

SERF 2010: Report on Walkover Survey

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Introduction

The fourth season of the SERF Walkover Survey took place from 10–14 August 2010. The main activity consisted of walkover survey in the area of Thorter Burn and Scores Den, on the land of the Keltie Estate, 3 km south-west of Dunning. SERF is very grateful to Callum Rollo for his permission to carry out fieldwork on his land, and to the teams of students for their hard work and enthusiasm.

Project aims

1. Investigate the relationship between people, their landscape and their environment in Dunning, Forteviot and Forgandenny parishes, at all periods
2. Investigate communication routes along and across Strathearn and the Ochils, particularly in the Neolithic and Medieval periods
3. Investigate the relationship between the Iron Age forts in the Ochils and in Strathearn
4. Document and study the development of agriculture from pre-improvement to improvement
5. Examine changing settlement patterns, and the relationship between settlements, land use and the environment
6. Investigate the later 'biographies' and changing meanings of prehistoric and medieval monuments
7. Provide data for the National Monuments Record of Scotland
8. Provide training and experience for students from the University of Glasgow, University of Aberdeen, and elsewhere



Fig. 1. Walkover survey crossing the Thorter Burn

Project methods

1. Investigation, visiting and documentation of the main known sites and features across the study area
2. Systematic and intensive walkover survey of between 5 and 10 survey areas, which provide a representative topographical, historical and environmental sample of the study area
3. Database and GIS analysis of distribution patterns, intervisibility, environmental change, etc.
4. Full integration with all other components of SERF: documentary history, excavations, fieldwalking, geophysics, standing building survey, etc.

The 2010 season: aims and methods

The aims of the 2010 season were as follows:

1. Give the students a one-day taster of systematic walkover survey and site recording
2. Give the students the opportunity to discuss and experience an upland landscape and various approaches to landscape archaeology
3. Look for evidence for Medieval and Late Medieval settlement, particularly small-scale dispersed settlement and structures built of turf
4. Investigate post-medieval enclosure, tathing, and the extension of cultivation into the uplands
5. Investigate the evidence for seasonal movement of cattle between lowlands and uplands
6. Carry out preliminary recording of any other features of interest

Five days of walkover survey and site recording were carried out by students from the University of Glasgow, University of Aberdeen and elsewhere as part of SERF's field school component. This work represents the fifth season of an ongoing survey programme investigating the uplands above Dunning and Forteviot. The 2010 survey covered an area of c. 1.1 x 0.5 km on the northern slopes of the Ochil Hills above Dunning, inbetween Piperstones Hill and Scores Burn (c. NO 00050 11400). We also carried out some informal site recording on Waughenwae Knowe, which lies c.1 km to the north-east of the main survey area (NO 00890 12100).

