



CARNASSARIE EXCAVATION DALRIADA PROJECT



EXCAVATION DATA STRUCTURE REPORT

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Archaeological Excavation at Carnassarie, Argyll

0. SUMMARY

- 0.1 An archaeological excavation was carried out at Carnassarie Farm, Kilmartin Glen; between the 25th of August and 8th of September 2008. The partial excavation of a partially enclosed platform, which was identified during previous surveys, revealed a prehistoric platform cairn or ring cairn from which a few abraded sherds of prehistoric pottery and a single thumbnail scraper were recovered.

1. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The area around Carnassarie Farm has been the subject of a series of archaeological studies (Fig. 1). Many of the earlier studies, principally those conducted by Marion Campbell, subsequently appeared in the Royal Commissions Inventory of Mid-Argyll (Campbell and Sandeman 1964, RCHAMS 1988). More recently, work has been conducted by Alan Begg, Heather James and Kilmartin House Museum (Begg 1998; James 2003, 2006; Regan and Webb 2007).
- 1.2 Prior to excavation the site appeared to comprise an artificially levelled terrace measuring approximately 25m by 18m with upright stones forming a rough arc around the southern side (Fig. 2). Several large stones appeared to delineate its southern periphery and were thought to perhaps be the remnants of a large kerb. A linear bank appeared to survive on its western side and some upright slabs of stone lay within its circuit, which were initially thought to be the remnants of a cist. The working hypothesis was that this feature was the robbed out remnants of a burial cairn or some form of enclosure.

The site is located at around 130 m OD and is set between two low craggy ridges of limestone overlooking Kilmartin Glen to the south. A plethora of early prehistoric monuments occur within the immediate vicinity of the platform/ring cairn. A natural outcrop with 8 cup marks is located on the western ridge (roughly 30 m from the platform/ring cairn) and along the same ridge but slightly further to the north is located a small isolated flat boulder of rock with a mass of 36 small cup marks pecked into its upper surface (61 & 63 respectively, Regan and Webb 2007). Two further cup mark sites are located roughly 200 m to the west (103/104 & 107/108 Regan and Webb 2007). To the south and clearly visible from the site, are two standing stones (NMRS: NM80SW 22) set adjacent to each other; the easternmost standing stone leans at a dramatic angle to the east. Southwards, beyond the standing stones on the brow of a hill, is a cairn (NMRS: NM80SW 21). In the early 1930s during excavation a cist was discovered off-centre but within the cairn; the base of the cist comprised water-worn pebbles. Recovered from the cist were a tripartite type food vessel, charcoal and ochre. Additional charcoal and flint fragments were discovered outside the cist and elsewhere in the cairn. An arc of boulders, perhaps a kerb of an earlier cairn or perhaps an integral construction feature of the cairn, was recorded at its base. A further cup marked stone, with seven cup marks, lies just to the west of Carnassarie Castle (NMRS: NM80SW 32). Visible to the northeast of the site is located the impressive Carn Ban (NMRS: NM80SW28), a large unopened boulder cairn that dominates the

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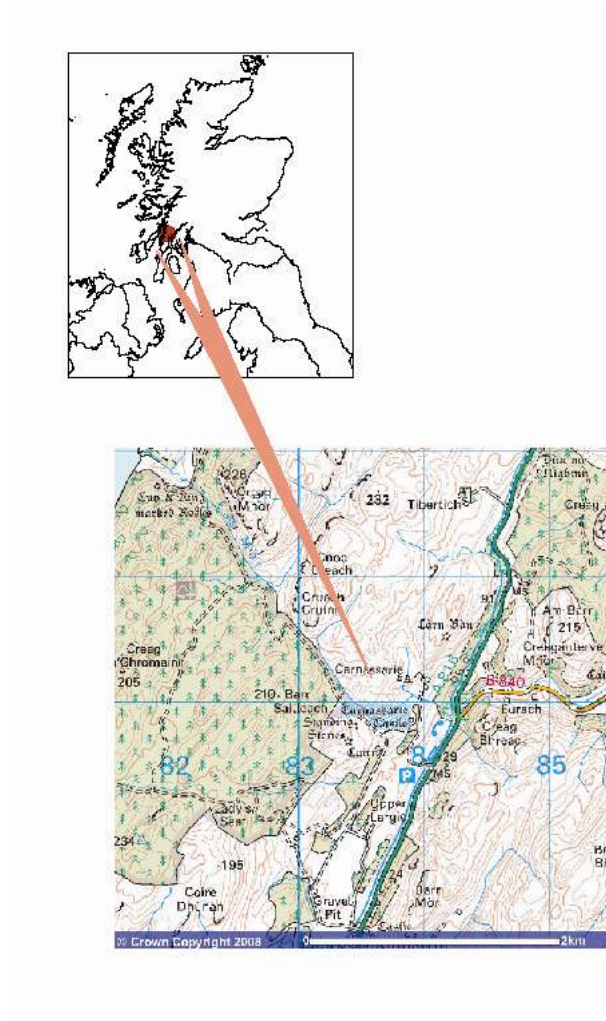


Fig.1. Location of platform/ring cairn, Carnassarie Farm, Argyll.

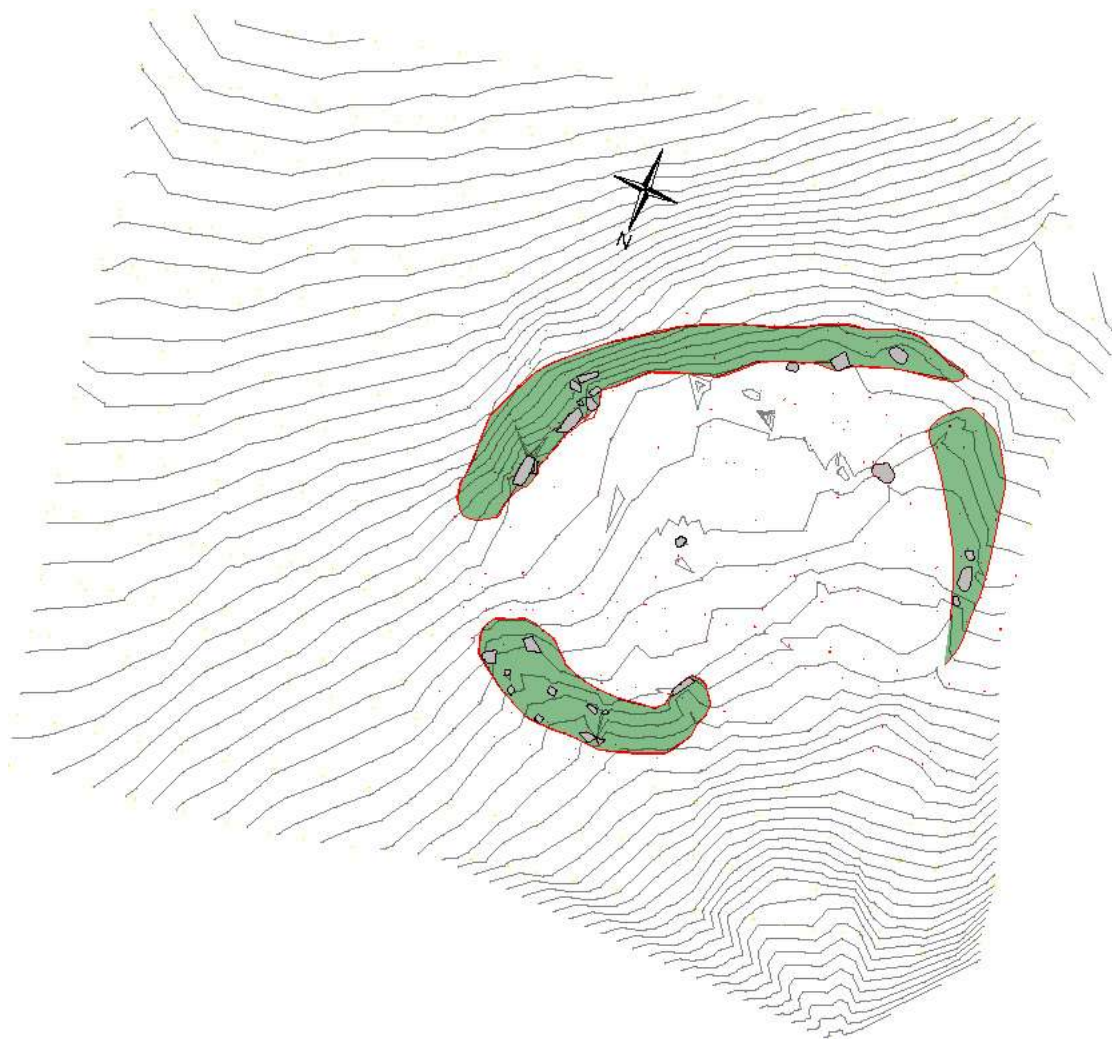


Fig. 2. Topographic survey of the platform/ring cairn prior to excavation.

local skyline. From its summit and the elevated platform on its southern side are magnificent views of Kilmartin Glen including Glebe Cairn, Nether Largie north and Nether Largie mid-cairn. In addition, roughly 500 m to the north is a mound that appears to comprise enhanced natural with a possible cist slab at its centre (Regan and Webb 2007); this possible burial mound is not visible from the site.

