

**Report of Archaeological Watching Brief  
May to August 2003  
Mulbuie Water Supply Project  
Phase 1**

Client: Halcrow Group Ltd on behalf of Scottish Water

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## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Stuart Farrell was commissioned by Halcrow Group Ltd on behalf of Scottish Water in May 2003 to undertake an archaeological watching brief on sections of pipeline as part of a water mains renewal project.*

*Work revealed a number of features in the show field to the edge of Muir of Ord both modern. Work around Loch a' Mhuin and Spital Shore revealed no features whilst work to the north of Tarradale House also revealed no archaeological features.*

*No further recommendations for further work have been proposed.*

## **1. Introduction**

This report is for a number of archaeological watching briefs conducted for Halcrow Group Ltd on behalf of Scottish Water by the author for the Mulbuie Water Mains Renewal Project Phase 1.

The work was conducted between May 7<sup>th</sup> and August 14<sup>th</sup> 2003.

## **2. Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank the following for their help during the work:

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- Mr. A Barnett, of Halcrow Group Ltd;
- Mr. C Mearns, of Tulloch Construction;
- Mr. S Buchanan, for onsite help;
- Staff of Tulloch Construction for onsite works;
- Staff of Wyvis Plant & Power Ltd for onsite works;
- Staff of Highland Council Archaeology Unit.

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**Figure 1 – General Location**  
**Figure 2 (over) – Route of Pipelines**



### **3. Archaeological Background**

The archaeological watching brief was to follow up on recommendations that had been made following a desk-based and walkover survey conducted by the CFA Archaeology Ltd (Johnstone, 2003) where it was possible that prehistoric deposits could be revealed, especially in relation to cropmark sites.

### **4. Objectives**

To conduct a watching brief on the excavation of the pipe trenches to record those features revealed by excavation work.

### **5. Methodology**

A monitoring was made of the removal of topsoil and subsoil's to an average depth of 200mm. A back-acting machine with a straight edged bucket cleared the topsoil and subsoil with possible archaeological features being cleaned by hand. A back-acting machine with a toothed bucket cleared the section's of work north of Tarradale House.

### **6. Watching Brief Investigation**

The watching brief was carried out in accordance with accepted professional archaeological standards as published by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1999). Over the construction period a suitably qualified archaeologist was on site to carry out observations and assessment of the area affected by the excavation works.

#### Results

Results for areas of interest were as follows:

**1** – Show field (Work conducted 7<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> May 2003) Work to be conducted due to lying close to cropmark NH54NW 35 of an enclosure. Route of pipeline ran from W to S from NH 53518/49367 to NH53354/49343 then to NH 53357/49287 then S to NH 53343/49267 then running to NH 53363/49163 then W to NH 53206/49129 ending at NH 53373/48850. Work in the area of the Black Isle Show field (see figures 3-4) revealed 2 features. Feature 1 was a small section of concrete centred at NH 53304/48911 of a strip foundation 10m in length and 0.25m wide, with fragments of tile drain located in topsoil. Possibly foundation for toilet block (current toilet blocks being situated 20m to NW). (See photograph over)

Feature 2 was a small width of possible road or hard standing of small cobbles and tarmac 5m wide. Possibly not a road as there is not any access points to this area of the field or that feature lies in an area likely to have been an access. More likely to be area of hard standing for use during the farming show. (See photograph over) Both these features are modern in date.

Overall there was limited topsoil over the show field site with the ground being heavily disturbed in certain areas by existing gravel roads especially in the central area close to the toilet block being cut heavily by existing services. In some areas in section there was signs that parts of the show field had been wet and then seen periods of drying out before becoming wet again (evident in fine silt layers and layers of peat).

Below Left – View of concrete foundation strip facing N – scales 1m x 1m.  
Below Right – View of road/area of hard standing facing N – scales 1m x 1m.



**2** – Loch a Mhuin – NH 55020/50193 to NH 55777/49533 (Work conducted 5<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> June 2003) (see figures 5-7) Watching brief was conducted due to route of pipeline partly crossing open field's where there might be a chance of unrecorded archaeological features.

