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# TARRADALE THROUGH TIME: TARRADALE MAINS ABANDONED MAILERS' SETTLEMENT

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
TABLE of CONTENTS.....	iv
TABLE of FIGURES .....	v
SUMMARY.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	3
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	4
AIMS and OBJECTIVES.....	15
METHODS of INVESTIGATION .....	16
Phase One – Clearance.....	16
Phase Two – Site Survey.....	17
Phase Three – Excavation.....	19
Trench One .....	19
Trench Two .....	23
Trenches Three and Four.....	23
DISCUSSION and RECOMMENDATIONS.....	25
CONCLUSION.....	30
APPENDIX ONE.....	31
STRUCTURES and ASSOCIATED FEATURES.....	31
MAN-MADE FEATURES.....	38
NATURAL FEATURES.....	43
APPENDIX TWO.....	45
FINDS.....	45
Metal Detector and Associated Finds .....	45
Finds from T1 House 2.....	45
CONTEXT LIST .....	46
Trenches 1 and 2, House 2 .....	46
Trench 3, Feature 23.....	47
Bibliography .....	48
Thank You .....	49

# TABLE OF FIGURES

*Frontispiece: Illustration of Tarradale and the Black Isle looking north. Image from J. S. Bone Collection, © NOSAS .....i*

*Figure 1 Aerial photo of the mailer settlement in woodland to north of Tarradale Mains from west, J. S. Bone Collection, ©NOSAS ..... 1*

*Figure 2 Maps of area, including Lidar scan – contains Ordnance Survey data, © Crown copyright and database rights 2017, and public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.03..... 3*

*Figure 3 General Roy map 1747-52, © NLS ..... 4*

*Figure 4 Maps of area – contains Ordnance Survey data, © Crown copyright and database rights 2017 and public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.03 ..... 4*

*Figure 5 Plan of the Lands and Barrony of Tarradale - the Property of Kenneth Murchison Esq - made out from an accurate Survey by David Aitken, 1788, © NLS..... 5*

*Figure 6 Extract from Plan of the Lands and Barroney of Dryne - the Property of Colonel Colin Graham - made out from an accurate Survey by David Aitken, 1876, © NLS..... 6*

*Figure 7 Extract from 1788 Aitken map of Tarradale showing settlement before abandonment, © NLS..... 6*

*Figure 8 Extract – Contents list from 1788 Aitken map of Tarradale, © NLS ..... 7*

*Figure 9 Extract – Tarradale House (Mains) from 1788 Aitken map, © NLS ..... 7*

*Figure 10 Extract – Names of tenants of settlement 1788 Aitken map of Tarradale, © NLS ..... 8*

*Figure 11 Aerial photo of the Tarradale Mains settlement site, private collection ..... 11*

*Figure 12 Extract – Plan of the Lands of Redcastle, the Property of Patrick Grant Esquire. 1824, © NLS..... 13*

*Figure 13 Site of House 2 before clearance, © A. Coombs ..... 16*

*Figure 14 Clearance of House 2 and House 1, © A. Coombs ..... 16*

*Figure 15 Survey of Site, © A. Coombs ..... 17*

*Figure 16 Original Compass and Paced Plan of Site, © J. Wombell..... 17*

*Figure 17 Plane tabling of House 2, © A. Coombs..... 18*

*Figure 18 Photogrammetry Plan, © A. Thompson ..... 18*

*Figure 19 Pole photo of House 3, © J. McComas..... 18*

*Figure 20 House 2 cleared before excavation, © A. Coombs..... 19*

*Figure 21 Plan of position of Trench 1 and Trench 2, © R. E. Jones..... 19*

*Figure 22 Trench 1 looking south, © A. Coombs..... 20*

*Figure 23 Trench 1 looking north, © A. Coombs..... 20*

*Figure 24 Trench 1 pole photo, © J. McComas..... 21*

*Figure 25 Plan of Trench 1 ..... 21*

*Figure 26 View of north wall slot looking east, © A. Coombs ..... 21*

*Figure 27 View of north face of south wall, © A. Coombs..... 22*

*Figure 28 View of south face of south wall, © A. Coombs..... 22*

<i>Figure 29 Slot on north side of south wall showing cobbles, © A. Coombs</i>	22
<i>Figure 30 View of Trench two from above showing possible post holes, © A. Coombs</i>	23
<i>Figure 31 Plan of position of Trench Three, Trench Four, and Sondage, © R. E. Jones</i>	23
<i>Figure 32 View of north end of Trench three looking south, © A. Coombs</i>	24
<i>Figure 33 Pole photo of Trenches three and four from SSE, © J. McComas</i>	24
<i>Figure 34 View of sondage from north, © A. Coombs</i>	24
<i>Figure 35 (Appendix 1) Schematic version of paced plan (fig.16, p. 17), © R. E. Jones</i>	31
<i>Figure 36 (Appendix 1) Plane table plan of House 1</i>	32
<i>Figure 37 (Appendix 1) Plane table plan of House 2 and House 3</i>	34
<i>Figure 38 (Appendix 1) View of enclosure 2.3 from north</i>	34
<i>Figure 39 (Appendix 1) Plane table plan of feature 23 and House 4</i>	36
<i>Figure 40 (Appendix 1) Plane table plan of House 5</i>	37
<i>Figure 41 (Appendix 1) Plane table plan of House 6</i>	38
<i>Figure 42 (Appendix 1) View of enclosure 24 from northwest</i>	40
<i>Figure 43 (Appendix 1) View of trackway 6 from north</i>	42
<i>Figure 44 (Appendix 1) View of pool 45 from northwest</i>	43
<i>Figure 45 (Appendix 2) Cauldron pieces, glass, pottery and miscellaneous finds</i>	46

## SUMMARY

Between 7 and 14 April 2018, an archaeological survey and small-scale excavation were carried out on an abandoned mailers' settlement near Tarradale Mains Farm by a group of volunteers from the North of Scotland Archaeological Society (hereafter NOSAS).



Figure 1 Aerial photo of the mailer settlement in woodland to north of Tarradale Mains from west, J. S. Bone Collection, ©NOSAS

The post-medieval abandoned mailers' settlement near Tarradale Mains Farm is the most recent historic site investigated by the wider *Tarradale Through Time* project examining landscape history of Tarradale from the earliest occupation 6000 years ago to the early 1800s. The abandoned mailers' settlement lies in an area of rough grazing and regenerated native woodland to the north of Tarradale Mains Farm but is not recorded on any maps from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey 1873<sup>1</sup> and onwards or in any archaeological records. The area is no longer in agricultural use and it was decided to make a record of the remains as they continue to disappear beneath the vegetation and tree cover.

This investigation brings our interpretation of the settlement into the local and national Historic Environment Records and expands the understanding of life in a mailers' (or cottars') settlement in the Highlands in the late 18th century. Although the work on the

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<sup>1</sup> [Explore georeferenced maps - Map images - National Library of Scotland \(nls.uk\)](https://nls.uk/explore/georeferenced-maps-map-images/)

settlement in 2018 was a stand-alone event there are a number of research questions arising out of the survey and excavation which would justify returning to the site and doing further work. For example, more could be done on the agricultural remains to answer wider questions on the agricultural systems specific to the Black Isle and the wider Highland area. There are also research questions about the construction and date of the buildings and the relationship between houses, outbuildings, kale yards, and runrig fields.



## INTRODUCTION

The site is centred on NH 5542 4955 and lies immediately to the south of the A832 between Muir of Ord and Tore and about 950m north of the Beaully Firth. It measures approximately 470m E-W by about 200m N-S. The site is part of the Tarradale estate and is presently not cultivated. There is well-cultivated farmland immediately to the south and east of the site. However, the site lies on boulder clay whereas the land immediately to the south is part of the 50m raised beach. The boulder clay is less fertile land in comparison to the lighter sandier soils of the raised beach.

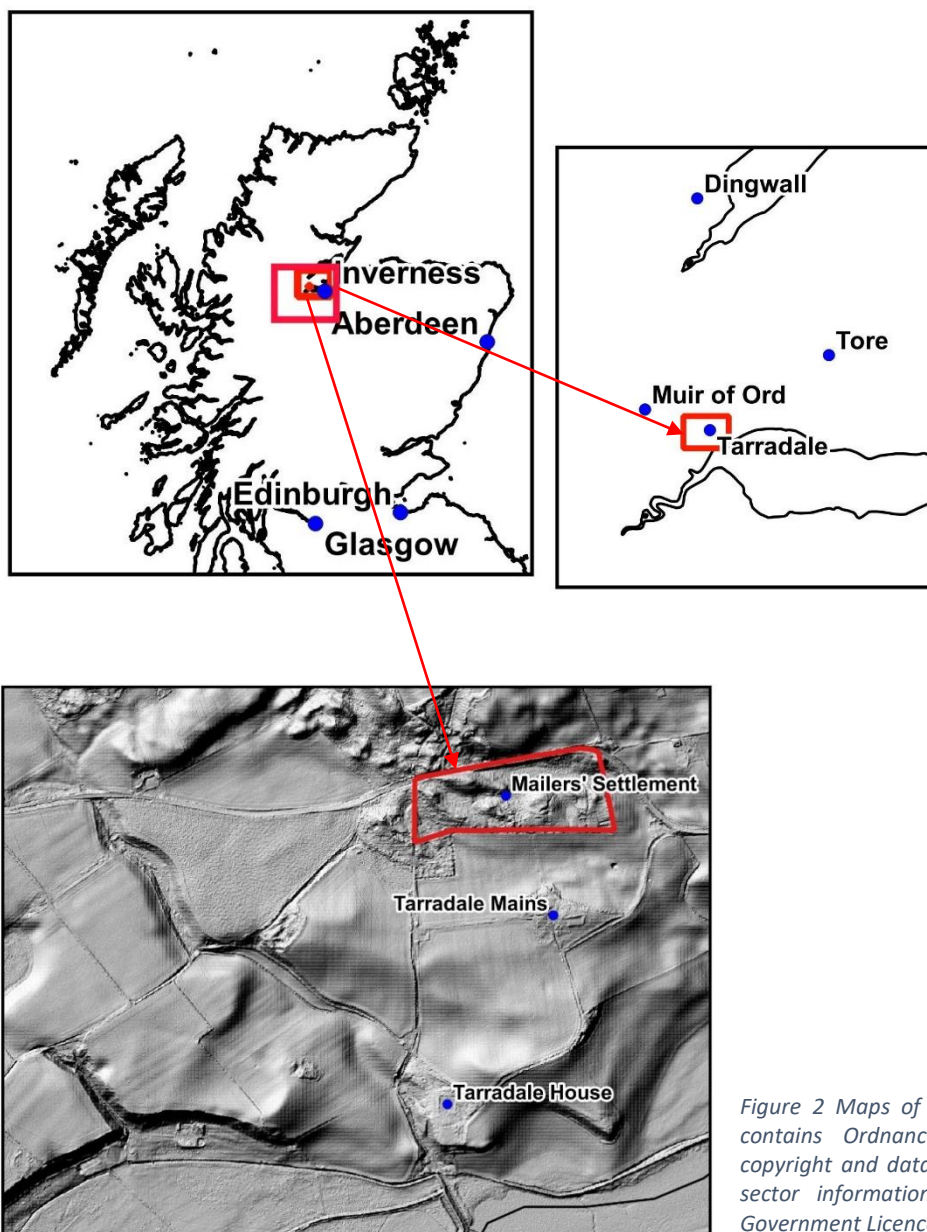


Figure 2 Maps of area, including Lidar scan – contains Ordnance Survey data, © Crown copyright and database rights 2017, and public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.03

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

General Roy's map<sup>2</sup>, produced between 1747 and 1752, shows the name *Tarradale*, however no settlement is depicted.