- 1.3 The excavation was undertaken by a core professional team comprising Clare Ellis and Roddy Regan who were aided by volunteers, Andy and Mary-Ann Buntin, Karl Pipes, Juliette Mitchel, Liz Dollan, Sue Furness, Brian John and George Offman. An open day comprising guided walks of the site and key archaeological features adjacent to the site took place on Sunday 7th September.

2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The archaeological objectives were to:

- determine the nature of the structure
- obtain material for radiocarbon assay
- assess the condition of preservation and the potential quality of the archaeological resource

3. METHOD

3.1 Trenching

- 3.1.1 Over the course of the two week excavation 12 trenches were hand excavated (Fig. 3); turf and soil were kept separate to aid backfilling. The trenches were located to explore the extent and physical nature of the structure. All trenches were recorded in plan at 1:20, with the exception of Trenches 8, 9 and 11 as only bedrock was revealed in these. The trench locations were also recorded utilising an Electronic Distance Measure (EDM). On completion of the excavation the trenches were backfilled with the excavated soil and the turf replaced. Following the request of the landowner larger stones and cobbles were left to one side and not included in the backfill.

3.2 Topographic survey

- 3.2.1 A topographic survey of the monument and the surrounding hillside was undertaken utilising a Trimble 3600 EDM (Fig. 4). Individual large exposed stones within the monument were also surveyed.

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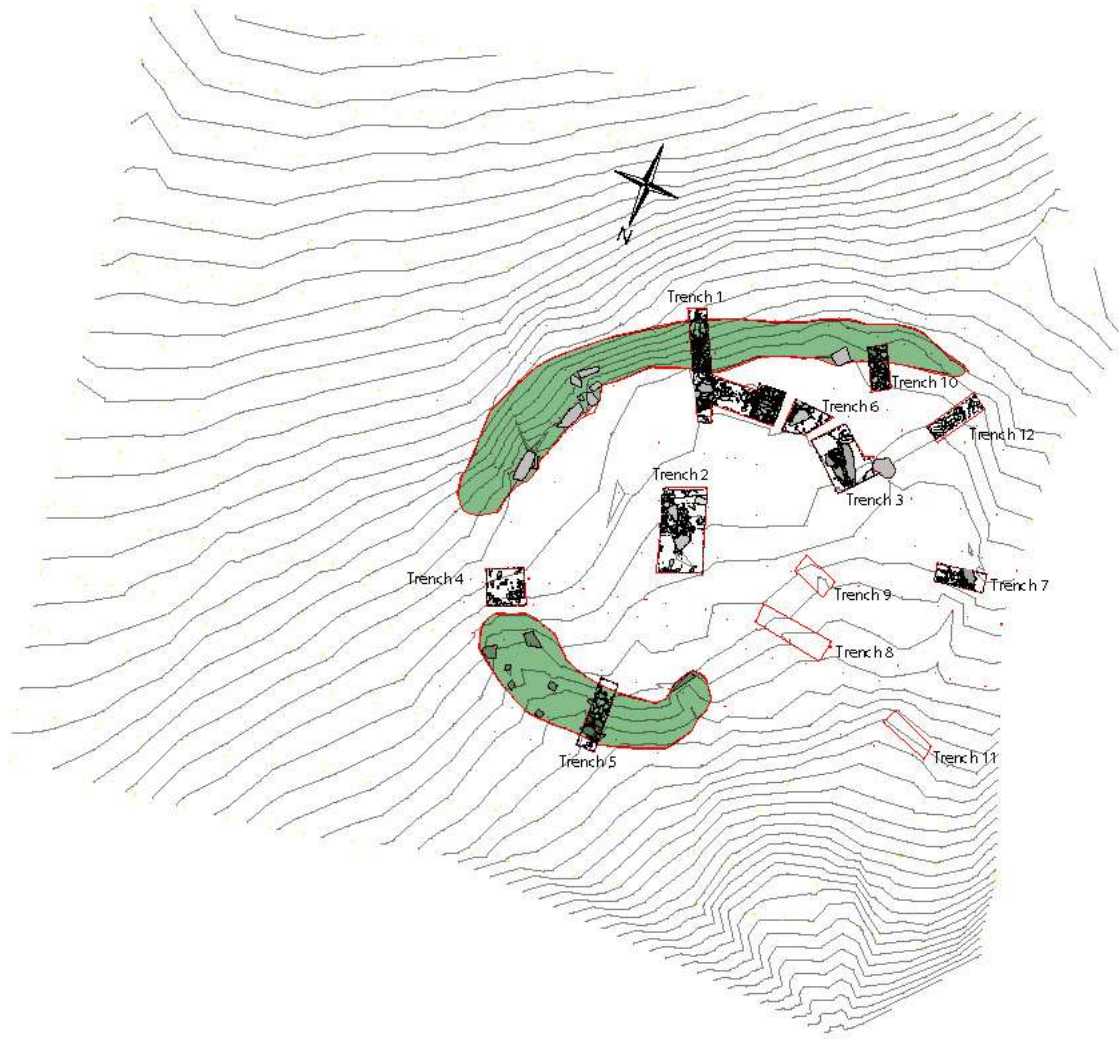


Fig. 3. Location of trenches

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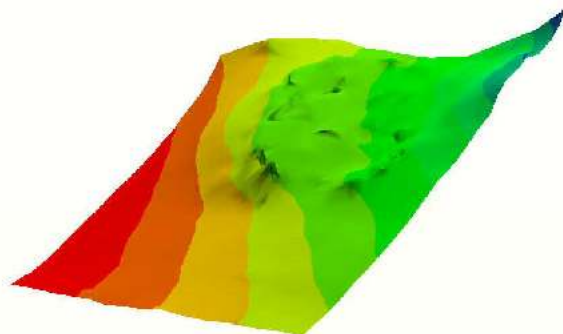


Fig.4a. Results of topographic survey, viewed from southeast.

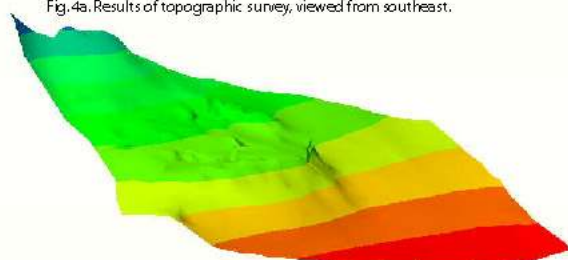


Fig.4b. Results of topographic survey, viewed from west.

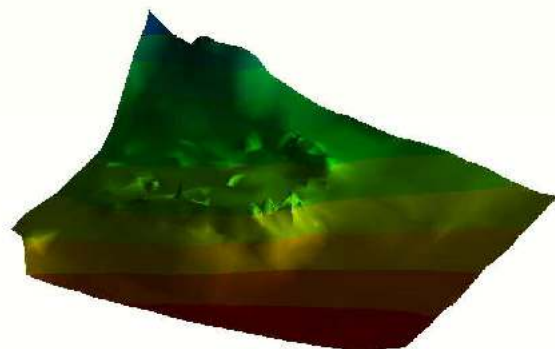


Fig.4c. Results of topographic survey (spot light), viewed from south

4. RESULTS

4.1 Trench 1

4.1.1 This trench was placed to determine the nature of the bank on the southern side of the monument; it was at this location that the bank appeared to be well preserved and/or of substantial construction. Excavation revealed a mid grey brown silt with some iron pan [002] immediately beneath the turf (Fig. 5). At the northern end of the trench [002] capped [039] a mid brown sandy silt up to 0.10 m in depth. This in turn capped [015], although the southern end of the trench [002] lay immediately above [015] (Fig 5 & 6). [015] comprised a compact stony deposit set in a mid red brown sandy silt; this deposit was up to 0.22m thick but thinned out down slope. Beneath [015] was a dark brown silt with fragments of charcoal and burnt bone; it was unclear during excavation whether this deposit was earlier or later than [026]. [015] abutted [026], an irregular compact alignment of stones of various sizes with a distinct northern and southern edge (Plate 1). [026] is later than, and possibly cut into, [031] a



Plate 1. Trench 1, [026] distinct northern edge of stone wall/bank. Taken from west.

mid brown sandy silt with moderate amounts of charcoal flecks and occasional fragments of burnt bone (Plate 2). On the southern side of [026] is a mid brown silty sand with occasional fragments of charcoal and burnt bone [020]; this context is probably the same as [031] (Fig. 7). On the upper surface of [020] adjacent to the stone blocks of [026] was a layer of elongated blocks (Plate 3) which appear to have been deliberately placed forming a narrow flat area. [020] thinned southwards. Beneath [020] was a thin layer of compact pebbles [022]; this layer did not occur on the north side of [026] (Fig. 8) (Plate 4).

