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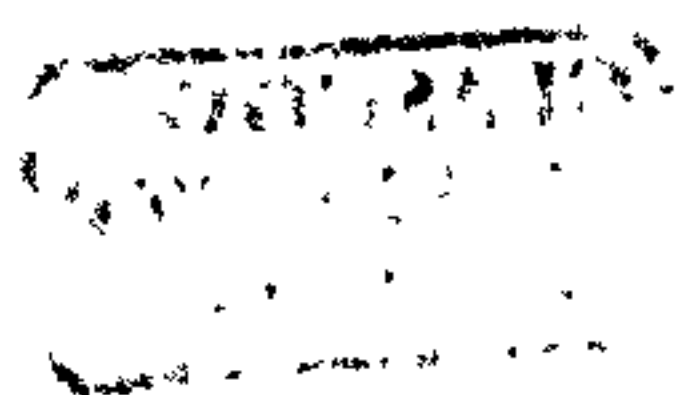
A Landscape Given Meaning

**An archaeological perspective on landscape history
in Highland Scotland**

Janet Hooper

VOL I

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Abstract

In Highland Scotland, evidence for Early Medieval and Medieval settlement has proved difficult to recognise, in spite of the fact that recent landscape survey has revealed a dense palimpsest of archaeological remains. The publication of North-east Perth in 1990, the first RCAHMS volume to take a more landscape oriented approach to the recording and presentation of this survey data, made available a wealth of material for a previously little known area of Perthshire. It resulted in the identification of a new building group - the Pitcarmick-type buildings - to which a Medieval, or potentially earlier date, was assigned. It raised the possibility that the general absence of first millennium A.D. settlement across much of Highland Scotland was not the case in this part of Perthshire, while suggesting the potential for building upon the resource made available by the RCAHMS to further our understandings of upland settlement and land use in the Highlands over a broad chronological framework.

This thesis aims to explore ways in which this data can be approached in order to achieve more comprehensive and meaningful understandings of cultural landscapes. This has been done by approaching the archaeology of a particular area - in this case Highland Perthshire - within a variety of temporal and geographical scales. At Pitcarmick North in Strathardle, detailed topographic survey of a discrete area, where the remains spanned a broad chronological range from the later Prehistoric period to the eighteenth century, was undertaken. By utilising the landscape to anchor the often divergent and competing strands of evidence produced by detailed documentary research, alongside analysis of the physical remains at Pitcarmick North, it has been possible to glean a greater comprehension of the immediate historical and social frameworks within which these cultural landscapes developed.

In order to provide a broader appreciation of the understandings formulated at Pitcarmick, the geographical range of this study was extended through a wider assessment of the archaeological and historical evidence for the Early Medieval kingdom of Atholl. This provided an opportunity to examine the influences directing social life within a larger political and social setting. The stress placed on the contextualisation of daily routines has produced a clear sense of place, a framework which can be seen as mediating individual understandings of the world.

Both case studies have been predicated on the belief that landscape is a cultural construct, whose meaning is both historically and socially contingent. Landscape is not just a passive reality, simply encountered during the daily routines of life, but the material context which creates a sense of place and structures social relations. The means by which the totality of the landscape (whether this is topography, archaeological remains or the myriad of less tangible elements which constitute the experience of landscape) is conceptualised and incorporated into meaningful understandings of the world is important if the human dimension of these landscapes is to be perceived. To approach the analysis of such lived-in landscapes must begin to break down the barriers in archaeological practice between the economic and the social, the ritual and the practical, between the need to classify the physical residues of the past and the need to write a generalized understanding of a particular area or period. By stressing understandings of the natural world, as well as the form of the landscape of settlement and exploitation, it has been possible to draw all this disparate information together into a visualisation of everyday life in Highland Scotland.

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1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to produce an increased awareness of the human dimension in the development of the landscape in Highland Scotland, an area where the sheer scale of the terrain can appear to reduce individuals to mere specks on the horizon. In Scotland, the difficulty of obtaining easily classifiable and dateable material from the survey and excavation of rural sites of many periods gives the impression of insuperable difficulties which few have tackled previously. This is in spite of the often dramatic visibility of the archaeology in the present landscape, particularly in the uplands, and the remarkable knowledge and awareness possessed by the current inhabitants of the physical remains which litter the world around them. By attempting to visualise, primarily through the material remains, the history of discrete areas of the Highlands at varying temporal and geographical scales, it is hoped that the wealth of newly recorded archaeological sites (particularly on the uplands) can be incorporated into a meaningful history of these areas. To do so, this study will draw on a wide range of evidence, such as written documents, place-names, ethnography, and environmental evidence to illuminate the archaeological sites in their topographic context, taken here to mean more than difficult terrain or fertile ground, but something closer to a more holistic concept of land and landscape.

The particular conditions imposed by working in the Highlands (here taken to refer to the whole of the area to the north of the geological boundary known generally as the Highland line) - a very fragmentary historical record prior to the Early Modern period and an equally little understood and under-explored archaeological record - have ensured that, in the case-studies presented here, a very long term view has been employed in the study of the surface remains. It seemed that by taking a very rigorous approach to the creation of the landscapes visible today, through analysis of the shape

and form of individual buildings, settlements and field systems, useful insights could be gleaned into the development of those landscapes. Careful comparison of the remains of differing periods should make this process easier. To ensure that this did not become simply a discursive account of the landscape history of a particular area, the primary material had to be worked against a theoretical background, which has drawn on aspects of spatial analysis, space-time geography, and anthropological and ethnographic concepts. This should allow the results of detailed local analysis to extend beyond a mere description of a landscape which people have modified over time to one where people (among other factors) are active mediators of the history of that landscape.

The majority of the recently obtained information on upland settlement stems from a combination of fairly rapid topographic survey and aerial photography; its level of resolution does allow for detailed landscape analyses, but requires further time on the 'surface' to gain an understanding of the material from the perspective of those who would have occupied that landscape. However, it has vastly increased the available archaeological data for the Highlands and begun to rectify the neglect which many areas (outside the far north and west) have suffered. The first two chapters will, therefore, expand upon these themes; first of all offering a general critique of past and present approaches to the writing of the history of particular landscapes (chapter 2), and secondly, assessing the present state of knowledge in Highland Scotland (chapter 3).

In Scotland, there are a variety of sources, both archaeological and historical, which can be employed in this type of study. The archaeology of the Highland areas, in particular, provides the possibility of studying landscapes which visibly incorporate a complex palimpsest of settlement and land use evidence. These types of sites, in the Medieval and later period in particular, are usually referred to as rural settlement (Hingley 1993, iv); here the scope of this phrase will be widened to incorporate all those remains - over a much longer timespan - which are found in a rural setting. Observable field remains have provided the primary study material, since this project is predicated on the view that a far greater realisation of the potential of these remains - from all periods - in aiding our understanding is needed prior to any more invasive

archaeological examination. All previous archaeological work, invasive and non-invasive, will be important in illuminating the physical remains. Both primary and secondary material can also be extracted from the documentary record; here, such evidence has been utilised to establish a tentative history for individual settlements. Of interest in its own right, this then allows each social group to be placed, as active and determining components, within their geographical and administrative context. By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it is also possible to gain a sense of the relationships, occupations and histories of individuals. To balance this very localised input, the work of other historians, historical geographers and ethnologists has helped in the discussion of the travellers' accounts and the vernacular sources of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These seem to give the most all-encompassing impression of the materiality of the world and peoples' engagement with it, the first real documentary hints of those everyday lives which form the focus of this study (chapter 4).

The proposed outcome of this thesis is the production of a local history for each of two areas of the central Highlands. Both these areas were intended to encompass a diversity of landscape types, which could be examined at varying geographic scales, while still retaining some topographic coherence. The region of Atholl in Perthshire provided the framework for both case-studies (chapters 5 and 6; fig. 1). In effect, Atholl is both a geographical and an administrative construct; it includes all of upland Perthshire north of the Highland line, encompassing fertile river valleys, of which the Tay is the largest, as well as deep, narrow and often remote glens such as Glenlyon, where the growing season would be appreciably shorter and the population could be isolated by snow for much of the winter. Highland Perthshire is bounded by Druim Alban on the west, the range of mountains which appears to form the backbone of Scotland, by the Grampian mountains to the north and by the fertile plain of Strathmore to the south. Only on the east, is the boundary less well-defined topographically. Here a number of narrow glens run almost north-south, extending eastwards from the Tay to include Strathardle, Glenshee, Glenisla and Glenclova, the latter two now part of Angus.

In spite of its seeming impregnability on all but its east side, Atholl forms the focus of major north-south and east-west routes and these have had a major impact on the nature of its archaeology. The character of this archaeology varies considerably, ranging from cropmark sites in Strathtay to upstanding remains, dominated by numerous hut-circles, on the surrounding hills. This archaeology has received relatively little attention in the past, although there are a number of well-known sites of all periods (e.g. Croftmoraig stone circle, Dunkeld cathedral), plus two potentially unique site types (circular homesteads and Pitcarmick-type buildings, the latter only recently classified as a distinct site type). Perthshire was never the subject of a county survey by the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS), of which the seven volumes on the monuments of Argyll were the culmination. However, its most north-easterly corner, comprising Strathardle and Glenshee, was chosen to be the subject of the first more landscape-oriented study by the RCAHMS. North-east Perth (1990) utilised a wealth of aerial photographs, backed up by topographic and documentary research (although on a far more limited scale than that undertaken for the previous county surveys), in an attempt to provide a comprehensive account of the archaeology of a smaller and more targeted area of Scotland. While clearly this revised approach has much to do with the enormous amount of time, energy and money required to produce even a single county survey, the new format did attempt to set the archaeological remains within their landscape context.

These initial attempts at landscape survey by the RCAHMS in North-east Perth generated a desire to refine their initial identification of cultural landscapes (Barrett and Downes, in prep; Hooper, in prep). The publication of North-east Perth had made available a vast resource of new data on these upland areas on which it appeared possible to build, through a combination of excavation and environmental analysis (directed by John Barrett and Jane Downes) and further detailed topographic survey and historical research (undertaken by the author). While also an attempt to assess the validity of the new approach adopted by the RCAHMS to the understanding of a particular landscape, the primary aim was the understanding of the landscape itself. The

first case-study was, therefore, centred on the palimpsest of archaeological remains - called Pitcarmick North by the RCAHMS - apparent in just one area of moorland above Strathardle (Chapter 5). The context for these remains at Pitcarmick North, which vary in date from the Bronze Age to the nineteenth century, was sought in the wider archaeology and history of the immediate locality, as defined by the parish boundary (Kirkmichael). While clearly a religious and administrative construct only applicable in the historical period, this parish does include the two neighbouring glens of Strathardle and Glenshee, giving it, therefore, a distinct geographical integrity. The fact that both glens are very different in character enabled the context of a wide range of archaeological remains to be examined.

This relatively small-scale approach was then contrasted with a regional study of Atholl as whole. The size of the area restricted any attempts to take such a wide-ranging chronological view, so the Early Medieval foundations of the kingdom of Atholl provided the focus (Chapter 6). In this case-study, the size of the area (and the general lack of previous fieldwork or even collation of the known archaeological or historical sources) required a greater emphasis to be placed on other primary (e.g. contemporary documents, place-names) and secondary sources to assess their significance. In effect, this thesis has set out to assess the relative worth of studying a large-scale and abstract political structure, as opposed to a more detailed, contextualised approach to the history of a very discrete topographical area, if the aim is to produce a documented (whether in terms of archaeological remains or historical documents) history of the people who lived in that landscape.

