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Writing People into the Landscape:
Approaches to the Archaeology of Badenoch
and Strathnaver

Volume I: Text

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Abstract

This thesis presents accounts of two Highland Scotland landscapes: Badenoch and Strathnaver. The threads of archaeological evidence – as well as topographic context, historical evidence and other pieces of data – are drawn together and woven into an understanding of the inhabitation of these landscapes at different times in the past. Two chapters are devoted to exploring the archaeological landscapes of each study area.

The thesis is founded on certain perceptions of archaeological practice: that it constitutes a dialectical process of engagement with archaeological remains, in which the archaeologist fashions meaning from the raw material of the evidence. This process is a kind of dwelling, in some ways akin to how people make meaning of the landscapes in which they live, through coming to know them, to shape and be shaped by them. Writing about archaeological landscapes should reflect and be a working out of that process.

The study areas were chosen for their contrasting and complementary characteristics. Strathnaver, in the far north of Sutherland, borders the coast; Badenoch, in the central Highlands, is landlocked. Both areas have a topographic coherency, formed around river valleys and their watersheds. The remains of prehistoric communities survive to a greater extent in Strathnaver than in Badenoch, while in Badenoch the remains of Medieval or later settlement remains are most prominent. Both study areas contain evidence for the early Medieval organisation of the landscape in the form of chapel sites; the settlements to which they provided pastoral care may have continued in use through the Medieval period. As an important routeway through the Highlands, Badenoch served as the seat of some of the most powerful figures in Medieval Highland Scotland, and the process of feudalisation appears to have strongly influenced the development of its settlement pattern. Strathnaver, lying along a maritime route and forming part of the Norse earldom of Caithness, saw settlement by Norse farmers; that history is reflected in its numerous Norse place names, and many of its townships may have their origins in the Norse period of settlement in the late first millennium A.D. Both Badenoch and Strathnaver were the focus of Improvements in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, resulting in the clearance of townships, although those in Strathnaver were more widespread and brutal. In both areas, these changes left the earlier settlement pattern fossilised as the remains of townships.

Some of the most important research questions for Badenoch and Strathnaver focus on the antiquity of this fossilised settlement pattern, and the changes in how and where people lived throughout the second millennium A.D. The thesis concludes by highlighting avenues for further research in the two study areas, in order to further understand the cultural context at different times in the past and how that was intimately linked to the physical character of the landscape, and in the hope of writing people into these landscapes more effectively.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis addresses the history of inhabitation of two discrete landscapes: Badenoch in the central Highlands of Scotland and Strathnaver in the northern Highlands. It presents accounts of how each area was inhabited through time, from earlier prehistory to the present, drawing largely on archaeological evidence and topographic context, but also on historical and place name evidence and antiquarian accounts.

The temporal scope of the thesis is large, covering the evidence for each study area from earlier prehistory to the present; however, the fact that each area is relatively small and well-defined means that the different periods can be discussed in adequate detail for the purposes of the thesis. The scope also presents certain challenges to writing: the nature of each area's inhabitation has been different at various times in the past, in terms of the structure imposed on the landscape, the social, political and economic networks in place, the routes by which people moved and the symbolic significance of different places. Attempting to talk about that varying inhabitation requires writing in ways that represent it differently for the different periods; the resulting accounts, with their different textures, effectively amount to essays on the archaeology of Badenoch and Strathnaver, within their historical context where relevant. The point of this exercise has not been to produce site gazetteers in narrative form for each area, but to write accounts that evoke something of the character of archaeological remains from different periods and the clues they give to how these landscapes were perceived by their inhabitants, how the physical environment shaped their lives and was in turn structured by them. The overall aim is, in fact, to write people into the landscapes of Badenoch and Strathnaver.

1.1 The structure of the thesis

In Chapter Two, I begin by addressing aspects of current archaeological practice that have some bearing on conventional forms of writing about archaeological remains, and particularly about landscapes. From discussing prevailing conventional paradigms, I move on to explore alternative ways of perceiving archaeological practice and examine their implications for writing archaeology. Finally, I present the approaches to landscape

and to writing which inform my treatment of Badenoch and Strathnaver in the subsequent chapters. These present my accounts of how the landscapes of Badenoch and Strathnaver were inhabited in the past. Each area is treated in two chapters. Chapter Three covers the evidence for the occupation of Badenoch from earlier prehistory through the first millennium A.D., while Chapter Four treats its inhabitation through the second millennium A.D., from the advent of feudal authority to the present. Chapter Five addresses the evidence for Strathnaver's occupation from earlier prehistory to the late first millennium A.D., and Chapter Six discusses its inhabitation from the arrival of Norse settlers late in that millennium, through the second millennium A.D. to the present. Chapter Seven concludes the thesis, evaluating the effectiveness of the studies and discussing avenues for further research.

1.2 Introduction to the study areas

The natural and made landscapes of these two areas are similar in some respects, while differences in their location, topography and archaeological resource make them a useful and complementary pair of case studies for the examination of archaeological landscapes. Both areas lie within Highland Scotland (see Figure 1.1), to the north of the Mounth, the massif that runs east/west across the central Highlands, and immediately east of Druim Alban, the mountainous spine that runs from Ben Lomond northward, cuts a dogleg across the Great Glen and continues to Ben Hope on the north coast. Both are regions defined by their topography: Strathnaver is defined by the watersheds of the River Naver, while Badenoch's boundaries follow the watersheds of the River Spey and its tributaries; both areas focus on the large straths through which their rivers flow (see Figures 3.1 and 5.1). While Badenoch is land-locked, Strathnaver comprises both hinterland and coast. Within each area, the topography falls naturally into zones of different topographic character. I have distinguished these by number in each study area, defining 10 different topographic zones in Strathnaver and 11 in Badenoch, on the basis of changes in the width of the valley bottom, the steepness of its sides, the degree to which a particular stretch of the strath or tributary valley feels open or constricted, the views which the local topography permits and so on. The boundaries of these zones are depicted on Figures 3.2 and 5.2.

Both areas have been somewhat neglected in archaeological studies except for later periods, perhaps in both cases because of their proximity to other, apparently richer areas: Orkney and Caithness in the case of Strathnaver, and Moray in the case of Badenoch. However, both areas contain archaeological remains that indicate dense and complex occupation for most periods. Strathnaver contains abundant prehistoric remains in the form of chambered cairns, hut circles, field systems and brochs. These allow the nature of its occupation and the structure of its landscapes throughout prehistory to be interpreted in more depth than in Badenoch. While Badenoch may have had a similarly dense prehistoric occupation, remains of funerary monuments, settlement and agriculture from those periods survive only in pockets. It is likely that here the relatively restricted amount of land neither too damp nor too high for year-round occupation has meant that its repeated occupation has destroyed earlier remains.

In both areas, an early Christian ecclesiastical presence was established in the later first millennium A.D., indicated by chapel sites. In both – and typically for much of Highland Scotland – the sites of contemporary settlement do not survive as visible remains. The arrival of Norse settlers in Strathnaver in the later first and early second millennia A.D. may have established the settlement pattern that was to endure through the following centuries, although the degree of continuity remains somewhat open to debate. In Badenoch, the basic patterns of settlement and land division are likely to have been established by the late first millennium A.D. The formation of the Scottish kingdom closely affected Badenoch, as Moray contested amalgamation and became a locus for power struggles in the north. Strathnaver, as part of the Norse earldom, lay under Norse control or at least cultural influence longer and was amalgamated rather later.

Both areas were important entities in the Medieval period, and perhaps earlier. Strathnaver in fact was the name given at that time to the entire north-west corner of mainland Scotland, which suggests the significance of the strath to the region. Both areas lay on important routeways; Badenoch, in particular, formed one of the main routes through the central Highlands, both north/south and east/west, and comprised

the mountainous hinterland of the fertile Moray coastal region. Strathnaver lay on a routeway linking settlements on the north-east coast to the north coast; perhaps more importantly, its coast borders the maritime corridor of the Pentland Firth, which links the Northern and the Western Isles, vital in the Norse period if not before. Anglo-Norman and Scottish feudal powers sought to control land in both areas. Badenoch served for a time as the seat of some of the most powerful figures in Highland Scotland, a reflection of its strategic importance and proximity to the Moray coastal zone; substantial architectural remains survive which were an expression of that power. Strathnaver, however, became a political backwater in the Medieval period as Norse lands were absorbed into the Scottish kingdom. In Badenoch, the settlement pattern appears to have developed and congealed largely through the process of feudalisation in the later Medieval period. While Strathnaver probably experienced a similar process, its greater marginality may have meant it was less formal there. Badenoch again played a central role in the early eighteenth century because of its strategic location, as the government military attempted to establish control over the Highlands and met the Jacobite challenge.

In the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, both areas attracted the interest of agricultural Improvers and of travelers from the southern lowlands, and landowners in Badenoch and Strathnaver along with others in the Highlands became concerned to make their land profitable. The resulting Improvements involved the large-scale eviction of small tenants in Strathnaver and their relocation on the coast, and the creation of vast sheepwalks. In Badenoch there were fewer evictions, although here the settlement pattern also changed as sheep husbandry replaced subsistence farming on large tracts of the landscape. In both areas, these changes left the earlier settlement pattern fossilised as the remains of townships, although later land use has destroyed many of them. For both Badenoch and Strathnaver, some of the currently most important research questions focus on the antiquity of this fossilised settlement pattern, and the degree to which the locations and ways in which people lived throughout the second millennium A.D. altered.

1.3 *Methodology*

A similar methodology was employed for each case study. The analysis began with a trawl through the National Monuments Record of Scotland (N.M.R.S.) and Highland Region Sites and Monuments Record (S.M.R.) for all known archaeological sites in both study areas. These were plotted onto maps of each area at a scale of 1:50,000, using symbols to indicate period and type of site. While visual analysis of the distribution maps was the starting point for interpretation, it was crucially aided by fieldwork at varying degrees of intensity in both areas. This ranged from general observations on the local topography and views, to site visits in order to check the NMRS data and record further notes on the character and positions of selected sites, to detailed topographic survey of two sites in Strathnaver, to four seasons of excavation at a township and one season of survey and evaluation at a chapel site in Badenoch. Research into the historical and archaeological context for different periods in each area for different periods was also carried out in order to help make sense of the specific evidence. The known sites are plotted onto the detailed distribution maps for each area, contained in Volume II, and the N.M.R.S. references are given in the text for specific sites discussed. For the most part, the contents of that database are now equivalent to the contents of the Highland S.M.R., although reference numbers differ; for newly discovered sites not yet entered in the N.M.R.S., the S.M.R. reference is given.

For both case study areas, the conventional terms currently in general use have been adopted to talk about different chronological periods; while these terms are entirely artificial and perhaps say more about the present than the past (a potential subject for a thesis in itself), they are convenient handles. However, as a reflection of their artificiality and the problems inherent in making such clearcut chronological distinctions on inadequate evidence, in the chronological terms given for chapter sub-sections periods are deliberately blurred; for example, section 3.3.2 is titled 'Neolithic into Bronze Age.'

'Mesolithic' is used to refer to the period from c. 8,000 cal B.C. to the advent of relatively settled, agricultural communities in the late fifth millennium cal B.C. (Finlayson

1997, 109), while 'Neolithic' is used to connote the late fifth millennium to the mid third millennium cal B.C. (Barclay 1997, 127). 'Bronze Age' refers to the period from the middle of the third millennium to the eighth or seventh century cal B.C. (Cowie & Shepherd 1997, 151). 'Iron Age' is used here to mean the span from the eighth or seventh century cal B.C. to the late sixth century cal A.D.; while traditionally the Iron Age is perceived as ending with the Roman occupation of Scotland, in the study areas this probably would have had little immediate effect (see Armit & Ralston 1997, 169-71). The arrival of Irish Christian missionaries on the west coast of Scotland is taken to mark the beginning of the Early Medieval period (Ralston & Armit 1997, 217-8). In Badenoch this is taken as the span ending with the direct imposition of feudal authority here after A.D. 1130 (Barrow 1988a, 1-3), the beginning of the Medieval period. In Strathnaver, what I am calling the Early Medieval period was superseded by the influence of first vikings from Norway and later Norse settlers; the latter, beginning in the mid ninth century A.D. (Graham-Campbell & Batey 1998, 2; Hunter 1997, 241-2), made permanent marks on the landscape there. The beginning of the Late Norse period is taken as the point from which viking activity ended and the Norse earldom was securely established in the late eleventh or early twelfth century A.D. (ibid. 2-3), through the period in which, while Norse political power was on the wane, its cultural influence continued in the far north. The Medieval period in Strathnaver is taken as the span from the late thirteenth century A.D., when the Scottish Crown firmly established its control over the study area, to the late sixteenth century. In both Badenoch and Strathnaver, the post-Medieval period is considered as that in which lowland economic and social influence began to be felt and to alter the landscape, from the early eighteenth century to the late nineteenth century.

The accounts offered below are an attempt to weave together different kinds of evidence – other investigators' fieldwork results, the author's own fieldwork at different levels of intensity, historic maps and analysis – into a narrative account of the human occupation of each study area. They attempt above all to make visible the people who lived in Badenoch and Strathnaver at different times, to the extent that the evidence allows. The degree to which these accounts succeed is assessed in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Two: Writing People into the Landscape

2.1 *Introduction*

This chapter lays the theoretical foundations for the remainder of the thesis. I begin by examining and offering a critique of the root metaphors or paradigms which have informed archaeological practice to present. I then present an alternative root metaphor, developed by Edgeworth (1991), which more accurately depicts the work of archaeological survey and excavation, and discuss concepts developed in ethnography (principally by Clifford 1988) regarding the representation of cultures. These various ideas brought together, have powerful implications for the practice and writing of archaeology, which I explore. As the majority of the thesis is concerned with understanding particular archaeological landscapes, I then briefly review various approaches to the study of such landscapes. Finally, I set out the theoretical perspectives on landscape and dwelling that have informed my work in Badenoch and Strathnaver.

2.2 *Paradigms for archaeological practice, old and new*

In Scotland, the study and practice of archaeology have developed within the broader context of the discipline's growth in Britain and indeed world wide. The growth of the related disciplines of history and science have influenced archaeology's development from the eighteenth century onward. The threads of this influence and the trajectory of that development have been thoroughly explored elsewhere (e.g., Trigger 1989; Champion 1991; Hodder 1986; Appleby et al 1994). They need only be summarised here as the basis for an exploration of the underlying ways of perceiving both the past and archaeological practice that prevail in the discipline as a result. Its development has, of course, been much more complex than this brief summary suggests; certain aspects of that development are discussed in more depth where relevant throughout this chapter.

The development of modern science, with its emphasis upon maintaining a neutral, objective mindset, collecting data and forming and testing hypotheses, began with the European Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. This intellectual movement also gave rise to different ways of perceiving the past. In particular, it

spawned a new understanding of the span and chronology of human and natural history and a new perception of distance between the past and the present (Appleby et al 1994, 15-28, 56-60). Both of these disciplines gave rise to archaeology, first as an antiquarian interest and, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as a serious field of study.

Archaeology remained relatively naïve in theoretical terms until the latter part of the twentieth century, when so-called New Archaeologists such as Clarke (1968; 1972) and Schiffer (1976) began to argue that archaeological inquiry and fieldwork should be set within more sophisticated theoretical frameworks. They also advocated that techniques such as statistical analysis be applied to interpret data in more complex and fruitful ways, in order to understand long-term social and economic processes – the so-called processualist movement. In eventual reaction to this, and under the influence of post-modernist theory, post-processualists have challenged this view of archaeological practice as an objective, scientific endeavour, highlighting the interpretative role of the archaeologist and bringing the theories of Marxism (e.g., papers in Miller & Tilley 1984), structuralism (e.g., papers in Hodder 1982), feminism (e.g., papers in Gero & Conkey 1991) and phenomenology (e.g., Tilley 1994), among others, to the practice of archaeology. While this belated theoretical debate has stimulated the discipline in some respects, it has also, as Bradley (1993a) has observed, produced polarisation between those who see archaeological practice as a relatively straightforward matter of observation and recording and those who emphasise the subjective role of the practitioner. Certain ways of perceiving archaeological remains and archaeological practice underlie both extremes, and these are explored below.

2.2.1 *Root metaphors for archaeological practice*

The ways of thinking about the past discussed above have their foundations in certain ways of perceiving archaeological practice, perceptions which Patrik (1985) has labelled ‘root metaphors’ and which parallel Kuhn’s (1962) paradigms. Kuhn argued that the scientist (or historian or archaeologist) does not simply fix an intellectual mirror upon nature or the past, which then reflects data back upon his or her mind, as earlier philosophers of science assumed. Rather, this mirror is always

set at a certain angle (or paradigm) which can reflect only certain data and may become clouded by one's habits and associations. Paradigm shifts involve changing the angle of the mirror, according to a new theory about the human or natural world.

As the New Archaeologists of a few decades ago were among the first to realise, archaeological practice is not simply a matter of straightforward observation and interpretation. Certain theoretically informed approaches to fieldwork and analysis are more productive than others. Root metaphors, which explain practice through the use of analogy, are what underlie these approaches. As such, they not only serve to explain what we do as archaeologists; they can also structure it, informing the way new data are collected and interpreted (*cf.* Cosgrove & Domosh 1993, 31).

2.2.1.1 *The record metaphor*

Patrik (1985) has examined the paradigms that have influenced archaeological practice throughout its history; her analysis is summarised here. The term 'archaeological record' lies behind all of these paradigms, but it has been used in very different ways. At a superficial level, the term can be used to refer to the ground that contains archaeological remains, to the deposits and structures themselves, to artefacts, samples, site records and archaeological reports (30). However, how the record and our relationship to it are actually perceived can vary considerably.

The concept of an archaeological record has its origins in the influence of geology, and particularly the understanding of stratigraphy that that discipline bestowed on archaeological practice, beginning with the publication in 1833 of Lyell's *Principles of Geology*. This established the concept that layers were laid down in sequence, so that the lower layers in a series of deposits could generally be interpreted as earlier and the upper ones as later. Field archaeologists of the earlier twentieth century refined the interpretation of stratigraphy, and in particular the complex ways and subtle problems involved in using artefacts to date layers and vice versa (Renfrew & Bahn 1991, 28-31, 104-107). As noted above, the 1960s saw the introduction of more sophisticated ways of interpreting archaeological remains in Britain and the United States. In particular, the New Archaeologists identified the

need for Middle Range Theory, which would use empirical observations and logic to bridge the gap between the static, physical phenomena observed in the archaeological record and the dynamic, behavioural events that produced them (Binford 1981, 25; Raab & Goodyear 1984, 256). They believed it was necessary to develop law-like, testable principles that would draw on uniformitarian assumptions in order to interpret formation processes. They perceived archaeological remains as a 'fossil record' of the functioning of past societies (Binford 1964, 425); people's actions left direct physical traces, they believed, and by observing and recording them and applying Middle Range Theory one could know what those actions were. This rather straightforward view was contested by Schiffer (1976; 1983), who argued that such physical traces actually offer a distorted image of past behavioural systems. In his view, as material remains cease to be part of human lives, they undergo both cultural and natural formation processes which transform them into the condition in which archaeologists find them (Schiffer 1983, 679-89). In order to filter out these distortions and obtain an accurate picture of past activities, it was necessary to construct models to account for them. Archaeologists needed to apply the hypothetico-deductive method of inference to remains, formulating and testing laws of human behaviour that could be applied cross-culturally and used to explain patterns in the archaeological record (Schiffer 1976, 11-15).

Critics have pointed out that these approaches, with their close focus upon methodology at the expense of theory, have tended to produce rather low-level, almost banal interpretations linking certain behaviours to certain patterns in the record but failing to investigate the reasons for those behaviours (Raab & Goodyear 1984, 262). The post-processualist approaches of the 1980s and 1990s have largely been a reaction to this failing. While they vary widely in their theoretical underpinnings – from neo-Marxist (e.g., Miller & Tilley 1984) to structuralist (e.g., papers in Hodder 1982) to contextual (e.g., Barrett 1991) – they share a similar perception of archaeological remains and their interpretation: generally speaking they see archaeological remains as a record, but a textual rather than a fossil record.

According to the textual metaphor, the archaeologist cannot simply reduce interpretation to understanding causal connections between events and material traces. Meanings are not determined entirely by environmental adaptation but are

used creatively by individuals to communicate, to negotiate or sometimes to gain power over others; every action has its social and historical context. Archaeological remains are therefore a cultural text, with both pragmatic and abstract meanings. The perceiving archaeologist reads this text by attempting to understand the code which structured the society responsible or the social context in which it was written (Hodder 1986, 128-48). In an extreme application of the textual root metaphor, some post-processual archaeologists, most notably Shanks and Tilley (1992), have argued that facts themselves are social or textual productions; the code or context in which archaeological remains were created can never really be known, and their meaning is only construed by the perceiving archaeologist. Therefore, the past is continually being created and transformed by our study of it, and writing is the real practice of archaeology.

While both of these broad approaches have proved to have a certain amount of conceptual power, aiding in the interpretation of archaeological remains, the root metaphor of archaeological remains as a record also has severe limitations which have produced crippling theoretical divisions in the discipline. A focus upon archaeological remains as a fossil record, albeit one distorted by cultural and natural processes, tends to ignore the active role of the perceiving archaeologist in interpreting them. It raises the process of inference to a 'methodological philosophy', and effectively equates the record made of the remains with the evidence itself (Edgeworth 1991, 20-25).

This approach is exemplified in two of the most influential guides to field practice currently in use in Britain, Barker's *Techniques of Archaeological Excavation* (1977) and *Understanding Archaeological Excavation* (1986). Barker details the best recording techniques, emphasising the importance of keeping interpretation separate from description. While he concedes that this can be difficult, as excavators begin to interpret deposits as soon as they appear, he argues that 'the recording of the evidence must be as objective as possible, so that it can be looked at, long after the site has been destroyed, with a fresh and unbiased eye' (1986, 104). He notes that, as excavation necessarily equals at least partial destruction of archaeological remains, the records made on site must be as complete and trustworthy as possible, as they in effect come to stand for the destroyed remains.

Similarly, explanations of survey methodology tend to present the process of topographic survey as a relatively straightforward one of mapping all the visible evidence to produce a record of earthworks, buildings and other remains, with little attention paid to the interpretative processes which are actually responsible for the resulting maps. For example, Burgess (1998) discusses in depth the use of string readings and spot heights, the problems of visibility and the relative merits of hachure drawings versus digital terrain models in his account of the survey methodology employed at Cleaven Dyke and Littleour. However, at no point does he discuss the surveyor's interpretative role or the possibility that, in choosing where to take readings, he or she could express and develop different interpretations of the monuments. Rather, the process appears to be a relatively simple matter of record and most effective depiction of the results. In its fundamental assumptions about the nature of archaeological remains and our perception of them, the root metaphor of the remains as a fossil record continues to inform most field practice.

The root metaphor of archaeological remains as a textual record has provided a useful balance against extreme functionalism. While it has great explanatory potential, it too fails adequately to explain archaeological practice and has therefore remained largely marginal, a metaphor espoused and experimented with by theoretical archaeologists who occasionally undertake fieldwork. At the root of its failings is the fact that a culture's complete context will always be very difficult to see archaeologically. The opaque kinds of remains archaeologists often encounter – particularly in Highland Scotland, where they might constitute obscure arrangements of postholes, empty pits, subtle changes in soil colour and other mysteries, with very little accompanying material culture – simply do not allow for the ambitious levels of interpretation the textual metaphor suggests are possible. A more serious criticism, however, is that in emphasising the role of the perceiving archaeologist in constructing the past, applications of this metaphor tend to ignore the very real and constraining part played by archaeological remains in the process of interpretation.

Patrik (1985) offers a possible synthesis of the fossil and textual metaphors, in which archaeological evidence is seen as a (distorted) fossil record of a group of material symbols that were composed like a textual record when they were made,

used and deposited. However, this metaphor still does not accurately describe the process of practising archaeology; that practice requires both a perceiving archaeologist, who necessarily has opinions about how the social world does or should work, and material remains with particular origins and characteristics resulting from the human actions that created them.

2.2.1.2 *The raw material metaphor*

Edgeworth (1991) has developed an alternative, more fertile root metaphor for archaeological practice, one that has potentially far-reaching implications for how the results of that practice might be written; Hodder (1999) has subsequently and independently developed a similar model, based on the theory of hermeneutics. The paradigm shift Edgeworth proposed interprets archaeological practice as a kind of labour, which the archaeologist expends upon archaeological remains in order to produce data.

In his model, before their discovery and interpretation through excavation, survey or other forms of fieldwork, material remains exist independently of archaeological practice or knowledge; they are, therefore, a kind of raw material. Through the act of discovery, which takes place as archaeologists labour upon the raw material, it is transformed into data – something understood, classified and interpreted.

This raw material is both malleable and resistant; it constrains the form of the knowledge produced from it. To some extent it is shaped – sometimes literally, in excavation, and always cognitively through the process of interpreting it – into comprehensible data. However, it has its own form and shape, that given it by those who originally created it and left it behind, and altered to some degree by post-depositional processes. As the archaeologist works upon it, physically manipulating it through excavation, recording it through survey, making sense of it, the raw material in turn shapes his or her ideas about it. These ideas change through time as the archaeologist tests hypotheses upon it, as the material resists some interpretations and conforms to others. Through these processes of manual investigation and practical reasoning, which take place in the act of discovery, meaning is made.

Data produced in this way can in turn be used as tools of production, in that they are used further to shape raw material as knowledge previously manufactured is employed to make sense of newly discovered archaeology. An archaeologist excavating, for example, a Highland post-Medieval longhouse has certain expectations about its architectural form, internal layout and the nature of its occupation deposits, based upon knowledge gained from other excavations (e.g., Fairhurst 1968), ethnohistorical accounts (e.g., Jamieson 1974) and so on. A hearth will be expected in a certain position; the excavator will look for evidence of the couples that she expects to have supported the roof, and so on. Similarly, a field surveyor observing the remains of a group of hut circles in northern Scotland will interpret the surface remains based on what is known from other surveys in the area and from excavations of certain sites. A hut circle with a massive wall and elaborate entrance might be interpreted as later Iron Age, for example, based on its apparent similarity to the Type V hut circle at Kilphedir (Fairhurst & Taylor 1974).

This alternative root metaphor is much more consistent with the realities of archaeological practice than are the different forms of record metaphor. It portrays that practice as a dialectical process rather than a relatively straightforward procedure of uncovering and recording evidence, as empiricists argue, or one of manufacturing data through a largely subjective act, as some post-processualists would have it. The record metaphor hides the transactions that take place between the subject and object in the act of discovery, giving primacy to one or the other. The raw material metaphor, however, permits the archaeologist her or his true role, the subjective one of actively investigating and making sense of material remains, while it recognises the objective quality of those remains. In doing so, it transcends the subject-object dichotomy that has plagued and crippled much theoretical discourse within the discipline. It admits to a process of inference, of making sense of the past, of constructing histories; it opens a theoretical space between the remains of the past and the knowledge of the past that we glean from them, so that while the latter does not equal the former, neither are they divorced (Edgeworth 1991, 6).

2.2.2 *Partial truths*

If the implications of the raw material metaphor are followed through, the written or visual record of material remains is neither a straightforward image of the evidence or a subjectively created artefact, but a kind of snapshot which freezes the fluid process of interpretation, creating a partial representation of what happened in the past. Before considering what other kinds of written representations of the past and of archaeological remains the raw material metaphor might facilitate, some relevant ideas developed in anthropology's theoretical discourse are considered.

Although for the most part ethnography deals with societies in the present day and archaeology with those from the past, they do share certain characteristics. Both seek to build pictures of societies by gathering information on their ways of life (social structure, subsistence strategies, ritual practices and so on), material culture and as far as possible world views. Both have also been dominated by an ideology 'claiming transparency of representation and immediacy of experience' (Clifford 1986, 2). Representation of the results of fieldwork in both areas has, until recently, been considered a fairly straightforward matter of objective reportage, not to be burdened with or distorted by theory.

Ethnography began as a colonial enterprise; the first ethnographers were sent by the governments of Great Britain, France and other imperialist nations into countries they occupied as colonial powers. Those early, pioneering ethnographers – men such as Evans-Pritchard, who studied the Nuer in Sudan on behalf of the British government – served their governments obliquely and sometimes directly by providing them with detailed information on the indigenous inhabitants (Geertz 1988). Just as alien lands were explored and mapped by men such as Livingstone and Burton (Monmonier 1991), alien societies were also mapped, classified, interpreted. Knowledge of both land and people meant a better means of occupying and controlling the country; this knowledge was gained primarily through visual observation, with the ethnographer as a participant-observer, standing apart from but living among the communities they studied. 'The simple fact of drawing up a map could give an overview and initial mastery of the culture inscribed on land' (Clifford 1988, 69).

Similarly, earlier twentieth century archaeologists were mainly Europeans and Americans; they not only emulated the ideal of the scientific investigator so essential to the modernist project, they also took part in its imperialist agenda. Whether they excavated tombs in Egypt (e.g., Petrie), ancient cities in India (e.g., Wheeler) or Iron Age brochs in the Northern Isles (e.g., Hamilton), they approached these remains – and the pasts that lay behind them – as resources to be studied and exploited. Artefacts were removed, and those of value were taken to European and American capitals for display in museums there. Local workers in Third World countries as well as in Britain carried out most of the manual labour involved in excavating sites, but little of the intellectual labour involved in interpreting them. The past was indeed seen as a foreign country, one that could be as legitimately occupied as any colony.

Like archaeology in the 1960s and '70s, ethnography in the early twentieth century went through a methodological revolution; its fieldwork methods were made more systematic and professional, and academic institutions rather than foreign governments began to lead fieldwork. Its theoretical motivations began to change after the first World War. In the wake of that conflict, a sense of nihilism permeated European intellectual circles, a feeling that under the influence of human nature 'things fall apart' (Clifford 1988, 64). Anthropological proponents of the surrealist project expressed this idea through their work (presenting, for example, simply a series of verbal snapshots of a society's way of life, rather than any coherent interpretation), while others strove against it, arguing that on the contrary cultures tended to remain coherent and to survive. The sudden and turbulent changes that overtook many indigenous cultures after the withdrawal or moderation of colonial rule further affected ethnographic practice. Ethnographers observing these changes sought to defy what they saw as the death of these cultures by recording the old, disappearing lifeways. Ethnography thus came to have a new, post-colonial purpose: to preserve (through representation) and thereby to redeem ways of living and seeing which would otherwise be lost to the Western academic community (*ibid.*, 64-69).

In recent years, ethnographers have begun to challenge the validity of this motivation. Clifford (1986; 1988) has pointed out that in attempting to preserve by record and thereby redeem ways of life which would otherwise be lost,

anthropologists have tended to produce accounts which attempt entirely to define societies. However, no culture, or the people whose lifeways constitute it, can be rendered down into an essential, totalising account that defines them. Any group of people is made up of many, sometimes unharmonious voices, individuals who can never be fully known because they have their own wills and ways of seeing. The process of interviewing members of a self-defined group, observing their individual and collective actions and then writing the resulting records into a coherent description of their culture is a complex and subjective one, involving decisions of rhetoric and exclusion. Certain quotations are chosen to illustrate the narrative; voices inconsistent with the overall picture are omitted; details that seem to be irrelevant are left out, as are most ambiguities and uncertainties; the writer of necessity uses certain words and ways of expression (rather than others) that in turn impose certain meanings. 'Ethnographic truths', Clifford writes, 'are thus inherently *partial* – committed and incomplete' (1986, 7).

The notion of partial truths applies to archaeological practice as well, although in somewhat different ways. While archaeology did not have its roots in explicitly colonial enterprise, as noted above it did emerge as a discipline in the period of empire. Its early practitioners often had military backgrounds (Renfrew & Bahn 1991, 29-31) and were imbued with the spirit of contemporary science, which sought to know and thereby possess (in the sense that knowledge endows power) unknown realms of nature and culture. In the culture-historical approach which prevailed in the preceding century, the archaeological remains they explored were seen as representing long-dead people; their artefacts were categorised and these categories equated with societies. Once classified, a society could be fitted into the evolutionary processes, of which modern culture appeared to represent the pinnacle (Clifford 1988, 92). Proponents of this approach tended to assume the artefacts spread through diffusion from more sophisticated societies, generally based around the Mediterranean, to more marginal areas such as Britain; undertones of nationalism and sometimes racism permeate their interpretations (Trigger 1989, 380; also see Trigger 1980).

Although the discipline has moved on significantly from the theoretical naïvety of the culture-historical approach, the concept of preservation as a means of

knowing lost cultures still prevails in archaeological practice. The past is gone forever; therefore, archaeological remains seem to represent that past, materially and concretely. The only way to preserve those remains while at the same time investigating them, thereby redeeming any available knowledge of the cultures that left them, is to record them as thoroughly as possible. This view strongly governs approaches to recording on excavation. National Planning Policy Guideline 5, which informs planning authorities' decisions on how developments affect archaeological sites in Scotland, sums up this approach. The phrase 'preservation by record', the preferred option where preservation of remains *in situ* is not possible, is in common currency in commercial archaeology.

2.2.3 *Implications of the raw material metaphor and the concept of partial truths*

The need for careful observation and thorough recording on archaeological excavations and surveys is crucial to a well-founded understanding of individual sites and larger landscapes; it is not contested here. However, the concept of preservation by record is misplaced in its theoretical foundations and its implications for practice. Its roots lie in the metaphor of archaeological remains as a fossil record of the past, which portrays those remains as a fairly straightforward record of past activities. Its implications have been worked out in current approaches to site recording, which place primacy on description rather than interpretation. As outlined above, interpretation is viewed as subjective and changeable, while description is seen as stable and concrete (Barker 1993; 1986).

While the two do involve somewhat different conceptual processes, they are inextricably linked and in fact represent different ends of the same spectrum, as Edgeworth's (1991) raw material metaphor so aptly describes. In practice, the perceiving archaeologist organises the evidence almost as soon as it is uncovered into comprehensible units – in archaeological jargon, contexts – relating to events in the past, and descriptions of it are recorded on that basis (Hodder 1999, 95). Observations may lie at either end of the spectrum: an interpretation may be high-level, but it will still rely on the physical attributes of the evidence for its coherence, while a description may be based on very low-level and implicit interpretation. In both excavation and survey, description rarely precedes interpretation in the way field

manuals and pro forma recording sheets, with their carefully demarcated areas for each, imply; before an archaeological feature is recorded, its origins and significance have been determined to some degree. The raw material metaphor allows for the production of truths about the past which are necessarily partial, based as they are on a unique act of discovery which can vary according to the excavation or survey strategy employed, the interpretative choices made and the background knowledge and perceptiveness of the archaeologist.

The notion of redemption through preservation by record also has implications for how archaeological accounts are written. If material remains represent past societies as a fossil record, and site records represent those remains as a carefully made, objective image, then the report should (by logical extension) simply draw together those records with minimal interpretation in order faithfully to represent the site. In attempting to preserve archaeological remains by record, archaeological authors tend to write accounts that set down all the evidence in descriptive detail, with as little obvious interpretative slant as possible. This, according to conventional perception, will allow others to later re-interpret the site based on the evidence; it is indeed apparently preserved for posterity (Barker 1986, 104). To write archaeological accounts that draw the evidence into cultural accounts, explicitly peopled by those who created the material remains, would be going too far, smudging the distinction between description and interpretation and sullyng the purity of that straightforward representation of the past which has come to stand in place of the archaeological site or landscape.

The principal metaphor in ethnographic practice is one of the ethnographer standing outside a culture, observing and objectifying it, 'reading' a given reality. It stems from the method of participant-observation (Clifford 1986, 11), which is the foundation for the predominant mode of fieldwork authority. Texts produced from fieldwork are convincing, or construct the look of truth, not only when they present a large amount of specific, apparently carefully observed detail, nor merely when they contain forceful theoretical arguments. These texts carry authority when they succeed in convincing the reader that the author was indeed there – that he or she 'actually penetrated . . . another form of life' (Geertz 1988, 4). The reader can believe what the author says; he feels he is there because the author was there (Clifford 1988,

22). The experience of the participant-observer is the principal source of authority in the field, and it is through writing that this strategy of authority is mobilised (*ibid.*, 35). The ethnographer, then, occupies a powerful place. He can fashion his experiences as participant-observer into an account which represents his subjects in particular and potent ways.

The predominant metaphors for archaeological practice have been those of observer (or reader) as well as inventor (or author) of the past (Patrik 1985). Both of these metaphors have informed the work of the archaeologist upon physical remains, and to some extent the additional step of writing cultural descriptions from this work. Like the ethnographer's, the archaeologist's account carries a certain amount of authority, based on personal experience. The archaeologist has excavated or surveyed the site; her account is written on the basis of having spent time physically working and observing the archaeology. If she writes convincingly of having 'been there' (conventionally indicated by copious amounts of detailed description and reasonable interpretation), and if her report is backed by a certain amount of institutional scaffolding, then the reader is likely to accept her account as truthful.

The establishment of archaeological verisimilitude differs significantly from ethnographic, however. The ethnographer writes directly about people, whether he does this with totalising authority or with a sense of their diversity and individuality and the limits of his own understanding. The archaeologist usually writes, according to current conventions, mainly about material. She rarely attempts to write explicit cultural accounts from her study of the material, and therefore rarely *directly* collides with the problem ethnographers face of ethically representing the Other (Clifford 1986). She seems to evade that collision by focusing on archaeology's apparent object of study – physical remains – rather than on the human subjects, which are the real point of that study. Nevertheless, because archaeological accounts are the traces of human activity, her accounts necessarily create representations of those people, even if only obliquely.

The accounts the archaeologist writes about material remains are indeed partial truths. Her observations and experiences are translated into textual form. The tentative, fluid interpretations formed during fieldwork are frozen by their

inscription, along with the descriptions that support them. In fact, writing archaeological accounts – even the fragmented records compiled on site, or data structure reports which attempt to make the most basic sense of the evidence – always involves choices and omissions. Certain deposits or features are selected as significant to the site's history; the records of these are crafted together into an account which makes sense of that history, according to the overall understanding of the site or landscape which the investigating archaeologist has accumulated. Pieces of evidence are selected to weave an authoritative account of the work and its results, one which will convince readers to accept her interpretation of the material. Even the most bland, descriptive reports are constructed: certain observations are considered important and included, while others are left out.

While in archaeology as in ethnography, some fear that this view of cultural representations as manufactured will erode standards of objectivity and truth, this need not be the case once cultural descriptions are accepted as partial and this view is incorporated into practice. Practitioners, aware of their own choices and role in constructing partial truths based on fieldwork, can and should build them much more carefully, aware of the ethical stances implicit in the choices they make and the accounts they write: 'A rigorous sense of partiality can be a source of representational tact' (Clifford 1986, 7).

Rather than seeking to define the essence of an archaeological site or landscape or (by extension) a group of people, authors can accept the diversity that characterises human society, past and present. That diversity is the result of individuality, and it means that no person or group of people can be fully known or defined, especially by an observing outsider. The project of describing and therefore, in a sense, capturing people and society through 'knowing' them – either through their living societies or their material remains – is not only misguided, for that knowledge is always limited and biased. In its most ambitious forms it is unethical: respect for the people whose worlds we study demands we acknowledge the partial nature of our knowledge of their lives.

Archaeological accounts *are* partial. Their potential for narrative and explanatory power lies in the recognition both of their limits and their possibilities.

2.2.4 *Writing archaeology*

The metaphor of archaeological remains as fossil or textual record read by the archaeologist allows her no active role in writing histories of people from those remains, for that would introduce too much of a subjective element -- that of imagination. The metaphor of archaeological remains as a text written by the archaeologist leaves her hopelessly shy of and inept at writing explicit, ambitious cultural accounts, for if the entire effort is subjective, on what basis can she write?

The alternative and more appropriate metaphor of archaeological remains as raw material, upon which the archaeologist works to make knowledge, gives her the conceptual framework within which to write more potent but explicitly partial cultural accounts. If the archaeologist is neither simply reading off the facts from the remains which lie self-evident in the ground, nor merely inventing these facts from ambiguous remains, but is manufacturing data from these real, objectively existing remains, then she is not only allowed but obliged to shape these facts into an account which does its best to reflect and respect the people who created the archaeology. If interpretation is part of the dialectical process that is any encounter with material remains, then accounts may in fact go beyond description and low-level interpretation. They need not surpass human subjects to talk only in terms of physical remains and impersonal processes. They may construct human histories, as far as the evidence allows, but these will always be only partial truths.

In a short, elegant article called 'Archaeology: the loss of nerve' (echoing the title of Clarke's optimistic 1973 piece 'Archaeology: the loss of innocence', which celebrated the rise of processual archaeology), Bradley (1993a) addressed the theoretical polarisation prevailing in archaeology. He observed that the disciplinary self-confidence, which Clarke celebrated and predicted would grow gradually to push out theoretical division, has in fact deteriorated into increasing theoretical division. This has resulted in a loss of nerve, which amounts to a crisis of confidence about our ability as archaeologists truly to know anything about the past.

Clarke (1973) had identified five areas of archaeological thought: pre-depositional, depositional and post-depositional theory, retrieval theory, analytical theory and interpretative theory. In the last two decades, however, most archaeological thinking has gravitated either to the first two areas, essentially the study of formation processes, or the last one, essentially the issue of explanation; the two foci have become polarised in terms of their theoretical bases. The problem for both sides, in Bradley's (1993a, 131) view, originates in frustration with the limitations of archaeological evidence and the loss of faith in the possibility of writing either meaningful history or hard science from that evidence.

Archaeologists have taken refuge, at one extreme, in detailed studies of artefacts and ecofacts, as if through carefully characterising, measuring and dating these remains they can take on the characteristics of scientists and avoid the delicate and difficult issue of interpreting the past human experience of the evidence. The bland, detailed description of deposits and structures, typical of so many excavation and survey reports, is another very widespread (if sometimes less self-consciously science-minded) expression of this position. However, as Bradley writes, 'if this is science, it is a routine science, a science of technicians' (1993a, 131).

At the other extreme, archaeologists have concentrated on addressing and developing theory, to the extent that they rarely address data, or they introduce it primarily to illustrate or exercise a particular theory. Influenced by the post-modernist belief that it is ultimately impossible to know and say anything meaningful about other cultures, particularly those of the past, they focus instead on the present in the belief that archaeological analyses speak most volubly and truly about the politics of today. Collectively they have expended tens of thousands of words on the need to write archaeology in ways that more directly represent human agency in the past and the present, but relatively few in actual attempts to do so (e.g., Barrett 1993; Shanks & Tilley 1992).

The result, Bradley writes, is that 'archaeological activity is in danger of polarizing, with one faction who hold on to the methods and aspirations of the scientist, and another who are engaged in fervent introspection and regard that aspiration to scientific method as a political position in itself' (1993a, 132). Caught

and in danger of being suffocated between the critical self-consciousness of both these camps is creativity. Although archaeologists rarely acknowledge creativity in their work, in fact we all employ it to some extent. As Bradley points out, 'we all engage in acts of intuition, in pattern recognition, in linking previously unrelated observations and ideas: the very processes that are fundamental to imaginative thought' (133). The imaginative application of theory is essential to good archaeological practice, for it oils the process of discovery which defines it, 'that first-hand contact with past lives from which everything else follows' (*ibid.*).

The dichotomy – between those who see archaeological practice as descriptive science, focusing closely upon the archaeological record, and those who see it as primarily an expression of a theoretical position – is inappropriate, failing to reflect as it does the real nature of that practice, as illuminated by Edgeworth's (1991) raw material metaphor. It is also outmoded. Philosophers of science have generally recognised that relativism is not the only alternative to complete faith in the possibility of acquiring knowledge about the past through applying the scientific method. Most have moved beyond the debate between positivism and social constructionism to a new understanding of the role of social factors and the nature of objectivity (see Wylie 1989; also Hodder 1999, 20-29). They have recognised that the social nature of scientific work (including the social sciences) is essential, not peripheral, to its findings; that investigators work not alone, in a vacuum, but in communities of researchers who influence and inform each upcoming generation's presuppositions about their field. Through this process, 'it is possible to know some things more rather than less truly' (Appleby *et al.* 1994, 194).

What has also emerged from this debate is a sense of how linguistic conventions actively help to constitute and shape knowledge, and this too has implications for archaeological practice and writing. Reality exists independently of our naming it; by extension, archaeological remains exist whether or not we discover and describe them. However, just as facts must be named before they can be discussed, we have to make initial sense of these remains, introducing them into our systems of classification and interpretation, before we can discuss and explore them. For example, an archaeological assessment of a landscape usually produces an initial description of the remains visible within it, in order to facilitate its further

exploration and, in many cases, to determine a mitigation strategy in the face of impending development; they are characterised as hut-circles, clearance cairns, quarry scoops and so on. In this way, as in all the social sciences, having certain words and not others to talk about reality (that is, archaeological remains) helps shape our understanding of it. Language is not transparent or natural; neither does it wholly constitute reality. The truth lies somewhere between, in the dialectic between the observing, interpreting archaeologist and the objective archaeological remains.

Archaeological writing (including on-site recording, but particularly fieldwork accounts) tends to fall to either side of a divide. Some archaeological accounts, especially excavation or survey reports, focus mainly on the material encountered, proceeding in dry, detailed description of that material and rarely moving beyond to draw from it histories of the people who left it behind. They cling to ground level, generally failing to step back and comprehend the larger picture. Others, generally academic syntheses or theoretical works, tend to transcend the detail of the material and the lives of past subjects; instead they speak in broad and authoritative terms about patterns of artefact distribution, or changing subsistence strategies, or the attempts at social coercion that lay behind these. They see the past as if from a great height; the evidence of individual lives is subsumed within their greater vision. Common to both kinds of archaeological account is an addiction to the passive voice. Human subjects are rarely given the active roles they once possessed; instead, they are referred to obliquely, either as the invisible forces somehow responsible for archaeological remains or as the components in a much larger and all-encompassing economic or social system.

Also characteristic of most archaeological writing is a failure to talk about the process of discovery which must have taken place if new knowledge has been produced from the study in hand. Reports on excavations and surveys, where the production of new knowledge and understanding is particularly intense, often present their data almost as given, describing deposits or structures as if they were found lying exposed as they are described, their interpretation more or less self-evident. What is missing is an account of how those archaeological remains were uncovered, explored and made sense of. They smooth out the inevitable processes, mistakes and external factors which accompany any such endeavour: hypotheses proved wrong,

disagreements between participants, deposits dug away because of a misguided strategy, states of confusion, hampering weather conditions and so on (*cf.* Edgeworth 1991).

Finally, and on a similar note, most archaeological accounts do not admit to being only partial truths; most do not admit to the possibility of alternative interpretations. They often fail to consider what aspects of people's lives might be unknowable to us, and how the small pieces of the picture which these accounts present might fit into the much larger and more complex one which was their reality.

The prevailing root metaphor of archaeological remains as fossil record informs this style of writing. Speaking in too direct and active terms about the human subjects who created the site would be to move to an improper level of inference. To discuss the process of discovery, and its limitations and problems, would be to imply that the act of reading the archaeological record was a partially subjective one, and to introduce elements of doubt and interpretative fluidity into what ought to be a reliable account. Similarly, to admit the partial nature of an archaeological account would undermine its authority. The alternative metaphor of archaeological remains as raw material transcends the subject-object dichotomy, admitting to the process of making sense of the past. Under this paradigm, it is possible to admit to the dialectic which led to the conclusions reached about a site. The process of discovery can and should be described as part of a fieldwork account, as the knowledge produced is partly contingent on the course of that process. The stages of encounter with the material, the turns, setbacks, intuitions and interpretative leaps which moved the process forward and the social and external factors influencing it all are important to the results, and these can legitimately form part of the account.

The raw material metaphor embraces interpretation as a fundamental part of the dialectic between archaeologist and material; therefore, the knowledge produced from archaeological investigation comprises not just knowledge of what the remains were like, but an understanding of their origins and history. The lawyerly approach of conventional reports, in which description must be kept clearly separate from interpretation, can be abandoned in favour of an account that leads with

interpretation, using description to support and illustrate the conclusions drawn. It should still, however, show clearly how and on what basis those conclusions were reached, in order to reveal the process of inference.

Under a paradigm which admits the fundamental role of interpretation, it is possible to speak in direct terms, using the active voice, about the people who created the remains and to draw out what can be said of their activities and concerns, their environment and their relationship with it, based on the evidence. This sounds almost too obvious to state, but it is the subject around which archaeological accounts have skated since the abandonment of the culture-historical approach of Childe and his colleagues. Often only fairly banal statements can be made about people's activities, but even these can and should be pushed to their logical conclusions, in order to draw as much human history as possible from the remains. These histories should, however (and in a definite departure from the naïve confidence and normalising tendencies of the culture-historians), be written with a sense of their partial nature and of the impossibility of knowing or distilling people, living or dead, into simple statements or essences.

Description of archaeological remains, while serving to support or illustrate interpretations, should still be an integrated and important part of reports. One of the privileges and pleasures of practising archaeology is having physical contact with objects, surfaces and features that were part of the material world of people who lived in the past. That material is itself archaeology's most immediate object of study. There can be something pleasing about reading descriptions of soil colour and texture, of the fabric of structures, of the shape of features, of the lie of the land. Contact with those remains is unique to archaeology, and their description should be included in archaeological accounts. However, that description needs to be integrated with interpretation, and accounts need to move beyond it to address the past subjects behind the material. Both elements are necessary: without description of the material, authors would neglect their duty to the past, present and future to recount the character of the archaeological remains they encountered, and their accounts would become insupportable and unbearably banal lists of interpreted past activities; but when accounts fail to move beyond description to meaningful

interpretation, they become lifeless, serving, as Bradley (1993a, 131) calls it, a 'science for technicians'.

2.3 Writing people into the landscape

The preceding section argued the potential for departure from conventional ways of writing about archaeological remains and past human subjects in general. The bulk of this thesis is concerned specifically with understanding how two discrete topographic areas – Badenoch and Strathnaver – were occupied, perceived and constituted as landscapes at different times in the past. This endeavour is guided by certain specific approaches to the study of archaeological landscapes, as well as by the more fundamental concepts outlined above. A brief review of past and current approaches to the study of archaeological landscapes, particularly but not exclusively in Scotland, precedes a statement of the approach to landscape study which informs this thesis.

2.3.1 A review of approaches to archaeological landscapes

Early, antiquarian interest in archaeological remains, beginning in the seventeenth century, tended to focus on highly visible archaeological monuments, especially in southern England and to some extent in Scotland. The earliest English antiquarians, such as Camden, Aubrey and Stukeley, placed more importance on the physical character of dramatic sites such as Avebury and Silbury Hill rather than their topographic settings or place within an ancient landscape, although they were also aware that there would have been temporal, cultural and spatial links between these sites in the past (Fowler 1995, 101).

In Scotland, an early interest in antiquities found expression along with a concern for topographical description and survey, most notably in the work of Timothy Pont, who compiled his maps of Scotland in the late sixteenth century (Graham 1974, 181; Stone 1989a, 5-6); he may even have been inspired by the maps of England and Wales produced by Camden (Stone 1989b, 13). His main purpose seems to have been to record the 'human features' visible in Scotland's landscapes including, occasionally, antiquities (Stone 1989b, 17). After Pont's death, his material

eventually passed to Sir Robert Gordon of Straloch and his son the Rev. James Gordon, both antiquarians and amateur geographers, who corrected and completed it for use in Blaeu's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, published in 1654. Pont's material then passed to Sir Robert Sibbald, who in 1682 was appointed Geographer for Scotland. He soon launched an ambitious project to publish a 'New Atlas and Description of Scotland', which would gather together geographical and statistical records, as well as old traditions and works on antiquities; these would later be published as Macfarlane's *Geographical Collections Relating to Scotland* (Graham 1974, 181-84).

While these focus mainly on topography, vegetation, agricultural regimes, settlement patterns and so on, they do occasionally refer to more visible archaeological sites, although with little analysis. One quoted by Macfarlane in a 1726 description of the County of Strathnaver describes a wall which had since been demolished, in fairly typical detail but without reference to its setting:

This mannour [at Balnakeil] having been church lands of old, there was to be seen, (till this last year that it was thrown down for building a new house) the ruins of an old wall about eight or nine foot thick and in some places thirty foot high, without any window thereon, it seemd to extend on the one side one hundred foot long, and in breadth fourty foot; there is no tradition by whom it was built, or for what purpose; it seems to have been some old monastery (quoted in Macfarlane 1906, 193).

The eighteenth century saw a widening and maturing of Scottish antiquarian interests, led largely by Daniel Wilson and Robert Sibbald. In 1780 prominent antiquarians formed the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in order to promote and conduct historical research and study and conserve museum objects (Graham 1974, 184). Interest continued to focus mainly upon individual sites and their artefacts, as well as stray finds. This interest also found expression among the educated public. In writing descriptions of their parishes for the First Statistical Account of Scotland, ministers were asked to discuss the antiquities in their parish, such as 'Roman, Saxon, Danish or Pictish castles, camps, altars, roads, forts' and other sites and objects of interest (quoted in Graham 1974, 185).

Early volumes of the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* provide some insight into how archaeological remains were perceived and studied, in particular the relevance or otherwise of their settings and relationships to other sites.

A couple of examples will suffice to illustrate the rather cursory treatment that landscapes received. Reports almost always mention topographic settings, as in Joass's 1864 article 'Two Days' Digging in Sutherlandshire'. Fairly typically, he briefly describes the appearance and location of the broch he subsequently cleared out: 'The building occupies a commanding position on the edge of a sandy terrace, once an old coast-line, and the stone-work is now covered to a considerable depth with turf' (Joass 1864, 242). Some authors did consider monuments' settings and nearby sites in slightly more depth. Stuart (1866b), for example, reported on the excavation of several cists in a cairn and recumbent stone circle in Aberdeenshire. He begins: 'The cairn was placed on the top of a rising ground on the farm of Warrackstone, overlooking on the one side the glen of Terspersie, and on the other commanding a wide prospect through the vale of Alford' (1866b, 24). Going on to describe the cists, their locations and contents, he concludes, 'The spot is overlooked by the hills of the Coreen range. On the slopes of some of them are many pits, both round and oblong' (*ibid.*).

The introduction of aerial photography (e.g., Crawford 1929) encouraged the wide-scale examination of larger tracts of land. Fox (1923) was among the first to attempt a regional study of the archaeological monuments and artefacts from a particular area, in his *Archaeology of the Cambridge Region*, which he described as a 'topographical study'. Although largely concerned with artefacts, he also considered the relationships between sites in some depth and the trackways that had crossed the landscape at different times in the past. His study is fairly descriptive, but he does draw back from the detail to present his broader interpretations of the evidence, as in: 'The beaker folk were buried for the most part *not* in barrows on the hills, but by fen and riverside, and even in the fens; and the distribution of beakers suggests that the invaders arrived by way of the Wash and the fen rivers' (1923, 68).

In Scotland, Ogston (1931) was an early practitioner of this approach, with his study of the archaeology of an area of Aberdeenshire. By the second half of the twentieth century, other field archaeologists were attempting more ambitious studies of particular regions, examining and comparing sites of similar form and period, considering their physical contexts and associated sites nearby. Calder, for example, reported on known Neolithic house sites in Shetland, as well as their field systems

(1955) and also burial cairns and burnt mounds in the islands (1964). He listed and described sites, presented comparative plans of structures and occasionally outlying archaeology, and used these to build up a picture of the farming communities, which he interpreted as made up of isolated farms or small hamlets. Importantly, in his conclusions he attempted to evoke what the life of this 'newly established colony' was like, visualising the daily tasks of pottery and tool making, cultivation of the soil, harvesting, drying and milling grain, raising stock and cutting peat (1955, 358).

The interpretative approach of processual archaeologists, with their interest in long-term processes of social and economic change, encouraged the examination of archaeological landscapes on a wider scale in order to build models of human behaviour over long periods of time. The tools of statistical analysis were employed to determine site catchment areas (e.g., Clark 1972), territorial boundaries (e.g., Renfrew 1976), the influence of climate on economy (e.g., Sherratt 1982) and so on. This approach itself borrowed concepts from the so-called New Geography, and was predicated on a particular view of landscape as two-dimensional and abstract, a surface on which people had moved and inscribed their traces in the past. Rather than allowing for cultural variations in perception of surroundings, space was assumed to be constant, universally and cross-culturally. Landscape therefore appeared to act as 'a relatively passive index of technology and belief' (Ashmore & Knapp 1999, 7).

Post-processual archaeologists have generally taken a different approach to landscapes, viewing them as multi-vocal and contested cultural texts (Bender 1992, 735), or entities which were 'created and manipulated' to express cosmology (Richards 1996, 190). Rather than comprising neutral container for action, landscape was perceived as a medium, constituted through social relations (Ashmore & Knapp 1999; Tilley 1994; Barrett, Bradley & Green 1991). Other recent studies have tended to treat monuments as an integral part of their topographic settings, exploring (for example) more subjective aspects such as the how the visual experience of a monument changes as one approaches it and the visual links between a series of monuments (Fraser 1996). Phenomenology has been appropriated, to varying effect, in this effort, with studies examining how the materiality of the world is experienced through the medium of the human body (e.g., Tilley 1994; Brophy 1999).

In Scotland, at a less explicitly theoretical level of discourse, the last several decades have seen radical changes, in both conceptual and technical terms, in the ways field archaeologists study archaeological remains in association with each other and in their physical contexts. Systematic surveys of large tracts of land, particularly by the Ordnance Survey, beginning in the 1970s, began to increase exponentially the numbers of known archaeological remains in the Highlands. Fieldworkers accumulated knowledge of many different sites of various periods, in different configurations and topographical positions, and began to perceive patterns in the evidence. As a result, focus broadened from individual sites to the possible associations between different monuments; ‘scrappy heaps of cleared stones and ruinous walls and banks . . . became field systems, and, in their turn, these became prehistoric or medieval landscapes associated with the hut-circles or townships nearby’ (Halliday in press). Pre-afforestation surveys (e.g., RCAHMS 1993), coastal surveys (e.g., Mercer 1980; Batey 1984) and intensive surveys of island landscapes (e.g., Hunter 1991; Hunter 1996) have further illuminated the density of archaeological remains in what are now more marginal areas. Sample and rescue excavations of sites making up archaeological landscapes (e.g., McCullagh & Tipping 1998) have demonstrated the chronological complexity represented by the visible remains as well as those blanketed beneath peat, and showed that physical proximity of remains does not necessarily demonstrate contemporaneity (Halliday in press).

The techniques of field survey on a large scale have also advanced enormously, allowing wide tracts of landscape to be recorded electronically. A succession of county inventories produced by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) throughout the twentieth century demonstrates its changing approach to archaeological sites and landscapes. The earliest volumes – Berwickshire in 1909 and Sutherland in 1911 – focused primarily on recording known sites. The 1950s and ‘60s saw the use of aerial photography and ground prospection to identify new sites (Halliday & Stevenson 1991, 132). The publication in the last decade of North-east Perth (RCAHMS 1990), the Strath of Kildonan (RCAHMS 1993) and Eastern Dumfriesshire (RCAHMS 1998) have represented attempts at more integrated, holistic interpretations of archaeological landscapes. In technological terms, the RCAHMS have progressed in the last few

decades from plane-table or theodolite survey, tied in using electronic distance measurers, to total station survey (Halliday & Stevenson 1991, 133-4), to the use of global positioning satellites to locate survey stations and in some cases carry out detailed survey.

As this section has attempted to demonstrate, approaches to the study of archaeological landscapes have evolved over the preceding century, with increasingly sophisticated techniques and theoretical tools of varying complexity and power being applied to understand how tracts of land were occupied, exploited and perceived in the past. The following section sets out the theoretical approach to landscape that informs my studies of Badenoch and Strathnaver.

2.3.2 *Archaeologies of dwelling*

In some respects, the same theoretical divisions that are expressed through processual and post-processual archaeology – those rooted in the fossil and textual metaphors for archaeological practice – have also taken hold in the study of archaeological landscapes. Most studies proceed on one of two basic assumptions about the landscape: a naturalistic one, that is provides a neutral, external background against which people live their lives, or a culturalistic view, that each landscape is culturally conceived and ordered according to the symbolism that governs those lives. Ingold (1993, 154) offers an alternative view, which he calls a ‘dwelling perspective’. In his view, landscape does not simply equate to the natural world, or to land, or to space; nor is it entirely cultural. It is simply ‘the world as it is known to those who dwell therein, who inhabit its places and journey along the paths connecting them’ (*ibid.*, 156). Its constitution is intricately linked to temporality. In its essence, the term ‘dwelling’ means that through living in a place and carrying out the routine activities that move their lives forward, with reference to each other and to their environment, people pass through time, gathering meaning from the landscape and creating what Ingold calls a ‘taskscape’ (*ibid.*, 157).

These tasks, the business of everyday life, are what constitute ‘dwelling’. They often occur in rhythmic cycles, and in fact at any period many different cycles – of individuals and communities – interweave and connect and sometimes conflict.

The landscape is not simply the backdrop for this dwelling. It actually comes to embody the taskscape: 'the forms of the landscape arise alongside those of the taskscape, within the same current of activity' in what Ingold describes as a 'work in progress' (*ibid.*, 162). Landscape, made up of the topographic forms and archaeological features we can see, is therefore a 'congealed form of taskscape' (*ibid.*). It is not only the taskscape of living societies which is discernible in the landscape. Indeed, Ingold argues that archaeology is the study of landscape's temporality, a matter of probing it at progressively greater depths to discover its meanings, to which archaeological features and named places can provide clues (*ibid.*, 172).

The practice of archaeology is, in a sense, a kind of dwelling. Searching for clues to a landscape's meanings requires different degrees of practical involvement with its topography and the archaeological features in it, learning its characteristics and interpreting them. Clearly these practical activities and the stories that result differ from those of people actually living in the landscape, in the past or present, but both archaeologists and native dwellers 'seek the past in the landscape' (*ibid.*, 153). Edgeworth's (1991) metaphor of archaeological practice as labour upon raw material is again apt here. The landscape is a kind of raw material – unknown or barely known to the archaeologist at the beginning of a project. The processes which have produced this thesis involved research into known sites and the history of particular landscapes; plotting and attempting to understand the distribution of sites of different periods on maps; walking through parts of the landscape, observing and recording archaeological sites, noting the visual effects of its topography and how these relate to the character and locations of sites; detailed topographic survey of certain features, and several seasons of excavation of others. Through this labour, the raw material of Badenoch and Strathnaver's landscapes has been crafted into accounts of their dwelling at different times in the past. Scattered pieces of knowledge – contained in the National Monuments Record and Sites and Monuments Record, in history books and in the ground itself, like flecks of ore in a lump of rock, have been smelted, hammered and forged into some kind of understanding of the taskscape and the landscape's temporality – partial truths at best.

As Ingold writes,

For both the archaeologist and the native dweller, the landscape tells – or rather *is* – a story. It enfolds the lives and times of predecessors who, over the generations, have moved around in it and played their part in its formation. To perceive the landscape is therefore to carry out an act of remembrance, and remembering is not so much a matter of calling up an internal image, stored in the mind, as of engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past (1993, 152-3).

The process of dwelling that is archaeological practice is in some respects, at least superficially, at odds with this concept, particularly the process of topographic survey and the use of maps to make sense of the landscape. Topographic survey produces a picture of a site or sites within their context that is apparently independent of any particular point of observation, as if from an omnipresent perspective or a rectified snapshot taken from a great height (*ibid.*, 155). Indeed, topography has been called a ‘science of domination’; it claims to be universal, neutral and unbiased, producing objective maps (Duncan & Ley 1993, 1-2). In fact, however, maps are subjective creations, which can and have been used to exercise mastery over lands and people (Clifford 1988, 69) and to distort and manipulate the truth (Monmonier 1991; see also Turnbull 1989). Given this, the survey of archaeological sites is never simply the straightforward recording of visible features with minimal interpretation, as some accounts of survey methodology might imply (e.g., Burgess 1989), any more than excavation simply involves stripping back layers and recording stratigraphy (*cf.* section 2.2.1.2). It is in fact a thoroughly interpretative process, through which the surveying archaeologist comes to know and understand the site more deeply than would otherwise be possible (*cf.* Mercer 1991, 152). Through the forms of dwelling which survey and, at a more intensive level, excavation entail, the archaeologist forms partial truths from the raw material of the archaeological landscape.

Before embarking on the accounts I have crafted of Badenoch and Strathnaver’s temporal landscapes, it remains to explain in more depth the assumptions about the nature of people’s relationship to landscape which have informed my interpretation. While some may seem obvious and based on common sense, they do have relevance to the approaches taken and the conclusions drawn and so are worth stating.

I begin with some assumptions about the nature of people's relationship to their physical surroundings: that they always perceive those surroundings in certain ways, which vary according to culture, time and place and which also grow out of their personal and group biographies, their responses to natural topographic and other features, and their day-to-day inhabitation of places. Through these perceptions and acts of inhabitation, people constitute landscapes, giving them conceptual texture and ascribing different meanings to different features within them (Ucko 1994, xix), and these meanings are thoroughly integrated with their economic activities, their perceptions of the sacred and their ritual activities. As Barrett (1991, 8) writes, echoing Ingold (1993),

Landscape is thus the entire surface over which people moved and within which they congregated. That surface was given meaning as people acted upon the world within the context of the various demands and obligations which acted upon them. Such actions took place within a certain tempo and at certain locales. Thus landscape, its form constructed from natural and artificial features, became a culturally meaningful resource through its routine occupancy.

There are certain obstacles to understanding how discrete areas were understood and occupied in the past. Those perceptions may not have been worked out or expressed physically or monumentally, in ways traceable archaeologically (Ashmore & Knapp 1999, 2). Even for later periods, documentary sources which might supplement archaeological evidence have often been produced by those at higher levels of society – those with political and economic power – rather than people making up most of the population of Highland areas like Badenoch and Strathnaver, and by those with little interest in how people at these lower levels saw or shaped their surroundings.

The very concept of 'landscape' is a relatively recent, Western, culturally constructed one, its roots in the art of the Italian Renaissance and in Enlightenment notions of land management and control (Cosgrove 1983; Schama 1995). Its definition can vary according to the artistic, scientific or practical perspective of the person defining it (Fowler 1995); the fact that we even perceive it as something to be defined lies in what Daniels and Cosgrove (1993, 57) have called 'geographical thought.' In fact, it is an unstable concept, sliding back and forth within a spectrum which ranges from the natural to the cultural (Tilley 1994). If it is so unstable today, the ways in which it was perceived in the past must also have been fluid and diverse

and are difficult for us, as observers from another culture and time, to penetrate. Nevertheless, as Ashmore and Knapp (1999, 6), argue, 'as a positive consequence, such instability and relativity actually serve to explain the appeal of exploring landscapes, as a catalyst to draw upon diverse approaches and to examine differing domains of human action and experience. There are multiple different ways of "knowing" the earth and the socially recognized places upon it.'

People interact with the spaces they inhabit, shaping them physically and conceptually, and in turn those spaces shape their perceptions, experiences and beliefs. As Tilley (1994, 18) writes, 'a sense of attachment to place is frequently derived from the stability of meanings associated with it.' Through their individual and communal experiences of places and the meanings they attach to them, people create 'locales' (or meaningful places) in a process fundamental to the creation of personal and communal identities (*ibid.*). They draw on the natural qualities of the landscape as well as the memories and histories they associate with it to create these locales; and through the daily and seasonal routine rhythms of their lives they continuously re-work these meanings; in a sense they, too, use the raw material of their surroundings and their experiences to construct the taskscape. Moreover, this is not a universal, predictable process, but one which varies according to culture, time, place and to some extent individual, so that the same landscapes can be perceived in different ways, by different groups of people; they are arenas for the working out of social relations and the negotiation for power (Bender 1992).

Naming places in the landscape is a process that cements natural and created features into social discourse. By naming such features, people fix associations to them and can talk about them and work them into their collective biographies (Tilley 1994, 28-33). By inhabiting an area of land – building houses, field boundaries and funerary monuments, grazing cattle, planting and harvesting crops – people re-shape its physical appearance and organisation; they also impose upon it their own perception of its texture. In turn, the natural and made qualities of the landscape shape their perceptions of themselves, their social groups and the natural world. The process of landscape construction is therefore a dialectical one, which produces a sense of connection to and familiarity with a place, through knowledge of it and dependence upon it.

A distinction can perhaps be made between relationships to landscape built up through the routine occupation of it and those created and expressed through monument construction. In the latter, people deliberately alter their surroundings and in turn their world views and those of later generations are shaped by the monumental topography (Bradley 1993b), which in some cases mimic the natural topographic setting, expressing cosmological views which are intimately linked to the landscape (Richards 1996).

Paths through the landscape are crucial to the process of knowing it. By moving through the landscape, navigating by known and named features according to established, socially constrained routes, people further appropriate the topography, reinforce certain ways of viewing locales and work their surroundings into the narratives they construct to explain the world (Ingold 1993, 155-6). Paths link locales; they enable knowledge not just of particular places but of the wider landscape which people inhabit and of the past and present economic, social and symbolic relationships between locales. Moving through the landscape can become a 'biographic encounter', as people see features or places which trigger memories of events; places and the paths that connect them take on 'sedimented layers of meaning' which are continually accumulating (Tilley 1994, 27). Similarly, boundaries – both real and conceptual, natural and made – are key to the ways people perceive their surroundings and their place within them. The existence of boundaries presupposes the existence of transitional points and liminal zones, which again are worked into perceptions of the landscape. Archaeological traces can also play an active role in the ways people understand their surroundings, as they construct stories about a remembered or mythical past which contribute to their sense of place and connection to it.

2.4 *Conclusion*

Equipped with these assumptions about how people generally relate to their surroundings, it should be possible to write accounts of particular localities – in this case, Badenoch and Strathnaver – which draw together the archaeological and historical evidence for their dwelling in the past.

Chapter Three: Badenoch to the first millennium A.D.

3.1 *Introduction*

From the deserted settlement of Easter Raitts, on the fluvio-glacial terrace that runs along the north side of Strath Spey, one can see across the flat, marshy floor of the strath to the smooth grey hulks of the Cairngorm massif to the south-east. The glens of the Rivers Tromie and Feshie knife obliquely through the mountains of Grampian to the south. To the south-west, the eye is arrested by the small geometric grey mass that is Ruthven Barracks on its steep-sided green mound, in the middle of the strath's floor; beyond, the rumpled blue Grampians recede across the Gaick plateau to the Mounth, where the watershed at Drumochter Pass defines the southern border of Badenoch. Ben Alder looms on the skyline to the west of Drumochter, and on a clear day the pyramid of Schiehallion pricks the sky on the far horizon. Turning toward the rising ground to the north of the settlement, one sees the craggy, heather-clad foothills of the Monadhliaths.

The estate of Raitts lies in the eastern part of the region of Badenoch, but in the heart of the broad bowl that forms its core. It contains archaeological remains from several periods, and has been the focus of the most intensive programme of archaeological excavation yet carried out in Badenoch, directed by the author. As such, it opens small but revealing windows onto the occupation of Badenoch in later prehistory, the early Medieval period and the post-Medieval period; other archaeological remains on the estate from intervening periods also provide clues to illuminate that habitation. The discussion of Badenoch's past landscapes in this and the following chapter reaches to all parts of the region, drawing on the evidence of recorded surface and excavated remains as well as historical, cartographic and documentary evidence. However, the discussion returns at the appropriate times to the detailed picture of the taskscape yielded by the work at Raitts.

The region known as Badenoch lies along and around the upper reaches of the River Spey, in Inverness-shire (see Figure 3.1). The area follows a kind of natural corridor through the central Highlands, south of the Moray Firth and east of the Great Glen. The A9, the main artery through the Highlands, whips through its centre today, carrying travellers whose eyes are usually set on reaching Inverness to the north or Perth

to the south. Perhaps as a result of its proximity to the archaeologically richer lands around the Moray Firth, Badenoch has generally been overlooked in archaeological studies. However, during the Medieval period, and probably before that, those occupying and controlling these lands considered them logistically pivotal in the political dynamics of the Highlands, mainly because of the junction of natural corridors here.

Badenoch consists of several different land types, including a large proportion of high, rocky moorland, well-drained terraces along the sides of its main strath and, along the River Spey, an extensive floodplain. The amount of land suitable for occupation all year round, at least during the last 2500 years, is therefore relatively small, and this land – the fluvio-glacial terraces – has been occupied and re-occupied throughout prehistory and history, while the higher and lower ground has seen seasonal or temporary occupation for the most part. As a result, few prehistoric remains survive in the study area. During the Medieval period, the landscape acquired the spatial organisation that still prevails in its essential layout, but it is possible to perceive beneath this, mainly through the evidence of place-names and chapel-sites, an even earlier structure to the landscape. In the nineteenth century the settlement focus changed significantly with the Improvements, moving down to the edges of the strath floor and leaving the older pattern fossilised on the terraces above. The pastoral rather than arable agricultural regimes that have prevailed in the area in modern times have favoured the survival of these remains.

This chapter first examines the evidence for the geological and climatic processes that created Badenoch's physical characteristics. It then discusses the archaeological evidence for its habitation throughout earlier and later prehistory, followed by the evidence from the first millennium A.D., when it formed part of the Pictish province of Moray, saw the spread of Christianity and was absorbed, with much of the rest of Scotland, into the newly formed Scottish kingdom of Alba. The following chapter begins with the introduction of feudal authority to Badenoch, a system that was to influence its subsequent settlement pattern strongly.

3.2 *The natural environment, past and present*

Badenoch is defined by its topography: more specifically, the upper valley of the Spey and its watersheds (see Figure 3.1). On the north and north-west it extends to the watersheds of burns descending the Monadhliath Mountains. Its western edge reaches to the Pass of Corrieyairack – the Spey’s watershed – and the south-west end of Loch Laggan. Along the south it follows the watersheds of Ben Alder, Drumochter (just south of An Torc, the hog-backed mountain known as the Boar of Badenoch) and the Gaick plateau; these uplands comprise the western part of the Mounth, the mountainous mass which stretches east/west across the central and eastern Highlands. Its boundary then turns northward to follow the edge of the Cairngorm Mountains, crossing Strathspey at the western end of that range to the east of Aviemore. The River Spey flows through its broad, flat-bottomed strath between these mountainous areas, forming a natural corridor from the Corrieyairack Pass north-eastward toward the Moray coast and linked by the pass to Lochaber and the Great Glen. A more low-lying route from Lochaber leads along the Spean valley, alongside Loch Laggan and through Strath Mashie to join the Spey valley. Other natural corridors lead into Badenoch from the south across the Mounth, via Drumochter Pass and the Minigaig Pass, while a third corridor leads westward through the Cairngorms to Aviemore from Braemar, by way of the Larig Ghru and Strath A’an. Throughout this and the following chapter, the term ‘upper Strathspey’ is sometimes used to refer to that portion of the study area that comprises the Spey’s valley, while ‘lower Strathspey’ is used to refer to the portion of the Spey valley to the north-east of Badenoch.

The solid geology of the area consists of a basement of metamorphic rocks, including Moine schist and Dalradian schist, intruded by granitic igneous rocks. The process of folding and metamorphism of the older rocks began with the Caledonian Orogeny, about 500 million years ago. Molten granite magma forced into them helped create the massive Grampian mountains and the Mounth in the southern part of the study area. In the Monadhliaths the Moinian rocks have produced a broad, rolling, peat-covered plateau which stretches to the deep fault of the Great Glen, while granites make up the Cairngorm massif. The central north/south watershed of Druim Alban, which crosses the south-west end of the study area at Ben Alder and the Corrieyairick Pass, was

created in the Tertiary period, about 50 million years ago, and the main river valleys, including that of the Spey, formed about the same time (Gillen 1993, 1-5).

This topography was modified by glacial breaching of the main east/west watershed, as ice flowed down the trench which is now Loch Ericht from the Rannoch basin to Strathspey. Glacial erosion also formed the corries, U-shaped valleys, troughs and smooth, rounded granite tops characteristic of the Cairngorms and the Mounth (Gillen 1993, 17). At the end of the last glaciation, about 13,500 years ago, glacial meltwater scored the valley's sides with channels and left very thick fluvio-glacial deposits as terraces along the lower slopes and mounds on the floor of the strath (Sissons 1976, 42, 64-67). The dominant soils in the area are podzols derived from acid parent rocks, including schist, quartzite and granite, on the uplands; these are generally coarse in texture and freely draining. Along the sides and floor of Strathspey are fluvio-glacial and alluvial sandy soils (Gillen 1993, 19).

Although the climate, like that of the rest of Scotland, is classed as temperate, the region is generally colder than coastal areas, with first frosts occurring in late September throughout most of the twentieth century, and very low temperatures on the higher ground (Ross 1976, 42). Indeed, alpine and arctic vegetation grows on the scree slopes and below high cliff ledges on the Cairngorms, and snow can remain in pockets here all year round (Webster 1976, 63). Mean seasonal temperature in upper Strathspey itself is about 14°C in summer and 3.5°C in winter, with a fairly short growing season of five or six months. Rainfall averaged 800 to 1200 millimetres in the first part of the twentieth century, and there is snow cover on the uplands over much of the winter. The winds prevail from the south or south-west, but can blow from the north-east in winter and can reach gale force 8 or more on the Cairngorms (Haynes 1983; Ross 1976, 42).

Although little environmental analysis has been undertaken in the eastern or central Highlands (Mowat 1996, 115), radiocarbon dating was carried out of lake bed deposits in Loch Etteridge in the upper strath. Here, the basal organic deposits were dated to 11,200 B.C. (Sissons & Walker 1974). While the Loch Lomond glacial re-advance did reach the Gaick plateau and some of the higher parts of the Cairngorms, most of Badenoch remained free of ice at the end of the last glaciation. As with the rest of Scotland, Badenoch would have experienced a milder climate during the post-glacial

climatic optimum, which peaked between 5,000 and 3,000 B.C.; woodlands were most fully developed just before the latter date. Birch was the first to colonise the area, beginning by about 8,000 BP, followed by hazel and then elm and oak by c. 7530 cal B.C. (Whittington & Edwards 1997, 16). Pine and birch woods dominated the study area, but the higher parts of the Monadhliaths probably remained treeless. Woodlands generally began to decline after 3,000 cal B.C., partly due to forest fire clearance, and never fully recovered (Tipping 1994; Whittington 1980). There may have been another period of warmer weather from about 1200 to 1000 cal B.C., when bog growth ceased, but subsequently the climate deteriorated, becoming colder and wetter in the first millennium B.C., and the bogs began to regenerate. However, more recent statistical analysis of pollen data and the use of climatic modelling have suggested that climatic fluctuations since the sixth century B.C. over Scotland have generally been much less dramatic than was previously thought (Whittington & Edwards 1997, 14).

