



Report of a survey of archaeological sites on part of the Corrybrough estate, near Tomatin, Inverness-shire

February 2012 to March 2013



With the kind permission of Corrybrough Estate

**Report of a survey of archaeological sites on part of
Corrybrough estate, Raigbeg, near Tomatin, Inverness-shire
carried out by NOSAS members**

February 2012 to March 2013

Members of the team

Beth Blackburn, Anne Cockroft, Anne Coombs, David and Susan Findlay, George Grant, Bob
and Rosemary Jones, Elspeth Kennedy, Meryl Marshall, Alan Thompson

Front cover: the township of Tom Beg/Creag an Tuim Beag viewed from the south

Introduction

The targeted area was to the west and south of Corrybrough Lodge and includes the small valley of the Allt a'Choire Mhoir and its surrounding catchment area. The area takes in the hill roughly 1km to the SE of Corrybrough and the hill of Creag an Tuim Bhig to the south; the A9 trunk road forms the SW boundary. It is an area of roughly 4km² which is generally north facing and at an altitude of between 300m and 450m. Today the lower slopes present a regular pattern of improved fields which are used for grazing sheep and cattle and the heathery upper slopes are devoted to a grouse shooting moor.

An intermediate area of rough grazing, between 360m and 400m, is marked on the Roy map of 1750 as having largely been cultivated; this area and the higher heathery moor ground has abundant evidence of prehistoric activity with hut circles, field systems and clearance cairns. These prehistoric sites have previously been recorded and it was not the intention to record these unless obvious omissions in the record were noted.

The line of General Wade's military road from Crieff to Inverness traverses the area; it too has been well recorded and apart from observing its line we were not to give this any attention either. Our aim was to take details of the post medieval settlements seen on the First Edition OS survey, of which there were four, and any other sites that we came across in the walkover. One of the four post medieval settlements, Creag an Tuim Bhig/Sheanevall/Soilshan NMRS No - NH82NW037, has been scheduled by Historic Scotland. Only scant details appear on the record of the other three and two of them, Braenrerich and Brunton, were recorded during the First Edition Survey Project of 1996 which was a desk based project.

Five days were spent walking over the area drawing sketches and taking notes of each of the sites. All the sites have been given their own number for the purposes of this project.

We are grateful to the landowner for permission to access the area and to the keeper Duncan Mackenzie for his help. The results of the survey will be deposited with the HC Historic Environment Record (HER) and the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments Scotland (RCAHMS)

A Brief History of Corrybrough (mostly taken from IF Grant)

The part of Strathdearn around Tomatin was held in feu from the Earl of Moray by the Macintosh of Mackintosh since early times. In the 17th century it was divided into several estates and let to different members of the Mackintosh clan. Corrybrough Mor, later named Balnеспick, was let to one of the Macintosh family and Corrybrough Beg was let to the MacQueen family. The MacQueens were very closely associated with the Clan Mackintosh and were part of Clan Chattan. Members of the MacQueen family had come to Strathdearn in the 15th century in attendance upon Mora, daughter of Clan Ranald of Moidart, when she married Malcolm, 10th Chief of Mackintosh.

In the 18th century many of the MacQueens of Corrybrough followed the professions of the

Church, the Army and the Law, particularly having strong connections with the Army. The Old Statistical Account (OSA) of 1791-99 tells us that Sheriff Donald MacQueen, sheriff substitute for Inverness and a noted authority on Celtic literature, farmed at Corrybrough but the land was unenclosed. He died in 1792 and was succeeded by his son Captain Donald MacQueen. The New Statistical Account reports that in 1811 there were eleven holdings at Corrybrough and that in eight of them there was joint occupancy by two tenants.

But the estate was experiencing increasing financial difficulty and in 1811 the point was reached where Captain Donald MacQueen was forced to sell his property. It was bought in 1817 by Mr Campbell Smith who felled the timber and in 1836 cleared the people from all the eleven holdings on the estate. The NSA tells us that they went to America and that the estate was made into a sheep farm. This seems to have been the only instance of wholesale clearing in Strathdearn. In 1844 the estate fell into very good hands when it was bought by Mr Malkin. This family, although not resident on the estate, beautified and cared for it and the local people.

Sheep farming does not appear to have been very successful but in the early 19th century grouse shooting was becoming popular and shootings were beginning to be let:

“before the 1840s shooting lodges of a simple kind were built.... at Corrybrough and probably at Balnespick. Square two storied houses with four rooms and perhaps garrets were the stock pattern” (IFG)

Grouse shooting continues on the estate today.

The Military road built by General Wade in 1728 cuts through the estate. It has been superseded more recently first by the Parliamentary road built by Thomas Telford in the 1820s and then by the modern dual carriageway. Both of these roads take a completely different line 1 km to the west of the Wade road and as a consequence it has become largely overgrown. The Wade road is marked on the Roy map of c1750 and also on the Thomson map of 1830. On the Roy map the townships of Corrybrough and Meikle Raigbeg are marked as straddling the road in its lower reaches, Burnton is marked alongside the burn and there is evidence of extensive rig and furrow cultivation even on the higher slopes. By 1830 and the Thomson map, Corrybrough is marked in the present location of the Lodge and Braeourarig and Tombreak are the only other townships to be marked. *(both maps although good for their time are well known for having inaccuracies)*. The 1st Edition OS map of 1875 has the remains of 3 deserted townships - at Sheanevall, Braenrerich and Tombreck (Burnton). Tombeg (Creag an Tuim Bhig) has 5 roofed buildings and 2 unroofed buildings; in addition a deserted farmstead is marked NW of Braenrerich