2 Landscapes of people and places

In the past - and perhaps even in the present - archaeological research has been founded on studies of individual settlements or, perhaps more accurately, on the built remains of those settlements and the artefacts found in and around their buildings (cf. Mercer 1985b, 10-1). There is a tendency, of course, to tackle those settlements of higher status, since their occupants tend to acquire more archaeological visibility through the elaborate nature of their dwellings, the quality of their personal possessions and their presence in the historical record. However, in this process, the settlements are divorced from their context; the landscape becomes the one-dimensional backdrop to the distribution maps that plot out all the known settlement remains of one period in a single area. The boundaries of such areas are difficult to define, generally resulting in the choice of later administrative units as the criteria for the size and scope of the study area. More significantly, this tends to lead to the adoption of a regional scale of analysis in which the history of each individual settlement and of the people who dwelt in them drops firmly out of sight.

The development of environmental analysis has, to a certain extent, rectified these biases, since it has drawn attention to the wider landscape that surrounds the settlement. However, as a consequence, the archaeological site acquires a catchment area and becomes the source of exploitative relationships with the surrounding countryside (e.g. Clark 1972), ones that can appear to be entirely environmentally determined. Again, however, this information tends to be utilised to enhance the regional picture, as it allows the individual settlement to become part of a wider economic system involving many other sites. The embedded nature of that settlement in the landscape is entirely lost. In the recent past, this has been alleviated by a greater awareness of the immediate landscape context in which a particular site lies and by an appreciation of the wealth of evidence that can be derived from other disciplines (such as history, place-names and so

on) to create contextualised studies of particular places on various scales (e.g. Fairhurst 1968, 1969; Beresford and Hurst 1971 (1989), 1990).

The situation described above is, in part, the product of the wealth of field survey undertaken this century, much of which has been aided by developments in aerial photography. It has become most apparent through attempts to record large-scale landscapes in areas of the uplands where the presence of well-preserved field systems makes this process, technologically, quite easy (e.g. RCAHMS 1990, 1994; Johnson and Rose 1994). The recording of such remains, however, has been of overriding importance; the desire to find the social and political context is, in many cases, merely a consequence of the quality of the remains (e.g. Fleming 1988, 10-1). Although there have been numerous aerial surveys of the cropmarks of lowland areas (e.g. Whimster 1989), it is only these recent surveys of the uplands which have produced a greater awareness of the chronological depth of such landscapes and the impact that these landscapes have on the form and location of settlements. The amount of recorded information has been almost overwhelming in the Highlands (as elsewhere) and this extensive body of aerial photographs and topographical survey material, which is, rather erratically, reinforced by material from excavated sites, remains largely untapped.

Yet, in spite of the large amounts of information, there are limitations to this data set. Aerial photographic coverage is not always followed up by ground survey, even if the intention to do so has been made explicit in the original research design (e.g. Whimster 1989, 2); the result is morphological and spatial analysis of cropmarks, meaningless because there is neither chronological nor spatial reality within the frameworks chosen. The objective recording of walls and the traces of cultivation and their final reduction to one-dimensional form on a piece of paper distances both the recorder and the viewer from the landscape in which the remains are set. An accurate perspective of the landscape is hindered by this presentation in plan view; the totality of the landscape, looked at from this angle, can never be experienced in practice by the people who lived in that landscape. More subtly, it is an inability to utilise appropriate means of representation for the physical elements of the landscape; this needs to involve not just

archaeological sites or buildings, but should also, for example, emphasise topography and routeways. This is, in many ways, dependent upon the scale at which the remains are presented, which, with the potential of machine-stored data recorded by total station, is now far more flexible. However, accompanying descriptions (while necessary) tend to be purely factual, fossilising the materiality of the remains as a series of measurements (e.g. Johnson and Rose 1994, 14). Evocations of landscape are consigned to 'popular' books (e.g. Campbell 1977; Fleming 1988) or, just possibly, the introduction to an archaeological site report. Equally, this static representation means that any recognition of these remains as a reflection of a once lived-in landscape, one where the remains have a continual role to play in the present construction of the landscape, is hard to grasp.

Consequently, this distance makes it easier to satisfy the ever present need to classify the material within already acknowledged frameworks, whether this be accepted building types or chronological periods. This further perpetuates extant modes of thought and practice because it conceals the wealth of variety present in each of these groups or periods (cf. Mercer 1985b, 11). Such categorisations are not helped by the scale at which analysis is undertaken, nor the fact that any distribution map still tends to concentrate on permanently occupied sites. The boundaries of the individual site become the boundaries of the lived-in world; rarely are they escaped to record intimately the landscape exploited by that settlement (e.g. fields, shieling grounds). Therefore, a sense of the scale at which the inhabited landscape operates is replaced by the need to establish regional (and, very occasionally, local) patterns. The result of these descriptive classifications is the loss of any comprehension of this data as a product of the social processes which generated it - and an active (although only partially recoverable) response to the negotiation of people's relationships to each other and to their surroundings.

These concerns can be illustrated in more detail through the changing format and content of the most recent Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments

of Scotland (RCAHMS) publications. In all the county inventories prior to North-east Perth (1990), each site (whether archaeological or architectural in nature) was incorporated into a category, comprising either ritual, domestic or industrial monuments. This has created a hierarchy where significance appears to have been assigned arbitrarily to each site-type. All forts, duns, chapels and many of the cairns and standing stones tend to be beautifully planned (although, in general, they are reproduced at such a tiny scale as to be almost meaningless) and a photograph included in the text. The Argyll volumes (as early as 1971 in the case of Kintyre) were the first RCAHMS inventories to specifically include the remains of Medieval and later townships; nonetheless these were given very brief treatment, often with only one or two “good representative specimen[s]” being planned and described in detail in each area (e.g. RCAHMS 1984, 312). Associated sites, such as shieling groups, in particular, were very rarely noted. Even if this uneven treatment is necessary in the publication (for reasons of size and cost) it was, however, maintained in the National Monuments Record of Scotland database (NMRS). In this, some settlements were noted, others were not, apparently quite arbitrarily.

Nonetheless, the continued evolution of the RCAHMS approach to the recording of Scotland’s archaeology resulted in the publication of North-east Perth in 1990, their first attempt to produce a more landscape-oriented discussion for a far smaller geographical area than that tackled previously. Although a still comparatively large and topographically varied area had been assessed and the remains within them described (not all graphically), the published volume provided little sense of the reality of the cultural landscapes they purported to present. The descriptions (both in the text and in plan) created very rigid and clearly divided, almost static, landscapes. The text, in particular, amounts to little more than a gazetteer of sites, which still preserves descriptive and functional classifications, down to the miscellaneous category into which all less easily explained sites are lumped; this is a feature no longer present in succeeding RCAHMS volumes (e.g. South-east Perth (1994), Mar Lodge (1995)), where the accompanying text is far more discursive and arguably, therefore, more successful.

While there is certainly a greater degree of concern with the graphical presentation of larger areas of landscape and their associated remains, this does not always appear to go much further than that visible in earlier volumes. It is hard to avoid the suggestion that the plans of areas such as Balnabroich and Drumturn Burn (figs. 28 and 41) are simply a response to the bias inherent in the archaeology of North-east Perth; the landscape-based approach appears to disintegrate when confronted by individual monuments such as tower-houses. If there had been more than the occasional castle or the single fort, would they have been presented as an element in the surrounding landscape or as 'monuments' such as those in the Argyll volumes?

Discrete landscapes are presented as a series of nested plans, coming down in scale from large areas to individual buildings (Pitcarmick West provides a good example of this (see RCAHMS 1990, 70, 72, 76; these plans are also reproduced in this volume as figs. 46 and 47, while the overall plan has been re-drawn as Plan 1)). This is a satisfying approach as it conveys a very immediate sense of the apparent density with which these landscapes have been inhabited in the past; whether it helps the viewer to appreciate the time depth visible in these landscapes is perhaps more questionable. The majority of the landscape areas are depicted at a scale of 1:2500 or smaller (although clearly this will be somewhat dependent on the size at which such plans can be reproduced in book format), with much smaller areas pulled out for presentation at larger scales. In consequence, individual buildings are rarely included at a large enough scale for distinctions in structural form to be apparent; only buildings considered worthy of note are presented at a scale of 1:500. This was especially true of categories of buildings (e.g. shielings), which appeared to be of little interest to the RCAHMS.

The smaller scales, while providing an adequate record of landscape areas, proved difficult to relate to that same landscape when it was encountered on the ground. It was often impossible to establish (beyond purely logistical reasons) why the boundaries between segments of the landscape had been drawn in a particular location. This applies particularly to Pitcarmick North, the area eventually chosen for further study, where the north ridge (partly because a series of rectangular buildings were not identified from the

air) and the hut-circles above the bluff at the west end of the south ridge were ignored, in spite of the fact that a large part of the more southerly ridge was regarded as of enough significance to be reproduced in plan form (see chapter 5.2). Topography, represented by a series of contours forming only a hazy backdrop to the archaeological detail, is scantily recorded, in spite of the fact that hachures and so on are employed in the individual plans of buildings to lend them substance. The lack of a meaningful sense of the topography became the main barrier in any attempt to relate the two-dimensional plan to the remains on the ground. Without detailed knowledge of the constraints imposed by the rise and fall of the ground, by lines of sight and by stony and marshy areas, no conception of the potential relationships between elements of the built landscape can be achieved. Without this, further steps towards visualisation of this bleak, moorland landscape as a lived-in world cannot be taken.

In most historical and archaeological writing, the majority of ordinary people remain shapeless shadows, mechanically responsible for the agricultural labour and production which maintain the society of which they are a part. If these people are not to disappear without trace from such texts, emphasis will have to be placed on the routine experiences and practices of the everyday and on the immediacy of individual response to the landscape. This need not require a different set of source materials, but it will require a different response to them. This should stress the ability of the archaeological record to reveal something of the lives of those people who are never mentioned in historical documents. If such lives are to be examined thoughtfully, the need to seek a suitable scale of analysis becomes critical. The uncertainties and problems implicated in this approach are exemplified in attempts to study the development of the inhabited landscapes of Highland Scotland. Here, knowledge of the primarily subsistence agricultural populations which made up the bulk of the population is limited. The constraints imposed by an often extreme environment reinforce the need to recognise the situated nature of all social activities. This, by definition, highlights the importance

of the landscape context and draws attention to the intimacy and complexity of the relations which characterised people's lives.

Landscape is a cultural construct, separate from, yet nonetheless integral to, the land. The land is the bare bones of topography, but landscape encompasses the understandings of the people who, through dwelling within the world, create it. However in archaeological studies, the landscape over which the sites are distributed tends to become just another facet of the economical and functional perspective with which the sites themselves are treated. Landscape history becomes simply a study of form and structure (Barrett, Bradley and Green 1991, 6), with the resulting need to systematically record all traces of past human action:

“[fieldwork] involves observing and recording the mainly relict features with the aim of explaining the evolution of patterns and shapes in urban and rural landscapes”

(Aston and Rowley 1974, 23).

With a greater rigour being shown towards the testing of site survival, this sense of the surface of the land as a sheet on which the totality of past human activity is inscribed has led to the imposition of models (derived from ethnographic examples or based on common-sense assumptions about walkable distances) for the location of settlements and the probable size of catchment areas (cf. Tilley 1994, 9-11). Spatial distributions, become the direct reflection of social organisation, the character of which can be assigned to geographical and ecological determinants (Barrett, Bradley and Green 1991, 6). Consequently, the mapping of these systems as they develop over time forms the main focus of much archaeological research. Furthermore, such approaches can be implemented from outside the landscape, on just a basic acquaintance with the topography and vegetation gleaned from maps and photographs. Therefore the researcher need never know intimately the areas about which they write. The result is a discussion of the increasing ease with which human control is imposed on the

landscape, where the past is considered as static and self-contained blocks of time (Bender 1992, 735-7; Barrett 1994, 6ff).