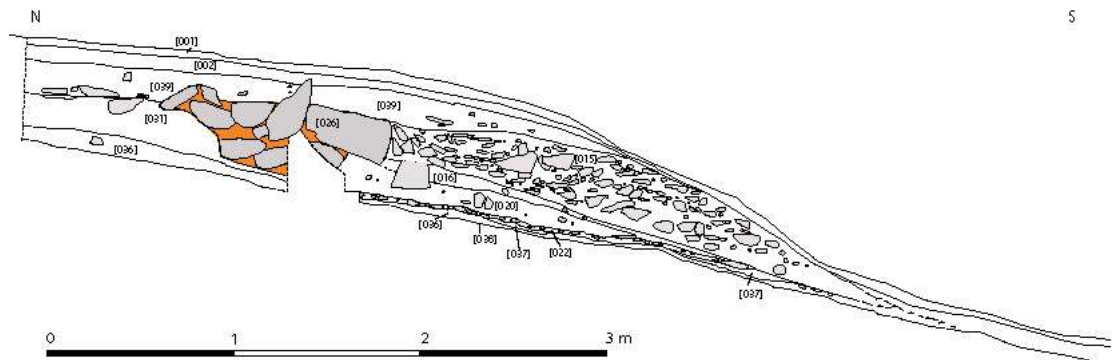


Fig. 5. Trench 1, west facing section

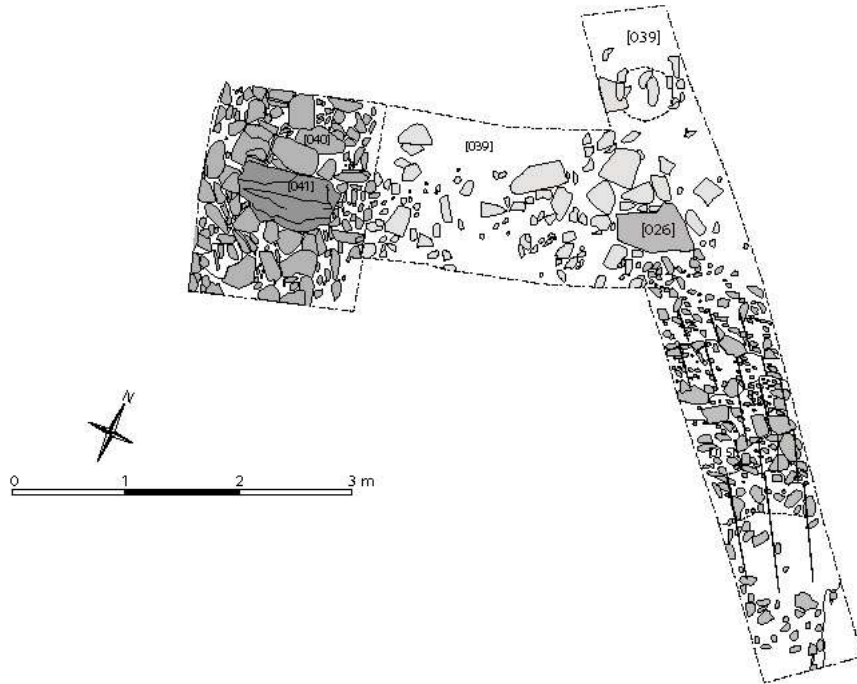


Fig.6. Trench 1 [015] compact bank material and standing stone [041] within the rubble wall/bank [040].

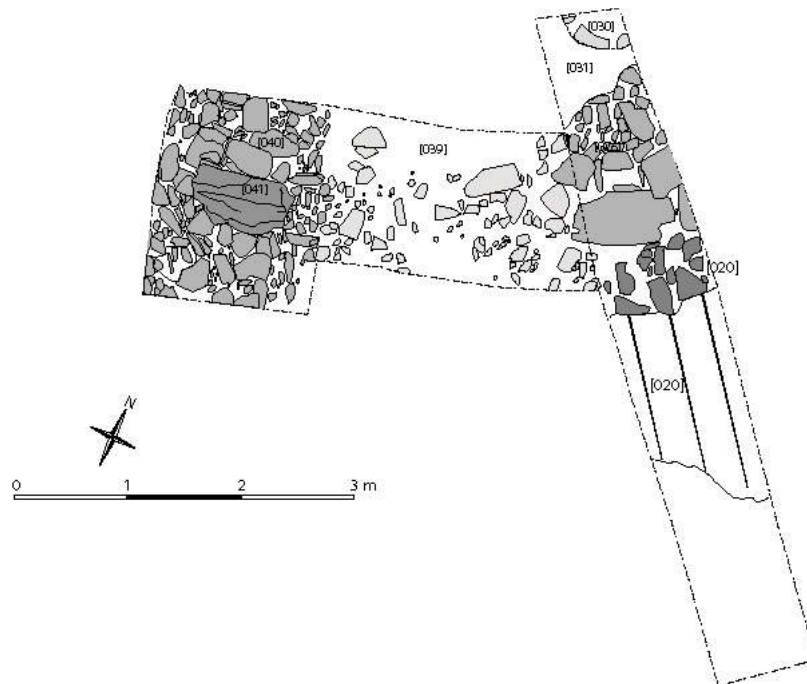


Fig. 7. Trench 1, [020] with flatly laid cobbles at its north end.

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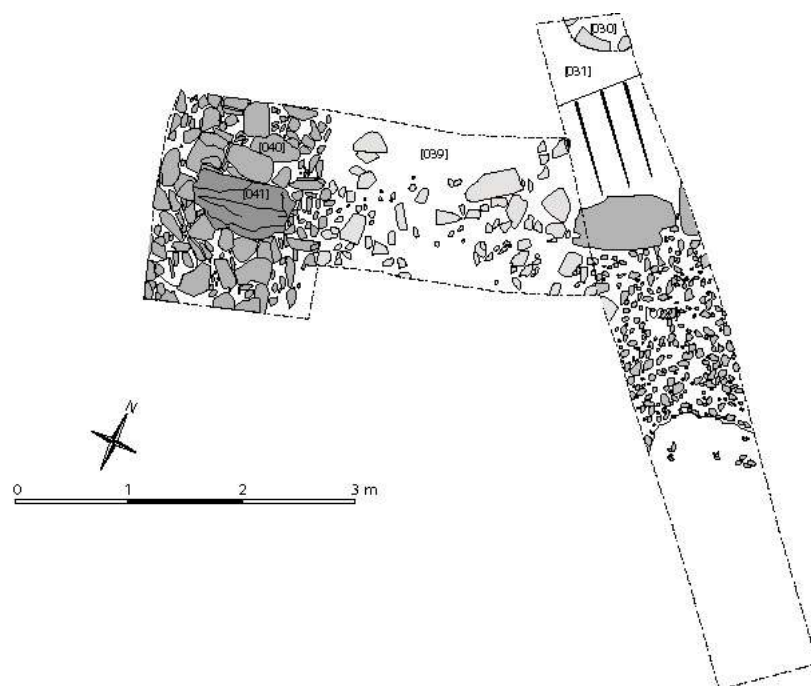


Fig. 8. Trench 1, metallised surface [022].



Plate 2. Trench 1, concentration of charcoal [030] within the brown sandy silt [031]. Taken from north.



Plate 3. Trench 1, horizontally placed elongated stones on the upper surface of [020] and located on the southern side of the stone wall [026]. Taken from the north.



Plate 4. Trench 1, cobbled surface [022]. Taken from west.

Beneath [026] occurred an irregular thin deposit of mid dark grey silt with occasional charcoal inclusions and burnt bone fragments [037]. The lowermost anthropic deposit was [036] a light yellow grey brown sandy silt with occasional beach pebbles and rare charcoal flecks; this deposit occurred beneath the wall/bank [026]. At the west end of the trench was an upright stone [041] which appeared to be an integral part of the stone wall/bank [040]. Much later field clearance [007] had been piled up against the south side of standing stone (Plate 5). This standing stone had a small cup mark on its south facing side.



Plate 5. Trench 1, standing stone with later field clearance against its southern side.

4.2 Trench 2

- 4.2.1 At the centre of the platform/ring cairn were two large stones set upon a small grass covered mound, the latter indicative of further stones. Partial excavation revealed a stone cairn [035] made up of numerous smaller rounded stones up to 0.44 m in diameter (Fig.9). A bright brown silt [029] occurred between and over the stones. In the sondage at the southern end of the trench it was demonstrated that the bright brown silt [029] capped a brown silt with occasional flecks of charcoal (some quite large) and numerous stones [042].

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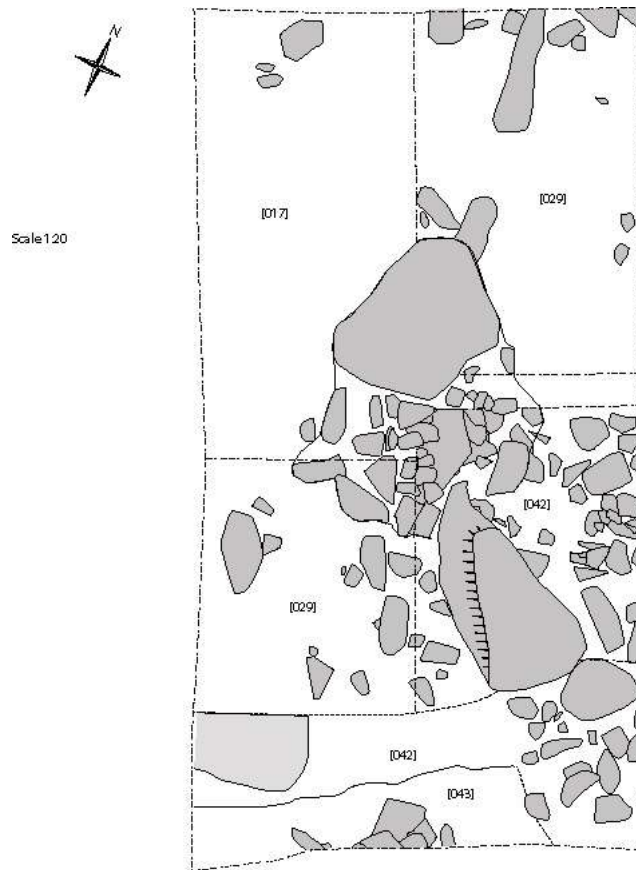


Fig.9. Trench 2, excavation plan (not to scale).

