

## **BIRSE COMMUNITY TRUST**

### FOREST OF BIRSE

## Archaeology Survey Report

### Updated Schedule

July 2015

In 1999, Birse Community Trust (BCT) commissioned an archaeological survey of the Forest of Birse by Stephen Carter of Headland Archaeology. His report 'The Forest of Birse - An Archaeological Survey' was published in 2000 and is available on BCT's website.

The report recorded 93 archaeological sites in the Forest of Birse and highlighted that the Forest of Birse's history of human settlement and use has left an exceptionally rich heritage of archaeological remains.

In the years since Stephen Carter's report, BCT has found additional archaeological remains. These will have been missed before due to the limited survey time for such a large area, as well as the depth of the heather in some areas and the thickness of the bracken cover in others.

This report updates the schedule of sites in Stephen Carter's report, by recording the additional discoveries as sites 100-146 in the following pages. Their locations are also marked on the map at the end of this report, which shows all the known archaeological sites in the Forest of Birse.

The records of these additional sites have, as with the previous sites, been passed by BCT to the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeologist for inclusion in the Council's Sites and Monuments Record.

BCT considers that some further archaeological sites still remain to be found and recorded in the Forest of Birse. BCT therefore anticipates that this report will be updated in due course.

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Site No	Site Type	Description	SMR Reference
101	Building	The remains of a building located at NO 54204 90846, aligned E-W, measuring 7 x 4m with an outshot on the western end.	
102	Building Enclosure	The remains of building located at NO 54208 90846, measuring 3 x 3m with attached yard.	
103	Enclosure	A partial rectangular enclosure located at NO 54272 98063, measuring 7 x 4m. There is no indication of a wall on the southern side.	
104	Drystone dyke	The remains of a dyke which runs in an approximate E-W direction with a northerly curve. The dyke is some 280m long	
105	Building	The remains of a building located at NO54375 90925, aligned NE-SW, measuring 7 x 4m. The remains of the dyke (104) abut onto the eastern and western walls	
106	Enclosure	An enclosure measuring 20 x 13m. The lower southern corner has been removed by road widening.	
107	Building	The remains of a building located at NO 54565 90923, aligned NE-SW, measuring 9 x 4m with an outshot measuring 4 x 4m on the eastern end. Some 3 m to the south is a small 2 x 2m, three sided, drystone structure which appears to be of a later date. This is perhaps a shepherd's shelter built from stone robbed from the southern wall of the building.	
108	Building	The remains of a building located at NO 54610 90961, aligned NE-SW, measuring 4 x 7m with an internal partition wall some 3m from the western end.	
109	Building	The remains of a large building located at NO 54685 90990, aligned NE-SW, measuring 11 x 4m with an internal partition wall. In addition there is a 4 x 3m three sided outshot on the SW end with no wall on the SE side.	
110	Building	The remains of a building located at NO 54696 90972, measuring 6 x 3.5m.	
111	Drystone dyke	The remains of a wall forming 2½ sides of a rectangle.	
112	Building	The remains of a building located at NO 54738 91049, aligned SE-NW, measuring 9 x 4m with an internal partition wall some 3m from the SE end. There is an entrance on the eastern side. It is partly built into the hill with a sloping floor so is possibly a byre dwelling. A small enclosure or outshot, 3 x 3m abuts onto the SW corner.	
113	Building	The remains of a building located at NO 54754 91059, aligned NE-SW, measuring 11 x 4m.	
114	Building Enclosure	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 55887 90914 at an altitude of 200m. It is located on a level terrace on a south facing slope, some 140 metres uphill from the Water of Feugh. The footings of a shieling hut are aligned N/S on its long axis measuring 5.1x2.7m. There is an entrance on the E side. The lack of tumble would indicate that this is the footings of a turf walled building. The remains are now densely covered in heather, bracken and blaeberry. Also some 5m further N is the footings of an enclosure wall measuring 10x5m, aligned E/W in its long axis.	
115	Enclosure	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 56057 91279 at an altitude of 280m. It is located on a gentle south facing slope just above the forest track. The footings of an irregularly shaped enclosure wall	