Much of the study area today is used for sheep walks, with limited arable farming practised along the lower slopes of Strathspey. The upland plateaus of the Monadhliath and Gaick mostly comprise heather moorland. There are extensive forestry plantations around Loch Laggan, near Dalwhinnie and along the southern side of the strath between Killiehuntly and Aviemore. The floor of the strath, especially between Newtonmore and Kincaig, has been intensively improved through drainage in modern times.

Within the watersheds that define it, Badenoch consists of more discrete topographic zones (see Figure 3.1), identified by the author on the basis of local topography as perceived on the ground, considering such factors as visibility, elevation, local drainage, steepness of the strath's sides, etc. (see Chapter One). The region is shaped like a spoon, with the bowl formed by the broadest part of the Spey's floodplain and with a main handle – the axis of upper Strathspey – and several subsidiary handles formed by smaller straths and upland glens. The uppermost part of Strathspey (zone 1), from the river's watershed at the Corrieyairick Pass to Black Craig, is high, remote and steep-sided. Its floor is open but undulating, broken by small knolls and outcrops. At Black Craig, Strath Mashie diverges from the axis of the main strath to run toward Loch Laggan. The short, relatively narrow length of Strath Mashie, with its high sides and enclosed aspect, constitutes another topographic zone (2), while the long, deep cleft filled by the loch defines another (zone 3). At Black Craig, Strathspey opens out

considerably to form a very broad, flat-based corridor over a kilometre wide (zone 4), with irregular fluvio-glacial terraces defining both sides below ridges of high ground. This extends as far as Auchmore, where the strath closes in again. Along this stretch (zone 5), which reaches to Biallidbeg, its floor is narrow and undulating, with high, steep crags and knolls on either side.

The eastern part of Strathspey, reaching from Biallidbeg to Aviemore, forms the bowl of the spoon (zone 6) and the largest portion of Badenoch. The strath opens out here to a broad floodplain, up to two kilometres wide but narrower at either end. Undulating but fairly regular fluvio-glacial terraces line both its north and south sides, which climb gradually to the foothills of the adjacent mountains. While the overall aspect of the bowl is broad and open, within it sizeable glacial moraines on the floor and lower sides of the strath create smaller spaces where visibility is much more limited, as around Loch Insh and Loch-an-Eilan. From the bowl of the spoon, four other 'handles' diverge. From behind Newtonmore, Glen Banchor cuts a high, broad corridor eastward through the Monadhliaths, with burns descending into it from high corries at its head (zone 7). Glen Truim, another high, remote but narrower glen (zone 8), descends into the south-west end of the bowl from Drumochter Pass. Glens Tromie (zone 9) and Feshie (zone 10) cut clefts through the Gaick plateau to the south and open into the southern side of Strathspey; while Glen Tromie is quite narrow, Glen Feshie is broader with a flat floor. The parish of Rothiemurchus forms another, quite discreet topographic area (11), set back from and slightly above the main axis of Strathspey, with Loch-an-Eilean at its heart and the Cairngorms ringing it on three sides.

These natural divisions in the area's topography are considered here along with the archaeological and historical evidence for human activity in Badenoch to understand the how the landscape was occupied, organised and perceived throughout the past.

3.3. Badenoch in prehistory (the eighth through the first millennia B.C.)

The following discussion should be read against the maps which show the locations of known sites in the study area (Figures 3.3-3.7); Plates 3.1-3.20 also illustrate

some of the sites. Figure 3.2 shows the positions of the site distribution maps in the study area.

3.3.1 *The missing Mesolithic*

There is no definite evidence of human activity in Badenoch from the Mesolithic period. Several flint scatters have been found in topographic zone 6, along the north-west shore of Loch Insh between Dunachtonmore and Kincaig (NH80SW 23, 26; see Figure 3.4). One of these included a micro-core which might be Mesolithic in date, but otherwise the material consisted of rather undiagnostic flakes, cores and a scraper, as well as a whetstone (Kenworthy 1974; Wordsworth & Harden 1986).

It is very likely that people did live in this area in the millennia before agriculture was established. With its river, associated wetlands and extensive adjacent uplands, it must have provided good ground for fishing, foraging and hunting. The fact that pastoral rather than arable agricultural regimes have prevailed in the region for at least the last two centuries must be a factor in the paucity of other recorded lithic scatters, and more may be found in the future.

3.3.2 *Neolithic into Bronze Age*

Most of the monuments in the study area known to date to the Neolithic or early Bronze Age are in the main, bowl-shaped part of Strathspey (zone 6) and cluster most densely at its eastern end, at points that mark the significance of this area and perhaps certain conceptual boundaries in the landscape. They are cairns of the Clava type, which have two discrete structural elements: a central monument of either a ring-cairn or passage grave, defined by a closely set kerb, and in some cases surrounded by a ring of upright stones (Henshall 1963, 12-39); these cluster most densely along the Moray Firth and in lower Strathspey.

MacCarthy (1996) argues that many of the Clava cairns were originally constructed as only ring-cairns or passage graves, and that the stone circles were added later. Recent work at Balnuaran of Clava by Richard Bradley has produced radiocarbon dates that indicate at least one of the monuments was built at about the same time as its

surrounding stone circle (Bradley 1997); however, this may not be true for all Clava-type cairns. MacCarthy bases his argument mainly on the topographic settings of the monuments and the ways the circles effect different degrees of accessibility to them.

He argues that the structural elements of ring-cairns or passage-graves and stone circles have two very different architectural effects: whereas the tightly-fitted stones of the cairns' outer kerb would have sealed the interior from view, the intermittent stones of the surrounding circle would have allowed those outside the monument to see whatever ceremonies took place inside it. He suggests that, if the circles represent a stage of elaboration, this parallels the changes made to Orkney-Cromarty cairns, to which external forecourts were added (see Davidson & Henshall 1991); 'it would seem these cairns were being architecturally tailored for developments in external ceremonial action' (MacCarthy 1996, 99). This may reflect changes in the focus of rituals connected with the monuments: from rituals concerned with the proper burial of the dead, undertaken for the sake of the dead and therefore kept hidden from the eyes of the living, to rituals carried out for the sake of those watching, meant to establish and confirm links with the ancestors and emphasise the continuity between past and present (Barrett 1988). Bradley (1998) has examined how these alterations and the rituals associated with them might have reflected changes in people's relationship to the land they occupied – a theme explored further in Chapter 5. He notes that the later, more accessible forms of monument tend to date to the period when agriculture was firmly established.

Even the rather sparse monumental evidence for Neolithic people in Badenoch indicates the presence of well-established communities at least in the lower, north-eastern part of the study area; the higher reaches of Strathspey and its tributary strath may not have been occupied, at least not densely. Something of the structure of the Neolithic inhabited landscape can be extrapolated from the monuments' characters and positions. The cairns at Aviemore, Grenish and Delfour, discussed further below, stand within what was probably occupied and farmed land, although set apart from the surrounding ground by the local topography. These positions, on or at the edges of good agricultural land, are consistent with those MacCarthy (1996, 89) noted generally for Clava cairns in Strathspey and Moray. Ingold (1993, 159) points out that the locations of rituals and ceremonies in the landscape may mark boundaries: between wild and domestic, for example, or between communities. The cairns of Badenoch could have worked in this way as an integral part of the early Bronze Age taskscape.

The easternmost Clava cairn in Badenoch is at Avielochan (NH91NW 8; see Figures 3.3 and 3.8). This chambered cairn was built on a small, natural knoll on the undulating floor of the strath, near its western edge; the knoll extends from a ridge of higher ground that blocks views to the north and north-east (see Plate 3.1). The monument occupies most of the relatively level ground on top of the knoll; outside it, the ground falls away sharply. An outer kerb of orthostats defines the cairn's perimeter. These are highest on the south-east, where they flank the mouth of a passage which slopes down to an oval chamber, also defined by orthostats (Henshall 1963, 360). The mouth of the passage looks across the strath, to the Cairngorm mountains, and the higher ground blocking views to the north and north-east helps reinforce the impression that the monument was orientated to address the lower-lying area up and across the strath. The limited space on top of the knoll means that when it was designed and built, no surrounding stone circle could have been envisaged or intended, and none could be added later at the same level as the cairn itself.

Less than two kilometres further up the strath, also near its western side, is a ring-cairn at Grenish (NH91NW 5; see Figures 3.3 and 3.8). It consists of a large, doughnut-shaped cairn, partly disturbed, defined by an inner and outer kerb, the outer kerb stones closely set with their smoother sides facing outward, as is typical for Clava-type ring-cairns (Henshall 1963, 378-9). It sits just below the top of a slight ridge, from which a spur extends to the SSW (see Plate 3.2). The lower ground to the north-east holds a small lochan, and in winter the low ground to the south and west is also often flooded, so that the cairn would at times have occupied an island.

The monument is orientated to the SSW, with the highest orthostats in its outer kerb facing that way, toward a saddle in the Monadhliaths on the skyline. It appears designed to be approached from the spur. As one walks up the spur, the cairn remains invisible until just below the top, when the orthostats appear like a low wall. Two fallen monoliths outside the north-western arc of the cairn suggest it was once surrounded by a stone circle (Cash 1906, 245), perhaps later elaboration of the monument.

A third, small and much-disturbed ring-cairn, of which only the outer kerb is visible, occupies a small, grassy island in the middle of a modern housing estate in

Aviemore (NH81SE 1; see Figures 3.3 and 3.8, and Plate 3.3), hemmed in by bungalows and driveways. Like those at Grenish and Avielochan, it lies on the floor of the strath, to the west of the River Spey. Five outlying monoliths along the southern and western arcs indicate a former enclosing stone circle. Again the highest orthostats in the outer kerb face south-west, obliquely across the strath and toward the Cairngorms, of which it would have commanded a magnificent panoramic view before the bungalows were built.

Another substantial ring-cairn survives at Delfour (NH80NW 1; see Figure 3.3), this in a different position: perched on the edge of a narrow, level fluvio-glacial terrace lining upper Strathspey, at c. 240 m above OD (a position similar, in fact, to the platform excavated at Easter Raitts (see below), which had evidence of early Bronze Age use in the form of residual Beaker sherds and a flint bladelet). The ground above the terrace climbs steeply up crags to high moorland tops, while just below the monument it slopes away to a lower terrace. Many of the kerb stones are of pale pink feldspar; when they were freshly set the effect would have been very striking. As at Grenish, the orthostats forming the cairn's outer kerb rise in height toward the south-west, and they are closely set to form a tight, sealed ring (Cash 1906, 252), except for two gaps to either side of the two highest stones which may represent its later modification. These gaps may have been created in prehistory by removing kerb stones, allowing visual or physical penetration of what was formerly a well-sealed circle. About seven metres to the south-west of the highest part of the kerb stands a massive, triangular, upright slab, roughly three metres high, with distinctive swirling veins of pink feldspar visible in its flat south-east and north-west faces (see Plate 3.4). With this monolith and the highest portion of the outer kerb, the monument appears to be aligned directly on Meall Chuaich, a hill rising to 951 m above OD to the east of Glen Tromie in the distance, by far the most prominent hill on the skyline in that direction.

About three kilometres up the strath and in the centre of the floor, there may have been another ring-cairn at Invereshie; presumably destroyed, it was described in James Robertson's Tour of 1771 as a 'Druidical temple' (*ibid.*, 380). There is a reported long cairn on a flat-topped hillock at Dalnavert (which means 'Dale of the Graves' (Watson 1926, 242)) near the mouth of Glen Feshie (zone 10; Figure 3.3; NH80NE 16), and another at Balnascriten four kilometres up this narrow glen (Figure 4.3; NN89NW

1). Although the archaeological character and date of these have not been confirmed in the field, if they are Neolithic long cairns their presence here shows that people were not only occupying the sides of Strathspey in earlier prehistory but pushing up the valleys of its tributary rivers as well, perhaps for seasonal transhumance or hunting if not year-round occupation. The only other known ring-cairn in the study area is farther up the strath at Newtonmore, 12.5 kilometres from Invereshie (NN79NW 1; Figure 3.4). It sits on a hillock called Tom a'Chladha at the edge of the valley floor. Much of it was robbed to build a neighbouring cottage in the nineteenth century, when stone cists, urns and human bones were reportedly found, but its outer kerb and what may be an inner kerb are still visible (see Figure 3.4 for location; Henshall 1963, 358). The absence of a stone circle could suggest that the monument may have been abandoned, its significance lost or faded, by the time stone circles were being built around other monuments. Farther up the strath at Bruach Mor near Ballmishag (in zone 5) a stone axe was found (NN59SE 5).

While there may have formerly been other early Bronze Age monuments in Badenoch like the known ring-cairns and passage-graves, evidence from the eighteenth century suggests that such monuments were respected by those occupying and farming the surrounding land, at least in recent centuries. The known distribution may, therefore, correlate to the original. For instance, the minister writing the New Statistical Account for the parish of Alvie in 1835 noted that the cairn and standing stones at Delfour were still held in such veneration that, although they stood inconveniently in the middle of a ploughed field, farmers always carefully avoided disturbing them (MacDonald 1835, 87).

The use over several hundred years of Clava-type cairns, as the Clava radiocarbon dates have indicated (Bradley 1997), suggest that here were communities which, through farming the land, had become closely linked to these particular places in the landscape. The positions of the cairns on or at the edges of good farming land further suggest symbolic links between the monuments and agricultural regimes; they may have marked boundaries between communities' lands, or between cultivated and uncultivated land (Ingold 1993). As people later elaborated the monuments by adding stone circles to form 'open-air precincts' (MacCarthy 1996, 100), this might reflect a stronger need for public ceremonies which re-affirmed those links to place and ancestor.

3.3.3 *Later prehistory (second millennium B.C. through first century A.D.)*

People appear to have occupied a platform at the western end of what would later be the post-Medieval township of Easter Raitts in later prehistory; however, there is also evidence (see below) that it was occupied in some way in the later Neolithic to Early Bronze Age. The platform also bore evidence of intensive metalworking, at some time before its re-use in the eighteenth century. The metalworking might date to any time, from later prehistory to the Medieval period. Refinement and absolute dating of the chronology await post-excavation analysis of samples and finds, and only an interim statement is possible here. For ease and clarity of discussion, all of the evidence for its use in prehistory is discussed in this section, along with the evidence for metal working on the platform; the evidence for its post-Medieval occupation is presented in Chapter 4.

Excavation of the platform in 1999 worked down through post-Medieval and earlier levels of occupation (see Chapter 4; Lelong 1999). During the removal of the post-Medieval occupation layers in that season, several sherds of coarse, domestic pottery of probable Bronze Age or Iron Age date were recovered. These represented at least 10 different vessels. Rim sherds showed that they included large, bucket-shaped pots, in some cases with horizontal rows of vertical fingernail impressions (these were similar to sherds recovered at Dunbeath, in deposits thought to date to the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age (T. Pollard, pers. comm.)). Three sherds of All-Over-Comb Beaker were also found near the centre of the trench, close to the find spot of a fourth, much better-sealed sherd of the same kind (see below). A flint knife of probable Neolithic or Bronze Age date (M. Donnelly, pers. comm.) was also recovered. This prehistoric material was clearly residual, but it was found in sufficient quantities to suggest strongly that people had been using the platform in prehistory. The platform's re-use in the post-Medieval period, and probably also in the interim, had disturbed and churned the earlier archaeology.

However, continued excavation in the summer of 2000 established the essential sequence of use and found more securely stratified prehistoric material. The centre of the platform, which was partly enclosed by a boulder spread (see below, and Figure 3.9), had largely been scoured out by later use, destroying stratigraphic relationships between the eastern and western sides. Therefore, the eastern side – which demonstrated the

sequence of enhancement and construction of the platform itself – is discussed first, and then evidence from the western side is discussed. Linking them remains difficult, although post-excavation analysis may clarify the relationships.

The platform consisted of a slight, natural mound of fluvio-glacial sand and gravel, which had been banked at its edges to extend it. Figure 3.10 shows the south-west facing section through the south side of the platform and illustrates the sequence of deposits and structures making it up. The earliest surface, overlying the natural subsoil, was a yellow-brown silty sand (5120), on which several sherds of coarse, low-fired black pottery were found. Lenses of charcoal-rich material were found on it, and a stakehole (5169) with a stake burnt *in situ* had been cut into it. To the north-east, a similar early ground surface (5165), probably of the same phase, was exposed in a slot to this level, and postholes (5175, 5176, 5177) were found cut into this. Although not enough of this earliest horizon was exposed in plan to be certain, it may be that those occupying the platform in prehistory built a structure defined by posts and stakes which followed its edges. Subsequently, a turf bank (5159/5180) was built along the same arc. It eventually slumped and spread, and charcoal (5155) became trampled on its surface.

At this point in the stratigraphy of the platform's eastern and southern sides, tap slag appeared. Several pieces were found directly under large boulders (5085) which were laid in an arcing band on the trampled, charcoal-rich surface (5155), forming what may have been the base of a structure (see Figure 3.9 and Plate 3.5). The boulders were generally sub-angular and weathered, and appeared to rest at all sorts of angles; some were upright, and removal of them in two slots revealed an apparent kerb along their eastern edge in the northern slot. The section drawing (Figure 3.10) supports the interpretation that the boulders were set in stages: first those resting on the turf bank, defined at least partly by the kerb (5085), were set, and then this was extended by setting massive stones (5029) on a dark brown humic sandy loam (5123) which had accumulated against the earlier stones' edges (see Plate 3.6). In this final extension of the platform, the massive stones were propped in position by small, angular stones (5122) tucked in at reverse angles at the edges. The purpose of the boulder spread was not fully understood: its edges were very well-defined at both stages of construction, but it seems too broad to have been a wall base; it may have been a wall which tumbled inward (to the west, and the centre of the platform). Certainly the boulders were not set to form a surface. In

fact, in plan they resembled nothing so much as part of a ring-cairn, with the massive stones representing a kerb which had been set upright and then tipped outward; the pieces of tap slag found under the boulders seem chronologically inconsistent with such an interpretation, but not necessarily so.

The other feature of secure prehistoric date was a large pit (5167) at the western edge of the trench (see Plate 3.8). It had been re-cut, probably during the phase of metalworking (see below). Its original, mixed yellow and brown sandy fill was sealed by rake-out from a nearby fire-spot (see below). After it had been re-cut (through this rake-out), part of the original fill had been revetted along the west side with a built stone face, and its secondary fill was of dark brown clay sand (5135). This produced four sherds of pottery, three possibly from the same vessel, in a fine, dark grey, roughly wiped and burnished fabric; one sherd bears a carination and a small finger impression. A fourth sherd was in a lighter grey-pink fabric. The burnished pottery is reminiscent of other assemblages of fine, earlier prehistoric pottery found in eastern and central Scotland, and generally dating to the first half of the fourth millennium B.C. (Cowie 1993, 15-19). The same secondary fill also produced a fragment of burnt bone and a piece of carbonised, organic material, which has been identified as part of a crabapple (*Malus sylvestris*) (Drs. J. Miller & S. Ramsay, pers. comm.). Only three other crabapples have been found in Scotland: one from probable Iron Age deposits at Over Rig, near Girvan in Ayrshire, another from Medieval deposits in Elgin High Street and a third from the fill of a feature at the Neolithic timber hall of Balbridie, Fife (*ibid.*). This material came from the pit's secondary fill and may be residual, having been disturbed and re-deposited when the pit was re-cut; however, the occurrence of several sherds from what may be the same pot suggest they might have been in the original fill, or in the vicinity.

Tap slag was found in great quantities, all over the trench but especially concentrated to the south-east of this pit. Here, the earliest horizon was a fire-spot (5164), consisting of an area of scorched and partly vitrified natural sand subsoil. It had been burned bright orange-pink at its centre and dark purple around its edges, suggesting something set around the edges had prevented oxidisation there. Pieces of tap slag lay on and around the fire-spot. Over and around it lay a deposit of charcoal-rich, black silty sand (5158), material raked out from the fire; it sealed the original cut (5167) of the pit that produced the burnished pottery, but had been disturbed by the pit's re-cutting. This

rake-out extended to the edges of the adjacent curving boulder structure (5059), but ran under some large stones (5119) that formed a kind of kerb around the fire-spot to the south (see Plate 3.7). Sealed beneath these stones was another sherd of coarse, low-fired black pottery, a sherd of AOC Beaker, several pieces of burnt bone, a flint flake – and pieces of tap slag. Stratigraphically, this was the earliest sherd of Beaker found. It may have been residual, but it is not impossible that it was associated with the slag and the smelting.

To summarise at this preliminary stage, these appear to be the earlier phases of the platform's use: People certainly occupied it in some respect in the Neolithic to early Bronze Age, as the Beaker sherds, the burnished pottery and flint bladelet suggest. They may have dug post-holes and stake-holes for a structure that hugged the platform's edges, although those could belong to a later prehistoric phase of use. From the abundance of coarse, domestic, later prehistoric pottery found, the most intensive occupation seems to have been at some time in the later Bronze Age. The post-hole and stake-holes may well belong to a roundhouse built on the platform, with the turf bank representing a later phase of delineation of the same space. After the turf bank had slumped and a ground surface had formed over it, people began smelting ore on the platform. They set boulders in a broad arc around the eastern and southern sides of the platform, defining them with a neat outer kerb, and this arc was later extended outward with another, more substantial kerb.

The fire-spot is the best candidate for the epicentre of the smelting (along with another, less intensively scorched area to its east), from the concentration of tap slag around and above it. Large fragments of furnace lining, consisting of oxidised clay with grass impressions and slag adhering to them, were found in later deposits and show that whatever structure was used to smelt ore, it was dismantled or destroyed and the site was later much disturbed. The early pit was re-cut at the ore smelting stage and its sides revetted with stone, but the purpose of that is unclear; the piece of burnt bone, the carbonised crabapple and the burnished pottery are reminiscent of domestic occupation. It may have used to store food; in fact, at its second, stone-lined phase it resembled a tiny souterrain. After its re-cutting, the area around the fire-spot was ringed with boulders, perhaps to contain or define the smelting area.

The deposits and structures belonging to this phase were sealed beneath later, post-Medieval layers, discussed in Chapter Four. Although that later re-use disturbed the earlier remains and made it difficult to understand the sequence as a whole across the platform, post-excavation analysis of soils and artefacts and analysis of the slag should help to flesh out the story. In particular, radiocarbon-dating of the crabapple from the stone-lined pit, of charcoal from above the fire-spot and of the burnt stake on the edge of the platform should establish the relative and absolute chronology of these events.

The nearest known prehistoric remains to this site are two circular, partly turf-covered cairns about 200 m to the east of the township, perched below the top of the terrace on sloping ground at about the same height above OD as the platform (Figure 3.4). Both are about eight metres in diameter, with what appear to be kerbstones defining them.

Aside from these, there are relatively few known remains of settlement or burial dating from later prehistory in Badenoch, especially in comparison to other central Highland landscapes such as north-east Perthshire (see RCAHMS 1990). While this general paucity may reflect the lack of systematic field survey here, evidence of later prehistoric remains was similarly sparse at Mar Lodge, c. 30 kilometres to the east (RCAHMS 1995). However, it may be significant that in Badenoch one of the few areas subjected to detailed field survey – the north side of Strathspey to the west of Kingussie (zone 6) and along Glen Banchor (zone 7), undertaken by the RCAHMS in 1995 – is the area where known hut-circle settlements and other remains of later prehistoric date are by far the most abundant.

Hut-circle settlements have been more comprehensively investigated in the far north, where they also occur in much greater abundance. Fieldwork by the RCAHMS (1993) in the Strath of Kildonan allowed the establishment of three main categories of hut-circle settlement, based on numbers of structures and an association with cultivation remains, in the form of either clearance cairns or field banks and lynchets (the latter presumably representing a greater commitment to the land and longer-term agricultural regimes). These categories have more relevance for the Strathnaver hut-circle settlements, and are discussed further in Chapter Five. However, for the sake of consistency and in the hope of illuminating patterns in Badenoch's round-house

landscapes, such as they survive, hut-circle settlements are plotted here using the same set of symbols to distinguish the different categories.

In Badenoch the RCAHMS have found hut-circles, often occurring singly but sometimes in clusters of up to four or five, spread along the gently sloping fluvio-glacial terraces lining the strath over a seven-kilometre stretch west of Kingussie and the base of the steeper slopes above, in the upper part of zone 6 (e.g., NH70SW 4, 10, 11; see Figure 3.4). Often they are associated with clearance cairns, and in some cases clearance cairns and cultivation plots were found in isolation from the hut-circles. There are two burnt mounds among the settlement and cultivation remains (NH70SW 4, 17), suggesting the use of outdoor cooking sites, perhaps when the hut-circle settlements were occupied but also perhaps earlier or later in prehistory. Two burial cairns (NH70SW 19, 26) were built along the lower edges of the settlement clusters.

Along this stretch and near the mouth of Glen Banchor these remains all lie at between c. 300 and 400 m above OD. Their distribution in comparison to later townships and shielings is striking and follows a pattern familiar to Highland Scotland: most of the townships lie below the prehistoric remains, while the shieling huts lie well above them. The higher altitude of the hut-circle settlements suggests that they were built and used in a period when the climate was milder and were abandoned when it began to deteriorate, perhaps in the middle first millennium B.C. (as happened at Lairg (McCullagh & Tipping 1998)). In later, Medieval to post-Medieval times these higher slopes may have been considered too exposed for settlement.

Another relatively dense concentration of known prehistoric remains occurs around Avielochan ring-cairn (Figure 3.3); including burial cairns, hut-circles and association cultivation remains. Other, looser clusters are known around Pityoulish and Rothimurchus (Figure 3.3). A fragmentary, patched bronze cauldron found in Loch Gamhna probably dates from the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age (Forsyth 1964).

On a flat, low-lying terrace near the River Tromie, close to its confluence with the Spey, is a large schist outcrop with quartzite veins. Its broad, west-facing surface is covered with cup marks (Figure 3.4; Plate 3.9. At least 30 have been recorded on at its north-eastern and south-western ends, but almost certainly these continue across its

centre, which is clad in turf (SMR NH70SE 77). Such a remarkable concentration of cup marks on this distinctive stone suggests it marked a well-known and significant spot. The outcrop's position near the mouth of Glen Tromie might suggest it lay en route to lands was used for different purposes than that which it overlooks – for hunting or fishing, for example – and that the rites that produced the cup marks emphasised or facilitated the transition (*cf.* Barrett, Bradley & Green (1991)).

In the upper, narrower reaches of Strathspey, known prehistoric remains are even fewer, with only a few scattered hut-circles known in Glen Banchor (zone 7) and near Laggan (zone 4). A burial cairn lies on the north shore of Loch Laggan (zone 3), and a bronze flat axehead was also found on its shores. Seven logboats have been found in Loch Laggan; two of these (NN58NW 6 and NN48NE 4, discussed further below) have been tentatively dated to the later Iron Age and the Early Medieval to Medieval periods, respectively. Of the others (NN48NE 1 & 2; NN48SE 1; NN58NW 3 & 4), some could well be of earlier prehistoric date, but none were subjected to scientific dating assay when they were found, little was recorded of their character and all are now lost (Mowat 1996, 62-65).

These few clusters of archaeological remains, which most likely date to the first and second millennia B.C. (*cf.* McCullagh & Tipping 1998; Barrett & Downes forthcoming), may only be fragments of a more complex prehistoric landscape in Badenoch, the remainder of which either has yet to be discovered or, on the lower slopes, has been destroyed by later land use. Much of the region may have been unsuitable for settlement, even in a warmer period: most of the Gaick plateau, for example, lies at above 450 m above OD, but on the evidence of the RCAHMS's survey of Glen Banchor hut-circle settlements generally occur in this area at below 450 m. In addition, long stretches of the Spey's floodplain (especially in topographic zones 5 and 6) may have been too wet for settlement. However, future surveys of the sides of Strathspey and particularly the burns draining the higher ground, where recent land use will have been less intensive, may well find more hut-circles, burnt mounds, cultivation remains and other traces of human activity dating to later prehistory.

3.4 *The first millennium A.D.*

The group of people designated 'Picts' by the Roman writer Eumenius first appear in the historical record in A.D. 297 (Keillor 1993, 43; Mann 1974, 34). Foster (1996) more broadly defines the period between A.D. 79, when the Romans first penetrated Scotland, and c. 842, when the mac Ailpín dynasty established itself as ruler of the united Pictish and Dál Riata kingdoms, as that dominated by the Picts over much of Scotland (see also Wainwright 1981a, 2; Alcock 1984, 9). At either end of this date range, however, the chronological boundaries are blurred. The earlier chronological marker for the period – Roman contact with native peoples north of the Forth-Clyde isthmus in A.D. 79 – is probably somewhat artificial, as it is likely that those peoples were the descendants of Scotland's inhabitants in the later first millennium B.C., or 'proto-Picts' (Wainwright 1981a, 15). Indeed, Alcock (1994, 80) argues that 'they had been Picts, by both genetic and cultural inheritance (through [sic] probably not in name), as far back in time as . . . the seventh century B.C.'

The political amalgamation of the Pictish and Scottish kingdoms into Alba in the latter part of the first millennium A.D., and the resulting Gaelicisation of the Pictland, may have had significant social effects on those living in Badenoch, affecting their language and perhaps the organisation of the landscape as well (Broun 1994, 21). Similarly, the spread of Christianity throughout the area, which may have preceded or accompanied these changes – the evidence of chapel-sites suggests the latter – would have altered their belief systems and also affected the structure of the landscape.

This section treats the evidence for how Badenoch was inhabited in the first millennium A.D. It is divided into two parts: the first sub-section deals with the evidence for Pictish or proto-Pictish peoples pre-dating the arrival of Christianity in Badenoch, while the second treats the evidence for conversion, the presence of the Church in the study area and the period in which Badenoch formed part of Alba, the infant kingdom of the Scots.

3.4.1 Badenoch's inhabitants in the early first millennium A.D.

3.4.1.1 *The historical and archaeological context*

What we know of Pictish society in the first part of the first millennium A.D. is based partly on archaeological evidence and partly on written records of its early contact with literate Christians, beginning in the sixth century. To a large extent, then, any attempt to reconstruct that society requires working backward from later sources, assessing the likely antiquity of political and social structures represented in them and attempting to achieve a best, if loose, fit between this extrapolated documentary evidence and the archaeology of the period. Syntheses such as those written by Alcock (1987), Driscoll (1991) and Foster (1996) represent such attempts and form the basis for the summary discussion of early Pictish society presented here, which in turn helps set the context for a discussion of the relevant evidence from Badenoch. The impression which emerges from the later documentary sources is of a society organised into petty kingships, perhaps first based on tribal affiliations but later on clientship, in which power gradually became more centralised in what Alcock (1988, 28) calls 'potentates'. Warfare, pursued for wealth and personal glory, seems to have been a key feature of this society, and Smyth (1984, 46) suggests that the agriculture practised by the general population of Pictland supported an aristocratic warrior elite in the early centuries of the millennium.

From at least the early first millennium A.D., the people we term 'Picts' probably occupied the areas stretching north from the Firth of Forth. The term 'Picts' is, however, largely irrelevant for this period, and certainly has no racial relevance, as those peoples would have grouped and identified themselves by kinship relations into the tribes which Classical authors describe (Wainwright 1981a, 11; Foster 1997, 6). By the seventh century the term Pictland is understood to refer to mainland Scotland to the east of Druim Alban – Adomnán's *Dorsum Britanniae* (Anderson & Anderson 1991, 166) – the mountainous spine which runs from Ben Lomond northward, doglegs at the upper end of Badenoch across the Great Glen and continues to Ben Hope on the north coast. Irish speakers forming the kingdom of Dál Riata may already have populated much of the western seaboard by this time, although the north-west coast and many of the islands may still have been dominated by Picts (*ibid.*, xxxi).

Alcock (1987) has identified evidence for the emergence in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. of power centres in Pictland, and therefore for the gradual centralisation

of power in potentates. The evidence of succeeding centuries (discussed further below) suggests the development from the fifth to the ninth centuries of a hierarchical political system which extended kingly authority over large areas, with tiers of sub-kings, nobles and other royal officials (Foster 1996, 33). Driscoll (1988, 216) envisages a Pictland made up of 'many independent petty kingdoms . . . which on occasion fell under the dominion of the more powerful kingdoms of the fertile coastal regions.' Certainly Adomnán's early seventh century account of Columba's mid sixth century visit to Bredei mac Máelchú (who was described as *rex potentissimus*, 'very' or 'most powerful king') refers to hostages he held of the under-king of the Orkneys, who himself was present at the court (Anderson & Anderson 1991, 166-67). From Bredei's seat on the Moray Firth, probably at Craig Phádraig (Small & Cottam 1972), he would have ruled over the province of Moray, his power base, and appears to have wielded authority over lesser rulers of other provinces as well. The Moray Firth seems to have been a locus of power in Pictland until the seventh century (Shepherd 1993, 75), and Badenoch's proximity would have brought it well within that regime's influence.

About half of the fortified sites in Pictland for which radiocarbon dates are available were built in the fourth to the ninth centuries A.D., reflecting this consolidation of power; these include Clatchard Craig in Fife; Green Castle, Portknockie in Banffshire; and Dundurn in Perthshire (Alcock 1987, 86). In some cases (such as at Craig Phádraig), prehistoric hillforts were re-used in this period (Foster 1996, 46). The layout of their interiors, within enclosing ramparts, indicates the hierarchical organisation of space and tight control over access to inner, higher-status areas. Excavation at hillforts such as Dundurn has shown that highly skilled craftsmen, working metal, leather and textiles, had workshops there; the hillforts were more than simply military installations, and must have been centres where agricultural surpluses were controlled and marshalled to support such craftsmen as well as their superiors (Alcock 1988, 25-27). The forts' strategic positions 'reflect the increasing dominance of new elites whose authority was acquiring territorial definition' by the seventh century, as something resembling an early state emerged in Pictland (Foster 1996, 51).

Large souterrains (as opposed to the smaller, earlier ones of northern Scotland; see Chapter 5), which tend to correspond to better cereal-growing areas such as Angus and Aberdeenshire, were generally in use from the last century B.C. into the second or

third century A.D., or the proto-Pictish period (Wainwright 1981b, 91). Most had probably fallen out of use before the fourth century A.D., with some souterrains, such as those at Ardestie and Carlungie, deliberately infilled. However, excavation of the remains of substantial circular or ovoid structures associated with these two souterrains and of later, less substantial structures post-dating their infilling showed a continuous sequence of occupation of the same sites. It is likely, therefore, that these souterrains and associated structures were built by the direct predecessors of those who built the later structures over them – in other words, by ‘proto-Picts’ (*ibid.*, 92). Although Wainwright (1963, 128) suggests that the main function of large souterrains such as those at Ardestie and Carlungie was that of underground byres, Barclay (in Watkins 1980a, 206) argues for a wider variety of functions, including ritual as well as pragmatic ones. Watkins’ own investigation of the souterrain at Newmill in Perthshire led him to conclude it had been used to store food, as the underground conditions would have been ideal for the purpose (1978-80, 198). Inglis (1987) suggests that the larger, southern souterrains may indicate the potential for agricultural surpluses that would have supported elites. If so, souterrains also must represent a well-developed and perhaps fairly standardised system of stockpiling, storing and otherwise managing such surpluses; they must also be a key trace of the social relations which that system embodied (see Driscoll 1991, 82).

The Class I symbol stones, undressed slabs bearing a range of stylised, elegant designs, are thought by some to date from as early as the fifth or sixth century A.D. (e.g., Thomas 1968, 108), although other authorities would place their origins as late as the seventh or eighth century (Stevenson 1981, 97). In any case, they represent one expression of a complex cultural code that must have been far more sophisticated and meaningful than modern attempts to interpret it can reach (e.g., Thomas 1984; Samson 1992; also see Driscoll 1988), and one which was also expressed on other media, such as jewellery. Inglis (1987) has analysed the distribution of symbol stones for which the original find spot is known in the area extending from the Rivers Dee to the Spey, corresponding roughly to the Pictish sub-kingdom later known as Marr and Buchan. He found that they generally were placed on the better quality arable land: mostly below 195 m OD and many below 90 m, and often on south-east facing slopes and near water sources. In addition, about 60 per cent were erected within a kilometre or two of probable contemporary settlement sites, as indicated by souterrains, hut-circles, crannogs,

fortified sites or *pett* names. (These names, although generally thought to be later in date (Nicolaisen 1995) and therefore discussed below, may well have been attached to land which had been valued, occupied and worked for some time.)

The more enduring fortified or enclosed sites are the most substantial remains of proto-Pictish or Pictish settlement. For the most part, archaeological traces of the settlements of the dependent commoners who most likely worked the land, perhaps bound to it and to an overlord by networks of kinship, are missing (Driscoll 1991, 107), although work on unenclosed settlements is steadily increasing the database (e.g., at Pool on Sanday (Hunter 1990); at Easter Kinnear, Fife (Driscoll 1991); and in the Western Isles (Harding & Armit 1990)). Some of the best evidence for how people lived in the early to mid first millennium A.D. has come from the Northern Isles and far north of the mainland, where drystone cellular houses excavated at Buckquoy (Ritchie 1977) and elsewhere have been dated to the Pictish period and produced ecofacts and artefacts which shed light on local economies (see Chapter 6).

Closer to Badenoch, limited field survey and excavation have established something of the nature of houses and agriculture in the period. In southern, lowland Pictland (including parts of present Angus, Fife, Aberdeenshire and East Lothian), rectangular structures identifiable as cropmarks have been interpreted as Pictish timber houses (Maxwell 1987). At Easter Kinnear in Fife, scooped, circular buildings dating to the mid first millennium A.D. were replaced by sub-rectangular timber buildings in the late sixth or early seventh century A.D. (Driscoll 1991). Oval and figure-of-eight shaped houses have also been found in association with early first millennium A.D. souterrains, along with evidence indicating a mixed farming economy (Watkins 1980a, 1980b; Wainwright 1963). In Strathtummel and Strathtay, what have been called circular homesteads have been tentatively ascribed to the Picts (Taylor 1990).

Extensive field survey undertaken by the RCAHMS in north-east Perthshire identified a particular kind of building as possibly Early Medieval (i.e., Pictish) in date, the so-called Pitcarmick-type building (RCAHMS 1990, 12). These buildings are sub-rectangular and bow-sided, often with rounded ends and partially sunken floors; they are generally found on the uplands, in areas littered with earlier, prehistoric roundhouses and associated field systems; in two cases, Pitcarmick-type buildings overlie prehistoric

structures. Subsequent detailed survey and analysis undertaken by Hooper (1997) at Pitcarmick North further refined the understanding of these buildings and their landscape settings on the basis of surface remains. Excavation of one of these structures found it was laid out in a similar fashion to later, post-Medieval longhouses, with a hearth in the middle of the floor at one end, clearly the living quarters, and a paved byre in the larger, eastern part. A smaller sub-rectangular structure had been built over the living end of the house and its hearth had been re-used, while the byre end appeared to have been unroofed at that stage and was probably used as a yard. Radiocarbon dates were obtained of 600-664 and 666-852 cal A.D. for the earlier phase and 897-1012 cal A.D. for the later (Barrett & Downes in prep).

Field survey carried out by the RCAHMS in Badenoch and on the Mar Lodge estate to the east of the study area failed to identify any possible Pitcarmick-type buildings there, and for these areas the pattern of settlement and the character of people's houses and field systems are still unknown. However, a few archaeological remains of known Pictish date illuminate the occupation and organisation of Badenoch's landscapes in this period, as well as the social relations which lay behind that order. To some extent, later documentary evidence helps to fill out that picture, which Barrow (1973; 1988a; 1989) has done much to reconstruct for the study area.

3.4.1.2 The Picts in Badenoch

If the area along the Moray Firth was a Pictish power base until at least the seventh century A.D. (Shepherd 1993), the study area would have lain well within that sphere of influence. The River Spey forms a natural corridor southward from the Moray Firth to the Mounth – that is, from northern Pictland through the mountains to southern Pictland and the western seaboard; the Mounth historically divided northern from southern Pictland (Cowan 1993, 121). To the south, Drumochter Pass and the east/west massif of the Mounth form Badenoch's border with Atholl, itself an ancient Pictish province (Anderson 1980, 184). On the south-west, the Spey's watershed leads to the Corrieyairick Pass, one route through Druim Alban to the Great Glen and the western seaboard. Another, more circuitous but lower-lying route led along Loch Laggan and on to the Great Glen via Glen Spean.

Straddling these two routes to the Great Glen is the most substantial and striking archaeological site of Pictish origin in Badenoch, the hillfort of Dun-da-Lamh (NN59SE 3; Figure 3.6). It is perched at 445 m above OD on the north-eastern end of Black Craig, a high, narrow spine which projects into the southern edge of upper Strathspey (see Plate 3.10). At this point the more open, flat-based zone 4 of the study area constricts into zone 1 and begins to rise and twist toward the Corrieyairick, while narrower Strath Mashie (zone 2) leads off to the south. The name Dun-da-Lamh has been interpreted as meaning 'Fort of the Two Hands' (Watson 1926, 488), which may be a reference to this confluence of corridors. It could alternatively be a reference to the topography in its interior, which is dominated by two knolls resembling clenched fists. Another explanation offered to Watson was that those who lived in the fort and controlled the area used to levy tribute in the form of handstone (*dornagan*) from the people within their domain; Early Medieval Irish sources do mention the use of such stones as weapons (*ibid.*).

One approaches the fort today by means of a winding track up the east side of the ridge; a direct approach is virtually impossible, given the steepness of its sides. A saddle in the ridge leads to an entrance in the south-western rampart, up a narrow path. The fortifications follow the edges of the summit, enclosing a roughly triangular area. The massive drystone rampart, neatly faced and composed of thin slabs, measures between four and seven metres wide (Feacham 1977, 128). In places it stands up to two or three metres high, where tumble has been cleared away from the interior and exterior faces, and the tumble indicates it originally stood even higher. Below the walls outside the fort, the crags fall away in precipitous, tree-clad slopes. Inside it the topography rises and falls over the two large knolls and several terraces, some of which might be artificially cut and could have supported buildings. An enormous glacial erratic lies in the fort's north-western corner.

The fort has not been investigated through either survey or excavation and no dating evidence is available; it might belong to either of Alcock's (1987) two main phases of fort construction, in the first century B.C. or fourth to fifth century A.D. Its form, which follows the natural terraces of the hill, has been compared to the Early Medieval sites of Dundurn and Dunadd (Close Brooks 1986, 137); the former was first built in the seventh century A.D., while the latter was an important Dál Riata royal site (Alcock

1984). Its massive wall is also comparable to Mither Tap, Bennachie, Aberdeenshire (Derek Alexander, pers. comm.). Certainly the tightly constricted entrance and the knolls and terraces within it suggest those who built and occupied the fort controlled access to it and the use of space in the interior according to well-developed hierarchical notions.

Whether it was built by those we call proto-Picts or by Picts proper, clearly the fort was an important base of power for those living in and controlling upper Badenoch. From their position here, the occupants could have looked up the Spey to the south-west as far as the Pass of Corrieyairack and down it to the north-east as far as present-day Laggan; they also could see down Strath Mashie to the south, toward Loch Laggan. In this sense it is also similar to other Early Medieval hillforts, such as Dunadd and Dundurn, which like it straddle key passes. Its position speaks of a certain watchfulness over these natural corridors and perhaps of authority over the lands visible from the fort.

It also suggests a significant, powerful and hierarchical Pictish community here in the early to mid first millennium A.D. Its well-built, massive masonry ramparts must have taken a large team to build, perhaps under the supervision of a skilled architect, as Alcock (1988, 26) has argued for other sites. These workers must have been fed by surpluses gathered from people living in and farming the immediate vicinity or perhaps a larger territory. Alcock has suggested that hillforts such as these were centres of political power, which kings and their armed retinues would have visited at intervals to collect *cain* and *conveth* (see below). They may have been bases from which the forerunners of thanages were administered, with food rendered as tribute to support local rulers; those who produced the food may have lived in nucleated settlements, akin to the later townships (*ibid.*, 33, 37; Alcock 1984, 24).

Alternatively, Driscoll (pers. comm.) has suggested that high, massively-built enclosed sites like Dun-da-Lamh were designed primarily for ritual activity rather than defence; they may have been religious as well as political focal points. Certainly Dun-da-Lamh would have been difficult to occupy all year round, and there is no ready water source on the hill. Its symbolic importance could be indicated by the presence of a probable Early Medieval chapel site on the floor of the strath nearby, dedicated to St. Michael and discussed further below. St. Michael dedications are frequently associated

with high places; the chapel site may represent the Christian appropriation of an earlier sacred (and high) place, which later shifted to the valley floor.

Some of those people whose farming products must have made the fort's construction possible and for whom it was a political and/or religious focus may have lived around Loch Laggan. There is evidence that the later Iron Age inhabitants of upper Badenoch moved about on the loch, in the form of a logboat found at its north-eastern end (NN58NW 6; Figure 3.7). Now lost, this is known from descriptions and a photograph taken on its discovery to have been a narrow boat, 11.6 m long, with a projection (possibly a figurehead) at one end. During its life the bottom of its mid-section began to split, and someone had attempted to repair it by oversewing two long battens over it with bark or twigs, threading the lashings through holes bored into the floor and thus drawing the sides of the split together (Mowat 1996, 63). In the boat was found a small, round, shallow wooden bowl with a narrow, everted rim and one loop handle; it had been turned from a single piece of birch, and was tentatively dated to the early to mid first millennium A.D. (Earwood 1993, 164-65). Another logboat measuring 9.2 m long was found near it (Mowat 1996, 63).

If the date is broadly correct, it shows the presence of people on and around the loch in the Pictish period. (Five other logboats have been found along the loch's shores (*ibid.*), although of these at least one is Early Medieval to Medieval in date.) The loch sides are generally sloping, but the ground adjacent to the point where the boat was found is flatter and well sheltered by the enclosing slopes, and would have made good ground for the settlements of people who exploited the loch for fish or travel, and who were perhaps connected with the builders of Dun-da-Lamh at the other end of Strath Mashie. The logboat's very narrow dimensions and shallow draught (evident from the photograph in Mowat 1996, 63) suggest it was designed to be used on relatively still waters. Its owners might have taken it out on Loch Laggan to fish in calm weather, or used it for crossings of its length or breadth; they might have carried provisions in the bowl, or perhaps berries or nuts collected from the loch's shores. Aberarder, a name of Pictish origin referring to the confluence of the Allt Crunachdaih or the River Pattack with Loch Laggan, is now attached to the farm at the eastern end of the loch, within a few hundred metres of the logboat's find spot. The name may be later rather than earlier

Pictish (and is discussed in more detail below), but it does lend further weight to the suggestion of this area's occupation in the early to mid first millennium A.D.

A possible circular homestead, dating from the earlier first millennium A.D., has recently been identified by J. S. Bone through aerial photography in Glen Banchor (see Plate 3.11). It lies near the confluence of the River Calder and the Allt an Lochain Duibh, in a strip recently burned of heather cover. Although the site has not yet been visited to check its dimensions and character, it appears to be much larger than hut-circles in this area and bears resemblance to the monuments identified in Perthshire as circular homesteads (Taylor 1990); if so, it is the first such monument discovered in Badenoch.

Only a few other remains from the earlier Pictish period are known in Badenoch, all from the broad, bowl-like part of Strathspey (zone 6; Figure 3.4). At Lynchat, dug into the edge of one of the lower fluvio-glacial terraces that line the north side of the strath, is a large souterrain called locally *An Uaimh Mhor*, or the Great Cave (MacPherson 1893, 408; NH70SE). Horseshoe-shaped and largely intact, it has faced drystone walls nearly two metres high which curve inward as they rise toward a roof of massive flagstones. It is open to the south, at the deepest, convex part of the horseshoe's curve (Figure 3.11; Plate 3.12). The souterrain was pointed out to Sir David Brewster, Principal of the University of Edinburgh, in 1835 (Brewster 1863); it must have been known to local people before that time, and although he records that no local traditions about it existed, this is contradicted by folklore about the monument recorded in the nineteenth century (see section 3.4).

Brewster found the souterrain full of 'stones and rubbish from the neighbouring grounds' (1863, 119). He removed the rubbish and exposed the internal walls and entranceway. His sketches of the structure show the entranceway with two stone steps leading down to the interior, and with what appears to be a slab-framed doorway beyond. Another slab-framed doorway leads to the western part of the souterrain, but this passage is now all but blocked. Among the rubbish he removed, Brewster found a very corroded, oblong iron padlock, up to 3 inches long, with a hasp. While he records clearing stones and rubbish from the monument's interior, he does not note the extent or

depth of his clearance, or whether he found occupation deposits or deliberately laid flooring beneath.

A hollow-way runs up the slope immediately to the west, possibly leading to the souterrain's entrance. The ground to the north of the structure, into which it is dug, is bracken-covered, but there are several possible banks perceptible which might be the remains of an associated building like those found outside or above other excavated souterrains (e.g., Ardestie, Carlungie and Newmill; Wainwright 1963; Watkins 1980a). (A local tradition (see Chapter Four) describes the use of the monument and a building which covered it by a local family in the Medieval period; if the story has any roots in truth, the banks could relate to this later re-use.) From its size and manner of construction the souterrain has affinities with those of Angus, Fife and Perthshire, which generally date to the first two centuries A.D. and typically had associated huts above ground, rather than with the usually smaller and earlier northern examples. Its dimensions and shape in plan are similar to those of Newmill in Perthshire, which like the Lynchat souterrain had a blank end wall at its northern end and two entrances close together at the opposite end. It had been deliberately filled in in the late second or early third century A.D. A sequence of post-built houses were associated with it; the last in the sequence had survived for some time after the souterrain was infilled, but was not rebuilt. Evidence for later activity on the same site was found in the contents of a firepit, which yielded a radiocarbon date in the ninth century A.D. (Watkins 1980a, 199). Watkins interpreted the Newmill souterrain as most likely built for the storage of agricultural produce.

The one at Lynchat might have served a similar purpose, and certainly there may have been a settlement associated with it. The later, Medieval to post-Medieval township clusters of Raitts lie on the terrace above the souterrain, c. 300 m to the north. It is likely that cultivation and other kinds of land use associated with their later occupation would have destroyed any visible traces of the later Iron Age houses, fields or enclosures of those who built and used the souterrain. However, as described above, excavations of a platform at Easter Raitts in 1999 and 2000 have produced evidence of its later prehistoric occupation – although no contemporaneity with the souterrain can be shown as yet.

Two other possible souterrains have been identified as cropmarks or surface remains: one among the cluster of hut-circles to the north-west of Kingussie (Figure 3.4; NH70SW 11), and another among the hut-circle settlements clustered around Pityoulish (Figure 3.3; NH91SW 43). These juxtapositions suggest that some of the hut-circle settlements date to the later Iron Age, a likelihood discussed further with regard to Strathnaver in Chapter Five.

Another likely site of Pictish settlement in Badenoch, perhaps of some local significance, is at Dunachton. Here a Class I symbol stone stands on the edge of the terrace above the valley floor (NH80SW 2.01; Figure 3.4). It was found in 1870 in use as a lintel over the door of the old steading at Dunachton (Allen & Anderson 1903, 100), where it may have been deliberately placed to give protection or blessing of some kind to the dwelling or to those passing beneath the lintel. The stones of the steading were used to build present Dunachton Lodge, and the symbol stone was re-erected here outside the walled garden. It bears a gracefully carved beast's head symbol near the top of the stone; a vertical line on the beast's neck terminates in a little round cup.

Although its original position is not known, this general location is fairly consistent with those which Inglis (1987) found for the majority of symbol stones between the Dee and the Spey: just above a south-east facing slope, on good arable ground and close to a water source. The name 'Dunachton' combines Gaelic and Pictish elements (Watson 1926, 239) – the Gaelic word for a fortification with the personal name Nechtán (the latter was a fairly common Pictish name in the seventh and eighth centuries (Macquarrie 1997, 177), although Bannerman (1974) suggests that the king of that name had Irish origins). There was formerly a castle at Dunachton, mentioned in a 1380 document by Alexander Stuart, Wolf of Badenoch and burnt down by the Lochaber MacDonalds of Keppoch about 1689 (Macbain 1890, 12); it might have had a predecessor in a Pictish enclosed or unenclosed site, although no evidence of one is known.

Driscoll (1988) interprets the Class I symbol stones as having played a key role in the rise of the Pictish aristocracy and ultimately in the formation of the Pictish kingdom, which would form the core of the Scottish state emerging in the ninth century. He argues that their meanings must have varied according to the context of the stones; they

might have been raised to commemorate the dead, as Thomas (1984) suggests, but they may also have been used more subtly in political and social discourse, as people established their positions within a hierarchical society of growing complexity. Given the name Dunachton and the likelihood that the symbol stone was originally planted close to its present location, there may well have been a Pictish site here which played a role in that process. The evidence of *pett* names, discussed below, suggests something of the landscape's organisation, at least in zone 6, from the ninth or tenth century A.D.; that structure may have evolved from an earlier, Pictish one.

3.4.2 *Christianised Badenoch into the kingdom of the Scots*

The later part of the first millennium A.D. saw the development in Pictland of administrative networks, in which power over land (and therefore over people) gradually consolidated in local centres, regional underkings and overkings, and in which obligations between clients and overlords came to replace kinship relations as the primary social glue (Driscoll 1991, 88). This was accompanied and in some ways abetted by the growth of ecclesiastical influence, and would eventually make possible the formation of the Scottish state.

3.4.2.1 *The historical and archaeological context*

During the second half of the first millennium A.D., conversion to Christianity spread across Pictland. The distribution of long cist burials and *eccles* place-names suggests that southern Pictland (particularly the area around and to the north of the Firth of Forth) was converted first, in the fifth to the seventh centuries A.D. (Barrow 1983; Burt 1997). This may have been due to the influence of the ecclesiastical centre at Whithorn, although it appears not to have been primarily an evangelising establishment (Thomas 1968, 111). The relative scarcity of Class I symbol stones in southern Pictland compared to their abundance in northern Pictland is further evidence that Christianity had a greater influence earlier in the south than it did in the north (*ibid.*, 108). Following Columba's arrival in western Scotland and the establishment of a monastery on Iona in A.D. 563, missionary activity became more intensive and eventually permeated northern Pictland. Although Adomnán records that Columba converted a few Pictish people during his visit to King Bridei near Inverness, he does not mention either large-scale

conversion or the baptism of the king himself (Anderson & Anderson 1991, 160-67); it is likely, therefore, that the mainstream conversion of Pictland began at some point after this visit (Anderson 1965, 33).

Certainly beginning in the seventh century A.D., the Columban monastery at Iona – and those established by Maelrubai at Applecross, Molúog at Lismore and Drostan at Aberdour, among others – sent missionaries across much of Pictland, converting the populace and establishing chapels and smaller religious communities (Thomas 1971b, 91). By the late seventh century, when Adomnán was writing his hagiography of Columba, there were minor Columban cells across Pictland (Hughes 1980, 51). The exact paths which conversion took are uncertain, although there have been attempts to trace them by mapping dedications to early saints (e.g., Simpson 1935). It is likely that in Badenoch, as elsewhere in Pictland, the process of changing people's beliefs and ritual practices was a slow and gradual one (Thomas 1997, 96), sometimes involving the appropriation of existing sacred sites.

As the Church gained the approval of Pictland's political authorities, beginning in the early eighth century (Hughes 1980, 52), it must have been given land on which to build its monasteries and chapels and which, through farming or dues, could provide it with an income to support its incumbents and fund mission work. The pastoral (rather than eremitic) role of the clergy was probably significant, given the proximity of early chapel and other ecclesiastical sites to good arable land which must have been occupied and worked by the local population. This is true of chapel sites in Badenoch as well as Strathnaver (see Chapter 6) and other parts of the Highlands, and these stand in clear contrast to the isolated and difficult positions of eremitic sites. These early chapels and churches would have been simple, rectangular buildings built of timber, turf and wattle-and-daub, and rarely of stone. They often stood within enclosed cemeteries which were typically oval or circular in plan (Thomas 1971a, 67), and were sometimes associated with simple, cross-incised stones (Henderson 1987; 1995). Early twentieth-century scholars tended to believe that chapels, churches and monasteries established before the eighth century A.D. were usually associated with the names of their founders or the founders of the monasteries from which those planting the sites issued, and that only from the eighth century onward did the practice begin of dedicating establishments to saints (e.g., Knight 1933, 307). Anderson (1965, 27), however, argues that it is impossible to be certain

whether apparently early dedications reflect such a direct association or were ascribed in the later, Medieval period. On balance, while dedications to early saints are not entirely reliable as indicators of Early Medieval sites, they can in combination with other evidence such as circular or oval enclosures, hand bells and incised stones point to an early foundation.

In the case of the Badenoch dedications, all of the known chapel sites do carry dedications to early Irish saints; some of these chapels are mentioned in documentary sources of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, so clearly they existed by that date (see below). It is therefore likely that they were established as Irish missionaries penetrated the central Highlands, via the Great Glen and the Moray Firth, perhaps as part of the general process of Gaelicisation as Pictland and Dal Riata fused in the newly formed kingdom of Alba in the later ninth and tenth centuries (Broun 1994, 23).

The Pictish symbol stones known as Class II – dressed slabs which bear both Pictish and Christian symbols and show Northumbrian artistic influence – are mostly concentrated to the south of the Mounth in what was southern Pictland, and date from the late eighth to the tenth centuries A.D. (Stevenson 1981, 97). They show the strength of the Church in this part of Pictland from the eighth century. They may also show the scope of the authority of kings such as Nechtán, the first to give official sanction and support to the Church in northern Pictland (Thomas 1997, 104); kings such as he must have supported if not commissioned the stones (Foster 1996, 93).

The Church's expansion in the eighth century occurred partly in tandem with the consolidation of the Pictish state under Nechtán and his successors. The evidence for the structure of that state is generally later (tenth century) in date; however, the references in Adomnán (Anderson & Anderson 1991) and Irish documentary sources to greater and less Pictish kings indicate something of its character, and it is likely that the tenth-century evidence describes social, political and economic structures of long standing. As Driscoll (1991, 88) points out, social practices and organisation tend to evolve with reference to past practices, rather than emerging without precedent.

On this basis, it is possible to project backward to some extent from the later sources to consider the nature of late Pictish society. Sources such as the Annals of

Ulster refer to different levels of kingship or lordship in Early Medieval Ireland, and hint at similar distinctions in Pictland. The Annals refer as early as A.D. 739 to the death of a king of Atholl (Hennessy 1887, 199). The term 'mormaer', for an under-king, first appears in the documentary record in A.D. 918 which states that in a battle against the men of Alba, no king or 'Mor-maer' was killed (Hennessy 1887, 437; Broun 1995, 5). The evidence for the nature of Pictish leadership throughout the mid first millennium A.D. suggests that the seat of highest power was essentially an insecure one, in which the king had to draw on military, economic, ideological and political power to defend challengers to his position. The Pictish peoples formed a loose confederation, which gradually began to consolidate and strengthen with eventual assistance from the Irish Dál Riata kingdom on the western seaboard. (Mann (1974) suggests that the initial impetus for the formation of a Pictish state may have been the Roman Empire's presence at and north of the Antonine Wall, forging unity in opposition to it; also see Breeze 1994.) The hierarchical political and economic structures which developed in Pictland, in which clientship replaced kinship in the social fabric, made possible the kingdom of Alba's formation, but hand in hand with this went the Church's role of ideological legitimisation, which fundamentally changed the character of kingship (Driscoll 1991, 187).

By the seventh century, a Pictish power base appears to have shifted from the north (particularly the province of Moray) to the province of Fortriu, in the area of Fife and Perthshire. Into this area the Irish-speaking Dál Riata began to push from at least the eighth century, prompted partly by the rich agricultural potential of that part of Pictland. A complicated series of military disasters and power struggles had left a power vacuum in the Pictish kingdom by the mid ninth century, and into this Cináed mac Ailpín moved to become the first king of a united Pictland and Dál Riata in 842 A.D. Clearly this was the culmination of a gradual process of consolidation which had followed a halting, sinuous course for nearly a century: intermarriage had mingled Pictish and Dál Riata blood in the nobility of both sides and there had already been three Gaelic kings of Fortriu by 842 (Anderson 1980, 192-95). Cináed mac Ailpín's assumption of leadership was not so unprecedented in itself; however, his most striking achievement was to establish a dynastic kingship in Scotland, in which inheritance of the crown passed down within a much smaller kin group than before (Broun 1994, 2).

This appears to involved a transition, in the years following A.D. 900, from a Pictish to a Scottish identify for those living east of Druim Alban, between Moray and the Forth. The territorial term 'Pictland' was replaced by 'Alba', signifying this new identity, and the transition was probably accompanied by some level of 'political and social upheaval' which also involved the decline of the Pictish language and the ascension of Gaelic (Broun 1994, 21-22). A late ninth to early tenth century addition to the Pictish king-list mentions the seven provinces of Pictland, which included Fib (Fife), Cat (Caithness and Sutherland), Foltlaid (Atholl, meaning 'New Ireland') and Fortriu (the area centred on Strathearn). While these may have been recognised territories, these seven were selected for inclusion here for their alliterative qualities, and to support a legend designed to depict all Picts as united in one country, as if the new dynastic kingship of mac Ailpín were an historical fact (*ibid.*, 24-25). (Another, later reference in 1290 to discrete territories or earldoms within the kingdom of Scotland also defines only seven, with Badenoch, Atholl and Strathearn (Fortriu) among them; although the antiquity of these is unknown, they do appear to pre-date the Anglo-Norman infeudation of Scotland (Simpson 1941, 105), discussed further below.) Broun (1994, 29) suggests that this apparent desire for a new national identity and unity in Alba and the accompanying social changes may have been in response to the external, destabilising pressures brought by repeated Scandinavian incursions.

The northern mainland and the Northern and Western Isles were by this time under increasing Norse control (see Chapter 6), while mainland Argyll appears to have become marginal to Alba. The province of Moray, of which Badenoch formed part, was ruled practically independently by the Dál Riata Loarn dynasty, which had pushed its influence up the Great Glen. By the early tenth century, the Scots appear to have prevailed over Moray, a victory perhaps commemorated in Sueno's Stone at Forres, which Jackson (1993, 95) describes as a 'definitive statement about the end of a particular era.' (The monument has alternatively been interpreted as commemorating a Pictish victory over Norse invaders (Mackie 1975, 204) and an eleventh-century Scottish victory over Scandinavian invaders by Malcolm II (Skene 1890, cited in Sellar 1993, 98), among other suggestions; see Sellar 1993 for a thorough review). However, even after Moray had been absorbed into the Scottish kingdom, it continued to have a distinctive identity of its own (Shepherd 1993, 75), and was to prove again to prove disruptive to the kingdom in the following century under Macbeth (see Chapter Four).

The extent to which these changes in political control affected the lives of most Picts is not entirely clear; strands of both continuity and change are evident from linguistic and documentary evidence. Clearly the Pictish people were not extinguished, but their identity was eventually subsumed within the larger Scottish cultural and political identity. Their symbols, which must have been part of a more complex cultural code, had already begun to fall out of currency and did not recover. Their language likewise was superseded by Gaelic, but some words probably continued in use. However, the structure of Pictish kingship, already established by the ninth century, endured, as did other aspects of Pictish culture such as the organisation of land – ‘which alone suggests considerable continuity in the population at large’ (Foster 1996, 113).

Certainly in the tenth century and perhaps for some time before that, land was organised and administered at the local level in thanages (later known as shires); these appear to have been royal or comital lands, managed on behalf of the king or earl by thanes, while mormaers held their lands by heritable right. While the finer points of Pictland’s territorial divisions and inheritance rules are not well understood, what is clear is that ‘the introduction of the specialist post ofthane . . . marks a crucial stage in the development of society when, due to the expansion of their territories, kings were no longer considered part of one’s extended family, whether real or fictive’ (*ibid.*). Thanages and mormaers were part of a well-established and longstanding administrative system by the tenth century; although most of the documentary evidence for thanages dates from the following two centuries, the system seems to have developed in Alba as ‘a vital link between the crown and the local communities north of the Forth’ (Grant 1993, 49). Thanages in all likelihood grew out of small tribal entities, similar to the Irish tuath and based upon obligations of kinship (Driscoll 1991, 108; Skene 1880, 217). They appear to have derived from a multiple-estate system of some antiquity (Barrow 1973, 58-64; Grant 1993, 40), and they came to structure and embody the social relations which characterised pre-feudal Scotland at a local level. Those social relations appear to have operated between three general levels, and they also were intimately linked to the spatial order imposed on the landscape. Driscoll (1987; 1991) has summarised these levels and discussed their general archaeological visibility.

Living in small settlements and working the land were dependent commoners, referred to in later documents as *neyfs* or *nativi* and apparently tied to the place of their birth. They appear to have lived on and been linked to the farmsteads or *petts* which helped to make up thanages and are discussed further below, and which were occupied by free farmers (Inglis 1987, 74). Skene (1880, 220-22) found evidence for *neyfs* with different kinds of relationships to their overlords, depending on their and their ancestors' length of tenure on the township lands; while these were recorded in the later, feudal period, they may have fossilised earlier, pre-feudal classes of bondmen.

In pre-coinage Scotland, the king's wealth was tied up in landed estates, and thanages were a means of managing and harvesting that wealth. Thanages therefore acted as hinges between two sectors of society: they 'served to integrate the interests of the primary producers and the local aristocracy' (which included the Church) and 'to articulate the interests of the local aristocracy with those of a regional or national lord' (Driscoll 1991, 94). They were the unit by which thanes assessed and rendered the king's dues of *cain* (tribute or agricultural produce), *feacht* or *sluaged* (military service) and *conveth*, or hospitality; the kings of Alba travelled about their realm as a means of distributing the burden of keeping the court among their subjects, consuming the wealth their land produced and maintaining royal control (Foster 1996, 62; Skene 1880, 231-2). Thanages were also the context for settlement at a small scale, the places inhabited by those at the lowest level of society.

Thanages appear to have had three main components: a *caput*, or the main royal residence, which would have been occupied by thethane who managed it on behalf of the king; a ceremonial centre, where justice was administered and inauguration rituals were held; and several substantial farms, the *petts* or dependant estates (Driscoll 1991); a defined area of permanent common pasture seems also to have been an essential element (Barrow 1973, 52). Altogether between 60 and 70 thanages are known from documentary records of the feudal period, and many of these coincide with Brittonic or P-Celtic names, supporting the theory that they were a pre-Gaelic (i.e., Pictish) structure (Barrow 1973, 57-63). Although the relationship of *davochs* to *petts* is not fully understood (and is discussed further below with reference to the study area), *davochs* are thought to relate to early land divisions such as those prevailing in thanages (*ibid.*, 59).

A thane supervised the king's residence on the thanage, if one existed; for instance, a king's hall at Rathenach in lower Strathspey (its exact location is unknown), where Edward I stayed in 1296, was recorded as having been rebuilt in 1264 with plank walls and a roof of double beams (Barrow 1973, 49). A thane called Yothre ma Gillys held that thanage from William the Lion, providing sergeant's service in his army and holding certain rights, including a net for fishing in the Spey. Tribute would have been brought to the *caput* from outlying farmsteads; the thane would deduct his own share and pay the remainder to the king or earl; he would administer justice in his overlord's absence, and lead the inhabitants of the thanage in war (Grant 1993, 40). The legal status of thanes is not entirely clear; there are indications that in fact some were *nativi* or *neyfs* (Barrow 1973, 49-50), but in general they seem to have been drawn from local lairds and probably had lands elsewhere (Grant 1993, 41). Barrow (1973, 67) suggests that the earlier, Pictish word for the post may have been something akin to the Primitive Welsh *maer*, the antecedent of the Old Scots word *mair* or petty official. If so, *mormaer* (or great maer) may have been to *maer* what in the later, immediate pre-feudal period earl was to thane. Many of the thanes noted in the documentary record have Gaelic names, and the term translates in Gaelic to *toisech*, 'first or foremost person' or 'leader' (Grant 1993, 42). However, the two terms are unlikely to equate so simply, and it is likely that Gaelic lords and thanes – who often held their posts for a short term – co-existed, and both had the status of *toisech* (*ibid.*).

Names with the element 'pit' may indicate early, Pictish definitions of discrete land entities; they derive from *pett*, a Gaelic word borrowed from Pictish, meaning 'portion' or 'piece' and alluding to a dependent estate which may have formed part of a thanage (Barrow 1973, 59). Whittington (1975) has analysed the distribution of 'pit' names and found that they generally correlate to well-drained, sheltered locations and loamy soils, ideal for farming settlements (see also Whittington & Soulsby 1968). Most surviving *pett* names appear to post-date c. 850 A.D., when Pictland was being absorbed into the kingdom of Alba, and were assigned for another 150 to 200 years by Gaelic speakers in the kingdom of Alba, perhaps having been adopted for administrative reasons (Nicolaisen 1997, 43; see also Forsyth 1997, 25). The term and the administrative structures which lay behind it were among the features of Pictish society adopted by the newly formed Scottish kingdom in the later ninth and tenth centuries, when generic *pett* names were combined with specific Gaelic names (Taylor 1997, 10).

Taylor (1997, 11) argues that during the early centuries of the Scottish kingdom (the ninth through the eleventh centuries), *pett* continued in use to refer to a 'full estate as part of a wider network of lordship and administrative and fiscal organisation', while the wholly Gaelic *baile* was used to refer to places of actual habitation, perhaps the nucleus of settlement on a *pett* or other entity. The distribution of these names in Badenoch indicates something of the pre ninth-century organisation of the landscape into thanages and petts.

3.4.2.2 *The structure of Badenoch's landscapes in the late first millennium A.D.*

There is place-name and documentary evidence for four possible thanages in Badenoch: one centred on Kingussie, one on Alvie, a third on Insh and a fourth on Rothiemurchus. These various pieces of evidence suggest that Badenoch's landscapes were highly organised and well populated in the later first millennium A. D. Until about A.D. 1200 it is likely that 'the farms held by the smaller freeholders and the more complex groupings of estates held by great secular lords, by the earls, by bishops and important churches, were actually worked, in tillage but more particularly in the grazing of cattle, pigs, and sheep, by a peasantry enjoying little if any legal freedom' (Barrow 1981, 18).

Alvie is described in sources such as Pont's late sixteenth-century map as 'Skeiralloway' (from *sgire Allmnuighe*, or the shire of Alvie); as Barrow (1973, 54) argues, 'in Scotia as farther south thane and shire go together. Shires needed thanes.' Figure 3.12 shows Barrow's (1973) reconstruction of the shire of Alvie. Alvie has evidence of *petts* in the form of at least two pit names: Pitchurn and Pitourie, which later became Balchurn and Balourie and have been translated as deriving respectively from *peit-chaorthainn* ('portion of the rowan tree'; Watson 1926, 412) and *peit-odhavaigh* ('dun-coloured portion'; Scarlett 1988, 40). The thanage or shire of Alvie also included the settlements of Dunachton and Raitts, both of which have evidence of early origins in the form of chapels and associated davochs, and the possibly early ecclesiastical site on Loch Alvie (see below).

Barrow (1973, 59) believes that the *petts* which made up thanages may have corresponded to davochs or ploughgates; Driscoll (1991, 92), however, points out that

they refer to different categories of land and argues that the terms do not correlate. Davoch, from the Gaelic *dabhach* or large vat, was a measure of land. It appears in documents from the eleventh century onward (first in the Gaelic *Notitiae* in the Book of Deer (Jackson 1972)), but is likely to have been in vernacular use from an earlier period. Although there has been debate about what exactly constituted a davoch, it was evidently an agricultural unit; its size depended on the agricultural capacity of the land, which of course could vary according to local soils, altitude, drainage conditions and so on. The name may have originated in either the amount of seed corn required to sow it or the amount of corn it yielded as tribute, although davochs in the Medieval period also included pasture (Barrow 1973, 268-69).

The chapel at Dunachton was attached to a davoch that Barrow believes may have been the secular *caput* for the thanage of Alvie. According to Barrow (1973, 274), *rath*, the origin for the place-name Raitts, was a term for a quarter of a davoch, and Skene (1880, 282) suggests it constituted the smallest single-tenancy holding. In either case, the occurrence of this name, attached to the lands associated with St. Molúog's chapel, in documents as early as the twelfth century suggests these lands were perceived as a discrete unit in pre-feudal times.

Insh, on the south side of the river (Figure 3.3), may also have been a thanage – perhaps one dedicated to the Church from an early time, as no evidence survives of a secular lordship site; it was composed of half-davochs. An agreement of 1229 x 34 refers to Bishop Andrew de Moravia's lordship over all the clerical *neyfs* or native clergy, as well as two laymen *neyfs* called Gillemolúog Macnakeeigelle and Sythach Macmallon. These two Gaelic names and the reference to a 'son or servant of Molúog' (perhaps linked to the chapel at Raitts) may indicate the survival of an older clerical caste here (Barrow 1989, 10).

Kingussie has evidence for two of the elements Driscoll (1991) has postulated for pre-feudal thanages; indeed, Barrow (1989, 9) has argued that Kingussie may have been a royal thanage, and possibly Badenoch's secular capital in the Pictish or Alban periods. There was certainly a ceremonial centre here, at least in the fourteenth century, where justice was administered. This was the 'standand stanyes de la Rathe de Kyngucy estir' (*Reg Moray*, no. 159), the standing stones of the rath of easter Kingussie, at which

Alexander Stuart, Wolf of Badenoch, demanded the Bishop of Moray to appear and prove his ownership of, among other properties, lands of the chapels of 'Rate and Nachton' (Raitts and Dunachton). The details of this encounter, recounted in the *Moray Registrum* and discussed further in Chapter 4, clearly shows that there was an open-air court at Kingussie. The 'rath' has been identified as the hillock on which the present church stands (Figure 3.4); according to local tradition, the standing stones were removed when the church was built in 1792 (Oram 1996, 15-16). The hillock is known as 'Tom a' Mhóid or 'Moot Knoll', indicating a judicial function (Watson 1926, 271).

Natural or artificial mounds were frequently important sites for meetings and inaugurations in Early Medieval Britain, as well as Ireland; Moot Hill at Scone, which was used for royal inaugurations and for popular courts, is the most prominent example of such a site in Scotland (Driscoll 1991, 98). In some cases these places were prehistoric monuments such as cairns or, as at Kingussie, standing stones. As Driscoll (*ibid.*) points out, the choice of these monuments for later sites of great local significance in the political landscape throws some light on the meanings they may have carried in the Early Medieval period.

There is also evidence that at least one *pett* or dependent farm helped make up the thanage of Kingussie. Pitmain, now the name of a farm at the west end of Kingussie village (Figure 3.4), translates as 'middle portion' (Watson 1926, 412). The name suggests that there were other portions or dependant farms in addition to the 'middle' one, and its position adjacent to Kingussie lends further weight to the theory that this was the site of a thanage.

The fourth probable thanage is that of Rothiemurchus (Barrow 1999, 1). In a bond of manrent of 1472, Alexander Macintosh is referred to as thane of Rathamurcus (*Miscellany of the Spalding Club* 1842, 252). The name, meaning 'rath of Muirgus (or Morcus)' (Watson 1926, 237-9, 517), suggests there was a defended site of Gaelic-speaking secular authority here. It may correspond to the Doune, the later seat of the Grant family (Tindall & Gow 1999). Its name itself suggests a defended site, and it occupies a strategic position at the narrowest point of Strathspey (Barrow 1999, 1). Rothiemurchus also has an early church or chapel site (see below).

Elsewhere in the study area, place-names and their topographic settings provide further clues to the structure of the landscape in the later first millennium A.D. Other names of Pictish origin in Badenoch include Pityoulish and Pitvarnie; like Pitmain (and many of the other locations of 'pit' names analysed by Whittington (1975)), they are associated with well-drained agricultural land on the fluvio-glacial terraces lining the most open stretch of upper Strathspey (zone 6; Figure 3.3). Pityoulish derives from *peit-gheollais*, or 'portion of bright station' (Watson 1926, 499), while Pitvarnie (near Kincardine) derives from *peit-fheàrna*, or 'alder portion' (Mathieson 1952, 220-21). The place-name Kincardine, which occurs at the north-east end of Badenoch, is also Pictish in origin, from *carden* or 'thicket', and means 'copse-end' or 'wood-end' (Watson 1926, 353).

One other name of Pictish origin in the study area occurs at the north-east end of Loch Laggan, as Aberarder (Figure 3.7), with the purely Pictish *aber* element referring to a river mouth or confluence; on the uplands above it is Uinnèag Choire Ardobhair, or 'the window of Corader' (Watson 1926, 454). Fraser-Mackintosh (1897, 334) also refers to a Comyn grant of 1260 referring to lands in this area which included Abyrcarden – combining the *carden* element with *aber*. Nicolaisen (1997, 113-14) has pointed out that the distribution of *aber* names contrasts with that of *peit* names; *aber* names are attached to places on the floors of river valleys, while *peit* names are associated with better-drained ground. This, he argues, suggests the former were occupied by Picts who were not farmers but 'who made a living from rivers, whether through fishing or through using them for travel or other kinds of routes of communication, as far as the water-courses were navigable' (114). He further argues that some of these confluences and indeed some of the rivers had cultic significance, noting that Christian chapels and churches were often founded close to *aber* sites (*ibid.*, 117). The name Aberarder, which means 'High Water' (*ibid.*, 115), refers to the confluence of Loch Laggan and the River Pattack. Significantly, this is also the site of a chapel dedicated to St. Kenneth (discussed further below). This may represent an instance of an earlier sacred site appropriated for Christian purposes; it is reminiscent of the proximity of St. Michael's chapel to the Pictish or proto-Pictish fort of Dun-da-Lamh, mentioned above.