Bibliography

Grant IF (1980) – Along a Highland Road

OSA (1791-99) - Parish of Moy and Dalarossie

NSA (1836) – Parish of Moy and Dalarossie

Results/Gazetteer of sites

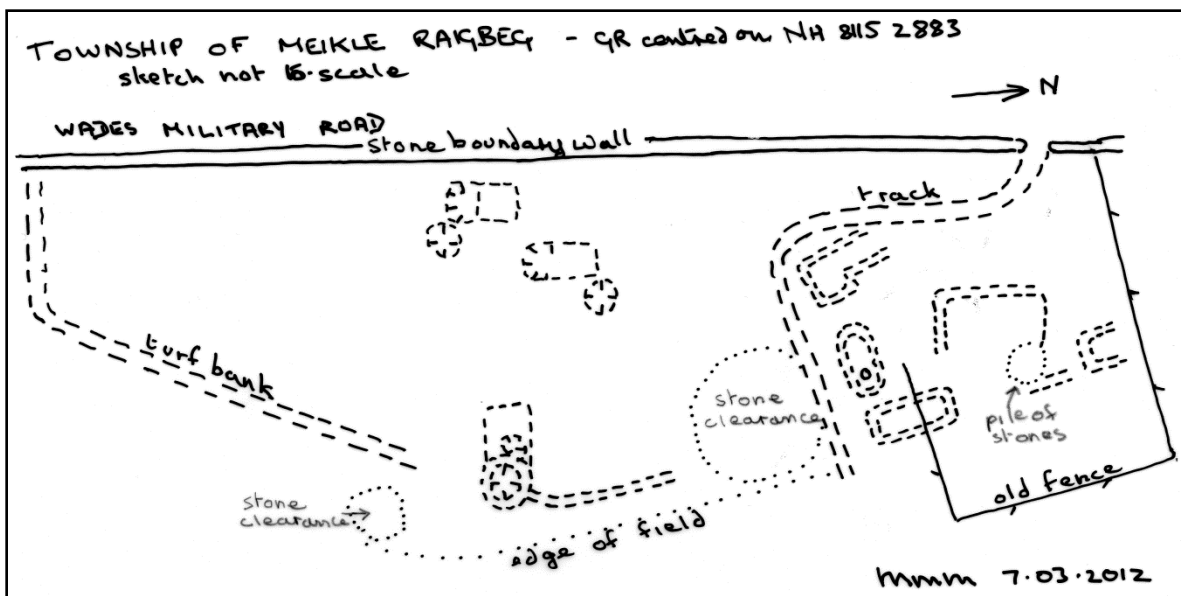
CB01 Substantial stone built wall – This substantial boundary wall, previously unrecorded, encircles a large L-shaped area of roughly 150 hectares which is divided into two and forms the “improved” lands in the small valley of the Allt a’Choire Mhoir. The lower part of the enclosed land is relatively fertile fields and the upper part is rough scrubby land which was possibly a sheep farm. To the north and east the area abuts the grounds surrounding Corrybrough Lodge. The boundary wall is in several sections:

A – NH 811291 to NH 8245 2797 - this part of the wall, c2km in length, bounds the south and west part of the lands. From Raigbeg it runs on the east side of Wade road and is generally 1 - 1.5m thick at its base and “battered”. It leaves the line of the Wade road and heads towards an obvious burn. This latter part is constructed of stone and turf and is less substantial

B - NH 8245 2797 to NH 824291 – this part is c1.2kms in length and bounds the east part of the lands. It is aligned N-S and in its southern part is quite wasted. It crosses the Allt a’Choire Mhoir and becomes more substantial, 0.7m high, battered and 2m thick at its base. The middle section, from NH 826285 to NH 826288 is a stone wall c1m high and the northern section, which traverses boggy ground, is less defined and intermittent. At its NW end it abuts a further boundary wall at NH 824291, which encloses the improved fields around Corrybrough Lodge

C – NH 824291 to NH 8165 2840. This part of the wall is 1km in length and bounds the enclosed land to the NW and also the improved land of Corrybrough Lodge which are adjacent. It is aligned SW - NE and ends at the Allt a’Choire Mhoir NH 8165 2840. In its upper part it is substantial of turf and stone, 0.7m high and battered (1.5m at its base) the lower part is more wasted and descends the steep hillside through a plantation.

CB02 Township of Raigbeg/Meikle Raigbeg - GR centred on NH 8115 2883 and situated two hundred metres to the south of Raigbeg the scanty remains of a previously unrecorded township are seen in a field on the east side of the Wade road. The township of Meikle Raigbeg is marked on the Roy map of c1750 in this location but the settlement does not appear on First Edition OS map of 1875. The township is situated at the lower end of a linear area, which is marked as wooded on the FES. It has the remains of tree stumps and is adjacent and parallel to the Wade road.



The township comprises the low, barely discernable, turf footings of at least 5 buildings, a corn drying kiln, a possible enclosure and several pits – see plan. A farm track runs through the centre of the township and some of the buildings have been truncated, in other places more recent dumping of clearance material may obscure features

(At NH 8176 2817 a substantial stone walled hut, RCAHMS No NH82NW017, has been recorded previously. It measures c13m x 8m(2.5m))

CB03 (North) Braenrerich - Farmstead of two buildings and an enclosure. GR centred on NH 8204 2802 - NMRS No - NH82NW042, HER ID - 25459 This previously recorded farmstead is adjacent to wall, CB1, in rough heathery moorland at 373m altitude

Building 1 –centred on NH 82044 28015 and abutting enclosure. It has a NE-SW alignment and measures 18m x 3.5m internally. The stone walls are 0.5m thick and 0.3m height. An outshot abuts the SE wall, it measures 2.5m x 1m internally, there is also an entrance, 0.8m width, in this wall

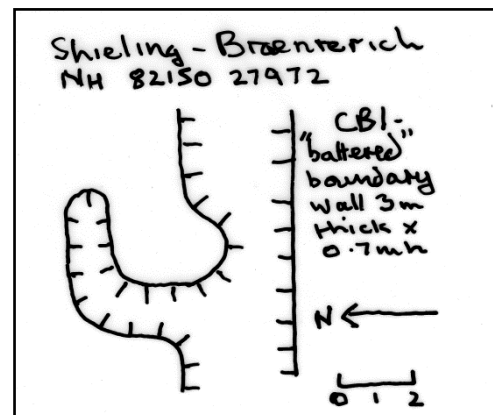
Building 2 – centred on NH 82074 28007 is situated a few metres to the S of the previous building and the enclosure. This building is on a NW-SE alignment and measures 8m x 2.5m internally. The walls are crudely constructed and of rounded stones. Entrance in NE wall

Enclosure – centred on NH 82032 28022 measures 23m x 15m internally, surrounded by rough turf and stone wall 1m thick x 0.5m height. North corner rounded

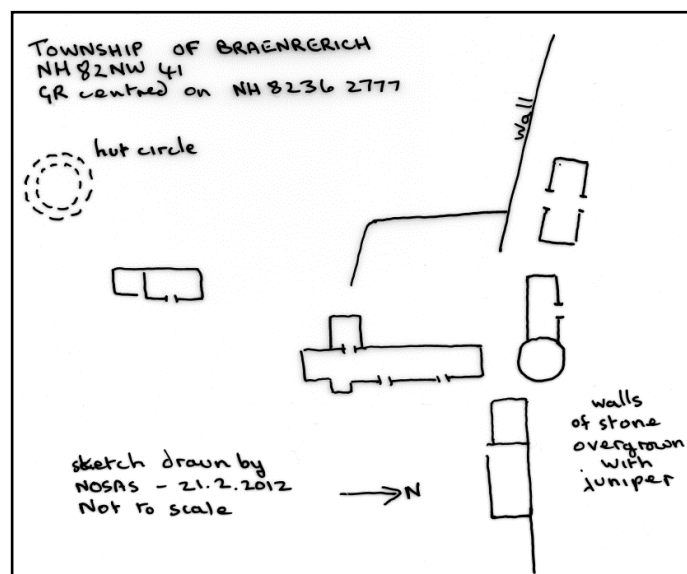
CB04 Shielings - Previously unrecorded and in rough heathery moorland close to the wall CB1 these sheilings probably predate the wall

Shieling 1 – NH 82150 27972 abuts wall CB1 on its east side and probably predates the wall. This small rectangular building, measuring 2.5m x 2m internally, is on a N-S alignment and has turf and stone footings. There is an entrance in the east wall

Shieling 2 – NH 82169 27921 is oval grassy mound measuring 8m x 7m overall, the building has turf walls 0.3m high and an entrance in the east corner, it measures 4m x 2.5m internally.