Site No	Site Type	Description	SMR Reference
		measure approximately 11x6m at its widest. Some 8 m to the N are the possible remains of a second enclosure wall but they are obscure and covered in deep bracken.	
116	Building Enclosure	<p>This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 56176 91130 at an altitude of 270m. There are the footings of three abutting structures located on a gentle south facing slope just above an area of grass and bracken ground flora. The furthest uphill is the wall of an enclosure aligned E/W along the slope and measuring 8x5m. On the downhill side is an obvious drystone retaining wall. There is a possible entrance near the SE corner.</p> <p>Abutting onto the downhill wall are the footings of an irregularly shaped structure measuring 5x2m, aligned E/W across the slope. The Eastern end is narrower than the Western end. There is no obvious entrance. An outshot on the E end measures 3x2m.</p> <p>Abutting onto the downhill side of the second structure are the footings of a third, rectangular structure, possibly a dwelling house. It is aligned N/S up and down the slope and measures 5x2.5m with a possible obvious entrance on E side.</p>	
117	Building Still House	<p>This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 56250 90856 at an altitude of 200m. It is located in the bed of a small gully which runs across a steep south facing slope and is well hidden from below. The structure is of drystone construction and measures 3x2m. It is partly scarped into the hill behind and the N,E and W walls stand 4 courses high incorporating a large natural boulder at the E end. Only the footings remain of the S wall. There is a natural spring at the E end of the structure. Given its size and location it is possibly a still house.</p> <p>It is interesting to note that in the gully downhill of this structure and around the Craggs of Finlets are the only location where hawthorns are found growing in the Forest of Birse Community. Hawthorn timber burns well with little smoke which would make it ideal for firing an illicit still. It may be that it was encouraged to grow here or that haws dropped from bundles of firewood being carried up to the still and seeded where they fell.</p>	
118	Building	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 56314 90871 at an altitude of 220m. It is located on a small natural terrace on a steep south facing slope. The surrounding ground is mainly boulder scree of little value for grazing. There is no easy access, however the site commands a good view to the S and E and also to the possible still house some 65m away. The site also commands a view of the possible still house at NO 56887 90658 identified in the Headland Archaeology survey of 2000. The footings of a rectangular shieling hut are aligned E/W across the slope and measure 8.5x3m with an entrance in the S wall. The footings are densely covered in bracken and blaeberry and the lack of tumble indicates that this was a turf walled building.	
119	Building	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 52414 90823 at an altitude of 260m. It is located on a small level platform on the slope above the Burn of Auldgarney. The footings of a shieling hut measure approximately 4.5x2.5m. There is a possible entrance on the E side. The lack of tumble would indicate that this is the footings of a turf walled building. The remains are now largely covered in grass and bracken.	
120	Building	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 51543 90531 at an altitude of 300m. It is located on a gentle south facing slope within field system No	

Site No	Site Type	Description	SMR Reference
		5. The footings of the building measure approximately 3x3m. The extent of tumble would indicate that this is the footings of a drystone walled building. This abuts onto a second building measuring approximately 5.5x2m. There is a possible entrance on the S side. The collapse appears to have been spread over a wide area, indicating deliberate demolition. The remains are now largely covered in grass and bracken.	
121	Building Enclosure	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 51622 90480 at an altitude of 290m. It is located on a gentle south facing slope adjacent to the Balloch enclosure dyke. The grass covered footings of a building measure approximately 5x3m, the SE corner of which is partly covered by the dyke. To the S of the building are the footings of an enclosure wall some 11x5m	
122	Building	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 51596 90436 at an altitude of 290m. It is located on a gentle south facing slope adjacent to the Balloch enclosure dyke. The grass covered footings of a building measure approximately 11x3m, aligned E/W across the slope on its long axis.  The footings of enclosure walls extend some 25m to the S and abut onto the footings of a circular structure, perhaps a sheep fold.	
123	Building	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 51416 90365 at an altitude of 280m. It is located on a south facing slope above the Burn of Corn. The grass covered footings of a building measure approximately 6x2.5m. The lack of tumble would indicate that this is the footings of a turf walled building. It is aligned SW/NE across the slope on its long axis. The entrance in on the SE side.	
124	Enclosure	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 51577 90327 at an altitude of 270m. It is located on a gentle south facing slope adjacent to the Balloch enclosure dyke. The grass covered footings of an irregular enclosure measure approximately 20x20m. It occupies a dry knoll above a wet area.	
125	Building	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 51561 90279 at an altitude of 270m. It is located on a small knoll above the Burn of Corn. The grass covered footings of a building measure approximately 4.5x2m. The lack of tumble would indicate that this is the footings of a turf walled building. It is aligned W/E across the slope on its long axis. There is no obvious entrance.	
126	Building	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 51455 90500 at an altitude of 280m. It is located in a small hollow on a gentle south facing slope. The grass covered footings of a shieling hut measure approximately 5x2m. It is aligned E/W across the slope on its long axis and the uphill wall is partly scarped into the natural bank. There is a possible entrance in the S wall	
127	Feature	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 51077 90788 at an altitude of 280m. A large granite boulder approximately 1.4m long shows chisel drill marks and has been split and wedged open. There is no indication that any of the stone has been removed. possibly intended for use in the Birse Castle water supply which issues	