Work revealed no archaeological features or deposits only a dry stone dyke (Johnstone, 2001, site 70). Work also revealed that the clearance cairn identified by the CFA (ibid, site 67) was in fact 3 demolished concrete water tanks of a modern date dating to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and which went out of use circa 1959 with installation of current water main. (Information from local farmer)

**3** – Spital Shore – NH 55862/49449 to NH 56113/49194 (Work conducted 30<sup>th</sup> June – 4<sup>th</sup> July 2003) (see figure 7) Watching brief was conducted due to lying in an area where placename relates to location of medieval hospital. Recorded in the NMRS (NH54NE 11) of 'The patronage of the *domus hospitalis de edirdouer*' belonging to Elizabeth Bisset, widow of Andrew de Bosco, was, c 1299-1310, transferred to William, E. of Ross. Edirdouer was the old name of the parish of Killearnan'.

Work revealed no archaeological features or deposits only natural ground on a slight south-facing slope with natural yellow-brown sand at 200mm.

**4** – Woodside – NH 54593/50713 to NH 54546/50616 (Work conducted 3<sup>rd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> July 2003) (see figure 9) Watching brief was conducted due to route of pipeline lying close to farmstead recorded during walkover survey (Johnstone, 2001, site 56) where there might be a chance of unrecorded archaeological features.

Work revealed no archaeological features or deposits as farmstead lies on natural ridge. One feature was located to W edge of wayleave by farm of a modern concrete trough at NH 54563/50647. (See over)



**5** – Tarradale House – NH 55204/48974 to NH 55473/49242 and NH 55765/49502 to NH 55582/49288 (Work conducted 11<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> August 2003) (see figures 7-8) Watching brief was conducted due to area of pipeline lying to the east of an area of cropmarks (NMRS NH54NW 23-25)(Gregory and Jones 2001) of a barrow cemetery, ring works and a sunken road. Area of watching brief was some distance away from cropmark sites.

Work started at NH 55204/48974 working north on a south facing slope with depth of topsoil at 800mm over orange-brown sand rising to 250mm at Tarradale Cottages. North end of trench ended at NH 55202/49177 then curved 90° to NH 55207/49183 then turning E to NH 55230/49196 then north to NH 55233/49217 then finally turning E and ending at NH 55473/49242 close to Tarradale Mains Farm. Work revealed no archaeological features or deposits.

Second area was to the NE of Tarradale Mains Farm starting at NH 55765/49502 heading SW on a south facing slope, with an average depth of topsoil of 250mm over a orange-brown sandy marl ending at NH 55582/49288. One feature was revealed at NH 55759/49495 of a rubble field drain running N-S in a low-lying area to the N of the East Lodge. No other archaeological features or deposits were revealed, though a back-acting machine with a toothed bucket cleared this section of pipeline. The middle section of this pipeline had also evidence of being heavily ploughed with topsoil being heavily mixed with the natural.

## **7. Overall Conclusions**

Overall the watching brief had very limited results but the work will be a good indication of depth of topsoil and subsoil's to areas watched for any future work in these areas.

## **8. Recommendations**

No recommendations with regard any further fieldwork for this project is to be proposed due to no further construction work being currently proposed with this project.

## **9. Archive**

The following is to be deposited in the National Monuments Record in Edinburgh:

- Notebook of results
- Copy of this report

A set of colour slides showing the progress of the work has been deposited with Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record. Digital images used in this report have been deposited with HSMR on disc as well as a copy of this report as a PDF file.

## **10. Discovery & Excavation in Scotland**

A short summary of the results of this project will be submitted to the Council for Scottish Archaeology's publication *Discovery & Excavation in Scotland*.

## **11. References**

Gregory, R A & Jones, G D B (2001) Survey and Excavation at Tarradale, Highland. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 131, 241-266.

IFA (1999) By-laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. Reading.

Johnstone, M (2003) Mulbuie Archaeological Desktop Survey & Walkover Survey Report. CFA Archaeology Ltd report no.778. Unpublished Report – copy held by HSMR.

National Sites and Monuments Record CANMORE database entry for NH54NE 11.