CB05 Township of Braenrerich GR centred on NH 8236 2777. NMRS No - NH82NW041, HER ID - 26447 comprising 4 buildings, an enclosure and a substantial corn drying kiln this township straddles the remains of a wall (an "offshoot" of wall CB1). The wall footings are of stone and up to 0.4m height, many are overgrown with juniper bushes. The kiln bowl appears large; its extent could not be determined because of the dense growth of juniper. A hut circle lies to the SW



CB006 Shooting butts – Previously unrecorded and at altitude of 427m, a line of several rectangular structures on the east facing slope of Carn na Doire Leathrain are seen. All are recessed into the slope and measure 2m x 1.5m internally and generally 1-1.2m deep. The internal walls have well constructed stones faces and there are entrances to east; some have stone steps into them

No 4 at NH 82715 26775

No 5 at NH 82708 26737

No 6 at NH 82705 26700

No 7 at NH 82700 26656

No 8 at NH 82699 26621

No 9 at NH 82695 26577

No 10 at NH 82695 26535

Also at NH 82600 26495

And at NH 82596 26480

CB07 Creag an Tuim Bhig SW township/Tombeg GR centred on NH 8140 2759. NMRS No NH82NW 38, HER ID – MHG 14321 Previously recorded and comprising 8 buildings, a corn drying kiln, a horse engine platform and a large field with a substantial turf and stone wall surrounding it adjacent and to the SW. The township appears to have two phases with some buildings much more wasted than others. It is marked on First edition OS map of 1875 with 5 buildings (1,2,3,6 and 7) roofed, 2 buildings (5 and 8) unroofed; 9 and 10 are unmarked.

More recent phase:

Building 1 with horse

gang – Centred on

NH 81415 27550 the

substantial remains of

this stone built three

sided building enclose

a scooped area

(?midden) and has a

horse engine adjacent

on the SW side. The

SW part of the

building is 24m x

3.5m internally, the

SE part is 20m x 4m

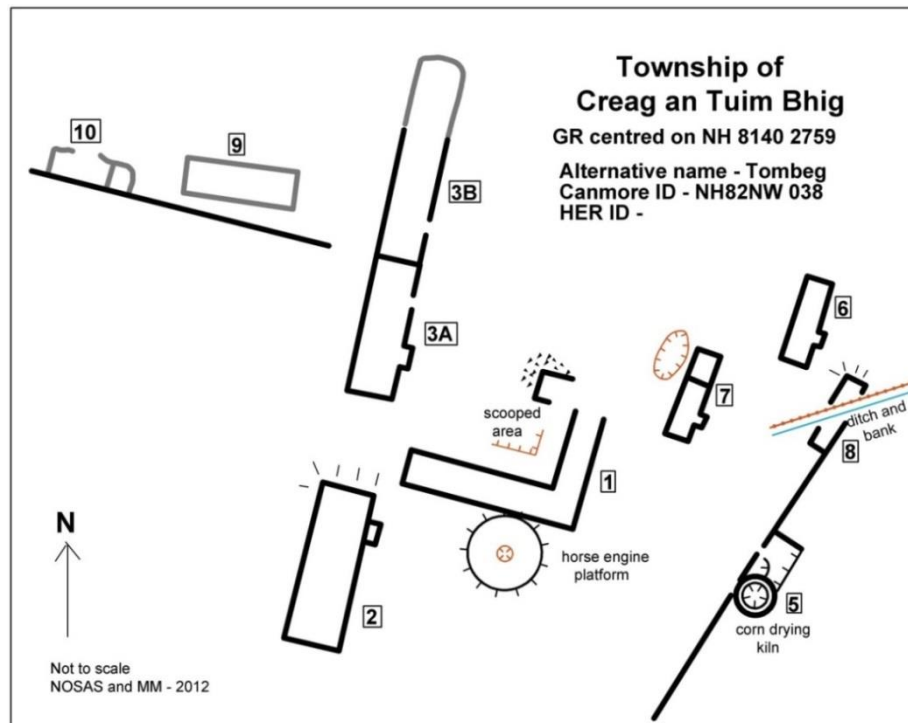
internally (it has no

end wall at the north

end) and the NE part,

which is much more

wasted is 6m x 3.5m.



The footings are generally 0.6m thick and between 0.5 and 1m in height although the NE part has intermittent stone edges only. The building has several entrances, the one in the S corner being 2.2m wide. The horse engine platform is 10m in diameter and 0.6m high with a pit of 2m diameter at its centre.

Building 2 - centred on NH 81390 27551 and on a N-S alignment, this building measures 17m x 5m internally. The S end of the building is more upstanding and has walls up to 2.4m height, the N end is much more wasted. An entrance is in the S wall, 0.7m wide. A window 0.8m wide is on W side and a second window opposite of the same size with a further window in this E wall. There is evidence of a small outshot, c1.2m x 0.7m at the north end of the east wall.

Building 3 - centred on NH 81404 27583 this building is on a N-S alignment with internal measurement 3.8m x 14.2m. The stone walls are 1.0m thick and 0.8m in height. An outshot abuts the E. wall measuring 0.9 m x 1.7m. There is also an entrance in this wall 0.9m wide.. Another entrance 0.7m wide likely on the W. wall, opposite the outshot.

Building 3A – Centred on NH 81405 27592 this probable byre adjoins building 3 but is at a lower level. It has internal measurement of 3.8m width x 16m, but is more wasted at the N end. Walls are 0.8m thick x 0.5m high. There is a possible drain for most of its length and an entrance in the E wall, 1.0m width, and 2 further possible entrances in E and W walls at N end.

(No 4 Unallocated)

Older phase:

Corn Drying Kiln/Building 5 – NH 81440 27532 Abuts the south side of a field boundary. The bowl is faced with stone and 2m deep, it measures 3m diameter at the top, 1m at its base and has a scarcement around some of its upper part. The barn to the NE is less clear and has a shallow firepit in its north corner.