As Pictland was absorbed into the kingdom of Alba in the later ninth and tenth centuries (see below), Gaelic became the language of the kingdom and gradually replaced

Pictish, while much of the existing administrative and fiscal infrastructure continued in use (Taylor 1997, 10). The place-name *baile* first appeared about A.D. 1100, when it meant 'farm' or 'village' – as noted above, the specific place of habitation, perhaps often within a larger *pett* or dependent estate. By the twelfth century, however, as feudalisation or (to use Taylor's term) 'Europeanisation' began to spread across Scotland, *pett* was no longer actively used in the process of naming newly formed or restructured estates. *Baile* became the indigenous word for 'estate', replacing it (*ibid.*, 11). In some cases, earlier *pett* names in the study area were changed into *baile*- ones, as with Pitourie and Pitchurn (Barrow 1973, 60), although sometimes the *pett* version was still in use in the nineteenth century (*cf.* Fraser-Mackintosh 1897, 340). *Baile* names are scattered along upper Strathspey, in (for example) Ballinluig and Baldow near Alvie, Balnespick near Dunachton, Balnacraig near Insh, Balgowan near Cluny and Balmishag near Crathie. Their appearance, especially where they replace *pett* names, may indicate something of the process of Badenoch's Gaelicisation. The sites of chapels dedicated to Irish saints give another indication.

3.4.2.3 *The chapels of Badenoch*

In Badenoch, the evidence for the survival of Pictish or Alban social and economic structures into the second millennium A.D., particularly thanages and davochs, mostly resides in early feudal documentary sources regarding chapels and their associated davochs. In 1371, when Robert II took the throne, there were 60 davochs in the Badenoch; these are traceable throughout the Medieval period (Barrow 1989). As the Church became established and especially as it was granted land, it effectively became part of the prevailing administrative system, with local clergy acting as the king's representatives along with the local nobility, who in turn gained extra authority through their association with the Church. Thus, the clergy as landowners had interests, equally strong to those of thanes, in managing land for the economic benefit of its royal owners as well as the Church.

From the eighth century, then, much of Pictland (and certainly including the reasonably good arable lands of Badenoch) would have been 'a thoroughly structured and organized landscape of agricultural exploitation'; Foster (1996, 58-64) envisages 'fields and trackways (perhaps defined by hedges, hurdles or dykes to protect crops from

animals), interspersed with grazing and woodland.' With this model in mind, an examination of the possible early chapel sites in Badenoch might further illuminate the organisation of its landscapes and settlement in the late first millennium A.D.

Along the Spey, there are chapel sites at fairly regular intervals on the edges of the valley floor, with another at the head of Loch Laggan (see Figure 3.13). Almost all of those whose dedications are known are associated with early Irish saints; they may have been established in the years following A.D. 900, as Badenoch became part of the kingdom of Alba in more than name. Missionaries from Irish monasteries on the west coast might have worked their way along the Great Glen and into Badenoch from Lochaber, via Loch Laggan and the Corrieyairick Pass, or have come north from Atholl or south from Moray.

Certainly dedications to early saints cannot by themselves indicate early foundations (Anderson 1965, 27). However, the Badenoch chapel and church sites as a group have a certain consistency of character in their locations, and more concrete evidence for some in the form of incised stones, a hand bell and curvilinear enclosures do point to early origins. On this basis, the dedications as a group seem to support (rather than prove) the impression that the chapels represent a well-established system of chapels and associated lands here in the pre-feudal period. Barrow (1989) argues that in Badenoch, the chapels were the expression of a late first millennium A.D. cult of saints, which survived to be taken over by the ecclesiastical feudal authority in the twelfth century.

The positions of the chapel sites in lower Badenoch (zone 6) is particularly striking: those along the north side of the strath almost all lie along the line of the present B9152, close to the line of the Wade military road and the A9, hugging the edge of the floodplain. It is a logical position for any road, following the lowest traversable ground, and these chapels could lie along a much earlier routeway. They also would have stood at the edges of agricultural lands, rather than in their midst – perhaps in the vicinity of associated settlement, but alternatively set apart from it.

There was formerly a chapel at Raitts dedicated to St. Molúog. Unlike all of the other chapel sites in Badenoch, its location has never been discussed by scholars such as

Mackinlay (1914), nor is it listed in the National Monuments Record or Highland Sites and Monuments Record. What has traditionally been known among local inhabitants as the site of the chapel was recently pointed out by the late Meta Scarlett, and was the subject of a pilot season of survey and excavation in the summer of 2000, directed by the author. That work established that this is indeed the site of the Early Medieval to Medieval chapel.

Molúog, an Irish saint, founded the monastery at Lismore near the mouth of the Great Glen and died in 592 A.D. (Mackinlay 1914, 157). Most of the chapels dedicated to him extend in a band eastward and north-eastward from there, possibly indicating the route he or his followers took on their mission work (Simpson 1935, 79). The chapel at Raitts is mentioned, with that at Dunachton, in the 1380 document by Alexander Stuart, and a 1575 charter refers to the land of 'Croft Ma Luac' (Shaw 1775, 371) – probably a reference to an agricultural smallholding attached to the chapel, perhaps once occupied by the incumbent. The chapel itself, however, is not mentioned in documents after the fourteenth century.

The site lies along the north side of the B9152, to the north-east of Chapelpark farmstead, at Lynchat (see Plate 3.13); clearly the farmstead took its name from the site. The name Lynchat has been translated as 'wildcats' field'; its root is related to *lann*, an Irish word used in relation to churches, and its Scottish use for 'enclosure' or 'field' could also in some cases have had ecclesiastical connotations (Watson 1926, 286) – as at the Medieval parish church of Lhanbryde in Moray (Oram 1996, 98). Given the results of the site's evaluation, it seems likely to have had a similar meaning here.

The chapel site is visible as a trapezoidal enclosure, measuring externally about 45 m ENE/WSW by 24 m at its western end and 20 m at its eastern end (see Figure 3.14). It is defined by a substantial, turf-covered bank about 2 m wide and standing between 0.5 and 1 m high. There are undressed stones visible intermittently along the bank, and evidence of facing along the bank's exterior on the north. The enclosure has been slightly clipped by the road on the south-east, and the bank is all but missing along its east side and the eastern part of its north side; here the enclosure is defined by a distinct break of slope. The point where the bank disappears coincides with a field boundary shown on the first edition O.S. map (see Figure 4.33), traces of which are visible on the

ground as a turf-covered stony bank at the enclosure's south edge and as a line of mature trees on the north side of the A9; the bank appears to have been ploughed out on this side, and excavation confirmed that ploughing had truncated features in that area (see below).

The first edition OS map (Figure 4.33) also shows mature trees planted on and in the enclosure; these also appear on a 1946 aerial photograph of the site, although now these are only represented by about 20 stumps, mainly concentrated in the south and east of the enclosure. It is likely these were planted in the late eighteenth or nineteenth century, after the Raitts estate was purchased by James MacPherson (see Chapter Four). The field in which the site lies is undulating, improved grassland, with low-lying areas to north and east of the enclosure; these are flooded through much of the winter. The present tenant of Chapelpark Farm, John Pirie, has farmed there for about 15 years, and generally ploughs up to the edges of the enclosure. The interior is in poor condition, its surface churned by cattle and tractor ruts, and rabbit burrow and sheep scrapes have also damaged the bank in places.

The site and its environs were recorded by total station survey, and then six small trial trenches were opened over the interior and bank (see Figure 3.15): trenches 1 and 6 in the eastern part of the interior, trenches 2 and 3 over a scooped area and an adjacent slight bank near the centre, trench 4 over the bank, and trench 5 in the western part of the interior. Trench 5 found only tractor-compacted ploughsoil (003) overlying the orange gravelly sand subsoil (002), which had been disturbed by tree roots. The scooped feature investigated in trench 3 proved to be a large tree-hole, and trench 2 revealed a slight, tumbled stone wall with twentieth-century finds sealed in the ploughsoil beneath it.

Trench 4, which allowed recording of a section through the bank, showed it may have been built in two phases (see Figure 3.16 and Plate 3.14). It was built first as a low bank with a sandy core (024, 015), faced on either side with stone (024, 026). This was later made more substantial, widened with the addition of well-built outer (011) and inner (014) stone faces and heightened by piling more stones (012) on top in a silty sand matrix (013). No dating material was recovered from the bank's fabric.

Trenches 1 and 6 confirmed that this was indeed the site of the chapel. In both trenches, grave cuts were identified beneath the ploughsoil; the trenches were expanded to expose the full extent of the cuts, and they were then fully excavated and recorded. In both cases, the cuts had been truncated by ploughing and were overlain by compacted ploughsoil (003).

At the western end of trench 1, the ploughsoil overlay a hollow, the base of which was filled with a pale orange-brown, leached, compact sandy loam (005), in which sat several large, angular stones measuring 0.2 to 0.5 m across. These lay in a rough east/west alignment, and were subsequently interpreted as a kind of kerb to the burial that had been disturbed and dragged by ploughing. The leached sandy loam (005) overlying the cut appeared to be a ground surface which had formed over it, overlapping its edges, and had survived plough truncation because of the hollow in which it lay. The burial itself proved to be a long, oval cut (004), 0.3 m deep in its truncated state and measuring 1.8 m east/west, 0.42 m wide near its eastern end and 0.57 m wide near its western end; it had clearly been cut more widely at the west to accommodate the head (see Figure 3.17). Its alignment was 98° east of magnetic north. The cut was filled with a very loose, dark red brown gravelly sand (006), the subsoil originally excavated for the burial and then backfilled. Covering its base was a thin layer of dark red to black greasy silt sand (007), slightly thicker at the western end, which appeared to be the only trace of the person originally buried in the grave (see Plate 3.15).

The burial investigated in trench 6 was almost identical, although slightly larger, measuring 2.06 m east/west, 0.32 m wide near its eastern end and 0.53 m wide near its western end (see Figure 3.17) – again, wider at the west to accommodate its occupant's head. It was aligned to 82° east from magnetic north. The cut (016) was 0.6 m deep, but like that in trench 1 it had been truncated by ploughing. It was filled with a very loose, dark yellow brown silty sand (017), the backfilled subsoil, and again a thin layer of reddish brown silty sand (021) covered the base of the grave, probably a body stain (Plate 3.16).

Phosphate analysis of samples taken of the putative body stains should confirm whether that is their origin, but in any case the results of the evaluation show beyond doubt that this is the site of Raitts Chapel. Its date remains somewhat uncertain. That

the enclosure is not circular or oval might suggest it is not Early Medieval, but it could overlie an earlier enclosure on a different plan. Geophysical survey is planned to establish whether traces exist of an earlier one and to identify any chapel structure, along with the extent and density of burials. The date of the chapel's demise is also uncertain. However, it is likely that with the elevation of Kingussie and Insh chapels to parish churches by the twelfth century (Shaw 1775), small chapels such as this one became less relevant spiritually and less viable economically. As noted above, the chapel itself is not mentioned in surviving documents after the late fourteenth century.

At this point, then, all that can be said is that some time before the thirteenth or fourteenth century A.D. – but quite possibly as early as the tenth century – a priest stood over each of these graves, pronouncing the rites in Latin, probably uncomprehended by those watching the burial of a loved one or neighbour. The people buried and those attending the rites probably lived at Raitts – perhaps on the higher, better-drained ground occupied by the later townships. Barring tree cover, they could have seen the ground rolling up to the higher terrace from the grave side; the artificial scarping for the A9 now partially blocks the view. These tenants were obliged to yield a teind (or tithe) to the Church from their labour on the fields that might have lain within view, agricultural produce which would have helped maintain the priest and helped guarantee their own place in the enclosure (Barrow 1989, 1).

Raitts Chapel is nearly unique among chapel sites in Badenoch, in that it has survived agricultural improvements and has not been built over with a modern enclosure or been filled with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century graves. Only St. Michael's chapel at Ballmishag (discussed below) is better preserved (and indeed possesses what is probably an original curvilinear enclosure). The Raitts Chapel site, already compromised by modern agricultural land use and tree planting, therefore has the best potential for yielding more information on the nature of the small Early Medieval to Medieval chapels in Badenoch and their relationships to the communities they served.

Most of the other early chapel sites lie along this broad stretch of the Spey's floodplain (zone 6). At the north-eastern end of this topographic zone, immediately north of the river, is the site of St. Eata's chapel and burial ground (NH80NE 4; Figure 3.3). A stone-lined natural spring, known as St. Eata's Well, was connected to the chapel

(NH80NE 5). Eata, who died in A.D. 683, was a pupil of Aidan's and first abbot of the monastery founded by Aidan at Old Melrose (MacKinlay 1914, 240). Planting and other recent interventions have removed all traces of the chapel, and its date of foundation and abandonment are unknown. The parish church of Rothiemurchus, now roofless, was built in 1827-30 to replace the pre-Reformation structure (Oram 1996, 139). It was dedicated to St. Duchaldus, possibly a corruption of do-Cheallaich; there were two abbots of Iona called Cellach, while another accompanied Aidan to Northumbria, served as bishop among the Mercians and in the 650s retired to Iona (Mackinlay 1914, 505; Barrow 1999, 1, 5).

On the same side of the strath about two kilometres to the north, the parish church of Alvie is dedicated to St. Drostán. He was the patron of the parish of Urquhart in Inverness-shire, and according to tradition lived for a period there on a piece of ground called Croit-mo-Chrostain, or St. Drostán's Croft (Mackinlay 1914, 217). The ninth century Book of Deer describes him as Columba's nephew and joint founder with him of the monasteries at Aberdour and Deer, land for which was given them by the mormaer of Buchan (Macquarrie 1997, 233). However, the name Drostán appears to have been current in Pictland in the sixth through the eighth centuries and may indicate the saint had Pictish origins (Anderson 1965, 33). In the late nineteenth century, during renovations, 150 uncoffined skeletons were found lying head to head under the floor of the church (NH80NE 17; Figure 3.3). There was no living local memory of their having been interred there; they were re-interred in the churchyard (MacPherson 1893, 56-57). The present church, built in 1798, sits on a knoll that extends into the loch at its western end, almost forming an island; its site is very similar to that of the church at Insh (see below). In both cases the River Spey widens abruptly to form the lochs. The placing of chapels on high knolls at the head or foot of these river-lochs could suggest these locations had some cultic significance, perhaps associated with the river.

Another chapel dedication to St. Drostán occurs a few kilometres up the strath at Dunachton (NH80SW 1; Figure 3.4), where the name and the Class I symbol stone suggest an earlier Pictish presence; this chapel, attached to a davoch in the thanage of Alvie, was certainly in existence by 1380 and, given the Irish (or Pictish?) dedication, very likely before the twelfth century establishment of the Moray bishopric (see Chapter Four). It stood between the present line of the railway and Wade's military road, on

ground known in the nineteenth century as the Chapel Field (Fraser-Mackintosh 1866, 2), at the foot of a scarp which has been exaggerated for construction of the A9. The area between the burial ground and the B9152 is general flat meadowland. The Mackintoshes of Moy enclosed the burial ground with a rectangular stone wall and built a mausoleum there in 1780 (Macbain 1890, 189). Although there are no visible signs of an early chapel, it may well lie beneath the later structure.

About two kilometres to the north-east of Dunachton, what is now Insh parish church stands on a small, high knoll at one end of Loch Insh and on the south side of the Spey (NH80NW 3; Figure 3.3). It is dedicated to Adomnán, appointed abbot of Iona in A.D. 694 and the subject of abundant dedications throughout Pictland. The hillock is called Tom Eunan, or 'knoll of St. Adomnán' (MacKinlay 1914, 56-58). Although the present church structure dates to the eighteenth century, it may incorporate older masonry (MacKinlay 1914, 58). The church is mentioned in the *Moray Registrum* as early as 1226, and again in 1380 and 1603 (Macbain 1890, 174). The present church lies on the lower, north-eastern end of the knoll. Its burial enclosure is a low, mortared masonry wall, rectangular in plan to the east but curving at its western end around an area empty of grave markers. This part of the wall could echo the line of an earlier ecclesiastical enclosure.

A beautiful cast bronze quadrangular bell with an oval looped handle resides in a niche in the church (see Figure 3.18). This is one of only five known bronze quadrangular hand bells in Scotland. All are similar in form to two from Ireland which date to about 900 A.D., but most Irish bronze bells are quite different in form, suggesting an increasing degree of cultural separation between the two ecclesiastical communities. Two of the Scottish bronze bells are from Dunkeld and Forteviot, both royal centres and perhaps indicating royal patronage of the churches there in the late ninth century (Bourke 1983, 464). Local tradition attached to the bell at Insh recounts that it was once removed to Perth, but refused to be silent until it was restored to Insh, but constantly rang out the refrain 'Tom Eònan!' (Macpherson 1893, 222). An old granite font (which used to form a windowsill, to which the hand bell was chained (Anderson 1881, 195)) now holds flowers in the porch; this may be another element of an earlier church or chapel.

On the opposite side of the strath from Lynchat is the burial ground of Cladh ma Chalmaig at Invertromie (Figure 3.4), enclosed by a sub-rectangular drystone enclosure, rebuilt (perhaps to a new plan?) in the early nineteenth century (Harman 1987). The ground inside the enclosure is banked up against the wall, which actually appears to act as a battered revetment (see Plate 3.18). Inside it are several plain, flat and upright slabs in rows, a few with worn inscriptions. There are local traditions of a chapel there, dedicated to St. Colman – possibly the bishop who founded a monastic church at Drummore in Co. Down about A.D. 500, although the Irish Records contain the names of 230 saints of the same name (MacKinley 1914, 93).

About five kilometres up the strath on the same side, a chapel site at Nuide is thought to have been dedicated to St. Fintan or Fintan-Munnu; the latter, an Irish saint, was briefly at Iona in the early seventh century and founded a monastery at Kilmun on Holy Loch (*ibid.*, 71). Unlike all of the other chapel sites, which lie at the edges of the floodplain and usually at the foot of scarps, this is tucked into a high-sided hollow, open only on the north (Figure 3.4). A rectangular enclosure, defined by a post-and-wire fence, which contains several flat, plain grave slabs as well as some small, upright ones. The latest marked burial dates to 1922. A fragmentary stone wall outside the enclosure to the north may be a remnant of an earlier enclosure, but otherwise no remains are visible. The footings of buildings forming a township lie just to the west of the site.

The church at Kingussie, which later became the parish church, was dedicated to St. Columba and (like many others with this dedication) was claimed by local tradition to have been founded by the abbot. Called Cladh Challumcille, it stood on the left bank of the Gynack Burn near the west end of the village (Figure 3.4); the old burial ground is now surrounded by nineteenth-century buildings, and was terraced and landscaped in the nineteenth century. A Carmelite friary was founded here in the fifteenth century (Cowan & Easson 1976, 137; see Chapter Four), supposedly on the site of the earlier church (MacKinley 1914, 46).

Until about 1860, a fair called Feill Challumcille or St. Columba's Fair, was held in Kingussie at midsummer, partly inside and partly outside St. Columba's precincts. Local traditions report that a plague broke out one summer among those attending the fair, but that those within the precincts were not contaminated (MacPherson 1893, 115-

124). According to Anderson (1881, 196-97), it was customary for women to wear white to the fair, and he suggests this may have been an ancient tradition. He also notes the occurrence in pairs here, as elsewhere, of churches dedicated to Columba and Adomnán (the parish church at Insh).

Moving up the strath, the next chapel site is at Banchor, in present Newtonmore (NN79NW 4; Figure 3.4). It was dedicated to St. Bridget, who died in 525 A.D. (MacKinley 1914, 130). No remains are visible of the chapel, although the graveyard is still maintained and in use. Barrow (1989, 6) has noted that farther down the Spey valley, a Bridget dedication at Advie was paired with a Molúog dedication at Cromdale, as the two are paired here in the chapels either side of Kingussie.

In the next topographic zone (5) up the strath, where the floodplain begins to open out into the wide basin of zone 6, is the chapel of Cladh Phadruig (or Patrick) at Biallidbeg (Figure 3.5; NN69NE 8). This was dedicated to St. Patrick (Macbain 1890, 192). The chapel itself was destroyed about 1850 and there are no traces of it, but local traditions hold that it lies beneath one of the walls of the present burial ground, which is still in use. Patrick was, of course, the primary saint of Ireland in the late fourth and early fifth century A.D., and there are pre-Reformation dedications to him throughout Highland Scotland (Mackinlay 1914, 103).

The present enclosure sits on a flat, narrow terrace at the foot of a steep, craggy slope. It is rectangular in plan, but with rounded corners, and it appears to have been recently rebuilt on the west. Like that at Invertromie the drystone masonry is built with a pronounced batter to revet the ground inside, which slopes down from it in a bank up to 1 m wide. Some small, rough slabs protrude from this bank. Several flat slabs occupy the interior, along with a few inscribed headstones of nineteenth and twentieth century date. Curiously, a circular cairn lies inside it, just east of its centre. It measures about 5 m in diameter and 1.2 m high, and is composed of fist-sized stones, its lower parts turfed over. It seems unlikely to be a clearance cairn – partly because of the size of the stones, which are too small to disturb a plough, and partly because of its location. Even today, known burial grounds throughout the Highlands are generally treated with respect, and it would be unusual for clearance to be dumped inside one. It might be an earlier feature related to the use of the burial ground.

On the terrace below this, to the south, are several fields defined by sinuous banks; the Wade military road runs just above them. On the terrace below that are the remains of the township of Biallidbeg (NN69NE 7). The visible remains, consisting of longhouses, enclosures and field systems, appear to be of post-Medieval date. However, settlement might have existed in this location, supported and served by the chapel, from the early Medieval period onward.

In the next, broader topographic zone (4), to the north of the river, a burial ground called Cladh Chluanaidh (St. Clarent's Graveyard) is enclosed within a stone wall (NN69SW 4, at NN 644 892); it had pre-Reformation origins (OS Name Book 53, 106) and was traditionally the burial ground of the chiefs of Clan Macpherson. It went out of use after 1934. On the opposite side of the strath where the Allt Breakachy leads into it is Cladh a'Bhile, a burial ground dedicated to St. Bridget, marked on early estate maps (NN62SW 3; Richardson 1997, 8).

Two other chapel sites in the upper reaches of Badenoch have stronger visible evidence for early origins, in the form of a font, a curving enclosure and an incised slab. On the floor of Strathspey in the broad, open zone 4, is the site of St. Michael's chapel at Ballmishag (NN59SE 1; Figure 3.6). Here a D-shaped enclosure measuring about 20 m east/west by 28 m, and defined by a low, turf-covered stony bank, about 1.8 m wide and up to 0.5 m high, less substantial but otherwise similar to that at Raitts. An entranceway leads into it from the west, with another possible candidate on the south. The bank appears plough-damaged on its north-eastern arc. Near the centre is a faint, oval platform on which is an upright stone (leaning now and in danger of falling), as well as two recumbent gravestones and some small, rounded boulders which are also probably grave markers. The platform may mark the position of a chapel.

The top of the upright stone appears to have broken off, but the shaft and the lower side of one arm of a cross are traceable, incised on one side (see Plate 3.17). The edges of the slab are cross-hatched with crude saltires, and on the reverse is an enigmatic incision. It appears as though a carving on the upper part of the face, possibly of a Celtic cross with four plain bosses, has been superimposed on a carving on the lower part of the face; the latter appears to be of two coarsely executed beasts, facing each other (see

Plate 3.19). Dr. Ian Fisher (pers. comm.) has suggested from the style of the carving that the stone is tenth or eleventh century in date. The Michael dedication may refer to Michael the Archangel (Mackinlay 1914, 15).

The chapel's close proximity to the proto-Pictish or Pictish enclosed site of Dunda-Lamh might be coincidental, but alternatively it could be associated in some way. It lies almost under the nose of the fort, within easy view of it and in the midst of good arable land. There may have been a substantial Pictish community here at the time that missionaries were working their way through upper Badenoch, perhaps crossing Druim Alban from the Great Glen via the Spean corridor or the Pass of Corrieyairick; either route would have led them directly here. The position of the chapel, on open ground on the valley floor, contrasts with the hillfort's lofty location. As noted above, dedications to Michael the Archangel are often associated with high places, and it is possible that this chapel represents the appropriation of an earlier site of spiritual significance and its subsequent shifting to this lower position.

Another possible site, known locally as a burial ground, lies about 100 m to the east of Coull farmstead, about 400 m north-east of the Ballmishag site (Richardson 1997, 9). It consists of a circular enclosure, defined by a tumbled drystone wall. If it is a chapel site, its dedication is unknown, and its proximity to St. Michael's chapel is somewhat anomalous.

One other chapel site, dedicated to St. Kenneth of Aghabo, lies on a plateau at the north-east end of Loch Laggan (Figure 3.7). As discussed above, the proximity of this chapel to the Pictish name Aberarder, at the confluence of the River Pattack and Loch Laggan, could indicate it was one of those sites of Pictish cultic importance (Nicolaisen 1997), and that that significance was harnessed to an early Christian foundation here. In the nineteenth century the parish was known as Laggan-Choinnich, 'Hollow of St. Kenneth', a name also shown on Pont's map of the 1590s. Nearby are the names Iomare Choinnich, 'the ridge of Kenneth' and Crachan Choinnich or 'Kenneth's little burn', while the bay at the end of Loch Laggan near the chapel site is called Camus Cillein, or 'bay of the cell' (Scarlett 1988, 98). Kenneth was reputedly one of Columba's companions when he visited King Bridei near Inverness, and is traditionally said to have visited Laggan (MacKinley 1914, 63). The present church, now a ruin, is thought to have

been built by Allan-nan-Creach (Allan of the Spoils), a member of the Lochiel family, in atonement for his crimes (Macpherson 1893, 94; NN58NW 1).

The site occupies high ground overlooking the expanse of sandy beach at the eastern end of Loch Laggan. A rectangular, mortared stone enclosure defines the burial ground; the ground drops away in a short, sharp break of slope near its east end, and again more gradually in a curving slope near its west end. It is filled with eighteenth- to twentieth-century grave markers, as well as several small, rough slabs (Plate 3.20). One large, thin granite slab bears a very faint, simple incised cross. Although this could be an early carving, the regular thickness of the stone and of the carving would suggest it is of relatively recent date. The rectangular, roofless, drystone church occupies the northern part of the enclosure. Built into the thickness of the wall on the right of the south entrance is a niche, which contains a round, granite baptismal font, thought to be a remnant of the site's earlier use. The present owners of the house immediately west of the burial ground have stated that during landscaping of their garden earlier in the twentieth century, skeletons were discovered (H. Hanson, pers. comm.). If this is true, it would suggest the burial ground has either shifted eastward or contracted over time.

Barrow (1989, 9) interprets Laggan as 'an example of the kind of parish typical of Scotland benorth Forth, where the ecclesiastical and spiritual centre, the site of baptisms and burials and the perpetual round of mass, bore no obvious relation to the ways in which royal or feudal lordship was exercised or for that matter in which pastoral and agricultural resources were exploited.' Noting the paucity of chapel sites in the Spey valley above Banchor, he suggests that Laggan had a low, dispersed population; the highest reaches of the strath may have been used for shieling grounds and hunting, with little or no permanent settlement. He observes that those living in the upper Spey valley between Crathie and Auchmore must have found the location of St. Kenneth's chapel, at the head of Loch Laggan, 'extremely inconvenient'; however, the chapel of St. Michael at Ballmishag, in existence from the twelfth century if not before, would have served that part of the thanage.

His comments do highlight the question of how contemporary settlements related to the sites of Badenoch's chapels. Certainly they are most abundant in the part of the study area most suited for settlement, with well-drained arable ground on the

fluvio-glacial terraces of the bowl which forms zone 6. In the case of chapels here, it may be that tenants lived on the terraces and the slopes leading up to them, above the chapels, which hugged the edges of the floodplain. Perhaps, as Barrow (1989) suggests, the chapels stood apart from what was perhaps a patchwork of fields with settlements either clustered or dispersed around them. The regular distribution of the chapel sites does indicate something of the pattern and density of that settlement, even if the exactly where and how the *neyfs* of Badenoch lived in the late first millennium and early second millennium A.D. are still unknown.

3.5 *Conclusion*

This chapter has used the evidence for Badenoch's occupation through prehistory and the first millennium A.D. to reconstruct how its landscapes were inhabited, organised and perceived throughout these periods. Although only fragmentary remains survive for most of this time span, those that are known suggest that that occupation was fairly intensive, particularly in the period preceding and during the spread of Christianity. By the end of the first millennium A.D., it is likely that Badenoch was highly organised around thanages, dependent farms and church lands, and these provided the social, economic and political frameworks within which most people lived on and worked the land.

The essential elements of its organisation probably survived the arrival of feudal authority in the area around A.D. 1100 and its gradual consolidation over the following centuries, while the effects of the feudal system led to the greater structuring of the landscape and the clustering of settlements over the Medieval and post-Medieval periods. The following chapter examines the archaeological and historical evidence for that evolution, tracing the political events and their social effects on Badenoch's inhabitants and their environment through the second millennium A.D. to the present.

Chapter Four: Medieval and Post-Medieval Badenoch

4.1 *Introduction*

There may have been considerable continuity in population and settlement patterns and only gradual changes in political control between the last period covered in Chapter 3 and the first covered in this chapter. Nevertheless, the division between these two chapters reflects the significant alterations to Badenoch's social, economic and political make-up that began in the early twelfth century and continued through subsequent centuries. This chapter outlines those changes, tracing the archaeological and historical evidence for both feudal power and peasant settlement in the study area throughout the Medieval period. It pursues this evidence through the post-Medieval period, focusing on the results of excavations at the township of Raitts and the traces it has yielded of the everyday life of the tenants. Finally, it outlines the changes to Badenoch's landscapes wrought in the last 200 years.

The tenants living at Raitts from the beginning of the second millennium A.D. would, like those of the other townships of Badenoch, have witnessed changes to the political structure that governed their lives. Through living on the land, building their houses and barns, farming the land, grazing stock, worshipping at the chapel – all of these under the partial influence of the economic parameters imposed on them – they shaped the landscape as it shaped their lives.

Figures 4.1-4.9 show the locations of sites discussed in this chapter. Figure 3.2 shows the positions of these distribution maps in the study area.

4.2 *Medieval Badenoch (early twelfth to mid fifteenth century A.D.)*

This period saw the introduction of military feudalism, a system which was to have significant effects on the character and development of settlement in the study area (see Dodgshon 1998b, 58). While the essential pattern of settlement may have already been established in the thanages, dependent farms and chapel lands which structured the landscape, the gradual imposition of feudal authority altered the system of landholding and the relationship between tenant and landlord, producing

the clusters of settlements which emerged in later periods as townships. This is likely to have been a lengthy process, however, one explored in the following sections.

4.2.1 Badenoch brought within the network of feudalism (early twelfth to early fourteenth century)

4.2.1.1 The historical context

The character of the Scottish kingship evolved further in the eleventh century, although the most significant changes – those which would most directly touch the lives of people living in Badenoch – began in the early twelfth century, with the accession of David I. The name Badenoch is first recorded in this period, in Church records dating to 1229. It has been translated as meaning ‘the drowned land’ or ‘the submerged land’ (probably a reference to the Spey’s tendency to flood, especially where its flood plain is broadest in topographic zone 6) (Watson 1926, 118; Macbain 1890, 173).

Some more general historical background for the beginning of this period will help set in context the subsequent political changes that would directly affect Badenoch. In the mid-eleventh century A.D., the province of Moray reached from the Spey valley to Lochalsh on the west coast and northward from the Mounth as far as Ross, with Badenoch forming its south-eastern part. The Scottish kingdom’s centre of power remained in the south between Perth and Edinburgh (Barrow 1981, 25-26). Moray, however, still saw itself as a quasi-independent kingdom. Macbeth claimed his royal lineage and therefore his right to the Scottish throne partly through the Cenél Loairn, the Dal Riata kindred which had expanded up the Great Glen to the Moray Firth in preceding centuries; he also was descended from Malcolm II, as was Duncan whom he ousted (Cowan 1993, 19). Malcolm Macduncan (later Malcolm III or Canmore) regained the Scottish kingship and defeated him at Lumphanum in A.D. 1057 but, with characteristic intransigence, the people of Moray chose Macbeth’s stepson Lulach Macgillecomgan as their king. Within a year Lulach was ambushed and killed at Essie in Aberdeenshire (Barrow 1981, 26).

Malcolm Canmore’s second marriage, to Margaret, daughter of Edward the Atheling of Northumbria, opened the way for the influx to Scotland of a variety of

continental and English influences. The Scottish court developed close cultural and political connections with the newly-established Anglo-Norman aristocracy of England, and Margaret in particular helped to reform and introduce more structure to the Scottish Church. Donald Bán, who succeeded to the throne after his brother Malcolm's death, expelled the Norman and southern English knights whom Malcolm and Margaret had introduced, but he was supplanted in 1097 by Malcolm's son Edgar, who ruled as a vassal of the Norman kings of England. After his death, a battle over the line of succession was won by his youngest brother David in 1124, with the support of a strong contingent of Norman knights (*ibid.*, 29-32).

It was David who brought the province of Moray, including Badenoch, under the firm and permanent control of the Scottish crown. In 1130 Angus, the then earl of Moray and grandson of Lulach, rose in arms against David but was defeated and killed at Stracathro near Brechin. David then annexed the province and proceeded to feudalise it by degrees (Barrow 1988a, 2-4), bringing Anglo-Norman nobles to Scotland and granting them estates over much of the Highlands as a means of controlling large stretches of territory (Ritchie 1954, 215). He established the Freskin family (who may have been of Flemish descent – but see Crawford 1985) over much of Moray, although it seems that Badenoch continued to be held by its thanes directly of the Crown (Barrow 1988a, 4). The Freskins' adoption of the surname de Moravia ('of Moray'), certainly appended only by royal consent, suggests that in effect they took over the role of the former mormaers or earls (*ibid.*, 3). David appears initially to have created knight's fees and other estates out of the old comital demesnes (those which had belonged to the earls) rather than out of royal lands.

Lands along the upper Spey valley, in fact, remained in royal hands until the early thirteenth century, and that may have been their status anciently, before the earldom was forfeit (*ibid.*, 4). Skene (1880, 83) argues that Celtic political structures endured longer on lands which remained in the Crown's possession, and the evidence of thanages and the endurance of *cain* and *conveth* obligations in Badenoch suggests this may have been the case here (see Chapter 3 and below). Gradually, however, lands in Badenoch were granted as feudal holdings to various supporters of the Crown, a process given impetus by pressure from rival claimants to the kingship.

Moray came under attack about 1229 by Gilleasbuig MacWilliam and his sons, who had claims to the throne possibly through Lulach. They invaded from the west, burning Inverness and several timber castles in Moray and plundering the demesnes of Alexander II, the then king. MacWilliam had been a rival claimant to the throne since 1211, and Young (1997, 27) has suggested that Badenoch was in reality, if not officially, under his control.

Clearly the passes leading from the Great Glen to the upper Spey, via the Corrieyairick and the River Spean, were crucial to MacWilliam's line of attack. In order to control them and secure better protection for his interests than the existing feudal authorities in Moray had provided, the king placed Moray under the wardenship of William Comyn, earl of Buchan. Comyn had gained his earldom through marriage to the daughter of the last native earl or mormaer (Ritchie 1954, 282). He died soon afterward, and in 1234 his son Walter Comyn was granted the heritable lordship of Badenoch (as well as, at the same time, the lordship of Lochaber, illustrating the vital geographical connections between the upper Spey and Spean valleys) (Barrow 1988a, 6).

At this point, then, Badenoch came under direct feudal control. Up to this time, the obligations of *cain* and *conveth* were still attached to Church and Crown lands, but with the process of feudalisation they became less relevant. In a 1225 agreement between the Bishop of Moray and Walter Comyn, for example, the bishop freed Comyn from any obligation to pay the tithe of the king's *cain* for the lands of Badenoch (Skene 1880, 227).

The establishment of a bishopric in Moray was another means by which the Scottish Crown extended its authority over the region, as the king was able to wield influence over the bishop and therefore over his diocese. The bishopric of Moray had been established by the early 1100s (Reg. Moray, xi). Although there is little record of how parishes were formed in Moray, they were defined for the most part in the later twelfth century (Oram 1996, 82), and in Badenoch they seem to have been formed from thanages (Barrow 1988a).

Barrow (1989, 6) argues that in the pre-feudal period (i.e., by the tenth or eleventh century), chapels and burial grounds were established in many davochs and half-davochs in Badenoch in order to provide places for worship, mass and burial to the inhabitants; the distribution and character of probable early chapel sites, outlined in the preceding chapter, supports this view. As parishes were formed out of shires or thanages, some existing chapels or churches were selected for parochial status and given half or whole davochs as endowments for their support (*ibid.*, 10).

The chapels at Raitts, Banchor, Dunachton and elsewhere, discussed in Chapter 3, continued in use at least into the late fourteenth century and would have been subordinate to those at Kingussie, Insh, Alvie and Laggan, which were elevated to the status of parish churches. People living in Badenoch in the early feudal period, then, might have seen a network of small, scattered, informal shrines, holy wells and chapels replaced by parishes with fixed boundaries, which they maintained through their annual offerings and teind (or tithe) in the form of cheese, corn and other products of their labour on the land (*ibid.*, 1).

In 1226, the thanage (now parish?) of Rothiemurchus was granted by the Crown to the Bishop of Moray, chief builder of the cathedral of the Holy Trinity at Elgin, with particular reference to his rights to hunt and cut down the fir trees that grew there abundantly (*Reg. Moray*, no. 29). Barrow (1999, 1-2) points out that this would have given the bishop a base in Badenoch, from which he could visit the parish churches and associated lands there with which Elgin was endowed – Laggan and Kingussie – as well as Insh (see below) and the chapels of Raitts and Dunachton. It would have given him opportunity to receive homage from vassals and tenants, administer justice and receive the teind the Church was due.

Barrow argues that the thanage or shire of Insh may have belonged to the Church, as it had 'an obviously ancient and prominent church site yet no obvious site of secular lordship' (1989, 8). Bishop Andrew selected the half-davoch in which Adomnán's church stood as part of his own allotment. His other half-davoch was very likely that occupied by the township of Balnespick, or 'bishop's toun' (*ibid.*). In other thanages, the Bishop of Moray generally possessed only half a davoch in each (Grant 1993b, 159). The obligations to the Church of people living on and farming

the davochs in the study area are evident from an agreement between Bishop Andrew de Moravia and Walter Comyn in 1229 x 34. It shows that the bishop annually received six pigs; eight 'cogal' of cheese, two and a half chalders of oats and four merks, as the second teind payable from the king's *cain* (*ibid.*, 8). Another agreement between them stated that the bishop would have lordship over all the clerical *neyfs* or native clergy, as well as over two laymen *neyfs* and all their chattels, possessions, children, posterity, and the chattels (movable possessions) of their children, while Comyn would have lordship over all the other lay *neyfs* in Badenoch (Skene 1880, 250).

Contemporary laws also help evoke the character of life for the *neyfs* or *nativi*, unfree tenants on lands such as Raitts. For example, a law issued by Alexander II at Scone in 1214 suggests that food supply was a problem and attempted to ensure it by enforcing arable agriculture (Dodgshon 1980a, 48). It states that 'rustici [*neyfs*] in those places and townships in which they were the previous year shall exercise their agriculture and not neglect their own profit.' It specifies when they should begin to plough and sow, and alludes to spade cultivation: those who possessed less than five cows 'may not use them in ploughing, but shall labour the land with hands and feet, trenching and sowing as much as is necessary for the sustenance of them and theirs' (quoted in Skene 1880, 244). A law issued by William the Lion ruled that earls, barons and freeholders should 'live as lords from their lands, rents, and dues, and not as husbandmen or sheep-farmers, wasting their property and their country with a multitude of sheep and beasts' (*ibid.*, 245).

4.2.1.2 *The archaeology of early feudalism in Badenoch*

This is also the point from which the inhabitants of the study area would have begun to see the direct effects of the new administrative system, most notably in the construction of a castle on the moraine mound at Ruthven (in zone 6; Figure 4.2). This was probably built by John I Comyn, Walter's nephew, before A.D. 1269. The first record of the castle, in a charter, shows it was standing by 1289, but there is evidence to suggest it had already been built for some time: 20 years earlier John I Comyn was challenged by David of Strathbogie because he had built a castle at Blair in Atholl (this may have formed part of the lordship, but alternatively Comyn may

have been acting on behalf of the Crown) (Barrow 1988a, 9). Clearly he built this castle to guard the southern exits of at least two passes over the Mounth: the Minigaig and Drumochter, both of which lead directly into Badenoch near Ruthven. He would have needed a castle at Ruthven to monitor the northern exits of these passes (Young 1993, 198).

Whatever its exact date of construction, this first castle at Ruthven would have been of stone (Barrow 1988a, 7). The glacial mound, already a position of natural strength, has been scarped and its top levelled, very likely in the thirteenth century to create a platform for such a substantial building. Standing proud of the Spey floodplain to the south of the river, the mound visually dominates the south-western part of the broad, oval bowl of Badenoch (see Plate 4.9). Surmounted by a stone castle, it would have made a striking statement of power to those living or passing within sight of it.

Possibly the mound had borne earlier fortifications: it is a naturally defensible feature, which even today during winter floods can become an island. The name has been interpreted as having derived from *rath uaine*, or green fort (Scarlett 1988, 13). If there were earlier halls or forts on it, they would probably have been of timber; although there is no known archaeological evidence for earlier buildings, no systematic or large-scale excavation has been carried out at the site. In any case, the use of stone in Ruthven and other newly-built Norman castles must have helped to reinforce the impression of strength and permanence conveyed by this architecture of feudal authority.

John I Comyn (also known as John the Red), who died in 1274, or his son John II (John the Black) probably built the road which crossed the Gaick plateau to link Ruthven and Blair castles (Kerr 1975, 54). The first edition Ordnance Survey map (1872) names it as *Rathad nan Cuimeinach*, or Road of the Comyns (see Figures 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4). From Ruthven it ascends the ridge along the east side of Glen Tromie, follows the glen southward and then climbs onto the Gaick plateau to run along the west side of Loch an t-Seilich, dropping into Blair via the Kirrichan Sheiling and Glen Barvie (*ibid.*, 61-62). By the seventeenth century it seems to have fallen out of use in favour of the Minigaig Road farther to the east; later maps such

as Roy's Military Survey show the latter as the only road crossing the Gaick. However, both were much more direct routes across the Mounth than Drumochter Pass, the route chosen by General Wade for the new military road in the 1720s. The route of Comyn's Road is 27 miles long while the Minigaig, a well-used drover's route, is 25.5; the route which follows Drumochter is about 42 miles. However, Comyn's climbs to about 2,500 feet and the Minigaig to 2,754 feet, both more than 1,000 feet higher than Drumochter Pass, and therefore they would have been impassable in winter (Scarlett 1988, 75; Kerr 1975, 54)

The northernmost stretch of Comyn's Road is visible today as a trackway leading southward from the site of the castle (now Ruthven Barracks) through a cleft in the hills and past the abandoned township of Braeruthven. It then crosses a burn that runs through a shallow valley to the south of the township before ascending the ridge to Glen Tromie. The burn curves around the west, south and east sides of a slightly raised, oval area – c. 35 m east/west by 22 m – which the road crosses, fording the burn beyond it and continuing up the slope as a distinct hollow-way (see Plate 4.2).

The oval area partly enclosed by the burn appears to have been some kind of defensive feature, closely linked to the road: along the south side of the burn, facing the Gaick uplands, a ditch has been dug and a substantial bank built of its upcast. The bank stands up to a metre high, and some stone is visible is the turf covering it. The low-lying area to the west has been drained, probably in the last century, and at least one drainage ditch is visible leading into the burn; however, the bank and its associated ditch clearly served no such purpose, and are much less regular in form than the drainage features. They follow the burn's arcing course for about 70 m around one side of the oval area. Along the north side of this area and defining it on that side is a shallow channel, damp but not holding standing water; it may be an old burn course. A much smaller ditch and bank (standing only about 0.3 m high) have been dug and built along that side of the oval area.

This appears to have been a defensive structure or fortlet, closely linked to the use of the road; it may in fact have been an outpost for Ruthven Castle. The route of Comyn's Road as it descends from Glen Tromie is not directly visible from

the site of the castle. Those manning the outpost could have given the castle forewarning of any threat from the Gaick by means of a runner or even a beacon on top of Braeruthven, and they could also have monitored traffic from the northern exit of the pass. The much more substantial bank and ditch on the south, coupled with the burn on that side, suggests they were more concerned about approaches or attacks from the uplands. The poor visibility and the much slighter bank and ditch on the side leading toward the castle suggest they did not fear attack from that direction. (The fortlet has not, to my knowledge, been previously observed or commented upon by either archaeologists or historians; I am grateful to Paul Basu, who first noticed it and pointed it out to me.)

A local tradition concerning Walter Comyn, lord of Badenoch from 1234, concerns the road. According to the story, one summer he decreed that all the women between the ages of 12 and 30 in Ruthven would have to work naked in the fields as they gathered in the harvest. He then left for Atholl. Departing from Atholl some time later to return to Ruthven and enforce the order, he set out on horseback along the Comyn's Road. Late that same day his horse returned to Atholl, riderless except for a leg trailing from one stirrup. A search party sent out the following morning came upon two eagles preying on Comyn's body; the birds were said to be the mothers of two of the girls who would have been the object of his ruling. From this story came the traditional local curse, 'Walter's fate of Gaick on you' (Kerr 1954, 69; Macbain 1890, 185). The story's lurid and fantastic details are probably fictitious, but its spirit may shed hazy light on the nature of the Comyns' relationship to the local people over whom they ruled. Certainly more sober documentary evidence securely dated to the following century indicates elements of terrorism in the rule of later feudal overlords in Badenoch (see below).

Ruthven was the *caput* or chief seat of the Red Comyns, a senior branch of a family whose power and territorial control grew exponentially between 1240 and 1306; it would therefore have been the locus and symbol of power in Badenoch in the thirteenth century. Where and how, then, did those over whom they ruled live? Banks (1996) has postulated that Highland rural settlement in the Medieval (as well as earlier) periods was influenced largely by the location of centres of power. He suggests that different settlements were positioned according to the level of

obligation which existed between their inhabitants and the local lordship, with those who served it on a daily basis living closest to the centre of power and those who only provided rent, seasonal agricultural service or occasional military service living farther away.

Certainly the surrounding area would have been peopled, perhaps densely, at the time for, as Barrow (1988a, 1) has noted, 'there could be no power without population.' From the *caput* the Comyn family would have overseen the farming townships, mills, churches and chapels which early feudal lordship carried with it (*ibid.*, 2). Any buildings housing those who served the daily needs of the household might have been on the mound itself, although space on its top is limited. Those who served the *caput* on a less intimate but still regular basis might have lived on the well-drained slopes immediately to the south-west, the site of Ruthven township in the post-Medieval period and now occupied by Ruthven Farm (Figure 4.2).

Elsewhere, while the evidence of *davochs* (discussed further below) suggests that the pre-feudal settlement pattern continued to a large extent throughout the study area, the nature of that settlement for this period in Badenoch is still unknown from archaeological remains. However, as Dodgshon (1980a, 57) argues, 'In all probability [by c. A.D. 1100] there simply existed *a well-spaced but still elemental pattern* based on touns that appear later as key settlements' (original emphasis).

A few other traces of early feudal authority are known in the study area. The castle of Loch-an-Eilean stands on a small, natural island in the loch of that name, in Rothiemurchus (zone 11; NH80NE 1; Figure 4.1). Plate 4.1 shows the castle viewed from the loch shore, while Figure 4.10 presents Simpson's (1937) phased plan of the building. Shaw (1775) attributes it to the Comyns, although Simpson (1937) found no architectural evidence for a thirteenth or fourteenth century construction. It may, however, stand on the site of an earlier fortification. As noted above, the lands of Rothiemurchus had been granted by Alexander II to Andrew, Bishop of Moray in 1226 in exchange for other lands; Rothiemurchus was heavily forested even then, and the Bishop mortified it to the Cathedral of Elgin, to furnish its lights and candles (Shaw 1775, 40). Barrow (1999, 1), following Bryce (1991) has suggested that the

earliest structural element on the castle might have been built by Bishop Andrew between 1222 and 1242.

A possible motte has been identified at the north-eastern end of topographic zone 6, at Inschriach (NH80NE 22; Figure 4.1). It lies just within what was formerly the shire or thanage of Alvie, at the northern end of the long, narrow part of the shire which extends southward along the River Feshie, and which appears to have been much less densely populated than the northern part on the opposite side of the River Spey (Barrow 1988a, 3; see Fig. 3.12). If this is a motte, it may have been a base from which this part of the shire was administered. Its position close to the river would have allowed its occupants fairly easy access to the northern part and would also have let them monitor activity along this side of the Spey. The same is true of another possible motte (NH80NE 33; Figure 4.1) near The Doune, the later Grant family mansion; its name does suggest an earlier (Gaelic period) defended structure here. Both monuments indicate the strategic importance of this part of the strath and the high level of organisation imposed by those in control of it.

At the opposite end of the study area, archaeological remains in Loch Laggan appear to date from the Medieval use of Eilean an Rìgh, a small, natural island near Ardverikie; the name means 'Island of the King', and an alternative name for it is King Fergus's Isle (NN48NE 1; Figure 4.8). While its association with royalty is probably of recent antiquarian origin, the nature of the remains does suggest the fairly high status and wealth of those who used it. The larger of two neighbouring islands bears the remains of a building of rubble masonry, discovered and recorded by written notes (but unfortunately no drawn or sketched record) when the loch level dropped by 16 feet in 1934 (Maxwell 1951). A doorway to the building was observed at the top of a nearly vertical rock face on the island's shore, with sockets cut into the rock on either side. There was also evidence of a collapsed wooden pier. On the island itself, the rubble-built structure, bound with lime mortar, appeared to have had a roof covering of shovel-shaped turves fixed with wooden pegs. This stone building sat atop the burnt remains of an earlier structure. A heavy beam of black wood, with mortises and pegholes evident, was found, along with many pieces of fired clay wattle. Pieces of men's, women's and children's sewn leather shoes were also discovered. In addition, sherds of buff-coloured, wheel-turned Medieval pottery, a

wooden dish shaped like a three-legged pot and a long-handled wooden vessel were found along with fragments of cloth. Finally, part of a carved wooden tracery screen or panel was discovered (see Figure 4.12).

The evidently high status of the building, the evidence for substantial (although probably not permanent) occupation and its location on this tiny island are consistent with traditions of its use as a hunting or fishing lodge, perhaps by the lords of Badenoch or Lochaber. Loch Laggan lies directly on the route which links the two lordships, and this route from the western to central Highlands is likely always to have been important to those who controlled both regions.

Other remains found on the shore at Ardverikie and in the loch might also be traces of their presence. A logboat found on Eilean an Rìgh (NN48NE 2) might have borne people to the island in the Medieval period. Fragments which survive of the boat have been identified as a floor timber, two conjoined sections of plank – with hair-derived caulking material between them – and a repair patch with a handmade nail in it (Mowat 1996, 99). The boat has been tentatively dated to the early fifteenth century.

A smaller, nearby island was known in the nineteenth century as Eilean n'Cone, or Island of the Dogs, and is said to have been where hunting dogs were kept (Grant 1790, 227), although there is only a heap of boulders on the island now, with no evidence of a structure (NN48NE 1). At Ardverikie, on the nearby shore, is an oval earth-and-stone mound, a metre high and aligned east/west, measuring c. 8 m by 4 m (NN58NW 2). It is known locally as Kings Grave, and there are traditions that a King Fergus is buried in it. In the nineteenth century, according to the New Statistical Account, during trenching for a garden in the immediate vicinity of the grave a silver coin of Henry II (king of England in the mid 1100s, knighted by David I of Scotland) was found (Cameron 1839). Scotland had no coinage of its own before the reign of David I (Barrow 1981, 20). The loss or deposition of a coin here suggests that people of some wealth and status were at the site in the later twelfth century or afterward.

These scattered pieces of archaeological evidence and the more abundant historical evidence from Badenoch's period of early feudalisation reveal something of the landscape as it was structured by the politically and economically powerful, rather than those who would have made up most of the population. Nevertheless, together they help fill out the picture of how the landscape was inhabited and organised, and clarify the gaps to be filled through future research. The same potential and limitations apply to evidence from the following period.

4.2.2. *Gaelic lordship under the Wolf of Badenoch (early fourteenth to mid fifteenth century)*

4.2.2.1 *The historical context*

This section deals in some detail with the political history of Badenoch in the early fourteenth to mid fifteenth centuries. While it may seem excessively historical, the events, personalities and political forces of the period are important to reconstructing something of its social history. Nothing was recorded directly of those people who made up most of the population of Badenoch during this time, and their archaeological traces have yet to be discovered. Therefore, the recorded history must be used to draw out whatever can be extrapolated about their lives and the tasksapes they inhabited.

The Comyn family held the lordships of Badenoch and Lochaber for only about 70 years: in 1306 John III Comyn was murdered in Dumfries by Robert Bruce and his followers for his failure to support Bruce's bid for kingship. John's son (also John) claimed his hereditary right to the lordship, but Bruce considered it forfeit and in 1313 bestowed it on his nephew Thomas Randolph as part of the newly reconstituted earldom of Moray (Barrow 1988a, 6). The feudal power structures which the Comyns had imposed on Badenoch had not had time to take deep root; in any case it is likely that the Comyns' actual authority had been weaker in some years than others and that sometimes rents were due in name only (Macbain 1890, 153). For the next century or more 'Badenoch, along with other central Highland earldoms and lordships, endured a period of sustained political, economic, military and social disruption which saw the established networks of aristocratic power in the area obliterated, refashioned, and then destroyed again' (Boardman 1996, 2).

Within 20 to 30 years, the Randolphs' control over the study area had loosened as a result of various power struggles among the Scottish nobility, and the male line ended with the death of John Randolph in 1346. The general breakdown of royal control in the region had two significant effects locally. Powerful Hebridean families such as Clan Donald and Clan Ruari were able to push eastward into the western and central Highlands, including Lochaber, putting pressure on the existing power structures. At the same time, local power devolved and fragmented among lesser Gaelic noblemen commanding kindreds which emerged as strong, politically semi-independent forces as the power of the Lowland-based aristocracy declined; in Badenoch as well as Lochaber these coalesced as the Clan Chattan confederacy, among whom the most prominent families were the Mackintoshes and Macphersons (Boardman 1996, 3). The Mackintoshes of Rothiemurchus, who had supported Bruce against the Comyns, continued to occupy their lands between the Spey and Findhorn rivers under their feudal superior, the Bishop of Moray (Scarlett 1988, 55). Law and order had degenerated by the mid fourteenth century to the extent that David II described Badenoch and Strathspey in a 1365 charter as characterised by local warfare of such intensity that it had effectively disabled justice in these areas (Boardman 1996, 3).

The emergence of local lords with personally loyal military followings was encouraged by disruptive social and economic factors: declining levels of population and agricultural production, a long period of warfare at both local and national scales and the onset of the Black Death. Areas of Perthshire and Angus to the south of Badenoch, on the other side of the Mounth, were described as wastelands in the 1330s, with crops, people and their settlements virtually wiped out and this, of course, adversely affecting the incomes of ecclesiastical and secular landowners (*ibid.*, 4). It is likely that in Badenoch, as elsewhere in the Highlands, the expansion of existing settlements and the colonisation of unbroken ground for new ones ceased for a time after these catastrophes, to revive only in the late fifteenth century (Dodgshon 1980a, 52).

Where militarised lordships, whether locally grown or Hebridean in origin, were taking control of parts of the western and central Highlands, their main

instruments appear to have been troops of men called caterans. An agreement made in 1394 between Alexander, son of John of Islay, Lord of the Isles, and Thomas Dunbar, then the earl of Moray, illuminates their activities. In it Alexander agreed not to allow 'his men, nor other caterans he is able to, of whatever rank they shall be, to beg through the lands of Moray nor to consume or ruin them' (quoted in Boardman 1996, 5). As one of the defining characteristics of caterans, their lords forced local populations to accommodate and feed them. Complaints made by Parliament in 1384 and 1385 indicate that groups of caterans were employing tactics of violence, intimidation and terror to extract sustenance – partly through cattle raiding – from tenants who evidently resisted and resented them. Therefore, 'by the close of the fourteenth century, it was clear that a substantial military following, which lifted its supplies and wages direct from tributary populations and estates, had become an essential element in the successful exercise of power across much of Gaelic Scotland' (*ibid.*, 7).

Badenoch's most notorious and colourful ruler, Alexander Stewart, known later in his life as the 'Wolf of Badenoch', emerged in and partly from this unstable milieu. His father, Robert the Steward (later Robert II), was nephew and heir apparent of David II; in 1368 he and two of his sons (although not Alexander) were required publicly to agree not to harbour 'evil-doers' in their lordships (*ibid.*, 8). By this time Alexander was controlling the lordship of Badenoch, one of the most troubled areas, although it was not yet officially his. Ruthven Castle was his seat by 1370; from it he issued a pledge to protect and defend the lands and tenants of the Bishop of Moray in Strathspey and Badenoch as if they were his own (Grant 1993b, 143); he promised never to bring the tenants into his courts or judgements, or demand levies of corn, cattle or marts or duties on animal skins (Barrow 1999, 3). These included lands associated with the chapels of Raitts and Dunachton. Clearly Alexander and his 'friends and men' had been extracting money and other goods from the tenants living on those lands, as they promised not to do it again (Boardman 1996, 7).

Alexander Stewart apparently gained the lordship through his father's second marriage to Euphemia Ross, countess of Moray and widow of the last Randolph earl. Key to his ascendance in real, not just titular, terms in Badenoch (as well as Atholl

and other lordships) was his ability to win the support and manipulate the power of the militarised Gaelic kindreds which had emerged locally as feudal control disintegrated. Alexander, although of the Lowland aristocracy, invested himself personally and politically in Gaelic culture, partly through his probable secular marriage to *Mairead inghean Eachainn* of Ross, mother of his children. His sons were apparently raised to speak Gaelic, and both they and Alexander personally led cateran forces in Badenoch in the late fourteenth century. His Gaelic appellation *Alasdair Mòr mac an Rìgh* ('Great Alexander, son of the king') may reflect the authority he was perceived as possessing, as a prince of the royal line, as well as the reputation he acquired as a powerful lord (*ibid.*, 9-10). Grant (1993b), however, argues that he ultimately failed to control violence, administer justice and maintain his authority in Badenoch and elsewhere, partly because he had no real kinship base in the Highlands and partly due to flaws in his character. Medieval historians such as Walter Bower described him as 'insolent and malign' (*ibid.*, 157), and during his lordship the tenants of Badenoch experienced great instability, as the lands they occupied and worked were exploited, pillaged and wrested between different forces.

With his father's accession to the throne as Robert II in 1371, Alexander's power grew through a series of royal grants of titles, including his commission as sheriff of Inverness outside the regality of Moray, lieutenant of all of Scotland north of Moray, royal justiciar in northern Perthshire and (on behalf of his under-age brother) control of the castle and barony of Urquhart. He gained further territory as aristocratic families resigned feudal titles to him, perhaps a reflection of his actual power at the time in contrast to their own ineffectiveness. Finally, his marriage in 1382 to the recently widowed Euphemia, countess of Ross – enabled by papal dispensation, probably against her wishes and certainly against those of her son's supporters – brought him the earldom of Ross in liferent as well as a range of heritable lordships, thanages, baronies and other titles in the Western Isles, Sutherland, Caithness, Atholl and Galloway. With all of these and his acquisition in the same year of the earldom of Buchan, he emerged by 1382 as the most powerful magnate in northern Scotland, underpinned by strong military backing (Boardman 1996, 10-12).

In the following years, however, he came under increasing attack from, above all, the Bishops of Moray and Aberdeen. Both bishops held estates in Alexander's political heartland of Badenoch and Strathspey, as well as Buchan, which were suffering at the hands of the cateran forces he maintained and deployed. The Bishop of Aberdeen, for example, complained that the tenants of Church lands of Birse, near Aboyne, could not and dared not stay in their homes or continue farming the land because of threats of violence (*ibid.*, 14). At a general council held in 1385 there were further complaints about caterans' killing, plundering and demanding shelter in Moray; the bishops' appeal to the Crown for redress amounted to 'a clear statement of no confidence in the royal lieutenant in the north, whom [they] . . . probably regarded as the chief defender and employer of the caterans who afflicted their estates in Badenoch and Strathspey' (*ibid.*, 15).

Tensions escalated between Alexander Stewart and Alexander Bur, the Bishop of Moray, particularly over Alexander Stewart's failure (as the Bishop saw it) to protect his tenants on Church lands in Badenoch and Strathspey from extortion and violence. While it was not uncommon in this period for overlords to have problems in disciplining cateran forces, the contemporary documents which chart the battle between Alexander and the Bishop imply that Alexander actually encouraged the terrorising activities of his followers in order to enlarge his own powers. At the same time, the Bishop seems to have been trying throughout his tenure to assert the independence of the bishopric from anyone but the Crown (Grant 1993b, 146).

The two quarrelled spectacularly over jurisdiction of lands in Badenoch, including those of Raitts. The Bishop had claimed that any secular powers of jurisdiction over the bishopric had lapsed with the extinction of the male Randolph line. In response to this challenge, in 1380 Alexander required the Bishop's presence at the standing stones of the 'Rathe de Kyngucy estir' (the ceremonial centre associated with the putative thanage of Kingussie, and the 'Moot Hill' discussed in the preceding chapter) to show his titles to Church lands in the lordship (*Reg. Moray*, no. 159). These included the 'lands of the chapels of Rate and Nachton', as well as davochs in Laggan ('Logachnacheny'), Insh ('Ardinche'), the kirkland of Kingussie and the bishop's half-davoch of Kincardine (MacPherson 1893, 119; Grant 1993b,

159). The Bishop appeared with a group of supporters but remained outside the court, protesting against the summons and declaring that he held these lands directly of the king. After a series of moves and counter-moves, Alexander ruled the episcopal lands forfeit. The next day, however, at Ruthven Castle, he conceded the bishop's right to the lands and the record of the case was cut out of the court roll and ceremonially burned in a fire in the great hall. The lands of the chapels of Raitts and Dunachton remained, along with the others contested, in the hands of the Church; several years later, and probably by way of exchange, the Bishop gave Alexander Stewart a tack for three lives of Rothiemurchus (equalling six davochs), but reserving to himself and future bishops all nests or eyries of hawks (Barrow 1999, 3)

The story is fascinating for its evocation of strong personality clashes and political manouvering, but it also helps to flesh out the material context of the events. Moot Hill in Kingussie, now the site of St. Columba's Church (built in 1792), is a large, flat-topped knoll, with steep sides to the south, east and west and a longer slope to the north side, the easiest route of approach. The Bishop may have advanced with his retinue up this slope, stopping just within earshot. That he remained outside the court on 10 October 1380, delivering his lengthy protest, suggests it was an open-air court, perhaps with Alexander sitting in judgement among the standing stones on the hill. (According to local tradition, the stones were removed when the new parish church was built in 1792 (Oram 1996, 15-16).) The hill lies directly across the floodplain from the site of Ruthven Castle; for those attending the court it would have loomed in the distance, a potent symbol of Alexander Stewart's power.

The group of local clergy and landowners who witnessed the ceremonial burning and show of conciliation the next day in the castle's great hall must have been keenly aware of the tensions between the men and the power of Alexander's followers to inflict hardship on local tenants. The chaplains from the chapels of St. Molúog at Raitts and St. Drostán at Dunachton, whose parishioners would have felt the effects of peace or hostility most keenly, might have been among them.

An uneasy peace prevailed between Alexander Stewart and the Bishop of Moray for several years afterward. However, they clashed again in 1389, when Alexander's lawful wife Euphemia complained that he was co-habiting with Mairead and the Bishop ordered him to return to her. A few months later the Bishop delivered another blow to Alexander's pride and authority by retaining Thomas Dunbar, son of the earl of Moray and by now Sheriff of Inverness, to protect his 'lands, possessions, rents, men, castles and manor-houses . . . and [his] rights and interests against all "malefactors" and "caterans"' (Boardman 1996,17). Apparently Alexander was still not restraining cateran bands from their plunder and other activities, and this agreement meant that Dunbar could intervene militarily and judicially in areas of his lordship.

These humiliations proved too much for Alexander to bear, and in May 1390 he and his caterans attacked and burned the burgh of Forres and, in an act of extreme sacrilege which secured his public reputation as the 'Wolf of Badenoch', burnt Elgin and its cathedral. (Grant (1993b, 152) suggests that this may have been a kind of twisted pun in action: the teinds of the lands of Rothiemurchus, which the Bishop had ceded to Alexander in exchange for the Church's acknowledged right to the lands of Raitts, Dunachton, etc., had for 150 years gone toward providing lights and candles for Elgin cathedral.) The Bishop excommunicated him, although he was later absolved after agreeing to compensate the Church. Soon afterward Euphemia divorced him, on the grounds that their marriage had 'been the cause of wars, plundering, arson, murders and many damages and scandals and it is likely that more will happen if they remain united' (quoted in Grant 1993b, 153).

A Scots translation of a late fifteenth century French bestiary indicates the nuances of meaning which accompanied the appellation 'wolf': a 'cruell, reiffand [plundering] and stark [strong] man on fut; and for wodnes [madness, rage] to complet his will did with gud will slauchter and homicid' (Houwen 1994, quoted in Boardman 1996, 1); this gives some idea of how Alexander was perceived, at least by his political foes. With the loss of Ross which accompanied the divorce, Alexander lost much of his former territories, and in the 1390s his control constricted to his original areas of lordship – Badenoch, Strathspey and northern Perthshire – where he may still have had a loyal following among locally powerful Gaelic families, although

Grant (1993b) questions this. His political fortunes began to recover somewhat in the early 1400s, but he died in 1405 with his public image as the Wolf of Badenoch largely intact (Boardman 1996, 18-20, 22).

Alexander's son of the same name, although illegitimate, secured the earldom of Mar through his marriage to Isabella of Mar. In this he had the support of the Mar nobility, almost certainly because of his command of and control over cateran forces in the uplands to the west of Mar, notably Badenoch and Strathspey. In Alexander Stewart II they had a source of protection and also a means of resisting the advances of the Lordship of the Isles into the Great Glen and beyond. In 1429, there was a campaign against these forces in Mar's lands in Badenoch, showing that Lordship caterans had pushed at least that far, presumably from Lochaber via the Spean and upper Spey (Brown 1996, 37).

Although Alexander's rule over Mar and upland lordships to the west was generally accepted and supported by the Lowland aristocracy and Crown, he was 'himself a cateran leader, a product of a militarised Gaelic society' into which he had been born and brought up (*ibid.*, 42). His customs and cultural affinities were Gaelic, and he was articulate enough in the language to compose poetry in it during his flight from Inverlochy after defeat there in 1431. In spite of his more or less constant struggle to extract rent from and control local Gaelic kindreds, elements of the Clan Chattan confederacy in Badenoch largely supported him; some of them may have been his own kin (*ibid.*, 39-40, 45).

Where and how these powerful families lived in Badenoch is not known, nor are their origins entirely clear. It may be these were the descendants of pre-feudal thanes who had continued to wield power locally under the Comyns, and that the kindreds of the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries lived in the same locations and in a similar style to them. The Bishop of Moray's 1380 reference to his lands, men, rents, castles and manor-houses in Badenoch and Strathspey (*Reg. Moray*, no. 159) gives some idea of the buildings, population levels and resultant income on these Church lands. The chapels of Raitts and Dunachton continued in use throughout this period, although the nature of the buildings themselves is still unknown and no other chapel buildings from the time survive in the study area.

That the lands associated with them continued to produce rents shows that they were indeed populated and farmed by the same tenants whom the caterans terrorised.

Even the relatively sparse and terse legal documents that survive from the period hint at the extreme insecurity and vulnerability of people at this level of society. The small tenants on lands such as Raitts and Dunachton must have been members of local kindreds, perhaps rivals to those of the cateran bands who victimised them. Caterans may have burned their buildings and fields, perhaps several times over the century or so when they were most active. Their houses would almost certainly have been fairly insubstantial, probably composed of the basic elements of timber couples, turf walls and heather thatch and perhaps also the stone wall footings that characterise the local vernacular architecture of the post-Medieval period. Stones, however, might well have been re-used for subsequent structures, and the less permanent building materials would have left little trace as surface remains (Morrison 1974, 66). Indeed, tenants may have shifted the locations of their settlements, rather than re-building on the same site (Dodgshon 1980a, 63). The pattern of their settlement for this period is open to debate. Barrow (1973, 270) envisages fairly widely dispersed townships, with no clear nucleus of settlement. Tenants' houses, barns and yards may have been scattered over a wider area than the nucleated clusters of the post-Medieval townships, although they probably did live near or around the arable land they farmed. Dodgshon (1998b) discusses the evolving pattern of Highland rural settlement, and his views are examined in more detail below.

In Badenoch, it is likely that the pattern of social units, organised around the township and/or davoch, endured in its basic form from pre-feudal times (as the chapel lands suggest) through the Medieval period to the early nineteenth century. Certainly over much of the study area, ground which would have been suitable for permanent settlement and agriculture was (as now) limited to the sides of the strath between the base of the fluvio-glacial terraces and (given climatic conditions) c. 300 m above OD, particularly in zone 6. The floodplain and the higher ground might have been exploited seasonally for pasture.

It is likely, therefore, that these well-drained terraces were in fact the focus of settlement in the Medieval period as well as the post-Medieval, even if that earlier settlement was more dispersed. Future archaeological work might illuminate the effects of the climate of violence on the lives of the tenant population, although the very instability of those lives and the apparently more stable and enduring land use of subsequent centuries might mean that few traces remain to be found. While subsequent decades and centuries saw political changes in Badenoch, the environment and everyday lives of dependent commoners may have changed much more slowly as the forces of feudalism re-shaped the landscape, while the basic pattern of land division endured.

4.3 Late Medieval to post-Medieval Badenoch (mid fifteenth to early eighteenth century A.D.)

4.3.1 The historical context and the archaeology of power

In 1435 James I annexed Mar, initiating 20 years of conflict which would eventually change the power structures of Scotland north of the Mounth and bring the former lordships, including Badenoch, more closely under royal control. When Alexander Gordon was created Earl of Huntly in 1452, he was given various manors and lordships, including that of Badenoch, and created Sheriff of Inverness (Shaw 1775, 54). The Gordons held extensive lands in the study area throughout the late Medieval and post-Medieval periods, and they still hold lands there, although they are much diminished.

Although this period in Badenoch saw less local warfare and insecurity than previous centuries, its castles continued to be important and contested centres of power. The tower that forms the nucleus of Loch-an-Eilean Castle (Figure 4.1; Plate 4.1) appears to date to the late fifteenth century (NH80NE 1). It was gradually expanded over the next two centuries to fill the available space on the small, natural island it occupies, with the addition of a hall, curtain wall, guard house and lodging (Simpson 1937, 57-60). The earliest historical record of the castle refers to James Malcolmson; he took refuge there in 1527 after murdering Lachlan Mackintosh, chief

of Clan Chattan, who held Rothiemurchus from the Bishop of Moray for the yearly rent of a fir-cone, payable on demand (*ibid.*, 61; Scarlett 1988, 62). Malcolmson was captured and killed by Mackintosh's kinsmen. In 1539, the Bishop of Moray confirmed a grant by Alan Keir Mackintosh to Master George Gordon of Beldorney, a son of Lord Huntly. The grant bestowed on him the kirklands of Rothiemurchus along with the loch, manor-place and fortalice, and this may have been a reference to Loch-an Eilean Castle (Simpson 1937, 61).

In 1680, according to a topographical description of Strathspey, the castle was 'usefull to the Countrey in time of troubles or wars: for the people put in their goods and children here, and it is easily defended' (quoted in Simpson 1937, 62). Indeed, in 1688-9, the Grants of Rothiemurchus and their neighbours had to take refuge in the castle, which was attacked from the shore with muskets; the then Lady Rothiemurchus manufactured a steady supply of lead balls for its defence from inside the walls (Fraser-Mackintosh 1897, 413). The *Rathan nam Mearlach* or 'Thieves' Road' runs along the loch side and is said locally to have been used by reivers from Lochaber to drive cattle stolen from Moray (Scarlett 1988, 61).

Ruthven Castle continued in use, with several episodes of destruction and rebuilding, throughout the Medieval period. In 1451, just before the Gordons' acquisition of Badenoch, John, Earl of Ross, stormed and partly ruined it. The Gordons appear to have rebuilt it quickly, as James II visited it in 1459. In the late sixteenth century George, sixth Earl of Huntly, built a new castle on the site (he actually built two in quick succession; the first burnt down through the 'adventure or negligence of his servants') (MacPherson 1893, 366)).

Pont, who collected his geographical observations in the 1590s (Stone 1989, 5), describes the castle as 'the only and principal dwelling of the Lord of the Country, well seated upon a green bank about a bow shot from the river' (quoted in Kerr 1975, 74). John Taylor, writing in 1618, recounts spending several days hunting in Badenoch, 'where having such sport and entertainment as wee formerly had after foure or five dayes pastime, wee tooke leave of hunting for that yeere; and tooke our journey toward a strong house of the Earles, called Ruthven in Bagenoch, where my

lord of Eugie and his noble Countesse (being daughter to the Earle of Argile) did give us most noble welcome three days' (quoted in Hume Brown 1891, 123).

The castle saw combat again in 1647, during the Civil War, when General Leslie laid siege to it, captured it and held it under the captaincy of the Macphersons. Two years later it was attacked again, and this time garrisoned by the English under Cromwell (Cox 1998, 1106). During the reign of Charles II it was garrisoned again in order to deter local trading in stolen cattle (Scarlett 1988, 11). In 1685, the Duke of Gordon was granted the lordship of Badenoch, and established a pro-Williamite garrison in the castle; it was attacked by Graham of Claverhouse and again reduced to a ruin. Remnants of the sixteenth century castle built by the sixth Earl of Huntly, including a wall base, were found during recent excavations there (Cox 1998).

Shaw (1775, 208) recalled seeing the ruins before they were razed for the construction of barracks in 1719. He describes the south wall of the castle as about nine feet thick, pierced by an arched entryway with an iron grate and portcullis. The other walls were 14 feet high and four feet thick and enclosed a courtyard containing low buildings and a well; there were towers at the two northern corners. When Hanoverian government troops built their barracks on the mound (see below), they demolished the remaining ruins but re-used the water supply to supply the garrison and also re-used some of the earlier wall bases for the barracks structures (Cox 1998, 1116). Mackintosh (1897, 370) records that during reconstruction of the well for the garrison, timbers from an earlier well shaft were found.

The Comyn's Road (Figures 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4) was still in use in 1500, when a contract between George, Earl of Huntly, his oldest son Alexander, John, Earl of Atholl, and Robert of Tulliment granted license to the inhabitants of Badenoch and other lands of Huntly's north of the Mounth to pass through the Earldom of Atholl and the Barony of Tullimet unhindered. It promised 'freedom for all and sundry of inhabitants of Badenoch on the north side, to come and go through the said lands of Atholl and Tullimet, with your goods and carriage, passing and repassing as often as you want. No one is to be stopped' (quoted in Kerr 1975, 56). This suggests firstly that there was a well-established route across the Gaick at this time and secondly that it saw frequent use by people travelling, with goods, perhaps including cattle.

By 1689, however, the Minigaig Road seems to have replaced the Comyn's Road as the principal route across the Mounth; Robert Greene's map, published in that year, shows it as the only road through the Grampians (although it shows it on the wrong alignment) (*ibid.*). The road also appears on Moll's early eighteenth-century maps. The Minigaig Road ran farther east than the Comyn's Road (outside the study area) and took an even shorter route across the Gaick plateau. Among the Gaelic place names along both roads are many *sitheans*, or fairy knolls, and frequent allusions to animals such as stags, pigeons, toads, boars, dogs, ravens, eagles and calves, including the mythical black hound Brodainn. There are also references to people such as clerks, earls, tinkers, pedlars, carpenters and colonels. One of the named places is Coire Bhran, well known as a meeting place for drovers (*ibid.*, 83; Macbain 1890, 185).

Kingussie continued to be an important ecclesiastical centre in Badenoch, although its fortunes changed after the Reformation. In the late fifteenth century, George, Earl of Huntly founded a Carmelite friary there (Figure 4.2). Payments of alms to the friars are recorded in 1501 and 1506; a prior is mentioned in a document of 1520; the prior and convent are recorded as having received royal protection in 1530, and a rental of 1565 refers to the 'prior de Kingusye' (Cowan & Easson 1976, 137). In the wake of the Reformation, the friary seems to have been dissolved – although the Gordons continued Catholic – and its commercial interests were transferred to the secular authorities, the Gordons themselves. A Gordon rental of 1603 refers to the 'Abbey croftis' as well as its meal mill in Kingussie; the mill must have been in existence during the life of the friary, as the friary site is beside the old mill house near the west end of the village (Figure 4.2). The ruins of the church and cloister were still visible in the nineteenth century, when they were recorded as substantial masonry walls, with a piscina built into one (Shaw 1775, 267). This site was wholly abandoned in 1624 and a new church was built in what is known as the 'Middle Churchyard' (Scarlett 1988, 4). The friary site is now a landscaped graveyard filled with tombstones dating to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

4.3.2 *The inhabitation of late Medieval to post-Medieval Badenoch*

For this period, an archaeological picture begins to emerge of where and how people lived – although questions remain about how the exact location and nature of their settlements in the late Medieval period actually relate to the visible remains of townships.

The evidence of charters and other early documents, as reviewed below, suggests that by about A.D. 1100 the pattern of settlement in Badenoch had been well established. Named settlements such as Raitts, Dunachton and Kingussie continue to appear in documentary sources throughout the following centuries. It is likely that the settlement pattern developed through the expansion and in some cases splitting of townships and the colonisation of previously unsettled ground. In general terms, settlement in rural Scotland did expand over the period 1100 to 1650, with population levels increasing three or four fold, although there were static or even regressive periods such as that following the Black Death in the fourteenth century (Dodgshon 1980a, 97). The many estate plans produced in the eighteenth century, as well as Roy's Military Survey (sheets 24/1-2, 25/4-5, 26/4-5) show what was a thoroughly occupied landscape in which every piece of suitable ground was occupied and cultivated – a pattern resulting from settlement expansion in the preceding centuries (*ibid.*, 45).