Figure 3 General Roy map 1747-52, © NLS

Although Tarradale Mains and Tarradale House are on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey maps, the settlement site must have gone out of use and been reduced by 1873 as the site is shown covered with trees and no buildings, occupied, or ruined, are represented.

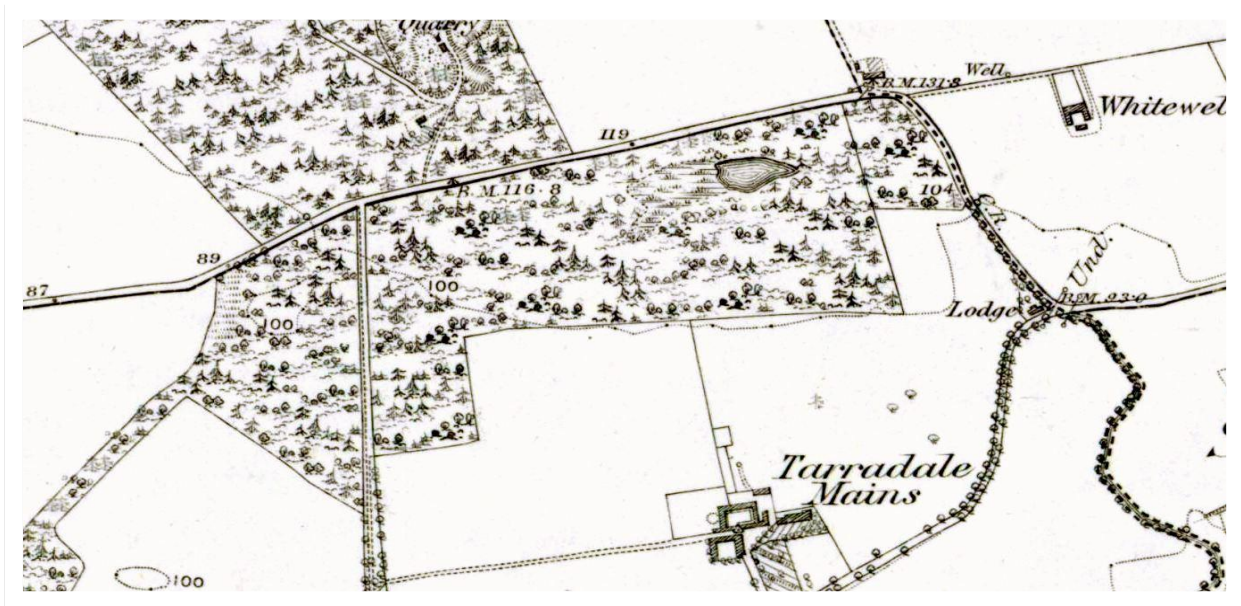


Figure 4 Tarradale settlement area, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey Map, surveyed 1873, © NLS

<sup>2</sup> [Explore georeferenced maps - Map images - National Library of Scotland \(nls.uk\)](https://www.nls.uk/explore-georeferenced-maps-map-images/)

All subsequent Ordnance Survey maps show an area of mixed woodland and rough grazing, with the block at the southwest corner shown as plantation woodland on the 1-inch Ordnance Survey map 1921-1930<sup>3</sup>. The only record of the settlement during its period of occupation is on David Aitken's map of Tarradale Estate compiled in 1788<sup>4</sup> which has recently become available on the National Library of Scotland map website.



Figure 5 Plan of the Lands and Barrony of Tarradale - the Property of Kenneth Murchison Esq - made out from an accurate Survey by David Aitken, 1788, © NLS

The 1788 estate map was created by David Aitken for Dr Kenneth Murchison, who had recently acquired the Tarradale estate, to show the current land use and settlement on the estate and opportunities for improvement. David Aitken was employed to map estates in the area prior to improvement and consolidation of smallholdings into larger, more

<sup>3</sup> [Explore georeferenced maps - Map images - National Library of Scotland \(nls.uk\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> [View: Plan of the Lands and Barrony of Tarradale - the Property of Kenneth Murchison ... - Estate Maps of Scotland', 1750-1900 \(nls.uk\)](#)



economic farms. The houses and farm buildings and agricultural use of the land are shown, with red or yellow lines indicating the boundaries of reorganised farms, although these may have been added after the map was initially compiled.

In the key to a similar estate map<sup>5</sup> drawn by Aitken for Drynie Estate a few miles east of Tarradale, the coloured lines are clearly stated to be the divisions between different farms.

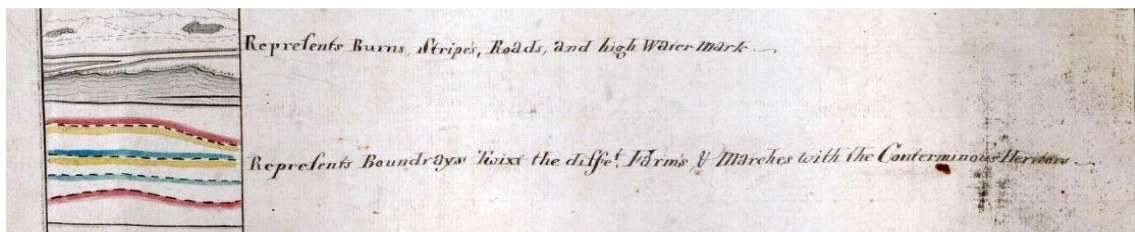


Figure 6 Extract from Plan of the Lands and Barroney of Drynie - the Property of Colonel Colin Graham - made out from an accurate Survey by David Aitken, 1876, © NLS

The improvements which took place on the Tarradale estate after the drawing of the map would have impacted on all the tenants and small settlements. Many settlements shown on the map as a cluster of houses and outbuildings (i.e. fermtouns) are now single farms.

The settlement which is the subject of this project is shown in detail, about three quarters of a mile to the north of Tarradale house on the east side of the map.



Figure 7 Extract from 1788 Aitken map of Tarradale showing settlement before abandonment, © NLS

<sup>5</sup> [View: Plan of the Lands and Barroney of Drynie - the Property of Colonel Colin Graham ... - Estate Maps of Scotland', 1750-1900 \(nls.uk\)](#)

The 1788 map includes a tabulated contents list of “Tenements” or holdings on the estate with the names of the tenants and amount of their holdings in acres, roods and falls (A.R.F). In the table the reference to the now abandoned settlement is listed as “Improvements in 19 separate fields possessed by 11 mailers lying north of the Mains”<sup>6</sup>.

Tenements	Acres	Roods	Falls	Total
Mains of Tarradale	1	0	0	1
Auldalgie	2	0	0	2
Hilltown	3	0	0	3
Ballaclachie	4	0	0	4
Ballaclachie	5	0	0	5
Ballaclachie	6	0	0	6
Ballaclachie	7	0	0	7
Ballaclachie	8	0	0	8
Ballaclachie	9	0	0	9
Ballaclachie	10	0	0	10
Ballaclachie	11	0	0	11
Ballaclachie	12	0	0	12
Ballaclachie	13	0	0	13
Ballaclachie	14	0	0	14
Ballaclachie	15	0	0	15
Ballaclachie	16	0	0	16
Ballaclachie	17	0	0	17
Ballaclachie	18	0	0	18
Ballaclachie	19	0	0	19
Improvements	20	2	2	22
Total	100	2	2	102

Imp <sup>t</sup> from the Mabr	17	19	109	126	109	126
Young Plantation	15	Laying	north of Hilltown			
Plantation	16	Laying	north of the Mains			
Improvements	17	In 19	Sept Fields Poss <sup>d</sup> by 11 Mailers Lying N. of Mains	22	2	22
Total	100			102	2	102

Figure 8 Extract – Contents list from 1788 Aitken map of Tarradale, © NLS



Figure 9 Extract – Tarradale House (Mains) from 1788 Aitken map, © NLS

The ‘Mains’<sup>7</sup> at this point was the farm attached to Tarradale House, the home of the proprietor, Dr Kenneth Murchison

Within a few years of the production of the map a new Tarradale Mains farmhouse and buildings had been built on the better agricultural land just to the south of the mailers’ settlement. It is possible that the building of Tarradale Mains Farm about 1794 for the principal tenant of the estate indirectly led to the mailers’ settlement going out of use.

<sup>6</sup> [View: Plan of the Lands and Barroney of Tarradale - the Property of Kenneth Murchison ... - Estate Maps of Scotland', 1750-1900 \(nls.uk\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> [View: Plan of the Lands and Barroney of Tarradale - the Property of Kenneth Murchison ... - Estate Maps of Scotland', 1750-1900 \(nls.uk\)](#)

A 1791 rental of the whole of Tarradale Estate “Rental of Maillers on the Estate of Tarradale 28<sup>th</sup> February 1791”<sup>8</sup>, lists all the tenants’ names but surprisingly, within the study area of the abandoned settlement, only one name, that of Colin McKenzie, is found in both the 1788 map and the 1791 rental. Mailers (also ‘maillers’, ‘mealers’) were a class of tenants who were the poorest and paid their rent mainly in kind, hens, eggs and labour on the Mains farm in addition to a small cash rent. The Aitken map gives names to each of the tenants in the study area, and we expected to find evidence of five houses within the investigated area which we presumed would be the buildings associated with the mailers named on the map, i.e. Duncan McKiver, Ewan McKiver, Norman Glass, Janet McKiver and John Ferguson, each of whom appeared to have a house and a defined area of land.

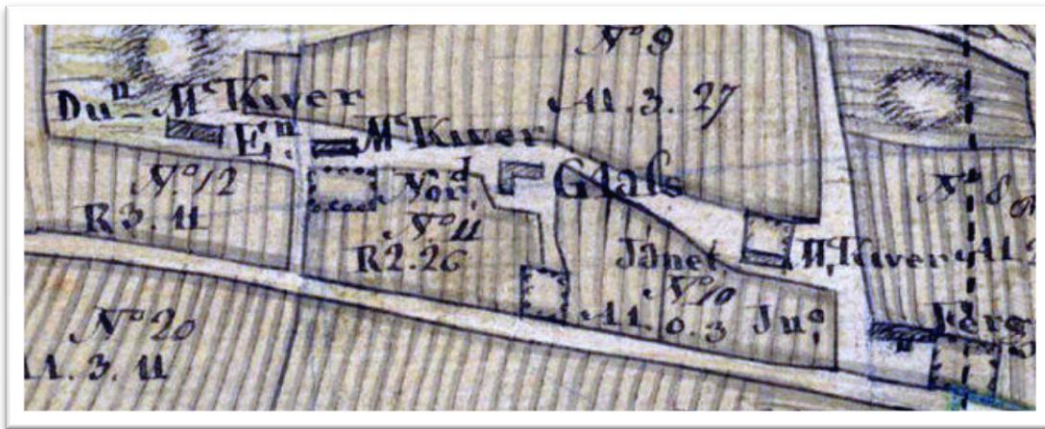


Figure 10 Extract – Names of tenants of settlement 1788 Aitken map of Tarradale, © NLS

Of the rest of the 11 mailers “north of the Mains”, the building on the 1788 map belonging Nanny Grant at the western end of the site has disappeared under the later access road to Tarradale House, and the buildings belonging to Colin McKenzie just south of the study area were not found when the plantation was walked. It was concluded that this area and the area to the west of the access road had been extensively quarried, either for stone or possibly for clay, prior to the modern planting of conifers. As no remains were found this area was not included in the survey. The other mailers included in the 1788 list lived in houses to the east of the study area, most of which are no longer identifiable owing to realignment of the main road.

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<sup>8</sup> Private collection



Among the documentary evidence considered were references to mealers or mailers in the Old Statistical Account 1791-2<sup>9</sup> for Urray parish where Tarradale is situated.