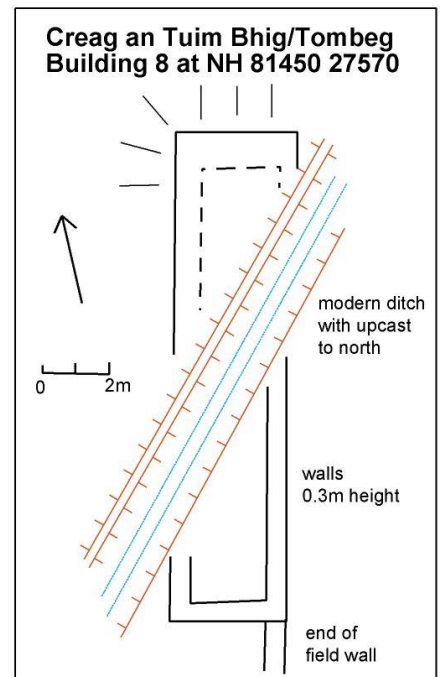
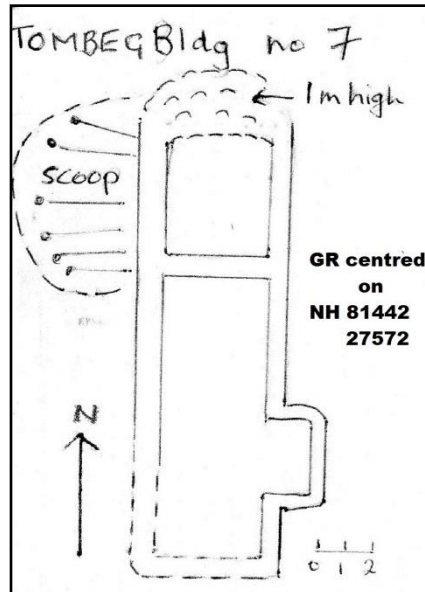
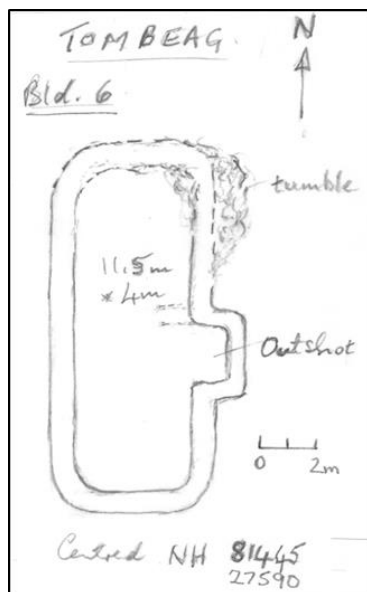
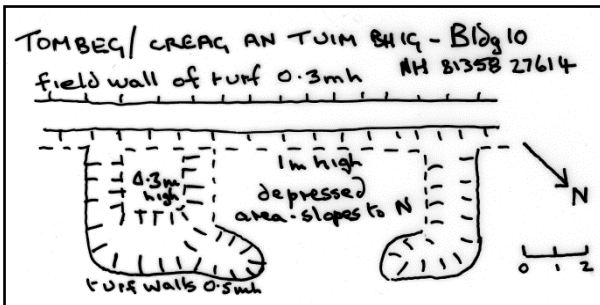
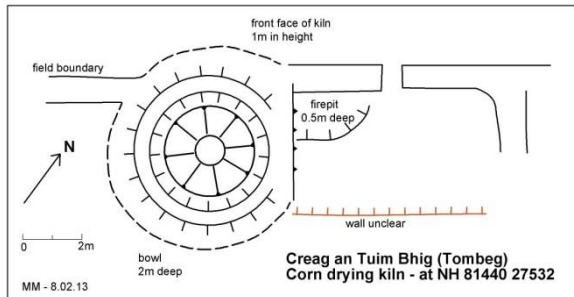
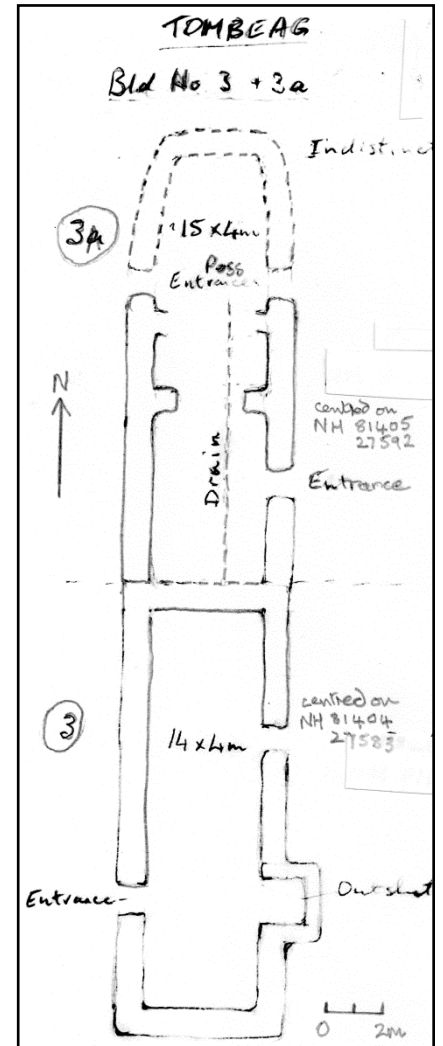
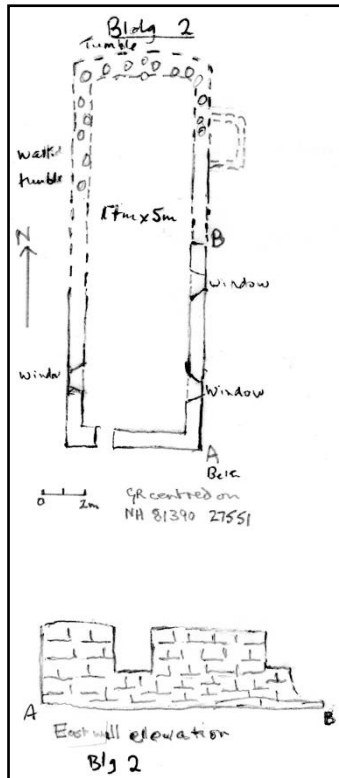
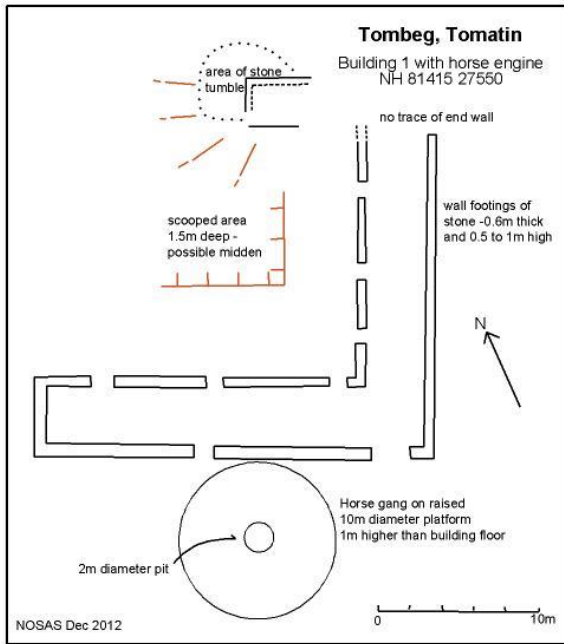
Building 6 - On the N edge of the settlement, centred on NH 81460 27578 in a N-S alignment. Measuring 11.5m x 4m internal with walls 0.5m high and 0.7m wide. An outshot on the E wall facing up slope, measuring 1.4m x 2m. Building very wasted.