## Appendix 1 – Details of Slides

### Film 1

- 1 – Showfield Section - View of trench by main entrance facing E.
- 2 – Showfield Section - View of trench by main entrance facing W.
- 3 – Showfield Section - View of trench towards central toilet block facing S.
- 4 – Showfield Section - Detail of section showing fine deposited layers.
- 5 – Showfield Section - View of trench facing south to pavilion.
- 6 – Showfield Section - View of area towards fence upon stripping of topsoil's facing W.
- 7 – Showfield Section - View of area along fence-line upon stripping of topsoil's facing S.
- 8 – Showfield Section - View from fence towards pavilion facing E.
- 9 – Showfield Section - View of area along fence-line upon stripping of topsoil's facing S.
- 10 – Showfield Section - Detail of area of road/hard standing.
- 11 – Showfield Section - Detail of concrete strip facing N.
- 12 – Showfield Section - Detail of concrete strip facing N – scales 1m.
- 13 – Showfield Section - Detail of area of road/hard standing – scales 1m.
- 14 – Loch a Mhuin Section – View N to Loch a Mhuin.
- 15 – Loch a Mhuin Section – View of drystone wall facing SSW.
- 16 – Loch a Mhuin Section – View of field facing S.
- 17 – Loch a Mhuin Section – View of reinstated trench from Loch a Mhuin facing S.
- 18 – Loch a Mhuin Section – Ibid but facing N.
- 19 – Loch a Mhuin Section – Ibid but from wall.
- 20 – Loch a Mhuin Section – View of trench facing N.
- 21 – Loch a Mhuin Section – View of trench above quarry facing W.
- 22 – Loch a Mhuin Section – View to W from Hughston.
- 23 – Loch a Mhuin Section – View of machining in quarry field facing SSE.
- 24 – Loch a Mhuin Section – Downhill towards Whitewell Farm facing SSE.
- 25 – Loch a Mhuin Section – Uphill from A832 west of Whitehill facing NNW.
- 26 – Loch a Mhuin Section – View south to A832.
- 27 – Loch a Mhuin Section – View of concrete tanks – CFA site 67 facing SW.
- 28 – Spital Shore Section – View from East Lodge towards Acharry facing SE.
- 29 – Spital Shore Section – View from A832 to Spital Shore facing S.
- 30 – Spital Shore Section – View uphill towards lane at Spittalfields facing N.
- 31 – Spital Shore Section – View south to Spital Shore.
- 32 – Woodside Section – Detail of concrete trough facing SW.
- 33 – Woodside Section – View of Woodside Farm facing NNE.
- 34 – Tarradale Section – View of section NE of Tarradale Mains facing SW before excavation.
- 35 – Tarradale Section – View E from Tarradale Cottages to Tarradale Mains before excavation.
- 36 – Tarradale Section – View S from Tarradale Cottages before excavation.

### Film 2

- 1 – Tarradale Section – View N to Tarradale Cottages before excavation.
- 2 – Tarradale Section – View of excavation facing N towards Tarradale Cottages – scale 1m.
- 3 – Tarradale Section – Machining in progress facing N to Tarradale Cottages.
- 4 – Tarradale Section – View of track upon excavation facing S from Tarradale Cottages.
- 5 – Tarradale Section – Ibid.
- 6 – Tarradale Section – View of track at corner by Tarradale Cottages facing SW.
- 7 – Tarradale Section - View of track upon excavation facing E to Tarradale Mains.
- 8 – Tarradale Section – View of excavated trench facing S from Tarradale Cottages.
- 9 – Tarradale Section - View of track upon excavation facing W from Tarradale Mains.
- 10 – Tarradale Section – Ibid – scales 1m.
- 11 – Tarradale Section – View of area from Tarradale Mains to East Lodge facing NE.
- 12 – Tarradale Section – View of Dovecot of Tarradale Mains Farm facing N.
- 13 – Tarradale Section – Detail of rubble field drain to N of East Lodge – scale 1m.
- 14 – Tarradale Section - Machining in progress facing SW to Tarradale Mains.
- 15 – Tarradale Section - View of track upon excavation facing SW to Tarradale Mains.

16 – Tarradale Section - View of track upon excavation from Tarradale Mains to East Lodge facing NE.