4.3.2.1 *The evolution of townships*

Essentially, the process that lay behind the evolution of the township as the dominant form of rural Highland settlement was one of feudalisation. Dodgshon (1998b, 147-48) defines this as the system in which burdens of tax or military service 'became bound up with the conditions on which land was held' – in other words, when the assessment for a person's obligation to a chief or laird changed from being based on the person or the house to the land which he or she occupied or controlled. Dodgshon believes that the imposition of land assessment through feudalisation brought tenants together in co-operative arrangements, effectively 'ring-fencing' separate farms (*ibid.*, 57). Areas where the Anglo-Normans penetrated from an early date changed more rapidly to feudal land-based assessment, while in the western Highlands and islands the changes were more gradual and uneven, taking over piecemeal the older, more strongly kinship-based clan system (*ibid.*, 10).

For the most part the demand for land and the process of expansion were regulated through the landlord-tenant or lord-vassal relationship. By 1100, units of land such as davochs and ploughgates were well defined, and these provided a structure or framework within which settlement and cultivation could expand. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, documentary references to outsets, outfields and the division of common grazings increase significantly, indicating the creation of new settlements; evidently there was both a steady demand for and a good supply of fresh land (*ibid.*, 49). This process probably involved first expansion on assessed land to its limits and then the colonisation of non-assessed land.

All townships consisted of both assessed and non-assessed land; the former consisted of the site of the township itself and its infield and intervening meadows, while the latter consisted of its outfield. Infield comprised strips of arable in and around the township's locus which were continually cropped with bear, oats, rye and perhaps pease, and received all the available manure, including the soot-impregnated turf walls and roofs of houses (Whittington 1973, 532-37). The strips were re-allocated periodically among the tenants in runrig to produce a regular layout of landholding (Dodgshon 1980b, 76). There has been much debate about the origins of runrig. Barrow (1960) cites a possible late twelfth century reference to it, and although it only emerges clearly in the documentary record from the fifteenth century, it is likely to have been established earlier than that (Dodgshon 1980b, 85).

The farmsteads were often built at the edge of the infield, on well-drained but not best quality agricultural land, and frequently above the fields to allow effluent to drain from the byres on them (Whittington 1973, 536). A township might also possess haughland or laighland (as was the case in Badenoch in 1770; see below), ground along a river which was flooded during winter and enriched with silts, and would be put under the plough each summer (*ibid.*, 534).

From the point of view of those living in the township, the infield, interspersed with natural hay meadows used for grazing, formed an inner ring of land around their houses, barns and kailyards, while (at least schematically speaking) the outfield formed an outer ring. The outfield was usually poorer quality land used for

pasture, up to half of which was cultivated for oats or straw and then, according to a strict rotation, left fallow for several years and fertilised through grazing of stock on it (*ibid.*; Dodgshon 1980b, 77). Forming the outermost ring of land (again, in schematic terms) and demarcated by the head dyke or ring dyke were the muir lands or rough grazings, on which stock were grazed in the spring, summer and autumn. Sheep, cattle and horses were first moved across the head or ring dyke about the beginning of May, to allow the crops to grow; milk could still be carried to the township each day from these near grazings. In June they were moved to more distant shieling grounds, which were often as far as seven miles away, for six weeks or even longer in the Central Highlands. There were often two phases of movement: a 'small flitting', when young herdsmen were sent to the shielings with young horses, dry mares and other animals not needed around the township to repair the huts, make heather beds and collect a stock of fuel; the women and girls would follow with the milch-cows in the 'big flitting' (Fenton 1980, 95-101). While not all townships throughout the Highlands possessed shielings (Whittington 1973, 569), most did and charters survive which conveyed shielings along with the township itself, suggesting they were considered extremely important (Dodgshon 1980b, 80). Clearly the proper management of stock, moving them onto good grazing ground after a starving winter and thus allowing crops to flourish, was crucial to the survival of the animals, the harvest and therefore the people of the township.

Dodgshon (1980a) argues that settlement expansion in Medieval rural Scotland took several routes. The fact that infield was assessed ground while outfield was non-assessed shows the essential sequence of development; clearly infield was ground occupied earlier. In some cases townships simply expanded cultivation into what was formerly waste ground, creating outfield. In others, they actually settled on former grazings, creating permanent settlements and infield, sometimes on what were formerly shieling grounds. In still other cases, townships split into two or three, and this might happen more than once. The *Register of the Great Seal* volume covering the period 1593 to 1608 contains 978 references to split townships, evident by their common surnames with qualifying prefixes such as Easter and Wester, Nether or Upper. A township might have split because of partible inheritance, in which it passed to more than one heir, because of its proprietary division through sale or

feuing, or simply to make it easier to regulate a town which was growing in size and complexity (Dodgshon 1980a, 61).

As for the precise locations and layout of settlements, these are likely to have been in continual flux throughout the Medieval and perhaps post-Medieval periods as well. Typically, townships consisted of an irregular cluster of houses, barns and kailyards – the layouts shown on eighteenth century estate plans and Roy's maps (for example, see Fig. 4.11). These are borne out by Burt's early eighteenth century description of a typical Highland township as 'composed of a few huts for dwellings, with barns and stables, and both the latter are of a more diminutive size than the former, all irregularly placed, some one way, some another, and, at any distance, look like so many heaps of dirt' (Jamieson 1974, 130). After episodes of local conflict, larger scale war or common pillaging, like those documented at Raitts and Dunachton in the fourteenth century, a township's inhabitants might have rebuilt on a different site or a different alignment. When a township split, as for example Raitts did before the 1590s (see below), perhaps the old township was entirely replaced by two or three new ones, each with a different focus than their single predecessor.

Where buildings were built mainly of turf, timber and wattle, as they were over much of the Highlands, they had a limited lifespan, as did the tacks or leases of their inhabitants. If a tack was not renewed, a tenant might remove the timber couples and even the door of their house to use again in a new one elsewhere; the process itself 'encouraged a continual abandonment and renewal of dwellings' (Dodgshon 1980a, 63). The eighteenth century plans showing the locations and layout of Highland settlements most likely represent simply a photograph of a much more fluid pattern (*ibid.*, 64), and the latest phases of occupation might well have obliterated surface traces of the earlier ones.

Again, Burt's observations are pertinent here. Speaking particularly of Badenoch, he wrote that 'in the inner part of the mountains there are no stone buildings that I know of, except the Barracks [at Ruthven]; and one may go a hundred miles an-end without seeing any other dwellings than the common huts of turf' (Jamieson 1974, 204-5). He also caught the fluidity of buildings' abandonment and renewal, in a way contemporary maps failed to do, with an important

observation on the character of townships. His first impressions of townships were that they were quite large; however, on drawing nearer he found that 'all the outskirts, which served to increase the extent of them at a distance, were nothing but the ruins of little houses, and those in pretty great numbers. Of this I asked the reason, and was told, that when one of those houses was grown old and decayed, they often did not repair it, but, taking out the timber, they let the walls stand as a fit enclosure for a kale-yard . . . and that they built anew upon another spot' (*ibid.*, 29).

4.3.2.2 *The character of everyday life*

Documentary sources indicate that Badenoch was a densely populated and economically busy area in the late medieval period. By the 1590s, when Timothy Pont surveyed the area, the pattern of settlement that existed in 1800 appears already to have been established. Pont's map (published in Blaeu's atlas of 1645) is the first to show the study area in any detail (see Figure 4.13). It shows the fluvio-glacial terraces which line upper Strathspey dotted with settlements, some of them bearing names indicating they had split (among them Raitts; see below). The 1603 Gordon rental refers to many of the settlements Pont shows, naming their tenants and the rents due for each (rental reproduced in MacPherson 1893). For example, for Ruthven village, a burgh which held a market every Friday and six fairs a year, the rents came to four pounds plus meal, an ox and a half, six poultry, and a kid or lamb from each tenant. Mylne Ruthven also paid four pounds (Scarlett 1988, 13). The same rental refers to 20 feus or estates held by the Macphersons and eight held by the Mackintoshes, as well as lands held by Macleans, Gordons, Macqueens and Macdonalds (Macbain 1890, 156). In 1689, Parliament erected Dunachton into a burgh of barony and granted the holding of a weekly market there (*ibid.*, 39).

While the Gordons, Earls of Huntly held most of Badenoch, some estates were held in feu from them. These included, from the fifteenth century, the estate of Raitts, which was held by Mackintosh of Borlum (Grant & Cheape 1987) and, from the sixteenth century, the lands of Benchar, Cluny, Kincraig, Dunachton, Kinrara and Dalnavert (held by Mackintosh of Mackintosh) (Macbain 1890, 156). The feu system was a departure from the old, purely feudal arrangement in which vassals provided military service to the Crown (or to their superior vassals) in return for

holding land. In the feu system, however, the Crown granted the land to the vassal (or feuar) for an initial payment, after which the latter paid an annual feu duty (Zeune 1992).

Several pieces of evidence suggest that land divisions in existence at this time, which may have originated in the pre-feudal period, continued to endure through the next 300 years. As Barrow (1988a, 9) has noted, records of 1371 show that Badenoch then contained 60 davochs. The 1603 rental of Badenoch records a total of 52.5 davochs (based on the calculation of four ploughs per davoch, the usual ratio for this period). However, the number of distinct township names equals 59 (or 60, counting Shevin at the head of Strathdearn), if split townships (such as Easter and Mid Raitts) are counted as one. It is difficult to dismiss this as coincidence. As discussed above, the documents which refer to Church lands in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries show that certain place-names (such as Raitts, Dunachton and Balnespick) were associated with populated estates at the time. It seems likely that these and the others making up the 60 davochs of 1371 endured in their essential form throughout the Medieval and post-Medieval periods and that in this area davochs did come to signify the same land units as townships.

In the 1770s, the Gordons had their lands in Badenoch surveyed in advance of planned improvements (including some evictions). The maps produced are extremely informative of the pattern of land division. Given what is known of the history of the Raitts estate, its boundaries shed particularly good light on the antiquity of this pattern. The maps (not illustrated) show the lands belonging to each township along the main axis of upper Strathspey as comprising a strip which stretched from the river up onto the fluvio-glacial terrace and beyond to moorland and crags. Each, therefore, appeared to made up three kinds of land: haughlands along the river, better-drained ground on the terraces and, on the high ground, rough grazings for summer use. This pattern of land-type distribution is, in fact, typical of thanages of the early Medieval to Medieval periods (Driscoll 1991, 107).

At this time the lands of Raitts were still held in feu by the Mackintoshes of Borlum, so the Gordon map for that area (SRO RHP 1835/4/1) does not show that township's internal arrangements (such as fields or buildings) in any detail; it does,

however, show the boundaries following the same pattern described above, stretching in a broad strip from river side to high moorland. Given that the Mackintoshes' feu arrangement began in the late fifteenth century, it is likely that the land divisions shown in 1770 were established by that time. The endurance in 1371 and 1603 of davochs that appear to correspond to post-Medieval townships is further evidence that the ways in which Badenoch's landscape was organised in the pre-Improvement period had been established for 600 years. It may even be that the pattern of strips from river to high ground represents that which prevailed under the davoch system of pre-feudal years.

Many of the inhabitants of Badenoch from the fifteenth century onward belonged to families making up the Clan Chattan confederacy, which was at the height of its power between 1400 and 1600. This rather loose confederacy was made up of about 16 kindreds, including Mackintoshes, Macphersons, Davidsons, Cattanachs, Macbeans, Macphails, Shaws, Farquharsons, Macgillivrays, Macleans of Dochgarroch, Macqueens and Gillanders. For the most part the confederacy served under the leadership of Mackintosh, frequently designated as captains of the clan in royal charters (Shaw 1775, 45). The name derives from 'son of *toisech*' which, as discussed in Chapter 3, may have denoted a similar status to that of 'thane'. Macbain, Clan Chattan's most prominent historian, believes the name originated in Badenoch (1890, 161-2; also see Shaw 1775, 44).

The confederacy was frequently divided, and presumably various elements of it made up the cateran forces which had terrorised tenants of rival kindreds in the preceding century. In 1427 part stood by King James I and another part by the Lord of the Isles; the king subsequently granted pardon to some members of Clan Chattan, on condition that they swore fealty to the Mackintoshes, his supporters. The Earls of Huntly were the clan's feudal overlords, although on at least three occasions (in 1550, 1591 and 1594) Huntly tried to undermine the unity of the clan, playing one kindred off against the others and binding some members directly to himself (Macbain 1890, 160-69). According to Macbain (1895), Clan Chattan was a compromise between the older Gaelic tribal system (similar to the Irish *tuath*) and feudalism, but the latter primarily influenced its structure and loyalties. Although the cateran bands of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries seem to have been

subdued under the Gordons' rule, there is evidence that social conditions were not entirely peaceful throughout the remainder of the Medieval and post-Medieval periods. In 1620 the Privy Council deplored the people of Badenoch as 'disordourit and insolent Highland men' (Scarlett 1988, xi).

Cattle raiding appears to have been more or less a way of life. For example, there are accounts of a fourteenth century battle at Invernahavon between the Mackintoshes and their confederates in Clan Chattan, and the Camerons. The Mackintoshes held lands in Lochaber which were occupied by Camerons, and their usual method of extracting rents from them was by forcefully taking cattle. The Camerons, irritated, marched into Badenoch with 400 men to confront the superior strength of Clan Chattan, who only prevailed after kindreds belonging to the uppermost part of the strath put aside intra-clan rivalries to join the battle (Shaw 1775, 215; Scarlett 1988, 7).

The large souterrain at Lynchat (Figure 3.4), probably built in the later Iron Age (see Chapter Three), may have seen re-use in the Medieval period. A local tradition recorded in several sources (MacDonald 1835, 88; MacPherson 1893, 408; Scarlett 1988, 33-34) and attributed to a fifteenth-century source called 'Old Biallid', recounts the use of the souterrain, which was known in the post-Medieval period as *An Uaimh Mhor*, or the Great Cave. According to the story, members of the MacNiven family had stolen cattle from their neighbours and rivals, the Macphersons. Fearing retribution, they hid in the souterrain by removing some of its roof flags; a cottage built above the souterrain was occupied by members of the family. One of the Macphersons, a man called Alistair Caint, disguised himself as a beggar in an attempt to find out the whereabouts of the robbers and asked for shelter at the cottage. He was grudgingly admitted to warm himself by the fire. While he was there, a batch of freshly baked oatcakes was put in a wall cupboard to cool. When the cupboard was opened again to put in another batch, he saw that the first one was gone. He drew his conclusions and left to return with members of his family, who flushed the MacNivens out of their subterranean hiding place and put most of the male members of the family to death (Macpherson 1966, 11).

The details of the story may or may not be true. It does, however, suggest that the souterrain was known to and used by local people in later periods, and more importantly suggests there was habitation here on the lower slopes of the fluvio-glacial terrace in the Medieval period. The only possible traces of habitation are some low, rather amorphous lengths of banks on the ground immediately north of the souterrain; they could be remains of Medieval or indeed prehistoric structures, although they appear linear rather than curving. If they are Medieval, then at some later point the settlement converged upon and nucleated in the areas higher on the shoulder of the strath, where the township remains lie.

From the beginning of the seventeenth century onward, the local families making up Clan Chattan grew in economic and political power at a local scale, mainly through marriage connections, acquiring land and increasing their stock. Macpherson (1966), who has traced this process of expansion, records that after about 1600, members of the clan were tenants-at-will of their feudal superiors (in most cases the Earls of Huntly, but in others Lairds of Grant or Mackintosh). As such, they held lands for a year at a time and were theoretically vulnerable to removal or eviction at the end of each lease or tack. However, in practice families who had maintained occupancy of a township for three generations or more were considered to have established *dùthchas*, or the right of ancient possession, which was recognised and considered inviolable by the community in general. The clan chief, even if only a tenant himself, would generally act on behalf of a clan member threatened with removal; 'his political power, cutting across the normal feudal structure of society, usually meant that his intervention was effective' (Macpherson 1966, 11-12). By the seventeenth century, economic relationships between tenants and feudal superiors were in the process of changing in Badenoch, principally through the mechanism of wadsetting, in which the superior, to raise capital, would mortgage the rent of a farm to its tenant. The tenant would advance a capital sum, the interest on which would cover the farm's annual rent for an indefinite period or until it was repaid; in some cases the wadset could not be redeemed for a certain number of years or generations, thus providing some security of tenure (*ibid.*, 12).

The documentary evidence maps the development and expansion of townships, particularly through the transfer of property within an intricate web of

family connections maintained through marriage and re-marriage. In some cases archaeological remains survive of the named settlements. For example, in 1661 Andrew Macpherson, younger son of John of Nuide, acquired the wadset of the Davoch of Wester Raitts; his oldest son John later (in 1678) exchanged this for another wadset of Benchar (in Glen Bannochar) (*ibid.*, 13). At both Wester Raitts and Benchar, remains survive of extensive townships (see below), and some of the visible traces may date to this documented occupation.

Archaeological remains from this more stable period include many of the other deserted townships along both sides of Strathspey, mainly concentrated on the fluvio-glacial terraces lining zone 6 as well in the stretch of open strath between Auchmore and Crathie (zone 4; Figures 4.5 and 4.6), in lower Glen Banchor (zone 7; Figure 4.6) and at the head of Loch Laggan (zone 3; Figure 4.8). They also include large groups of shieling huts, concentrated especially at the heads of burns which flow down the sides of Glen Banchor (Figure 4.6; see Figure 4.15 for a plan of one example at Allt Fionndrigh) and along the Rivers Feshie and Tromie (Figure 4.3). Intensive survey by the RCAHMS in Glen Banchor has recorded townships there which were among those cleared by the Gordons in the late eighteenth century (see Figure 4.14 for a plan of one building cluster), and for which documentary records exist as far back as the sixteenth century.

4.3.2.3 *The vernacular architecture*

Of the ways of life of the people who inhabited townships in late to post-Medieval Badenoch, some of the best pieces of evidence we have are descriptions made by travellers and Improvers in the eighteenth century, before the more drastic changes to those ways of life that such contact eventually introduced. These descriptions need to be read and used carefully: those who wrote them were by definition outsiders to Highland society, literate and educated Lowlanders who identified with the Enlightenment spirit of progress which had already transformed much of western Europe. Their accounts, therefore, must be read as having particular political and moral agendas which were inherently unsympathetic to Highlanders' ways of life, whatever their authors' intentions. The deprivation they

saw shocked them and, while they could see the value that people within that society placed on their lifestyles, they could not step inside it and view it as they did.

Nor can we, several hundred years later. However, by reading these accounts through a kind of filter, knowing the biases of their authors, attempting to understand the close relationship that existed between people and the landscape in the rural Highlands and through the results of archaeological fieldwork, we may comprehend more of their existence than we otherwise would. Although the accounts of Highland townships and their people were written late in the sequence (and more properly belong in the following section), the ways of life and methods of architecture they describe may have been practised for centuries.

Information about how people lived in the post-medieval Highlands, including Badenoch, comes from descriptions by contemporary travellers (such as Burt's letters, written in the 1720s and '30s and first published in 1756), material culture and ethnographic material (e.g., Grant 1961), archaeological excavations (e.g., Fairhurst 1968) and experimental work (Noble 1983; Walker & MacGregor 1996). In particular, these sources provide important details about how people built and lived in their houses.

Burt, an Army officer serving under Wade, was a particularly descriptive if frequently snide observer. He offers vivid descriptions of the layout and structure of Highland longhouse:

The skeleton of the hut was formed of small crooked timber, but the beam for the roof was large out of all proportion. This is to render the weight of the whole more fit to resist the violent flurries of wind that frequently rush into the plains from the openings of the mountains; for the whole fabric was set upon the surface of the ground like a table, stool or other moveable (Jamieson 1974, 60).

The basic architectural form for Highland longhouses, then, consisted of one or two courses of stone footings, laid below or around a frame of timber crucks or couples. Experiments have shown that it would have been more convenient to erect the couples first and then lay the footings around and against them, as the couples would often be of irregular length and therefore not exactly fit a pre-determined plan (R. Noble & S. Whyment, pers. comm.). In some cases, however, couples would

have been seated in or on the footings, and must have been erected after the footings were laid; Fairhurst (1968) found cruck slots built into the walls of a longhouse at Rosal in Strathnaver. The couples were braced with collars and bound or pegged together at the top, where they were joined to the 'roof-tree' or ridge-pole, which formed the apex of the roof. The roof itself was of reed or heather thatch, usually laid over a turf skin supported on purlinns which rested on the couples.

Although in some areas of the Highlands, such as Sutherland and Caithness, building stone is readily available and would have been used to carry the footings up as walls to the eaves, in Badenoch the walls were more commonly formed of cut turves, or sometimes of alternating layers of stone and turf. In some cases the turf walls might have been built against an inner skin of wattling, creating a 'creel' house, and the archaeological evidence (see below) suggests they were built with a thick batter for stability, which slumped periodically and had to be augmented. The stone footings would have acted as a damp-proof course, and would also kept the couples from moving outward under pressure from the roof. The turves of the wall would have continued to grow for the first year or two after they were cut, so that the houses would have been covered with grass, weeds and wild flowers. After this they would have become root-bound, the roots growing together and acting like mortar to create thick, stable, insulating walls (R. Noble & S. Whyment, pers. comm.).

Burt's observations are again relevant here: 'The walls were about four feet high, lined with sticks wattled like a hurdle, built on the outside with turf; and thinner slices of the same serve for tiling. This last they call divet. When the hut has been built some time it is covered with weeds and grass; and, I do assure you, I have seen sheep, that had got up from the foot of an adjoining hill feeding upon the top of the house' (Jamieson 1974, 60). Longhouses were frequently built on a scoop or terrace cut into a natural slope, as with structure 24A at Easter Raitts (see below); the adjacent slope would have provided shelter against the wind and would have given sheep or cattle the easy access Burt describes. Sometimes, very large boulders were built at the corners of houses; several of these, over a metre high, occur at Easter Raitts. These are traditionally said to be rubbing stones, set there as scratching posts for cattle which might otherwise rub against the turf and timber corner of a house and topple it (R. Noble, pers. comm.).

Burt would usually enter a longhouse to find the occupants grouped around the fire, which lay in a hearth in the middle of the floor, with a hole in the roof above for a chimney. 'The floor was common earth, very uneven, and no where dry, but near the fire and in the corners, where no foot had carried the muddy dirt from without doors' (Jamieson 1974, 59). Mrs. Elizabeth Grant, a Badenoch lady, echoes this. In 1790 she wrote, upon seeing James Macpherson's mansion at Belleville (as he re-named Raitts) for the first time: 'Only think how this must dazzle people accustomed to look on glass windows as a luxury, and on floors as convenient but by no means necessary appendages to a building' (quoted in MacPherson 1893, 260).

The longhouses are usually described as having been divided into living space for animals and humans, with one entrance serving both. The humans occupied one end and in winter the animals occupied the other, both benefiting from the other's warmth. Some excavated longhouses (in Lairg and Rosal, for example; see Fairhurst 1968, McCullagh 2000) have been found to contain linear drains in their byre ends. The two excavated longhouses at Easter Raitts (21 and 24) have not contained evidence for this arrangement, although there is evidence that here the animals were over-wintered collectively in another structure (see below). The smoke from the central hearth escaped partly through a hole in the roof and partly through its fabric; experiments have shown that the addition of a loft space, with a gap in the loft above the hearth, would have encouraged the smoke to concentrate near the roof where it might have been used for smoking meat (S. Whyment, pers. comm.). The smoke would also have discouraged wood-boring insects from residing in the couples.

Burt compared the appearance of a smoking longhouse to 'a fuming dunghill removed and fresh piled up again, and pretty near the same in colour, shape and size.' He comments particularly on the smoke inside houses. In winter, he writes, people would 'sit brooding in the smoke over the fire till their legs and thighs are scorched to an extraordinary degree, and many have sore eyes, and some are quite blind . . . and when the huts are not water-tight, which is often the case, the rain that comes through the roof and mixes with the sootiness of the inside, where all the sticks look like charcoal, falls in drops like ink' (Jamieson 1974, 135-6). This indoor

rain had its own name in Gaelic: *snighe* (Grant 1961, 151). Burt adds that ‘the Highlanders say they love the smoke; it keeps them warm’ (Jamieson 1974, 64).

In spite of its disadvantages, especially to one used to mortared buildings and glazed windows, this form of renewable architecture suited the available materials and rhythm of life over most of the Highlands. The thick turf walls insulated the houses, keeping them warm. While only the stone footings and timber couples endured for any length of time, the walls and heather or reed thatched roofs were easily replaceable. As the walls slumped, the gap between the wall-head and eave could be filled in with more turves or the walls replaced altogether; heather thatch lasted up to 50 years, while reed thatch had to be replaced every four or five (S. Whymant, pers. comm.).

The houses also represented a form of recycling: turf stripped from the fields cleared them for cultivation, and the smoke-permeated, nutrient-rich fabric of replaced walls and roofs was spread over the fields as fertiliser (Whittington 1973, 532). The practice of over-wintering the animals inside also created an annual harvest of fertiliser in the form of manure, although cattle typically suffered extreme deprivation from hunger and want of movement over the winter. As township populations grew, however, the practice of stripping turf to build houses put greater pressure on the land, causing the loss of good pasture as exposed topsoil eroded. Improvers in the Highlands complained particularly about this practice.

The longhouse appears to have been symbolically central to the ways Highlanders perceived their world. Frequent toasts among them were ‘to your fire-side’ or ‘to your roof-tree’ (Jamieson 1974, 59). The hearth seems to have been particularly important. It was the source of light, heat and food – in fact, the source of the elements necessary for survival – and was generally never allowed to go out, but damped down each night and revived the next morning. One was meant to move around it in a sunwise direction (Grant 1961). Only in times of extreme catastrophe, particularly when a contagious disease was spreading among a township’s cattle, was the fire extinguished. A ‘forced fire’ was then kindled using a wheel or by rubbing dry sticks together, and a new hearth fire would be lit from this (Shaw 1775, 248). This was meant to purify the fire and purge the cattle of disease.

Ethnohistorical accounts of how houses were built, what they looked like inside and how their inhabitants perceived them can help flesh out the picture of everyday in a Highland township. Excavation, however, provides contact with the very stones laid as walls, the hearths which served as the heart of the houses and the floors on which people walked. Deposits such as these are a kind of incidental record of that life, one made by people who left no written record of their existence.

4.3.2.4 A township through time: Excavations at Easter Raitts

The settlements now collectively known as Raitts (Figure 4.2, above Lynchat) were in all probability here in the 1590s, when Timothy Pont mapped the area. He shows three discrete settlements along the shoulder -- West Rait, Mid Rait and Rait -- which seem to correspond to three settlement clusters visible today (see Figure 4.13). The attachment of the name 'Rait', with no qualifier, to the easternmost cluster could suggest that this was the original township and that the others split from it. The nomenclature was probably more complex than he depicts, however. In 1572, Lachlan Mackintosh craftily obtained a gift of the 60 davochs of Badenoch from the Regent Morton after the death of the Early of Huntly, whose lands were then forfeit; although the deed was never executed, the surviving document lists the named places he would have received. They include Raitbeg, Raitmor and Raitmeanach -- Little Rait, Big Rait and Middle Rait. When the lands of Raitts were cleared at the beginning of the nineteenth century (see below), 37 tenants were listed as deriving from a bewildering variety of places, including Wester Raitts, Easter Raitts, Upper Raitts, Midtown of Wester Raitts, Midtown of Easter Raitts, Baldhu* of Raitts, Kerrow* of Raitts, Kerrowdhu* of Raitts, Strathinlea of Raitts, Tyravoan of Raitts, Achavourich of Raitts, Tillysoul of Raitts, Tillysoul House and Tynacairn of Raitts (Fraser-Mackintosh 1897, 400; his list does not claim to be exhaustive). (*The first edition OS map of 1872 (Figure 4.33) names the eastern cluster as Kerrowdow and the central one (today's Easter Raitts) as Baldow.)

The largest township cluster of the three now visible (today known as Wester Raitts) extends along the shoulder to the south-west of a partly eroded and quarried esker; it comprises very large, substantial subrectangular buildings, many with

attached yards (see Plates 4.3 and 4.4). Some of the structures appear terraced or hollowed into the ground, and several courses of drystone revetment or walling are visible in places where rabbits have eroded the sides. An area of smooth, apparently improved ground stretches to the north of the cluster to the base of the foothills, and rigs are just visible on it.

Another area of improved ground lies between the glacial esker and the settlement examined in detail here, known today as Easter Raitts (perhaps Pont's Mid Rait). A third, smaller cluster of buildings lies on the other side of the burn from the middle settlement and farther down the slope. A hollowed trackway, resembling a street, runs through this third settlement, following the burn upslope and defined on the east by a line of small, upright boulders. Most of the buildings are on either side with their ends facing onto the track, terraced into the slope.

Easter Raitts is defined on the west by a tumbled stone dyke running south across the shoulder, then turning to run along the contour and the south side of the cluster (Figure 4.17). It stretches as far as a small, marshy burn that runs downslope through the centre of Raitts, the eastern cluster. Rigs are just visible running down the gentle slope, but they appear to have been flattened by harrowing. A trackway winds through the settlement, leading from a gap in the western boundary dyke and crossing the burn at the other end. The township was surveyed in 1995 (Dalland & Smith 1995); structure and feature numbers referred to below were assigned during that survey, which preceded a season of trial trenching (Cameron 1995) and a pilot season of training excavation in 1996, directed by Jonathan Wordsworth. Four subsequent seasons of excavation have followed, under the direction of the author.

The township comprises at least 18 remains identifiable as structures, defined by partly turf-covered stone footings. Some of these have been interpreted as longhouses, based on their similar sizes and alignments to excavated examples (e.g., structure 21). Most lie along the trackway and appear to face onto it; these are all aligned roughly east/west, so the prevailing winds would have swept along the buildings' axes. Other structures are aligned north/south, and some of these have two opposing entrances; these are most likely barns, built to exploit the prevailing

wind for winnowing grain in the draught through the entrances. Still other structures are not so easily interpreted from the surface remains.

Raitts was cleared in three stages, in 1801, 1802 and 1806 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1897), and according to local knowledge most of its inhabitants appear to have been relocated in the village of Lynchat at the foot of the terrace, just below Wade's military road, or elsewhere in the vicinity (R. Noble, pers. comm.). The visible remains appear to provide a snapshot of the township's occupation at the time of its abandonment, although the picture is of course more complex than that.

Several of the structures and hollowed features – numbers 21, 26, 24, 14, 15, 6 and 2 – have been investigated through excavation. The buildings and features investigated have included a longhouse (21), probably cleared of its inhabitants in one of the three phases of eviction, with a small outbuilding (26) added late in its life; another longhouse (24) which was re-used for a byre, with a new byre built over one end with an adjacent a cobbled yard (14); a feature dug to extract and puddle clay (15); a byre (2) built over earlier, prehistoric deposits and metalworking debris; and, in the largest structure in the township (6), a byre or stable which was expanded over four phases and appears to have been used almost entirely for animal accommodation. While the following discussion represents an interim statement, based on the data structure reports on each season's work (Lelong 1997; Lelong 1998; Lelong 1999), the results so far show an increasingly complex picture of the ways the township was occupied, the changing needs and wealth of the inhabitants and the variety of buildings making up their settlement.

Structures 21 and 26

The best-preserved longhouse investigated, structure 21 had been built by scooping slightly into the naturally sloping gravel to create a level surface, and laying one and in places two courses of stone footings in a double skin, with a rubble and earth core (21002, 21009; see Figure 4.18). Internally it measured about 10 m east/west by 3.5 m, and an annexe 4 m by 3 m had been built against its eastern end. After laying the footings, the builders had piled turf against and on top of them, with a thick batter. This was evident from wedge-shaped loamy deposits lying against the

footings; variously leached stripes visible in the sections showed the layers of individual turves, or possibly remnants of successive turf walls which had slumped and been largely removed for fertiliser, to be replaced by a new turf wall.

Inside the main part of the house, the entranceway led around to the north side of the hearth – sunwise, as folklore indicates was the proper way in which to move around the longhouse (Grant 1961). In its earlier phase, the entranceway led through a scoop (21242); see Figure 4.19) which had become filled with burnt material (21241), with postholes (including 21228) dug into its eastern edge; the constituents of the burnt fill included hazel, willow, birch and alder (Ramsay 1999). These may have been elements of a hurdling screen, which protected the hearth from draughts through the doorway and had caught fire and burnt.

The hearth itself had clearly been the focus of the house, and had seen two phases of use. An earlier phase (not illustrated) was represented by an area of burnt pink clay and sand, ringed by three post-holes which must have supported some cooking apparatus. Three successive layers of trampled, charcoal-stained earthen floor survived to the south of the hearth (where they would have been less exposed to traffic than on the north), and these were contemporary with the earlier hearth.

While the third floor, a light brown sandy silt (21123), was exposed, the centre of the house was substantially remodelled. Rake-out from the hearth was spread around it, filling the two smaller post-holes; a sherd of blue-and-white china found its way into one of them – stratigraphically the earliest piece of mass-produced pottery discovered. Then, clean yellow sand was laid over the hearth and over part of the adjacent floor (21123) to the south. Heavy stone slabs were laid to form a new hearth (21041), and large flat slabs were also set on the floor to form a crescent-shaped area of paving (21024) to the south (Figure 4.18). About this time, clean yellow sand was also dumped over the entrance scoop, with its burnt contents, and paving stones were laid on top, forming a new surface. Plate 4.5 shows the hearth, with an adjacent early floor exposed after removal of some of the paving slabs.

While the floor in existence when the new hearth was laid was still exposed, a much-repaired iron spade foot was retrieved from a fire (fragments of its burnt

handle survived *in situ*) and placed on the floor to the south-west of the hearth; it was then covered by the next earthen floor – quickly, as little of the burnt material associated with it had spread or been kicked around it. Another two phases of flooring followed, and these contained more sherds of mass-produced, post-Medieval pottery. Beside the hearth to the west, visible in the latest of floors (21110) was a rectangular, compact deposit of decayed turf (21042). This was interpreted as the remains of a turf seat (Figure 4.18). Fragments of clay tobacco pipe were found at the north-east corner of this seat, conjuring a picture of someone habitually perched by the hearth, smoking. The slabs defining the hearth were fire-cracked and spalled, as if pots had been set on them, and those along its south side had bevelled, highly patinated edges, presumably from feet resting on them.

The hearth area and entranceway may have been remodelled during the life of the house simply because a new generation of its inhabitants came of age and wanted improved flooring; it may have reflected an increase in wealth (although stone slabs and sand were presumably not expensive commodities). However, given what is known of Highlanders' views on their hearth and fire, on particular ways of entering and moving around a house, and on the special uses of iron objects as foundation deposits to ensure luck (B. Walker, pers. comm.), it seems naïve to explain the remodelling of the hearth and entranceway and the spade's deposition in practical terms alone. Iron objects must have been relatively valuable – the repairs evident on the spade foot showed it had been kept and used for some time – and it must be significant that it was left here, fresh from a fire and exposed on the floor, to be then covered by a new floor.

This phase of sudden change, involving fresh fire and old iron, may have expressed some concern with renewing the longhouse and ensuring blessing or luck, perhaps against disease (*cf.* Shaw 1775, 248) or unwanted changes. It is tempting to suggest that the upheaval of 1745-46, with the defeat of Jacobite forces at Culloden (at which men from Easter Raitts may well have fought; see below) and the subsequent subjugation of the Highlands could have triggered such a response. Radiocarbon dating of hearth deposits immediately pre-dating the remodelling might clarify when this took place.

The centre of the house was featureless except for small patches of clay flooring (21019, 21130; see Figure 4.18). It seems likely that box beds stood in this area, forming a partition between the hearth and the eastern part of the house and accounting for the absence of flooring here. To the east were two platforms (21115, 21116), built of sandy soil and capped with stone, on either side of a well-packed stone walkway or drain. This was tentatively interpreted as a dairy, on the basis of sherds of internally-glazed milk pan found among the stones of the platform. The eastern annexe to the house, with its own separate entrance, was interpreted as a small byre, with areas of hard-standing (21090) and a small milking stand with a tethering post (represented by post-hole 21081) in the south-west corner (Figure 4.18).

Over the interior of the main part of the longhouse, sealing the hearth and floor deposits, was a layer of thick, rooty, decayed turf, representing the collapsed walls or roof, which was rich in artefacts: many pieces of broken eighteenth to early nineteenth century pottery; part of an iron cooking pot; a musket flint; brass buttons; a flat iron, and a charred timber plank (21004). This had the appearance of an abandonment deposit, indicating either that the inhabitants left the house in a mess as they were leaving, or that it was used as a midden after its abandonment. The age of the artefacts suggests that this longhouse was abandoned when the township was cleared between 1801 and 1806 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1897).

Two post-holes (21218, 21220) outside the entrance appear to have supported a porch leading into the longhouse during a later phase of its use. Outside it, a scooped feature (26) was investigated in 1998 on the assumption that it might be a midden. It proved instead to be a paved outbuilding (Figure 4.19), its interior measuring 3.4 m east/west by 2.5 m, apparently built late in the life of the house; of several successive phases of cobbling outside the longhouse entranceway, only the latest (21201) was contemporary with the outbuilding. The builders had first scooped into the natural gravel and laid sand as a base for a paved floor (26014). There was evidence that a slight wall had stood around the paving, in the form of post-holes (not illustrated) and a linear depression around the perimeter (26021; see Plate 4.6). The outbuilding *could* have functioned as a midden, as the stones would have helped organic material to retain heat, encouraging its decay. If so, however,

little organic rubbish was left on it at its abandonment, and very little cultural material found its way between the paving stones.

Structure 24, Features 14 and 15

The other longhouse investigated (structure 24A; see Figures 4.20 and 4.21) had been built by terracing steeply into the northern slope, again to create a level surface; otherwise its construction was similar to that of longhouse 21, with stone footings (24004) laid on the exposed ground surface, and evidence of slumped turf walls (24101) outside it. It measured about 9 m east/west by 4 m internally. There was no sign of the wall forming the building's eastern end; this may have been dismantled during its later phase of use (see below). Its paved entrance, with a worn threshold stone (24016), had originally faced south over the strath and led out onto a cobbled apron (24023) (Figure 4.20). An iron key (Figure 4.22) was found tucked between stones beside the entrance.

This entrance had later been sealed up and the interior had apparently been re-used for animals. They had scoured it of most traces of its human occupation. What did survive were the reddened, fire-cracked stones forming its central hearth (24005), along with a slight ridge just east of the hearth which may have represented an internal partition. At this late phase in the building's life, a small but substantial stony structure (24B) had been built (24057) over its west end, re-using one couple (in slot 24061) from the earlier house; a rough manger (24105) was constructed against the new gable wall (Figure 4.21). This superimposed structure was interpreted as small byre, with a roughly cobbled interior (24088, 24081), a tethering post (24093) and a well-paved drain (24092) leading out to a hollowed, thickly cobbled yard (14015) to the south-west (see Figure 4.21). On the basis of its substantial nature, the later building (24B) has been tentatively interpreted as a pig house, as pigs would have required extra measures to contain them.

The cobbled apron outside the original entrance to 24A had led out to a small, sub-rectangular scoop (feature 15). Excavation of this, also on the basis that it might be a midden, showed that it was in fact a deliberate scoop onto a natural clay deposit (Figure 4.23). The north side of the scoop had been built up and revetted

(15006, 15010), and along the south side a slight earthen bank (15009, 15016) had been built (see Plate 4.7). The surface of the clay (15021) was deeply etched with water-worn channels, and artefacts found directly on the surface showed it had been left exposed for some time. The combination of the deliberately exposed clay and the revetment and earthen bank led to its interpretation as a clay puddling pool. The clay was quite coarse, and by leaving water (contained by the revetment and bank) on its surface, those quarrying the clay allowed it to soften, letting the finer particles rise and the coarser particles sink. It would then have been usable for floors, like those found in some of the structures (21 and 6B), or perhaps for daub.

Structure 2

This building dominated the southern side of the platform (5) discussed in Chapter 3, which bore evidence of prehistoric occupation and metalworking. The building itself proved to have a complicated history (see Figure 4.25). In its latest incarnation it measured about 4 m south-east/north-west by 5 m internally, defined by massive stone footings (5008, 5009, 5011, etc.). Wedges of small, rounded stones in a turf matrix (5012) abutting the walls suggested that it had been built of alternating layers of stone and turf; a sickle of c. 1800 was found in its collapsed walling, dating its collapse to some time after the township's clearance. Originally, it seems to have been a much larger building; that original extent was represented by a well-defined, rectangular area of paving (5013) and a fragmentary entranceway (5100) to the north. The building appears to have been extended eastward, with the addition of a less substantial wall on the south (5106), and the paving was also extended eastward (as 5051); sherds of eighteenth-century stoneware were found sealed beneath the later paving. At some point, a cobbled entrance (5074, 5101) through the north wall of the building was sealed up, and a cross-wall (5009) was built across the internal paving, creating a much shorter structure. Also in its latest phase, a drain or soakaway (5049) was dug into the natural sandy subsoil along the north side of the interior. It appears, then, to have been used as a byre, at least latterly.

Outside, on the northern side of the platform, the old ground surface (5063) on which the building's latest phase rested partly sealed the boulder structure (5085)

discussed in Chapter Three (see Figure 3.9); small stones (5056) had also been dumped over the boulders, probably to level up their uneven surface. Over the fire-spot (5144) thought to be associated with the earlier metalworking (see Chapter Three), a stony, boat-shaped platform (5006) was built; a sherd of eighteenth-century glass sealed beneath the platform dates its construction to late in the life of the township.

Structure 6

Evidence of the importance of beasts at Easter Raitts emerged in structure 6, the largest building in the township (see Figure 4.26 and Plate 4.8). Before excavation it was clear that it had been built over different phases; it had four compartments, with entrances to three leading out on to the trackway that runs through the settlement, and a marked drop in level and shift in alignment between the two middle cells. A fifth compartment abutted these on the south, outside the dyke built onto the structure, which forms the township's southern boundary.

Excavation resolved the relative chronology of the construction of adjacent compartments and demonstrated the complete absence of evidence for human habitation of the building. The earliest building phase was the largest compartment (6B), which measured about 11 m south-east/north-west by 3.5 m internally, and had two entrances (see Figure 4.28). The eastern one led into a byre, with a beautifully paved drain (6162) running between two roughly cobbled areas (6154, 6155). The western one led into an area covered by three phases of clay flooring (6135, 6128/164). Although this part of the building was initially interpreted as a threshing barn, samples taken of each clay floor proved empty of cereal grains or any other evidence of its use. There was no sign of a hearth or any other evidence of human occupation. Pads for couples (6139, 6153) found along the north and south walls of the western end showed that, as in the other structures in the township, timber couples had borne the weight of the roof while turves surmounting the stone footings (6104, 6102, 6004, 6103) defined the walls.

A small byre (6A) (Figure 4.27), measuring 3.8 m south-east/north-west by 3 m internally, had later been built at the west end of this larger compartment. It also

had a well-paved drain (6008), with an area of hard standing (6018, 6015) to one side and a small, square, cobbled stand (6022, 6009) in one corner.

To the east of compartment 6B, a more substantial structure (6C), measuring about 7 m south-east/north-west by 2.8 m internally, had been added; no direct relationship existed between 6A and 6C, so their relative phases of construction could not be established. This secondary structure appeared to have been built by digging into the natural slope to the east of 6B to prepare a level surface for the extension, in the process undercutting the original east wall (6103) of structure 6B. Its wall face had been dropped by inserting stones in an uncoursed fashion beneath the original footings. Two entrances, one cobbled (6240) and one paved (6226), led more or less side by side into this compartment (Figure 4.29). Beside the western one, a cobbled platform (6206) abutted the building and extended through the thickness of the wall, leading directly to a deep, cobble-floored drain (6224) formed of upright slabs (6209). This ran diagonally across the building, from the platform, to lead through the southern wall (6204) into the outshot compartment (6E).

The rest of the interior of 6C was covered with very rough cobbling (6213). A linear gully (6252) ran diagonally (east/west) across the interior, and might have represented an internal partition. A stone-edged hollow (6234) dominated its east end, but its purpose was not understood. In a second phase of use (Figure 4.30), both entrances were sealed, and the wall was extended to run across the cobbled platform; the eastern part of its southern wall had also been rebuilt at some point. This very enigmatic compartment probably had some industrial purpose. There was some evidence that the drain (6162; Figure 4.28) from byre 6B may have been diverted through the rebuilt common wall between 6B and 6C, perhaps to drain urine into a vat (set into a curving stone setting, 6241; Figure 4.30) for use in some process such as dyeing or tanning leather. Alternatively, it might have been a dairy; sherds of milk pan were found just outside the western entrance.

The outshot compartment (6E; Figure 4.32) had been built onto this compartment, certainly while its drain was still functioning, as greasy black material (6406) from the drain had spread over its interior in the adjacent corner. This room's broad entrance and rough cobbling (2405) suggest it had probably been used for

animals, perhaps as a temporary shelter, or for tools or seed used on the adjoining arable land.

At a late stage (but conceivably contemporary with the construction of byre 6A or outbuilding 6E), another small byre (6D), measuring about 2.3 m square internally, had been added to the east end of 6C. This was less substantially built, with an earth and stone bank (6301) defining it (Figure 4.31). Inside, cobbling (6303) lay in discrete strips, separated by gaps (6305, 6311) which appeared to delineate stalls and probably had held timber partitions. A cobbled drain (6304) sloped out through the end wall. From the size of the stalls, small beasts such as goats may have been housed here.

The construction of extensive accommodation for animals, its gradual expansion over time and the addition of space for some kind of industrial processing, perhaps of animals products such as urine or milk, indicates the great importance of animals –cattle, sheep goats – to the economy of people living at Easter Raitts. The discovery of a building exclusively given over to animals and associated functions is, to my knowledge, unique among excavated Highland post-Medieval buildings. It certainly does not fit the usual model, gleaned from ethnohistorical sources as well as excavation, of a few cattle overwintered with the human occupants in a byre dwelling (e.g., Jamieson 1974; Pennant 1774; McCullagh 2000; Fairhurst 1968). As such, this multi-phase building could add significantly to our understanding of the variety of ways people accommodated animals in the post-Medieval Highlands, and perhaps of their expanding herds and therefore wealth over time. An alternative or additional explanation is that, given Easter Raitts' proximity to a major north/south drove route along the foothills to the north and to Wade's military road (and any Medieval precedent), people in the township may have been offering overnight stabling for pack ponies and beds for their owners traversing the road.

The excavations have produced a great deal of detailed evidence from the later stages of life at Easter Raitts, as well as the evidence for the site's prehistoric use outlined in Chapter Three. The physical traces of the lives of people occupying the township, created through careful building, careless discarding or simply the dust and trample of everyday existence – these, along with the views and weather one

experiences at the site, are our best and closest contact with the material reality of that existence. It was shortly to change enormously with the Improvements – changes which preserved those traces while it altered forever the lives that had left them.

4.4 *The clash of cultures*

The fact that descriptions of Highland people, buildings and culture were made by travellers, soldiers, ministers and other educated observers in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was a symptom of the growing interest among Lowland Scots and English in the Highlands – an interest which varied from the relatively respectful attention of Pennant (1774), to the usually patronising but often affectionate interest of parish ministers (e.g., MacDonald 1835), to the more disdainful and frequently horrified fascination of Burt (Jamieson 1974). This interest found its most formal expression through the government military forces who sought to control and subject the militaristic culture and independent mentality of Highlanders through their physical presence and punitive measures, and through Improvers, who saw the Highlands as an area ripe for agricultural reform and social engineering.

4.4.1 *The military presence (early eighteenth to mid eighteenth century)*

In the early eighteenth century, the residents of Badenoch saw significant changes arrive beneath their noses, most obviously in the form of the government military. The importance of the area to controlling the central Highlands had already been noted by Parliament, who in 1669 recommended that a garrison be stationed at Ruthven. Work only began in the early summer of 1719, however, after the Jacobite rising of 1715, and the barracks were completed in 1721. The garrison stationed there was one of four installed in the Highlands at this time with the purpose of policing their immediate surroundings; there were others at Bernera, Fort Augustus and Garvamore, guarding the western seaboard and Skye, Lochaber and the Corrieyairick Pass, respectively.

The soldiers at Ruthven lived in two barrack blocks separated by a parade ground, in rooms of a standard size of 5.49 m long and 5.18 m wide with five beds for 10 men and a fireplace for cooking their rations. A stable block was added by General Wade in 1734 (Stell 1973, 23-25). Even now, roofless and in ruins, the structure visually dominates the broad, open section of Strathspey in lower Badenoch (zone 6). To those who lived within sight of it or passed by it on the existing drove roads, it must have been an awesome and intimidating expression of the force behind the architecture. To the soldiers stationed there, many of them probably from far south, it must have seemed an isolated and strangely exposed posting, there in the middle of the strath (see Plate 4.9). A surveyor, examining the property on behalf of the Gordons in 1792, described the wetness of the surrounding floodplain and added that this 'damped, as I am informed, the barracks very much, so that the military stores could not be kept from rusting, and even their linens would be so damp that they were obliged to have them conveyed to another place, in order to save them from rotting' (quoted in Fraser-Mackintosh 1897, 371).

Until the early eighteenth century, people moved through the Highlands along certain routes, many of them well-established drovers' roads with earlier precedents such as Comyn's Road and the Minigaig Road in Badenoch. However, other than the high and only seasonally passable Comyn's Road, these could not take wheeled traffic and so made travel slow and difficult. In 1725, soldiers under the supervision of General Wade began building roads to and through this crucial Highland corridor; Wade himself stayed at Drumochter over the summer of 1729 to supervise the work. By the end of that summer the road was lengthy enough that Wade could drive along it from Inverness to Drumochter in a coach (Mackenzie 1897, 157).

The military roads, built over eight years, trisected Badenoch, leading northward from Drumochter Pass to the main axis of Strathspey, and forking near Dalwhinnie to lead to Ruthven Barracks and join another road leading westward over the Corrieyairick Pass from Lochaber (see Plate 4.10); these roads re-joined near Newtonmore and proceeded toward Inverness. Figures 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and 4.9. show the roads running through Badenoch, where their routes are known and remains are visible (Figure 4.1 shows the line in blue, while the others show it in

purple). They were feats of engineering that overcame the boggy, upland nature of much of the route and transformed access to and through the central Highlands. In particular, they made it possible to move troops and supply wagons more quickly and efficiently than ever before, and were crucial to the government's military control of the mountains.

Excavation of some stretches of the Drumochter road has shown that the planned, standard width of 4.88 m (16 feet) was altered to 3.05 m (10 feet) in areas of more difficult terrain. In most cases, peat and soil were dug out and banked up on either side of the road, and large stones and then gravel were dumped in the trench to provide a hard, well-drained surface; in others, however, the soliders simply stripped away soil to expose the stony surface of the glacial till (Curtis 1980, 479). Shaw (1775, 229) describes how large stones were set upright on the roadside in some places to provide guidance in deep snow.

The road-building process must have had an enormous impact on Badenoch. Wade was given a warrant to enforce the 1716 Disarming Act as he progressed through the Highlands. This forbade all, except a few loyal subjects granted licenses, to possess weapons (Mackenzie 1897, 151; Stell 1973, 20). Written instructions to General Wade state that 'many of the inhabitants of that part of our dominions do still continue possessed of great quantities of arms and warlike weapons, with which they commit robberies and depredations, and raise illegal exactions from our faithful subjects' (quoted in Mackenzie 1897, 174). Many of the arms yielded to him were, however, unserviceable and a great number of guns in working order must have been hidden away (*ibid.*, 169).

The road-building programme would have brought about at least seasonal changes in Badenoch's population: up to 500 soldiers were employed each summer (the only period when weather permitted the work to progress) in building the roads (Curtis 1980, 477). However, there is also evidence that local labourers were used. In 1730 the Lord-Advocate, Duncan Forbes, wrote with reference to the military roads that 'the Highlanders begin to turn their heads and hands to labour, which in a little time must produce a great change upon the face, as well as upon the politics, of the country' (quoted in Mackenzie 1897, 158).

While those changes may have been of a different nature than Forbes could have foreseen, they certainly did come about. The massive influx of alien soldiers each summer – probably bored when they were not working and perhaps with wages to spend – must have affected, both socially and economically, people in the townships and shielings past which the roads crept. That impact would not have ended when the roads were complete. In the wake of the soldiers, taking advantage of their efforts and seeking to capitalise on their wages and needs for entertainment, came a variety of newcomers from the south and perhaps also from the north, particularly traders and prostitutes; some of Wade's letters refer to the former (Mackenzie 1897, 174).

A public house was built at Ruthven before 1736 to cater to those stationed in the barracks. According to the Kirk Session of Kingussie dated 10 July 1726, 'a great many stragglers and vagabonds come into this parish without testimonials as also a great many dissolute and unmarried women from different parts of the kingdom commonly follow the soldiers at the barracks of Ruthven and are sheltered in some houses in the parish where they and the soldiers have frequent meetings and very often upon the Lord's Day' (quoted in Scarlett 1988, 12). A fine of £20 Scots was recommended for people who maintained what were in effect these local brothels.

The impact of these incomers, and of the new, mass-produced goods which traders brought for sale, must have been something like the effects that followed the advance of the Roman empire through continental Europe and Britain. In the archaeological record, the sudden appearance of mass-produced pottery in longhouse 21 at Easter Raitts may reflect this economic opening up of Badenoch. Another response to these sudden changes may have been expressed in the small iron key (Figure 4.22), found tucked between wall footings next to the doorway of longhouse 24, which had later been sealed when the house was re-used as a byre. Highland longhouses are not generally recorded as having had locks on their doors, at least not of metal (e.g., Burt's description in Jamieson 1974, 143). However, Easter Raitts faced down directly onto Wade's military road. The soldiers building it would have

worked their way along the foot of Raitts lands, within easy sight of the inhabitants, and the effects might have been both beneficial and harmful.

Eighteenth-century records indicate something of the latter. A man known as Brigadier Mackintosh (of the Mackintoshes who held Raitts in feu from the Gordons) lived in 1698 in what was later described as a 'typical Highland longhouse' on the site of the later mansion of Belleville or Balavil (see below), c. 1.4 km north-east of the township clusters. The Brigadier, an early agricultural Improver, served the Jacobite cause during the 1715 uprising; he escaped from prison on the eve of his trial and fought in the abortive 1719 rebellion, but was eventually re-captured and imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle, where he died in 1734. His father, with foresight, left Raitts to his son's wife so that it was not forfeit to the Crown (Scarlett 1988, 33-34).

At some point during his imprisonment in the 1720s the Brigadier wrote 'A Short Scheme whereby it is proposed by the help of the Military Road made by Lieut. Gen. Wade . . . effectually to stop Depredations and Theft so frequently committed and so destructive to the Northern Counties of Scotland' (*ibid.*, 35). The title of his 'scheme' does not specifically refer to his own estate, but given that Wade's road passed through it he must have been prompted by personal experience of the said depredations. A later statement by one Dr. Carruthers hints at the dangers which confronted travellers and at the changing nature of these through the eighteenth century: the Brigadier's own grandson, Edward Shaw, was a rascal who once attempted to abduct his own nieces from Boston for nefarious purposes connected to inheritance. He later turned highwayman and 'disgraced his clan and descent by highway robbery, committed not in the old legitimate piratical way of levying blackmail, but by attacking travellers' (Dr. Carruthers, quoted in MacPherson 1893, 258).

This suggests that roads in Badenoch had formerly been controlled by local families, who extorted what was in effect protection money from those needing to travel on them, such as they were. In all likelihood the military presence obviated the need for and discouraged such blackmail, and so those wanting to profit dishonourably from travellers were forced to rob them outright.

The first Statistical Accounts of local parishes give some indication of local people's attitudes toward the soldiers' presence. According to the minister for Alvie parish, his parishioners were 'extremely averse to the military' (Gordon 1792, 5), while those in Kingussie parish were 'inclined to martial enterprise' (Anderson 1790, 201). The Hanoverian occupation of Ruthven Barracks had ended only 40 years earlier, and the relative proximity of parishioners to it must have influenced their views. Those living in Kingussie parish, in which the barracks lay, may have known soldiers personally, benefited economically from their presence and been influenced to join their ranks. Those living slightly farther away in Alvie parish may have felt only the military's intrusive presence and stern discipline, and none of the personal contacts and benefits that could have sweetened that experience. Those living at Raitts, in Alvie parish, would have been within constant sight of the barracks and within sight and hearing of the military road, although separated from the former by the river and marshy floor of the strath. Given both this distance and the perhaps unwelcome contact via the road's builders and users, they may have held more negative views.

The effects of the 1745 Jacobite rising must have been keenly felt in Badenoch. Prince Charles Edward Stuart passed through here, using Wade's military road to cross the Corrieyairick and proceed along Strathspey, past the townships of Pitmain, Raitts, Dunachton and many others, on his way to the final confrontation with the Hanoverian army at Culloden. It is likely that men from townships he passed would have joined the march and fought with him at Culloden. In 1745, the company then lodged at Ruthven Barracks left to join General Cope against the Jacobites, leaving only 14 men to man the barracks under one Sergeant Mulloy. In February 1746 they came under attack from a force of about 200 Jacobites, and managed to hold it against them for three days before surrendering. The rebels burnt the barracks (Shaw 1775, 207).

After their defeat at Culloden, many Jacobite soldiers made their way back along the Wade road, and they might have sought food or bandages from those living in the townships they passed. At least 2,000 of them assembled near the barracks the day after Culloden under the command of Lord George Murray,

prepared to re-group and fight again. Murray sent an aide-de-camp to the prince to receive orders, but the reply sent back was the defeatist and heart-breaking message, 'let every man seek his own safety' (Scarlett 1988, 13). The *Scots* magazine reported that parties of government troops were sent to search the Minigaig Hills for rebel soldiers hiding out there; many must have retreated up the old Minigaig Road (Kerr 1975, 59). Prince Charles Edward Stuart himself hid out in upper Badenoch for several months after Culloden, in what were probably shieling huts in the region of Ben Alder, under the protection and sustenance of the Cluny Macphersons and the Macphersons of Breakachy. Cluny's large, newly-built house was burned for his part in the rising, and he famously hid out himself in several caves in the steep crags above the strath floor near Cluny (Scarlett 1988, 104-105).

By the time Roy's surveyors mapped the area in the late 1740s, changes had begun to take place on the Raitts estate that prefigured those to come, there and in other parts of Badenoch. At some point in the first part of the eighteenth century, a substantial steading of mortared stone buildings had been constructed at Raitts, still surviving as Mains of Balavil farmstead. It lies c. 1.2 km to the south-east of Easter Raitts, a short distance down slope from the site of the 'old Highland longhouse' of Brigadier Mackintosh and Wade's military road. The steading and its associated, well-defined enclosures are depicted on Roy's map of the area (see Figure 4.16); nothing is shown, however, on the shoulder where the settlement remains lie. The surveyors chose to focus on the more substantial and modern steading – an early sign, perhaps, of the redundancy of the townships to the Raitts estate.

4.4.2 *The Improvements (late eighteenth to mid nineteenth century)*

The Statistical Accounts offer some of the strongest evidence for the nature of the changes that took place in Badenoch in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The fact that they were written at all illustrates the growing interest of Improvers, both social and agricultural, in the Highlands, and they presaged the changes to come.

In the first Statistical Account, ministers for Badenoch parishes bemoaned the tenants' general lack of ambition, saying they preferred their subsistence farming

to learning a trade or to working as day labourers for the estates (Anderson 1790, 202; Gordon 1792, 5). The tenants seem to have held fiercely to their independence. The ministers also condemned the small holdings and short leases commonly granted to tenants, which effectively put them at the mercy of their landlords in a system one minister described as worse than feudal (Anderson 1790, 199). They blamed this system for the people's unwillingness to adopt better agricultural practices or build more substantial houses: with no security of tenure, they apparently had little motivation to improve the land they farmed or build houses which would last longer.

The ministers writing these accounts typically described their parishioners as brave, hospitable and polite, but inclined to drink and quarrel; few could read, and the ministers tended to despair of their moral education. The military, in league with the clergy, imposed rules on local life. The parish records, extant only from the 1720s, suggest a certain disregard among the inhabitants for these rules; as well as the misdemeanours by prostitutes mentioned above, they list offences such as fist fights, fiddling and fishing on the Sabbath (Macpherson 1893, 30-38).

By the 1770s, as noted above, the Gordons were having their lands surveyed and were planning Improvements to make them profitable, including the conversion of large areas to sheep walks. As elsewhere in the Highlands, growing population levels and poor harvests were putting increasing pressure on the land, and on landowners. In famine years, the Duke of Gordon supplied grain to his tenants (Grant 1845). The Gordons appear not to have practised widescale eviction, although some did take place; people were moved from some townships, including those in Glen Banchor, and resettled along the edges of the strath, especially at Newtonmore and Kingussie. Kingussie was re-created as a planned village in 1799, and Newtonmore (formerly Banchor) was established within the following two decades (Scarlett 1988, 20). A census of 1841 includes several pages of people whose address is cited simply as 'the north side of the military road' (*ibid.*, 9).

One of the first sheepwalks in Scotland was created at Aberarder in the 1790s, leased from the Duke of Gordon and staffed with Lowland shepherds (Sinton 1910). The forests of Gaick and Glenfeshie were let as sheepwalks for sheep

imported from the Borders, and sheepwalks were also created on other estates, including Raitts (Scarlett 1988, 73, 114).

By 1788, the estate of Raitts had passed out of the Mackintosh family, having been sold to James MacPherson, the controversial translator of so-called Ossianic, or ancient Gaelic poetry. A schoolteacher brought up in the township of Ruthven, on the hillside opposite the barracks, he was known locally as *Seamus Ban* (Scarlett 1988, 36-37). He built an elegant mansion, designed by the Adam brothers, named Belleville (later Gaelicised to Balavil) on the site of the old Brigadier's longhouse and facing onto Wade's military road, away from the present A9 (Figure 4.2). He cleared some of the tenants on Raitts and his other properties (Fraser-Mackintosh 1897, 399); his eldest son James completed the evictions.

Elizabeth Grant, writing after 1814, refers to an attempt to re-house on the Rothiemurchus estate four widows she describes as 'old smoke-dried, shrivelled up witches with pipes in their mouths and blankets on their backs [who] preferred their dark, dirty smoke-filled huts' (Grant 1794, 323). Nevertheless, the old forms of architecture apparently continued in use for some time: about 1850, 20 'turf shanties' were demolished in Kingussie to build the Duke of Gordon Hotel (Sinton 1910). In general, after the early nineteenth century initial Improvements, farms in Badenoch were run as larger units and with improved cultivation methods, and root crops were favoured. As old thatched houses fell into disrepair, they were abandoned rather than repaired and were replaced by new mortared stone buildings (Scarlett 1988, 45).

By 1765, a bridge had been built over the Spey at Ralia, and the length of military road from Ralia to Ruthven Barracks became largely redundant. It also made the several ferries over the river – at Boat of Insh, Boat of Garten and Boat House of Kingussie – less necessary. Most traffic now by-passed the inn at Ruthven, and some townships – including Luibleathann and Ruthven itself – eventually were abandoned. John Maclean, a local entrepreneur, saw his chance, leased the farm of Pitmain and opened an inn there; he also moved the post office there from Ruthven. Travellers making the five-day journey by post chaise from Edinburgh to Inverness inevitably stopped at Pitmain Inn (*ibid.*, 17).

Badenoch continued to be an important thoroughway along the droving route. The Bill for the Maintenance of Highland Roads and Bridges, passed in 1823, contained a concession that cattle could travel from Strath Hallidale to Perthshire without incurring a toll except at Pitmain Bridge over the Spey, where a toll of 10 pence per score of black cattle and five pence per score of sheep and lambs was charged (*ibid.*, 18). The Minigaig Road continued in use as the main drovers' route through the nineteenth century, with most stock destined for the Falkirk Tryst; a sheep stance and inn at Coire Bhran, near the large shieling cluster at the junction of the Truim and Bhran rivers, served them (*ibid.*, 75). Dalwhinnie also lay at the junction of two drove roads, leading from upper Strathspey and Laggan, and there was formerly a cattle stance there as well; in the eighteenth century, Bishop Forbes encountered eight droves (about 1200 head of cattle) there (*ibid.*, 92).

During the nineteenth century, however, the character of the area changed significantly. Kingussie became popular as a health resort; its Scottish Episcopal Church was built especially for the use of summer visitors, as were its golf course, bowling green and tennis courts (Scarlett 1988, 22). Grouse moors, deer shoots and shooting lodges were established to cater for seasonal hunters (*ibid.*, 45). A richer class of people began to frequent the area, their presence facilitated by the better roads.

As for the everyday life of people farming as tenants in Badenoch, the Second Statistical Accounts, compiled in the mid-1830s, show changes since the first accounts. Small tenants continued to farm in the same way, in rigs held communally, using both infield and outfield. They continued to build their 'wretched hovels' in a similar manner, with 'a few wooden couples, joined together with cross spars, and covered with a turf roof, that requires to be renewed almost every second year' (MacDonald 1835, 91). Leases were still short and harvests still uncertain. However, much formerly barren land had been improved and brought under cultivation, and in general tenants were more inclined to partake in the spirit of Improvement. The minister for Kingussie noted that large areas had been converted from smallholdings to sheepwalks, and expressed a wish that this could be reversed in order to slow the pace of emigration from the parish (Shepherd 1835, 80).

Education in the 1830s was much more widely available, with a private school established at Raitts (exactly where is unknown) and even older people being taught to read. Gaelic was by then losing ground to English, especially among the young. The minister for Alvie observed two illuminating and contrasting currents. He wrote (on the subject of prevailing winds): ‘The ignorant country people, particularly the old, who are strongly wedded to the absurd superstitions of their venerated ancestors, consider the whirlwind as indicative of a procession of the imaginary beings called fairies’; he added with satisfaction that such superstitions were quickly eroding (MacDonald 1835, 82). Only paragraphs later, however, he records that the cairn and standing stones at Easter Delfour, a mile west of Alvie church, were still held in such veneration that, although they stood inconveniently in the middle of a ploughed field, farmers always carefully avoided disturbing them (*ibid.*, 87).

These two observations capture the enormous cultural changes taking place here in the first half of the nineteenth century. Badenoch’s inhabitants were being brought perforce into a modern, capitalist, rational society and, through the engines of Improvement and education, being made to conform to it. Within only a few generations the resulting changes in people’s world views and lifeways had been pervasive. The changes to the landscape were just as enduring.

4.5 *Conclusion*

This chapter has explored the evidence for Badenoch’s history in the second millennium A.D. and the forces and events that have shaped its landscapes to the present day. The introduction of feudal power and its gradual consolidation were to have far-reaching effects, although the structure of the landscape may well have already been established by its inception. Although feudal power was strongly expressed in structures like Ruthven Castle, it took centuries to establish itself firmly and bring social order and its own form of justice to the area; that the process was retarded must have been partly due to the Wolf of Badenoch’s own approach to his lordship and failure to control caterans. Those living as tenants on the dependent

farms which made up Badenoch's thanages and (later) feudal estates would have felt the effects of social, economic and political unrest most keenly. In response they may have shifted their settlement locations within a limited area around their fields, and in any case their houses and barns are likely to have been insubstantial.

With the relative stability of the later Medieval period, and encouraged to do so by feudalisation, people's settlements clustered and consolidated on the fluvio-glacial terraces which line Strathspey. Their settlements grew and subdivided as population levels grew until, by the time landlords such as the Gordons were of a mind to make the land profitable and introduce agricultural improvements, the land could indeed not support the numbers of people on it. While the Improvements did not result in changes as drastic as those elsewhere in the Highlands (see, for example, Chapter 6), they did alter the landscape significantly, leaving the fluid settlement pattern of previous centuries frozen on what is now for the most part pastureland.

Today, tourism is one of Badenoch's most vital industries. While skiing near Aviemore draws tourists in winter, local people have continually to invent means of luring people off the A9 and into the villages during the rest of the year – a difficult matter with Inverness so near. In an odd twist of history, the Highland Folk Museum has for the past several years been reconstructing a Highland township at Newtonmore, based more or less on the excavated buildings at Easter Raitts. The longhouses are built of timber couples and stone footings, with turf walls thickly covered in grass and wild flowers in summer. Entering them, one chokes like Burt on the peat smoke that rises from the central hearth. In the space of 200 years, the everyday life of Highland townships has become a museum piece, turning a profit for Badenoch in a way people then could never have envisaged.

Chapter Five: Strathnaver to the first millennium A.D.

5.1 Introduction

Strathnaver and the coastline that flanks its mouth are densely scattered with archaeological remains from most periods, indicating a long-established human presence, especially in the strath and along the eastern stretch of coastline (see Fig. 5.1 [location map]). The most abundant settlement remains survive from later prehistory, but from all periods where sufficient evidence of settlement and ritual activity survives to permit patterns to be established, patterns do emerge which show the different inhabited texture of the landscape at different times.

This chapter first describes the context of the natural environment of Strathnaver and the adjacent coast, and evidence for its character in the past. It then discusses the archaeological evidence for settlement, land use and religious associations throughout prehistory, through most of the first millennium A.D., up to the beginning of Norse influence as early as the ninth century A.D. Chapter Six treats the evidence for the Norse period to the present. As in Badenoch, possible Early Medieval chapel sites are the best indication of the locations and character of settlement in the mid to late first millennium A.D.; the settlements that supported and used them must have developed from later Iron Age communities in the strath. These settlements and their chapels would also have been those the Norse encountered as they pushed up the strath. Therefore, the chapel sites are shown on both the site maps for this chapter (5.3-5.5) and those for Chapter Six.

Throughout the area remains from all periods are intermingled; stretches of fertile land have drawn settlement again and again, and the division of the following discussion into periods pulls out layers of archaeology, one at a time, from the palimpsest. It is an attempt to understand how the area was understood and occupied at different times: where people lived or built their monuments, which places seem to have been more important at different times, what can be deduced about ways of life and conceptions of the land and sea. However, the distribution of known remains is almost certainly not representative of the density of the landscape's occupation in the past. The use, over and over again, of certain areas will have left only the most substantial remains from more distant periods.

As McCullagh (in McCullagh & Tipping 1998, 2) has observed, the uplands of northern Scotland are exceedingly rich in archaeological remains, but relatively few sites from any period have been investigated using modern methods of excavation (and in the study area, few have been excavated at all). As a result, some of those that have been excavated have become 'type-sites' for their period, such as the Type V hut-circle at Kilphedir in the Strath of Kildonan (Fairhurst & Taylor 1974) and the longhouse at Rosal (Fairhurst 1968), while others have simply remained little understood (e.g., Suisgill; Barclay 1985). The lack of repeated investigation of similar sites means there is no database of informed observations on which to draw in interpreting the nature and distribution of upstanding archaeology from surface remains alone. In addition, the distribution of the known remains in the study area is undoubtedly skewed, as some areas have been subjected to more systematic examination than others.

In spite of these limitations, by examining the topographic context of remains from different periods, the following analysis does provide a general understanding of the landscape's history. The discussion draws on information held in the National Monuments Record of Scotland, on the work of previous investigators such as Mercer (1981), and on observations made in the field by the author. For the later (Norse to post-Medieval) periods, treated in Chapter Six, the amount of historical information available means that the study area's position in the political and religious currents of the time can be examined, but still it is necessary to turn to archaeological remains for an understanding of how it was occupied.

5.2 *The natural environment, past and present*

The north-western corner of the northernmost part of mainland Scotland, known now as Sutherland (Figure 5.1), has a rock-bound coast punctuated by sandy bays, particularly where inland rivers empty into the sea. The largest of these rivers, the Naver, flows north for c. 25 km from its source at Loch Naver, along a strath named for it, and joins the sea at the eastern edge of Torrisdale Bay, which is also fed by the smaller River Borgie to the west. From uplands around Loch Naver, the strath opens out into a flat-bottomed valley broken up by glacial moraines; along its

lower reaches, fluvio-glacial terraces line its steep, short sides, which rise on either side to moorland plateaus and mountains (see Fig. 5.1).

Although today the name Strathnaver applies only to the strath carved out by the River Naver, in the Medieval period it was used to denote the entire north-western corner of mainland Scotland, from Strath Halladale in the north-east to Cape Wrath. The study area extends from the head of Loch Naver, northward along the strath, following its watersheds on either side to the coast; it reaches along the coast for *c.* seven kilometres to the east and west and includes a strip of the hinterland from two to four kilometres wide. To the east of the Naver's mouth it reaches as far as Kirtomy Point and to the west as far as Sleitel.

The landscapes of Strathnaver and its flanking coastline owe their present shape to processes of geological formation and glaciation. The solid geology comprises Lewisian Gneiss on the west side of the strath, extending north to the coast, and Moinian rocks in the strath itself. The Lewisian Gneiss, part of a basement extending westward to the continental shelf and eastward beneath the northern Highlands, are crystalline metamorphic rocks which formed over 1700 million years ago – the oldest exposed in north-western Britain. Although predominantly exposed along the west side of Sutherland, inliers occur to the east, along the west side of Strathnaver and elsewhere. The metamorphosed sediments called the Moine Series (after A' Mhoine, where they were first described), were deposited *c.* 750 million years ago, and are the oldest sedimentary rocks in the British Isles. They are generally banded, show signs of having folded and re-folded, and are often interbanded with thrust slices of rocks which are Lewisian in origin (Ross 1982, 22-27). The faults and folds of the rocks of the Moine Series create the geos, caves, stacks and small inlets that give the coast its serrated appearance.

Strathnaver itself formed during the Tertiary Period, *c.* 70 million years ago, when its river exploited the softer Moinean rock, following the east edge of the Lewisian Gneiss, to run NNE to the sea. Loch Naver formed in a valley basin at its head but, like many other larger lochs in Sutherland, it was deepened by ice action in a series of glaciations. By the end of the last glaciation, *c.* 13,500 years ago, Strathnaver was being shaped by fluvio-glacial meltwater as the climate improved and the glaciers melted. Glacial till dumped by decaying ice formed the moraines in

the upper strath between Skaill and Loch Naver, and meltwater redistributed the looser material above the till in the layered terraces that line the lower strath.

The river continued to cut a meandering channel through glacially-deposited layers of sand and gravel, dumping alluvial silts on the low, flat land of the valley bottom. Along the coast, as sea levels rose but before the land recovered from the weight of the ice, the sea cut into the unconsolidated sand and gravel deposits there, creating beaches which were raised when the land did spring back; these raised beaches are visible in most of the bays along the north coast, including Skerry, Lamigo and Strathan Skerry (Ross, Omand & Fiddy 1982, 55-58).

The glaciers left Sutherland with its generally coarse, acid soils. Its low summer temperatures and moderate to high rainfall produce intensive leaching, with the result that soils become acid more quickly. Sutherland is now dominated by peat, peaty podzols and peaty gleys, with blanket peat covering the higher, level ground to the east of Strathnaver and much of the coastal strip around its mouth, or with peaty podzols on the moundy moraines and peaty gleys in the hollows between them. In the strath, coarse, gravelly to sandy alluvial soils have developed on its alluvial terraces. It also contains strongly acid, humus-iron podzols, as well as brown forest soils on the rocky sides of the lower strath (Fiddy 1982, 63-70).

Analysis of a transect at Lairg (McCullagh & Tipping 1998, 213), c. 40 km to the SSW of the study area, showed that, because the parent materials were poor in nutrients, soils in that landscape had already become podzolised before the first archaeological monuments were built; while the timing of podzolisation may have varied over northern Scotland, in general it appears to have taken place during the Holocene. In that case, the soils in the study area would always have been acidic, although differential drainage patterns may have developed later.

The coast and hinterland have a maritime climate. Rainfall in the middle part of the twentieth century averaged 1,500-1,100 millimetres (59.1-39.4 inches) a year in the area which includes Strathnaver and the adjacent coast. The winds prevail from the south to south-east, but frequently also blow from the west and north-west. Winds reach strong or gale force about 15 per cent of the year, and they are particularly harsh in winter, often bringing polar air too quickly for it to have warmed

over the ocean and, with it, drifting snowfalls. The sea reaches its coldest temperatures (6 degrees C/43 degrees F on the west coast) in March, warming to a maximum of 13 degrees C/55 degrees F in August all around the coast. June through September are the warmest months, and October through January the wettest; ground frost can occur, however, at any time throughout most of the area (Omand 1982, 78-86).

Examination of the mineral and pollen content in dated lake bed deposits in western Sutherland has shown that, following the development of soils and vegetation after the last glaciation, *c.* 10,000 B.C., a period of climatic deterioration led to the decline of both between *c.* 9,000 and 8,400 B.C., and during this time small glaciers reappeared in some of the higher corries. The climate thereafter warmed again and between 8,000 and 7,000 B.C. herbaceous grassland and birch woodland spread in succession over the landscape. Pine followed the birch in the north and east, as did oak and alder in smaller populations (Michie 1982, 267-70).

At about 3,000 B.C., open birch and hazel woods dominated the north of Scotland (Tipping 1994, 12). By *c.* 2500 bc the Wick area had become significantly wetter and blanket peat began to develop by *c.* 1500 bc; an absence of tall herb pollen in the Caithness core suggests there was widespread grazing by that time. By 500 bc cereal, grass and weed pollens had increased, suggesting abundant cultivation in that area (Pegler 1979). Evidence of tree stumps in blanket peat show there was extensive forest cover in prehistoric Sutherland, but upland forests shrank probably as a result of clearance and also climatic deterioration in the late Bronze Age and Iron Age; the latter factor encouraged the regrowth of bogs (Michie 1982, 270). Northern Scotland may have seen another period of warmer weather from about 1200 to 1000 cal B.C., when bog growth ceased, but subsequently the climate deteriorated, becoming colder and wetter in the first millennium B.C., and the bogs began to regenerate. As noted in Chapter 3, recent statistical analysis of pollen data and the use of climatic modelling have suggested that climatic fluctuations since the sixth century B.C. over Scotland have generally been much less dramatic than was previously thought (Whittington & Edwards 1997, 14).

