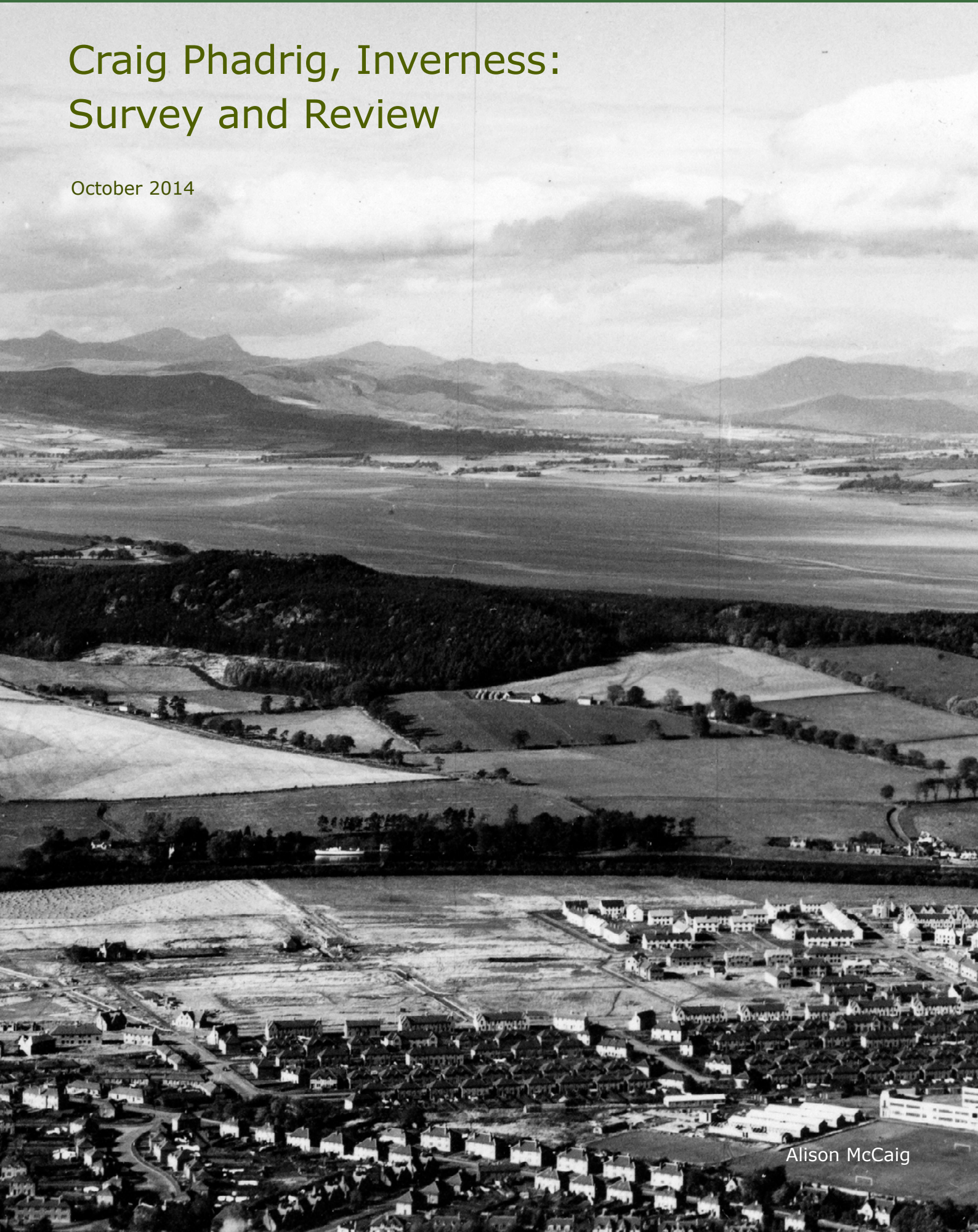


Craig Phadrig, Inverness: Survey and Review

October 2014



Alison McCaig



Royal
Commission on the
Ancient and
Historical
Monuments of
Scotland



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SC1315141

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SC1367558

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Fig 1 Craig Phadrig. SC1367559

Craig Phadrig, Inverness: Survey and Review

Introduction

In September 2013 Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) entered into a partnership agreement which resulted in the latter carrying out a survey of the vitrified timber-laced fort on Craig Phadrig, Inverness (Fig 2). This survey acted as a catalyst for a second partnership project, undertaken early in 2014, which saw the author research and catalogue that part of the archive within the RCAHMS Collection which related to Craig Phadrig – in particular the archive of Alan Small (1937–1999).

Small excavated at the fort in 1971 and 1972, and a varied assemblage of excavation notebooks, scientific reports, publication notes, photographs and finds drawings, as well as a great deal of correspondence, was donated to RCAHMS after his death. In addition to cataloguing this material, an attempt was made to reconcile the observed disturbances to the earthworks with the documentary evidence and to set the most recent survey of the site (by RCAHMS) into context in relation to almost 250 years of investigations of the fort.