As a consequence, there is no materiality to the earth on which people walk or over which they look. People simply 'do' things to the surface of the earth (Bender 1992, 735). Yet in pre-modern societies, the perception that all the elements of the lived-in world were indissolubly intertwined means that it would be impossible to conceive of such a separation between action and consequence, even if this does not necessarily equate to a romantic notion of people in harmony with nature. For the majority of individuals, their whole existence was lived so close to the land that their consciousness of how it worked would have been negotiated and renegotiated on an everyday basis. There is no division between culture and nature, but a mutually dependent relationship that does not allow for the dominance of one or the other (Bender 1992, 742ff; cf. Ingold 1993, 154). There are no sharply defined categories into which things were slotted where they need have no impact on the other constituent parts; the reality of people's sensory response to their environment will underlie their understandings of the world around them. Meaning can only be given by the observer as a product of engagement with their surroundings, their past experiences and their hopes for the future (Barrett 1994, 60). The construction of the landscape by the people who dwell within it will, therefore, be very different from that of the external (and, generally, modern) observer who attempts to objectify the landscape as a series of descriptive categories (Cosgrove 1984, 19; Barrett 1994, 3). Any meaningful understanding of the inhabited landscape will have to assimilate individuals' differing perceptions (dependent on age, sex, status and so on) of the world in which they live.

Those locales in which social interaction was played out will have a determining influence on the nature of that interaction. Where architecture clearly structures space, it is relatively easy to establish the ways in which bounded space was utilised to guide and direct interaction between individuals. For example, the highly organised layout of a broch and its adjacent radial settlement (e.g. Gurness, Orkney), directs movement in a

way that is easy to recognise today. These patterns of movement are also determined by the height of the broch tower and the elaboration of its entrance. Similarly, sixteenth century towerhouses draw in the eye of the observer, impressing upon them a sense of the power and influence of its owner. This extends further - in this instance, statements of ownership are made explicit in the ostentatious display of aristocratic insignia over the main entranceway (e.g. Carnasserie, Mid-Argyll). More subtly, the idea of ownership and control is suggested by the subordination implicit in the dark and narrow staircases that led to the main internal rooms of the tower where the lord sat in residence. Yet the explicitness of the built structure can only hint at the complexity and the subtleties of the social relationships it was intended to maintain.

‘Reading’ the architecture of built space can therefore begin to reveal something of the social structures which created it (e.g. Glassie 1975). However, this is only possible if it is understood that the creation of a locale (or of any object of material or oral culture) is a product of the motivations and knowledge of the society in which it is created and on which, through the routine practices of the everyday, it then has a recursive effect. It is through vernacular architecture and material culture that individuals and groups orientate themselves within the world. It is this recognition which is the essence of the vernacular, but it is one that takes it far beyond the spiritually and culturally impoverished definitions found in many studies of vernacular tradition (Jackson, J.B., 1984, 85-7; see chapter 4).

The act of inhabitation, the product of peoples’ individual and situated experience of land, will produce landscape (just as it produces homes out of the shell of a building). As people pass over the landscape, its surface is modified as part of ongoing processes of change and interaction. This is both physical - the imposition of built structures or the replacement of the natural vegetation with vast expanses of a single cultivated species - and intellectual. Such cultural assimilation makes people as integral a part of the land as the animals and plants (Jackson, J.B., 1984, 11); each person belongs and draws meaning from their physical surroundings. Consequently, the entirety of the inhabited landscape becomes imbued with significance. This is not to negate the fact that there

will be underlying tensions between each person as an inhabitant of the earth and, through the need to survive and find an identity in the world, as members of the human race (ibid.). This forms a part of the constant conflict between the need to maintain the past and the need to adapt and change, which ensures that, in many respects, the present becomes the moment where tensions between the past and the future are worked through.

Places, paths, and the topography within which they are set, are the means by which the landscape is encountered, described, understood and renegotiated by those who dwell within it (cf. Bender 1992). Places are loci of meeting, exchange, ritual and avoidance. Referred to in human terms, they 'become' as part of people's understanding of how the world worked. Therefore, the routinised practices which constitute social life do so because of people's presence at particular places at certain times (Giddens 1985, 293). This may be articulated as a unified creation myth, where landscape features had been created by the ancestors, and people, through the repetition of the mythical journeys of their ancestors, found their own place in the continuous cycle of life (e.g. Ingold 1986, 149, 153). Places (and paths) are made concrete through the ideas embodied in them and through peoples' individual engagement with the temporal and spatial dimension of those ideas and memories (Norberg-Schultz 1980, 5; Ingold 1986, 153; 1993, 155-6).

Places need no physical mnemonic. However, they will have atmosphere and a historical contingency which cannot be separated into particular physical properties, such as concrete space, without the danger of losing the qualities which give that place meaning (Norberg-Schultz 1980, 7-8). Architecture will grow out of the landscape, monumentalising the properties inherent in the landscape itself. In this manner, monuments exploit or even imitate the natural forms of the landscape, more or less explicitly (cf. Devereux 1991; C. Richards, pers. comm.). As part of a physical and a conceptual process, any monument (or place) will create a smaller world within the landscape. As such, they may be placed at liminal points within the landscape - whether

these are physical (e.g. topographical or ecological) or conceptual. These monuments will close down the participant's view of the world or, by referring to other features, expand that perspective. In this way, monuments begin to alter the land more fundamentally than the paths of the ancestors, by creating and directing movement and, ultimately, perceptions of peoples' own place in the world. People may no longer see themselves as part of a mythical and (in their eyes) timeless world, but of a world where time is constructed on a more human scale (Fraser 1996, 307ff). This reduction in scale appears to make possible the appropriation of rights in areas of land to communities or individuals (Ingold 1986, 153-154).

Habitual encounters with the landscape will tend to follow certain prescribed paths, whether this involves the daily movement between the dwelling and the fields or the recreation of ancestral journeys (and other ritual activities) where practice and behaviour may be more closely controlled. The temporal and spatial qualities of these actions may be, to a greater or lesser extent, physically inscribed on the landscape, but more importantly, they will form an integral element of the ways in which knowledge is memorised. Movement - whether on a daily basis or from birth to death - is a metaphor for the intersecting lives of individuals, their pasts and their futures (Ingold 1986, 153; 1993, 157; Tilley 1994, 27-31). Movement provides therefore a mechanism for understanding the structure and signification of the intricate network of places and linking paths which constitute the cultural landscape (Ingold 1986, 147ff).

Each of these individual spaces or paths will be defined by a boundary, whether physical or metaphorical. These boundaries will have, in the minds of individuals, a myriad of divergent meanings at different times. They need not be interpreted proscriptively as defining territoriality or ownership of an area (Bradley 1993, 6; Parker Pearson and Richards 1994, 24; but cf. Ingold 1986, 1993) and many will indeed reflect a far more flexible conception of the contents of the space they define. Boundaries, in more or less permeable fashion, may rationalise contact between an inside and an outside (Jackson, J.B., 1984, 13-4). For example, an artificial space (such as a house, where spaces are bounded by walls) within a modern, Western landscape, may be

surrounded by a buffer zone (the garden or other empty space), which then has a very visible boundary, imbued with the sanctity of private ownership (the garden fence). Such spatial definitions enable social relationships in a world where identity appears to be of paramount significance (ibid., 15-16). Although the boundaries of the unit may have been physically delimited, recognition of when, and on what grounds it was acceptable to enter another person's dwelling would have been determined by a far less concrete set of social norms (although at times these might be backed up by the law). In hunter-gatherer societies, however, it is probably more accurate to conceive of landscapes as continuous corridors along which people moved through a series of nesting places, each of which dissolved and disappeared into the next (Ingold 1986, 149-50). In such a context, paths (e.g. traplines) may belong to an individual or group, but the zone on either side would be freely available to all (ibid., 151).

Nevertheless, movement through the landscape creates constantly changing perspectives which will engender their own interfaces along paths and between places. These, as much as the idea of 'belonging' or 'not belonging', constitute a whole series of intellectually and physically visible boundaries and defined spaces, even though the contents of the space might appear to be empty. These distinctions may not always have been so important or so simplistic, but neither (as Ingold (1986, 156-7) suggests) need they have originated in an agricultural phase when particular groups began to assert exclusive tenure over areas of land for the first time. Rather, the idea of transitional points provides a representation of space, making it possible to examine the abstract categories which individuals and groups employed to conceptualise their environment. This means it is possible to go beyond the series of physically defined areas provided by topography to define those places which have meaning for the people to whom they belong. Further, the means by which the spaces in and around a settlement or monument are defined by patterns of behaviour and expectations of order may be extended beyond its bounds and into the exploited landscape (Fletcher 1978, 233). This may be expressed only as part of the conceptual systems by which the community ordered their world, but

it can also possess tangible reality in the layout of field systems, the naming of places and so on.

In Western Europe, at least, the Inclosures and Improvements could only happen when human control of nature allowed the treatment of land as an economic resource; once this point had been reached, land became property to be bought and exchanged by individuals. No longer was it the lifeblood of the community, a symbolic resource necessary to ensure the survival of the group (cf. Bender 1992, 739-40). Cosgrove (1984) utilises the same metaphor to explain the development of landscape art and cartography in the Renaissance period and after; here the observer stands outside the landscape, looking in, and a barrier is erected between the individual, as viewer of these representations of landscape and as inhabitant of a lived in landscape (Barrett 1994, 3-4). Although superficially treated here, both these examples have begun to show how physical and conceptual boundaries acquire layers of meaning; a merely descriptive, functional approach to these divisions could only begin to hint at their real significance.

The physical and symbolic boundaries constructed in everyday life have been extended, in archaeological writing, to the formation of totally arbitrary divisions between the secular and the sacred worlds. This is reinforced by the perception that the most important ritual landscapes, such as those of Neolithic and Bronze Age Wessex, stood in isolation from the settled world. Physically, and therefore also conceptually, this can no longer be sustained (e.g. Bender 1992, 747). Even if a rigid conceptual or physical separation between the ritual world and the world of the everyday was present, the relationships between all aspects of life would still be inextricably linked. The practices of daily life will be as intimately associated with the bodies of social knowledge that generated them as ritual practice (Richards 1993, 175-6). This can be illustrated in many different societies at different times, but Richards employs the Orcadian Neolithic to provide a striking illustration. At Barnhouse, the internal structure of two of the Neolithic dwellings (Structures 2 and 8) mirrors the internal arrangement and construction of the massive chambered tomb of Maeshowe, c. 1km to the south-east

(ibid., 159-72). Further, the central features of Structure 8 recall the internal organisation of the standing stones of Stenness, 150m to the south-west of the Barnhouse settlement (ibid., 172-5).

The ritualistic nature of routine practice, as an essential part of even the most mundane act, is clearly expressed in the care taken over traditional methods and actions. It is these aspects of life, and their physical manifestations, which are examined in the context of recent vernacular tradition in the Highlands (Chapter 4). These issues are also integral to the consideration of the primarily settled landscapes which are the basis of each case-study. Current archaeological classifications fix immutably the differences between architectural types; as a consequence, these typologies are perceived to have a conceptual reality in the social spheres in which they were created and used. As Richards's study of the Stenness peninsula has demonstrated, considering domestic architecture as distinct from that created in the ritual sphere, would have obscured the striking correspondences between the structure and form of space in each of the monumental contexts examined. Breaking down such boundaries will reduce the need to separate each monument into an evolutionary typology or impose upon it a distinct, functional usage (Richards 1993, 146-7). This will enable an understanding of the landscape as a socially constructed whole.