Building 7 – centred on NH 81442 27572 also in a N-S alignment this structure measures 6m x 4m internally with turf and stone walls to 0.5m max. height and 1m thick. The building is wasted on the SW edge and has no obvious entrances. There is an outshot on the E. side and an internal dividing wall. Tumble at the N. end below substantial outer wall remains to 0.75m in height. At the N. end and adjacent to the W. wall is a scooped out oval area 10m x 6m max.

Building 8 – centred on NH 81450 27570 the wasted stone and turf footings of this building, which measures c15m x 3.5m internally, are on a NNE-SSW alignment. The east wall of the building is continuous with a field wall which continues southwards where it forms the NW wall of the corn drying kiln. Building 8 has walls up to 1m thick and generally 0.3m high. A modern drain with an earthbank of upcast material to its north, cuts diagonally through the building

Building 9 – centred on NH 81383 27606 the footings of this building, on an E-W alignment are parallel to the substantial field wall. The building measures 15m x 4m and has turf walls 0.25m high and 1m thick showing little stone. The building is rounded at the west end but is generally very wasted especially at the E. end however a large stone marks the north corner.

Building 10 – centred on NH 81358 27614 this turf building abuts the field wall on its NE side. It measures 10m x 3m internally and has 2 compartments the smaller one to the east being at a

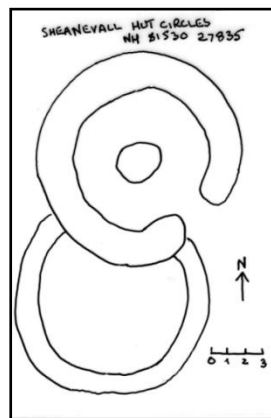


higher level. The turf walls have very little stone and are 1-1.5m thick and 0.5m high but where it abuts the field wall 1m high.

(300m to the SW of Tombeg township a farmstead of 1 roofed building and 2 enclosures is marked on the 1st Edition OS map. No evidence of this was found and it was assumed that it had been swept away by the construction of the A9 trunk road or perhaps the railway).

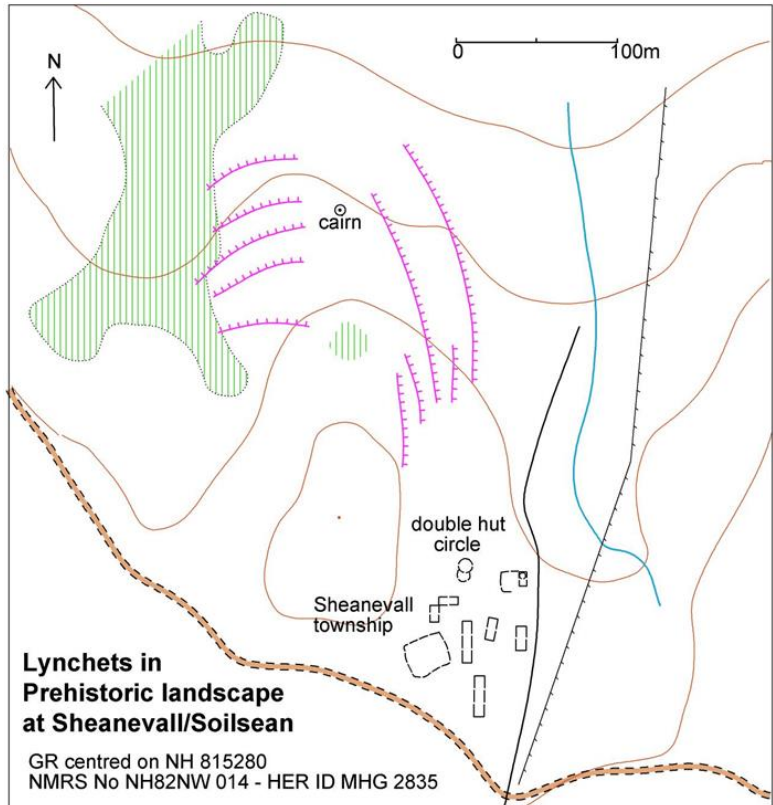
CB09 Creag an Tuim Bhig/Sheanevall/Soilshan

prehistoric hut circles and field system RCAHMS No -NH82NW014, HER ID – MHG 2835 Scheduled by HS and at NH 8153 2782 the recorded hut circle was noted to have a further hut circle abutting.



The second hut circle was very degraded and roughly 11m in diameter overall, no entrance could be detected. In addition and probably associated with

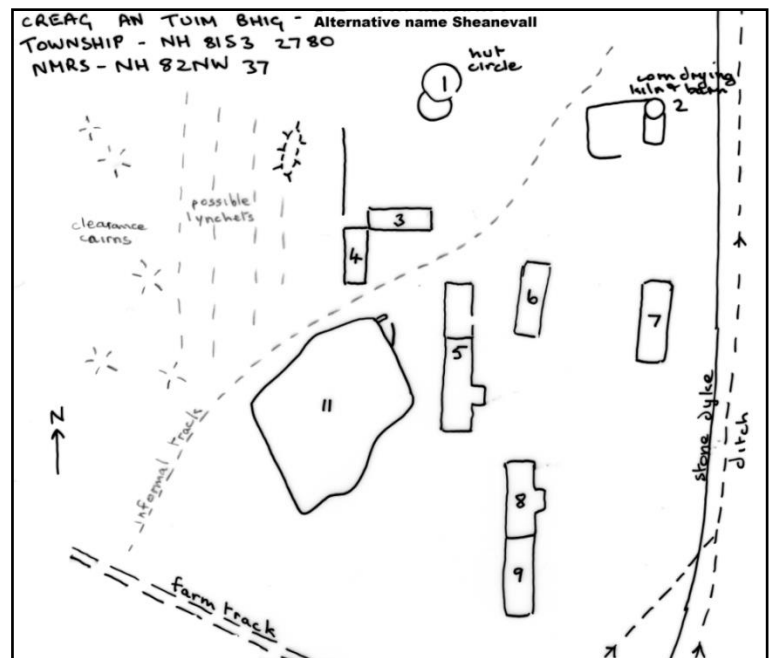
these features, centred on NH 815 280, well preserved lynchets were seen on the north facing slopes of the hill to the north. The lynchets are extensive and vary in length from 50m to 150m and from 0.3 to 0.5m in height – see plan



