of this circle stands in a field on the south side of the public road at Stonehead, a location on a broad terrace at the top of the steep escarpment dropping down to the Shevock. The recumbent (2) is a block measuring some 3.9m in length and its gently domed summit is up to 2.1m high. The flankers (1 & 3), which are aligned with the leading edge of the recumbent, stand 2.95m and 2.4m high respectively, the taller on the west also being the more slender. Field clearance has been gathered into a mound at the rear of the setting and probably includes two large stones lying to the north-west of the west flanker.

A fine annotated pen and ink sketch from the west by James Skene in the 1820s provides the first detailed record of this circle. Focused on the leading face of the setting, this suggests that by then the ring was largely reduced to its present state, though a stone shown lying to the right of the east flanker may have been a displaced orthostat. In 1867 the OS surveyors recorded only the three stones of the setting, but in 1901, when Coles visited the setting, there were at least three other large stones lying round about, two of which are the stones still visible amongst the field clearance to the north-west of the west flanker. These are shown hatched on his plan, implying that he believed they were still in their original positions, while the third

Skene's dramatic 1820s sketch of the recumbent setting from the west-north-west also shows the Hill of Dunnideer. SC730434



is shown only in outline a little to the east of the east flanker (Coles 1902, 538–40, fig 56). This last stone has been removed. All three stones can be glimpsed on James Ritchie's photographs of 1904 and 1906, which show that the surrounding field alternated between cultivation and pasture.

Subsequent fieldwork by Sir Norman Lockyer in 1907, and Right Rev George Browne and Alexander Keiller in the 1920s, has had little to add and it was Richard Little of the OS who first suggested that the additional stones shown by Coles were not part of the setting. More recent work by Ruggles has focused on the astronomical alignment of the circle; he and Burl





Cultivation surrounded the recumbent setting when it was photographed by James Ritchie in 1904. SC679134

have also noted that Stonehead is one of a number of circles that face directly onto conspicuous hills, in this case the Hill of Flinder, one of a ridge of low summits rising up on the south side of the Shevock. Julian Cope has also postulated a topographical link in the design

of the setting, but in his case he has argued that the recumbent mirrors the shape of the hills behind it, implicitly referring to Dunideer away to the east (1998, 386).

Coles 1902, 581; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 353, Abn 100; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 41; Barnatt 1989, 302, no. 6:89; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 41; Burl 2000, 422, Abn 103

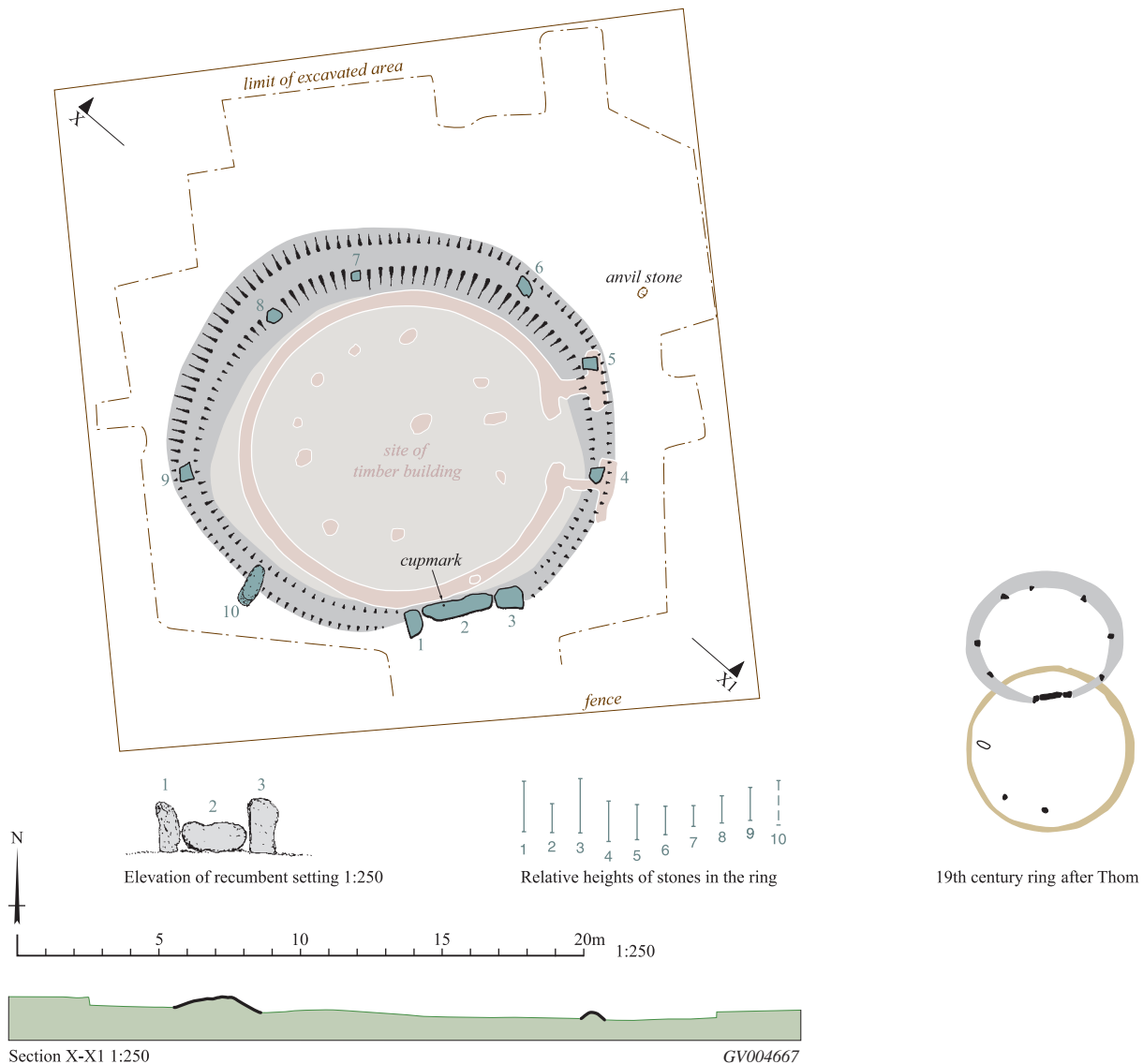
Date	Personnel	Record
1820s	James Skene	Sketch (RCAHMS ABD510/1)
1867	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1870, xliv.1); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 41, p 40)
September 1901	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketch (Coles 1902, 538–40, figs 56–7, 579)
February 1904	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2663)
June 1906	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2501)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 402, 407)
1920	George Browne	Description and photograph (Browne 1921, 80, pl xxiii)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1927, 7)
1930s	J Ruxton	Photograph (RCAHMS AB5846)
4 March 1969	Richard Little	OS: description and map revision
13 June 1981	Clive Ruggles	Astronomical survey and tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 59, 66, 69–71, 74–5; 1999, 213, 215–16; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 38, 46, 49)
3 April 1996	John Sherriff & Iain Fraser	RCAHMS: description and photographs
15 October 1998	Kevin Macleod, John Sherriff & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44484)
6 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

62 Strichen House, Strichen, Aberdeenshire
 NJ95SW 2 NJ 9367 5447

This wholly rebuilt recumbent stone circle stands within a grass and gorse-grown enclosure on the east side of the summit of the low hill to the north-north-east of the ruins of Strichen House. Partly robbed by the mid 1773, cleared and rebuilt about 1830, cleared again in the 1960s, and finally reconstructed in the light of excavations in 1979–82 (Phillips *et al* 2006), the circle has had a chequered history which has been driven by the evolution of attitudes to the conservation and presentation of cultural heritage from the 18th century to the present day. In its contemporary form it attempts to reproduce an authentic prehistoric monument, using some of the original stones and what are probably original sockets, though the reconstruction of the recumbent setting is demonstrably wrong, and the

heights and grading of the orthostats is little more than conjecture.

As reconstructed, the circle comprises a recumbent setting and seven orthostats, standing on the line of a ring-bank to form an oval ring measuring 15.4m from east-north-east to west-south-west by 12.8m transversely overall. The recumbent (2) measures about 2.6m in length by 1.05m in height and is situated on the south-south-east of the ring; the uneven summit of the slab has a crudely centred shot-hole on the inner edge and a shallow cupmark to its south-west. The flankers (1 & 3), which stand about 1.75m and 1.9m high respectively, are of contrasting shapes, the western being the more slender of the pair. Unusually, the leading edges of both flankers project in front of the recumbent, and that on the west is placed with its long axis at right-angles to the recumbent setting (see discussion below). One of the orthostats has now



fallen (10), but the remainder have been graded in height from the flankers on the south-south-east down to an eccentrically placed stone only 0.7m high on the north-north-west (7). The ring-bank is made up largely of angular rocks and measures up to 3m in thickness by 0.35m in height, while the uneven interior measures 13m from east-south-east to west-north-west by 11.5m transversely.

The 19th-century reconstruction of the circle fortunately took place within a freshly constructed earthen ring-bank offset to the south of the original site, which remained relatively undisturbed until the excavations of 1979–82 (Phillips *et al* 2006). These uncovered the remains of an ancient ring-bank and up to fourteen possible stone-holes. There was no evidence that the ring-bank had retaining kerbs, but it was apparently bounded inside and out by shallow gullies, the outer of which on the north-west contained small horizontally laid slabs. The bank itself was constructed of stones and turves placed directly onto the old ground surface; the turves were thought to have been stripped from the interior. At least one sherd of Beaker and a large quantity of flaked and shattered quartz lay amongst the rubble of the bank, and a cremation of an adult woman, together with some sherds of pottery, were found in a secondary disturbance on the north-east. Six fragments of cremated bone were also discovered immediately outside the ring-bank on the north-west. Quartz fragments were markedly more concentrated on the north and south-east, while a block of stone on which they had probably been pulverised can still be seen just outside the ring-bank on the east-north-east. Most of the fourteen possible stone-holes lay along the inner edge of the ring-bank, and a heavily compacted semi-circular area of clay and rubble on the south-south-east (possibly the residue of dismantling the ring-bank) marked the position of the recumbent setting. The interior of the ring-bank had been occupied in the Iron Age by a timber round-house, but a disturbed spread of rubble at the centre was interpreted as a cairn measuring at least 2m in diameter. Some of the larger stones at its base showed traces of burning, which had also penetrated the subsoil over an area 1m in diameter. Fragments of cremated bone were recovered from at least two pits within the interior of the ring-bank, one of which was roughly lined with stones and lay at the edge of the burnt area, though its relationship to the cairn was uncertain. A Beaker sherd was found in a disturbed area adjacent to this latter pit, while a similar stone-lined pit to its north-east produced two sherds, one modern and the other thought at the time to be Neolithic. Unfortunately most of these artefacts have been lost, but they included: a third sherd of Beaker and a barbed-and-tanged arrowhead from near the cremated bone outside the ring-bank on the north-west; a fragment of a plano-convex knife from the interior; some worked flints and quartz; and several sherds of coarse pottery



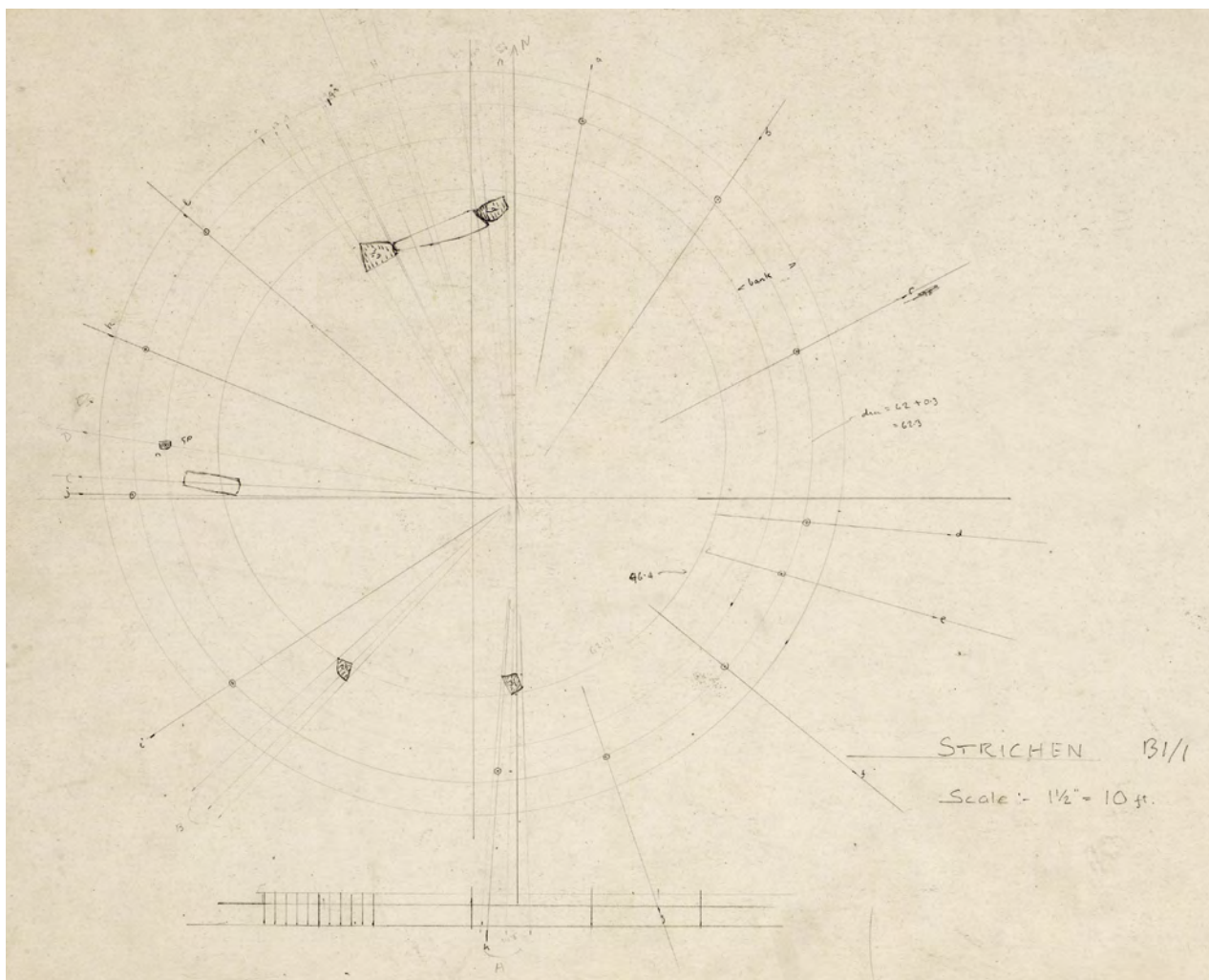
The restored monument from the north-north-west. SC1097640

(one of which survives). These were largely from residual contexts, and the observation that the greater concentration occurred on the north side of the circle should be tempered with the knowledge that the south side had been the more heavily disturbed in modern times. However, a small weathered cup-and-ring marked stone was also found on the north side of the circle, reused as a packing-stone in a post-hole belonging to the later round-house; this post lay on an axis drawn from the recumbent through a central post-hole.

The recumbent stone circle at Strichen House was first noted by James Boswell, who visited the ring with his father in the autumn of 1758. He returned in the summer of 1773 with Dr Samuel Johnson during the latter's celebrated tour of Scotland and related how:

'Mr Johnson was curious to see a Druid's Temple. I had a recollection of one at Strichen which I had seen fifteen years ago; so we went four miles out of our road, after passing Old Deer, and went thither. Mr Fraser [Alexander Fraser of Strichen] was at home and showed it. But I had augmented it in my mind, for all that remains is the two stones set up on end with a long one laid between them, as was usual, and one stone due... from them. That stone was the capital one of the circle which surrounded what now remains' (Pottle and Bennet 1963, 77–8).

Johnson was not impressed and simply recorded that *'Mr Fraser showed us in his grounds some stones yet standing of a Druidical circle, and what I began to think more worthy of notice, some forest trees of full growth'* (Chapman 1924, 18–19). These trees were presumably planted when the policies shown on Roy's map (1747–55) were laid out, forming a rectilinear emparkment subdivided into arable parks and plantations. The circle probably lay in a rectilinear plantation depicted behind the house. By 1794, the year that Captain Alexander Fraser inherited the estate, the ground seems to have been cleared of woodland and was undergoing improvement, as labourers *'were employed hurling dung to [the] Druid's temple'* (Sleigh 1935, Hampsher-Monk and Abramson 1982). Some of the stones had evidently

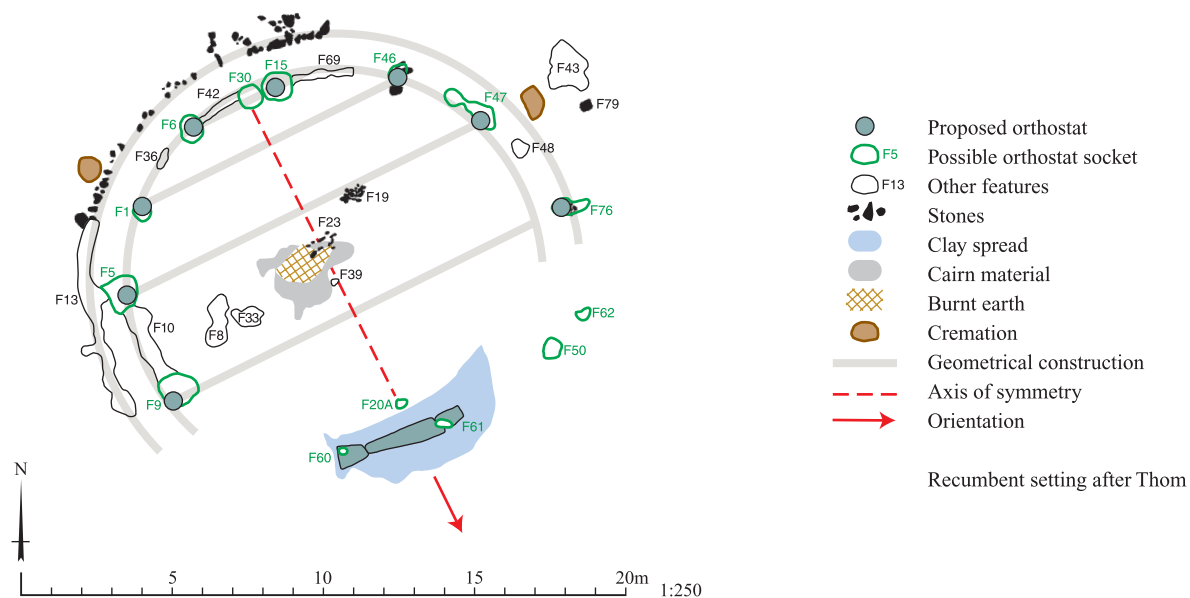


Thom's plan of 1956. DP079064 © Eoghann MacColl

been removed before Johnson's visit, and further damage may have occurred when the ground was being manured at the end of the 18th century, but it does not necessarily follow that the rest of the circle was cleared at that time (pace Shepherd 1986, 153–4). Indeed, Coles learned from John Milne, who had lived for many years at Atherb and whose grandfather had worked on the Strichen estate, that the major clearance of the site was about 1830. By this time, however, the hill seems to have been back under woodland (NAS RHP 1136). The tenant responsible was instructed to restore them by Thomas-Alexander Fraser, who had inherited in 1803, though 'according to Old Milne's recollection, they were not all replaced, and those that were, were set up not in their original positions' (Coles 1904, 279–80). The results of this restoration were visited by the OS surveyors in 1870. The remains then lay within a circular fenced enclosure in a wood. The Name Book reports that it comprised six stones, varying in height and placed at irregular intervals (Aberdeenshire, No. 82, p 41). It is faithfully depicted on the 1:2500 map with the recumbent setting on the north and a tree at the

centre. Evidently the circle had become an antiquarian folly, presumably a temple to Druidism, and in its new guise was intended to enhance pleasure and interest in the policies (Burl 1995, 108).

The curiosity of the recumbent setting standing on the north side of a circle was first noted by Rev James Peter, who also published a sketch of the recumbent with its two flankers viewed probably from the south (1885, 372). This was confirmed shortly afterwards by James Spence (1890, 29). Henry Mitchell, however, added the gloss that the recumbent setting had been left undisturbed when the other stones were first removed and then re-erected around a chestnut tree to the south (Mitchell 1898, 92). Apart from John Milne, Coles made other enquiries to verify this local tradition, but he was also convinced of its truth (erroneously as it happens) by the positions of the recumbent and the orthostats which lay well within what he misunderstood to be an original ring-bank. This was in fact simply the fenced enclosure noted by the OS surveyors. Unfortunately, on account of its troubled history, he did not make his customary record, and there is a dearth of descriptions, plans, sketches or photographs from then until its complete removal in the 1960s. Right Rev George Browne,



An alternative interpretation of the features discovered in the excavations of 1979–82 (Derived from Phillips et al 2006). GV004668

for example, who also failed to understand that the ring-bank was no more than the remains of the fence erected around the reconstructed circle, provides only the briefest of notes (1921, 90), though he provides an invaluable photograph of the recumbent setting, probably taken from the south-east, from within the interior of the circle as it was in 1920 (1921, 90, pl xxxi). Alexander Keiller was equally dismissive and typically outspoken about the ‘*misguided attempt at unscientific reconstruction*’ (1934, 12). As we have seen, this may have been to misunderstand the intentions that lay behind it, which were never to restore the circle so much as to create a Druidical temple to enhance the policies. The first detailed plan of the reconstructed circle is by Alexander Thom in 1956, and shows the same six stones depicted within the ring-bank on the 1st edition OS map. This also proved to be the last record of the reconstructed circle prior to its complete removal in the 1960s.

This took place in 1965, but not before it had suffered the indignity of becoming a tea garden to a tuberculosis sanatorium based on the house (closed 1958; Burl 1979b; Thom *et al* 1980, 157). However, tree-felling operations led to its destruction, according to Keith Blood of the OS, who visited the site in 1967. All that remained visible was the bank of the fence that had enclosed the reconstruction, from which a large stone protruded on the south, and traces of a disturbance where the chestnut tree had been uprooted from its centre.

In 1978 a local proposal for the restoration of the circle led to the excavations of 1979–82, initiated by

Burl and subsequently completed by Philip Abramson and Iain Hampsher-Monk. These quickly established that the visible ring-bank was a 19th century fence and that the ring had originally stood to the north. The subsequent reconstruction upon the original site was based upon a selection of the possible stone-holes that had been identified, together with Peter’s sketch of the recumbent setting and the photograph reproduced by Browne. At first sight, the results of the reconstruction are of an authentic recumbent stone circle (Shepherd 1986, 153–4, no. 93), but detailed examination suggests a number of anomalies, both in the reconstruction of the monument that formerly stood on the site, and in comparison to others nearby. The focus of these anomalies, as with the monument’s architecture, is the recumbent setting itself, the one feature that was thought may have survived the demolition of the 1830s (above). This has been reconstructed with the leading faces of its flankers projecting in front of the recumbent and the long axis of the shorter west flanker turned at right-angles to that of the recumbent. This arrangement is at variance with the plan recorded by Thom, in which the long axes of both flankers are aligned with the recumbent and the taller stone is on the west. Despite the difficulties of making comparisons between Peter’s sketch, Browne’s photograph and Thom’s plan, it is fairly clear that the reconstruction assumes that the sketch and the photograph were taken from the northern side of the setting, whereas the plan indicates that they are almost certainly from southern side. As a result the positions of the two flankers are now reversed, and what was the slightly convex front of the recumbent setting faces into the interior of the circle, rather than outwards with its flankers turned to pick up the arc of the circle of orthostats; in short, the recumbent setting has not only

been reconstructed inside out, but the misplaced west flanker has been turned through a further 90°. Another aspect of the reconstruction that does not hold true with the rest of the corpus concerns the position of the smallest stone, which is typically found on the north-north-east arc of a ring; at Strichen this has been placed eccentrically on the north-north-west. The reasons for this are not hard to find, lying partly with the decision to reconstruct the ring with seven orthostats, as at nearby **Berrybrae**, and partly through choosing a stone-hole on the north-north-west opposite the recumbent setting, rather than a less convincing example on the north. Had the reconstruction proceeded with eight paired orthostats, utilising the possible stone-holes that were located on the north and west-north-west respectively (Phillips *et al* 2006, 115, illus 3; 116–19, features 1 & 46), this would have created a less eccentric layout, allowing the smallest stone to be placed to the east of the central axis of the monument, if not actually on the north-north-east arc. This proposed plan takes the axis of the recumbent setting from Thom's survey and best fits it to the possible positions of the flankers identified by excavation. This creates a slightly eccentric position for the setting in relationship to the first pair of orthostats, though the pad of clay upon which it is

thought to have stood forms a strikingly symmetrical arrangement in which the spacing of the stones would have been evenly graded to close up from south to north. As built, the reconstruction has the orthostats set out correctly along the inner edge of the bank in the manner that can be seen at **Loudon Wood** and possibly **North Strone**, but the way the ring-bank tapers in thickness towards the recumbent setting is conjecture; the banks certainly do not behave in this way at the nearby examples of **Aikey Brae** or **Berrybrae**, albeit that the orthostats there are set along the outer lips of the bank.

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1904, 293; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 353, Abn 102; Ruggles 1984, 58, no. 7; Barnatt 1989, 302–3, no. 6:91; Ruggles 1999, 185–6, no. 7; Burl 2000, 422, Abn 105

1 Radiocarbon assays of charcoal from a bulk sample from this disturbance yielded dates of 3390±130 BP (BM–2316R) and 2650±160 BP (HAR–4301). Neither can be regarded as reliable.

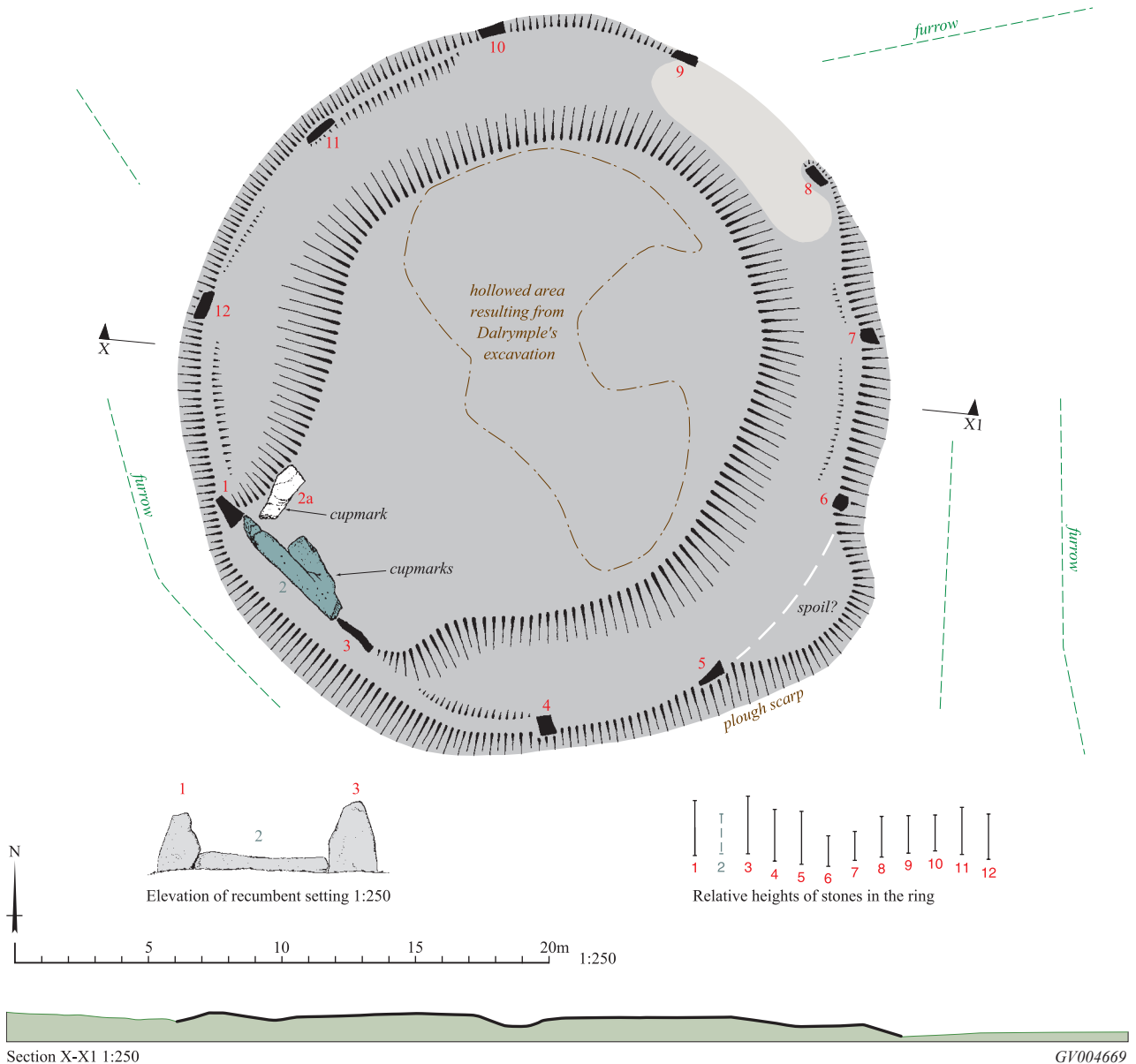
2 This probably comprised a wall-trench with a slightly eccentric internal post-ring and an out-turned porch on the east. The eccentricity led the excavators to argue that they represent two structures, but it is relatively slight and this interpretation seems unnecessarily complicated. Radiocarbon assays on charcoal originating from the wall-trench yielded dates of 2460±130 BP (BM–2315R) and 2370±130 BP (BM–2317R).

Date	Personnel	Record
1773	Samuel Johnson James Boswell	Description (Pottle and Bennet 1963, 77–8; Chapman 1924, 18–19)
c1830	Tenant farmer	Demolition and reconstruction (Coles 1904, 279–80, 293, 304)
1870	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Aberdeenshire 1872, xiii.3); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 82, p 41)
c1885	James Peter	Description and profile (Peter 1885, 372)
c1888	James Spence	Note (Spence 1890, 29)
c1898	Henry Mitchell	Description (Mitchell 1898, 92)
September 1903	Frederick Coles	Description (Coles 1904, 279–80, 293, 304)
1920	George Browne	Description and photograph (Browne 1921, 90, pl xxxi)
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1934, 12)
14 April 1956	Alexander Thom	Theodolite survey and notes (Thom 1967, 136; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 156–7; RCAHMS DC4384; MS430/26; Ferguson 1988, 66)
1965	Unknown	Demolition
20 March 1967	Keith Blood	OS: description
1979–82	Aubrey Burl Philip Abramson Iain Hampsher-Monk	Description, excavations and reconstruction (Burl 1979b; 1995 & 2005, 107–9, no. 116; Abramson 1980; Abramson and Hampshire-Monk 1981; Hampshire-Monk and Abramson 1982; Phillips <i>et al</i> 2006; RCAHMS MS362)
6 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 58, 66, 68–72, 74–5; 1999, 213–15, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 25, 29–30, 46, 51, 54)
21 August 2003	Kevin Macleod, John Sherriff & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44541)
6 June 2006	Yves Candela, David Herd & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

63 Sunhoney, Midmar, Aberdeenshire
 NJ70NW 55 NJ 7159 0570

This grass-grown recumbent stone circle is situated within a small plantation of mixed woodland on the summit of a hill overlooking Sunhoney from the north-west. It measures 25m in overall diameter and comprises the recumbent setting and nine orthostats set out around the perimeter of a low cairn; all the stones bar the recumbent on the south-west (2) are upright, and this is broken into two pieces. The larger piece is a slab measuring 5.2m in length by 1.4m in breadth. This now lies face down, and its even summit is set flush with the leading faces of the two flankers. It cannot have fallen into this position and has evidently been moved – a clear indication that the ring has undergone some restoration, probably, as will be shown below,

in the 18th century. Furthermore, its west tip is caught behind the west flanker, and cannot have been dragged back into this position when the flanker was in place. There are at least 28 shallow cups on the upturned surface of the larger piece of the recumbent, and one on the smaller fragment lying displaced immediately to its north-west. The two flankers (1 & 3) are of a similar size and shape, standing about 2.1m and 2.2m high respectively, and the tops of the rest of the orthostats are roughly graded to reduce in height from the south-west, though unusually the lowest is on the east-south-east (6). There is no equivalent reduction in the spacing of the stones, which are set out fairly evenly along the line of a low ring-bank. Externally the height of the ring-bank has been exaggerated by the cultivation of the surrounding ground, and it forms the leading edge of a low platform encircling a roughly circular cairn some



20m in diameter. Although no kerbstones are visible, the perimeter of this cairn is quite well defined, extending outwards on the south-west to meet the back of the recumbent setting.

It is more than likely that Sunhoney is one of the three '*Druical fanes*' in the parish of Midmar referred to at the end of the 18th century by the minister, Rev John Ogilvie (*Stat Acct*, ii, 1792, 519), but James Logan is responsible for the first detailed account (Logan 1829a, 202, pl xxii). By then the ring had been enclosed within the plantation, which evidently gave it an air that fulfilled his conception of its Druidical origins, and his description, accompanied by measurements, two plans and a sketch, show that the circle was already approaching its present state, with the recumbent lying broken where it is today. This is an important point, carrying with it the implication that any restoration that has taken place here probably dates from before the beginning of the 19th century. To Logan's mind, however, the circle was largely undisturbed, though he was less certain whether a stony ring-bank at its centre was a feature of the original interior or merely the upcast from an earlier excavation. His sketch suggests the latter, and may explain why in 1855 Charles Dalrymple found that the cairn material in an area 2.4m in diameter at the centre was more loosely packed than elsewhere and mixed with small quantities of burnt bone and charcoal (Stuart 1856, xxi). A number of the stones were also burnt, while somewhere on the southern margin of the cairn, Dalrymple retrieved some fragments of '*a rude stone vessel*' from a circular pit. On the main body of the cairn traces of his excavations can still be seen extending north and south-east from the centre. He also excavated around several of the orthostats, which he observed were of red granite rather than the grey of the recumbent, and in doing so uncovered parts of the ring-bank on the lip of the platform encircling the cairn, describing it as '*a ridge of loose stones, like the foundation of a dyke*' (Stuart 1856, xxi). Some of the orthostats had a '*small pavement of stones in front of them*' (*ibid*), presumably meaning against the inner side. Although he does not record how many of the orthostats were examined, he noted that '*the ground seemed, in various cases, to have been dug down into the subsoil, so as to form a pit about two and a half feet deep [0.75m] ... and they all stood on deposits of middle sized boulder stones*' (*ibid*). At a distance of 150 years this description of their sockets and the packing material is almost impenetrably cryptic, but we can speculate that his observation of some cut into the ground beneath the cairn carries with it an unstated commentary that others did not.

The OS surveyors relied entirely on Dalrymple's account when they visited the ring in 1865, but within a few years Jonathan Forbes-Leslie had prepared a new plan and a sketch, and Dr Black had supplied the first description of the cupmarks on the recumbent to Sir

James Young Simpson. A little later Christian Maclagan published another plan, though with thirteen stones in her rendering of the circle it is patently unreliable. These publications played an important part in advertising Sunhoney amongst a wide circle of antiquaries, who were also corresponding with each other to share their observations and measurements. For most recumbent stone circles this sort of correspondence is now lost, but its existence is implicit at Sunhoney, in the first place between Black and Simpson, but subsequently in a description published in 1880 by Robert Angus Smith (1880, 308). The latter drew on a manuscript by Dr William Brown, an Edinburgh surgeon, who in his turn had been supplied with information by Rev George Hutchison, the minister of Banchory-Ternan. In that same year Sir Henry Dryden had Archibald Crease measure the circle, drawing up his own sketch plan in 1881 and comparing his figures with those taken by Hutchison. Taken to the nearest foot, both sets of measurements roughly correlate with the present survey, but Dryden was a stickler for accuracy and was evidently not impressed with the discrepancies that he identified in the work of his fellows both here and elsewhere in the North-east.

Suffice it to say, Sunhoney was well known as one of the best preserved recumbent stone circles by the time Coles visited in 1899. Unsurprisingly, it received his full treatment, with measurements, a plan, sections, and two sketches, and his description also draws attention to the grading of the circle. Curiously, his plan does not show the main body of the internal cairn as a mound, instead marking its edge with a low ring-bank, or '*ridge*' as he preferred to call it, and he comments that no coherent features could be seen within its compass. His sections, however, depict the area within the inner ring-bank as a shallow hollow, which is completely at variance with the raised inner part of the mound first described by Robert Dickson of the OS in 1965 – although he assessed its diameter at only 7m. In some senses Coles' plan echoes the impression given by Forbes-Leslie. His sketch seems to show two low concentric banks within the circle, the inner surrounding a central hollow, while the accompanying plan employs hachures to suggest that the area occupied by the main body of the internal cairn was a large hollow. This was Coles' first season surveying recumbent stone circles, so his depiction and ideas were perhaps led by the earlier plans, but his sections are so different from the modern profile of the cairn that it is difficult to explain the discrepancy. The more so since successive photographs by James Ritchie in 1902, Right Rev George Browne in 1920 and Dickson in 1965 show several of the same trees growing on the cairn, implying that it has remained largely unchanged throughout the 20th century. Nor is there any reason to believe that there have been any substantive alterations since Alexander Keiller's commentary on its sad state shortly after the circle was scheduled in



1925 (1927, 11). Indeed, the area of disturbance currently visible roughly replicates the extent of the scatter of loose stones noted by Coles, suggesting that the problem may lie with the way in which Coles constructed his sections. Coles does not record how he approached the preparation of these drawings, and at Sunhoney, unaccompanied by any scale, they are possibly little more than sketches. If this is the case, the view from the north and west, which is also recorded in one of Ritchie's photographs, possibly skewed his perception of the interior, apparently showing not only the ground rising into the back of the recumbent setting but also an elevated lip on the edge of the disturbed ground on the north.

The cupmarks on the recumbent have also caused some disagreement, and Coles argued on various grounds that they were the result of natural weathering. As so often happens, the total number of these cups has changed slightly with the lighting conditions of every visit. Whereas Black counted 30 on the upturned surface of the main portion of the

The recumbent setting from the west-south-west. SC1097558.

recumbent, Ritchie made it 31, Browne 28 – the same number counted on the day of the present survey – and Dickson only seven. Coles' view was almost certainly coloured by the realisation that some would have been hidden when the stone was upright. At that time there was no concept that such stones might be in reuse and it was inconceivable that cupmarks carved into a slab would have been deliberately covered over. It was left to Ritchie to confirm that they were artificial, though he was equally hamstrung in his interpretive framework and therefore concluded that the slab had fallen upon its back.

Being so well preserved, Sunhoney has also attracted successive researchers exploring astronomical alignments in stone circles, beginning with Sir Norman Lockyer in 1906 and Browne in 1920, and more recently including Alexander Thom, Burl and Ruggles. Thom drew up a new plan in 1955, which in addition to the stones of the circle shows the lip of the cairn on

the north and south-east, together with a hole on the north-north-east. He also argued that the orthostats were intended to be equally spaced (Thom and Thom 1978, 22–3). When first published, the plan seemed to show an additional orthostat just within the projected line of the circumference between the west flanker and the neighbouring orthostat (Thom 1967, 145), but this does not appear in the booked measurements in the archive or on later versions, suggesting that it is a printer's mistake. However, the error misled Burl (1979a, 140), who later used a theodolite here to supplement Lockyer's record and Thom's plan, as did Ruggles. Together Burl and Ruggles observed that the recumbent setting faces Blackyduds, the summit of the eastern spur of the Hill of Fare, though the sheer bulk of the hill

blocks out any more distant sightlines southwards and forced them to explore a more complex astronomical hypothesis (Burl 1979a, 145; 2005a, 109).

Sunhoney continues to draw researchers and visitors for different reasons, from casual sightseers enjoying the tranquillity of the spot to the likes of Duncan Hart, who in 1997 prepared a finely drawn plan of the stones accompanied by profile sketches for a measured drawing competition, or Gavin MacGregor researching the colour and texture of the stones in relation to their architectural and cultural significance.

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1900, 198; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 353, Abn 103; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 72; Barnatt 1989, 303, no. 6:92; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 72; Burl 2000, 422, Abn 106

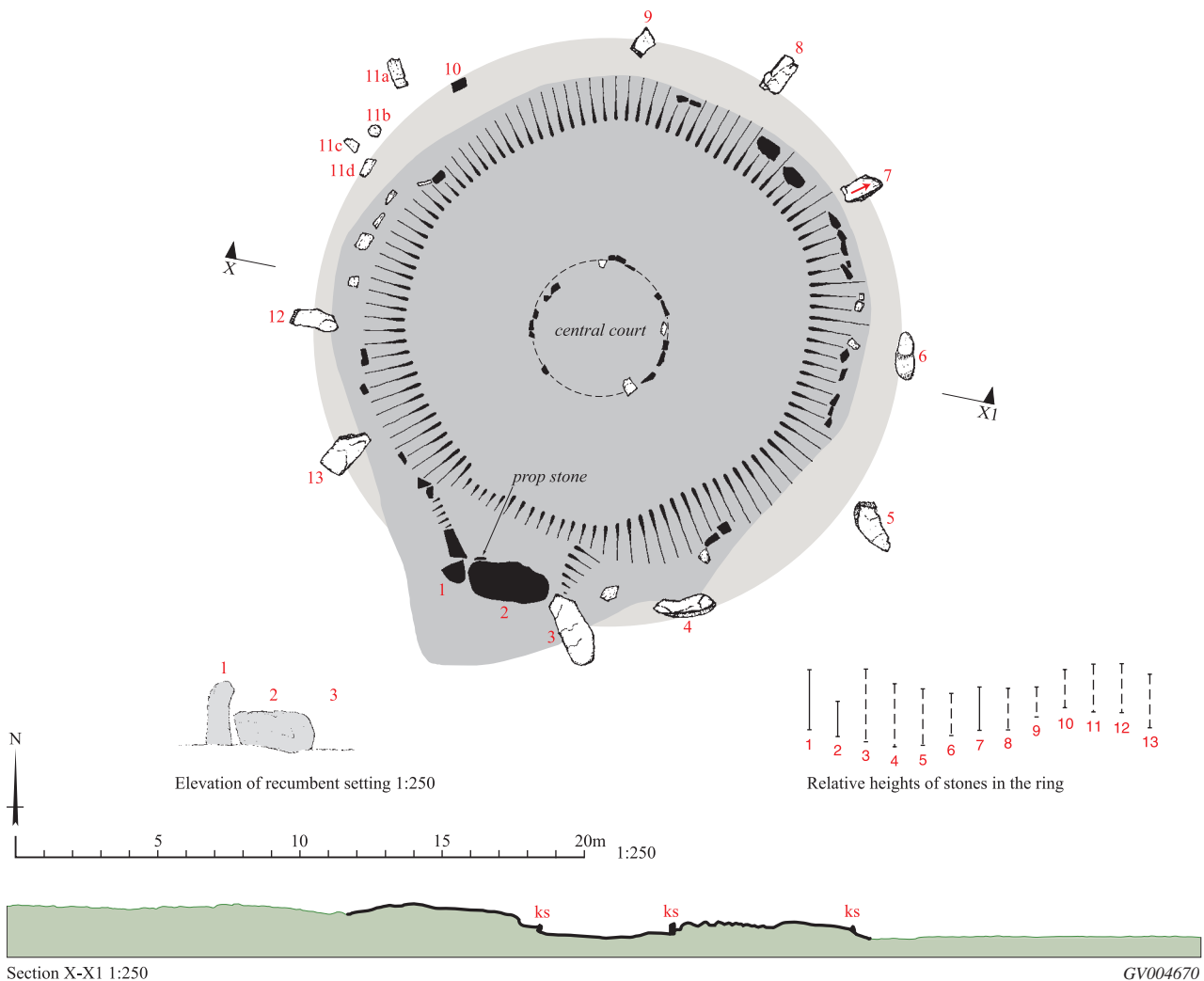
Date	Personnel	Record
1792	John Ogilvie	Note (<i>Stat Acct</i> , ii, 1792, 519)
1829	James Logan	Description, plan and sketch (Logan 1829a, 198–203, pl xxiv)
1855	Charles Dalrymple	Excavation and description (Stuart 1856, xxi)
1865	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Aberdeenshire 1869, lxxiii.14); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 62, p 33)
1860s	Dr Black	Description of cupmarks (Simpson 1867, 70)
1866	Jonathan Forbes-Leslie	Plan and sketch (Forbes-Leslie 1866, i, 215, pls x & xiii)
1870s	George Hutchison	Description and measurements (Smith 1880, 308)
1880	Archibald Crease	Measurements for plan by Henry Dryden (RCAHMS SAS39/7)
15 August 1884	William Lukis	Description, plan and section (Lukis 1885, 310; GMAG 7829.43, a & b)
September 1899	Frederick Coles	Description, plan, sections and sketches, (Coles 1900, 181–7, figs 32–5)
July 1902	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2475 & AB2479–81; also undated AB4834 & AB4840)
July 1904	James Ritchie	Description of cupmarks and photographs (Ritchie 1918, 88–9, 118, 121; RCAHMS AB2527)
28 September 1906	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 380)
c1912	John Milne	Description (Milne 1912, 3–4)
1920	George Browne	Description, plan and photographs (Browne 1921, 56–60, 157–60, pls vi–viii)
31 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1927, 11; 1934, 15)
August 1955	Alexander Thom	Plan and notes (Thom 1967, 136, 145, fig 12.5; Thom and Thom 1978, 22–3; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 196–7; RCAHMS DC4406; MS430/22; Ferguson 1988, 66)
13 January 1965	Robert Dickson	OS: description, photograph and map revision
c1980	Aubrey Burl	Astronomical survey, guidebook description and photographs (Burl 1970, 60, 63–4, 66, 70–2, 76, 79; 1976a, 173, 179, 183, 353; 1979a, 140, 145–7; 1980a, 199, no. 23; 1995 & 2005a, 108–9, no. 117)
17 June 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67–71, 74–5; 1999, 94, 98, 213–16, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 38–41, 46, 49, 51, 54–5, 57)
21–30 July 1997	Duncan Hart	Plan, section and sketches (RCAHMS D15460)
15 April 1998	Kevin Macleod, Ian Parker, John Sheriff & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44513)
2002	Gavin MacGregor	Stone colour survey (MacGregor 2002, 149)
14 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

64 Tillyfourie, Monymusk, Aberdeenshire

NJ61SW 3 NJ 6431 1350

At the time of the survey in 1998, this recumbent stone circle stood in a heather- and grass-grown clearing beside a track in Bogmore Wood. Since then the surrounding forest has been felled, revealing its topographical position on a terrace on the south-east slopes of White Lady. Of its thirteen stones, only the recumbent (2), the west flanker (1) and one orthostat (10) are still upright, but the circle is otherwise substantially complete, measuring about 20m in diameter and enclosing a well-defined ring-cairn. The recumbent boulder (2), which lies on the south-south-west, measures about 2.85m in length by 1.45m in height and is placed at a skewed angle to face almost south. Its horizontal summit is relatively even and a substantial earthfast stone behind its west end appears to chock it in position and prevent it from tumbling backwards. The west flanker (1) is a relatively slender pillar standing 2.3m high and arches over the end of the

recumbent, but the east flanker (2), a broader slab, has fallen forwards, exposing its full length of 2.6m. When erect the two stones would have been of similar heights, and to a certain extent the curve of the eastern edge of the east flanker may have created the illusion of the pronounced inward curve of its neighbour on the west. Like the west flanker it was probably set back from the front of the recumbent and turned slightly to trace the arc of the circle. Apart from the one orthostat surviving upright (10) on the north-north-west and another leaning steeply on the east (7), seven of the eight remaining are prostrate (4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12 & 13) and the seventh (11) has been broken up into at least four pieces which lie discarded on the north-west. Under these circumstances it is difficult to demonstrate that the heights of the stones were graded, but in general the smaller stones are on the north and the lengths of the fallen and leaning stones around the east suggest that on this side at least their tops progressively reduced in height from south to north. On the west, however, where the circle climbs a low scarp that tilts the west half of the monument





towards the east, they almost certainly did not. The internal ring-cairn measures about 17m across, rising from the top of the surrounding kerb to a flat top 14m in diameter and 0.6m in maximum height. The rubble-choked court at its centre is about 4.5m in diameter and the sixteen remaining stones of the inner kerb increase in height from north to south. The outer kerb, which evidently links to the back of the recumbent setting on the south-south-west, is not so clearly graded, but the largest of the 32 earthfast and fallen kerbstones that are visible is set immediately behind the west flanker.

Tillyfourie is annotated *Druids Temple* on an estate plan drawn up by John Innes in 1799 (NAS RHP 245), and some thirty years later in 1834 it appears as a *Druidical Circle* on a plan prepared by George Stephen (NAS RHP 982). In the latter guise the ring is referred to by Rev Robert Forbes, minister of Monymusk (NSA, xii, Aberdeenshire, 463), and it is also noted by his neighbour in Tough, Rev James Gillan, who recognised that it was more complete than the **Old Kirk of Tough** in his own parish. Gillan provides no detail of the circle itself, but instead describes the *'tumuli ... without number; and the remains of ancient walls or causeways ... running out from the principal circle, and connecting it with several lesser ones'* (NSA, xii, Aberdeenshire, 613). It can be no coincidence that his final invocation that *'it seems to deserve the inspection of an antiquarian'* (*ibid*) should eventually be followed up by John Stuart, probably shortly before 1853. Stuart slightly underestimated the overall diameter of the

The recumbent setting from the west-north-west. © NMS

ring at about 14m, but nonetheless describes the ring-cairn quite accurately as a *'circular mound of stones, about 15 feet [4.5m] in breadth, guarded by large flat stones set endwise; and inclosing an open space 9 feet [2.7m] in diameter'* (Stuart 1854a, 141). The central court had already been cleared out by then and most of the orthostats had fallen. Like Gillan, in some respects Stuart seems to have been more interested in the surrounding landscape, describing one bank that extended northwards from the circle to form a long narrow enclosure that returned on the west, and another running away to the east. He also mentions that there were a large number of small cairns disposed in two main groups. At this time, the circle probably formed part of what might now be termed a prehistoric landscape on the flank of the hill, though the ruins of a township and the *'marks of ridges'* shown to the south and east respectively on Innes' plan of 1799 suggest that more probably it stood at the edge of a later field-system belonging to the township. Rather than prehistoric, the field-banks may have been the remains of later tathe-folds, built of stones robbed from the body of the cairn and exposing the court. Shortly after Stuart's visit the circle disappeared behind a veil of conifers and, while this has preserved the circle itself, several generations of trees have since effectively seen off most of the visible traces of the surrounding features, prehistoric or otherwise. In 1927 Alexander Keiller managed to



The cairn now merges with its surroundings. SC851605

identify a bank extending away south-south-east from the fallen east flanker, while in 1998 a short length of bank 5m thick and up to 0.3m high was recognised on the west of the circle and two small clearance heaps in the trees to the north.

A sketch and notes by Arthur Mitchell in 1862 are referred to by Coles (1901, 208), but the OS surveyors in 1865 are the only additional source of information at this date. Apparently closed off from any tracks or rides, they opted for the simplest of depictions in the dense forest, but this shows the five upright stones mentioned in the Name Book, comprising the west flanker (1), probably the fallen orthostat on the south-south-east (4), the heavily leaning stone on the east-north-east (7), the upright orthostat on the north-north-west (10) and finally the fallen one on the west-south-west (13); they do not show the recumbent, and their account ends cryptically *‘it is not known if there were ever more stones than are at present on the ground’* (Aberdeenshire, No. 64, p 43).

Coles visited the ring twice in 1900, producing a fine annotated plan and two profiles. These clearly bring out the ring-cairn, which for want of a suitable nomenclature he referred to simply as a *‘veritable rampart’* ... *carried round within the line of the few remaining upright stones’* (Coles 1901, 204). The plan shows the outer kerb much as it is today, though his surveying may have been a little awry in places, and the inner kerb is almost complete. The stones around an oval pit to its north-east are hatched in the same way as the kerbstones, as if to signify a built structure, but the text suggests that this was no more than a treasure hunter’s excavation; it had already disappeared by the

time Alexander Keiller re-planned the ring in 1927 and is certainly not visible today (below). Two more orthostats (4 & 7) in the ring had fallen and Coles recognised that orthostat 11 had been deliberately broken up, confirming his view that both the cairn and the ring had been extensively interfered with. Apart from the orthostat on the south-west (13), which had yet to fall, the stones of the ring are pretty much in their present positions, but a large rectilinear slab lying to the east of the ring, which appears on Keiller’s plan as two stones lying side by side, is now missing.

James Ritchie’s photographs of 1902 and 1906 reveal the extent to which the circle was then hemmed in with trees, conditions that must equally have hindered Sir Norman Lockyer in 1906. As a result Coles’ plan has only been bettered by Keiller in 1927, who had the advantage that the trees had all been felled about 1917. Furthermore, the thick cloak of grass and bracken that had hidden the stones of the cairn had also gone, as can be seen in contemporary photographs. In part this probably came about simply by the felling of the trees, but the disturbance seems to have gone beyond this, as Keiller discovered when clearing away the bracken; not only was there cairn material lying on brushwood, but the pit on the north-east and another hole Coles mentions to the rear of the recumbent had evidently been filled in. This probably accounts for why so many of the inner kerbstones recorded by Coles are no longer visible.

Alexander Thom’s plan drawn up in 1962 is less detailed, but at that time orthostat 13 was still upright, as it seems to have been when Keith Blood of the OS visited in 1968, shortly after the surrounding ground had been re-planted with yet another crop of trees. Indeed, the collapse of this stone seems to have escaped notice



Innes' plan of 1799 © NAS

before the survey in 1998 and it is not known exactly when it fell. Later work by Burl and Ruggles focused on the analysis of the astronomical alignment of the circle and its setting in the landscape, though it was again buried deep in the forest and they were forced

to calculate the alignment of the setting from the map. Inspection since the trees were removed has confirmed that the flankers frame the summit of Green Hill above the recumbent, about 3.7km to the south-south-west.

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1901, 248; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 353, Abn 115; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 73; Barnatt 1989, 307, no. 6:103; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 73; Burl 2000, 422, Abn 120

Date	Personnel	Record
1799	John Innes	Estate map (NAS RHP 245)
1834	George Stephen	Estate map (NAS RHP 982)
c1835	James Gillan	Note (<i>NSA</i> , xii, Aberdeenshire, 613)
November 1840	Robert Forbes	Note (<i>NSA</i> , xii, Aberdeenshire, 463)
c1853	John Stuart	Description (Stuart 1854a, 141; 1856, xiii)
1865	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Aberdeenshire 1869, lxiii.11); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 64, p 43)
September 1900	Frederick Coles	Description, plan, profiles and sketch (Coles 1901, 203–8, figs 15–17, 248; 1910, 164)
March 1902	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2517 & AB2540)
June 1906	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2518 & AB 2422)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 396, 409)
1920	George Browne	Description (Browne 1921, 84–5, pl xxix)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
5 October 1927	Alexander Keiller	Plan, profile and photographs (Keiller 1927, 11–13; 1934, 17–18; RCAHMS ABD541; MS106/27, 43; AB4821–2po)
21 April 1962	Alexander Thom	Plan and notes (Thom 1967, 137, 142; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 224–5; RCAHMS DC4418; DC4774co; MS430/34; Ferguson 1988, 67)
7 February 1968	Keith Blood	OS: description and map revision
c1980	Aubrey Burl	Astronomical survey and guidebook description (Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 353; 1980a, 199, no. 17; 1995 & 2005a, 110, no. 120; 2000, 422)
1 July 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67–71, 74–5; 1999, 213–16, 238, 266; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 28, 40–1, 47, 49)
11–12 May 1998	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44470)
7 April 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

65 Tilquhillie, Banchory-Ternan, Aberdeenshire

NO79SW 10 NO c725 940

A recumbent stone circle probably once stood in one of the improved fields to the east-south-east of Tilquhillie Castle, but the stones were cleared before 1855 (see below) and the recumbent, a block known as the Druid Stone (Ritchie 1919, 71), lies discarded on a consumption dyke 375m south-east of the Castle (NO 7252 9402). Measuring about 2.5m in length by 1.3m in breadth and 0.8m in thickness, what was the even summit of the block now forms its west-north-west side. A second stone from the circle has been re-erected in a gap between another two consumption dykes 35m south-west of the Castle (NO 7223 9410); it presents a strongly curved profile and stands 1.65m high.

The presence of a stone circle at Tilquhillie is first recorded by James Ritchie, whose attention was drawn to the site by Alexander Macdonald (Ritchie 1919, 71). Macdonald was for many years the schoolmaster at Durrus and had assisted Coles in the excavation of **The Nine Stanes** (Coles 1905, 91), so he knew both the area and its people, but Ritchie's account is so confused that it seems unlikely that he could have fully understood the information he had received. Ritchie interpreted the lone standing stone close to the Castle as the west flanker of the recumbent setting,



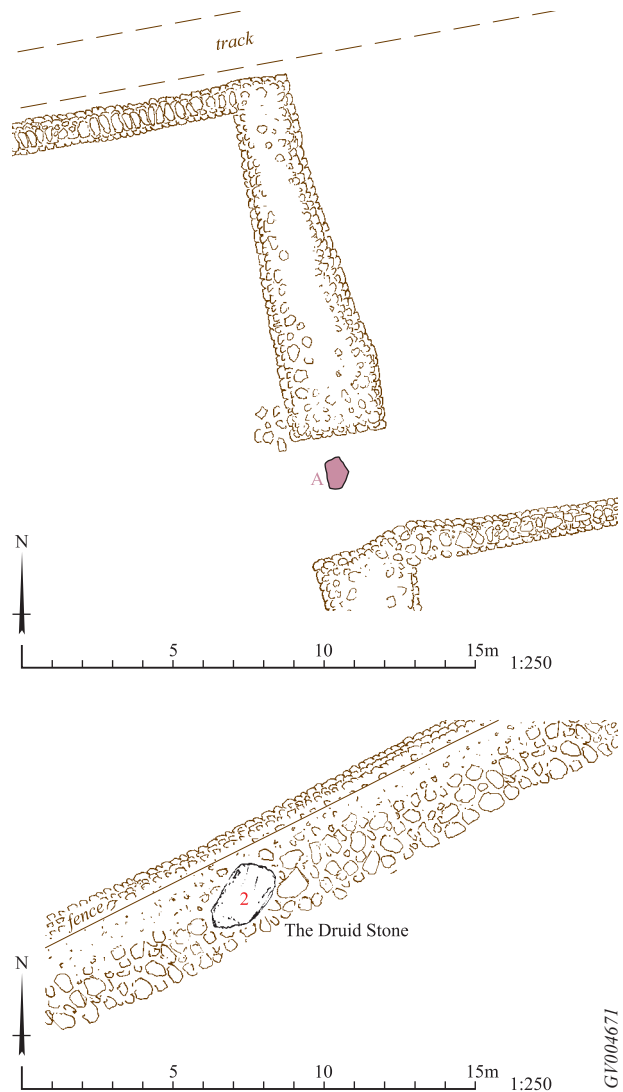
'The Druid Stone' lies in a consumption dyke (above) and the supposed flanker stands in a gateway in a dyke elsewhere (below). DP078429 & DP078428



though the supposed recumbent was a diminutive boulder little more than 1m in length, while the farmer explained to him that the third boulder in the setting 'had been brought in quite recently from the neighbouring field, and thrown down in the vacant space so as to be out of the way' (1919, 71). Curiously this gap in the consumption dyke where the stone now stands does not appear on either the 1st or the 2nd edition of the OS 25-inch map, suggesting that none of these stones had been in this location very long. Despite recording that *The Druid Stone* was built into the dyke of the neighbouring field, the significance of its size, shape and name were lost upon him, and Ritchie suggested without much conviction that it might have been an outlying stone, drawing comparisons with those at Shelden (App 1.74).