Responses to the landscape in recent writings on the prehistoric past have relied largely upon phenomenological approaches (e.g. Tilley 1993, 1994). Phenomenology is concerned with the ways in which the materiality of the world, as mediated by the human body, is experienced. This, while stressing the importance of making sense of the past on a human scale, actively employs a framework which articulates possible responses to landscape in the past through critical examination of our own situated perceptions. This is the recognition that "the practice of archaeology is itself a form of dwelling" (Ingold 1993, 152). These studies have been concerned with the creation of meaning from place, through the constant interpretation and re-interpretation of internalised experiences. The stress placed here, both on the importance of the knowledgeable agent and of the material referents of practice, rectifies the lack of

engagement with the physical world in previous archaeological writing. It makes possible the construction of liveable worlds, in which agency can be seen to have an active role and which privileges personal involvement (whether in the past or in the present).

The approach taken to this thesis presumes that the materiality of the landscape which the modern observer encounters is similar to that experienced by the people who lived in and who utilised that landscape. It recognises that this is mediated by the bodies of knowledge accumulated through the experiences of the fieldworker and by the processes of historical development which monuments and landscape have undergone during their lifetimes. Such concepts have been explored in detail where the ritual monuments of earlier prehistory are concerned (e.g. Fraser 1996, 68-9); in this study equal emphasis has been placed on the architecture of the domestic sphere and on the natural forms of the landscape. In this way, and in contrast to much of the work quoted above, which has tended to concentrate on the period of prehistory when these large stone monuments first appear, the totality of the visible landscape (both natural and anthropogenic) is stressed here.

This, as Barrett (1994) has emphasised, moves away from archaeology's concern with the reasons for building a particular monument or for employing a particular exploitative strategy to one where all elements of the landscape (including pre-existing archaeological remains) were involved in ongoing cycles of use and disuse, decay and rebuilding:

"One way of thinking about the contrasting interpretations ... is to consider them involving different kinds of chronological reasoning, between chronologies of authorship and origins ... and chronologies of reading and interpretation. The former is concerned with fixing the moment of creation as if the true significance of the monument or object was also fixed at that (the time of creation by some author - literally the authoritative voice); the latter explores the chronologies over which certain interpretative strategies may have run (the time over which a common readership might identify itself)"

(Barrett 1994, 11).

This view has, in part, been generated by the specific conditions present in Highland Scotland. The sheer visibility of the archaeological record, particularly on the uplands, makes this possible (the overall map of Pitcarmick North (plan 2) is testimony to this). If any archaeological work in these areas is to make an imaginative contribution to the writing of a social history of particular localities, comprehension of all the processes of aggregation which this landscape has undergone is almost a requirement.

History (whether it is written from documents or material culture) tends to be reduced to a series of discrete events. Even if it is the processes that underlie and motivate action which are being sought, the relationships between structure and event which generate particular happenings are ignored (Hodder 1987, 2-6). If, however, the interchange between process and event is treated in a far more positive manner, the potential for the re-interpretation of the past in the present becomes possible (cf. Hodder 1987, 6-7). Only in this light, can a sense of people's endeavours to deal with the densely acculturated and multilayered landscape which they, as members of a new generation, inherit, be comprehended.

Within such an ideological framework, the wealth of evidence (both archaeological and historical) that has to be incorporated into the study restricts the geographical area which can be analysed. In compensation, by employing such a small, even microscopic, geographic scale, it should be possible to write a 'humanised' landscape history of individual, local (and consequently meaningful) areas. While detailed chronological control of settlement and monument types in the Highlands is often lacking, the archaeological record is dominated by distinct horizons. These have provided the initial frameworks for the structure of each of the case studies. The very radical changes of the last two hundred years form just one of these; however, they govern our present perceptions of the Highland landscape to such an extent that these, too, cannot be ignored if a sense of what constituted earlier landscapes is to be achieved:

"Above the sixtieth parallel in Canada you feel that nobody but God has ever been there before you, but in a deserted Highland glen you feel that everyone who ever mattered is dead and gone"

(Hugh MacLennan, quoted in Hunter 1995, 25).

Landscape is a product of physical experience. To quantify this will clearly be impossible; to convey even a sense of the reality of such sensory encounters in two-dimensional form will be almost as difficult. This study has relied on written text to present the landscapes being considered, since as Fraser has already recognised in her examination of monument visibility, analytical method produced “only extremely generalised, abstract images” which added little to the “detailed subjective impressions of place recorded in the written descriptions” (1996, 64-6). Landscape is a very visual experience; in this study, the text has been separated from the graphic images, not to give pre-eminence to one or the other, but (bearing in mind the equally subjective nature of the perspective inherent in taking photographs or drawing plans) to allow them to be ‘read’ alongside each other.

3 Current perspectives: present knowledge of Highland rural settlement

The general lack of understanding of rural settlement in many time periods and regions is particularly acute where the Early Medieval and Medieval periods of Scotland are concerned. However, as this subject now attracts more positive attention from field workers in many disciplines, the situation is less one of cries of despair than suggestions put forward for avenues which future research could take (e.g. Alcock and Alcock 1980; Nieke 1983; Crawford 1986; Foster 1989). The apparent absence of rural settlement in both the Early Medieval and Medieval periods (e.g. Morrison 1974; Alcock 1984; Yeoman 1991) can no longer be seen as either comprehensive or, in terms of area, universal (e.g. RCAHMS 1990, 12; Corser 1993; Dixon 1993). However, our understanding still remains imperfect - largely restricted to a few excavated sites or to site-types (something which is not just confined to the Early Medieval period), which although they may be relatively well understood are constrained in terms of geographical distribution. These statements could be applied also to the higher status elements in the settlement hierarchy, but here the benefit of historical research allows a recognisable framework to be constructed around individual sites.

To help remedy the gaps in our knowledge of low-status settlement, it is proposed to focus on the chronological periods on either side (cf. Fairhurst 1967-8, 139-40). The justification for this belief is that a greater understanding of the later prehistoric period, primarily that of an Iron Age where settlement remains are both numerous and visible, will help in comprehending the seemingly sudden disappearance of all but the vaguest traces of settlement activity in the succeeding period. In turn, the Early Modern era, as the supposedly traditional forms of Highland life decline and disappear in the face of massive change largely brought about by external forces, should directly benefit our understanding of the apparently more transient remains of the preceding period. Only from a more comprehensive understanding of the changes and developments taking

place in society can a sense of the competing motivations and identities running through peoples' everyday lives be built up. This should reduce the emphasis placed on such imposed chronological frameworks, although the necessity of providing a structured layout for this study, means that they are retained as chapter headings.

If this is to be achieved then the received understanding - in broad outline at least - of each of these periods (including the Early Medieval) in Highland Scotland requires examination. For the purposes of this chapter, this vast chronological range has been divided into three sections: later prehistory (i.e. the last millennium B.C and the first half of the first millennium A.D.), the Early Medieval period (from the middle of the first millennium A.D. to the beginning of the second millennium A.D.) and the Medieval and Early Modern era. It is recognised that these divisions have no real meaning in terms of the archaeological remains or the historical development of the areas under consideration - and they have been left vague in consequence – but, nonetheless, they are employed here to provide a convenient framework for initial discussion. This section is intended to be essentially a (brief) presentation of the available evidence (therefore succumbing, for example, in the prehistoric period, to the perception that there is no 'real' archaeology outside the Atlantic region and, in the first millennium A.D., to the primacy of the historical record). However, within these boundaries, it has been possible to highlight a series of interpretative themes which previous authors have recognised as of especial importance within their own fields. In the case of the prehistoric period in particular, where perhaps more imaginative work has been done, these can then be seen to have a wider applicability in the study of the past landscapes of Highland Scotland.

3.1 The Later Prehistoric period

The Iron Age of Scotland is characterised by the settlement architecture of the north and west (the 'Atlantic' region). The numerous and impressive forts, brochs, souterrains, duns, crannogs and wheelhouses that stand so evocatively in what are today mainly remote and apparently barren landscapes, are testimony seemingly to the constant human struggle for survival. Yet the very elements of humanity that generated such uniqueness of form have been lost amidst the rigid definition of categories, and the almost obsessive search for an evolutionary typology that accounts for the visible variation (cf. Barrett 1982, 207ff). Such classifications subsumed the less dramatic settlement types - and the artefactual evidence - into the overwhelming search for typologies. This led to the outlining of what now seem arbitrary regions and provinces by Piggott (amongst others), and the explanations for what appeared to be radical changes being laid at the door of exotic imports and cultural invasion (cf. Armit 1990a, 46; Hingley 1992, 8-10). Both these approaches have served to further abstract the material from the historically contingent contexts in which it was generated.

In studies undertaken in the first part of this century, the people who lived in and utilised such structures as brochs vanished. Brochs were simply refuge towers or the apex of a 'castle' complex (Barrett 1982, 207-9). Traces of these interpretations still survive - defense is the primary motivation, although the 'convenience' of being sited close to good agricultural land was obviously important (MacKie 1987, 14). Drawing on an analogy from late Medieval society, the brochs have now become the homes of minor aristocracy (i.e. tacksmen) in a hierarchical tribal society (ibid., 13-6). Scott's view, in the 1940s, that these were defended homesteads and not that different from other local monument types was soundly denounced (quoted in Barrett 1982, 207-9; cf. Armit 1990a, 45). The desire to see these monuments as completely unique, while, somewhat contradictorily, seeking their inspiration in southern England, has dominated much of

the writing on the Atlantic region. Subsequent re-interpretations have drawn on the most positive elements of Scott's thesis to characterise much of the evidence for the later prehistoric period as settlements and their attendant field systems (MacKie 1987, 12ff; Armit 1990a, 45-7). These structures do not sit in empty landscapes - many occur in areas where there were already the remnants of earlier human activities around which peoples' everyday lives had to be negotiated. Further, the almost complete uniqueness of certain of these settlement elements (e.g. brochs, wheelhouses and souterrains) appears to have its antecedents in indigenous traditions (cf. Foster 1989, 228ff).

In essence, these architectural forms (except souterrains, although these are attached to surface structures, evidence for which is now very fragmentary) are all representatives of what Hingley (1992, 12ff) terms "substantial circular houses". This, while suggestive of their materiality, encompasses none of the social responses which were both generated and maintained by their architectural form. Such dwellings, because of the input required to build them, often remained in use for a considerable length of time - maybe for several generations. Some of these sites, such as Pool and Howe on Orkney (Hunter 1990, 182; Ballin Smith 1990, 32), were indeed built on sites of earlier prehistoric date, thus adding another sense of continuity. Over time, these structures were continually altered and sometimes even radically transformed. This, as Hingley (*ibid.*, 15) suggests, implies a strong sense of identity, retained in face of the ongoing processes of change which any society undergoes, for the group inhabiting the structure. The architecture of a broch or wheelhouse would presence the authority of the group, whether that of the ancestors who first built it, or of those in whose hands authority currently rested (*ibid.* 15-7). This would also seem to suggest a strong association with the land around the settlement - this may perhaps represent more than an attachment to place and something close to concepts of land ownership and territory. The bounded nature of the spaces within the house, exemplified by the radial arrangement of the piers inside a wheelhouse, is paralleled in the tightly knit and ordered settlements around the brochs and the defined spaces of the fields and field systems often closely associated with hut-circles.

In many instances, these building forms represent the only structural types of the Iron Age in the Atlantic region; therefore, they cannot be taken as exceptional or perhaps even particularly prominent within the local political situation (MacKie 1987, 13-6; Hingley 1992, 14ff). Although some brochs are certainly towers and others do possess defensive features, the villages which cluster close to the walls of many must reduce their capacity in this respect. It can now be suggested that many did not reach such a height and that most were indeed single domestic structures, each completely roofed over. What is perhaps more striking is the observation that, even though they might be built in prominent positions, the impression of height and impact of some broch towers in Caithness and Orkney would be blurred by the clustered buildings around them (Hingley 1992, 14, 18-9).