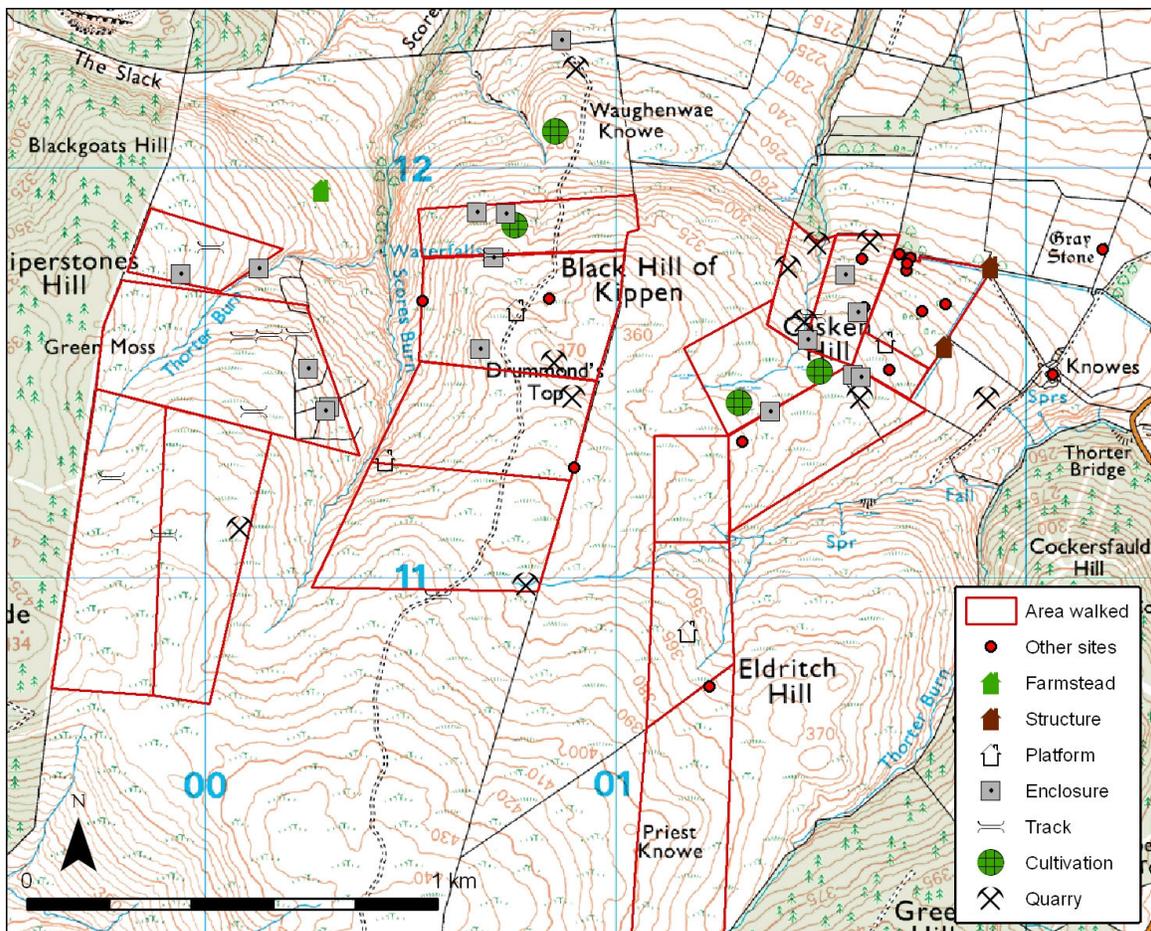


Fig. 2. Map of survey carried out in 2010 (left), 2009 (centre) and 2007 (right), with site categories. See Fig. 6 for site numbers.

Results

Our most striking finding this year was a clear relationship between a series of turf-walled enclosures and multiple braided cattle tracks (Fig. 3). As suggested by our work on Casken Hill in 2007, the mostly trapezoidal enclosures are likely to be for tathing cattle at some point in the post-Medieval period, perhaps the 17th and 18th centuries: when the soil was sufficiently enriched, they could be used for cultivation.

The braided cattle tracks appear only on the steeper slopes, where there was the most erosion from the animals' hooves. They typically fan out from the break of slope into anything between three and eight separate furrows, normally c. 0.5m deep and c. 2.0 m wide, though there are deeper ones elsewhere in this area. By examining the contacts between the enclosures and the tracks, it was very clear that the animals were diverted round the outside of the enclosures.

One set of tracks coming down hill from the south (SF139) clearly direct the cattle into a gap between two sets of enclosures (SF138 on the east, SF140 on the west); this is visible in Fig. 3. As the enclosures lie on flatter ground, the cattle tracks disappear, though the route between the turf dykes of the two sets of enclosures is very clear. At the northern end of the enclosures is a break of slope, and at this point the braided tracks appear again, running down the deep slope and then on the next broad terrace directing the cattle to the west of the farmstead (SF133; see below). The tensions between the cultivators and the herders taking their animals to and from their upland summer pastures are very clearly visible on the ground.