Balquhain and Druidstone. There the matter has rested, though Tilquhillie has appeared in several lists as a possible recumbent stone circle, and following a visit in 1984, Stratford Halliday of RCAHMS concluded that the stone set up near the Castle might have been a prehistoric standing stone. In retrospect the erection of this stone probably took place after the gateway was cleared through the consumption dyke, apparently not long before 1912. An estate map at the Castle shows that the pattern of fields here was established by 1855, while the 1st edition of the OS 25-inch map indicates that the consumption dykes were in place by 1864–5 (Kincardineshire 1868, vi). Presumably the site of the circle is not far from where the *Druid Stone* now lies.

Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 360, Knc 16; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 88; Barnatt 1989, 304, no. 6:94; Ruggles 1999, 188, no. 88; Burl 2000, 429, Knc 19



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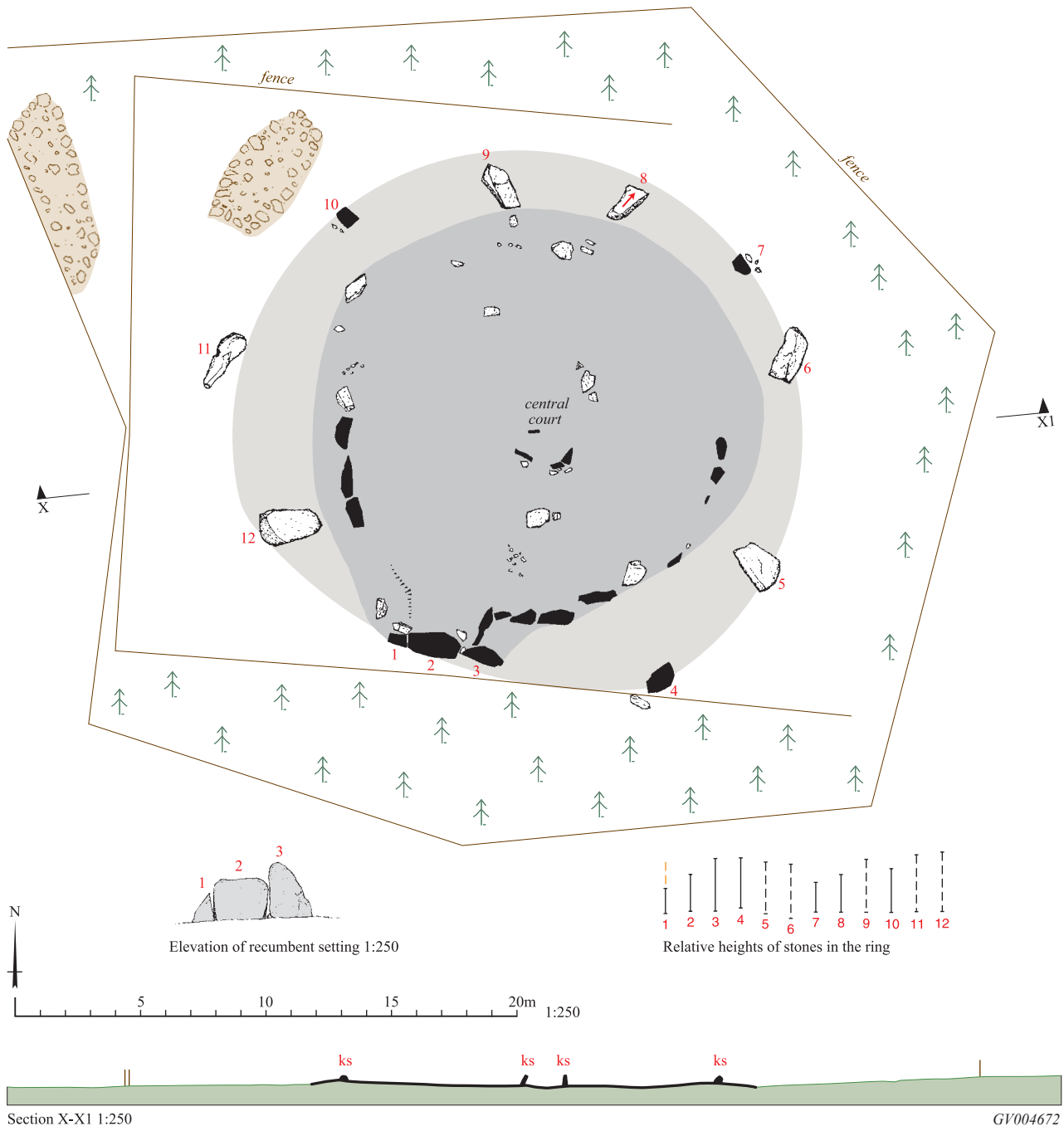
Date	Personnel	Record
June 1912	James Ritchie	Description and photograph (Ritchie 1919, 71; RCAHMS KC298)
March 1984	Stratford Halliday	Standing stone (RCAHMS 1984, 19, no. 96)
22 April 2005	Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description
10 May 2005	Angela Gannon & Ian Parker	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44565)
22 July 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

66 Tomnagorn, Midmar, Aberdeenshire

NJ60NE 1 NJ 6514 0775

This recumbent stone circle stands on a terrace on the west flank of the hill overlooking Tamnagorn from the east. Now in a grass-grown clearing at the edge of a modern coniferous plantation, the circle encloses a well-defined ring-cairn and measures about 21 m in diameter. It comprises the recumbent setting (1-3) on the south-south-west and nine orthostats (4-12). However, one of these (8) is leaning so steeply as to be almost prone, while another five are lying flat (5, 6, 9, 11 & 12). The recumbent block (2) measures about 2.15 m in length

by 1.5 m in height and has a relatively even summit. While both flankers remain standing, the western (1) has sheared off obliquely to a stump and what are probably fragments belonging to its top lie immediately behind it. Nevertheless, the two stones evidently presented contrasting profiles, the western being a slender pillar and the eastern (3) a much broader slab, its east edge rising inwards to a rounded point and giving the impression that it leans over the end of the recumbent. In contrast to the west flanker, which is set flush with the leading edge of the recumbent to extend its long axis, the east flanker stands back and is turned inwards slightly towards the recumbent. At 2.1 m, the east flanker



is the tallest stone in the circle, and the measurements of the rest of the orthostats, both standing and prostrate, show that they reduced in height and spacing round towards the north, where orthostat 7 on the north-east is the shortest surviving upright. The heavily robbed ring-cairn within the interior measures 15.5m in diameter over a kerb of boulders up to 0.6m high. At least twelve of the kerbstones remain in place, one of which is a slab 1.7m in length set almost at right-angles to the general line of the kerb behind the east flanker, and serving to link the ring-cairn to the back of the recumbent setting. At least three of the four earthfast stones visible at the centre probably belong to the kerb of the inner court, though the status of the fourth, a rather lower stone on the north-west side, is uncertain, for if this is indeed part of the kerb it would suggest that the court was little more than 2m in length by 1m in breadth, whereas more probably the line extended round by the displaced stones some 4m to the north.

The circle above Tomnagorn escaped any specific notice until 1865–6 and the arrival of the OS surveyors in the district. Then it lay in rough pasture on the fringes of sparse coniferous woodland, and, showing the recumbent setting as a single stone symbol, they faithfully reproduced the disposition of the other nine orthostats, including the reduction in the spacing of the stones on the north; the depiction also appears to show the central court of the ring-cairn. Elsewhere the OS surveyors often omitted fallen stones, implying that all

were erect here at this time. If so, this did not remain the case for much longer. By the time Coles reached the ring in 1899 it was densely planted with trees, dramatically revealed in James Ritchie's photographs taken in 1902. By now, no less than four of the orthostats had fallen (5, 9 11 & 12), and 8 on the north was cowped at its present angle. Despite the conditions, Coles was pleased with the amount of detail he was able to retrieve, which enabled him to estimate the size of the ring, the grading in the spacing, the heights of the stones and the layout of the 'inner stone-setting' – the term he used to describe the outer kerb of the ring-cairn. He also recognised the inner kerb on the south side of the 'central space' and suggested that the slab still lying a little way to the south originally filled the gap in this run of kerbstones. Peeling back the moss behind the recumbent he not only discovered the kerbstone linking the setting to the ring-cairn, but also a layer of water-worn boulders. His description of the latter as 'like a floor' betrays an echo of antiquarian thinking, in which the recumbent was an altar on an elevated platform, and he failed to detect the rest of the cairn material within the outer kerb of the ring-cairn.

Despite the plantation, Sir Norman Lockyer took his astronomical measurements here in 1907, though by then perhaps the trees had been thinned, for by 1920 Right Rev George Browne found the circle in

These stones probably formed part of a central court. DP078431





open woodland and Alexander Keiller was at pains to compliment the tenants on the way they kept it free of bushes and undergrowth (1927, 15). Keiller believed the flankers had been shaped (1934, 12), and his unpublished plan is accompanied by a fine scaled profile of the stones unfolded along a horizontal baseline. The state of the circle was still much as Coles had found it, but by 1962, when Alexander Thom prepared yet another plan, orthostat 6 on the east-north-east had fallen and 11 on the west-north-west had been turned to lie in its present position. Thom is also the first to record the small upright slab set to the north-west of the three kerbstones of the inner court at the centre. Not long after, in 1968,

The recumbent setting from the interior. DP078430

Richard Little of the OS recognised the spread of cairn material within the outer kerb of the ring-cairn, though he believed the slabs at the centre had been displaced when the cairn was robbed. Since then Burl and Ruggles have returned to Tomnagorn to observe that this is one of ten circles where a recumbent with an even summit does not face any conspicuous peak, either in the foreground or on a distant horizon.

Coles 1900, 198; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 353, Abn 104; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 75; Barnatt 1989, 304, no. 6:95; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 75; Burl 2000, 422, Abn 108

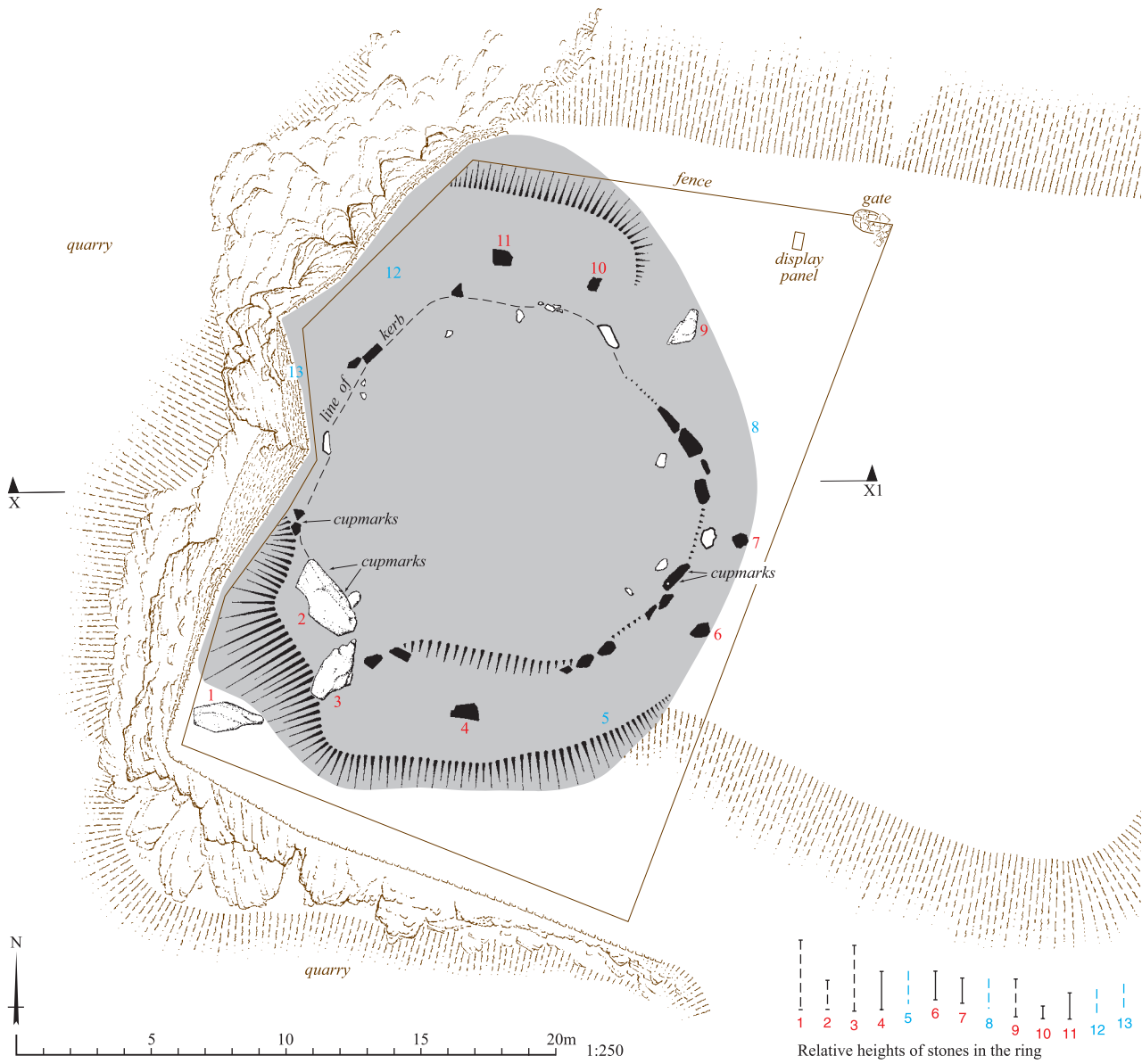
Date	Personnel	Record
1865–6	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Aberdeenshire 1869, lxxii.7); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 62, p 64)
September 1899	Frederick Coles	Description, plan, sections and sketches (Coles 1900, 173–9, figs 27–31)
July 1902	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2483, AB2526, AB2655 & AB2659)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 393, 399)
1920	George Browne	Description and photograph (Browne 1921, 73–5, pl xix)
1927	Alexander Keiller	Description, plan and profile (Keiller 1927, 15; 1934, 12; RCAHMS MS106/27, 35–42; ABD544/1)
2 May 1927	Office of Works	Scheduled
7 February 1968	Richard Little	OS: description and map revision
April 1962	Alexander Thom	Plan and notes (Thom 1967, 137; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 220–1; RCAHMS DC4416; DC4771co; MS430/34; Ferguson 1988, 66)
c1980	Aubrey Burl	Astronomical survey and description (Burl 1980a, 199, no. 32; 1995 & 2005a, 109–10, no. 118)
17 June 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67–71, 74–5; 1999, 213–15; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 47)
30 October 1998	Angela Gannon, Kevin Macleod, Ian Parker & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44491)
23 July 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

67 Tomnaverie, Coull, Aberdeenshire

NJ40SE 1 NJ 4865 0349

The Tomnaverie recumbent stone circle stands on the summit of a hill at the centre of the Howe of Cromar, which forms a natural amphitheatre fringed with mountains from Morvern in the west to the pass north of Aboyne in the east, and with distant views across

Deeside to Lochnagar some 29.5km to the south-west. A Guardianship monument, it was excavated over two seasons from 1999 to 2000 by Richard Bradley and has been partly restored for display. Apart from the re-erection of some of the missing stones, the fenced enclosure within which it previously stood has been removed and the quarry that had encircled its western flank has been partly backfilled in a programme of landscaping.



Section X-X1 1:250

GV004673

The visitor today encounters a circle measuring 17m in diameter, with eleven of its original complement of thirteen stones upright, including an imposing recumbent setting on the south-west (1–3); the gaps for the missing orthostats are on the west-north-west (12) and north-west (13) respectively. All three stones of the recumbent setting have been re-erected, the recumbent (2) having fallen backwards and the two flankers forwards, only for the western (1) to be displaced even further down the slope (see below). The recumbent, which measures 3.2m in length by 1m in breadth and up to 1.15m in height, is a roughly trapezoidal block containing inclusions of quartz. It bears two cupmarks, one on its relatively even summit and the other on its rear, where there is also a natural hollow that Bradley has likened to a bronze flat axe (2005, 32, fig 49). Three other stones have also been re-erected (5, 8 & 9), of which that on the south-east (5) was recovered from the floor of the quarry and found to bear a cupmark. With the exception of this stone, which is light grey in colour, all of the others are pale red, and are arranged so that they reduce in height from the two flankers on the south-west round to the shortest stone on the north-north-east (10) – although the latter appears to have been decapitated. In a similar fashion, the gaps between the stones also close up towards the north-east. The orthostats stand on a stony platform that measures a maximum of 24m from north to south by up to 0.6m in height and encircles a polygonal cairn measuring up to 15m in diameter over a well-defined kerb of granite blocks and slabs; on the south-west the kerb turns outwards to meet the back of the recumbent setting. Cupmarks can be seen on two of the kerbstones, one on the east-south-east, bearing at least one cup on its upper surface, and the other on the west-south-west, with two on its outer face.

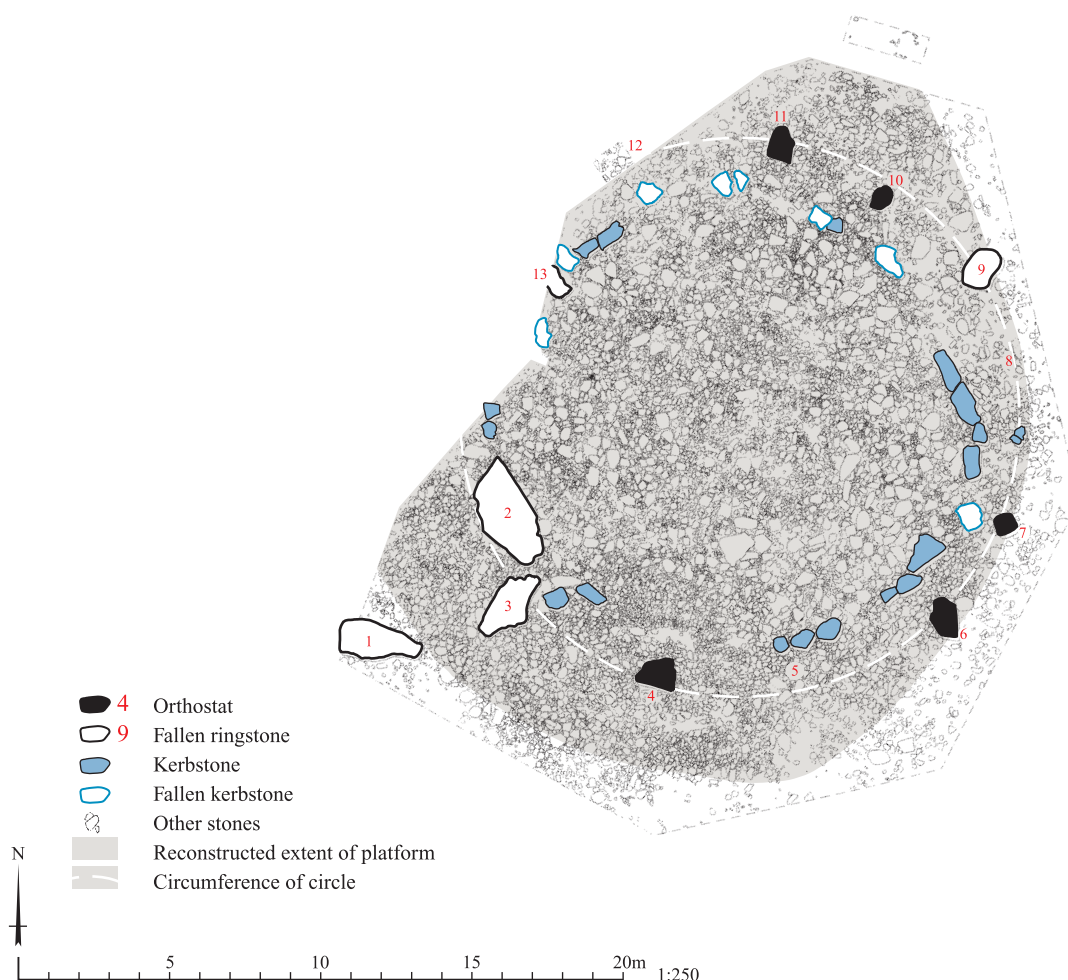
During the excavations, the monument was completely stripped, revealing that it was far better preserved than was previously thought. Rather than complete excavation, however, Bradley's objectives were limited to establishing its structural history and chronology, the following account of which is taken from the published report (Bradley 2005). The first use of the hilltop was for pyres, which led to the build up on the old ground surface of a low mound roughly 3m in diameter made up of burnt soil, charcoal and fragments of cremated human bones. This mound was subsequently incorporated into the polygonal cairn, which was constructed to form a relatively level platform on the hilltop. In preparation for the construction of this cairn, a series of steps had been cut into the slope on the south-west and layers of turf and soil were deposited behind low banks of rubble, apparently to form a firmer foundation where the margin of the cairn extended out onto the slope. The perimeter of the cairn was revetted with a continuous stone kerb, which was itself buttressed externally by



The restored recumbent setting from the south. © NMS

an outer rubble platform. The kerb, which was subtly graded to increase in height towards the south-west, had been heavily robbed and of the twenty-five kerbstones that remained, nineteen were still in place. Several arcs of boulders observed in the surface of cairn proved to be superficial, but there were also up to thirteen radial lines, and at least seven of these proved to be crudely built divisions going down through the cairn material and thus relating to its construction. The outer platform encircled the whole cairn, giving it a tiered profile and forming a substantial feature on the south-west. Here the ground is steepest and its clearly defined outer edge included a few blocks of quartz; on the north-east, opposite the position eventually occupied by the recumbent, six sherds of Beaker pottery were found beneath the outer platform at the foot of the kerb, while charcoal from a pit cut into one of the terraces beneath the cairn on the south-west produced a series of radiocarbon dates centred on the 25th century BC. The stones of the circle were erected in shallow sockets cut into the outer platform, those of the two flankers being the deepest, while the recumbent had been chocked in position in a shallow hollow between them. Probably at the same time, the kerb of the cairn was reconfigured to turn outwards to meet the back of the recumbent setting, and a straight run of large kerbstones to its rear was removed. The trench from which they were extracted was backfilled with rubble, contrasting with the soil fill where kerbstones were robbed more recently. Once the circle was in place, there is little evidence of any further activity until about 1000 BC, at which date there was a further episode of burning at the centre of the cairn, again associated with cremated bone fragments. More recently still, in the 16th or 17th century AD, a shallow pit was dug into the centre of the cairn. As well as the sherds of Beaker pottery, finds from the excavations included sherds of Late Bronze Age plainware, a possible fragment of daub, quartz, a rock crystal, a number of worked stones (including six flint blades) and some burnt animal bones.

Prior to the excavation, there was little expectation from its appearance that the interior of the circle would



Derived from a manuscript drawing, RCAHMS Accession Number 2005/222. GV004674

turn out to be so well preserved, an impression that is evident in the first records of the circle made in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Rev Alexander Robertson is almost dismissive, noting only that it comprised ‘a few large stones, some of them standing upright, others fallen down, without any appearance of figures or inscription’ (*Stat Acct*, iii, 1792, 201). Nevertheless, one of his successors, Rev William Campbell, writing in 1842 in the *New Statistical Account*, recognised that they formed a circle (Aberdeenshire, xii, 958), as did Andrew and James Watson, a father and son who were the successive ministers in the neighbouring parish of Tarland. They probably looked up daily to see the ‘distinguished Druidical temple’ on the skyline and perceptively observed that it comprised ‘two circles formed of large erect stones, at short intervals, from 4 to 5 feet [1.2m–1.5m] in height, 3 [0.9m] broad, and 2 feet [0.6m] thick’ (*NSA*, xii, Aberdeenshire, 842). From what is now known about the structure of the monument it is reasonable to correlate their two circles with the ring of orthostats and the kerb of the cairn, but Coles also identified what he believed was an inner ring of set stones lying concentric to the ring of orthostats. Of the

kerb of the cairn (his middle ring) he could make neither head nor tail, though he recognised the significance of the kerbstones at the rear of the recumbent setting, drawing a comparison with those at **Hatton of Ardoyne**. By comparison, Sir Alexander Ogston’s plan drawn up seven years later is little more than a measured sketch, but following on from Coles it is unsurprising that he too shows elements of an inner ring (ie the kerb of the cairn) depicting both it and the ring of orthostats as concentric. Indeed, with the exception of Alexander Thom in 1955, every plan, sketch or description thereafter, including the plan prepared by RCAHMS investigators in 1998 at the request of Bradley, has been heavily influenced by Coles’ observation of the interior. The working assumption that the stones of this inner ring belonged to the kerb of an inner court was dispelled once Bradley had stripped the interior and they proved to be no more than field clearance (2005, 12).

The brief entry in the *Statistical Account* shows that several of the orthostats had fallen by the end of the 18th century, but there are few clues to when the missing stones from the ring and the kerb were removed. Curiously, none of the sources before Coles makes any mention of the recumbent setting either. In 1867 the OS surveyors, who are the first to enumerate



*The restored recumbent stone circle perches on the edge of the disused quarry.
DP007332*

the stones, simply reported that five of them were upright (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 16, p 34). Their depiction on the 1st edition of the OS 25-inch map suggests these were on the south-south-east (4), east-south-east (6), east (7), north (11) and west (13). The absence of the recumbent is no surprise, since the surveyors rarely showed them on the maps, but the omission of the flankers shows that they were already lying where Coles found them forty years later. In excavating the stone-holes of the flankers, Bradley found the packing stones were largely undisturbed, as if the two stones had been lifted vertically from their sockets, and he speculated that the men from the nearby quarry may have been responsible. Be that as it may, neither stone was broken up and the positions in which Coles recorded them were much as they would have been had both simply toppled forwards. Nevertheless, Ogston believed that there had been a deliberate attempt to break up the recumbent, recounting that *'The "Altar Stone" seems to have been prized up at its central side, and small stone blocks placed beneath it, as if it had once been intended to split it into long slabs'* (1931, 94). The orthostat on the north-north-east (10) also appears to have lost its top and the excavation uncovered wedge sockets cut into several kerbstones, but this is as likely to relate to stone-robbing earlier in the 19th century.

In 1867 the quarry had not long opened, forming a relatively small pit about 15m across a little to the north-west of the circle. Over the next thirty years it was driven deep into the hillside, until by the end of the century it was threatening the very existence of the monument. The 2nd edition of the OS map shows

the perimeter fence of the quarry cutting across the circle, though the depiction of the circle itself bears no resemblance to either the earlier map or Coles' plan (Aberdeenshire 1902, lxxxi.4). Coles was the first to voice concerns about the advancing quarry face, noting that it had *'quite recently ... been carried close up to, within indeed 3 feet [0.9m] of, one of the few Standing Stones yet in situ'* and was now *'so close as to cause real uneasiness lest this fine Stone should be shaken from its foothold'* (1905, 210). There is little doubt that this refers to the orthostat on the west (13), shown on Coles' plan but now missing. His description is of *'a rugged and rather top-heavy block' standing '5 feet 7 inches [1.7m] clear of the ground, and girths at the base 8 feet 6 inches [2.6m]'* (*ibid*), and this is certainly as it appears on James Ritchie's photographs taken in the same year. Another photograph by an unknown photographer dated 1910 shows this stone still standing, but by July 1911 it had gone and its position is marked only by a letter A on Ogston's plan drawn up on the 27th of that month. Rather than falling into the quarry, however, it was said to have been *'built into the wall of a tradesman's house in Tarland village'* (Ogston 1931, 94). If true, the stone tentatively identified by Bradley as orthostat 13 lying beneath the perimeter fence on the edge of quarry (2005, 24) is unlikely to be one and the same, though it would be possible to test the hypothesis from Coles' measurements and Ritchie's photographs.

Renewed concerns about the workings were expressed by Alexander Keiller, and the circle acquired scheduled status in 1927. However, the notes and sketches he made in 1923 show that at some point before his visit in 1926, the west flanker (1) had been dragged down the slope (RCAHMS MS106/29; Keiller 1927, 16), where it remained on the edge of the quarry

until the restoration project in April 2000. Initially, the intervention of Lord Aberdeen seems to have saved the circle from destruction (*ibid*), but scheduling ensured its longterm preservation. Whereas the quarry might easily have consumed the whole summit of the hill, it was extended around its southern flank, and the face below the circle was eventually shored up and stabilised with the construction of a stone wall. The landscaping of the quarry and the restoration of the fallen stones following the excavation is the logical conclusion of this process. As a result of the excavation the sockets of three of the missing orthostats were located on the south-east (5), east-north-east (8) and north-north-west (12), and another was found beneath the fallen slab on the north-east (9). Orthostat 8 was also found beneath the turf beside its socket, while another stone lying on the floor of the quarry was tentatively identified as orthostat 5, though having fallen before 1870 and been missing since before Coles prepared his plan in 1904 it is unknown how it might have ended up unbroken in the quarry another 100 years on. Nevertheless, orthostats 5, 8 and 9 were re-erected, each fitting snugly into its socket, as did the two flankers. The recumbent was rolled upright between them, and though its north-west

end slotted neatly back into position, its south-east end required considerable packing to level the summit. The result is hugely impressive, though viewed from the perspective of the present survey the setting has not turned out in the way that might have been anticipated. Typical flankers are set with their long axes in roughly the same alignment as the recumbent, albeit sometimes turned slightly so that the leading face picks up the arc of the circle. Here, when the crane lifted them back into place, they would only fit between the packing stones of their sockets turned at right-angles to this plane, though this results in the kerb of the cairn apparently stopping slightly short of their outer edges rather than meeting their rear faces. The result is most unusual, recalling only **Strichen House**, though in that case the reconstruction is demonstrably wrong. With the re-erection of the stones at Tomnaverie, it is now much easier to appreciate the circle in its topographical setting. This confirms Burl and Ruggles' observation that the recumbent faces towards the distant peak of Lochnagar.

Coles 1905, 208–13; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 353, Abn 105; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 77; Barnatt 1989, 304, no. 6:96; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 77; Burl 2000, 422, Abn 109

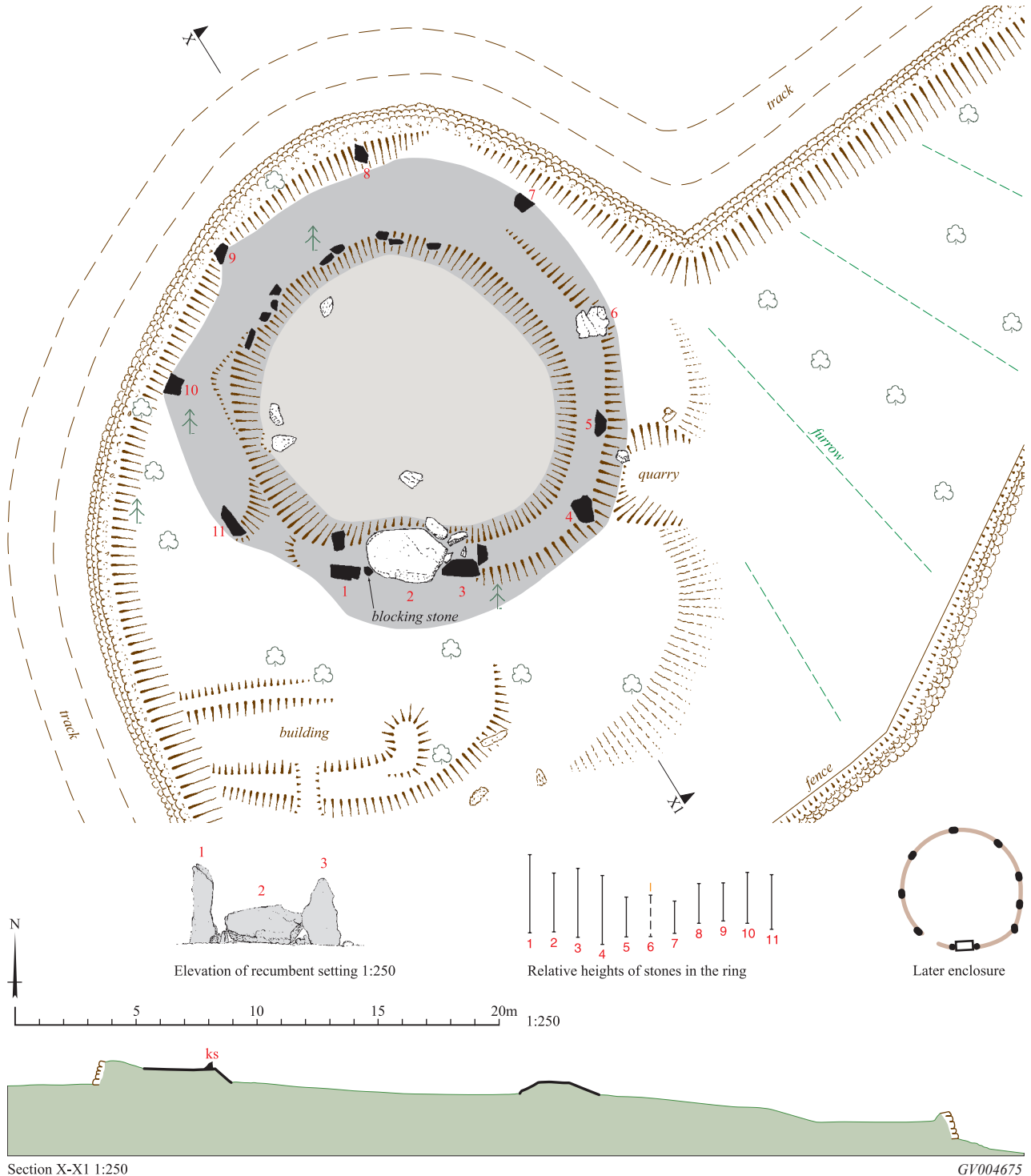
Date	Personnel	Record
1792	Alexander Robertson	Note (<i>Stat Acct</i> , iii, 1792, 201)
1842	Reverends Andrew & James Watson	Description (<i>NSA</i> , xii, Aberdeenshire, 842)
August 1842	William Campbell	Note (<i>NSA</i> , xii, Aberdeenshire, 958)
c1854	John Stuart	Note (Stuart 1854b, 260)
1866–7	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1870, lxxxi.4); Description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 16, p 34)
July 1904	James Ritchie	Note and photographs (Ritchie 1917, 34; RCAHMS AB2452 & AB2664)
September 1904	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketch (Coles 1905, 208–13, figs 11–12)
1910	Unknown	Photograph (RCAHMS AB4793)
27 July 1911	Alexander Ogston	Description and plan (Ogston 1931, 93–5, figs 55–6)
1923	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1927, 16; RCAHMS MS106/29, 10–17)
31 May 1927	Office of Works	Scheduled
23 September 1930	Office of Works	Taken into Guardianship
8–9 August 1955	Alexander Thom	Plan and notes (Thom 1967, 136; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 210–11; RCAHMS DC4411; MS430/17; Ferguson 1988, 66)
1963	Richard Feachem	RCAHMS: description (Feachem 1963, 39)
15 October 1968	Richard Little	OS: description, sketch plan and map revision
1960s–90s	Aubrey Burl	Guidebook description (Burl 1970, 60, 79; 1976a, 170, 353; 1995 & 2005a, 110, no. 119)
16 June 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67–8, 70–1, 74–5; 1999, 213–4, 216; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 39, 49, 51)
27–30 October 1998	Ian Parker & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44478–9)
1999	Derek Alexander	Survey (Alexander 1999)
1999–2000	Richard Bradley	Excavation (Bradley 1999; 2000, 9; Bradley <i>et al</i> 2002, 840–8, figs 2–6)
4 May 2006	David Herd, Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

68 Tyrebagger, Dyce, Aberdeenshire

NJ81SE 11 NJ 8595 1321

This well-known recumbent stone circle, standing in the north-west corner of a plantation enclosure above Standingstones farm, is one of the few that has retained its full complement of stones. Set on the leading edge of a terrace on the north-east spur of Tyrebagger Hill, it measures 18.5m in diameter and comprises

the recumbent setting (1–3) on the south and eight orthostats (4–11); one of the latter (6) was fallen on the day of the survey but had been re-erected by the autumn of 1999. The recumbent slab (2) measures 3.35m in length by 2.4m in height and has an even summit, but it has fallen backwards and rests at an angle on a boulder near its west end. In this tilted position it has proved a convenient hood for a fireplace and the blackening of its inner face is testimony to over a century of picnic fires,



eventually splitting the stone and requiring repairs in 1998. The initials JL are carved close to the centre of its outer face. Both flankers remain standing, the western (1) being a slender pillar 3.25m high and the eastern (3) a broader and more pointed slab 2.8m high, but whereas flankers elsewhere so often appear to curve over the ends of the recumbent, here the reverse is true. They are aligned with the front of the recumbent to form a flat facade, and a possible blocking stone can be seen filling the gap between the west flanker and the recumbent. The flankers are the tallest stones in the ring and the tops of the rest of the orthostats are graded to reduce in height from the south down to a stone 1.3m high on the north-north-east (7). This grading is not matched in the intervals between the stones, and the relatively even spacing around the west and north breaks down on the east, where orthostats 5 and 6 appear to have been inserted asymmetrically and 5 stands a little way inside the circumference of the ring (see plan). All the orthostats are now set out along the outer margin of a stony ring-bank 3m thick and 0.5m high, though this probably forms a misleading impression of the original character of the interior of the circle. According to James Logan, writing in the early 19th century, the circle had been used as a cattle pound (1829b, 411), to which end the interior was dug out; a gap in the ring-bank between the west flanker (1) and the neighbouring orthostat (11) probably marks the entrance into the

pound. Without Logan's description, the nine earthfast stones protruding from the inner edge of the ring-bank on the north-west quarter might be interpreted as inner kerbstones defining a broad central court, but more probably they are the outer kerbstones of a robbed central cairn about 12m in diameter, which was linked to the back of the recumbent setting by the kerbstones that can be seen embedded in the ring-bank immediately behind both flankers. No other trace of this cairn can now be seen, apart from four displaced kerbstones lying within the interior.

The circle is a prominent landmark above Dyce, and is perhaps recalled by the name Adenacloch (burn of the stone) that appears in a grant of the forest of Cordyce in 1316 (Duncan 1988, 382–3, no. 107). More obviously the circle has lent itself to the name of Standingstones farm – both appearing on an estate plan of 1748. To Rev William Wilson, however, the author of the parish entry for Dyce in the *Statistical Account*, the circle was a *Druidical temple*. His description continues: '*It consists of ten long stones placed in a circular form, the diameter of it is about 24 feet [7.3m]. The highest of the stones, which stand on the south side, are about nine feet [2.7m] above the ground. The lowest, which are on the north side, four and a half [1.4m]. There is one stone placed on its edge, betwixt the two southmost*

This view from the east shows the repaired orthostat re-erected in 1999 and the sooted underside of the recumbent. SC1101239



stones, which is about six feet high [1.8m]' (iii, 1792, 131). Despite his underestimate of its overall diameter, if indeed that was what he was measuring, it is a perceptive and accurate description that conveys the scale of the stones and their grading. Like Logan a few decades later, he seems to have counted the stones of the circle separately from the recumbent to arrive at a total of only ten. In Logan's opinion the eleventh, the recumbent, had 'originally been elevated on several smaller stones' (1829b, 411), though quite what he meant by this is not clear. In a slightly later account about 1840 by Rev William Pirie, the recumbent is described as 'crushing through the low and decayed pediment on which it had been originally raised' (NSA, xii, Aberdeenshire, 122), and there is a sense in which both he and Logan may have perceived the slab set up like a cromlech on the smaller kerbstones at the rear of the setting. Nevertheless, the enduring value of Logan's contribution lies in the accompanying copper plate (*ibid*, 410, pl xxii), which provides a sketch of the ring from the north and an excellent plan with an accurately measured diameter from the east flanker (3) to the northernmost orthostat (8). The sketch is especially useful, for it clearly indicates that the recumbent had already slumped backwards. Moreover, unlike the plan, the sketch portrays the remains of the cattle pound – a ruinous drystone wall running from orthostat to orthostat to enclose the dished interior with its entrance on the south-west. The dishing of the interior, however, appears to have been eccentric to this wall on the west side of the ring, where two of the kerbstones can be seen protruding from the lip of the hollow. This eccentricity may well indicate that the centre had already been dug out before the wall of the pound was built. The wall itself has largely disappeared, probably robbed to supply the material for the plantation enclosure, though John Cobban, a local mason engaged by Christian Maclagan at the end of the 19th century, had heard that stones from the circle had been taken to build Standingstones steading (Maclagan 1894, 23).

The OS surveyed Tyrebagger in 1865–6, by which time it had been incorporated into the plantation. The field to the north-west had also been taken into cultivation, detaching the circle from the landscape of small cairns that once existed on the moorland beyond. The accompanying report in the Name Book asserts: 'It consists of 10 stones, 9 of which stand erect and in a circular position. Two of these on the south of the circle are 10 feet high, the rest being from 5 to 7 feet [1.5m–2.1m] in height. Resting on its edge between these two high stones in a sloping and evidently fallen posture, lies a very large broad stone... there is a gap in the circle as though one of the stones has been removed and there is a belief in the neighbourhood as to the whole not being there' (Aberdeenshire, No. 27, p 31). In this case it is not clear whether the tenth stone is the recumbent or a fallen orthostat, nor where the supposed



An estate map of 1748 shows that the recumbent stone circle was already a well-known landmark. © NAS

gap lay. Unfortunately other contemporary sources do not resolve the issue: two drawings by Jonathan Forbes-Leslie, who considered the ring to be especially well-preserved, are known to have been exhibited to a meeting of the British Association at Edinburgh in 1871 but are now lost (NLS APS.1.79.129), and Christian Maclagan's plan cannot be regarded as an entirely reliable guide to the remains on the ground (1875, pl xxviii). As far as the number of stones is concerned, the count of ten probably does not include the recumbent, which is not shown on the contemporary edition of the 25-inch map, but equally there is no gap in the depiction of the western half of the ring. Possibly, it signals the date at which orthostat 6 was broken into at least two pieces, both of which were then set upright and appear on the plan prepared in 1884 by Rev William Lukis. This might also account for the local tradition that a stone was missing. The source of the Name Book entry can probably be traced to Rev John Kemp, the minister and evidently a man of learning who had been rector of several schools before taking up the incumbency of Dyce (Scott 1926, vi, 55) It is tempting to speculate that he might have been responsible for the re-erection or even the re-introduction of a missing stone into the ring.

Maclagan also referred to ten granite stones in the circle, though the distinction she drew between them and the recumbent clearly indicates that she had counted the latter separately. She shows all eleven on her regularised and stylised plan, which has kerbstones ringing two thirds of a central court 5.5m in diameter, half the size of the probable cairn and considerably smaller than the area dug out in the interior. This sort of discrepancy undermines any credence that might be put on her observations, which include several stones behind the recumbent, probably those already identified by Logan and others, which she construed as 'very faint traces of what was once the entrance-gallery leading through the wall' (1875, 77), a contrivance by which she sought to interpret the evidence of Tyrebagger in the light of her reconstruction of **Easter Aquhorthies**. In addition, she claimed to have seen 'evidences of the



This model was based upon an exacting record made by General Pitt-Rivers' assistants, Tomkin and Gray, in 1889. © Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum

former existence of a second concentric circular wall' (*ibid*) about 30 feet (9m) beyond the ring, though no subsequent visitor has found evidence that such a feature existed. In 1961 Eric Cameron of the OS correlated this with a length of low bank on the south-west, but this is one side of a rectangular building which is presumably the ruined cottage whose occupants Logan tells us had converted the circle into a pound (1929b, 411).

Rev John Michie, a disciple of Maclagan's interpretations who had helped her measure Tyrebagger, also dug at the foot of one of the orthostats, reminding her by letter in 1877 that this did not penetrate the subsoil, and was entirely founded within 0.6m of loose stony debris belonging to what they believed was the wall, but which with hindsight may have incorporated a platform encircling the cairn (Maclagan 1881, 32–3). Some time later, in 1893, the controversy surrounding Maclagan's theories led her to return to the evidence of Michie's excavation. As part of a renewed defence of her contention that the ringstones were not embedded in the ground but were supported by the 'ruined wall' (1875, 6), she engaged John Cobban to undertake a second excavation at Tyrebagger (Maclagan 1894, 20–3). The published letter, one of at least two he sent her, reiterates his results, which were evidently not entirely to her satisfaction. He had observed what he believed was the ancient soil beneath the circle, sandwiched between the clay subsoil and the overlying cairn material, or 'deposited rubbish' as he termed it. While it was difficult to distinguish the overlying material from the soil, in his opinion the stone stood in a shallow socket cut into the subsoil; its fill was a mixture of clay and the ancient soil. As a practical man, he believed that this stone had been set up before the deposition of any of the cairn material, but in answer to her leading questions he tried to wrap up his observations in such a way that did not compromise her theory. We can only guess that his earlier unpublished letter implied an outright contradiction of her position.

Lukis' plan of 1884 is a complete contrast to Maclagan's impressionistic style, drawn using the architectural conventions he had adopted elsewhere with

Sir Henry Dryden. It includes detailed sections showing the dished interior and elevations of the individual stones to reveal the grading. Within the interior he shows eight surviving kerbstones and was sufficiently perceptive to identify them as the last vestiges of an internal cairn, which at this date was remarkably well-informed (Lukis 1885, 308–9). This heralded a flurry of work here that continued into the 20th century. Alfred Lewis published a good account three years later, but his compass bearings were corrupted by magnetic anomalies, leading William McCombie Stewart, his local informant, to provide him with another plan prepared by an unnamed railway engineer (Lewis 1888, 44–6; Bulloch 1888, 65). He learned from Stewart that 'there was formerly a hole in the middle of the circle' (*ibid*), which he considered might be evidence of a cist, and he identified two or three stones to the south-east of the ring as the constituents of Maclagan's 'second concentric circular wall' (*ibid*) – an idea that he firmly repudiated. Shortly after, in 1889, General Pitt-Rivers' assistants, William Tomkin and Claude Gray, spent two wet and windy days in August planning, sketching and photographing the circle in preparation for a model that now graces Salisbury Museum, observing as they did so that several of the stones had been defaced by graffiti.

This level of work preceding Coles' survey was unusual, but he makes little reference to the evolving record, other than to cite Logan to explain the ring-bank. This assumes exaggerated proportions upon his plan and is emphasised in his sketch from the north by his practice of omitting later enclosure walls. He counted twelve stones, puzzling over the two fragments standing on the east-north-east (orthostat 6), and showed only five of the kerbstones ringing the dug out interior; the plan suggests that he saw this 'internal setting' as the remains of a central court, but he makes no reference to it in the accompanying description. Likewise one sketch shows his children, Helen and Cecil, sheltering beneath the recumbent, and yet he does not allude to the picnic fires that were even then being lit in its lee; the soot from them is clearly visible in James Ritchie's photographs of 1902. Visits by the great and the good continued, with Sir Norman Lockyer in 1907, Right Rev George Browne in 1920 and Alexander Keiller in 1927.

Keiller produced yet another plan, together with a fine, scaled profile of the orthostats unfolded along a horizontal baseline. With the exception of orthostat 8, this shows that little had changed since Coles' day, and the circle has been maintained largely in this state to the present, though the southern fragment of orthostat 8 had fallen before Alexander Thom carried out his survey in 1955. He was led to believe that it had been dislodged by a falling tree in 1953 (Thom 1961a, 92), while Eric Cameron of the OS reported the collapse of the other fragment in 1961; the two had been fitted together by 1980 (RCAHMS D72851po) and were eventually re-erected as a single stone in

1999. Thom's work here, and Lockyer's before him, has been followed up by Burl and Ruggles, who have examined the circle's astronomical alignment and its topographical setting. They contend that the recumbent setting faces Brimmond Hill, a prominent hilltop 4km to the south, and that the summit of the recumbent itself is uneven, rising into a rough peak. However, the

recumbent probably slewed round slightly when it fell, and the western part of the summit, representing about two thirds of its overall length, was almost certainly originally horizontal.

Lewis 1900, 72; Coles 1900, 198; 1910, 164; Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 351, Abn 46; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 83; Barnatt 1989, 281, no. 6:36; Ruggles 1999, 188, no. 83; Burl 2000, 420, Abn 45

Date	Personnel	Record
1748	Unknown	Estate map (NAS RHP 263)
1792	William Wilson	Note (<i>Stat Acct</i> , iii, 1792, 131)
1820s	James Logan	Plan, sketch and description (Logan 1829b, 411; 1831, 1, 220)
c1840	William Pirie	Description (<i>NSA</i> , xii, Aberdeenshire, 122)
1865–6	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Aberdeenshire 1869, lxx.12); description (<i>Name Book</i> , Aberdeenshire, No. 27, p 31)
c1871	Jonathan Forbes-Leslie	Lost drawings (NLS APS.1.79.129)
c1875	Christian Maclagan & John Michie	Plan, sections and excavation (Maclagan 1875, 73, 77, pl xxviii; 1881, 32–3; 1894, 20–3; RCAHMS SAS467; DC53020)
6 August 1884	William Lukis	Description, plan and elevations (Lukis 1885, 308–9; GMAG 7829.32, a & b)
September 1885	Alfred Lewis & a Railway Engineer	Plan (Lewis 1888, 44–6; Bulloch 1888, 65)
10 September 1887	J Murray	Sketch (Bulloch 1888, 65)
17 & 19 August 1889	William Tomkin & Claude Gray	Plan, sketches, photographs and model (Thompson 1960, 109, 117–18; NA Work 39/3/16–25, 27–31, 68–70; 39/8/67–70; 39/11/8; 39/13/10–12, 165–76)
1893	John Cobban	Excavation (Maclagan 1894, 20–3)
1899	Frederick Coles	Description, plan, sections, sketches (Coles 1900, 188–95, 198, figs 36–42)
March 1902	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2418–19; AB2690)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 396, 409)
1920	George Browne	Description and photographs (Browne 1921, 89–90, pls xxxi & xxxii)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1927	Alexander Keiller	Plan and profile (Keiller 1927, 5; 1934, 9–10; RCAHMS ABD549; MS106/27, 49–50)
9 August 1955	Alexander Thom	Plan and notes (Thom 1967, 136; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 194–5; RCAHMS DC4405; MS430/17; Ferguson 1988, 67)
27 October 1961	Eric Cameron	OS: description, photograph and map revision
1960s–90s	Aubrey Burl	Guidebook description (Burl 1995 & 2005a, 99–100, no. 101)
29 June 1981	Clive Ruggles	Astronomical survey and tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60, 67–71, 74–5; 1999, 213–16; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 46, 49)
12–14 August 1998	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44475)
1999	Historic Scotland	Orthostat 6 re-erected
21 March 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

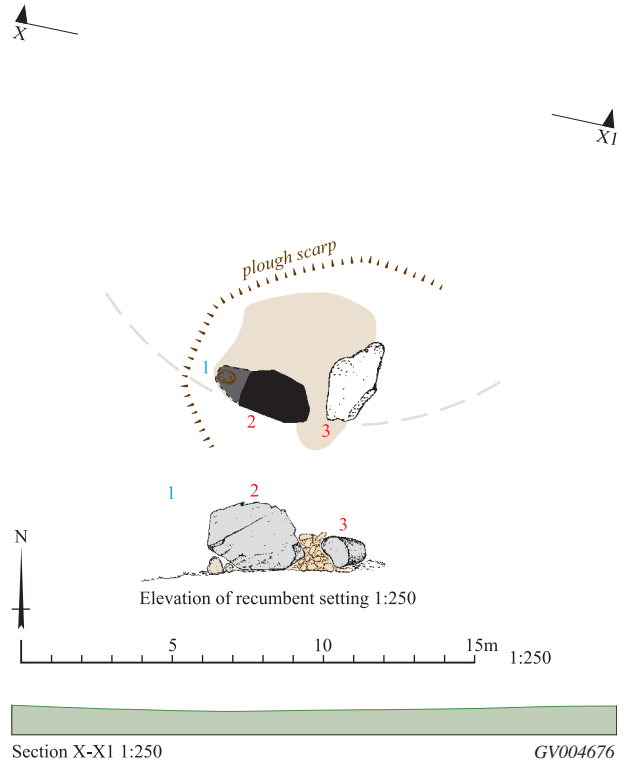
69 Wantonwells, Inch, Aberdeenshire

NJ62NW 2 NJ 6187 2729

Two stones mark the site of this recumbent stone circle, one being the recumbent and the other its fallen east flanker. Now situated in a clearing in a young deciduous plantation on the north side of the minor public road from Old Leslie to Inch, they formerly stood in a cultivated field, occupying the summit of a low rise on the gently shelving spur dropping down above Wantonwells. The recumbent block (2), which has a domed summit, faces south-south-west and measures 3.2m in length by 2.2m in height. The east flanker (3) measures just short of 3m in length and would have been an impressive stone when it was upright. No internal features of the circle are visible, although a shallow depression can be seen in the ground to the north of the recumbent.

Wantonwells is probably one of the *Druidical temples* in the parish of Inch noted in the *New Statistical Account* (xii, Aberdeenshire, 751), but the surveyors of the OS are the first to provide any more detailed information. They visited it in 1867, reporting that three stones then remained standing, and that another three had been removed a few years before. By 1901, however, the western flanker had also gone, as can be seen from James Ritchie's photograph. That same year Coles recorded the

Ritchie's view from the south-south-west in 1901. SC679933



two stones that were left, together with three earthfast boulders to the north of the recumbent, but he failed to elicit any further information about the missing flanker. James Beattie, the tenant farmer, told him only that in about 1879 he had blasted a very large boulder shown on the map beside the road about 125m to the west-south-west (NJ62NW 3), but this was probably no more than an erratic. The boulders noted by Coles behind the recumbent are now lost beneath the field clearance which has gathered around the remains of the setting. Unfortunately, Ritchie's photograph is taken from the south-south-west, and, while it shows that the field had been cultivated up to the very foot of the recumbent setting, the boulders are hidden from view.

The main weight of work since Coles' survey has concentrated on the shape of the recumbent and the

astronomical alignment of the setting, beginning with Sir Norman Lockyer in 1907 and later followed by Alexander Thom, Burl and Ruggles. The east flanker was still standing in 1957 when Thom undertook his survey, but it had fallen by the time Richard Little of the OS revised the archaeological records for the area in 1969. The sharp razor-like edge of the recumbent caught Alexander Keiller's attention and he observed that this was a characteristic feature of several in the neighbourhood of Inch (1934, 15). Many years later Burl and Ruggles observed that its domed shape broadly matched the profile of Satter Hill, which forms the skyline on the axis of the setting away to the south-south-west.