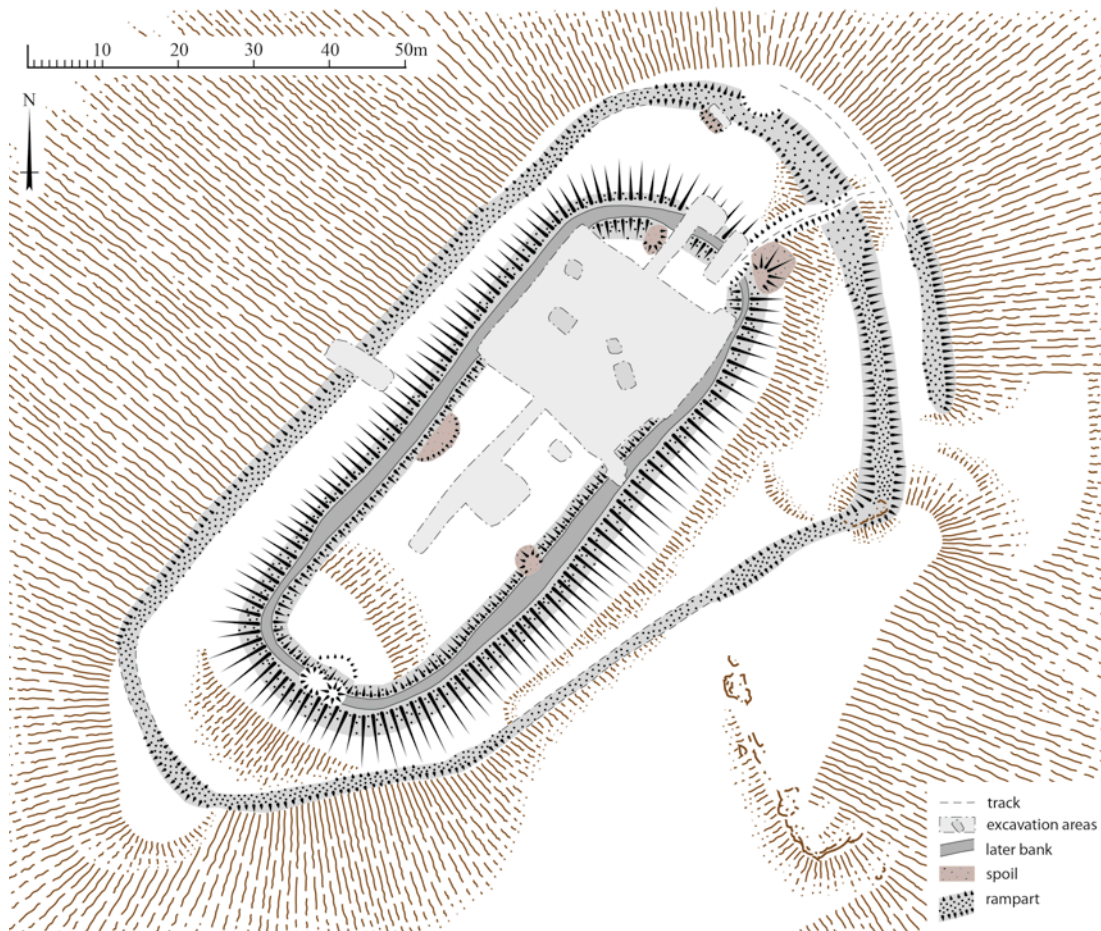


Fig 2 RCAHMS 2013 Survey of Craig Phadrig. SC1386712

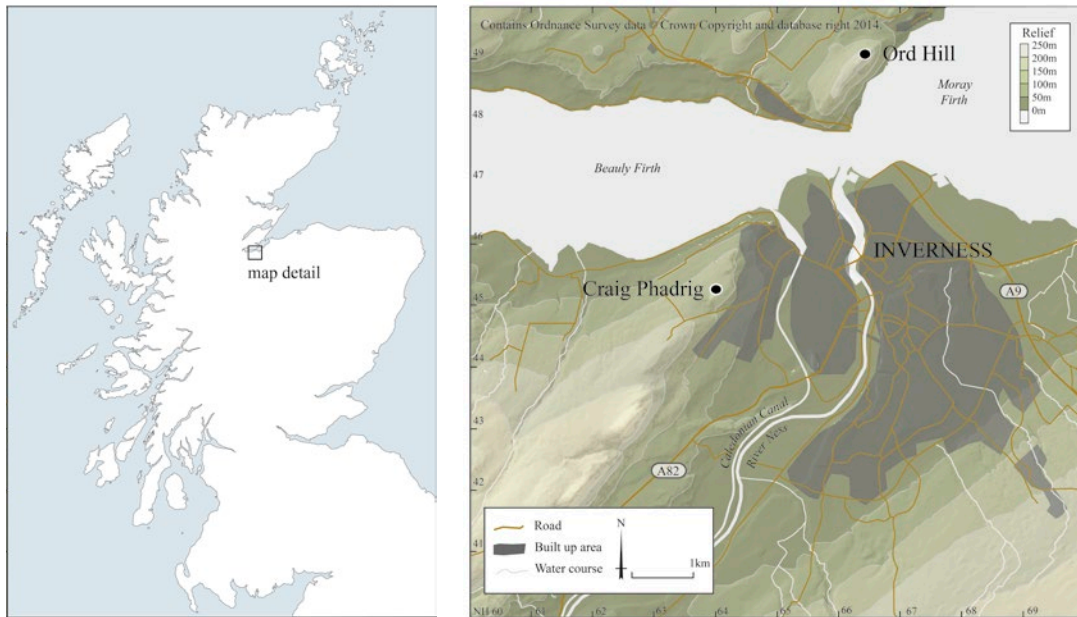


Fig 3 Location of Craig Phadrig fort.

The Fort

The fort crowns Craig Phadrig (NH 6400 4527), a steep-sided conglomerate hill that lies close to the western edge of Inverness and forms the north-east end of a ridge that overlooks the valley of the River Ness to the south-east and the meeting point of the Beauly and Moray Firths directly to the north-east (Fig 3). Roughly rectangular with rounded corners on plan, it measures 72m from north-east to south-west by 22m transversely within a vitrified wall now reduced to a grass-grown bank up to 12m in thickness and 1.4m in internal height. A second, slighter, line of vitrified defence lies concentric to it around much of its circuit but departs from this line on the south-east. A third line of defence, which appears to be only present on the north-east, follows the crest of a steep natural slope.

Such is the disturbance to the interior of the fort that the only features visible relate to periods of 'exploration' and excavation that have been undertaken since at least the latter part of the 18th century. At the time of the 2013 survey Craig Phadrig was wooded, save for its interior and the inner wall, but work had recently been undertaken by Forestry Commission Scotland, under the guidance of its archaeologist Matthew Ritchie, to remove some of the trees from the outer defences.

A Note on the Name

The spelling adopted here is Craig Phadrig – the form of the name which appears on modern Ordnance Survey maps, but numerous variations in spelling exist in the records – Craig Phadraig, Craig Phaidraig, Craig Phaidrick, Craig Patric, Craig Pharuig, Creck Faterick, Craig Phatrick, Craig Phadra and Creek Fateric.

In the Golden Charter granted by James VI in 1592 there is a mention of 'Craig Phadrick' in reference to the right of the local population to cut peat. By the 1770s, the site was known to locals as the Giant's Chair

(Watt in Williams 1777, 37) and a rock formation to the south-west still retains the name. However, around this time others also refer to the site as 'Peter's Rock' (West 1777, 387; Carey 1811, 12). The writer of the Statistical Account suggests that 'Craig-Phatrick', if Pictish, as was suggested at the time, might link with Adamnan's story of Columba's conversion of the Picts to Christianity and the baptism of Brude (Stat Acct 1791–99, vol. 9, 610). The entry in the Ordnance Survey Original Name Book in 1868 (Inverness-shire vol. 31, 11) stated that the name was anglicized from Gaelic and meant 'Peter's or Patrick's Rock'. Gowans (1870, 303) was of the opinion that Craig Phadrig was a relatively modern ecclesiastical name and that the Gaelic Highlanders knew it as Larach Thaigh More or the 'Site of the Great House or Castle'. This view was supported by Fraser (1878, 126), with the name taking a slightly different form (Larach an Tigh Mhoir).

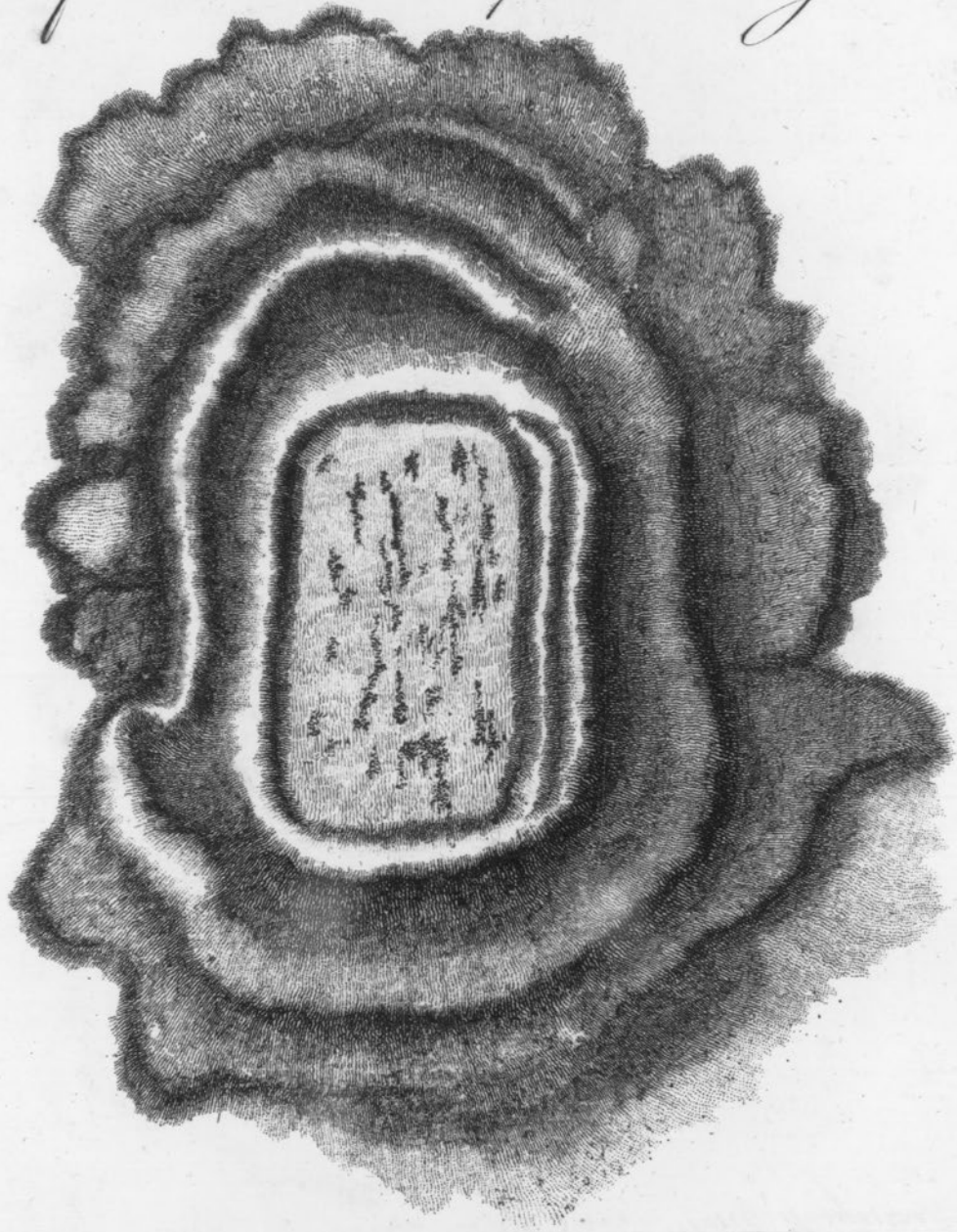
Early Interest and Investigations at Craig Phadrig

Published evidence of investigations at Craig Phadrig began to appear towards the end of the 18th century, very soon after the first notice of a vitrified fort appeared in *A Tour in Scotland 1769* (Pennant 1774, 221). In a period when antiquarian and scientific interest was stimulated by discussions on the origin of the vitrified stone found at Craig Phadrig and other sites, the writings on the subject provide an expression of the holistic and scientific mindset of men and women who enjoyed the freedom to explore numerous fields of study.

The first 'scientific' examination of Craig Phadrig was undertaken in the 1770s by John Williams, a Welsh mineral engineer who chartered the resources of the Annexed Estates in Scotland between 1763 and 1775 (Jonsson 2013). His written account was accompanied by a plan of the fort by the engineer James Watt (Fig 4). Contrary to some of the more fanciful notions of the time, Williams suggested that the vitrification was 'resultant of human activity' (1777, 31–35) and his arguments are ever present and generally well regarded in published discussions on the subject over the following century. Thomas West, a Jesuit priest, author and antiquary, working at the same time as Williams but with no apparent connection to him, sent a specimen of vitrification from Craig Phadrig to the Royal Society whose 'learned members' judged it to be 'real lava' (West 1777, 387). West used a pick-axe to break off samples from the rampart and he also noted digging others from the summit of the hill, at a depth of four feet. This is the first record of excavation at the site.