Iron-smelting in Strathnaver in the late Medieval period, if not earlier, probably contributed to woodland clearance; the Scottish Parliament passed an act in

1609 forbidding the use of timber for iron smelting, such was its effect on Highland forests generally. Timothy Pont's map of the 1590s shows forests farther north than today in Strathnaver (see Chapter 6), and almost certainly sheep grazing over the last two centuries has inhibited the regeneration of much woodland (Michie 1982, 267-70). Sutherland has an unusual wealth of rare plant life, particularly in the mountain plants found at sea level. The glacial outwash plain at Invernaver, a nature reserve colonised by mobile dunes, has particularly rare examples including mountain aven, creeping willow and crowberry. The machair around Bettyhill supports purple oxytropis, Scottish primrose abounds on the sea-facing slopes at Torrisdale and Lamigo, and marram grass covers the dune systems at Invernaver and Farr (Kenworthy 1982, 88-98).

Today, most of the study area is used for farming sheep. The lower slopes and floor of Strathnaver are mainly improved grassland, while the upper slopes and coastal strips are used as rough grazings. The upper strath, around Rosal and Truderscaig, is extensively planted with commercial forestry.

The study area falls into 10 distinct zones defined by its topography, shown on Figure 5.1; as the following sections will explore, these appear to have influenced the ways in which the strath was inhabited over time. The southernmost zone (1) is that dominated by Loch Naver; its sides slope up fairly gently on the south and more steeply on the north to craggy tops. The loch unifies the entire zone, and certain relationships of intervisibility between monuments on its shores suggest that it was perceived this way in the past. Another zone (2) reaches southward from the confluence of the Rivers Naver and Mallart at the foot of the loch and follows the Mallart's valley upstream, encompassing the higher ground to the watersheds on either side.

The third zone extends from the head of the River Naver to Syre; the strath's floor is relatively narrow along this stretch and the sides are steep. Forestry plantations on both sides presently increase the closed-in feeling, but the natural topography does create it to a large extent. At Syre, the strath opens out considerably to a broad, flat floor and short, terraced sides, and this fourth zone extends as far north as Skail.

From Skail to Chealamy, the fifth zone, the strath again closes in somewhat; the floor is punctuated by moraines which break it up into more intimate spaces between some more open stretches, while both sides rise fairly abruptly. At Chealamy the river and strath change alignment from NNE to run more directly northward. Here the strath enters its sixth topographic zone, which extends as far as Skelpick and Achargary. It again opens out significantly; the valley floor is broad and level and the west side rises quite steeply, but the east side of the strath rises more gradually in a series of wide terraces.

At Skelpick and Achargary, where the river again kinks slightly to run more north-westerly, the strath constricts. Views up and down it and of the river are much more limited by the knolls and ridges along the floor and sides. This seventh zone extends from Achargary to the bridge at Invernaver. The northernmost and shortest zone of the strath (8) extends from Invernaver to the mouth of the river at Torrisdale Bay. Along this tidal stretch of the river the sides rise up fairly precipitously to the slopes below Bettyhill on the east and the glacial outwash plain on the west, and above the latter the cliffs of Druim Chuibhe. Nevertheless, the breadth of the river and the ocean to the north give this seventh zone an open aspect.

To the west side of the river, where it flows into Torrisdale Bay at Invernaver, is a peculiar geological feature, consisting of a plateau of boulder clay which formed as a fluvio-glacial outwash plain and has been cut by the sea and river on the north, east and south. Its northern side, toward the beach, is fringed with sand dunes and the plain is now covered with windblown sand above the fluvio-glacial gravels, with little vegetation. To its south-east the Naver broadens and forms a deep tidal pool. The steep, craggy cliff face of Druim Chuibhe towers 90 m above the plain to the west, sheltering it from the worst of the wind and sandblow, but the plain is still relatively exposed to both southerlies and northerlies. The archaeological and historical evidence, discussed below, suggests that in the past windblown sand by turns covered and was swept off the plain, and this instability may have been the reason for its abandonment at several points.

The stretch of coast to the east of the Naver's mouth (zone 9), from Invernaver to Kirtomy Point and including the headlands of Ardmore and Farr Points and Creag Ruadh, is quite exposed, with a wide, north-west facing beach at

Farr and smaller but open inlets at Swordly and Kirtomy. A small valley leads down to the sea at Swordly, with a broader one at Kirtomy. The coastline to the west of Torrisdale Bay (zone 10) is today generally called Skerray; reaching from the River Borgie to Sleiteil and including the three inlets of Skerray, Lamigo and Port an t-Strathain, it is more sheltered but also less open than zone 9. Tall cliffs and geos front the sea, with high moorland behind them. Four small straths – at Skerray, Lamigo, Strathan Skerray and Sleitel – lead to inlets. Skerray, Lamigo and Strathan are all relatively sheltered, receiving extra protection from the islands lying off shore, Eilean Coomb and Eilean nan Roan (and its smaller sisters); from their inlets the islands block views of the open sea altogether. Sleitel, however, is a north-west facing valley positioned as the coast curves south-west toward the open mouth of the Kyle of Tongue, and much more exposed to north-westerlies.

These topographic zones and their defining characteristics will be referred to throughout the remainder of this chapter and Chapter Six, where they appear relevant to the clusters of archaeological remains and to patterns of human use of the study area. As in Chapters Three and Four, the conventional terms used to distinguish phases of the prehistoric and historic past are followed here for the sake of convenience, while their limitations and artificiality are acknowledged.

The following discussion of Strathnaver's archaeology should be read against Figures 5.3, 5.4. and 5.5, which show the known archaeological sites in the study area. Figure 5.2 shows the positions of these more detailed maps within the larger area.

5.3 Strathnaver in earlier prehistory (eighth through third millennia B.C.)

5.3.1 The earliest evidence

The earliest evidence of human presence, either in the strath or along the coast, consists of an extensive scatter of flaked flint and chert artefacts on the gravel surface of the fluvio-glacial outwash plain at Invernaver (NC76SW 25; see Figure 5.3). Extending over an area of least 4800 square metres and running beneath dunes to the north, east and west, the scatter has yielded cores, flakes, blades, blade cores,

and a narrow blade microlith that indicate it is Mesolithic in date (Wickham-Jones & Firth 1990). The scatter shows that people were at least making tools here by the sea – and perhaps hunting on the adjacent uplands, fishing from the beach or in boats or taking salmon from the river – as long ago as c. 8,000 B.C.

The paucity of evidence for Mesolithic occupation in the study area is not surprising given its relative scarcity in northern Scotland generally, although the body of evidence to suggest a significant Mesolithic presence in the region is growing. Mesolithic tool assemblages have been recovered from Smoo Cave, Durness (Pollard forthcoming), from Camster Long Cairn in Caithness (Wickham-Jones & Firth 1990), from Freswick in Caithness (Wickham-Jones 1994), from the Black Isle through fieldwalking (A. Jack, pers comm) and from Inverness (Wordsworth 1985). Fieldwalking undertaken in Caithness as part of the Scottish Lithic Scatters Project has found further evidence for Mesolithic occupation there (Stuart in prep). The fact that so little evidence for Mesolithic activity has so far been discovered in the study area may be attributable to the limited number of invasive investigations that have taken place. Environmental evidence has shown that woodland burning did take place in several parts of northern Scotland during the Mesolithic period (Tipping 1996).

5.3.2 *On the re-shaping of landscapes in the Neolithic*

Evidence for a later human presence, in the Neolithic, survives almost solely in large monuments, which do at least indicate a well-established occupation of the area and suggest the importance of certain elements in the landscape. They cluster at several points that may have been foci for settlement, or perhaps for ritual activity which drew people from several settlements in the vicinity. Mercer (1981, 9) suggests that the distribution of chambered cairns in northern Sutherland and Caithness may correspond to settlement and cultivation centres in the middle Neolithic, or that the cairns may occupy land on the margins of such foci.

The lack of direct evidence for Neolithic settlement is, of course, not unusual for Highland Scotland. Only a handful of sites, such as the chambered cairn at Ord North near Lairg (Sharples 1981) have provided dates for their construction, use and abandonment. Therefore, for this area 'there is almost no basis for any detailed

explanation of the profound changes that occurred in settlement type or pattern, or in human society and economy, throughout the Neolithic, however that term is interpreted' (McCullagh in McCullagh & Tipping 1998, 4). The work at Lairg found evidence for the cultivation of cereals between 3500 cal B.C. and 2000 cal B.C. – the earliest yet found in Scotland (*ibid.*, 112). It also showed that later, Bronze Age occupation proved highly destructive to the remains of Neolithic settlement and land use; the authors tentatively suggest that the later prehistoric settlement was more sedentary than the earlier, and therefore perhaps more substantial (*ibid.*, 212).

Previous work on Neolithic monuments in the study area has tended to focus on the architectural form and development of chambered cairns. Henshall, in her substantial two-volume work *The Chambered Tombs of Scotland* (1963, 1972), distinguished these monuments by their architectural features and appearance in plan, developing their characteristics into a scheme of classification. Although mainly concerned with morphology, Henshall did attempt to distinguish whether forms indicated a monument had been built in a single phase or been constructed over several phases (Henshall 1972, 223). In their more recent volume, Henshall & Ritchie (1995) have built on her previous work, further developing chronologies and typologies. Mercer, as part of his survey of coastal stretches of Sutherland and Caithness (1980, 1981, 1985), re-visited some of the monuments included in Henshall's earlier analysis and in some cases re-interpreted them. He made minor adjustments to Henshall's scheme of classification according to his own observations in the field, while acknowledging her valuable contribution in recognising that many chambered cairns exhibited evidence of 'cumulative construction' (Mercer 1985, 23).

Bradley (1998) has considered the changes in ideology that must have been necessary for the transition from hunting and gathering to settled farming, itself undoubtedly a long, slow process with many variations. He argues that Mesolithic peoples made no clear distinction between domestic and wild, or between themselves and the natural world. In their way of perceiving the world, many places in the landscape might have been seen as significant or sacred, but none were constructed as such. It was neither necessary nor conceptually possible to build monuments, with the degree of control and re-shaping of the landscape which they involved (*ibid.*, 31-35).

With the gradual adoption of agriculture, people's conceptions of time and place must have altered. Meillassoux's (1972) analysis of the differences between hunter-gatherers and farmers, although over-simplified, is essentially valid here. Hunter-gatherers have no long-term investment in one particular place, but need to range over a larger area; their efforts are short-term, with immediate returns, and they do not depend on the labours of previous generations for their living. Farmers, by contrast, must have a long-term commitment to an area. They invest labour for rewards that they reap later, and so necessarily take a longer view of time. In addition, the decisions and labours of the generations preceding them do affect their lives: they work land cleared by ancestors; they plant seed and raise animals spawned by previous generations of domesticates, passed on to them by their fathers and grandfathers. Therefore, they have a stronger sense of the importance of ancestry and of their own genealogies (see Bradley 1998, 51).

Barrett (1988) has distinguished, in Neolithic mortuary ritual, between funerary rituals, concerned with the proper disposal of the dead, and ancestor rituals, which established the presence of ancestors and were undertaken for the sake of the living. Analysing the dating evidence and structural form of chambered cairns in north-west Europe, Bradley (1998) finds a gradual change from cairns with closed chambers to passage graves, in which chambers remained accessible after the cairn was built (*ibid.*, 62). Closed chambers, he argues, where articulated bodies were buried and then sealed, represent the sites of funerary rituals; open chambers, in which disarticulated bone was often deposited and then re-organised there or re-distributed in other monuments, represent ancestor rituals through which people tried to establish a 'clear continuity between past and present' (*ibid.*, 63). In general, passage graves date to the middle Neolithic, the dates for which vary across north-west Europe, but which is taken here to mean the period when farming economies were becoming more firmly established.

The Neolithic cairns in the study area are generally classified as belong to the Orkney-Cromarty group of passage graves, which occur over the north from Orkney to the Moray Firth. Radiocarbon dates have been obtained from five of these monuments (four in Caithness and one, The Ord North, in Sutherland), showing they were built and initially used in the second half of the fourth millennium B.C. (Davidson & Henshall 1991, 83) – that is, not in the first bloom of agricultural

activity, but after some stability of place and routine had been established (Henshall & Ritchie 1995, 76). Excavations have shown that some were first built as passage graves beneath round cairns, but were later modified with the addition of heels or horned facades, creating a formally constructed external arena, often at the same time as the interiors of the monuments were blocked (Sharples 1985). Charcoal on the floor of the main chamber at Ord North produced a date of 3506-2911 cal B.C., while three other comparable dates were obtained from soil filling the antechamber; a cremation found in the collapsed roofing of the main chamber was dated to 1889-1528 cal B.C., showing the monument continued to be a focus for ritual activity throughout the following millennia (Henshall & Ritchie 1995, 75).

In constructing such substantial and conspicuous monuments, people were establishing the significance of particular places. They may have been establishing territorial claims to these places, and marking an association between their ancestors and the fertility of the soil. It may be that in constructing more cairns for rituals which allowed them to establish and re-establish connections between the living and the dead, they were expressing a stronger awareness of genealogy and a closer connection or commitment to certain places in the landscape, reflecting their greater involvement in agriculture.

What follows is a closer consideration of the Neolithic chambered cairns of Strathnaver and its flanking coastline, with particular attention to their positions in the landscape in relation to the local topography and to other monuments, and the ways they may have both expressed and structured people's changing concepts of time and their relationship to the land.

5.3.3 *Neolithic monuments and their builders in Strathnaver*

Strathnaver contains one of the main clusters of Neolithic monuments in northern Scotland; there must have been well-established communities here in earlier prehistory. Most of the chambered cairns are near the mouth of Strathnaver, with another cluster close to the coast and a few farther up the strath. Henshall & Ritchie (1995, 16) have shown that most Neolithic cairns in northern Scotland, and presumably their associated settlement, were built on and around the best agricultural soils, often brown forest soils developed on freely draining drift deposits. Of the

Strathnaver chambered cairns, six out of the nine were built on brown forest soils, in the short stretch of strath between Skelpick and Bettyhill. Henshall & Ritchie (*ibid.*, 18) have concluded that, while many cairns were clearly positioned for dramatic visual effect, intervisibility between the monuments appears not to have been particularly important. Visibility from settlements or from other, unmarked but symbolically important places in the landscape was probably paramount, however.

To the east of the strath's mouth is a remarkable group of four large cairns, occupying the crests of a ridge at Fiscary (see Figure 5.3). The two largest ones (NC76SW 5) sit at the centre of the group on two high, adjacent crests, at 120 m above OD (Henshall 1963, 318; Henshall & Ritchie 1995, 105-7). The northernmost contains an off-centre, tripartite chamber, apparently sealed within the body of the monument, which was excavated by Kerr in 1891 after it had already been robbed for stone; it held broken stones, ashes, carbonised wood and, in two compartments, unburnt bones (Kerr 1892, 67; see Figure 5.7 for his sketches). The chamber might be either primary or secondary, but in either case suggests the cairn was built in two phases (Henshall & Ritchie 1995, 38). Traces of corbelling indicating a chamber are also visible in the other round cairn. The smaller cairn's chamber was evidently sealed within the body of the monument. The two may have been enveloped by a lower, sub-rectangular cairn at a later time to form a large, waisted cairn, as Mercer (1981, 7) observed. The two flanking round cairns (NC76SW 4 and 6) sit on lower crests (see Plate 5.1).

Although no dating evidence was obtained from the smaller cairn's chamber, the fact that it no passage apparently led to it suggests it may be an earlier monument – although Kerr did not note that the bones it contained were articulated. In any case, the later enveloping of the two round cairns by a long one indicates a later phase in which they must both have been sealed. These two sit on the summit of the ridge, and the lower positions of the other two cairns would suggest they represent the later expansion of the monument complex.

From their appearance and position they seem to have been an important focal point along this stretch of coast. From the crests of the ridge, one looks northward across Swordly Loch, Swordly Bay and Farr Point, out to the wide sea; southward across a sheltered basin below the ridge and to the rising moorland

beyond; eastward to the higher ground beyond Kirtomy Point, and westward as far as the islands which lie off Skerry. No other Neolithic cairns are within sight. This tight cluster in its highly visible and view-commanding position must have been built by communities living along this coastal fringe to the east of the Naver's mouth, on the lands over which the ridge looks. The cairns seem built to exaggerate the hill crests, increasing their visibility from the surrounding land. Their distinctive visual link to the sea strengthens the impression that the lives of those who built them and continued to acknowledge their importance were also linked to the sea, as a source of food and perhaps communication, and in symbolic ways as well. However, they also overlook land farmed by later prehistoric groups (see below), who might have lived on the sites of older farming communities. The gradual adoption of farming must have established those communities firmly on the land which the cairns overlook; however, they might well have continued to fish on the sea and to hunt in the uplands of the hinterland, which are also visible from the ridge.

In lower Strathnaver, Neolithic cairns were built in several clusters, in positions that may have been important junctions between routeways and/or boundaries between communities' lands. These are concentrated in zone 7, between Skelpick and Invernaver. At Coille na Borgie is a group of three horned, chambered Orkney-Cromarty type cairns (NC75NW 3; Figure 5.3), two of them set back-to-back on the same axis. In their construction they are unique to Sutherland, with their kerbs, horns and forecourts defined by spaced orthostats, very similar to horned cairns at South Yarrows in Caithness (Henshall & Ritchie 1995, 47-48).

Coille na Borgie North may consist of two cairns, built with reference to each other but on slightly different alignments (see Figure 5.9). Its northern, heel-shaped part has a deep, north-facing forecourt with an orthostatic facade, while the southern part is trapezoidal with an orthostatic crescentic facade at its south end (Henshall 1972, 574). The walls of a chamber are visible in the northern part, as the tops of five orthostats poking up. This was cleared out in 1867 (Munro 1884). Coille na Borgie South, the largest cairn in the group, is horned at both ends (see Fig. 5.9; Henshall & Ritchie 1995, 99-101). It lies on the same terrace as Coille na Borgie North, directly south of it and on the same axis as its northern part. It may have been built in two phases (Mercer 1985, 21): a passage leads out toward the northern façade, its axis about 13° to that of the cairn, as if it were built first and then the cairn

was added; Henshall & Ritchie (1995, 21) believe it never actually exited the cairn. The cairn has deep forecourts at either end and kerbstones defining its edges; see Figure 5.8 for Curle's (1909) sketch of the cairn. Its chamber was also emptied by Munro, who found 'charred wood and fragments of animal bones (Munro 1884, 231).

The cairns are built along a natural terrace, at the foot of a craggy ridge, and orientated roughly north/south along the axis of the strath. With their long, low contours they seem to imitate the topography, almost blending into it, in contrast to the high visibility of the Fiscary cairns. As Henshall & Ritchie (1995, 97) note, they could have been built in a more prominent position, on top of a knoll to the south-west. From the forecourt of the northernmost cairn one can see just a sliver of the sea, beside the rampart-like outwash plain at Invernaver. The southern forecourt of Coille Na Borgie South looks up the strath as far as Skelpick (where zone 7 ends and zone 6 begins), into the mouth of the Skelpick Glen. From it, the short horned cairn at Skelpick South is visible breaking the skyline.

Another, more loosely defined group of chambered cairns was built in an area measuring c. 800 m north/south by 400 m, around the mouth of the Skelpick Glen where it joins Strathnaver (Figure 5.3). One, Skelpick Long (NC75NW 7), lies on a long, low glacial mound beside the Skelpick Burn, on the floor of the glen; a long horned cairn with a polygonal chamber and the only intact passage among cairns in the study area, its crescentic forecourt and portal stones face north-west down the burn (see Figure 5.10). From it, one can just see the ocean in the far distance. Like the Coille na Borgie monuments, this cairn seems to echo the topography of the low ridge on which it sits. While the cairn is aligned north-west/south-east, its chamber and passage are aligned more closely north/south, again suggesting they were built at different times. Its forecourt has been blocked, creating a terminal cairn abutting the long cairn and suggesting a further phase of altered use in the life of the monument (Mercer 1985, 21); likewise, its passage was deliberately blocked with a stack of slabs (Henshall & Ritchie 1995, 58). The chamber, cleared about 1867, was found to be 'filled with stones and rubbish' (Horsburgh 1867, 274), but it appears to have been filled in previously, as part of the chamber was visible in 1800 (Henshall & Ritchie 1995, 129-30).

Above the steep side of the glen to the north-east is a large, round cairn (Skelpick Round, NC75NW 9) with a ruined chamber (Henshall 1963, 329; see Figure 5.10). From it, Skelpick Long and Skelpick South are visible. It has been extensively robbed, but reportedly contained two large, nearly octagonal, slab-built chambers with a passage leading out toward the south; only a few orthostats are visible now (Henshall & Ritchie 1995, 130-31).

The most prominent cairn in this group is the short horned cairn at Skelpick South (NC75NW 10). From it, Skelpick Long and Skelpick Round are visible. Its four horns radiate approximately to the cardinal points of the compass, and define four shallow forecourts (see Figure 5.10). The chamber appears to have been entered from the south-east; a few of its corbel stones are visible (Henshall & Ritchie 1995, 131-32; Henshall 1963, 68, 330). Although it has been robbed somewhat to build a field wall which crosses it, the cairn appears to be more or less intact.

From their size, prominence and strategic positions, these cairns must have been an important ritual focal point for nearby communities. Their location may indicate something about where those people lived and how they moved about the landscape. The cairns' position around the point where the Skelpick Glen joins Strathnaver has been noted above; they cluster not around the actual confluence of the burn and river, but where the narrow glen begins to open out to the broader vistas and more open spaces of the strath.

Anyone travelling up or down the glen, following the burn, would have had to pass the Skelpick Long cairn; the position of its forecourt, facing north-west, might suggest it was meant to be approached or viewed from downstream. The cairn above to the east would also have been visible from certain points in the glen, but would have been more visible from the Skelpick ridge opposite, to the west. The two cairns on that ridge, including the horned cairn at Skelpick South, would likewise have been visible to people living or travelling on the ridge itself or in the glen, and (at least the Skelpick South cairn) from the floor of Strathnaver to the south. It may be that this confluence of the valleys was a focal point for settlement in the middle Neolithic, perhaps by people both farming the well-drained sides of the strath around Skelpick and hunting on the adjacent uplands or in the glen. The sides of the Skelpick Glen are generally steep, but hut-circles and shieling huts clustered along it

show this land supported settlement, seasonally as well as year-round, in later periods. The cairns may have marked a symbolically important boundary or liminal area between these different kinds of land. Skelpick Long, with its initially accessible passage and chambers, hints at a concern with maintaining links between past and present, ancestors and living. Its position along a route into the uplands might have expressed the continuity between ancestors who hunted on those uplands and living farming communities who were more focused on the arable land in the strath.

The Skelpick South cairn is the most prominently placed of any in the strath. It looks southward up the strath along the broad reaches of zone 6 (from Skelpick to Chealamy), and beyond to the heights of Ben Klibreck beside Loch Naver, which closes off the view in the far distance. Its horns, radiating to the cardinal points, point up and down the strath – toward the sea and the hinterland – and to either side of the ridge, toward Skelpick Glen and the floor of Strathnaver. It might have been a pivotal monument among middle Neolithic communities living in all of these four directions, farming the fertile ground along lower Strathnaver and exploiting the uplands as well. The tight cluster of horned long cairns at Coille na Borgie might have been built at the centre of one group's realm of influence; their position is just inland from the entrance to the strath, not poised at its mouth (or the point where the river turns tidal) with a clear view of the sea, as might be expected if those that built it had strong links to the coast.

A third group of cairns lies at the northern end of zone 6, the open, broad stretch of Strathnaver between Skelpick and Chealamy (Figure 5.3). These are clustered at Achargary, on a river terrace and on the steep slopes of the strath on either side of the Acheargary Burn. They include one large, round, chambered cairn (Henshall 1972, 306; NC75NW 16) and another robbed, possible chambered cairn. A chamber in the more intact cairn was visible in the early twentieth century, but only one slab is visible now (Henshall & Ritchie 1995, 82; see Figure 5.6). These cairns lie within sight of the Skelpick South horned cairn, and at a point of entry into the adjacent uplands (along the Acheargary Burn). They could have been a focal point for communities living in this open stretch of the strath, perhaps clearly distinct from those in the more constricted zone 7, with the looser group of Skelpick cairns at the boundary between the two.

Only two or possibly three chambered cairns are known in the strath south of Achargary. One is perched on the edge of a terrace above the floor of the strath near Dun Viden broch (see Figure 5.4), on a narrow ridge projecting into the strath (Henshall 1963, 317; Joass 1865; NC75SW 12). Almost all of the cairn material has been robbed, leaving only the chamber and remains of a passage leading ESE (see Figure 5.6; Henshall & Ritchie 1995, 104). One of the slabs forming the chamber has eight possible cup marks on its inner face, although Henshall & Ritchie believe these are natural. The cairn lies at the southern end of zone 6, the open stretch between Skelpick and Chealamy, on the edge of a short, steep drop with views up and down the strath. The topography here, comparable to that at The Ord, appears to have restricted the cairn's size (Henshall 1963, 68).

The second is at Skail, on the floor of the strath (Figure 5.4; NC74NW 4). A round cairn, it has been severely robbed except for a stony ring around its perimeter, leaving its bipartite chamber exposed (see Figure 5.6; Henshall 1963, 328). A steatite cup with a side handle was reputedly found in it (Henshall & Ritchie 1995, 127). The cairn would have been entered from the north-east, facing up the strath into zone 4, the area between Skail and Chealamy. The third, possible cairn lies in the cleared township of Grumbeg (Henshall 1972, 576) overlooking Loch Naver in the first zone of the strath; Henshall & Ritchie (1995, 152), however, believe it to be field clearance. In any case, the isolated positions of these two or three cairns and the relative scarcity of Neolithic monuments in the upper strath could suggest that it was much less densely populated in the middle Neolithic period than the lower. One other, robbed chambered cairn (NC75NW 58) lies to the east of the strath along the Allt nan Laogh, amid a cluster of hut circles and burnt mounds; this burn appears to have drawn settlement throughout prehistory. A possible chambered cairn at Grumbeg on the north shore of Loch Naver (Figure 5.5; NC63NW 10) has been dismissed by Henshall & Ritchie (1995) as a natural outcrop against which clearance has been piled and walling built.

Finally, there are four concentrations of standing stones in the study area, two of them at transitional points in the landscape. One, a small stone circle known as Clach an Righ (NC63NE 11), stands near the head of the River Naver, near the junction between topographic zones 1, 2 and 3 (Figure 5.5). This may have been an important transition point between the upland valley of the River Mallart, Loch

Naver and the upper strath. Another concentration lies in the uplands at the head of Strathnaver (zone 2; Figure 5.5), on the south-facing slopes of Cnoc Bad Fainne near its summit and overlooking Loch Truderscaig and the valley of the Mallart River. It consists of a standing stone and, nearby, four stone rows (NC73SW 11 and 12). The slopes overlooked by the monuments were a focus for later prehistoric settlement, and the stones suggest the area had drawn people for some time. Near the western end and on the south side of Loch Naver, a cup-marked stone and a cup-and-ring marked stone perch on the terraces overlooking the loch (NC63SW 5 and 6). A fourth concentration occurs at the northern end of the study area (Figure 5.3). This consists of stone rows and a standing stone (NC65NE 4 and 7), positioned on either side of Strathborgie at the point where the River Borgie curves sharply and descends from high moorland to its broad strath near the coast, on the southern edge of zone 10. Again, this seems to be a transitional point in the landscape, the boundary between lowland coastal zone and high hinterland.

Whether the distinct changes in topographic character identified here influenced how the landscape was used and occupied in earlier prehistory cannot be proven. However, the positions of the chambered cairns and standing stones in the study area strongly suggest that certain places in the landscape, particularly transitional points between areas of different topographic character, were considered important. These particular places seem to have become the foci for the construction of monuments, the treatment of the dead, the community effort and the symbolically charged actions that must have been fundamental to the way these groups of people saw themselves and their place in the world.

The evidence for phasing in many of the chambered cairns is striking: where enough of the cairn and chamber remain, it seems clear that many were built in at least two phases, as at Fiscary, Coille na Borgie North and South and Skelpick Long. In some cases, the passage was evidently blocked at a later stage, as at Skelpick Long, the two Coille na Borgie monuments and possibly also Skelpick South. This trend contrasts with that identified by Bradley (1998) for passage graves elsewhere in north-west Europe, in which the monuments became more accessible over time. In Strathnaver, it could reflect a growing sense of distance between the past and the present, the ancestors and the living. It might also suggest that people felt a less

urgent need for rites involving the physical remains of their ancestors, and perhaps a greater sense of stability and security in their own connection to the land.

What does seem clear is that in building these monuments, Neolithic peoples in Strathnaver were expressing something of how they perceived the structure of the landscape. They were imposing their cultural and social order upon it and at the same time responding to its natural divisions. The monuments must have marked out points which symbolised features of that order, whether those were boundaries between living groups or between the living and the dead or were places considered spiritually dangerous or laden with historical significance. That people's settlements lay near the clusters of cairns seems likely, given their proximity to the well-drained terraces along the lower strath, although there is no direct evidence for that as yet.

5.4 Bronze Age into late Iron Age (second millennium B.C. through sixth century A.D.)

Having worked up the strath from the coast in the preceding section, the discussion now begins at the head of the strath and works back down toward the sea, tracing the evidence for later prehistoric settlement; it finally works back up Strathnaver following the brochs.

Evidence for settlement is much more abundant here from later prehistory, as is common over much of Highland Scotland (McCullagh & Tipping 1998, 212). By far the most frequently occurring monuments in the study area are hut-circles and clearance cairns, the two usually but not always in association, and sometimes discernible field systems; other monuments from later prehistory include burnt mounds, isolated cists and cist-bearing cairns. From the first millennium B.C. to early first millennium A.D., there are brochs, duns and other kinds of defended homesteads.

The chronological subtleties of these monuments – not to mention what our different classes actually meant to those who built and used them – are poorly understood. This lack of understanding is reflected in the treatment here of such a large block of time in one section. The discussion progresses following the generally

established chronology of hut-circle settlements dating largely to the first and second millennia B.C. and the brochs post-dating the turn of the millennia although, as noted below, in Sutherland it is likely that they overlapped in currency.

5.4.1 Bronze Age and earlier Iron Age landscapes: chronology and context

Bradley (1998) has considered the changes which affected Bronze and Iron Age communities, among whom agriculture became more important and developed than ever, and the ways in which Neolithic ideas were carried forward and adapted. The process by which landscapes became dominated by round-houses rather than round cairns was, he believes, a gradual one in which domestic (or economic) and ritual concerns were mixed throughout and cosmology remained fundamentally important. The symbolic power of circular architecture endured and came to be expressed in different kinds of structures through time. In the later Iron Age, cosmology focused even more on the domestic sphere, perhaps to the extent that the dead were disposed of in domestic contexts.

The interpretation of prehistoric settlement clusters in the study area draws partly upon the results of the large-scale programme of excavation and sampling undertaken at Lairg (McCullagh & Tipping 1998), as it represents the most comprehensive invasive study of prehistoric upland settlement in northern mainland Scotland to date; it also draws on intensive survey work in the Strath of Kildonan, in eastern Sutherland (RCAHMS 1993). Figure 5.11 shows the extent of known hut-circle settlement in northern Scotland. The work at Lairg has demonstrated that the architectural form generally identified in the field as hut-circles was current over a long period of time, from the early/mid second millennium to the late first millennium B.C. As the authors observe, 'This has clear implications for the correct interpretation of those Bronze Age landscapes identified by survey of the ubiquitous hut-circle and clearance cairn' (McCullagh & Tipping 1998, 212). Indeed, our understanding of the subtleties of northern Scotland's later Bronze Age and Iron Age architecture and its relation to contemporary society is coarse at best, as exhibited by our habitual use of the rather perjorative term 'hut-circle' to denote all kinds of more or less circular structures of varying dimensions (Cowley in press).

In Sutherland, Curle (RCHAMS 1911, xxiv) observed, hut-circles tend to fall into one of two categories: small, oval, stony structures, often in pairs and usually associated with clearance cairns, and circular structures, not always stone built or associated with cairnfields. He also noted what we now know are burnt mounds, which he provisionally included in this typology. Further work by the Ordnance Survey identified a particular kind of hut-circle in Strathnaver and Strath Hallidale, the so-called hollow-walled round-houses, which have a groove running around the top of their turf banks. Howard (1981) noted that in Sutherland, round-houses were often built on steep slopes where gentler ones were available nearby, and often at the point where gentler slopes along the sides of a strath began to climb more steeply to the uplands; this may have reflected the use of both kinds of land, perhaps for arable and grazing, by those living in the houses. Mercer (1985) refined Curle's typology as a result of intensive survey in Sutherland and Caithness, defining 16 types of structure by their shape in plan, entrance configuration and size. His categories include small cellular and larger multi-cellular structures, an example of the latter being Monument 17 at Invernaver (see below), which could be later Iron Age (Pictish) in date.

A third survey carried out around Helmsdale and the Strath of Kildonan (RCAHMS 1993, 6-10) identified three types of hut-circle settlement: larger settlements with a wide range of building size and style associated with regularly-shaped field systems on the lower slopes and in the broader straths; smaller, more homogeneous settlements with more amorphous field systems in the tributary valleys; and isolated hut-circles at higher altitudes, interpreted as the remains of more marginal, perhaps seasonal settlement similar to Medieval shieling huts. The Lairg excavation results generally confirmed Mercer's (1985, 73) prediction that smaller round-houses were built atop larger ones, the latter pre-dating 500 B.C. However, they also showed that his typology did not in general correspond to the plans of structures as they were designed, but tended to represent their final form as field monuments (O'Sullivan in McCullagh & Tipping 1998, 110-11).

The Lairg radio-carbon dating programme also showed that what appear on the ground as clusters of hut-circles do not necessarily represent a 'village'. Despite its broad scope, it showed that few hut-circles in close proximity to each other were in use at the same time. The excavation results showed that house stances were

generally occupied for a period, in some cases rebuilt or superseded by a smaller house, and then went out of use; a new house might later be built nearby and the old stances ploughed (205-6). Two large round-houses excavated (1 and 2) were in use between 1800 and 1600 cal B.C., while a third (house 3) dated to between 1480 and 1290 cal B.C. The early second millennium B.C. also saw changes in the associated field systems, with what had previously been open cultivated ground, surrounded by clearance cairns, enclosed by dykes. Cultivation appeared to decrease in the later second millennium, and smaller houses (e.g., house 6, dating from between 1220 to 1010 cal B.C.) were built, sometimes on top of old house stances (McCullagh & Tipping 1998, 33, 112-13).

The Lairg programme also involved the radiocarbon dating of four burnt mounds identified in the survey transect. Their dates fell mainly between 1600 and 800 cal B.C. (*ibid.*, 76). Survey in the Strath of Kildonan identified a total of 39 mounds there. Excavation of a sample of them produced a similar range of dates for most, with a scattering in the Medieval and other periods (Barber 1990, 102; RCAHMS 1993, 6, 11-12). Assuming their use for cooking, perhaps during or after hunting trips (but see Buckley 1990 and Blood 1989 for a wider range of interpretations), the mounds in these areas may have built up through sporadic episodes during this period of fairly intensive round-house occupation.

A period of climatic deterioration in the later Bronze Age, from about 1300 B.C., probably led to the abandonment of settlements on more marginal land and the contraction of settlement to more favourable areas (Cowley in press; Armit 1997, 66); see Fig. 5.11. At Lairg the Bronze Age round-houses were clearly abandoned at around 1000 cal B.C. (McCullagh & Tipping 1998, 209), while at Kilphedir peat began to accumulate on the site about 500 cal B.C., probably accounting for the abandonment of the settlement (Fairhurst & Taylor 1974, 90). While this may have been due to a worsening climate, settlement in these areas may have become untenable for other reasons as well. Over-vigorous and longstanding cultivation of the podzolised soils may have led to erosion of topsoils, bringing Bronze Age ards ever closer to a subsoil horizon they could not penetrate. Whereas previously, continual cultivation had slowed or arrested blanket peat growth, as that cultivation eased or ceased the peat spread and made occupation of the marginal lands more difficult (McCullagh & Tipping 1998, 206-10).

At both Lairg and Kilphedir, evidence was found for the re-colonisation of the marginal land in the later first millennium B.C., with the construction of substantial, rather more elaborate structures in the tradition of what Armit (1991, 182) has called the 'Atlantic round-house'. At Lairg, a large, stone- and post-built round-house (7), more substantially constructed than the earlier, turf-walled ones, was built and occupied between 120 and 340 cal B.C. (McCullagh & Tipping 1998, 113). At Kilphedir the strongly built Type V round-house, with its high, stone-faced wall and deep entrance passage, produced burnt roofing material dating to about 130 cal B.C. (Fairhurst & Taylor 1974, 90). Survey by the RCAHMS (1993, 12) elsewhere in the Strath of Kildonan found more of these substantial round-houses, and found that they were often associated with enclosed fields. The architectural tradition of very large round-houses may have appeared in northern Scotland by the early first millennium B.C. The second phase of a large round-house (V) at Cnoc Stanger dated to about 970 bc (Mercer 1996, 186), while a circular ditched enclosure (1) at Lairg dated to between 220 and 240 cal B.C. (McCullagh & Tipping 1998, 36). This, and the later Iron Age round-house which preceded the broch tower at Howe on Orkney (Ballin-Smith 1994), both hint at the progression of domestic architecture in the late first millennium B.C. toward the increasingly monumental (Armit 1997, 30-40), culminating in the broch. In Sutherland, it is likely that round-houses of some description continued to be built and used into the early centuries A.D. (Cowley in press).

Some of the later round-houses in the study area have associated souterrains. In the Strath of Kildonan (RCAHMS 1993, 12), 14 souterrains were found, nine of them accessible from the interior of a round-house, and usually one associated with a developed, enclosed field system. All but one of the others appear formerly to have had associated houses, since destroyed or buried. These 14, with an additional two noted by Morrison (2000), constitute 41% of the total number in Sutherland. Most are simply long, narrow chambers, although a few examples are more spacious oval ones or, in the case of Suisgill III in Kildonan (Barclay 1985), cruciform-shaped. They appear almost always to be associated with settlement. The souterrain at Fouhlin on Loch Eriboll, to the west of the study area, was found on excavation to be fairly typical of Sutherland souterrains in its construction, consisting of a trench lined with dry-stone masonry and roofed with large slabs; one of its two entrances

led from the interior of what was probably a round-house (Morrison 2000). In a few cases, phasing is evident: at Skelpick Burn in Strathnaver, for example, the wall of a round-house was extended to incorporate a souterrain (*ibid.*). As with the souterrains of southern Pictland (see Chapter Three), debate about their functions has considered a wide range of possibilities; these smaller, northern examples, however, seem more likely to have been used mainly for storing food.

As for dating, the souterrain at Suisgill III was tentatively dated to the mid first millennium B.C. (Barclay 1985, 194). A souterrain at Cyderhall was associated with surface structures dating between 400 and 200 cal B.C., but the souterrain itself was filled in in the third century A.D. (Pollock 1992, 159) – a date comparable to that produced by Newmill in Perthshire (Watkins 1984, 78). Fouhlin's associated structure produced a green glass bead dating to around the early first century A.D. (Morrison 2000). In summary, based on the limiting investigation and dating of Sutherland souterrains so far carried out, they appear to date from the late first millennium B.C. and into the early first millennium A.D., a period which corresponds to the construction of increasingly substantial round-houses associated with developed field systems.

If the model of continually but only slightly shifting settlement during the last two millennia B.C., with a relatively small area of land occupied and cultivated over hundreds or thousands of years, holds true for the northern Highlands in general, then the number and distribution of hut-circle settlements in Strathnaver must represent a longstanding later prehistoric population farming the land. Generations of families may have lived on in the same part of the strath, building houses on or near the remains of their ancestors'. Halliday (in press) offers an alternative interpretation of the more marginal hut-circle landscapes, suggesting that they represent discontinuous occupation, the result of cyclical movement around the landscape or temporary expansions from and contractions to more permanent settlements on better land. An observation made by Fairhurst and Taylor (1974, 92) is particularly relevant here. They pointed out that if all the hut-circles around Kilphedir in the Strath of Kildonan were occupied at once, the population would have greatly exceeded that in the early nineteenth century just before the Clearances, which itself stretched the poor upland soils beyond their ability to support it.

The distribution and density of hut-circles shown on Figure 6.2 depicts, therefore, not a static picture of the later prehistoric occupation of the strath but the traces accumulated by generations of people – perhaps in two main phases, as at Kilphedir and at Lairg (*ibid.*; McCullagh & Tipping 1998). As in most Highland straths and glens, archaeological remains on this scale survive mainly on the marginal land along the sides and to some extent on the moorland beyond; the more fertile valley floor may have been at least as heavily populated, if not more so, but some evidence there has presumably been destroyed by later land use.

As noted above, the evidence at Lairg demonstrated changes in agricultural practices in the early second millennium B.C., with banks built to enclose what had previously been open fields with scattered clearance cairns (*ibid.*, 112). Baines (1999) has discussed the significance of this variation in the archaeological record of northern Scotland generally for the relationship of people to the land they occupied. He suggests that areas of cultivation delineated by clearance cairns demonstrate systems of long fallow agricultural regimes, in which land was left for long periods between episodes of cultivation, while those delineated by enclosures were short fallow regimes, in which the land's fertility was maintained over long time spans with manuring and perhaps rotation of crops (33). While in some cases enclosed and unenclosed field systems must have existed at the same time, representing more and less intensive land use (Cowley in press), the Lairg evidence does suggest a general trend toward enclosure and greater commitment. This change in agricultural practice and therefore in commitment to certain parts of the landscape must, he argues, have also involved social changes; rights of access or tenure to certain enclosed areas had to be maintained over longer periods to ensure a return on people's investment of labour and manure. Differential status among different people must have played a part in the necessary negotiations for control of land (*cf.* Ingold 1993), and these differences may well have been expressed also in the houses in which people lived (*ibid.*, 37).

Several authors (e.g., Barrett 1981; Hingley 1996; Sharples & Parker Pearson 1997) have suggested that the construction of substantial, more imposing houses from the first millennium B.C. onward might have been one way their occupants emphasised the increasingly firm boundary between domestic and wild, of which the inception of enclosure was another expression. This boundary was expressed most

powerfully through the architecture of the broch, and Baines (1999, 38) argues they originated as dominant families or groups attempted to establish and maintain their presence in the landscape. By building such monumental, visually dramatic structures in topographic positions which accentuated their impact, their occupants congealed the power relationships already developed; the buildings in turn would have provided a medium for the daily, intimate social contact that would have reproduced those relationships through time. Foster (1989a; 1989b) has shown how the development of brochs and broch villages brought about the increasingly hierarchical organisation of space, and postulates correspondingly complicated spatial distinctions between people and activities and their relative social ranking (also see Barrett & Foster 1991).

A brief outline of the state of knowledge and argument on broch functions and chronology will suffice to set the stage for a closer, although still cursory examination of Strathnaver's brochs in their topographic settings, and a consideration of the social relationships they may have expressed. The problems besetting broch chronology are linked to general confusion and debate about their function and use. In terms of date, MacKie (1983) holds that brochs appeared after 100 A.D., built by migrants from southern Britain. Armit (1991) argues that brochs belong to a larger class of monumental structures – Atlantic round-houses – which it shares with duns, galleried duns and semi-brochs, and probably date from c. 400-200 B.C. Parker Pearson, Sharples & Mulville (1996) accept MacKie's first century B.C. date for brochs' conception, while rejecting his view that immigrants from the south were the first to build them. Young (1962), meanwhile, has suggested that as the Norse arriving in the north-west in the later first millennium A.D. gave brochs names such as *burg* and *burb*, denoting their character as strongholds, some were still in use at that time.

Debate has also raged over what defines a broch (e.g., Swanson 1984). The answer is frequently based on its architectural form (Fojut 1981), but also on its function. Brochs have been interpreted as defences against sea raiders (Curle 1927), castles for Iron Age lairds (Fojut 1982) and, in the most generally accepted view, as 'fortified farmhouses' (Fairhurst 1984, 181-82).

Parker Pearson, Sharples & Mulville (1996, 60) have pointed out that this focus on function misses the point: evidence of other aspects of Scottish Iron Age society shows that the symbolic and the functional were inextricably linked for people living in that time. 'The very act of building a broch sets it in a particular relationship to other habitations within separate categories of landscape, creating classificatory differences between their occupants' (*ibid.*, 60). They argue that the locations of brochs expressed certain statements that made sense only within their social context, while also addressing defensive and agricultural concerns. Barrett (1981, 207) has also argued for a 'return to context', rather than a focus on structural type, in order to understand how brochs and other structures and artefacts helped to reproduce the cultural and social systems operating in the Atlantic Iron Age.

Studies of the locations of several groups of brochs in northern and western Scotland have illuminated certain consistent patterns. Fojut (1982) found that the Shetland brochs tended to be associated with good arable or grazing land, but that the majority stood on the edge of this land or just beyond it; defensible positions seemed to have been important when their locations were chosen. Many were built at regular distances from each other (about 1 km apart), but intervisibility appeared not to have been a determining factor in their positions. Armit (1990) noted that in the Western Isles, brochs and other Iron Age round-houses often were built in the kinds of topographic position where Neolithic chambered tombs were constructed – in marginal or coastal locations or on ridges or hilltops with high visibility. Parker Pearson, Sharples & Mulville (1996) found that on South Uist, most brochs were built on the edges of the machair, which was crowded with settlement during the Iron Age. They argue that the frequent positions of brochs on elevated, marginal land expressed 'a social distancing through domestic isolation, and a hierarchical structuring of social relationships' (61).

Although brochs are generally presumed to represent the latest, most elaborate stage in this progression, insufficient modern excavations and dating assays have been undertaken to prove that the occupation of brochs and round-houses were always mutually exclusive in chronological terms. Indeed, Baines (1999, 362) has suggested that some round-houses continued to be occupied into the later Iron Age, and their inhabitants were drawn into the developing social networks of which brochs were one expression. Similarly, Cowley (2000) argues that in Sutherland,

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round-houses continued to be built while the brochs were in use, and while (around the end of the first millennium B.C.) other forms of building, such as sub-rectangular or oval, were being built in Caithness. In another divergence from Caithness brochs, the Sutherland brochs are generally not the focus of nucleated settlement, and Baines (1999) suggests that they represent a different pattern of later Iron Age settlement in which the brochs were more integrated with the wider landscape. In his view, through these massive structures the inhabitants of northern Scotland were expressing for the first time a formalised relationship between domestic architecture and the agricultural landscape around them. Brochs may have 'provided a lasting symbol of the importance of those entitled to reside within, which may have been maintained and re-appropriated over a number of generations' (*ibid.*, 364).

5.4.2 Round-house landscapes in Strathnaver

No environmental investigations or archaeological excavations on the model of Lairg or even detailed field survey like that of the RCAHMS in the Strath of Kildonan have yet been undertaken of hut-circle settlements in the study area. In spite of these limitations, their distribution and positions within the landscape can allow some conclusions to be drawn about the nature of its occupation in later prehistory. The maps of sites in the study area (Figures 5.3, 5.4, 5.5) show that small clusters of hut-circles, frequently associated with clearance cairns, lynchets and other traces of field systems, litter the sides of the upper strath, while there are several very dense concentrations in the lower strath and on the coast. The map also shows the distribution of what are thought to be burial cairns of Bronze Age date, as well as burnt mounds. Hut-circles are shown according to their affinity with one of the three groups, based on those defined by the RCAHMS for the Strath of Kildonan (1993, 6). The RCAHMS stipulated a minimum and maximum number of hut-circles for each group. For Strathnaver, hut-circles have been assigned to a group purely on the basis of associated evidence of agricultural regimes and enclosure, to avoid any biasing assumptions about relationships between size of settlements and land use (see Baines 1999, 69). However, the range of numbers occurring in each group in Strathnaver is given below.

Group I: Hut-circles, generally isolated from other monuments, with no signs of nearby cultivation, perhaps representing temporary settlement or transhumance. Always 1-2.

Group II: Hut-circles associated with small cairns and sometimes short lengths of bank, but not with identifiable regular enclosed fields, suggesting short fallow agricultural regimes. Frequently 1-2, but up to 9.

Group III: Hut-circles associated with enclosures, evident as walls, field banks and lynchets, indicating longer-term agriculture. Often 1-2, but up to 14.

The assignation of hut-circles to a particular group here is based mostly on observations contained in the National Monuments Record of Scotland, in most cases made by the Ordnance Survey in the 1960s and 1970s, rather than on recent fieldwork. (For most of the sites the O.S. recorders noted the presence or absence of measurable plots, along with clearance cairns, lynchets and walling, so clearly they were looking for evidence of enclosure.) The symbols used also distinguish hut-circle settlements that include what appear to be massively built structures similar to the Type V hut-circle at Kilphedir (Fairhurst 1974), associated with both Group II and III cultivation remains. The groupings represented on maps 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 must be seen as a preliminary classification, but one that should help form a basic understanding of Strathnaver's round-house settlements, which further fieldwork will eventually refine and expand.

In the uplands around the Mallart River (zone2), along its tributary valleys, are scattered but substantial hut-circle settlements, with a fairly high proportion of Group III among them (see Figure 5.5). One includes a more substantial, Type V round-house (NC63SE 5). Large settlements with developed field systems also cluster on the slopes around the western end of Loch Naver in zone 1 (e.g., NC53NE 2, which comprises nine structures).

Along the axis of upper Strathnaver (zones 3, 4 and 5) and along the upland valleys of tributary burns, there are hut-circle settlements at fairly regular intervals; Group II clusters, with clearance cairns rather than defined plots, are more common here (see Figure 5.4). Most of the settlements lie at no higher than 120 m above O.D., but on the south-facing slopes above Loch Syre are several clusters, most of them isolated round-houses with no associated cultivation (e.g., NC64NE 9 and 11), as well as two burnt mounds (NC64NE 7 and 12). These remains lie at around 200 m above O.D., and could represent the seasonal use of these uplands for hunting or

transhumance. The hut-circle clusters are less abundant in zone 5, the relatively constricted length of strath between Skail and Chealamy; this, however, may be due to the strath's steep sides. In both zones 4 and 5, the strath's floor would have been much better suited to settlement: in zone 4 it is relatively broad and flat, while in zone 5 open stretches alternate with more sheltered areas created by moraines. This good arable ground beside the river might well have been heavily settled in later prehistory, but if so Medieval and later land use have removed any apparent traces.

Other, smaller clusters of hut-circles occur in the southern part of the more open zone 6, as far as Dun Viden along the Achanellan Burn, on the western side of the strath along the Carnachy Burn and particularly along the eastern side of the Skelpick Burn. This last concentration is about a kilometre to the east of the largest concentration, near Skelpick.

By far the densest concentration of hut-circle settlements in Strathnaver occurs along the eastern side of the strath to the south of Skelpick, near the northern end of zone 6 and especially along a 1.5 km stretch southward from a small burn near Skelpick (see Figures 5.3 and 5.4). Here the ground rises in broad terraces to moorland, falling away again steeply farther east to the Skelpick Glen. This concentration includes many hut-circles associated with evidence of committed agricultural regimes (Group III) (e.g., NC75SW 34, 36-38, 43), as well as some burial cairns (e.g., NC75SW 33) and burnt mounds (e.g., NC75SW 30). Even assuming not all of the structures stood at the same time, this must have been a substantial agricultural settlement. Its proximity to the dramatic cluster of Neolithic chambered cairns at Skelpick is also striking.

These terraces could have been the focus of settlement from the third millennium onward. Communities must have existed here who built and elaborated and revolved around the chambered cairns in the middle Neolithic. They would have been substantial, certainly well enough established in and connected with the land to put their own architectural emphasis upon certain places in it. The scale and number of the chambered cairns indicate a symbolic momentum that must have taken generations to accumulate, and it is likely that that momentum would have carried forward the significance attached to this part of the landscape for many generations after the cairns were first built. The monuments would have created a

symbolic topography, working like gravitation to influence movement around the landscape and the locations of settlement. From the largest hut-circle concentration on the east side, one can look northward to the short horned cairn of Skelpick South on its hill and westward to the group of chambered cairns directly across the strath at Achargary; views to the south carry straight down the strath to the point where it closes in at Carnachy. Those travelling down the Skelpick Burn from hut-circle settlements along its banks would have passed the large horned cairn of Skelpick Long on the floor of the glen. The occurrence of so many hut-circle settlements associated with developed field systems, cairns and burnt mounds suggests people continued to live here, till their fields, bury their dead and cook game outdoors for millennia afterward.

In the upper six topographic zones of Strathnaver, from the head of Loch Naver to Skelpick, smaller burial cairns presumed to date from the late Neolithic to middle Bronze Age (*cf.* McCullagh & Tipping 1998, 94) were built among the generally dispersed later prehistoric settlements. A crouched skeleton in a short cist, with no grave goods, was found in a knoll at Rough Haugh (Bruce 1986, 38; NC74NW 6), and a Beaker was found in a short cist beside the road near Woody Knowe (Clarke 1970, 522; NC74NW 7). A Beaker and partial inhumation were found in a cist at Chealamy and may have formed part of a cemetery there (Gourlay 1984; NC75SW 67). These three Bronze Age funerary deposits were all found in glacially deposited gravel mounds on the floor of the strath. (The fact that they were all found along its western side undoubtedly relates to the route of the modern road there, as associated quarrying and other interventions led to their discovery.) Such mounds, typical of these topographic zones, may have been perceived as special – perhaps as similar to Neolithic cairns such as that at Skail – and may have helped to structure the way the landscape was perceived and navigated. At Achargary are two heavily robbed Bronze Age cairns which contained short cists and produced most of a jet necklace and button, on the north-west edge of the chambered cairn cluster (Stevenson 1939, 325-26; NC75SW 3). This shows that that cluster continued to have spiritual significance long after the chambered cairns were built. People living around them in later prehistory may have focused their traditions about their ancestors on them, so that the monuments became essential to their own histories, ‘mnemonics’ of the past (Bradley 1998, 162).

Along the coast, there are several substantial settlements of hut-circles, clearance cairns and burial cairns along the south- and south-east facing slopes at Farr, Swordly and Fiscary (see Figure 5.3; Mercer 1981, 31-37). One well-preserved group lies in the unimproved grassland of a basin, in the shadow of the curving ridge topped by the group of chambered cairns at Fiscary (NC76SW 7). Another comprises cairnfields, peat-sealed field walls and hut-circles and hut platforms to the north of the Fiscary group around Swordly Loch (NC76SW 7 and 8; see Plate 5.2). All are positioned away from the sea, sheltered from northerlies by the cliffs and headlands along the coast. However, the people living in them would have access to the sea along the north/south running valleys that lead to Kirtomy Bay and the Bay of Swordly, and their positions on the edges of these valleys suggests that access was important.

To the west of the Naver, in zone 10, clearance cairns, a few hut-circles and burial cairns are scattered along the Allt an Dearg, which leads inland from Strathan Skerry. There might well have been later prehistoric activity in the sheltered and more fertile part of the valley close to the sea, traces of which have been destroyed by later occupation. Another cluster of Group II hut-circles straddles the pass where the River Borgie descends from the uplands, near the stone rows and chambered cairn, suggesting that the importance of this transition area was longstanding.

5.4.3 *Invernaver*

At Invernaver is a later prehistoric settlement and burial complex with the most intimate associations of any to the sea. These lie on the plain of boulder clay formed by glacial outwash at the mouth of the River Naver at the seaward end of zone 8 (Figure 5.3).

Walking seaward from the tiny crofting settlement at Invernaver, one crosses a grassy field that ends in a ragged edge, giving way to the encroaching sand of the littoral. Here the river opens out into a deep, tidal pool. Ahead, a small stream cuts through the dunes to join the river; immediately after crossing it, one climbs a short, steep slope to the surface of the glacial outwash plain. It stretches ahead for c. 700 m and to the east for nearly 500 m, but to the left rises the steep, rocky, scree-strewn slopes of Druim Chuibhe.

It is a peculiar landscape, both in archaeological and in natural terms. The plain is mostly covered with sand. Documentary evidence records that in the past, sand carried in the teeth of storms has at some times been blown onto the plain, making habitation there unfeasible, and at others been scoured away by wind (Morrison 1883). There is very sparse vegetation cover, chiefly rare Arctic plants, as well as bent on the dunes along the beach side. Mobile sand dunes cover parts of the plain, and the stretches of flat sand between them are littered with water-worn stones. In some cases these appear randomly spread, but some cluster in the shapes of hut-circles, walls, rectangular platforms and cairns, dating from the prehistoric as well as perhaps the post-Medieval occupation of the plain.

It is an extraordinarily difficult landscape in which to orientate oneself; one cairn or dune looks much like another. Even equipped with Mercer's (1981) plan, which shows the positions at the time of survey of the sand dunes and visible archaeological features (see Figure 5.12), it takes much more effort here than it would in a more typical, vegetation-clad landscape (even moorland) to make sense of the natural and made topography. (Mercer himself found that, even though only ten years had elapsed between the Ordnance Survey's visits and his own survey, it was impossible to work out which monuments corresponded to the O.S. descriptions.) The plain is not quite land, not quite littoral, but a bleak, windswept combination of the two.

Its surface is constantly in a state of slow flux; shifting sand dunes reveal some archaeological remains and cover others, so that the different views of the evidence through time have varied not only because the accumulation of knowledge generally has allowed more informed interpretations, but mainly because the archaeology has appeared in different configurations to different observers.

Mackay, visiting in 1900 after winter storms had swept away much of the sand cover, identified

two brochs, one at the south end and the other at the north end; one doubtful broch, two objects which I took to be large round-houses, one or more probable burial cairns; seven circular rings which I took to be cattle folds, all on the same model and about 60 feet in diameter; nine smaller heaps which look like round-houses and nine oblong structures, some

smaller and some larger, evidently the ruins of the eighteenth century buildings (Mackay 1906, 132).

Curle, a trained archaeological observer, noted in 1909 many 'stoney mounds . . . mostly small and circular', only two of which he positively identified as cairns. He also said there were 'numerous hut-circles, presenting no unusual features' and 'a circular enclosure on the E side, towards the S end' (RCAHMS 1911, 71). Curle also noted 'one or two flat heaps of stones, circular, evidently the remains of cairns' near the south end. He could see no remains of brochs.

Although it might be argued that Mackay mistakenly and perhaps wishfully interpreted cairns or hut-circles as the remains of brochs, he did distinguish both cairns and hut-circles among the stony remains on the plain; clearly he knew what a broch looked like, as earlier in the same passage he identifies the broch of Druim an Duin on the clifftop above. Neither Mackay nor Curle noticed opened cists, either in a cairn or in the ground; it seems likely from this that the cists visible today were opened and emptied after 1909 (Mercer 1981, 12).

The Ordnance Survey were the next to record the archaeology on the plain, in 1960 and 1971. They noted 'at least 8 stone-walled huts . . . and a contemporary field system', as well as at least three and possibly as many as six burial cairns, five with signs of kerbs. They noted two cists set within a cairn as well as three set into the ground (NC66SE 3). In 1977 another O.S. visitor noted a further three cairns and two rectangular stone platforms or huts (*ibid.*).

Mercer, the next archaeological observer, in 1980 recorded six hut-circles (1981, 19), another complex comprising an enclosure with cellular elements, a possible robbed clearance cairn, the cist-bearing cairn, only two cists set into the ground, about 18 fragments of field wall and 24 rectilinear stony platforms (see Figure 5.12, which shows the features surveyed by Mercer, colour-coded by type). The following discussion of these remains draws on Mercer's analysis as well as observations made on the Invernaber plain 18 years later; the numbers used to refer to features follow those assigned by Mercer (1981).

At different times in the past this must have been cultivable land, covered by turf and other vegetation, and quite desirable: it was sheltered from north-westerlies (although not southerlies sweeping up Strathnaver) by Druim Chuibhe; people, animals and crops would have had some protection from winter storms and salt spray behind the dunes of Torrisdale Bay; there was easy access to the sea and the river for fishing and good harbourage for boats.

The most recent period of the plain's occupation was before 1780, when there was a township here called Baile Marghait (or Margaret's Town). Sand which encroached in a single night's storm drove the tenants away (Morrison 1883). In 1900, winter storms blew much of the sand away; it was after visiting the site that year that Mackay (1906) noted the oblong buildings he interpreted as the remains of that occupation. In 1998, as in 1981 when Mercer surveyed the plain, no remains of typical township buildings were visible. However, Mercer did tentatively interpret the 24 small, rectilinear, stony platforms as the remains of the township buildings. Mercer's Monument 10 (Figure 5.15) is a well-defined rectangle, almost 10 m long by 3.5 m wide; although its surface is uniformly stony and no larger stones are visible outlining the wall footings, it might be the very top of a collapsed drystone building. Monument 11 (Figure 5.10) is a much smaller and more diffuse platform, 5 m by 3.5 m, with what appears to be two curving alignments of stones visible in its stonework. The platforms cluster fairly tightly along the western part of the plain, in the most sheltered area. If these do represent the eighteenth-century township, then it is puzzling that none of the nearby hut-circles, cairns or field walls appear to have been robbed to build them (1981, 20).

There are five features interpreted here and by previous observers as hut-circles (e.g., the Ordnance Survey, who noted another two not observed in 1981 or 1998; RCAHMS 1911; Mercer cautiously identifies them as enclosures). They appear as circular rings of stone, between 10 and 18 m in overall diameter, the stony rings 2 to 3 m wide. Some are better defined than others; Monument 12 (Figure 5.14), for example, has kerbing evident. In three or four cases (Monuments 9, 12, 16 and perhaps 8), a double skin of stones defining the perimeter wall is discernible (see Figures 5.13 and 5.14). Two (16 and 20) are incomplete; sand dunes obscure the eastern part of the latter and the western part of the former is not visible, perhaps destroyed. In several, most notably 9 and 12, one can see what appear to be central

stone settings, perhaps for posts; Monument 9 (Figure 5.13) may even have a secondary ring of stones around the central setting. Where their entrances can be picked out they generally face south-west. In several of the rings Mercer noted thickening of walls or eccentricities in wall facing which he interpreted as signs of structural complexity and change, perhaps representing different phases of building (*ibid.*, 17-19).

Several lengths of wall are visible on the plain, again most of them toward the west and many aligned NNW/SSE, but a few are visible in the eastern part. Small cairns lie around them and in one case are incorporated into a length of wall. As Mercer (*ibid.*, 19-20) points out, it is impossible on the basis of this jumble of surface remains alone to associate all or some of the field walls and small cairns either with the putative longhouse platforms or with the earlier structures. It is possible that some relate to the later, post-Medieval occupation and some to the prehistoric occupation, presenting two fragmentary and mutually indistinguishable pictures of the field systems of different periods.

On the surface of the plain the bewildering topography of undulating sand and stony mounds – some natural, some archaeological – is difficult to navigate and understand. Viewed from the clifftop above, however, one can begin to see associations and patterns; the plain is spread below like a map or an aerial photograph, but one is low enough still to be able to discern subtle topographic changes (see Plate 5.3). Each of the four hut-circles on the western part of the plain (Mercer's 8, 9, 12 and 16) sits on top of a low knoll. In this they are similar to the round-houses clustering around the Allt na Fearnna quarry site and particularly house 4 at Lairg, which was in use from about 1600 to 1000 cal B.C. (McCullagh & Tipping 1998, 48, 113); however, as noted above, this physical proximity cannot be assumed to mean contemporaneity.

The rectangular stone platforms lie among them in a north-west/south-east running gully, with a cluster of small cairns at its north-west end and between three of the hut-circles. Another cluster of small cairns on the east side of the plain seem to stop in a well-defined edge just north of two larger cairns, as if at the edge of a field (Mercer's Nos. 18 and 21). Most of the field walls are on the plain's south-east quadrant, although there are two to the north-east of the alignment of small cairns,

and several lengths immediately east of the hut-circles. The absence in this area of both platforms and hut-circles – except for one, Monument 20, near the east edge – suggests that the more exposed, eastern part of the plain was given over entirely to agriculture in later prehistory, the post-Medieval period or both.

Among the hut-circles is a prominent cairn (No. 15; Figure 5.15, defined by a kerb along the north and east. Two empty cists are visible in its fabric; Beaker sherds may have come from one, as suggested by Mercer (1981, 10) and they were probably robbed in the early twentieth century. Two (or according to the Ordnance Survey, three) cists have also been cut into the ground close to the cairn, to the north and east; these also are now empty. Mercer (1981, 20) notes the close proximity of the cairns and hut-circles, remarking that the burial cairn appears not to have been robbed to build the circular structures. The kerbed cairn with its central and peripheral cists again shows the extent to which people integrated their houses and field systems with their monuments to the dead in later prehistory.

One set of remains falls neither (however roughly) into the categories of post-Medieval or prehistoric structure; it just possibly represents late Iron Age (Pictish) occupation. This is Mercer's Monument 17 (see Fig. 5.15). At the time of his survey it was only partly visible and was interpreted as 'an open enclosure area, 10 m in maximum dimensions and sub-rectilinear in form, which has appended to its southern and eastern flanks a series of smaller "cellular" enclosures' (1981, 19). The cellular elements are very striking. In the southern part of the complex a double curve of stones is visible, with a faced south-eastern terminal; a second, inner skin is apparent, concentric with the northernmost curve. To the north of this a single skin of stones defines a tripartite cellular form with a possible entrance to the north-west; abutted to the west by an arc of stones which is Mercer's open enclosure area. Two other arcs of stone to the east may be fragments of other structures. As presently visible these remains are so fragmentary that any interpretation of their date or original form would be stretching legitimacy. They do, however, hint at similarities with both Neolithic/Bronze Age and Pictish cellular structures known in the Northern Isles, such as the example of the former at Sumburgh in Shetland (Downes forthcoming) and the latter at Buckquoy in Orkney (Ritchie 1977).

The complex of remains at Invernaver, ranging from the Mesolithic to the post-Medieval periods, show the intermittent re-use of this landscape with its access to the sea and the river, an occupation threatened and driven away perhaps more than once by windblown sand. The wide mouth of Torrisdale Bay and the shelter offered by the headlands on either side of it have consistently drawn people who settled here whenever it was viable, farmed the plateau and invested the landscape with symbolic meanings through the funerary monuments they built.

The processes of sand accumulation and deflation have removed or covered any old ground surfaces, as well as any soil element in the make-up of buildings and cairns, at least at the presently exposed level. This last statement assumes that the visible stonework represents the lowest surviving level, such as the footings of hut-circles and walls. Although this has not been proven by excavation, it is probably the case or nearly so, as the hut-circles and other structural remains lie at roughly the same level as cists set into the ground; however, the present ground level relative to ancient ones may vary across the plain, and different structures may be preserved to different degrees.

As a result of the processes of preservation and erosion, the visible archaeological remains are startlingly, perhaps deceptively distinct. They exist in what Mercer aptly describes as a “quasi-excavated” state (1981, 11). The post settings and open cists are features not normally visible in vegetation-clad monuments. The cairns stand proud of the plain, somehow appearing more natural here, set as they are against a background of sand into which they blend rather than one of grass, heather or bracken. The remains lie like the skeletons of their original structures, exposed to the elements and to view. They are almost too blatant, as if there were something indecent about the absence of accumulated layers of soil which usually mask and soften the form of archaeological monuments. Their forms seem so accessible, so transparent at first glance: that is a hut-circle; there is a cairn; this must be a field wall.

Yet that transparency is deceptive. The visible remains can only be fragments of the original structures, some partly hidden beneath sand and others partly destroyed by centuries of natural erosion and human occupation of the plain. Further complicating the picture is the fact that fragments from different periods are

all visible together, with none of the usual clues that help one distinguish remains of one period from those of another. At the north-west edge of the plain, in the vicinity of the Mesolithic lithic scatter noted above, is a small, oval setting of stones, measuring about 1 m north/south by 0.7 m (Plate 5.4). It sits in a surface of wind-scoured gravel, and sand has built up around and inside it. It might be a setting for a relatively modern campfire, although there are no signs of charcoal or modern rubbish, and vegetation has partly colonised the sand. In fact, it might be prehistoric; in this environment, it might be anything.

5.4.4 *The Brochs of Strathnaver*

As noted in the preceding section, the chronology of brochs and hut-circles in the northern Highlands is poorly understood; none of Strathnaver's brochs has been excavated or dated, so there is no direct evidence for their dates of construction and occupation. Therefore, treating the brochs and their positions in Strathnaver's landscape separately from the evidence for later prehistoric occupation may be creating artificial divisions in what was a more unified pattern of settlement. Having said this, the brochs of Strathnaver are such a striking and coherent family of structures that, at the risk of creating such divisions, they are addressed as a group here. Reference is made, however, to hut-circle settlements in the vicinity where they exist. An analysis of where the later Iron Age inhabitants of Strathnaver chose to build their brochs, with a closer consideration of the character of a few brochs in the study area, may illuminate their concerns and the structure of the landscape during this period. Considering other similar fortified sites, not classified as brochs, as part of this analysis may help establish a regional framework for understanding the pattern of settlement and social life over the study area (see Armit 1988), although the lack of secure dates for any of the monuments will inhibit firm conclusions.

Perched on the edge of the steep, rocky slopes of Druim Chuibhe, directly above the hut-circle settlement at Invernaver, is the broch of Druim an Duin ('Fort of the Ridge'; NC66SE 2) (see Figure 5.3 and Plate 5.5). Its mound of tumbled stone almost blends into the scree which surrounds it, but in 1909 its walls stood to 'a considerable height' (RCAHMS 1911; Mercer 1981, 21). Now a scarcement is visible inside; the walls have largely collapsed above it, but have been rebuilt with cruder drystone masonry in the nineteenth century. Its interior appears to have been cleared

of sand and rubble, probably at the same time as the partial reconstruction took place. Young (1962, 189) classifies this as a dun on the basis of its poor quality masonry but, as other authors (e.g., Parker Pearson, Sharples & Mulville 1996) have noted, such classifications were not necessarily meaningful to those that built the structure.

Its builders chose a strategic and highly visible position that must have presented some engineering challenges, given the steepness and instability of the slope just beneath it. There was access to water from a nearby lochan and the stream that runs off Druim Chuibe immediately to the south. However, it would have been very exposed to winds and weather here from all directions; the site's visual command and prominence must have been worth the exposure, as must its defensibility, either actual or perceived.

From the broch one can see well out to sea. To the east the cairn-topped ridge at Fiscary is visible, with the hillocks of Swordly breaking the skyline beyond and the headlands around Farr and Bettyhill in the foreground. One can see all of the lowest topographic zone (8), the sweep of the river as far as Invernaver and the lower reaches of Strathnaver (Plate 5.5). And one has complete visual command of the open plain below. The broch is equally visible from most points in the landscape within its view, breaking the skyline with particular dramatic force from the headlands of Bettyhill and Farr. It seems poised just so: to see and to be seen.

While the hut-circles and field systems on the plain below may be earlier, they could be contemporary with the broch. The fact that they lie on the western part of the plain, directly beneath and overlooked by the broch, is difficult to dismiss as coincidence – although the fact that this is the most sheltered part of the plain must account for their positioning in part. Mercer (1996, 187) does note that the four larger hut-circles are comparable in size to one excavated at Navershough, Bu, Orkney, the primary occupation of which was dated to 510 bc; he suggests that round-houses like these were antecedent to the development of the northern broch. The broch's almost absurdly elevated position above and on the edge of what was clearly arable land in the past recalls the locations noted for brochs in the Western Isles and Shetland (Parker Pearson, Sharples & Mulville 1996; Fojut 1982). Its occupants must have been supported by agriculture, and it is reasonable to suppose

they would have farmed the nearest arable land, that within their view – although they did not disturb the nearest and most sheltered ground of all, that occupied by the round-houses. (Curle (RCAHMS 1911) did note some small cairns on the top of Druim Chuibhe immediately west of the broch, although Mercer (1981) failed to find them; that land, while it might have been cultivated on some scale, would have been extremely exposed.)

From Druim an Duin a broch or dun at Farr (Horsburgh 1867, 275; NC76SW 1), now removed, would have been visible. Another reported broch, which could not be found by later investigators, stood on the north-facing slope directly below the chambered cairns at Fiscary, and near Loch Swordly (Joass 1873, 190; NC76SW 16). A third alleged broch, Cai Dun, lay at a similar height to Druim an Duin, directly opposite it to the east and overlooking the Naver estuary; again, this broch could not be found by Ordnance Survey investigators (NC76SW 18). If these three now-destroyed monuments were in use at the same time as Druim an Duin, their positions could suggest there were discrete groups of people who controlled the land on their respective sides of the river or areas of headland and hinterland.

A broch or dun sits above the River Borgie's mouth near Torrisdale (NC66SE 4; Figure 5.3), a position highly desirable in terms of both resources and defence. Another possible one is in a similar position near the river's tidal limit, looking both down toward the sea and up the strath (NC66SE 6). The promontory fort of Mas an Buaile (NC66SE 21) on the Skerry coast is one of the few other indications of a later Iron Age presence in this area (10), along with a souterrain near Tubeg (NC66SE 11) and a possible crannog on Loch nan Ealachan (NC66SE 14).

Above the bridge and tidal limit at Invernaver, there are two brochs in topographic zone 7 (Figure 5.3). Here the strath is rather constricted, with knolls and terraces breaking up its base and limiting views along it. The broch at Achcoillenaborgie (NC75NW 2) is on a low knoll near the river, partly enclosed by a bank and ditch. Its low position (although partly defended by an outerwork) contrasts with the broch at Allt a Chaistel (NC75NW 6; Figure 5.3). It sits on a very steep-sided, natural knoll above the burn; the sides of the knoll around the base of the walls have been revetted, and there is an outerwork to the WNW (Young 1962, 185). Two hut-circles lie on the level ground behind the broch, to the east. Its

entrance faces west, directly across the strath to the pass that leads across Naver Roch toward Borgie, and overlooking the flatter ground and the lower reaches of Skelpick Burn directly below. It also looks into the mouth of Skelpick Glen and along the ridges to either side, and northward as far as Achanlochy Loch, with just a small wedge of the sea visible in the distance.

The broch's triangular lintel lies pointed outward outside the entrance, where it must have crashed when the tower collapsed. Inside, the walls survive to head height, and the amount of rubble suggests there was originally another storey. Its position and character appear extraordinarily strong and watchful, with its steep, revetted knoll and the gaze of its entrance directly to the pass leading across the high ground from the west. Its position seems chosen also to make an impact from below, built as it is on the edge of the steepest ground lining the strath. From the valley, standing to its full height, it would have broken the skyline dramatically (see Plate 5.6).

The only other possible defended site in this topographic zone is a large, defended structure, on a small knoll on the steep western side of the strath, just north of the cairn complex at Achargary (Figure 5.3). Described as neither quite a dun nor a broch by Ordnance Survey fieldworkers (NC75NW 14), it was defended by a ditch and outer rampart. Small clearance cairns and banks delineating plots to the east of it may belong to a contemporary phase of cultivation.

To the south of this homestead, the strath opens out into topographic zone 6, with its open, flat floor, steep western side and more gradual eastern side. It contains three intervisible brochs. The northernmost is on the floor of the strath, on the west bank of the river. There are two (Dun Carnachaidh and Dun Chealamy, NC75SW 8 and 9) on the edges of terraces along the western side of the strath, elevated above the floor, and a third (Dun Viden, NC75SW 11) on the edge of a terrace above the eastern side, midway between these last two (see Figure 5.4)

The southernmost, Dun Chealamy on the western side, was built on a naturally defensible spur at the edge of the fluvio-glacial terrace above the floor of the strath. There is an outerwork defending it on the south-west (Young 1962, 189). Like that at Allt a Chaistel, it looks directly out over the arable land below; a cleared,

post-Medieval township is spread over the ground immediately to the north-east. One can see the Dun Viden broch across the strath to the north-east. A cluster of hut-circles and clearance cairns has been recorded just to the south of Dun Chealamy (Mackay 1906), and could represent contemporary, associated settlement. There is also a souterrain (NC75SW 17) in the west side of the strath between Carnachaidh and Chealamy brochs, and an oval homestead or dun on a level stance on the west bank of the river, a notably different position from that of the brochs.

If the brochs are contemporary with each other, their locations again suggest the control of different parts of the strath, with the river demarcating that between Dun Viden and Duns Carnachaidh and Chealamy. This could suggest competition for land and firmly drawn and guarded boundaries; but it could also indicate a degree of cooperation between those who built and lived in the brochs (Fojut (1982) suggested similar possibilities of hostility and cooperation expressed in the Shetland brochs). The three brochs all lie in the southern part of the zone 6; the northern part is dominated by the extensive spread of hut-circles and associated cultivation remains south of Skelpick. Without any dating evidence the remains in these two parts of the zone cannot be assumed to be contemporary, but their mutual exclusiveness is worth noting and could indicate some contemporaneity and perhaps social divisions in the landscape.

In zone 5 – where the strath is somewhat more constricted, its floor broken up into smaller spaces by glacial moraines – there are two brochs, at Skail and Inshlampie, directly opposite each other near the southern end of the topographic zone (NC74NW 3 and 5; Figure 5.4). In the fourth zone only one broch is known, that on the ridge above the Langdale Burn (NC64SE 1); see Plate 5.7. There are no brochs in the more constricted zone between Syre and the head of the river, but the souterrain at Rosal (NC64SE 28) and another (now lost) near Syre (NC64SE 26) indicates some probable later Iron Age settlement in its vicinity.

The area around Loch Naver, zone 1, has several brochs (see Figure 5.5). Their positions again seem to point to a certain degree of mutual awareness among the builders and inhabitants, either cooperative or defensive in nature. One broch, Dun Creagach (NC63NW 11), lies on the south shore of the loch near its western end; another (Coill 'ach a'Chuil, NC63NE 2) is on the same side near its eastern end, and a third (NC63NW 2) is on the north shore at Grummore, to the east of the

westernmost broch. Their entrances all face shoreward. The two on the southern shore actually sit on small islands that are joined to the shore by causeways; a hut-circle straddles the entrance to the western broch's causeway. Small bays adjacent to both brochs would have provided a means of beaching boats.