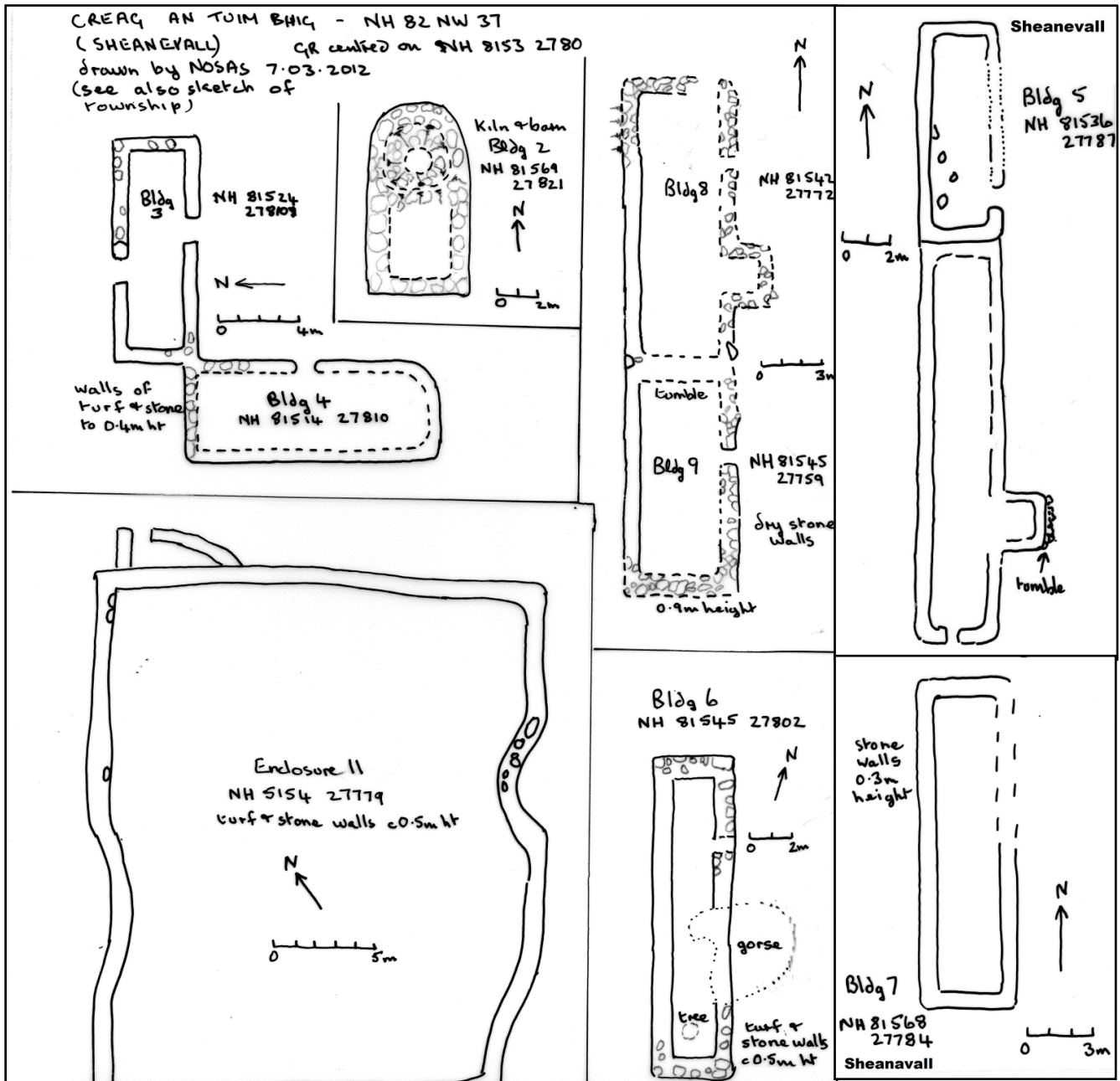
GR centred on NH 815 280, well preserved lynchets were seen on the north facing slopes of the hill to the north. The lynchets are extensive and vary in length from 50m to 150m and from 0.3 to 0.5m in height – see plan

CB08 Creag an Tuim Bhig NE settlement/ Sheanevall/Soilshan

Township GR centred on NH8154 2780. NMRS No -NH82NW037, HER ID – MHG 26460 “Scheduled” by Historic Scotland this township has 6 buildings, a corn drying kiln and barn and 2 enclosures. The majority of the buildings are on a N-S alignment and have turf and stone footings to 0.5m height. The two largest buildings measure 24m x 3.5m internally and have two compartments; both have small outshots 2m x 2m internally in



their east walls, a feature which seems to be quite common in buildings of this area. The other buildings are between 10 and 14m in length and 2 and 3m in width.



CB10 Braenreraich – Cairn/shooting butt at NH 81929 27660 This circular pile of stones with a dished centre is overgrown with heather. It is 5m in diameter and 0.6m high, the central depression is 1m in diameter and 0.5m deep

CB11 Burnton - enclosure/?sheepfold at NH 82575 28392 Adjacent and on the west side of the wall CB1 this elongated oval enclosure is surrounded by a very wasted turf bank which is barely discernible. The enclosure is roughly 50m in length by 30 width.