Describing Craig Phadrig's setting in the landscape with 'as noble a situation as can be imagined', Williams (1777, 31) correctly identified the inner rampart, the outer rampart and the possibility of a third. It is the character of the low outer rampart, apparently much of which could be seen sticking to the bare bedrock, which fascinated Williams, who proposed that it may have been to secure cattle. However, it is his statement dubbing this low vitrified wall as the 'greatest curiosity of

SKETCH of CRAIG PATRICK by M^r Watt Engineer



Northeast end.



Section

Fig 4 Watt's Plan and Section of Craig Phadrig.
SC1376598

any ruins in Europe' (*Ibid*, 34) that sets the scene for the numerous investigations to be carried out on the site over next two hundred years.

Watt's plan, our earliest representation of the fort, was largely drawn from memory (Watt in Williams 1777, 35) and has no scale associated. Despite this, it is an interesting and important representation of the site. The regular suboval form of the inner rampart is depicted shorter and squatter than it is in reality, but the depiction of the outer wall recognises the completeness of the circuit – something not achieved by several later surveys. The depiction of the inner wall on the north-west as a feature that appears to have been split along the line of its crest is a curious one until one realizes that Watt probably surveyed both the outer crest of the ruined vitrified wall and the later (and much narrower) wall that has been constructed along the line of its inner crest. Watt's section drawing confirms this differentiation on the north-west side, but nowhere else on the circuit. However, the section drawing does make it clear that the later wall has been surveyed sitting on top of the earlier feature on the south-east. In light of the next survey to be undertaken, it is probably pertinent to note here that Watt identified no features within the interior of the fort worthy of survey.

The next recorded expression of interest in Craig Phadrig is that of Alexander Fraser Tytler – Lord Woodhouselee – advocate, judge and Professor of Universal History and of Greek and Roman Antiquities at the University of Edinburgh. He wrote a paper (Tytler 1790) that summarised the current thinking on the phenomenon of vitrification, as well as noting earlier accounts and the thoughts of others. These included those of the Bishop of Derry who held the opinion that vitrified rock was not an artificial creation but signified the presence of an ancient volcano (*Ibid*, 4), and Crosbie who had argued that the hill had been thrown up from the bottom of the sea (*Ibid*, 5). Perhaps of more significance to modern discussion of the site is the fact that Tytler's paper contains the results of original fieldwork and his plan (Fig 5) is perhaps the most interesting of the early ones, not for its accuracy – which is somewhat lacking, but for the level of interpretation that is clearly evident from the accompanying annotation.

Tytler notes the inhomogeneous nature of the outer rampart, identifying a low 70yds (64m) length on the north-west (where there is a steep natural slope) as the only section not vitrified, and instead constructed of dry stones and earth. This contrasts with his description (and depiction) of the outer rampart at the north-east end as 'a prodigious mound of vitrified matter' over forty feet (12.2m) thick. Excavation in 1972 (Small 1973, 23) demonstrated that the remains were those of a very thick bank containing comparatively little stone and no vitrified material. The 2013 RCAHMS survey confirmed the north-east end as the thickest portion of outer wall, but identified no visible clues that might explain the existence of a bank as opposed to a ruinous timber-laced wall. In stark contrast to the plan drawn by Watt, Tytler's is notable for the number of internal features it depicts – at a time when the fort may

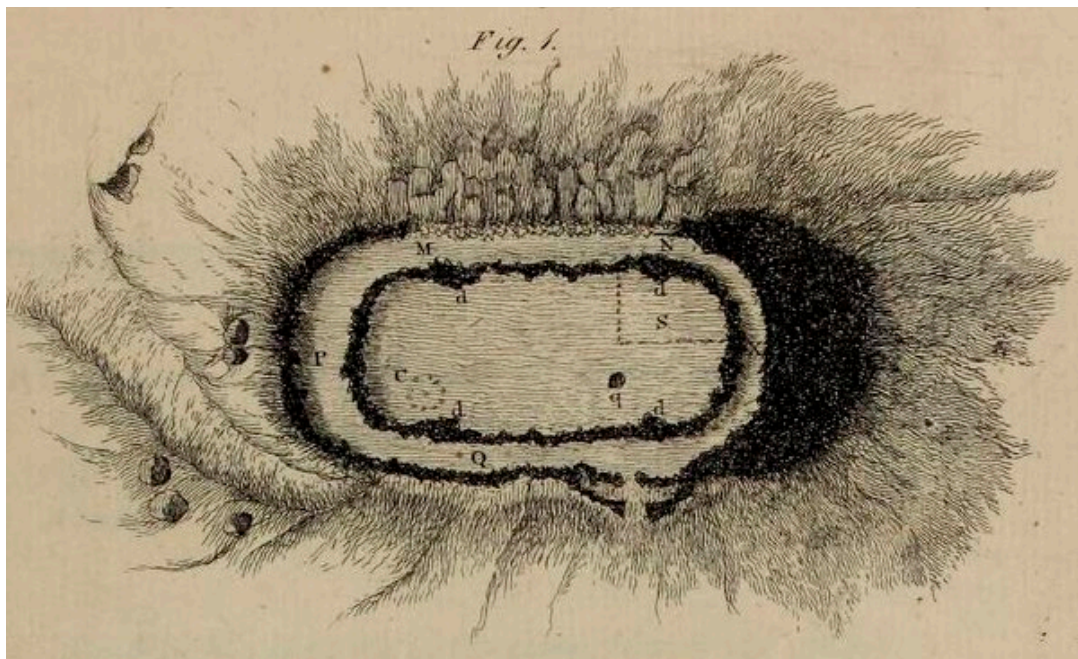
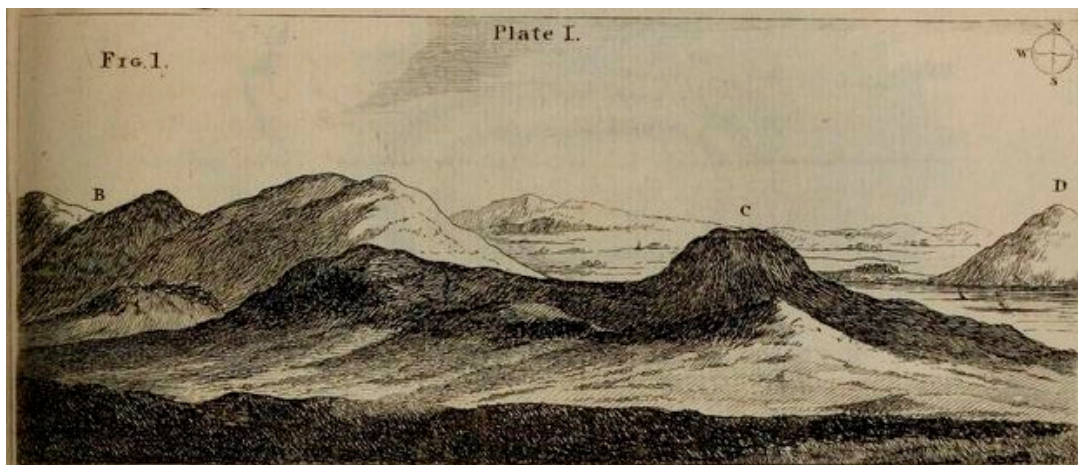
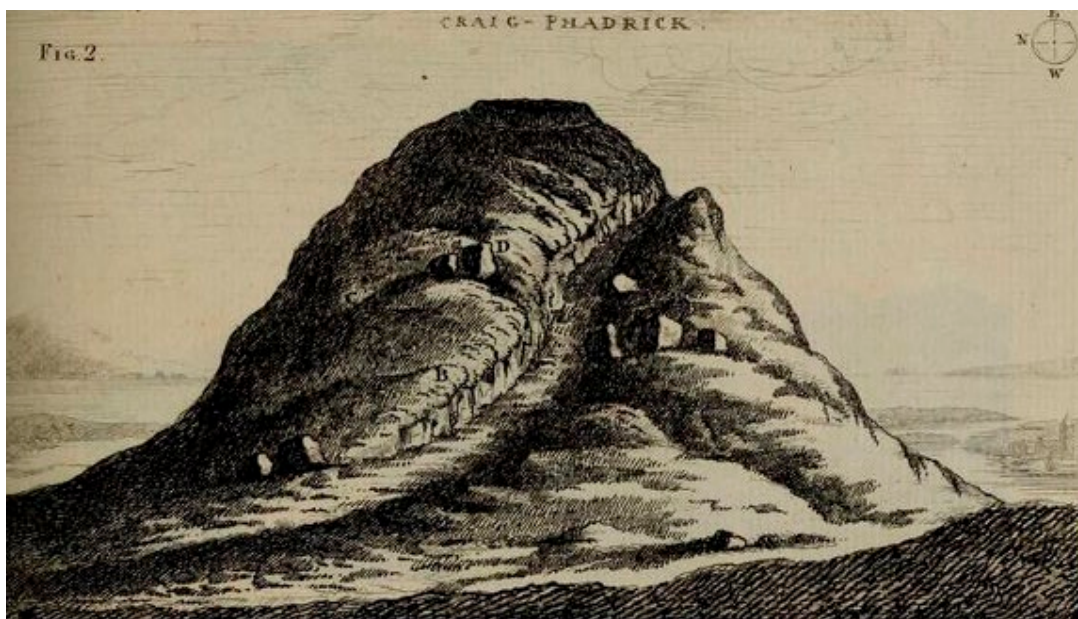


Fig 5 Tytler's Plan of Craig Phadrig (from Tytler 1795).