Grummore broch (Plate 5.8) sits on a low-lying point of land next to a pebbly beach. Joass (1864, 358) observed 'a regularly flagged way' about 4 metres wide leading from the broch into the loch one summer when the water level was extremely low; Stuart (1866, 297) also observed it and interpreted it as a pier – an indication of the importance of the loch for travel, communication, trade, fishing or all of these. The broch appears externally as a rubble mound, but its interior appears to have been cleared out and the footings of a small structure, probably a modern shelter, lie against one wall. In the south-west arc is a window, apparently original to the broch. Looking through it, one can see Dun Creagach on the southern shore, framed perfectly within it. It again suggests a certain degree of integration or at least mutual awareness among the people living around Loch Naver in the later Iron Age.

As a group, the Strathnaver brochs share certain striking characteristics. Almost all are built on the leading edges of the fluvio-glacial terraces that line the strath, directly above the haughland. As such, they seem poised to look particularly imposing from below; from here, standing to full height, they would have broken the skyline or stood out against a background of distant hills. Although their contemporaneity or otherwise cannot be proven without excavation, many of them do seem to respect or acknowledge each other, built as they are at regular intervals along the lower to middle strath and around Loch Naver, and with good intervisibility between several.

In these respects they are markedly similar to the brochs in upland areas of eastern Sutherland and Caithness, and especially in the Strath of Kildonan. Both Baines (1999, 365-66) and Cowley (in press) have noted that these brochs tend to occupy similar topographic positions, at the edges of the first major terrace above the strath floor, commanding views of the valley and dominating the view from below. In Baines' opinion, for their builders 'an *appearance* of dominance seems to have been more important than occupying the highest or most easily defensible location' (365) (original emphasis). Most were built at regular intervals along the lower and middle

stretches of river valleys and, while most lie in areas of hut-circle settlement, they do not seem to have provided a nucleus for it. Many of them also seem built with reference to each other, suggesting some interdependence; they may even, as Baines (366) suggests, have been built and lived in by 'extended households linked by kinship.'

As Cowley (in press) points out, the numbers of brochs in Sutherland cannot have housed all of the people living in its straths; the evidence that some hut-circles were occupied into the first millennium A.D. further suggests that this kind of architecture continued to be current while the brochs were built and occupied. He concludes that there must have been some hierarchy expressed through domestic architecture in the later Iron Age, with the brochs acting as the centres of estates along the valley floor (also see Cowley 2000). He further argues that, in contrast to the Caithness and Orkney brochs, which seem part of a continuing focal point of settlement, the Sutherland brochs appear to have been 'planted' in the landscape. He suggests that in the later Iron Age, while lowland Caithness and Orkney saw the development of localised and regional elites based on the land's fertility and access to the sea, upland areas were increasingly marginalised because they lacked the economic surpluses necessary to build power bases. The construction of the brochs in upland areas may even have been a means of maintaining local control imposed by external powers from these richer areas. He notes, however, that the more marginal upland straths probably continued to be important centres for some resources, such as grazing and timber.

The Strathnaver brochs, then, may be vestiges of a system of estates or territories strung out along the river valley. Given their regular spacing along the strath, and in light of Cowley's argument about the importance of grazing in a marginal area such as this, it is possible that these estates might have been defined in a similar way to the later thanages south of the Moray Firth (see Chapter Three), in strips that extended from the river to the adjacent uplands, including both arable land and high grazings. While the social structure and land tenure prevailing on such estates would have grown out of a long, developing tradition, the construction of the brochs must have been a strong expression of local authority, their imposing physical presence an abiding statement of the differences in status between those living inside it and those living in the landscape around it (Baines 1999, 365).

In Strathnaver, while the brochs are mainly concentrated in the lower strath and around Loch Naver, the largest concentrations of roundhouses occur in stretches of the strath where the brochs do not. This seems coherent with Cowley's observation, noted above, that the Sutherland and upland Caithness brochs seem to have been 'planted' in the landscape, as they lie apart from hut-circle settlements rather than appearing to have grown out of them as a culmination of a long-developing architectural tradition, as in lowland Caithness and Orkney. Possibly as sub-rectangular and oval buildings began to be constructed in the more highly organised centres of power in Caithness and Orkney in the early first millennium A.D., expressing through the potent medium of architecture a rapidly changing social and political order, the round-house survived longer in more marginal areas such as Strathnaver, a lingering tradition of an older social order by then on the wane (Cowley in press).

5.5 *The Early Medieval period (seventh to ninth century A.D.)*

5.5.1 *Picts and priests in northern Scotland*

About A.D. 140, the Classical geographer Ptolemy put the River Naver ('Nabarus') on a map (MacKay 1908, 79). That this name endured throughout the millennium suggests that the language of the people who knew it in the first century also endured, at least until the Norse incursion, and the name survived that linguistic assault (Watson 1906; Watson 1926, 47; Waugh 2000). It appears to derive from an Indo-European root meaning 'moist, cloud, water, mist' (Nicolaisen 1976, 188-9). As in Badenoch, those living in Strathnaver in the early to mid first millennium A.D. were probably the descendants of those who had occupied it in the late centuries B.C., who had lived inside (or outside) the brochs and worked the landscape into their social structure and agricultural routines – Wainwright's (1981a, 15) 'proto-Picts.' Much of the general discussion of what is known of Pictish culture and society in Chapter Three may hold true as well for Strathnaver. Orkney and Caithness appear to have had well-developed political, social and economic structures from at least the early centuries A.D., as is evident in the nucleated settlements around brochs and the highly structured landscapes of which they may

have been the focus (Cowley in press). If, as Cowley suggests, areas such as Strathnaver were marginal but still relevant to that society, then those living here may have considered themselves part of it.

In Caithness and Orkney, evidence suggests that broch sites continued to be used well into the first millennium A.D., sometimes with ongoing occupation of the buildings around the broch or even the broch itself, but most often involving the construction of new, rectangular or oval, often aisled buildings on the site. Baines (1999, 367) argues that this involved appropriating traditionally significant places, rather than simple continuity of settlement. The brochs of Strathnaver, as elsewhere in northern Scotland (Armit 1997), may have faded as centres of settlement and symbols of power, at the same time as they were drawn into and re-used in the creation of new social worlds (*cf.* Driscoll 1998). Certainly in eastern Sutherland and southern Caithness, a new architecture emerged in the middle centuries of the first millennium with the construction of aisled buildings or wags, tucked away in what seem isolated locations (Baines in press). Their visual reticence, in contrast to the brochs, suggests that it was no longer necessary or appropriate to make a strong, explicit statement about control over the landscape or its resources. In Baines' (1999, 368) view, the location of the aisled buildings points to the greater importance of paths along and access to the river systems in negotiating social relationships.

None of these structures is known in Strathnaver, and indeed for northern Sutherland as a whole little or nothing is known of the settlement pattern after the brochs went out of use, nor indeed is it known when or how suddenly they ceased to be occupied. However, something of the character of life in the mid first millennium A.D. in northern Scotland is known from other sites in the region.

Most of the documentary as well as archaeological evidence for settlement and political structure in the mid to late first millennium A.D. comes from Orkney. Records of the later first millennium A.D. suggest that the Picts of Orkney had some identity of their own, separate from the Pictish power centre around the Moray Firth, to whom it was probably subservient. Adomnán's early seventh century account of Columba's mid sixth century visit to the Pictish king Bredei mac Máelchú refers to hostages he held of the under-king of the Orkneys, who himself was present at the

court (Anderson & Anderson 1991, 166-67). The Annals of Ulster also record that a rebellion in Orkney was quashed in A.D. 682 (Anderson 1922, I, 191).

Archaeological evidence from Orkney shows that Pictish people there lived on individual farms or in small farming communities. Their houses in the north appear to have been built of stone and might be sub-circular, sub-rectangular, cellular or figure-of-eight shaped with timber-framed or stone-corbelled roofs and covered with turf (Ralston 1997; Ritchie 1995). Cellular buildings have been excavated at Birsay, a probable Pictish power base, and at Buckquoy and Red Craig (Morris 1989a; Hunter 1990; Ritchie 1977). Similar buildings have also been found making up part of the broch village at Yarrows in Caithness (Graham-Campbell & Batey 1998, 5). Analysis of environmental samples from excavated Pictish sites has shown that, at least on Orkney, the inhabitants grew barley and oats, ate fish and shellfish and raised pigs, sheep and cattle for meat and milk, probably using their hides for clothes, boats and vellum and their bones for tools (Ritchie 1995, 21-23). They may have used boats like that depicted on the St. Orland's Stone and those mentioned in early annal entries (see Foster 1996, 102). Those living in the study area might well have known how to navigate the River Naver, Loch Naver or the coastal waters.

Pictish artefacts have also yielded an insight into their highly developed aesthetic sensibilities. The abstract and zoomorphic designs on jewellery and other pieces of fine metalwork have affinities to Celtic and Anglo-Saxon art of the same period. They also appear on the symbol stones, which – as discussed in Chapter Three – demonstrate the progression of Pictish art beginning with simple, elegant symbols on the earliest (Class I) stones from as early as the fifth century A.D. (Thomas 1968, 108) to the late seventh century A.D. (Proudfoot 1995, 28). After the beginning of conversion to Christianity, stones were produced which combined Pictish and Christian symbolism (Class II) and latterly bearing purely Christian symbols (Class III), from the late eighth or ninth centuries, although these are more abundant in southern Pictland (Stevenson 1980, 97). Proudfoot (1995, 28) argues that where Class III stones are found *in situ* they 'indicate a strong Christian community' as well as a wealthy one.

Stones such as these are one of the few material indications of Picts and of the influence of Christianity in the study area. Chapel sites with early, simple cross

slabs may be another. Henderson (1987) has pointed out the potential importance of boulders and dressed slabs bearing simple incised crosses (which she classifies as Class IVa and B respectively). She has suggested that while the symbol of the cross and the knowledge of quarrying and dressing stones were monastic contributions, the techniques used to incise the simple cross-slabs were the same as those used to create symbol stones. She argues, in tandem with Thomas (1971), that their distribution shows the northward spread of missionary activity in the seventh and eighth centuries A.D., a trend spawned by Irish-based monasticism (1987, 49), which appears to have left its traces in the study area.

There are records of missions by the Columban church to the north, and particularly to Orkney. Adomnán relates how Cormac, a follower of Columba's, made a second sea voyage in an attempt to find a 'desert place in the ocean' – an eremitic site; he eventually landed on Orkney, as Columba had foreseen (Anderson & Anderson 1991, 440). Other missions may have followed Cormac's path northward, and some almost certainly founded monastic sites along the coast of the north mainland, as the evidence in the study area suggests (see below). Morris (1996, 42), however, believes that the spread of Christianity northward, at least to Orkney, was also partly due to influence from the Northumbrian Church from the eighth century onward. Lamb (1998) further argues that Peter dedications in Orkney indicate Northumbrian influence, and suggests links between the existing secular powers and the new Christian establishments. The carved stone crosses marking ecclesiastical sites may, therefore, reflect Northumbrian rather than Irish influence, but whether the source of their inspiration mattered to the carvers is another question.

In terms of religious beliefs as well as social and political structure, the links between Orkney and the north-west mainland and the extent to which people living on the latter felt themselves part of that world is poorly understood. The following section sets out what evidence there is for the presence of people and the structure of the inhabited landscape in Early Medieval Strathnaver.

5.5.2 *The Chapels of Strathnaver*

The sites of chapels or churches are scattered along the strath and the coast around its mouth. Some have archaeological evidence for early origins, while others do not. For ease of discussion, they are treated here as a group, with the proviso that they may not all be Early Medieval in date. Similarly, the simple cross-incised stones are discussed together here, but they may well date from different periods.

In topographic zone 1, on Loch Naver, is a probable early Christian site at Klibreck (see Figure 5.5). This is marked by a cross-incised slab, standing upright next to a plain standing stone (Henderson 1987; NC53SE 4). Both stand in a low-lying, boggy area at the base of a craggy slope, along which are spread the remains of the post-Medieval township (although some of these remains may be earlier – see below). The low footings of an enclosure wall, possibly oval, curve westward from the stones, and a small mound of rubble to the west appears to be a collapsed structure (NC53SE 5). It has been more clearly observable as such in the past. Horsburgh (1867) noticed the foundations of what he thought was a small chapel, ‘with many large square stones lying about’. The position of these features is curious, as clearly this area frequently floods; attempts have been made in the twentieth century to drain the ground, as drainage cuts attest, but they have not been very successful and before this it must have been even wetter. The location recalls mystical (perhaps even pre-Christian) associations between wet places and the spirit world. The striking density and arrangement of brochs around Loch Naver indicates there were well-developed and substantial communities living here in the later Iron Age, still focused around the brochs if not actually occupying them. It is tempting to postulate some contemporaneity between the chapel site and settlements associated with the broch sites, and perhaps the appropriation of an earlier sacred place by Christian missionaries, although there is no dating evidence available to support or contest that hypothesis at present.

There is another possible early Christian site at the far end of the loch on its opposite shore, at Grumbeg (Figure 5.5), where a graveyard has produced two cross-slabs. The graveyard appears as a mound on the edge of the fluvio-glacial terrace above the lochside, enclosed and revetted by a rectangular drystone wall. Outcrops visible near the top of the mound show it is a natural feature, but it may have been augmented by a build-up of burials over time. Unmarked, roughly dressed, sub-rectangular slabs are visible on the surface on the mound, some arranged in rows and

some lying so that they form a rough spiral ascending the slope (see Plate 6.9), but generally speaking the graves seem placed to accommodate as many as possible within the walls and between the outcrops. A small annexe has been built against the southern, downslope side of the graveyard; it contains some later nineteenth century gravestones and is said to be the private burial ground of the Aberach MacKays (NC63NW 8). The graveyard lies on the southern edge of the township of Grumbeg, which was cleared between 1814 and 1819.

In 1909, two simple, cross-incised stones were observed lying on top of the east wall of the burial ground. By 1977 they had disappeared (Macdonald & Laing 1970, 134), but they were re-discovered later lying face down in the turf beside the wall. A well, dedicated to St. Martin (Tobair Claish Mhartain), is recorded as being 'near Grumbeg burial place' (Mackay 1914, 34; NC63NW 9). (St. Martin, founder of the monastery at Tours in the fourth century A.D., inspired St. Ninian's mission to Britain in the fifth century (Hill 1997, 1-4)). The well is shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map, but its exact location is not known now. However, to the north-east of the burial ground is a large, smooth outcrop, in the centre of which is a deep depression (see Plate 5.10). In September 1999 it was too full of water to determine whether the depression had been artificially hollowed out, but whether natural or artificial this could be the well; it does resemble a large font. Anderson (1881, 196) has noted the occurrence of such features on early Christian sites, where superstitious traditions are often associated with them. Tobair Claish Mhartain has been attributed with healing powers (Knight 1933, 125).

The chapel's dedication is not known, but given the well's traditional name it may have been St. Martin. The presence of the cross-incised stones at Grumbeg could suggest that the site was of some importance in the early Christian period. Their provenance is problematic, as the earliest observations record that they were lying on top of the burial ground – not a terribly secure context, and not definite proof that they were at Grumbeg in the mid to late first millennium A.D. However, on balance it seems more likely than not that they were, or were not transported far from their original site. The name of the settlement is Norse in origin (as is that of Klibreck – see below), but that does not preclude the possibility in either case of an earlier chapel or sacred place at the site.

In zone 3, between the head of the River Naver and Syre (Figure 5.4), the only archaeological evidence for an Early Medieval presence is a crescent-headed bronze stick pin, described in Laing's (1973) catalogue only as from Rosal (NC64SE 54). It appears to date from the fifth to the eighth centuries A.D. There might well have been settlement remains in the vicinity which were obliterated by later Norse, Medieval or post-Medieval settlement.

The next two topographic zones, 4 and 5, have produced slight but potentially significant evidence for people in the late Iron Age to early Christian period. Although again there is no direct indication of settlement, the circumstantial evidence of symbol stones and chapel sites would imply there was a local population that the chapels served and for whom the stones were carved. At Syre (Figure 5.4), at the upper end of zone 4 where the strath begins to open out to a broad, flat base, part of an incised slab was found in 1905 (NC64SE 23). It bears a partial, sharply incised crescent or arch symbol, which Thomas (1963, 81) interprets as signifying 'noble'. It was found standing upright but buried, with boulders at its base, and appeared to have been planted that way after the original had broken (Mackay 1906, 128). Its presence here suggests the existence of a Pictish community, a member of whom the original stone perhaps commemorated, from perhaps as early as the fifth century A.D. (see Thomas 1968, 108) and before the late seventh century A.D. (see Proudfoot 1995). Its re-erection after breaking shows a different kind of commemoration, perhaps of an individually or communally remembered past, at a later time. It may have been buried after this point by peat growth or erosion of sediments down slope.

In this zone and the more closed stretch of Strathnaver between Skail and Chealamy (zone 5), where moraines create smaller spaces on the valley floor, are three pre-Reformation chapel sites, at least two of which appear to have early origins. There is a certain consistency in character and location among the three that suggests they are contemporary.

The southernmost is at Langdale (Figure 5.4). It consists of a rectangular drystone wall which revets the edges of a mound (NC64NE 1). Several flat, plain, sub-rectangular slabs and small boulders marking graves are visible on the surface of the interior. In its centre are the very faint traces of an oval or sub-rectangular

building, aligned east/west and measuring 8 m by 4 m; these may be traces of the chapel mentioned in the *Origines Parochiales Scotiae* (1885, 708). The chapel's dedication is unknown. The mounded nature of the burial ground suggests long use, although the enclosure wall is in good condition and is probably later.

The chapel site near Skail lies beside the river in an arable field. It is visible today as a very low, bracken-covered mound measuring c. 25 m in diameter, with an upright, cross-incised stone at its northern edge (NC74NW 2; see Plate 5.11). The stone is known as Clach an t-Sagairt Ruidhe – 'Stone of Red Priest' – and it bears an equal-armed cross with a rounded head (Allen & Anderson 1903, 55). The chapel here, again mentioned in the *OPS (ibid.)*, was dedicated to St. Maelrubai, the Irish monk who founded the monastery at Applecross and died in A.D. 722. (One tradition say he was martyred here by Norse invaders (Knight 1933, 215); according to others, however, he died at the hands of the Norse in Easter Ross or at Urquhart, or of old age at Applecross (Reeves 1858, 261)). The significance of the dedication is uncertain; it certainly is not a reliable indicator of an early site (Anderson 1965). However, the cross-slab may well date to the seventh or eighth century (Henderson 1987). The chapel here could have been founded by monks from an early Christian site on the coast at Eilean Coomb, discussed below.

In 1864, Joass noted flat grave slabs, like those at Langdale, on the surface of the burial ground; none are visible today. He described them as natural slabs taken from the river bed; their surfaces had 'an appearance of highly relieved tracery, like twining serpents, caused by the occurrence of raised quartz veins' and speculates that this influenced their selection (1864, 359). Without seeing the slabs it is difficult to picture the effect, but Joass's description suggests they were reminiscent of Celtic interlace designs like those found on early Christian cross slabs, and if so they might indeed have been chosen for that reason. The slabs visible in the nineteenth century, however, may have been laid relatively late in the burial ground's use, before the Reformation.

There were formerly more stones delineating an enclosure. MacKay (1906, 131) reports that in 1825, after the Clearances, the stones of the enclosure and chapel as well as the font were carted away for use in revetting the river bank opposite Rhiloisk. About halfway there the driver, unwilling to see the font so degraded, put

it out of the cart onto the river bank, where it reportedly lay for years; its location now is unknown (NC74NW 2). The first edition six-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1873 shows the outline of the burial ground as triangular, with the cross slab at the northern apex of the triangle. The *OPS* records that a piece of ground nearby was called Dalascary, or Dal-an-t-Sagairt, 'Priest's Field', and 'was believed to have been the glebe land attached to this chapel' (1855, 708).

A hill near the site is called Cnoc an t-Sagairt Ruidhe, or 'Hill of the Red Priest'. Somewhere in the vicinity (its exact location is unknown) is a slab-built structure, c. 5 m long and 2 to 3 m wide, which local tradition calls the Red Priest's Cell (Temperley 1977, 46). It is probably the remains of a robbed chambered cairn, but these names at least demonstrate the existence of other local traditions about the chapel site.

The third chapel site is in a similar topographic position, on the floor of the strath (Figure 5.4), but on the east side of the river at Rivigill (NC74NW 1); the first edition O.S. map (1873) names it as Cladh Rivigill, but in the nineteenth century it was known locally as Cladh Rìgh-Geal. It consists of a mound, its upper periphery enclosed by an oval drystone dyke. The mound is known as Cnoc an t-Sagairt, or 'Hillock of the Priest'. In 1870 the remains of a chapel were visible on it, and again this was dedicated to St. Maelrubai. Horsburgh (1867, 274) says that local people believed the old church at Farr (presumably that pre-dating the 1774 structure) was built with stones from this place. The oval shape of the enclosure could suggest an early Christian date (Thomas 1971). The mound lies on the end of a glacial moraine and so must be partly natural in origin, but dark, humic soil is visible in rabbit scrapes on its surface, indicating a build-up of organic material. Other moraines to the south create a wide but enclosed area immediately to the south of the chapel site, an obvious location for any associated settlement.

While Skail with its cross-slab and Cladh Rivigill with its oval enclosure are the more convincing early Christian sites, similarities in the position, size and distribution of these three sites hint at contemporaneity. They are evenly spaced along the valley, each lying 2.6 km from the adjacent chapel site. All are located on the floor of the strath – two on the west side of the river and one on the east – in positions which suggest a certain confidence and ease with their surrounding areas.

If these were early Christian chapels, there must have been a local Pictish population to which the priests ministered. Their positions suggest that those priests enjoyed a certain amount of support, as the chapels lie on and in the midst of good arable land, where they might have been central to surrounding communities; the Church must have been granted land here by local authorities. The buildings of those communities might, like the later townships, have occupied the slightly more marginal land on the adjacent edges of the strath, with the base of the strath used mainly for cultivation.

Loch mo Naire, above the eastern side of the strath in zone 6, was said in the post-Medieval period to have curative powers; people would come to the loch on the first day of February, May, August and November, dip three times in its waters, drink of it, throw money in and then leave before sunrise (*OPS* 1855, 708). Although a tradition recorded late, it hints at early, perhaps even pre-Christian beliefs. The name has been interpreted both as referring to a Celtic deity and as a variant of 'Naver' – itself in existence as early as A.D. 140 (MacKay 1908, 79).

On the coast to either side of the Naver are ecclesiastical sites, both dedicated to St. Columba, which might have been the first established in the study area (see Figure 5.3). To the west of Torrisdale Bay is Eilean Coomb (Columba's Island, and the name recorded in the Old Statistical Account written in 1792) (NC66SE 5). An alternative name for the island is Eilean na Naoimh or Neave, 'saint' or 'holy' in Gaelic (NC66SE 5; Temperley 1977, 57)). Watson (1926, 250), however, was given the name as Eilean na Neimhe, which may mean 'Island of the Nemed' and indicate a pagan sacred place which was appropriated by Christianity. It lies off the coast of Skerry, c. 200 m from the low-lying headland beside Skerry Bay. The *OPS* (1855, 708) and Morrison (1883, 99) both refer to the former existence of a monastery dedicated to St. Columba (d. 597) and a church dedicated to St. Bride (the earliest of whom died in 525) there.

The part of the island nearest the mainland is a flat, grassy terrace above low cliffs, sheltered from the windward side by rising ground. This is the traditional location of the chapel as shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1873. Pont's map, surveyed in the late 1500s, shows a church there and according to the Old Statistical Account, compiled in 1792, the remains of a chapel and burial ground

were still visible on the island at that time. By 1873, however, when the Ordnance Survey surveyed the island, no remains were visible. There are, however, traces of a circular platform – perhaps the footprint of a cell – and a linear scatter of stone slabs. The island formed part of the grazings belonging to Skerray farm in the post-Medieval period (*OPS* 1855, 708).

The low-lying headland opposite, beside Skerray Bay, is called Iomair Chaluim-cille, or ‘rig of Columba’s church’ (Mackay 1914, 33), suggesting that the monastic establishment did farm land on the mainland and therefore presumably had some cooperation from local communities. A well above Skerray pier is called Fuaran Chaluim Cille, or ‘Well of Calum (Columba) the Church-builder’ (Temperley 1977, 57).

Traditions survive that early priests, to preserve their separateness, used to preach from the edge of the island to their audiences on the shore; the hillock opposite, above the headland, is still known as Cnoc a Phobuill, or ‘the People’s Hill’ (Temperley 1977, 58). The nature of the site suggests it was an eremitic monastery like other, similar sites along the north coast and in the Northern and Western Isles. Such ‘group hermitages’, perhaps loosely connected to a mother monastery (Iona or Applecross, for example) were mainly established in the seventh century A.D. (Thomas 1971, 45-47). This could have been one of the first Christian sites founded in the area by monks who sailed around Cape Wrath, and the chapels in the strath and the ecclesiastical site at Farr might have been founded from this mother establishment.

Above the wide beach at the head of Farr Bay is an upright cross-slab in the graveyard of the former parish church (see Plate 5.12; NC76SW 11). One face bears a ring-headed cross with a raised circular boss at its centre and panels of Celtic interlace decoration in relief; although a Class III slab, its interlace panels bear resemblance to Class II stones (Allen & Anderson 1903, 83-4). The cross faces west, and is almost certainly in its original position. The present church was built in 1774, but on the site of a predecessor mentioned in charters as early as 1223-45 (*OPS* 1855, 707) which became the parish church. The cross probably dates to the late eighth or ninth century A.D. (see Proudfoot 1995; Foster 1996, 93). The quality of the carving points to a well-established ecclesiastical presence here from this time and a relatively

wealthy community to support it. In that case it may have been carved and erected some time after a church was founded at Farr, after the local population had been at least partially converted and support for the church had had time to grow. The stone may, therefore, be later than the simpler cross-slabs in the strath.

This location, on flat machair and (at present) sheltered behind dunes, would have been ideal for settlement; that the Church was granted land here marks its importance to and acceptance in the local community. The Clachan Burn, winding north-westward past the site, formerly made an island between its present channel and the graveyard known as Eilan tigh-an-t-Sagairt, or 'Island of the Priest's Croft' (Morrison 1883). A long, recumbent stone, recorded in the past as lying near Fiscary c. 1 km to the east but missing today, was traditionally known as marking the boundary of the Priest's Croft (Gunn & Mackay 1897, 104).

At Fiscary, Mercer (1981, 22-24) recorded a group of small structures which appeared to form a tight cluster around a 'courtyard' (Monument 79d). He noted rectilinear, oval and nearly circular forms among them, some conjoined, and observed their apparent similarity to buildings excavated by Curle at the Wag o' Forse in Caithness; there the structures proved later than an Iron Age circular structure. Although the Fiscary structures are presently undated, they might be earlier to mid first millennium in date.

An apparently earlier Pictish (Class I) symbol stone, carved with a serpent, was recorded as having been built into the wall of a barn at Kirtomy (Allen & Anderson 1903, 45); its original provenance is unknown (NC76SW 17). According to Cheape (1984, 41), Kirtomy has a tradition of a *céli-dé* or culdee, an eighth- or ninth-century movement toward ascetic monasticism in reaction to the growing wealthiness and worldliness of the Church (see Clancy 1996).

The evidence of archaeological remains, place names and ecclesiastical dedications from Strathnaver and its flanking coastline is, while patchy, substantial enough to indicate that the church established itself here in the Early Medieval period, probably via missionaries sent around the western and northern coast from Iona, or perhaps even from Northumbrian-influenced establishments on Orkney. That priestly presence must have converted and ministered to a native, Pictish

population. The locations of these chapels are our only clues to the structure of Strathnaver's landscapes in the second half of the first millennium A.D.; although it remains possible that settlement continued to cluster around the broch sites that had served as foci in the preceding centuries, there is no direct evidence for such continuity or appropriation in the study area to date. The chapels do at least suggest where people were living: around Loch Naver, strung out along the upper strath below Rosal, and along the coast. They may reflect an existing structure, in which the landscape was already organised and worked by discrete groups of people, but it is also possible that they helped to structure it and form those communities. In either case, the evidence of Norse place-names from subsequent centuries (see Chapter Six), juxtaposed with the chapel sites, does indicate that when Norse settlers arrived in Strathnaver, intending peace or otherwise, they encountered those communities.

5.6 *Conclusion*

This chapter has interpreted the evidence for how Strathnaver and its flanking coastline were inhabited and perceived throughout prehistory and much of the first millennium A.D. The nature of that habitation at different times seems to have been partly in response to the natural divisions within the landscape, with Neolithic burial monuments at certain transitional points in the topography or positioned to visually command a discrete area. The evidence for later prehistoric settlement again shows clear preferences for certain areas of the strath and littoral, although processes of attrition will have biased the evidence toward the more marginal ground. In later prehistory, those living in Strathnaver and along the coast appear to have invested their labour in massive and sophisticated architectural projects for the living rather than dead, and these also impose a certain structure on the landscape; when they were standing, the brochs would have made dramatic and undismissable statements to those viewing them the floor of the strath, as they were intended to be seen. The lifespan of the estates represented by the brochs is unclear, as is whether and for how long people continued to live in roundhouses through the early first millennium A.D. However, the chapel sites suggest that there were well established communities in the strath in the later part of the millennium, probably descended from those earlier settlements.

The following chapter carries the thread forward through time, into the Norse, Medieval, post-Medieval and modern periods. The distinction between the latest period discussed in this chapter and the first addressed in the following is somewhat artificial: the people who lived in the study area in the first few centuries A.D. were probably the ancestors of those Picts living here when the first Christian missionaries arrived and, after them, the Norse seafarers who named the Pentland Firth after them.

Chapter Six: Strathnaver through history

6.1 *Introduction*

From the later first millennium A.D. onward, our level of detailed knowledge of where and how people lived in the study area increases, at first gradually and then, in the post-Medieval period, exponentially. This knowledge springs, for the most part, from archaeological evidence from elsewhere in the north of Scotland and from documentary sources; the actual traces of those people are elusive for most of that period in Strathnaver.

Among the questions currently plaguing research into the archaeology of Highland Scotland is how the nature of life and the pattern of settlement altered through the timespan addressed in this chapter: to what extent these continued into the Medieval period and from the Medieval into the post-Medieval period, when and if abrupt changes took place and, if so, what caused them. Clearly the conversion of northern Scotland to Christianity had already effected cultural changes and influenced the landscape's structure somewhat, as it did in Badenoch. The arrival of the Norse, first as vikings and later as settlers in the late first to early second millennium A.D., also must have affected the language, culture and perhaps well-being of the native Pictish population. Research has suggested, however, that the changes brought about by the Norse presence may not have been as dramatic or sudden as once was thought. In the Medieval period, the feudal system penetrated the northern Highlands as they gradually came under the control of the Crown; that was a slower process here than in Badenoch and the rest of the central Highlands. This may have re-configured the social and physical landscape and changed the lives of people living in the study area – although perhaps slowly, over generations – the most fundamentally.

6.2 *The Norse period (ninth to twelfth centuries A.D.)*

The Norse presence in the study area is somewhat problematic: the evidence of place names clearly shows that the Norse did influence the area linguistically, and may have therefore actually settled in the strath and along the coast. The archaeological evidence, however, is all but absent. The following sections briefly outline the history of Norse penetration of northern Scotland and the ways in which place name studies have illuminated that history further; information from the sagas, although not entirely reliable,

complements other kinds of evidence in constructing the story. Section 6.2.2 examines the evidence of archaeological remains, place-names and topographic indicators for the Norse in Strathnaver.

6.2.1 *The historical and place name context*

From as early as the ninth century A.D. Strathnaver, like the rest of the northern mainland, came under the influence of settlers from Norway. Beginning in the late eighth century, sailors from Norway regularly carried out viking expeditions to raid and plunder mainland Britain, its islands and Ireland, particularly the coasts and the Northern and Western Isles. While the first raids originated in western Norway, some argue that piratical bases were quickly established in the Hebrides, Orkney and Shetland and served as a base for later raids (Crawford 1987, 40-42). However, there is no firm archaeological evidence that Norse settlers initially wrested land, particularly in the Northern Isles, from the native Picts in any violent campaign (Graham-Campbell & Batey 1998, 44-45), and some to suggest that they settled by a peaceful and more gradual process (Ritchie 1974, 33-34).

Whatever the nature of the process, the motives behind their colonisation are likely to have been varied and complex, including population growth, land pressure and the development of a strong kingship in Norway, as well as the lure of wealth available through raiding and trading opportunities. The Norse, like other Scandinavian peoples, had already acquired the maritime competence necessary to navigate the frequently stormy northern seas (Crumlin-Pedersen 1981). If the earliest incursions of the Norse took the form of viking raids, by the mid ninth century they were settling on a more permanent basis in the Northern Isles. With King Harald Finehair's granting of the earldom of Orkney to Rognvald of Møre, who transferred it to his brother Sigurd in the late 800s, a political structure was established in the islands which would eventually ensure the peace and stability necessary for large-scale settlement by Norse farmers (Crawford 1987, 53-57).

In the late ninth century the Norse also began to settle the northern provinces of Pictland. Saga and place name evidence suggest that they penetrated as far south as the River Oyckell – the southern boundary of *Sudrland* (the southern part of what was then the province of Caithness) – and eventually as far as Beaully (Graham-Campbell & Batey 1998, 68). In the early and mid tenth century Irish-Norse leaders, having lost their base in Ireland, moved into western England and also made several attempts on the Scottish hinterland from the west and south-west, probably for both political and commercial

purposes. Meanwhile, Norse settlers were colonising the islands and coasts and penetrating the adjacent interiors of the northern provinces, and by the late tenth century much of these areas belonged to the Norse in more than political name (Crawford 1987, 58-62).

By the mid eleventh century, the earls of Orkney had become an established, Christianised political power, and they set in place an administrative and ecclesiastical infrastructure, establishing a bishopric in Orkney which probably had dominion over churches in Shetland and Caithness as well (Clouston 1932, 150). In Orkney, Earl Rognvald or one of his descendants established a system of military, 'huseby' farms. Taxation was based on a system of land assessment which divided land into ouncelands and pennylands, and these divisions can be traced in all the areas where Norse place names appear around the coast and in the islands, including Strathnaver and its coastline (Crawford 1987, 85-88). It has been suggested that, as this system of land division had no precedent in Norway, it must have been based on a pre-existing system, with ouncelands equating to davochs (the Pictish system of land assessment, most likely based on the amount of tribute-corn a piece of land could produce) (Bangor-Jones 1986). In any case, it can be safely said that the taxation system based on ouncelands and pennylands funded the navy of the earls of Orkney, and therefore that the lands subject to this tax formed an important power base for them.

The present boundary between Caithness and Sutherland (with the latter now reaching up to the north and west coasts as well as the east) reflects real differences in landscape and geology as well as, according to place name evidence, Norse influence. The distribution of place names almost wholly Norse in character very closely matches the underlying solid geology of Old Red Sandstone in Caithness, while all over present Sutherland, where the solid geology consists of harder metamorphic rocks, Norse and Gaelic place names intermingle, although Gaelic is much more dominant. It seems likely that the softer landscape of Caithness, with its lighter, well-drained soils similar to those in Orkney, were most attractive of all to the Norse when they came to settle, and that they penetrated the areas to the south and west less intensively (Batey 1987a, 1).

The Norse sagas frequently mention Caithness and Sutherland and specific places traceable today in both, but rarely if ever mention the western part of the north mainland coast in terms recognisable to us. Until very recently Strathnaver has been largely ignored in modern studies of Scandinavian Scotland, perhaps for this reason and because of the paucity of direct evidence for the Norse here (but see Batey 1987a, 288; Waugh 2000;

Crawford 2000). The 'Dales' mentioned in the sagas, however, could well mean the long, north/south valleys that open onto the north coast, among them Strathnaver. If what is now northern Sutherland was something of a backwater with its extensive, acidic uplands and rock-bound coast, it also has fertile, low-lying stretches, sandy beaches and some natural harbours. It bordered the route of vikings or more peaceful traders navigating along the coast from Orkney or Shetland to the Western Isles and Ireland (Graham-Campbell & Batey 1998, 39), offering them shelter in its inlets, perhaps booty in its settlements and eventually land for farms. For a seagoing people, the sea was not a barrier but a medium which connected pieces of land (Crawford 1987, 11), and every coast within their reach must have felt Norse influence. Indeed, the evidence of Norse place names in the study area and immediately to the west of it, around the Kyle of Tongue, shows beyond doubt that they settled here. If it remained a political backwater (although this may be doubted; see below), it must still have supported thriving farming and ecclesiastical communities throughout the period of Norse influence.

The evidence of place names suggests this period lasted from about A.D. 880 to 1200 (Fraser 1979, 18), although after this period presumably those people of Norse origin whose ancestors had settled in the study area continued to live on there, their language and genes mingling with those of native Pictish communities. The period of linguistic influence to which place names are generally attributed overlaps somewhat with the late Norse period, the historical events of which are treated below.

Norse place names in northern Scotland generally fall into two groups: those that refer to local topographic features, or topographical names, and those which refer to the way in which it was inhabited or to a person associated with that habitation, or habitative names (*ibid.*, 17). (Waugh (2000, 16) has argued that topographical names should be taken to indicate Norse settlement.) Habitative names of Norse origin include those which incorporate the elements *-býr*, *-setr*, *-bólstadir*, *-stadir* and *-skáli*. While all of these broadly refer to a farmstead, subtleties of meaning and chronology distinguish them. These subtleties, particularly those relating to chronology, are poorly understood.

Names incorporating *-stadir* ('farmstead') are thought to relate to places of earlier Norse settlement; *-býr* elements, more much common in southern Scotland than in the north and west, are also thought to be early (Crawford 1987, 108). In Nicolaisen's (1976) scheme, place names with the *-setr* ('dwelling-place', as in Sandside) element appeared next (although it can be difficult to distinguish between this element and *-saetr*, or 'shieling').

Next in the sequence are thought to be *-bólstadir* names, perhaps denoting division of a primary Norse farm, as in Eriboll (Crawford 1987, 110), while *-skáli* was used first to denote a modest hall and later to refer to a building of higher status (e.g., Skail; Graham-Campbell & Batey 1998, 39). However, the uncertainties attending these chronological distinctions make them unreliable for use in firmly establishing the sequence of settlement.

Topographical names include *-dalr*, a valley or glen (as in Armadale), *-skiki*, or strip of land (as in Boarscaig); *-vollr*, or field (as in Langwell); *-bakki*, or bank (as in Hysbackie); *-gil*, meaning ravine or gully (as in Suisgill); *-ey* or island (Handa); *-ness*, a point or headland (Durness), and *-gjá*, which became the Gaelic *geodha* or creek (as in Sango) (Fraser 1979, 20-24).

Archaeological evidence of the Norse along the northern coast of Sutherland is sparse; some of the known sites could be the traces of passing travellers rather than permanent settlers, but the body of evidence is growing. Viking-age hoards from northern Scotland have been tentatively interpreted as intended as payment for viking raiders (Graham-Campbell 1993, 180). Graves have produced some of the strongest evidence for a Norse presence, although many of these are from Caithness, including the pagan graves at Reay, those in Castletown broch and a boat burial at Huna (Batey 1993, 139-41). In northern Sutherland, west of Strathnaver, two graves have been found near Durness. At Balnakeil Bay, west of Durness, the burial of a young boy was found eroding out of sand dunes. He had been carefully buried, perhaps on a pillow, with a large, sheathed sword; a spear; probably a shield (only the iron boss survived); a simple, pennanular brooch, possibly Irish in origin; an antler comb; gaming pieces and a board, and a bone needle case (Batey 1993, 157; Low, Batey & Gourlay 2000). As this appeared to be an isolated burial, he may have died aboard a passing Norse ship that paused here in the bay to bury him; however, a Norse settlement and further burials could well be hidden beneath the dune system beside the bay (Graham-Campbell & Batey 1998, 140-42). Farther inland on the Kyle of Tongue, at Keoldale, a mound investigated by antiquarians proved to contain an object which was at first interpreted as a 'the bottom of a brass candlestick', but was re-interpreted as 'an elliptical Scandinavian brooch' (Horsburgh 1867, 278; Batey 1993, 150). A small bell, an enamelled bronze brooch and two bronze and silver earrings may also have come from a grave near Keoldale (Batey 1993, 155).

Along the coast to the east of Durness, middens excavated in two caves leading off the narrow, sheer-sided inlet of the Allt Smoo have been radiocarbon-dated to between the

ninth and eleventh centuries A.D. The discovery of boat rivets of Norse type in the middens suggests that passing seafarers pulled into the inlet, perhaps to shelter from storms, and hauled their boats onto the beach for repair. Lumps of iron slag found in the middens show that iron was worked on the site, possibly to manufacture rivets. The middens contained abundant marine shells, large fish bones and sea bird and seal bones, indicating that the people who used the inlet found much of their food in and on the sea. Charred oats and barley were also found, along with the waste products from grain processing, suggesting that they brought harvested grain with them and processed it either as they needed it or before carrying it up the steep slopes of the inlet to nearby settlements (Pollard forthcoming).

What may be a Norse settlement is eroding out of dunes at Sangobeg, less than two kilometres to the south-east of Smoo Cave (Brady & Morris 1998, 255); its position, on level ground at the head of broad, sandy bay ideal for beaching boats, is typical of the coastal locations the Norse chose to establish their farms in the north and west. The settlement was discovered during coastal survey in September 1997; grass-tempered pottery was found on the surface of the dunes, as well as probable boat rivets. Planned excavation of the site should establish its date and character. To the east of the study area, in Caithness, Norse settlements have been excavated at Dunnet Bay (Pollard 1996) and Robert's Haven (Barrett 1995), while the foundations of a possibly Norse rectangular building were found in a mound at John o' Groats (Batey 1987b, 135-7). On the east coast, south of Duncansby Head, excavations have investigated an important Norse settlement at Freswick Links (Batey 1987a). This consisted of eight structures, as well as deep midden deposits demonstrating the practice of both inshore and offshore fishing and extensive cultivation from about A.D. 1020-1280 (Morris *et. al.* 1995, 268). Other possible Norse sites on the northern Caithness coast have been identified as eroding midden material and fragmentary structural remains, in some cases of rectangular form; these are usefully reviewed by Batey (1987b, 131-38). Within the area that includes Strathnaver, however, a gap exists in the archaeological evidence along the coast and indeed in the hinterland between Dunnet Bay and Balnakeil. As Batey (137) notes, the evidence of sagas and place names point to the existence of many more Norse settlements than we know from archaeological traces.

Place names which are Norse in origin tend to decrease in proportion to Gaelic names the further west one goes from Reay (Waugh 2000, 13). The place name evidence for northern Sutherland in general, showing Norse mixed with Gaelic and Pictish (P Celtic)

elements (Batey 1987a, 17), suggest that here Norse settlers intermingled with pre-existing Pictish settlements. In some cases they attempted to translate existing Celtic names and make them their own, 'but sometimes the Celtic name was either so well established or so different from Norse that no attempt was made to translate it in this way and Strathnaver is a case in point' (Waugh 2000, 13).

Particular place names show areas where Norse settled along this stretch of coastline; they cluster most densely around the Kyle of Tongue, immediately west of the study area. The kyle is a long, very shallow inlet, in which expanses of sand are exposed at low tide now; it may have silted up since the Norse period, however, and in the past provided access for boats of shallow draught such as they used (Graham-Campbell & Batey 1998, 30). It would have offered shelter from and access to the open sea, as well as long, well-drained slopes along its eastern side for habitation and cultivation.

Tongue itself, from *tunga*, means a 'tongue of land' (Fraser 1995, 96) and may refer to the spit which extends from the eastern side of the kyle, the site of present Tongue Lodge. A Norse farmstead and church just over a kilometre to the south are indicated by the place name Kirkiboll (Waugh 2000, 18). Farther up the glen of the Rhian Burn are two more names indicating settlement: Hysbackie, meaning 'house-bank', and Scrabster, meaning 'seamew-stead' (Fraser 1979, 18, 22); alternatively, Hysbackie may mean 'high bank' (Fraser 1995, 96). Scrabster contains the *-setr* element, which indicates a dwelling-place (although it could, alternatively, derive from *-saetr* or 'shieling'). Crawford (1987, 110) argues that *-setr* names indicate 'internal expansion into peripheral, often inland, pastoral areas around earlier farms, usually primary settlements at the head of bays.' Scrabster's position inland from Kirkiboll is consistent with this interpretation.

Place names indicate other probable locations of Norse settlement around the kyle. Farther inland on the opposite side is Boarscaig, or 'bothy strip' (Fraser 1979, 21), the site of a later township. Closer to the kyle's mouth is Melness, or 'sandy headland' (Waugh 2000, 22). On the west side of its mouth, in a sheltered, sandy bay which would have been ideal for settlement, is Talmine, from *holmr* or islet (Fraser 1995, 96), a reference to the small island in its harbour; around the coast to the west is Port Vasgo or 'tapering creek' (Fraser 1979, 23). Near Talmine is the settlement of Skinnnet, which Waugh (2000, 22, following Nicolaisen (1982, 84)) translates as 'the shining one.' She offers no plausible explanation for the name, but it seems likely it refers to the kyle itself, which at low tide consists of expanses of wet, glittering sand and pools of water. On the east side of the

kyle's mouth is the small natural harbour of Scullomie – 'valley of the booths' according to Gunn (1910, 186) but 'fox-slope' according to Fraser (1995, 96). Coldbackie, or 'cold bank', lies just inland (Fraser 1979, 22) at the head of a broad, shallow bay and sandy beach. This dense distribution of Norse place names just to the west of the study area and clustered around the inlet at Tongue shows intensive settlement there, but a scattering of place names around Strathnaver's coast and far up the valley demonstrates their presence here, too.

6.2.2 *The Norse in Strathnaver*

That the Norse settled along Strathnaver and probably also along the coastline flanking it is evident from place names, topographic indicators and to a small degree archaeological remains. This section outlines the evidence, and discusses to what extent the pattern and nature of that settlement can be deduced and what questions remain unanswered. Table 6.1 lists the names of Norse origin in the study area and their translations; there are 32 in all, 9 habitative and 23 topographical names.

Along the coast to the west of the River Naver (zone 10; see Figure 6.1) are several Norse place names. Torrisdale or 'Thori's valley' (Fraser 1979, 21) is the name given to the wide bay into which the rivers Naver and Borgie flow but is more specifically attached to the post-Medieval to modern settlement tucked inside its western edge. In 1565 it was given as 'Thorisdail' (Waugh 2000, 16). Although perhaps technically a topographical name, the personal element does suggest that a specific person was associated with the valley running north-westward from the present settlement. The location would have been suited to settlement, offering both shelter from weather sweeping in from the ocean and access to the River Borgie for fish and fresh water and to the sea. The River Borgie, 'fort-river' (Watson 1906, 362; Fraser 1979, 22) is another topographical name but one which exhibits knowledge of local features. It refers either to the broch or dun of Dun Torrisdale, perched on the edge of the higher ground to the south of present Torrisdale, or to another possible broch c. 500 m upstream.

To the west are four other Norse names. The general name for this area is Skerray, or 'rock'. This stretch of coastline is characterised by high cliffs and geos, penetrated only by a few narrow bays; from the sea or the coast on either side it appears as a folded series of continual cliffs, and this might explain its name and would suggest it was assigned by seafarers. However, Skerray has also since c. 1600 been the name for the settlement and

small bay opposite Eilean Coomb, which is protected by the island. The name could have come from the exposed reef at its mouth. There are gently shelving slopes around the bay, and a short stretch of flat-bottomed strath with a small burn leads down to it from the valley of Torrisdale. This would have made suitable ground for settlement, and indeed traditions about the Columban monastery on the island and ground belonging to it on the mainland opposite (see Chapter Five) suggest that there was a pre-Norse community here.

Lamigo, or ‘lamb’s creek’ (Watson 1906, 365), lies a kilometre to the west (Figure 6.1). It has a narrow, well-protected harbour and a sandy beach, with the ground rising abruptly from the sea to a raised beach and to cliffs on either side; a burn flows down the

<i>Habitative Names</i>	<i>Translation</i>	<i>Topographical Names</i>	<i>Translation</i>
Skail	Hall [°]	Torrisdale	Thori’s valley*
Achargary	Field of the garth by the copset [†]	Lamigo	Lamb’s creek [†]
Borve	Fort or castlet [†]	Skerray	Rock
Kirtomy	Copsewood valley [°]	Apigill	Gully
Fiscary	Fish shieling [†]	Dalharrold	Harald’s valley [†]
Truderscaig	Boar’s strip* or Thronð’s strip [†]	Rivigill	Big gully [†]
Modsary	Shieling with contracted form of person name [†]	Langwell (Langdale)	Long valley [°]
Kedsary	?Ketill’s shieling [†]	Swordly	Sward-slopet [†]
Poll	Olaf’s or Anlaf’s pool [†]	Bunisdale	Valley
Amhlaibh		Klibreck	Cliff-slopet [†]
		Rimsdale	Valley
		Rivigill	Big gully [†]
		Rosal	Horse field [†]
		Borrogeo	Fort creek [†]
		Achaniasgaich	Fishing-field [†]
		Sleitell	Even-field [†]
		Borgie	Fort-river*
		Syre	Mud ^{°^}
		Grumbeg	Little peak [†]
		Grummore	Big peak [†]
		Dail na	Valley of ??
		Drochaide	
		Dalhorrisgle	Valley of ??
		Dailmallart	Valley of the Mallart (river)
		Dail a’	Valley of ??
		Thurraich	

Table 6.1 Norse place-names in the study area. Translations are derived from *Fraser 1979, 18-23; °Waugh 2000; †Watson 1906; °Gunn 1910; †Gray 1910; ^Stefánsson 1910.

western side of the strath. It is now divided into two crofts, but the amount of land at a gradient that would permit cultivation and grazing could have supported more than that in the past. While the *-gja* element of the name might well have been assigned from an ocean-going perspective, the reference to lambs suggests that the namers were familiar enough with the land to know its use.

The name Strathan Skerray (little strath of Skerray), for the next small strath to the west, is a mixture of Gaelic and Norse. It probably came into being after 'Skerray' had come to denote the whole district. It also has a sandy beach and well-sheltered bay, its mouth protected by Eilean nan Roan. The strath is lined with broad, gently sloping fluvio-glacial terraces that could have supported considerable settlement in the past; a large burn flows down its centre. Although the place name does not support evidence for Norse settlement here, it is not unlikely, given its sheltered bay for beaching boats and land suitable for farming – the two elements that Norse settlers generally preferred (Crawford 1987, 149). Inland from here is Modsary, which Watson (1906, 363) interprets as a contracted form of a personal name attached to the ON for 'shieling'. Sleitel, the third inlet along the Skerray coast, is much more shallow and less suitable for landing, with a sloping, bowl-shaped valley above a rock-bound shore. Watson (1906, 366) translates it as 'even-field'.

At the head of the Naver's estuary, below the present bridge at Invernaver where the river turns tidal (zone 8; Figure 6.1), is an expanse of machair elevated above the level of the river and sheltered by higher ground on either side. Immediately downstream from it the river has carved out a deep, tidal pool, which is sheltered from the seaward side by the glacial outwash plain to the north (see Plate 5.5). The place seems an obvious choice for Norse settlement, with harbourage for ships, good farm land and access to fresh water as well as the sea. No Norse place names are associated with the land here and there are no known archaeological remains of that period, but the tidal pool is called Pol na Marraich Mor, which translates as 'Lagoon of the Great Seamen' (Mackay 1906, 32). Traditions may have lingered of a Norse presence here, resulting in this later Gaelic appellation. (*-pollr* is an ON word for pool, with sisters in Gaelic, Pictish and Welsh; while its use here could originate from the Norse, the first occurrence of the name is not known and so its etymology is uncertain.)

Along the coast to the east of the River Naver (zone 9; Figure 6.1) are five Norse place names that more convincingly point to settlement, at least one of them attached to

archaeological remains of probable Norse origin. Borge Castle (NC76SW 2), which occupies a steep-sided promontory on Ard Farr, is traditionally said to have been built by a Norwegian called Torquil (OPS 1855, 717). It is connected to the mainland by a low saddle, protected by a natural rampart that has been scarped to enhance its steepness. A bank and ditch also protect the north-eastern, seaward approach. A small keep, built of dressed blocks bonded with lime mortar, all but blocks the landward approach and this is abutted by the remains of a rectangular range of similarly-built structures. On the lower, seaward part of the promontory are several circular and rectangular hollows, which might be the site of a well and additional buildings. The castle became the seat of the MacKays of Farr until 1555, when it was besieged and demolished by the Earl of Sutherland, using artillery from a gun battery established on the cliff directly opposite (*ibid.*). Lamb (1980, 96) compares Borge to the Caithness castles of Old Wick and Brough. He argues that the style of the fortification suggests a date in the twelfth century A.D., or late Norse period, and that the castles were all related to Norse control of these areas. Borge, like the other two, could overlie the remains of earlier fortifications.

The name Borge, meaning 'fort' or 'castle' (Watson 1906, 362), does indeed support a Norse origin for it and could point to a fairly well-established Norse presence in the Farr area. Its position hints at a certain wariness both seaward and landward and an orientation toward the sea, in people establishing a foothold on the edge of the coast rather than moving into an area already secured. However, the bank and ditch protecting the seaward approach may in fact have simply sealed off an eroding part of the promontory, as the c. 30 m-high sea-cliff at this point is sheer, and it seems unlikely that attackers would have attempted the castle from that side; the landward outwork would have protected those inside it from forces that had landed in one of the nearby bays and made their way here on foot. It may be that the castle was built to monitor activity in the surrounding waters by people who occupied and farmed the adjacent hinterland and who must have had an easier means of access to the sea for their own purposes, perhaps in nearby Swordly Bay. (The name Swordly, a small bay and valley to the east of Borge, is also Norse in origin; meaning 'sword-slope' (Watson 1906, 365; Fraser 1979, 23), it does not directly indicate settlement.) Alternatively, it may have served mainly as a statement of power, serving as warning and status symbol to those passing on the sea.

The name Fiscary, attached now to a ridge and adjacent basin and south-facing slope, has been translated as both 'fish-shieling' (Watson 1906, 363) and 'enclosed pasture-shieling' (Gunn 1910, 185). It represents Norse borrowing of the Old Gaelic *-áirghe* to

form *-erg*, for 'sheiling', although Fraser (1979, 20) notes that the use of this name to indicate habitation is not certain. Archaeological remains at the site substantiate the name. Spread along the south-facing slope is a group of at least 13 structures, along with several small cairns, some lengths of wall that may be stock-funnels and a hollow-way (Mercer 1981, 22-27; NC76SW 7). They lie near, but clearly apart from the prehistoric settlement remains and burial cairns in the basin and on the ridge (see Chapter Five). Mercer, who surveyed the complex, described the structures as having 'a rather more recent "feel" about them' than the other features in the area; he noted some structures which might be called hut circles on morphological grounds, but others that were more irregular in shape and difficult to interpret.

In fact, while the structures have a variety of forms they do have a certain coherence as a group. Among them are oval or kidney-bean shaped structures; one is almost circular and another larger one is sub-rectangular. At least one appears to be made up of two oval cells set alongside each other. Four seem to have been built on artificial platforms. Their entrances face mostly south or south-west. In some cases wall faces are visible on the interior, abutted by turf-covered mounds externally. In their form and size these remains resemble shielings identified elsewhere in the Highlands, such as those along the Kinbrace Burn in the Strath of Kildonan (Dixon 1993, 33) and at Ben Lawers (Atkinson *et. al.* forthcoming). This interpretation is supported by the stock-funnelling walls and the place name; the latter suggests an origin in a period when Norse was spoken by those who used and named the shieling ground – unless Norse speakers named the place for an older shieling ground already in use. About a mile from Fiscary is Ach-an-iasgaich, or 'fishing-field' (Watson 1906, 363).

Whoever established the shieling ground chose a location near water – a burn runs along the base of the slope – and one that would take advantage of the summer's sunlight. The hollow-way leads up from the direction of Farr, the location of a probable Early Medieval church site which endured through the Norse period (see Chapter Five and below), and from the headland now occupied by Crask and Clerkhill beside Farr Bay. If it is contemporary with the shieling ground's early use, it may indicate where those who used it seasonally spent the rest of the year.

The name Kirtomy applies to the short, broad strath to the east of Swordly; its name means 'copsewood valley' (Gunn 1910, 186). Kirtomy has a small natural harbour that must have been known to passing seafarers. If an Early Medieval *céli-dé* was

established here, as local nineteenth century traditions said (Cheape 1984, 41), that is not reflected in the name.

In Strathnaver itself, Norse names survive along much of its length and on the adjacent moorland in certain concentrations that hint at the nature and pattern of Norse influence here. In zone 7 (Figure 6.1), with its fluvio-glacial terraces and moraines breaking up the topography, a Norse name occurs at the point where the pass leading over Naver Rock from the west descends into Strathnaver. The name, Apigill, probably refers to the ravine that the modern road follows. A hairpin bend in the river opposite the ravine's mouth creates a fair amount of level ground on the strath's floor at this point. At the northern end of the broader, more open zone 6 is Achargary. The name, meaning 'field of the garth by the copse', refers to a yard or enclosure (Watson 1906, 364; Fraser 1979, 19) and suggests habitation or cleared ground here. Curiously, in the remainder of this wide stretch of the strath no Norse place names are known.

The next occurs near the northern end of zone 5, with its more intimate topography, at Rivigill, the site of a possible Early Medieval chapel (see Figure 6.2). The name in ON means 'a deep narrow glen with a stream at the bottom' (Waugh 2000, 19). It makes no reference to any chapel or to habitation there. However, the name probably refers to the course of the Allt Rivigill c. 800 m to the south-east of the chapel site; it may have come to have a wider application at a later date, which would explain the lack of reference to the chapel and any associated settlement. The burn flows between two steep-sided hills, Ceann Garbh and Creag Feusaige, from a high valley in the moorland plateau and here near the burn is a group of shielings called Bunisdale (NC74SW 13, at NC 728 443), a Norse name that refers to the valley. The shieling huts may be later in date, but the name shows that Norse speakers did know and re-name this remote upland valley; perhaps they used it themselves for seasonal transhumance.

At the southern end of this zone is Skail, which definitely indicates Norse settlement. It originally meant a temporary hut or shed, but its uses in Caithness and Orkney, where it is common, usually refer to a more permanent residence. Excavations at Skaill, Deerness, Orkney found the remains of a rather insubstantial, low-status ninth-century house, superseded after a short time by a larger, more substantial one. Gelling (1984, 36) has suggested that this sequence illustrates the changing meaning of *skáli*, originally signifying 'hut' or 'shed' (the earlier, inferior building) and later connoting 'hall' as the farm grew in status. Waugh (2000, 17) argues that in the case of Skail in Strathnaver,

the term referred to a permanent and substantial residence: 'A name which survives so effectively in a predominantly Gaelic linguistic environment bespeaks the importance of the habitation to which it originally referred.' The name appears in charters as early as 1530 (as 'Skaill'; see below), suggesting that importance endured through the Medieval period. The river bends sharply eastward at this point and creates a larger space in the bend to its west, the likely location of such settlement (and the location of the present farmhouse). The Early Medieval chapel site associated with the Red Priest's Stone lies c. 400 m to the north, and there was in all likelihood a pre-existing Pictish community nearby.

This point marks the transition to zone 4, in which the strath is broad, straight and flat-based, its sides lined with fluvio-glacial terraces. The next Norse name is Langdale, but it is recorded in the thirteenth century as 'Langeval' and indeed up to the nineteenth as 'Langwell' or 'long field' (Waugh 2000, 17). This seems to refer to the topographic character of this part of the valley, and also suggests it was land that had been cleared and perhaps used for cultivation or grazing. Again, the existence of a possible Early Medieval chapel site about halfway along it could suggest associated settlement, and this appears to be one of the topographically most amenable parts of Strathnaver. Possibly, however, certain parts of the strath such as this were already densely settled by the Pictish population; the symbol stone at Langdale indicates a Pictish presence pre-dating the eighth century. It may be that in some cases Norse incomers pushed past their existing settlements, rather than overthrowing them and taking their land, to establish farms in less densely occupied areas. The concentration of place names in the upper strath, beyond this point, might support that interpretation. However, Crawford (2000) suggests Langwell was an important staging point on a vital routeway between north and south (see below).

Syre, just to the south of Langdale, may be a Norse name. Stefánsson (1910) translates it as meaning 'mud' from the ON *saurr*, and Waugh (2000, 20) tentatively offers the same interpretation. She believes it could also contain the ON element *-ergi*, or 'shieling', and was subsequently abbreviated and Gaelicised. It could refer to the swampy ground in the vicinity of Loch Syre.

Along the sides of zone 3, where the strath closes in south of Syre, are two Norse names: Rosal ('Rossewal' in 1269) and Kedsary. The meaning of Kedsary is uncertain but it appears to refer to a shieling ground (Fraser 1979, 20); Watson (1906, 363) suggests it may mean 'Ketill's shieling'. The name Rosal (with the ON element *völlr* or 'field') probably refers to an area of cleared land, separated from the farm buildings, rather than an

enclosed field (Watson 1906, 366; Fairhurst 1968, 140). The specific element probably derives from the ON *hross* or 'horse', although Waugh (2000, 17) notes that rarely is *völlr* connected to an animal reference. Rosal is associated with an open, west-facing slope above the river, while Kedsary is on steeper ground on its opposite side. Crawford (forthcoming) notes the pairing of Rosal and Langwell here and, in the light of the evident significance of upper Strathnaver and the granting of these farms in charters from the thirteenth century on (see below), argues that the names were connected to pasturing places for horses needed to pass between Strathnaver and Ross, via Lairg. The importance of this area, at least in the late Norse period (but even earlier, the place names would suggest), lay in its proximity to this crucial route

At the head of the strath, at the point where the river leaves Loch Naver and the Mallart River joins the Naver from the south, is a striking cluster of Norse place names (Figure 6.3). To the east of the River Naver is Dalharrold, or Harald's valley. The nearby stone circle and cairn of Clach an Righ (meaning 'King's Stone') are also called King Harrauld's Pillars. A local tradition recorded in the nineteenth century says that the stones were raised to commemorate the victory in a nearby battle of King William the Lion's army, led by Reginald of the Isles, over a Norse army led by Harald Madadson, Earl of Caithness, in 1196 or 1198 (Joass 1864, 358).

In his article Watson (1906) gives as Norse the name Poll Amhlaibh. He does not indicate the location of the name, but discusses it just after he addresses Rosal and before Dalharrald; Klibreck, Grumbeg and Grummore follow. Its treatment with these others suggests it lies in the upper strath. He translates it as 'Olaf's pool' or 'Anlaf's pool' (*ibid.*, 366). The name Poll an Loinein is associated with an area near the west bank of the Naver, just below its confluence with the Mallart. The antiquity of that name is not known, but it might be another version of the one that Watson gives.

The place name Dailmallart, or 'valley of the Mallart' (river), occurs a short way up this north/south running strath. It may be that the name Mallart derives from pre-Norse times and was appended by Norse speakers to name the valley. Farther up the river, on the south-facing slopes of Cnoc Bad an Leatha, is Truderscaig, the site of a later township. The name, meaning 'boar's strip' (of land) (Fraser 1979, 21) or possibly 'Thronð's strip' (Watson 1906, 366) may not refer directly to settlement; it does, however, indicate that the area was known and named by Norse speakers and perhaps associated with a specific person. Given the concentration of Norse place names at the foot of the Mallart's valley,

the name Trudercaig could refer to an outlying settlement. It does show that the Norse did not limit themselves to the main axis of Strathnaver but followed the smaller Mallart valley at least as far as this point. They seem to have done the same at Syre, leaving Strathnaver to follow a pass through the hills at least as far as Rimsdale, another Norse place name which refers to the pass, and perhaps settling there.

Around Loch Naver are four Norse place names. At the eastern end of its north shore is the name Dail a' Thurraich, another name referring to the strath and the site of a later township. Along the loch to the west are Grumbeg and Grummore, both containing the Gaelic elements meaning 'little' and 'big'. They are recorded in 1551 as Gnowb Litol and Gnowb Mekle (OPS 1855), which Watson sees as deriving from the ON *gnúpr* or 'peak'. Both names are associated with the side of a large hill immediately to the south of the townships.

Near the western end of its south shore is Klibreck, the site of a probable Early Medieval chapel (see Chapter Five) and meaning 'cliff-slope' according to Watson (1906, 368) or 'sloping brink' according to Gunn (1910, 185). The foundations of a small, rectangular structure, measuring c. 6.4 m by 3.7 m externally, have been identified here (RCAHMS 1911, 86); Batey (1987a) has suggested it could date to the Norse period. Elsewhere along the lochside there is other evidence of later Iron Age to Early Medieval, pre-Norse settlement, in the form of the chapel site (and presumed associated settlement) at Grumbeg and the brochs of Grummore, Dun Creagach and Coill 'Ach A'Chuil. It may be that Norse farmers integrated with the existing population, but excavation of potential Norse and Pictish sites would be required to establish whether or not such integration took place.

The close examination of Norse place names in the study area and their association with topographic indicators and archaeological remains reveals some surprising patterns. There are clusters of names both in areas which seem well suited to settlement – with hospitable topography and access to the sea or along the main corridor of Strathnaver – and in places which today seem more marginal, which to reach would have involved bypassing areas already settled, either by Norse or Picts, to establish farms further inland. The results raise questions about the nature of Norse penetration of the study area, and should be considered within the wider context of evidence about their influence elsewhere in northern Scotland.

As Crawford (1987, 14), has pointed out, the first Norse to encounter this coast, probably vikings on their way to raid in the Western Isles or possibly along the coast itself, would have navigated around it by remaining in sight of land, using features that they came to recognise over repeated voyages. Nicolaisen (1980, 110) argues that after coastal features, Norse people penetrating an area would next have named features relating to land use and drainage. Batey (1987a, 14-15), considering how Norse incomers would have made toponymic sense of an area which bore names in an unknown language – in effect a ‘nameless landscape’ – suggests that they would have named features in the same way as in their homelands, reflecting land use but also elements of the scenery that were familiar to them. They may even have transplanted names directly, as happened so often in the European colonisation of the Americas and elsewhere. Waugh (2000, 22) has noticed similarities between a number of place names in Strathnaver and in Caithness, and suggests that this may demonstrate connections between Norse settlers along the north coast. Such links may have arisen from contemporary settlement of the two areas; alternatively, perhaps Caithness was colonised first and the descendants of those early settlers later pushed westward and took the names of their homelands with them. That question may be resolved in future by archaeological work that produces dating evidence for Norse settlements in the study area.

Thus it is likely that topographical features along the coast were re-named by the Norse before features in the hinterland. That these coastal names have endured, however, shows that they were not simply known and used by passing seafarers but by Norse speakers who came to live in the area – a point emphasised by Waugh (2000, 22). The same argument holds true for the rest of the study area, where Norse names occur as far inland as Klibreck. These names were not assigned by Norse raiders or explorers who penetrated the hinterland and then left. In order for them to endure into the Medieval period, they must have been the names by which local people came to know specific places. Therefore, Norse speakers must have stayed on here, perhaps intermarrying with the existing Pictish population and in some cases replacing their old names with new ones.

Crawford (1987, 94) has also raised the question of whether a Norse place name indicates actual occupation by a Norse speaker, or whether it might simply indicate a Norse overlord who re-named a settlement already occupied by natives. In the case of Strathnaver itself only a few names, such as Skail, suggest actual buildings and farmsteads occupied by Norse speakers. The remainder, while not explicitly demonstrating habitation, do exhibit a high degree of familiarity with both local topography (as in Rivingill) and land

use (as in Rosal or Kedsary). The attachment of Bunisdale to shielings in a very remote location suggests more than a passing knowledge of more marginal parts of the landscape.

The proximity of names that suggest Norse settlement along the coast, such as Torrisdale and Fiscary, to the likely locations of pre-Norse Christian chapels on Eilean Coomb and at Farr raises the question of Norse settlers' relationship to the pre-existing church. If Norse speakers settled the mainland coast and adjacent hinterland over the latter part of the ninth century and afterward, they would have come into contact with whatever churches already existed. If so they did not, as in Orkney and Shetland, give them *papar* names, as almost none are known outside the Northern Isles (only two in Caithness (*ibid.*, 165)). However, this is not proof of an absence of pre-existing chapels, and clearly carved stones such as that at Farr indicate they did exist before the Norse arrived (see Proudfoot 1995).

Although the Norse earls were not officially converted until the late tenth century, it is likely that some conversion of the general population took place before that, while pagan practice continued among many (Crawford 1987, 167-69). Crawford, while arguing that early Celtic dedications do not prove the existence of pre-Norse religious establishments, admits that the converted Norse were unlikely to have used the names of early saints such as Columba without some prompting by local tradition. If the chapel sites in the study area do pre-date the Norse, the fact that they endured into the Medieval period (as in the case of Farr, Rivigill, Grumbeg and Klibreck, and probably others as well) shows that the Norse did allow them to continue, and perhaps eventually claimed them as their own spiritual homes.

The pattern of Norse place names in the study area suggests that they did appropriate land for farms in the hinterland, perhaps bypassing areas already densely settled, as in the case of the Mallart valley. They may even have pushed up the strath via the river, if their shallow-draught ships were able to navigate it; it is also possible, given the apparent importance of the upper strath as a routeway to Ross, that some settlers arrived from the south. The Norse appear to have established a strong foothold on the coast with the construction of Borge Castle, and the nearby names suggest they farmed the adjacent headlands. Waugh (2000, 15) points out that by the thirteenth century, the Gaelic language was gaining in influence over Norse in the province of Strathnaver. The survival of Norse names throughout the Medieval period, in spite of this, shows that

at some point – probably in the tenth to twelfth centuries – Norse inhabitants were sufficient in number and length of stay to leave their place-names behind when they eventually departed, whether literally, through death, or metaphorically, through intermarriage and gradual language change and loss of distinctive Norse identity.

The degree to which their settlements continued in use into later periods is a question addressed in the following section.

6.3 *Late Norse into Medieval periods (twelfth to sixteenth centuries A.D.)*

If archaeological evidence for where and how people lived during the period of greatest Norse influence is elusive, it is even more so for the period from 1200 to 1600, taken for this area to represent the Late Norse to Medieval periods. The most compelling evidence that settlement endured, in many cases at locations with Norse place names, lies in charters. As with the Norse period, documentary evidence forms a kind of frame for the picture of settlement in the strath and along the coast, from which the picture itself – the archaeological evidence – is so far missing for the most part.

During the late Norse and Medieval periods, northern Scotland was absorbed into the newly consolidated Scottish kingdom. Until about 1600 Sutherland continued as the name for the lands south of the Ord as far as the River Oyckell, the southern part of the province of Caithness, of which Strathnaver also formed a part (Crawford 2000, 1). By the early seventeenth century, Strathnaver was the name used to refer to the whole north-western corner of the mainland, from Strath Hallidale westward to Cape Wrath and south to Assynt (Mackay 1906, 27); according to the *Origines Parochiales Scotiae*, it consisted at least of the parishes of Tongue and Farr (1855, 707), but in the thirteenth century its extent may have been restricted to the parish of Farr (see below; Crawford 2000, 3). In any case, the use of the strath's name for a much larger area shows its importance to the region. The documentary sources bear out this importance.

The following section outlines the history of the political and social changes taking place over these periods. While these changes may have had little immediate effect on the lives of the people living in the study area, they do illuminate the significance of the charter references to Strathnaver and constitute the historical context in which they were drawn up. They also illustrate the process of feudalisation in Strathnaver, which in time would

have had a significant impact on people living there, leading to the development of townships (Dodgshon 1998b). The subsequent sections discuss the charter evidence and the scanty archaeological evidence, and consider questions about the continuity or otherwise of settlements from the earlier and into the later periods in the study area.

6.3.1 *Historical background and charter evidence*

An account of the absorption of Sutherland and Caithness from a possession of the Norse earls of Orkney into the kingdom of Scotland is largely the story of several powerful families of Norse, lowland Scottish and probably Pictish or Celto-Norse noble lineage, each converging upon and claiming parts of these lands, and the growing power of the Scottish Crown through its noble supporters. Certain aspects of the story throw light on the importance of Strathnaver during this period as the possession of some of the protagonists. Table 6.2 lists the occurrence in charters of place names in the study area from 1269 to 1601.

While Norse cultural and linguistic influence in northern Scotland lasted for several hundred years, Norse political power, particularly over the mainland, was shorter-lived. The earls of Orkney held Orkney and Shetland from the kings of Norway, while they held the province of Cat (which comprised Caithness and Sutherland) nominally from the Scottish kings. However, their bond to Norway was stronger for historical, cultural and geographical reasons than any obligation they felt to Scotland. The earldom had originated through Norse political seizure of the islands; the earls were, for the most part, Norse by birth, as were many of the people under their rule; and whereas they were separated from the body of the Scottish mainland by a long sea journey around Duncansby Head and southward, from their seat on the Pentland Firth its northern coast appeared part of their territory, like the southern islands of Orkney ‘and, after all, “united” with them by water’ (Crawford 1985, 25).

Thanages, the units by which Crown lands were administered in Medieval Scotland (see Chapter Three), were entirely absent north of the Moray Firth, where the Crown’s authority jostled with that of the Norse earls (Grant 1993a, 43). The *Orkneyinga Saga* (Pálsson & Edwards 1978) presents a picture of Caithness society highly organised and thoroughly Scandinavian in character up to the early decades of the thirteenth century, with

Date	1269	1286	1401	1499	1530	1539	1542	1546	1551	1553	1567	1570	1601
Lands	Achenedes Ardovyr Clibry Comeferm Dovyr Langeval Rossewal Toffys	Achenedes Ardovyr Clibry Comeferm Dovyr Langeval Rossewal Toffys	Innvymavyr	Fer Rynevee Davach Lochnaver	Fer (+ fishing) Elyngiell Rewigill Rennewe Skale Skelpick Skarray Syre	Fer (+ fishing) (erected free barony) Davach Lochnaver Ryneve	Barony of Farr (+ fishing) Langewall Rossewall Achenedess Carneferme Dowyn Clybry Ardouyr Toffis Renuwy Revegill Skale Skelpik Skarry Syre Elingeell	Water of Farr (fishing, mills) Ranowy	Barony of Farr (+ fishing) Carnoche Daache Lochnavare Innemaver Rhinovie Rebegill Skelpik Syre Thorisdale (+ fishing) Mekle Gnoub Litill Borg	Barony of Farr (+ fishing) Carnoche Daache Lochnavare Innemaver Rhinovie Rebegill Skelpik Syre Thorisdale (+ fishing) Mekle Gnoub Litill Borg	Barony of Farr (+ fishing) Davach Lochnaver Renuwy Revegill Skale Skelpik Skarry Syre Elingeell	Barony of Strathnaver: Farr (+ fishing) Innemaver Rinewe Skelpick Carnachie Ravigill Shyre Grubeg Grubmoir Langwall Rosswall Achnis Clibrig Skaill	Barony of Farr (+ fishing) Davach Lochnaver Innemaver Skelpick Carnachie Ravigill Syre Grubeg Grubmoir Langwall Rosswall Achniw Clibrig Skaill Borge Skerti
Awarded to	Elgin Cathedral	Reginald de Cheyne III	Angus, son of Goddred of the Isles	Odo Makky	William Sutherland of Duffus	Donald MacKay	Donald MacKay	E. Sinclair, wife of D. MacKay	Robert, Bishop of Orkney	Robert, Bishop of Orkney	George, Earl of Huntly	Y MacKay	John, Earl of Sutherland
Reason	to maintain chaplains	inherited lands, re-grant from Church	marriage	service to crown	Makky had no male heir; long failure to pay dues to Church due to anarchy in lands	had some claim as bastard son of Odo Makky	awarded by arbiter, but had to pay compensation to W. Sutherland; refers to long and violent feud between the families over these lands	not known	lands forfeited by D. MacKay of Farr ('lived and died bastard')	D. MacKay's son Y MacKay's part in 'slaughter' of unnamed party	D. MacKay had died illegitimate and intestate	Pardoned for his assistance to English at Haddington in 1543; sold these lands in feu by MacKay as vassals of Earl of Huntly	Annexed to sovereign and granted to earldom by reason of nonentry since death of Robert, Bishop of Orkney; Bishop of Orkney; interested parties (Huntly, MacKay), summoned but had not appeared
By	Joanna of Strathnaver	Church, W. Fedreth	Lady Margaret of Ard	James IV	James IV	James IV	James, Earl of Moray (arbiter)	Mary	Mary	Mary	Mary	Mary	James VI

Table 6.2: Summary of the evidence of Medieval charters for places in Strathnaver.

secular power complemented by ecclesiastical. From the middle of the eleventh century onward, however, Scottish kings began to resist Norse hegemony and attempt to extend their influence to Caithness and Sutherland. The first Scottish bishopric was established in Caithness about 1150; its extent coincided with that under the control of the earls of Caithness and included Strathnaver (Crawford 1974, 20). The bishop eventually gave in to local opposition and transferred the bishopric to Dornoch, a move that also reflected Scottish attempts to reorganise the church in Caithness (Batey 1987a, 21).

Scottish kings marched against Caithness several times in the late twelfth century in response to these attacks on the church. In 1196 William the Lion (brother and successor of Malcolm IV), on a punitive expedition, crossed the River Oyckell into Sutherland and succeeded in defeating Harold Maddadson, the then earl (Mackay 1906, 25). It was during this campaign that the supposed battle took place at Dailharrald near the head of Strathnaver; other traditional accounts of the battle say it was concluded in a final stand by Harold on the ridges at Fiscary, Swordly and Crask, and that survivors fled to Borge Castle (*ibid.*, 25-26).

At about this time the Scottish Crown granted much of Sutherland (that is, the southern part of the province of Caithness) to Hugo Freskyn de Moravia or his father William, members of a noble lowland family (who were also established as local rulers over much of Moray; see Chapter Four), as a means of incorporating it into the kingdom (Crawford 1985, 23-33). The sagas suggest that much of what comprised the newly created earldom of Sutherland was controlled in the later twelfth century by the Moddan family, described as native chieftains – probably a Celto-Norse family – who in the early eleventh century still held the very north-eastern corner of what is now Caithness (Crawford 1987, 65-66; Mackay 1906, 33). Their base appears to have been in the ‘Dales’, the location of which is uncertain, but which may have meant the series of large, north/south running river valleys along the north coast of present Caithness and Sutherland. These include Strathnaver as well as Strathalladale and the Strathy Water, and the term may have been coincident with the province of Strathnaver, which was certainly in existence at this time (Crawford 2000, 2-3). It is unclear whether or not lands controlled by the Moddan family were formerly part of the Norse earldom (Batey 1987a, 319).