Similarly and in spite of the complexity of the internal arrangements of wheelhouses, none of this would have been visible in their semi-subterranean external appearance (Armit 1990b, 204). The effect on the wider community would have been strictly limited, especially because access to the interior of each building could be carefully controlled; the monumentality of these buildings must have little to say about relative status and wealth in that community, and rather more about the importance of status relationships within the individual social group. It can be suggested that because the roundhouse form makes possible an increase in height, the visibility of these structures (although still determined by location) will be dramatically enhanced. This has been taken to suggest that these buildings were intended to be far more prominent markers in the landscape (ibid., 197). Yet this, until the few broch towers are built, will be entirely dependent on the choice of roofing materials - natural materials such as turf will blend into the surrounding landscape - in combination with the shape and height of the roof. Despite the encasing of the internal cellular structure of earlier houses by a single, outer wall so that it appears to be simply circular in shape, it seems more significant that this does little to alter the impression of internalisation articulated by these building-types (ibid., 195-7).

In the west, the duns of Argyll have generated almost as much interest; this is not so true of the Outer Isles where duns have tended to be solely defined in opposition to brochs (Armit 1990a, 47). Again, the perceptions of the first half of this century have dominated all later work. The classifications of forts and duns was undertaken on the basis of four sites - Dunadd (nuclear fort), Duntroon (timber-laced fort), Druim an Dùin and Ardifuir (both galleried duns) - excavated in 1904-5 under the auspices of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (RCAHMS 1988, 29; cf. Christison 1904-5). These initial classifications still stand, although they have been further refined during the century. As a consequence of the excavation of Ardifuir and Druim an Dùin, galleried duns were set up as a separate category from the numerous solid-walled duns. Galleried duns possess what are supposedly characteristic broch-like features, such as intra-mural galleries and elaborate entrances. In Kintyre, particularly, stack-fort is a term used for the smallest sites (often also of the slightest construction) which can be loosely described as duns; one example has been partially excavated at Ugadale (Fairhurst 1956). In contrast to the larger sites, these are often found on isolated coastal promontories and stacks.

The final volumes in the RCAHMS survey of Argyll have recognised the futility of such descriptive classifications (e.g. Vol. 6 (1988), 31-2), while work in the Outer Isles has begun to deny the significance of the supposed division between brochs and duns (Armit 1990a, 47, 49-60). The smaller examples, at least, seem to have been single, roofed dwellings similar to brochs (Nieke 1990, 135ff). As with the brochs, the impressiveness of the dun enclosure might be reduced by the outworks around it, although the chronological relationships between duns and their outworks have not been tested (*ibid.*). Most duns are found in close association to cultivable land (*ibid.*, 139), although this does set apart most of the stack-forts. A comparable social structure to that found in the far north and west might, therefore, be embodied in these sites. Those sites that were too large to be roofed become, therefore, small forts. The chronological and functional significance of this has yet to be fully explored, but surface evidence from Argyll suggests that smaller duns - with attendant social fragmentation - replaced the

forts and the larger social groupings that utilised them (*ibid.*, 132, 135-6). In general, the close similarities in the form of forts and duns give the impression that there were few distinctions in function between these sites (and even perhaps suggests the almost complete irrelevance of these categories).

The distinguishing architectural characteristics of the substantial houses of the north and west have been utilised by Hingley (1992, 17) to suggest that they were not part of a hierarchical social structure. He stresses the importance of the ancestors for the structuring and maintaining of group identity - primarily on the basis of the pieces of human bone found, for example, under the entrances of buildings such as the Wag of Forse (Curle 1948, 21; cf. Hingley 1992, 16). If this was so, then he proposes that each social unit will have been more concerned with internal affairs than making statements of relevance to the wider world (Hingley 1992, 17).

Previous interpretations have relied far more on recognising patterns of power and the building of regional hierarchies has been of paramount concern to archaeologists. In this respect, Scotland has suffered from comparisons with rich and well-studied areas of southern England (particularly Wessex). This has been developed in the far north and west of Britain to suggest that the presence of these elaborate buildings was a product of competitive elites operating on a local scale, their wealth and power derived from the mobilisation of agricultural resources through a pattern of dependent relationships (e.g. Barrett 1982; Barrett and Foster 1991). Such elaboration expresses the centralisation of resources and people under the close supervision of that elite. Such scenarios will also require the rigid definition of relationships through the form and use of space - although here more emphasis would perhaps be placed on external appearance and carefully controlled means of access at an intra-site level. The monumentalisation of brochs, and particularly their entrances, would seem to be designed to achieve just such an effect (Foster 1989, 228ff).

It is likely that both these propositions simplify extremely complex situations. The relationship, whether this differs over time or space, of larger enclosed settlements to these substantial houses has not yet been defined. Forts and enclosed promontories have

largely been ignored in areas where brochs and wheelhouses survive (Hingley 1992, 19). This is hampered because the development of the regularly arranged buildings around brochs and, further, the role of enclosures around such sites (e.g. Gurness, Orkney) is not really understood (*ibid.*, 18-9). It is possible that consolidation of the social structure, which in its initial phases generated the broch towers, eventually made these monuments redundant; equally it might suggest the instability of social relations in the broch phase (Armit 1990b, 200-2). Whether or not social control was maintained, the architectural symbolism of the brochs had become unnecessary. However, in many cases, centralisation of settlement around the decaying broch indicates a form of social cohesion was still requisite. In Orkney, the maintenance of authority was now expressed in formal planning (*ibid.*); in other areas, where local conditions were not so stable, different solutions had to be sought.

In other areas, these very visible architectural forms are absent - or, at least, the conditions that generated such elaboration of the hut-circle form were never reached. Nonetheless, hut-circles come in a wide variety of forms, many suggestive of an increasing degree of social complexity over time. Simple, single-walled structures were replaced by substantial (often double walled) buildings with entrance passages (cf. Fairhurst 1971b, 5-6). The function of these double walls is unclear (see chapter 5.2.1), but they ensure that these buildings are monumental in scale. In some areas of Scotland, the monumentality of the hut-circles themselves extends to the construction of the associated field-systems (RCAHMS 1990, 4-5), although the chronological significance of this cannot yet be assessed. In contrast, the often slight remains of the single-walled hut-circles reinforces the potential for slightly built structures to be found in association with settlements of a far more substantial nature (Hingley 1992, 16-7). Equally, the possibility of a far more significant number of timber or turf-built buildings cannot be ignored (cf. RCAHMS 1990, 2).

The dating of construction and period of use of many of these supposedly Iron Age monument types is difficult - although it might be quite closely defined in one area of

the monument's distribution. It is certainly possible that brochs, wheelhouse and duns were in use at the same time in the Western Isles (Armit 1990a, 68); however, in Argyll debates concern the relative chronological relationship of forts and duns (Nieke 1990, 132-5; Hingley 1992, 18). In Orkney, the uncertainties surrounding the sequence of development for the brochs, their enclosures and the adjacent planned settlements - and the possibilities of local variation - hampers more concrete statements (ibid., 18-9). The origin of all these monument types can be sought in the earlier part of the Iron Age, although only in Orkney do the thick-walled round houses provide clear antecedents for the later buildings of the area (ibid., 13). In Orkney, it is also clear that the tradition of building houses on a similarly monumental scale is present as far back as the Neolithic and Bronze Age. Although the forms of the houses are quite different, this must lend the fact that many of the later structures are built on top of earlier settlements even greater significance.

The lack of known examples of earlier houses from the Western Isles does not allow such a sequence of development to be established there. However, this might be an accurate reflection of a differing response to monumental construction in these areas (ibid., 13-4). In the most intensively studied areas of Perthshire and Sutherland (Harris 1985; Fairhurst and Taylor 1974), there do appear to be at least superficial similarities in the form of hut-circles, yet the question of dating throws up rather sharp divisions. In the far north, the elaborate hut-circles with long entrance passages (e.g. Fairhurst and Taylor 1974, Hut-circle V) possibly continue to be built until the end of the first millennium B.C. Further south in Perthshire, none of the dates from the few excavated examples (even those of elaborate 'Dalrulzion' type (see chapter 5.2.2)) extend much beyond the beginning of the first millennium B.C. (RCAHMS 1990, 4). This leaves the Iron Age in these areas, as it is currently perceived, rather empty of settlement. Again the answer might be found in less monumental building forms.

With the reservation that only the higher status dwellings in the landscape may be visible, the numbers of hut-circles imply that they accommodated a large majority of the

population. Recent aerial surveys of the uplands have, for the first time, recorded the extent of the field systems and agricultural remains that surround these buildings (e.g. RCAHMS 1990, 1993). This is matched by the complexity of the structural evidence from adjacent areas of the lowlands, even though here, as the landscape context is not so apparent, there is a danger that further analysis will return to the search for descriptive classifications (e.g. RCAHMS 1994, 64ff, 70-1). Detailed study of this material must surely begin to rectify the as yet little understood cultural landscapes of the hut-circles, one that can incorporate the wider social landscapes of which hillforts, crannogs and brochs were also a part. Although quite different from their northern counterparts, the souterrains of the lowland east of Scotland are also monumental in scale and form.

There is a tendency to see the presence of elaborate storage facilities, as embodied by souterrains, to reflect the concentration of wealth in the hands of powerful individuals or groups. As the wheelhouses hide the monumentality of their construction, so do souterrains; in both cases the impressive form of the structure must have been seen primarily by the social group which utilised them. However, recent aerial surveys (e.g. RCAHMS 1994, 64ff, 70-1) have demonstrated the almost ubiquitous nature of settlements with associated souterrains in the lowlands of eastern Scotland (and farther afield). This makes them the settlement norm rather than the exception. Further, the numbers of souterrains now apparent in each settlement may suggest that they can no longer be seen as identifying the dominant dwelling (Hingley 1992, 30).

The fact that the monumentality of these settlements is hidden and that they are largely unenclosed must be important. Alongside souterrains, the presence of crannogs and the lowland brochs, in particular, suggests that substantial houses (utilising a large proportion of timber in their construction) are also to be found outside the Atlantic region (ibid., 27). However, the unenclosed yet substantial house at Newmill in Angus, which dates to the end of the first millennium B.C. and is surrounded by a souterrain, may be more typical (ibid., 28; there are problems with this interpretation). Lack of enclosure seems to be a feature of areas to the north of the Forth and need not, therefore,

equate to lack of status in these areas (ibid., 33). On the uplands, although most hut-circle groups are unenclosed, the boundaries of the surrounding field-systems seem to be quite well defined. In spite of the problems of preservation, this could also apply to cropmark settlements, suggesting that differential access to resources within the wider community had not lost its significance in many areas of Scotland.

While further reinforcing the possibility that in areas of Scotland where the Iron Age is 'missing', it should not be far beneath the surface, the answers to these problems can perhaps be sought in the numerous large, fortified sites in areas of southern and eastern Scotland. These - on the surface at least - suggest that in regions of greater fertility, political and social intercourse was undertaken on a larger geographical scale (Peltenberg, quoted in Hingley 1992, 18). This is explicitly referred to in the scale of the forts - even if they represent quite large settlements, the inhabitants would need to mobilise the resources of a wider community for their construction (Nieke 1990, 135). The defensive nature of such sites runs only skin deep (Hingley 1992, 19), and they may be as much concerned with the ceremonial aspects (although this may still be too simplistic) of community life as with the residence of power. This implies that the identity of the community, rather than that of the individual household, was asserted through enclosure (cf. Hingley 1992, 33). If individual households did not retain such political significance as elsewhere, then this gives some authority to the presence of larger scale political constructs. The loose confederacies that constitute the tribes of Iron Age Scotland seem to provide just this sort of social milieu.