Coles 1902, 581; Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 353, Abn 110; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 43; Barnatt 1989, 306, no. 6:100; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 43; Burl 2000, 422, Abn 115

Date	Personnel	Record
1867	OS Surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1867, xlv.6); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 41, p 65)
September 1901	Frederick Coles	Description, plan and sketches (Coles 1902, 535–7 figs 51–3, 581)
September 1901	James Ritchie	Photograph (RCAHMS AB2431)
1907	Norman Lockyer	Astronomical survey (Lockyer 1909, 393, 399)
1920	George Browne	Description and photograph (Browne 1921, 83, pl xxvii)
1920s	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1934, 15)
April 1957	Alexander Thom	Theodolite survey and notes (Thom 1967, 136; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 174–5; RCAHMS DC4600; MS 430/20; Ferguson 1988, 67)
4 March 1969	Richard Little	OS: note and map revision
c1980	Aubrey Burl	Astronomical survey (Burl 1980a, 199, no. 20)
7 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 59, 66, 69–71, 74–5; 1999, 213, 215–16, 238; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 30, 49)
22 February 1996	John Sherriff & Iain Fraser	RCAHMS: description
22 June 1999	Kevin Macleod & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44501)
7 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

70 Wester Echt, Echt, Aberdeenshire

NJ70NW 2 NJ 7385 0834

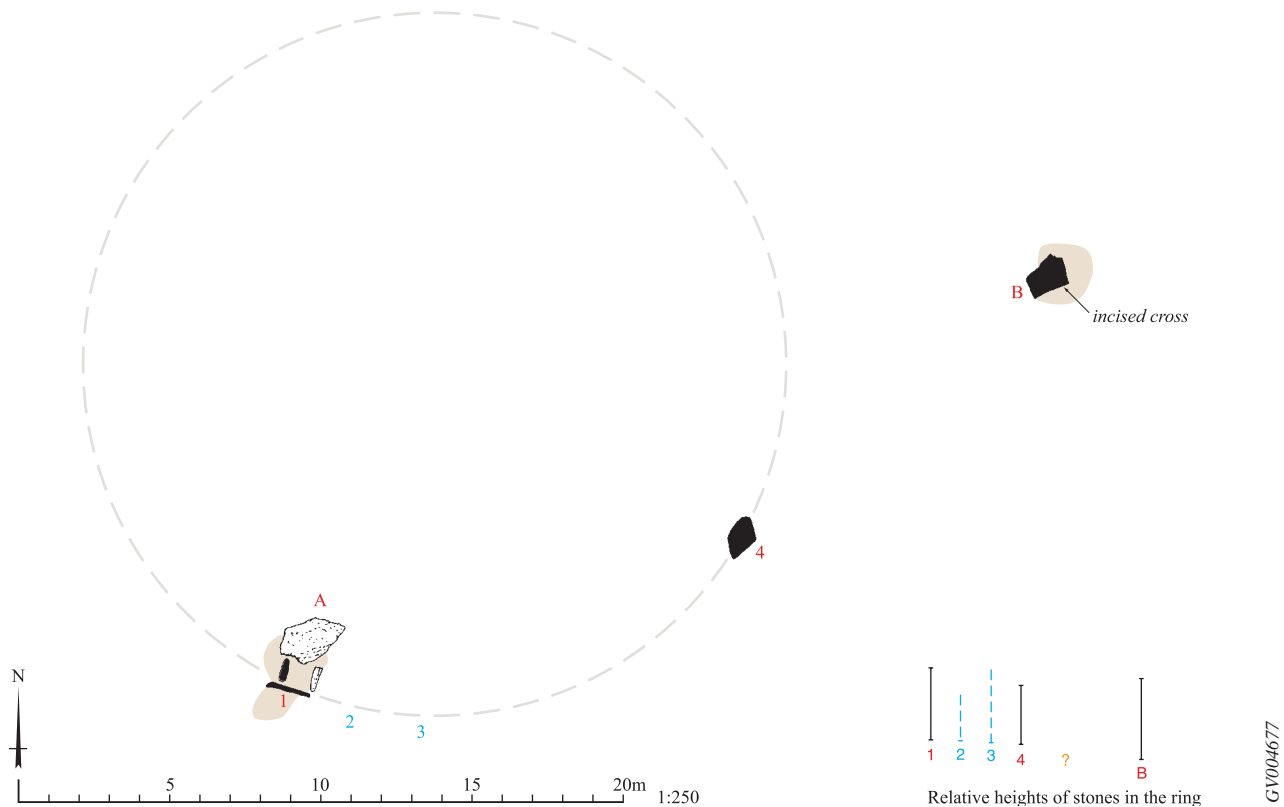
Three stones disposed in a shallow arc 130m south-west of the steading at New Wester Echt are all that remain of a recumbent stone circle with what was probably an outlying standing stone. They stand on ground sloping gently down eastwards from the summit of a low hill, the easternmost (B) being the outlier and the other two comprising the west flanker (1) and an orthostat (4) on the south-east quarter of the ring. The flanker is a tall granite slab and measures 1.4m in breadth by 0.4m in thickness and up to 2.4m in height, while the neighbouring orthostat, which leans heavily to the south, is about 1.9m high. The presence of an internal cairn can be inferred from a single kerbstone, a thin upright slab, visible amongst the field-cleared stones gathered behind the flanker. Its character is clearly demonstrated by one of James Ritchie's photographs taken in 1902 before the rest of the stones were dumped here, though the status of a second earthfast stone he noted behind the flanker is less certain (see below). A large polygonal slab (A) also now lies amongst these stones and may be a fragment from one of the other orthostats. With so few stones

Ritchie did not appreciate in 1902 that the stone in the foreground stands outside the circle. SC676659

remaining it is difficult to estimate the original diameter of the circle with any confidence, but the positions of the stones, and due allowance for the recumbent and a second flanker, place the diameter in the order of 23m, with the outlier standing some 8m to the east. The latter measures about 1.3m by 1m at ground level and rises to a point at a height of 2.6m. Its south-east face bears an incised cross near the top and the initials CM towards the base.

Wester Echt is probably one of the *Druidical temples* noted in the parish at the end of the 18th century (*Stat Acct*, xiii, 1794, 621n; *NSA*, xii, Aberdeenshire, 738), but its identification as a recumbent stone circle rests on a sketch by James Skene dating to about 1822. Taken from the south-west this shows the flanker on the west of a large block, the latter identified in an annotation as the 'altar stone 10 feet by 6 above ground' (RCAHMS SAS464). The copper plate produced from the sketch and published in *Archaeologia Scotica* boldly shows the west end of the recumbent hidden behind the flanker (Skene 1822, 327, pl viii), but the sketch itself is more ambiguous. This view is later reproduced by Right Rev George Browne, who clearly recognised its significance: 'In Skene's time the recumbent stone was still in existence, and a marvellous great block it must have been' (1921, 51). Of the other six stones shown on Skene's sketch, two are those still standing to the north-east of the flanker (4 & B), another two are displaced boulders lying





in front of the east end of the recumbent, and the last two are boulders behind and west of the flanker. Skene almost certainly thought that the outlier (B) stood on the circumference of the ring and gives a diameter of 96ft (29.25m), representing the distance from it to the west flanker (1), though in practice the arc that the three stones describe is close to 60m in diameter. Several of the subsequent commentators recognised that the circle was unusually large, but most of them shared Skene's view. Alexander Keiller, for example, who in 1923 measured the three stones metrically, concluded: 'The stones are consequently not in alignment, but must have been part of a very large circle at one time' (RCAHMS MS106/106/29). Over 60 years later John Barnatt was the first to recognise that this indicates that the easternmost stone is an outlier (1989, 306, no. 6:101).

It is clear from Skene's account that the circle had already been severely damaged by 1822 and he conveyed a sense of foreboding for its future when he wrote that it 'has the misfortune to encumber a cultivated field, a situation it has little chance of enjoying long' (Skene 1822, 327). His pessimism was justified by events and by the time the OS surveyors visited in 1865 the recumbent had been removed, along with most of the smaller boulders that had lain round about. The surveyors cautiously annotated the three surviving stones *Standing Stones*, though the accompanying Name Book entry shows

that *Druidical Temple* and *Stone Circle* had been considered as alternatives before being literally ruled out (Aberdeenshire, No. 28, p 12). This explains why Coles did not make more of an effort to visit the stones in 1899 and only learned retrospectively that an acquaintance of James Gillespie, the tenant, remembered 'there were nine stones in a complete circle, and that they were removed about sixty years ago, the three largest ones being left' (Coles 1900, 187). Given the date of Skene's sketch, this is unlikely to be a memory of the original composition of the circle. At best it may have been told to Gillespie's informant as a boy, but perhaps more likely it relates to the removal of the recumbent and the other boulders. If this is the case the circle was reduced to its present state sometime around 1840.

Ritchie photographed the remains of the circle in 1902 and also recorded his own observations. One image clearly shows the two small stones behind the west flanker, which he interpreted as 'the remains of a stone cist, and indicate that this circle, like so many others, had been used for burial purposes' (1919, 64). Keiller also noted these stones, recording that 'on one side of the rubble of stones (the east side) is a large round stone; on the other a flat stone that would seem to be a broken part from the near-top of 3 [the west flanker]' (RCAHMS MS106/29); contrary to Ritchie, however, Keiller considered that the two stones had



Skene's sketch of the 1820s shows the missing recumbent. SC730423

been placed there 'as a support' (*ibid*), a view reinforced by Keith Blood of the OS, who in 1965 described them as 'modern packing stones'. Excavation will be required to determine the purpose of these stones, and whether the western is a fragment of the flanker, but as far as can be seen the flanker is not resting upon either of them and there is little reason to believe that they provide any support for the stone in its present position. Indeed, Ritchie's photograph suggests the very opposite: the eastern is simply a rounded boulder that would have

lain largely behind the west end of the recumbent; the western is an upright slab set in cairn material in exactly the position where typically the kerb of an internal cairn would have met the recumbent setting.

Lewis 1900, 72; Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 353, Abn 112; Ruggles 1984, 60, no. 70; Barnatt 1989, 306, no. 6:101; Ruggles 1999, 187, no. 70; Burl 2000, 422, Abn 118

The year before Blood visited the circle a colleague at the OS noted 'a dark circular crop mark' was visible here on vertical aerial photographs dating to May 1953 (58/RAF/1109 F21 0165-7), but no trace of such a feature was identified when copies of these and other aerial photographs in RCAHMS collections were reviewed for this entry.

Date	Personnel	Record
1822	James Skene	Sketch and note (Skene 1822, 327, pl viii; RCAHMS SAS464)
1865	OS surveyors	Standing Stones (Aberdeenshire 1869, lxxiii.7); description (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 28, p 12)
September 1900	Frederick Coles	Description (Coles 1900, 187)
July 1902	James Ritchie	Description and photographs (RCAHMS AB2476 & AB2478)
1920	George Browne	Description and sketch (Browne 1921, 51, pl v)
October 1923	Alexander Keiller	Description and photographs (RCAHMS MS106/24; MS106/29, 28-30; AB4819-20po)
3 August 1957	Alexander Thom	Plan (RCAHMS DC4414; MS430/27; Ferguson 1988, 67)
13 January 1965	Keith Blood	OS: description, photographs and map revision
16 June 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 60)
10 October 1994	Historic Scotland	Scheduled
15 April 1998	John Sherriff	RCAHMS: description
22 July 1999	Kevin Macleod, John Sherriff & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44442)
5 June 2006	Simon Howard, Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey
March 2008	John Borland	RCAHMS: drawing of cross (RCAHMS SC1110322)

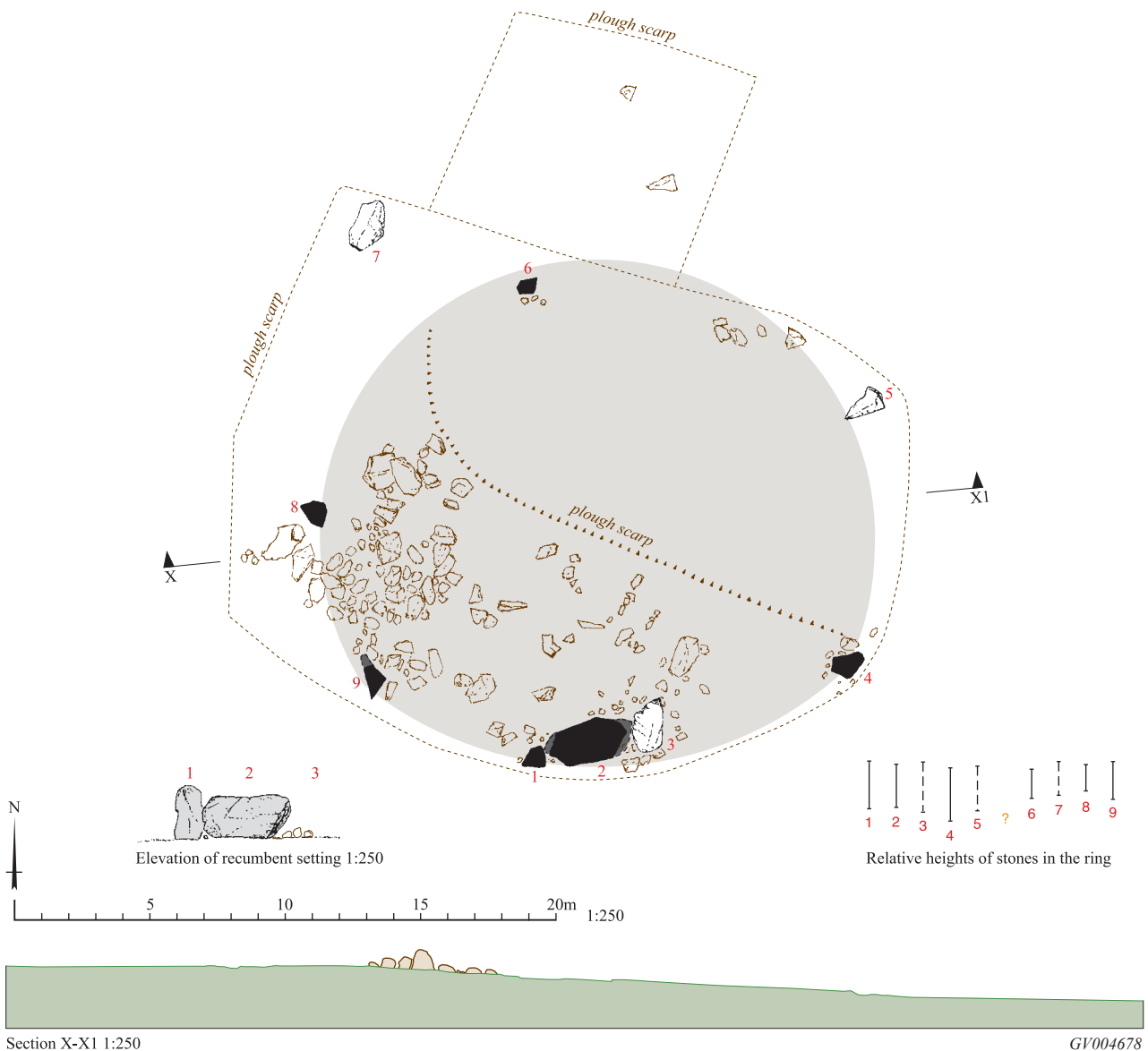
71 Yonder Bognie, Forgue, Aberdeenshire

NJ64NW 15 NJ 6006 4577

This recumbent stone circle stands on a gentle east-facing slope dropping down from the crest of a minor rise. Assuming that the surviving stones belong to a single ring (see below), the circle was oval on plan, measuring about 22m from east to west by 18m transversely, and originally comprised the recumbent setting and up to nine orthostats; only nine stones now remain, and three of these are prostrate (3, 5 & 7). The recumbent block (2), which lies on the south, measures 3.35m in length by up to 1.7m in height. Its summit is uneven and the leading face bears a rash of possibly natural pockmarks low down near its east end. Of the two flankers, only the western (1) remains upright, standing about 1.95m in height; it was the more slender of the pair, and was probably the taller also. The foot

of the west flanker, which is aligned with the leading edge of the recumbent, is set at a slight angle to pick up the arc of the circle, but the setting itself appears to lie askew the projected circumference, forming a markedly flattened facade with its neighbouring orthostats (4 & 9), though it is not placed symmetrically between them. With the tallest of the orthostats on the south-east (4) and the shortest on the north-north-west (6), there can be little doubt that the stones were graded to reduce in height from south to north; and it is likely that the spacing of the stones decreased too. The interior probably once contained a cairn (see below), but it is now featureless, being disfigured with old plough scars and heaps of field-cleared stones.

Yonder Bognie may have been one of the *Druidical temples* in the parish of Forgue mentioned in the *Statistical Accounts (Stat Acct, xii, 1794, 288; NSA, xii, Aberdeenshire, 601)*, but the first specific record of the





The view from the south-south-east. © NMS

circle at Yonder Bognie is not until 1870–1, when the OS surveyors described it as simply ‘a few large stones’ (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 34, p 28). Nevertheless, a manuscript note by Coles, written into his copy of the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries* in 1905 (held in RCAHMS; Coles 1903a, 130–1), identifies this as the site of an excavation made in 1856 by Alexander Morison, the owner of the Montblairy estate. His informant, William Shand, was a long-standing tenant of Yonder Bognie. The excavation is otherwise noted by John Stuart, who wrote: ‘in September 1856 Mr Morrison of Bognie made excavations in a large double circle at Wardend, on his estate of Bognie, which led to the discovery of an urn in the centre of the smallest circle with traces of pavement, under which was a deep layer of bones and burnt matter’ (1867, xxii; Simpson 1860–2, 448). Wardend is the adjacent farm to the south of the ring. The smaller of the circles, with its reference to the ‘pavement’, was probably the remains of an internal cairn rather than a freestanding circle of orthostats, though more recently Alexander Thom has suggested that the surviving stones may represent two concentric rings (see below). Sherds of the urn discovered at the centre were donated to the National Museum of Antiquities (NMAS 1892, 166, EA 102–3).

It is clear from the depiction on the 1st edition of the OS map that most of the interior of the circle was already under cultivation in 1870–1, and this continued to be

the case into the 20th century, as can be seen in James Ritchie’s photograph of 1906. By then the circle was in much the state it is in today, though the displaced orthostat now lying outside the ring on the north-west (7) is shown on Coles’ plan prostrate and partly buried midway between orthostats 6 and 8. Then, as now, there was no trace of a central cairn, but Coles speculated that the scatter of stones shown on his plan behind the recumbent setting included ‘earthfast integral portions of the Circle’ and that one group was ‘suggestive of cists’ (1903a, 131); this part of the interior had escaped ploughing, probably because it was particularly stony, and the recumbent appeared to rest on a low tump. These stones are scarcely visible in Ritchie’s photographs and it is no longer possible to distinguish them from the field clearance that is now scattered across the southern half of the interior.

Alexander Keiller visited the ring in 1928 and, confusingly, reported that ‘the only fallen stone of the circle’ (1928, 13) had been destroyed accidentally when the outcropping rock close-by was blasted some sixteen years earlier (c1912); it is not clear which stone he meant, possibly referring to the displacement of orthostat 7 on the north-west, or perhaps a stone shown by Coles midway between 4 and 5 on the east and now missing. The latter might fit with Alexander Thom’s report in 1962 that the farmer had ‘removed a menhir’ somewhere to the south-east of the circle (Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 184–5). Thom’s survey, however, revealed the eccentric position of the recumbent setting,

leading to his suggestion that there were two concentric rings of orthostats here, those on the east-south-east and east-north-east (4 & 5) belonging to the outer. This is an ingenious geometrical solution to the eccentric position of the recumbent setting, but it should be borne in mind that he had no concept of the flattened facades that are a recurring feature of recumbent stone circles; the only example where the presence of an inner and outer ring

of orthostats can be demonstrated is at **Colmeallie**. More recent work at Yonder Bognie by Burl and Ruggles has concentrated on the astronomical alignment of the circle; they have also noted the level summit of the recumbent and its orientation towards a conspicuous peak on the horizon, in this case the Hill of Foudland.

Coles 1903a, 142; 1910, 165; Burl 1976a, 353, Abn 118; Ruggles 1984, 59, no. 25; Barnatt 1989, 308; Ruggles 1999, 186, no. 25; Burl 2000, 423, Abn 122

Date	Personnel	Record
1870–1	OS surveyors	Stone Circle (Remains of) (Aberdeenshire 1874, xviii.9); note (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 34, p 28)
September 1902	Frederick Coles	Description, plan, profile and sketch (Coles 1903a, 127–31, figs 38–40, 142)
April 1906	James Ritchie	Photographs (RCAHMS AB2429, AB2915 & AB2941)
17 August 1925	Office of Works	Scheduled
1928	Alexander Keiller	Description (Keiller 1928, 13; 1934, 12; RCAHMS MS/106/9)
April 1962	Alexander Thom	Theodolite survey and notes (Thom 1967, 136; Thom, Thom and Burl 1980, 184–5; RCAHMS DC4399; DC4760co; MS430/34; Ferguson 1988, 67)
9 September 1964	John Todd	OS: description and map revision
c1980	Aubrey Burl	Astronomical survey and guidebook description (Burl 1980a, 199, no. 28; 1995 & 2005a, 111, no. 122)
1 August 1981	Clive Ruggles	Tabulated observations and measurements (Ruggles 1984, 59, 66, 68–71, 74–5; 1999, 213–16; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 41, 44, 49)
30 October 2003	Angela Gannon, Ian Parker & Adam Welfare	RCAHMS: description, photographs and plane table survey (RCAHMS DC44546)
6 June 2006	Diane Mitchell & Nigel Ruckley	NMS: geological survey

No.	Name	Lewis 1900	Coles 1900-7; 10	Burl 1973	Burl 1976a	Ruggles 1984	Barnatt 1989	Ruggles 1999	Burl 2000
1	Auchaber	-	Q	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Auchagallon, Isle of Arran	-	-	-	A	-	A	-	Q
3	Auchlee	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	Auchorthie	-	A	-	-	Q	Q	Q	-
5	Auld Kirk o' Alford	-	A	-	-	-	Q	-	-
6	Avochie	-	A	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	Balgarthno	-	-	-	A	-	A	-	A
8	Bogton	-	-	-	A	-	Q	-	A
9	Brandsbutt	-	A	-	A	-	Q	-	A
10	Brankholme Cottage	-	-	Q	A	-	A	-	A
11	Broomend	-	-	C	Q	Q	A	Q	Q
12	Broomend of Crichtie North	-	-	-	A	-	Q	-	Q
13	Brownhill	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	Burreldales	-	A	-	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
15	Cairn Ennit	-	A	-	-	-	Q	-	C
16	Cairnfauld	Q	A	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
17	Cairnwell	-	A	A	-	-	A	-	Q
18	Castle Hill, Kintore	-	A	-	-	-	-	-	-
19	The Chapel o' Sink & Ark Stone	-	A	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
20	Chapmen's Graves	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
21	Coilleaichur	-	A	-	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
22	Corshalloch	-	A	-	-	-	A	-	-
23	Cortess	-	-	Q	Q	Q	A	Q	Q
24	Craigenlow Quarry	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25	Craighead	Q	A	-	A	-	A	-	A
26	Croft Moraig	-	A	-	A	-	A	-	C
27	Crookmore	-	A	C	C	Q	A	Q	C
28	Culsh / Hill of Culsh	-	A	Q	Q	Q	A	Q	Q
29	Daviot Church	-	A	-	-	-	A	-	A
30	Doone Hill	-	-	-	A	-	-	-	A
31	Doone of Dalmore	-	A	-	A	-	Q	-	A
32	Druidsfield	-	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
33	Drumfours	-	A	-	A	-	A	-	A
34	Edintore	-	A	-	-	-	Q	-	-
35	Ellon	-	-	-	A	-	A	-	A
36	Esleie the Lesser	C	C	C	Q	Q	C	Q	Q
37	Fortingall Church	-	A	-	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
38	Gaulcross North	-	A	-	A	-	A	Q	A
39	Gaulcross South	-	A	-	A	-	Q	-	A
40	Gaveny Brae	-	A	-	-	-	A	-	-
41	Glassel	Q	A	-	A	-	-	-	A
42	Gray Stone, Cortiecrum	-	A	-	-	-	A	-	-
43	Greymuir Cairn	-	A	-	A	-	Q	-	A
44	Greystone, Glass	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
45	Hare Stanes	-	C	C	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
46	Hatton	-	A	-	Q	Q	A	Q	Q
47	Huntly	-	C	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
48	Innesmill	-	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
49	Johnston, The Ringing Stone	-	A	-	-	-	-	-	-
50	Kinellar Parish Church	-	C	-	-	-	A	-	-
51	Kirkton of Culsalmond	-	A	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
52	Knocksoul	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
53	Lagmore East	-	A	-	A	-	Q	-	A
54	Leslie Parish	-	-	Q	A	-	A	Q	A
55	Marionburgh	-	A	-	A	-	Q	-	A
56	Melgum	-	-	-	A	-	Q	-	A
57	Mill of Carden	-	A	C	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
58	Mill of Noth	-	C	-	-	-	Q	-	-
59	Millplough	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
60	Mitton Hill	-	A	Q	Q	Q	-	Q	Q
61	Moncrieffe House	-	-	-	A	-	A	Q	Q
62	Mundurno	-	A	C	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
63	Nether Balfour	-	-	C	C	Q	Q	Q	C
64	Nether Corskie	-	C	C	C	Q	Q	Q	C
65	Nether Coullie	-	A	C	C	Q	Q	Q	C
66	Nethertown	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Q
67	Newbigging, Clatt	-	C	C	C	Q	A	Q	C
68	Newbigging, Lethnot	-	-	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
69	Old Bourtreebush	Q	C	C	C	C	C	C	Q
70	Peat Hill	-	A	-	-	-	A	-	-
71	Rapplaburn	-	C	-	Q	Q	A	Q	-
72	St Marnan's Chair	-	A	-	-	-	A	-	Q
73	Sands of Forvie	-	-	-	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
74	Sheldon	-	A	-	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
75	Stonecrossfield	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
76	Stoneyfield	-	A	-	A	-	Q	-	A
77	The Suitor's Mither	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
78	The Sunken Kirk, Seggieden	-	A	-	A	Q	Q	Q	A
79	Torhousekie, Wigtonshire	-	-	-	C	-	A	-	C
80	Upper Auchnagorth	-	A	-	A	-	Q	-	A
81	Upper Ord	-	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
82	Upper Third	-	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
83	West Haughs	-	A	-	A	-	Q	-	A
84	Wheedlemont	-	Q	-	A	-	A	-	Q
85	Woodfield	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

- = No reference

C = Classified as an RSC

Q = Classification as an RSC is qualified, queried, or an element of doubt is conveyed

A = Alternative classification, or unclassified

Table showing successive evaluations of the five authorities who have attempted to classify and list the rings now rejected as recumbent stone circles.

Appendix 1: Other Monuments Sometimes Claimed as Recumbent Stone Circles

1 Auchaber, Forgue, Aberdeenshire

NJ64SW 5 NJ 6321 4033
Stone Circle (Possible)

About 1873 OS surveyors noted a single stone ‘*broken off close to the ground*’ in the Wood of Auchaber; it was supposed to be the sole surviving orthostat of a stone circle that had been robbed for building materials (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 31, p 74; Aberdeenshire 1873, xxvii). Coles combed the wood in vain and could find only a ‘*fairly large boulder*’ (1903a, 107), but not in the position indicated on the map. More recently, in 1973, Iain Sainsbury of the OS located a loose fragment of stone about 0.8m square at the published location, presumably all that was left by the stone breakers. Coles’ submission that ‘*the drawing on the OM [Ordnance Map] indicated a large block in the position of a recumbent stone*’ (*ibid*) is not borne out by an examination of the depiction, and while this may well be the site of a stone circle, there are no grounds for assuming that it included a recumbent setting.

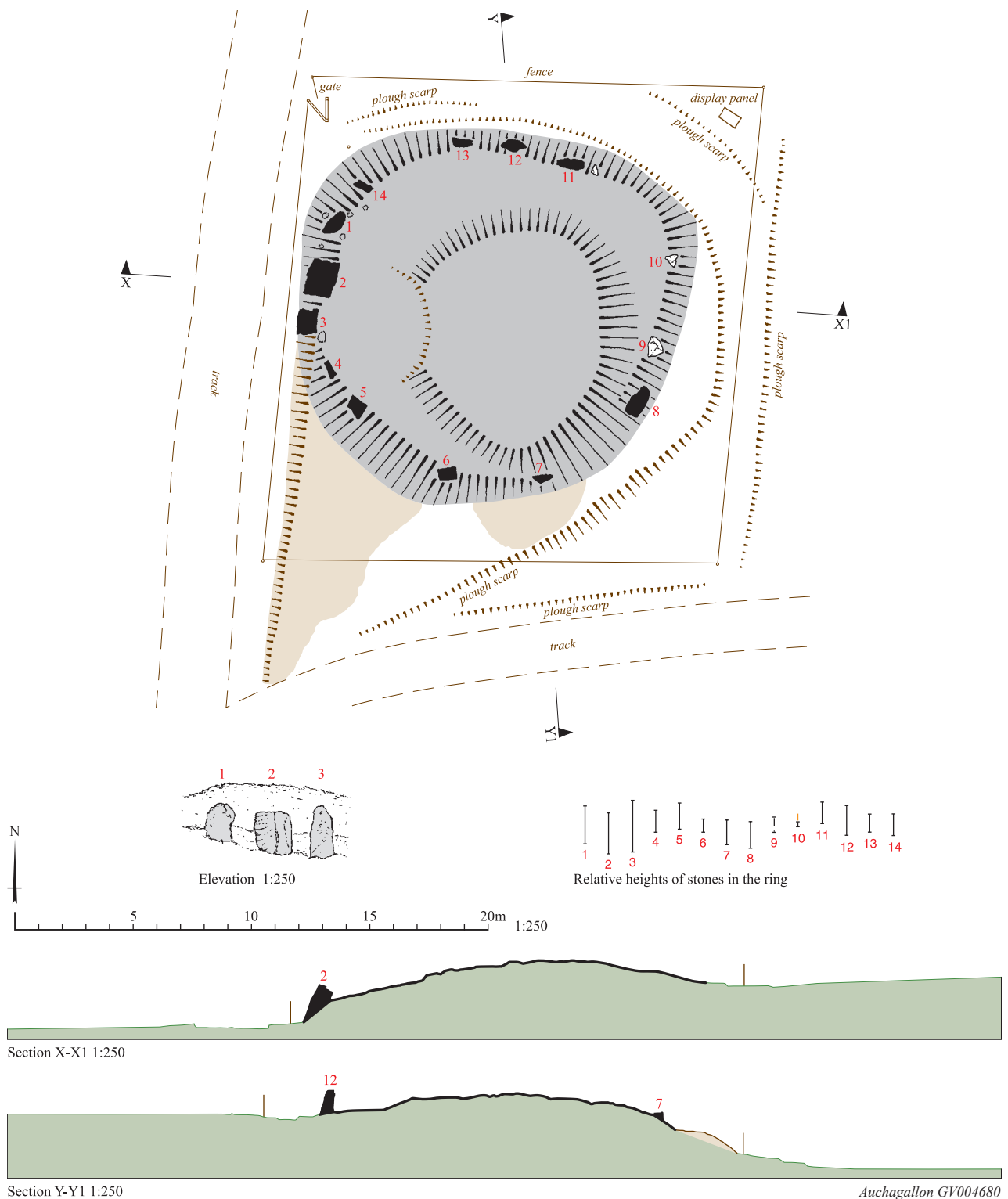
2 Auchagallon, Kilmory, Isle of Arran, North Ayrshire

NR83SE 1 NR 8928 3464
Stone Circle and Cairn

This unusual cairn, which is a Guardianship Monument in the care of Historic Scotland, stands within a fenced enclosure beside the track leading up to Auchagallon. It is set towards the rear of a sloping terrace commanding fine views southwards to Machrie Moor, though the design of what is either a freestanding stone circle or a kerb of tall orthostats faces westwards over the sea to the Kintyre peninsula. The circle is made up of fourteen stones, all but two (10 & 9) apparently in situ, and measures about 15m in overall diameter. The spacing of the stones is irregular and there are plainly gaps

where some are missing. Nevertheless, they appear to be graded in height, rising from the shortest in the east to the tallest on the west, where there is an imposing set of three (1–3) that are reminiscent of a recumbent setting, with two tall orthostats 1.6m and 2.2m in height placed to either side of a block measuring 1.65m in length by 1.2m in thickness and up to 1.8m in height. In keeping with recumbents in the North-east, the central block has a relatively flat and level summit, but in contrast it is both taller than it is long and the stones to either side do not stand flush with its ends. All three lean back into the cairn, which rises steeply behind them, and their external heights are far greater than any internal measurement. Of the other orthostats, one on the east-north-east (10) remains earthfast but barely rises above the surface of the ground and may be a broken off fragment, while another on the east-south-east (9) has probably fallen inwards. The latter is of granite, whereas the rest are red sandstone. Unusually, the axis of stone 14 on the north-west is set at right-angles to the circumference of the ring. The cairn is now largely grass-grown, with a broad flat summit that rises marginally higher than the tallest orthostat on the west. Set on such steep ground, it presents a long talus of cairn material sloping down to the south, which subsumes the lower portions of stones 6 and 7, and may well hide any other lesser slabs around this side. The origin and antiquity of the cairn, however, are of some debate (see below).

Auchagallon may be one of the *Druidical circles* first mentioned by Rev Alexander Macbride of North Bute (*NSA*, v, Buteshire, 52), but it is not described in any detail until 1864, when the OS surveyors were preparing the 1st edition of the 6-inch map (Buteshire 1869, ccxlviii). By then the surrounding ground had been improved but the accompanying Name Book entry describes it as ‘*one of the most perfect cairns or circles ... to be found on the island*’ (Buteshire, No. 2, p 30).



Even then its classification was problematical, and the proposed annotation *Stone Circle* is partly erased in favour of *Cairn and Circle*, which duly appeared upon the published map. The entry reveals that fourteen sandstone uprights were visible ‘surrounding a cairn of water worn large pebbles’, but a note added by the officer in charge also records that the ‘interior is now filled up several feet higher than the adjacent land

with loose stones gathered from the ploughed fields’ (*ibid*). The depiction is essentially unchanged on the 2nd edition of the OS map, but by then the cairn that had stood some 50m to the north had been removed (Buteshire 1895, ccxlviii).

Just how far field clearance has contributed to the make-up of the cairn remains unresolved. When Thomas Bryce wrote about it at the beginning of the

20th century, he was told by Archibald Sim, who had been the tenant at Auchagallon, *'that in his youth the enclosed area was flat and free of stones. The ground is cultivated all round the circle, and the stones gathered from the fields have been piled year after year within it, until now a number of the upright stones are actually hidden below them'* (Bryce 1910, 119). Sim also remembered *'seeing the circle excavated at the centre many years ago'* (*ibid*); this revealed a stone cist, though he was unable to furnish any details of its contents. According to census records Sim was born at Tormore in 1827, less than 2.5km to the south, and had moved a little further south to Drumadon by 1841, but from at least 1881 he was the farmer at Auchagallon. As such he may have been responsible for clearing the cairn to the north and depositing some of the clearance within the circle. Bryce evidently had sufficient belief in this account that he was dissuaded from mounting an excavation in the ring, and there seems no reason to doubt that a substantial portion of the mound here today is made up of cleared stones. The flattened arc of the cairn on the north-east and the absence of any upright stones there (9 & 10) perhaps shows where carts gained access into the interior to dump them, and this in turn may explain why the summit of the cairn is off-set to the south-east and the talus on the south subsumes the two orthostats on this side (6 & 7). Others have been more sceptical and Robert McLellan, who wrote a guidebook to the ancient monuments of Arran, suggests that Sim *'had something to hide, for there were few farmers with access to these monuments in the first few decades of the nine-teenth century who did not rob them of stone'* (1977, 32). This, however, has no actual bearing on the issue, and the real question is whether the cairn described by the OS surveyors in 1864 contained the residue of an earlier mound. The discovery of a cist at the centre perhaps suggests that it did, though other burials in the centres of circles on Machrie Moor were not covered by cairns.

Bryce's description is accompanied by a plan by Angus McAllister and a photograph from the north-north-west showing the mass of stones within the interior (1910, fig 41). He opens with the statement that *'this magnificent circle ... consists of fifteen blocks, for the most part of red sandstone'* (1910, 119–20), and provides a table giving the dimensions of each stone. Assuming each stone was measured consecutively, a comparison with the measurements gathered in the course of the present survey indicates that he began with the stone on the south-west (5) and then worked clockwise around the ring. The sequence only breaks down on the north-north-east (11) and it is difficult to correlate the stones on the east with any conviction, not least because the last six stones in Bryce's table lack at least one measurement. The problem is exacerbated by McAllister's plan, which shows only fourteen stones and none of these are numbered (Bryce 1910, 120, fig 59).

Over the years, commentators have laboured over the classification of this monument, with opinion ranging from an encircled cairn (McArthur 1873, 14) to simply a stone circle (McLellan 1977, 31) or cairn (Stevenson 1995, 156). Most have drawn attention to the grading in the heights of the stones, their irregular spacing, and the presence of an internal cairn or mound of stones (eg Barnatt 1989, 242; Stevenson 1995, 156), but Horace Fairhurst was amongst the first to draw a formal connection between the architecture of Auchagallon and recumbent stone circles; the block on the west, he noted, was *'closely fitted between the other two and has a relatively flat top'* (1981, 33). Burl's views evolved in parallel, at first likening the *'recumbent kerbstone'* to the false portals then recently discovered in Argyll at Kintraw and Culcharron (Burl 1976a, 147, 171). His subsequent guidebook entry employs the term *flanker* and concludes that the ring *'could be a variant form of recumbent stone circle'* (Burl 1995, 113); more recently still he has emphasised the features Auchagallon shares with recumbent stone circles, citing *'The combination of an internal cist and possible cairn, south-westerly orientation and recumbent slab'* (2000, 92). The circle, he suggests, *'is arguably an ill-remembered copy of the recumbent stone circles of Aberdeenshire'* (*ibid* 90).

There is no doubt that the three stones on the west have a passing resemblance to a recumbent setting, but the likenesses can be overstated. Not only are they facing due west, an orientation otherwise unknown in recumbent stone circles, but (as has been indicated) the block is taller than it is long, while the flanking orthostats are set apart from it, again a feature unknown in the North-east. There may well have been a cairn in the interior; a central cist, if indeed it was central, is unparalleled in recumbent stone circles, finding much better comparisons closer to home on Arran. The only cists known from recumbent stone circles are those from **Corrie Cairn** and just beyond the margin of **Loanhead of Daviot**. The approach taken by the present survey concurs with Jack Stevenson in not wishing to pigeon-hole Auchagallon into any particular scheme of classification (1995, 156–7), particularly as it stands on the fringes of one of the most extraordinary concentrations of stone circles in Scotland, exhibiting a wide range of architectural features that include grading, the construction of cairns and the presence of central cists.

Visited 3 December 2008

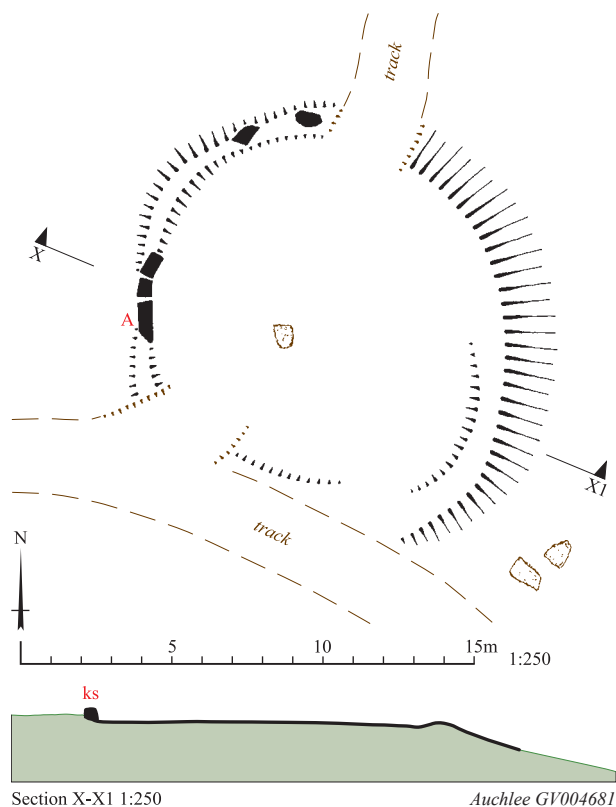
3 Auchlee, Banchory-Devenick, Aberdeenshire

NO89NE 14 NO 8934 9705

Hut-circle

This small enclosure, which stands on a low knoll 260m north-north-east of Auchlee farmhouse (see p 226), incorporates a large upright slab (A) in its wall on the

west. Measuring about 10.3m in internal diameter, the enclosure is probably no more than a hut-circle, but at the time of its discovery in 1984 the presence of this large slab was a sufficiently unusual feature for a parallel to be drawn with recumbent stone circles (RCAHMS 1984, 8, no. 11). Some 1.4m in length by 0.5m in thickness and 1.2m in height, the slab lacks any flankers and, unlike any other recumbent setting, appears to face into



the interior of the enclosure rather than to the exterior, forming part of the inner face of the wall. No entrance is visible, but it may have been destroyed by one of the two tracks that converge on the south-west side of the enclosure, one of which cuts across the interior and through the wall on the north-north-east.

Visited 13 June 2003

4 Auchorthie, Strichen, Aberdeenshire

NJ95SW 35 NJ c 923 525
Stone Circle (Possible)

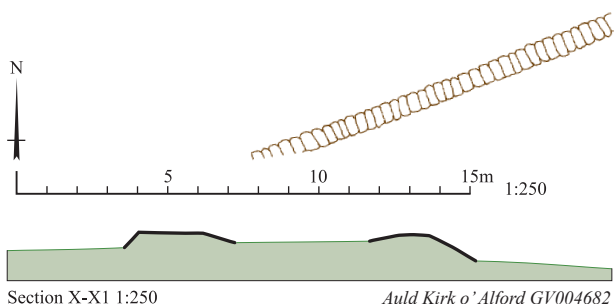
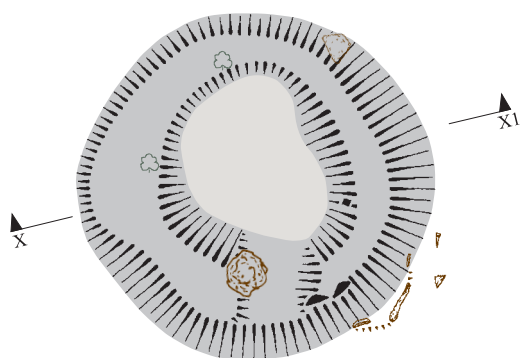
The site of what may have been a stone circle was noted by Coles about 500m north of the farmhouse at Auchorthie (1904, 278–9). His informant, John Milne of Atherb, knew of the circle from his grandfather, who had worked on the Strichen estate and had told him that it was removed about 1840 by the tenant farmer, George Hardie. From Milne's description, Coles concluded that there was a 'Recumbent Stone, hollow on the top' (*ibid*). On the strength of this Ruggles included it in his

list of possible recumbent stone circles (1999, 186, no. 8), though Barnatt was rather more sceptical (1989, 458, no. 6:107). Milne seems to have been well acquainted with the recumbent stone circles in Buchan, and Coles generously acknowledges his assistance, but in this case he certainly had not seen the circle and without locating its site there is now no way of confirming the story that had been handed down to him.

5 Auld Kirk o' Alford, Alford, Aberdeenshire

NJ51NE 3 NJ 5651 1630
Cairn

What are probably the remains of a cairn are marked by a lone tree and a rotting stump at the edge of a field about 100m north-north-west of Greystone. Little of the cairn is currently visible, however, hidden beneath a ring-bank 11.5m in overall diameter, which was constructed and planted in the 19th century to help preserve the remains of the monument. Faced externally with small boulders, as can be seen most plainly on the west-north-west (not shown on the plan, p 227), the ring-bank now measures up to 4.2m in thickness by up to 0.6m in height, but a significant proportion of the material of which it is composed is field clearance, dumped over its lip into the interior since 1900; the most recent addition is a large boulder almost 1.5m across lying on the bank on the south. If it were not for the tradition of a 'circle of large stones' or a *Druidical Temple* here (NSA, xii, Aberdeenshire, 499; Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 5, p 21), and a plan prepared by Coles in 1900 (1901, 208–9, fig 18), it would be difficult to demonstrate convincingly that there was a monument here at all. Nevertheless, two contiguous slabs set up on edge on the south-east, the tops of which stand 0.7m above the surrounding ground level, are almost certainly outward facing kerbstones, the survivors of a row of three shown here by Coles. Coles believed that these belonged to the innermost of three concentric rings of stones, showing another three slabs diametrically opposite on the north-west, and two on the east. These other stones have been either removed or buried; in this respect what may be the very top of an upright slab is flush with the turf on the crest of the ring-bank on the north-west. Coles' middle ring comprised three stones, which apparently stood between 0.75m and 0.9m high on the crest of the ring-bank, but of these nothing can be seen, unless the stone currently lying on the outer scarp of the ring-bank on the north-north-east is the one Coles showed hereabouts. If so, it has been rolled off the crest, suggesting that these were no more than field-cleared boulders, perhaps dumped since the first OS surveyors reported in the Name Book that 'the stones which formed the circle are now almost invisible above the surface of the ground' (Aberdeenshire, No. 5, p 21). Of the two stones that made up Coles' outer ring, only the one on the south-east is still visible, protruding through the turf at the foot of the ring-bank; its



status is unknown and it may even be outcropping rock. Despite having entered the antiquarian record as a stone circle, Auld Kirk o' Alford has only been included as a possible recumbent stone circle by Barnatt, who was struggling to interpret Coles' triple circles (1989, 286, no. 6:48). Only one of these circles stands scrutiny, and this is probably the external kerb of a cairn or ring-cairn measuring no more than 9m in overall diameter. This kerb was relatively massive and quite large enough for it to have acquired the status of a stone circle in local lore, and this in turn may account for the name of the neighbouring farm, Greystone.

Visited 13 March 2009

6 Avochie, Huntly, Aberdeenshire

NJ54NW 7 NJ 5398 4684

Cup-and-ring Markings

This massive cup-and-ring marked slab, which is situated on the crest of a west-north-west-facing slope 220m west-south-west of Hillhead of Avochie, was tentatively suggested as the recumbent of a destroyed circle by Burl (2005a, 119), though he has never listed it as a recumbent stone circle in his gazetteer. The slab, which measures 4m from north-north-east to south-south-west by 3.5m transversely and rises up to 1.2m above the surrounding ground level, bears no less than 80 cupmarks, many of them ringed. Although it bears some resemblance to a collapsed recumbent, there can be little doubt that this is no more than an earthfast

erratic that has become progressively more exposed by cultivation over the century since Coles first published his description (Coles 1906b, 318–20, fig 20; Ritchie 1918, 115). It is perhaps telling that Coles, who had visited several erratic blocks in pursuit of recumbent stone circles, never entertained that possibility here.

Visited 19 July 2005

7 Balgarthno, Dundee, City of Dundee

NO33SE 5 NO 3533 3161

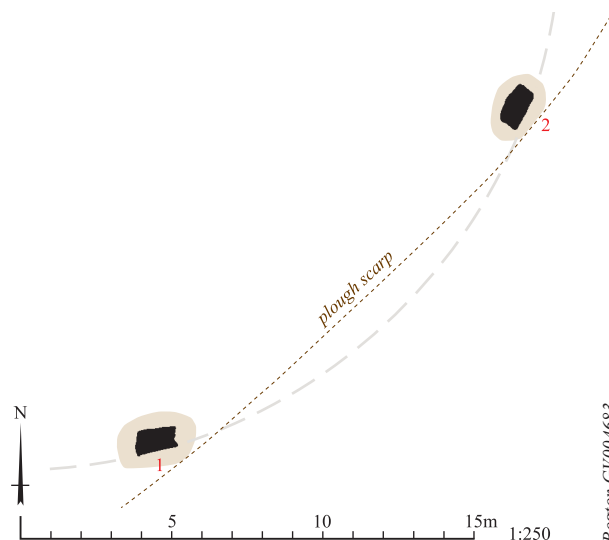
Stone Circle

This stone circle, which is situated in a park on the west side of Dundee, comprises a ring of nine stones with an internal diameter of about 8m. With the exception of one upright orthostat standing 1.5m high on the west, all the stones have fallen. Other boulders lying within the circle are probably field clearance gathered when the surrounding ground was under cultivation. The report on a watching brief carried out here on behalf of the McManus Galleries, Dundee, refers to the ring as a recumbent stone circle, apparently citing this as one of the reasons that the monument was initially scheduled in 1935 (Hind 2006, 1). While clearly a circle of largely recumbent stones, the circle shares no architectural characteristics with the type of monument known as a recumbent stone circle. Its affinities lie with a group of small rings found elsewhere across Angus and Perthshire (eg RCAHMS 1994, 30–3).

8 Bogton, St Andrews-Lhanbryd, Moray

NJ26SE 11 NJ 2744 6075

Stone Circle



In 1810 the greater part of this stone circle was removed and only two orthostats now remain (Name Book, Elginshire, No. 21, p 53; Morrison 1872, 256). Standing 14.7m apart on a low natural rise 60m north-north-east

of Bogton Cottage, both are roughly rectangular in section, the taller (2) measuring about 1.8m in height and its neighbour (1) on the south-west 1.6m; their disposition suggests that the circle was possibly as much as 34m in diameter. Burl includes Bogton in his gazetteer of stone circles (1976a, 361, Mry 2; 2000, 430, Mry 2), but on the strength of its relatively large diameter Barnatt has suggested that it may have been a recumbent stone circle or a Clava cairn (1989, 255, no. 5:7). There is no other evidence to sustain this line of argument and, with so few stones left, it is impossible to judge whether the orthostats were graded; at face value, the heights of the stones suggest they were not, but the taller on the north-east is set lower down the slope of the rise, so much so that its top is 0.1m below the top of the shorter stone on the south-west.

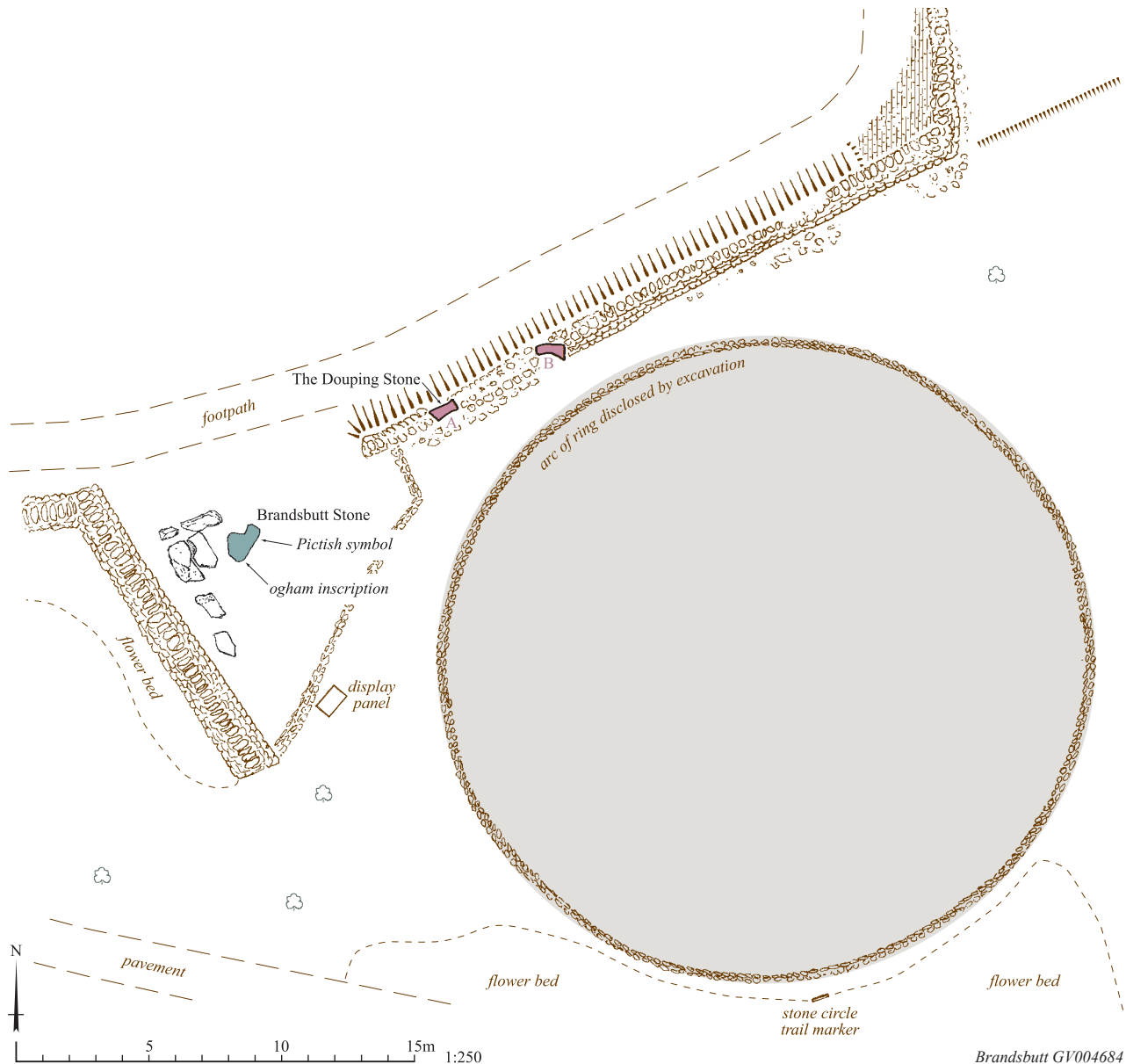
Visited 21 July 2005

9 Brandsbutt, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire

NJ72SE 12 NJ 7600 2240

Stone Circle and Pictish Symbols

The site of this stone circle is preserved in an open space in one of the housing estates on the western outskirts of Inverurie, where its circumference is now laid out as a strip of cobbles in the grass. The stones of the circle were cleared away in the late 18th or early 19th century, but in 1866–7 four of them, including the Pictish symbol stone known as the Brandsbutt Stone, were pointed out in the adjacent field dykes to the OS surveyors, who believed that two were still in their original sockets (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 42, p 5). In 1900 Coles at first located only three of the stones in the dykes, but he subsequently returned to discover the Brandsbutt Stone. He concluded that the



first three were still in position, projecting a diameter a little over 27m (1901, 229–30), and it was left to Ian Shepherd to establish by excavation in 1983 that the site of the circle actually lay a little to the east. Systematically stripping back the topsoil, he located five stone-holes and estimated that in its original form the ring had measured about 25m in diameter, comprising twelve or thirteen evenly spaced orthostats (Shepherd 1983). Although Barnatt has suggested that its relatively large diameter may indicate that Bransbutt was a recumbent stone circle (1989, 273, no. 6:16), Shepherd could find no evidence of a recumbent setting, despite exposing the south-west arc of the ring. His concluding discussion favoured its interpretation as a plain circle while also entertaining the possibility that it may have had a recumbent. In the light of the present survey it is possible to make one further observation. The ground plan that Shepherd recovered is evidently slightly flattened around an east and west axis rather than circular, which by comparison with other recumbent stone circles places the most likely position for any recumbent setting on the south arc. This falls uncomfortably close to the single stone-hole he uncovered on the south side of the ring. On these grounds Bransbutt is better considered a plain circle until proven otherwise.

Visited 16 March 2000

10 Brankholme Cottage, Logie-Coldstone, Aberdeenshire

NJ40NE 4 NJ 4599 0558
Stone Circle (Probable)

This probable stone circle was removed about 1847 to make way for a farmsteading named Bottomend (Aberdeenshire 1870, lxx), which was itself removed in the early 20th century; the site now lies in an arable field 150m south-west of Brankholme Cottage. Described in the Name Book as *'three or four upright stones, believed to be part of a circle'* (Aberdeenshire, No. 54, p 85), *'human bones, ashes and calcined clay'* (*ibid*) were also found when the foundations of the farmstead were dug. In 1970 Burl suggested that these stones might have been the remains of a recumbent stone circle (1970, 79), but he has since listed them as a possible four-poster setting (1976a, 352, Abd 71; 1988b, 95–94; 2000, 421, Abd 72). Barnatt's assessment that there is too little evidence to classify them as a recumbent stone circle (1989, 462, no. 6:142) is certainly correct. By the same token their identification as a four-poster assumes that the setting was complete at the time of its destruction.

11 Broomend, Premnay, Aberdeenshire

NJ62NW 12 NJ 6330 2579
Stone Circle (Probable)

These standing stones stood about 200m south-west of Overhall. They were described in 1867 by the OS surveyors as a stone circle *'composed of four stones, three of which have been broken up for various purposes and the fourth can still be seen ... built into a wall close by. Underneath one of them a recess was found, in form exactly like the ordinary stone cists but rather larger; which was filled with ashes'* (Aberdeenshire 1870, xlv; Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 75, p 12). Alexander Keiller claimed to have found several large stones of pink granite in the nearby dykes that he believed were from the circle (1934, 20), but they have not been seen since. Burl and Ruggles have both listed Broomend as a possible recumbent stone circle (Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 350, Abn 17; 2000, 419, Abn 16; Ruggles 1984, 59; 1999, 186, no. 45), though the latter has also expressed his doubts (1999, 266 note 8). With only four stones recorded and no mention of any large slab that might have been a recumbent, there are certainly no grounds for such an identification.

Visited 4 April 1996

12 Broomend of Crichtie North, Kintore, Aberdeenshire

NJ71NE 7 NJ c 7793 1975
Stone Circle and Ring-cairn (Possible)

In 1693 James Garden briefly described two *'small ston monuments'* at Broomend of Crichtie in a letter to John Aubrey (Hunter 2001, 137), one of which is clearly the well-known henge monument (NJ71NE 6). As he remembered them, each comprised two rings of stones, but whereas the ditch of the henge lay outside the two rings, in the other it was between them. He gives no clue as to where this second monument lay, but it is generally assumed to be the structure that in the mid 18th century William Maitland described to the north of the henge, *'encompassed with three rows of stones erect, with a small cairn or heap in the middle'* (1757, i, 154). Maitland considered it the larger of the two monuments, and it was approached by an avenue of standing stones that passed through the henge. While the henge and several standing stones have survived, this monument at the northern terminal of the avenue has been destroyed, probably when the Aberdeen turnpike was constructed just before 1800 (Ritchie 1920, 169–71). It is shown as a disc of stipple on an estate map of the Barony of Crichtie dating from 1780 (Ritchie 1920, 162, fig 4) and its site now falls in a disused sand-pit. Although Burl has suggested that this monument may have been a recumbent stone circle (1995, 97; 2000, 419, Abn 17a; 2005a, 97, 285), Maitland's only reference to an altar stone, the contemporary term for a recumbent, is circumspect in comparison to his description of the rest of the

complex, as he appears not to have seen this feature for himself. He describes it as if it was a separate structure: *'near to this [ie the monument at the north end of the avenue] there is said to have been an altar of one stone, with a cavity in the upper part, ... This altar for burnt offerings, like those of other temples, was an artificial heap, or cairn, of rough unwrought stones, with a large flat stone on the upper part'* (1757, i, 154). Whether or not this group of monuments ever included a recumbent stone circle is unlikely to be resolved, but in the light of what survives of the prehistoric monumental vocabulary in the north-east of Scotland, the description of three concentric rings of upright stones best fits a circle of orthostats enclosing a ring-cairn with well-defined inner and outer kerbs.

13 Brownhill, Newton Hill, Glass, Aberdeenshire

NJ44SE 101 NJ 45 41
Stone

Situated on the north side of the valley of the River Deveron, Brownhill (NJ 4587 4204) lies on the south-east shoulder of a spur to the north-east of Newton Hill (NJ 453 414). In 1970 James Godsman reported that *'a massive stone on the farm of Brownhill, Newton Hill, is all that remains of a Recumbent Stone Circle'* (1970, 20). His authority for this statement is unknown and there are no other references to either a large stone or a stone circle on Newton Hill, where the only prehistoric monuments that are known are a Neolithic horned long cairn (NJ44SE 7; Henshall 1963, 392) and a heavily robbed round cairn (NJ44SE 8; Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 36, p 24). Neither can be confused with the remains of a recumbent stone circle.