Figs 6-7 Views of Craig Phadrig (from Tytler 1795).



not yet have suffered widespread investigation. He observed, somewhat tentatively, four 'turrets' placed at regular intervals around the inner face of the inner wall. The locations of the pair set towards the north-east end of the fort have been lost as a result of later excavations; of the pair set towards the south-west end there is now no visible trace. There is a mound of earth and stone set against the inner face of the wall midway along the north-west side, but this appears to be nothing more than a spoil-tip of the adjacent excavation trench. Nor is there now any trace of a 'circular setting of small tumuli of earth with a stone placed in the centre', a well in the form of a stone-filled depression, or a subrectangular enclosure 'demarcated by two ranges of stones'. The latter two features would have lain within an area at the north-east end of the interior which has been extensively explored and excavated and thus it is no surprise that they are no longer visible. The circular setting of small tumuli, however, stood within the south-west end of the interior – an area which gives every appearance of having largely escaped the attention of any excavator. Tytler's plan suggests that there were ten tumuli but even allowing for discrepancies the setting could have been no larger than 5m in overall diameter. Whatever this feature was, there is now no visible trace of it.

A sign of the growing interest in antiquities in the latter half of the 18th century and first quarter of the 19th was their increasing depiction on maps, and Craig Phadrig was no exception. Whilst one might have supposed that the fort would have been known to military surveyors, it is not depicted on Roy's Military Survey (1747–55). Indeed, it seems that it was not until 1789 that it made its first public appearance, being referred to as a 'Vitrified Fort' on a map published by John and James Ainslie of Edinburgh and William Faden of London (Ainslie, Ainslie and Faden 1789). The scale of the map does not allow an accurate depiction – instead it is shown as a rectangular symbol. Later maps, for instance Stockdale's map (Stockdale 1806) or that produced by Faden (Faden 1807), are derivatives of Ainslie's original and they offer no additional information.

Around the same time as the fort was being introduced to a wider audience through cartography it was also inspiring artistic, literary and poetic works. David Carey, the poet, novelist and, in 1811, editor of the *Inverness Journal*, published a work which captured the exciting history of the site:

*Here where the rampart, vitrified, sublime,
Brav'd the rude ravages of War and Time;
Where now the wild bee sips the rathe perfume,
And lambkins sport amid the yellow broom*



Perhaps the first person to undertake substantial intrusive investigation at Craig Phadrig was Thomas Telford, the Scottish civil engineer, architect and noted road, bridge and canal builder. Correspondence in October 1972 between the British Waterways Board and Alan Small, who excavated the site in 1971 and 1972, records the discovery by the Board of a survey of the fort by Telford and Alexander Nimmo dated 1809, that is during the period Telford was constructing the Caledonian Canal. Unfortunately, it appears that no associated documentation survived (MS 7264). In 1990 the Board provided RCAHMS with copies of the plan and sections (Fig 8 ; MS 974/1; SC1367518).

Telford's story is well known; that of Alexander Nimmo less so. Born in Cupar in 1783, Nimmo was an engineer and architect by profession who is best known for his later work in Ireland but was appointed rector of Inverness Academy in 1805. Whilst in this post, he undertook a survey of the Inverness-shire county boundary for the Commission for Roads and Bridges, keeping a journal that has only recently been published (Wilkins 2011). Telford was Nimmo's mentor and given their respective skills it may have been the latter who undertook the survey of Craig Phadrig on behalf of Telford. However, the plan states only that the height was calculated by Nimmo using barometrical measurements and nothing more on its creator.

Whoever was responsible, the plan reflects the elongated shape of the summit enclosure more accurately than that of Tytler, but the rather regular playing card shape of the site as a whole strongly indicates that the plan was not the result of a measured survey – at least not one that one would associate with someone of Telford's (or Nimmo's) engineering background. The real value of the plan is that it provides an indication of where ten trial pits were dug – nine within the summit enclosure and one between the inner and outer wall at the south-west end. The caption for the illustration informs us these pits were 'sunk down to the plum-pudding solid rock, and in general four feet deep'. None of these can now be positively identified on the ground but they provide a record of the extent of Telford's interest in the site and demonstrate a very early example of archaeological assessment by test-pitting.

Perhaps of more importance, however, is the depiction of a feature at the north-east end which is still visible today and has all the characteristics of a barrow-run. It links two probably later excavation trenches which cut through the inner and outer walls respectively. If it is a barrow-run, then its depiction here is evidence of what must have been very early and considerable excavation.

Telford's efforts at Craig Phadrig were followed in 1826 by more extensive work by Sir George Steuart Mackenzie, a mineralogist most noted for the discovery that diamonds were a pure form of carbon (Agnarsdottir 1992, 91). There is little information about exactly what Mackenzie did and there is no contemporary plan, but

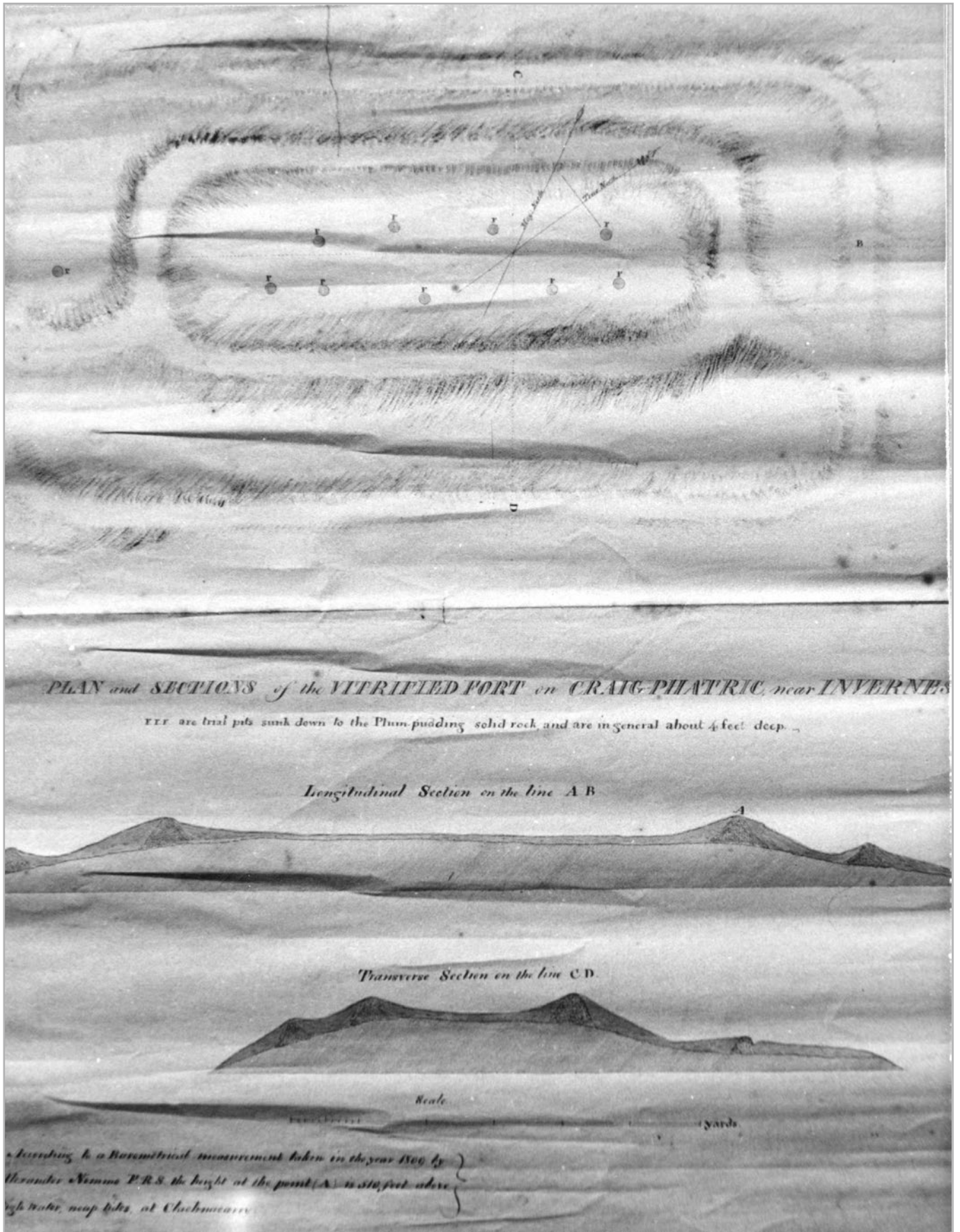


Fig 8 Plan and Section of Craig Phadrig by Telford and Nimmo. Courtesy of British Waterways Board SC1367518



Fig 9 OS 6 inch
1st Edition.



Fig 10 OS 6 inch
2nd Edition.