This in turn capped a thin compact layer comprising broken, weathered fragments of bedrock, brown silt and rare charcoal flecks [043].

4.3 Trench 3

4.3.1 Trench 3 was dominated by a large stone setting [018] (Fig. 10). The western stone was set on its long edge and was just over 2 m in length. This elongate stone had a single cup mark on its western face. Two other large stones lay parallel to the largest stone and the gap between them was neatly infilled with elongate, rounded stones and bright brown silt [006] (Plate 6). The wall [018] ended abruptly at its southern end. A slight hollow [014] with a fill of irregular stones and grey silt lay to the south of the wall [018]. There was no clear cut at the base of the wall, although there was a slight depression into which the larger stone appears to have been set.

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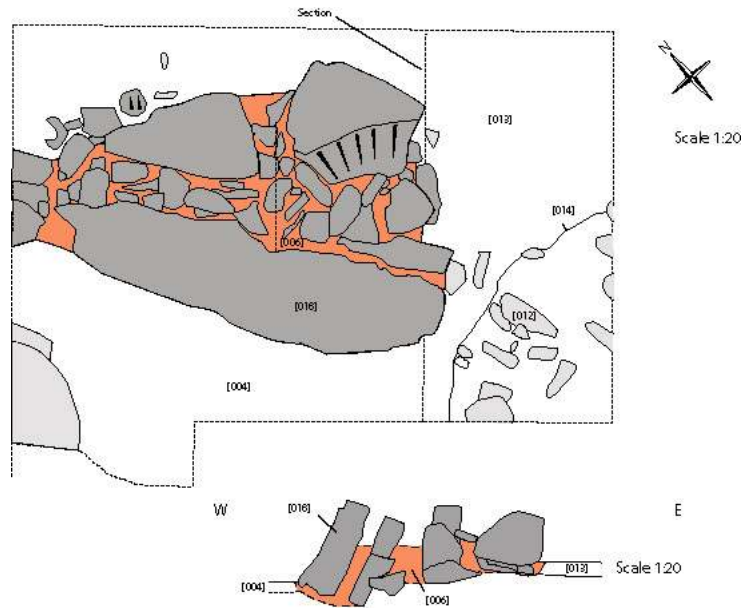


Fig.10. Trench 3, plan and south facing elevation of stone wall/bank [018]. Not to scale.



Plate 6. Trench 3, internal packing of wall [018]. Taken from the east.

4.4 Trench 4

4.4.1 Trench 4 was located in an apparent break in the bank on the eastern side of the platform/ring cairn. A succession of reddish brown silts with small, irregular rubble was revealed during excavation ([009], [021] & [023]). A square arrangement of rubble was observed in [009] in the northwestern corner of the trench. Only [021] contained charcoal flecks, although a flint thumbnail scraper was retrieved from the uppermost deposit [009].

4.5 Trench 5

4.5.1 The stone and earthen bank of the platform/ring cairn was also sample excavated on the northern side of the monument where the slope of the bank lay within the interior of the monument. The upper portion of the bank comprised a roughly constructed stone wall [011] (only a single course was revealed during excavation) with various rubble layers occurring on its southern side ([019] & [024]) (Fig. 11). A mid brown silt [003] abutted the wall/bank [011] on its northern side. The wall/bank was not removed during excavation.

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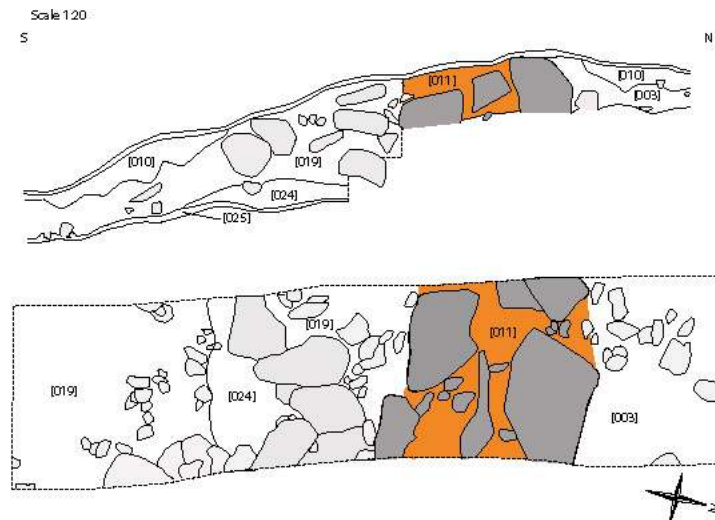


Fig.11. Trench 5, east facing section and plan.

4.6 Trench 6

- 4.6.1 Trench 6 was excavated around a large flat stone that was partially exposed within the turf (Plate 7). The large stone was set in a red brown silty grit, with large cobbles occurring deeper in the deposit [028] at eastern and southern sides of the trench; this deposit was not fully excavated. There were no cobbles on the western and northern sides of the large stone. The stone was lifted during excavation but there were no marks on its underside; it was returned to its original position prior to backfilling. Various plough marks (?), elongated grooves with no preferred orientation, were apparent on its upper surface.



Plate 7. Trench 6, large flat stone with cobbles to east and south. Taken from south.

4.7 Trenches 7, 11 & 12

- 4.7.1 Trench 7 was located over a low linear bank that occurred to the western side of the main platform/ring cairn (Fig. 3). Excavation revealed a low stone bank comprising one large cobble and numerous smaller stones set on a bedrock ridge [034] (Fig. 12a & Plate 8). This survived to a single 'course'.

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Plate 8. Trench 7, low stone bank [034]. Taken from south.

Trench 11 was excavated to determine the extent of the linear bank which was clearly visible some way to the south and north of Trench 7. Small stones occurred at the north-western end of Trench 11 (Plate 9). This was thought to

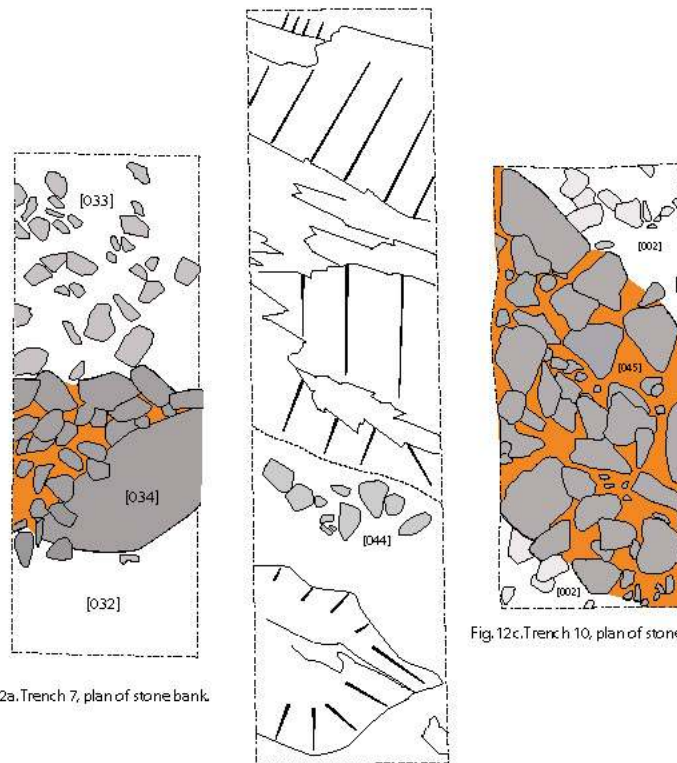


Fig. 12a. Trench 7, plan of stone bank

Scale 1:20

Fig. 12b. Trench 12, plan of stones.

Fig. 12c. Trench 10, plan of stone bank

Fig. 12a. Trench 7, plan of stone bank. Fig. 12b. Trench 12 plan of stones and Fig. 12c. Trench 10 plan of stone bank.

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Plate 9. Trench 11, collection of small stones at the north-western end. Taken from the northwest.

be shattered natural, although it could represent the barest remnants of the linear stone bank recorded in Trench 7. Trench 12 was located over the possible southern limit of the stone bank (Fig. 12b & Plate 10). Excavation revealed mainly bedrock with a few small aligned stones sitting directly upon bedrock; these may be the remnants of the stone bank.



Plate 10. Trench 12, alignment of small stones that may be the remnants of the stone bank. Taken from the south.

4.8 Trenches 8 and 9

4.8.1 Trench 8 and 9 were excavated to determine whether the bank/wall of the platform/ring cairn occurred in the northwest portion of the site or whether the lack of a visible earthwork reflected a real absence. Immediately beneath the turf in both trenches was a dark red gritty silty sand which overlay bedrock; no features of archaeological significance were observed.

4.9 Trench 10

4.9.1 Trench 10 was located over a low linear mound set on the edge of the south facing slope leading off the monument. Immediately below the turf a low stone and earthen bank was revealed [045] (Fig. 12c & Plate 11). The linear extent of this stone and earthen bank was not ascertained.



Plate 11. Trench 10, stone and earthen bank, with northern edge clearly visible. Taken from the north.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Trench 1

5.1.1 The stratigraphic sequence revealed in Trench 1 indicates that the monument was multi-phased.

5.1.2 The lowermost layer [036] is interpreted as a dirty natural sub-soil or colluvium, into which rare fragments of charcoal were probably incorporated later through the activities of earthworms and roots. There was no evidence for a buried turf above this layer, although there were patches of a thin brown subsoil [037] and so it is probable that the site was deliberately de-turfed prior to the construction of the metalled (cobbled) surface [022]. This cobbling did not appear to extend underneath the later stone wall/bank [026].