Visited 21 March 2009

14 Burreldales, Fyvie, Aberdeenshire

NJ74SW 6 NJ 7362 4027
Cairn and Standing Stone

A single standing stone in a field 400m north-west of Burreldales Cottages marks the site of a what was probably a cairn enclosed by a low platform. It was investigated by James Chalmers of Rothiebrisbane in October 1860 and trenched shortly after by the farmer, Adam Nichol; most of the stones from the cairn were built into the dykes (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 35, p 52). According to Chalmers (1862, 429–31), the central cairn was shaped like a doughnut and measured about 9m in diameter, while the enclosing platform was some 3m wide and about 15m in overall diameter. Three or four large stones were *'set round'* the platform, though this statement is not entirely borne out by the sketch plan and section that accompanied his letter to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. Not published

until some years later (Smith 1874, 435), these depict only two stones, the plan showing them on the scarp forming the edge of the central cairn and the section placing them on the platform; the western seems to have been a prostrate slab 1.5m square and 0.5m thick. Nicol described the cairn to the OS surveyors rather differently, referring to *'two complete Circles consisting of a large quantity of huge boulder stones some of which weigh from twenty to thirty hundredweight the outer circle measured about thirty yards [27m] in diameter the outer stones did not form a perfect circle nor did they stand upright'* (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 35, p 52). This should not necessarily be read that the inner circle or cairn was also composed of a ring of boulders, but it does suggest that there had been more than three or four stones around the edge of the surrounding platform, though these may have been a rough kerb rather than a ring of orthostats. In 1902, having spoken to an old crofter who had participated in the demolition of the cairn, Coles claimed four blocks stood on the platform, reconstructing their positions and also showing the prostrate slab on the west (1903a, 102–6, fig 19).

Beneath the central cairn Chalmers had found *'extensive traces of burning – bones, black earth, and a sticky clay-like stuff'* (1862, 430), but Nicol, as a result of systematically trenching the cairn, a method of improving the ground and removing the stones rather than of archaeological investigation, discovered two cists and a pit. These are shown on Chalmers' sketch plan, with the cists on opposite sides of the central cairn and the pit under the fringe of the platform. The first of the cists lay on the west and measured 0.5m by 0.4m and 0.9m in depth; its fill contained burnt material and probably a single urn placed between two stones, though Nicol believed that there were two, placed one above the other. The second cist was smaller and less regular, but it contained *'some burnt stuff, which he believed to be fragments of another urn'* (*ibid* 431); this was possibly accompanied by a bronze razor (Coles 1964, 148), though again the Name Book entry claims this was found *'two yards north of the stone coffin'* (Aberdeenshire, No. 35, p 52). The pit, which was 0.9m in diameter and at least 1.2m in depth, probably lay on the south-west of the platform south of the prostrate slab and was filled with *'a very black close stuff'* (Chalmers 1862, 431).

By the time Coles visited, only the stone standing there today and a large flat slab nearby were left, but there must be some doubt as to how these related to the original monument, if only because the socket of the upright stone in its present position evidently lies well below the land surface the platform and cairn were built upon; Coles' conversation with the old crofter led him to place it on the north-west, but in the light of the ambiguities in the various records there is also the possibility that this was the prostrate slab that

lay on the west. Leaving such speculation aside, this monument shares several features in common with recumbent stone circles, in particular the boulders set around a platform encircling a low central cairn. This has led to it appearing as a possible example in several of the lists (Burl 1976a, 353, Abn 92; 2000, 422, Abn 94; Barnatt 1989, 299, no. 6:81; Ruggles 1984, 59; 1999, 186, no. 6), but there is no evidence that there was ever a recumbent setting here, and no reason to believe that the prostrate slab that lay on the west was part of such a setting. The doughnut shape of the inner cairn was possibly the remains of an internal court, but again Chalmers was fairly circumspect in his view and was unsure if this was anything more than an earlier excavation; he certainly did not recognise any formal kerb defining it.

15 Cairn Ennit, Forglen, Aberdeenshire

NJ65SE 13 NJ 6781 5045
Cairn

This cairn, which is situated on the east shoulder of a low ridge 750m west of Mains of Carnousie, lies in an area of ground formerly within the east margin of Whitehill Wood. It measures up to 17m across, but the centre was dug out before 1870 (Name Book, Banffshire, No. 13, p 53) and the rest is so heavily disturbed that it is not only difficult to differentiate the original cairn material from the field-cleared stones that have been added to it since, but those shown on a plan prepared by Alexander Thom are no longer immediately recognisable on the ground (Thom *et al* 1980, 234–5). On the south-west, however, well beyond the edge of the cairn, there is a huge erratic boulder which was first noted by Coles during a fleeting visit in 1902. Measuring 2.9m by 1.7m and 1.65m in height, this has itself been quarried and is now considerably smaller than the rough measurements of 3.5m in length by 2.4m in height given by Coles (1903a, 140); a shot-hole can be seen just below its summit and a shallow hollow in the ground to its north is probably the place from where the bulk of the boulder has been removed. Despite drawing a comparison with the Carlin Stone at **Cairn Riv**, which lies no more than 4km to the south, Coles did not include Cairn Ennit in any of his lists of recumbent stone circles. On the strength of this large erratic on its south-west, however, Coles' view that **Cairn Riv** was a late form of recumbent stone circle has been transposed by Burl to embrace Cairn Ennit (Burl 1995, 111; 2000, 419, Knc 19), though Barnatt recognised that the relationship between the cairn and the erratic might be fortuitous (1989, 307–8, no. 6:105).

The occasion of Coles' visit was to record a stone circle shown on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map about 140m to the north of Cairn Ennit (Banffshire 1874, xvi); this has been removed since and its site

taken into cultivation. In Coles' day the circle lay in a dense plantation of conifers and it was only with some difficulty that he finally located what he believed to be its site. However, he almost certainly lost his bearings amongst the trees and bracken, for his plan showing seven stones lying in a rough circle about 9m across roughly conforms to a probably fortuitous collection of stones planned by Thom a mere 15m to the north of Cairn Ennit (Coles 1903a, 137–40; Thom *et al* 1980, 234–5).

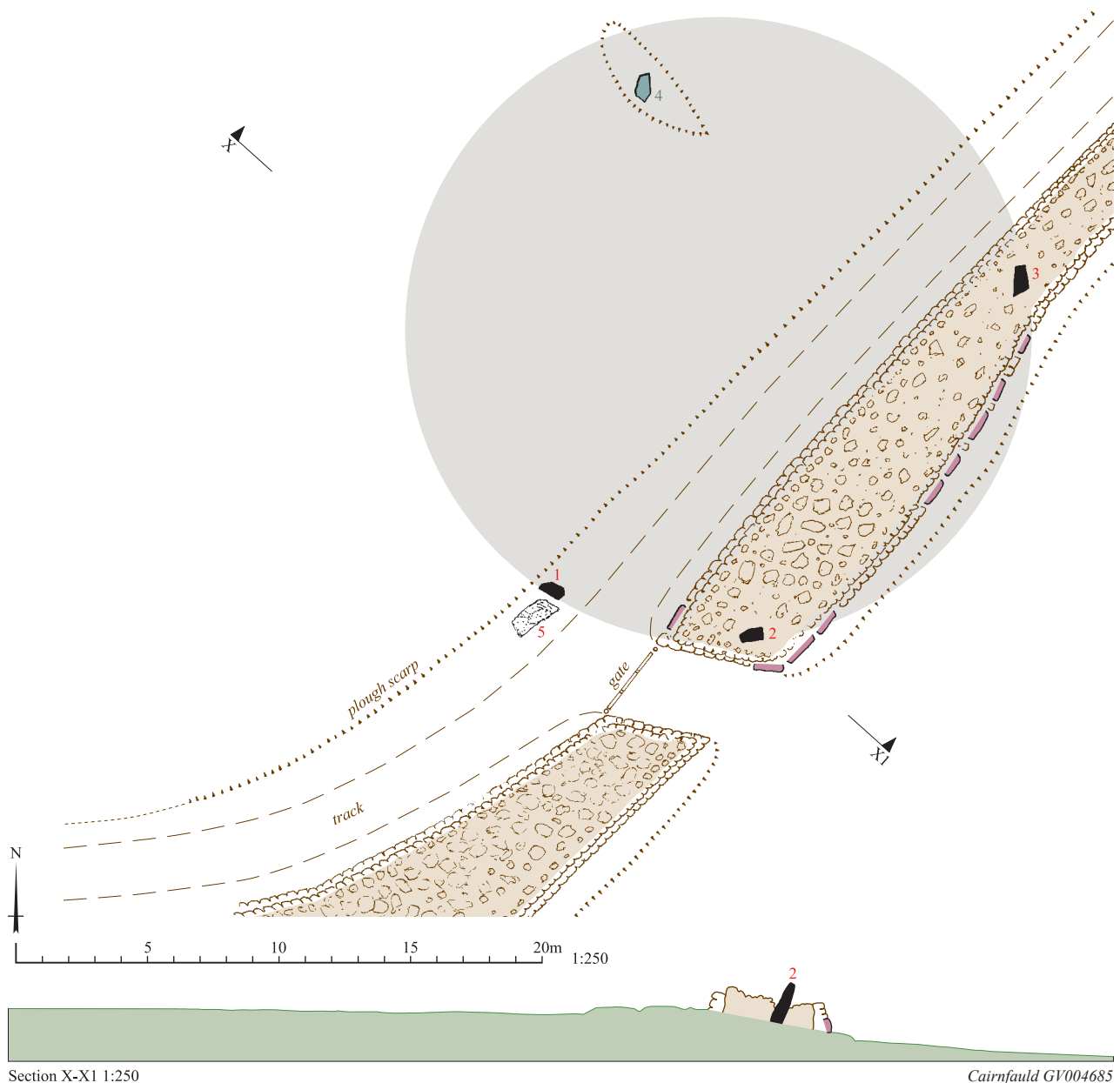
Visited 20 May 2005

16 Cairnfauld, Durris, Aberdeenshire

NO79SE 1 NO 7535 9406
Stone Circle

This stone circle is situated at the southern edge of a field about 100m north-east of Cairnfauld. Measuring about 22m in diameter, the disposition of the five surviving stones suggests that it originally comprised nine evenly spaced orthostats. Of the five that remain: one (5) has been displaced since Coles surveyed the circle in 1899 (1900, 156, fig 14) and has been lying at the foot of the orthostat on the south-west (1) for at least the last 25 years; another (4) stands askew the circumference of the circle and was apparently re-erected about 1877 (Coles 1900, 156); and two (2–3) are incorporated into the consumption dyke that forms the south-east boundary of the field. When first recorded by the OS surveyors all five orthostats were standing, *'each about 5 feet [1.5m] in height'* (Name Book, Kincardineshire, No. 7, p 39). The one exposed to its full height on the south-west (1) is indeed 1.5m high and the exposed portions of the two in the consumption dyke suggest that they are of a similar order, as is the displaced stone, which measures 1.75m in length; in contrast, the re-erected stone on the north (4) is only 1.2m high. Nine large slabs built into the foundation of the consumption dyke are possibly fragments of the missing orthostats. In response to Coles' enquiries at the farm, Charles McHardy, the tenant, told him that trenching near the centre of the circle many years before had uncovered human bones.

The suggestion that Cairnfauld is possibly a recumbent stone circle can be traced back to Burl, who contended that it was not only in the typical size range of such circles but also that its stones were probably graded from the highest on the south to the lowest on the north (Thom *et al* 1980, 214–15; Burl 1976a, 360, Knc 2; 1995, 137; 2000, 429, Knc 3); other researchers have taken a similar line (Ruggles 1984, 60; 1999, 188, no. 87; Barnatt 1989, 274, no. 6:18). While the diameter does indeed fall within the range of recumbent stone circles, it is more difficult to sustain the grading of the stones, not simply because two are encumbered with clearance in the consumption dyke, but because



the small stone on the north (4), which is crucial to their case, has probably been re-erected. Furthermore, as Coles appreciated, what is known of the spacing of these neat pillar-like stones around the south-west quarter does not lend itself to a circle with a recumbent setting. More likely, this is a circle of evenly spaced orthostats of relatively uniform height.

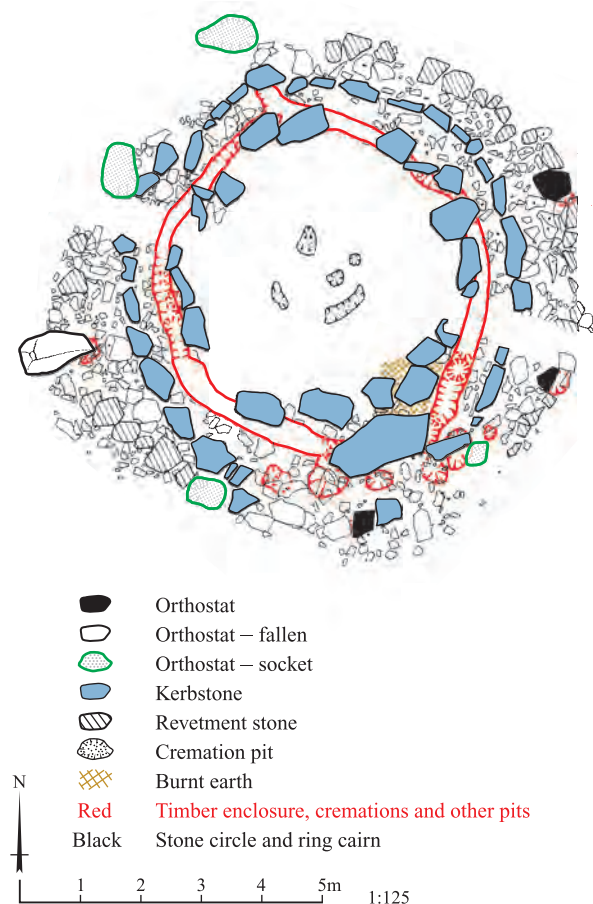
Visited 1 May 2003

17 Cairnwell, Banchory-Devenick, Aberdeenshire
 NO99NW 4 NO 9071 9733
 Stone Circle and Ring-cairn

In 1995 this ring-cairn and its surrounding stone circle were fully excavated by Thomas Rees (1997) and reconstructed on a new site adjacent to the access road

in an industrial estate 175m to the north-west (NJ 9063 9749). When first described by Alexander Thomson in 1858, the inner and outer kerbs of the ring-cairn were almost intact and there were apparently thirteen stones in the surrounding circle (1864, 131–3), though the spacing of the eight sockets recovered in the excavation suggest there were rather fewer and perhaps no more than eleven. The kerb and the ring of orthostats seem to have been visible when Christian Maclagan made her sketch plan, despite showing only nine of the ringstones (1875, 72, pl xxvii). Then the orthostats were apparently ‘standing amongst the growing corn’ and she also illustrated a circular enclosure nearby. By 1899, however, when Coles prepared his plan, there were only three stones in the circle left standing and relatively few of the kerbstones remained visible (1900, 149–52). Apart from the sporadic addition of cleared stones

from the adjacent field it remained in this state until the excavation in 1995 (Henshall 1963, 400; RCAHMS 1984, 8, no. 12; Rees 1997, 255–9, 264). As disinterred, the ring-cairn measured at least 7m in diameter over a near-continuous outer kerb; for the most part this kerb was made up of thin slabs up to 0.7m high, but around the south-west it was formed of more rounded thicker boulders, and one slab on the south was 1.8m long. The internal court measured 4.2m across and the slabs of its kerb formerly stood about 1m high. Outside the outer kerb a platform of cairn material extended out to a line of larger stones following the circumference of the surrounding circle, which measured about 9m in overall diameter.



Cairnwell G17004686 Derived from Rees 1997

To all intents and purposes, the final form of this ring-cairn and its stone circle is fairly typical of other examples contained within this volume. The excavation, however, revealed a complex sequence of activity, beginning in the Neolithic with six shallow pits set out in a semicircle some 14m in diameter. Two of these contained Neolithic pottery, and charcoal from another returned a radiocarbon date of 4680 ± 80 BP (GU-4402: 3650–3190 cal BC). The next secure context was some 1600 radiocarbon years later, comprising an area of intense burning that was interpreted as the remains of a funeral pyre and dated to 3070 ± 60 BP (GU-4399:

1515–1180 cal BC). The excavator suggested that the otherwise undated stone circle also originated in the middle Neolithic to account for the concentric position of the earlier pits in relationship to the eventual position of the ring-cairn. Be that as it may, the use of the site as a pyre heralded a series of events that are evidently closely related in time and space. The first of these was the construction of a small penannular enclosure 5.7m in overall diameter, formed of timbers set in a continuous bedding trench and terminating in two large post-holes flanking the entrance on the south; a radiocarbon date of 3020 ± 70 BP (GU-4400: 1435–1035 cal BC) was returned from charcoal at the bottom of one of the terminal post-holes. Four pits set in a shallow arc outside the entrance were also sealed beneath the ring-cairn and probably belong to this phase. All contained fragments of burnt bones, though in only one could it be identified as human; in another the bones probably belonged to a large mammal, and charcoal from this pit was dated to 2970 ± 50 BP (GU-4401: 1395–1050 cal BC). On the basis of radiocarbon dates of 3020 ± 50 BP (GU-4396: 1420–1135 cal BC) and 2970 ± 50 BP (GU-4398: 1395–1050 cal BC), the excavator also attributed the five cremation pits that were first discovered within the interior in 1858 by Thomson to this phase. While this may be the case, there is no reason stratigraphically why they should not have been deposited in the court of the ring-cairn, which references several components of the timber enclosure so closely that they are unlikely to be of substantially different dates. The inner kerb, for example, roughly followed the line of the timber wall, while the long slab in the outer kerb lay across its entrance and the kerbstones on either side were the only two in the entire circuit that were set in sockets cut into the subsoil. A radiocarbon date of 3100 ± 50 BP (GU-4396: 1515–1270 cal BC) was obtained from a buried soil containing pottery beneath the ring-cairn. The rubble platform outside the ring-cairn was clearly an addition extending out from the foot of the outer kerb to embrace the orthostats of the surrounding circle. Despite the excavators' hypothesis that the latter was erected in the Neolithic, the registration of the stone and timber components to one another suggests that they are all very closely related, and probably constructed over a relatively short period of time.

As Cairnwell was clearly a ring-cairn standing within a stone circle, Audrey Henshall included it with the two on nearby Campstone Hill, Raedykes, in her survey of the Clava group of passage graves and ring-cairns, and it has since appeared with that designation in Burl's gazetteer and guidebooks (Burl 1976a, 360, Knc 3; 1995, 137; 2005a, 137). As long ago as 1972, however, James Kenworthy argued that the ring-cairns in the North-east had their own identity (1973), and Barnatt has since suggested that these three share more features in common with recumbent stone circles than with Clava cairns; in his view they are extreme

expressions in the range of architecture displayed by recumbent stone circles, albeit that they have dispensed with the recumbent setting (1989, 96–8, 275, no. 6:21). In the light of the excavation, Burl has now listed Cairnwell as a possible recumbent stone circle (2000, 429, Knc 4). There can be no doubting the connections between the architectural features of Cairnwell and these monuments, from the use of the larger boulders in the outer kerb on the south-west through to the encircling platform. It is equally detectable in the symbolism of the long slab on the south laid across the entrance to the earlier enclosure, probably between two of the larger outer kerbstones. That said, there is no link forged between this blocked doorway and the surrounding circle in the way that is typically found in recumbent stone circles; if anything, it lies asymmetrically to the closest orthostats of the circle. In effect, there is no unison in the design that focuses from the circle to this slab in the way that is routinely presented by the monuments included in this Gazetteer as recumbent stone circles.

Visited 21 March 2009

18 Castle Hill, Kintore, Aberdeenshire

NJ71NE 32 NJ 7939 1634

Motte

In about 1854, when the Castle Hill in Kintore was removed to make way for the Great North of Scotland Railway, what has been interpreted as a prehistoric stone monument was discovered beneath it. The Castle Hill was a royal castle and the *caput* of the thanage of Kintore in the 12th century. The motte, a substantial mound according to Alexander Watt, the local schoolmaster at the time, measured about 45m in diameter at the base, 9m in height and a little over 20m across its flat top (1865, 141). Many Scottish mottes are simply tailored from natural features, but in this case the upper 3m of the mound seems to have been artificial, and Watt, who had witnessed its destruction, described a substantial structure on the surface below: *'This lower surface was covered with a layer of burnt earth of considerable depth, and along the eastern margin of the hill... and for some distance back from it, were deposited, in an irregular manner, a quantity of stones, and among them eleven large blocks..., a large block, was lying on the west end of it, about seven feet [2.1m] long, and about two feet [0.6m] broad, and about eighteen inches [0.45m] thick' (ibid)*. Two of these blocks were inscribed with Pictish symbols and are slabs 1.5m and 1.05m in length respectively (Fraser 2008, 28, no. 30). In summary Watt concluded: *'From the appearance of the stones it seems probable that a circle of stones, connected by a wall, had formerly existed on the hill' (1865, 141)*. Watt, who rescued the Pictish symbol stones, is evidently the source for

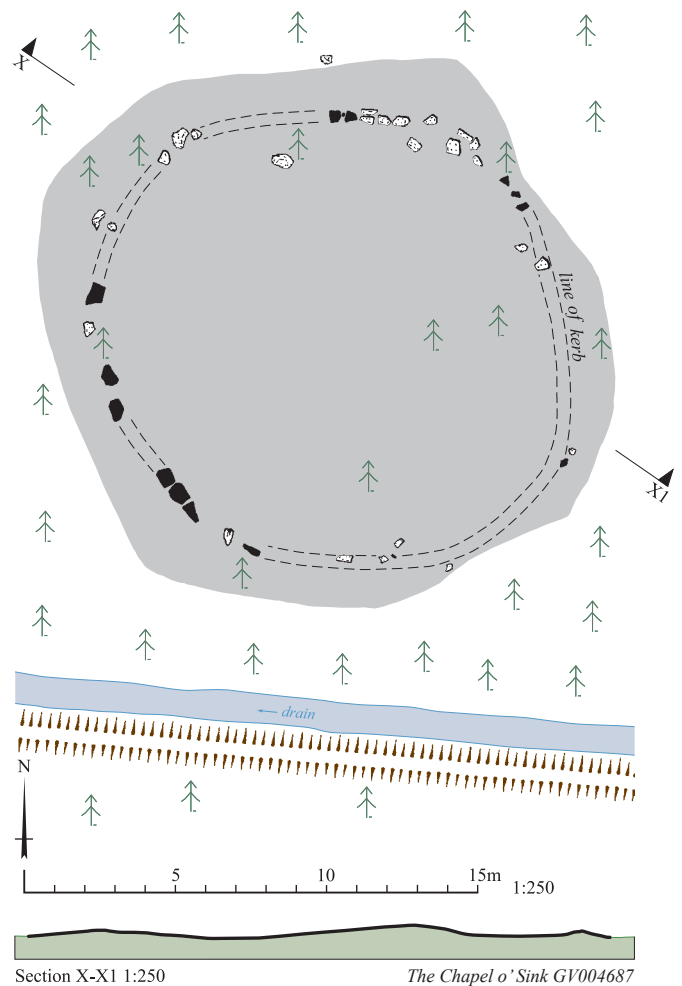
a similar account that was published slightly earlier in the first volume of John Stuart's study of sculptured stones, where the description is elaborated a shade to run *'that a circle of large stones, connected by a low wall of smaller ones (as is still the case with one class of the "Druidical" Circles) had formerly stood on the summit of the hill' (1856, 33–4)*. It was Douglas Simpson, however, who forcefully asserted that this was the remains of a recumbent stone circle (1943, 97), employing an argument that is almost as obscure as it is spurious; lying unstated behind his train of thought was possibly Watt's description of a large block lying on the west, though from its size it is more likely to have been an orthostat than a recumbent. In truth, it is impossible to be certain that these stones were any more than the substructure of the motte; if a prehistoric monument, however, the description cannot be stretched beyond a cairn with a ring of orthostats in its kerb.

Visited 1 October 2002

19 The Chapel o' Sink, Chapel of Garioch, Aberdeenshire

NJ71NW 4 NJ 7060 1895

Cairn



This robbed cairn, which lies in a plantation of conifers on the rising ground behind Westerton, measures about 14.7m in diameter over a kerb of slabs and small boulders, of which about thirteen remain in place. Neatly built, the kerb is graded in height, the tallest of its stones standing about 0.6m high on the south-west. In this respect the cairn resembles some of those recorded within recumbent stone circles, though in this case there is no evidence that the kerb was ever adapted to incorporate a recumbent, nor that there was once a surrounding circle of orthostats. The cairn was already robbed by 1867 and is described in the Name Book as ‘a circle of standing stones of no great height nor size’ (Aberdeenshire, No. 13, p 102). The suggestion that this is the remains of a recumbent stone circle was first made by James Ritchie (1917, 40–1), and from that source it has found its way into later lists as a probable or possible example (Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 350, Abn 26; 2000, 420, Abn 26; Ruggles 1984, 60; 1999, 187, no. 64). It was Ritchie’s contention that the Ark Stone, a block incorporated into the dyke separating the plantation from the fields about 100m to the north-north-west (NJ 7058 1908; NJ71NW 28), was the recumbent robbed from the circle, though neither its size nor its shape would have lent itself to such a use. Indeed, there is no reason to believe that the Ark Stone is anything more than an erratic, lying where it was dumped by ice thousands of years ago. It was a well-known local landmark in the days before the ground was enclosed and served as a marker on the march between the estates of Monymusk and Balquhain (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 13, p 104). The name of the cairn, Chapel o’ Sink, carries with it a similar folklore to the Sunken Kirk (App 1.78), in which building work on a chapel by day disappeared by night (*ibid*, p 102; Ritchie 1917, 40–1; 1926, 306).

Visited 25 July 1996

20 Chapmen’s Graves, Kennethmont, Aberdeenshire

NJ52NE 20 NJ 5717 2882
Stones

In the 19th century two long stones lay prostrate 18m apart in a field on a prominent ridge 400m east-south-east of Whiteburn. They were thought to mark the graves of two packmen or chapmen who shot one another in a quarrel (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 46, p 47). They were probably removed before the end of the century and do not appear on the 2nd edition of the OS 6-inch map (Aberdeenshire 1901, xliii). In preparing material for their field sections, staff of the OS Archaeology Division suggested in 1967 that the stones might have been the remains of a recumbent stone circle, based on no more than the notion that such circles were quite numerous in the area. Keith Blood duly visited the site and observed numerous large stones along the fence immediately to the south, which suggested to him that there may indeed

have been a stone structure here, a stone circle being the most likely possibility. Some of these still lie along the old fence-line, but there is no reason to believe that they have been removed from a recumbent stone circle.

Visited 3 April 1996

21 Coilleaichur, Dull, Perth & Kinross

NN84NW 24 NN 8488 4638
Enclosure (Ring-cairn or Hut-circle)

This enclosure, which now lies within a clearing in a forestry plantation, was discovered by Coles on a north-west-facing slope in moorland overlooking Urral from the east-south-east. Measuring 10.5m in internal diameter, its perimeter is heavily robbed, now comprising little more than two incomplete rings of contiguous upright slabs placed concentrically some 2.5m apart. Coles seems to have been struck by the slabs set up on edge, some of them being of considerable size (1910, 147–9). With no experience of the wide range of hut-circles that exist in Perthshire, he described the enclosure as a stone circle, but in 1975 John Barneville of the OS, surveying the antiquities for the map revision programme, had no hesitation in identifying Coilleaichur as the remains of a double-walled hut-circle. This type of hut-circle is more commonly found in north-eastern Perthshire and no others are known so far to the west, which is what probably led to a follow up visit some three years later by John Linge, also of the OS. Linge was equally clear that this is not a stone circle, but raised the possibility that it was a ritual monument rather than a domestic hut-circle, and it was duly annotated *Enclosure* on the new series of 1:10,000 maps. In the meantime Burl published Coilleaichur as a possible recumbent stone circle in his gazetteer (1976a, 362, Per 11; 2000, 432, Per 14). His reasons are not explained, but he was perhaps misled by the run of outer kerbstones on the south-west, or the large inner kerbstone that Coles drew attention to on the east-south-east. Nevertheless, it is cited as part of an Aberdeenshire connection in his discussion of Croft Moraig (1976a, 202; 2000, 251), albeit with a diameter of 49m. This has left other researchers struggling to account for it, both architecturally and geographically (Barnatt 1989, 314–15, no. 7:15; Ruggles 1984, 58 note x, 60; 1999, 188 no. 98, 266 note 26). The two largest of the slabs forming the perimeter are up to 1.2m in length by 0.6m in height, one of them forming part of the inner ring on the east-south-east and the other in the outer on the south-west, but there is no evidence that either formed part of a recumbent setting, nor that there was a ring of orthostats here. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the eleven visible slabs of the better-preserved inner ring are graded in height towards the south-west, all of them being between 0.5m and 0.6m in height. This need not disqualify the enclosure from

being the remains of a ring-cairn, but upright slabs are also employed in the walls of hut-circles, and with the interior possibly levelled into the slope on the south this provides an alternative interpretation of its character. As Linge observed, the perimeter is too heavily robbed to be certain which is the correct interpretation, though it does not have the deeply splayed entrance typical of double-walled hut-circles and is unlikely to belong to that category. Of one thing there can be no doubt, however, this is not a recumbent stone circle.

Visited 13 March 2009

22 Corshalloch, Glass, Aberdeenshire

NJ44SW 1 NJ c 4179 4196

Cairn

In 1970 James Godsman claimed that there had once been a recumbent stone circle on the farm of Corshalloch, but that it had '*long since vanished*' (1970, 20). This probably refers to a *Stone Circle* noted in 1871 by OS surveyors immediately west of the steading, apparently well known locally as a *Druidical Circle*. They described it in the following terms: '*A circular mound... supposed to be the remains of a stone circle from the remains of the large stones that are still visible and form a circle*' (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 36, p 14). None of the stones appears on the map, which merely depicts the dotted outline of the mound (Aberdeenshire 1874, xxv.1), and Coles found no trace of them in 1905.

He subsequently learned from George Watt, a former tenant, that the stones '*as far as he could tell, were taken down and broken up and rebuilt for corners to the new buildings*' (Coles 1906a, 186–7). There is no doubt that there was once a cairn here, which still formed an amorphous mound up to 0.6m high when it was visited by Royal Commission investigators in the course of a survey of this part of the Deveron Valley in 1990, but it is difficult to be certain whether the OS surveyors of 1871 were describing a surviving ring of orthostats or simply a kerb. In this respect, the absence of any stones from the map depiction is perhaps the most persuasive evidence, suggesting that none were very large and thus hinting that they were no more than kerbstones. In the same passage Godsman mentions a '*Bronze Age burial cairn*' at Corshalloch that had also been removed, but other than this mound beside the farm there is no record of such a feature anywhere in the vicinity.

Visited 27 March 1990

23 Cortes, Rathen, Aberdeenshire

NJ95NE 5

Duplicate Record

A possible recumbent stone circle is listed under this name by Burl and Ruggles (Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 351,

Abn 34; 2000, 420, Abn 33; Ruggles 1984, 58; 1999, 185, no. 4). It is attributed to a reference to a '*Druid temple on the estate of Cortes*' in the *New Statistical Account* (xii, Aberdeenshire, 293). This, however, probably refers to the one on Cortie Brae (cf Barnatt 1989, 460 no. 6:120, 484 no. 6:k), which does not appear in Burl's gazetteer. The *New Statistical Account* does not mention any other stone circles in the parish and in 1870 the Cortie Brae circle was the only one known to the OS surveyors and their informants (Aberdeenshire 1872, viii), by which time it comprised only three stones (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 76, p 96). To add to the confusion, Rev John Pratt's account of Buchan places the *Druidical circle* referred to in the *New Statistical Account* two miles south-west of Rathen Church (1858, 149) rather than on Cortie Brae to the south-east; this was compounded by Robert Anderson in revising the text for the 4th edition at the end of the century, for he adds that a single stone still marked the spot (Pratt 1901, 247). Like many such sources, the directions and distances should not be taken too literally – for example Trefor Hill is placed north-east of the church rather than north – and it is perhaps more telling that Cortie Brae otherwise escapes Pratt's and Anderson's notice. Indeed, Anderson is almost certainly referring to Cortie Brae, where in 1903 Coles found a single stone set upright (1904, 290–1). However, neither these remains nor the earlier accounts give any grounds to suggest that there was a circle with a recumbent setting on the Cortes estate.

24 Craigenlow Quarry, Echt, Aberdeenshire

NJ70NW 43 NJ c 7305 0855

Natural Feature

In 1997 an archaeological assessment in advance of the expansion of Craigenlow Quarry identified a number of features, one of which was postulated to be a possible recumbent stone circle on the south-west shoulder of Craigenlow Hill (Bain 1997). Subsequent investigation demonstrated that it was not (Bain 1998), and a follow up visit suggests that these stones are nothing more than a fortuitous arrangement of large boulders among a scatter of other erratics.

Visited 26 April 1998

25 Craighead, Banchory-Devenick, Aberdeenshire

NO99NW 3 NO 9117 9772

Stone Circle and Cairn (Possible)

Craighead, or Badentoy as it is sometimes called after the farm to the north-east, does not appear in any lists of recumbent stone circles, but in one of her plates Christian Maclagan applies the name *Bodentoy* to a circle with six stones and the pecked outline of a

recumbent (1875, pl xxvii). It is probably this same plate that led Alfred Lewis to comment that it was uncertain whether or not there had been an *altar-stone* here (1900, 72). A closer reading of Maclagan's text, however, reveals that this is the name she gave to Old Bourtreebush (App 1.69; 1875, 73). Standing within the raised interior of a walled enclosure, the Craighead circle now comprises four stones set out at the corners of a rhombus measuring 9m from north-north-west to south-south-east by 7m transversely. This has led Burl to include Craighead in his gazetteer of four-posters (1988b, 130–1), but there is some doubt that any of them is standing in its original socket. In 1899 Coles' suspicions were aroused by the way in which the stones appeared to stand at the cardinal points and had been drilled to take the iron rings anchoring the guys of a flagstaff at the centre (1900, 150 fig 10, 151). The flagstaff, however, seems to have been an afterthought to an earlier remodelling of the circle and there is no sign of it on the plan drawn up in 1884 by William Lukis (GM7828.37). This shows the four stones standing in their present positions within the enclosure, and he also records that the northernmost had been re-erected by the tenant (1885, 305). However, the depiction on the 1st edition of the OS 25-inch map drawn another fifteen years earlier is very different, showing three stones disposed around the south arc of a much larger circle (Kincardineshire 1868, vii). Three is also the number that Alexander Thomson noted in 1858 when he excavated here in company with Charles Dalrymple and others. Thomson believed that there had originally been seven, standing on a raised platform. Digging in the centre they discovered traces of a cremation deposit (1864, 130–1). The platform was 'about 60 yards in circumference' (*ibid*), which roughly accords with the stony outline some 17m across shown on the 1st edition of the OS map, but this was cut back to little more than 10m in diameter when the low revetment wall was built. Of the four stones now present, the southernmost is possibly still in its original socket, but the rest were almost certainly re-positioned within the new enclosure. Without excavation it will not be possible to demonstrate the true character of this circle and its relationship to the platform, but there is no reason to believe that it incorporated a recumbent setting.

Visited 21 March 2009

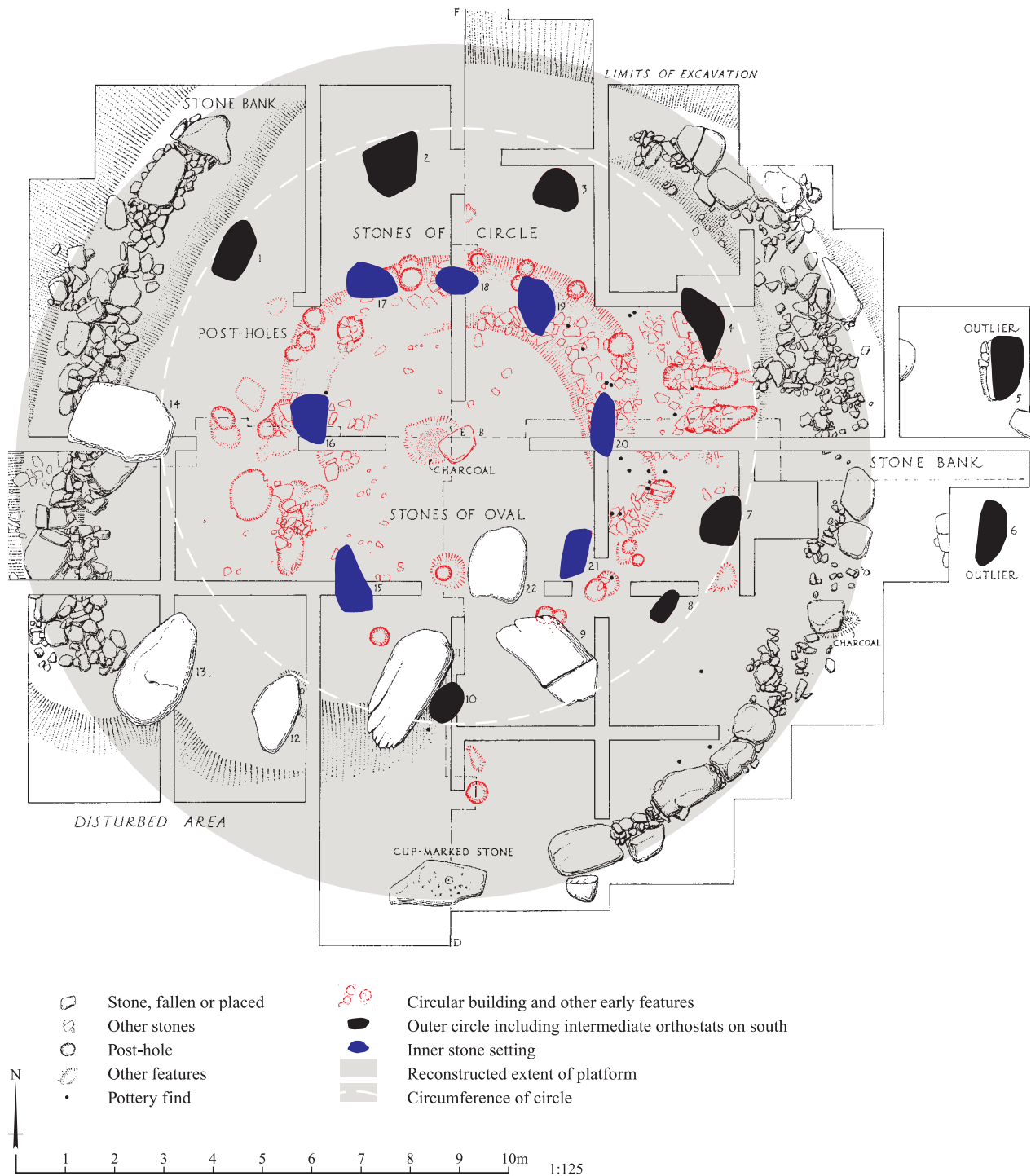
26 Croft Moraig, Dull, Perth & Kinross

NN74NE 12 NN 7975 4726

Stone Circle and Cupmarkings

This well-known stone circle, which is situated on a low rise on the south-west side of the approach road to Croftmoraig, was extensively excavated in 1965 to reveal a complex sequence of superimposed stone

and timber monuments (Piggott and Simpson 1971; Bradley and Sheridan 2005). To the visitor today it has four principal components. Working from the centre outwards these comprise: a central oval setting of eight low orthostats (Stones 15–22 on excavation plan; see plan, p 238) graded to increase in height towards the south-west and measuring about 6.3m by 5.5m; an outer circle of nine taller stones (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 11, 13 & 14) about 12.2m in diameter, which are interdigitated on the south with another three small boulders (8, 10 & 12); traces around the north-west, east and south of a sharply defined lip studded with boulders, one of them being a large prominently sited slab on the south-south-west bearing twenty-one cups and two cup-and-ring marks; and finally a pair of outlying slabs on the east-south-east (5 & 6), one of which is now fallen. The excavation uncovered a concentrically placed ring of timbers about 7.5m in diameter at the centre, accompanied on the north by an internal ring-ditch; there was a narrow porch-like entrance on the east-south-east. The only stratigraphic relationships that had survived later disturbance and stone-robbing demonstrated that the inner setting had succeeded the timber circle and the ring-ditch. The excavators, Stuart Piggott and Derek Simpson, adopted what was then a conventional interpretation that placed the timber monument at its start, followed by the inner stone setting and the arcs of a *stony bank* forming the boulder-studded lip, and completed by the outer stone circle with its outliers forming a portal on the east-south-east; until recently this broad sequence has been generally accepted (Burl 2000, 249–51; 2005a, 157–8; Barclay 2000). Richard Bradley and Alison Sheridan, however, have reviewed the structural evidence and the finds from the fill of the ring-ditch, which included a few sherds of Neolithic pottery. These are now considered residual and they have suggested an alternative sequence in which the timber circle and the ring-ditch represent separate phases inserted successively into the interior of the outer circle and followed by the construction of the penannular setting and the enclosing arcs of bank (2005, 273, fig 3). Most of the sherds recovered from the ring-ditch are probably of Late Bronze Age date, thus providing a *terminus post quem* for the construction of the inner stone setting (*ibid* 278). In this new sequence, they contrast the east-south-east alignment of the outer stone circle and the entrance to the timber monument inserted into its interior, with the north-north-east and south-south-west axis of the inner stone setting, which they postulate was originally penannular with its open side facing south-south-west. They suggest that this apparent shift in the orientation of the monument is heralded by the digging of the arc of the ring-ditch, which was found only around the north-east half of the central area. Whatever the merits of this new sequence, which is discussed further below, the re-dating of most of the pottery finds to the Late Bronze Age is of some



Croft Moraig G1004688 Derived from Piggott and Simpson, 1971

significance, with far-reaching implications for stone circles elsewhere.

The present survey has been concerned principally with the evidence that Burl has advanced to suggest that Croft Moraig is a *variant* recumbent stone circle, but the commentary offered here has some bearing on the character and dating of both the inner setting and the outer circle, and is not wholly in accord with the new interpretation advanced by Bradley and Sheridan. In their examination of the axis of the monument they

dismiss Barnatt's suggestion that the orthostats of the outer circle may have been graded in height towards the south-west (2005, 269; Barnatt 1989, 316–18, no. 7:22) in favour of the major axis lying east-south-east and west-north-west through the portal formed by the two outliers. Of this latter axis there can be no doubt, extending through the gap between two stones 1.65m high on the east-south-east of the outer ring (4 & 7) and across to a tabular slab lying prone on the west-north-west (14). Measuring 2m in length by

1.4m in breadth, this is also the broadest stone in the outer ring. Measurements of the other fallen stones on the south-west quarter, however, show that these increase in length towards the south-south-west, where the longest stone (11) is no less than 2.8m in length, its neighbours (9 & 13) to either side being 2.3m and 2.45m respectively. While we do not know the depth of the sockets for the stones on the north side of the outer ring – Piggott and Simpson record only that they were shallow (1971, 8) – these three on the south-west would need to be sunk between 0.9m and 1.4m below the present surface to reduce them to the height of the two standing on the north-north-east (2 & 3), both of which are 1.4m high. At this depth it is inconceivable that the sockets would not have cut the subsoil, and yet the only ones located in the south-west sector of the ring belong to the small intermediate boulders. Thus, though the two outlying stones provide an axis to the outer circle lying east-south-east and west-north-west, there can be little doubt that the orthostats of the outer circle were graded in height around an axis lying north-north-east and south-south-west.

Piggott and Simpson attributed the loss of the sockets on the south-west to extensive later disturbance, which they believed was also responsible for the removal of the much misunderstood ‘stone bank’ in this sector (*ibid* 8). The apparent eccentricity of this feature to the outer stone circle, has led most researchers to associate it with the inner setting rather than the outer circle (Barclay 2000), but this forgets that it was heavily robbed (Piggott and Simpson 1971, 7–8). As Alexander Thom demonstrated many years ago, the larger boulders surviving along its course are roughly set along the circumference of a circle (Thom *et al* 1980, 348–9), so much so that these should surely be interpreted as the surviving kerbstones of a much more regular and formal structure. Some of the boulders were founded on the bank of rubble, and as they appear today they form a roughly level rim encircling the monument. As such, they were probably designed not to retain the bank so much as create a formal edge to a level platform, and if the size of the cupmarked stone on the south-south-west, a slab over 2m in length, is any guide, the largest of these kerbstones may have been placed around the south-west quarter. Any eccentricity between the kerb of the platform and the outer stone circle, which can only be judged on the projection of the surviving arcs, was again on this same axis, the gap between them being narrowest on the north-north-east and broadest on the south-south-west. If this platform is reinstated across the south-west quarter of the circle, it at once suggests why no stone-holes were recovered in this sector, for the sockets were probably contained within its thickness, though in its turn this implies that the orthostats of the outer circle were erected after the platform was constructed. To some extent this hypothetical sequence is confirmed by photographs in the excavation archive.

These show the packing stones of the standing orthostat on the east of the outer ring (4) rising almost to the turf (eg RCAHMS PT10193) and thus above the level at which ‘flat or roughly flat stones’ were found on the surface of the material that filled the earlier post-holes and the arc of the ring-ditch (Piggott and Simpson 1971, 6–7). This scatter of stones was probably the residue of the robbed platform, and the position of the packing indicates that the socket for the orthostat was cut through it. Some years ago such a sequence would have appeared unlikely, but now it is more normal, conforming to the sequences that Bradley (2005) has recovered in his excavations of the recumbent stone circles at **Aikey Brae**, **Cothiemuir Wood** and **Tomnaverie**.

If this analysis is correct, however, the timber structure reverts to where Piggott and Simpson placed it, at the beginning of the overall sequence of construction, sealed beneath the platform. The only possible evidence that there may have been a stone setting here before the construction of the platform is provided by the shallow sockets in the subsoil for two of the small stones apparently interdigitated with the orthostats of the outer circle on the south. As for the timber structure itself, there is no satisfactory evidence to detach the ring-ditch from the post-ring; as Bradley and Sheridan hint (2005, 279), if these were found without the association of a stone circle, unquestionably they would be conflated as the remains of a Bronze Age round-house with a partly sunken floor and its entrance on the east-south-east; examples can be found throughout eastern Scotland (eg Kintore; Cook and Dunbar 2008). The same commentary is presented elsewhere in this volume in respect to the wall-trench and post-ring excavated within the recumbent stone circle at **Strichen House**, though in that case the building was inserted into an existing stone circle. The filling of the ditch at Croft Moraig may have taken place within the history of this building rather than with the construction of the platform (eg see Achany Glen, Lairg, House 2, McCullagh and Tipping 1998, 38–40); at any rate the sediments had certainly consolidated before the erection of the stones of the inner setting, for none of these shows any signs of subsidence.

Piggott and Simpson assumed that the inner setting of stones was oval rather than penannular, based upon the large stone lying prone in its open arc on the south-south-west (22). They failed to find its socket, but the robbing of the platform readily explains its loss, and probably why most of the others had only the shallowest seating. With all of these stones bar one upright, however, the alignment of the setting is plain enough; their tops rise progressively towards the south-south-west. Furthermore, a line drawn through the smallest stone on its north-north-east (18) and the middle one of the three interdigitated with the outer circle on the south-south-west (10) passes through the centre of the

cupmarked slab on the kerb of the platform, if not the cup-and-ring on its upper surface (Bradley and Sheridan 2005, 272), combining elements probably belonging to three separate phases. And yet the inner setting also references the east-south-east alignment of the outer circle in its short axis, and more precisely than the entrance into the earlier timber building; this is manifested in the positions of the two stones on its longer arcs (16 & 20), which are set roughly on a line drawn from the fallen tabular slab on the west-north-west of the outer circle through the portal on the east-south-east.

Burl has also recognised the presence of the platform here and has marshalled it with the 'supine' cupmarked stone on the south-south-west, the pieces of quartz found scattered across the interior (Piggott and Simpson 1971, 8), the grading of the inner orthostats, and the apparent orientation of the inner setting towards the south-south-west, to argue that in its later stages Croft Moraig is a *variant* recumbent stone circle (Burl 2000, 249–51; 2005a, 157–8). As we can now see the south-south-west is also referenced in the grading of the outer circle and the platform. That said, the circle has never borne any resemblance to a recumbent stone circle at any stage of its development into the composite monument that survives today. These are simply elements in a shared vocabulary that turn up in different ways throughout the country. As is the case where Burl has postulated other long distance links (Auchagallon App 1.2; Coilleaichur App 1.21; Fortingall Church App 1.37; Torhousekie App 1.79), there are more likely comparisons to be found at much closer hand. What is perhaps most remarkable about Croft Moraig is that the Late Bronze Age pottery apparently provides a *terminus post quem* for every stage of its megalithic development.

Visited 5 April 2009

27 Crookmore, Tullynessle and Forbes, Aberdeenshire

NJ51NE 16 NJ 5864 1868

NJ51NE 144 NJ 5864 1878

Hut-circle (Probable)

The supposed existence of a recumbent stone circle at Crookmore has a long history of confusion, not only in recent gazetteers but also going back to the first accounts of a discovery that was made in the 19th century. This took place probably in 1828, when what was termed a *Druidical circle* at Crookmore was removed and its site brought under cultivation. In the course of this work two stone *ladles* or lamps were discovered nearby, both of which are now in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, having been donated by John Stuart in 1838 and 1853 respectively (AQ 10–11, NMAS 1892, 59). Stuart also supplied Daniel Wilson with a description

of their discovery. In this he reported that the circle 'was of considerable size, and the stones composing it were inserted in the centre of a mound or dyke of some elevation. The earth in the interior had been withdrawn... and it presented the appearance of a bason which, at a former period, might at the centre have been eight or ten feet [2.4m–2.7m] deep. Around the circle, to about the extent of an acre, the ground was covered with a close pavement of large flag-stones ... Pointing in a south-easterly direction, a paved road, of about twelve feet [3.6m] in breadth, of the same material as the causeway, was discovered extending about five hundred yards, and from the situation of the ground it seems to have been intended as an approach to the circle through a marshy piece of ground' (Wilson 1854, 116–17). The *ladles* had been found under the external paving, though an entry in the OS Name Book for what is presumably the site of the same *Stone Circle* at Crookmore, compiled in 1866, places them within the circle, gives the date of their discovery as 1829, and reduces the length of the road to 200 yards (Aberdeenshire, No. 88, p 97); a cross was placed on the map to mark its site (NJ 5864 1868), though the exact location of the circle was by then forgotten.

Wilson correlated the *ladle* Stuart donated to the museum in 1838 with one of two mentioned in the *New Statistical Account* for the parish (Wilson 1851, 111), which also gives a detailed description of how they were found during the demolition of a *Stone Circle*; unlike Stuart's account, however, this does not name the farm upon which they were found and, confusingly, in 1866 the site of the discovery was pointed out to OS surveyors as being the two stones standing at Druidsfield, Montgarrie (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 88, pp 85, 90; see also discussion under App 1.32). Nevertheless, the *New Statistical Account* mentions the same principal features reported by Stuart at Crookmore – a circle levelled internally into the slope, a paved road extending for a distance of 600 yards through a bog to the south-east, an extensive area of external paving and two stone *ladles* – and there can be little doubt that it refers to the same discovery. Thus, the additional details that it furnishes provide a further insight into the character of the *Stone Circle* that stood at Crookmore: 'The upright stones were mostly gone; but it was evident they enclosed a circle about fifty feet [15m] in diameter... The upright stones were on top of the bank... There was no pavement within the circle' (NSA, xii, Aberdeenshire, 449–50). The only discrepancy lies in the descriptions of the lamps, which do not fit the two preserved in the museum. Having been donated separately ten and twenty-five years respectively after the event, one or both may have become confused with others from elsewhere in Aberdeenshire. The *New Statistical Account* itself mentions another found nearby in a *Druidical circle* at Whiteside (NJ c571 199; NSA, xii, Aberdeenshire, 450).

Alexander Keiller believed that Crookmore was probably a recumbent stone circle (Keiller 1934, 18), which accounts for its inclusion as a possible example in the lists prepared by Burl and Ruggles (Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 351, Abn 36; 2000, 420, Abn 35), though the latter elaborated his suspicion that there had been some confusion (Ruggles 1984, 57 note m, 59; 1999, 187 no. 50, 266 note 9). Keiller's reasoning was largely based on the presence of the road or causeway, a feature that had been reported at several other sites that he believed were recumbent stone circles. A more recent review of the evidence for these causeways has concluded that their lengths tend to have been exaggerated and at Newbigging, Clatt (App 1.67), for example, it is more likely that the description refers to the remains of a souterrain attached to a large hut-circle (Gannon *et al* 2007, 70–1). The circle at Crookmore certainly sounds more like a hut-circle than any stone circle, with its floor sunk deep into the slope and a wall incorporating a few particularly large stones. What may be its site is revealed by a disc-shaped cropmark that has been photographed on a low spur about 100m north of the estimated location plotted in 1866 by the OS surveyors (NJ 5864 1878). No sign of a souterrain can be seen on this photograph, so in this case the causeway was possibly an early field boundary, other examples of which are sometimes referred to in this way in antiquarian sources (eg *NSA*, xii, Aberdeenshire, 463). The external paving uncovered at Crookmore hints that the hut-circle formed part of a much more extensive settlement.

Visited 5 March 1997

28 Culsh, New Deer, Aberdeenshire

NJ84NE 12 NJ 881 480
Stone Circle

In the late 18th century, probably about 1770 (*NSA*, xii, Aberdeenshire, 177), a *Druidical temple* was removed from the farm of Standingstones to provide stones for the foundations of the manse at New Deer (*Stat Acct*, ix, 1793, 191). On the strength of the place-name alone this was probably a megalithic ring, and Rev Hugh Taylor, the minister of the parish, placed it 'about half a mile north from the church' (*ibid*), a location that falls on the lower slopes of the Hill of Culsh to the south of Standingstones steading. The exact position of the circle and its character are unknown, but in 1870, almost 100 years after its removal, Alexander Wilson of Mill of Auchreddie pointed out its site on the summit of the Hill of Culsh to the OS surveyors, claiming to remember 'when a boy to have seen one of the stones which formed part of the circle standing near where the Trig Station now is' (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 64, p 52); apparently confronted with an eyewitness, the OS surveyors duly marked the site of the circle

on the summit (Aberdeenshire 1874, xx; NJ84NE 2, NJ 8811 4829) where the monument commemorating William Dingwall-Fordyce MP (1836–1875) now stands. Alexander Wilson, however, was only born in 1802, some 30 years after the circle is supposed to have been removed, so his testimony cannot be considered reliable. Nevertheless, some memory of where the circle stood may have survived into the 20th century, sufficient for Rev William Beveridge to mount an excavation in 1913 at what he believed to be the spot, assisted by the tenant of the farm, James Littlejohn, and his sons. Explicitly, this was in one of the fields on the south face of the hill rather than anywhere on its summit (Beveridge 1914, 191–2), its site identifiable by the quartz scattered in the ploughsoil. This was spread over an area about 9m across, within which they found 'masses of burnt soil'. On further investigation they also discovered four pits, two of which were filled with stones and had possibly contained inhumations. Mr Littlejohn was no stranger to archaeological remains on his farm (Abercromby 1901), but he was not the tenant when the OS surveyors prepared the Name Book and may not have held the farm from long before the turn of the century. As a result it is not clear whether Beveridge had tapped into surviving local lore, or whether Littlejohn's discoveries in his fields had simply led him to rationalise his own observations with the parish records held in the two *Statistical Accounts*. The enduring quality of quartz, however, holds the promise that this particular location might still be identified by field-walking.

In conclusion, there is no reason to doubt that a stone circle once stood on the lower slopes of the Hill of Culsh, but its exact position is lost and in the absence of any compelling antiquarian description there are no grounds to identify it as a recumbent stone circle. Burl first raised this possibility, based on the understanding that it stood on the flank of the hill and that its site correlated with the quartz and burning reported by Beveridge (Burl 1970, 73, 79; 1976a, 351, Abn 39; 2000, 420, Abn 38); Ruggles was more sceptical (1984, 56 note c, 59; 1999, 186, no. 14; cf Barnatt 1989, 460, no. 6:123).

29 Daviot Church, Daviot, Aberdeenshire

NJ72NW 2 NJ 7495 2823
Stone Circle (Possible)

The presence of what may have been a megalithic monument in the churchyard at Daviot is first mentioned by Rev Robert Shepherd in the *Statistical Account*, who describes it as one of two *Druid temples* in the parish (vi, 1793, 86), the other being the recumbent stone circle at **Loanhead of Daviot**. According to James Logan, who probably visited Daviot about 1818 (Cruickshank 1941, xxiii), it stood on the south side of the burial-ground and comprised 'two very large rough stones,

one of which forms part of the side wall of a cottage' (Cruikshank 1941, 34). Both were removed shortly after and broken up for reuse in other buildings (*NSA*, xii, Aberdeenshire, 822; Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 24, p 32); no trace of them can now be detected within either the burial-ground or the walls of buildings standing nearby. Although Daviot does not figure in any of the consolidated lists as a recumbent stone circle (Burl 2000, 421, Abn 71b), Burl implies that it may have been another example in various guidebook and gazetteer entries for **Loanhead of Daviot** (Thom *et al* 1980, 191; Burl 2005a, 102). At best this monument can be described only as a possible stone circle, but in truth there is insufficient evidence to be sure that these stones were any more than two erratic boulders.