Site No	Site Type	Description	SMR Reference
		some 100m to the E.	
128	Feature	Source of water supply issues at OS Grid Ref NO 51163 90852. A granite slab approximately 1 m long has been set on edge at the point where the water emerges from the ground. A channel that has been dug from the source is shown leading to Middyke (OS Grid Ref NO 51860 90370) on the 1st edition OS. After an initial length, the channel is now dry to feature 129 below.	
129	Feature	Concrete water collecting tank at OS Grid Ref NO 51529 90754, which forms part of the water supply system for Birse Castle. The tank has an in-pipe that may be buried in the dry channel described in 128. The out-pipe from the tank has been buried along the next length of former channel to a large concrete storage tank. The remains of a previous asbestos pipe are sticking out of the ground between the collecting and storage tanks.	
130	Feature	A weir and water intake are sited on the Burn of Corn at OS Grid Ref NO 51565 90185. The weir is well constructed with large field boulders with a timber face on the upstream side. The water intake passes under a lintel in a section of drystone wall that has been constructed on the bank of the burn. The lade leads to a sequence of two mill ponds, which are both largely silted up, and on to supply the Mill of Cranna. (Site 12 in the Headland Archaeology Survey 2000)	
131	Feature	A concrete sluice is located at OS Grid Ref NO 51565 90185. This controls the water supply from two sources. The first is a channel leading from the Mill of Cranna mill ponds (See feature 130). The second is from a weir and sluice gate on the Water of Feugh at OS Grid Ref NO 52105 89930. At the sluice The water was channelled into a metal pipe, approximately 30cm in diameter to feed the hydro electric scheme for Birse Castle. The pipe crossed the Feugh on an aqueduct at OS Grid Ref NO 52230 90075, the pillars are still standing, and lead to the turbine house, Feature 132.	
132	Building	The turbine house is located at OS Grid Ref NO 52725 90460. It is built with dressed granite stones, in courses, with mortar pointing. It measures approximately 4x4m and has a slate roof. A chamber in the floor of the building housed the water turbine and an opening in the wall allowed the water to spill back into the Feugh. The generating machinery has all been removed but was originally used to supply electricity to Birse Castle. It was in use some time between 1930 and 1945.	
133	Feature	The log cable bridge is located at OS Grid Ref NO 52480 90410 and carried the power cable from the turbine house (Feature 132) across the Water of Feugh. It consists of a single tree trunk that has been sawn down the middle and had a groove gouged from the middle of each half to carry the cable. The halves were then bolted back together, the trunk supported with sections of tree trunk on each bank, with one section on each side carrying the cable up into and down out of the bridge.	
		<b>Note</b> - Entry Nos 134 - 141 provide further information on Site No 2 in the Headland Archaeology Survey Report of 2000	
134	Field system	This area, of approximately 4.5ha, is enclosed by the Allanstank Burn along its NE side and by two lines of ditch and bank along	