5.1.3 On the southern side of [026], the cobbling is capped by [020], described as a sandy silt with large to small stones and inclusions of charcoal and burnt bone. The upper surface of [020] adjacent to the base of [026] comprised elongated cobbles that had been arranged to make a flat surface, although this only extended some 0.60 m beyond the southern edge of the wall/bank [026]. [020] is interpreted as a deliberate dump, or dumps, of material that make up the lower core of the bank. It seems likely that [031] is basically the same deposit as [020], although it had fewer stone inclusions than [020] and more charcoal and burnt bone fragments. A similar deposit [043] was recorded in Trench 2. It is possible that these various brown silt deposits with burnt bone and charcoal inclusions formed a single unit. Excavation demonstrated that the burning events that produced the charcoal and burnt bone fragments had probably taken place elsewhere. Identification of the actual location of these burning events remains elusive as there was very little charcoal from the excavated deposits in any of the other trenches. Interestingly, a deposit of burnt soil, finely dispersed charcoal and small fragments of cremated human bone forming a low mound were found to underlie the platform cairn at Tomnaverie, Aberdeenshire (Bradley 2005, 15).

5.1.4 The next phase comprised the construction of the stone wall/bank [026]. The compact rubble on the northern side exhibited a sharp northern edge. At this location in Trench 1 the stone wall/bank appears to comprise a line of large stones on its outer edge (forming the kerb) with compacted, smaller cobbles making up the thickness of the wall/bank within the interior; the stone wall/bank is approximately 1.40 m wide in Trench 1. Stone [041] is interpreted as a standing stone, inasmuch that the stone has been deliberately packed to ensure it stands upright. A single cup mark was located towards the top of the standing stone on its south facing side. Around the standing stone there was no clearly definable northern or southern edge of the stone bank/wall [040] within the trench area as excavated.

5.1.5 Overlying [020] was [016], a silt, rich in charcoal and burnt bone with occasional fire cracked pebbles; this is also interpreted as the result of a series of deliberate dumps.

5.1.6 The lower portion of the stone bank/wall [026] was obscured by bank material [015]. The bulk of this material comprised angular, probably quarried, limestone which was rammed into position. The exposed bedrock at the lower, southern end of Trench 1 has clearly been smashed away forming a near level platform that skirted around the base of the platform/ring cairn. This rammed stone deposit formed a large bank on the southern and eastern side of the stone wall/bank [026], and together they defined the southern and eastern limits of the platform/ring cairn. However, the bulk of the levelling material within the platform (ie [036] and [031]) had already been deposited prior to the construction of the stone wall/bank [026] and bank [015], indicating that the platform/ring cairn and its outer bank were built to accentuate the pre-existing topography. Overlying the stone wall/bank and bank was a mid red brown silt [039] which is interpreted as a post-abandonment horizon. It is likely that this deposit was subject to cultivation in the early modern era, if not earlier.

5.2 *Trench 2*

5.2.1 Trench 2 is dominated by a clearance cairn [035] which incorporates a bright brown silt; this silt is interpreted as colluvium produced during the early modern cultivation of the site. However, the clearance cairn is located at the centre of the platform/ring cairn, a coincidence perhaps, or conceivably clearance has been dumped upon a pre-existing central feature; unfortunately lack of time prevented its excavation. Beneath the bright brown silt [029] was a brown silt with occasional flecks of charcoal [042] in which many stones were located; this in turn overlay deposit [043], discussed above.

5.3 *Trenches 3, 6, 7, 10 & 12*

5.3.1 Prior to excavation in Trench 3 the stone setting within, visible beneath a covering of grass and moss, was thought to be the remnants of a cist. However, excavation revealed a large linear stone, with a cup mark on its outer edge, lying parallel to two slightly smaller large stones, between which smaller stones and bright brown silt had been packed [018]. This is interpreted as a stone bank/wall (same as [026]/[040] in Trench 1). However, there was a distinct lack of rubble around the wall [018] compared to that observed in Trench 1. Furthermore the abrupt southern end of [018] appears to mark a real break in the stone bank/wall, as opposed to damage being caused during later agricultural activities. This abrupt end to the wall/bank is reflected in Trench 6, where the large stone, which is thought to have possibly toppled over, is backed to the east and south by a mass of cobbles but with no significant stone on its northern or western sides. This gap between the two walls is interpreted as a possible entrance (Fig. 13).

5.3.2 The large linear stone of wall/bank [018] is intriguing in that it too exhibits a cup mark, this time on the western face towards the narrower end of the block. One explanation of this cup mark is that it had been carved into the stone prior to its incorporation into the wall/bank. The natural ridge immediately to the west of the site comprises the same lithology and cup marks abound on at least two separate panels. Perhaps the large rocks of [018] and [041] were prized off the natural exposure, their respective cup marks already in place. Furthermore, it is tempting to interpret the shallow scoop [014] in the southwestern corner of Trench 3 as the 'slot' or, given its shallowness, the original resting place of the long-stone of [018] which may have been held in an upright position by packing stones in a similar manner to standing stone [041]. Indeed, perhaps the neat packing within the core of wall/bank [018] originated from the packing of such a standing stone. The implication of such an interpretation is that at least some of the prostrate stones which form the wall/bank of the platform/ring cairn originally stood to form a stone circle.

5.3.3 A roughly triangular platform of flat ground is located on the south-western side of the platform/ring cairn, just beyond Trenches 3 and 6 and bounded by Trenches 10 and 11 (Fig. 13). Prior to excavation a low, intermittent bank was just visible extending from just south of Trench 11 down to Trench 12. Similarly a low and barely traceable bank was visible in the location of Trench 10. A low but substantial stone bank was revealed by excavation in Trench 10. This bank had very clearly defined southern and northern edges; its western and eastern extent were not ascertained although the topography indicates that the stone bank ended just to the west of the trench edge. The presence of a linear bank running roughly north/south on the western side of the platform/ring cairn was also confirmed by excavation in Trench 7. The

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southern end of this stone bank was not definitively defined, but excavation in Trench 12 suggests the utilisation of the natural bedrock with the addition of stones placed on top and around it. Although no stratigraphic link can be made between the wall/bank of the platform/ring cairn and the two linear banks on the western side, in plan the alignment of the entrances coupled with the creation of a large flat area between the two entrances hints at an inner forecourt.

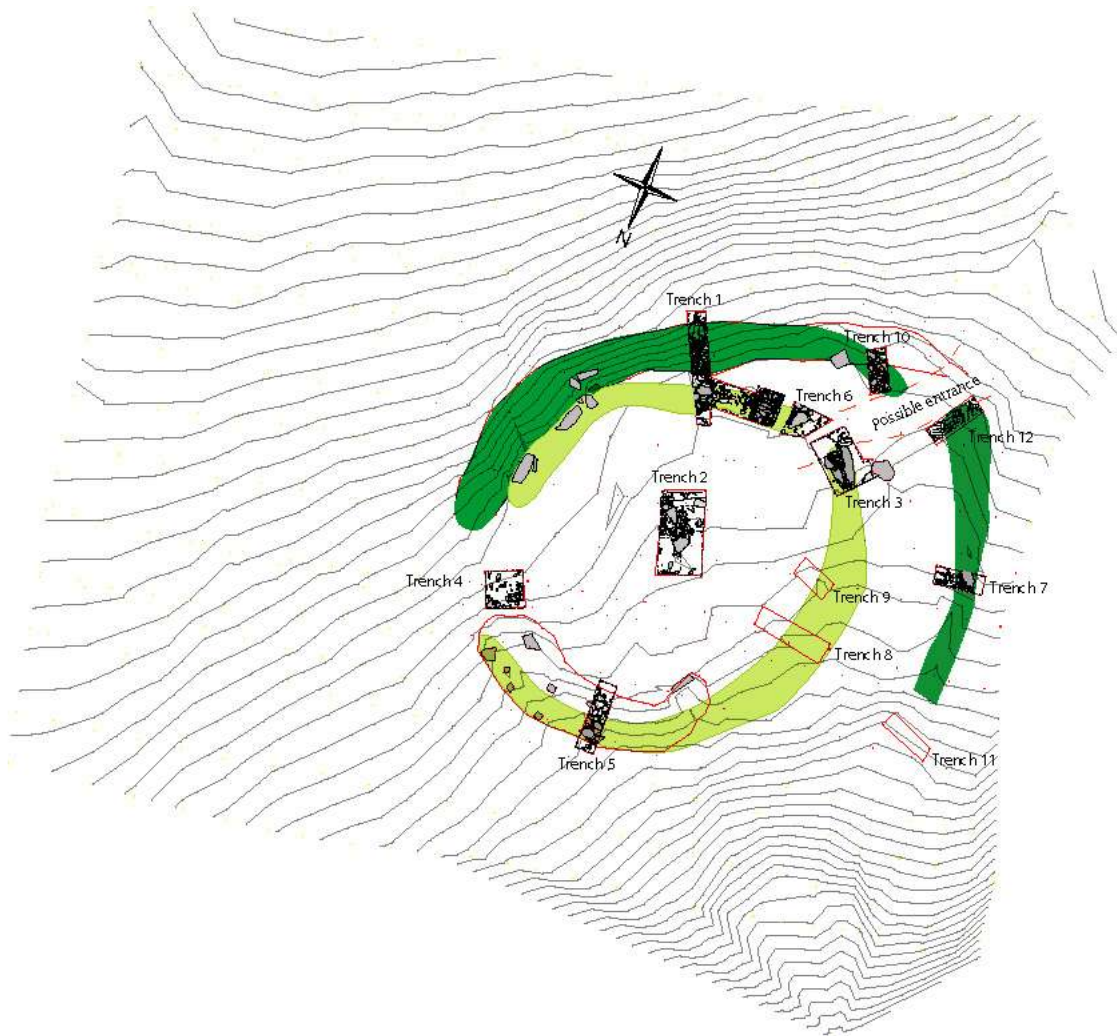


Fig. 13. Interpolated course of the ring cairn (pale green) and 'forecourt' banks (dark green) and possible entrance (red dash).