3.2 The Early Medieval period

The known Early Medieval archaeology of Britain is dominated by high status sites (both secular and ecclesiastical). This is hardly surprising, since the presence of written records draws attention to those sites which are historically documented. These, by this very defining characteristic, will be highly placed in the social hierarchy and somewhat easier to identify. Since the beginning of this period marks the end of Roman occupation, analysis has tended to dissolve into a rather uncritical search for the continuity of Roman 'civilising' tendencies in the face of wave upon wave of 'barbarian invasion'. If the latter motivation is not of paramount concern in the Highlands of Scotland, then the former certainly is - exacerbated by, even in comparison to areas farther south, the paucity of primary historical documentation. Establishing suitable explanations for the unique artefactual traditions (especially visible in sculpture, metalworking and in manuscript art) present in post-Roman Scotland appears to provide the only worthy distraction.

In many respects, these are concerns that bring together the whole of northern and western Britain and Ireland, creating a large province linked by sea routes across the Irish Sea. This is confirmed by the supposed 'invasion' of the Irish into the area of Argyll that became Dál Riada (Foster 1996, 13-4). Only the Picts, who possessed an archaic language and a remarkable form of cultural expression in sculptured stone, stand outside this province, lending the northern and eastern areas of Scotland a particular potency. The subsequent expansion of the Dál Riadic Scots into the heart of Pictland in the ninth century led to the formation of the kingdom of Alba (Broun 1994). This covered the whole of the area north of the Forth, eventually imposing a sense of cultural homogeneity (somewhat disrupted by the arrival of Viking raiders) that is the foundation of modern Scotland.

The barbaric nature of the Picts and Scots (see Gildas above) would seem to provide the origin of the later conception of the 'noble savage' that dominates Highland imagery and history. It is such images that have dominated not only public perceptions of the Early Medieval period, but also, however unconsciously, academic attempts to build up a more coherent picture of Early Medieval society. The beginnings of modern scholarship on the Picts testify to the conception of them as separate and, therefore, a 'problem' (Wainwright 1955; Henderson 1967). This is, at least, partially the result of the perception that the historical record is paramount - a fountain of truth against which the archaeology has to be 'read'. Today, this supposed separation from the rest of northern and western Europe (e.g. matrilineal succession, 'Pictish' ogam) is not supported by the archaeological record, although until recently, this has had very little to say concerning either settlement or burial evidence.

There is now a database of excavated sites (the result of both research (Crawford 1986, 1996; Crawford and Switsur 1977) and rescue driven work (Ritchie 1977), supported by a considerable amount of discussion on Pictish art and artefacts. This - alongside the vast wealth of evidence recorded in recent surveys (e.g. RCAHMS 1990) - has made possible a 'new look at old problems' (Small 1987). As they are in historical terms far less obscure, the Scots of Dál Riada have, in contrast, suffered less from attempts to create a truly unique identity for them, than a deflection of interest towards the far more mysterious Picts (Foster 1996, 15ff).

The picture given in Roman sources of the Iron Age tribes in Scotland can be paralleled in the names of those tribes present in the latter half of the millennium. For example, the Votadini become the ill-fated Gododdin, and the name of the Caledones is probably preserved both in the name of Dunkeld (see chapter 6) and in the term Caledonia for Scotland itself (ibid., 12). The names for the tribal confederacies of the first few centuries A.D. are confusing, as is the appearance of the term, *Picti*, in a third century Roman geography. What does seem to be clear is the existence of large-scale social units in the Iron Age which survive, although almost certainly in modified form, in the subsequent period (ibid., 11-13, 35).

It is these groupings that are perhaps the basis of the Early Medieval kingdoms which first appear in the historical record in the seventh century and which survive, in large part, as the earldoms of Medieval Scotland. In Argyll, although the origin of the kingdom is slightly different, developments within the kingdom of Dál Riada may mirror those of neighbouring Pictland. Here the three kindreds (or *cenéla*) of the Irish Dál Riada provided the basis for the original territorial divisions of the new kingdom. However, as the overlordship became concentrated in the hands of the Cenél nGabhráin, these kindreds dissolved into seven competing factions (Foster 1996, 36). The consolidation of these territories - and the creation of Alba - testifies to the fact that overall political control re-emerged during the eight and ninth centuries.

To support these large-scale political structures, kings and sub-kings were dependent on a series of kin-based relationships, which nonetheless revolved around the relative status of individuals and groups. The power and authority of the aristocracy was maintained through ritualized modes of behaviour (which, although most clearly codified in the contemporary Irish laws, appear also to be present in Scotland). The ability to maintain a retinue of fighting men and possession of particular status insignia, such as rich jewellery, visibly reinforced social position and heightened the importance of individuals. The collective power of the aristocracy was monumentalised in the settlements that provided the focus of that power and in sculpture. The mainstay of this social structure was the redistribution of moveable, primarily agricultural, wealth. Through the receiving and consuming of food renders and the provision of breeding cattle by the lord, the relative position of each grade of society was defined and the security of the system ensured. Through these mechanisms, more formal and extensive patterns of clientship gradually replaced kinship and the Church came to articulate (through patronage) the expressions of aristocratic power.

Within the present framework, establishing the secular and ecclesiastical infrastructure of each of the individual smaller kingdoms/kindreds has proved difficult, largely because of the lack of coherent settlement patterns or of an understanding of the social and political meanings of the more prominent aspects of material culture (e.g. the

carved stones). Most of the emphasis in recent times has been placed on southern Pictland and, although the northern half of Pictland (from Inverness north to Orkney and Shetland) has received considerable attention, other areas of the Highlands have been rather neglected. The western kingdom of Dál Riada can also be separated from the rest of the Highlands because it has been the subject of more detailed archaeological and historical studies (Bannerman 1974; Nieke 1983; Nieke and Duncan 1988).

In marked contrast to the picture of complex and extensive later prehistoric settlement, after the first few centuries A.D., settlement becomes almost completely invisible. This disappearance is marked by, at first glance, apparently strong discontinuities, both in terms of particular settlement locations and in site types. However, the situation is far more subtle than it may at first seem. The seemingly contemporaneous infilling of souterrains in the eastern areas of Scotland disguises the fact that occupation continued on many of these sites (Wainwright 1955, 91-3; 1963, 73ff, 98ff). South of the Mounth, the souterrains have a similar distribution to that of the Pictish stones; north of the Mounth, although there has been comparatively less excavation, there appears to be a disparity between the two distributions (Cottam and Small 1974, 49; Shepherd 1983, 331-2). Many of the brochs in the north of Scotland were divided and secondary occupation, either within or around the walls of the tower, continued (Foster 1989, 172ff). In many respects, the propensity of later settlement to cluster around hut-circle groups in upland areas (the evidence from Perthshire is discussed in more detail in chapter 5.2.1) probably reflects a similar trend. This is unlikely to be simply attraction to areas of enhanced fertility, but representative of a deeper link to places of past significance.

The nature of these continuities and discontinuities should reveal something further of the underlying changes in social structure that brought them about. Souterrains may no longer be used, but it seems that there is a tendency to exploit semi-subterranean buildings, appearing as discs and crescents on aerial surveys in areas such as south-east Perth (RCAHMS 1990, 43-8, 72) and visible in excavations such as Easter Kinnear

(Driscoll 1997). On the fringes of the areas containing souterrains, and in less dramatic form, the Pitcarmick-type buildings may also share this characteristic, as each has a narrower, sunken end. The explicit incorporation of these potential storage areas into the rest of the domestic space must, however, reflect a significantly different conception of that space than that expressed in the architecture of souterrains.

Although clearly derived from the same tradition, the buildings that succeed the main period of broch occupation tend to be far less substantial than their predecessors (in spite of a reservoir of available stone). This, if not simply indicative of changing status, seems to represent rather different local political conditions. A clearly hierarchical society or one primarily concerned with internal group politics at a local level (see chapter 3.1), appears to be replaced by a society in which political control was exerted over far greater areas (perhaps by the Pictish kingdom or its progenitor). This meant that local elites would be operating in a far more restricted sphere, their authority deriving from their relationship to the overlord, something which was not expressed through high-rise architecture. The post-broch settlements may then have been the homes of lower elements in this hierarchy - the producers of the agricultural wealth and perhaps the fighting men who supported the beginnings of the Pictish state.

On the fairly sparse evidence from several sites, particularly in Argyll, it seems likely that a similar breakdown in the structure of society ensured that the large Iron Age forts also went out of use at the end of the first few centuries A.D. (Nieke 1983, 301-2; RCAHMS 1984, 20-3). In Argyll, and elsewhere, their replacements were the much smaller 'nucleated' forts, such as Dunadd and Craig Phadráig. In contrast to the re-use of broch sites, maintenance of some level of social control is far more clearly expressed in these sites which (presumably) sit at the head of the settlement hierarchy. The artificially enhanced form of these hill-top sites represents visibly the immediacy of the complex patterns of personal relationships recorded in the Irish sources (Stevenson 1949; Alcock 1988, 28-9; Alcock, Alcock and Driscoll 1989, 206-14).

In Argyll, some of the duns and crannogs continued to be occupied, if not built in this period. This suggests that the needs of the new elites did not alter significantly, even if

the resource base had become far more localised. Studies in mid-Argyll have already shown that relationships can be established with other sites in the landscape on the basis of the artefacts probably used as status insignia (Nieke and Duncan 1988, 17; Nieke 1993, 129). These are the beginnings of more clearly establishing the probable status and functional divisions between these categories of sites, as well as within the categories themselves (cf. duns, galleried duns and stack forts (Fairhurst 1939, 1956; RCAHMS 1988, 31-2)). Despite this, detailed studies of the *Senchus fer nAlban* have shown that the household structure recorded there cannot yet be closely related to the archaeological remains (Nieke 1983, 306ff).

Argyll, in revealing the presence of a visible settlement hierarchy, only reinforces the lack of low status sites. It is likely that the *Senchus fer nAlban* includes settlements below the status levels indicated by duns, since these could also have been directly taxable (Nieke 1990, 141). The outworks of some duns may have sheltered dependent dwellings and detailed fieldwork in the vicinity of dun sites is beginning to identify more transient structures (Nieke and Duncan 1988, 18). Around the two duns at Ardanstur on Loch Melford, are a series of terraces and building platforms which may be contemporary with the main occupation of the duns themselves (ibid.). On excavation in advance of gravel extraction, the circular timber buildings at Bruach an Druimein, Poltalloch, which probably lay within a palisade, produced imported pottery of the eighth to the tenth centuries (RCAHMS 1988, 35). The discovery of this site, in particular, is the one tangible clue to the layer of settlement that must (economically and socially) underpin the much more strongly enclosed settlements in Argyll.

It is, therefore, possible that occupation continued - in some form - on many high-status settlements well into the first millennium A.D. The evidence for the Early Medieval period in the Northern and Western Isles and the northern mainland of Scotland appears to come almost entirely from such sites, although, as indicated above, much of it no longer implies such high status. A similar depth of chronology (often spanning the Viking transition) is also visible on sites of lesser status, such as unenclosed settlements and souterrains. It seems likely that these settlements retained a

historical and social significance that made them attractive for continuing occupation (Foster 1996, 49-51). In the heartland of the southern Picts, the Early Medieval ceremonial and mortuary evidence at the royal site of Forteviot focuses on an area whose importance probably began in the Neolithic (Alcock and Alcock 1992, 231ff). In Argyll, the Kilmartin valley - perhaps with a monastery at Kilmartin itself forming the Early Medieval focus (since these tend to be closely associated with royal authority) - suggests a similar re-use and appropriation of a prehistoric landscape (Foster 1996, 51).