Visited 8 July 1999

30 Doune Hill, Tarland, Aberdeenshire

NJ40NE 9 NJ 48 06

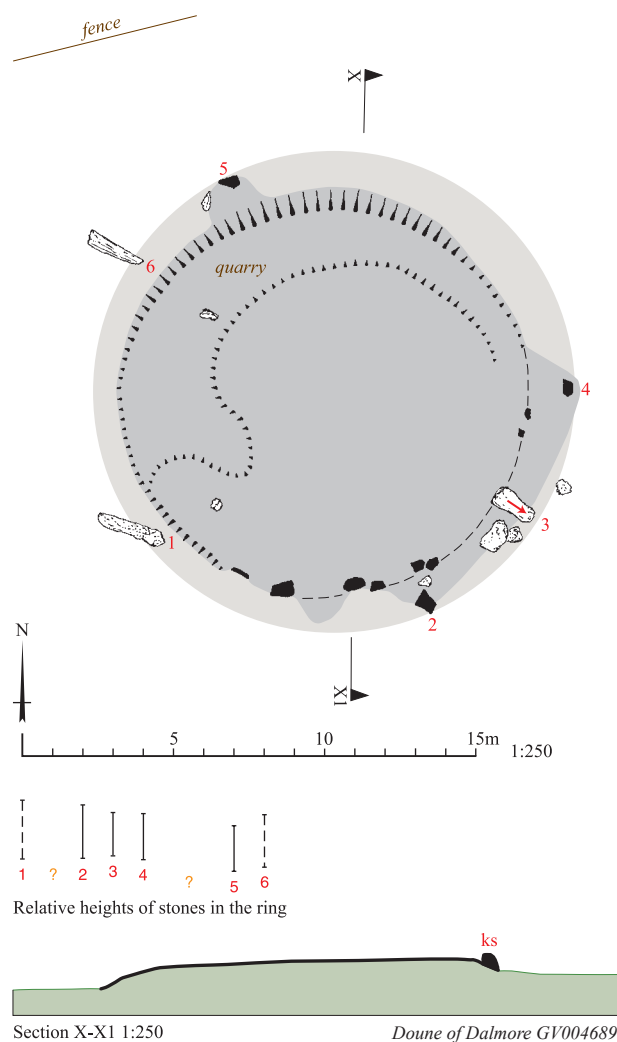
Cairn

A cairn that once stood on the west flank of Doune Hill, a spur which drops down to the north-north-east of Tarland (NJ 487 064), has been referred to by Burl as a recumbent stone circle (1988b, 19; see also App 1.52). The only description is provided by John Stuart, who seems to have visited the antiquities in the neighbourhood in the mid 19th century: *'On the west slope of the Doune'* he wrote *'there remained, till lately, the circle of stones which had surrounded a cairn after the stones of the latter had been removed, and the stone coffin which had been in its centre also remained, surmounted by a blue boulder of immense size'* (Stuart 1854b, 260). While the character of *'the circle of stones'* is not immediately clear, the general context of the passage seems to draw a distinction between cairns enclosed by kerbs – *'circles of stones, which projected a little above the ground'* (*ibid*) – and circles composed of upright stones. There can be little doubt that Doune Hill belongs in the former category, particularly as Stuart obliquely refers to the robbing of the mound to reveal the cist at its centre. Nevertheless, Burl's first listing of the stone circles of the British Isles tentatively identified Doune Hill as a *'plain ring'*, a general term that he employs for a stone circle with an open interior (Burl 1976a, 351, Abn 41). Perhaps misled by Stuart's mention of the *'blue boulder of immense size'* covering the central cist, he subsequently revised his view in a discussion of the character of recumbent stone circles in the Howe of Cromar and grouped Doune Hill with the cairn on Knocksoul (App 1.52) and the **Blue Cairn of Ladieswell** (Burl 1988b, 18–19). More recently still he has reverted to his initial listing (2000, 420, Abn 40), but the conclusion of the present study is that Doune Hill and Knocksoul are simply large robbed cairns and they should not figure in any list of stone circles.

31 Doune of Dalmore, Inveravon, Moray

NJ13SE 4 NJ 1853 3085

Stone Circle and Ring-cairn



This ring-cairn and its surrounding stone circle stand on a hillock that rises out of the haughland on the east bank of the River Avon at its confluence with the River Livet. The cairn, which is composed mainly of waterworn cobbles, measures about 13m in diameter by up to 0.7m in height and has been retained by an outer kerb of larger boulders that can be traced round the southern arc from the east to the south-west. Of the eight kerbstones that remain, one on the south-west is significantly larger than any of the others and measures 0.7m in length by 0.6m in height. Nothing can now be seen of the central court, but six stones belonging to its kerb are shown set on edge on the plan drawn up in 1906 by Coles (1907a, 136–9, fig 6); at that time they protruded between 0.15m and 0.25m above the surface of the cairn and described a rough circle 5.8m in internal diameter around another four stones arranged in a square. The circle surrounding the cairn probably comprised ten equally-spaced orthostats, of which three remain in place and another three lie where they have

fallen. Standing about 1.2m outside the line of the outer kerb, the orthostats are apparently set out along the lip of a stony platform skirting the cairn, though this is now only visible in places on the south-east, north-west and south-west. Judging by the heights and lengths of the surviving orthostats, the circle was graded to reduce in height from south to north.

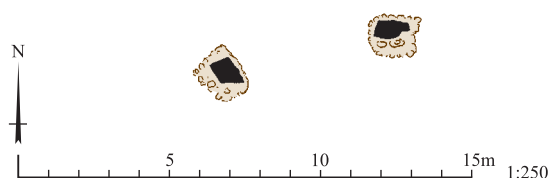
Briefly mentioned in the *Statistical Account* (xiii, 1794, 43), the stone circle is first described by OS surveyors, who noted that four of the orthostats (1, 2, 4 & 5) were still upright (Name Book, Banffshire, No. 17, p 105; Banffshire 1872, xxix); by the time of Coles' visit in 1906 stone 1 on the south-west had fallen. Coles describes the circle and what he termed the 'inner setting', but these were not recognised as the remains of a ring-cairn until a visit in 1966 by Keith Blood of the OS. Since then the classification of the monument has been discussed in several publications (Henshall 1972, 274 note), opinion oscillating between a Clava-type cairn (Burl 1976a, 355, Ban 2; 2000, 424, Ban 2; 2005a, 118) and a recumbent stone circle, the latter being argued inconclusively by Barnatt on the basis of the encircling platform (Barnatt 1989, 260–1, no. 5:21). At the core of the debate is the premise that the circle has been so wrecked that it is impossible to characterise it without excavation. In the assessment of the present survey, however, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that it is not a recumbent stone circle. The positions of the surviving stones suggest that Coles was almost certainly correct in supposing that the circle comprised ten orthostats, and though these were graded in height, we can be confident that their spacing did not increase on the south side. Evenly spaced, there is simply no room for a recumbent setting anywhere on the southern half of the circumference. Furthermore, at the most likely position, adjacent to the present gap in the ring on the south-south-west, the kerb of the cairn pursues a regular arc without the merest hint that it might once have turned outwards to embrace a recumbent setting.

Visited 20 July 2005

32 Druidsfield, Tullynessle and Forbes, Aberdeenshire

NJ51NE 1 NJ 5789 1771

Standing Stones



Druidsfield GT/004690

These two granite pillars stand on a low ridge some 90m north-east of Druidsfield. Set 4.6m apart, the western stands 2.2m in height, the eastern 2m. In 1866–7 they were pointed out to OS surveyors as the

remains of a stone circle (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 88, p 90), though this may have been based on the understanding on the part of their informants – John Innes, an Inspector of Poor, James Leslie, a miller, and George Clerihew of Sylavethy – that this was the site of the *Druidical temple* described in the *New Statistical Account* (xii, Aberdeenshire, 449–50); in this they were mistaken, for that description almost certainly refers to a hut-circle some 1.2km to the north-east at Crookmore (see discussion in App 1.27). In part the history of this misunderstanding can be inferred from the *causeway* depicted on the 1st edition OS map leading off to the north-east from the two stones at Druidsfield, though it evidently concerned the surveyors that the *New Statistical Account* entry indicated that this feature should have led south-east: 'Although stated here to lead in a "Southeast direction" no information can be obtained now to that effect, nor has any vestige been seen within the memory of the oldest living inhabitant in the neighbourhood to indicate its course in that direction, but it is believed to have gone in the direction of another "Stone Circle" which shows it leading in a Northeast direction' (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 88, p 85). In popular imagination, or at least in the mind of John Innes, who was also one of the informants for Crookmore, the tradition of a roadway leading somewhere from the *Druidical temple* described in the *New Statistical Account* seems to have required another *Druidical* monument at its other end (cf **Druidstone, Premnay**). Thus, the circle at Crookmore and the two stones at Druidsfield had not only become intertwined in local lore, but the description in the *New Statistical Account* had been transposed to the opposite end of the road that supposedly linked them, probably for no other reason than that the two stones continued to be a local landmark, whereas Crookmore had disappeared. The alignment of the *causeway* on the map was duly achieved with a ruler drawn between Druidsfield and the site of the circle the surveyors had previously plotted at Crookmore.

The identification of the Druidsfield stones as the remains of a recumbent stone circle can be attributed to Coles and it has consistently appeared in the lists of these monuments ever since (Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 351, Abn 42; 1979a, 23; 2000, 420, Abn 41; Barnatt 1989, 280, no. 6:33; Ruggles 1984, 59; 1999, 187, no. 52). Coles recorded the two stones in 1900 and was immediately struck by their resemblance to a pair of flankers. He picked up a local story that a recumbent had been removed in 1830, which was confirmed to him by the tenant, Adam Moir, who wrote: 'There was a stone which lay between the two Standing Stones. I am certain of that. I do not remember ever hearing how many stones more were in the circle. It is quite true that the stone which lay on its side between the two Standing Stones was removed and put in the bank of the Don; and it remains there yet; it was never replaced' (Coles 1901,

210). At face value, the case that the Druidsfield stones formed part of a recumbent setting is unequivocal, but in the light of the confusion between Druidsfield and Crookmore that already existed in the 1860s, the local memory that also told Coles some 40 years later that this had been a *'fine circle well known, not so many years ago, to the local residents'* (*ibid*), should be treated more circumspectly. This has all the ingredients of a story that has grown in the telling, and we should be wary that the recumbent was said to have been removed in 1830, almost exactly the same date at which the monument at Crookmore was demolished. The supposed recumbent in the bank of the Don has never been identified.

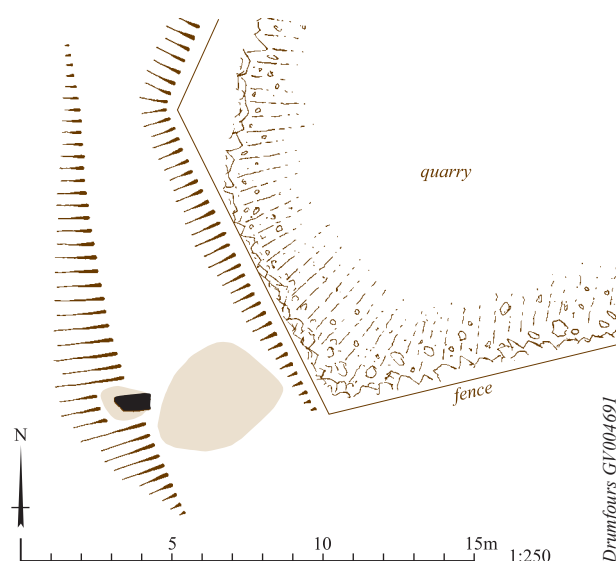
Visited 26 October 1998

33 Drumfours, Leochel-Cushnie, Aberdeenshire

NJ51SE 1

NJ 5608 1104

Standing Stone and Cupmarked Stone



This stone, which in 1999 was still upright, is now lying beside a pile of field clearance immediately south-west of an old quarry 240m west-north-west of Drumfours. It stood on the scarp forming the east lip of a hollow in the field to the west of the quarry, and measured about 1.3m in height. The OS surveyors visited the stone in 1866–7 and were persuaded by their local informants, who included Rev Alexander Taylor, author of a detailed historical account of the parish and its people in the *New Statistical Account* (xii, Aberdeenshire, 1102–31), that it was the remains of a stone circle (Aberdeenshire 1869, lxii; Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 53, p 47). Annotated as such on the map, in 1900 Coles mistook four points along the contour defining the hollow to the west as additional stones forming *'a rude oval'* (1902, 490–1). He concluded that these had been removed long since, and drew attention to at least four stones lying 25m to the east on the edge of what he then described as a small quarry. One of these was cupmarked and on

further enquiry he discovered that it had lain for many years against the standing stone, and had only been removed to the edge of the quarry for its safe-keeping. According to James Ritchie, the reasons were more practical, so that the standing stone might serve as a rubbing stone (1918, 89–90). Ritchie believed that the cupmarked stone had been cut down from a much larger boulder, an opinion in which he was almost certainly swayed by the knowledge that it had once lain beside the standing stone. Thus, he concluded that it had *'every appearance of having been originally the recumbent stone of the Drumfours circle'* (*ibid* 90), betraying his underlying assumptions rather than any real assessment of the character of the boulder. At any rate, Coles does not seem to have shared this view, for though he accepted that the standing stone was the sole surviving orthostat of a circle, the cupmarked boulder measured only 1.4m by 0.8m (taken from plan, 1902, 490, fig 3) and with its rounded shape this evidently did not suggest to him that it had ever been of sufficient size to be a recumbent. Had he read the map correctly in the first place, he might not have been so ready to accept that this was the remains of a circle at all, for the position of the standing stone lying east and west on the lip of the hollow in the field to the west indicates that any circle to which it belonged would have breached uncomfortably across the scarp. Sadly the cupmarked boulder is now missing, presumably as a result of the expansion of the quarry between the visit by Richard Little of the OS in 1968 and the arrival of the present farmer, Arthur Smart, in 1970.

Visited 9 April 2002

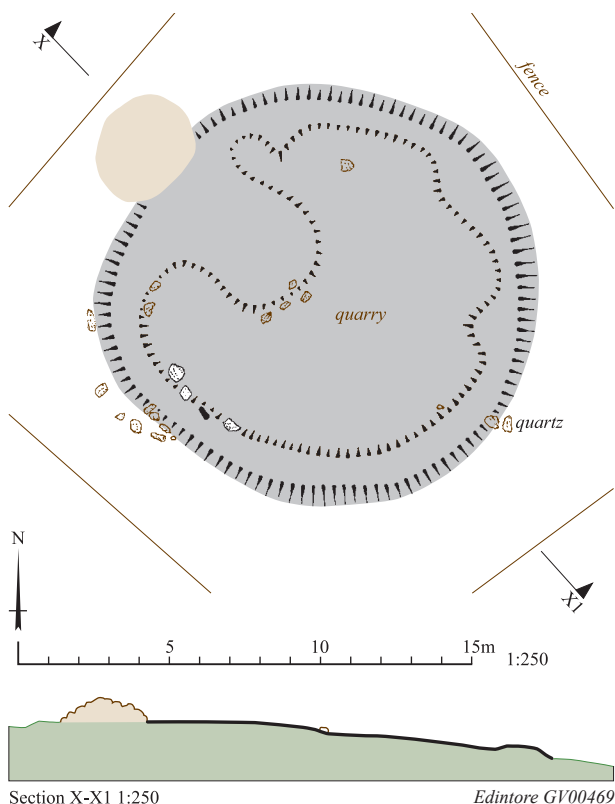
34 Edintore, Keith, Moray

NJ44NW 2

NJ 4289 4666

Stone Circle (Possible) and Cairn

No trace of a stone circle can be seen enclosing this robbed cairn, which is situated high on the south-east flank of Cairds Hill, where it is enclosed on all sides except the north-west by a conifer plantation. The cairn measures about 14m in diameter over little more than a rim of cairn material up to 0.3m in height and is now overlain on the north-north-west by a pile of field-cleared stones; an earthfast quartz boulder visible on the inner lip of the rim on the south-west is possibly a kerbstone. The cairn had been robbed by 1868, when it lay in woodland, but at that time the OS surveyors found *'7 or 8 large long stones lying on the ground evidently having been displaced from their upright position. There is no regular form or shape as the stones strewn about destroy the uniformity of it'* (Name Book, Banffshire, No. 20, p 134). On the strength of these stones and their informants, which included the Hays in Edintore House, they annotated the map *Stone Circle (Remains of)*. This in turn led Coles to the spot in 1905, but by then the stones observed by the OS surveyors had been removed. Even



if this cairn was integral to a ring of orthostats, there are no grounds to sustain Barnatt's suggestion that this may have been a ring-cairn within a recumbent stone circle (1989, 485).

Curiously this does not seem to be the *Druidical circle* on Cairds Hill mentioned in the *Statistical Account* (v, 1793, 429). This lay above a spring known as Tobar Chaillich on the north flank of the hill and is probably the cairn recorded in 1972 by Iain Sainsbury of the OS beneath the Triangulation Pillar on the north-east spur of the hill (NJ44NW 5, NJ 4305 4730); in 1868 this area was clothed in dense woodland, which may explain why it does not appear on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map. The main body of the cairn measures about 13m in diameter, but it is encircled by a low stony platform with an overall diameter of some 21m. The platform stands between 0.2m and 0.5m above the surrounding ground level, while the rim of undisturbed cairn material around the margin of the central mound rises up to 0.6m above its surface. A large boulder measuring 1.2m in length by 0.65m in height, which is not mentioned by Sainsbury, lies on the scarp forming the east edge of the platform, but it does not appear to be bedded in the ground and may have been dumped there since 1972. Elsewhere, and most noticeably around the north, the edge of the platform presents a sharply cut profile, possibly where a ring of kerbstones has been removed. Despite the attribution of a *Druidical circle* in the *Statistical Account*, there is no evidence that this unusual hilltop cairn was ever ringed with standing stones.

Visited 20 July 2005

35 Ellon, Ellon, Aberdeenshire

NJ93SE 8

NJ 9549 3025

Stones

In 1938 a small group of stones situated just above the flood-plain on the north bank of the River Ythan in Ellon was removed by William Grieve who deposited them further upstream with an interloper (NJ 95483 30221) (Godsman 1958, 23). The original location of the stones is marked on the 1st edition of the OS 25-inch map (Aberdeenshire 1871, xxxvii.15), but they are not shown as antiquities. Coles was informed about them in 1903 by Henry Mitchell, a respected member of the Buchan Field Club, who described them as 'some stones of the type usually found in circles with recumbent stone, arranged in a sort of circle' (1904, 258). Coles, however, who was probably privy to more information than he published, concluded that they had been moved from elsewhere and that their original site was irretrievably lost; consequently he did not pay a visit. It was left to James Ritchie to provide the only detailed record, from which it is clear this was not the remains of a recumbent stone circle, and indeed there is no particular reason to believe that any of the stones had been brought from such a circle. Nevertheless, in Ritchie's opinion three small pillars no more than 1m high and 0.7m wide had been set upright on the south and north respectively of a small circle no larger than 6m in diameter; the other two stones were low rounded boulders that he believed had been brought from elsewhere (1917, 34–6). His photographs show the ground around the stones sloping down to the edge of the flood-plain, a position that in 1968 led Keith Blood of the OS to suggest that they had been no more than an ornamental construction. Other writers have preferred to follow Ritchie (Burl 1976a, 351, Abn 48; Barnatt 1989, 282, no. 6:38), and more recently Burl has drawn a connection between the entry for Ellon in his gazetteer and a circle in the parish at *Fochell* mentioned by James Garden in his correspondence with John Aubrey (Burl 2000, 420, Abn 48). Fochil was a steading on the south side of the river (NJ 9690 2971), but contrary to Garden's contention that *Fochell* translated as 'below the chappell' (Hunter 2001, 120), it probably means a green place or field of pasture (Alexander 1952, 56, 58). The circle that Garden claimed stood on higher ground nearby was presumably to the west near Hillhead of Fochil (NJ 9571 2966), but there are no records of such a structure here, nor of any discoveries that might hint at its existence.

36 Eslie the Lesser, Banchory-Ternan, Aberdeenshire

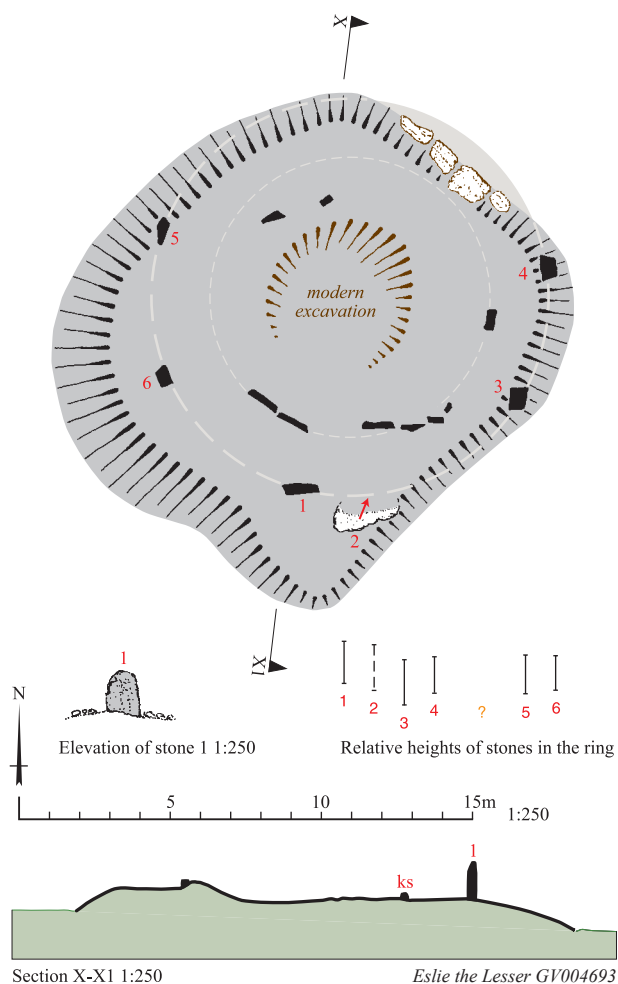
NO79SW 1

NO 7225 9215

Stone Circle and Cairn

A stone circle enclosing a cairn is situated on a gentle south-south-west-facing slope 560m east-south-east of

Esleie, and now forms a substantial mound strewn with stones and boulders gathered from the surrounding field. The circle measures 13.5m in overall diameter and the spacing of the six surviving orthostats suggests that there were originally nine, the gaps between them reducing progressively from the south round to where the three missing stones stood on the north. There is no recumbent setting as such, but two slabs were set up close together on the south, and though the eastern (2) has fallen, at about 1.45m in height the western (1) would have appeared to be the tallest in the ring. The other four stones (3–6) range from 1.1m to 1.5m in height, but their tops are all roughly at the same level. The cairn within the interior of the circle is rather more irregular in shape and measures about 9.5m from east to west by 8.5m transversely over a kerb of slabs and boulders, the largest of which are in the southern quarter and over 1m in length. The centre of the cairn has been dug out, probably in 1873 by Robert Angus Smith, though he believed that it had already been disturbed and he found no evidence of an inner court (1880, 303–4). As it appears today, the internal cairn is set on a much larger flat-topped mound measuring about 17m across and rising about 0.8m above the level of the surrounding field. At least the upper portion of this mound is probably an ancient construction, forming a



platform beneath the stone circle, but the addition over the years of field-cleared stones has largely obscured its original size and shape.

The circle had been reduced to its present complement by 1864, when the OS surveyors described it in the Name Book as 'a druidical circle consisting of five upright stones' (Kincardineshire, No. 3, p 148), but a little while later Smith wrote that it comprised 'six standing and a lying one almost exactly at the South; one standing stone being at each end of the lying one as in the others' (1880, 303–4). This has caused no end of confusion ever since, not only alluding to the presence of an additional upright, but also identifying the prone orthostat on the south as a recumbent; the sixth upright, he seems to suggest, was a flanker at the east end of this fallen slab. Sir Henry Dryden, for example, who struggled with several of Smith's other descriptions of stone circles around Durris, commissioned further measurements in 1880 from Archibald Crease, but the latter could find only five stones upright and the fallen slab on the south, leading Dryden to draw up a sketch plan in 1881 that shows the supposedly missing flanker with a dashed outline and a question mark (RCAHMS DC11871). More the pity that in 1884 William Lukis judged the circle too dilapidated to merit survey, though he also believed there was a recumbent stone here (1885, 309–10).

The explanation of Smith's description lies with the measurements supplied to him by William Brown, an Edinburgh surgeon, who probably visited the circle in 1868. Brown measured the distances between a total of six stones, but all are too long to relate to the narrow gap between orthostat (1) and its fallen neighbour (2). Indeed, set against the modern plan, it is reasonably clear that Brown measured anticlockwise from orthostat (1), missing out the fallen slab (2), and introducing the additional upright on the north. His heights and girths do not reconcile quite so neatly, but if they were recorded in the same sequence, this additional stone on the north was much smaller than any of the others and only 0.9m high. Possibly the OS surveyors in 1864 considered that it was simply another field-cleared boulder. Its triangulated position falls in a sector where a series of other boulders had been dumped along the edge of the mound by the time Coles prepared his plan in 1899 (1900, 166, fig 21). Smith may not even have counted the stones for himself, and the passage suggesting that there were two flankers should be seen as a misguided attempt to explain the character of the ring to his readers rather than as a description of the stones themselves. Nevertheless, Coles accepted that the two stones on the south belonged to a recumbent setting (1900, 166–7) and, with the exception of a Royal Commission survey of Kincardineshire in the 1980s (RCAHMS 1984, 10, no. 20), this interpretation has passed unchallenged (Kenworthy 1973, 29; Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 360, Knc 9; 2000, 429, Knc 12; 2005a, 138; Thom *et al* 1980, 202–3; Barnatt 1989, 283, no. 6:40; Ruggles 1984, 60; 1999, 188, no. 89; Ruggles and Burl 1985, 33).

The case against this slab being a recumbent rests on the apparently symmetrical spacing of the stones of the circle; if the spacing of the three stones on the west (1, 6 & 5) is reproduced on the east, the fallen slab (2) adopts the equivalent position of orthostat (1). The alternative reconstruction of a recumbent setting here, with a flanker on the east, necessarily abandons any pretence at the visual symmetry of the southern facade of the circle. Notably, this facade is not flattened. In this respect, rather than reproducing the design of the neighbouring recumbent stone circle at **Eslie the Greater**, Eslie the Lesser relates to the circle enclosing the ring-cairn known as Raedykes North West on Campstone Hill North, Fetteresso. There a pair of orthostats in the kerb of a ring-cairn was probably originally matched by another pair of pillars standing in front of them on the circumference of the surrounding circle. In this case the eastern of the two stones is broader and slightly shorter than its neighbour, raising the question whether the fallen stone at Eslie the Lesser was once a tall slab set up on end or a broad slab set up on its side.

Visited 9 April 2003

37 Fortingall Church, Fortingall, Perth & Kinross

NN74NW 3 NN 7454 4692

Stone Setting and Cupmarkings

The southernmost of three stone settings on a terrace on the floor of the valley of the River Lyon 300m east-south-east of Fortingall Church has been described as a *'ruined and idiosyncratic recumbent stone circle'* (Burl 1976a, 194–5). The basis for this comparison lies in the composition of the setting. This lies north-west and south-east and comprises a pair of low pillars about 1.5m in height and standing 5.8m apart, apparently symmetrically flanking a lower boulder measuring 1.4m by 0.9m and no more than 1.2m in height. A trial excavation in 1970 was designed to test whether the setting stood on the south-west side of a circle and duly uncovered what has been interpreted as another stone-hole to the north-west (Burl 1988b, 175); the diameter of this postulated circle has been estimated variously at 23m (Thom *et al* 1980, 337) and 14.6m (Burl 1988b, 175; 1995, 160).

Closer examination of the disposition of the three stones, however, suggests that they share little in common with the settings found at recumbent stone circles. Such settings consistently form a facade in which the flankers are typically placed hard against the recumbent and extend its long axis, even when turned slightly to pick up the arc of the circle. Here at Fortingall, what are supposed to be the flankers stand back from the recumbent, and both are turned at right-angles to the axis formed by the alignment of the setting as a whole. In effect, rather than forming a facade, they oppose each other like the corner stones of a four-

poster. In this respect they replicate the design of the two settings to the north, which the excavations in 1970 demonstrated were essentially four-posters, but with lower intermediate stones in the centre of each side (Coles 1908, 121–5; Burl 1988b, 166–75). Furthermore, the alignment of the three stones roughly correlates with the alignment of both these monuments. In short, despite Burl's protestations (1995, 160; 2000, 432, Per 27c), this setting is more likely to be the remains of a third four-poster than any other form of circle (cf Barnatt 1989, 320–1, no. 7:30; Ruggles 1999, 188 no. 99, 266 note 27), and the discovery of the stone-hole to the north-west should perhaps be regarded as fortuitous until proven otherwise.

Visited 5 April 2009

38 Gaulcross North, Fordyce, Aberdeenshire

NJ56SW 11 NJ 5354 6392

Stone Circles and Cairn

39 Gaulcross South, Fordyce, Aberdeenshire

NJ56SW 10 NJ 5350 6387

Stone Circles and Cairn

Two stone circles formerly stood in the field on the crest of the hill a little over 200m north-north-east of Ley, each apparently comprising six orthostats erected along the line of a stony ring-bank. Save a single stone of the northern circle left as a rubbing stone (Cramond 1884, 92–3), most of the orthostats were blown up to provide materials to build the farmhouse and steading (Stuart 1867, 74–5; Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 12, p 56), and even this stone has now been removed. The date the circles were demolished is not altogether certain, but about 1838 or shortly after, both were trenched to improve the ground and remove the smaller stones that still remained. This led to the discovery of the well-known Gaulcross hoard of Pictish silver close to the single orthostat that had been left standing on the northern circle.

The circles were first noted by Thomas Pennant, who refers to them as *'the two circles of long stones called Gael-cross'* (1774, 140), but the most complete description is provided by John Stuart almost a hundred years later. He had his information from the tenant of the farm, James Lawtie, whose father had taken the lease in 1837 and soon after had begun improving the ground. While Lawtie remembered these improvements himself, the majority of the orthostats had probably been removed by then, for he could only relay to Stuart what an old man had told him about them. Thus, most of this description is at second or third hand. Nevertheless, the un-named old man recalled: *'The one was about forty yards [36.5m] and the other about thirty-five yards [32m] in diameter, and ... there were six pillars in each circle. These pillars were placed in a circular foundation*

of small boulders about thirty foot [9m] broad and two [0.6m] deep'. Lawtie continued: 'Only one now remains of all the pillars. It marks the site of the circle that stood to the north. In the course of trenching the area of this circle about twenty years ago, the workmen found the silver chain and pin... between two stones... at a spot not far from the pillar (which still remains) on the south side of the circle ... under and towards the centre of the circular belt of small stones in which the large pillars stood. On the opposite side of the circle was a large flat slab of limestone about seven feet long and three in breadth... [and] below it there was a thin layer of darkish greasy earth, which rested upon the common soil' (Stuart 1867, 74–5). Apart from the hoard of Pictish silver, nothing else was found and it is clear that Lawtie's expectations of burning and burials, and perhaps some kind of entrance, were disappointed.

Lawtie also appears first in the list of three authorities consulted by OS surveyors for the terse description that appears in the Name Book (Banffshire, No. 12, p 56). He presumably pointed out the sites of the two rings, though Rev William Cramond, guiding a party of the Banffshire Field Club in September 1884, claimed that the outlines of both were still visible, lying about 45m apart. The additional details that Cramond supplies are therefore probably born of his own observations and those of Lawtie, who was still in the farm at that time (Cramond 1884, 93): the southern had '*an outer ring of smaller stones, covering the ground irregularly in large quantities to a breadth of some 16 feet [5m]. Six large blocks of stone marked the circle proper, the diameter of which was about 60 feet [18m]*' (*ibid* 92). Of the northern circle he was less forthcoming, other than it was similar, but he located the surviving stone on the west of the circle, and the discovery of the Pictish hoard 5.5m south-east of it. The stone had fallen by the date of Coles' visit, but he measured and sketched it where it lay, recording that it was 1.8m long by 1m broad and up to 0.6m thick (1906a, 187–9). It remained there until at least 1967 when Keith Blood of the OS visited the site.

Both these circles seem to have been unusual monuments. We should not perhaps place too much weight on the count of six stones in each, but it is otherwise clear that the ring-banks formed substantial bands of cairn material and, designated an '*outer ring*' by Cramond, that they extended well outside the orthostats. The absence of any entrances through the ring-banks is possibly also telling, for were these merely the stumps of large robbed cairns there would usually have been a gap broken through the perimeter to allow the passage of carts in and out of the central quarry. Parallels for rings of orthostats set in ring-banks can be found amongst the recumbent stone circles, such as at **North Strone**, but the absence of any detailed description of the orthostats and no mention of anything that might have been a

recumbent setting on the southern arc precludes such an identification for either of the rings here.

This was certainly Barnatt's view of Gaulcross North (1989, 461, no. 6:130), but Ruggles included it in his supplementary list of recumbent stone circles (1999, 188), perhaps as a result of misunderstanding the report submitted in 1961 by William Johnston, an OS field investigator, who unfortunately described the last surviving orthostat as a *recumbent stone*. In the case of Gaulcross South, however, where Cramond produced a more convincing assessment of its diameter, Barnatt has suggested that this was more consistent with that of a recumbent stone circle than the six-stone ring postulated by Burl (1976a, 355, Ban 3; 2000, 424, Ban 3; Barnatt 1989, 284–5, no. 6:44). Unfortunately Burl has mistakenly associated the discovery of the Pictish silver hoard with Gaulcross South in the latest recension of his list.

40 Gaveny Brae, Banff, Aberdeenshire

NJ66SE 31 NJ 6938 6293

Standing Stones

The shattered remains of this megalithic monument are situated on the west end of a low ridge that extends across the general trend of the northern slopes of Gaveny Brae, the steep hillside rising from the south-east bank of the River Deveron opposite Duff House. According to Charles Cordiner, writing in 1780, it then comprised '*several large stone pillars, tending to form a semi-circle*' (1780, 5–6), but by 1867 these had been reduced to the state in which Coles and James Ritchie found them (Name Book, Banffshire, No. 21, p 7). Ongoing cultivation ever since has left the surviving stones on an isolated tump rising above the surface of the surrounding field. Two slender pillars that stood side by side in Coles' day now lean heavily towards the west, the southern of them having tipped over between the visits by William Johnston and Keith Blood of the OS in 1961 and 1968 respectively, and the northern since. Coles recorded them in 1905 and his plan and sketches (1906a, 167–71, figs 3–6), coupled with two photographs taken at about the same time by Ritchie (RCAHMS BN976 & BN989), provide a detailed record. The two stones on the east stand 1.7m and 1.6m high respectively, while a slab 1.65m long lying immediately west, and two other rougher boulders he also noted, can be picked out amongst the field clearance that now litters the tump. The two uprights evidently puzzled Coles, for the axis of the northern lies east-north-east and west-south-west, while its shorter neighbour is set at right-angles to it. This unusual configuration did not conform to the architecture of the recumbent stone circles he had surveyed and led him to propose that one of the stones had been erected more recently. Indeed, in trying to rationalise

the stones as the remains of a recumbent stone circle, he observed that the axis of the taller pillar allowed the possibility that it was the eastern flanker of a demolished recumbent setting; its neighbour, therefore, was the intruder, a conclusion perhaps confirmed by its subsequent collapse. That said, Gaveny Brae did not enter Coles' lists of recumbent stone circles and has largely passed unnoticed ever since (Barnatt 1989, 485, no. 6:s). If there is a stone circle here, and there is space on the end of the ridge for a modest ring, these stones are on its southern arc, but it is equally possible that they belong to some other type of setting.

Visited 21 March 2009

41 Glassel, Banchory-Ternan, Aberdeenshire

NO69NW 2 NO 6488 9966

Stone Setting

This stone setting is situated in Dam Wood immediately north-east of the disused Deeside railway. Probably comprising six small stones between 0.8m and 1m in height, only five remain upright. Four of them are set out in a rough square to form the east-north-east and west-south-west sides of the setting, while the fifth stands on its axis on the south-south-east. The latter was probably matched by the sixth on the north-north-west to form a symmetrical arrangement some 7.6m in overall length by 3.45m in breadth; the long axis of the stone on the south-south-east is aligned with the axis of the setting.

The setting was annotated *Stone Circle* by the OS surveyors in 1864, at which time all six stones were upright (Name Book, Kincardineshire, No. 3, p 26), but when William Lukis drew up his plan in 1884 the one on the north-north-west had already fallen (1885, 303, 304–5; GM7829.29). Lukis noted that the setting was not circular, but Alfred Lewis included Glassel in his paper on Scottish stone circles. There it is noted in an appendix listing sites that he deemed *'so incomplete that it is uncertain whether they possessed an "altar-stone" or not'* (1900, 72), which perhaps implies that he had no firsthand knowledge of the stones. Any question that the setting might have included a recumbent was dispelled by Coles' survey in 1899 (1900, 168–71, figs 24–5) and James Ritchie's photographs taken in 1902 (RCAHMS KC316 & 317); a third photograph taken the following year is staged with the fallen stone on the north-north-west re-erected (RCAHMS KC315). An excavation by Coles (1905, 202–5) and a survey by Alexander Thom (Thom 1967, 137; Thom *et al* 1980, 212–13) have confirmed the general character of the setting, which Burl has suggested is a four-poster with an outlier (1988b, 132–3; 2000, 429, Knc 14). Despite his arguments for the close links between four-posters and recumbent circles (1988b, 15; 2000, 229–31), there can be no doubt that Glassel has no place in the present Gazetteer.

42 Gray Stone, Cortiecrum, Lonmay, Aberdeenshire

NK05SW 4 NK 0271 5071

Stone Circle (Possible)

The Gray Stone, which was described by Coles as *'a huge pillar-like mass of whinstone, but fallen half prostrate towards the south'* (1904, 281), was removed in the late 1940s. It has never entered any of the lists of recumbent stone circles, but in a recent publication Garth Weston speculated that *'this gigantic block was probably the recumbent of another ring'* (2007, 136).

The name of the stone was not known to OS surveyors in 1869–70 and thus it does not appear in the Name Book; nor was it recognised as an antiquity to justify its depiction on the 1st edition of the 6-inch map. Nevertheless, the 25-inch map shows the outline of the stone near the north-east corner of an irregular field about 350m south-south-west of Cortiecrum (Aberdeenshire 1872, xiv.10), while the name *'Graystone Pot'* is applied to a stretch of the North Ugie Water about 360m to its south-south-east (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 57, p 17; No. 58, p 70). By tradition the stone had toppled on a treasure hunter digging beneath it (Milne 1889, 43; Coles 1904, 281 note; Ritchie 1926, 309) and its leaning posture is apparently enshrined in the place-name Cortiecrum, on record in 1446 as *Cortycrum* and in 1696 as *Corthicram*, and derived by William Alexander from the Gaelic *Coirthe crom*, meaning *'bent or crooked standing stone'* (1952, 39). The stone was also sufficiently well-known in the district to appear in local rhymes (*'Mormond'* 1889, 28–9; Grinsell 1976, 209), one of which is recorded by Coles' local informant, John Milne (1889, 43). Milne provides the first brief description of the stone, which he believed was not simply an erratic block but one that had been set upright; and the presence of a circular hollow in the ground adjacent led him to conclude that it was the last survivor of a circle. There is no hint in Coles' brief commentary that he observed this hollow and, if only in deference to the valuable service provided by his source, he merely repeats the local tradition of a circle. It is perfectly clear from his description, however, that he did not consider that the stone itself was a recumbent and he never listed the site as the remains of a possible recumbent stone circle (1904, 293). Whereas recumbents in his surveys are consistently measured in height, length and thickness, in this case he approached the stone as a pillar: *'Around its middle it measures about 18 feet [5.5m]. Its present greatest height is 6 feet 8 inches [2m], and its greatest length over 11 feet [3.3m]'* (1904, 281). In the absence of any new information, Weston's speculation is unwarranted, particularly when it is recalled that Coles had by this time visited and measured most of the stone circles and many of the standing stones in the North-east.

43 Greymuir Cairn, Inverkeithny, Aberdeenshire

NJ64NE 9 NJ 6751 4520

Stone Circle (Probable) and Cairn

The Greymuir Stone, which was removed some time between 1967 and 1986, was probably a fallen orthostat of a circle enclosing a low cairn. Its site lies at the edge of a field about 180m west-south-west of Newton of Fortrie, where the 1st edition of the OS 25-inch map (Banffshire 1871, xxii) annotates a pecked circle in a small patch of uncultivated ground *Greymuir Cairn (Remains of)*. The circle measures about 19m in diameter and the stone lies within its southern margin. By that time the cairn was already robbed and a note appended to the entry in the Name Book records ‘*A large number of small stones still remain of this cairn the Greymuir stone being the largest and most remarkable*’ (Banffshire, No. 19, p 16). The stone itself is described some 30 years later by Coles, as lying on its side and measuring 1.8m in length by 1.15m in height and 1.05m in thickness (1903a, 124–5). In talking to the tenant, James Wright, who had lived there over 40 years, he elicited that ‘*A Circle of stones extended to the north of the monolith*’ (*ibid* 125) and that in 1872 another smaller slab found a little to its north had been cleared to the edge of the field near the steading. Though nothing was found beneath it, Coles considered the latter was likely to be the coverstone of a cist. In referring to the Greymuir Stone as a monolith, it is clear that Coles believed it to be a fallen orthostat rather than a recumbent, and he did not list it as a remnant of a recumbent stone circle (*ibid* 140). A century later, over 20 years after the stone was removed, this still seems the most likely interpretation (Burl 1976a, 351, Abn 56; 2000, 420, Abn 57), despite Barnatt’s tentative suggestion that it may have been a small recumbent (1989, 461, no. 6:132).

44 Greystone, Glass, Aberdeenshire

NJ44SW 113 NJ c430 414

Stone

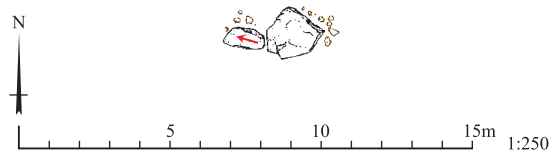
In 1970 James Godsman claimed that there had once been a recumbent stone circle on the farm of *Graystone* (1970, 20), but he does not provide the source for this idea and it may be no more than a play on the name in local lore. When the OS surveyors mapped the area in 1871 (Aberdeenshire 1874, xxv), the present steading had yet to be built; this is first depicted in 1902 on the 2nd edition of the 6-inch map (Aberdeenshire 1902, xxv.NW). By then the ground that was partly improved in 1871 had been enclosed, but neither edition of the map shows any large stones from which the farm might have taken its name; nor do they show any antiquities in its immediate vicinity.

Visited 21 March 2009

45 Hare Stanes, Inverkeithny, Aberdeenshire

NJ64SE 1 NJ 6645 4383

Stone Circle and Cairn



Hare Stanes G1004694

Two boulders lying in a field on an east-facing slope 450m north-west of Feith Hill are all that remain of this stone circle. The larger is a prone slab measuring 1.75m in length by 1.5m in breadth, and its smaller neighbour on the west measures about 1.45m in length by 0.6m in breadth and 0.5m in thickness. When first recorded by the OS surveyors, about 1866, the larger slab was still upright and was identified as the *Hare Stone*; the smaller is only mentioned in the Name Book as an inserted note (Banffshire, No. 19, p 54). Nevertheless, both appear on the 25-inch map, marked with dots 5m to 7m apart. However, by the time Coles paid a visit in 1902 the smaller lay no more than 1.35m to the west (1903a, 116–17, fig 28). Since then, this stone has been moved still further, Richard Little of the OS reporting it upright in 1967 and the present survey finding it steeply canted over. The cupmarks Coles noted on its upper surface, which were subsequently described by James Ritchie (1918, 108), are now on its underside, six of them adjacent to a raised mineral vein. Despite its small size, Coles believed that the *Hare Stone* was a recumbent, which his plan shows aligned roughly east and west, and on the understanding that the smaller stone had stood close by he identified it as the fallen west flanker. The farmer, John Morrison, who was probably the J Morrison cited by the OS surveyors in the Name Book almost 40 years earlier, told him that the circle had been about 18m in diameter and its interior was very stony, though there is now no evidence of any concentration of stones in the ploughsoil round about. He also told Coles that several cists had been found within the interior.

The Hare Stanes appear in most lists as a probable recumbent stone circle (Burl 1970, 60, 79; 1976a, 355, Ban 4; 2000, 424, Ban 4; Barnatt 1989, 286, no. 6:49; Ruggles 1984, 59; 1999, 185, no. 18), but the present survey has been more circumspect in its assessment. The present configuration of the two stones is misleading and it is clear from the first recorded position of the smaller stone that it is unlikely to be a fallen flanker. Furthermore, the overall shape of the larger slab, and its rough upper surface, formerly its south face, do not make for a particularly convincing recumbent – even if the stone has been cut down and partly results from relatively recent stone breaking. It would be churlish, however, to deny that this is the site of a stone circle enclosing a cairn, finding at least one parallel close by at the Greymuir Cairn (App 1.43).

Visited 31 October 2003

46 Hatton, Cruden, Aberdeenshire

NK03NE 10 NK 0507 3643

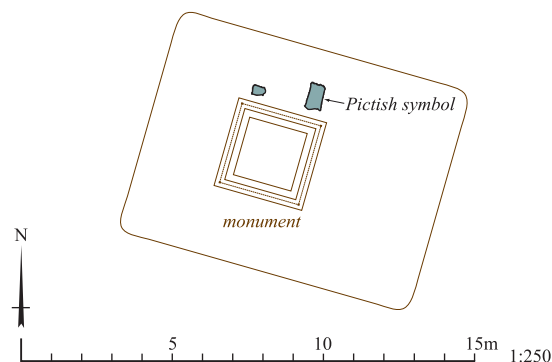
Stone Circle

The site of this stone circle lies on the low rise immediately east of Stones Farm, which was formerly named Standingstones (Aberdeenshire 1872, xxxi). First noted in the *Statistical Account* (v, 1793, 436), the circle was removed about 1831, at which time it comprised seven or eight upright stones (Pratt 1858, 42; Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 22, p 61). Though there is no mention of any recumbent here, it is included in Burl's gazetteer as a possible recumbent stone circle (1976a, 351, Abn 57). Possibly he was aware of Rev Andrew Chalmers' retiring address as president of the Buchan Field Club, in which this stone circle is conflated with the *Grey Stane of Ardendraught*, a natural rock that Chalmers misleadingly describes as the *altar-stone* (1903, 11). This rock was broken up in 1777 and was so large that it provided enough material to build the walls of the new parish church (*Stat Acct*, v, 1793, 438; Mackay 1912, 80–1). Ruggles included the circle in his lists, though he noted there was no evidence of a recumbent (1984, 56 note b, 59; 1999, 186, 266 note 1), and similar doubts are expressed by Barnatt (1989, 461–2, no. 6:134). Barnatt, however, also mentions a cairn and finds made within the circle, citing '2 part-inhumations, 2 urns, various flints and a polished bracer, all within a cist' (*ibid* 462) – information probably deriving from the parish entry for Peterhead in the *New Statistical Account* (xii, Aberdeenshire, 355). These finds are now attributed to the circle in Burl's latest recension of his gazetteer (2000, 421, Abn 58). Unfortunately this is a conflation of the Hatton circle with the sites of discoveries in two other locations, one in 1818 in one of two cists in a sand-pit 650m to the north-east of the circle (NK03NE 25), the other in 1817 in a mound 850m to the south-east (NK03NE 15). As far as the circle itself is concerned, without some new evidence that there was once a recumbent here it has no place in any gazetteer of recumbent stone circles.

47 Huntly, Huntly, Aberdeenshire

NJ53NW 1 NJ 5292 3999

Stone Circle (Possible) and Pictish Symbols



Huntly GI7004695

The two stones standing immediately north-east of the statue of the Duke of Richmond in the Market Square of Huntly have been listed as remains of a possible recumbent stone circle (Burl 1976a, 351, Abn 63; 2000, 421, Abn 64; Barnatt 1989, 288, no. 6:55), though Ruggles has noted that the evidence is tenuous (Ruggles 1984, 56 note g, 59; 1999, 186, no. 30, 266, n 5); one of the stones also bears an incised Pictish symbol (Fraser 2008, 24, no. 24). Popularly known as the *Standing Stanes of Strathbogie*, they were an important landmark before the planned town grew up around the square, not only figuring in a well-known 16th century ballad *The Battle of Balrinnies*, but also as the scene of court proceedings held in February 1557, '*apud lie Standand Stanis de Huntlie*' (Stuart 1856, vi note; 1867, xlii). The only description of a circle, however, was gleaned by Coles from James M'William of Greens of Glenbeg, Glass. As presented by Coles, this purports to be a firsthand account, the key passage reading: '*Mr M'William recollects seeing six Standing Stones, none remarkably tall, the average being about 4 feet 6 inches [1.4m]; five of these were upright; one other, a very large stone, was lying in front of two. This I take to be the Recumbent Stone fallen forward. Judging by the position of two of the Standing Stones, the diameter of the Circle was between 40 and 50 feet [12m–15m]; whether the area was quite circular or not, my correspondent does not remember. There appeared to be no rising in the centre.*' (1902, 569). Coles seems to have been uncharacteristically hasty to conclude that these were the remains of a recumbent stone circle. Had he consulted Thomas Shier's plan of the town in 1823 (NAS RHP 2270), he might have questioned his correspondent more closely, for this shows only two stones, presumably those still there today. The census records for 1901, on the other hand, record that M'William was only 62. Although another of Coles' correspondents, Miss Gray of the Brander Library, informed him of a third stone '*close by a house flanking the east side of the southern half of the Square*' (Coles 1902, 570), it seems unlikely that there had been six standing stones in the square during M'William's lifetime. At best he was relaying received wisdom, and its reliability can only be judged on his knowledge that one of the stones bore incised symbols, though he was apparently unaware that this was one of those still standing in the square. His belief that '*the stones would have been all removed when the Duke of Richmond's statue was erected [1862], had it not been that an antiquary interfered*' (*ibid* 569) relates to the survival of the last two stones, not to the demolition of the original megalithic monument. That had probably taken place long before, as he put it '*when the Rawes of Strathbolgie were being built*' (*ibid*); the grid of streets in Huntly was planned in 1776 and, while most of the buildings around the square date from the 19th century, several are 18th century. In all likelihood this is the site of a stone circle, but it is unlikely that either of the two stones is in its original socket. Whether it ever had a recumbent setting will probably never be known.

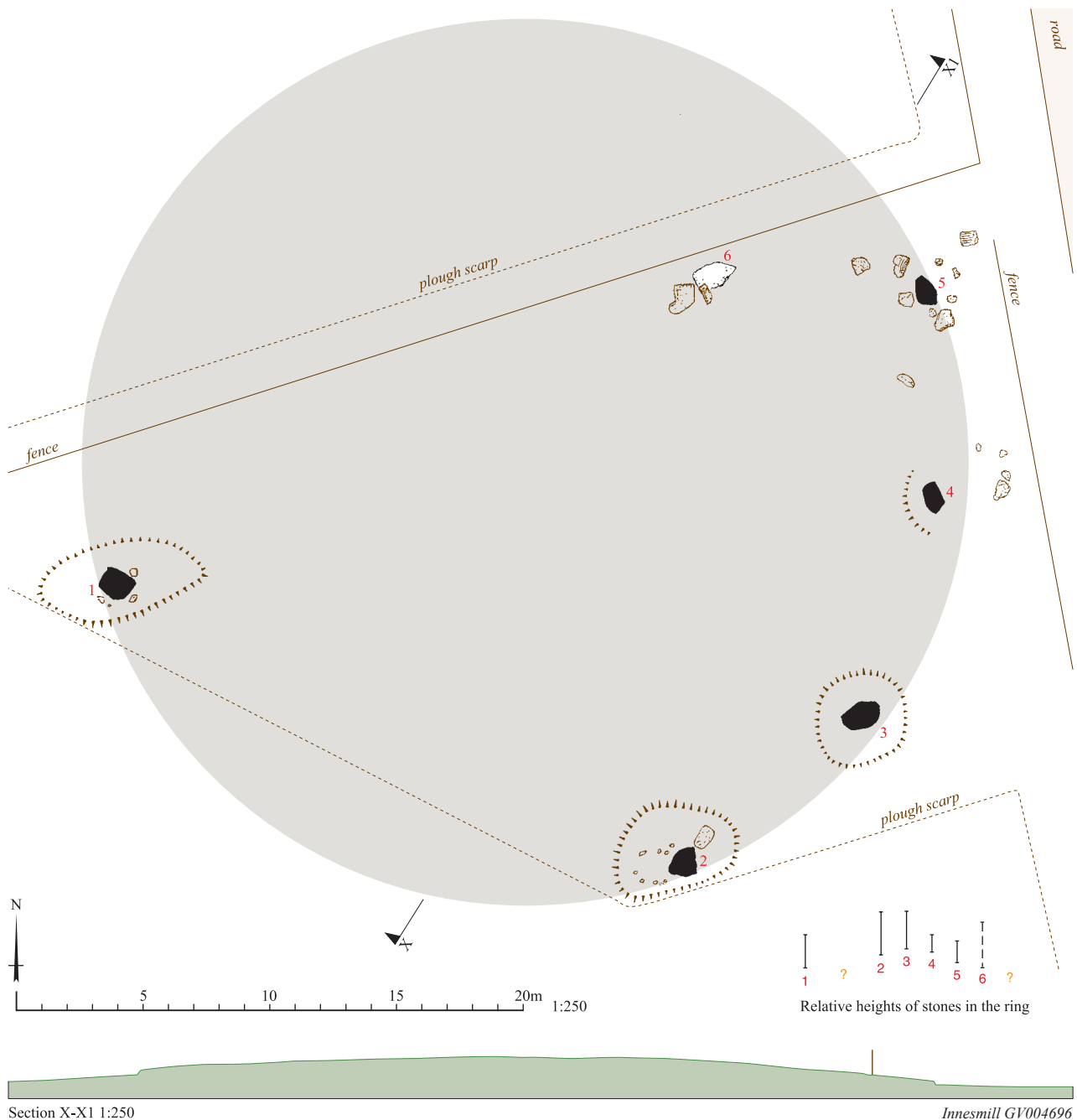
Visited 7 April 2005

48 Innesmill, Urquhart, Moray
 NJ26SE 7 NJ 2895 6407
 Stone Circle and Cairn (Possible)

This stone circle stands on a local summit in a field about 470m east-north-east of Innesmill. It measures 33m in diameter and probably comprised at least twelve evenly spaced orthostats, of which only six remain. Five of these are upright and the sixth lies displaced beside another large boulder on the north-north-east, adjacent to the fence that cuts across the north half of the projected circumference. The four stones standing around the eastern arc (2–5) preserve the spacing of the orthostats, while that on the west-south-west (1)

the diameter. The two tallest are on the south-east (2 & 3). Although these measure 1.7m and 1.45m in height respectively, their tops are almost at the same level, and the rest of the stones are apparently graded to reduce in height from this arc northwards. The hollows and channels previously noted as cupmarkings on stone 1 are the result of natural weathering. The interior, which is gently domed, probably once contained a more prominent mound (below), but there is no trace of any cairn material underfoot.

In 1835 Rev James Maclean described Innesmill as ‘nine tall stones fixed in the earth, and placed in a circle, the entrance to which, fronting the east, has a stone on each side taller than the rest’ (NSA, xiii,



Elginshire, 46). Unsurprisingly one of its local names was *The Nine Stanes* (Coles 1906a, 198), but if the estimate of the circle's original complement at twelve is correct, this in itself implies that three of its stones had been robbed long before. Another three were to go by 1870–1, when the circle was surveyed for the 1st edition of the OS 25-inch map (Elginshire 1874, viii), though Rev James Morrison, writing in June 1871, described eight, two of which were fallen (1872, 256). A brief note in the Name Book claims that all six of the stones shown on the map were then upright (Elginshire, No. 22, p 38), but the sixth corresponds with the position of the two displaced stones lying within the circumference on the north-north-east. In 1905 Coles certainly found the circle in its present state and both his plan and a sketch show the two stones that currently lie on the north-north-east (1906a, 198–201). On enquiry he was told that one of the missing orthostats had been taken to build a new steading at Viewfield (NJ 2877 6462), probably before 1843, but following 'uncanny signs and omens' it was returned whence it had come, only to end up buried about 70m to 90m short of the circle, presumably somewhere to the north (Coles 1906a, 201 note).

Curiously, his local informants, 'all zealously interested in megalithic antiquities in this part of Urquhart' (*ibid*), failed to tell him about the excavations that Morrison reported at the circle (1883, 44), or about some other standing stones about 'half a mile north'. According to Morrison the latter were removed about 1840 to provide building materials for cattle sheds (1872, 256). Morrison is perhaps not the most reliable of witnesses and there is a sense that this second megalithic monument is a conflation with some other story, possibly involving the stone carried off to Viewfield. Nevertheless, this farm was the scene of a number of other antiquarian discoveries that were reported by Rev Henry Walker. Most of these can be correlated with sites recorded by the OS surveyors in 1870–1, but a barrow on the farm excavated by the Elgin Scientific Society has never been located, although subsequently some large stones covering a pit were found beneath it (Walker 1857, 532). According to Walker, however, 'Another barrow in the same district of the parish was also opened with a like result; it was surrounded with several concentric circles of standing stones, but contained no remains.' (1857, 532). This is most probably the Innesmill circle and may indicate that there was once a more prominent mound within the ring of orthostats, though there is no mention of anything that might be construed as a recumbent setting. The interpretation of the ring as a recumbent stone circle rests entirely with Coles, based on the grading of the orthostats and his misreading of Maclean's *New Statistical Account* entry to say that two of the stones stood 'at the entrance to the altar' (Coles 1906a, 201). He later came to

doubt that there had been a recumbent here (Coles 1910, 165), but Innesmill appears in most lists of possible and probable recumbent stone circles (Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 361, Mry 6; 2000, 430, Mry 9; 2005a, 142–3; Barnatt 1989, 262, no. 5:26; Ruggles 1984, 58; 1999, 185, no. 1).

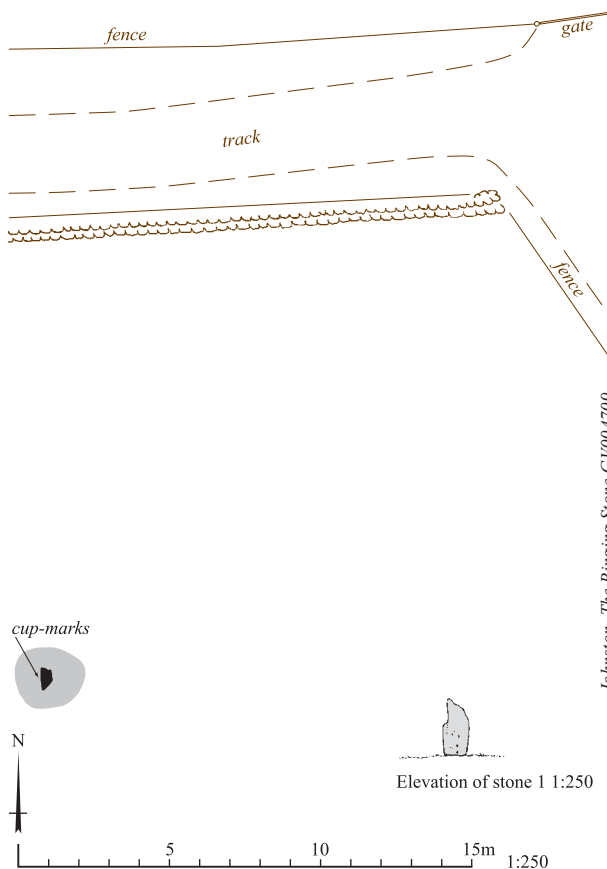
Visited 18 May 2005

49 Johnston, The Ringing Stone, Leslie, Aberdeenshire

NJ52NE 7

NJ 5790 2517

Stone Circle (Probable), Cairn and Cupmarkings



The Ringing Stone is a granite slab standing in the north-east corner of a field 230m north-north-west of Johnston. It is probably the sole survivor of a stone circle enclosing a cairn. Measuring 2m in overall height, it has a claw-shaped profile and bears at least four shallow cupmarks on the lower part of its west-north-west face, the largest of them measuring 50mm in diameter; a single depression in the surface of the east-south-east face is natural.