5.4 Summary

5.4.1 The Carnassarie monument is multi-phased. On the southern side of the monument and prior to the construction of the cobbled surface [022] the turf was deliberately removed; there was no evidence for a buried turf horizon in the other trenches. The cobbling was capped by a mixed deposit containing burnt bone and charcoal, which appears to have accumulated as a series of dumps.

5.4.2 Evidence for a stone circle phase prior to the construction of the ring-cairn is tentative and limited to the long-stone of [018], with its cup mark and which may have originally stood upright in the possible shallow socket [014], Trench 3, supported by chocking stones. The

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base of standing stone [040] was not excavated so it is unclear whether the stone was inserted into the wall or was pre-existing and incorporated into the wall.

- 5.4.3 On and possibly cut or sunk into the dumps of silt, burnt bone and charcoal of Trench 1 was constructed the ring of stone [026]/[041]/[018]/[011], the character of which changes according to the very variable local topography. The prostrate elongated stones of [026]/[018] are interpreted as outer kerb stones of a ring cairn, the outer kerb stones designed to retain the stone rubble stacked on their inner edge. These kerb stones varied in size, although the longest as exposed was the long-stone of [018], Trench 3, at 2.11 m. A possible and less substantial inner kerb was recorded in Trenches 3 and 5. The diameter of this ring cairn [026] is variable, between 20 and 22 m, forming an ellipse and not a true circle; it measures between 1.00 m and 1.50 m wide. The bank abutting the outer kerb was well defined on the southern side of the monument but faded out on the southwestern side (Trench 3) and was non-existent on the northern and western sides where the ground was flattest; a similar variation according to topography was observed at Tomnaverie (Bradley 2005, 17). The bank appears to have functioned as a revetment to the kerb where this was set on made ground, although it also served to accentuate the monumentality of the site when approached from the south. It appears from the limited excavation that the internal area of the platform/ring cairn has been built up on the southern side, to compensate for the natural slope and create a level platform; again a similar phenomenon was observed at Tomnaverie (Bradley 2005, 21). However, in contrast to the platform cairn at Tomnaverie and ring cairn at Cothiemuir (Bradley 2005) there appears to be minimal internal rubble or cairn material, although this could possibly be a consequence of later field clearance. The Carnassarie platform/ring cairn is unusual in that it also appears to incorporate a forecourt area, although whether this is contemporary with the construction of the platform/ring cairn or a later addition is unclear.
- 5.4.4 The monument at Carnassarie appears to fall between the categories of ring cairn and platform cairn, although limited excavation within the confines of the ring suggests sporadic internal rubble, whereas the interior of other examples of ring or platform cairns, such as Tomnaverie and Cothiemuir, have an extensive inner rubble core. Ring cairns, as a classified monument, are extremely rare on the west coast of Scotland, although recent fieldwork has identified two further candidates. A possible ring cairn located at Barr Ban, Knapdale was evaluated as part of the Dalriada Project and proved to comprise a ring of rubble (12 m x 11.20 m) set around a central pit with a large capstone. The slopes of the mound are artificially enhanced (Regan 2006, 40). Another possible ring cairn is located on Blasthill near the Mull of Kintyre, although this monument is listed in the NRMS (NR70NW7) as a round cairn. However, in 2008 Vicky Cummins of University of Central Lancashire opened an evaluation trench on the southern side of the cairn, revealing a small stone rubble bank with an apparently clean interior.

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7 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: context descriptions

Project	Area	Context	Context type	Description	Interpretation	same as	over	under	Bulk Sample No
08	T1	1	Layer	Turf, dark brown silt up to 0.06 m thick.	Topsoil.		007		
08	T1	2	Layer	Mid grey brown subsoil. Iron pan. Small pebbles/stones, occasional charcoal flecks, occasional inclusions of slate and quartz. Up to 0.08 m.	Subsoil.			007	
08	T5	3	Layer	Mid brown silt with angular stones (0.10-0.35 m) , inclusions of slate. Roots. Up to 0.16 m deep.	Build up of hillwash/collivium against wall/bank. Includes tumble from wall/bank.			001	
08	T3	4	Layer	Pale yellow/red silt with occasional patches of granular grey silt with iron pan. Occasional small stones (0.02 -0.05 m). Up to 0.05 m deep.	Sub-soil which has accumulated since construct of the site.	002	012	001	
08	T3	6	Fill	Bright brown silt occasional rootlets. Fill around central packing of wall. Stones up to 0.30 m, some horizontal, others vertical. Depth not ascertained - not fully excavated.	Lower fill of packing of wall. Soil appears to be deliberately added as part of the packing. Soil is re-deposited natural.			005	
08	T1	7	Layer	Small pile of cleared stones (angular) dumped up against south side of standing stone.	Modern clearance		002	001	
08	T4	8	Layer	Mixed grey brown silt loam subsoil. Inclusions of quartz, slate and rare pebbles.	Subsoil, included probable buried turf.	002		001	
08	T4	9	Layer	Pale, bright brown silt. Occasional stones. Rootlets. Up to 0.24 m thick in SE corner. Rare charcoal flecks. Stones up to 0.46 m, sub-rounded to angular.	Colluvium/hillwash of cultivated soil in which rubble from wall/bank is located.	013, 019	021	008	2

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08	T5	10	Layer	Grey brown silt. Inclusions of slate. Rootlets. 0.10 deep.	Remains of turf.	002	001
08	T5	11	Layer	Light yellowish brown silt. 25% grit. Rootlets. Inclusions of angular stones. Large stones of wall/bank 0.40-0.70 m across top of the bank. E/W orientation. Rubble between 0.20 -0.50 m on slope of bank. Inclusion of slate and glass.	Tumble and hillwash.		001
08	T3	12	Fill	Compact grey silt with 10% grit. Rootlets. Occasional iron pan. Occasional stones, placed horizontally up to 0.34 m long. Possible packing stones . 0.10 m deep.	Fill of scoop [013].		013
08	T3	13	Layer	Pale bright brown silt. Occasional rootlets and occasional small stones. Depth not ascertained.	Natural silt.		004
08	T3	14	Cut	Not fully revealed in trench. 0.63 m wide 1.50 m. Up to 0.10 m deep.	Possible scoop/socket for standing stone.		
08	T1	15	Layer	Re-deposited stone, possibly quarried from nearby. Compact stones, possibly rammed/crushed into position as there was little space between fragments. The majority of the stones appear to be small to medium limestone fragments, although some larger fragments (max 0.38 m x 0.20 m x 0.10 m) were incorporated. Also occasional slate, quartz and possible burnt stone used. The matrix is a loose mid red brown sandy silt. Depth 0.22m.	Banked up stone and soil deposit on south side of the platform, the stone is re-deposited rammed limestone.		

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08	T1	16	Layer	Dark brown soil with frequent flecks of charcoal and occasional burnt bone (cremation?) and burnt stone. Some of the stones appear to be fire cracked. Up to 0.08 m deep.	Too thick for one dump - accumulation deposit - occupation/use deposit.	20	15	1, 3
08	T2	17	Layer	Brown silt. Roots. Occasional small stones. Occasional larger (up to 0.10 m) cobbles. Up to 0.12 m deep.	Subsoil.		001	
08	T3	18	Object	Largest stone 2.05 x 0.55 m, up to 0.40 m wide. Cup mark on SW side 0.84 m from N. end and 1.14m from the S. Cup 0.05 x 0.05 m. Stone possibly split surface lost on S side of cup mark. Lying parallel another large stone 0.70 m x 0.40 m and 0.54 m x 0.64 m, irregular. Both stones appear to comprise schist. Stone packing [005]/[006] in between smaller stones, not fully revealed. Wall appears to continue to the N.	Stone wall. Largest stone possibly derived from ridge to west, was cup mark already in the rock? Stone with cup mark possibly knocked down/removed from socket [014].		001	
08	T5	19	Layer	Light brown silt. Occasional roots and sub-angular stones up to 0.20 m. Animal burrow. Inclusions of slate and one piece of glass.	Lying on south side of the wall/bank, containing small hearting tumble of wall/bank.	024	010	
08	T1	20	Layer	Mid brown silty sand with occasional medium to large stones and occasional charcoal and burnt bone fragments. Largest 0.40 x 0.30 x 0.08 m. Max depth 0.19 m.	Dumped deposit of sand and stones to make up bank of monument. Mixed with this are small patches of burnt bone and charcoal, either subsoil mixed with burnt deposits or scatter of cremated material dumped as silt accumulated.	031	022	016 5