*The great body of the people is divided into two classes, tenants and cottagers; or as the latter are called here, mailers. The former amount to 120, who rent from £5 to £10 per year. Not above two or three pay £30. The mailers are those poor people who build huts on barren ground and improve spots around them, for which they pay nothing for a stipulated number of years. The proprietor frequently indulges them with tools & feed for the first season. After the first period is expired, these crofts are rented at from 3s to 40s a year.*

The Black Isle has some of the best agricultural land in northern Scotland, currently producing high-quality malting barley for the whisky industry. Even in the late 1780s, the area was noted for its legal and illegal distilling. The Old Statistical Account (hereafter OSA) reports that there are nine licensed stills “at 30 gallons each” in the parish of Urray and “*the whole barley in the parish is distilled*”<sup>10</sup>. Apparently, it was not uncommon for mailers to pay the cash part of their rent with whisky made in unlicensed stills.

The development of the agricultural potential was underway at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the red lines just to the south of the study area on the 1788 Aitken map of Tarradale may indicate the proposed boundary of the new Mains Farm. The double dotted line to the west of the settlement indicates a new (and still current) access road to Tarradale House, and the single dotted line on the east side shows the line where a large stone boundary wall was to be built, the land to the east of the wall being improved as arable.

The Aitken map suggests the fields of rigs assigned to the tenants were not enclosed; a situation which was common at this time on the Black Isle.

*The tenants alledge, that they cannot afford the expense of inclosing their lands, ...even if they were inclosed, they say, they cannot lie out of their ordinary crops for long as would be necessary to put their farms in modern cultivation.*<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> [Statistical Accounts of Scotland \(edina.ac.uk\)](http://edina.ac.uk)

<sup>10</sup> [Statistical Accounts of Scotland \(edina.ac.uk\)](http://edina.ac.uk)

<sup>11</sup> [Statistical Accounts of Scotland \(edina.ac.uk\)](http://edina.ac.uk)

George Gun Munro of the nearby estate of Poyntzfield, contributed to Sir John Sinclair's *General view of Agriculture of the Northern Counties of Scotland*<sup>12</sup> written in 1795, and was very complimentary about Kenneth Murchison's care for his tenants.

*Mr Murchison of Taradale, with his medical knowledge, possesses very great humanity. Seeing the miserable state of health and constitution to which the poor inhabitants in general are reduced, by the wretchedness of their dirty, low, suffocating hovels, he instantly determined to remove so shocking an evil, as far as he could, upon his own estate.*

Later in the document, Munro discusses how mailers might be better accommodated:

*...drawing them into small close colonies, directing the construction of their houses in a more comfortable manner, and these to be commodiously placed in regular ranges together, near some good wholesome brook or spring, with their lands apportioned out contiguous to their dwellings.*

Unfortunately, no record has been found giving details of the actual improvements which gave rise to the above compliment. It is possible that the settlement at Tarradale is an example of Kenneth Murchison's humanity whereby he gave his poor tenants pieces of land to cultivate and to build decent clean and dry houses beside their land. These mailers were probably poor tenants who were being resettled when the old communally worked fermtouns were being reorganised into more modern and larger farms.

The inference from the 1788 estate map is that the 'runrig' system of cultivation was still being practised across the estate, which would involve the tenants sharing the various areas of cultivated land, common grazing, and sharing the provision of animals to plough the land. Again, the OSA provides some information about this, suggesting that the ploughing was done with horses, but adds that mailers had very few animals to provide manure for the ground or to pull ploughs:

*Some of the cottagers have from 1 to 3 horses. ...and each mailer at 1 (black cattle) ...worth 40s<sup>13</sup>.*

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<sup>12</sup> Sinclair Sir John, *General view of Agriculture of the Northern Counties of Scotland*.

<sup>13</sup> [Statistical Accounts of Scotland \(edina.ac.uk\)](http://edina.ac.uk)



The OSA for Urray makes no direct reference to the Tarradale Mains mailers' settlement and no references were found in any other official documents. The only documentation for the site is on the Aitken map of 1788. Again, on the map of the adjoining Drynie estate, Aitken, makes it clear in the key to his drawing that the enclosed lines '*Represent Arable Lands and the Direction of the Ridges.*' So, it is reasonable to assume that much of the Tarradale estate was still in rig and furrow cultivation in 1788. Even though new farms with large areas of cultivated ground were being laid out, the tenant farmers may well have continued ploughing the fields in rigs for some time before the fields were properly drained and improved and in a fit state to be ploughed using the modern system of larger areas of unidirectional ploughing.

Several enclosed areas were found during the survey; two conform to the 'yards' or enclosed plots shown on the Aitken map, but others were found that are not shown on the map. It is possible that some enclosures date to a later occupation period in the life of the settlement.

On a site such as the Tarradale settlement which seems to have been in runrig cultivation, it could be expected that the undulations of the rig and furrow would have been reasonably visible in the landscape. However, there was only a very small area of five rigs identified on the north side of the site. It is possible that the best of the ground on the south side of the site was brought briefly back into cultivation during the Second World War, however this is not confirmed by the black and white aerial photograph thought to have been taken soon after the war.



*Figure 11 Aerial photo of the Tarradale Mains settlement site, private collection*

The above photograph (fig. 11) and the Lidar photograph (fig. 2, p. 3) show distinct signs of rig and furrow to the north of House 5 and House 6. It may be that the depth of bracken litter now on the site is such that the rigs could not be seen or felt when walking over the ground. Once again there is no record in official documents of re-use of the land to the north of Tarradale Mains once the settlement went out of use. It is understood that the previous farmer of Tarradale Mains used the land for grazing sheep and cattle into the 1990s.

The Aitken map clearly shows the individual holdings of each named tenant, and the size of their holding. Each tenant appears to have a house associated with their land, just as was described in Sir John Sinclair's comments. Was the settlement an example of Kenneth Murchison's improvements of his tenants' lot? The results of the survey did not quite match the map as three buildings were found which are not on the Aitken map. These buildings may be associated with later occupation. However, it has to be repeated that by the time of the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey maps in 1873, all the buildings had become so ruinous (i.e. without roofs and with collapsed walls) that they were not depicted on the map, and any reoccupation must have been relatively short lived.

A map of the adjacent estate, Redcastle, to the east of Tarradale, compiled in 1824<sup>14</sup>, is included in the National Library of Scotland's online estate maps. At the point where the boundaries join northeast of, and beside the road from Muir of Ord to Tore, there is another group of small fields and buildings. This is the area of what became Whitewells farm, still represented by the survival of Whitewells farmhouse, though it is no longer operated as a separate farm. The several small buildings shown in the 1824 Redcastle estate map possibly include some buildings that were shown in a similar position on the 1788 Tarradale estate map. This was outside our immediate study area, but the named holdings beside the 'wells' was 'Logan' in the 1788 map and the name also appears on the Redcastle map list of tenants. The mailers' holdings shown in the 1824 Redcastle map are on better land, or at least land that has been extensively improved, now amalgamated into larger fields – a process that did not happen in our study area to the north of Tarradale Mains, even though the underlying topography of marshy and hummocky boulder clay was the same.

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<sup>14</sup> [Plan of the Lands of Redcastle, the Property of Patrick Grant, Esquire - Estate Maps, 1750s-1900s \(nls.uk\)](https://nls.uk)

The presence of these mailers on the Redcastle estate immediately to the east of the Tarradale Mains mailers' settlement, suggests that the owners of Redcastle estate were maintaining the settlement pattern which we know existed next door at Tarradale in 1788. It is impossible to say if the Tarradale Mains mailers' settlement was still occupied in 1824 but, as the tenants' names have disappeared from the rental by 1791, it is considered unlikely. The settlement site may have been abandoned at the time of the building of the new Mains farm when possibly the settlement area was landscaped, while the Redcastle mailers would have disappeared after 1824 when the improved Whitewells farm was created out of their holdings.

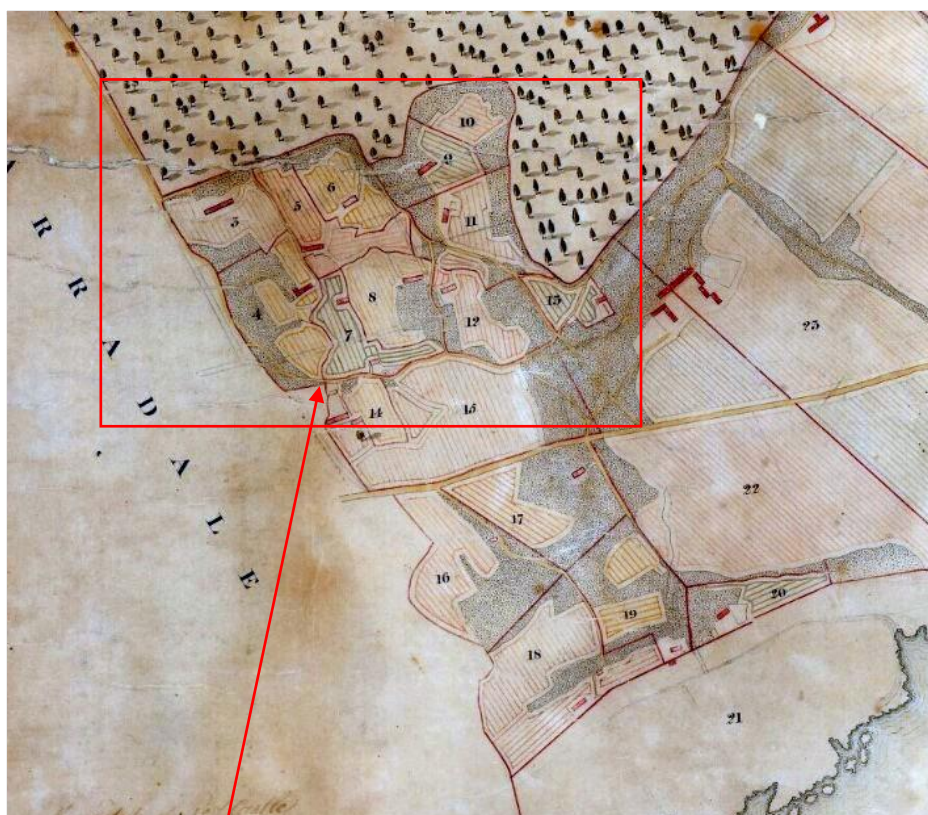


Figure 12 Extract – Plan of the Lands of Redcastle, the Property of Patrick Grant Esquire, 1824, © NLS

Whitewell Mailers					
Angus Campbell	2:0:7	1:0:5	5:0:12		
William Logan	2:1:54	2:1:17	4:5:11		
Andrew Bisset	2:2:10	0:0:10	2:2:20		
Alexander, M <sup>c</sup> Donald	1:5:57	0:2:6	2:2:5		
Alexander, M <sup>c</sup> Lennan	2:0:54	0:0:17	2:1:11		
Widow, M <sup>c</sup> Lennan	1:5:54	1:1:10	5:1:4		
William, M <sup>c</sup> Kenzie	1:0:25	1:0:18	2:1:5		
Widow, M <sup>c</sup> Kay	1:0:2	1:2:19	2:2:21		
Widow Fraser	1:5:52	2:0:15	4:0:5		
John Campbell	1:5:25	1:0:27	5:0:12		
Roderick, M <sup>c</sup> Farquhar	0:1:25	0:1:25	0:5:10		
John Logan, senior	1:2:50		1:2:50		
John Logan, junior	7:2:28	1:2:24	9:1:12		

The survey and recording of the Tarradale Mains abandoned houses built by the poor tenants was an equally important part of the research. Once the building remains were

cleared of vegetation, the stones of the lowest courses of the buildings were revealed as relatively small – smaller than 0.5m in any direction and bonded with clay. One of the points considered in the discussion section of this report is whether the houses were clay-walled houses built on shallow stone foundations, or if the walls were constructed of clay and bool, i.e. layers of clay and rounded boulders, a style of building more often seen in Aberdeenshire. The traditional form of building in many areas of the Highlands was to layer turf and stone walls on a low stone foundation. In places where there was a plentiful supply of turf or 'feal', walls could be made entirely of turf on a stone foundation. Where stone was more available, turf would be used as a 'mortar' to secure the stone in place and seal gaps between the stones. The evidence from the examination of one building in the Tarradale settlement was that clay was present, but turf was not identified.