Further, the evidence suggests that there was a gradual change from round to rectangular, or at least sub-rectangular architecture, during this period. At Easter Kinnear, a rectangular structure, dated to the late sixth/early seventh century, succeeded the circular building (Watkins and Freeman 1991, 32). In the north and west, cellular and 'figure-of-eight' structures were gradually replaced by sub-rectangular buildings that may not be of wholly Viking derivation (cf. Skaill, although here there were no cellular buildings (Gelling 1984, 38)). At Cnip on Lewis, the gradual modification of the original wheelhouse culminated in a "revetted, passage-like structure" (Armit 1988, 27). The little understood sub-rectangular, aisled structures known as wags and found in Caithness, Sutherland and Orkney may also date to this period (e.g. Curle 1948; Smith 1990). The explanations for such a seemingly radical change, however slowly it occurred, remains an archaeological conundrum that only very detailed studies of the utilisation of internal space can solve.

The uplands of Perthshire suggest that this feature may also occur in less well understood areas; besides the Pitcarmick-type buildings, there is evidence that one of the roundhouses at Carn Dubh, Moulin, Perthshire was transformed into a sub-rectangular building (Rideout 1995, 153ff; see chapter 5.2.1 for more detail). In contrast, however, the north-west of Perthshire (and maybe adjacent areas of Argyll and the eastern lowlands) possesses a unique form of circular architecture - the rather obscure homesteads, such as Aldclune and Litigan - which seem to span the entirety of the first millennium A.D. (chapter 6 discusses these sites in greater detail).

Without the benefits of strongly enclosed elements in the settlement hierarchy, a predominantly stone architecture or, more prosaically, coastal erosion, it is likely that these sorts of remains would be invisible in other areas. In the whole of the RCAHMS's survey area in North-east Perth, there is only one fort (Barry Hill) and this seems to relate to the area of Strathmore to the south (1990, 5). Although stone is the predominant building material, the superstructure of most buildings seems to consist of organic materials such as turf and wood. However, a careful use of the insights into Early Medieval settlement gleaned in other areas of the Highlands, should help in making sense of the vast amount of new survey data in upland areas.

The structural evidence suggests that most settlements were occupied by small social units; only the Udal is of a scale to suggest the presence of a small village (Crawford 1996, 89-90), although some of the cropmark sites in South-east Perth may be of matching size (Maxwell 1992, 454; RCAHMS 1994, 45, 72). These individual units seem to express a degree of social isolation, that may or may not equate to self-sufficiency. This stands in marked contrast to the large and well-ordered villages that surround many of the brochs and are perhaps also reflected in the formal landscapes of the hut-circle phase. This need not mean that these social groupings were not an integral element in the more extensive social organization realized through the Early Medieval kingdoms. Indeed, local studies in southern Pictland, particularly in Strathearn, have begun to demonstrate the potential for reconstructing not only the boundaries, but also the internal structure of local administrative units, through the association of historical, place-name and archaeological data (Driscoll 1991; Foster 1996, 63). Of particular concern in these areas is the character of the larger entities or thanages and the role of the *pett* names within this infrastructure. The prominence of early ecclesiastical organisation in determining the outlines of secular power must also be stressed. It is likely that similar identifications can be made in, archaeologically and historically, less well understood areas of the Highlands.

Establishing the links between the Early Medieval and the Medieval period proper is a huge problem. Here, in contrast to the beginning of the Early Medieval period and in spite of the few dated examples, the excavated sites indicate a 'break' in our knowledge of rural settlement from (roughly) the tenth to the twelfth centuries A.D. Both the main period of use of the duns and high-status sites of Argyll (and perhaps also the crannogs) seems to have ended before the eleventh century. This could perhaps be the result of the collapse of Dál Riadic power, due either to Viking incursions or the further abstraction of power on the creation of the Scottish kingdom (Nieke and Duncan 1988, 20). The fact that sporadic re-use often continued only after a long period of abandonment suggests that there was indeed a considerable adjustment of the settlement structure. For example, the galleried dun at Kildonan Bay seems to have been occupied between the second century A.D. and the end of the seventh century A.D.; its interior was then re-leveled and rough stone huts and hearths were constructed, associated with late thirteenth/early fourteenth pottery (Fairhurst 1939, 207-10, 216).

Perhaps surprisingly, these discontinuities are not so striking in many of the other Viking influenced areas. At Buckquoy, the last Pictish house had been infilled before the first building of Norse style was constructed, in a position that slightly overlapped the earlier dwelling (Ritchie 1977, 181, 184). This complete change in architectural style is not matched by similarly great differences in material culture, as aspects of 'Pictish' material culture continued in use (*ibid.*, 192). At Skail, also on Orkney, occupation continued but here there was no evidence for cultural integration (Gelling 1984, 38). This concept was taken up by Crawford, at the Udal, where the identification of a Viking 'fort' suggested a violent take-over (1977, 131). These accounts rely on a rather dubious equation between cultural attributes (in this case artefacts and architecture) and political difference; the fact that no satisfactory explanations can be put forward to solve the differences visible at these sites should argue for a far more imaginative use of the available evidence.

Whatever the exact nature of the Viking incoming, the fact that it did not extend to the avoidance of pre-existing settlement sites is significant and a useful clue perhaps to

the search for continuing settlement in other areas (cf. Alcock and Alcock 1980, 67-8). In other areas the discontinuity is far more significant, one that is not resolved by the continuity that is clearly visible in administrative (both secular and ecclesiastical) terms (Barrow 1973). This lack of settlement remains is rectified only by their re-appearance in the early modern period. Certainly, place-names and charter references mean that settlements can be traced, either forwards from the Early Medieval period or back from the early modern period, but there is little archaeological evidence to support the location, form or function of such sites. To bridge this gap will be a necessary prerequisite of any study of the medieval period.

3.3 The Medieval and Early Modern period

The study of Scottish rural settlement, in archaeological terms, revolves around the description of individual sites and their remains. Inevitably, the lack of attention rural settlement of the Medieval and modern periods has attracted, ensures that discussion will always return to the two excavated sites of Lix and Rosal and the work of Horace Fairhurst (e.g. 1960, 1967-8, 1968-9). Simply recording even the very numerous physical remains has been problematic, although these are now present on the Ordnance Survey maps and are a prominent feature of recent RCAHMS surveys (e.g. Argyll, Volume 7 (1992), North-east Perth (1990) and South-east Perth (1994)) and in the work being undertaken currently by groups such as the Afforestation Land Survey (e.g. Strath of Kildonan (1993)). This has resulted in the recording and presentation of the evidence - evidence that now extends beyond the immediate building remains themselves, to include areas of landscape with cultivation remains, the shielings and traces of earlier activities - while not actually addressing many of the problems raised by these settlements. This is visible in the establishment of the Medieval Or Later Rural Settlement (MOLRS) working group by Historic Scotland in 1991, which seeks, primarily, to establish a suitable framework for the assessment of these settlements in terms of future preservation and management (Hingley 1993, iv; Swanson 1993, 1-3). To achieve this, however, the significance of these physical remains requires a broader understanding of the histories of these settlements, their morphologies in terms of the social structure which determined and maintained them, and the landscape context which they occupy; the work of Dodgshon (1975; 1993a-c; 1995) and Grant (1924; 1961) are notable exceptions here. To a greater or lesser extent, the raw materials to achieve this, in the form of detailed survey material and historical documentation, are now increasingly available within areas of Highland Scotland.

The difficulty of finding Medieval settlement is becoming gradually fossilised in the literature (Laing 1969; Fairhurst 1971a; Morrison 1974; Yeoman 1991; many of the issues that may underlie these problems are equally applicable to later periods in the Highlands and are therefore discussed in the next section). Yet work nearly fifty years ago on the sunken, round buildings of Manor parish in the Borders provided dates of the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries, and possibly earlier (Stevenson 1941). Thirteenth and fourteenth century stone buildings, all capped by plough-soil, were found at Springwood Park, Kelso (Dixon 1988). Pollock (1985) in his more extensive study of the Lunan valley, Angus has yielded evidence from the Medieval period, although this does not relate to settlements or dwellings, but rather to the agricultural remains possibly associated with them. This has allowed Corser (1993) to provide a hopeful summary of the evidence for pre-Improvement settlement and agriculture in eastern Scotland.

However, the excavated material from the Highlands does not extend the time range back beyond the middle of the seventeenth century (see chapter 3.3), although the detailed landscape surveys now available are yet to be fully exploited (Dixon 1993, 24-5). Already, building on such surveys in the uplands of Perthshire has indicated the presence of a series of sub-rectangular buildings ('cots'), surviving as low turf-covered stone footings and dateable to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries on the basis of associated pottery (see chapter 5.2.2). Initial cleaning of the turf-built structure within the enclosure of Macewen's Castle, to the north of Kilfinan in Cowal, revealed unstratified small finds of twelfth century and later date (Marshall 1983, 138). There is enormous potential, therefore, for traces of settlements and landscapes of the Medieval period to survive in the Highlands, although in spite of this the rest of this chapter may appear to dwell more or less exclusively on the post-Medieval period.

The agenda within which rural settlement was - and probably still is - considered has been largely determined by the work of historians and historical geographers. This has resulted in a very functionalist and deterministic view of society in rural eighteenth and nineteenth century Scotland. In this context, the discussion of settlement within

economic parameters becomes of foremost importance. Much analysis has, therefore, been directed at an examination of the structure of the joint-tenancy farms to determine their economic viability, primarily in terms of cost- and time-efficiency. This, in a sense, perpetuates the observations of those travellers to the Highlands in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who saw, but misunderstood or only partially comprehended, the lives of the people whom they visited. Such analysis tends to impose a very rigid picture of a joint tenancy farm with a tacksman, tenants and possibly cottars, with a proportion of infield, outfield and common grazings, the applicability of which has not been accompanied by detailed examination on the ground. This is then slotted into an evolutionary framework which accommodates the breakdown of traditional social relations, periodic rises in population, the need by the higher grades of society for a better standard of living, the Improvements and the Clearances.

Little of this work, however, has chosen to examine the effect of these changes on the people who had to accommodate them into their everyday lives. The historical record in Scotland provides detailed evidence, both in written and pictorial form (e.g. rentals, accounts of the Improvements, estate plans), for the workings of many estates (e.g. Grant 1924). These are very much administrative documents, reflecting the views and outlook of the landowners and the tacksmen. Nonetheless, such sources do provide direct glimpses of both the thoughts and actions of the lower tenants and, less directly, much detail on the day-to-day workings of the estates from the tenants' own perspective. This has allowed, for example, Bil's very comprehensive account of shieling use and activities in the central Highlands (1990). Furthermore, the potential for archaeology to contribute to these questions has been quite comprehensively ignored.

In addition, the wealth of customs and lore contained within the traditions of oral narrative, still extant in Scotland, could be brought to bear, albeit only critically, on this study. Such material, as the expression of the people themselves, has potential as an instrument by which we can attempt to recover the meanings of the physical remains and artefacts, through the recreation of their social and historical context. These songs, stories, charms and sayings reveal how these people conceptualised their lives, their

environment, and their relationships with others in the community and beyond. The daily, seasonal and lifetime cycles by which their lives were ordered becomes the potential medium through which these can be examined. Such an approach has the ability to present groups, for example, women, in a more constructive way and to explore the reasons for and the consequences of the changes that were taking place.

From the admittedly only partial excavation of sites such as Lix, Rosal and Lianach (Fairhurst 1968-9, 1967-8; Stewart and Stewart 1988), the potential of the excavated evidence to fit in with the broad historical framework is apparent, both in chronological terms and in the assimilation of these sites into accepted general categories. Beyond this, discussion becomes often purely descriptive and a lament that the buildings and artefacts seem to extend no further back than the eighteenth century. For instance, settlements are dismissed as generally amorphous in form, with the individual farming units within them very hard to identify. This is true, for example at Rosal, where the three settlement clusters, however, do tie in reasonably well with an estate plan of 1811 and the suggested size of population given in an account of 1806 (Fairhurst 1967-8).