Hibbert, in publishing letters by Mackenzie, records thirty years later (1857, 188) that he cleared a pit, thought to be a well, to a depth of five feet (1.5m), and dug other holes to a depth of three and a half to four feet (1.1–1.2m). Large quantities of burnt wood and bone were recovered, including a human tibia, but the only artefact noted was a small sharpening stone. Hibbert was of the view that Mackenzie had excavated quite a large area and although he provides no clues about where within the fort these excavations took place, there must be a real possibility that this was the occasion which saw the opening up of such a large area within the north-east part of the interior. Possibly referring either to trenches dug by Telford or Mackenzie, Gowans (1870, 304) stated that the stratigraphy visible in holes made 'many years ago', comprised grass, charred wood, peat and burnt bone above pure loam.

Two years before Gowans revealed his observations, the site had been surveyed by the Ordnance Survey (Inverness-shire (Mainland) 1876, Sheet 11), though it was not published at 6-inch-to-a-mile scale until 1876 and at 25-inch scale until 1881 (Sheet 11.04). The OS captured most of the major features of the site despite the fact that it was wooded (Fig 9), but minor points of criticism could include the shape of the outer rampart on the south-east, which does not contain the sharp angle it ought to, or that the third wall on the north-east was not picked up. There is also an inexplicable gap in the outer wall at the west corner.

Compared to the map depiction, the entry for the site in the contemporary Original Name Book of the Ordnance Survey (Inverness-shire vol. 31, p.11) is not as informative. The use of the term 'aborigenes' by the writer to describe the builders of the fort perhaps betrays an archaic form of thinking even for the 1860s. However, it is the comment that the fort was 'in a very good state of preservation', without mention of what must have been very visible evidence of past excavations, which suggests the commentator had a rather poor understanding of the site and its comparatively recent history of disturbance.

The nature of the disturbance to the fabric of the fort, which must have been visible in the years around the middle of the 19th century, is in part accounted for by Thomas Pryer (1847, 276) who explained that he and a friend removed the covering of moss and grass in several places and 'laid considerable portions of the wall bare' in order to examine the rampart structure and remove specimens. And they were not alone. Gowans, in collecting and examining samples of his own, noted that recent visitors had broken most of the exposed vitrified masses into small pieces 'without noticing the columnar structure' (1870, 302). He also noted partial excavation of the 'upper' rampart and that the outer rampart on the south side-east had a long trench cut along its face where there was, 'the appearance of a continuous sheet or coating of vitrified matter' (*Ibid*, 304). It is likely, though difficult to prove, that the majority of the damage inflicted on the fort, particularly its

interior, by antiquarians was complete by the time Gowans undertook his sampling. Writing in the late 1860s, Keddie stated that the site had been 'laid bare' (1868, 248).

A further representation of the site was produced by Dr Thomas Aiken in 1880 following an excursion to the site with members of the Inverness Scientific Society. Little is added to the interpretation of the fort apart from the assertion that the hill is only fortified in the most accessible places that require most defence. The plan appears to be sketched rather than measured, and affords more detail to the topography of the hill than to the fort, although, a 'surrounding terrace or ditch' is annotated where the outer rampart should lie to the north-west (Aitken 1880, 348).

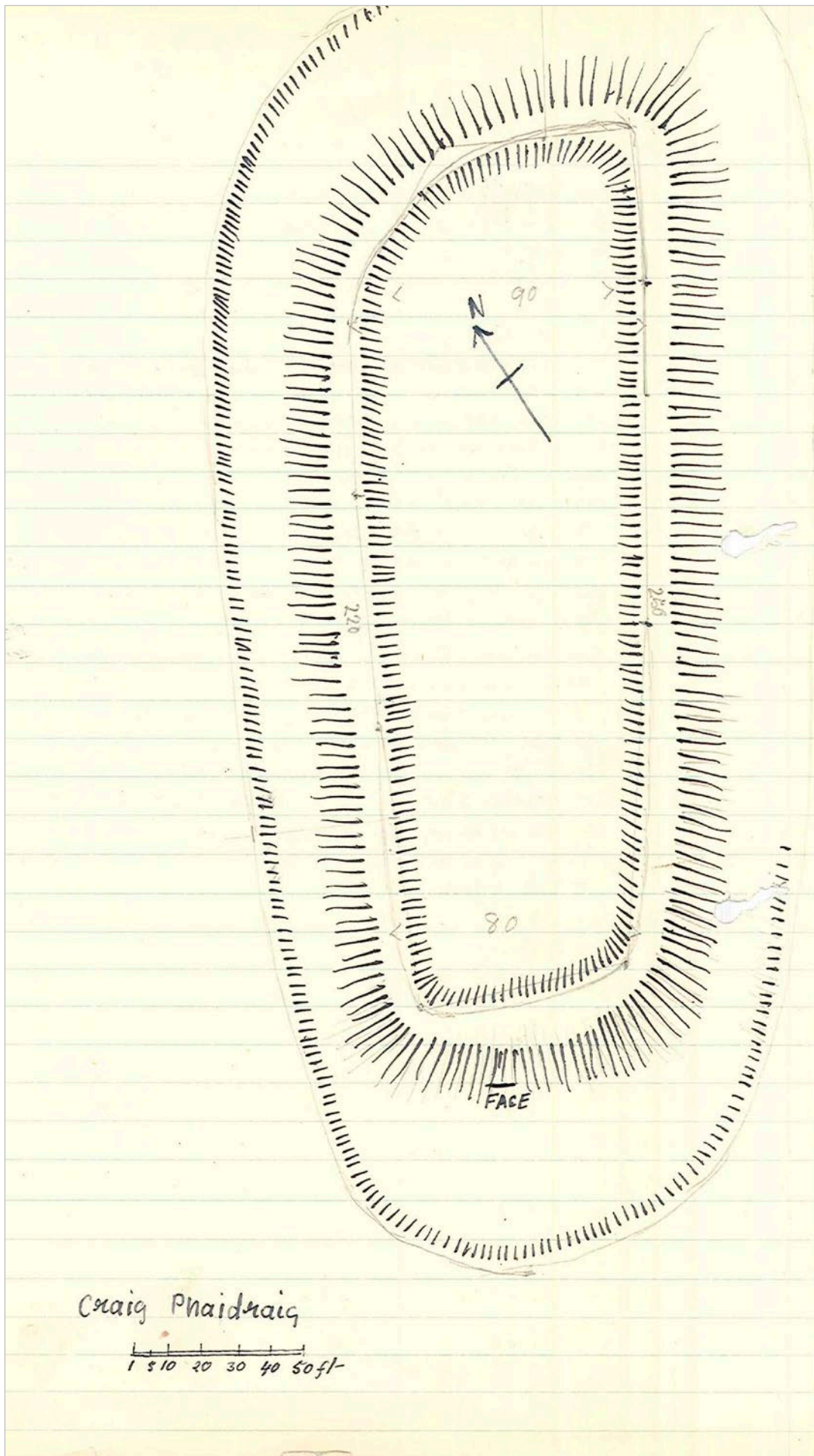
During the following one hundred years the site lay comparatively undisturbed until the excavations conducted by Alan Small in 1971–2 (see p. 15). It is worth noting, however, that in the Interim Report for the 1971 excavation (Small and Cottam 1972) Small records that four visitors to the site mentioned to him having opened up and investigated small pits in the fortifications. Perhaps as evidence for this, the excavation notes document areas considered to be of recent unrecorded excavation in which considerable quantities of modern debris were recovered (MS7261/4; WP003162). Just after the completion of his excavations Small appealed to the Forestry Commission to be watchful of the likelihood of attempts at unauthorised excavation, given its relatively urban situation (MS7262/1).

The Twentieth Century

Documented 20th century interest in the fort prior to Small's excavations in 1971–2 appears to be limited to survey of the earthworks or discussion more generally about vitrified forts. The OS 1903 revision of the 25-inch map (Inverness-shire (Mainland), Sheet 011.04) showed no substantial change from the earlier version surveyed in 1868 (Fig 9), though, interestingly, the 6-inch equivalent map (Sheet XI), published in 1906, better reflects the sharp angle in the outer wall on the south-east (Fig 10).

In 1912–13 Thomas Wallace, Honorary Secretary of the Inverness Scientific Society submitted a series of articles to the *Inverness Courier* which were later published together in the *Transactions* of that society (Wallace 1921). Wallace produced a sketch-plan of Craig Phadrig based on that published by Tytler, but which purported to represent the 'present state of the ruins' (*Ibid*, 91–2). However, Wallace's plan appears little more than a poor copy of Tytler's. Certain details, such as the location of the well and the alleged ring of tumuli, are both depicted in the wrong place and even the overall shape of the fort is different. Wallace himself seals the fate of this sketch-plan by stating that because of the 'accumulation of vegetable growth' the details on the earlier plan, including the alleged bastions, tumuli, enclosure and well, 'cannot be determined' (*Ibid*, 93).

Fig 11 RCAHMS
Emergency Survey
of Craig Phadrig.
WP002403



The forestry and woodland around Craig Phadrig was the 37th acquisition by the nascent Forestry Commission (established in 1919), with the deeds signed on the 28th of November 1925. Craig Phadrig Wood was already established woodland of mixed deciduous and conifer trees and is depicted as such on contemporary OS maps. There is no obvious evidence that the early work of the Commission's foresters (whether it was felling or planting) resulted in any significant damage to the fabric of the fort.