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08	T4	21	Layer	<p>Reddish bright brown silt with large areas of white silt. Occasional rare flecks of charcoal. Roots. Small sub-rounded to angular stones, concentration in SE corner. Max 0.06 m deep, thins southwards.</p>	<p>Weathered natural. Possible original surface (cleared of turf?) on which bank/wall was constructed. Stones represent possible tumble of the rubble fill of the bank/wall.</p>	023	009	4
08	T1	22	Layer	<p>Metalled surface comprising compact pebbles rammed in very close to one another, these are set in a yellow brown clay/silt matrix. Max size of pebble (0.18 x 0.10 x 0.25 m). N edge hidden underneath large stone which is later in the sequence.</p>	<p>Remnants of possible gravel surface or preparation for bank construction</p>	036	020	
08	T4	23	Layer	<p>Reddish brown silt with occasional patches of white silt and common iron pan/concretions. Very few stones. Up to 0.10 m thick. Thins southwards.</p>	<p>Weathered bedrock with iron pan.</p>	Nat	021	
08	T5	24	Layer	<p>Grey silt with few roots. Few sub-angular stones up to 0.10 m and pieces of slate. Up to 0.16 m.</p>	<p>Layer of silt lying south side of large stone tumble of wall.</p>		11	
08	T5	25	Layer	<p>Red brown silt with roots. Sub-angular to sub-rounded stone up to 0.10m. Animal burrows. Rare inclusions of charcoal and slate. Up to 0.02 m thick.</p>	<p>Located south of wall on slope. Build up of silt - weathered bedrock.</p>		019	
08	T1	26	Object	<p>Compact alignment of stones, set within a mid grey brown silt. Largest stone 0.57 m x 0.36 m x 0.15 m.</p>	<p>Possible wall of ring-cairn. May be revetting material to the north forming the northern 'kerb' of the cairn structure.</p>	031	039	
08	T6	27	Layer	<p>Topsoil on to the greyish silt. Some small stones 0.05 -0.10 m in length. Layer some 0.04-0.05 m in depth. Large stone in the trench.</p>	<p>Topsoil.</p>		028	

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08	T6	28	Layer	Red brown silty grit. Small stones 0.10 - 0.15 m in the soil. Larger cobbles set in this unit at east end of trench.	Colluvium/sub-soil.				027
08	T2	29	Layer	Bright brown silt, small stones and larger cobbles at base of unit. 0.22-0.10 m small stones of mixed lithology. Up to 0.25 m depth. Appears to be the same layer as silt between clearance cairn material.	Colluvium, possibly cultivated.			042	001
08	T1	30	Layer	Charcoal and burnt bone occur as small patches in N side of T1, truncated by animals. 1 mm thick,	Possibly remnants of in situ burning/cremation or a discrete dump from a burning event.			031	026 6
08	T1	31	Layer	Mid to dark brown sandy silt. Inclusions of charcoal and occasional burnt bone (cremated bone?). Occasional pebbles (some appear burnt), rare quartz and slate. Appears to be confined to N end of T1. Animal burrows. 0.14 m deep.	Mixed deposit of soil and burnt material.	020	036	030	7
08	T7	32	Layer	Greyish silt. Small sub-angular stone 0.50 - 0.20 m), some iron pan.	Sub-soil.	002			
08	T7	33	Layer	Greyish silt with reddish inclusions of iron. Occasional small stones (0.20 -0.70 m). 0.17 m deep.	Sub-soil.	002			001
08	T7	34	Layer	Large medium stones forming revetment. One very large rounded cobble (1.12 x 0.60 m) and medium stones aligned parallel to the large (0.10 x 0.30 m).	Stones as part of bank, linear bank/wall oriented N/S.				001

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08	T2	35	Object	Stone cairn with 2 large stones, one rounded 0.80 x 0.80 m and one linear stone 1.10 x 0.60 m (fallen standing stone?) around which smaller stones 0.44 to 0.10 m have been laid. Forms sub-circular cairn roughly 1.30 x 1.30 m but with stones trailing off southern end. Bright brown silt between the stones, appears integrated rather than later addition.	Clearance cairn - probably relating to later agriculture use the land.	029	042	001	
08	T1	36	Layer	Light yellow/grey brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles and rare charcoal flecks. Thicker at N end of trench, up to 0.03 m at S end and 0.01 m at N end.	Remnants of possible original sub-soil or colluvium above natural.		038	031	8
08	T1	37	Layer	Thin patch remnant of mid to dark grey sub-soil, occasional charcoal and burnt bone fragments. 2 mm thick.	Sub-soil.				9
08	T1	38	Layer	Natural subsoil at N end consists a compact light yellow silty clay and stones and at S end a shattered bedrock.	Natural.			036	
08	T1	39	Layer	Mid red brown sandy silt. Inclusions of occasional pebbles, quartz and slate and rare charcoal flecks. 0.10 m thick.			040	002	
08	T1	40	Object	Loosely packed stones forming southern bank to platform, also forming packing around the standing stone. The larger stones comprise large rounded cobbles (0.40 x 0.26 x 0.26 m). These possibly form a rough revetment of the southern edge, within the core of the packing and around the standing stone. In between the bank comprises a packing of more angular (quarried?) stone (Limestone, schist).	Bank construction and packing around standing stone [041].				039

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08	T1	41	Object	Standing stone 1.08 m high above excavated level (not bottomed) 0.85 m wide E/W and 0.30 m in width N/S. Large triangular block of stone leaning slightly to the N 20-25 degrees. Has a possible cup mark on its upper extent 0.03 x 0.03 x 0.015 m.	Standing stone appears to have been in place before bank [040] was constructed as stone packing of wall around and behind it.				040
08	T2	42	Layer	Brown silt with occasional flecks of charcoal. Roots. Stones, sub-angular to sub-rounded up to 0.50 m, sit on top of this silt. Rubble or part of structure ? Surface ? Layer thickens southwards, up to 0.05 m in sondage.		031			029, 0043
08	T2	43	Layer	Small angular fragments 0.03 - 0.04 m of weathered bedrock mixed with brown silt, overlying [042] in SAW corner of the trench. Rare charcoal flecks, compacted.	Deliberate leveling layer?		042		029
08	T12	44	Object	Loose stones up to 0.20 m, sub-rounded to sub-angular set on bedrock.	Possible remnant of wall/bank	34	Nat		002
08	T10	45	Object	Stones, mainly sub-rounded, up to 0.60 m diameter. Well set together, randomly packed, clear S edge. Brown silt matrix.	Stone bank, southern edge very clear, northern edge less clear. Bank appears to lead around from the bank in T1, possible later addition to form triangular shaped 'entrance' to platform.				002

Appendix 2: Graphics register

Project no	Drawing no	Sheet no	Area	Scale	Contexts	Description
8	1	11	T1	1:20	007	Plan. Trench 1, clearance pile
8	2	10	T1	1:20	039	Plan. Trench 1 after removal of [002]

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8	3	21	T3	1:20	004, 005	Plan. Trench 3, after removal of [001]
8	4	14	T3	1:20	004, 006	Plan. Trench 3, after removal of [005]
8	5	17	T3	1:20	004, 006, 018	Plan. Trench 3, after removal of [006]
8	6	21	T2	1:20	017, 029	Plan. After removal of topsoil
8	7	21	T4	1:20	008	Plan. Trench 4, after removal of topsoil
8	8	0	T5	1:20	003, 010, 011, 006, 012, 013,	Plan. Trench 5, after removal of topsoil
8	9	1	T3	1:20	014, 018	Plan. Trench 3, 006, 013, 014
8	10	1	T3	1:20	006, 018	Section of wall/bank, south facing section
8	11	6	T1	1:20	020, 026	Plan. Trench 1, stone [026].
8	12	4	T4	1:20	009, 021	Plan of Trench 4, 009, 021.
8	13	20	T4	1:20	021, 023	Plan of Trench 4, 023 - post-exc.
8	14	20	T4	1:20	008, 009	Section of Trench 4, west facing section
8	15	8	T1	1:20	030, 031	Plan of sandy deposit [031] and charcoal [030].
8	16	9	T1	1:20	[020]	Plan of Trench 1 sandy deposit
8	17	5	T1	1:20	016	Plan of Trench 1, bank sandy silt [016]
8	18	12	T1	1:20	022, 037	Plan of Trench 1, metalled surface [022].
8	20	4	T5	1:20	003, 011, 025	Plan of T5
8	21	7	T5	1:20	024, 025 003, 010, 011,	Plan of T5, 024, 025
8	22	7	T5	1:20	019, 024, 025	Section. East facing section of T5
8	23	3	T1	1:20	040, 041	Plan of Trench 1, standing stone [041] and bank [040].
8	24	18	T2	1:20	017, 029, 035 017, 029, 035,	Plan of Trench 2
8	25	19	T2	1:20	042, 043	Plan of Trench 2
8	26	15	T6	1:20	028 1, 2, 20, 22, 39, 26, 15, 16, 30,	Plan of Trench 6.
8	27	22	T1	1:20	031, 36, 37, 38	Section of T1, east facing section
8	28	13	T7	1:20	032, 033, 034	Plan of Trench 7
8	29	14	T10	1:20	045	Plan of Trench 10, after removal of topsoil
8	30	16	T30	1:20	044	Plan of Trench 12 after removal of topsoil

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Appendix 3: photographic register