Presently the area is uncultivated apart from some recently planted trees to provide wildlife cover. The pools of water depicted on the 1788 map remain but have expanded into pools with boggy margins with much natural tree regeneration both in and beside the water. The building remains are slowly disappearing and were initially difficult to locate under a thick cover of bracken and gorse, but once the undergrowth had been cleared away it was clear that this possibly short-lived settlement has left its mark on the landscape.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. The main aim of the project was to survey and record the settlement remains on part of the area of the Tarradale Mains mailers' settlement shown in 1788 estate map of Tarradale. A copy of this report will be sent to the Historic Environment Record of Highland Council (HER) and the CANMORE record of Historic Environment Scotland.
2. To survey and record the landscape immediately surrounding the abandoned settlement to enable an understanding of the agricultural methods undertaken by group of tenants.
3. To record and characterise the building methods and materials used in the construction of the now-ruined buildings.



# METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

## Phase One – Clearance



*Figure 13 Site of House 2 before clearance, © A, Coombs*

The first phase of the work was vegetation clearance. This was done over a period of four days in February and early March 2018 to prevent disturbance of the breeding bird population. The site is within woodland but apart from one dead tree in House 1 no trees were removed. There was a considerable amount of gorse and it was removed from the buildings. Apart from the use of a chainsaw on the tree and the larger gorse bushes, all the work was done by hand. The resulting brash was piled away from the various features. Where necessary the dead bracken was raked off the features and left in heaps.



*Figure 14 Clearance of House 2 and House 1, © A. Coombs*

## Phase Two – Site Survey

The whole site was surveyed by compass and pacing to create a site plan



Figure 15  
Survey of Site,  
© A. Coombs

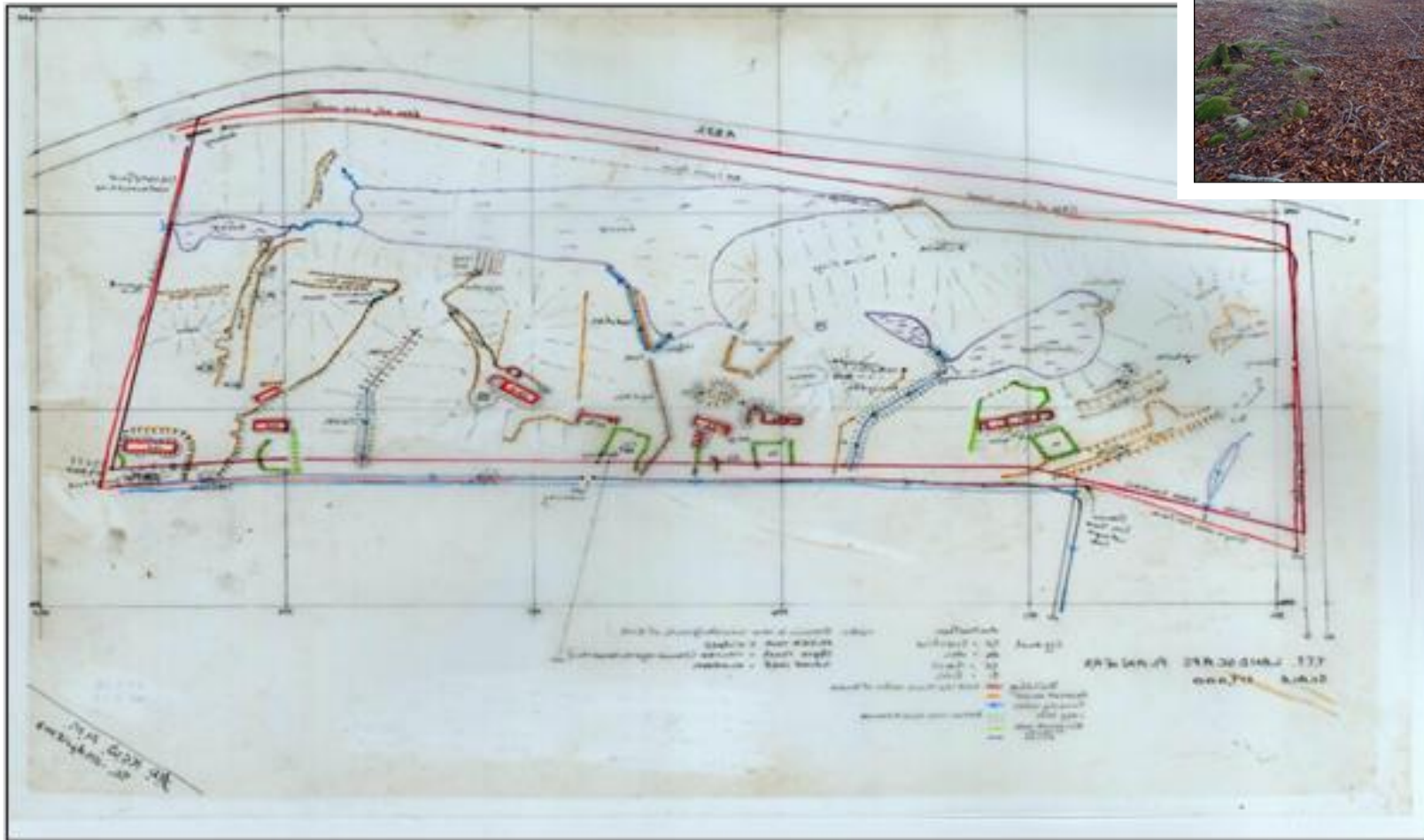


Figure 16 Original Compass and Paced Plan of Site, © J. Wombell

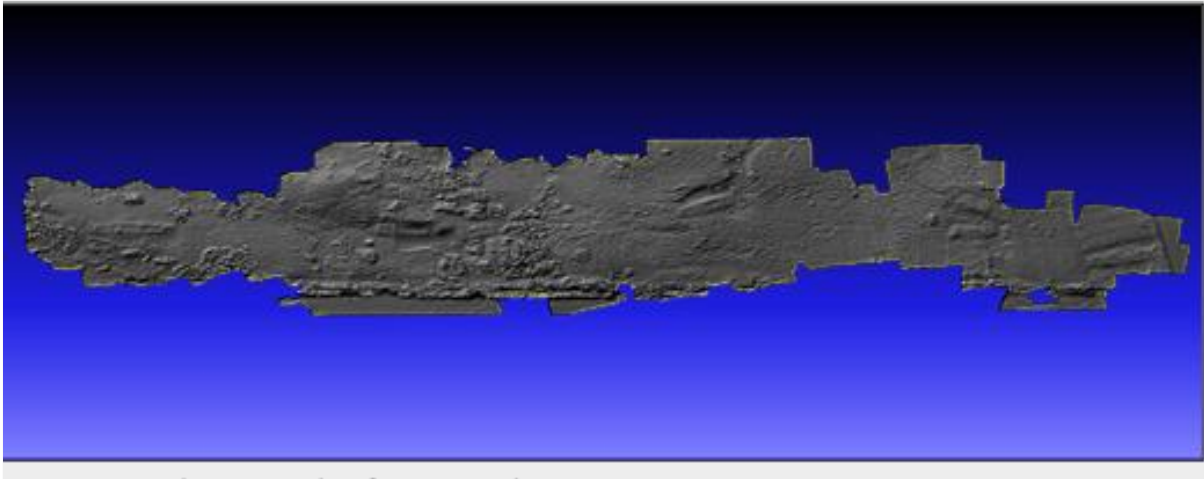


Individual buildings were surveyed by plane tabling.



*Figure 17 Plane tabling of House 2, © A. Coombs*

The site was flown by drone and several pole photos were taken to produce pictures using photogrammetry.



*Figure 18. Photogrammetry Plan, © A. Thompson*



*Figure 19 Pole photo of House 3, © J. McComas*



## Phase Three – Excavation

### Trench One



Figure 20  
House 2  
cleared  
before  
excavation,  
© A. Coombs

Once the building remains had been planned, a trench was laid out over House 2 and then extended in order to include the area in front of the building to ascertain if there were features associated with the building and enclosure lying to the south.

Trench one was 1m east west and extended 6m north south across the building down into hollow (2.1). It was later continued up the north bank of the enclosure (2.3).

The results from the enclosure bank were inconclusive and this part

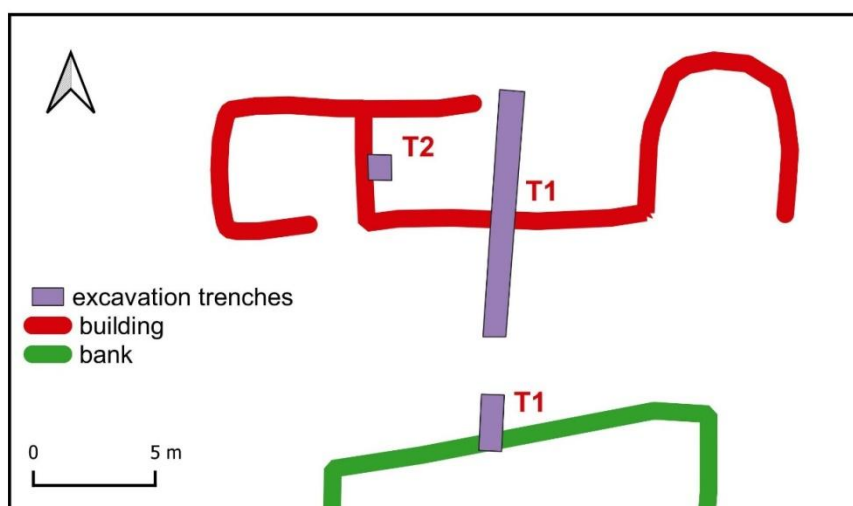


Figure 21 Plan of position of Trench 1 and Trench 2, © R. E. Jones

of the trench was closed after de-turfing. The bank appeared to be made of stone and earth and there were no finds within the shallow (c.0.20m) excavation.





Figure 22 Trench 1 looking north, © A. Coombs

The hollow 2.1 was excavated down to a roughly cobbled surface c.0.20m below the topsoil. The north part of the hollow sloped up to the south wall of the building and cobbling was not evident or had not survived as the ground rose up the slope.

The main purpose of the trench across the building was to find the back wall, doorway and hearth and any information about the building methods.



Figure 23 Trench 1 looking south, © A. Coombs



As the work progressed it was decided to reduce the width of the trench to 0.5m east west. The north part of the trench extended into the bank and at the base a wall slot was exposed.



Figure 24 Trench 1 pole photo, © J. McComas

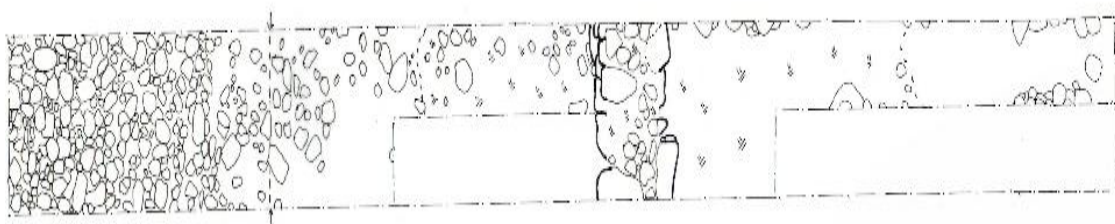


Figure 25 Plan of Trench 1

The north wall had completely collapsed, and a considerable amount of small stone and clay was removed from the trench to the south suggesting that the wall had fallen into the building. The front (south) wall was fully exposed down to the subsoil. The construction of the wall (which may only be the



Figure 26 View of north wall slot looking east, © A. Coombs

foundations of the wall) was typical of buildings in the Highlands with an inner and outer wall face of better stone and an infill of smaller stones and clay. The wall was c.0.5m wide and c.0.30m high.