The suggestion that the Ringing Stone may be the remains of a recumbent stone circle was first made by James Ritchie, who observed that the claw-shaped profile of the stone was very like that of some flankers (1918, 111). Lying north–south, however, the axis of the stone would put it on either the east or west side of a circle, neither of which occurs in the recorded range

of positions for recumbent settings. On these grounds its inclusion in the present Gazetteer of recumbent stone circles has been rejected. Nevertheless, there is a good case to be made that there was once a circle here and that this enclosed a large cairn. The evidence that the Ringing Stone was part of a larger megalithic monument is provided by an estate plan of New Leslie drawn up in 1797 by George Brown (NTS Leith Hall Ms), which depicts *Stones* at this location, an ambiguous attribution but one that is applied to other stone circles appearing on estate plans elsewhere in Aberdeenshire. In this case the denoting of the *Stones* on the estate plan confirms that there were two megalithic monuments in the parish of Leslie, the other being the recumbent stone circle at **Braehead**. These, therefore, are probably the two *Druidical temples* in the parish referred to by Rev John Harper in the *Statistical Account* (viii, 1793, 518). A little over 70 years later Rev James Peter identified **Braehead** to the OS surveyors as the only one that he knew of, thus confirming that this was the recently demolished circle he mentions in 1835 in the *New Statistical Account* (xii, Aberdeenshire, 1022). Peter, who had come to the parish in 1830, was also one of the authorities cited by the OS surveyors in the Name Book entry for the Ringing Stone, a 'plain Standing Stone', which has an appended note that 'Mr and Mrs Skinner remember of a Cairn being here. And says that her uncle built the Cottown with the stones taken from it' (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 54, p 16). The cairn was presumably of some size to be remembered as a quarry for the building stone of this steading, which stands a short distance to the south-east (NJ 5831 2503). Presumably the circle enclosed the cairn, and we can only guess that Andrew Jervise misunderstood his informants to describe the Ringing Stone 'formerly

surrounded with a cairn of small stones' (1879, 334). In the light of this new evidence, it is now possible to discard the unlocated stone circle in Leslie parish that Burl has listed (App 1.54; 1976a, 352, Abn 68; 2000, 421, Abn 69), initially noting it as a possible recumbent stone circle (1970, 79).

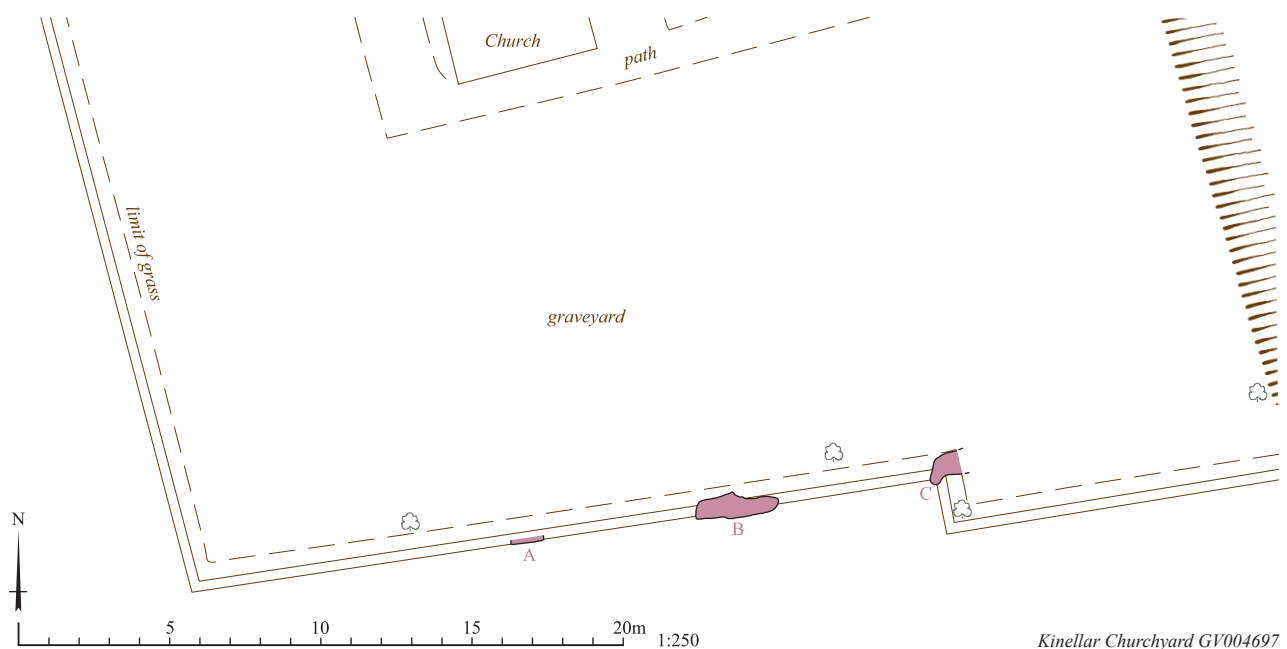
Visited 23 June 1999

50 Kinellar Parish Church, Kinellar, Aberdeenshire

NJ81SW 5 NJ 8215 1444

Stone Circle (Possible)

The south wall of the burial-ground of Kinellar Parish Church incorporates three large blocks (A, B, C), two of which have long been attributed to a stone circle standing on this hilltop. They lie 5m apart, the central one (B) visible for its full length of 2.85m, and the eastern (C) now largely hidden by a later extension of the burial-ground. A third block (A) a little over 1m in length is visible in the foundation of the wall 5m to the west. Noted in the *Statistical Account* (iii, 1792, 505), by James Logan (Cruickshank 1941, 106) and in the *New Statistical Account* (xii, Aberdeenshire, 115), it is difficult to tell whether these contain a memory of a stone circle standing here or whether they are simply explaining the presence of the two stones (cf Barnatt 1989, 485, no. 6:v). Be that as it may, in 1865–6 the OS surveyors marked this as the site of a stone circle, placing a cross on the 6-inch map in the field just south of the wall (Aberdeenshire 1869, lxv). Thirty years later Coles had little hesitation in pronouncing them the flankers of a recumbent setting (1902, 503–4), but if they were pushed over as he suggested and 'made use of, with as little effort at removal as might be, to eke



out the wall' (*ibid* 504), it begs the question as to why the recumbent he visualised between them was not employed in the same way. It is reasonable to conclude that there was a megalithic monument standing here, quite possibly a stone circle, but it was probably demolished long before the wall was constructed and there is no evidence that it included a recumbent setting. Such a monument was perhaps the original site of the stone bearing Pictish symbols that was dug out of the south-east corner of the old parish church in 1801 (Stuart 1856, 6; NJ81SW 6).

Visited 26 July 1996

51 Kirkton of Culsalmond, Culsalmond, Aberdeenshire

NJ63SE 1 NJ 6500 3294
Stone Circle

The site of what has been claimed as a possible recumbent stone circle lies near the centre of the churchyard surrounding the roofless shell of the old parish church of Culsalmond (Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 351, Abn 38; 2000, 420, Abn 37; Ruggles 1984, 59; 1999, 186, no. 38). It is described by Rev Ferdinand Ellis in the *New Statistical Account* as a '*circle of twelve upright large granite stones ... which were overturned when the first Christian temple was erected.*' (xii, Aberdeenshire, 732). Ellis, who was minister of the parish 1801–41, gives the impression that the circle had stood in living memory, but this is the site of a medieval parish church and the commentary that follows the description should probably be taken to indicate that the stones were already prostrate long before his day – if indeed any of them were still visible when he first arrived. Nevertheless, he believed that all twelve stones lay buried in the churchyard, though one was apparently disinterred in 1821 and could still be seen at the time he was writing. Subsequently Coles heard from John Callander that the sexton had encountered large stones beneath the turf (Coles 1902, 577). There is, however, no mention of a recumbent setting and little to recommend Barnatt's assertion that the number of stones in the ring suggests that it was a recumbent stone circle (1989, 460, no. 6:122).

Visited by 21 February 1996

52 Knocksoul, Logie Coldstone, Aberdeenshire

NJ40NW 19 NJ 4214 0696
Cairn and Cist

The cairn on the summit of Knocksoul has been included by Burl in a discussion of the character of recumbent stone circles in the Howe of Cromar. In essence, his thesis ran, cairns are the dominant

architectural feature of the interiors of recumbent stone circles in this district, and, citing Sir Alexander Ogston for the number of cairns that once existed here (1919, 175), he goes on to suggest that it is '*not surprising that the putatively late RSCs of Blue Cairn, Doune Hill and Knocksoul should encircle cairns rather than the open-centred ring-cairns*' (Burl 1988b, 19; see also **Blue Cairn of Ladieswell** & App 1.30). The Knocksoul cairn was first discovered by Ogston, who described it as a '*cairn on a platform*' (1931, 107), and makes no mention of a cist now exposed in a large robber pit in the centre. He gave the diameter of the cairn at 60ft (18m) and the breadth of the platform at 24ft (7.3m), computing the overall diameter at 100ft (30m). These measurements are difficult to reconcile with the remains visible today, which comprise little more than a platform of cairn material about 20m in overall diameter and 0.4m in height; the shallow pit sunk concentrically into its centre is about 10m in diameter and the coverstone of the cist lies where it has been dragged off to one side. A large kerbstone 1m long and 0.55m high can be seen on the west edge of the platform and a second has been uncovered on the north as a result of recent forestry operations. Despite the extensive disturbance of the surroundings, however, there is no trace of any spread of stones extending beyond the lip of the platform, suggesting that Ogston probably overestimated its size. If this is the case, the cairn that he noted on the platform was also much smaller, probably correlating with the diameter of the robber pit.

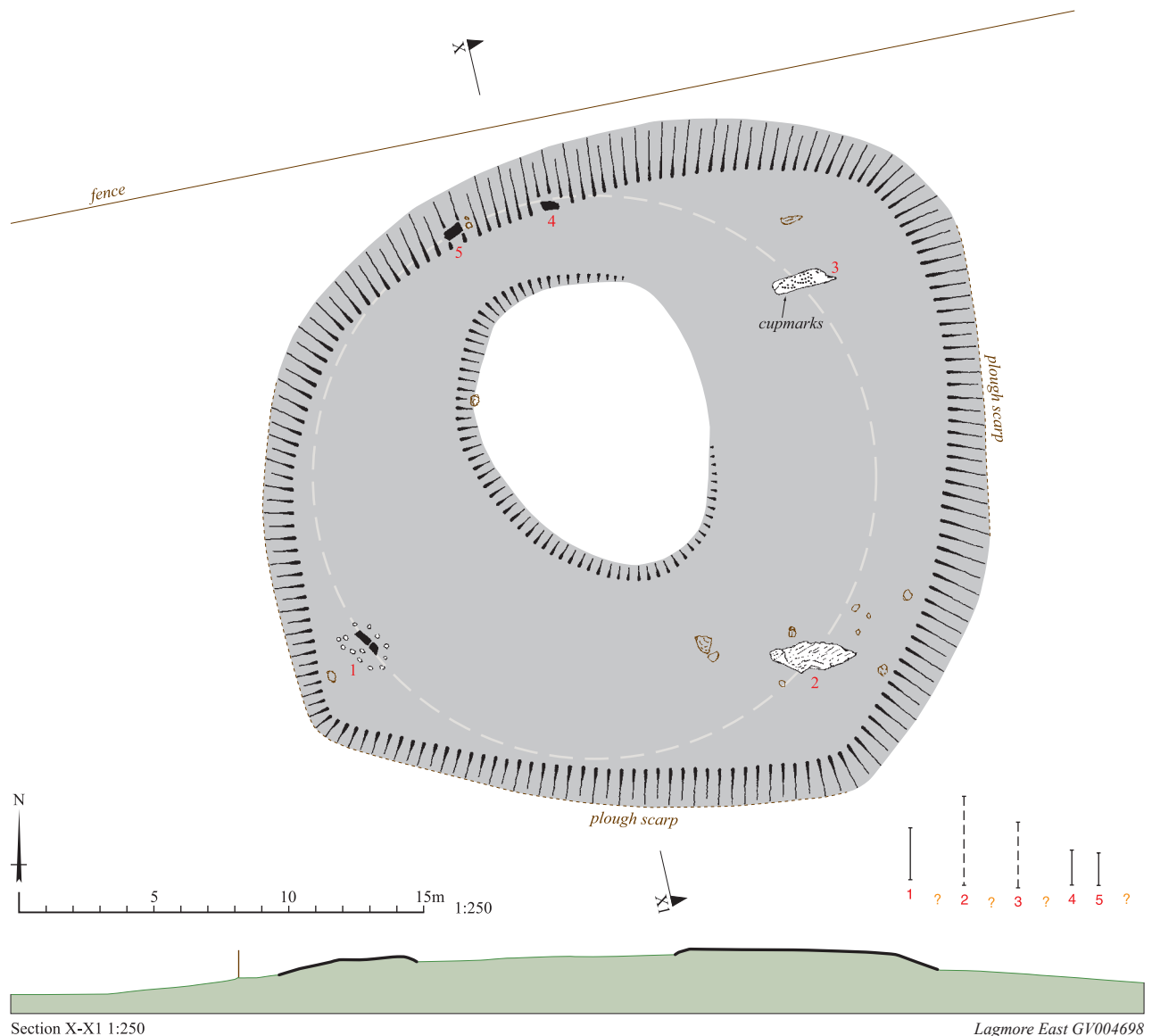
There is nothing here today to suggest that this is anything other than a burial cairn (*pace* Craig 1950, 429–30); nor is there any other record of a ring of standing stones, let alone a recumbent setting. With hindsight Burl may have been misled by another passage in Ogston's work, which links Knocksoul and **Blue Cairn of Ladieswell** as '*two giant cairns*' associated with a prehistoric routeway crossing over from the Howe of Cromar into the Deskry Water (Ogston 1931, 110). It only remains to note that the idea that there is a remarkably dense concentration of burial cairns in the Howe of Cromar is based upon the flawed premise that the large groups of small cairns recorded by Ogston are cemeteries (1919), an interpretation that few would accept today, most preferring to see them as evidence of land clearance for agriculture.

Visited 13 March 2009

53 Lagmore East, Inveravon, Moray

NJ13NE 10 NJ 1796 3595
Stone Circle, Cairn and Cupmarkings

The five remaining orthostats of this circle stand on a flat-topped mound of stones at the edge of a field about 100m north-east of Lagmore. The mound has been



clipped by ploughing on every side and now forms a rounded quadrilateral shape on plan. It measures up to 27m from east to west by 25m transversely and 0.5m in height, and extends from 2m to 6m beyond the projected circumference of the circle. The latter is about 21m in diameter and may have comprised up to seventeen orthostats if the spacing of the two still standing on the north-north-west (4 & 5) was maintained throughout the circumference. At 1.3m and 1.2m high respectively, these two stones are also the shortest, comparing with a height of 1.9m for the fractured and split slab standing on the south-west (1) and a length of 3.3m for the fallen stone on the south-east (2). Given this disparity, it is probable that the orthostats were graded to reduce in height from south to north. The fifth orthostat, which lies prone on the north-east (3) exhibits about 23 cupmarks on its upper surface. A shallow hollow lies slightly eccentrically within the stone circle and

measures 11.5m from north-north-west to south-south-east by 9m transversely. The presence of this hollow has led to the identification of the mound as the remains of a ring-cairn, but there is no trace of an inner kerb. In truth this feature may be no more than a stone-robber's pit, and if Coles' description of the interior as *'fairly smooth and level'* (1907a, 141) is correct, it may have been dug since 1906. The rest of the circle, however, had been reduced to its present state by 1869 (Name Book, Banffshire, No. 17, p 62).

Lying within the fringes of the distribution of Clava-type cairns, and with an example of a Clava passage grave standing only 300m to the west-south-west (NJ13NE 9), there has been an assumption that Lagmore East also belongs in that general category (Henshall 1963, 390; Burl 1976a, 355, Ban 6; 2000, 424, Ban 7). Barnatt, however, considered that it might be a ruined recumbent stone circle, though in the light of

the passage grave at Lagmore West he too was inclined to regard Lagmore East as a Clava cairn (1989, 263, no. 5:30). It cannot be stated too firmly that there is no evidence either on the ground or in the antiquarian sources that there was ever a recumbent setting here. That said, it is not particularly helpful to shoehorn this circle into the Clava group by default. As Keith Blood of the OS recognised in 1967, it is not possible to tell whether there has ever been a chamber or an internal court within this circle, and the possibility remains that it was never anything more than a stone circle set on a low flat-topped cairn.

Visited 21 July 2005

54 Leslie Parish, Aberdeenshire

Duplicate Record

A stone circle in Leslie parish listed by Burl on the strength of an oblique reference in the *New Statistical Account*, initially including it as a possible recumbent stone circle (1970, 79; 1976a, 352, Abn 68; 2000, 421, Abn 69), is a duplicate of Johnston, The Ringing Stone (App 1.49).

55 Marionburgh, Inveravon, Moray

NJ13NE 3 NJ 1830 3640

Stone Circle and Cairn

A heavily robbed cairn surrounded by a ring of standing stones is situated in a small overgrown plantation enclosure immediately south of the drive that approaches Ballindalloch Home Farm from the road junction opposite Marionburgh. The cairn measures 14m in overall diameter and has been reduced to a bank of rubble about 4.5m in thickness and 0.6m in height, so much so that the open hollow 5m across at its centre is generally thought to represent an internal court or the chamber of a Clava passage grave (Henshall 1963, 391; Shepherd 1986a, 160). No inner kerbstones are visible and Audrey Henshall drew attention to only one possible outer kerbstone, apparently situated on the west of the cairn though it does not appear upon her plan of 1957 (1963, 391). There were probably eleven orthostats in the surrounding ring, set along the leading edge of a low concentric platform and measuring about 23m in overall diameter; of the eleven, five remain upright and four are fallen. Although the smallest is currently on the south-east and is only 0.7m high, the ring was probably graded in height, reducing from a tall stone 2.7m high on the south-west round to one only 1m high incorporated into the dyke on the north-east.

Most of the damage here probably occurred before the end of the 18th century (*Stat Acct*, xiii, 1794, 42–3) and in 1869 the OS surveyors noted only ‘three stones standing and three or four lying on the ground

half buried in the soil’ (Name Book, Banffshire, No. 17, p 51). Coles’ plan of 1906, however, shows all the stones that are visible today, though he struggled in the undergrowth to plot them (1907a, 151–4, fig 17). Coles sensed that the interior was very stony, but it was left to Henshall to adapt his plan to show the internal cairn. Her survey, and a description prepared in 1967 by Keith Blood of the OS, which concluded that it was most likely to be a ring-cairn, have been the main sources of subsequent commentaries. Thus, Burl has listed Marionburgh as a probable ring-cairn (1976a, 355, Ban 7; 2000, 424, Ban 8), but Barnatt has speculated that the absence of a massive internal kerb might suggest that it is the remains of a recumbent stone circle (1989, 264, no. 5:31). This is not a sound basis for such a suggestion and only serves to confuse the unwary. The present survey can only repeat its conclusions for the neighbouring circle at Lagmore East (App 1.53): there is no evidence, either on the ground or in the antiquarian sources, that there was ever a recumbent setting here. In this case, however, the possibility remains that it is indeed a ring-cairn.

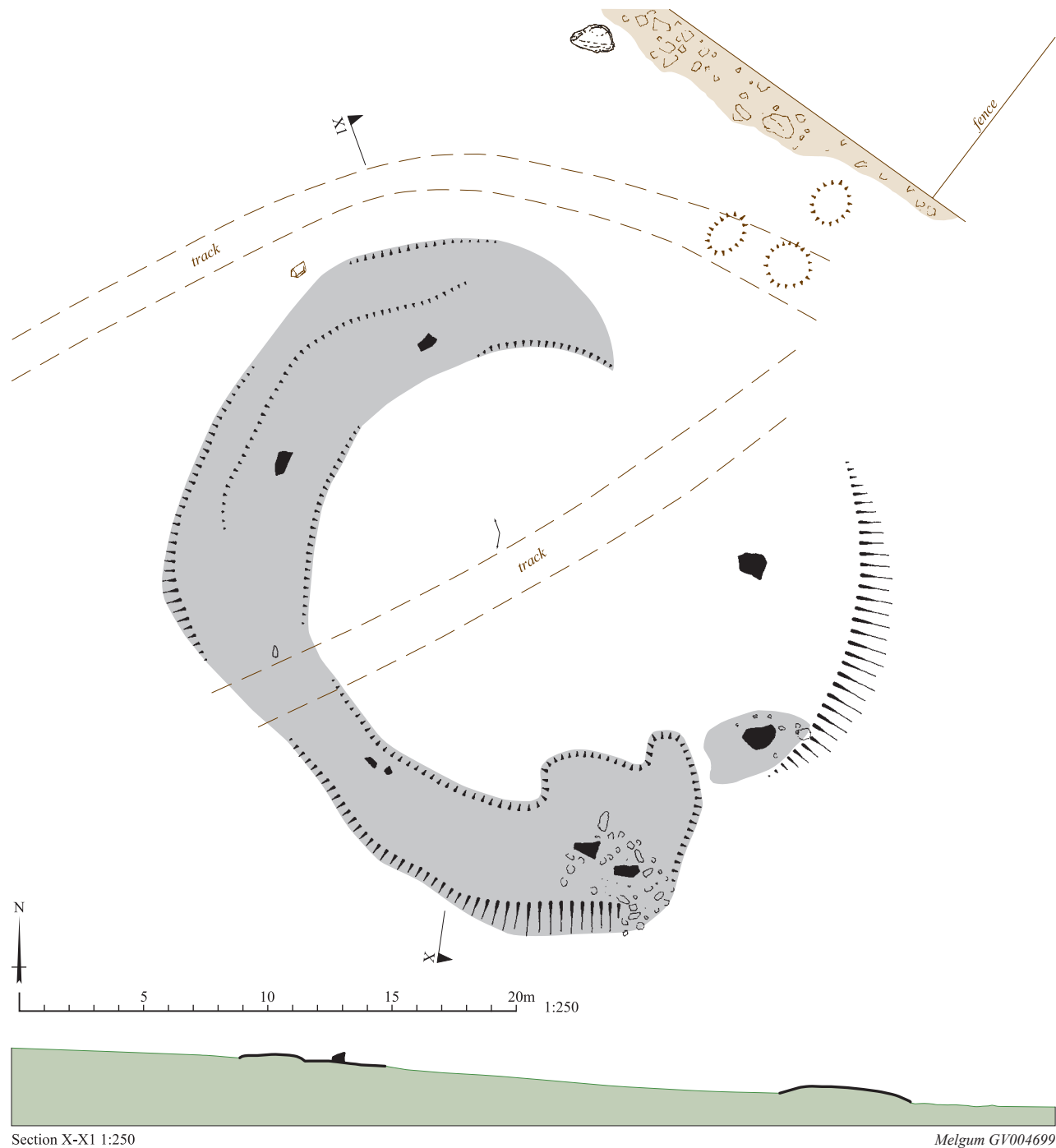
Visited 21 July 2005

56 Melgum, Logie Coldstone, Aberdeenshire

NJ40NE 1 NJ 4714 0524

Unenclosed Settlement

The easternmost of three hut-circles or enclosures at the foot of the south-east flank of Gallow Hill has been noted as a possible recumbent stone circle (Barnatt 1989, 292, no. 6:63), a misidentification that can be traced back to when they were first mapped by OS surveyors in 1868 and annotated *Stone Circles (Remains of)* (Aberdeenshire 1870, lxx). At that time this term was being applied to a wide range of structures, ranging from hut-circles and thick-walled enclosures to rings of freestanding orthostats (Gannon *et al* 2007, 70–1), and in this case the Name Book entry displays what little the surveyors knew: ‘Three circles formed by large boulder stones, but a quantity of the stones has been removed, yet the circles is quite visible. It is a mere conjecture what these may have been, whether encampments, or used in conjunction and part of the surrounding Druidical Temples or Stone Circles’ (Aberdeenshire, No. 56, p 96). Each of the enclosures measures about 20m in internal diameter within a wall reduced to a low stony bank up to 5.5m in thickness, but the robbing of the easternmost has left a series of large boulders standing proud above the top of the bank, two of which probably mark one side of the entrance on the south-east. At the beginning of the 20th century Sir Alexander Ogston recognised that these were not circles of standing stones (1931, 95–6), but in the 1920s Douglas Simpson described the easternmost as



an 'hitherto undescribed stone circle' (1927, 265–6). Since then it has been their fate to appear in lists of stone circles (Burl 1976a, 352, Abn 75a-c; 2000, 421, Abn 77a-c; Thom *et al* 1980, 208–9), which in its turn left Barnatt to struggle with their interpretation, his ideas ranging across freestanding rings of orthostats, ring-cairns and recumbent stone circles (1989, 292, no. 6:63). More likely parallels for these structures are to be found in the nearby settlements for which the area around New Kinnord is famed.

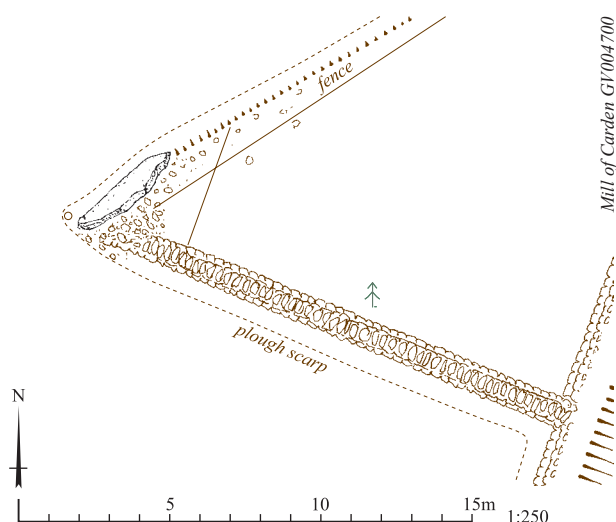
Visited 12 May 2005

57 Mill of Carden, Oyne, Aberdeenshire

NJ62NE 4 NJ 6932 2602

Standing Stone

This stone, which formerly stood in the middle of a small field about 100m north-east of Mill of Carden, was first moved to the north edge of the field and now lies against a stone wall some 110m to the north-east of its original position. A pillar of red granite, it measures 3.9m in length by 1.4m in breadth and up to 0.35m in thickness. In 1867 OS surveyors illustrated



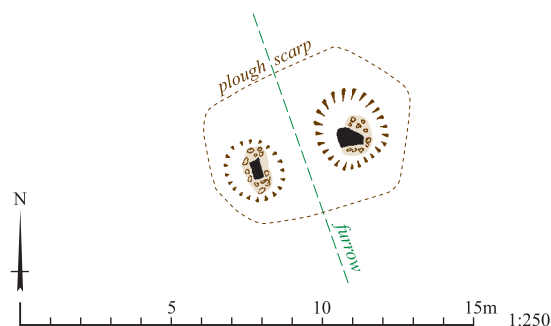
the stone with a delightful vignette in the Name Book, but they found no local tradition that it had belonged to a circle. Indeed, quite the opposite. It was believed to be a single memorial marking *'the site of some battle, or to record the death of some noted personage'* (Aberdeenshire, No. 70, p 48). To Coles the stone was simply a striking monolith (1902, 531, 532 figs 47–8), but some years later Alexander Keiller referred to it as a *'Pillar Stone'* and was quite sure that it was once a flanker in a recumbent stone circle (1934, 20–1). Thus it has appeared in Burl's lists as a possible recumbent stone circle (1970, 78; 1976a, 352, Abn 77; 2000, 421, Abn 79), though other researchers have been more hesitant. Barnatt, for example, considered there was too little evidence to justify this classification (1989, 463, no. 6:143), and while Ruggles included it in his list of possible recumbent stone circles (1984, 60; 1999, 187, no. 57), he also noted that there is no evidence that it has ever been anything more than a single standing stone (1999, 266, note 10).

Visited 17 March 2000

58 Mill of Noth, Rhynie, Aberdeenshire

NJ52NW 3 NJ 5033 2779

Standing Stones



This pair of stones stands on a terrace on the south side of the Burn of Easaiche 100m east-north-east of Mill of Noth. Set 2.7m apart, they are both 1.95m high, but whereas the eastern adopts the general axis of the pair, which lies east-north-east and west-south-west, the rather thinner western slab is set at right-angles to it. The OS surveyors who plotted the stones in 1866 (Aberdeenshire 1870, xliii) noted that local tradition *'assigns these stones to be the remains of a Druidical place of worship'* (Aberdeenshire, No. 78, p 146), but it is Coles who first suggested that they had formed part of a stone circle. More specifically, he thought they were the flankers of a recumbent setting from which the recumbent had been removed, but for no other reason than that they were *'shapely Pillars'* (1902, 565). Burl was evidently not convinced and they do not appear in his lists of stone circles, but Barnatt has included them as a possible example of a recumbent stone circle (1989, 463, no. 6:144). The flat, low-lying location, however, would be unusual for a recumbent stone circle, and the way the western member of the pair is turned at right angles to its neighbour is also very rare in a recumbent setting, recorded only at **Hill of Fiddes, Netherton of Logie, Strichen House** and **Tomnaverie**, and certainly at the last two it is the result of an incorrect reconstruction. This feature is sometimes found in other pairs of standing stones, such as at Castle Fraser (NJ71SW 4).

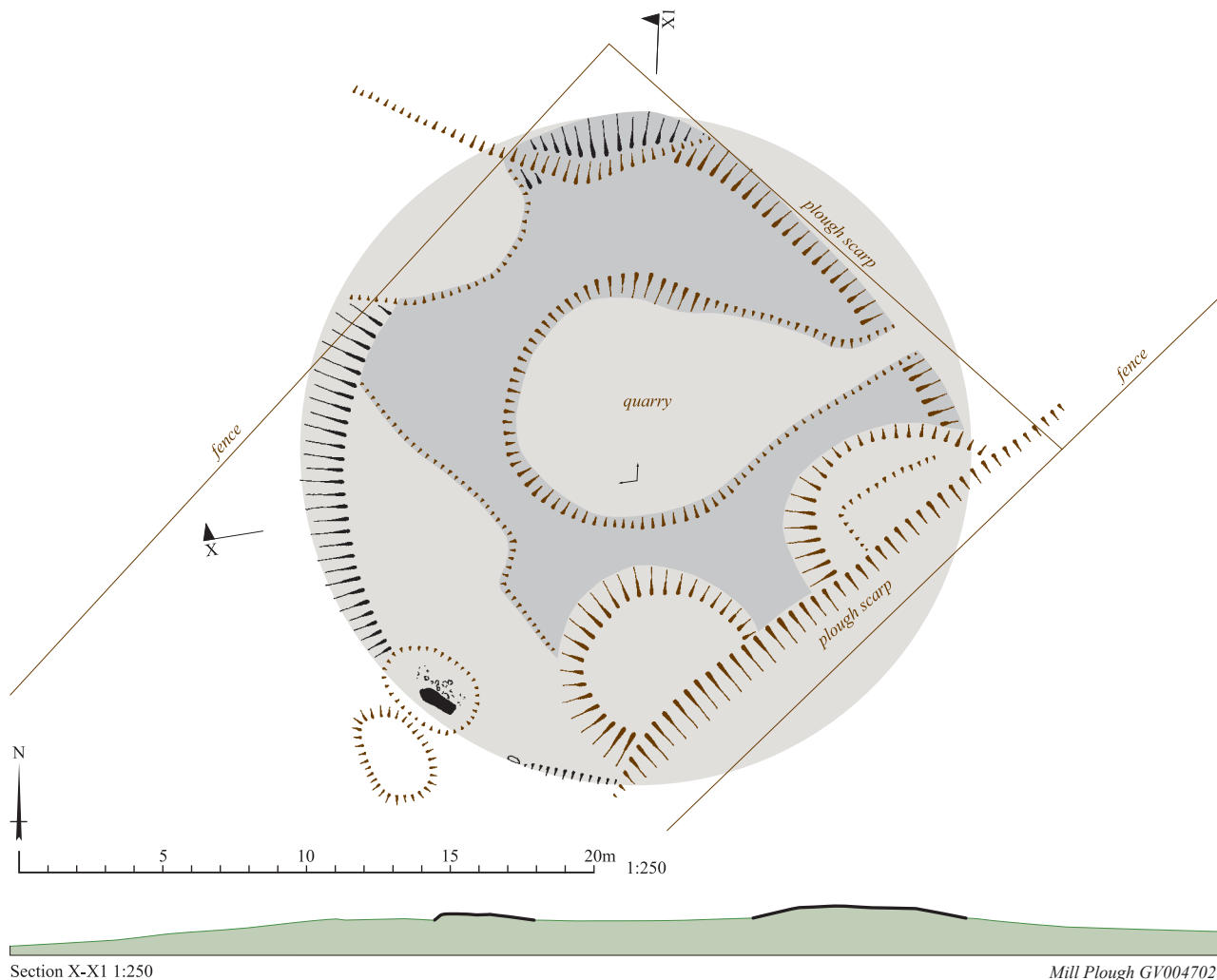
Visited 5 March 1996

59 Millplough, Arbuthnott, Aberdeenshire

NO87NW 12 NO 8172 7540

Stone Circle and Cairn

Situated no more than 200m west-south-west of the lone recumbent at **Millplough**, this monument is set slightly further down the slope, on a low spur projecting west-south-west into the Den of Pitcarles. Hidden in a clump of whins, and distressed with robber pits and plough scars, the OS surveyor who sketched the stone standing on its south-west margin in 1863 (Name Book, Kincardineshire, No. 1, p 37) did not recognise the remains as those of a cairn. It has measured about 23m in diameter and in places beneath the field clearance is still up to 0.6m high. The stone measures 1.3m by 0.6m at ground level and rises to a point at a height of 1.8m. In 1982 RCAHMS investigators suggested that the cairn was one of a local group characterised by well-built kerbs incorporating a single large stone (RCAHMS 1982, 12, nos. 25, 55–6 & 58). The other examples are **The Cloch, Millplough** and **Montgoldrum**, all of which the present survey classifies as recumbent stone circles. In the case of this cairn at Millplough, however, there is no equivalent slab to suggest that there was ever a recumbent setting. Nor are there any other examples of two recumbent stone circles in such close proximity.



While this need not be seen as conclusive, where there is another monument close by, it is more typically a cairn or ring-cairn, some of which are also encircled with rings of upright stones. Indeed, it is now clear that in the North-east there is a wide range of stone circles enclosing cairns, many of which have been mistaken for recumbent stone circles and appear in this Appendix.

Visited 21 August 2003

60 Mitton Hill, Kinneff, Aberdeenshire

NO87NW 1 NO 8272 7911

Cairn

Situated on the summit of Mitton Hill, this robbed cairn measures about 17m in diameter over an intermittent ring of displaced kerbstones that in 1864–5 was mistaken by the OS surveyors for a stone circle (Kincardineshire 1868, xxi). The accompanying entry in the Name Book describes it as *'set round at regular distances with fourteen large stones some of which would weigh twenty cwt'* (Kincardineshire,

No. 13, p 17). Coles failed to find the cairn in the dense plantation that still clothed the hill in 1902, but published a plan drawn up by the local schoolmaster, William Duthie (1903b, 198–9, fig 5). With its initial annotation on OS maps, the inclusion of Mitton Hill in lists of stone circles has followed a well-trodden path, though both Barnatt (1989, 484, no. 6:1) and Ruggles (1999, 188 no. 93, 266 note 22) recognised that it was probably no more than the kerb of a robbed cairn. In Burl's gazetteer, however, it is included as a possible recumbent stone circle (Burl 1976a, 360, Knc 5; 2000, 429, Knc 7), probably on the strength of Duthie's plan, for this shows the stones disposed in two concentric circles, the inner made up of *'smallish earthfast stones'* and the outer of four rather larger boulders, the greatest of which lay on the south-east and was considered by Coles to be a *'prostrate pillar'* (1903b, 199). The impression they create is of a ring of orthostats enclosing an internal cairn, an interpretation that is not borne out by an examination on the ground.

Visited 20 July 2005

61 Moncrieffe House, Dunbarney, Perth & Kinross

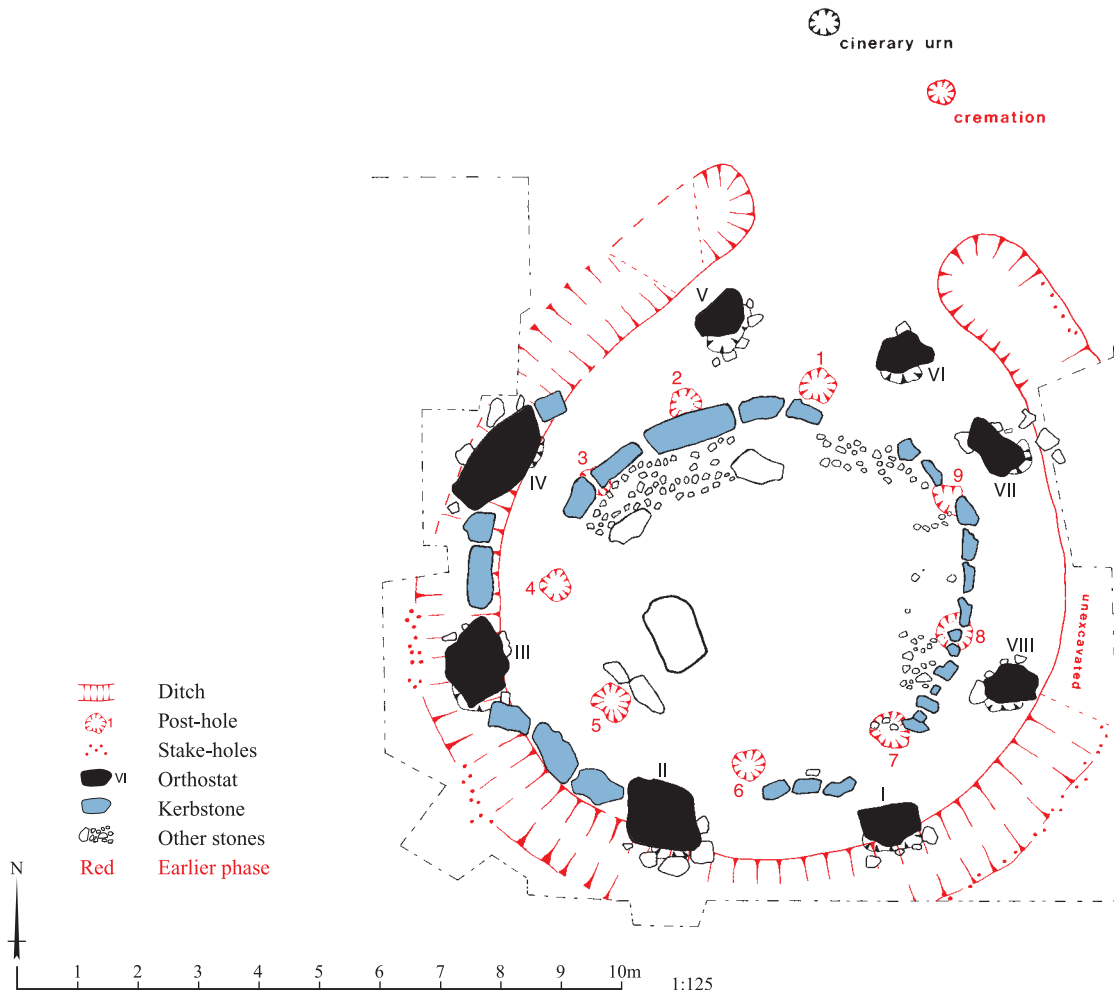
NO11NW 11 NO 1328 1933

Stone Circle

This stone circle, which formerly stood on the north verge of the west drive of Moncrieffe House, was completely excavated by Dr Margaret Stewart in 1974 (Stewart 1985). No formal recumbent setting was discovered, but Stewart's interpretation of some of the features she uncovered has led to the inclusion of the ring in Burl's lists as a possible recumbent stone circle (1995, 162–3; 2000, 432, Per 40; 2005a, 162–3), though other researchers have rejected the comparison (Barnatt 1989, 324–5, no. 7:41; Ruggles 1999, 188).

The excavation revealed that the construction of the circle was but one stage in a complex sequence, which began with a small penannular henge monument measuring about 9m in internal diameter and enclosing a ring of post-holes. The stratigraphic sequence thereafter is not entirely clear, but the south-west half of the stone circle was erected over the filled ditch of the henge and was thought to represent the third phase. Stewart, however, believed that several of the stones were set into earlier sockets, which constituted one element of her second phase. In this phase she proposed that a

small kerbed cairn surrounded by a ring of free-standing orthostats had stood on the site. This was completely dismantled at some point prior to the construction of the stone circle that was still standing there at the outset of the excavation. The latter measured about 10m in overall diameter and comprised eight orthostats. These were graded in the sense that the bulkiest and tallest were set around the south-west arc, an aspect of the architecture that is brought out most clearly by Romily Allen's sketch of 1880 (1882, 92, fig 12). A series of lesser stones were laid horizontally between the three orthostats on the south-west quarter, and these Stewart presented as the equivalent of the *recumbent* of the circles in the North-east. Concentrically within the interior there was also a cairn measuring about 6.5m in diameter over a low boulder kerb. Observing that the kerbstones appeared to be doubled up in one or two places, she interpreted this as a ring-cairn. In this central area there were seven pits, several of which may have held cremations, and a mixed deposit on the north-east included fragments of urns, Grooved Ware and Late Bronze Age pottery. There was also some 2 cwt of quartz scattered amongst the cairn material. There is no need to outline the subsequent phases of activity, but it is important to focus briefly upon the supposed



Moncrieffe G1004703 Derived from Stewart 1985

architectural link that has been drawn with recumbent stone circles.

It cannot be stated too strongly that no formal recumbent setting existed here (cf Ruggles 1999, 188), and thus Moncrieffe House has no place in lists of recumbent stone circles. At best it can be said that the apparent focus of the design on the south-west quarter suggests that there are shared concepts, just as there are with other types of megalithic settings, but the detail of their architectural expression is very different. The pattern of grading here, for example, and indeed amongst other stone circles in eastern Perthshire (RCAHMS 1994, 33), appears to have alternated short and tall in a way that is most clearly demonstrated in the heights of the stones around the south-west half of the circle. The tallest and largest stone (IV) stood 2m high on the west-north-west and was run a close second by the stone 1.9m high on the south-south-west (II), but the one between them (III) was little more than 1.45m high, while the next stone round onto the south-east (I) was 1.15m high, followed by another taller one of 1.75m (VIII). The horizontal slabs laid between the orthostats on the south-west, far from being a surrogate recumbent, were surely a kerb (cf Barnatt 1989, 325). Furthermore, this almost certainly extended round the south-east quarter, where Alexander Thom's plan taken in the course of the excavations includes another three displaced boulders lying between the orthostats (Thom *et al* 1980, 350–1). At some stage this was almost certainly a composite monument comprising a cairn bounded by a ring of alternating short and tall orthostats set in a kerb; this was probably most impressive around the south-west half of the circumference. The status of the inner kerb recorded by Stewart is less clear, but possibly represents an earlier line that was robbed to build the kerb between the ringstones. There is certainly no unequivocal evidence that this inner cairn was a ring-cairn with an internal court, an interpretation that perhaps owes more to what was then known about the cairns within recumbent stone circles than to the evidence recovered in the course of the excavation. By her own admission the deposits in the centre had been churned.

Visited 9 December 1996

62 Mundurno, Old Machar, Aberdeenshire

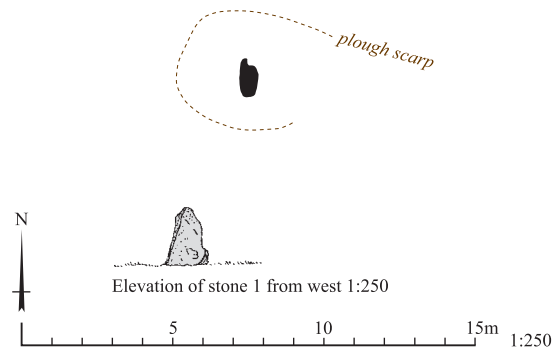
NJ91SW 5 NJ 9400 1309

Stone Circle

A single stone standing 420m west-north-west of Mundurno is probably the sole survivor of a stone circle that was removed when the surrounding field was improved in the mid 19th century. Unfortunately the stone fell in 1993 and has been re-erected (Barclay and Miles 1993). Its original orientation is not recorded in any published source and it now stands with its long axis north and south, measuring about 1.3m by 0.45m at

ground level and rising asymmetrically to a point at a height of 1.85m.

In 1864–7 the OS surveyors noted that when the whins were cleared 'it was found that besides this stone there were 6 or 7 more nearly the same size lying beside it and that they formed a circle' (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 69, p 17). Coles did not have access to their description, but he was well aware that there had been a circle here (1904, 303, 305). It fell to Alexander Keiller to make the suggestion that the stone had been



a flanker in a recumbent setting (1934, 20–1) and it has appeared as a possible recumbent stone circle in Burl's lists (1970, 78; 1976a, 352, Abn 78; 2000, 421, Abn 81). Ruggles and Barnatt have been more sceptical (Ruggles 1984, 60; 1999, 188 no. 82, 266 note 20; Barnatt 1989, 463, no. 6:145), a view with which the present survey concurs. There is no doubt that Keiller was right that the asymmetric shape of the stone was appropriate for a flanker, but if its present axis faithfully reproduces its original alignment, this would place it on the east or west side of the circle and thus outside the typical range of positions for a recumbent setting.

Visited 1 March 1999

63 Nether Balfour, Tullynessle and Forbes, Aberdeenshire

NJ51NW 5 NJ 5392 1720

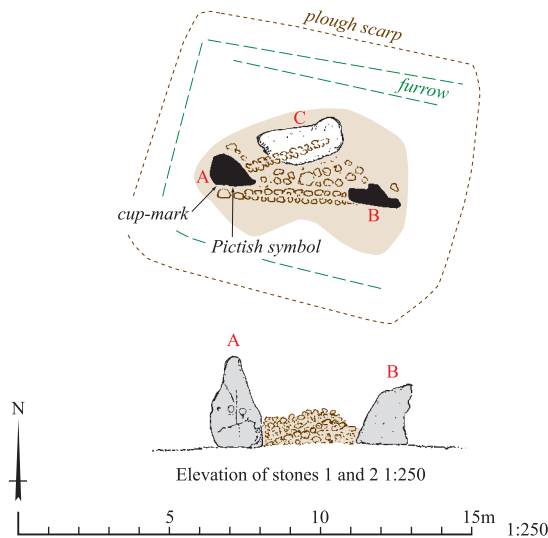
Hut-circle and Souterrain (Probable)

In 1867 OS surveyors noted the site of what they termed a *Stone Circle* in a field 250m south-east of Nether Balfour (Aberdeenshire 1869, lxii). It had been removed some 20 years before and measured about 18m in diameter, with what was described to them as 'the remains of about 20 yards [18.3m] of road paved with flat stones, evidently leading to the circle, from the NE' (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 88, p 107). Annotated *Causeway* on the map, this was one of a number of such features that they had been told about, in every case adjacent to a *Stone Circle* – **Bankhead**; Crookmore (App 1.27); Druidsfield (App 1.32); and Newbigging (App 1.67). At both Druidsfield and Newbigging, Coles was persuaded that these had been rings with recumbent settings, but it was

Alexander Keiller who then drew a connection between *causeways* and recumbent stone circles, thus drawing Nether Balfour into this category (1934, 18). Without any visible remains to contradict this identification, the inclusion of these structures in lists of possible and probable recumbent stone circles has been inevitable (Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 352, Abn 79; 2000, 421, Abn 82; Ruggles 1984, 59; 1999, 187 no. 53). However, the most recent analysis of the descriptions of these monuments suggests an alternative explanation. Rather than rings of freestanding orthostats, they were all (excepting Druidsfield) probably walled enclosures or hut-circles with attached souterrains of the type that can still be seen at New Kinnord in the Howe of Cromar (Gannon *et al* 2007, 70–1).

64 Nether Corskie, Cluny, Aberdeenshire

NJ70NW 3 NJ 7482 0959
Standing Stones and Pictish Symbols



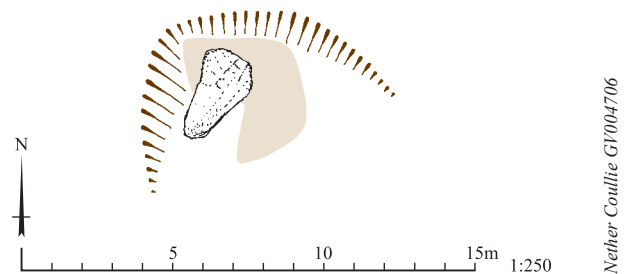
These two granite stones stand on a south-facing terrace some 300m north of Dunecht School. Set about 3m apart, the western (A) presents a pear-shaped profile to the south, measuring a maximum of 1.6m by 0.9m and 2.9m in height, while its eastern neighbour (B), a slab measuring 1.8m by 0.55m and 2.1m in height, has an asymmetric profile that appears to arch over towards the east. The taller western stone has been reused as a Pictish symbol stone and bears the incised outline of a mirror case and a mirror-and-comb on its south face (Fraser 2008, 34, no. 36). It also has a single cupmark on its west side. Lying on the dump of field-gathered stones that has collected around them there is a large boulder (C) measuring 2.9m in length by 1.4m in breadth. The origin of this boulder is unknown, though in 1865 the OS surveyors annotated the two stones *Stone Circle (Remains of)* (Aberdeenshire 1869, lxxiii). The entry in the Name Book identifies them as

one of 'the three druidical temples in the district, of the usual circular form' mentioned in the *Statistical Account* (x, 1794, 248 note) and claims the other stones had been broken up to build field walls (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 15, p 68). If the boulder now lying between the two stones was part of a circle, it must have been buried rather than broken up. It is a relatively recent addition and was not present when Coles visited the stones in 1902 (1903a, 83–4) or when James Ritchie photographed them in 1904 (RCAHMS AB4830). The suggestion that these are the remains of a recumbent stone circle comes from Coles, who had no doubt that he was looking at the flankers of a recumbent setting. This assessment has been generally accepted ever since (Burl 1970, 78; 1976a, 352, Abn 80; 2000, 421, Abn 83; Ruggles 1999, 187 no. 69, 266 note 14), though both Ruggles (1984, 57 note r, 60) and Barnatt (1989, 463, no. 6:147) have raised the possibility that they might be part of a four-poster setting or simply a two-stone alignment. The present survey has tended to this latter view and has not found Coles' hypothesis entirely convincing. Compared with the flankers of other recumbent settings, this pair is unusual; more typically the profile of the eastern slab would suggest that the recumbent lay to its east rather than between them. However, excavation could resolve the issue.

Visited 15 April 1998

65 Nether Coullie, Monymusk, Aberdeenshire

NJ71NW 11 NJ 7098 1564
Stone Circle



Since the late 19th century a single standing stone is all that has remained to mark the site of this stone circle, and even this has now fallen. Measuring 3.1m in length, it has been an impressive monolith, but curiously neither it nor its parent circle is shown on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Aberdeenshire 1869, lxiv). Situated in a field on the rising ground west-north-west of Nether Coullie, it is perhaps the exception that proves the general rule that in enclosed farmland upright stones that do not appear on the 1st edition OS map are more recently erected rubbing stones (Gannon *et al* 2007, 68). In this case, however, the sources are insistent, if slightly conflicting. Coles, drawn to the site by a passing reference in a history of Monymusk Priory (MacPherson 1895, 10–11), elicited merely that

the surviving monolith had apparently stood within a circle of nine stones until about 1860 (Coles 1901, 203). However, James Ritchie seems to have tapped a much more detailed vein of local knowledge, visiting the site of the circle with the tenant, William Connon, who put the clearance of the last stones some 40 years earlier. Ritchie's account was published in 1917, though he had been collecting information on stone circles since at least the turn of the century. Coles' date of about 1860, however, at least puts the demolition of the circle before the OS surveyors mapped the area in 1864–7. According to Connon, the circle measured between 22m and 24m in diameter and comprised eight stones, though in common with Coles' source he put the surviving stone in the centre. Nevertheless, as Ritchie got Connon to point out the positions of the various stones that had been removed, he concluded that this had been a recumbent stone circle, the surviving stone being the western flanker of the setting, its eastern pair apparently lying buried a little to the south-east (Ritchie 1917, 43–5). Their attempts to locate this buried stone by probing ended in failure, but Ritchie photographed two blocks in the field boundary to the south that were said to have been taken from the circle, and several others there show evidence that they have been blasted. Alexander Keiller followed Ritchie's interpretation (1934, 21), and Nether Coullie has been accepted as the site of a recumbent stone circle ever since (Burl 1970, 60, 68, 78; 1976a, 352, Abn 81; 2000, 421, Abn 84; Barnatt 1989, 293, no. 6:66; Ruggles 1984, 60; 1999, 187). The evidence, however, cannot be regarded as conclusive, and in view of the wide range of other types of circle that the present survey has recorded in the North-east, Nether Coullie has been rejected until further evidence is brought forward to show that it once included a recumbent.

Visited 22 October 1996

66 Nethertown, Inveravon, Moray

NJ12NE 18 NJ 1852 2913
Pen (Possible)

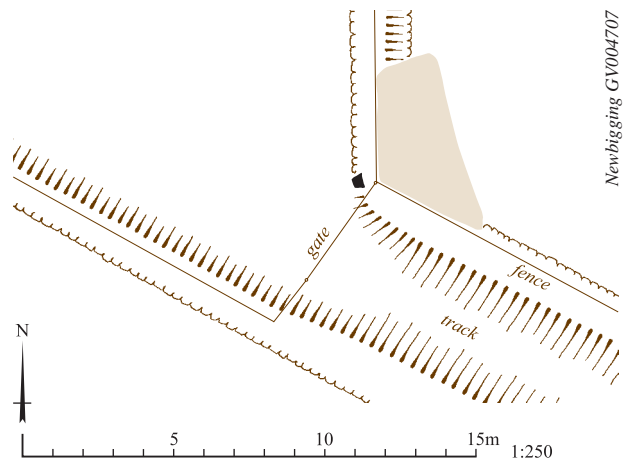
In the course of fieldwork on behalf of Grampian Regional Council, Moira Greig spotted but did not visit some stones that appeared to form a small circle with a recumbent stone. She tentatively reported her discovery in *Discovery and Excavation Scotland* (Greig 1993), leading to its inclusion as a possible recumbent stone circle in Burl's most recent recension of his gazetteer (2000, 425, Ban 10). Situated in rough pasture about 150m west of Nethertown, the stones do not form a circle, but comprise four slabs set up on edge in a contiguous row 2.6m in overall length from north-east to south-west. They range from 0.4m to almost 1m in height and all lean to the south-east. The supposed recumbent is a natural boulder lying prone in the rough grass to the north. The purpose of the row of stones is not

immediately clear, but it is probably no more than the remains of a 19th century pen.

Visited 21 July 2005

67 Newbigging, Clatt, Aberdeenshire

NJ52NW 10 NJ 5285 2652
Hut-circle and Souterrain (Probable)



The site of a *Stone Circle* approached by a *Causeway*, which is annotated on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map about 400m south-west of Bankhead (Aberdeenshire 1870, xliii), has become entrenched in the antiquarian and archaeological literature as a possible recumbent stone circle. The confusion is fully discussed in the Gazetteer entry for **Bankhead**. The discovery at Newbigging was described to the OS surveyors by William Booth of Hillhead, who had been one of the workmen involved in the discovery and demolition of the *Stone Circle*. They had 'come upon a circle about 40 feet [12m] in diameter beautifully paved with large stones, there was also a Causeway paved in the same manner leading in an easterly direction about 20 feet of it was visible... There were never any upright stones standing on this circle' (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 14, p 23). The causeway 'was composed of large uncut stones beautifully fitted together. So nicely fitted were they, that the workmen had great difficulty in getting their picks wedged in to separate them' (*ibid* p 25). Here is another example of the universal application of the term *Stone Circle* by the first OS surveyors to cover any ancient circular structure (see also **Bankhead** and Crookmore App 1.27), and in this case it is almost certainly a hut-circle with a souterrain that is being described (Gannon *et al* 2007, 70–1). When Coles visited the site of the circle in 1901, however, he was labouring under the misunderstanding that Rev Robert Cook's description of a recumbent stone circle in the parish entry for Clatt in the *New Statistical Account* referred to the circle at Newbigging (xii, Aberdeenshire, 851). Coles' description of a stone set up in a gateway at the angle of two dykes nearby as the only survivor from what appeared to have been

a fine monument contains a note of despair (Coles 1902, 553–4). The stone in question (NJ 5287 2646) is simply a large boulder placed at the angle to prevent vehicles damaging the dykes. Coles' misunderstanding was compounded by Alexander Keiller's belief that the causeways described by the OS surveyors were all associated with recumbent stone circles (1934, 18). Thus Newbigging's supposed status has been cemented in Burl's lists (1970, 78; 1976a, 350, Abn 28; 2000, 420, Abn 27b), though both Ruggles (1984, 56 note j, 59; 1999, 186, no. 34, 266, note 7) and Barnatt (1989, 459, no. 6:118) realised that there may have been some confusion in the antiquarian descriptions.

Visited 5 March 1996

68 Newbigging, Lethnot and Navar, Angus

NO56NW 3 NO 5413 6934
Stone Circle (Probable) and Cairn

Nothing remains of a substantial cairn that stood on the slope above Newbigging until the early 19th century. It had been largely removed by the time Andrew Jervise published a description in 1853, and about ten years later, the OS surveyors found no more than a low swelling in the surface of the field and an upright stone some 1.6m high. The tenant of Newbigging, John Ramsay, estimated that he had removed 400 cartloads of stones from the cairn (Name Book, Forfarshire, No. 60, p 61). Jervise's description is more detailed, if cryptic. He describes it as follows:

'a good specimen of concentric circles... but of the twenty or thirty large stones that enclosed an area from fifty to sixty feet [15m–18m] in diameter, only one remains... This boulder, which is about eight feet high [2.4m], is sometimes called Druidical... When demolished, the middle area of the inner circle was found to be filled with small stones to the depth of about three feet [0.9m], under which lay a quantity of black clammy earth, mixed with pieces of charcoal, while a track about two feet [0.6m] broad, composed of loose red sandstone, laid to the depth of a few inches, ran directly through the clammy earth and pebbles, from side to side of the outer circle' (Jervise 1853 152–3).