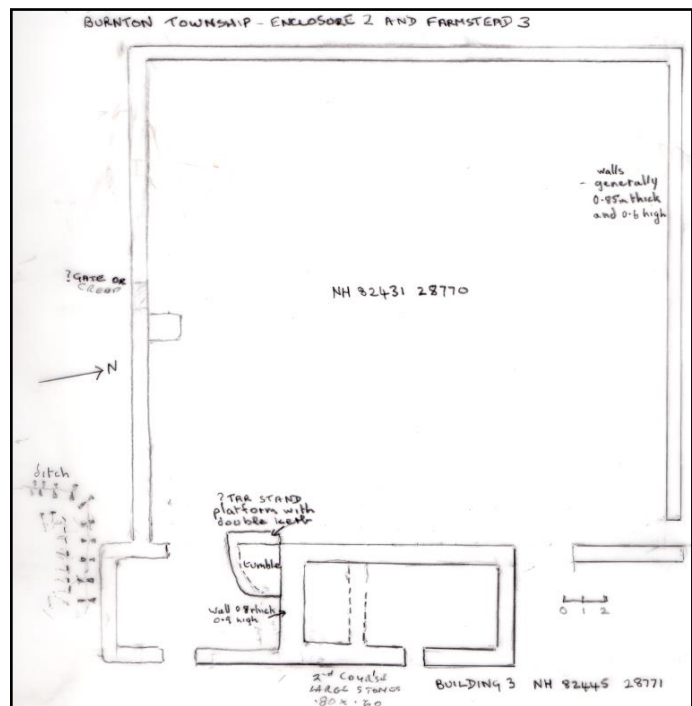
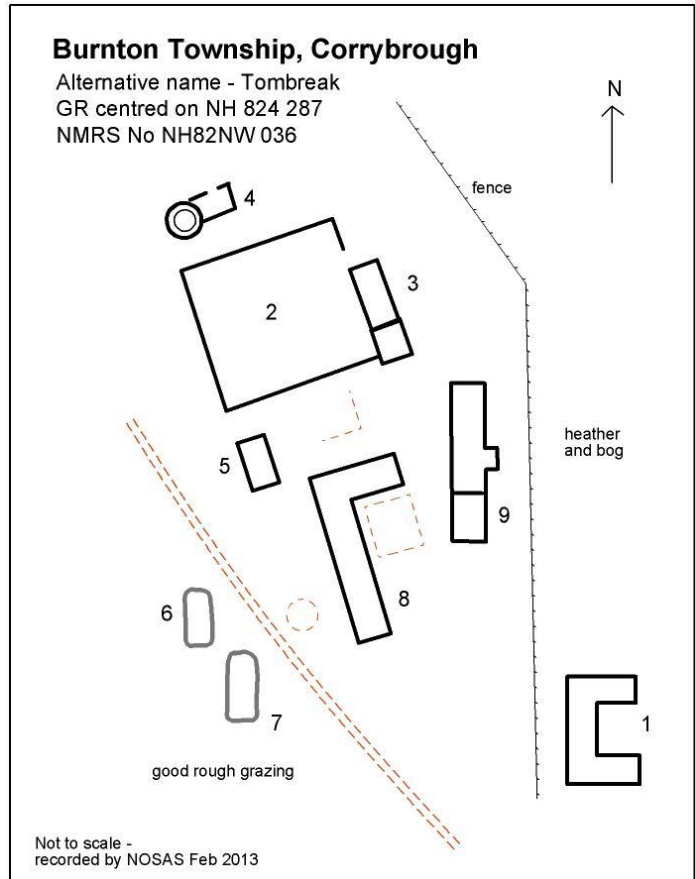
CB12 Burnton – building/?farmstead at NH 82508 28637 This stone structure is grossly overgrown with heather and juniper. It is difficult to discern its form and extent but it is roughly rectangular on a SW-NE alignment and measures c12m x 4m.

CB13 Burnton Township NMRS No NH82NW 036 HER ID MHG 26451 – centred on NH 824287 this township of 7 buildings, a corn drying kiln, an enclosure and two platforms which may be stack stands, is in an exposed position at an altitude of 400m. There appears to be 3 phases to the township – an older phase, a more recent phase and a single building, building 1 which may be a shooting lodge and may be contemporary with the more recent phase

Building 1 – centred on NH 82480 28711 this regular building of three compartments sits in unimproved ground on the east side of the modern fence. The building has been well constructed of unmortared stone and the wall footings are generally 0.6m thick and 0.3m high. The main compartment aligned N-S measures 18m x 3m internally and has an entrance in its east wall towards what could be called a courtyard enclosed by the other two compartments which both measure 6.5m x 3m internally. This building is different in form to the others of the township, it has a regularity to it and may be an early shooting lodge which was contemporary with the township

Enclosure 2 – centred on NH 82431 28770 this enclosure measures 29m x 27m overall. The surrounding rough stone walls are generally 0.8m thick and 0.6m high. There is an entrance, 3m width, in the east wall and a possible creep in the south wall. Building 3 abuts the enclosure on the east side

Building 3 – centred on NH 82445 28771



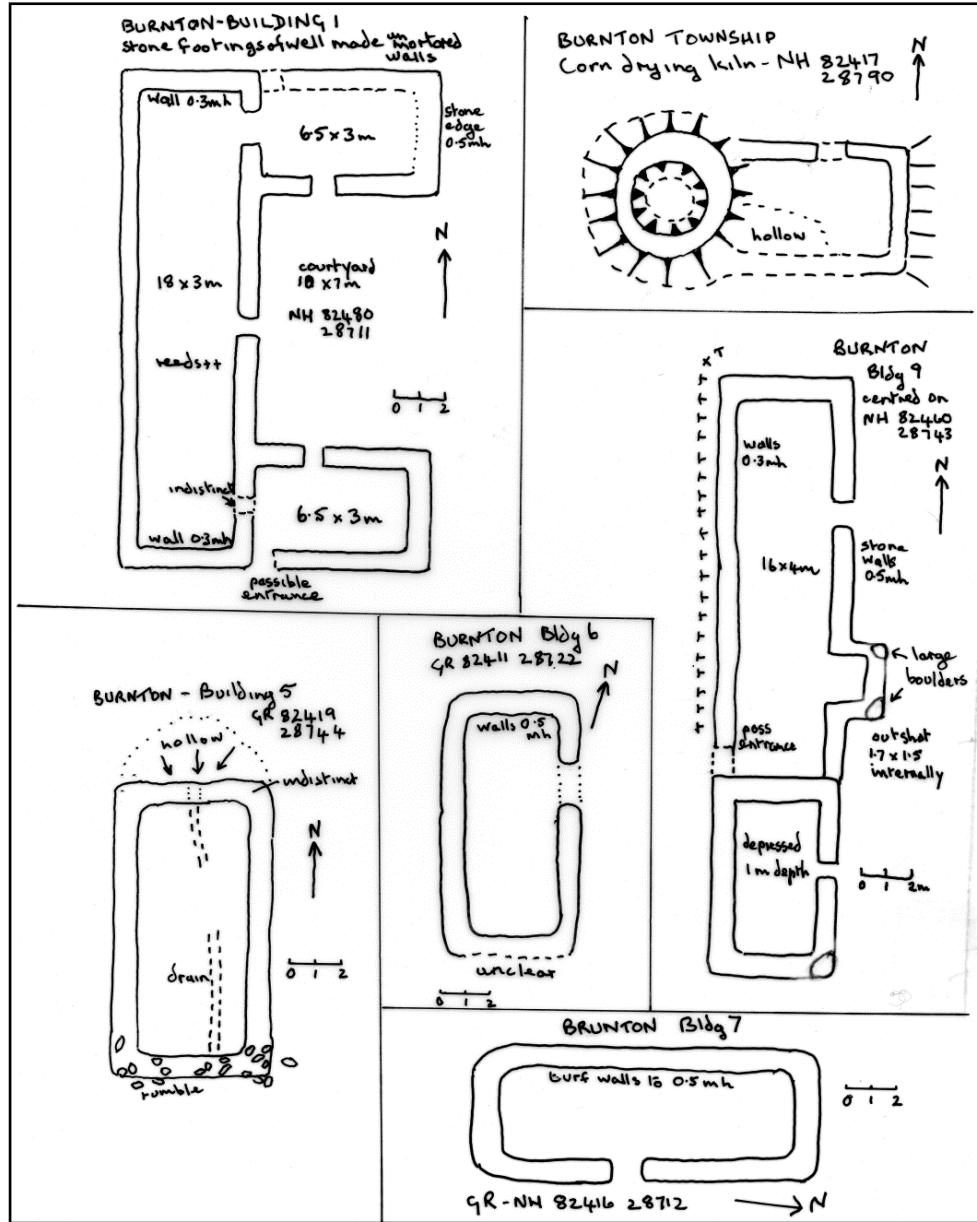
this building has two compartments and is aligned NNE-SSW. The stone footings are generally 0.8m thick and 0.3 to 0.6m high. The main compartment measures 10m x 4.5m internally and has an entrance in its east wall it may also have a further dividing wall. The smaller compartment to the south measures 8m x 4.5m internally and may have seen alteration and more recent use as a smearing shed – an area of tumble has defined edges to it and may have been a paved stance for a tar barrel.