The trench was taken down to a tamped clay floor on the inner side of the south wall. The clay floor was thin at this point and where a small section was removed it initially appeared that there may be a cobbled floor below the clay, however the cobbles did not extend across the 1m wide trench.



*Figure 29 View of north face of south wall, © A. Coombs*



*Figure 29 View of south face of south wall, © A. Coombs*



*Figure 29 Slot on north side of south wall showing cobbles, © A. Coombs*



### Trench Two

A second trench (T2), 1m square, was put beside the west gable of House 2 to try to locate the fireplace or signs of a cruck slot for supporting the roof. The gable end was more substantial than the S wall and survived to c.0.75m high. There appear to be at least four small stake holes in the clay floor. These could represent the stakes of a wooden lining to the gable of the building or some form of wooden structure immediately in front of the gable wall. There was no indication of any burning of the clay floor, but it was thicker than the clay in Trench one. There was no evidence for a cruck slot, a flat stone may have been a cruck pad, although it appears too small to have supported a cruck timber.



Figure 30 View of Trench two from above showing possible post holes, © A. Coombs

There was no indication of any burning of the clay floor, but it was thicker than the clay in Trench one. There was no evidence for a cruck slot, a flat stone may have been a cruck pad, although it appears too small to have supported a cruck timber.

### Trenches Three and Four

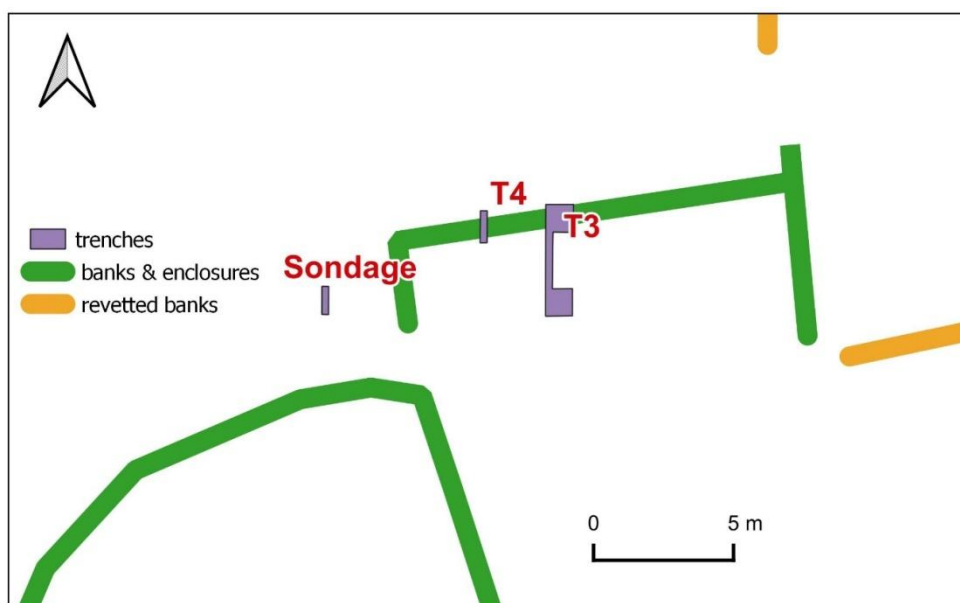


Figure 31 Plan of position of Trench Three, Trench Four, and Sondage, © R. E. Jones

Trench three was laid out across an area of stones, feature 23, to the east of the dry ditch (21) where a house should have been found according to the 1788 estate map. The trench was 1m east west by 4m north south with a 0.25m-wide section between two 1m east west



Figure 32 View of north end of Trench three looking south, © A. Coombs

by 2m trenches at the south end and north end. The intention was to investigate the possible north wall of a building and to find a second south wall. The south end of the trench revealed topsoil up to 0.5m deep before changing to the gritty, orange, natural subsoil. The north section was made up of randomly placed stones immediately below the turf and sitting on natural subsoil with no binding of clay or 'feal'.



Figure 33 Pole photo of Trenches three and four from SSE, © J. McComas

A narrow trench (2m N-S by 0.25m) west of T3 was put across the possible continuation of a building wall. The random nature of the stone placement continued but only 0.25m deep. It was concluded that the materials exposed in T3 and the sondage were field clearance stones rather than a collapsed building.



Figure 34 View of sondage from north, © A. Coombs

One small sondage (1m x 0.25m) was dug c. 10m west of Trench four to investigate the area between Trench three and the dry ditch (21) to understand the depth of the soil in the area. The topsoil in this sondage was only 0.15m deep.

## DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The principal aim of this sub-project of *Tarradale Through Time* was to survey and record the traces of building in uncultivated ground to the north of Tarradale Mains Farm. This has been completed and the report will be sent to the HER and CANMORE.

The secondary aim was to record the surrounding landscape which appears to be relatively unchanged since the settlement was abandoned. Our survey and resulting plans have placed the settlement within the landscape, but it has been more difficult to analyse the actual land use of the site. Where the soil was investigated in T3, feature 23, and in the enclosure 2.3 beside House 2, there was between 0.5m and 1m of soil above the natural subsoil. This suggests the ground had been improved over several years to create a growing medium for small scale crop production.

However, the sondage dug beside feature 23 and the core taken adjacent to feature 19, suggest that the overall ground quality is poor, and the soil is thin and, in all probability, it would only support grass production or infrequent and very low intensity cereal production. This would confirm the reports in the Old Statistical Account and other documents dating from the time of the Aitken map. The cultivated areas depicted on the 1788 Aitken map appear to have been cultivated by the rig and furrow method and one remnant was found on the north side of the site at feature 29. The other rigs can be seen in the black and white aerial photograph and the Lidar plan in areas marked as Feature 36 and 39. Although the direction of these remnants follow the direction of the rigs shown on Aitken's map it would be speculation to suggest the rigs found during the survey are unchanged since the making of the map. The rigs were constructed to increase the depth of soil and, if manuring was taking place regularly, as suggested by the depth of soil in some parts, the fertility of the ground would have increased. The range of crops planted on the rigs could have included barley, oats and potatoes.

The survey suggested that many of the cultivation plots had some form of enclosing bank (features 20, 22) and there were more 'kailyards' or garden plots (features 1.3, 2.3, and 5.2) on the site than depicted by Aitken. This would suggest that some level of 'improvement', or individual operation, was taking place in the settlement despite the reluctance to enclose reported in the Old Statistical Account. While there is no way to confirm this improvement

happened before the abandonment of the settlement, it seems likely as there is no explanation for later enclosures once the settlement was abandoned. The possible 'ladies walk' (feature 40) may suggest that after abandonment the settlement part of the area was included into the policies of Tarradale Mains and landscaped by the occupants of the farm to enhance their surroundings. The ladies walk does, however, conform to a gap between two areas of cultivation on Aitken's map, and the presence of the trees may not be associated with the building of Tarradale Mains as the presence of '*very fine old stately timber*' reported on Tarradale estate in 1795 implies that there were 'specimen' trees already on the estate before the main improvement period.

A third aim of the project was to understand the building methods and materials used by the mailers to build their houses. Our excavation was limited but did provide some information about the building materials. The walls of the buildings were generally 0.5m wide with an inner and outer face of larger stones. There did not appear to be any stone which had been worked in any way in the buildings. The stones varied in size from 20cms to 30cms and many seemed to have been selected because they were naturally square or rectangular but with rounded edges.

The walls were infilled with smaller stones and bonded with clay. The south-facing wall exposed by Trench one survived for two courses and was excavated to the base. The west gable was exposed to the clay floor and had four courses. In the limited section where the natural surface was visible, the wall was sitting directly on the natural subsoil. Therefore, any topsoil must have been cleared before the walls were built directly on to the natural orange gravelly surface. The wall stones do not appear to have been quarried as they are rounded rather than angular and have no tool marks. It is assumed that the stones used in the walls were gathered from the stones contained within the boulder clay on or near the surface, or from field clearance. Tarradale quarry, just to the north of the site across the road, was out of use at the time of the Aitken map and was not reopened until the 1800s. From the superficial observations of all the building materials in the settlement there is no evidence that there was access to quarried stone.

This could confirm the occupants' status as poor tenants given plots of land and encouraged to build their own houses but unable to afford worked stone for building. The clay for the



building could have come from near to the buildings, as the soil core taken just beyond the hollow between features 19 and 21 showed that clay lies very close to the surface in certain areas of the settlement. With an easily accessed source of clay and rough building stone, the walls appear to have been built with a high percentage of clay to stone. This is not quite a typical 'clay and bool' construction, found frequently to the east in Aberdeenshire, but a similar style. The traditional style of building for basic houses in the Highlands is foundations of stone then turf, often described as 'feal', as the main material to bind the stone as the walls progressed upwards. However, it seems that the availability of clay at Tarradale was exploited as feal was more difficult to access; the nearest source being some distance away on the Mulbuie Commonty. By the late 1700s it was being suggested that the Commonty was becoming depleted of feal and fuel (peat), and its exploitation was being discouraged by the landowners<sup>15</sup>. What we are unable to say regarding the Tarradale settlement is whether the walls of the houses were built the same all the way up, i.e. clay and rounded stones continuing above the foundations to eaves height, or whether it was mainly clay and fewer stones as the walls progressed upwards.

The clay was also used as a floor material. The clay floor layer was noticeably thicker at the west gable in Trench two than beside the south wall in Trench one, and when a very small section was removed in Trench one cobbles were found below the surface. However, the cobbles did not continue across the whole of the 1m-wide sondage and were not found beneath the clay in Trench two. It is assumed that there was a simple clay floor, and the cobbles could either strengthen the floor for a cruck or other feature above on the clay, or level the floor base up to the general floor level.

The absence of a doorway in the centre of the south wall was surprising but the wall has not survived well to the east of Trench one and, had there been further excavation the doorway may have been found. The north wall survived for a short distance from the west end of the building before apparently disappearing below the slope of the natural kame behind the house. Trench one was excavated partly to confirm the presence of the north wall. However, the wall was only visible as a wall slot at the edge of the clay floor. There was plenty of stone and clay within the trench immediately to the south of the wall line

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<sup>15</sup> R. Scott, *Division of the Commonty of Mulbuie: consequences of the private appropriation of a communal resource*, 2012.

suggesting the wall had collapsed into the building. We expected to find a drainage ditch behind the north wall, but the wall of the building seems to have been built directly into the bank. There was no indication of the roofing material or support mechanism, and the position of the hearth was not found.

It is not uncommon to find midden pits in front of Highland houses and the cobbled area 2.2 in front of House 2 would fit that explanation. However, it is possible that the hollow in front of the building was originally quarried to provide both the stone and more importantly the clay materials for the building. The excavation revealed a thin layer of topsoil and no sign of midden deposits. House 4 seems to have a similar hollow to the north and has a large pile of stones at the west end, possibly unused building material or field clearance. There was no investigation of these features. Stone extraction may also be the reason for the unexplained 7m diameter hollow 19. When the ground beside the hollow was cored, there was a layer of clay close to the surface. There is some evidence in historic documents and maps for clay pits in the nearby area. The nearby Drynie estate map, also compiled by Aitken, has a large clay pit depicted beside the 'Mansion House'. In comparison, south of House 1 there is a slightly hollow area like those beside House 2 and House 4, but this could be a trackway rather than a midden pit or hollow created by digging for stone or clay.