The Crown’s grant to the de Moravias may have been made after the death of one of the last of the Moddans, Harald Ungi, in 1198; he was killed by Harold Maddadson, earl of Orkney at the time, in a quarrel over Ungi’s claim to joint inheritance of the earldom.

Maddadson's earldom was forfeit for a time as a result but he probably regained it, as his son David succeeded to part of it. In the meantime, from about A.D. 1200 on, Harald Ungi's sister Ragnhild and her husband Gunni – both Norse names which indicate intermarriage between natives and Norse – continued to rule the province of Strathnaver and the Moddan lands in Caithness. They are thought by Skene (1837, 361) to have held extensive lands in upper Strathnaver (in this case meaning the strath itself), around Lochs Naver and Coire (also see Gray 1922, 93).

In 1231 Snaekollr, their son, approached the then-earl of Orkney and Caithness, John Haraldson, to demand his grandfather Ragnvald's lands in Orkney; when the earl refused, Snaekollr sought the intervention of a representative of the Norse king Hakon. The two parties met in Thurso but, warned of a plot by Earl John, Snaekollr's supporters killed the earl in a pre-emptory move. The case was referred to King Hakon and the parties travelled to Bergen, where five of the perpetrators were executed and Snaekollr himself was detained (Crawford 2000, 6). The king probably appointed one of the earl's kinsmen as his successor, but according to *Hakon's Saga*, the ship carrying the most prominent men (or 'chieftains') of Orkney home sank in the autumn of 1232 (*ibid.*). In the resulting power vacuum, Alexander II of Scotland granted the earldom of Caithness to several claimants in succession, including Earl Malcolm and Walter Comyn, 'as part of his policy for establishing a new regime in the north' (Crawford 1985, 34). Eventually the title passed to Earl Magnus in 1236 (who had a claim through the house of Angus), in a charter that granted the earldom of Caithness in two halves, north and south – probably based on a long-standing division (*ibid.*). Upon Magnus's death in 1239 the earldom passed to two heiresses, and after this point specific, named places in the study area enter the historical record.

One of the heiresses is referred to in a 1269 charter as '*nobilis mulier domina Johanna*', noted as possessing Strathnaver and half of the earldom of Caithness (Johnston & Johnston 1928, 35; *Moray Reg.* no. 126). While 'Strathnaver' here may refer to the province, it is clear from subsequent documents that Johanna's lands included certain recognisable places in the upper strath (see below). The identity and pedigree of this pivotal woman have exercised historians, for it was she who brought these lands to the Crown of Scotland through her marriage to Freskyn de Moravia, nephew of the new earl of Sutherland (Hugo's son William, created earl in 1237) (Gray 1922, 80).

Skene (1878) believes her to have been the daughter of Earl John on the basis of her name. Gray (1922, 101) refutes this, as no record exists of any claim on her part (or her husband's) to the earldom of Orkney. Crawford (1985, 35; 2000) argues that she was a member of the Angus family – probably a daughter of Malcolm, earl of Angus and thereby related to Earl Magnus – and came by her inheritance when he died. However, this does not explain her claim to the lands of Strathnaver, given that neither Magnus nor his wife is recorded as laying claim to them. Gray (1922, 111-12) reasons that the Strathnaver association must link her to the Moddan family, and suggests she was the descendant of Harald Ungi's sister Ragnhild – perhaps her grandchild, and the only child of Snaekollr. He further suggests that when her father failed to return from Norway the young heiress was made a ward of the Scottish Crown and named for the childless Queen Johanna. This line of argument, while coherent, does not appear to be either supported or contradicted by any direct evidence. In the 1230s the earldom of Caithness and the newly created earldom of Sutherland were parcelled up and granted through feudal charters, and Johanna may have received Strathnaver at that time (Crawford 2000, 3) – although there is no ready explanation (other than Gray's) for why she was awarded the lands. As Crawford notes, 'The breaking-down of the old order, and the arrival of new families, created a new structure through which it is very hard to penetrate to the previous tenurial circumstances' (2000, 5).

What is clear is that, before her death, Johanna granted some of her lands in upper Strathnaver to the Bishop of Moray for the maintenance of two chaplains at Elgin Cathedral. She had two daughters, Mary and Christian, between whom the inheritance was divided. Eventually it all was bestowed on Mary's son, Reginald le Cheyne III; his inheritance included four davochs of land in Strathnaver and rights to 'Scottish service' – that is, the right to claim military service from tenants on those lands (Barrow 1988b, 86). In 1269 the Church returned the lands in Johanna's gift to him, on the condition that he make a yearly payment to Elgin Cathedral for the two chaplains' maintenance, according to the terms of the original charter (OPS 1855, 715; *Moray Reg.* no. 263). In 1286 William and Christian Fedreth (Johanna's daughter and son-in-law) passed on to Reginald their inheritance of four davochs (possibly in the lower strath) from Johanna and agreed also to give him any lands in Strathnaver they might acquire in the future; Crawford (2000, 9) finds a hint of disputed territorial claims in this peculiar agreement. That Reginald de Cheyne III's name survived in upper Strathnaver is evident from a note in the *Origines Parochiales Scotiae*, which refers to 'the town and lands of Auchnes [Achadh an Eas] in Straithnaver, of

old called Kerrownaschein' (OPS 1855, 708). This name endured until the early twentieth century, when Gray (1922, 110) recorded it and translated it as 'Cheyne's Quarter'.

The 1269 document is the earliest known reference to the specific places involved. It mentions 'Langeval and Rossewal, tofftys de Dovyr, Achenedess, Clibr', Ardovyr and Cornefern' (Johnston & Johnston 1928, 35). These translate to Langdale, Rosal, Achadh an Eas (Achness), Klibreck and Coire nam Feuran; the later versions of Ardovyr and Dovyr are unclear. Three of these are Norse place names, and five are the sites of later townships. While evidently Johanna possessed all of what then constituted the province of Strathnaver, these estates in the upper strath would have lain closest to the Moray diocese via Lairg (Crawford 2000, 11).

Two important points emerge from these records. The charters show the existence in the thirteenth century of at least one inhabited place with probable pre-Norse origins (Klibreck, with its Early Medieval chapel), of Norse place names which may have originated only a few hundred years before at most (Klibreck, Langdale and Rosal) and of other names which were either pre- or post-Norse in origin (Achadh an Eas and Coire nam Feuran). That these lands were granted to the church by Johanna implies that they were inhabited: in order for the lands to fulfil their purpose of supporting chaplains at Elgin, they must have produced an income. In order to produce an income they must have been populated, for people are required to work and harvest land. de Cheyne's stated right to claim military service from the people living on these lands further bears this out, and the fact that the lands were still being disputed in the sixteenth century (see below) indicates that habitation and the income it produced continued throughout those 300 years.

The second point to stand out from the story of Johanna is the status of the province of Strathnaver in the late Norse to Medieval period. Neither of the charters refers to it as a lordship in the earldoms of either Caithness or Sutherland; it is referred to rather as *tenementum de Strathnaver*, indicating it was a separate and consolidated holding (Crawford 2000, 3). The mention of specific, traceable places in the 1269 and 1287 charters gives some clue to its extent, although its boundaries are unknown; Crawford believes the *tenementum* consisted at most of the parish of Farr, as there is no evidence that Johanna or her family held lands to the west in Durness parish. She argues that the special significance of the estates in the upper strath lay in their strategic uses: 'After the diminution of the earls' power, and the division of their north mainland possessions . . . , Upper Strathnaver may have become desirable as a strategic centre for new territorial lordships which were

based on inland routes and waterways rather than maritime ones.' The paired names Rosal and Langwell could, as noted above, indicate their importance as pasturing places for horses used to travel between Easter Ross and Strathnaver (see Crawford forthcoming).

Other charter evidence further shows the study area's significance and wider links in the Medieval period. The earliest documentary mention of a specific, identifiable place in the study area is in a charter dating to 1223 x 1245, made by Gilbert de Moravia, Bishop of Caithness. It refers to the church of Farr and reserves to the bishopric the 'power of dividing the foresaid parish of Farr into several parts on account of its scattered condition'; it refers specifically to 'the said whole church and its chapels' (*OPS* 1855, 707). Farr features prominently in later charters, and clearly was the ecclesiastical focal point of the area.

A 1291 letter of safe-conduct for John, Earl of Caithness and Orkney, to visit Edward I also mentions his valet, William of Grumbaig. He had been recently sent as a messenger to the king and returned to the earl with horses 'and their furniture' (Johnston & Johnston 1928, 60). That a man from Grumbeg was appointed the earl's valet and representative before the king points to the existence of a noble seat at Grumbeg in the thirteenth century; this could lend weight to Gray's (1922, 93) assertion that the Celto-Norse noble Moddan family were prominent in the upper strath. It certainly supports the notion that the upper strath had some political significance at the time.

From the early 1300s to the late 1400s, the MacKay family probably held the Strathnaver lands at least as tenants (*OPS* 1855, 709). MacKay family tradition states that their progenitor Iye, a descendant of Malcolm, Earl of Ross, settled in the western part of the province in the early thirteenth century; his descendants, the MacKays, provided refuge for their Moray relatives the MacHeths, who were in continual rebellion against the Crown (Mackay 1906, 15). Crawford (2000, 9), while noting that the origins of Clan Mackay are a problematic subject, does suggest that by the late thirteenth century the family were significant political players among Caithness landowners. Iye Mor MacKay is traditionally said to have acquired twelve davochs of Church lands in Durness by marrying Bishop Walter's (1263-70) daughter (MacKay 1906, 37). The Mackays certainly had closer links with the Crown in the late fourteenth century: a man called Fearchar Lighiche (Farquhar the Leech) was physician to King Robert II and treated his chronically inflamed eyes. He was the son of one Iye MacKay of Strathnaver, who was murdered at Dingwall with his eldest son in 1370 in the ongoing feud between MacKays and Sutherlands (Mackay 1914,

94-5; Crawford 2000, 10). The king's bastard son Alexander Stewart, the Wolf of Badenoch (see Chapter Four) controlled the lands between the Moray and the Pentland firths after 1372 as lieutenant of the north; it may have been as a gesture of appeasement for these murders that he bestowed on Fearchar the lands of Melness and Hope, on the west side of the Kyle of Tongue and the east side of Loch Eriboll. The gift was confirmed by the king's charter in 1379, and seven years later the king himself granted Fearchar (his 'beloved medico') the Little Islands of Strathnaver: Eilean nan Gall (the Rabbit Islands), Eilean Roan and Eilean Coomb (OPS 1855, 709; MacKay 1914, 94-5).

Later charters document an ongoing tussle for lands along the coast and in the strath throughout the Medieval period, with ownership passing back and forth between parties and the Church and Crown still clearly maintaining interests there. The history contained in these charters is teased out below, while Table 6.2 lists their dates and the places, people and events they detail. Place names are given in their modern forms where possible below, but the table gives the forms used in the charters.

In 1499, James IV granted to Odo MacKay in heritage the lands of Farr, Rhinovie and 'Davach Lochnaver' for service to the Crown; this may represent the first time that the MacKay family actually owned land in the study area, although that is not certain. At the same time he was given the lands of Armadale, Strathy, Golspie, 'Kynnald,' 'Dilvid', 'Cattaack', 'Bronych, 'Kilchallumkill' and Davach Eriboll. The specific lands named in Johanna's gift to the church do not appear here, but the term 'Davach Lochnaver' may have referred to the four davochs which had belonged to her daughter Christian. Clearly the lands in Johanna's gift continued to be tenanted and farmed, although management of them broke down. In 1525 Robert, Bishop of Moray, referred to her gift and observed

that from the intromission with and laying waste of those lands by wild and wicked men who inhabited them the chaplains were like to perish and must cease from their service for want of the payment of the yearly ferme; and that the lands, after the rentallers had for a long time failed in payment... (OPS 1855, 715).

Odo MacKay had a son, John, but both of them died in 1529 leaving no legitimate male heir, and the lands were awarded in 1530 to William Sutherland of Duffus. After this, however, Donald MacKay, Odo's illegitimate son, must have appeared and laid claim to the lands, because in 1539 James IV awarded them to him and at the same time created the free barony of Farr. His grant also included 'the mills, mill-lands, manors, demesne lands, and other pertinents' that had been Donald's father's (*ibid.*, 715). Clearly William Sutherland's heir of the same name contested this, and in 1542 James, Earl of Moray,

acting as arbiter, found in favour of Donald but ordered him to compensate William for the dues he had paid to the Church meanwhile. His decision refers to 'the great slaughters and injuries committed on each other by the ancestors of the parties in consequence of their disputes on the above subjects' (*ibid.*, 711). William, stating his claim, refers to the 'certain lands in Strathnaverne alleged . . . to be held by him in heritage of the church of Murray'. These do include Johanna's lands as they are named in the 1269 charter, as well as Skelpick, Syre, Skail, Skerray, Eilean nan Gall and several places around the Kyle of Tongue. 'Davach Lochnaver' is not mentioned, although this was among the lands in Odo's 1499 grant and clearly the rest of Johanna's lands reverted to Donald MacKay at this point. Four years later, Queen Mary awarded Donald's wife Elizabeth the lands included in the original grant to Odo MacKay, as well as 'the water of Farr, from the broad ford [at Invernaver] to the sea' along with fishing rights and several mills, noting that Donald had resigned them.

In 1549 Donald MacKay, who had formerly been a vassal of the Earl of Huntly, gave his 'band of service' to John, Earl of Sutherland. He died soon afterward and in 1551 Mary awarded his lands to Robert, Bishop of Orkney, noting that Donald had 'lived and died bastard without lawful heirs or a lawful disposition of the lands' (*ibid.*, 712). Two years later the bishop was awarded all the goods that had belonged to Y MacKay of Farr, apparently Donald's son, forfeit 'for his being art and part in the slaughter of some person or persons not named' (*ibid.*). In 1567 the lands were awarded to George, Earl of Huntly, formerly the feudal lord of the MacKays.

However, in 1555 Y MacKay was pardoned because of his assistance at the battle of Haddington. Fifteen years later all of the lands previously awarded his father, as well as Torrisdale, Invernaver, Carnachy, Grummore and Grumbeg, were sold to him and his heirs to hold in feu. After this point, the MacKays held the lands as vassals of the Earl of Huntly, whereas before they had held them directly from the Crown. However, in 1601 the lands and barony of Farr, along with the specific lands awarded to Y MacKay, were annexed by the Crown because of nonentry after the death of Robert, Bishop of Orkney. They were awarded to the Earl of Sutherland in a Charter of Regality; at this time, Strathnaver became part of Sutherland (Crawford 2000).

Many of the charters mention rights to salmon fishing and mills, indicating the importance of these to the income of the feudal overlord. Interestingly, a name indicating an Early Medieval ecclesiastical site appears in several charters: in 1530 as Bellinaglis, as

1546 as Balliheglis (when it was awarded to Elizabeth Sinclair), in 1551 as Balnaheglis and in 1570 as Balnaheglis. The name seems to combine the Gaelic *bal*, indicating a settlement, with the Pictish *heglis*; the addition of a Q-Celtic qualifier would suggest it is later in date than the mid first millennium examples of *heglis* names in southern and south-eastern Scotland (Barrow 1983). It may be the northernmost known mainland occurrence of this element, but unfortunately the location to which it was attached is unknown. In the charters it generally appears in tandem with Galvell (Gallowell or Galdwell).

The rather confusing web of award, annexation and counter-award that the charters map does fill in some of the background to the picture of settlement in Strathnaver during the Medieval period. In particular, the references to feuds and violence over rights to land demonstrates the close personal involvement of those who held the lands; these transfers of rights were not in name only. Such contests, as well as the 'laying waste of those lands by wild and wicked men who inhabited them' described by the Bishop of Moray, must have had a considerable effect on the lives of people living in the study area.

Even more significantly, the charters demonstrate the degree to which lands in the study area were bound up in the feudal system of land assessment as early as the late thirteenth century. Table 6.3 summarises the occurrence of place names in the study area in the Norse period, in charters and on post-Medieval maps. The consistent appearance of a suite of names from the late 1200s to the 1600s and beyond suggests that these settlements were continually occupied throughout this period, by people who worked the land and generated the produce which made farms desirable as the subjects of grants and feu agreements. The precise location and nature of these settlements may have altered over time, an issue addressed further below. It is not certain, however, whether the places named in the charters existed as discrete settlements throughout the period they cover. The settlement form of single or joint tenant townships was probably in place by the sixteenth century (Dodgshon 1998b), but possibly before that as feudal authority established itself in the area.

While the charters document the importance of lands in Strathnaver from the point of view of those who creamed off their wealth, they say little about the people who actually lived on the land, produced the wealth and fought the battles of noblemen and kings. Archaeological evidence can provide the only, incidental record of their lives, and this is at present almost entirely lacking for the Medieval period in the study area.

6.3.2 *The archaeological evidence*

As for the archaeological traces of those tenants whose inhabitation of Strathnaver would have most directly shaped its taskscapes in the Medieval period, their elusiveness here is typical of the rest of the Highlands, as discussed in Chapter Four. In the upper strath, Fairhurst (1968) investigated the township of Rosal (NC64SE 12; see Figure 6.2), which was cleared of its inhabitants between 1814 and 1818. The remains of this township are typical of those of other settlements of the same period throughout the study area but especially along the strath. Detailed survey has been carried out at only two – Rosal and Truderscaig (*ibid.*); see Figures 6.10 and 6.12. Excavation of a complex of structures, including a longhouse and barn, found evidence for its late eighteenth century use but none for earlier, Medieval occupation. The only evidence for a Medieval presence found at Rosal was part of the handle of a late Medieval, green-glazed pitcher, retrieved from around the entrance to the souterrain near the centre of the township. This does at least show that people were in the vicinity in the late Medieval period and suggests nearby settlement, as pitchers would not have been transported far. Fairhurst's excavations constituted a very small sample of the entire township, and they focused on upstanding remains; they do not prove the absence of traces of earlier occupation beneath and among the post-Medieval remains.

Fairhurst (1968, 164), discussing the absence of any evidence of Medieval occupation at Rosal, offered this explanation:

The site is not littered with puzzling grassy banks and fragments of dry-stone buildings inviting further excavations. The reason seems clear. The buildings themselves were largely of turf on a dry-stone footing around an earthen floor and there were no trenches for foundations. When such structures fell into disrepair as would be inevitable after a generation or so, it would be easier to rebuild on a new site nearby, utilising the stones again, and then to run a plough over the old site to freshen up the ground.

This model recalls the results from excavation of the Bronze Age roundhouses at Lairg (see Chapter Five), which demonstrated a similar pattern of slightly shifting location and cultivation of old house stances (McCullagh & Tipping 1998).

Morrison (1974) notes the common occurrence of prehistoric hut circles and other remains of early date in or near post-Medieval settlements. Pointing out the discovery in Peeblesshire of roughly circular, scooped huts of Medieval date (Stevenson 1941), he argues that 'hut circles and relict field systems need not be prehistoric, . . . and evidence from this type of site may eventually help to fill some of the gaps in our knowledge of the

development of Scottish non-burghal settlement in the mediaeval period' (1974, 73).

Barrow (1973) has pointed out the differences in settlement pattern between the areas of Scotland south and north of the Forth in the Medieval period; these differences may or may not have extended to the form of domestic structures. Still, Morrison's is a valid suggestion and one worth testing through selective excavation on sites where such juxtapositions occur, although other approaches may also prove fruitful in the future.

The chapel sites at Langdale, Skail, Rivigill and Klibrek were described as old burial grounds or the sites of former chapels in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (*OPS* 1855, 708; Pennant 1774, 325-26). They presumably went out of use after the Reformation in the late sixteenth century, although not necessarily right away (Mitchison 1970, 138). That at Grumbeg was still in use in the nineteenth century and, although its continuous use from Early Medieval times cannot be assumed, the settlement's name does appear in charters in the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries (see Table 6.3). The church at Farr certainly appears to have continued in use from the thirteenth century onward. As has been emphasised above, there must have been people living in the vicinity of each active chapel, church or burial ground who attended Mass, supported the incumbent and entered the graveyard at the appropriate time.

A few other archaeological sites of dubious Medieval date are known in the study area. Iron-working sites have been noted in several parts of Strathnaver, among them a bloomery mound being eroded away on the bank of the Skelpick Burn (NC75NW 20) and pieces of slag found on the glacial outwash plain at Invernaver (NC66SE 3). The location of the Skelpick bloomery mound corresponds approximately to annotation on Pont's map of the area, compiled in the last decade of the sixteenth century, which reads 'Mynes of Yron'. It may therefore date to that time or even earlier.

While the name associated with the shieling ground at Fiscary is Norse, suggesting its origin pre-1200, the place may have continued in that use throughout the Medieval period, with new shieling huts built on a long-used shieling ground (NC76SW 7). The structures' fair state of preservation does not demonstrate that they are late in date, as in the basin immediately to their north-west on similar ground are preserved hut circles and field systems of prehistoric date (Mercer 1981).

Two other monuments could be the traces of secular authority in the Medieval period. On the floor of the strath at Langdale is a large, fortified enclosure that could be

Medieval in date (see Figure 6.2). It is not a broch, and its low position contrasts markedly with their locations on the edges of the terraces above the valley floor. It is roughly circular, defined by a ditch and a substantial earthen bank (NC64SE 30; see Plate 6.1). A modern drystone wall has been built atop the bank, but there are traces of an original wall or revetment within it. Its interior has been cultivated, and the bank has been largely destroyed on the eastern arc. It may have had a standing stone inside it in the past, in which case it is probably the so-called 'Druidical temple' noted at Langdale in the early nineteenth century (Cooke 1810, 60). So little is known of the nature of Medieval settlement in Strathnaver that it is impossible to definitively assign a date to this feature, which is known locally as 'The Tulloch'. However, it is likely to be later than the brochs (given its survival in this position) and there is no documentary evidence for its construction or use in the post-Medieval period. Its location on the floor of the strath suggests that those who occupied it had rights to the arable land around it, and may even have controlled passage along this part of the strath. Its vaguely motte-like qualities could suggest it is Medieval in date; the standing stone might have marked a place where justice was administered locally, as at Moot Hill in Kingussie (Chapter Four).

Finally, above the River Borgie at the point where it curves out of the uplands and into its last stretch toward the sea is a large, sub-circular earthwork mound (NC65NE 1; Figure 6.1). Some stone is evident in its fabric but it is clearly not a broch, and it may be Medieval in date. Its position is highly strategic, watchful of movement both inland and seaward and along the passes through the hinterland to east and west; it could have been the seat of some secular authority in what were evidently unsettled times.

The pattern and nature of settlement in the study area, and over the Highlands in general, may have evolved slowly over hundreds of years. The next section explores what form that process of development may have taken and what factors seem to have shaped it. It also looks back over the evidence for how it altered and developed in the study area.

6.4 *Medieval into post-Medieval periods (sixteenth to nineteenth centuries A.D.)*

6.4.1 *Historical background*

By the mid 1600s the MacKay family were at their peak in terms of power, although they lost extensive lands in Strathnaver to the Sutherland family in 1601 (see Table 6.2 and above). In 1628 Donald Mackay became the first Lord Reay over the

province of Strathnaver, which at that time reached from the border with Caithness, at Strath Hallidale, to Kylesku on the west coast. He soon fell into financial difficulty, however, and large parts of the estate had to be sold. The lower end of Strathnaver was sold to John, thirteenth Earl of Sutherland, in 1642 and the upper end to Sir John Gordon of Embo in 1637. Eventually, the Gordons of Embo also fell into debt and sold their lands in the upper strath to Alexander, Lord Duffus, a cadet of the house of Sutherland. His family in turn had financial problems, and so in 1700 the remainder of upper Strathnaver also passed to the Sutherland estate (Bangor-Jones 1987, 23; Bangor-Jones 2000).

The changing fortunes of the MacKays and their peers reflect the changes which were taking place in Highland society and economy in the period 1600 to 1800, and which were to have ineradicable effects on the character of everyday life and the shape of Highland rural settlements (see below).

Much of the basic character of that life would have been similar to Highland life in Badenoch, as described in Chapter Four. Townships – tenant or joint-tenant farms – practised subsistence agriculture, both arable and pastoral; in this area, however, cattle were the more important of the two elements in township economies (Dodgshon 1998a, 189). Arable land was divided into infield, usually distributed among the tenants and sub-tenants in run rig which was periodically re-allocated, and outfield, or the poorer land farmed in rotation. Tenants grew oats, bere, peas, beans and cabbage, fertilising the rigs with manure collected in the byres over winter and with thatch from their houses which had become impregnated with soot (Caird 1964, 72-73).

Their houses, like those in Badenoch, were built of turf and/or drystone above low stone footings, the roof supported by timber couples and thatched. Sinclair describes the layout and character of townships in Sutherland:

The houses were not built according to any general plan but scattered in every direction. The roads and alleys were inconceivably bad, and especially in wet weather, as few of them were paved, and what added greatly to their miserable state was the abominable practice of placing the dunghill . . . before their doors (quoted in Caird 1964, 73).

Pope, minister of Reay, supplied observations for inclusion in Pennant's (1774) *A Tour in Scotland 1769*, and by contrast he describes the River Naver as 'a noble body of water, well stored with salmon, having many fruitful and beautiful villages on the banks of it, and is so inhabited for 18 miles' (Pennant 1774, 325).

However, Henderson, in his survey of the estate in 1806, described the byre-dwellings of the townships as

‘very mean and wretched. The walls are of mud (provincially feal) and the roof made water-tight with divots or thin sods, supported by couples and side timbers of birch or fir, made in the form of a semi-circle, having a few holes on the top of the roof to let out the smoke from a fire upon the hearth in the middle of the building, surrounded by the tenant, his wife and children. As the smoke diffuses through the whole of the building, the cattle who are tied by bindings made of birch wythes to stakes in the walls at one end of the house, reap the benefit of the warmth. In some cases the walls are built with a tier of stone betwixt each tier of feal, and in some the first three feet high of the walls and gables are built with stone, and the remainder of feal and sods’ (1815, 45).

The minister who wrote the account of the Parish of Farr for the *Statistical Account of Scotland* mentions a famine in recent years which had caused many people to leave the area. He notes some fishing along the coast, adding that the ling and cod caught were taken to Aberdeen for sale. He also refers to the souterrain at Rosal, and indicates it was open at the time. The people he describes as ‘fond of a military life, but not of a seafaring life’, and speaks disparagingly of the five ‘houses employed in selling spiritious liquors in Strathnaver’, which generally had a ‘mischievous’ effect on the morals of his parishioners (Dingwall 1791).

As Chapter Four reviewed, Dodgshon (1981; 1998a; 1998b) has considered the effect of changes in Highland society and economy and in relationships between tenants and landlords on the physical layout of townships. Addressing the question of continuity of settlement location from earlier periods, he notes that ‘as sites of settlement and land-holding, many traditional Highland townships were undoubtedly old-established, even prehistoric, but it does not follow that they remained unchanged as patterns of settlement or land-holding throughout their history’ (1998b, 51). The remains visible to us today, he argues, are the result of a long and gradual process of change.

That process was essentially one of feudalisation of the land, in which land came to be held not on the basis of the house, or personal association or ranking, but on the basis of taxes and military service. Areas controlled by the Anglo-Norman aristocracy from an early date, such as Strathnaver, changed more rapidly to feudal land-based assessment than other parts of the Highlands (*ibid.*, 10), although the relative marginality and remoteness of Strathnaver in comparison to Badenoch would suggest that feudalisation proceeded rather more slowly here. Even so, lands were changing hands as early as the thirteenth century

for the surplus they could produce (initially to maintain Elgin's chaplains). That land-based assessment would have effectively created more constricted settlement, forcing tenants into closer cooperation with each other and effectively 'ring-fencing' what had previously been separate farms (Dodgshon 1998b, 57).

Before examining the archaeological remains from the culmination of this process in Strathnaver, a review of the cartographic evidence should help to establish the overall pattern of change which the study area saw from the late sixteenth to the mid nineteenth centuries.

Table 6.3 shows the named places that appear on various maps from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. The earliest map on which the study area appears in any detail is Ortelius's 1573 map, which shows Loch mawyr (Naver) and Farr. Mercator's map of Scotland, published in 1595, shows the whole northern mainland as 'Strathnauernia'; it also depicts the specific places of 'Far' and 'Loch Nauer' (see Morrison 1987, 11-12).

Pont, who mapped much of Scotland between 1585 and 1600 (Stone 1989), was the first to produce a more detailed map of the study area (Figure 6.5). He shows the place names of Grumbeg, Grummore, Klibreck, Rosal, Syre, Langdale, Skail, Carnachy,, Loch ma Naire, Skelpick and Rhinovie. Along the coast are Invernaver, Borgie, Farr, Kirtomy, Port Skerray and Scullomy. Pont shows symbols for what appear to be churches at Invernaver, Farr and on Eilean Coombe, while settlement of some kind is depicted, but not named, on Eilean nan Roan. There are extensive forests along the west side of the middle strath and on the east around Ravigill, and a mill near the confluence of the Rivers Naver and Mallart, near Achadh an Eas. Gordon's 1654 map of Scotland depicts Loch Naver, Grummore, Grumbeg, Rosal, Skail, Langdale, Carnachy, Invernaver and Farr, while Dorret's 1761 map shows Klibreck, Loch Naver, Grummore, Grumbeg, Rosal, Syre, Landale, Carnachy, Skelpick and Rhinovie.

Roy's Military Survey of Scotland, compiled between 1747 and 1755 (Figure 6.6 and 6.7), shows not only settlements but areas of cultivated land (sheets 36/3, 36/4, 35/3). Although the maps produced were dismissed by Roy himself as military sketches rather than accurate surveys, recent systematic survey along the north coast near Durness found some remarkable instances of accuracy on Roy's map, with rigs running on different alignments in a small area clearly identifiable in the same configuration on the map (Brady

& Morris 1998). However, in the Strathnaver area, some of the named settlements appear to be shown in the wrong places while others are not shown at all (Morrison 1987, 16) (the same inconsistency was noted in Badenoch; see Chapter Four). Given that these settlements were cleared between 50 and 70 years later, leaving traces still visible today in places where Roy depicts nothing, it is much more likely that his surveyors missed or misplaced some townships than that their location shifted in this short time. Some, such as Skelpick, Rhinovie and Apigill, appear on earlier maps, although others may have sprung up during the late eighteenth century, a time when population was increasing in the strath. In particular, this period may have seen the colonisation of shieling grounds (*ibid.*, 18). Roy's map also shows several roads in the upper strath, running along the south side of Loch Naver and the valley of the Mallart and converging near the head of the River Naver (Figure 6.7); these might lie along the lines of earlier routes dating from the Norse or Medieval periods, discussed above.

Two sets of maps depict the enormous changes to the landscape that took place in the study area in the first few decades of the nineteenth century. In 1806, Henderson carried out an agricultural and population survey of the Sutherland estate (his *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Sutherland*), compiling a list of all the townships in Strathnaver and noting their agricultural regimes and potential land use. His survey complements that of Meredith, which was commissioned in 1810 by Cosmo Falconer, the estate factor. The map Meredith produced, *The Heights of Strathnaver* (Figure 6.9), shows the townships which peppered the sides and floor of the strath in that year; Figure 6.8 is a schematic representation of that inhabitation.

The next detailed map was compiled by the Ordnance Survey in 1878, and it shows a very different pattern of settlement and landscape use. The townships shown on Meredith's maps appear on the first edition O.S. map as clusters of unroofed buildings, sometimes with a few roofed buildings remaining. New settlements have appeared along the coast, and in both new and old settlements the distribution of fields and houses has changed. The second edition O.S. map of 1906 shows even more changes: the previously depopulated hinterland has been partly re-colonised (Figure 6.13).

6.4.2 *The archaeological remains*

Figures 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 show the distribution of township remains and shieling sites along the strath and, to a lesser extent, along the coast. In the lower strath, particularly

zone 7 (Figure 6.1), they tend to lie at either edge of the floor or on the lower slopes; Roy's map shows cultivation on the floor itself, and it is likely that people reserved this better ground for that. Only a few shieling sites are known on the adjacent plateaux, but little systematic fieldwork has been carried out and many more may remain to be found. In zone 6, the broad stretch between Achargary and Carnachy, only a few sites are known either from visible remains or documentary sources. Townships seem to cluster more densely in the upper strath (zones 1-4), where they tend to lie on the lower slopes of its sides (Figures 6.2 and 6.3).

While the locations of pre-clearance townships in Strathnaver are known from the estate maps, in many cases – especially below Syre – few traces survive on the ground. In the early twentieth century, the Sutherland estate created crofts in the strath in order to encourage people to move back in and increase the land's profitability, after the failure of the sheep farms to produce the immense profits that nineteenth-century Improvers had envisaged. The new crofters in many cases cannibalised the township remains for stone to build farm buildings, dykes and enclosures, and other aspects of this new, more intensive phase of land use also helped destroy older remains (Temperley 1977).

However, in the upper strath several townships survive well, largely thanks to the interest and rescue work of Fairhurst in the 1960s, which ensured the protection of Rosal from Forestry Commission planting in the vicinity. Fairhurst surveyed Rosal and investigated a few of its elements through excavation; he also examined the remains of townships at Truderscaig, Grummore and Grumbeg.

The remains of Rosal (NC64SE 12), cleared of its inhabitants between 1814 and 1818, lie on rising ground above the east bank of the River Naver. The township occupies an area of undulating ground, enclosed by a drystone ring-dyke; the topography is such that at no point within it can one see all of the settlement. Today commercial forestry laps its edges, exaggerating the encircling effect of the dyke and blocking the views that were formerly possible across the river and up and down the strath to Langdale and the head of the river. Fairhurst points out that, when it was occupied, Rosal would have looked like a green island in the surrounding moorland (1968, 138).

His survey of the township (Figure 6.10) recorded around 70 buildings, all in roughly the same condition; only 22 are shown on Meredith's plan of 1811 (see Figure 6.9; *ibid.*, 153). Among the structures Fairhurst distinguished dwellings (12-15), outhouses

(about 30), yards (about 20) and corn-drying kilns (7). The longhouses are extremely long (24 to 33 m), with a single doorway along one wall (see Plate 6.2). The buildings are clustered in three main groups around the periphery of the township, with pronounced rigs covering much of the centre and north-eastern part. Near the centre is a souterrain. Within the building clusters the houses, outbuildings and yards seem scattered in no recognisable pattern, so that it is difficult to distinguish discrete associations between particular sets of remains. In the south-western cluster some yards seemed the focus of several buildings, while in the northern one several longhouses appeared to have their own yards.

Excavation of a longhouse and outbuilding in the northern cluster (Plate 6.2) found that the house had been a byre dwelling, with a paved byre at one end and living quarters at the other (see Figure 6.11). The focus of the house would have been the kerbed and cobbled central hearth, with a thin, round baking stone at its centre. The byre and living quarters might have been separated by a flimsy partition, although no evidence was found for it. There were slots in the dry-stone masonry of the wall footings for couples, and patches of grey clay inside which suggested that those living in the house had tried to make it weatherproof by pointing the masonry. The byre end of the house had been broken through, probably to muck it out in the spring before the township was cleared in order to fertilise the fields – an indication of the documented disbelief in which tenants held announcements of the impending evictions (see below). A small room had been added onto the living end of the house, and this may have had another hearth against its gable wall (*ibid.*, 145-48).

Around the central hearth and the small adjacent room, sherds of mass-produced pottery dating from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth centuries were found, as well as part of a door latch. Sweeping and traffic had eroded the floor slightly, but Fairhurst concluded from the finds that the house had been built only a few decades before the Clearances. It appeared to have been thoroughly cleaned out, and the couples removed, when the inhabitants left (*ibid.*, 152). Within the township, Fairhurst identified some structures that might have been in ruins when it was cleared, and one circular structure that might be prehistoric but could also date to an earlier phase of the township. In general, however, in spite of the documentary evidence for the long occupation of its lands, traces of earlier settlement are elusive.

6.4.3 *The townships in upper Strathnaver: a provisional chronology*

Fairhurst (1968, 141) observed that if a list is compiled of place names in Strathnaver from sources of different periods, including the charters as well as the maps of Pont, Roy and Henderson, that list grows longer through time. Table 6.3, which lists all of these names (along with those of Norse origin in the study area), illustrates this; the proportion of colour-filled blocks, each representing a documentary mention of a place name, increases dramatically across the spreadsheet. This could be due to better recording in later periods. However, it is also possible, as Fairhurst notes, that it illustrates the colonisation of shieling grounds; other processes leading to the division of townships to create smaller, subsidiary farms, as discussed by Dodgshon (1998b), might also have been at work. Using his model as a guide, it is possible to argue that some townships are among the earliest and others have late origins. It does not, of course, follow that the remains visible at the sites of the putative earliest townships relate to their earlier phases of occupation.

Some very preliminary interpretations can be offered at present, using the limited work carried out by Fairhurst (1968) and the evidence of maps, charters and field remains. An analysis of the upper strath (zones 1, 2 and 3) shows some interesting patterns. At the end of the eighteenth century or early nineteenth century, there were 20 inhabited farms in this area (see Table 6.3). Of these, seven may have been occupied for 600 years or more, from at least the thirteenth century if not earlier: some (Rosal, Truderscaig) have Norse names, while the rest are mentioned in charters from that point onward. The remaining 13 names all appear, attached to settlements, in the late eighteenth century. Four of these names – Dailharrauld, Dailmallart, Dail a' Thurraich and Syre – are Norse in origin. Although they are topographical, Waugh (2000, 16) has argued that such names should be taken to indicate settlement. However, the fact that they are not mentioned at all in documentary sources or on maps undermines the likelihood that settlement at these places was continuous in the intervening period.

From this, it could be postulated that seven settlements in the upper strath endured from at least the thirteenth century onward: Rosal, Achadh an Eas, Truderscaig, Coire nam Feuran, Grumbeg, Grummore and Klibreck. Examining Meredith's map *The Heights of Strathnaver*, Fairhurst (1968, 159-63) noted that several very small settlements are shown around the periphery of Rosal's common grazings; these include Dailharrauld, Dailmallart, Bhreacachaidh, Bad an Leathaid, Badinloskin, Achadh an Phresh and Auchanrach – all names which appear late in the documentary record. Shielings are shown near some of

these settlements. The names Outfield of Grummore and Crockdow of Grummore – both places from which tenants were cleared in the early nineteenth century (NLS 1015) – suggest these also grew as outposts from the mother township of Grummore.

In the period preceding the Clearances, population grew and created increasing pressure on existing cultivated land. It seems likely that these smaller settlements began as shieling grounds, and became permanent rather than seasonal farms as the need arose for more land (*ibid.*, 163). In the case of those peripheral to Rosal, they still shared her common grazings, probably reflecting the origins in that township of those who settled them.

If those seven settlements are the sites of earlier, Medieval or even Norse occupation (or, in the case of Grumbeg and Klibreck, arguably even earlier), do the visible remains correspond at all to the exact locations of that settlement? Or can we expect settlement to have shifted and drifted over time? Only further fieldwork will answer that question, but a few conclusions can be drawn based on the visible remains. At Rosal and Truderscaig (Figures 6.10 and 6.12), the clusters of buildings could be seen as the pattern of an earlier, more dispersed settlement (Dodgshon's first model) which became 'ring-fenced' through the growing rigidity of feudal requirements. Fairhurst's work found no evidence at all for either earlier presence or any great length of occupation, but his focus on upstanding remains might explain that. Detailed survey of the other sites might reveal different patterns. Achadh an Eas been partly damaged by later buildings and stone robbing (*ibid.*, 164).

Three of the sites – Klibreck, Grummore and Grumbeg – have the potential for remains of earlier date. Klibreck (NC53SE 3.00) is spread along an undulating terrace, below crags and above the boggy hollow containing the cross slab and chapel site. The visible remains take a wide variety of forms, including round, oval and rectangular structures. There are amorphous platforms, traces of walls and fragments of turf banks, with intermittent orthostats defining some of the walls. A small, rectangular structure here has been suggested as possibly Norse by Batey (1987a). Given the indications of its early origins, this township is one of the most likely to have had continuous occupation for a long period of time; the surface remains further hint at chronological complexity.

Fairhurst described Grummore (NC63NW 1) as 'difficult to interpret' (*ibid.*, 164). The remains there are sprawling, more dispersed than the other townships. There is no rig,

but many enclosures, some of which contain small structures, recalling Dodgshon's (1994) theories about early settlements having these characteristics. This could be an older settlement that did not contract to the same degree that others did, and the visible remains might correspond more closely to an earlier, dispersed pattern. Although its name does not appear in charters until the sixteenth century, the appearance in 1291 of the name Grumbeg implies the existence of a Grummore; if the former was the seat of a lesser noble, the larger twin settlement must also have possessed some degree of status. Like Klibreck, detailed examination of this township might tease out more of its history.

Although Grumbeg (NC63NW 6) is not as well preserved as Grummore, it too has potential for remains of earlier date. It also is fairly dispersed, spread along the lochside. The area to the south of the graveyard is relatively flat and largely featureless, with no signs of cultivation. This apparently blank space might have been the location of early occupation, perhaps associated with a chapel. To the north is a distinctive structure – long and sub-rectangular, with bowed sides. A very large, pink, glacial erratic sits at one end, and a more angular structure lies on the east side of that (see Plate 6.3). A large, curving enclosure abuts the buildings on the south; the ground is much higher inside it than outside, suggesting a buildup of soil through manuring and cultivation. This could simply be a kailyard, but it is large enough to warrant interpretation as a field, and the character of the bowed building is distinctive

Dixon (1993) has pointed out the need for extensive field survey of townships and their agricultural landscapes in order to identify possible earlier elements. Only this, coupled with carefully targeted, sample and open-area excavation, will eventually find the missing traces of earlier settlement and might establish how far back in time occupation began at some sites – to the Medieval period, the Norse or even earlier. Chapter Seven presents more detailed ideas about potential methods for furthering that understanding.

6.5 *The Improvements*

6.5.1 *The Strathnaver Clearances*

The eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries brought profound social and economic changes to the Highlands, culminating in the Clearances of many Highland

straths. The history of that period has been well covered elsewhere (e.g., Richards 1982; Bangor-Jones 1987) and is only outlined here.

In the later eighteenth century, landowners throughout Scotland felt economic pressure to turn their estates into profitable ventures and make them produce transferable capital. Even in areas where feudalism had long been established, wealth had previously been measured less in terms of monetary surplus than in terms of agricultural produce and numbers of men who could be mustered to fight for the laird. However, Highland landlords had come to have stronger links with lowland urban centres and wished to maintain lifestyles like those practised there. In addition, the military emasculation of the Highlands after the failed Jacobite uprising of 1745 made the military strength of Highland lairds irrelevant, and indeed the growing populations of many townships were causing serious famines, which many landowners helped to alleviate (Richards 1982, 60).

In the first few decades of the nineteenth century, like other landowners throughout Scotland, the Duchess of Sutherland and her husband evicted many of the tenants farming their straths in order to create sheep farms and turn their estates into profitable ventures. The Strathnaver Clearances have come to have almost iconic historical status, partly because of the brutality with which they were sometimes carried out (*cf.* Basu 2000). The Staffords also subjected their tenants to an extraordinary experiment in social engineering. Between 1807 and 1821 they moved up to 15,000 people from the straths to new lots on the north and east coasts. These lots were much smaller than the lands they had previously held, and the Staffords planned that in order to feed themselves the people would have to take up fishing, which would give them a more secure living than subsistence farming and would also develop the fishing industry as a source of income for the estate (Fairhurst 1964, 1).

James Loch, factor for the estate after 1816, foresaw the tenants' future prospects with confident clarity. He wrote:

I am particularly anxious that their [new] lots should be so small as to prevent their massing any considerable part of their rent by selling a beast, their rent must not depend on that. In short I wish them to become fishers only, but if you give them any extent of land or of Commonality they will never embark heartily on that pursuit (Richards 1982, 318-19).

Contemporary accounts by parish ministers like Donald Sage describe the disbelief, the anger and the kind of stupor in which people left their homes in Strathnaver and went

(often on foot, carrying their possessions) to the unfamiliar coastal settlements of Bettyhill, Farr, Kirtomy and Strathy. Sage described the prospect these tenants now faced:

Some miserable patches of ground along the shores were doled out as lots, without aught in the shape of the poorest hut to shelter them. Upon these lots it was intended that they should build houses at their own expense, and cultivate the ground, at the same time occupying themselves as fishermen, although the great majority of them had never set foot on a boat in their lives (Mackenzie 1883, 36).

Those moved to Clerkhill, Farr and elsewhere found new lots laid out for them, and the pattern of crofts appears relatively ordered there, strung out in linear fashion. In the early phases of the evictions, however, the estate surveyors had not laid out the new lots by the time tenants arrived, so people cleared from Rosal and other townships at this stage divided the land between themselves (Bangor-Jones 1987); this may account for the more irregular pattern of lots in Bettyhill, for instance.

Estate records show that townships were deliberately split up, with tenants from each one sent to several different places on the coast, tearing apart the existing social fabric (NLS 1015). The former run rig system of communally farmed land and common grazings was replaced by small, individual crofts, many on exposed headlands. The small amount and poor quality of arable land and restrictions on grazing meant that, as Loch had planned, tenants could no longer make a living only from the land (Hunter 1976, 27).

6.5.2 *The prospect of the sea*

The alternative, the one that the Staffords had intended their tenants should choose, confronted them inescapably here. Their first experience of the sea would have been visual. One can only imagine the effect on those who had never been to the coast before of seeing the land abruptly ending and giving way to a flat, constantly shifting liquid plain which stretched ahead to the horizon, only the cliffs of Orkney faintly visible on a clear day – so different from the restricted views and undulating topography along the strath.

The sea along this coast, even in May when most of the removals took place, can be boisterous, as people learned to their cost: contemporary accounts describe newly removed people being swept away by waves while fishing from the rocks, collecting birds' eggs or inspecting their new lots (MacLeod 1841, 26). In order to have any sustainable contact with the sea, people had to learn its strength and rhythms. Whereas before they had synchronised the cycles of their working life with those of the sun, now they had to

match them to the rhythms of the moon as well. They had to learn the habits of tides and how to predict how these changed over the days and seasons. Equipped with this knowledge, they would know when the surf retreated, exposing shellfish or seaweed for use as fertiliser and making it safe to forage.

They must have had to learn new techniques for finding food through even the most basic contact with the shore. They would have needed to learn which kinds of shellfish were suitable for bait and which for food, where to find them and how to use them – for instance, to chew limpets and spread the pulp on the water to attract fish to rocks by the shore (Fenton 1992, 139). At a greater level of intensity, some would practise line fishing, going out daily in small, single-masted boats equipped with oars to catch whitefish (Gray 1978, 16-17). The daily and annual routines of life would have changed, especially for those who took up fishing full time (a more common occurrence on the east coast than the north); the seasonal herring fishing, with work for men at sea and for women at the gutting, replaced summers at the shieling grounds

In order to venture out on the sea in boats on either a daily or seasonal basis, people had to acquire the skills and confidence to handle them, as well as detailed knowledge of the local currents, reefs and safe landing places. In conceiving their plan for a new fishing industry the Staffords had failed to take into account the extremely hazardous nature of the northern coast, where during one early nineteenth-century winter, storms destroyed about 100 boats along a 30-mile stretch which included Farr and Kirtomy (MacLeod 1841, 27). Some small-scale fishing had existed there previously, and it is not clear whether the newcomers learned the necessary skills from existing fishermen. One account by the admittedly bitter Donald Macleod describes those new to the fishing buying old, cast-off boats from established fishermen, who watched their first attempts at sailing with contempt or pity (*ibid.*). No one recorded how many failed or succeeded in the attempt, although Macleod does mention frequent drownings along this coast in the early post-Clearance years. Some people never got accustomed to such an unfamiliar element. An elderly lady in Bettyhill had lived most of her life on Eilean nan Roan, off Skerry, the descendant of people removed there. She recently said that even in her lifetime, people on the island hated the sea and boats so much that they avoided going to mainland. When it was necessary, they would get into the boat, lie down in the bottom, cover their faces with their coats and howl for the duration of the journey (Pat Rudie, pers. comm.).

Those who ventured out on the sea had no topographic features, other than those on the coastline, by which to navigate. They must have learned to establish and utilise fishing marks, bringing two pairs of topographic features on the shoreline into visual alignment, to know their place on the ocean (Eunson 1961, 181-98). This might have forced them to learn the new shoreline's character very quickly, replacing the intimate knowledge they would previously have had of their part of the strath. Finding fish would have been a more complicated matter. Novice fishermen might have shadowed the boats of experienced ones, but even boats within shouting distance of each other can have completely different luck on a given day (Polson 1892, 42-47).

They would have had to build up models of fishy movements, learning to 'think like fish' (Pálsson 1991, 323-35), developing unique perceptual and cognitive skills (Pálsson 1990, 119; also see Durrenberger & Pálsson 1983). This might have involved training their eyes to spot the flashes of colour and flocks of gulls and gannets which followed shoals (Pennant 1774) and, through time, trial and error, acquiring a kind of instinct for where fish were likely to be. However skilful they became at fishing, they had still to deal daily with the vagaries of luck and chance that partly governed their success or failure, instead of the reasonably predictable and longer term results of investing labour on land.

Because fishermen (before the invention of sonar) have always been so vulnerable to chance, they typically have elaborate superstitions to ensure good luck (Pálsson 1991, 88). Those learning to fish off Strathnaver's coast may have picked up the superstitions of established fishermen or developed their own, perhaps adapting traditional ones to their new occupation; although the process was not recorded, many of the superstitions were. Some subjects – pigs, rabbits, salmon, ministers and God among them – could never be mentioned at sea. If a mention slipped out, the offender had to call out 'cold iron' and touch a piece of iron on the boat; often a nail was hammered into base of the mast for this purpose. It was very bad luck to meet a minister or a red-headed or pregnant woman on one's way down to the boats. Throwing the remains of fish into the fire meant that they would become scarce at sea, while whistling or drawing a cat through the fire would raise the wind (Polson 1892, 43-44).

Uncertainty about fishing's success and the lives of those at sea must have bound the families making up newly created communities together in new configurations. The communal effort required in fishing – mirroring to some extent the effects of communal farming perhaps – might have had a similar effect. (Indeed, those harvesting the fishing

banks around Barra on the west coast developed a system whereby they apportioned lots of it among themselves annually, in a kind of 'marine run rig' (Thompson, Wailey & Lummis 1983, 24)). Some did take to fishing and the general industry of fish-curing, especially younger people, although for those on Sutherland's north coast the distance from markets meant it was only profitable at a very small scale (McLeod 1841, 27; Smout 1969, 337). Those settled on the east coast, where the harbours were naturally better and enhanced by estate improvements, seem to have taken more readily to fishing, although everywhere the herring fishing declined later in the nineteenth century as the shoals went elsewhere (Gray 1978, 13).

This consideration of the experience of those learning to fish off Sutherland's coasts applies as well to those who tried and failed, and to some degree to those who never fished but still had to come to terms with living on the coast. Along the north coast, many people emigrated after a few years after trying to make a living on their new crofts and failing (MacLeod 1841). However, some persisted and during the nineteenth century a crofting landscape replaced the earlier settlement pattern.

The following section looks more closely at three sets of remains in Skerry from the periods preceding and following the Clearances that contain elements of both pre- and post-Improvement landscapes.

6.5.3 *The little straths of Skerry*

If people had been cleared to Skerry to the same extent that they were around Farr, perhaps the landscape would look different today: stretches of moorland would have been improved perforce, and instead of containing small crofting clusters the straths would be more thickly settled. The most intensive re-working of the landscape took place in eastern Skerry. Here the entire loch of Blár Dubh, in the broad strath between Achnabat and Aird Torrisdale, was drained and the basin and sloping ground to its north were divided into the strips typical of single crofts (see Plate 6.4); that area of Skerry is even today often locally called 'Lots' rather than its official name of Achtoty. At Modsary, Achnabat, Clasheddy, Torrisdale and Eilean nan Roan similar re-allocation of land transformed the settlement pattern. However, in the straths to the west settlement was much more limited.

By about 1750, Skerray included eight settlement clusters supporting 20 small tenants who all had proportions of the arable land according to their rents; the Mackays of Skerray, tacksmen to the Reay estate, held the wadsett (Caird 1987, 49). When that lease expired in 1820, some removals took place. Then, in 1826, after the Reay estate was sold to the Duke of Sutherland, the crofting system was introduced (although it had already been planned for some time) and the lots at Achtoty and Modsarie were created in the drained basin of Blár Dubh and on reclaimed moorland, respectively (*ibid.*, 42-46).

Here, as elsewhere along the coast, estate factors had ambitious plans for a greatly expanded fishing industry; as elsewhere, those plans were not realised. As was the case at Farr and Bettyhill, the newly created crofts were too small to support families on agriculture alone, but the fishing was neither reliable nor safe enough to encourage a large-scale industry. An 1828 census lists only seven boats in Skerray, and in 1851 there were some resident fishermen listed in the census but recorded as having gone to fish in Wick, while 11 fishermen from Aberdeen were temporarily based at Port Skerray (Caird 1987, 50).

6.5.3.1 Sleitell

The settlement at Sleitell is perhaps the best preserved piece of the immediate post-clearance landscape in the study area, by virtue of its having been abandoned in the 1950s. It is bounded on three sides by high moorland (Figure 6.1). Toward the sea is a narrow, rock-bound beach with a narrow, natural slipway leading through the bedrock; the rest of Sleitell's coastal strip consists of cliffs. The tiny inlet, which faces north-west into prevailing winds, could never have provided much shelter for boats and the Sleitell Rocks at its mouth create a dangerous wave (Gavin Lockhart, pers comm).

Sleitell opens suddenly like a broad green bowl after kilometres of empty, bleak moorland. The settlement is striking for what is absent: the strip fields ubiquitous elsewhere in the crofting landscape. A few buildings are scattered on the upper slopes of the valley to the east and west; a lochan fills its lowest part, and there are lazybeds along the cliff tops and peat cuttings in the moorland around. Some of the buildings were clearly houses, with gable chimneys, the remains of iron stoves, a rusted bedstead. They are of drystone construction, well-built and standing to the level of the wall-head in most cases. These walls would certainly have been strong enough to take the weight of a roof;

however, all of them have couple slots built into their fabric, and in several cases the timber couples themselves survive, weathered and decaying in the walls.

The presence of couple slots built into walls where none were needed might reflect a transition between pre- and post-clearance architecture, between tenants' conceptions of what the fabric of a house should be and landlords' or factors' ideas about Improved building techniques. Many landlords encouraged tenants to alter the manner in which they built, abandoning the old stone footings and turf or stone superstructure for more strongly-built, often mortared houses. The Sleitell buildings may reflect the tenants' own compromise, or perhaps a refusal to give up the security which couples had always meant: they held up the roof. The presence of couples here is also striking because of the entirely treeless character of the surrounding landscape. The closest woods today are c. 3.5 km directly to the south-west, around Strathtongue. Tenants moved would have had to fetch them from there by a more circuitous route.

Although Sleitell can be reached from the south-west along the coast from Scullomie, the route is difficult and steep in places. The closest neighbouring settlement, more easily accessible over the moorland and through a slight gap between hills, is Strathan Skerray. A track that still leads from the back of Sleitell to the west side of Strathan Skerray was the only means of communication for those living in Sleitell. Any contact with the church – for marriages or burial, for instance – or school or commerce had to pass by foot or pack pony along that track. Strathan Skerray itself is fairly isolated (joined by a modern single track road to the main A836 through Skerray), and a track leads eastward from it toward Port Skerray and the other settlements to the east; children travelled that way on foot to school until the mid twentieth century (Dorothy Burchill, pers comm).

6.5.3.2 *Strathan Skerray* (Figures 6.14 and 6.15)

Strathan Skerray is similarly surrounded on three sides by high, rocky moorland through which it cuts an open green swathe, with a broad burn leading out to its inlet to the sea (Figure 6.1; also see Plate 6.8). Little visible evidence remains of whatever settlement was here before the creation of the crofting landscape; some previous settlement is shown on Roy's map (Figure 6.6). However, one possible remnant of the pre-clearance landscape occupies the bottom of the strath. The remains of a horizontal mill here may, like that in Lamigo (discussed below), date to the eighteenth century, if not earlier. This

mill is on a similar scale to that at Lamigo, as well as those farther to the east in Kirtomy and Swordly (Cheape 1984, 2).

Where the burn turns sharply northward, the features belonging to the mill begin. The grassy ground embraced in the burn's elbow here is crossed by a narrow, shallow channel (A on Figures 6.14 and 6.15), just over 1 m wide, its bottom still wet in the dry May of 1998. Water-borne stones litter its northern (downstream) end. While the channel runs straight, the higher ground of the pasture to the east is revetted by a snaking drystone wall, built along a slope cut away by the former course of the burn (Plate 6.9).

The channel would have almost, but not quite, led directly to the mouth of the mill's lade (Plate 6.10). If the mill's builders dug the channel to divert water more directly into the lade they should have needed some kind of device to dam the burn and force water into the lade. A rough line of large boulders, two stones wide, crosses the burn just upstream; this would have had the effect of partly damming the burn so that water flowed down the west side and into the lade's mouth (B). However, it would have worked at odds with the channel, entirely bypassing it, and so it must represent a different phase of engineering works. A large, faced heap of stones along the north side of the lade's mouth would, as a higher structure (now presumably collapsed), have prevented water from flowing more or less straight ahead, diverting it instead into the lade itself. A slumped stone revetment leads from this putative collapsed structure straight ahead to rejoin the burn, probably built to protect the pasture to the west from flooding in spate and diverting water from the lade's mouth when it was not required.

The head (the first 12 m or so) of the lade is well-defined, with steep sides and signs of stone facing. The body of the lade (C) runs roughly northward across the flat base of the strath, a shallow, revetted channel between four and six metres wide, with at least three possible courses discernible along most of its length. Along the lower c. 40 m, its course seems more straightforward, defined by steep, short slopes. At the point where the lade turns sharply eastward to rejoin the burn it is most clearly revetted, its sides up to a metre high. A straggle of stones (D) crosses it, joining a substantial, tumbled heap of boulders along its north-west bank. A shallow channel leads between this heap and a smaller one to the west to the wheel-pit, doglegging slightly from the lade's axis.

The wheel-pit is an oval pond, 6 m long by 1.8 m at its widest. It has well-faced sides of drystone construction, three or four courses high and curved to accommodate the

horizontal millstone. It still holds water. A waterlogged wooden tirl hub, partly burnt and lacking any paddle slots, was recovered from it several years ago, photographed and then replaced (Gavin Lockhart, pers. comm.). A broad, elongated ring of stone tumble (E) surrounds the pit, suggesting perhaps that whoever built the mill constructed another three or four drystone courses above the ground as a structure to protect the workings of the mill itself. A very slight, turf-clad bank arcs out from the wheel-pit's eastern side, perhaps defining a turf-built hut here which would have given the miller shelter and just room enough to manouvre around the millstone. It had an entrance, visible as a break in the bank, along the east.

At its north end, the wheel-pit narrows again, and here some massive slabs may be a collapsed lintel or corbelling which roofed the mouth of the tailrace. The race runs just over 20 m further until it rejoins the burn at F; banks define it on either side, and the broad bank to the west must have been necessary to keep the used-up water separate from the naturally boggy ground at the foot of the fluvio-glacial scarp.

It is not, perhaps, the most logically laid out of mills. Its builders did not dig the lade to run straight across the flat valley bottom for maximum momentum. Instead, it curves westward from the burn before turning to run along the lower edge of the scarp, skirting the adjacent arable land but sacrificing some power at the same time. The lade is straight where its sides have been revetted, but along some stretches it snakes as if following an old stream course, as perhaps it did; possibly its braided appearance represents different phases of the mill's use. The wheel-pit is not quite placed to maximise the head of water it received: its mouth should have been just 1.5 m to the east (and no amount of re-interpretation of the surface remains can show it to have been distorted westward by collapse). Instead, the section of lade leading to the pit darts suddenly and awkwardly from the lade's main axis, which must have caused at least a tiny loss in momentum. Even so the flow could have been easily controlled, perhaps with a wooden sluice of which no evidence remains, and when the mill was not in use the water was allowed to flow eastward to rejoin the burn.

It would have been a low-key, low-maintenance mill, adequate for the needs of the strath's community, used as and when it was required to grind dried corn. The mill's length, spanning over 200 m of the floor of the strath, means it physically dominates this lowest-lying part of the township, and perhaps attests to its importance to those who lived here

and depended on its rotations for some of their food. The partly burnt condition of the tirl suggests that this mill may have met a similar fate to the one at Lamigo (see below).

6.5.3.3 *Lamigo* (Figures 6.16 and 6.17)

The next strath to the east, at Lamigo Bay, is smaller and more inaccessible than Strathan Skerray, although it also has a well protected inlet to the sea (see Figure 6.1). Here the moorland to the south and cliffs along the coast give way to a high valley which slopes down toward the sea, dropping about 60 m vertically in the space of as many metres horizontally. Indeed, before the construction of metalled roads leading into the settlement, it would have been more easily reached by sea than by land. The Modsarie Burn descends the steeper ground to the west of the strath and slips into the sea at the inlet's south-west corner. At the foot of some crags the ground opens out into a small, fan-shaped raised beach through which the burn flows to the beach. The mill (NC66SE 35) occupies the sliver of level ground to the south of the burn, while to the north is a larger expanse of flat ground (see Plate 6.5).

This horizontal mill is more compact than that at Strathan Skerray. It begins c. 100 m south of the beach, where the burn descends a near-vertical crag as a waterfall, and here its natural momentum was harnessed to power the mill. About 5 m from the foot of the waterfall, a cut in the bedrock along the burn's left bank leads to what appears to be a collapsed, formerly stone-faced channel (A on Figures 6.16 and 6.17) which runs north for c. 20 m, following the course of the burn. Roughly opposite where the channel peters out, the mill's lade leads northward on the opposite side of the burn (at B). The bedrock cut and the channel could have held a chute which funnelled water into the lade. Some very large boulders running across the burn at the foot of the waterfall suggest there was a dam here to divert water into the putative chute; given the relative alignments of the burn's course and the chute, the water would have needed little more than a nudge to flow along the latter. This arrangement seems a more likely one than an alternative attempted recently by the current crofter (Gavin Lockhart), who had hoped to make the mill function again. The wooden sluice he built at the mouth of the lade to divert water toward the mill proved not to work.

The lade is defined on the east by an artificially scarped slope and on the west by a bank 18 m long and standing up to 1.5 m high; the builders probably constructed it out of earth and stone they had scooped out of the slope on the south-east side. At the northern

end of the bank, the lade's relationship to the rest of the mill is somewhat confused today by a tumbled drystone field wall (C) which runs northward, down the slope and diagonally across the foot of the lade. Understanding how the mill functioned requires mentally erasing this wall; however, the section of wall to the north of the lade runs along an earlier faced bank which appears original to the system.

After flowing along the lade, the water could have taken one of two directions: left to its own momentum, it might have naturally flowed north-westward, bypassing the mill's pond and returning to the burn along the lower boggy ground. However, a sluice here would have encouraged the flow slightly north-eastward into the pond, a damp, semi-circular, low-lying area (D), defined along the east by the curving natural slope and along the west by the re-used bank; an area of disturbed ground (F) masks the pond's extent to the north and north-east. The bank is broader than the later field wall built onto it and appears to have some earth in its fabric. One stretch of its eastern side has a visible face of two courses, standing *c.* 0.5 m high, but the slumped earth and stone below indicates that formerly it would have stood at least 0.8 m above the present floor of the pond – which is doubtless considerably silted now. The pond's eastern side may have been scarped and appears to have slumped and spread along the south-east.

The bank leads directly to a drystone mill building, partly reconstructed by the crofter with guidance from a staff member from the RCAHMS, using evidence recovered from a rudimentary excavation of the mill site as well as plans of other horizontal mills of similar dimensions (Gavin Lockhart, pers. comm.). A trench measuring *c.* 7 m east/west by *c.* 4 m was excavated by machine across the assumed site of the underhouse and mill building in 1986. According to notes made at the time (22/1/86), the eastern side of the underhouse could be discerned as a curving stone face with two courses surviving in a deep deposit of soft, layered mud and clay. Patches of grey clay were concentrated at the south end of the face and, about 0.3 m below the ground surface in the mud and clay, a complete upper millstone of red sandstone conglomerate was found lying horizontally. It leans now against the east edge of the pond; it measures 1.1 by 1 m across, with a smooth-sided central aperture 0.12 m in diameter flanked by rectangular notches (see Plate 6.6). Two other fragments of millstones, each of different geological origin, lie near it and were also found during the excavation and ground-clearing. The upper millstone was probably left in place when the mill was destroyed and sank into the underhouse when it collapsed; the lower stone was expected beneath it, but it was not found.

Local tradition does indicate the mill was destroyed. The Lockharts' neighbouring crofter in Lamigo remembers her grandmother describing how the mill had been burnt by the Sutherland estate during her own grandmother's youth, so that tenants would be forced to use the estate's mill. Given the age of the present crofter (in her late fifties), this might have happened in the first half of the nineteenth century. To the west of the millstone's position in the underhouse were found many pockets of reddish peat ash and fragments of burnt birch twigs. If the mill was burnt these might represent the collapsed remains of its roof.

The mill is known to have existed from 1789. The Judicial Rent Roll of the Reay Estate from December of that year lists James Mackay of Skerray as renting the Lamigo mill for £3; he also held the vicarage of Stranskerray (Strathan Skerray) and Skerray itself, and must have been the same Mackay who was tacksman to the Reay estate (Caird 1987). It may be that after the Staffords took over the estate in the late 1820s they wanted to discourage the use of small, local mills in favour of its own mills, in order to generate more estate income.

One other remnant of the pre-crofting landscape survives in this corner of Lamigo. Across the burn, where the natural scarp curves around the rest of the level ground of the raised beach, is a small building platform (F). Sub-rectangular in shape and terraced into the gently rising ground at the base of the scarp, it measures c. 11 m north/south by 3 m (see Plate 6.7). It is well-defined, with some stone visible at either end of its upslope side. It does not, however, have the appearance of a nineteenth century longhouse, and in fact the ruined former croft house and present bungalow sit about 200 m to the west, on much higher ground. While any stone foundations of a structure might have been robbed, the platform has not obviously been disturbed. It might represent the remains of even earlier occupation on the edge of some of the better agricultural land at Lamigo Bay.

6.5.3.4 The little mills of Sutherland

In the nineteenth century (and presumably also earlier), each township or crofting settlement in this area had its own mill; by the mid nineteenth century, only one was still functioning, in Kirtomy, and this went out of use c. 1865. Alexander MacKay, who grew up in Kirtomy and Swordly, later recorded his memories of the mill's workings and its place in his community along with Gaelic terms for parts of the mill, some of them peculiar

to northern Sutherland. His descriptions of the mill and kiln are reproduced at length in Cheape (1984).

He described the mill building as covered with divot (*fòid*) and thatched with heather, held down with thatching stones at the eaves. There was a small, unglazed window that could be blocked when necessary with a sheepskin bag filled with chaff. There was a fireplace on the ground against the north gable with a hole in the roof above to release the smoke, which also exited through the doorway. The millstones rested on a plank platform (*an leibhinn*), and the square wooden hopper (called locally *sleaghag*) hung by ropes from the couples, tapered to feed the grain through the attached boot (or *bròg*) into the eye (or *sùil*) of the upper millstone. The amount of grain fed into the stone was controlled by a wooden pin across the mouth of the boot, and the miller raised or lowered the upper millstone for coarser or finer grinding by means of a system of wooden lever and wedges (*an t-each*, or 'the horse'). Those familiar with the mill could tell from the sound of it whether oats or bere were being ground, and whether the grain was being ground coarse or fine (MacKenzie 1886, quoted in Cheape 1984, 2-6).

The tirl stood upright in the underhouse around a square iron axle (*an t-Iarunn Mór*, 'the Big Iron') which went through the aperture in the lower millstone, held in place by an iron cross piece fitted into notches cut in the upper millstone. The tirl had 16 concave wings, each roughly 2.5 feet long and nine inches wide, sunk and wedged into its body. A wooden trough fed water from the sluice into the mill at a 45 degree angle to give it momentum (*ibid.*). The milled grain fell around the lower millstone onto the platform or, in the case of oats, onto a reed mat. Shelled oats were carried out to *Cnoc a'Mhuillin*, the Mill Hill, a knoll on the settlement's common, where they were winnowed in the wind onto a *guilt*, an old sail or rough bed cover. Only about two-thirds of the grain was ever successfully shelled; some of the unshelled grain was chewed by local school boys as a challenging snack, while the rest was cooked into a porridge (*ibid.*, 7-8).

Landowners frequently built and equipped mills and then required their tenants to use and maintain them as well as to pay 'multures', fixed percentages of grain, to the millers, who were also tenants (Cheape 1984, 35). Queen Mary's 1546 grant of the mills and multures of Farr to Elizabeth Sinclair suggests that in that case such fees in kind went directly to her; alternatively, the miller paid her a percentage of the multures he received. On the Sutherland estate, optimism about improved agricultural production led to new mills being built while old ones were maintained. However, at least in some cases, old mills

and querns were destroyed or 'silenced' in order to force tenants to use the laird's mill, so the tenant of that mill would receive his due multures and the estate would therefore receive more revenue. Traditionally in the north and west the miller and the laird's mill were treated with suspicion (Cheape 1984).

The dimensions of Kirtomy's mill as described by MacKay and as confirmed in the field by Cheape (1984, 16) are similar to those of the remains at Strathan and the reconstructed mill at Lamigo; like them it served local families, an essential and familiar part of their economy and social life. Unlike the rectangular underhouse described by MacKenzie, however, those at Strathan Skerray and Lamigo curved to accommodate the millstones; they may represent a local variation, or perhaps an earlier form.

6.6 *Conclusion*

This chapter has traced the evidence for how Strathnaver and the coastline around its mouth were occupied through different periods since the arrival of Christianity on the north coast of Scotland. Certainly the nature and pattern of that occupation altered over time, but the evidence of archaeology, place names, maps and charters does indicate that certain places were inhabited consistently, if not continuously throughout history.

Clearly, certain events and processes effected some of the changes. The arrival of Norse settlers would have affected the lives of those already living in the study area, perhaps clustered around the Early Medieval chapel sites, and altered the choices, lifeways and probably the genes of future generations. The following centuries may have brought more gradual changes, with settlements coalescing under the pressures of feudal authority into the townships of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Almost certainly the most dramatic changes were those brought about by the Improvements of the early nineteenth century, which virtually depopulated the hinterland and altered the very nature of social life and the pattern of settlement along the coast.

Since the late nineteenth century, the failure of the kelp and fishing industries and the general lack of employment have partly depleted the study of its people. Bettyhill is the largest village, while Strathnaver is still occupied by sheep farms. Skerray's population has declined from over 500 in 1826 to about 120 (Caird 1987, 50). However, it is a far from lifeless community. Land continues to be a cause for contention, as crofters attempt to

gain more power against monolithic landowners. In the last decade the crofters of Melness have bought Melness Farm, including common grazing stretching west into A'Mhoine. Len MacKay, a crofter at Invernaver (who is called locally Len Naver to distinguish him from the myriad other MacKays in the area) was born on his croft; his ancestors had been cleared from Rosal and Lòn. Like other crofters with whom he shares common grazings, he was enraged at the Sutherland estate's sale in 1998 of a house at Crossburn, on their grazings, as a holiday cottage; at well beyond 70 he is a pro-active crofter, speaking out for the need for land reform in the Highlands.

The land, then, continues to be occupied and re-worked, with new archaeology continually being created, not all of it related simply to settlement or agriculture. Skerray, in particular, seems to be the focus for imaginative changes to the landscape. Its residents have in recent years built a 'crannog' in Loch Crochach by digging a deep ditch to turn a small promontory into an island. In a community-wide ceremony they planted native species of trees on the island and dropped ceramic balls, made by the Balnakeil potter Lotte Glob (herself the daughter of Danish archaeologist P. V. Glob) into the water around it. The Lockharts, artists and crofters at Lamigo, have recently banished sheep from their croft and are planting native trees on the land with assistance from Scottish Natural Heritage. They have also diverted the Modsaridh Burn, which flows through their land, into a large Celtic knot that they dug out by hand; it can, they believe, be seen from airplanes passing overhead on one of the transatlantic routes.

Among these more recent archaeological traces is a peculiar feature on Eilean nan Roan. The inhabitants of the island left in the 1950s for an easier life on the mainland; one who left as a young man has lived ever since at Coldbackie and returns to the island to herd the sheep grazed there each summer. On one such visit, he and a companion came upon a small, circular feature holding water, surrounded by a turf-covered earthen bank. That, he explained, was a boating pond, built by the men of Eilean nan Roan on which to race their model sailboats (Gavin Lockhart, pers. comm.).

During the 1997 survey of archaeological sites and coastal erosion along this stretch of coast (Brady & Morris 1998), my fellow surveyor and I observed several puzzling structures on the neighbouring croft at Lamigo. Nestled in a narrow gully above a high, sheer-faced geo are a number of stone settings and small drystone structures in the shape of boats, their prows pointing out to sea. The features were duly recorded: boat-shaped settings are known in Scotland – for example, on St. Kilda – although these appeared

rather fresh. It later emerged that in the late twentieth century a visiting sculptor had gone up to the gully and begun to re-arrange several lambing shelters he found there into ship shapes. The neighbouring crofter, however, had objected because the shelters had been built by her father and she wanted them preserved as they were – the archaeology of the previous generation.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

In this thesis, I have focused on two discrete landscapes in Highland Scotland, each centred around a major river valley, and attempted to write the history of each landscape's habitation throughout the past. This has involved drawing together many hundreds of pieces of data of varying kinds and quality: the detailed descriptions of individual sites held in the National Monuments Record and Sites and Monuments Record, as well as antiquarian accounts and modern excavation and survey reports; the evidence of secondary historical accounts and to some extent documents and maps; my own observations of the local topography; and the results of my own fieldwork at differing degrees of intensity. In fashioning these myriad pieces of evidence into accounts of the landscapes' habitation, I hope I have achieved not just a generalised discussion of each, but something else: highly textured accounts that search out the meanings of the landscapes to those who occupied and sculpted them and whose lives were in turn shaped by them, at different times in the past, accounts that in some way evoke not just the physical characteristics of sites and the lie of the land but also the different ways in which they were perceived and developed.

My overall aim has been, as the title indicates, to 'write people into the landscape.' Has that been achieved? The answer might vary for different parts of the thesis. Certainly the scales of analysis have varied, and for the most part have been rather coarse; the extent to which I have made visible (my version) of those past inhabitants of Badenoch and Strathnaver has perhaps varied accordingly. The most intensive and invasive phases of the study – the excavations at Raitts and the limited survey in Sutherland – may have produced the more convincing accounts. It might also be argued that the nearer in time to the present that archaeological remains were created, the more we see and comprehend of the people that left them; for instance, we know the symbolic significance of the hearth in Highland Scotland, so we can interpret the remains of the hearth in longhouse 21 at Easter Raitts in more depth than we might for its Bronze Age equivalent. Nevertheless, I would argue that we should attempt textured and ambitious interpretations of more opaque remains, for which we understand little or nothing of their cultural context, but always proceeding on two important assumptions: that such a cultural context certainly existed and was intimately linked to the physical character of the landscape;

and that the accounts we fashion of those remains and the people that created them are partial, always limited, the results of our own dialectical engagement with the evidence. The challenge of writing people into the landscape is one of the largest currently facing archaeological practice, and one that must be met if we are to maintain relevance within our own culture and effectively communicate what we find to those outside the profession.

If the scales of analysis employed in this thesis have produced accounts painted for the most part with a broad brush, they have at least led to a more comprehensive and detailed understanding of the landscapes' histories, and these should form a firm basis for further, more detailed work in both study areas. Some of the most intensive investigations so far carried out on post-Medieval townships and related activity in the Highlands have focused on Badenoch and Strathnaver, including Fairhurst's work at Rosal, Bangor-Jones's historical research in northern Sutherland, my own work at Easter Raitts and the RCAHMS' fieldwork in Glen Banchor. That work has increased our understanding of that latest, pre-Clearance phase of occupation, answering many questions, raising others, but in general expanding the database of knowledge about the post-Medieval period. Other periods, however, remain poorly understood, and further fieldwork may answer some of the questions raised in this thesis.

In both Badenoch and Strathnaver, some of the most interesting questions arise from the evidence (or lack of it) for the later first millennium A.D. and the periods to either side of it. In Badenoch, the evidence for thanages raises questions about their antiquity and the form of the landscape's organisation out of which they grew. While such questions may not be answered through archaeological fieldwork, there is potential for understanding more of where and how people lived in the later first millennium A.D., how that had developed from an earlier social order and how it altered under the influence of feudalism in subsequent centuries. The chapel sites in Badenoch are the strongest evidence for that late first millennium inhabitation, and by beginning with them and working outward into the surrounding landscape it may be possible to establish its nature. Further investigation is planned at Raitts Chapel, including geophysical survey to establish the extent and density of burials and whether there are traces of a circular or oval enclosure or any associated

buildings, either inside or outside the banked enclosure. Further excavation, based on the results of the geophysical survey, may yield dating evidence for the bank's construction and the nature of any structures, as well as the length of time the chapel site was in use. This work could form the focus of a wider survey of chapel sites in Badenoch: detailed survey of all of the sites and their topographic settings would produce a useful database for comparative analysis of the surface remains and form a basis for selective geophysical survey and sample excavation at or around other sites with the potential to yield information on their origins.

While the excavations at Easter Raitts have established that the visible remains represent the latest, pre-Clearance phase of its occupation as well as a much earlier, prehistoric phase of use, evidence for the intervening periods remains elusive. The souterrain at Lynchat could provide important clues, especially if it was the focus of both later Iron Age and Medieval habitation. Topographic and geophysical survey of the area around the souterrain would establish whether the jumble of banks, lynchets and hollow-way visible beneath the bracken form any comprehensible pattern. The results could be used to guide sample excavation to test for the survival of archaeology from either or both periods, while micromorphological analysis of sections cut through the lynchets could establish how they formed.