Building/Corn drying Kiln 4 – Centred on GR NH82416 28790, the circular bowl at the N end is substantial and measures 2.25m in

diameter and 1.5m deep internally, the walls are 1m thick and there are clearance boulders in the centre. The barn attachment on the east side measures 7m x 4.5m internally. The NE wall is very substantial, measuring 1m thick by 0.5m in height. There is a possible entrance on the north wall.

Building 5 - Centred on GR NH82419 28746 and on a N-S alignment. It measures 10m x 4.5m internally, the walls to 1m thick but only 0.25m high and wasted and with rounded ends on the N. side. There is a possible byre drain running the length of the building. There are no obvious entrances. A hollow lies externally to the north and there may be a channel draining away to the east

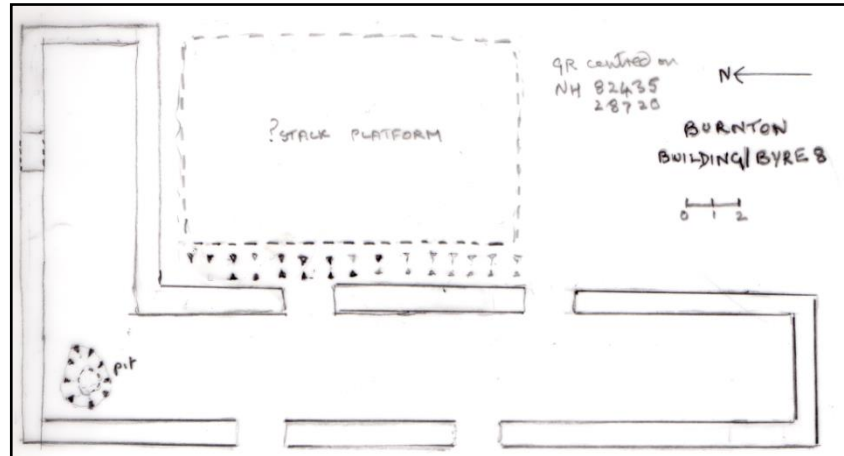
Building 6 - Centred on GR NH82411 28722 and just off a N-S alignment. It measures 9m x 3.5m internally with walls 1m thick and to 0.25m in height but fairly wasted. There is a possible entrance on the east side.



Building 9 is centred on NH 82440 28743. It has a possible entrance and a large boulder. The walls are 0.5m high.

Building 7 - Centred on GR NH82416 28712 and in a N-S alignment. It measures 13m X 3.5m internally and has rounded ends. The walls are 1m thick and to 0.5m in height and of turf and stone. There is a possible entrance on the east wall.

Building 8 – centred on NH 82435 28720 this large L shaped building is in an airy position on the shoulder of a spur. The turf and stone footings are 0.8m thick and generally 0.2m to 0.3m high. The longest arm of the building is aligned N-S and measures 30m x 6m overall, it has several entrances and a small pit in the north end. The smaller arm is 10m x 5m



overall. A regular grassy platform, 12m x 7m, to the east may be a stack platform and a pit a short distance to the SW may be a midden

Building 9 – centred on NH 82460 28743 the substantial footings of this building are aligned N-S. The double faced walls are generally 0.7m thick and 0.3 to 0.5m high. The building measures 24m x 5.5m overall and there are 2 compartments. The main compartment to the north is 16m x 4m internally; it has one entrance in the east wall and a further possible entrance in the west wall. An outshot in the east wall is a noticeable feature, it measures 1.7m x 1.5m internally, the space being integral to the interior of the building ie no evidence of entrances or doorways either to the outside or the inside. The smaller compartment to the south measures 6m x 3.5m internally, it has a narrow entranceway in the east wall and the floor appears “depressed” and with a depth of 1m. A large prominent boulder is sited on the outside of the SE corner and two further large boulders are at each corner of the outshot. A back ditch runs the length of the west wall.

CB14 Burnton – Cairn/Possible kiln at NH 82311 28699. In an exposed position this circular pile of stones with dished centre is filled with stone tumble. The feature is 5m in diameter overall and 0.5m high and has a possible entrance to the east.

CB15 Burnton – Possible sheepfold at NH 82079 28704. Within the east edge of a small coniferous plantation the remains of three walls of this enclosure which measures c20m x c10 to 15m are barely discernible. The footings of the stone walls are roughly 0.5m thick and 0.2m high. A field wall extends to the north and there may be a platform to the south

CB 16 Memorial – at NH 82123 29225. This mortared stone built memorial cairn lies within a circular enclosure of planted pine trees with a ditch surrounding. The inscription has “In most dear and honoured memory of the laird of Corryburgh Sir William Malken, GCMG GB, Legal Adviser to the Foreign Office. Born 17 April 1883. Lost his life on Atlantic Flight 4th July 1945”

Selected Photographs

The NW part of the substantial wall CB01 looking north



The northmost building at Braenrerich, CB05, with the corn drying kiln in the clump of juniper bushes



One of the shooting butts CB06



The township of Tombeg/Creag an Tuim Bhig, CB07, with building 1 in the foreground



The bowl of the corn drying kiln at Tom Beg/Creag an Tuim Bhig, CB07, looking NW.



The horse gang to the SW of building 1 at Tom Beg/Creag an Tuim Beag, CB07



Enclosure 2 at Burnton township
CB13 looking east



The outshot (line enhanced) on the
east wall of building 9 at Brunton
township CB13. Note the large
“rubbing” boulders at the corners



Building 1 at Brunton township
CB13 looking west. This appears
to have been a substantial regular
building built to a plan and is
quite unlike the other buildings of
the township