There were very few small finds from the excavation (Appendix 2). The site was partially metal detected and the broken remains of three cast-iron cooking pots were found. There was a cluster of cast iron fragments in or beside each of Houses 1, 2 and 3, almost suggesting one pot per house. The pots were consistent with the early cast iron pots produced by the Carron Works from 1759 onwards, and this would correspond with the presumed date of the settlement. There were some other fragments of metal as well as a metal chisel and one or two illegible bronze coins. There were a few pieces of ceramic, mainly early white-glazed vessels, and stoneware, as well as fragments of glass including a handful of broken green glass which may have come from an oil lamp. The poverty of finds suggests that the occupants were culturally and materially poor, although it is possible that when the settlement was abandoned, they took most of their possessions with them, assuming they were still serviceable. Many of the everyday vessels would have been made of wood and wicker that has not survived (for example, stave-made containers for milk and

water, and wooden plates for eating off). A few finds, for example the toy revolver, suggest that the site has been used by visitors in modern times.

Although the project's aims were achieved, inevitably questions remain to be answered. The obvious one concerns the relationship of Houses 1 and 3 to the settlement shown on the Aitken map. It seems reasonable to conclude that they were not earlier than the mapped buildings. As suggested earlier in the report, Aitken would not have depicted cultivated land if there was a ruined building on the ground. Therefore, were the two extra houses built to replace the houses of Nanny Grant and Colin McKenzie which were destroyed to make way for the new route to Tarradale House as shown on Aitken's map? Alternatively, were they built to house quarry workers when Tarradale quarry was reopened in the early 1800s to provide building material for the expansion of Inverness?

Research into this possibility is hampered by the lack of documentation of the Tarradale quarry operations. It has been assumed that the settlement went out of use relatively soon after the Aitken map was produced as none of the tenants named appear on the 1791 rental, apart from Colin McKenzie and he no longer lived near Tarradale Mains. However, it is possible that the settlement continued in use for longer than previously considered, or it may have been reoccupied after a period of abandonment, possibly when the quarry was reopened, falling into disuse again before the compilation of the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey maps.

## CONCLUSION

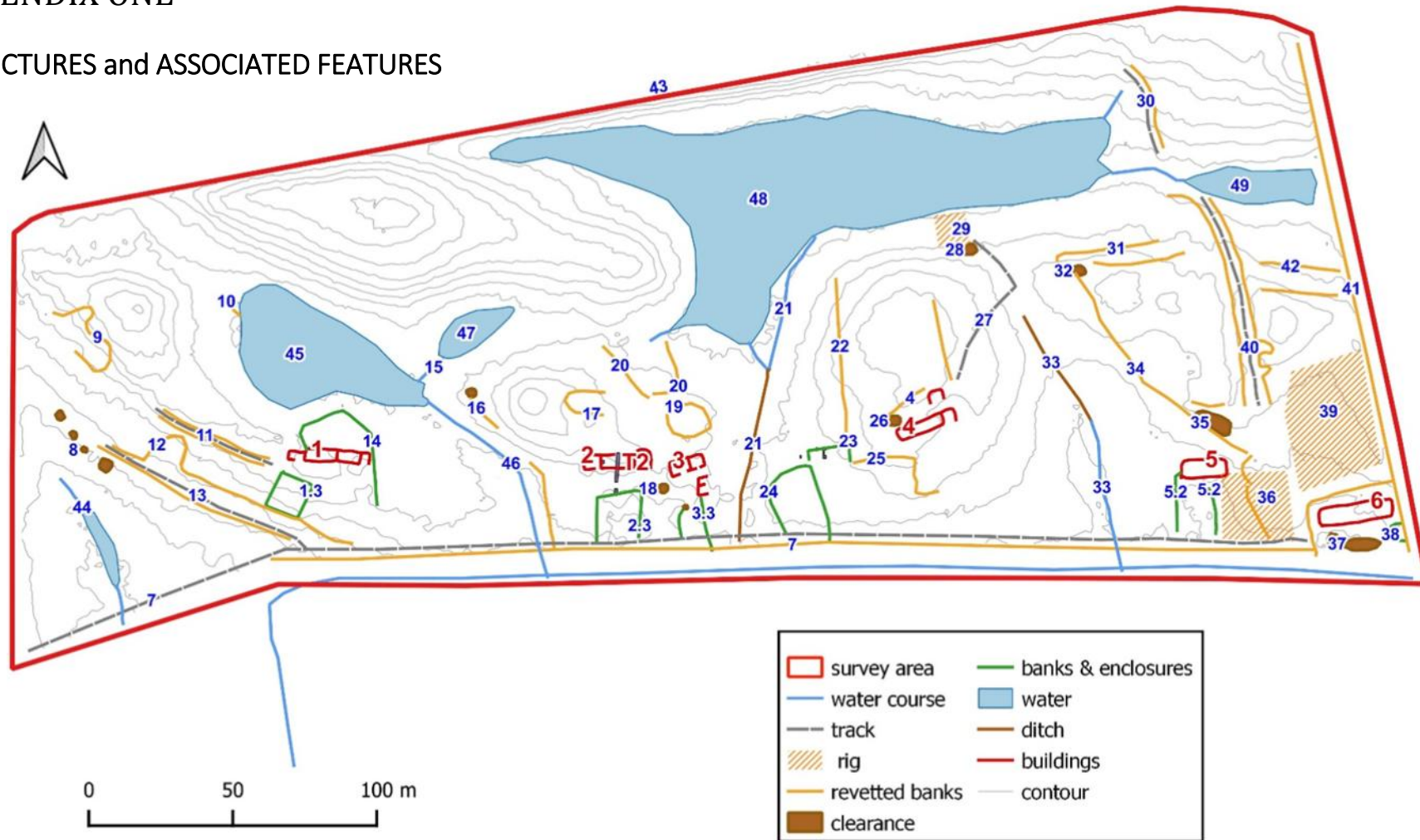
In conclusion, the main aim of the project was successfully completed, and the settlement area has been surveyed and recorded for the future. The secondary aims of learning and understanding the lives of the 'mailers' and their agricultural method have been only partially successful. There is potential within the settlement remains to discover more about the building methods employed. Further excavation could uncover more detail and solve some of the questions about the chronology of the occupation of the buildings.

The site as a whole is an unusual and rare survival of a pre-Improvement settlement cluster on the Black Isle. If, as suggested, the small area of rig and furrow does survive from 1788, it is a rare survival of a pre-Improvement field system, especially on the Black Isle where the high quality of much of the land has resulted in extensive and intensive agriculture over the last 250 years. It is possible that further clearance of some of the enclosed areas would expose more examples, and examination of the soil composition could inform our understanding of the methods used in subsistence farming in the latter years of the 18th Century.

Finally, the structural differences, if there are any, between the buildings shown on Aitken's 1788 estate map, and those buildings not on his map, were not investigated. If this work took place, it may provide information about the historical sequencing of the site.

# APPENDIX ONE

## STRUCTURES and ASSOCIATED FEATURES



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REJ 14 02 2021

Figure 35 (Appendix 1) Schematic version of paced plan (fig.16, p. 17),  
© R. E. Jones

## 1. NH 55296 49493 House 1

The house is not depicted on the Aitken map. The structure is c. 28.5m east west and c. 4.5m wide. The walls are visible as an insubstantial bank of earth and stone, with several larger stones at the corners of the structure and along the walls. In areas where the turf was disturbed during the vegetation clearance, there is no evidence of any material other than earth within the wall structure. The structure has 4 compartments with

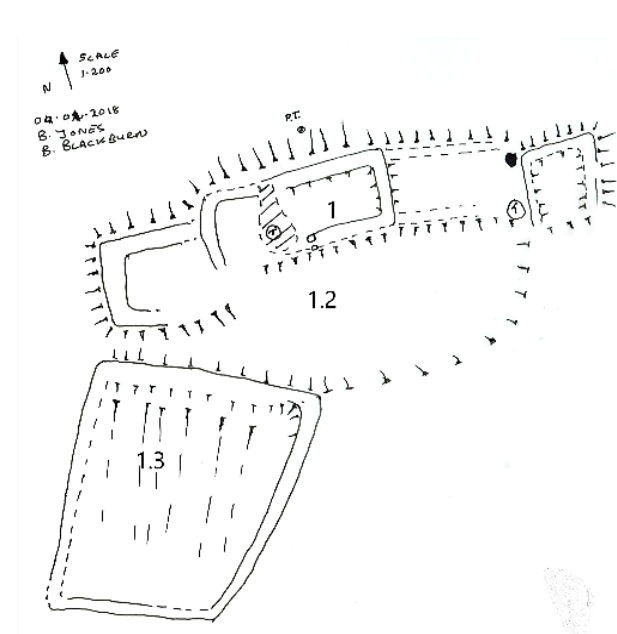


Figure 36 (Appendix 1) Plane table plan of House 1

the central two being the largest, and these may have been living accommodation. At either end there is a smaller compartment, possibly for storage or byres.

1a At the west end of the building is a possible byre. The structure has the most substantial walls of the building. They are up to c. 0.60m high and c. 0.75m wide with an outer wall face on the west end of the south wall. However, this wall is incomplete; it may never have extended the full length of the compartment, leaving an open space for animal access. There are a few inner wall face stones visible on the east wall. The north wall may not be keyed into the north wall of the next compartment which again suggests this compartment was not part of the living accommodation or may have been added later.

1b The next compartment, the largest of the 4 compartments, is c. 12m east west. It appears to have a gap on the south wall which may indicate the position of a doorway. The back wall is complete but has very few outer or inner wall face stones. It survives up to c. 0.25m and is c. 0.5m wide with little visible tumble on either side. There are several areas of inner wall face visible on the east and south walls. The appearance of this part of the structure is considerably distorted by a very large tree stump and root system. The tree rings were counted, and the tree is

c. 150 years old. This suggests that the building was out of use and partially ruined by 1860, and prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordinance Survey Map, 1873.

1c The next compartment is c. 9m east west and appears to be lower than the previous compartment. The north wall is very ruinous and difficult to define but it might be revealed by excavation. The south wall appears to have been completely removed or collapsed to a point where it cannot be seen. The east wall, however, is visible and c. 0.25m high and c. 0.5m wide with a large boulder on the northeast corner. There is a large tree stump on the line of the south wall, and this may be why there is less evidence of the south wall.

1d The easternmost compartment is small, c. 2.5m east west; all the walls are insubstantial and there is no indication that there was a south wall. The lack of the south wall suggests this was an open-fronted 3-walled structure and suggests it was for storage or animal shelter.

## 1.2

To the south of the structure there appears to be a path or work area, c. 7m wide, in front of the structure. This was probed and may be cobbled as the hollow 2.2.

## 1.3 NH 55299 49492

An enclosure lies c. 8m to the south of House 1 and is set into the south facing slope. The north wall is revetted into the slope and has a drop of c. 2m to the surface of the enclosure. It is c. 14m east west by 14m.

## 2. NH 55396 49507 House 2

This house is depicted on the Aitken map and has the name Duncan McKiver above it. This is possibly the best-preserved structure on the site. The north wall is revetted into a large bank which curves around at the east end of the structure. The structure is c. 20m east west and c. 5m wide, with walls c. 0.5m wide and up to c. 0.5m high. Where the wall structure is visible, it has at least 2 courses of stonework with inner and outer facing stones set in clay and rubble infill, held in place with clay. Parts of a broken cauldron were found just north of the wall of compartment 2.a.