Number	From	Trench	Description
1	West	T2	After topsoil removal
2	West	T2	After topsoil removal
3	East	T2	After topsoil removal
4	East	T2	After topsoil removal
5	South	T1	After topsoil removal
6			Working shot
7	South	T1	After topsoil removal
8			
9	South	T1	After removal of [002]
10	South	T1	After removal of [002]
11	North	T1	After removal of [002]
12	North	T1	After removal of [002]
13	West	T3	After removal of turf , S. end
14	West	T3	After removal of turf , S. end
15	South	T3	After removal of turf , S. end
16	South	T3	After removal of turf
17	West	T3	After removal of turf
18	North	T3	After removal of turf
19	North	T3	After removal of turf
20			Working shot
21	South	T4	After removal of [002]
22	West	T4	After removal of [002]
23	North	T3	After removal of [005]
24	North	T3	After removal of [005]
25	South	T3	After removal of [005]
26	South	T3	After removal of [005]
27	South	T1	[007] clearance pile
28	South	T1	[007] clearance pile
29	South	T1	[007] clearance pile
30	South	T1	[007] clearance pile
31	East	T3	After removal of [005]/part [006]
32	South	T3	After removal of [005]/part [006]
33	East	T1	Standing stone and bank after removal of [002].
34	East	T1	Bank east/north end
35	North	T1	Bank east/north end
36	North	T1	Bank east/north end
37	South	T1	Bank
38	South	T1	Bank
39	West	T1	Bank
40	West	T1	Bank
41	West	T1	Bank
42	West	T1	Bank
43			Working shot
44			Working shot
45			Working shot
46	East	T5	After removal of topsoil
47	North	T5	After removal of topsoil
48	North	T5	After removal of topsoil
49	South	T5	After removal of topsoil
50	West	T3	[014] possible slot for standing stone

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51	South	T3	[014] possible slot for standing stone
52	East	T3	Removal of [006].
53	East	T3	Removal of [006].
54	East	T5	Wall
55			Working shot
56			Working shot
57			Working shot
58			Working shot
59			Working shot
60	South	T1	Bank, charcoal rich deposit
61	West	T1	Bank, charcoal rich deposit
62	West	T1	Bank, charcoal rich deposit
63	West	T1	Bank, charcoal rich deposit
64	West	T1	Bank, charcoal rich deposit
65	West	T1	Bank, charcoal rich deposit
66	North	T1	Bank, charcoal rich deposit
67	South	T1	Bank, charcoal rich deposit
68	South	T1	Bank, charcoal rich deposit
69	South	T5	[019] partially removed
70	West	T5	Wall/bank
71	North	T5	Wall/bank
72	West	T4	Rubble [009] in SE corner
73	South	T4	Rubble [009] in SE corner
74	South	T5	Rubble [019]
75	South	T5	Rubble [019]
76	South	T5	Rubble [019]
77	North	T5	[003] and rubble
78	North	T1	Bank deposit [020]
79	North	T1	Bank deposit [020]
80			Working shot
81			Working shot
82			Working shot
83			Working shot
84			Working shot
85			Working shot
86			Working shot
87			Working shot
88	South	T2	After removal of topsoil
89	South	T2	After removal of topsoil
90	West	T1	Cobbled layer [022]
91	North	T1	Cobbled layer [022]
92	South	T5	Removal of some rubble [019]
93	East	T5	Removal of some rubble [019]
94	South	T5	Removal of some rubble [019]
95	South	T4	Slot through [021]
96	South	T4	Slot through [021]
97	East	T1	Stone bank [026]
98	East	T1	Stone bank [026]
99	South	T5	Removal of rubble [024]/[025]
100	South	T5	Removal of rubble [024]/[025]
101	South	T5	Removal of rubble [024]/[025]
102	South	T5	Removal of rubble [024]/[025]
103	North	T1	Burning/charcoal [030]
104	North	T1	Burning/charcoal [030]

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105	North	T1	Burning/charcoal [030]
106	North	T1	Burning/charcoal [030]
107	West	T9	After removal of topsoil
108	East	T9	After removal of topsoil
109	North	T9	After removal of topsoil
110	North	T9	After removal of topsoil
111	West	T9	After removal of topsoil
112	North	T5	Top of wall/ bank and [003].
113	North	T5	Top of wall/ bank and [003].
114	South	T2	Extended trench after topsoil removal
115	South	T2	Extended trench after topsoil removal
116	East	T2	Removal of [029]
117	West	T2	Removal of [029]
118	West	T2	Removal of [029]
119	South	T2	Removal of [029]
120	East	T2	Removal of [029]
121	North	T1	Metalled surface [022]
122	West	T1	Metalled surface [022]
123	West	T1	Metalled surface [022]
124	North	T1	Dark subsoil [037]
125	West	T1	Dark subsoil [037]
126			Working shot
127			Working shot
128			Working shot
129			Working shot
130	West	T1	Natural
131	West	T1	Natural
132	West	T7	After removal of [032]/[033]
133	North	T7	After removal of [032]/[033]
134	East	T7	After removal of [032]/[033]
135	South	T7	After removal of [032]/[033]
136	South	T6	Stone
137	South	T6	Stone
138	North	T6	Stone
139	East	T6	Stone
140	North	T6	Stone
141	West	T6	Stone
142	East	T1	North end of east section
143	East	T1	North end of east section
144	East	T1	North end of east section
145			general shot
146			general shot
147	West	T2	[043] in sondage
148	East	T2	[043] in sondage
149	East	T1	East facing section, south side of [026].
150	East	T1	East facing section, south side of [026].
151	East	T1	East facing section, south side of [026].
152	East	T1	East facing section, south side of [026].
153	East	T1	East facing section, south side of [026].
154	East	T1	East facing section, south side of [026].
155	East	T1	East facing section, south side of [026].
156	East	T2	general shot
157	South	T2	After partial removal of [029]
158	South	T2	After partial removal of [029]

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159	South	T9	Natural
160			general shot
161			general shot
162			general shot
163	West	T1	South end of west facing section
164	West	T1	South end of west facing section
165	West	T1	South end of west facing section
166	West	T1	South end of west facing section
167	West	T1	North end of west facing section
168	West	T1	North end of west facing section
169	South	T1	Standing stone
170	South	T1	Standing stone
171	West	T1	Standing stone
172	West	T1/T6	Standing stone and fallen stone
173	South	T1	Standing stone
174	West	T1	Standing stone
175	East	T1	Standing stone
176	South	T1	cup mark on standing stone
177			General shot of T3, T6 & T1
178			General shot of T3, T6 & T1
179			General shot of T3, T6 & T1
180	South	T10	Shot of stone bank
181	South	T10	Shot of stone bank
182	West	T10	Shot of stone bank
183	North	T10	Shot of stone bank
184	North	T10	Shot of stone bank
185	South	T8	Bedrock
186	South	T8	Bedrock
187	South	T8	Bedrock
188	West	T11	Bedrock and rubble
189	West	T11	Bedrock and rubble
190	East	T11	Bedrock and rubble
191			Carn Ban
192			Carn Ban
193			General shot open day
194			General shot open day
195	East	T12	Bedrock
196	South	T12	Bedrock and rubble
197	South	T12	Bedrock and rubble
198	West	T12	Bedrock and rubble

Appendix 4: Samples

Trench	Context	No.
4	9	2
1	16	1, 3
1	20	5
4	21	4
1	30	6
1	31	7
1	36	8
1	37	9

Appendix 5: Finds

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Appendix 6: References

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Archaeological Excavation at Carnassarie, Argyll

Appendix 7: DES Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Argyll and Bute Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Carnassarie Farm
PROJECT CODE:	Car 08
PARISH:	Kilmartin
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Clare Ellis
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Kilmartin House Museum
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Excavation
NMRS NO(S):	
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	platform/ring cairn
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	Prehistoric pottery, flint
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NM 83493 01185
START DATE (this season)	25 th August 2008
END DATE (this season)	8 th September 2008
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	<p>James, H. F. 2003 <i>Medieval and Later Landscape and Settlement in Mid Argyll and Knapdale, 2003</i>. GUARD Projects 1416, 1446 & 1447, Glasgow University</p> <p>James, H. F. 2006 <i>Mid Argyll Medieval Rural Settlement Project</i>. GUARD Project 2166, Glasgow University</p> <p>Regan, R. & Webb, S. 2007 <i>Carnassarie and Ormaig: A Field Survey for the Dalriada Project</i></p>
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>The partial excavation of a possible platform/ring cairn was undertaken by Kilmartin House Museum. There is good evidence that prior to construction of the earliest feature, a cobbled surface, the turf over the site was systematically stripped. Dumped upon the cobbled surface was a mixed deposit of silt, charcoal and burnt bone; it as yet to be confirmed whether this bone is human. Set upon this deposit is a large ring of stone. This comprises an outer ring of large prostrate kerb stones which on the southern side supports an inner rubble stone bank; an inner ring of smaller kerb stones with a rubble core occurs where the ground surface is naturally level. The internal area of the platform/ring cairn is almost level as the southern portion has been deliberately built up prior to the construction of the stone ring. On the southern side of the monument a rammed stone and earthen bank was constructed up against the outer kerb to support it as the natural topography slopes sharply away here. The monument is slightly elliptical with an internal diameter of between 20 and 22 m. There is a possible forecourt area bounded by two banks on its western side.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	Plan of Carnassarie platform/ring cairn
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Dalriada Project
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Kilmartin House Museum, Kilmartin, Argyll

Archaeological Excavation at Carnassarie, Argyll

EMAIL ADDRESS:	museum@kilmartin.org ellisclare@argyll-archaeology.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Kilmartin Museum