Finally, further work around the township of Easter Raitts itself would be an important next step, to establish whether traces do exist of its Medieval occupation. If people in Medieval Highland townships did regularly shift the locations of their houses, as Fairhurst (1968) suggested, then fieldwork strategies must be designed to find traces of that shifting pattern, or at least prove or disprove whether that was the case. At Easter Raitts, for example, excavation has so far focused on the visible structures. Future work might subject the areas between the visible structures to open-area excavation – although it might prove that traces of earlier occupation were scoured away by later use or even, as Fairhurst (1968) suggested, ploughed up. Here, too, geophysical survey in and around the township could be employed to establish the presence or absence of more elusive remains of earlier date.

In Strathnaver, the juxtaposition of the brochs, the chapel sites and the Norse place names (and townships on their sites) raise certain questions: if the brochs were the focus of or at least structured the settlement pattern in the early first millennium, how had that altered by the time chapels were established, and how do the chapels relate to contemporary settlement? What effects did Norse settlers, arriving late in the millennium, have on the strath's inhabitants and the character of their occupation? Did the farms established by the Norse continue to be occupied throughout subsequent centuries, into the Medieval and post-Medieval periods, as the charters suggest? And did that occupation shift location, continue upon the same spot, or repeatedly contract and expand? Here again, the chapel sites appear pivotal, as they are the best evidence for the locations of settlement in the later first millennium A.D. A comprehensive and detailed survey of the sites would be a starting point for understanding that settlement pattern. Closer investigation could then be carried out at certain sites with high potential for early origins and a continual (if not continuous) sequence of occupation.

As highlighted in Chapter Six, townships in the upper strath are the most potentially informative – in particular Klibreck, with its Early Medieval chapel site, Norse name, proven Medieval occupation and visible archaeological complexity. Detailed survey of this site and sample excavation, targeted at more ephemeral remains, could help untangle its sequence of development. In addition, it might prove interesting to examine another chapel site, one that appears to have long been out of use and which is likely to be less disturbed than others, due to its remote position: Eilean Coomb. Although no remains are visible at the site, they were in the last century; the island is unlikely to have been ploughed since, as it offers only a small and obviously inaccessible patch of level ground, and the only agricultural activity likely to have taken place here is grazing. Detailed topographic survey of the island might detect and record subtle traces not readily apparent on the surface, and guide trial excavation to establish whether any remains survive of the ecclesiastical establishment here. Little is known of the nature of early eremitic sites in this area, and investigation of Eilean Coomb could prove rewarding; this could form part of a wider examination of possible eremitic sites along the north Sutherland coast.

Finally, on a different but related tack, Strathnaver's hut-circle settlements hold great potential for understanding its later prehistoric occupation. Field survey on a large scale, like that carried out by the RCAHMS (1993) in Kildonan and elsewhere, would do much to elucidate the forms and configurations of structures and cultivation remains present and allow the establishment of a provisional chronology. The database of knowledge built up for Kildonan as well as the work at Lairg (McCullagh & Tipping 1998) would prove an invaluable basis for comparison of the Strathnaver settlements. Closer observation of Strathnaver's brochs, particularly as they appear to relate or not relate to hut-circle settlements, would also be a useful exercise, allowing the formation of conclusions about their relationship to contemporary domestic architecture on a more modest scale as well as the prevailing social structure in the later Iron Age here. Again, comparison with the Kildonan brochs would be fruitful, particularly in light of Cowley's (in press) provocative observations on the broch landscapes there. Fieldwork designed to increase understanding of the early first millennium inhabitation of Strathnaver would help in understanding the character of settlement in the centuries preceding the establishment of chapels in the strath.

These research questions have arisen during the process of writing this thesis. The accounts of Badenoch and Strathnaver presented here are based on the available evidence, but more will undoubtedly come to light through fieldwork like that outlined above, allowing the construction of different, more fully informed partial truths about how these landscapes were inhabited in the past. The work of writing people into the landscape is indeed a work in progress.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Methodology

The purpose of this appendix is to present a full statement of the research methodology employed in the thesis. It aims to explain how and why the study areas were selected, how the study of their archaeological remains was approached and what I hoped to accomplish through this. It also aims to make clear the nature and extent of archival research and fieldwork undertaken.

1.1 Choice of the Study Areas

The process of choosing the study areas was a complex one that evolved as the shape of the thesis itself changed during the first years of study. Originally, the chronological scope of the thesis was much narrower, focusing on the post-Medieval period and particularly the immediate pre- and post-Clearance period in mainland, Highland Scotland. This involved me first in Strathnaver, where some of the most notorious Clearances took place and were coupled with an attempt at social engineering involving re-location to the coast. Preliminary fieldwork in Strathnaver, however, drew my attention to the richness and variety of the archaeological remains it contained, and I realised I did not wish to restrict myself to a single period of study, particularly a recent one. Further fieldwork, involving coastal survey, along this and adjacent parts of Sutherland's north coast gave me still more insight into the cultural geography of the area.

The notion of looking at the entire chronological and morphological range of the archaeology in a defined area grew into an idea of attempting to write an area's history through its archaeological remains and taking a more geographical approach that also considered the influence of natural features in interpreting people's past experience of the landscape.

Strathnaver still seemed an ideal study area for implementing such an approach: it was well defined topographically, contained a variety of remains from different periods and was a potentially very informative but very much understudied area. Although it might be argued that an area where more excavation had taken place would have

provided more information with which to work, it actually seemed that the effectiveness of the method I hoped to employ, explained further below, would be more thoroughly tested in an understudied area. In addition, Strathnaver's historical and archaeological context dovetailed with my main areas of interest. These were, in brief, the first and early second millennia AD, with pre-existing Pictish societies influenced by the introduction of Christianity by priests from west coast monasteries, subsequent contact with and some degree of integration with the Norse earldom and, as northern Scotland became amalgamated with the Scottish Crown, eventual and gradual feudalisation of the landscape and the formation of townships.

Having settled on Strathnaver as one study area, I then sought another area with both enough similarities but also differences to permit me to undertake an effective parallel study. My first involvement at Easter Raitts in Badenoch drew my attention to this area. Although larger than Strathnaver, it also has a topographic coherence that had influenced its inhabitation and political influence in the past. Like Strathnaver, it contained sophisticated Pictish communities that would have seen changes to their landscapes as Christian missionaries swept across Druim Alban and established chapels and shrines. Its position in the central Highlands, in contrast to Strathnaver's marginal position relative to the Scottish power base, meant that it had played an important role in the politically and socially unsettled early centuries of the second millennia AD. The formation of its townships may have followed a similar process to that in Strathnaver. Like Strathnaver, its archaeology was understudied, although the historical events in this area had received more attention.

The two areas therefore seemed complementary, in the nature of their landscapes, their historical backgrounds and the paucity of archaeological work so far undertaken in both. I defined the limits of both areas using watersheds (although that defining the eastern side of Badenoch (Figure 3.1) is somewhat arbitrary, no archaeological sites were missed by straightening the line in this high and barren portion of the landscape). In retrospect, the thesis might have been more effective had the chronological scope been limited to the first and second millennia, as this would have allowed a closer, more in-depth treatment of the archaeological and historical evidence from a narrower time range. In addition, a more limited chronological scale would have

allowed greater integration of the areas' histories with their landscapes and a higher-level interpretation of the taskscapes in existence at different times.

1.2 *Methodology Statement*

The study of both areas was based upon known sites and involved little or no prospection for new sites. The starting point was the National Monuments Record of Scotland (it should be noted that the Highland Sites and Monuments Record is now virtually identical to the NMRS, thanks to regular downloads from the latter to the former, although where new detail about a known site is discovered this may be added to the SMR but not to the NMRS). Searches of the Canmore database produced lists of the sites, detailed records for which were downloaded and studied. Some sites were eliminated from consideration at this stage; these included probable post-Clearance farmsteads and enclosures as well as sites identified by a certain fieldworker whose field identifications have been shown elsewhere to be unreliable. The great majority of NMRS sites survived this initial filter.

In order first to gain an overall impression of the distribution of archaeological sites in each area, all the remaining sites were plotted on to maps. Plotting was initially done by hand, using different colours and symbols for sites of different types and periods, on paper copies of 1:50,000 scale maps of Strathnaver and Badenoch; the disparate maps were joined together to produce a composite map for each area. These large paper copies were examined to identify what kinds of sites clustered in which parts of the landscape and whether sites of different periods were concentrated in different places. Once these patterns had been established, the detailed NMRS records were again studied in conjunction with the maps. The sites were subsequently plotted onto scanned maps using Autocad LT98.

Preliminary fieldwork involved walking and driving (as required) the length and breadth of both areas to experience the varying topographic and other natural features and the different views on the ground. On the basis of this, topographic zones were identified, based on areas within Badenoch and Strathnaver with discrete topographic character. For example, in Strathnaver, as outlined in Chapter Five, at different points the strath narrows or widens, and this creates distinct areas of micro-topography; these

would have influenced the experiences of those living in or travelling through the strath. After the zones were defined, I again returned to the maps, demarcated the zones on them and examined the overall pattern of archaeological sites of different periods in relation to the zones' boundaries.

A second phase of fieldwork followed, which involved visits to selected sites in both areas. Sketches and notes were made during the visits to augment the NMRS entry and record my own observations on each site's position in the landscape, the views available from it across the landscape and to other sites of the same or earlier period and so on. In general, I attempted to visit sites representing most periods in each topographic zone of each study area. For example, in zone 1 in Strathnaver (around Loch Naver), I visited hut circle settlements along the north side of the loch at Grumbeg and on Gob Mor, Grummore broch, the early chapel sites at Klibreck and Grumbeg and the township sites of Klibreck, Grummore, Grumbeg and Achadh an Eas. What seemed to be more significant clusters of sites, such as some of the chambered cairn groups and hut circle settlements in the lower strath, were inspected in more detail.

Finally, a more intensive phase of fieldwork was undertaken in both study areas. In Strathnaver this involved detailed topographic survey of the horizontal water mills at Lamigo and Strathan Skerray, while in Badenoch it involved several seasons of excavation at the township of Easter Raitts and a season of survey and trial excavation at the site of Raitts Chapel.

The fieldwork was supplemented by archival research. To begin with, this involved looking at all documentary sources listed in the NMRS against each site included in the Gazetteer of Sites. This generally included antiquarian accounts of a site's excavation, notes in the *OS Name Books*, references in early travel guides, *Discovery and Excavation Scotland* entries and other modern journal articles detailing finds or excavation results. Often the bibliographies in these sources, particularly the modern journal articles, led to further reading on the site or similar sites, including period and regional synthesis pertinent to the material in the study areas. Little research into primary sources was carried out other than into those most readily accessible, including the *Origines Parochiales Scotiae*, the *Statistical Accounts*, existing collections of charters such as the

Register of the Great Seal and early works such as the *Annals of Ulster* and Adomnán's *Life of Columbus* in translation.

In writing about the multi-period archaeological landscapes of Badenoch and Strathnaver, I used the maps as a starting point to create a broad-brush impression of the structure of the landscapes at different times, aided by the descriptive detail in the NMRS records. I used my own notes on the topography, views and other experiences of the landscape along with observations on particular sites to focus on representative, unusual or otherwise more informative areas from each period and draw conclusions about how the landscapes were perceived and occupied in the past. Particular sites or groups of sites described and discussed in more detail are those visited or investigated during fieldwork. I drew on the primary and secondary sources consulted to flesh out the discussion of certain sites, and wove information taken from period and regional syntheses and reports on comparable sites elsewhere to further interpret the archaeological remains in their chronological and geographical contexts.

Appendix 2.1 Gazetteer of Sites in the Badenoch Study Area

<i>NH40SW Number</i>	<i>Nmrs Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Coille Dhubh	Shieling-Hut (Possible); Wall	N 4088 0128

<i>NH60SW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
2	Loch Dubh, Carn Dearg	Shieling-Huts	NH 6290 0169
3	Coire Nan Laogh	Shieling-Huts (Possible)	NH 6310 0046
4	Allt Ballach	Shieling-Huts	NH 6398 0331 & 6420 0324

<i>NH60SE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1.00	Lurg	Township; Hut- Circle; Small Cairns	NH 695 002
1.01	Lurg	Township; Kilns	NH 6954 0034
1.02	Lurg	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NH 6988 0028
2	Sidhean Mor Dail A' Chaorainn	Enclosure: Palisaded	NH 6906 0042
3	Ruigh Gleann Ballach	Building; Shieling- Huts; Trackway	NH 6510 0030
4	Sidhean Mor Dail A' Chaorainn	Cairn: Square (Possible); Cairn (Possible)	NH 6887 0041
5	Sidhean Mor Dail A' Chaorainn	Small Cairn	NH 6906 0012
6	Allt A'Chaorainn	Shieling-Huts	NH 6918 0010
7	Allt Cuil Na Caillich	Shieling-Huts	NH 6920 0476
8	Allt Cuil Na Caillich	Shieling-Huts; Shieling-Mound	NH 6927 0436
9	Allt A' Chaorainn	Shieling-Huts; Kiln- Barn	NH 4944 0313 to 6929 0366
10	Allt A' Chaorainn	Shieling-Huts	NH 6900 0178
11	Allt Fionndrigh	Shieling-Huts	NH 6693 0110 & 6697 0113
12	Allt Fionndrigh	Shieling-Huts; Pen; Bridge	NH 6629 0175
13	Allt An T-Seillich	Shieling-Huts; Pens; Sheepfold	NH 6588 0314
14	Allt Shuas Glas Choire	Shieling-Huts	NH 6609 0444

<i>NH70NW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Allt Unaig	Shieling-Huts	NH 7285 0514
2	Allt Unaig	Shieling-Huts; Pen	NH 7115 0506

<i>NH70NE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Ruighe Chreagain	Shieling-Huts (Possible)	NH 7906 0746
2	Ruighe Na Roig	Shieling-Huts (Possible)	NH 7562 0616
3	Allt Na Baranachd	Shieling-Hut (Possible)	NH 777 056

<i>NH70SW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Loch Gynack	Crannog (Possible)	NH 74 02
3	Loch Gynack	Small Cairns	NH 7394 0219
4.00	Allt Gortan	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns; Burnt Mound	NH 726 018
4.01	Allt Gortan	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NH 7262 0182
4.02	Allt Gortan	Burnt Mound	NH 7251 0182
4.03	Allt Gortan	Small Cairns; Rig (Possible)	NH 7240 0180
5.00	Allt Mor	Shieling-Huts; Pen (Possible)	NH 7140 0350
5.01	Allt Mor	Shieling-Huts	NH 7146 0350
5.02	Allt Mor	Shieling-Huts; Pen	NH 7127 0292
5.03	Allt Mor	Shieling-Huts	NH 7151 0289
5.04	Allt Mor	Shieling-Huts	NH 7177 0296
5.05	Allt Mor	Shieling-Huts	NH 7181 0286
5.06	Allt Mor	Shieling-Huts	NH 7188 0262
5.07	Allt Mor	Shieling-Huts	NH 7183 0253
6	Meall Dubh-Ghlaic	Small Cairns	NH 7170 0190
7	Allt Mor	Hut (Possible)	NH 7175 0155
8	Allt Mor	Small Cairns	NH 7183 0136
9	Allt Na Loinne	Hut-Circle (Possible); Small Cairns; Rig	NH 7134 0132
10.00	Allt Na Beinne	Shieling-Huts; Small Cairns; Field-Banks; Rig; Hut-Circle	NH 7077 0166

10.01	Allt Na Beinne	Shieling-Huts	NH 7078 0165
10.02	Allt Na Beinne	Field-Banks; Rig; Small Cairns	NH 7075 0162
10.03	Allt Na Beinne	Hut-Circle (Possible)	NH 7082 0149
11	Allt Na Beinne	Hut-Circles; Souterrain (Possible); Small Cairns	NH 7065 0160
14.00	Strone	Township; Farmstead; Mill	NH 7210 0001
14.01	Strone	Township; Corn- Drying Kilns	NH 7229 0029
14.04	Strone	Mill; Mill Lade; Buildings	NH 7247 0014
15	Strone	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NH 7175 0007
16	Creag Bheag	Township	NH 7351 0135
17	Creag Bheag	Burnt Mound	NH 7378 0117
19	Creag Bheag	Cairn	NH 7368 0086
20	Creag Bheag	Small Cairns	NH 7326 0121
21	Creag Bheag	Small Cairns	NH 7333 0096
23	Allt Gortan	Small Cairns	NH 7250 0136
24	Allt Gortan	Rig; Small Cairns	NH 7264 0129
25	Ballachroan	Hut-Circle (Possible)	NH 7258 0071
26	Caochan A' Mhanaich, Ballachroan	Hut-Circle; Cairn (Possible); Small Cairns; Bank	NH 7273 0080 & 7283 0080
28	Croft Duncan, Ballachroan	Township; Small Cairns	NH 7263 0033
29.00	Allt Gortan, Ballachroan	Township; Limekiln (Possible)	NH 7275 0069
30	Caochan A' Mhanaich, Ballachroan	Township	NH 7342 0053
34	Caochan A'Mhanaich	Farmstead; Enclosure; Rig; Small Cairns; Head Dyke	NH 7360 0072
38	Loch Gynack	Huts	NH 7449 0239
39	Allt Unaig	Shieling-Huts	NH 7185 0488
40	Allt Unaig	Shieling-Huts	NH 7403 0359
41	Tigh-Na -Gaoith	Township	NH 7402 0023
42	Tigh-Na-Gaoith	Cairn	NH 7405 0026

NH70SE Number	NMRS Name	Type of Site	NGR
1	Kingussie	Carved Stone Ball	NH 75 00
2	Kingussie, St Columba's Friary	Friary	NH 7568 0077
3	Lynchat	Souterrain	NH 7767 0193

4	The Rath Of Kingussie	Stone Circle; Moot	NH 7586 0065
5.01	Kingussie, High Street, Old Parish Churchyard; Alternative(s):Old Parish Grave Yard; Old Church Burial Ground	Funerary	NC 7686 0065
6.00	Upper Raitts; Alternative(s):Balsow; Kerrowdow	Townships	NH 775 023
6.01	Upper Raitts	Township	NH 773 023
6.02	Upper Raitts; Alternative(s):Baldow, Easter Raitts	Township	NH 777 023
8	Toman An T-Seomair	Township	NH 7531 0234
10	Lynchat	Deserted Settlement	NH 777 018
11	Laggan Cottage	Township	NH 773 016
12	Kerrow	Deserted Settlement	NH 770 016
15	Creag Bheag	Small Cairns; Lazy-Beds	NH 766 027
16	Torcroy	Crannog (Possible)	NH 773 000
27	Achadh A' Chatha	Township	
29	Achadh A' Chatha	Township	NH 782 037
74.00	Dunkeld - Dalnacardoch - Ruthven - Inverness Military Road	Transport And Communications	NH 7588 0000 to 7999 0356
84	Creag Bheag	Small Cairns	NH 7894 0233

<i>NH80NW Number</i>	<i>NRMS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Delfour; Alternative(s):Easter Delfair	Cairn; Ring; Stone Circle (Possible)	NH 8442 0858
2	Invereachy; Alternative(s):Invereshie	Cairn	NH 84 05
3	Insh Church; Alternative(s):St Adamnan's Church; Kincraig, Insh Parish Church Of Scotland And Burial Ground	Funerary; Religion	NH 8358 0533
8	An Suidhe	Flint Object	NH 81 07
10	Coire Chleirich	Shieling-Huts (Possible)	NH 8080 0791
11.00	Mid Delfour; Alternative(s):Wester Delfour; Easter Delfour; Delfour	Township; Settlement: Unenclosed	NH 843 085
12.00	Alvie Gardens; Alternative(s):Pitchurn	Township	NH 838 077
13.00	Ballourie; Alternative(s):Pitourie	Township; Rig	NH 833 070
25	Dunachton Burn;	Mill; Mill Lead	NH 818 050

	Alternative(s):Dunachton Mills		
35	Dunkeld - Ruthven - Inverness Military Road	Transport And Communications	NH 8241 0500 to 8499 0742
45	Dunachton Mill	Farming And Fishing	NH 818 052
46	Badden	Township	NH 827 062
47	Ballourie	Township; Enclosures	NH 830 069

<i>NH80NE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Loch-An-Eilean Castle	Defence; Residential	NH 8983 0792
2	Kinrara	Stone Cup	
3	Loch Gamhna	Bronze Cauldron	NH 8925 0683
4	Kinrara, Duchess Of Gordon's Monument; Alternative(s):St. Eata's Chapel	Chapel	NH 8687 0767
5	St Eata's Well	Well	NH 8704 0798
6	Croftgowan	Round and Square Barrows	NH 863 085
7	Ballinluig	Cairn: Ring; Hut-Circle (Possible); Cairns	NH 8638 0989
8	Ballinluig	Township	NH 864 099
9	Ballinluig	Cairn; Field Clearance Cairns	NH 8612 0985
14	Rothiemurchus, Old Parish Church	Religion	
16	Dalnavert	Cairn: Long (Possible)	NH 8573 0644
17	Alvie Parish Church, Church Of Scotland	Religion	NH 8640 0933
20	Alvie	Shieling-Hut	NH 8577 0964
21	Dalraddy Cottage	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NH 862 076
22	Inshriach Nursery	Motte-And-Bailey Castle (Possible)	NH 874 073
23	The Drum	Cairn (Possible)	NH 8905 0935
24	Creagan Ruighe Dhughail	Cairn	NH 8892 0687
25	Creag A'Chait	Cairn	NH 8888 0702
26	Loch An Eilein	Hut-Circles (Possible); Enclosure	NH 8975 0823
27	Creag A' Mhuilein	Cairns	NH 8934 0913
28	Lochan Mor	Deserted Settlement	NH 898 092
30	Loch Gamhna	Dun	NH 8936 0718
33	Doune	Defence	NH 8862 0985
35	Lochan Mor	Deserted Settlement	NH 898 095
52	The Drum	Shieling-Huts	NH 8904 0931

53	The Drum	Shieling-Huts	NH 8893 0932
54	Lochan Mor	Shieling-Huts	NH 8973 0930
55	Creag A' Mhuilein	Shieling-Huts	NH 892 092
58	Milton	Watermill (Possible)	NH 893 095
59	Milton	Mill Lead	NH 8945 0927
60	Loch-An-Eilean, Watermill	Industrial	NH 8977 0853
65	Ord Ban	Shieling-Huts; Enclosure	NH 891 087
79	Milton	Field Clearance Cairns; Building	NH 897 090
81	Loch An Eilein	Township (Possible); Limekiln	NH 897 083
98	Dunkeld - Dalnacardoch - Ruthven - Aviemore – Inverness Military Road	Transport And Communications	NH 8500 0742 to 8799 0999
99	Allt Dibheach	Settlement: Unenclosed	NH 8720 0916

<i>NH80SW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	St Drostan's Chapel And Graveyard; Alternative(s):St Drostan's Church	Funerary	NH 8227 0463
2.01	Dunachton	Pictish Symbol Stone	NH 8208 0461
2	Dunachton Lodge	Residential 'Castle' (Possible)	NH 8211 0474
22	Dunachton	Flints; Whetstone	NH 822 045
23	Loch Insh	Flint Scatter	NH 827 047 to 829 049
26	Loch Insh	Flint Objects	NH 830 049
28.00	Dunachtonmore	Township; Farmsteads; Field Clearance Cairns	NH 810 045
28.01	Dunachtonmore	Township	NH 811 046
30	Croftcarnoch	Cultivation Remains; Field Clearance Cairns	NH 801 037
31	Dunachtonmore; Alternative(s):Achnabeachan	Township	NH 812 042
35	Easter Inveruglass	Township; Limekiln	NH 809 006
36	Wester Inveruglass	Township	NH 809 004
39	Ballintean	Township	NH 847 026
41	Balachroick	Township	NH 849 009
42	Badan Dubh	Township; Dyke	NH 852 008
49	Dunkeld - Ruthven - Aviemore - Inverness Military Road	Transport And Communications	NH 8000 0357 to 8245 0499

50	Dunachtonmore	Cairns	NH 802 045
51	Meadowside Quarry	Quarry; Small Cairns	NH 817 039

<i>NH80SE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
2	Allt A' Mharcaidh	Shieling-Huts (Possible)	NH 868 043
9	Allt Nan Cuileach	Shieling-Hut (Possible)	NH 881 031

<i>NH81NE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Lethendryveole	Township (Possible)	NH 897 199
3	Dunkeld - Dalnacardoch - Ruthven - Aviemore Inverness	Military Road	NH 8999 1956 to 8858 1999

<i>NH81SE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Aviemore	Cairn; Ring; Stone Circle	NH 8970 1347
2	Avie more Military Road	Transport And Communications	NH 892 113
3	Ballinluig	Cairn (Possible)	NH 8641 1015
9	The Loist	Deserted Settlement	NH 897 103
11	Boring Mill	Watermill	NH 895 100
14	Easter Aviemore	Township	NH 896 141
15	Milton	Township; Corn Mill	NH 894 138
16	Dunkeld - Ruthven – Inverness Military Road	Transport And Communications	NH 8803 1000 to 8990 1499

<i>NH90NW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Balvattan; Alternative(s):Tullochgrue Hill; Whitewell	Hut-Circles; Field- System	NH 915 089
3	Rothiemurchus Doune	Defence	NH 925 067
29	Upper Tullochgrue; Alternative(s): Upper Balvadden	Township	NH 912 091
34	Auldrue	Township	NH 932 074

<i>NH91NW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
2	Grenish Moor	Hut-Circles; Field-System	NH 906 155
3	Avielochan, West Cairn	Chambered Cairn; Cairn	NH 9094 1672
4	Tom Pitlac; Alternative(s): Garten	Motte (Possible)	NH 947 196
5	Grenish; Alternative(s):Loch Nan Carraigan	Cairn; Ring; Stone Circle	NH 9078 1550
6	Grenish	Cairn	NH 908 154
8	Avielochan	Cairn; Bronze Pin	NH 905 169
11	Loch Vaa	Crannog	NH 912 174
13	Avielochan; Alternative(s):Laggantygown	Fort	NH 905 172
14	Avielochan	Hut-Circles; Field-System	NH 909 163
15	Pityoulish	Barrows; Bowl; Standing Stone	NH 931 152
17	Knockgranish	Flat, Bronze Axe	NH 91 15
25	Avieloch; Alternative(s): Avinloch	Township	NH 904 166
26	Recharr; Alternative(s): Ruachan	Township	NH 911 164
44	Kinchurdy	Small Cairns	NH 933 179
45	Balnabruich	Building; Cairn	NH 903 168
47	Avielochan	Cairn	NH 902 165
48	Laggantygown	Field Clearance Cairns	NH 907 175

<i>NH91SW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Creag Phitiulais	Dun	NH 9299 1390
2	Milton	Cist; Cairn	NH 942 144
3	Milton; Alternative(s):Creag Mheadhonach	Cairn	NH 941 143
4	Milton	Small Cairns; Field-System	NH 945 145
5	Milton	Hut-Circles	NH 946 147
7	Pityoulish	Barrows	NH 926 147
9	Dell	Enclosure: Palisaded	NH 901 117
10	Knockgranish	Hut-Circles	NH 915 146
13.00	Milton	Mill; Mill Dams; Houses	NH 938 145
14	Creag Phitiulais	Hut-Circle (Possible); SmallCairns	NH 928 138

17	Dell	Settlement: Unenclosed	NH 900 117
18	Inverdrue	Shieling-Huts	NH 907 102
20	Inverdrue	Shieling-Huts	NH 902 102
24	Knockgranish	Township (Possible)	NH 902 147
32.00	Achnahatnich	Township	NH 928 115
40	Kinchurdy	Small Cairns	NH 910 146
42	Aviemore - Grantown Military Road	Transport And Communications	NH 9000 1363 to 9052 1499
43	Pityoulish	Round House; Pits; Souterrain (Possible); Cropmarks	NH 927 144
45	Allt Garbh	Hut-Circle	NH 946 146
46	Allt Garbh	Small Cairns	NH 946 146
47	Milton; Alternative(s):Balnapoul Sluggan; Feich Sheilich	Cup-Markings	NH 932 141
50	Milton Burn	Shieling-Huts (Possible); Field Clearance Cairns; Bank	NH 937 140
51	Loch Pityoulish	Huts	NH 924 139
53	An Slugan	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NH 938 136
54	Creag Mheadhonach	Small Cairns	NH 943 140
55	Coire Sganìh; Alternative(s):Creag Mheadhonach	Small Cairns	NH 948 140
56	Creag Mheadhonach	Small Cairns; Cairn (Possible)	NH 947 136

<i>NN48NE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Eilean An Rìgh, Loch Laggan; Alternative(s):King Fergus's Lodge; Loch Laggan 1	'Castle'; Island Dwelling; Logboat	NN 4987 8755
2	Loch Laggan; Alternative(s):Loch Laggan 2; Eilean An Rìgh; King Fergus' Isle	Logboat	NN 499 873
4	Loch Laggan; Alternative(s):King Fergus' Isle	Logboat	NN 4987 8755
5	Allt A' Chrannaig' Alternative(s):Creag Meagaidh Nature Reserve	Shieling-Huts	NN 492 892
6	Coill A' Choire	Shieling-Hut (Possible)	NN 4587 8923
7	A86, Aberarder To Rubha Na	Archaeological	NN 4760 8615

	Magach	Survey; Trial Excavation of Cairn	
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<i>NN48SW Number</i>	<i>Nmrs Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
2	Allt Na H-Uamha	Shieling-Hut (Possible)	NN 402 832

<i>NN48SE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Loch Laggan; Alternative(s):Loch Laggan 6- 7; Rubha Na Magach	Logboats	NN 462 849

<i>NN49NW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
NN49NW 1	Mellan Odhar Beag	Shieling-Hut	
NN49NW 2.00	Dalwhinnie - Fort Augustus Military Road; Alternative(s):Corrieyairack Pass	Transport And Communications	NN 420 986
NN49NW 3	Mellan Odhar Beag	Shieling-Hut (Possible)	

<i>NN49NE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Clach Chatail	Standing Stone	NN 4709 9571
3	Melgarve, Corrieyairack Pass; Alternative(s):Allt Feite A'Mhoraire	Transport And Communications	NN 4686 9606
4.00	Dalwhinnie - Fort Augustus Military Road; Alternative(s):Corrieyairack Pass	Transport And Communications	NN 4999 9532 to 4500 9646
7	Allt A' Ghamhna	Shieling-Huts (Possible)	NN 4909 9591
8	Creag Bheag	Shieling-Huts (Possible)	NN 4857 9595

<i>NN49SW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Tom Dubh	Shieling-Huts	NN 439 943
2	Coire Bhanain; Alternative(s):Coire A' Bhan- Eoin	Shieling-Huts (Possible)	NN 4440 9125

<i>NN57NE Number</i>	<i>Nmrs Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
2	Loch Ericht	Flint Implements	NN 56 76

<i>NN58NW Number</i>	<i>NMRS</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	St Kenneth's Church; Alternative(s):Kinloch Laggan Old St Kenneth's Church And Burial Ground	Funerary; Religion	NN 5351 8969
2	King's Grave	Mound; Graves (Possible)	NN 5061 8740
3	Loch Laggan; Alternative(s):Loch Laggan 3; Kinloch; River Pattack	Logboat	c NN 533 889
4	Loch Laggan; Alternative(s):Loch Laggan 5; Tullochroam	Logboat	NN 5201 891
6	Loch Laggan; Alternative(s):Loch Laggan 2	Logboat; Wooden Bowl	c NN 535 895
9	Tullochroam	Township	NN 519 894
16	Kinloch	Township (Possible)	NN 537 890
17	Kinloch Laggan; Alternative: Allt A'Mhuilinn	Farmstead; Head- Dyke	NN 544 891

<i>NN58NE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Druim An Aird	Township	NN 573 895
5	River Mashie	Shieling-Hut (Possible)	NN 570 870

<i>NN59NW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Dalwhinnie - Fort Augustus Military Road	Transport And Communications	NN 5166 9500 to 5000 9532

<i>NN59NE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Markie Burn	Township	NN 579 956
2	Allt Uaine	Shieling-Huts (Possible)	NN 5751 9642
3	Blargie Craig	Shieling-Hut (Possible)	NN 5901 9511

<i>NN59SW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Loch Crunachdan	Crannog (Possible)	NN 5427 9272
3	Garvamore, Garva Barracks; Alternative(s):Garvamore Barracks; King's House	Defence; Residential	NN 5279 9429
4	Dalwhinnie - Fort Augustus Military Road	Transport And Communications	NN 5499 9348 to 5166 9499
5	Laggan Brae; Alternative(s):Allt Labharag	Township	NN 540 900

<i>NN59SE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	St Michael's Chapel, Bruach Mhor	Chapel; Graveyard	NN 5872 9378
2	Coul Farm	Burial Ground	NN 5902 9402
3	Dun-Da-Lamh, Laggan	Fort	NN 5823 9295
4	Crathie	Township	NN 580 940
5	Bruach Mhor	Stone Axe	NN 5849 9374
8.00	Dalwhinnie - Fort Augustus Military Road	Transport And Communications	NN 5999 9358 to 5500 9348
10	Tom Buidhe	Township; Sheep Pens	NN 556 939
11	Creagan A' Chait	Township	NN 5974 9425
12	Strath Mashie	Township	NN 5850 9182

<i>NN67NW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Drumochter	Coin Hoard	NN 63 79

<i>NN68NW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
5	Dalwhinnie - Fort Augustus Military Road	Transport And Communications	NN 6409 8559 to 6413 8999
6	Allt An T-Slugain	Shieling-Hut (Possible)	NN 648 876
7	Dunkeld - Ruthven - Inverness Military Road	Transport And Communications	NN 6375 8500 to 6499 8723

<i>NN68NE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Lechden	Farmstead; Shieling- Huts	NN 651 866
7	Presmuchrach	Township (Possible)	NN 658 884
11	Dunkeld - Ruthven - Inverness Military Road	Transport And Communications	NN 6500 8727 to 6727 8999

<i>NN68SW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Dalwhinnie, Wade Bridge over River Truim	Transport And Communications / Bridge	NN 6388 8277
9	Loch Ericht	Shieling-Huts (Possible)	NN 618 842
14	Dunkeld - Ruthven - Inverness Military Road	Transport And Communications	NN 6305 8000 to 6375 8499

<i>NN69NW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Dail Na Seilg; Alternative(s):Allt Madagain	Township; Farmstead; Shieling- Huts	NN 6486 9851
2	Creagan Soilleir; Alternative(s):Gargask Burn	Shieling-Huts (Possible)	NN 6148 9580
4	Gaskbeg	Fort (Possible)	NN 612 951
5	Gaskbeg	Hut-Circle	NN 622 950
6	Gaskbeg	Hut-Circle; Field Clearance Cairns; Rig; Iron Slag	NN 622 953
7	Dail Na Seilg	Cairn	NN 6489 9827
8	Uisge Dubh	Shieling-Hut	NN 6096 9958

9	Uisge Dubh	Shieling-Huts; Pens	NN 6154 9968
10	Gleann Madagain	Shieling-Huts	NN 6189 9858
11	Gleann Madagain	Shieling-Huts; Enclosure; Pen	NN 6285 9835
12	Dail Na Seilg	Shieling-Huts	NN 6453 9868
13	Sron Na Creige	Shieling-Huts	NN 6428 9875
14	Gleann Lochain	Shieling-Huts	NN 6393 9971

<i>NN69NE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
3.00	Glenbanchor	Townships; Farmsteads; Limekilns	NN 680 996
3.01	Glenbanchor	Township; Limekiln (Possible); Corn- Drying Kiln	NN 6782 9960
3.02	Glenbanchor	Township	NN 6839 9951
4	Invernahavon	Township; Corn- Drying Kiln; Sheepfold	NN 689 958
5.00	Dail An Tullaich	Townships	NN 6724 9864
5.01	Dail An Tullaich	Township; Corn- Drying Kiln	NN 6725 9860
5.02	Dail An Tullaich	Township	NN 6731 9882
6.00	Allt A' Chaorainn; Alternative(s):Allt A' Chaoruinn	Township; Corn- Drying Kiln	NN 691 999
7	Biallid	Township	NN 697 976
8	Cladh Phadruig; Alternative(s):Cladh Bhaillaid, Chapel And Burial Ground	Funerary; Religion	NN 6913 9717
9	Creagan Na H-Eighich	Small Cairns	NN 6727 9986 to c 671 997
10	Creagan Ruadh	Small Cairns; Lynchets (Possible);	NN 6742 9963
11	Allt A' Chaorainn	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NN 6933 9966
12	Biallidbeg	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NN 697 974
20	Allt A' Chaorainn	Building; Enclosures (Possible); Pit; Field Clearance	NN 6918 9999
21	Glenbanchor	Hut; Small Cairn (Possible)	NN 6855 9970
22	Glenbanchor	Enclosure; Small Cairns; Cairn (Possible)	NN 6865 9974
23	Glenballoch	Township	NN 6802 9915

24	Glenbanchor	Cairn	NN 6822 9971
25	Glenbanchor	Hut-Circle	NN 6807 9986
26	Dalballoch	Township; Farmstead; Sheepfolds; Rig; Head-Dyke	NN 6566 9893
27	Allt An Lochain Duibh	Small Cairns	NN 6512 9881
29	Dalballoch	Hut-Circle	NN 6599 9850
31	Dail An Tullaich	Burnt Mound	NN 6712 9841
33	Creagan Beag	Hut-Circle; Bank	NN 6985 9943
34	Creagan Beag	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NN 6966 9914
35	Creagan Mor	Cairn (Possible)	NN 6962 9881
36	Biallaid	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NN 6957 9823
37	Biallaid	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NN 6929 9799
38	Biallidbeg	Township; Kiln-Barn; Limekilns	NN 6929 9708
39	Biallidbeg	Hut-Circle	NN 6958 9726
40	Biallidbeg	Hut-Circle	NN 6963 9747
41	Biallidbeg	Small Cairns; Banks	NN 6952 9737
42	Biallidbeg	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns; Bank; Pottery	NN 6957 9753
43	Biallidbeg	Burnt Mound	NN 6874 9680
44	Biallidbeg	Rig; Bank; Field Clearance	NN 6872 9663
45	Biallidbeg	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns; Rig	NN 6895 9694
46	Biallidbeg	Township	NN 6917 9735
47	Biallidbeg	Cairn; Small Cairns	NN 6936 9764
50	Biallaid	Small Cairns	NN 6993 9795
51	Biallaid	Hut-Circle	NN 6984 9816
52	Biallaid	Hut-Circle; Buildings; Small Cairns; Enclosures	NN 6994 9839

<i>NN69SW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Cluny	Carved Stone Ball	NN 64 94
2.00	Cluny Castle	Residential	NN 6457 9429
3	Breakachy, "Cladh A' Bhile"	Burial Ground	NN 6414 9292
4	Cluny Castle, Burial Ground	Alternative(s): Cluny, Cladh Chluanaidh; Macphersons Of Cluny Burial Ground	NN 6426 9407
11	Laggan	Hut-Circle; Small	NN 613 949

		Cairns	
12.00	Ruthven - Catlodge Military Road	Transport And Communications	NN 6499 9336 to 6335 9294
13	Dalwhinnie - Fort Augustus Military Road	Transport And Communications	NN 6413 9000 to 6000 9358
15	Blargie	Township	NN 600 944
20	Balgowan	Township: Crofting	NN 635 944
23	Drumgask Farm; Alternative(s):Drumgask	Township; Smithy	NN 623 934
24	Tynrich	Township	NN 623 934
37	Torvaig Skye	Hut-Circle	NN 614 947

<i>NN69SE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Crubenmore	Township	NN 674 912
5	Ruthven To Catlodge Military Road	Transport And Communications	NN 633 929 to 674 921
5.01	Catlodge - Bridge of Eterridge Military Road	Excavation: Section; Military Road	NN 6835 9234 to 6840 9236
10	Glen Fernisdale	Township	NN 695 936
20.00	Dunkeld - Ruthven - Inverness Military Road; Alternative(s):Etteridge Farm	Transport And Communications	NN 6727 9000 to 6999 9370
22	Coraldie	Township (Possible)	NN 6611 9345

<i>NN77NW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Ruighe A'Ghlas Choire	Shieling-Huts; Sheepfold	NN 745 752
2	Ruighe Bad Na Seabhaig	Shieling-Huts (Possible); Structure; Enclosure	NN 712 760
3	Allt A'Chama' Choire	Shieling-Huts (Possible)	NN 702 796
4	Allt A'Chama' Choire	Shieling-Huts (Possible)	NN 71 795
5	Caochan Ruadh	Shieling-Huts (Possible)	NN 714 774
7	Allt Glas Choire	Shieling-Huts (Possible)	NN 733 773

<i>NN77NE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Allt Cragach	Shieling-Huts;	NN 763 761

		Sheepfold	
2	Bail A'Cheannaich	Buildings; Shieling-Huts (Possible)	NN 7550 7590
3	Allt Dearg	Shieling-Huts (Possible)	NN 760 795
4	Allt Dearg	Shieling-Huts (Possible)	NN 758 789

<i>NN78NE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
2	Ruigh Nam Plaidean	Shieling-Hut (Possible); Sheepfold	NN 780 894

<i>NN79NW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Tom A' Chladha	Cairn; Building; Kiln	NN 7264 9953
4	Newtonmore, St. Bridget's Chapel; Alternative(s):Cladh Bhride; Benchar; Gu Cladh Bhrichde	Funerary; Religion	NN 7054 9890
6	Lynallan	Township	NN 711 950
7	Lynmore	Township	NN 722 956
8	Cnoc An Earraich	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns; Rig	NN 7005 9992 & 7010 0008
9.00	Milton Of Glenbanchor; Alternative(s):Newtonmore, Knock Of Clune	Township; Small Cairns	NN 707 993
9.02	Milton Of Glenbanchor	Mill; Corn-Drying Kiln; Mill-Lade; Trackway	NN 7018 9949
11	Newtonmore, Tom Na Tilleadh	Socketed, Bronze Axe	NN 7147 9870
13	Inverton	Linear Cropmark	
14	Tom Na Croiche	Cropmarks	NN 749 992
16	Biallaid	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NN 7035 9786
18	Biallaid	Township; Corn-Drying Kiln	NN 7026 9820
19	Inverton; Alternative(s):Balniner	Township	NN 7445 9912
20	Drumnanoich	Township	NN 744 991
24	Cnoc An T-Sidhein	Township; Sheepfolds	NN 732 961
44	Biallaid	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns; Hut	NN 7001 9898 to 7005 9911
48	Newtownmore	Cairn	NN 7084 9844

51.00	Dunkeld - Ruthven - Aviemore – Inverness Military Road	Transport And Communications	NN 7145 9500 to 7499 9889
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<i>NN79NE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Ruthven Barracks; Alternative(s):Ruthven Castle	Defence	NN 7643 9977
5	Knappach	Township	NN 7560 9912
9	Glean Chomhraig	Township	NN 792 965
10	Druimgallovie	Township (Possible)	NN 753 985
14	Luibean Dubh	Shieling-Hut (Possible)	NN 788 962
20	Dunkeld - Ruthven - Aviemore - Inverness Military Road	Transport And Communications	NN 7500 9890 to 7589 9999
23	Torr Breac	Field Clearance Cairns	NN 7954 9852

<i>NN79SW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	'Phoines'; Alternative(s):Glen Fernisdale	Township	NN 701 939
2	Dunkeld - Ruthven - Inverness Military Road	Transport And Communications	NN 7000 9370 to 7145 9499

<i>NN79SE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
2	Lynacragan	Township	NN 765 938
4	Lynaberack	Township	NN 766 942
6	Socach Bhran	Shieling-Hut (Possible)	NN 761 903

<i>NN89NW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Tolvah, Glen Feshie	Cairn: Long (Possible)	NH 842 997
2	Stronetoper; Alternative(s):Stronalia	Township	NH 849 965
3	Coire Fhearnasdail; Alternative(s):Tom Fhada	Township; Sheepfold; Head-Dyke	NH 824 964
6	Tolvah	Township	NN 844 995

7	Druimcallich	Township	NN 846 982
14	Baileguish	Township (Possible)	NN 824 980
16	Corarnstilmore	Township (Possible); Sheepfolds	NN 831 981

<i>NN89NE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
2	Achlean	Township	NN 851 975
4	Coire Fhearnagan; Alternative(s):Ciste Mhairearaid	Shieling-Hut (Possible)	NN 876 972

<i>NN89SW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
6	Allt Choire Chaoil	Township	NN 848 934

<i>NN89SE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Lochan Nam Bo	Shieling-Hut (Possible)	NN 8626 9130

Appendix 2.2 Gazetteer of Sites in the Strathnaver Study Area

NC53NE Number	NMRS Name	Site Type	NGR
1	Altnaharra	Hut-Circles; Field Clearance Cairns	NC 576 356
2	Meall A Gob Mor	Hut-Circles; Field System	NC 576 360
3	Reidhachaisteil	Township	NC 5983 3606
4	Meall A Gob Mor	Burnt Mound	NC 5789 3614
6	Meall A Gob Mor	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 5798 3616
7	Grummore Little Wood	Small Cairns	NC 590 354
8	Gob Mor	Hut-Circle; Field-System	NC 5958 3575

NC53SE Number	NMRS Name	Site Type	NGR
1	Creag A' Mhuilinn	Hut-Circle; Field Clearance Cairns	NC 5884 3344
2	Klibreck Burn	Hut-Circle; Field Clearance Cairns	NC 5909 3339
3.00	Klibreck	Township	NC 5908 3375
4	Klibreck, Cross-Slab; Alternative(s):Stewart's Park	Cross-Slab	NC 5932 3401
5	Klibreck, Chapel	Chapel	NC 5930 3400
6	Allt Loch An Tairbh	Shieling-Huts	NC 5643 3249
7	Klibreck	Hut-Circle; Field Clearance Cairns	NC 5861 3409
9	Klibreck	Hut-Circle; Field Clearance Cairns	NC 5310 3417
10	Klibreck	Hut-Circle	NC 5859 3428
11	Klibreck	Shieling-Huts	NC 584 343

NC63NW Number	NMRS Name	Site Type	NGR
1	Grummore; Alternative(s):Gruamamor	Township	NC 605 364
2	Grummore	Broch	NC 6107 3669
3	Ruighnasealbhaig	Township	NC 618 360
4	Grumbeg	Hut-Circle	NC 6375 3858
5	Grumbeg	Hut-Circles	NC 644 386
6	Grumbeg	Township	NC 634 385

7	Creagach	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 6015 3501
9	St. Martin's Well, Grumbeg	Well	NC 634 383
11	Dun Creagach	Broch	NC 6046 3558
12	Creagach	Cairn (Possible)	NC 6046 3534
13	Creagach	Hut-Circle	NC 6048 3532
14	Allt A' Chnoic Leith	Hut-Circles; Field-System	NC 635 398
15	Creagach	Hut-Circle;-Stone-Setting	NC 604 354
16	Creagach	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 609 354
17	Cnoc Ruigh Nan Copag	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 630 350
18	Loch Tarbhaidh	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 636 364
19	Grummore	Hut-Circle	NC 6085 3717
20	Grummore	Hut-Circles	NC 607 372
21	Grummore	Burnt Mound (Possible)	NC 6065 3726
22	Grummore	Hut-Circle	NC 6287 3818
23	Carn Gruama Beag	Hut-Circle; Field Clearance Cairns	NC 6239 3822
24	Loch Tarbhaidh	Hut-Circle	NC 6398 3634
25	Allt A' Chnoic Leith	Burnt Mound	NC 6344 3980
26	Allt Gruama Mor	Hut-Circle	NC 6240 3951
27	Allt Gruama Mor	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 621 396
28	Cnoc Ruigh Na Sealbhaig	Field Clearance Cairns	NC 627 358
29.00	Righcopag	Township; Farmstead; Enclosures	NC 645 356
29.01	Righcopag	Township	NC 643 357
30	Loch Tarbhaidh	Burnt Mound	NC 6402 3583
31	Grumbeg	Cup-Markings	NC 6346 3837
32	Coire Buidhe	Shielings	NC 605 388
33	Allt Gruama Mor	Shieling-Huts; Buildings; Sheepfold	NC 632 394

<i>NC63NE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Site Type</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Loch Naver	Hut-Circles; Field-System	NC 656 386
2	Coill'Ach A' Chuil, Loch Naver	Broch	NC 6585 3815
3	Ach A' Chuil	Township; Corn-	NC 656 377

		Drying Kilns	
4	Allt Lon Coire Nam Feuron	Hut-Circles; Enclosures; Small Cairns	NC 6695 3607
5	Achadh An Eas	Township	NC 667 371
6	Meall A Choire Bhuidhe	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 692 389
7	Dalharrold	Enclosure; Hut- Circle; Small Cairns	NC 6840 3841
8	Poll An Loinein, River Naver	Hut-Circles	NC 674 384
9	Dalharrold	Hut-Circle	NC 6788 3899
10	Achadh An Eas	Homestead	NC 6709 3645
11	Clach An Righ; Alternative(s):Dailharraid	Stone Circle	NC 6793 3903
12	Blar Na Fola	Small Cairns	NC 681 394
13	Meall A Choire Bhuidhe	Cairn; Kerb	NC 6963 3886
14	Cnoc Na Gamhna	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 688 363
15	Allt A'Bhealaich	Hut-Circles	NC 686 357
16	Cnoc A Bhreac- Achaidh	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 674 353
18	Loch Coire Nam Feuran	Hut-Circle	NC 6606 3504
19	Loch Coire Nam Feuran	Hut-Circle; Field- System	NC 6608 3598
20	Loch Coire Nam Feuran	Cairn	NC 6626 3544
21	Allt A' Bhealaich	Hut-Circle; Hut- Circle(Possible)	NC 682 357
22	Achadh An Eas	Hut-Circles; Field- System	NC 663 367
23	Creag Dhubh	Small Cairns	NC 671 386
24	Strath Naver	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 669 382
25	Strath Naver	Hut-Circle	NC 6714 3842
26	Strath Naver, Poll An Loinein	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 674 384
27	Loch Coire Nam Feuran	Hut-Circle; Field- System	NC 6655 3563
28	Loch Coire Nam Feuran	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 663 356
29	Loch Coire Nam Feuran	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 662 357
30	Loch Coire Na Feuran	Small Cairns	NC 663 359
31	Loch Coire Na Feuran	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 664 353
32	Blar Na Fola	Hut-Circle	NC 6959 3953
33	Blar Na Fola	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 6995 3953
34	Blar Na Fola	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 6981 3922

35	Loch Naver	Hut-Circles	NC 659 385
36	Dailmallart	Hut-Circle	NC 6687 3774
37	Blar Na Fola	Small Cairns	NC 696 391
38	Loch Coire Nam Feuran	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 6617 3556
39	Loch Coire Nam Feuran	Rig; Shielling-Huts; Enclosures	NC 662 356
40	Blar Na Fola	Hut-Circles	NC 687 394
41	Blar Na Fola; Alternative(s):Dailharraid	Hut-Circle	NC 6850 3981
42	Blar Na Fola	Hut-Circles	NC 688 398
43	Blar Na Fola	Hut-Circles	NC 693 399
44	Breac Dubh	Shielling-Huts; Enclosure	NC 691 399
45	Blar Na Fola	Hut-Circle(Possible)	NC 6840 3949
46	Blar Na Fola	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 694 391
47	Meall A Choire Bhuidhe	Hut-Circle	NC 6954 3873
48	Cnoc Na Gamhna	Burnt Mound	NC 6907 3620
49	Cnoc Na Gamhna	Hut-Circles	NC 687 370
51	Achadh An Eas	Hut-Circle;-Structure	NC 6698 3644
52	Loch Naver	Crannog	NC 6549 3821
53	Dail A' Thuraich	Township	NC 651 386

<i>NC63SW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Site Type</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Round Hill	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 6296 3493
2	Dun Creagagh, Loch Naver	Hut-Circle	NC 6012 3469
3	Allt Creagach	Hut-Circle	NC 6063 3431
4	Dun Creagach	Hut-Circle	NC 6053 3486
5	Dun Creagach	Cup-Markings	NC 6016 3499
6	Dun Creagach	Cup And Ring-Markings	NC 6012 3460
8	Allt Creagach	Shielling-Huts; Rig; Enclosures	NC 606 342
9	Round Hill	Shielling-Huts; Rig; Enclosure	NC 631 346
10	Round Hill	Shielling-Huts; Rig; Enclosures	NC 632 344
11	Allt Creagach	Stones	NC 6051 3413

<i>NC63SE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Site Type</i>	<i>NGR</i>
2.00	Coirenamfeuran	Township	NC 662 347

2.01	Coirenamfeuran	Small Cairns	NC 664 349
3	Coirenamfeuran	"Small Cairns"	NC 651 344
4	Allt Ceann Na Beinne	"Small Cairns"	NC 654 334
5	Cnoc Na H-Iolaire	Hut-Circles; Field-System	NC 69 34
6	Cnoc Airigh An Leathaid	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 696 333
7	Coriefeuran Hill	Shielings	NC 661 331
8	Mallart River	Hut-Circle	NC 6872 3305
9	Mallart River	Shielings	NC 687 330
10	Snow Burn	Shieling-Huts; Enclosures	NC 662 309
11	Snow Burn	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 6610 3115
12	Coriefeuran Hill	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 6621 3311
13	Coriefeuran Hill	Hut-Circles; Field-System	NC 663 327
14	Coriefeuran Hill	Burnt Mound	NC 6630 3298
15	Coriefeuran Hill	Small Cairns	NC 659 321
16	Allt Fearn	Small Cairns	NC 650 316
17	Corienamfeuran	Burnt Mound	NC 6565 3478
18	Corienamfeuran	Cairn; Kerb	NC 6667 3499
19	Allt Fearn	Shieling-Huts; Rig	NC 652 314
20	Halmadarie	Township	NC 697 313

NC64NE Number	NMRS Name	Site Type	NGR
1	Cladh Langdale	Graveyard; Chapel (Possible)	NC 6991 4520
2.00	Langdale	Township	NC 695 452
3	Allt Stionachh Coire; Alternative(s):Allt Staing A' Choire	Township (Possible)	NC 653 469
4	Langdale	Small Cairns	NC 696 458
5	Langdale	Hut-Circle	NC 6983 4600
6	Langdale	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 6934 4534
7	Loch Nan Coinean	Burnt Mound	NC 6648 4661
9	Allt Meall A Bhreac-Leathaid	Hut-Circle	NC 6610 4684
11	Staingachoire	Hut-Circle	NC 6576 4717
12	Allt Meall A Bhreac - Leathaid	Burnt Mound	NC 6592 4691
13	Langdale	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 695 460
14	Langdale	Small Cairns	NC 699 462
15	Allt Bail An T-Soar	Shielings	NC 688 476
16	Allt Bail An T-Soar	Hut-Circles	NC 683 471

17	Loch Nan Coinean	Shielings; Cairn (Possible)	NC 669 467
18	Loch Nan Coinean	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 6681 4665
19	Langdale	Small Cairns	NC 681 451
20	Langdale	Small Cairns	NC 685 453
21	Langdale	Small Cairns	NC 690 451
23	Langdale	'Standing Stone'	NC 6960 4603
24	Cnoc Nan Damh	Mound	NC 6833 4864
25	Cnoc Nan Damh	Shieling-Hut	NC 6810 4867

<i>NC64SE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Site Type</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Langdale	Broch	NC 6926 4496
2	Langdale	Hut-Circle; Field- System	NC 6820 4491
3	Syre	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 6891 4414
4	Syre Lodge	Homestead	NC 6948 4467
5	Allt Rosail, Strath Naver	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns; Enclosures	NC 6864 4233
6	Allt Achadh Nam Preas	Hut-Circle(Possible)	NC 6971 4266
7	Allt Achadh Nam Preas	Hut-Circles	NC 6998 4216
8	Naver Forest	Bloomery Mound	NC 68 41
9	Allt Ceann Na Coille	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 6720 4158
10	Dalvina Lodge	Hut-Circle	NC 6991 4380
11	Allt Ceann Na Coille	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 6737 4174
12	Rosal	Township; Burnt Mound	NC 689 416
13	Rosal	Small Cairns	NC 685 419
14	Rosal	Small Cairns	NC 684 413
15	Allt Rosail	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 699 416
16	Ceann-Na-Coille	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 687 407
17	Gull Loch	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns; Cists	NC 68 43
18	Kedsary, Naver Forest	Hut-Circle	NC 6832 4238
19	Ceann-Na-Coille	Hut-Circles	NC 680 407
20	Ceann-Na-Coille	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 6836 4080
21	Ceann-Na-Coille	Township; Sheepfold	NC 680 407
22	Langdale	Steatite Mould	NC 69 44
23	Langdale	Pictish Symbol Stone	NC 69 44
24	Allt Achadh Nam Preas	Hut-Circle; Field-	NC 6935 4285

		System	
25	Rosal	Cairn	NC 6898 4135
26	Syre	Souterrain	NC 692 439
27	Syre	Small Cairns; Cist	NC 68 43
28	Rosal	Souterrain; Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 690 413
29	Syre	Hut-Circles-(Possible)	NC 68 43
30	Syre, 'The Tulloch'	Medieval Earthwork	NC 6973 4495
31	Langdale	Enclosure; Standing Stone	NC 696 448
32	Langdale	"Hut-Circle"	NC 6905 4497
33	Allt Ceann Na Coille	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 670 414
34	Allt Ceann Na Coille	Small Cairns	NC 671 418
35	Druim An T-Saighdeir	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 6783 4285
36	Druim An T-Saighdeir	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 6750 4273
37	Druim An T-Saighdeir	Small Cairns	NC 675 425
38	Naver Forest	Small Cairns	NC 687 429
39	Allt Ceann Na Coille	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 6765 4140
40	Auchenrach	Hut-Circle	NC 6979 4292
41	Bailtoire	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 6767 4481
42	Bailtoire	Small Cairns	NC 673 446
43	Coire Buidhe	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 6784 4406
44	Coire Buidhe	Burnt Mound	NC 6778 4406
45	Coire Buidhe	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 678 437
46	Coire Buidhe	Shielings	NC 677 437
47	Coire Buidhe	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 665 437
48	Coire Buidhe	Burnt Mound	NC 6655 4368
49	Coire Buidhe	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 6662 4356
50	Syre	Small Cairns	NC 684 443
51	Gull Loch	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 667 428
52	Syre	Burnt Mound	NC 6898 4409
53	Syre	Steatite Cup	NC 692 440
54	Rossal	Bronze Pin	NC 63 41
57	Langdale Burn	Watermill	NC 68 44
58	Achupresh	Township; Corn-Drying Kiln	NC 699 434
59	Auchenrach	Township (Possible)	NC 698 430
61	Kedsary;	Township; Sheepfold	NC 679 421

	Alternative(s):Ruighandaraich		
65	Syre	Township	NC 692 442
69	River Naver	Township (Possible)	NC 681 415

<i>NC65NE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Borgie Bridge	Medieval Earthwork	NC 671 587
2	Borgie Bridge	Hut-Circle	NC 6653 5871
3	River Borgie	Small Cairns	NC 67 56
4	Cnoc An Arbhair	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns; Standing- Stones	NC 6686 5834
5	Borgie	Field Clearance Cairn	NC 673 594
6	Borgie Bridge	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 6630 5869
7	Borgie Bridge	Stone Rows	NC 661 587
10	Loch Chuibhe; Alternative(s):Loch A' Chleibh	Shieling-Hut (Possible)	NC 693 599
11	Allt Loch Nam Breac; Alternative(s):Allt A' Chaol- Locha	Shieling-Hut (Possible)	NC 688 595
14	Ruigh Ruadh; Alternative(s):Reidhruadh	Township	NC 676 587
18	Easanee Burn	Shieling-Huts (Possible)	NC 668 558

<i>NC65SE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Cracknie	Souterrain	NC 6655 5092
2	Achnantot	Hut-Circles	NC 655 523
3	Druim Buidhe	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 60 53
5	Loch Nan Ealachan	Crannog (Possible)	NC 678 519
6	Easanee Burn	Shieling-Hut (Possible)	NC 679 545
7	Allt Lochan Nan Carn	Shieling-Hut (Possible); Enclosure	NC 673 541
11	Dalness	Wooden Vessel	NC 65 54

<i>NC66SW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Scullomie	Broch (Possible)	NC 615 610
2	Loch Modsarie	Cairns	NC 643 616

3	Loch Modsarie	Cairn; Small Cairns	NC 644 613
4	Loch Modsarie	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 6460 6103
5	Loch Modsarie	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 6452 6068
6	Blandy	Chambered Cairn	NC 622 601
7	Skullomie, Harbour; Alternative(s):Scullomie, Harbour; Tongue Bay	Transport And Communications	NC 617 614
9	Carn Na H-Uamhaig	Small Cairns	NC 644 623
12	Strathan Skerry; Alternative(s):Sgeireach	Township	NC 643 629

<i>NC66SE Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Type of Site</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Dun Riaskidh	Chambered Cairn	NC 687 614
2	Baile Mhargaite, Bettyhill; Alternative(s):Lochan Druim An Duin, Sandy Dun	Broch	NC 697 609
3	Baile Mhargaite, Bettyhill	Cists; Settlement; Field-System; Cairns	NC 699 611
4	Dun Torrisdale	Broch (Possible)	NC 677 618
5	St. Colomba's Chapel, Coomb Island	Chapel	NC 664 642
6	Carn Mean Leod	Dun (Possible); Stone Bead	NC 68 61
7	Allt Thorrisdail	Cup-Markings	NC 665 618
9	Lochan Druim An Duin	Small Cairns	NC 696 609
10	Skerry	Stone Axe	NC 66 63
11	Skerry Mains	Souterrain (Possible); Urns	NC 660 631
13	Lon	Small Cairns	NC 688 606
14	Loch An Tigh-Choimhid	Crannog (Possible)	NC 662 607
15	Crossburn	Small Cairns	NC 679 612
16	Torrisdale	Small Cairns	NC 673 617
17	Druim Chuibhe	Cairn (Possible)	NC 687 616
18	Druim Chuibhe	Walls	NC 687 616
21	Mas Na Buaile	Fort; Promontory	NC 672 634
22	Invern timer	Cist; Chert Arrowhead	NC 699 613
25	Clashbuie; Alternative(s):Claisbhuidhe	Township	NC 659 636
26	Clasheddy; Alternative(s):Claisfhada	Township	NC 665 635
28	Skerry	Township	NC 657 629
29	Lon	Township	NC 688 605
30	Torrisdale;	Township	NC 676 617

	Alternative(s):Torrisdail		
32	Achnabat; Alternative(s):Achnambat	Township	NC 662 626
33	Modsarie; Alternative(s):Modsairidh	Township	NC 650 618

<i>NC73NW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Site Type</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Bad An Leathaid	Township; Shieling-Huts; Corn-Drying Kiln	NC 702 360
2	Cnoc Bad Na Fainne	Hut-Circles	NC 716 353
3	Cnoc Na Gaoithe	Small Cairns	NC 727 356
4	Cnoc Na Gaoithe	Small Cairns	NC 72 35
5	Cnoc Na H-Uidhe	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7395 3658
6	Lochan A' Choire Bhuidhe	Hut-Circles; Field-System	NC 705 394
8	Badinloskin	Township; Kiln	NC 721 383
9	Cnoc Na H-Uidhe	Shieling-Huts	NC 739 369

<i>NC73SW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Site Type</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Truderscaig	Township; Kilns; Sheepfolds	NC 705 340
2	Truderscaig	Hut-Circles; Field-System	NC 708 340
3	Truderscaig	Hut-Circles; Field-System	NC 704 346
4	Leathad An Daraich	Hut-Circles	NC 719 345
5	Leatad Bad Na Crubaig	Hut-Circles; Field-System	NC 740 319
6	Cnoc Airigh An Leathaid	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 702 332
7	An Crom-Allt	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 721 310
8	Leathad An Daraich	Small Cairns	NC 716 348
9	Cnoc Airigh An Leathaid	Burnt Mound	NC 7028 3286
11	Leathad An Daraich	Standing Stone	NC 717 349
12	Loch Rimsdale	Stone Rows	NC 716 348
14	Cnoc Airigh An Leathaid	Burnt Mound	NC 7027 3329
15	Truderscaig	Burnt Mound	NC 7018 3463
17	Cnoc A' Chrom-Uillt	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7307 3123
18	Cnoc Airigh An Leathaid	Hut-Circle; Shieling-	NC 702 329

		Huts; Enclosure	
19	An Crom-Allt	Hut-Circle	NC 7201 3103
20	Leathad Bad Na Crubaig	Burnt Mound	NC 7408 3220
21	Leathad Bad Na Crubaig	Burnt Mound	NC 7382 3206
22	Leathad Bad Na Crubaig	Burnt Mound	NC 7393 3188
23	Allt Achadh An Daraich	Deserted Settlement	NC 723 349
24	An Crom-Allt	Township (Possible)	NC 719 310

<i>NC74NW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Site Type</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Gladh Rivigill	Graveyard; Church (Possible)	NC 7291 4946
2	Red Priest's Stone, Skail	Chapel; Burial Ground; Cross- Incised Stone	NC 7147 4722
3.00	Skail	Broch	NC 7201 4732
4	Skail	Chambered Cairn	NC 7204 4733
5	Inshlampie	Broch	NC 7129 4690
6	Rough Haugh	Cist	NC 7199 4827
7	Woody Knowe	Cist; Beaker	NC 7027 4577
8	Skail Burn	Stone Mould	NC 705 480
9	Rhifail	Flint Spearhead	NC 729 494
10	Strath Naver	Stone Spindle-Whorl	NC 71 47
11	River Naver	Hut-Circle	NC 7260 4816
12	River Naver	Burnt Mound	NC 7252 4815
13	Inshlampie	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7173 4669
14	Rough Haugh	Hut-Circle; Field- System	NC 716 482
15	Rough Haugh	Small Cairns	NC 716 480
16	Strath Naver	Hut-Circle; Field- System	NC 7146 4785
17	Inshlampie Burn	Hut-Circle	NC 7113 4562
18	Inshlampie Burn	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7116 4580
19	Rough Haugh	Hut-Circle	NC 7200 4820
20	Skail	Broch (Possible)	NC 7135 4744
21	Skail	Township (Possible)	NC 707 464
22.00	Skail; Alternative(s):Skoal	Township	NC 714 475
22.01	Skail; Alternative(s):Skoal	Mill (Possible)	NC 7164 4793
26	Rhifail; Alternative(s):Ravigill Or Rivigill	Township	NC 727 489

<i>NC74SW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Site Type</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Beinn Rosail	Hut-Circle	NC 7013 4128
2	Creag Nan Laogh	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7012 4173
3	Dalvina Lodge	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7000 4375
4	Dalvina Lodge	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7001 4319
5	Rimsdale	Township	NC 740 403
7	Rimsdale	Barrow	NC 7447 4031
9	Dalvina Lodge	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7016 4453
10	Dalvina Lodge	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7004 4399
11	Coire Buidhe	Small Cairns	NC 708 423
12	Creag Nan Laogh	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7038 4141
13	Bunisdale	Farmstead (Possible); Shieling-Huts	NC 738 442
14	Allt Bothan Uisge-Beatha	Shieling-Huts	NC 739 424
15	Beinn Rosail	Shieling-Huts	NC 712 405
19	Rimsdale Burn	Shieling-Hut (Possible)	NC 746 413

<i>NC75NW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Site Type</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Achnabourin	Hut-Circle	NC 7082 5391
2	Achcoillenaborgie	Broch	NC 7139 5942
3	Coille Na Borgie South; Alternative(s):Achcoillenaborgie; Lochan Duinte	Chambered Cairns	NC 715 590
4	Achcoillenaborgie	Field System	NC 7164 5890
5	Dail Na Drochaide	Hut-Circles	NC 7200 5747
6	Allt An Duin, Skelpick	Broch	NC 7235 5752
7	Skelpick, Long	Chambered Cairn	NC 7225 5672
8	Skelpick	Hut-Circle; Enclosure; Small Cairns	NC 724 568
9	Skelpick	Chambered Cairn	NC 7217 5635
10	Skelpick Lodge; Alternative(s):Skelpick,South	Chambered Cairn	NC 7249 5605
11	Skelpick	Cairn	NC 7247 5687
13	Skelpick Burn	Small Cairns	NC 732 554
14	Dalmor	Homestead	NC 7168 5539
15	Dalmor	Cairns; Cists	NC 7177 5509
16	Achcheargary	Chambered Cairn	NC 1794 5500

		System; Souterrain	
55	Fastly	Burnt Mound	NC 7387 5961
56	Clachan Burn	Hut-Circles	NC 741 589
57	Achamore	Hut-Circles	NC 742 579
58	Achamore	Chambered Cairn	NC 7417 5779
59	Achamore	Burnt Mound	NC 7404 5770
60	Achamore	Burnt Mound	NC 7396 5786
61	Coillelyal	Burnt Mound; Structure	NC 7135 5989
62	Coillelyal	Field System	NC 714 598
63	Collielyal	Hut-Circle	NC 7118 5978
64	Achamore	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 740 574
65	Achamore	Hut-Circles	NC 739 579
66	Achcoillenaborgie	Small Cairns	NC 7167 5938
67	Loch Nam Faoileag	Burnt Mound	NC 7285 5511
68	Naver Rock	Hut-Circle; Field- System	NC 7038 5860
69	Lochan Duinte	Hut-Circle	NC 7172 5800
70	Loch Nam Faoileag	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 728 550
71	Skelpick	Hut-Circles	NC 718 566
72	Clachan Burn	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7429 5848
73	Dail Na Drochaide	Burnt Mounds	NC 722 573
74	Dalveghouse	Burnt Mound	NC 7172 5559
75	Creag Dalhorrisgle	Small Cairns	NC 711 560
76	Tom Apigill	Burnt Mound	NC 7051 5696
77	Tom Apigill	Hut-Circle	NC 7059 5695
78	Tom Apigill	Cairn	NC 7054 5661
79	Tom Apigill	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 707 565
80	Dalhorrisgle	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7101 5625
81	Creag Dalhorrisgle	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7121 5571
82	Apigill	Hut-Circle(Possible); Enclosure; Small Cairns	NC 7073 5741
83	Achamore	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 7450 5810
84	Achamore	Hut-Circles	NC 744 577
85	Dail Na Drochaide	Hut-Circle	NC 7231 5707
88	Dail Na Drochaide	Township; Rig	NC 719 574
95	Skelpick Burn	Watermill	NC 7187 5733
96	Skelpick Burn	Longhouses	NC 717 573
100	Skelpick	Township	NC 720 564

<i>NC75SW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Site Type</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Skelpick Burn	Small Cairns	NC 740 543
2	Achargary	Cairns	NC 7198 5490
3	Achargary	Cairn; Cist	NC 7182 5482
4	Loch Ma Naire Burn	Hut-Circles; Field-System	NC 733 537
5	Loch Ma Naire	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 729 538
6	Loch Ma Naire	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7254 5399
7	Achanellan	Hut-Circle	NC 7229 5337
8	Dun Carnachaidh	Broch	NC 7213 5269
9	Dun Chealamy	Broch	NC 7199 5140
10	Carnachy	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 720 516
11	Dun Viden	Broch	NC 7265 5188
12	Dun Viden	Chambered Cairn	NC 7274 5185
13	Achanellan Burn	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 734 524
14	Loch Ma Naire	Small Cairns	NC 7278 5363
15	Loch Ma Naire	Well; Holy	NC 726 537
16	Achargary	Small Cairns	NC 718 548
17	Strath Naver	Souterrains; Miscellaneous Finds	NC 72 52
18	Dunviden Burn	Hut-Circles; Field-System	NC 735 511
19	Achanellan	Township; Corn-Drying Kiln	NC 727 532
20	Dunviden	Township; Corn-Drying Kiln	NC 727 518
21	Carnarchy	Township	NC 719 516
22	Achargary	Cairn	NC 7303 5482
23	Achargary	Burnt Mound	NC 7292 5474
24	Achargary	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7286 5464
25	Achargary	Hut-Circle; Field-System	NC 7307 5463
26	Achargary	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 7272 5474
27	Achargary	Burnt Mound	NC 7229 5493
28	Achanellan	Small Cairns	NC 731 527
29	Achargary	Burnt Mound	NC 7271 5461
30	Achargary	Burnt Mound	NC 7251 5471
31	Achanellan	Small Cairns	NC 731 534
32	Achargary	Burnt Mound	NC 7278 5499
33	Loch Ma Naire	Cairn; Kerb	NC 7298 5412
34	Loch Ma Naire	Hut-Circle; Field-	NC 7315 5390

		System	
35	Loch Ma Naire	Burnt Mound	NC 7292 5394
36	Loch Ma Naire	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 7296 5419
37	Loch Ma Naire	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7288 5427
38	Loch Ma Naire	Hut-Circle; Field-System	NC 7280 5394
39	Dunviden	Burnt Mound	NC 7251 5148
40	Dunviden	Small Cairns	NC 730 517
41	Allt Ruadh	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 743 548
42	Allt Ruadh	Hut-Circles	NC 744 545
43	Allt Ruadh	Hut-Circle(Possible); Field-System	NC 741 548
44	Allt Ruadh	Hut-Circles	NC 743 547
45	Allt Ruadh	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 744 548
46	Allt Ruadh	Hut-Circle(Possible)	NC 7465 5448
47	Allt Ruadh	Hut-Circle	NC 7469 5471
48	Dunviden	Hut-Circle	NC 7467 5108
49	Dunviden Hill	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 737 517
50	Allt Loch Na Caorach	Hut-Circle	NC 7453 5424
51	Allt Loch Na Caorach	Hut-Circle	NC 7476 5389
52	Cnoc Dalvegghouse	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 713 548
53	Achcheargary Burn	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7164 5461
54	Carnachy	Small Cairns	NC 713 518
55	Carnachy	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7135 5159
56	Carnachy	Hut-Circles	NC 712 514
57	Carnachy Burn	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7124 5100
58	Loch Ma Naire	Hut-Circles	NC 731 536
59	Allt Fada	Hut-Circle	NC 7493 5300
60	Achanellan Burn	Hut-Circles; Small Cairns	NC 739 521
61	Achanellan	Hut-Circles; Field-System	NC 733 527
62	Achanellan	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7350 5296
63	Achanellan Burn	Small Cairns	NC 735 522
64	Achargary	Burnt Mound	NC 7269 5496
65	Achanellan	Homestead	NC 7228 5329
66	Achargary	Burnt Mound	NC 7291 5451
67	Chealamy	Cist; Beaker	NC 7238 5017
68	Skelpick Burn	Shieling-Huts	NC 740 543

70	Carnachy Burn	Shieling-Huts	NC 7014 5009
73	Achanellan Burn	Shieling-Huts	NC 742 520
74	Allt Fada	Shieling-Huts	NC 749 534
76	Achargary; Alternative(s):Achcheargary	Township; Sheepfold	NC 722 528

<i>NC76SW Number</i>	<i>NMRS Name</i>	<i>Site Type</i>	<i>NGR</i>
1	Farr	Broch	NC 7175 6338
2	Borve Castle	Defensive	NC 6251 6408
3	An Rath Chruineach	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns; Souterrain(Possible)	NC 7269 6282
4	Fiscary	Cairn	NC 7285 6261
5	Fiscary	Cairn; Chambered Cairn	NC 731 626
6	Fiscary	Cairn	NC 7322 6248
7	Fiscary; Alternative(s):Loch Salachaidh	Field-System; Hut- Circles	NC 631 623
8	Swordly Loch	Hut-Circle; Field- System	NC 7306 6294
9	Swordly	Hut-Circles; Field- System	NC 741 627
10	Swordly	Cairn; Cist	NC 7426 6276
11	Clachan, Farr Church Of Scotland Parish Church, Cross Slab; Farr Stone	Religion	NC 7142 6225
12	Baile Mhargaite	Structure; Iron Working Sites	NC 701 607
13	Swordly	Field Systems	NC 732 632
14	Kirtomy Moss	Hoard (Possible); Bronze Spearhead; Bronze Palstaves; Flanged, Bronze Axe	NC 749 623
16	Loch Swordly	Broch (Possible)	NC 729 628
17	Kirtomy	Pictish Symbol Stone	NC 74 63
18	Cai Dun	Broch (Possible)	NC 71 61
19	Fiscary	Standing Stone (Possible)	NC 72 62
20	Achina	Hut-Circle(Possible); Small Cairns	NC 7112 6031
21	Borve Castle	Small Cairns (Possible)	NC 725 640
22	Creag A' Bhodaich	Bronze Hoard; Bronze Palstaves	NC 7199 6196
23	Craggan Soiller	Stone Circle (Possible); Bronze Spearhead	NC 726 626

24	Fiscary	Cairn (Possible)	NC 7300 6237
25	Baile Mhargaite; Alternative(s):Baile Mhargait/Invernaver	Flint, Chert, Stone Implements	NC 700 614
26	Fastly	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7345 6034
27	Fastly	Burnt Mound	NC 7340 6035
28	Fastly	Hut-Circles;Small Cairns	NC 733 605
29	Fastly	Hut-Circle	NC 7317 6057
30	Clachan Burn	Burnt Mound	NC 7291 6113
31	Clachan Burn	Hut-Circle; Field- System	NC 7276 6123
32	Fastly	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7376 6003
33	Loch Salachaidh	Hut-Circles; Enclosures; Small Cairns	NC 731 619
34	Creag A'Bhodaich	Hut-Circle; Small Cairns	NC 7270 6208
39	Swordly	Township	NC 7249 6189
41.00	Kirtomy	Township: Crofting	NC 742 635
41.01	Kirtomy, Horizontal Watermill	Industrial	NC 7432 6375
43	Swordly, Watermill	Industrial	NC 7390 6205
45	Clachan Burn	Hut-Circle	NC 7282 6161
47	Kirtomy Bay	Landing-Place	NC 74 64
48	Farr	Township: Crofting	NC 719 633
49	Achina	Township: Crofting	NC 707 609
50	Dalcharn	Township: Crofting	NC 705 614
51	Newlands	Township: Crofting	NC 713 615
52	Achneiskich	Township	NC 703 622
58	Cnoc Na Croiche	Execution Site	NC 706 615