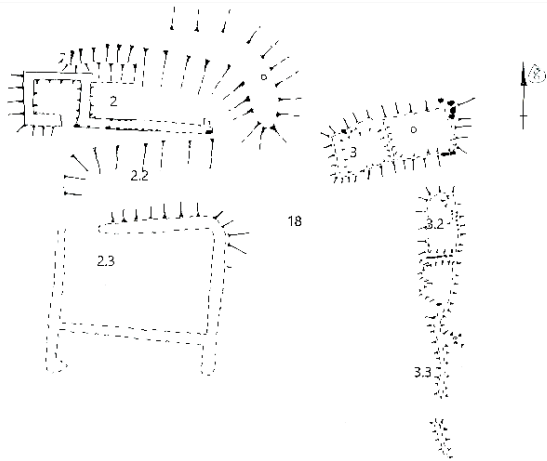


Figure 37 (Appendix 1) Plane table plan of House 2 and House 3

2a There is a separate compartment at the west end, c. 7m east west, with substantial walls with visible stone within earth. The south wall of this compartment is not complete and may not have continued for the length of the compartment which may have been used for storage or animals.

2b The main part of the structure is c. 14m east west and does not appear to have

any internal divisions. There is a short section of the north wall visible as a stony bank at the west end of the building, but most of the wall seems to be covered by tumble from the bank to the north. The east wall is not visible although there is a large stone at the southeast corner. The best-preserved wall is the south wall, and it has clear outer wall face stones for two thirds of its length. The eastmost third has no visible stone within the wall but continues as a clear change in slope. The doorway was not found.

## 2.2

To the south of House 2, the ground slopes away sharply from the south wall to a hollow c. 2m below. The hollow is c. 8m north south by c. 14m, and investigation exposed the base of the hollow was cobbled. It is likely this was used as a midden pit but may have been used for animals. The south side of the hollow rises to form the north bank of the enclosure 2.3.

## 2.3 NH 55433 49485

This enclosure occupies the ground to the south of House 2 and hollow 2.2 with the east enclosure bank being insubstantial. It is c. 17m east west by c.11m. It is likely the south bank was either destroyed or subsumed by the larger later bank of the ditch beyond the survey boundary.



Figure 38 (Appendix 1) View of enclosure 2.3 from north



### 3. *NH 55433 49485 House 3*

The structure does not appear on the Aitken map. It was found below a dense cover of gorse and was revealed as a mound of soil and, apart from the NE corner, the stonework was not exposed. The structure is c. 15m east west by c. 4m and sits up c. 0.75m above the surrounding ground level. There is stonework all round the walls below the soil surface apart from two small areas on the south side, one at the east, and one at the west end. There are two hollows within the walls and the west hollow is at a slightly lower level than the hollow on the east end, suggesting there is a division within the structure. This building is likely to have two compartments, each with a doorway on the south side. There is a tree in the east compartment.

#### 3.2

Lying c. 3.5m to the south of structure 3 and sitting on a mound is another building c. 8m north south by c. 2.5m. The whole mound is covered with stones but there appears to be an outer wall face on the south end and a possible wall edge on the west side. The east side has been disturbed but may have at least two, possibly three, entrances. There seems to be an internal division indicated by a change in slope. There are two slight hollows in each of the compartments. A broken cauldron was found below the top layer of stone.

#### 3.3

A substantial wall begins immediately to the south of a narrow gap at the south end of structure 3.2. The wall has visible wall faces on the east and west face. The wall is c. 13m long north south with a short gap (c. 3m) then it continues for a further c. 4m to the bank before the ditch bounding the survey area. The last c.4m of the wall is tumbled. There is an abandoned badger set within the wall which has disturbed the structure and created two mounds of upcast.

#### 4. NH 55399 49502 House 4

The building is depicted on the Aitken map and has the name Norman Glass across it. The structure sits on a rise above the surrounding ground and is c. 20m northeast southwest and c. 5.5m wide. The walls are visible on all sides except the southeast.

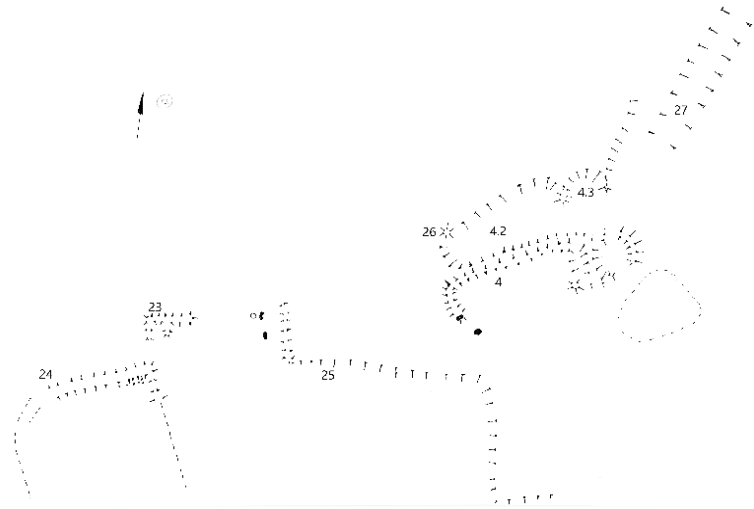


Figure 39 (Appendix 1) Plane table plan of feature 23 and House 4

Generally, the walls are made of small stones and earth with a possible outer wall face on the northwest side. Where the turf over the walls was disturbed during the vegetation clearance, there are small patches of clay bonding visible between the stones as in House 2. The southeast wall is very wasted and only discernible by the slightest change in level. There appear to have been two main compartments in the upper long structure, however the division is insubstantial and survives as a slightly raised area c. 1m wide and c. 0.20m high across the centre of the structure. At the northeast end there is a small compartment c. 1m below the main part of the structure. It is c. 5m northeast southwest, with slight walls with little visible stone and the appearance of earth banks with c. 1.5m spread and a central hollow. There does not appear to have been a south wall to this part of the structure. It is likely that this area was used for storage or for animals.

#### 4.2

On the northwest side of House 4 there is a drop of c.2.5m to a hollow like that to the south of structure 2. It appears to be lined with cobbles which were felt just below surface. It is c.4m north south and the ground rises c.2m on the northwest side of the hollow.

### 4.3

This structure sits in the slope to the north of the hollow 4.2. It is c. 5m northeast southwest by c. 3m and has the appearance of a quarried area but has a bank on the open southeast face and could have been used for storage or for animals.

## 5. NH 55605 49507 House 5

This building is depicted on the Aitken map and has the name Janet McKiver across it. On the plan there is an enclosure to the north of the building but no trace of this is now visible however there is a substantial enclosure to the S (5.2). The house lies on the level ground below a slight stony ridge; it has a thick turf covering and was not exposed during the survey but identified by probing and reference to the 1788 map. It is c. 15.5m east west and

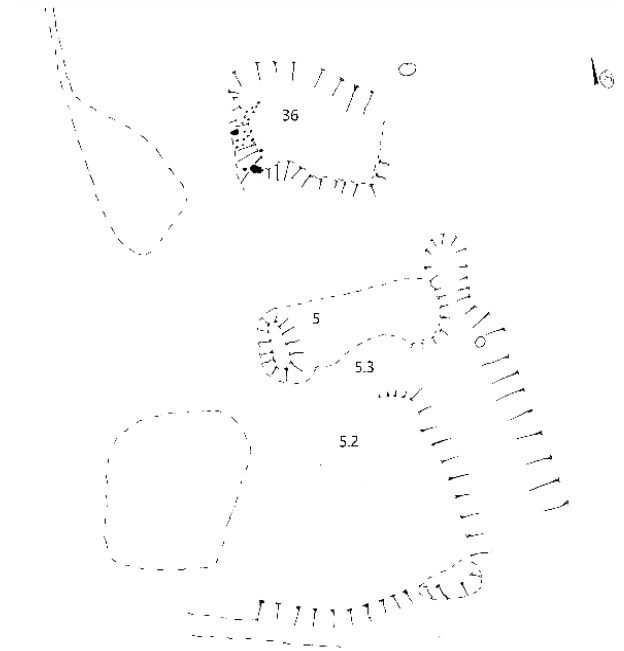


Figure 40 (Appendix 1) Plane table plan of House 5

c. 5.5m wide, and up to 1m high at the west end where it is most visible as a structure. The mound of turf-covered stone at the west end appears to resemble a gable end of a building but may include later clearance stone. There is another area of higher stone below the turf c. 10m east of the possible gable and a hollow towards the E end of the structure suggesting a lower section with an open south side.

### 5.2 NH 55593 49487

The large enclosure lies to the south of the structure and a stony bank can be felt beneath the turf for almost the whole perimeter. It is c. 16 east west by c. 14m.

### 5.3

Unlike several of the structures, there does not appear to be an obvious hollow cobbled area to the north or south of this building, just a slight dip between the building and the enclosure 5.1.

## 6. NH 55659 49477 House 6

This building is depicted on the Aitken map and has the name John Ferguson beside it. The structure lies at the easternmost end of the site. It appears to be c. 23m east west and c. 5m wide. There is a hollow at the west end of the structure which may indicate a compartment. There is a very large boulder on the southwest corner of the structure. Probing found the outshot depicted on the Aitken map. The structure was not exposed during the project as is

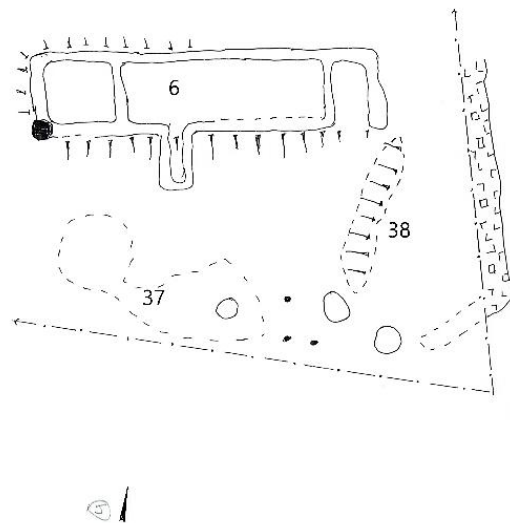


Figure 41 (Appendix 1) Plane table plan of House 6

covered in deep turf and the planning was informed by probing the ground and using the 1788 plan. Within the whole site, groups of young trees have been planted c. 10 years ago. One of these groups has been planted on the north edge of House 6. The house may have been considerably affected by the building of the nearby boundary wall, changes in the agricultural system to the south, and the tree planting.

## MAN-MADE FEATURES

7. **Trackway 1** The track or road is shown on the Aitken map as a gap between cultivated plots running east west. It is still visible as a faint hollow way along the south edge of the site. From the centre of the site the track becomes much less defined and fades completely towards the east end.
8. **4 piles of stone**
9. **An area of quarried scoops** These may be associated with the stone piles 8.
10. **A slight stone and turf bank** c. 0.25m high which runs into the water. Man-made but its use is unknown.
11. **Trackway 2** Aligned northwest southeast possibly running from the quarries 9 towards House 1. The track is revetted into the natural slope.
12. **A quarry scoop**
13. **Trackway 3** Aligned northwest southeast on the line of the gap between cultivated plots shown on the Aitken map, joining trackway 1 at the south end. This trackway, like



trackway 1, is slightly hollowed and both trackways are still visible although there are trees and gorse growing on them.