Fig. 3. Braided cattle tracks in foreground (SF139), with enclosures beyond (SF138)

A well-constructed pathway ran up the hill through our survey area, cutting into the slopes it traversed, with one causeway across a boggy area (SF125). This presumably led to and from a substantial farmstead immediately below our area (SF133; Fig. 4). The earlier phase of this farmstead shows a central courtyard with subdivided rectangular structures on three sides of it and a grain-drying kiln on the other. This may be the 'Scores' farm marked on a map of the area by Stobie, dating to 1783. In a later phase, the stones were reused to make a roughly built sheepfold.



Fig. 4. 19th century sheepfold with earlier farmstead (SF133)

On Waughenwae Knowe is a series of quarries clearly associated with the construction of the straight stone dykes marking 19th-century improvement. These are very similar in size and function to quarries found in previous seasons. On the summit of the knowe is a substantial enclosure with an area of rig and furrow within it (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Enclosure with rig and furrow on Waughenwae Knowe (SF127), looking north across Strathearn

Conclusions

This season has added to our broader picture of post-Medieval activity in the uplands associated with cultivation, animal husbandry and settlement. In particular, it helped considerably our understanding of the function of the braided cattle tracks, first identified in the 2009 season, and their relationship with the upland cultivation in enclosures.

Table 1 summarises the sites recorded during the season, while Fig. 6 shows their location.