Site No	Site Type	Description	SMR Reference
		its SE and SW sides. There is shallow rig and fur cultivation across much of the eastern part of the area, only visible where the heather has been recently burnt, and two lineal clearance cairns located at OS Grid Ref NO 51780 89322 and NO 51727 89325.	
135	Building Enclosure	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 51793 89283 at an altitude of 280m. It is located on a gentle north facing slope. The stone footings of a dwelling house measure approximately 7x2m. It is aligned NE/SW up and down the slope on its long axis. There is a possible entrance in the NW wall but the SW wall appears to have been completely removed. The lack of tumble would indicate that these are the footings of a turf walled building An irregularly shaped enclosure, 4.5x6m, abuts onto the NW side of the building.	
136	Building	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 51764 89257 at an altitude of 280m. It is located on a gentle north facing slope The stone footings of a dwelling house measure approximately 6x2m. It is aligned NE/SW up and down the slope on its long axis. there is an internal partition wall some 2m from the SW end. There is no obvious entrance. At the SW end there is an outshot measuring 2.5x2m with a probably entrance on the NW side.	
137	Building	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 51719 89270 at an altitude of 280m. The footings of a dwelling house measure approximately 8x2m. It is aligned NE/SW up and down the slope on its long axis. there is an internal partition wall some 2m from the SW end. There is no obvious entrance. The footings are densely covered in heather and bracken with little stone visible.	
138	Enclosure	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 51673. The footings of an rectangular enclosure wall measure approximately 12x10m at its widest. The footings are covered in heather and deep bracken. Some 5m to the NW are the low remains of a second enclosure measuring approximately 7x5m.	
139	Building Enclosure	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 51685 89322. The low footings of an irregular enclosure wall measure approximately 8x5m at its widest. Some 3m to the N are the footings of a possible dwelling house measuring approximately 8x3m. It is aligned N/S up and down the slope. There is a possible outshot at the N end measuring 2x2m. There is no obvious entrance. The footings are covered in heather and deep bracken with few stones visible.	
140	Enclosure Possible Kiln	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 51663. The footings of an irregular enclosure wall measure approximately 8x3.5m at its widest. The footings are covered in heather and deep bracken. Some 4m to the W is a circular depression some 4m in diameter partly scarped into the natural bank. This is possibly a corn kiln which has been demolished and partly infilled. The site is covered in tall heather.	
141	Enclosure	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 51651 89303. The footings of a sub rectangular enclosure measuring approximately 8x3.5m are aligned N/S on its long axis. No stones are visible and the footings are covered in heather and bracken.	
142	Building	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 51661 89521 at an altitude of 280m. It is located on a moderate east facing slope. The Stone footings of a dwelling house measure approximately 8x2m. It is aligned N/S across the slope on its long axis. There is possible entrance on the E side. The footings are densely covered in heather and	

Site No	Site Type	Description	SMR Reference
		bracken.	
143	Building	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 51661 89521 at an altitude of 280m. It is located on a moderate east facing slope. The Stone footings of a dwelling house measure approximately 8x2m. It is aligned NE/SW across the slope on its long axis. There is possible entrance on the SE side. There is an outshot on the NE end measuring 4x2m with an entrance on the SE side. The footings are densely covered in heather and bracken.	
144	Building Enclosure	Footings of a building and enclosure wall. Site location to be confirmed after further survey	
145	Still House	Located at approximately OS Grid Ref NO 52617 88957 is a small construction of drystone wall tucked into the bank of the burn. A possible still house.	
146	Building	Located at approximately OS Grid Ref NO 51515 92313 are the footings of a shieling hut with internal dimension of approximately 4x2m	

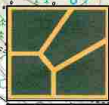
### Notes on Headland Archaeology Survey 2000

Site No	Site Type	Description	SMR Reference
2	Buildings Enclosure	Headland Archaeology recorded 5 buildings and one enclosure on their survey in 1999. This site was re-visited in July 2015 and confirmed the presence of 5 buildings but also another two enclosures and the possible infilled remains of a corn kiln. ( See Site Nos. 135-141) The presence of a surrounding ditch and bank and rig and furrow cultivation was also recorded. (See Site No. 134)	
6	Building	This lies at OS Grid Ref NO 51491 90669 at an altitude of 310m. It is located on a gentle south facing slope within field system No 5. The footings of a building measure approximately 4 x2.2m. The walls are of drystone construction with rubble infill and the entrance is in the SE corner. A partition drystone wall divides the building in two and stops less than 1m from the S wall. The wider E section is barely over 1 metre in width. It is shown as being without a roof on the 1st edition OS Map of 1865.  Approximately 3m to the S of the building a small hollow has been partly scarped into the natural slope and the uphill side has been lined with stones. The hollow appears to be wet and is perhaps a natural spring (Dry at the time of viewing) perhaps for watering	



		livestock. Nearby there are at least 4 pieces of red granite stones with drill marks, and with a triangular cross section, left scattered on the ground around the hollow.	
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Updated 19/07/2015