Jervise's knowledge of cairns and stone circles was becoming quite extensive, so his reference to *concentric circles* and then an *inner* and *outer* circle can be taken with some confidence to indicate that he was describing more than just a kerb of boulders ringing the cairn. His estimate of the height of the single stone that survived was wildly adrift, and is closer to the girth of 9 feet (2.7m) measured by the OS surveyors. Yet, even at 1.6m in height this is an unlikely kerbstone and can therefore be taken as evidence that Jervise's outer circle was a surrounding ring of orthostats. The significance of the deposits at the centre is more difficult to understand, unless the *'track ... from side to side of the outer circle'*,

was a platform between the ring of orthostats and the kerb of the cairn. Burl was first to suggest that this was possibly a recumbent stone circle enclosing a ring-cairn (1970, 79; 1976a, 354, Ags 9; 2000, 423, Ags 12), an interpretation in which he has been followed by Ruggles (1984, 60; 1999, 188, no. 97). Barnatt, however, considered the evidence insufficient for such an identification (1989, 463, no. 6:148), a conclusion with which the present survey concurs. The presence of a cairn surrounded by a ring of orthostats, possibly set out along an encircling platform, are all features of recumbent stone circles, but they are also found in other monuments, notably at the cairn close by at Bridgend of Lethnot (NO56NW 14).

Visited 13 September 1989

69 Old Bourtreebush, Banchory-Devenick, Aberdeenshire

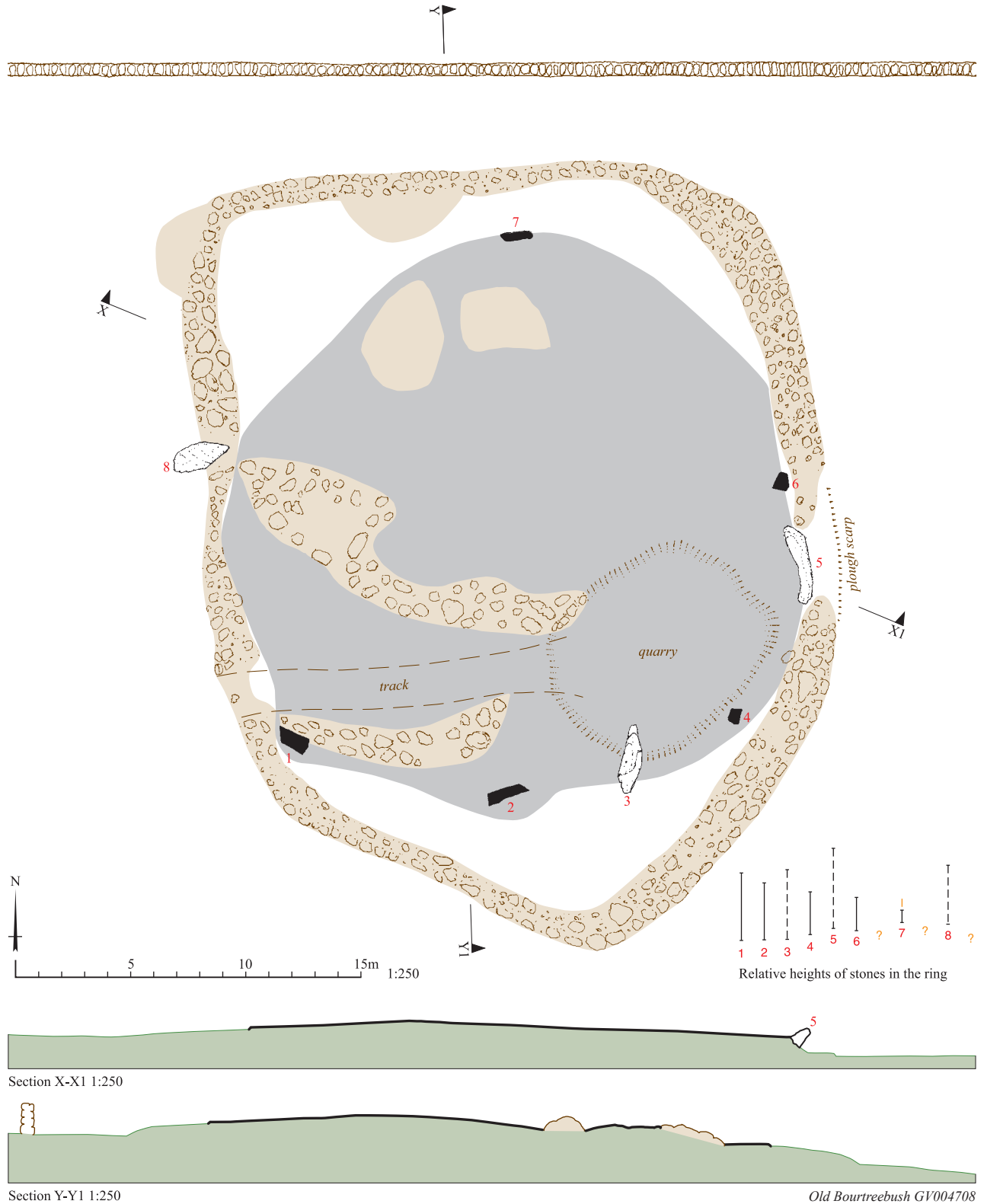
NO99NW 2 NO 9035 9608
Stone Circle and Cairn

This stone circle encloses the remains of a cairn on a low rise in the field about 200m west of Old Bourtreebush. It measures about 25m in diameter and may originally have comprised as many as fifteen orthostats if the spacing of fallen and upright stones on the south-east quarter was repeated around the rest of the circumference. In all, only four of these remain upright (1, 2, 4 & 6), but three other large stones lie prone around the margin of the cairn (3, 5 & 8), while a fourth may be represented by a loose stone that is possibly a stump on the north (7). In addition, William Lukis' plan of 1884 suggests another two fallen stones may lie hidden beneath the turf and field clearance elsewhere on the northern arc (GM 7829.38). The fallen orthostats include a long boulder (5) some 3.5m in length embedded in the cairn material on the east, which for the last 150 years has been interpreted as a recumbent (below). The heights of the upright orthostats suggest that the circle was graded, with the tallest stone standing 2.9m high on the south-west (1) and the rest reducing in height round to the stone 1.45m high on the east-north-east (6). By and large the orthostats are pointed, with the notable exception of one on the south (2), which is a much more rectangular slab, albeit with a jagged top. The cairn within the interior has been heavily disturbed by stone robbing and excavations, and its surface is also strewn with field-cleared stones and boulders.

The identification of Old Bourtreebush as a recumbent stone circle has a long history rooted in James Garden's correspondence with John Aubrey in 1692. The relevant passages are quoted in the Gazetteer entry for nearby **Aquhorthies**; suffice it to say here that it is not possible to distinguish **Aquhorthies** from Old Bourtreebush in Garden's description and that at

one point he implies that only one had a recumbent, even though he subsequently revised this to both. As he perceived them, one comprised two circles of stones and the other three, which at least throws some light on the shattered cairn within the interior of Old Bourtreebush. The concentric rings of orthostats and kerbstones surviving at **Aquhorthies** provide a yardstick, and

we can be confident that at the very least a substantial kerbed cairn has been lost from the interior of Old Bourtreebush. The general spacing of the orthostats of the surrounding circle, however, leaves little scope for a recumbent setting in the southern half of the ring, and ever since Alexander Thomson excavated here in 1858, general opinion has tended to accept that the large



prostrate stone on the east (5) is a recumbent. Thomson, incidentally, provides a sequence of measurements for the four upright stones, but while those for the first two roughly reconcile to orthostats 1 and 2, the rest are way adrift (1864, 134). Nevertheless, bar the addition of some more field clearance, little seems to have changed here since Thomson's day. The first OS surveyors show the same stones in 1865 (Name Book, Kincardineshire, No. 2, p 110; Kincardineshire 1868, viii), and some 20 years later in 1884 Lukis produced a metrically accurate plan and elevations of the stones that are instantly recognisable and infinitely superior to Coles' efforts in 1899 (Lukis 1885, 307–8; Coles 1900, 141–4, figs 2–4). Therefore, we can be confident that the stone now tentatively identified on the north of the ring as a stump (7) is not one of the two on the north that Lukis annotates *down & buried out of sight* (GM 7829.38). Lukis also shows the stone at the centre that Thomson mentions, though when the excavation party turned it in 1858 they found nothing underneath. Ironically this stone is the sole feature of the circle that Christian Maclagan managed to get right on her patently unreliable sketch plan (1875, 73, pl xxvii). For reasons best known to herself, she annotated this *Bodentoy*, showing six evenly spaced stones around the west, south and east, and reconstructing the position of a recumbent between the two on the south-west. In this last respect she may have been of one mind with Lukis, who partly on the strength of Garden's letters also believed that a recumbent had been removed (1885, 308).

Old Bourtreebush seems to have been the first circle that Coles recorded in his great survey and he did not have the weight of experience that he was to accumulate over the next few years. Had he surveyed it rather later he might have been more critical than his description implies: *'The long stone on the south E point is doubtless the Recumbent Stone, so striking a feature in many of these circles'* (*ibid* 143). There is an expectation in his description that is also eloquently captured in the composition of a photograph of this fallen stone taken by James Ritchie in October 1904 (RCAHMS KC294). Unfortunately Coles' identification has exerted a persistent influence and Old Bourtreebush is routinely listed as a recumbent stone circle (eg Burl 1976a, 360, Knc 13, 360; Barnatt 1989, 295–6, no. 6:72; Ruggles 1999, 188, no. 85), despite the note of caution that Burl has introduced in some of his other works (Thom *et al* 1980, 229; Burl 1995, 140; 2000, 429, Knc 16). The present survey has taken an altogether more critical stance. Garden is not a reliable source for the presence of a recumbent setting here (*contra* Barnatt 1989, 295–6), and the position of the stone on the east does not conform to that of any other surviving recumbent; nor does it have any evidence of flankers to complete a setting. Other types of stone circles enclosing cairns are sufficiently numerous that there is no imperative that there should have been a recumbent setting here.

With the southern focus that occurs in so many of these monuments, it is the contrast between the rectangular slab (2) set up on the south and the pointed pillars elsewhere that is perhaps the salient point of significance.

Visited 12 June 2003

70 Peat Hill, Keithhall and Kinkell, Aberdeenshire

NJ81NW 2 NJ 8211 1906

Stone Circle (Possible)

A granite standing stone, which is situated in a field on the crest of the rising ground to the north of Peathill steading, is reported to be the sole survivor of a circle that was largely cleared in the early 19th century. The stone measures 1m by 0.7m at ground level and 2.1m in height, and an *urn* was found at its foot some years before 1866 (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 44, p 48). The circle was estimated to have been up to 15m in diameter and the crops apparently grew higher and more luxuriantly on its site (*NSA*, Aberdeenshire, ix, 744). Elsewhere this observation might have been taken to indicate that the interior was slightly sunken, perhaps another example of a hut-circle misidentified as a stone circle (eg Crookmore App 1.27; Newbigging App 1.67), but in this case the presence of the standing stone indicates that some other explanation is required; possibly there was a band of stonier material around the circumference of the circle to create this contrast. This would in itself imply a more complex monument, but why Alexander Keiller thought it was likely to have been a recumbent stone circle is unknown (1928, 14–15). It may have been no more than his perception of its commanding position, but neither Coles (1902, 506–8) nor James Ritchie shared this view (1917, 38) and there is no record of a recumbent here in any of the earlier accounts.

Visited 21 March 1996

71 Rapplaburn, Auchterless, Aberdeenshire

NJ74SW 7 NJ 7270 4055

Stone Circle (Possible)

The site of a *Stone Circle* on the slope west of the Rapplaburn steading is annotated on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Aberdeenshire 1873, xxviii), but by then it had been reduced to no more than *'a pile of large stones supposed to be the remains of a Druidical Circle'* (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 7, p 76). Five stones were present in 1902, at which time Coles drew attention to the largest and suggested that it might have been a recumbent (1903a, 106). Measuring about 2.4m by 1.5m and 0.9m in thickness, it was evidently much larger than the others, but all five have since been removed and unfortunately they escaped James Ritchie's camera. For this reason the circle has received only qualified acceptance in some lists of recumbent stone circles

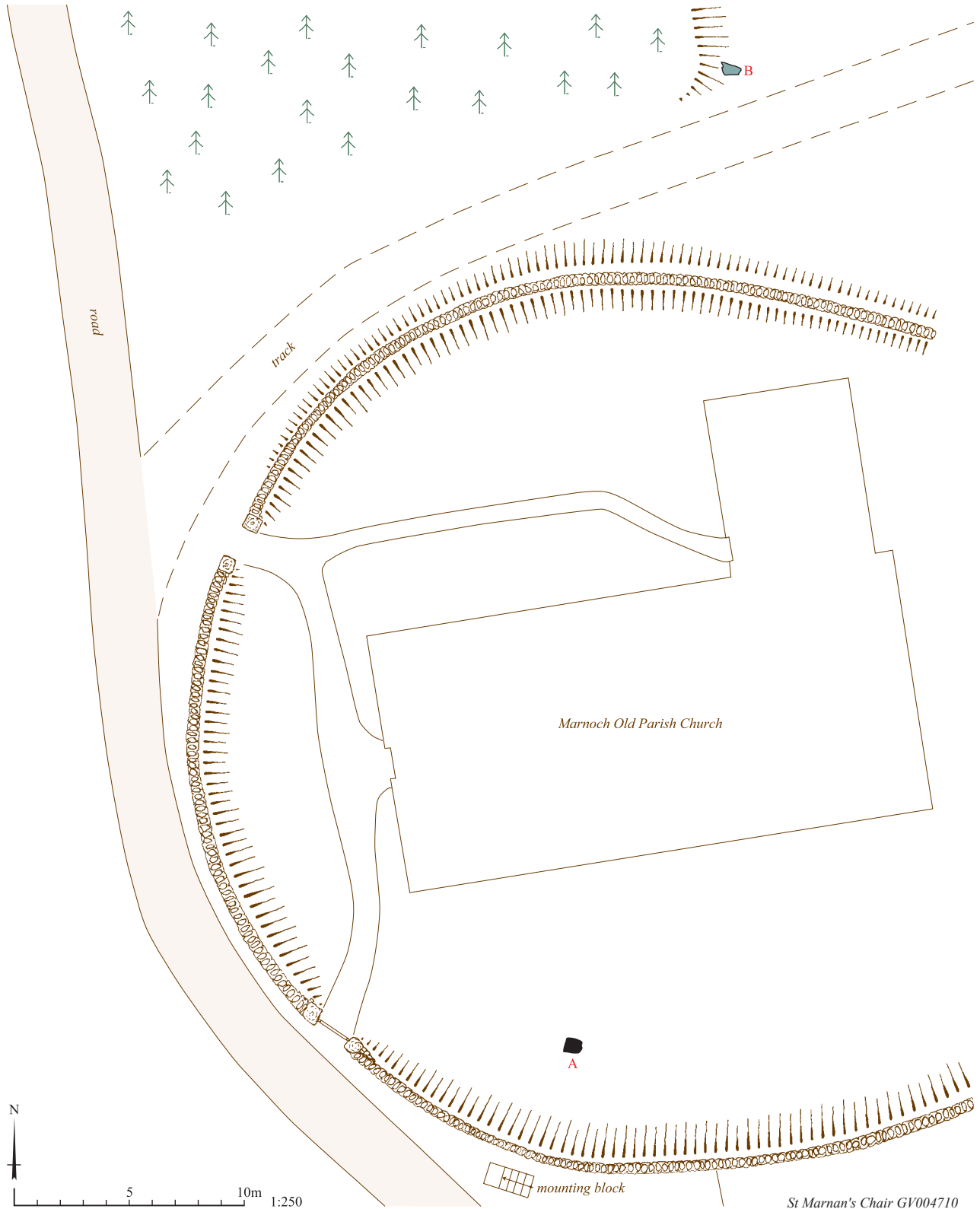
(Burl 1976a, 353, Abn 91; Ruggles 1984, 59; 1999, 186, no. 21), but has been rejected in others (Barnatt 1989, 487, no. 6:hh). It has now dropped out of Burl's gazetteer altogether (2000). There the matter must rest until such times that further work on the ground reveals new evidence.

72 St Marnan's Chair, Marnoch, Aberdeenshire

NJ55SE 6 NJ 5970 5019

Stone Circle (Possible)

Marnoch Parish Church, built in 1792 to replace a medieval predecessor elsewhere (NJ54NE 3), probably



occupies the site of the stone circle at *'Cairneduin or Cairnedewin'*, which is referred to by James Garden in his correspondence with John Aubrey in 1692 (Hunter 2001, 120–1). Only one of its orthostats is still in place, the stone known locally as St Marnan's Chair (A), which is an impressive pillar almost 2.5m high standing in the churchyard immediately south of the church. A smaller stone (B), which has been erected outside the churchyard on the north, may also come from the circle, but this first appears in its present position on the 2nd edition of the OS 25-inch map (Banffshire 1905, xvi). The OS surveyors who visited in 1868–71 noted the two stones (Name Book, Banffshire, No. 13, p 91), but the 1st edition of the map appears to mark three (Banffshire 1871–4, xvi), one of them being St Marnan's Chair in the churchyard, and the other two spots against the outside of the wall to the south-east and south-west respectively. This depiction caused Coles some confusion, for in 1905 he could only find St Marnan's Chair and the newly set up stone to the north; this latter he considered no more than a rubbing stone. Subsequently, on writing to the minister, he realised that the western of the two spots shown on the churchyard wall represented the mounting block that is still there today (Coles 1906a, 179–80). The eastern, therefore, is the second of the two stones identified by the OS surveyors, and presumably it is this stone that is now standing to the north of the churchyard. If its former position against the churchyard wall lies on the circumference of the stone circle, St Marnan's Chair stands on the northern arc, an unusual position for such an imposing stone in Aberdeenshire circles. On these grounds it is more likely that the smaller stone had been moved once already, and that the circle extended northwards from St Marnan's Chair, at least half of it lying beneath the church. This assumption underpins James Ritchie's explanation of the stone's name, which he took to be a metaphor for the bench-like appearance of a recumbent setting, surmising that the surviving stone is one of its flankers (1926, 308). It is certainly a good candidate for such a role, while the name of the adjacent farm, Cairnhill – or *Cairneduin* as Garden had it – might be construed as a reference to a cairn within its interior. While an attractive hypothesis, this falls some way short of confirming its identity as a recumbent stone circle.

Visited 19 July 2005

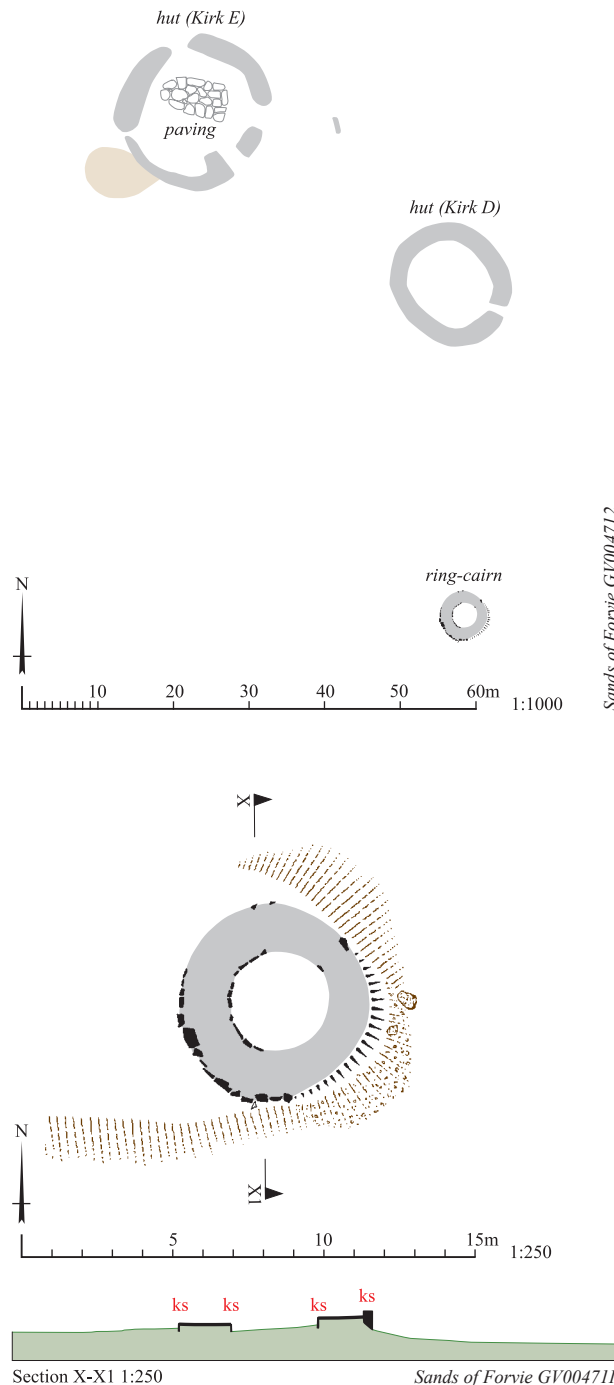
73 Sands of Forvie, Slains, Aberdeenshire

NK02NW 2 NK 0106 2633

Hut-circle

The inclusion of Sands of Forvie in lists of recumbent stone circles has come about through a series of misunderstandings and misidentifications, probably

initiated by the wording of Professor William Kirk's report of some of his excavations. In the introduction to the various structures emerging from the sand he employed the term *stone circles*, but as a description rather than a classification, while in his conclusions he wrote that the small ring-cairn (NK02NW 3) he had discovered exhibited *'in more complete fashion, on a smaller scale, the structural characteristics of many ring-cairns enclosed by recumbent stone circles'* (1954, 169). While there is no evidence that Alexander Thom had read Kirk's report, it is presumably this that drew him to the Sands of Forvie, specifically to the *stone circle* Kirk referred to as Site D (1954, 158; Ralston



Sands of Forvie GV004712

and Sabine 2000, 11, ID). In his report Kirk mentioned that the stones of its wall increased in height towards the entrance on the east, where two jamb-stones 0.9m long lay fallen in the sand. Thom surveyed what he could see of this structure, including one of these jamb-stones, and it turned out to be elliptical on plan; the survey also covered the ring-cairn a short distance to the south, which he annotated *concentric circles* (RCAHMS DC4404). He interpreted the elliptical structure as a megalithic setting, publishing the plan in *Megalithic Sites in Britain* (Thom 1967, 79, fig 6.20), where an entry for Sands of Forvie in one of his tables is accompanied by the letters CR, C and CC, codes for Recumbent Stone Circle, Circle and Concentric Circles respectively (1967, 136, Table 12.1). The arrows and annotations on the plan direct the reader 'to *concentric circles*' on the south, and 'to *much disturbed circle*' to the north-west. Reconciling these annotations to the letter codes, it would appear that the elliptical structure, Kirk's Site D, is Thom's recumbent stone circle; it was probably excavated by Kirk in 1955, producing a domestic assemblage, and is almost certainly a hut-circle (Ralston and Sabine 2000, 11).

The appearance of Sands of Forvie as a possible recumbent stone circle in Burl's lists (1976a, 351, Abn 49) must come directly from Thom's table, but it would appear that Burl, quite correctly, could not believe that the plan that Thom had published represented a recumbent stone circle. Therefore, he seems to have concluded that it was one of the other circles annotated on the plan; and as he knew that the *concentric circles* to the south were Kirk's ring-cairn, he deduced that the '*much disturbed circle*' to the north-west was the recumbent stone circle – his reasoning duly given away in his lists by the conversion of its diameter from megalithic yards to metres. In any case, he recognised that the ellipse was probably a hut-circle (Thom *et al* 1980, 192–3), though he did not make the connection between this other circle to the north-west and Kirk's Site E, another probable hut-circle (Kirk 1955; Ralston and Sabine 2000, 11–12, IE). Thereafter debate and misunderstanding has continued, with Ruggles evidently not convinced that there was a recumbent stone circle here (1984, 57 note u), and Barnatt preferring to interpret Thom's two circles as additional ring-cairns (1989, 485, no. 6:r). Ruggles finally concluded that there was no more than Kirk's ring-cairn adjacent to an extensive settlement in the dune system (1999, 187 no. 79, 266 note 19), but still the existence of a possible recumbent stone circle in the Sands of Forvie has persisted, appearing in the most recent recension of Burl's gazetteer, which also acknowledges Barnatt's interpretation (Burl 2000, 420, Abn 49). It can only be repeated in conclusion that there is no recumbent stone circle amongst the structures recorded in the Sands of Forvie, and to date only one ring-cairn.

Visited 28 March 2000

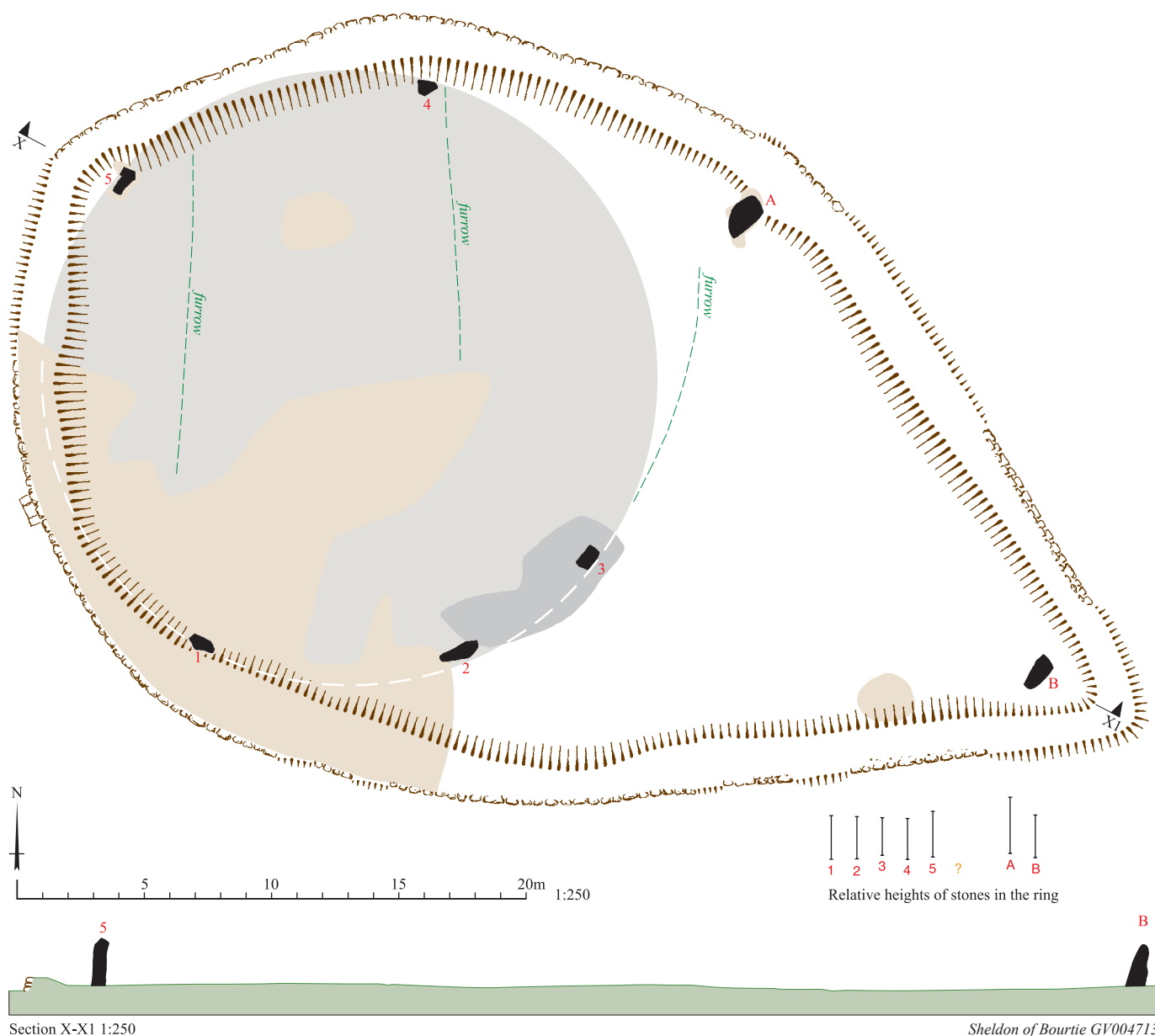
74 Sheldon, Bourtie, Aberdeenshire

NJ82SW 1 NJ 8229 2493

Stone Circle and Cairn

This stone circle, which has a two-stone alignment standing immediately to its east, is situated within a lenticular enclosure on the summit of a low hill 180m north of Sheldon. Now reduced to only five orthostats, the circle measures 24m in diameter and may have comprised as many as thirteen or fourteen stones if the rough spacing of the two on the south-east was maintained throughout the circumference. As far as can be detected with so many stones missing, the orthostats are not graded in height and range from 1.75m on the north-west (5) and south-west (1) to 1.7m on the south-south-east (2), 1.6m on the north-north-east (4) and 1.5m on the east-south-east (3). Indeed the tallest of the stones on this hilltop is the northern pillar in the alignment (A); this stands 2.2m high, while its pair (B) is 1.7m high. In 1867 the OS surveyors were told that '*much larger blocks were cut up and carried away for building purposes*' (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 10, p 48). The interior of the circle is disfigured with dumps of field clearance, but some of the stones visible between orthostats 1 and 2 on the south-east are quite firmly embedded and are possibly the remains of the cairn that was removed about 1820 to provide stones to build dykes and drains; in the course of the demolition a cist containing '*ashes and unctuous matter*' was discovered (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 10, pp 43, 48), while in the same year other human remains were found outside the circle to the south-east of the alignment (*ibid* p 48). Traces of rigs are also visible within the interior of the circle, showing that it had been taken into an arable field after the cairn was robbed. The enclosure, which hugs the west half of the circle and only diverges from this line to embrace the two stones of the alignment, was presumably constructed to protect the circle from any further damage.

By the end of the 19th century the enclosure had descended into a chaos of gorse and whins, graphically revealed by a series of three photographs taken by James Ritchie in July 1902 (RCAHMS AB2510, AB2551 & AB2653). Under the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that Coles had struggled to record the remains the previous September, conflating the circle and the alignment into a single oval arrangement, and compounding any inaccuracies in his measurements by reversing the north point on his plan (1902, 512–13). As a result, he does not appear to have considered the possibility that this might have been a recumbent stone circle. This was left to Alexander Keiller (1934, 6), though he too was confused by the orientation of the circle and placed the southern stone of the alignment (B) on the south-west rather than the south-east. Indeed, Barnatt is the first person to realise that there was not just one outlier here, but two (1989, 300, no. 6:84) – a



much simpler explanation of the disposition of the stones than Alexander Thom's attempt to construct two concentric circles with an overall diameter of over 30m and a single outlier on the south-east (Thom 1967, 59, fig 6.4; Thom *et al* 1980, 166–7). Nevertheless, most researchers have followed Keiller in listing Sheldon as a possible recumbent stone circle and accepting Thom's diameter (Burl 1976a, 353, Abn 94; 2000, 422, Abn 96; Ruggles 1984, 60; 1999, 187, no. 60). While there is no doubt that this was a stone circle enclosing a cairn, the oblique reference by the OS surveyors in 1867 to 'much larger blocks' does not constitute evidence that there was once a recumbent here. If anything, the absence of any clear grading tends to argue against this being a recumbent stone circle, and it is best considered as one of the growing number of circles enclosing cairns where there was no recumbent setting.

Visited 29 April 1999

75 Stonecrossfield, Rhynie, Aberdeenshire

NJ42NW 67 NJ c 49 27

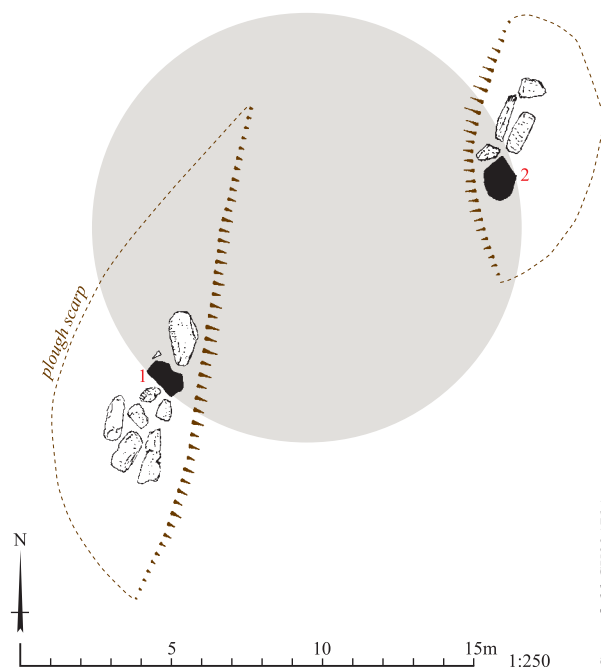
Stone Circle (Possible)

Christian Maclagan twice refers to a stone circle at *Stonecrossfield*, Rhynie, but this name no longer appears on maps and has not been located in any earlier sources. On the first occasion she merely mentions that it and **Ardlair** are quite near Tap o' Noth (1875, 51), but on the second, in a more informative entry on the monuments in the parish of Rhynie, she writes: 'At Stonecrossfield was a circle of very long stones, all of them now prostrate. Amongst them is the noted great flat table-like stone, forming a part of the south-west side of the circular line of stones. It lies on the ground between what have been two upright stones of the circle. The site of this structure is a hill over against Tap o' Noath, commanding an extensive view' (*ibid* 96). At face value she

seems to be describing a recumbent stone circle situated near the foot of Tap o' Noth, though her description does not fit any of the standing stones and stone circles known nearby. These include the pair of standing stones at Mill of Noth (App 1.58) a little to the north of the village, and the Drumel Stone (NJ53SW 10) at the northern extremity of the parish, while in neighbouring Auchindoir and Kearn, there are **Corrstone Wood**, Upper Ord (App 1.81) and Wheedlemont (App 1.84). Of the lower hills around the foot of Tap o' Noth, the low rise between the site of the Drumel Stone and Oldnoth might be one candidate (NJ 519 307), while the low spur above Newseat (NJ 488 283), adjacent to an old steading named Corsehill, where there is also a burial cairn (NJ42NE 158), is possibly another. To the west of Rhynie village also lies Ord Hill, a ridge trending south-west down to where the remains of the stone circle between Upper Ord and Wheedlemont stand (App 1.81). It seems unlikely that Maclagan found a recumbent stone circle that has somehow escaped the attention of other antiquaries, but the best hope of identifying its location rests on whether the name *Stonecrossfield* is preserved in the working knowledge of the local farming community. So far our attempts to find it on old estate maps have come to nothing.

76 Stoneyfield, Drumblade, Aberdeenshire

NJ53NE 10 NJ 5892 3762
Stone Circle



Only two orthostats of this small stone circle remain in place, standing in the paddock immediately north-west of Stoneyfield. They both measure about 1.3m in height and are set a little under 12m apart, though

the disposition of the stones noted by Coles in 1901 suggests that they do not stand in direct opposition to one another and that the circle is about 14m in overall diameter (1902, 575–7, fig 88). Coles probably found the circle in much the same state as the OS surveyors some 30 years earlier. They counted nine stones in all, seven of them already fallen and '*embedded in the soil*' (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 25, p 72), and the depiction on the 25-inch map shows that one of their nine was a slab on the north that Coles regarded as outcrop (Aberdeenshire 1874, xxvi). James MacDonald subsequently reported that in 1821 several others had been removed (1891, 72), which accords with Coles' interpolated plan of twelve evenly spaced orthostats, based on the positions of those lying fallen; the three missing stones in his solution were those closest to the steading and perhaps the ones most likely to have been taken in 1821. The interior of the circle was already under plough in Coles' day, as can be seen in James Ritchie's photographs (RCAHMS AB2914 & AB2942), and a further stage of clearance has taken place since. Those stones already gathered around the two orthostats are still where Coles found them, but the ones that lay on the north-west quarter have now been dumped adjacent to the western upright. Continued ploughing across the interior has also driven a broad channel up to 0.4m deep through the centre of the ring. Barnatt tentatively put Stoneyfield forward as a recumbent stone circle, partly on the strength of the number of stones in the ring, but also because he thought there was evidence that they were graded in height towards the south-west (1989, 302, no. 6:90). This is not borne out by the measurements of the various stones, most of which can be recognised from Coles' plan, even where they have been shifted into a new position. More importantly, there is no hint in either the surviving remains or the antiquarian record that there was ever a recumbent setting here. Nor, for what it is worth, is the topographical setting the typically prominent position in which recumbent stone circles are usually found, as the remains of the ring lie in the bottom of a narrow valley with rising ground on virtually every hand.

Visited 18 May 2005

77 The Suitor's Mither, Upperton, Durris, Aberdeenshire

NO79SW 45 NO 7389 9213
Natural Boulder

This large natural boulder is situated in a field immediately north of Upperton. James Ritchie first drew attention to the stone, but in connection to its name and the folklore that it may have evoked rather than by way of any claim that it was the remains of a recumbent stone circle (1926, 311). Indeed, he is quite specific on the point that it merely looked like

the recumbent of a circle – as can be seen in his fine photograph taken some time at the beginning of the 20th century (RCAHMS KC 377). Subsequently, however, it was marked on RCAHMS record maps as a *Recumbent Stone* and it is included here in case this descriptive annotation has caused any confusion in other quarters. Doubtless, however, researchers who see Ritchie's photograph will want to check for themselves.

Visited 22 April 2005

78 The Sunken Kirk, Seggieden, Clatt, Aberdeenshire

NJ52NW 6 NJ 5491 2708

Cairn, Cists and Cinerary Urn

The site of what is probably a cairn lies at the edge of a field beside the track leading east-north-east from the point where the approach road to Mains of Seggieden turns down the hill towards the steading. This was the line of an old road and also the boundary between the parishes of Clatt and Kennethmont, and the cairn was evidently a well-known landmark along the way. It appears beside a fork in the road on an estate plan of *Seggy Den* in 1758 (NAS RHP 5198/5), and was already labelled *Sunken Kirk*, a clear sign that it had an established place in 18th century folklore. In 1866 the OS surveyors were told that 'when some men were playing at cards here, the ground sunk in with them' (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 14, p 13), though at the beginning of the 20th century James Ritchie heard a more sinister tale involving the devil and an attempt to build a chapel, in which the progress made during the day sunk out of sight overnight (1910, 213–14; 1926, 306). A cross-incised stone found at Toft hills in 1879 was thought to have come from the cairn (Ritchie 1918, 101), but this may be no more than an assumption following the supposed association of the cairn with a chapel. Be that as it may, the plan of 1758 depicts two concentric circles and makes no attempt to show the Sunken Kirk as a circle of stones, either in plan or perspective. A later estate plan of 1840, however, annotates it *Druids temple* (NAS RHP 14754), which probably implies that it was thought to be more than a simple heap of stones – either a circle of freestanding orthostats round the cairn, or a ring of large kerbstones. This also accounts for why the OS surveyors subsequently annotated the site *Stone Circle*. There was certainly a substantial body of stones here, for they were told that 500 cartloads of small boulders had been trenched out of the ground when it was improved. This had possibly taken place about 25 years earlier when an urn illustrated in the Name Book was dug up immediately to the west-south-west; two cists were also found a little further south-west (Aberdeenshire, No. 14, p 14). Given its attribution as a stone circle rather than a cairn, Coles may be forgiven in 1901 for misreading the dotted OS depiction to show a circle of seven stones,

though why he should have thought that the burials were unearthed from its interior is unknown (1902, 555–6). Nevertheless, this misidentification set in train the inclusion of the Sunken Kirk into Burl's first gazetteer of stone circles under the name Holywell (1976a, 351, Abn 61), though not as a possible recumbent stone circle. This link is made in Ruggles' lists, where it is probably included in the interests of completeness, for in his notes he draws attention to the confusion that Rev Robert Cook had caused with his description in the *New Statistical Account* of a destroyed recumbent stone circle somewhere in the parish of Clatt (Ruggles 1984, 56 note j, 59; 1999, 186 nos. 34–6, 266 note 7). Barnatt opted to identify that circle with the Sunken Kirk (1989, 287, no. 6:53), but there is now no doubt that Cook was describing **Bankhead**. With that correlation secure, there is no reason to consider the Sunken Kirk as a stone circle of any description. It remains to note that some further confusion concerning this cairn has crept into Burl's most recent recension of his gazetteer. In this the Sunken Kirk is included under the name of Toft hills (2000, 422, Abn 107), but most of the sources relating to it are retained with an entry for Holywell (2000, 421, Abn 62). This has been given a new National Grid Reference, which would place it on the southern flank of the hill below **Ardlair** – clearly a mistake, as his subsequent guidebook entry makes clear (2005a, 284).

Visited 20 February 1996

79 Torhousekie, Wigtown, Dumfries & Galloway

NX35NE 14 NX 3825 5649

Stone Circle and Cairn

Standing beside the public road, the stone circle at Torhousekie is one of a cluster of megalithic monuments and cairns scattered across a low-lying terrace on the north-east bank of the River Bladnoch. The circle itself is the best preserved component of this complex and is a Guardianship Monument maintained by Historic Scotland. Its preservation, however, may owe as much to its long antiquarian history and the tradition that the three stones that extend in a line across its centre mark the tomb of *King Galdus*. The nineteen stones of the surrounding circle were first enumerated as long ago as 1684 in Andrew Symson's description of Galloway (Mitchell 1907, 74), and other reports appear in the *Statistical Accounts*, albeit bathed in a Druidic hue (*Stat Acct*, xiv, 1795, 487; *NSA*, iv, Wigtownshire, 2). The first detailed observations and measurements are recorded at the end of the 19th century by Coles (1897) and in 1911 by Alexander Curle (RCAHMS 1912, 183–4), both of them drawing up plans that compare well with the more recent surveys of Burl and Alexander Thom (Burl 1972; Thom *et al* 1980, 274). Now enclosed by a wire fence set in a neatly mown sward, the nineteen rounded orthostats are set out around a slightly raised

platform to form a circle about 22m in overall diameter, with a flattened arc on the east-south-east. The stones display subtle patterns of grading in both height and spacing, best seen in Burl's plan and extended elevation (1972, fig 1). The smaller ones stand closest together around the north-west arc, while the tallest comprise three between 1.05m and 1.3m in height on the east-south-east, followed closely by a pair 0.9m and 1m high on the south-west; the shortest is on the north-north-east. The alignment in the middle lies roughly north-east and south-west, and comprises two bulky boulders a little over 1m high flanking a much smaller stone no more than 0.65m high. The ground around this central setting has been dug out to form a shallow hollow in the surface of the platform; D-shaped on plan and defined by a low stony lip, this was first recorded by Curle in 1911, but it may have more to do with the removal of some of the field-cleared stones that had been dumped around the central setting in the late 19th century than a specifically antiquarian investigation (Coles 1897, 90).

A connection between Torhousekie and recumbent stone circles was first made by Burl, who argued that the three stone alignment at its centre was reminiscent of a recumbent setting standing within the projected circumference of a flattened circle (1972, 29–30). In particular, he associated it with the recumbent stone circles of Kincardineshire, where several of the settings form a flattened facade facing south-east or south-south-east and link the ring of orthostats to the kerb of an internal cairn (eg **The Nine Stanes**, Garrod Wood). Thus the flattened east-south-east arc of the Torhousekie circle and the grading of its stones fell into place, while the D-shaped disturbance of the interior, mainly lying to the north-west of the three stones at the centre, was explained as the remains of a ring-cairn (1972, 30; 1976a, 211–12, 365 Wig 5; 2000, 435, Wig 8a; 2005a, 171). The case is neither convincing nor helpful. It is not just that there is no superficial resemblance between Torhousekie and any recumbent stone circle in the North-east (Burl 1972, 29), but there are no shared points of detail. The supposed ring-cairn within the interior has nothing to recommend it as an ancient construction, and there are no examples of a recumbent setting in the North-east standing at the centre of a circle. We are left with the resemblance to the lone setting of stones in the kerb of one of the ring-cairns on Campstone Hill, Raedykes, which is so distant that it is hard to believe that it is of any real significance (cf Barnatt 1989, 35–6). Curiously, the three taller stones that form the flattened east-south-east arc of the circle provide a better comparison for the way in which recumbent settings are employed to form a facade, and yet this has passed unnoticed. At the heart of the argument is the search for architectural stepping-stones between supposedly similar stone circles in south-west Ireland and north-east Scotland, to manifest the transmission of ideas between the two areas. The

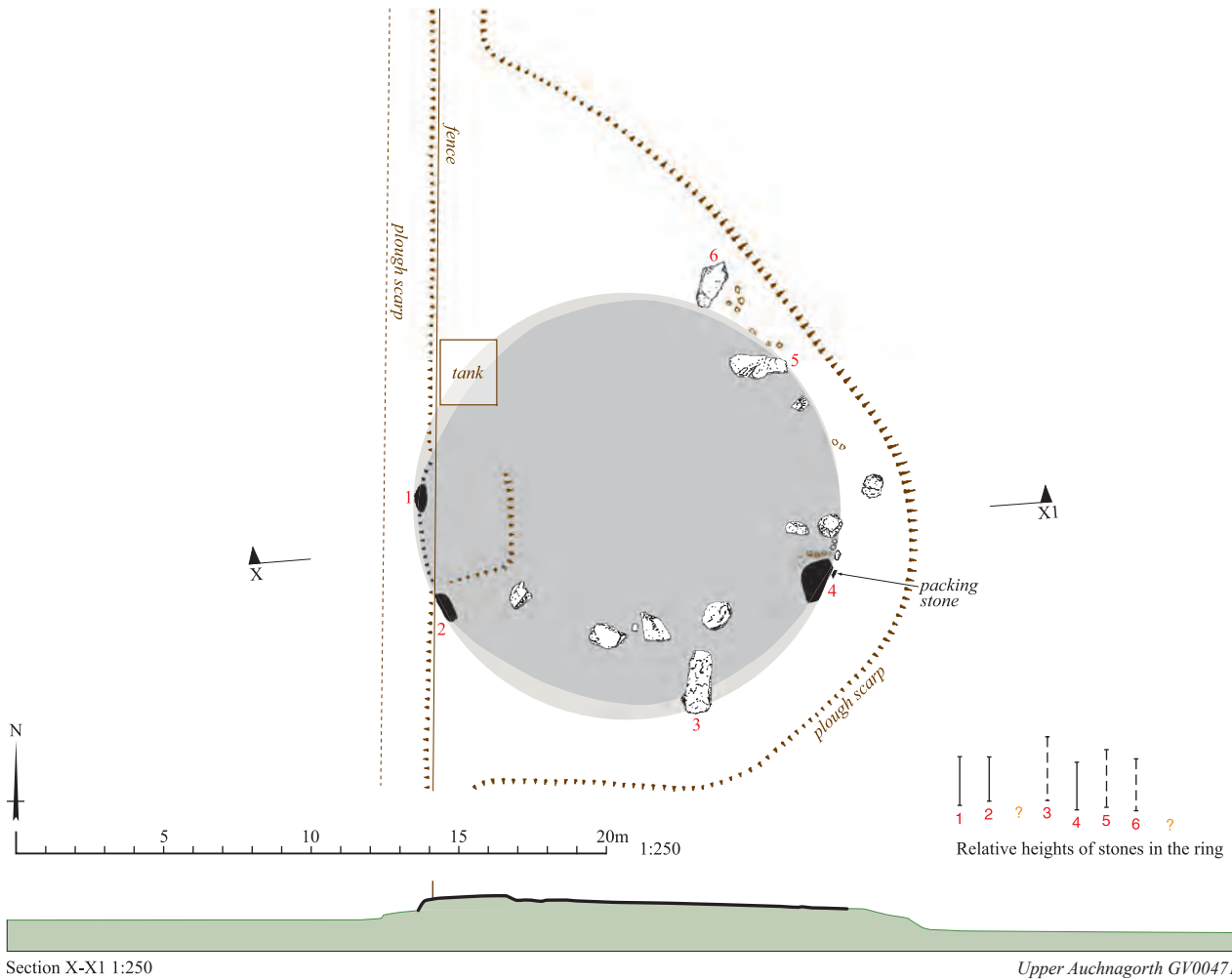
discordant chronologies and designs of these two groups of stone circles have now rendered any direct linkage redundant, and it is surely more important to seek the affinities of Torhousekie in a local context. To this end the circle is still unusual, but the surviving example of a low circle of stones surrounding a raised platform with a single central monolith at Glenquicken, in the Stewartry (NX55NW 1, 5 & 12), points up one line of enquiry (see for example Burl 1976a, 206, fig 37), while the axis of the central alignment towards the south-west, and indeed the two taller stones in the south-west arc, provide a link to the way this quarter is referenced in different ways in funerary monuments throughout the country.

Visited 6 October 2007

80 Upper Auchnagorth, King Edward, Aberdeenshire
 NJ85NW 2 NJ 8390 5629
 Stone Circle and Cairn

The remains of this stone circle stand at the north end of a ridge 250m south-east of Upper Auchnagorth, where they are incorporated into the headland on the west side of a field. The circle measures about 14.5m in overall diameter and may have comprised eleven or twelve orthostats, but only six remain, and of these three are fallen. The three upright stones stand on the west (1), west-south-west (2) and east-south-east (4), and measure 1.5m, 1.6m and 1.6m in height respectively, but whereas the two on the west quarter are neat pillars rising to points, that on the east-south-east is a rough block with a triangular section. The shape of the latter, however, demonstrates that it was designed to be viewed with a single flat side facing out of the circle. Within the interior the ground is rough and stony underfoot, and is evidently the remains of a cairn. Several large boulders protrude through the turf close to its south side, but whether kerbstones, fragments of broken orthostats, or simply field-cleared stones cannot be determined by survey.

Antiquarian sources have little to tell about Upper Auchnagorth, but there is little sign that its condition has changed since OS surveyors reported that *'there are several of the Circle stones standing still'* (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 50, p 95); certainly the stones are as Coles found them in 1903 (1904, 281–4), though it is plain from one of James Ritchie's photographs that continued cultivation has heavily reduced the ground level in the surrounding field (RCAHMS AB2899). Coles argued from the positions of the surviving stones and the absence of a recumbent that this was an evenly spaced circle of ten stones with the tallest on the north. Most researchers have followed his conclusion, if not his complete argument, and it thus appears in Burl's gazetteer as a plain circle (1976a, 353, Abn 107; 2000, 422, Abn 111), and does not figure in Ruggles' lists of recumbent stone circles (1984; 1999). Barnatt, however,

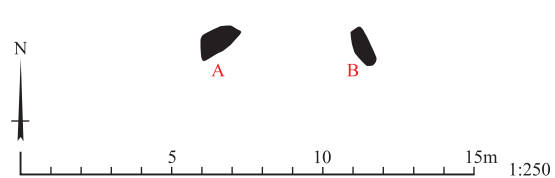


has pointed out that there is space for a recumbent setting on the south and also suggested there is possible evidence of grading towards the south-west (1989, 305, no. 6:98). While there is no evidence in any source that there was a recumbent here, the present survey shows that there is some merit in this view. The diameter of the circle is probably slightly larger than either Coles or Alexander Thom estimated (Thom *et al* 1980, 160–1), which in turn suggests that the two orthostats on the north-east (5 & 6) may lie where they have fallen. Their spacing roughly replicates the two upright on the west (1 & 2), and indicates the position of one missing stone on the east and at least three to complete the north-west quarter, though if the symmetry of the circle is maintained the interval needs to close up a little to accommodate the third stone on the north. This same spacing would place three missing stones on the south arc, but here the fallen orthostat on the south-south-east (3) lies midway between two of their projected positions. It is also noticeable that at 2m in length this orthostat was one of the taller stones in the ring. Barnatt’s suggestion provides an alternative hypothesis in which this orthostat is the east flanker, also lying where it has fallen, but possibly across

its socket if this side of the circle was flattened in the manner of other recumbent stone circles. The relatively wide interval between the position of this stone and the adjacent orthostat (4) is also replicated in other recumbent stone circles, as is the closed up spacing of orthostats on the opposing north arc; set in their sockets, the stones on the north would also have been shorter than any of those still standing. Were the fallen orthostat on the south-south-east (3) still upright, it would have provided sufficient grounds to either accept or reject this hypothesis, which must otherwise await further work before this ring can be classified more precisely.

Visited 17 May 2005

81 Upper Ord, Auchindoir and Kearn, Aberdeenshire
 NJ42NE 6 NJ 4825 2696
 Standing Stones



Upper Ord G1/004716

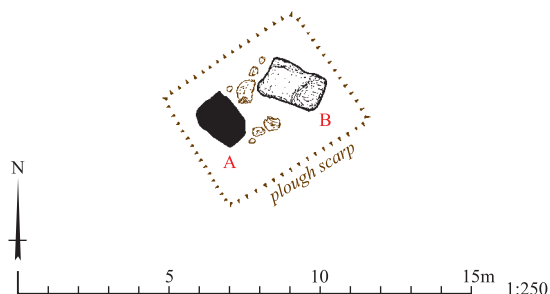
Two stones standing in a field above the road 560m north-east of Nether Wheellemont are the remains of some form of megalithic setting, but its form is quite unknown. The western and taller of the two (A) measures 1.7m from east-north-east to west-south-west by 0.5m in thickness and 1.7m in height, while the other (B), standing no more than 3.7m to the east, is set at right-angles to its long axis and measures 1.4m by 0.55m and 1.3m in height. The two stones were sketched by OS surveyors in the Name Book (Aberdeenshire, No. 6, p 41), but on the map they showed four in all (Aberdeenshire 1870, xlii), the other two strung out over a distance of 20m in a straight line north-west of the western slab (A). According to their description these were '*prostrate or mutilated*', but there is an implication that there may have been others, which had '*disappeared in whole, or were blown to pieces as circumstances required*' (*ibid*). Coles recorded both these stones on his plan, together with another earthfast boulder, and he shows the first two in his sketch (1902, 563–5, figs 78–9). Though neither has the appearance of a fallen orthostat, he persuaded himself that they belonged to a circle about 22.5m in diameter, in which the two upright stones on the south were the flankers of a recumbent setting. Another heavily leaning stone some 30m to the east-north-east of his flankers, which he mistakenly identified as the standing stone shown on the map 200m up the slope to the north-west (NJ84NE 3), he suggested was an outlier that had stood about 1.7m high; for some reason this stone does not appear on any edition of the OS map. A century later his argument is far from convincing, for there is no other recorded setting in which the flankers are aligned in this way, either in relationship to a circle or each other. Despite this, Upper Ord has been included in all subsequent lists as a possible or probable recumbent stone circle (Burl 1970, 79; 1976a, 353, Abn 108; 2000, 422, Abn 112; Ruggles 1984, 59; 1999, 186, no. 32), only Barnatt discussing the problems that this entails (1989, 306, no. 6:99).

Visited 25 October 1996

82 Upper Third, Auchterless, Aberdeenshire

NJ63NE 3 NJ 6774 3938

Stone Circle (Possible)



Upper Third G1004717

These two large boulders are situated in a field about 300m west-south-west of Upperthird. The west stone (A), which is clearly set upright, measures 1.6m from north-north-west to south-south-east by 1.2m transversely and 2.05m in height. Its neighbour (B), possibly lying on its side and now situated no more than 0.9m to the east, measures 2.1m in length by 1.4m in breadth and 1.25m in height. Apparently known as the *Gray Stones* in the 19th century, they were supposed to be the remains of a *Druidical Circle*, which the 1st edition of the OS 25-inch map shows in a small patch of rough ground measuring 7m from north-west to south-east by 5m transversely (Aberdeenshire 1873, xxvii.12). All trace of this had disappeared by the time James Ritchie photographed the stones in 1905 (RCAHMS AB2519 & AB2928) and the area has remained under cultivation ever since. The description in the Name Book contains a note of skepticism and simply notes '*Two large gray stones one of them standing about 4 feet above the surface of the ground and the other laying*' (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 7, p 41). Coles, who visited them in 1902, was also struggling to resolve the configuration of the two stones against the backdrop of other recumbent stone circles he had seen. He was evidently puzzled, but thought that the eastern had probably once been upright, leading him to write: '*Whether it constituted the east pillar with its neighbour as Recumbent Stone is conjectural*' (Coles 1903a, 102). Conjectural or not, Upper Third has figured as a possible recumbent stone circle in every list that has been prepared since (Burl 1976a, 353, Abn 109; 2000, 422, Abn 114; Barnatt 1989, 464, no. 6:155), though Ruggles has pointed out that there is no unequivocal evidence that this is a recumbent stone circle rather than some other form of megalithic setting (1984, 59, 58 note f; 1999, 186 no. 28, 266 note 4). The present survey concurs with this view and has little else to add, other than that by 1973 another rounded boulder had been dumped between the two stones.