The next survey of the site was that undertaken on the 15th August 1943 by RCAHMS as part of its 'emergency survey' work on recording monuments within military training areas that were thought to be at high risk of damage or destruction (Dunbar 1992, 20). Because of staff shortages during the Second World War, the work was undertaken by only two people – the Secretary, Angus Graham, and Vere Gordon Childe (Fig 11), then Professor of Archaeology at Edinburgh University and a recently appointed Commissioner, who volunteered for this work.

Unfortunately the sketch-plan produced by Childe (Fig 11; WP 002403) contains less information than one might have expected. It is not complete – missing the detail of the outer wall on both the north-east and south-east; nor is there any indication of the natural topography of the hill or of the evidence of excavation. However, there may be perfectly good reasons for this. One is that the sketch was only ever intended to be an aide memoire to Childe when writing a description of the site later. A second reason might be that the high summer vegetation made any form of survey difficult. Some of the gaps on the plan may be the result of practical difficulties in establishing lines of sight, taking measurements with a tape, and actually identifying the salient features.

Craig Phadrig was visited again by RCAHMS in 1957 during the Marginal Land Survey (WP 000775), which recorded sites that were considered to be under serious threat from the conversion of land to arable agriculture. At that time, as was noted, the whole of the inner rampart was covered in dense woodland vegetation and the interpretation of the outer rampart was also inhibited by dense scrub. No gaps were located in the ramparts, and beyond a depression towards the north-east end of the interior, interpreted as the well reported by Williams, no internal features were recorded. This visit did not result in a plan, but it is likely that because the fort was included in the MLS the Ministry of Works first considered scheduling the site in 1958 (National Archives of Scotland – DD27/2232). The fort was actually scheduled on the 19th December 1969 under the Ancient Monuments Acts of 1913 and 1931. The scheduling notice describes, 'a monument consisting of a conspicuous oval rampart and outer mound which may represent the remains of an outer rampart of Dark Age date at Craig Phadrig Forest' (Historic Scotland Scheduled Ancient Monument, Index Number 2892).

1971–2 Excavations

Two seasons of excavation were undertaken at Craig Phadrig in 1971 and 1972, sponsored largely by the Inverness Field Club (but with other contributions) and under the direction of Alan Small, then a Senior Lecturer in Geography at Dundee University, with the support of Barry Cottam. An interim report of the first season of excavation was promptly produced (Small and Cottam 1972) but little else pertaining to the work appeared before Small died in 1999 and a full account of the work has not been published since.

Finds from the excavation are held in the National Museums of Scotland (Accession Numbers X.HH 885–891) and some of the site archive is in the RCAHMS Collection, kindly donated by his widow, the catalogue details of which are presented below. Additional correspondence and monuments records are held by both Historic Scotland and the National Archives of Scotland. However, the whereabouts of much of the original site archive, including photographic negatives, prints and slides as well as plans and section-drawings are presently unknown. Attempts by the author to locate this material have seen unsuccessful enquiries made to Dundee University, the Inverness Field Club, Inverness Museum, Highland Archive Centre, Historic Scotland and the Highland Council's Historic Environment Record.

This is not the place to attempt to reassess the results of Small and Cottam's work at Craig Phadrig. There can be little doubt that this is required, but at the moment there is simply too much of the archive that is either poorly labeled, not labeled at all or entirely missing to achieve that goal. Comments here on aspects of the excavations are therefore restricted to more general points relating to the surviving visible remains.

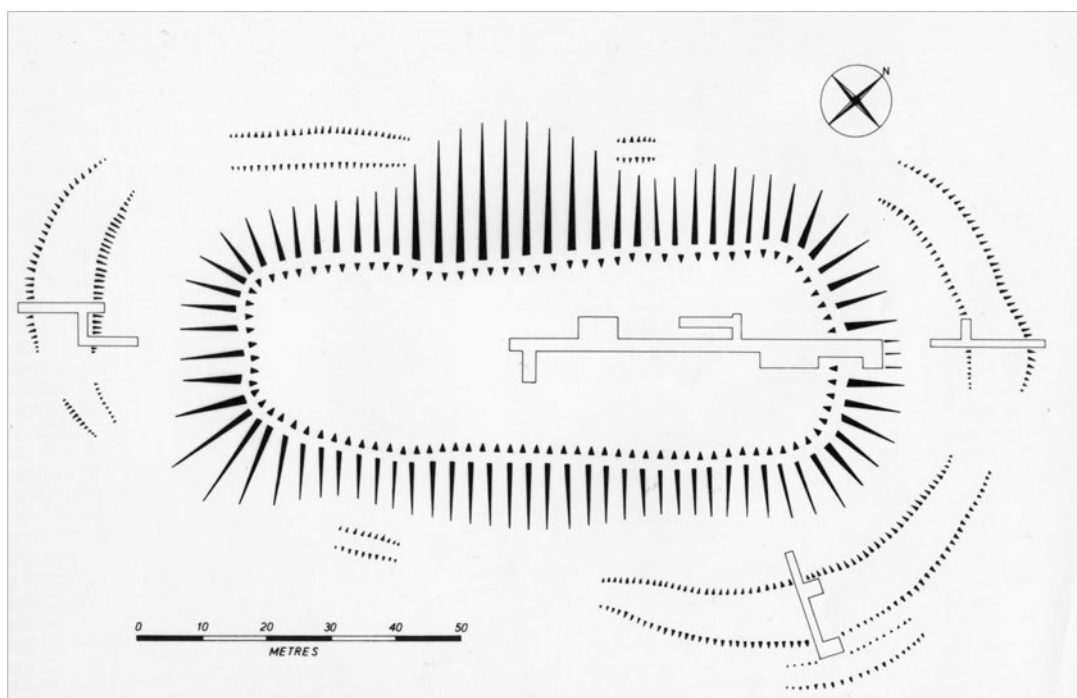


Fig 12 Plan of 1971 excavation areas (from Small & Cottam 1972).



Fig 13 Excavation photograph from 1971 showing rampart face – interval of ranging poles 0.5m. SC1406015

The interim report for the 1971 season of excavation contains a plan of the fort (Fig 12) which shows the location of the excavation trenches that year. What is not clear, however, is how this plan came into being – whether it is an altered version of an existing plan or whether it is the result of a survey by the excavation team. The existing archive offers no clues, but whatever its origin it is a plan that does not take into account the natural topography of the hill. As far as the reader is concerned the fort could be sitting in a flat field. Another criticism would point to the line taken by the outer wall on the east, which is shown too close to the inner wall.

The plan does have its good points however. There is an acknowledgement that the outer rampart was present on the north-west though a large part of it is shown as obscured by tumble from the ruined inner wall above. It also provides a good indication of the relative condition of the inner and outer walls, itself a strong hint that they are of different periods of construction. If the sole purpose of Small and Cottam's plan was simply to indicate the location of the areas of the 1971 excavation trenches, then it should perhaps be accepted on that basis.

Small's initial excavation strategy resulted in a long trench being dug from the inner wall at the north-east end back towards the centre of the interior and narrow trenches cutting across the outer wall on the north-east, east and south-west in 1971. This confirmed that the inner line of defence (Fig 13), had been of dry-stone and timber-laced construction which was probably built sometime during the 4th century BC. Its subsequent destruction resulted in large parts of its wall core becoming vitrified. The second wall was also timber-laced and at least partly vitrified.

Small found that the archaeological deposits within the interior of the fort had been extensively disturbed, but he identified fragmentary remains of Iron Age activity in the form of what he called a 'Lower Occupation Layer' (Small and Cottam 1972, 40–2). However, this layer post-dated the destruction of the inner timber-laced wall and it was overlain by a substantial 'chocolate brown humus horizon' which measured up to 0.38m in thickness and most likely represented a natural build-up of soil, probably in a wooded environment, over the course of several hundred years.

Sitting on top of this build-up of soil was an 'Upper Occupation Layer' (*Ibid*, 43–5) which was associated with a small structure which Small reckoned had been placed directly above another hut he had identified in the earlier occupation level. Both had been built in the lee of the ruined timber-laced wall at the north-east end of the interior. And both occupation layers contained quantities of animal bone, peat-ash and charcoal. More importantly, whilst the lower layer yielded a single find of a corroded bronze pin, the floor of the upper contained sherds of E ware pottery, possibly from a pitcher or a jar (Campbell 2005), and a mould for an escutcheon for a hanging-bowl (SC1406023) – artefacts firmly dateable to the late Pictish period, and a spindle whorl (Fig 14).