Birse Community Trust

# Forest of Birse Community

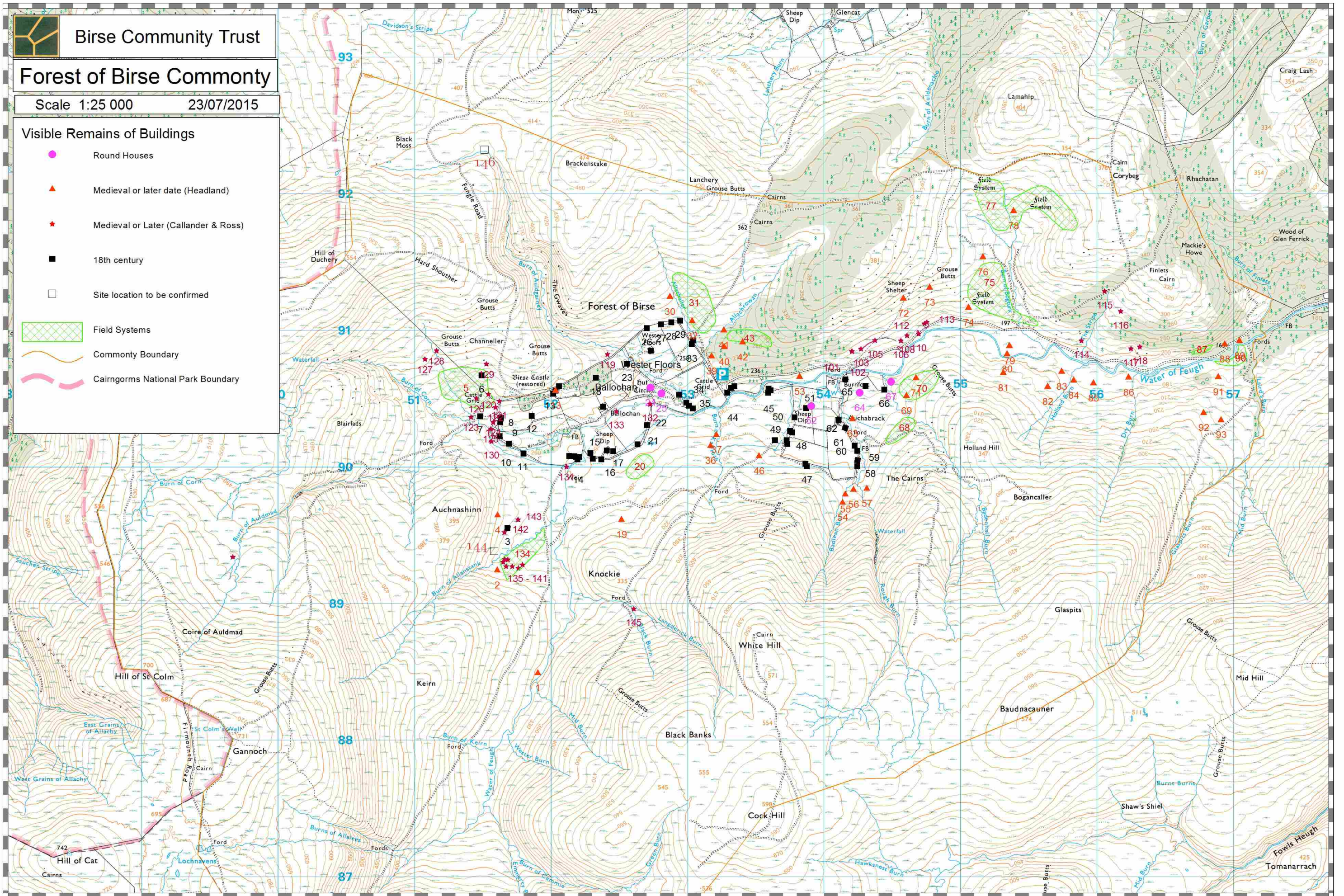
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23/07/2015

## Visible Remains of Buildings

- Round Houses
- ▲ Medieval or later date (Headland)
- ★ Medieval or Later (Callander & Ross)
- 18th century
- Site location to be confirmed

- Field Systems
- Community Boundary
- Cairngorms National Park Boundary



KILOMETRES 0.1 0.0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1.0 1.2 1.4 1.6 1.8 2.0 2.2 2.4 2.6 2.8 3.0 3.2 3.4 3.6 3.8 4.0 4.2 4.4 4.6 KILOMETRES