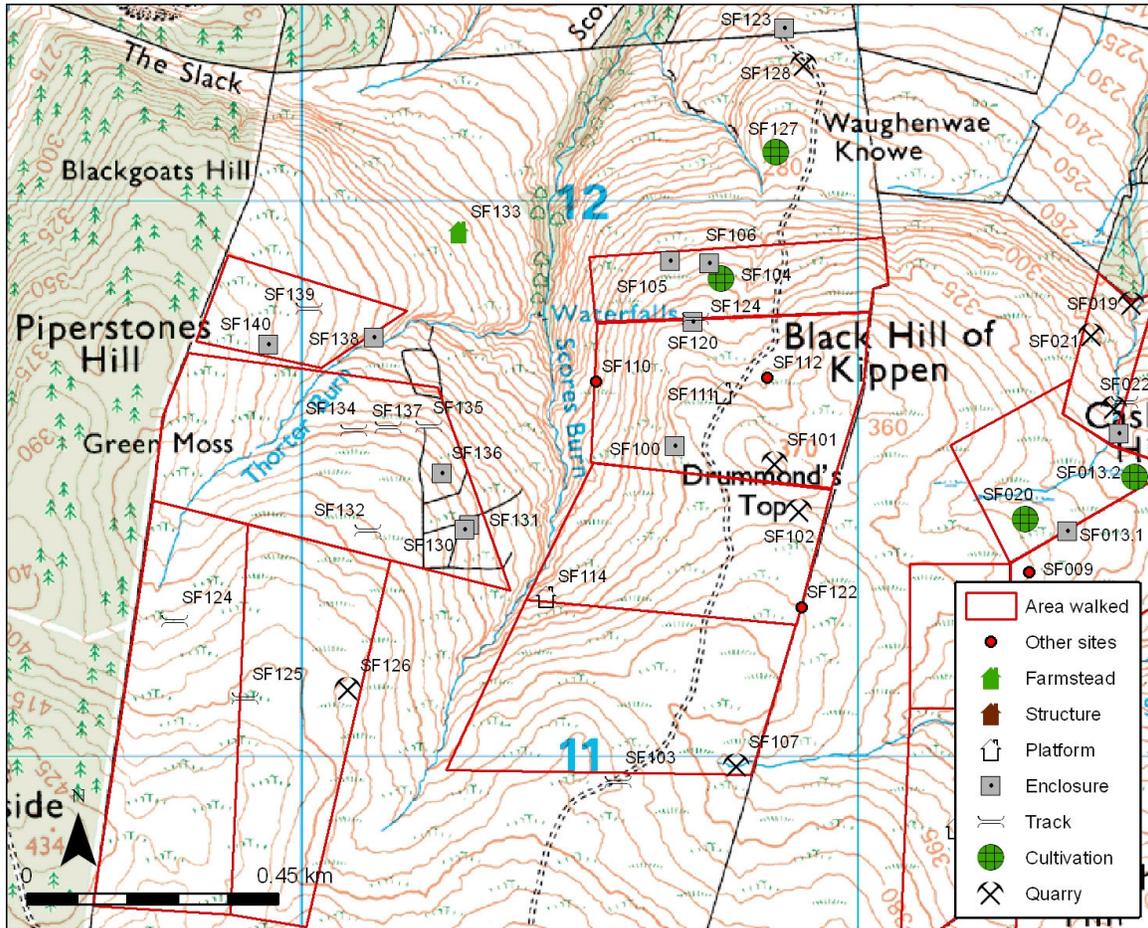


Fig. 6. Map of survey carried out in 2010 (left), 2009 (centre) and 2007 (right), with site categories and site numbers.

Site Code	Site Name	Site Type	E	N	Description
SF123	Waughenwae knowe	Enclosure/Boundary	00869	12310	Large circular enclosure with turf banks.
SF124	Green Moss	Track	11245	99772	Cattle trackway running South to North; extending over c. 130m. Several other trackways adjacent to the East.
SF125	Simpleside Hill	Track	11106	99898	Track/ Path. 2 metres wide with wheel furrows 30cm wide.
SF126	Scores Burn	Quarry	00083	11122	Quarry, with large blocks and earthen bank. Overall extent c. 6 x 3m.
SF127	Waughenwae Knowe	Cultivation	00852	12089	Rig and furrow enclosed by a turf dyke.
SF128	Waughenwae Knowe	Quarry	00903	12246	Exposed vertical stone face running north-south, eastern extent defined by spoil ditch, ground appears to form three bowl shaped hollows curved to top and bottom. 23 x 8 x 2m.
SF129	Waughenwae Knowe	Quarry	00860	12245	Section of curved bedrock. Narrow, linear channel running down to the north. Bedrock face c. 10.5m
SF130	Scores Burn	Enclosure/Boundary	00301	11418	Turf dyke, with some stones visible.
SF131	Scores Burn	Enclosure/Boundary	00292	11409	Field wall/boundary running north to south. Turf and soil with a few stones. Rounded top. c. 40 cm wide, 94 cm high
SF132	Scores Burn	Track	00119	11407	Track running N-S. Width 0.9-1.7m. More sections to N.
SF133	Scores Farm	Farmstead	00282	11946	Drystone constructed sheepfold and an earlier complex of buildings and structures. This earlier complex is adjoined to a head dyke. Sheepfold on 1st ed. OS map; used stone from earlier structures.
SF134		Track	00093	11588	2 distinct cattle trackways, c. 13m apart: 2.3m wide, 0.45m deep; 1.8cm wide, 0.3cm deep.
SF135		Track	00229	11595	Winding trackway. Width 1.5-2.0m.
SF136		Enclosure/Boundary	00251	11511	Systems of dykes defining field boundaries on south-east facing side of hill.
SF137		Track	00156	11594	4 cattle tracks branching over area c. 30m wide. Depth from 0.2-0.35m; width 2.0-2.1m.
SF138	Thorter Burn	Enclosure/Boundary	00129	11756	Turf bank running downhill from NW. Height c.0.45m. Width c. 2.6m.
SF139		Track	00014	11807	Three parallel cattle tracks.
SF140		Enclosure/Boundary	99939	11742	Roughly trapezoidal enclosure with low turf banks; part of larger complex.

Table 1. Summary of sites recorded in the 2010 season.