Visited 19 May 2005

83 West Haughs, Auchterless, Aberdeenshire

NJ63NE 7 NJ 6827 3858

Stone Circle

The site of this stone setting lies towards the top of a long slope dropping down towards the south-south-east from the crest of the ridge above Haughs. First recorded in 1871 by OS surveyors, it then comprised '*seven gray stones some of them standing about 2 feet [0.6m] above the surface of the ground*' (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 7, p 42). Although annotated *Stone Circle (Remains of)*, the depiction on the OS 25-inch map shows the stones in a cluster about 12m across rather than a circle (Aberdeenshire 1873, xxvii). Sadly they were all removed not long before Coles visited the area in 1902, but he estimated the diameter at about

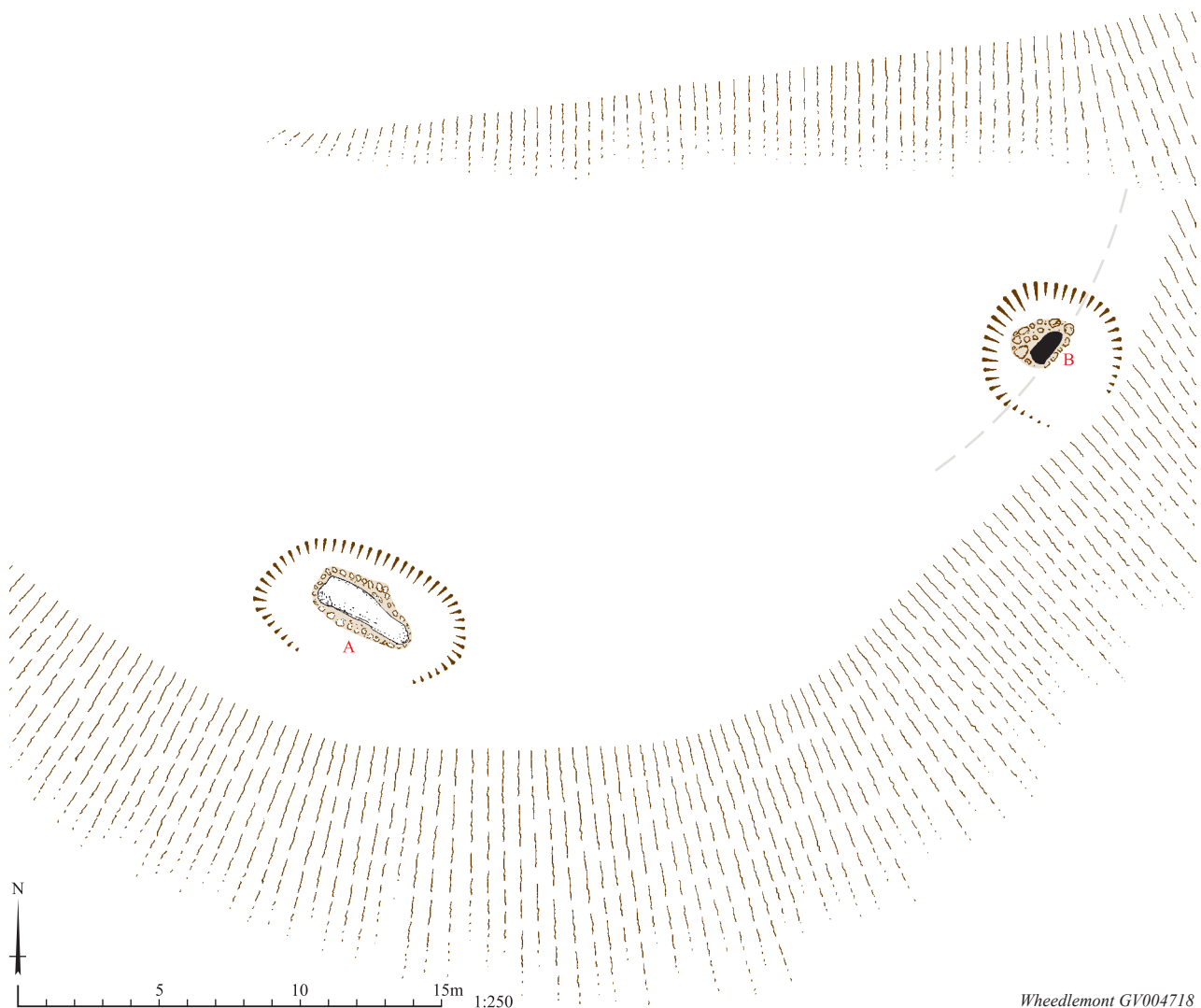
23m, based on the size of the patch of rough ground shown on the map, though on the 25-inch map this measures only 17m (1903a, 102). It appears as a stone circle in Burl's gazetteer (1976a, 353, Abn 113; 2000, 422, Abn 117), and on the strength of Coles' estimated diameter Barnatt has suggested that it may be the site of a recumbent stone circle (1989, 306–7, no. 6:102). This interpretation has little to recommend it and there is no physical evidence that a recumbent once stood here. The tallest of the stones were apparently no more than 0.6m high and the diameter relates to the patch of rough ground – not the positions of the stones. Rather than a circle, the stones could equally have formed some other kind of setting.

84 Wheedlemont, Auchindoir and Kearn, Aberdeenshire

NJ42NE 4 NJ 4795 2660
Standing Stones (Stone Circle Possible)

These two stones, one standing and the other prostrate, are situated on a south-facing terrace in a field 80m

north-east of Nether Wheedlemont. The upright stone (B), an impressive pillar measuring 1.3m by 0.5m at ground level, tapers upwards to a pointed top at a height of 2.9m. Its prostrate neighbour (A), which lies about 25m to the west-south-west, measures 3.6m in length by up to 1m in breadth and 0.7m in thickness. It also narrows towards its east-south-east end. The identification of these two stones as the remains of a stone circle goes back to a 'Local tradition' reported by the OS surveyors in 1865–6, and they were duly annotated *Stone Circle (Remains of)* on the OS 25-inch map (Aberdeenshire 1870, xlii.12). The entry in the Name Book, however, reveals some difference of opinion amongst the authorities they consulted and in the column for alternative spellings of the name it also lists *Stone Circle (supposed)* and *Standing Stones*, the latter scored through with a finality that left no doubt which camp won the day (Aberdeenshire, No. 6, p 37). The western stone was already lying prone, and the measurements appearing beside sketches of the two stones on the same page implies that it was on one of its narrower sides. This is not how Coles' sketches depict it in 1901 (1902, 561–3, figs 76–7) and a photograph



taken by James Ritchie (RCAHMS AB2937) shows it rolled onto one of its broader faces with the narrower east-south-east end cocked up into the air. Since then it has fallen back to recline horizontally on what is probably a bed of field-gathered stones. Coles was the first to consider the possibility that this stone was a recumbent, though he felt it was too thin, particularly at its east-south-east end. He was evidently unaware that it had been rolled quite recently, but the argument that clinched it for him was that the *'tall Standing Stone, 87 feet [26.5m] to the north, is not set with its broad face looking towards the centre of any Circle of which this fallen monolith could have been the Recumbent Stone'* (*ibid*, 563); in manuscript he noted *'in its present line'* in his volume of the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, now held by the Royal Commission. Despite concluding that it was a fallen orthostat, this probably reveals a lingering suspicion on his part that the stone was indeed a recumbent. In contrast, Alexander Keiller was not persuaded that the two stones had formed part of a circle at all (1934, 4), but Burl included them in his gazetteer of stone circles (1976a, 353, Abn 114), more recently revising his opinion of their classification to a possible recumbent stone circle (2000, 422, Abn 119). While the huge prostrate stone certainly gives an initial impression of a recumbent, this does not stand close scrutiny, particularly when the relative positions of the two stones are considered; a circle whose circumference adopts the axis of the upright stone (B) tangentially and passes close to the west-north-west end of its prostrate fellow (A) would measure in excess of 40m in diameter – well beyond even the largest of the recorded recumbent stone circles. Barnatt's suggestion that they formed a row or

alignment is equally unsatisfactory, for it is founded on the mistaken belief that the long axis of the east stone is aligned on its fallen neighbour (1989, 488, no. 6:pp). This is not the case and nor is it set at right-angles to an axis drawn between them. The present survey can offer no other solutions.

Visited 10 May 1996

85 Woodfield, Old Deer, Aberdeenshire

NJ94SE 13 NJ 9751 4427

Stone Circle

A stone circle that stood on the ridge about 300m north-east of Woodfield was removed *'many years'* before 1870 – the year it was reported to the OS surveyors, who also learned that it consisted of *'about six or seven of them [standing stones] and the altar stone was a very large one & was lying flat on the ground at the east end of it'* (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 68, p 131). The term *altar stone* is one used during the 19th century to describe recumbents and this has led Aberdeenshire Archaeology Service to suggest that Woodfield may have been a recumbent stone circle. It is certainly a possibility, and the unusual position of the supposed recumbent on the east should probably not be taken too literally, particularly as it seems to have been removed so long before the OS surveyors' visit. This, however, is the very reason that the circle has been omitted from the present Gazetteer, for the *'altar stone'* may have been no more than a fallen orthostat that has not only grown in the telling, but was fulfilling the antiquarian expectations of a stone circle in the popular imagination.

Appendix 2: Lost Records Relating to Recumbent Stone Circles

In the course of this study it emerged that several records that are known to have been prepared by earlier antiquaries and archaeologists are now missing. Some may have been destroyed, the victims of unsympathetic executors, but others may survive in private hands, or possibly simply lie unrecognised in bundles of uncatalogued papers held in public archives. The discovery of any would be of interest, on the one hand for the light they might throw on the history of individual monuments, on the other for our general understanding of how they were perceived by earlier generations. These records can be divided into three categories: the first comprises correspondence, notes and sketches; the second, maps and surveys; and the third, photographs. It only remains to emphasise that the lists elaborated below are merely what we currently know is missing. There may be many other items to be found, especially in the correspondence of local antiquaries and those living further afield, while unknown illustrations of one kind or another could turn up as loose leaves or bound into albums outside the region.

Correspondence, Notes and Sketches

Patrick Chalmers – sketches, 28 November 1850

Patrick Chalmers exhibited to the Society of Antiquaries of London ‘*rough sketches of a remarkable circle of stones in Aberdeenshire, and of what was termed an ancient ‘Altar Stone’ in the same locality*’ (Akerman 1853, 105; Browne 1921, 95).

Charles Dalrymple – correspondence with John Stuart, 1855–6

This conveyed the results of the excavations that he and Alexander Watt had conducted on Stuart’s behalf

at **Ardlair, Hatton of Ardoyne, Old Rayne and Sunhoney**. It is hard to tell how far Stuart’s published epitomes do justice to these reports, but he clearly excluded plans and sketches, such as the view of **Ardlair** which was later published by Joseph Anderson with the Rhind Lectures of 1866 (Anderson 1886, 110). Although the correspondence was subsequently made available to Frederick Coles part way through his study, it has not been directly referenced since (Coles 1904, 299–300). It is possible that copies of at least some of these letters were once in circulation. One, addressed by Dalrymple to Colonel Charles Fraser following the excavation of **Castle Fraser** in the autumn of 1856, was discovered by Harry Gordon Slade amongst the muniments at Castle Fraser. In this instance, Stuart did not provide a précis or quote directly from its contents in the preface to the second volume of *Sculptured Stones of Scotland* (1867), but it contains only minor differences from the long extract that was subsequently published by Coles (Slade 1978). Stuart’s copy evidently was accompanied by a plan and it seems likely that another was supplied with the Fraser letter (Mercer 1978), probably being that attributed by Slade to James Skene.

Sir Arthur Mitchell – notebooks, 1861

These were made available to Coles, but he seems to have cited them more out of a sense of duty than from any great conviction that they offered information that his own fieldwork had not supplied. However, in referring to some measurements and a sketch of **Tillyfourie** that appeared amongst their pages, Coles reported that they contained information on ‘*about a dozen others possessing a recumbent stone, this important feature having been, at that comparatively early date, definitely recognised by him as typical of many Aberdeenshire circles*’ (Coles 1900, 191; 1901, 208, 213). Apart from a visit to **Old Keig**, little else

is known of Mitchell's work in this field. He had been disappointed to learn that a ring on the Glebe at Boyndie (NJ66SW 11) had been cleared away, but otherwise Coles refers only to a sketch taken in 1864 of Upper Lagmore (Lagmore West, NJ13NE 9; Coles 1906, 171; 1907, 142–3, 147).

Jonathan Forbes-Leslie – plans and sketches

It seems likely that the original sketch of the recumbent setting at **Midmar Kirk**, which was published as a lithograph in Leslie's study of *The Early Races of Scotland* (1866, pl xv) alongside others of **Ardlair** and **Sunhoney**, is the unattributed drawing in the album entitled 'Primeval Antiquities' preserved in the library of the Society of Antiquaries of London (SAL 60.4). The same hand also appears to have been responsible for the sketch of Cullerlie (NJ70SE 2) under the name *Garlogie*, which is also included in the album, but in 1871 Forbes-Leslie is also known to have exhibited another fifteen drawings and diagrams of rings to a meeting of the British Association at Aberdeen in the course of a lecture under the title *Megalithic Circles*. According to a handwritten list on the title page of the privately printed transcript of the lecture, which is now preserved in the National Library of Scotland (NLS APS.1.79.129), these rings included the recumbent stone circles **Aikey Brae**, **Aquhorthies**, **Balquhain**, **New Craig**, **Rothiemay** and **Tyrebagger**, and more cryptically circles at *Clatt* (see **Bankhead** and Newbigging App 1.67) and *Daviot* (see **Loanhead of Daviot** and Daviot Church App 1.29).

Frederick Coles – notebooks, sketches and correspondence

The only holograph material that directly relates to Coles' own study are the annotations that occur in his run of the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* (RCAHMS 1575, 9), and those that appear upon the Ordnance Survey map with which he carefully planned his early seasons of fieldwork in relation to the local railway stations (RCAHMS MS69). What became of his extensive notes and sketches is unclear and although he is known to have painted landscapes in oils and exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy 1873–89, it is uncertain whether a recumbent stone circle ever featured amongst any later subjects (de Laperriere 1991, 1, 327; McEwan 2004, 108).

Gordon Childe and Howard Kilbride-Jones – excavation archives

There is a single notebook relating to Childe's second season of excavations at **Old Keig** in 1933 at the Institute of Archaeology, London (UCLCA/IA/A/5; Ralston 2009, 74; RCAHMS uncatalogued), and a collection of photographs of the excavation held by RCAHMS (below), but no contemporary records relating to the excavations at **Loanhead of Daviot**

have come to light, save for two plans by the Office of Works (RCAHMS DP038532–3) and a drawing of some Cinerary Urns from the cremation cemetery (Kilbride-Jones 1936, fig 7).

Maps and Surveys

Many recumbent stone circles will have appeared on estate plans and surveys prepared in the 18th and early 19th centuries, but only a relatively small number were examined in the course of this study. Held in both public and private collections, such surveys may preserve important information about the condition of recumbent stone circles at a time when the landscape around them underwent a radical transformation and they were perhaps most at risk of damage and destruction. The Name Books provide information on a number consulted in the 1860–70s by the Ordnance Survey when it was engaged in mapping the landscape for the 1st edition of the 6-inch map of Scotland. Some of these have been re-examined, but others, such as an undated example showing **The Cloch** and another of **Rothiemay** in 1782, have not been traced (Name Book, Kincardine, No. 4, 33; Name Book, Banffshire, No. 27, 64:). An estate plan of 1846 referred to under the Name Book entry for **Castle Fraser**, which has not been inspected, is probably one of those bound into the *'Book of Plans of the Lands of Castle Fraser lying in the Parish of Cluny and County of Aberdeen, the property of Colonel Fraser, 1846'* (Name Book, Aberdeenshire, No. 15, 40; McGowan et al 1996, 137, 138) – these are said to have been traced from originals taken in 1816.

In a different vein, the loss of the annotated Ordnance Survey map on which the Rev James Peter *'had placed marks showing the exact position of the circles existent [in the parish of Old Deer], in part, as well as those whose locality is well ascertained, though every vestige of them has disappeared'* is regrettable (Peter 1885, 371). It appears to have been submitted along with his paper to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, but apart from those he mentions at **Aikey Brae**, **Auchmachar**, East Crichtie (ie Woodfield App 1.85), **Gaval**, **Loudon Wood**, Skelmuir Hill (NJ94SE 16, 17 & 23), **Strichen House**, Upper Crichtie (NJ94SE 2) and White Cow Wood (NJ95SW 5), it may have identified only those other circles and standing stones whose locations were already shown on the OS map, such as Cairnorchies Holdings (NJ95SE 10) and Upper Benwells (NJ94NW 17). Nevertheless, he had been told that several more had once existed in the parish (Peter 1885, 370).

The whereabouts of George Carfrae's survey of **Eslie the Greater** made at the suggestion of Dr William Brown in 1872 is also unknown, although it was in the possession of Robert Angus Smith when he incorporated Brown's notes into his paper on the stone



circles of Durris (Smith 1880, 303). Smith also refers to an original drawing of the *lying stone* (the recumbent) at **Cothiemuir Wood** and a series of measurements of the ring which had been made by James Rait in 1868 (Smith 1880, 309). These are also now lost, although it is possible the measurements may have been on Rait's missing plan of the same date, which was copied by Sir Henry Dryden in 1881 and later examined by Coles (RCAHMS SAS 39/1; Coles 1901, 217). Likewise, it is unknown whether the plan of **Clune Wood** taken for Sir Norman Lockyer in 1906–7 by Thomas Braid, the factor at Durris, has survived, or whether he ever prepared those of the other nearby circles as he had promised (Lockyer 1909, 381, 410).

Paintings and Photographs

Paintings of recumbent stones circles are exceptionally rare and apart from those by James Giles of **Castle Fraser**, Sophia Lady Dunbar of **Easter Aquorthies** and William Cormack of **Blue Cairn of Ladieswell** no others are known before 1950. However, the fact that such may exist is demonstrated by the small oil of an unknown ring by James Cassie dating to 1859 which was sold recently at auction in Aberdeen. Another fresh discovery is the original frame (RCAHMS uncatalogued) that housed Lady Dunbar's painting,

James Cassie's painting entitled 'Standing Stones Near Bennachie' (1859) depicts the severely damaged remains of an unidentified recumbent stone circle ostensibly situated somewhere south of Bennachie in the vicinity of Monymusk and Kennay. © Adam Welfare

as a contemporary label on the original backing board preserves a record of some measurements and a note to the effect that it was taken on the spot.

Alexander Thomson's image of **Aquhorthies**, which with that of nearby Old Bourtreebush (App 1.69) was taken 'to give some idea of the ... two circles' (Thomson 1864, 134), is the earliest recorded photograph of a recumbent stone circle. Both were exhibited when he delivered a lecture on the results of the 1858 excavations to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, but although they were subsequently presented to the Society, neither has been located and no further copies are known. Almost as early is the lost photograph upon which the fine sketch of the carvings on the rear of the recumbent at **Rothiemay** was based; this may have been taken by Sir James Simpson's friend Dr Black, whose identity has otherwise yet to be established (Simpson 1866, 14, pl iii). Equally, the loss of Robert Angus Smith's plate of the excavations at **Eslie the Greater** in 1873 is as keenly felt today as it was at that time, while the photographs of **Clune Wood** and **The Nine Stanes** (along with one of Cairnfauld App 1.16), which he sent to the Society to accompany his paper, also appear to be missing (1880, 298, 299, 301). The whereabouts is

also unknown of the views of **Aquhorthies**, **Easter Aquhorthies** and **Tyrebagger** that were taken by General Pitt-River's assistants in 1889 to facilitate the preparation of the models that were exhibited at his private museum in Rushmore Park (Thompson 1960, 112–13, 117–18; 1977, 68–9, 126; Bowden 1991, 102).

The photographs of **Aikey Brae** and **Easter Aquhorthies** that were reproduced by James Spence and Robert Munro herald the work of James Ritchie, whose many studies of recumbent stone circles in the first quarter of the 20th century are notable for their quality and craftsmanship (Spence 1896, 26; Munro 1899, pl xiii). The care he took in composing each shot is exemplified by his now familiar portrayal of the recumbent setting at **Midmar Kirk**, while his extraordinary patience is expressed in his image of the carvings on the rear of the recumbent at **Rothiemay**, which was obtained without artificial lighting at dawn in June 1905. His work still sets the bar against which all later photography must be measured. The fact that he was Coles' contemporary and visited many of the same rings at much the same time adds an important academic component to their aesthetic value and it is fortunate that so many are held by RCAHMS. The commercial photographers amongst his contemporaries were perhaps a little less practised in the art of capturing such difficult subjects, but the results obtained by

Andrew Turner of Banchory and Robert Benzie of Dunecht are commendable and help fill out the picture in a period where otherwise such imagery might be scarce (Coles 1905; Browne 1921). Even so, there must be other professional photographs and opportunistic amateur snaps of these monuments, such as those taken by Thomazine, Lady Lockyer, at **Ardlair**, **Cothiemuir Wood** and **Easter Aquhorthies**, which may survive in private collections and are essentially unknown (Lockyer 1909, 383, 394, 404).

By contrast, the photographic record of the 30 years 1920–50 is surprisingly scanty. There are those that accompany the reports on the excavations at **Old Keig** and **Loanhead of Daviot**, but only Gordon Childe's negatives and prints are in the RCAHMS collection and the whereabouts of the aerial photographs taken for him by William Forbes-Sempill, the Master of Sempill, have not been ascertained (Childe 1934, 386). Otherwise, the period is only represented by the small handful of pictures taken by Angus Graham, Peter Hardy, Alexander Keiller and J Ruxton, which are all in the safekeeping of RCAHMS. This general lack of photographic imagery is particularly unfortunate in the case of a monument like **Strichen House**, where after a sorry tale of demolition and reconstruction the remains of the circle were finally cleared away without a care in 1965.

Appendix 3: Measurements of the Stones Denoted on the Plans of Recumbent Stone Circles

The stone numbers and letters relate directly to those on the plans.

The numbers of fallen stones or those that otherwise lie prone are denoted in parentheses (eg **Aikey Brae**: 1.6), while those of stones that have been re-erected are underlined (eg **Corrstone Wood**: 24.1). The measurements of the upright stones have been taken from the summit to the point at the foot where the greatest height is exposed. Thus, the measurements are maxima and do not relate consistently to either internal or external faces, so any figure quoted in a table can only be related to its neighbours in general terms.

The lengths of recumbents are noted as widths (eg **Aikey Brae**: 1.2), as are the small number of kerbstones that have been included (eg **Bellman's Wood**: 11.ks?), while the overall length of a fallen or prone stone is

recorded as its height (eg **Aikey Brae**: 1.6; **Colmeallie**: 22.D).

Where a stone is represented by one or more conjoining fragments, these are combined into a single estimated measurement (eg **Aikey Brae**: 1.1; **Colmeallie**: 22.2).

A measurement annotated with a + indicates that the stone is believed to have been cut down or the figure is a minimum (eg **Aquhorthies**: 2.8a; **Candle Hill**: 18.8), while a - by itself indicates that no measurement was taken. By contrast, a - is found where missing stones are included in the sequences of numbers appearing on some of the plans.

No measurements are given for **Ardtannes Cottages** and **Hill of Milleath** as both are known only from cartographic and literary references.

1 Aikey Brae

	(1)	2	3	(4)	(5)	(6)	7	8	9	(A)
Height	2.66	1.75	2.12	3.54	1.94	2.17	1.62	1.81	2.02	1.39+
Width	1.88	4.57	1.86	1.30	0.98	1.29	1.22	1.02	1.08	0.84
Thickness	0.41	1.60	0.47	0.80	0.35	0.43	0.57	0.66	0.67	0.40

2 Aquhorthies

Aquhorthies Major Series

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Height	1.55	1.37	-	1.89	-	1.47	1.07	-	1.57	2.13	2.37
Width	1.02	2.76	-	1.32	-	1.09	0.71	-	1.05	1.03	1.32
Thickness	0.58	0.91	-	0.69	-	0.35	0.38	-	0.85	0.58	0.94

Aquhorthies Minor Series

	4a	5a	6a	7a	8a
Height	1.53	1.40	0.93	0.63	0.30+
Width	0.65	0.63	0.44	0.52	0.65
Thickness	0.46	0.28	0.24	0.29	0.35

Aquhorthies Other

	A	B
Height	0.70+	1.32
Width	1.16	1.10
Thickness	0.29	0.53

3 Ardlair

	1	2	3	(4)	5	(6)	(7)	8
Height	1.51	1.67	1.70	1.11+	1.36	1.76	1.90	1.73
Width	1.35	2.91	1.50	0.68	1.06	1.10	1.05	0.76
Thickness	0.77	0.88	0.81	0.33	0.37	0.60	0.58	0.59

5 Auchlee

	1	(2)	3	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	A	B
Height	–	1.92	–	2.28	1.9	2.10	2.32	0.85	0.90
Width	–	2.91	–	0.76	0.59	0.89	1.34	+	0.90
Thickness	–	0.72	–	0.64	0.36	0.45+	0.84	+	0.70

6 Auchmachar

	(1)	2	3	4	(A)
Height	2.92	0.87	2.40	2.00	2.45
Width	2.07	3.25	1.46	1.09	1.10
Thickness	0.26+	1.10	0.79	0.88	+

7 Auchmaliddie

	(1)	(2)
Height	2.50	1.80
Width	1.49	3.15
Thickness	0.51	0.72

8 Balnacraig

	1	2	3	(4)	5	6	(A)
Height	–	1.40	–	1.73	1.14	1.52	2.20
Width	–	3.05	–	0.66	1.34	1.30	0.90
Thickness	–	1.01	–	0.20+	0.21	0.57	+

9 Balquhain

	1	2	(3)	4	(5)	(6)	(7)	8	9	A
Height	2.30	1.75	2.86	2.13	2.64	1.92	1.98	1.51	1.50	3.30
Width	1.98	4.07	1.50	1.37	1.20	0.67	0.75	1.43	1.56	1.50
Thickness	0.85	0.73	0.74	0.76	0.87	0.25+	0.44+	0.64	0.45	1.15

10 Bankhead

	(A)
Height	1.2+
Width	3.02
Thickness	0.78

11 Bellman's Wood

	(1)	2	(3)	ks?
Height	2.41	–	2.3	1.07
Width	1.67	–	1.45	0.93
Thickness	0.91	–	0.74	0.73

12 Berrybrae

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Height	2.36	1.39	1.55+	–	–	–	–	–	1.42	1.68
Width	1.6	3.28	0.66	–	–	–	–	–	1.02	1.27
Thickness	0.7	1.23	0.68	–	–	–	–	–	0.56	0.56

13 Binghill

	(1)	2	(3)	(4)	(5)	6	7	(A)
Height	1.94	1.17	1.91	1.81	1.54	0.97	1.29	1.36
Width	1.03	2.28	0.83	0.92	1.12	0.87	0.88	0.76
Thickness	0.48	0.71	0.4	0.80	0.56	0.45	0.43	0.29

14 Blue Cairn of Ladieswell

	1	2	3	4	(5)	(6)	(7)	8	(9)	(10)
Height	–	0.90	–	1.62	1.90	1.21	1.50	0.72	1.06	1.00+
Width	–	3.58	–	0.65	1.23	0.95	1.20	0.57	0.77	0.66
Thickness	–	1.75	–	0.55	0.35	0.31	+	0.31	0.21	0.23+

15 Braehead

	1	2	3
Height	–	1.82	–
Width	–	3.28	–
Thickness	–	0.84	–

16 Cairn Riv

	1	2	3	A
Height	–	2.60	–	1.20
Width	–	3.62	–	0.96
Thickness	–	1.93	–	0.66

17 Cairnton

	1	2
Height	2.25	1.57
Width	1.08	2.85
Thickness	0.61	1.22

18 Candle Hill

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	5	(6)	(7)	(8)
Height	2.50	2.02	2.01	1.40	1.35	1.45	2.45	1.94+
Width	1.10	4.02	1.05	0.62	1.32	0.80	1.37	1.14+
Thickness	0.45	0.45	0.28+	0.14+	0.38	0.20+	0.40	0.20+

19 Castle Fraser

	1	2	3	4	5	6	(7)	8	(9)	(10)
Height	2.46	1.56	2.68	2.00	1.36	1.50	1.57	1.52	2.43	2.38
Width	1.30	2.23	1.55	0.70	1.22	1.07	0.63	1.20	0.94	0.70
Thickness	0.74	0.90	0.62	0.73	0.90	0.50	0.40	0.40	0.14+	0.56

20 The Cloch

	1	2	3
Height	–	2.00	–
Width	–	2.54	–
Thickness	–	0.39	–

21 Clune Wood

	1	2	3	4	(5)	6	7	8	(9)
Height	1.56	1.05	1.28	1.51	1.84	0.62+	1.48	1.67	2.3
Width	0.97	2.96	0.98	1.10	0.47	0.87	0.80	0.94	0.70
Thickness	0.85	0.80	0.70	0.73	0.40+	0.57	0.62	0.60	0.53

22 Colmeallie

	1	(2)	3	4	(5)	(6)	(7)	4a	5a	6a	(A)	B	C	(D)
Height	–	2.23	1.65	1.58	2.17	2.06	2.49	0.80	0.37	1.00	2.26+	1.64	1.60	2.03
Width	–	4.70+	1.23	0.72	0.73	1.12	0.90	0.70	0.70	1.10	0.90	0.61	0.75	0.40
Thickness	–	0.65	0.25	0.35	0.32	0.24	0.45	0.45	0.25	0.35	0.30	0.39	0.18	0.18

23 Corrie Cairn

	1	2	3	A
Height	–	1.54	–	1.42
Width	–	3.51	–	0.91
Thickness	–	1.05	–	0.46

24 Corrstone Wood

	1	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(A)
Height	2.25	1.95	2.58	2.16	2.44	2.30	1.15
Width	0.75	4.1	0.90	0.60	0.74	0.90	+
Thickness	0.73	0.85	0.35	0.32	0.45	0.25	+

25 Corrydown

	(1)	2	3	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Height	2.37+	1.47	–	1.82	1.55	1.14	1.71	1.64
Width	1.03	2.53	–	0.93	0.78	0.65	0.66	0.95
Thickness	0.80	0.90	–	0.46	0.42	0.44	0.74	0.35

26 Cothiemuir Wood

	1	2	3	4	5	(6)	7	8
Height	2.7	1.28	2.65	1.83	1.4	1.31	1.18	1.6
Width	1.06	4.14	0.73	0.66	0.48	0.71	0.62	0.75
Thickness	0.58	1.5	0.68	0.49	0.46	0.36	0.36	0.42

27 Druidstone

	(1)	2	(3)	4	5	6	7	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	E
Height	2.00+	–	2.15	1.21	1.20	1.20+	0.53+	1.05	2.10	1.35	1.6	2.23
Width	1.31	–	0.82	1.12	1.30	1.05	1.20	0.66	+	+	+	0.94
Thickness	0.54	–	0.20+	0.44	0.29	0.39	0.54	0.45	+	+	+	0.80

28 Dunnideer

	1	2	3
Height	1.83+	1.89	2.17
Width	1.52	2.83	1.07
Thickness	0.60	0.55	1.13

29 Easter Aquhorthies

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Height	2.50	1.55	2.13	1.57	1.80	1.72	1.10	1.57	1.76	1.64	1.53	1.67
Width	1.22	3.99	1.50	1.54	1.42	1.16	1.14	0.82	1.00	1.47	1.42	1.16
Thickness	0.53	0.75	0.90	1.02	0.80	0.90	0.43	0.69	0.53	0.56	0.73	0.94

30 Esleie the Greater

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	A
Height	1.60	1.40	1.03	1.38	0.87	1.33	1.44	2.07	1.20+
Width	0.67	2.90	1.18	1.07	0.55	0.75	1.09	1.29	0.54+
Thickness	0.55	1.00	0.45	0.67	0.20	0.33	0.46	0.31	0.48

31 Frendraught

	(1)	2	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Height	2.09	1.87	2.26	1.00+	1.71	1.63+	1.67+	0.68+
Width	1.21	2.33+	0.89	0.46+	0.94	1.00	0.99	0.75
Thickness	0.9	1.15	0.50	0.34	0.81	0.46	0.23	0.15

32 Gaval

	A
Height	1.49
Width	0.92
Thickness	0.81

33 The Gray Stone of Clochforbie

	1	(2)	3
Height	–	0.95	–
Width	–	3.65	–
Thickness	–	1.40	–

34 Hatton of Ardoyne

	1	2	3	(4)	5	(6)	(7)	8	(9)	10
Height	–	1.94	2.80	1.38+	1.71	1.60	1.75	1.05	1.93	1.37
Width	–	2.44	0.60	0.91	1.00	0.75	0.60+	0.94	0.92	0.7
Thickness	–	0.29	0.82	0.84	0.58	0.32	+	0.53	0.53	0.32

35 Hill of Fiddes

	1	2	3
Height	1.7	1.5	–
Width	0.56	2.8	–
Thickness	0.66	0.75	–

37 Inschfield

	1	(2)	3	(4)
Height	–	2.4	2.84	1.96
Width	–	4.13	1.38	1.04
Thickness	–	0.82+	0.86	0.40+

38 Kirkton of Bourtie

	1	2	3	4	5	A
Height	–	1.9	2.95	2.1	1.74	1.40
Width	–	4.9	1.35	1.35	1.10	0.75
Thickness	–	1.8	1.00	1.00	1.15	0.45

39 Loanend

	1	2	3	4
Height	–	2.27	–	1.61
Width	–	4.15	–	1.35
Thickness	–	0.90	–	0.64

40 Loanhead of Daviot

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Height	2.26	1.80	1.73+	2.09	1.59	1.48	1.43	1.80	0.74+	1.74	1.82
Width	1.32	3.44	1.49	1.49	1.50	1.26	0.87	0.87	0.90	0.94	1.06
Thickness	0.81	1.34	0.45	0.77	0.88	0.38	0.65	0.70	0.70	0.43	0.79

41 Loudon Wood

	1	2	(3)	(4)	5	6	(7)
Height	2.20	1.15	2.66+	2.51	1.76	1.73	2.15
Width	1.05	3.21	0.93	1.50	1.20	1.06	1.04
Thickness	0.64	1.00	0.56	0.67	0.83	0.80	0.68

42 Mains of Hatton

	(1)	2	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	8	(9)
Height	1.70+	1.15+	1.95+	1.52	1.23	0.95	1.04	0.32+	1.37
Width	1.38	2.10	1.60	1.00	1.06	0.72	0.67	0.96	0.78
Thickness	0.50	0.56	0.64	0.49+	0.42+	0.30+	0.26+	0.59	0.39+

43 Midmar Kirk

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Height	2.44	1.05	2.34	1.85	1.97	1.06	1.45	1.93
Width	1.02	4.43	1.29	0.91	0.83	0.48	0.73	0.78
Thickness	0.62	1.24	0.60	0.58	0.63	0.35	0.42	0.42

44 Millplough

	1	2	3
Height	–	1.94	–
Width	–	3.22	–
Thickness	–	0.68	–

45 Montgoldrum, The Camp

	1	2	3	4	5	(A)	(B)
Height	–	0.94+	–	0.35+	0.15+	0.38	0.43
Width	–	1.72+	–	0.78	0.75	0.46	0.70
Thickness	–	1.40	–	0.43	0.51	0.53	0.83

46 Nether Dumeath

	(1)	(2)	(3)	4	(5)	6
Height	2.82	2.1	1.45+	1.99	1.84	1.65
Width	1.00	2.74	0.93	1.08	0.94	0.88
Thickness	0.56	0.62	0.44	0.38	0.23+	0.53

47 Netherton of Logie

	1	2	3	4	5	(6)	7	8	A	B	C	D
Height	1.62	1.09	1.66	1.28	1.05	1.57	1.20	1.72	0.84	1.00	1.10	1.22
Width	0.90	2.90	1.58	0.95	1.10	0.71	1.00	1.07	1.40	0.77	0.88	0.89
Thickness	1.07	1.45	0.78	0.51	0.54	0.44	0.47	0.71	0.41	0.47	0.41	0.33

48 New Craig

	1	2	3	(4)	5	ks
Height	2.55	1.85+	3.00	1.75	1.48	1.32
Width	1.28	4.10	0.99	0.57	0.80	0.80
Thickness	0.80	1.07	0.63	0.60	0.76	0.43

49 The Nine Stanes

	1	2	(3)	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Height	1.90	1.25	2.05	1.48	1.27	1.00	1.04	–	0.12+	1.34	1.22
Width	1.30	2.57	0.96	1.21	0.81	0.64	0.72	–	0.47+	0.79	0.78
Thickness	0.79	1.46	0.60	0.63	0.62	0.42	0.62	–	0.54	0.51	0.48

50 North Strone

	(1)	(2)	3	(4)	(5)	6	7	8	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	A
Height	1.00	0.80	0.74	1.40	0.92	1.07	0.98	1.15	0.96	1.20	0.93	0.95	1.40	1.24	1.34	1.30	1.11	0.90
Width	0.60	1.53	0.82	0.93	0.58	0.90	1.15	0.80	0.50	0.48	0.70	0.42	0.50	0.81	0.75	1.17	0.70	0.60
Thickness	0.30	0.46	0.50	0.35	0.42	0.48	0.60	0.40	0.42	0.48	0.54+	0.24+	0.22	0.28	0.44	0.24	0.41	0.16+

51 Old Keig

	1	2	3	4	(5)	(6)	(7)	(A)
Height	2.18	1.76	2.30	2.07	2.10	2.40	2.25	1.35
Width	1.30	5.45	1.53	1.22	1.10	1.10	0.52	0.65
Thickness	0.71	1.61	0.40	0.90	+	+	+	+

52 Old Kirk of Tough

	A	B
Height	1.23	1.03
Width	1.05	1.32
Thickness	0.35	0.35

53 Old Rayne

	(1)	(2)	(3)	4	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	A
Height	2.78+	2.10	2.75	2.20	2.04	1.98	2.32	2.35	+
Width	1.63	3.85	1.70	1.63	1.40	1.10	1.10	1.20	1.20
Thickness	0.75	0.50	1.34	0.65	0.37	0.68	0.60	0.50	0.75

54 Pitglassie

	1	2	(3)
Height	–	1.24	1.44
Width	–	2.47	1.00
Thickness	–	1.08	0.60

55 Potterton

	(1)	2	(3)
Height	3.00	1.70	2.6
Width	1.13	3.00	1.8
Thickness	0.68	1.10	0.77

56 The Ringing Stone

	1	2	3	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	ks?
Height	–	1.73	–	2.31	2.64	1.64	2.00	1.3	+
Width	–	3.57	–	0.78	0.56	0.88	0.81+	+	1.10
Thickness	–	1.10	–	0.43	0.53	0.71	0.39	+	0.60

57 Rothiemay

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Height	–	1.78	–	1.82	1.91	1.80	1.67
Width	–	4.30	–	1.40	1.26	0.80	1.01
Thickness	–	1.23	–	0.73	0.98	0.60	0.71

58 St Brandan's Stanes

	1	2	3	(A)	(B)	(C)	ks?
Height	1.69	–	1.94	1.68	1.23	1.25	0.84
Width	1.69	–	1.73	0.64+	0.48	0.65	0.77
Thickness	0.60	–	0.70	0.31+	0.30	0.65	0.55

59 South Fornet

	1	2	3	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)
Height	1.96	–	1.97	2.03	1.30	0.5	0.75	1.00	1.25
Width	1.47	–	1.23	0.77+	0.95	+	+	+	+
Thickness	0.38	–	0.68	0.20+	0.25	+	+	+	+

60 South Ley Lodge

	1	2	3
Height	1.66	1.19	1.78
Width	1.28	2.43	1.50
Thickness	0.70	1.50	0.61

61 Stonehead

	1	2	3
Height	2.95	2.10	2.39
Width	1.21	3.90	1.45
Thickness	0.83	1.03	0.68

62 Strichen House

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	(10)
Height	1.77	1.04	1.91	1.39	1.26	1.00	0.72	0.96	1.15	1.57
Width	0.57	2.61	0.92	0.56	0.44	0.63	0.36	0.62	0.62	0.55
Thickness	1.00	0.48	0.64	0.32	0.60	0.49	0.35	0.37	0.57	0.42

63 Sunhoney

	1	(2)	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Height	2.08	1.42	2.18	1.94	2.01	1.12	1.09	1.51	1.40	1.34	1.74	1.67
Width	1.56	5.20	1.77	0.61	1.10	0.48	0.59	0.87	0.90	1.03	1.29	1.06
Thickness	0.25	0.68	0.27	0.65	0.41	0.46	0.64	0.31	0.32	0.32	0.30	0.41

64 Tillyfourie

	1	2	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7	(8)	(9)	10	(11)	(12)	(13)
Height	2.31	1.44	2.59	2.21	1.98	1.60	1.38+	1.45	1.04	1.36	1.1	1.75	1.95
Width	0.79	2.87	1.06	0.70+	0.88	0.59	0.73	0.69	0.53	0.50	+	0.71	0.97
Thickness	0.79	1.50	0.21+	0.54	0.38	0.40+	0.37	0.37	0.20	0.36	+	0.20+	0.60

65 Tilquhillie

	A	(2)
Height	1.65	1.29
Width	1.00	2.53
Thickness	0.60	0.77

66 Tomnagorn

	1	2	3	4	(5)	(6)	7	8	(9)	10	(11)	(12)
Height	0.97+	1.5	2.1	2.00	2.06	2.16	1.18	1.50	2.1	1.77	2.50	2.6
Width	0.75	2.17	1.6	1.22	1.55	1.00	0.80	0.73	1.17	0.63	0.90	1.35
Thickness	0.48	0.55	0.40	0.64	0.52	0.84	0.38	0.37	0.30	0.60	0.55	0.60

67 Tomnaverie

	(1)	(2)	(3)	4	5	6	7	8	(9)	10	11	12	13
Height	2.08	1.13	2.45	1.42	–	1.09	0.94	–	1.40	0.50+	0.97	–	–
Width	1.13	3.19	1.18	1.09	–	0.87	0.56	–	0.71	0.45	0.72	–	–
Thickness	0.65	1.00	0.60	0.53	–	0.57	0.64	–	0.15	0.54	0.53	–	–

68 Tyrebagger

	1	2	3	4	5	(6)	7	8	9	10	11
Height	3.24	2.40	2.81	2.86	1.60	1.70+	1.31	1.65	1.55	2.11	2.26
Width	1.24	3.33	1.58	0.97	1.17	1.36	0.74	0.59	0.78	0.92	1.43
Thickness	0.60	0.65	0.52	0.61	0.54	0.40	0.70	0.50	0.44	0.72	0.40

69 Wantonwells

	1	2	(3)
Height	–	2.20	2.93
Width	–	3.21	1.56
Thickness	–	0.77	1.00

70 Wester Echt

	1	2	3	4	A	B
Height	2.39	–	–	1.90	+	2.39
Width	1.40	–	–	1.20	+	1.30
Thickness	0.38	–	–	0.50	+	0.30

71 Yonder Bognie

	1	2	(3)	4	(5)	6	(7)	8	9
Height	1.95	1.71	1.95	1.98	1.65	0.99	1.95	1.27	1.79
Width	1.00	3.35	1.26	1.41	0.93	0.46	1.03	0.63	0.95
Thickness	0.52	1.41	1.32	0.60	0.29	0.55	0.66	0.55	0.73

Appendix 4: Values for the Orientations Denoted in the Figures

These readings have been taken from the RCAHMS plans. Those for the centre line and perpendicular line azimuths can be compared with the values that Clive Ruggles obtained from a number of different sources (Ruggles 1984, Table 2).

Centre Line Azimuths – Fig 6.6

Ardlair	155°
The Nine Stanes	157°
The Cloch	158°
Frendraught	159°
Strichen House	161°
Nether Dumeath	164°
Mains of Hatton	166°
Aquhorthies	171°
Clune Wood	172°
Candle Hill	173°
Eslie the Greater	173°
Tyrebagger (Dyce)	179°
Netherton of Logie	179°
Yonder Bognie	180°
North Strone	181°
Millplough	181°
Montgoldrum, The Camp	183°
Aikey Brae	185°
Auchlee	186°
Binghill	187°
Loudon Wood	187°
Balquhain	187°
Druidstone	188°
Kirkton of Bourtie	190°
Cothiemuir Wood	194°
Loanhead of Daviot	195°
Castle Fraser	196°
Old Rayne	199°
Hill of Fiddes	199°
Tomnagorn	200°
Easter Aquhorthies	200°

Tillyfourie	201°
Old Keig	204°
Auchmachar	205°
Blue Cairn of Ladieswell	206°
Colmeallie	206°
Corrstone Wood	208°
Inschfield	211°
Hatton of Ardoyne	215°
Rothiemay	215°
Berrybrae	216°
Loanend	223°
Balnacraig	228°
Sunhoney	232°
Midmar	234°
Tomnaverie	236°

Perpendicular Line Azimuths – Fig 6.10

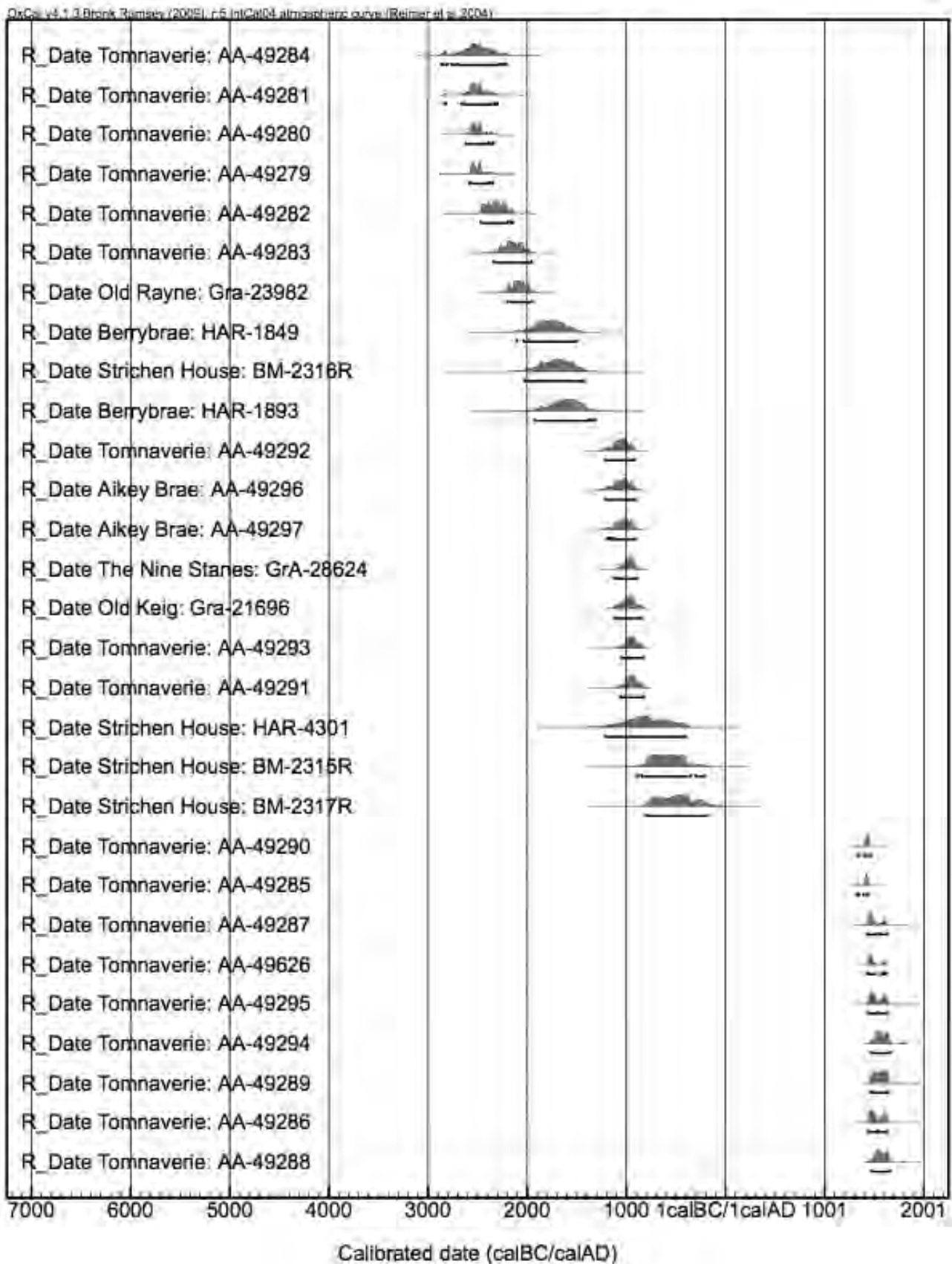
Pitglassie	165°
Cairnton	179°
Auchmaliddie	181°
St Brandan's Stanes	184°
Cairn Riv	185°
South Fornet	186°
Dunnideer	190°
Braehead	194°
South Ley Lodge	194°
New Craig	202°
Wantonwells	202°
The Ringing Stone	201°
Corrydown	206°
Potterton	213°
Stonehead	218°
The Gray Stone of Clochforbie	221°

Axes of Symmetry – Fig 5.24

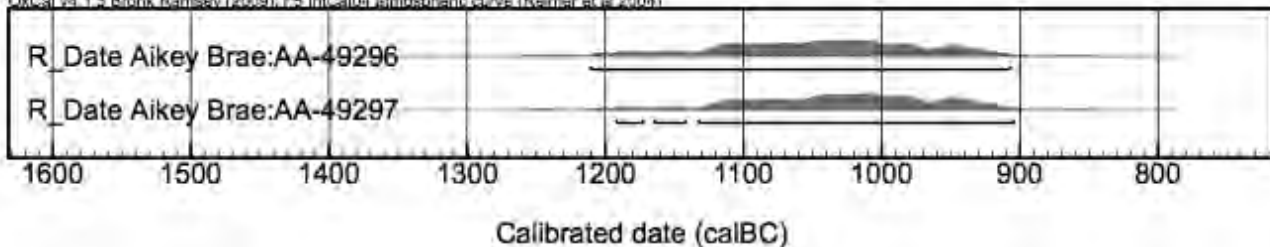
The Nine Stanes	150°
Aquhorthies	176°
Loudon Wood	184°

Loanhead of Daviot	192°
Castle Fraser	196°
Tomnagorn	200°
Easter Aquhorthies	203°
Rothiemay	216°
Sunhoney	233°
Midmar Kirk	233°
Tomnaverie	242°

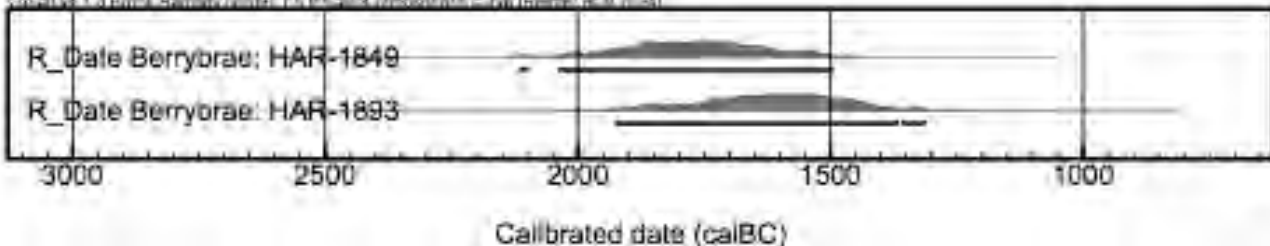
Appendix 5: Calibrated Radiocarbon Dates of the Recumbent Stone Circles



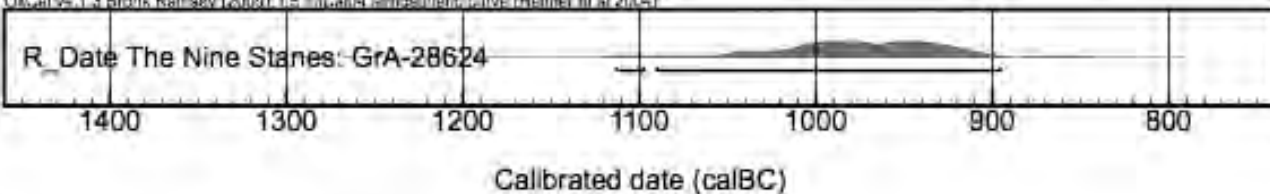
OxCal v4.1.3 Bronk, Ramsey (2009), v5 IntCal04 atmospheric curve (Reimer et al 2004)



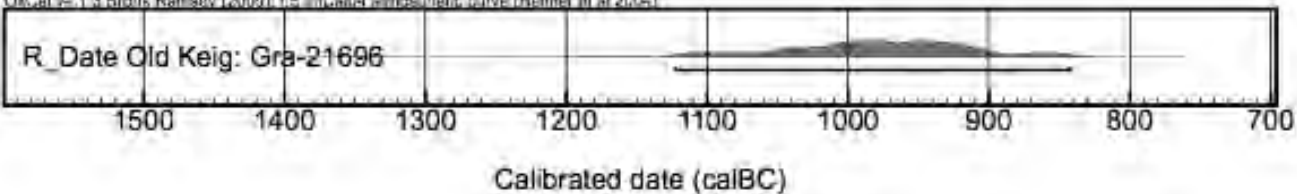
OxCal v4.1.3 Bronk, Ramsey (2009), v5 IntCal04 atmospheric curve (Reimer et al 2004)



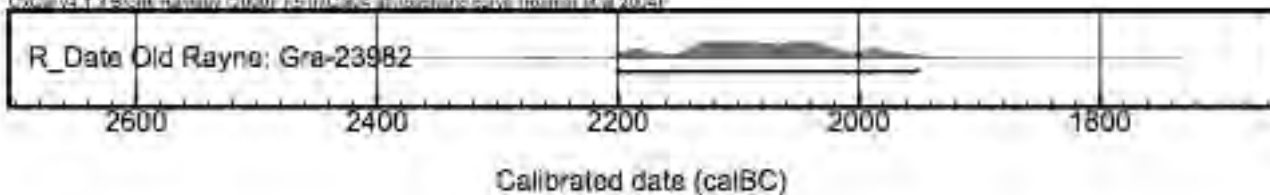
OxCal v4.1.3 Bronk, Ramsey (2009), v5 IntCal04 atmospheric curve (Reimer et al 2004)



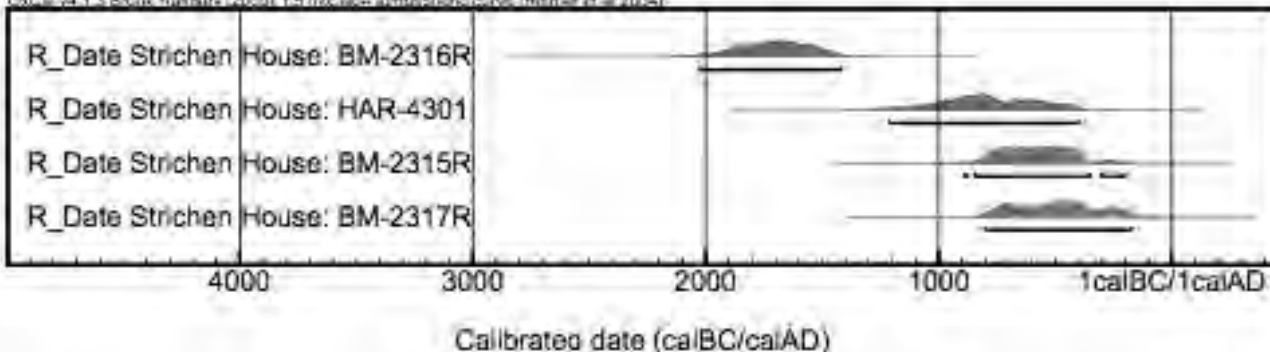
OxCal v4.1.3 Bronk, Ramsey (2009), v5 IntCal04 atmospheric curve (Reimer et al 2004)



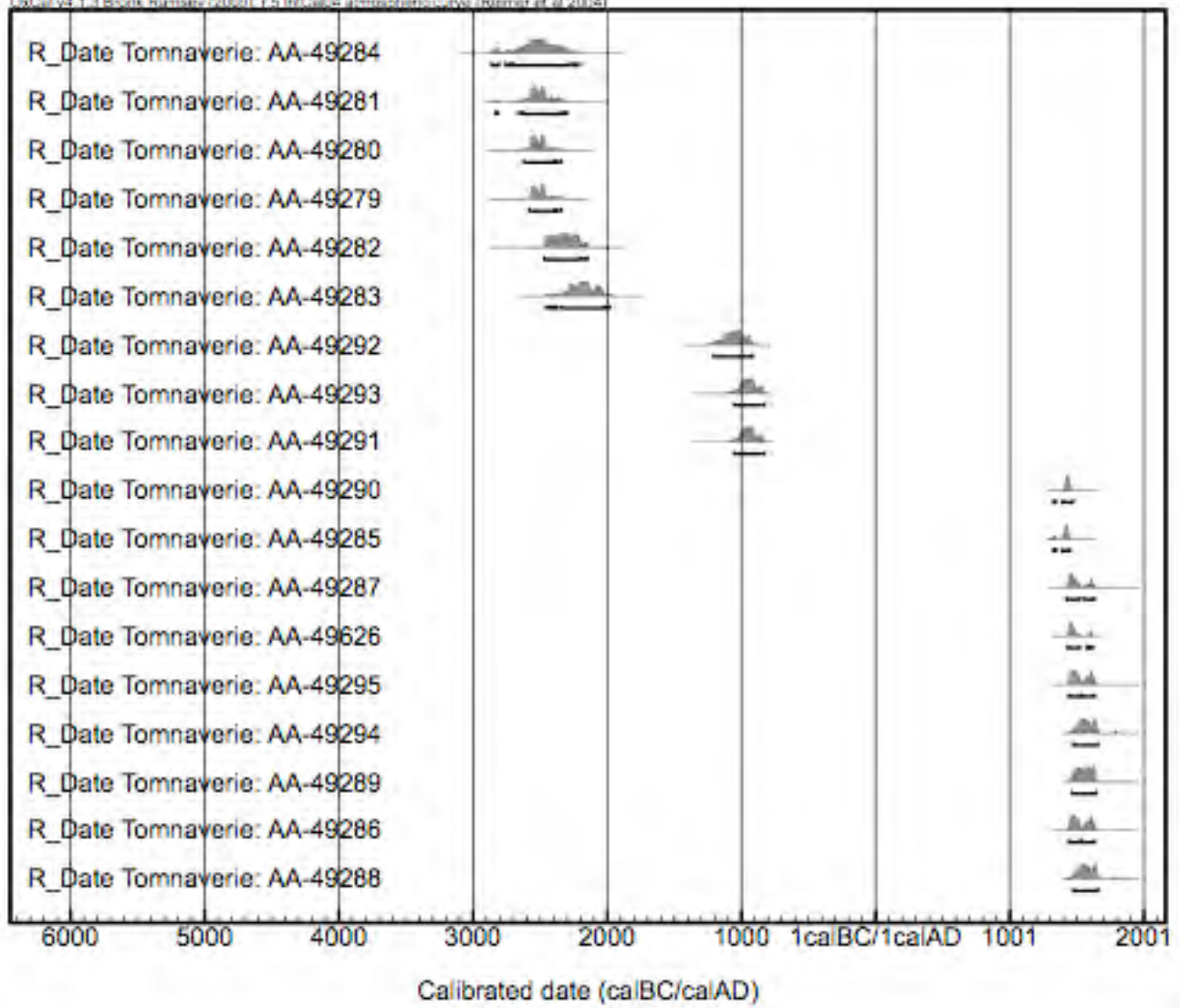
OxCal v4.1.3 Bronk, Ramsey (2009), v5 IntCal04 atmospheric curve (Reimer et al 2004)



OxCal v4.1.3 Bronk, Ramsey (2009), v5 IntCal04 atmospheric curve (Reimer et al 2004)



DeCal_v3.1.3 Book: Ramsey (2009) v.5 IntCal13 atmospheric (Reimer et al 2009)



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