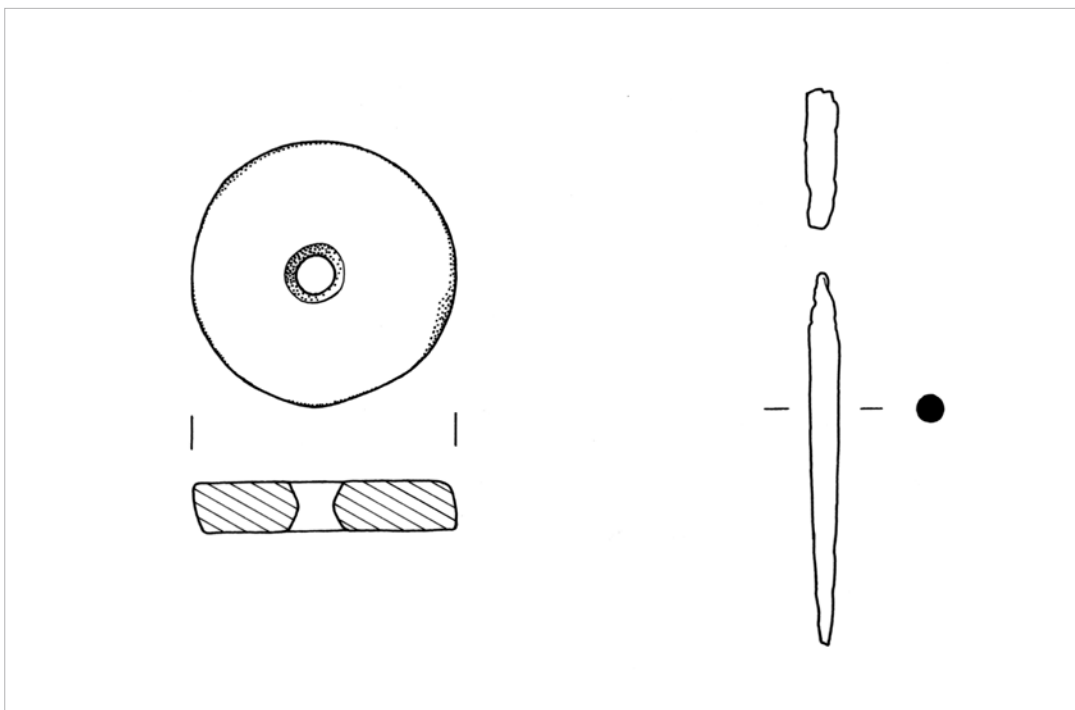


Fig 14 Finds illustration of spindle whorl and bronze pin from the 1971 excavation. SC1408010

Small's excavation could have gone on to produce more Pictish-period artefacts but to his great credit he thought it inappropriate to excavate structures in such potentially significant deposits until further comparisons were available (MS 7262/3), and then only if full excavation of the interior were to be undertaken, given the extent of the disturbance. Consequently, work on the interior was halted and thereafter efforts were concentrated on establishing the nature and extent of outer defences. No further investigations were made to the eastern outer defences, where the 1971 excavation had revealed a broad earthen bank containing very few stones. Unfortunately the precise locations and dimensions of these trenches are not revealed within the available excavation notes.

The second and final season of excavation focused exclusively on the outer rampart and a short entry in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland 1972* (Small 1973, 23) is the only published account of these investigations. Summarising the character of the outer defences, it stated that the wall was vitrified at the south-west end of the fort, but that the vitrification was not continuous around the fort. Small thought that there was no outer rampart on the north-west – only a low revetment, and that there were only the remains of the two timber-laced walls at the north-east end, with the impression of a third having been created from the upcast of the outer rampart.

Perhaps encouraged in part by Small's work, the possibility of dating vitrified forts using sophisticated scientific techniques resulted in

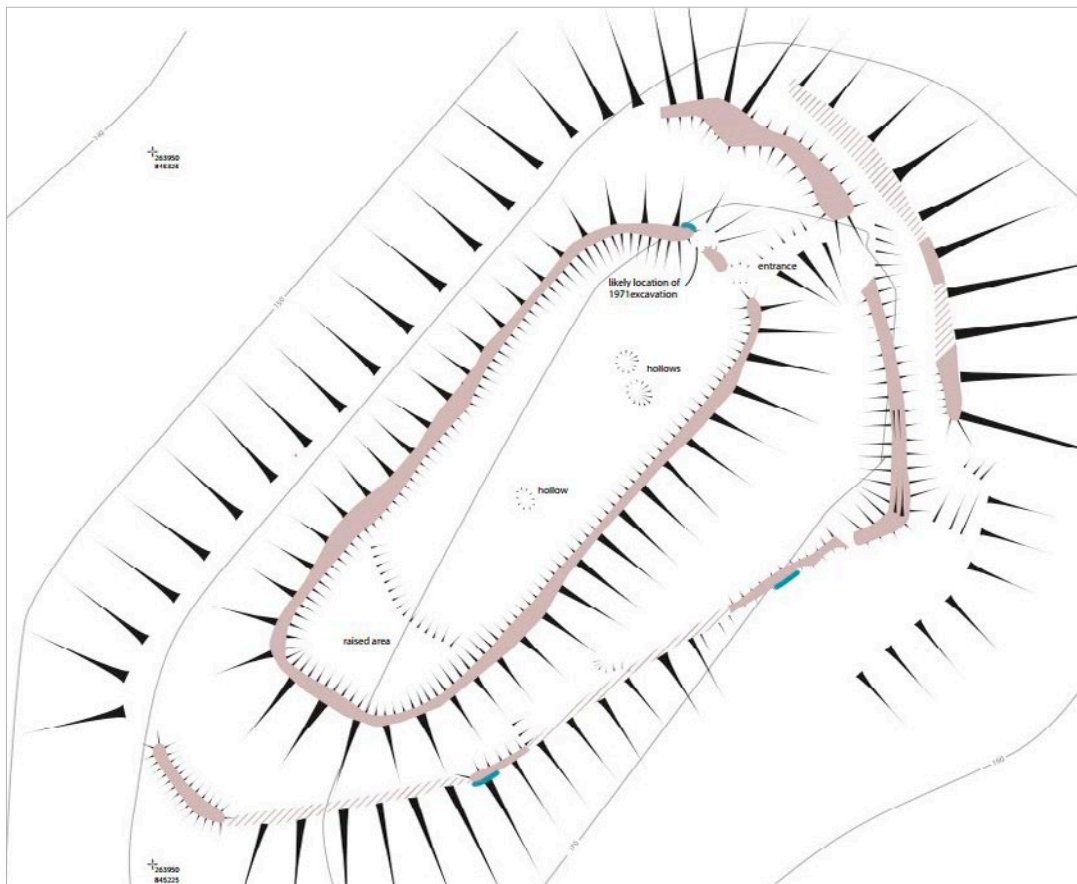


Fig 15 Headland's Survey of Craig Phadrig (from Dalland & Wessel 2011).

samples being taken from a number of sites, including Craig Phadrig. This subject is beyond the scope of this paper but the dates achieved through thermoluminescence and archaeomagnetic techniques have been summarized by Gentles (1989). A report on the chemical and mineralogical analysis of a sample of vitrified rock from the fort commissioned by Small is available in the catalogue (WP 003160), and the radiocarbon dates are available on Canmore attached to the record for Craig Phadrig.

Recent Survey

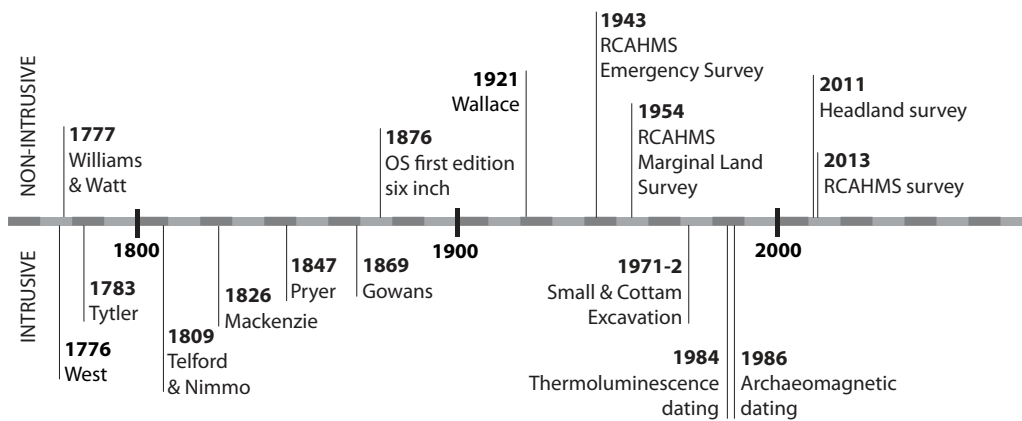
Prior to that undertaken by RCAHMS in September 2013, the most recent survey of the fort on Craig Phadrig was that carried out by Headland Archaeology Ltd, one of five surveys commissioned by FCS and undertaken in late 2010 and early 2011 (Dalland & van Wessel 2011, 17–18). The resulting plan (Fig 15) shows the principal characteristics of the site – the subrectangular inner enclosure and the larger, more irregular, outer enclosure with its additional line of defence on the NE, but various natural and man-made features picked up in the RCAHMS survey are not depicted.