- 14. A slightly raised flat grassy area of ground** to the north of House 1 with a slight bank around the perimeter. Shown as being rig and furrow cultivation on the Aitken map.
- 15. Ditch 1** A short ditch between ponds 45 and 47 which appears to be man-made.
- 16. A clearance cairn** Extending into a slight bank possibly enclosing the lower edge of an area of higher ground. On the Aitken map, this area is depicted as rig and furrow cultivation and the bank may represent a low enclosing bank which defines the cultivated area.
- 17. A hollow** Probably quarried out of the east end of the higher ground.
- 18. A large clearance cairn** c. 2m east west by c. 7m, and c. 1m high. It lies to the southeast of House 2. There is no clear reason for the position of the cairn. To the south there is a slight turf and stone bank.
- 19. A large hollow** c. 7m in diameter with stone on the base and sides. It appears to be a quarried area, possibly for stone or clay. Other purposes are not obvious, but it may have been used for penning animals.
- 20. A distinct bank around an area of ground** Inspection of the Aitken map suggests that this may be the area of rig and furrow cultivation immediately below the letters 'Kiv', part of Duncan McKiver's name.
- 21. Ditch 2** A visible hollow way or dry ditch running north-northeast south-southwest, c. 0.50m deep in places, it may be the gap dividing the fields assigned to Duncan McKiver to the west and that of Ewan McKiver on the Aitken map. At the north end of the dry ditch, it becomes a wet ditch running southwest to northeast into the large pond and wet area 48.
- 22. A slight edge along the edge of a raised area of bracken and grass** This may be part of a low bank partially enclosing the cultivated land on Aitken's plan north of House 4.
- 23. A linear area of stone clearance which has the appearance of a structure** To the northeast of enclosure 24. It is c. 15m east west and c. 3m wide at the west end, and only c. 1.5m at the east end. The line of stones is c. 1m wide on the surface and c. 0.5m high. There is little earth between the stones, and no clay. The area lying north south at the east end is wider and slightly higher than the majority, but again there is little earth and no clay in the mix of visible stone. Although the arrangement of the stones

gives the appearance of a building and there is a building depicted on the Aitken map belonging to Ewan McKiver in this general position, the result of the excavations (T3 and T4) shows that although the stones on the north side continue below the turf, there is no indication of structure within this feature. There are no inner or outer wall facing stones, no clay or bonding material between the buried stones, no trampled or clay floor, and no indication of a south wall, which indicates that there was no building. At the south end of the trench the fertile soil depth is c. 0.75m and at the north end of the trench the stones sit on the natural at a depth of c. 0.25m. The conclusion is that the stone feature is field clearance with the natural ground surface sloping to the south and being heavily improved, as seen at the south end of trench 3.

**24. NH 55458 49483 An enclosure** Lying to the east of the dry ditch, on a slight south-facing slope. It is visible as a stone-and-earth bank c. 0.25m high and up to c. 0.5m wide. The north side of the enclosure has two gaps in it which may indicate entrances. The south edge is the least visible and may have been destroyed by the later post-and-wire fence and ditch on the south edge of the survey area. The west side is less visible than the north and west banks. The ground rises to the east of the east bank.



Figure 42 (Appendix 1) View of enclosure 24 from northwest

**25. A distinct edge along the break of slope** There is a lot of stone along this edge, suggesting that the break of slope has been enhanced creating an enclosed area. This feature may be a continuation of the faint bank 22. The enclosure is an irregular shape with the NW section being revetted into the curving slope and following a similar line to that shown on Aitken's plan. On the south and east sides, the walls of the enclosure are not clear, but some stone was felt below the turf by probing on the west side.

**26. A large clearance cairn**

- 27. Trackway 4** The trackway, or hollow way, runs from House 4 around the lower edge of a raised area. This route does not appear on the Aitken map although there is a heavier line which may be a division between land holdings.
- 28. A clearance cairn** c. 5m diameter and c. 1m high, at the end of 27.
- 29. NH 55528 49579 Rig and furrow cultivation** This is the only definite area of cultivation identified probably dating from the time of the occupation of the site in 1788. The rigs follow the direction of the fields shown belonging to Norman Glass, House 5. There are five short rigs running north south, disappearing into the south slope. They are grassed and surrounded by trees.
- 30. Trackway 5** A short stretch of trackway, or hollow way, lying north south which may coincide with the edge of the small area of cultivation shown on the north side of the burn coming out of pond 48.
- 31. Hollow area** An area with revetted banks to the north and south but with no clear use, possibly a short trackway.
- 32. A clearance cairn**
- 33. Ditch 3** This ditch is dry at the north end but wet at the south end.
- 34. A slight edge along the edge of a raised area of bracken and grass** This may be part of a low bank partially enclosing the cultivated land on Aitken's plan.
- 35. NH 55601 49579 A stony ridge** To the north of House 5. This appears to possibly have had a stone bank on the south edge running towards the northwest along the break of slope then turning north-northeast before fading into a second rise, enclosing an area c. 12m southeast northwest by c. 7m. The whole of this platform is covered with visible stone but, apart from the possible bank along the edge, there is no clear shape to the feature. It has been speculated that this is a structure, but it lacks form. There are two large boulders at the NW end of the platform and a large Scots Pine to the northeast.
- 36. An area of rig and furrow** Identified from the Lidar photograph and depicted on the Aitken map to the south of House 5.
- 37. A considerable scatter of large stones and small boulders** There are two large trees between the south fence line and hollow 6.2, and around the base of the trees and extending into the hollow there is a scatter of large stones and small boulders. This may be a stone pile remaining from the building of the boundary wall to the east, or

stone clearance from the cultivated ground immediately to the south beyond the survey area.

**38. Many stones beneath the turf** According to the Aitken map there is an enclosure immediately to the east of House 6. The many stones beneath the turf in this area may indicate the edge of the enclosure. However, the presence of the boundary wall which crosses the enclosure has considerably impacted on the enclosure.

**39. An area of rig and furrow** Identified from the Lidar photograph, this is depicted on the Aitken map immediately north of House 6. It has been planted with young trees.

**40. Trackway 6** On the east side of House 5, there is a possible trackway. It is depicted on the Aitken map as an uncultivated area between Houses 5 and 6. The trackway becomes a more convincing feature to the N where it has three very fine beech trees which, along with the Scots Pine near to House 5, might have formed an avenue associated with Tarradale



Figure 43 (Appendix 1) View of trackway 6 from north

Mains to the south of the settlement site. The house was built in 1794-6 at a time when it was fashionable to plant avenues or "ladies' walks". It is possible an already existing route was enhanced. The north end of the avenue appears to be edged by a stone setting on each side. At the north end of the avenue there is a wet area 49.

**41. Large stone wall** Just beyond House 6, running north south and marking the boundary of the present agricultural ground. It is likely to have been constructed very soon after the drawing of the Aitken map in 1788. On the plan there is a dashed line where the wall has been built. On top of the wall there is a modern post-and-wire fence which continues from the south end of the boundary wall westwards along the south boundary of the surveyed site. To the south of the fence are the remains of the trackway shown on the 1788 plan which has been incorporated into the modern field system.



- 42. Two terraces** On the slope of the site, c 10m apart with slight retaining banks. One of these banks may be on the line of the change in direction of the rig shown on the Aitken map.
- 43. Site boundary** A substantial wall has been built along the north edge of the site. There is a gap in the wall where the drainage prevented the building of the wall. As noted, on the south edge of the surveyed site there is a post-and-wire fence and beyond it a ditch. The ditch is stone lined which may account for the considerable stone loss from the buildings.

## NATURAL FEATURES

- 44. A small burn** running north south, shown on the Aitken map, probably originating from a spring. The burn is silted up and has become a boggy area which drains into the plantation to the south.

- 45. An area of water** Shown on the Aitken map as 'pool' and much smaller than the pond. It is not on the present Ordnance Survey map.



*Figure 44 (Appendix 1) View of pool 45 from northwest.*

- 46. A burn** Flowing out of 45. This is shown on Aitken's plan and still runs into the modern ditch at the south of the site.
- 47. A small area of water** Shown on the Aitken map, but on his map it flows to the east rather than its present route to the west. It is not depicted on the present Ordnance Survey map.
- 48. An area of water** The largest area of water shown on the Aitken map and the modern Ordnance Survey map. There are many trees growing in the water, and it has expanded when compared with the plan. It drains to the east.

- 49.** A small, wet area shown on the Aitken map but not on the present Ordnance Survey map. The water runs out to the east into the main drainage system of the farmland beyond the boundary wall.

All Appendix 1 photos © A. Coombs. Plane table plans © *Tarradale Through Time*

## APPENDIX TWO

### FINDS

#### *Metal Detector and Associated Finds*

Depth from surface	Material	Co-ordinates	Description
4ins	Metal	55435 49463	Chain link
4ins	Metal	55411 49494	Chisel
2ins	Pottery	55414 49494	Pottery
8ins	Glass	55412 49495	Bottle base
12ins	Metal Iron	55412 49495	Cauldron 3 pieces
8ins	Metal	55400 49502	Cauldron 2 pieces
4ins	Metal	55395 49495	Chain Link
3ins	Metal	55401 49495	Toy revolver
4ins	Metal	55392 49493	Coin
2ins	Metal	55305 49493	Metal scrap (aluminium)
2ins	Metal	55299 49494	Nail
3ins	Metal	55292 49495	1p coin 1992
6ins	Metal	55288 49489	Cauldron 2 pieces
3ins	Metal	55297 49486	Cauldron 2 pieces
6ins	Pottery	55292 49488	Pottery

#### *Finds from T1 House 2*

Context	Material	Description
Topsoil	Glass	Small piece of green glass rim
2/3	Glass	10cm square piece flat clear glass
2/3	Glass	20mm x 10mm piece flat clear glass
2/3	Glass	40mm x 15mm thicker green bicurved glass
Between inner wall face and clay	Glass	35mm x 25mm clear glass



Figure 45 (Appendix 2) Cauldron pieces, glass, pottery and miscellaneous finds

## CONTEXT LIST

### *Trenches 1 and 2, House 2*

1. Topsoil with grass, bracken and bluebells
2. 001 Soil a mixed horizontal layer across the whole trench covering the wall and cobbles and up the bank on the N side of the trench. Contained bracken roots and stones up to 0.5m diameter, mainly rounded, very few angular stones and some lumps of clay. Mid-brown, medium texture.
3. 002 The wall built with a mixture of stones up to 0.5m x 0.5m x 0.4m and many smaller stones bonded with grey clay.



4. 003 Clay floor covers the whole width of T1 and all T2 but to varying depths from 8mm on the S side of T1 to 40mm at the gable end (W) of T2. Grey in colour and fine grained with a small number of pebbles.
5. 004 Cobbles within the building. Within the 25cm sondage in T1 immediately beside 002, there is what appears to be a setting of cobbles c. 40mm diameter. The setting did not extend the full 1m E-W of the trench. It was set into the natural subsoil.
6. 005 Cobbles c. 40mm diameter, set into the natural immediately below 001 at the bottom of the slope to the S of the wall (002). These cobbles appear to form a surface of a yard or possibly a midden.
7. 006 Natural, orange in colour with coarse grain and stones.

### *Trench 3, Feature 23*

- a. Topsoil with grass, bracken and bluebells.
- b. 001 Subsoil, a horizontal layer across the whole site. Contained bracken roots and stones up to 0.5m diameter, mainly rounded and a few angular. Mid-brown, medium texture.
- c. 007 Clearance stones up to 20cms.

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<https://data.gov.uk/dataset/72ba06ca-0239-4e99-a9ad-4a48f755a3bd/land-capability-for-agriculture-scotland> Class 1: Land capable of producing a very wide range of crops with high yields. Class 2: Land capable of producing a wide range of crops with yields less high than Class 1. Class 3: Land capable of producing good yields from a moderate range of crops. Class 4: Land capable of producing a narrow range of crops. Class 5: Land suited only to improved grassland and rough grazing. Class 6: Land capable only of use as rough grazing. Class 7: Land of very limited agricultural value. The best Black Isle agricultural land is defined as Class 2/3. (accessed Oct 2020)

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