RCAHMS Survey

Before going on to describe the results of the 2013 survey, it is worth describing the methodology used by RCAHMS in some detail. It would be wrong to suggest that RCAHMS employs any one particular methodology for recording large earthwork monuments. True, it makes use of traditional survey techniques, in particular the plane-table and self-reducing alidade, but it is also the case that it is continually looking to employ new techniques and new technologies to aid its work. At the end of the day, however, whatever means are used to record the features of a site they are used within a framework of guiding principles which insist on several things. Firstly, there is a tacit recognition of the fact that any survey of a large, often complicated, monument requires both expertise and time, and that surveys should therefore be undertaken by a minimum of two members of staff, ideally three, with experience of such work and with the freedom to spend whatever time is thought necessary in order to record the available information. Secondly, those recording the monument must work as a team to discuss the site, agree a scale and style of depiction. Thirdly, the survey must be a process of analysis and interpretation of all the visible features, which will result in an articulate survey drawing that provides answers to questions rather than posing new ones.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the Commission's survey of Craig Phadrig has been the recognition that the inner and outer timber-laced walls are probably not contemporary and that the outer most likely represents an earlier phase of enclosure. There are two good reasons for suggesting this might be the case. Firstly, there are comparable sites, two of which, Castle Law, above Forgandenny in Perthshire (SC1236359), and Finavon, in Angus, have recently been surveyed by

Fig 16 Comparison of Craig Phadrig plans. Timeline of known intrusive and non-intrusive investigations at Craig Phadrig fort.



the Commission. In 2011 it was demonstrated at the former that the inner of the two oval stone-walled forts superseded the outer, the wall of which was robbed in prehistory – almost certainly to provide stone for the later builders. Survey at the latter in 2014 has shown a hitherto unrecorded vitrified wall which, again, was probably used as a quarry by the builders of the later fort. At Craig Phadrig, in light of there being any significant evidence for more recent plundering of its stone, some of which can be of almost industrial scale. the most obvious explanation for the outer vitrified wall being so heavily robbed – down to exposed bedrock in one place, or differing in character is that it was quarried by the builders of the later timber-laced wall.

Secondly, as at Castle Law, Forgandenny, there is an uneasy relationship between the inner and outer walls – at Craig Phadrig this being towards the south-west end of the south-east side and towards the north-east end of the north-west side, where the two walls are barely more than 5m apart. It is surely asking too much to believe that both walls, which probably once stood at least 6m high, are contemporary! If the suggested relationship between the two walls at Craig Phadrig is correct then the site fits into a pattern that is being recognized more and more as some of Scotland's most significant and iconic Iron Age monuments are being reassessed – some being subject to rigorous archaeological survey for the first time.

The Commission survey has also recorded, for the first time, the visible evidence of the extensive excavation within the interior, most obvious within the north-east end. The identification of areas of previous excavation is seen as a vital component to the process of identifying original features which can survive as small, fragmentary traces between areas of disturbance. And, although it is not particularly pertinent at Craig Phadrig, the same reason calls for the recognition of the quarrying of walls and ramparts for stone. At Finavon there has been a massive amount of quarrying which has resulted in the complete removal of some sections of the ruined timber-laced wall and the obscuring of other parts of the site through the creation of spoil-tips. At Craig Phadrig several relatively small spoil-tips have been identified but none of them are thought to mask detail of any significance.

Discussion

All of the plans of Craig Phadrig discussed in this paper have been considered within the context of their intended purpose, the date when they were produced, as well as the technology utilised, the visibility of the remains at the time of survey and other constraints, including time, that could have affected the final result. A comparison of how the differing plans depict the basic form of the fort (Fig 16) demonstrates that the inner rampart was generally and correctly recorded, although the interpretation of the existence of an original entrance differed greatly. The second and third ramparts appear more problematic for surveyors; Telford and Nimmo choosing to greatly simplify the second rampart's shape and others misunderstanding the, in places, modest

and slight remains. A number of the plans restricted themselves to a more basic representation of features such as those produced by Watt, the OS and Headland. Others sought, sometimes somewhat fancifully, to produce more interpretive representations – particularly Tytler.

Alongside excavation, analytical survey clearly has a crucial role to play in understanding our archaeological sites and in producing plans with a clear focus on interpretation, one hopes that archaeological discourse will continue, encouraging the questioning of new and old ideas alike to further our understanding of long studied but yet to be fully understood sites. What one might also take from the comparison of these plans is the great variety in style of depiction, accuracy and interpretation of Craig Phadrig, a relatively small site. This perhaps highlights the pressing need for both a consistent level of accuracy and use of convention and symbology. In particular, there should be a clear distinction between man-made and natural slopes, and instances of disturbance, including excavation and quarrying, should be routinely recorded. Only then will plans be produced that can be used both as documents of record and a means of comparison with similar monuments.

The fort on the summit of Craig Phadrig is of particular interest not only because of its relevance for students of the Iron Age or early medieval period, but because of its importance to the development of archaeology in Scotland in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Its almost 250 year history of invasive and non-invasive study has ultimately been aimed at the pursuit of further understanding – be it of the geological processes of vitrification, and its causes, accidental or deliberate, its dating, phasing and chronology, or in its reuse. One might say that the site has been unlucky in the sense that its striking but easily accessible location overlooking Inverness has served to promote its status as one of Scotland's iconic prehistoric monuments, yet at the same time subject it to a prolonged history of intrusive investigation. The attention lavished on the fort in the 18th and 19th centuries by no doubt well-intentioned antiquarians has left a legacy of a site extensively stripped of its occupation deposits and with virtually no accompanying record. Small's excavations in the early 1970s were extremely valuable because they demonstrated the existence of both fragmentary Iron Age and Pictish occupation deposits and structures. The excavations provided poignant evidence of the huge amount of information that must have been lost, yet at the same time offered a tantalizing glimpse of knowledge that may yet be learned. This is not the place to judge the legacy of Small's work at Craig Phadrig, however it needs to be recognized that a properly considered assessment of that work cannot take place until more of the archive becomes available.

The Catalogue

The assemblage of material within the RCAHMS Collection largely comprises items donated by Alan Small's widow after his death in 1999. This material has been catalogued in batches of broadly similar material. Itemised descriptions are available within the manuscript notes in order to provide researchers with sufficient indication of the range and type of information available.

Alan Small Collection Accession number 2000/225 Unit ID 2000/10

Catalogue Number	Description	Number of Items	Date of Creation
MS 7261/1	'Craig Phadrig 1' Material relating to Craig Phadrig excavation including photographic prints, correspondence, bibliographic index cards and article offprints.	12 items	1973
MS 7261/2	Craig Phadrig. Wire-bound notebook of MB Cottam's 1971 excavation notes.	1 item	August 1971
MS 7261/3	A Small & M B Cottam, 1972 'Craig Phadrig, Interim Report on 1971 Excavation' University of Dundee Occasional Papers No.1.	1 item	1972
MS 7261/4	Notebook of Small and Cottam's Craig Phadrig 1971 and 1972 excavation notes. Includes correspondence with S Fay and comments on 'Craig Phadrig' paper.	4 items	1971
MS 7262/1	'Craig Phadrig 1972', Alan Small correspondence with E Meldrum, E McKie, R Ritchie and others relating to Craig Phadrig, from 1972.	46 items	1972
MS 7262/2	'Craig Phadrig Publication', folder of correspondence relating to Craig Phadrig Interim Report on 1971 excavation.	13 items	1971
MS 7262/3	'Craig Phadrig Money', folder containing correspondence and account summaries in relation to Craig Phadrig excavation finances.	51 items	1970
MS 7262/4	'Craig Phadrig Ministry Board', folder containing correspondence between Alan Small and the Department of the Environment regarding Craig Phadrig.	2 items	1971

<u>MS 7262/5</u>	Material relating to Craig Phadrig 1971 excavation. Includes photographic prints of finds, report on Craig Phadrig E ware by Ewan Campbell and report on analysis of vitrified stone from Craig Phadrig.	8 items	1971
<u>MS 7263/1</u>	'Craig Phadrig II of III', folder containing material relating to excavations at Craig Phadrig. Includes correspondence, black & white photograph of escutcheon hanging bowl mould and original pages, with mounted figures, of 1971 Interim report.	15 items	1971
<u>MS 7263/2</u>	Alan Small material relating to Craig Phadrig research. Includes copies and offprints of articles relating to Craig Phadrig and other vitrified forts.	12 items	various
<u>MS 7264</u>	'Craig Phadrig III of III', folder containing bibliographic index cards, notes, newspaper clippings and correspondence with M B Cottam, Sheldon Fay and others relating to excavations at Craig Phadrig.	21 items	1971
<u>MS 974/1</u>	Plan and Sections of the Vitrified Fort on Craig-Phatric near Inverness, with accompanying letter from R Gourlay, 16 May 1990. Photocopy of original in British Waterways Board office, Clachnaharry, Inverness.	1 item (British Waterways Board)	1990
<u>WP 000775</u>	RCAHMS Marginal Land Survey: Typescripts (Inverness-shire).	1 item (RCAHMS)	1954
<u>WP 002403</u>	Scanned copy of RCAHMS Emergency Survey: Manuscripts (1943 Volume 2).	1 item (RCAHMS)	1943
<u>WP 003160</u>	Scanned copy of report: 'Analysis of the stone from the Scottish Hill Fort of Craig Phadrig'.	1 item (Alan Small)	1971
<u>WP 003161</u>	Scanned copy of M Barry Cottam's 1971 Craig Phadrig excavation notes.	1 item (Alan Small)	1971
<u>WP 003162</u>	Scanned copy of Alan Small's 1971 Craig Phadrig excavation notes.	1 item (Alan Small)	1971
<u>WP 003163</u>	Scanned copy of Alan Small's 1972 Craig Phadrig excavation notes.	1 item (Alan Small)	1972

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