Beyond the implication that topography is the main determinant of layout, no attempt is made to see these clusters as the active product of the social conditions under which they were built. In such a light, the apparent lack of desire to define farming units may suggest the degree to which a communally operated environment has overcome a potential need to assert individual ownership or occupation. Changes in structure brought about by the first phase of Improvement introduced a more regularised layout to Lix, where the ruined clusters bear no relationship to those depicted on the pre-Improvement plan of 1755 (Fairhurst 1968-9, 171-2). Here, individual units do seem to be defined within the clusters, while a further degree of separation between these units is perhaps suggested at East Lix by their arrangement around a large and prominent knoll (*ibid.*; fig. 3C). These two brief examples indicate, above all, a need to consider the implications of apparently simple layouts for the workings of these pre- and post-Improvement farms. From the above, the potential for a far more imaginative use of the

material remains, one that explores the issues they raise in the light of the dialectical relationships inherent within material culture, is clear.

The archaeological evidence suggests that the transience of the building itself may contrast with the tenacity of a particular location for settlement. That this need not apply to the siting of the individual buildings or to their orientations is proved by excavations at Auchindrain, which demonstrated a sequence of walls and floors on the same house stance (House K), and by an estate plan of the same community drawn in the late eighteenth century, which, in contrast, demonstrates that most buildings were in a slightly different position or orientation to that of today (A. Morrison, pers. comm.; Fairhurst 1968, 185). The time sequences involved in these two examples from the same site may be very different. This highlights the need for a degree of resolution in spatial and temporal sequences achievable only through excavation, although the scarcity of finds usual on such settlements may preclude this. In North-east Perth, re-building on the same site is visible just in the surface remains at, for example, Easter Bleaton - though in complete contrast neither the site of Lix nor Rosal revealed a lengthy history for the excavated buildings.

Moreover, even if available ground is limited the retention of orientation is likely to go beyond the practical and functional, since it is not a universal occurrence. Consistency of both orientation and precise location may represent a stronger sense of identity between the occupants and their own history. In many more examples, shifts in location appear to be the norm, and could indicate the apparent and significant mobility of the tenants within their chief's land (Dodgshon 1993a, 424). This is in large part due to the nature of tenure in the Highlands. As the eighteenth century figures for Kirkmichael demonstrate, heritable tenure was relatively rare. Leases were frequently for as short as a year and, though tenants clearly had legal protection from the worst excesses of landlords until the breakdown of the social system in the eighteenth century, this, nonetheless, does not imply security of tenure. It is possible that the situation in parts of the Atholl estates was not quite as extreme as this - since in 1725, tacks are recorded for a period of between nine and eleven years and by 1760, tacks of fifteen or

nineteen years were common (Leneman 1986, 16). Dislocation of families is not likely to have been as great in such circumstances, but whether this applied to areas outside the Duke's direct jurisdiction is not known, since the necessary very detailed historical data is not available.

The one other constant in the history of the Highlands is the magnetic qualities of the clan system - it gave to the individual both a sense of belonging and of pride, which many of the English commentators see as markedly different from the slouching and slovenly tenantry in England (e.g. Burt 1754, Vol. 2, 126, 130). In Burt's understanding, most people owed blind devotion to their chief - a similar devotion is then extended to their own branch of the clan (*ibid.*, Vol. 2, 105-6). The chief acted as a paternalistic figure, the 'father' of his clan in all senses. Thus, all those who followed him were believed to bow to his absolute, yet invariably disinterested, authority and to subsume their own identity by taking on his surname. In the Early Modern period at least the representative of this authority at local level was the tacksman - generally a person related by blood (as a cadet branch of the main family) both to his chief and to his own tenants. He provided real support for his tenants and, from him, they held their land. Although feudal modes of tenure had had an impact on landholding in the Highlands, this had evolved into quite specific Scottish forms. These, at least partially, ensured that the immense social distinctions between the cruel landlord and the oppressed peasant of the English and French countrysides, did not find a place in Scottish history. As a result a very strong sense of identity was developed within the clan which made possible the considerable interchange between all levels of society that seems to have taken place. Within this, the identity of the individual is then dependent on their relationship to a rather abstract idea of extended family, made real through the figure of their chief and their loyalty to him. Individual settlements or land-holdings do not seem to be an important part of a world where status is derived from personal relationships of blood and service, and expressed through dress and manners, not buildings and, besides cattle, not in personal possessions (e.g. Grant 1924, 122).

In periods of constant feud and disruption, family fortunes were liable to fluctuate alarmingly. This applied to the large as well as the small, although the more important clan members could usually obtain restitution in time. After the proscription of the Macgregors in the sixteenth century, their followers found people willing enough to shield them from their pursuers and create a new life for them. Attachment between related members of different clans, in the case of the Macgregors, was enough to ensure at least the survival of many of its less important members, although they had to change their surnames. At a more local level, rivalry between different clans and the jockeying for position of the cadet branches of a clan were never-ending, but here the results were generally less drastic. For those of lower status, the constraints imposed by the need to work within a communal form of subsistence agriculture would create a series of different loyalties generated by a reliance on interdependence with their neighbours to survive. As leases were often short, their chance of security was rather more limited. In consequence, people were extremely mobile within a particular area, implying a rather different relationship to land and territory and a greater reliance on the kin on whose support they drew.

In the face of the overriding power of personal identities, the question of attachment to land and how this was territorialised is harder to quantify. Clearly clan territories did exist, but how this was physically enacted in practice, especially at a local level requires more exploration. In the disturbances of the eighteenth century devotion to the chief could override any such attachments to family or land. In apparent contrast, Robertson (1799, 67) says that any connection to land was so strong that if the tenants had not enough stock for a croft, they would become cottagers and labour on the farms. It is not stated whether these were the farms on which they had once been tenants or farms in the same locale. This might stem from what was possibly a widespread belief that the lengthy occupation of land led to the right of permanent occupation as a 'kindness', although this found no basis in law and the length of time varied between areas (Grant 1961, 7; Hunter 1995, 64ff). This sense of embodiment with the land can - and did - stand separate from the concept of land as a resource to be appropriated; it was both

recognised and accounted for in the crofting legislation of the late nineteenth century (Hunter 1995, 65-7). Such tenuous rights would have no place in the post-Improvement landscape, and by the time Robertson's account was written, such attachments were beginning to wear thin and people had begun to emigrate (Robertson 1799, 67).

This was a society, highly adapted to the environmental conditions in which it was created and which remained very closely linked to the land. A more intensive study of this relationship, with the benefit of the critical use of historical sources, should throw light on the means by which these people articulated their world and their place within it. This will both be determined by and determine the use of the resources (e.g. the land and landscape, material and oral traditions) available to them. In such a way, for instance, the response of the inhabitants to the changing form of settlements, effected through the division of the communally held lands in runrig into small individual holdings, can be examined. In addition to ending communal farming practices, this tends to physically separate the settlement, by removing the original focus, and creating in its place a settlement consisting of lots strung-out along a road - each held individually and each with its own house facing the road. This is exemplified in the crofting communities of the west, while in other areas, these first Improved settlements (as at Lix) may give way eventually to well-separated large farmhouses, where chance meetings with other people to swap gossip and advice are even more explicitly denied. Both these distinct settlement forms clearly necessitate new mechanisms for the negotiation of social relations, the requirement for new situations in which people can meet and new formulas for expressing community identity, or the lack of it. Not only will these changes be seen in the overall settlement layout - perhaps a greater need for privacy and abstraction from the community, reflected in the building of visible boundaries and through the creation of public and private spaces in houses, for example - but in all other aspects of the material and oral culture.

At present, the excavated database is inadequate for the purposes of detailed study. Both Lix and Rosal represent a coherent attempt at tackling the problems represented in the material, but are hampered by the very limited nature of the excavations undertaken.

This is seen both in the attempts to make sense of the internal arrangements of the buildings that are apparently longhouses, while those whose function is not immediately apparent from, for example, the positioning of opposed doors (suggesting a barn), remain generally an enigma. If any excavation is undertaken outside the buildings, it is invariably focused on the immediate area outside the doorway, negating the potentially valuable evidence to be gained from outside activity areas. Most thought in this period has been given to establishing the origin of these settlements and their form within the Medieval and Early Modern period (Fairhurst 1968-9, 168); therefore, attention is distracted from attempts to gain an understanding of the standing buildings. Lix and Rosal, in particular, have demonstrated the scarcity of finds and tangible structures likely to result from the excavation of such sites, though the presence of quite fine creamwares from England at Balquhiddar (Stewart and Stewart 1988, 317), and the pottery, probably produced in the Scottish lowlands, at Rosal, perhaps testify to surprisingly wide contacts in these contexts. Not only does the lack of finds ensure it is difficult to date these sites and establish the contemporaneity of buildings, but even attributions to a particular function become quite arbitrary. The limitations of the excavation process suggest that a greater awareness of what we should expect to find within and around these settlements, that is closely linked to increased comprehension of the nature of the society, itself, is needed.

To a certain degree, analysis in Scotland is also determined by the agenda set by work elsewhere in Britain, principally that undertaken in England. The problems to be tackled in the Highlands in particular are uniquely Scottish, and though benefit can and should be drawn from studies elsewhere, this should not be in the expectation that the situation is likely to be similar. In the early modern period, not only does the classic English-type village, for example, not occur in Scotland - except perhaps in parts of the Lothians - but even the lowland fermtouns do not act as service centres in the way that analogous settlements do in England. Milltouns, castletouns and kirketouns do occur, but it is only with the attempts by Improving landlords to create planned villages, that these functions do ostensibly become centred on one location (Fairhurst 1960, 69; Yeoman

1991, 115-116). In many places in the Highlands, the nature of the environment, ensures that the density of settlement is in no way comparable to that of England. This, perhaps, both confirms and ensures that a different means of approaching the question of continuity of occupation in one location is required. This applies equally to the forms of tenurial and social relations, which have produced in Scotland, a quite different social structure to England's very class-ridden society. The greater integration between all levels of Highland society, which in social terms is reflected, for example, in the Gaelic term for landowner, translatable as 'head of the family' (which as clan chief he might indeed have been) and the consequent intermarriage and intermixing socially, of all members of this extended 'family', must have ramifications too on the physical evidence. The study of rural settlement can, however, benefit both from the longer history of settlement studies in other areas of Europe and their experience in the use of scientific techniques, such as pollen and phosphate analysis.

The contemporary historical sources, even the descriptions of visitors, suggest the degree of regionalisation manifest in Scotland. This ranges from differences in the way the end of the harvest is celebrated (Fenton 1976, 70) to local preferences for characteristic methods of building. This is inherently unsurprising, bearing in mind the extremely localised nature of rural societies, increased in Scotland by the nature of the topography - with the individual glen often forming the economic unit within which the inhabitants were relatively self-sufficient (Grant 1924). Even in landscapes more favourable to regular communication, Pred (1985) records that in the lowland province of Skåne in Sweden, neighbouring villages, only 3km apart, spoke distinct dialects in the eighteenth century. Even if the situation may not be so extreme in Scotland, the mechanisms by which community identity was created and expressed, would seem to necessitate quite detailed local investigation. For certain areas and estates, the detailed historical framework appears to be in place and this should be exploited in future archaeological fieldwork, as is the case in the Balquhiddy project (Stewart and Stewart 1988, 305).

Many of the problems implicit in the failure of settlement studies in general to provide a social history of the communities on which they focus perhaps derive from the framework in which that study is begun. The mode of representation of survey material concentrates attention on the buildings alone, so removing their landscape context. The actual structures of the settlement, however, provide only one focus for activities. It is likely that much of the inhabitants' time and energy is devoted to work in the fields, returning only to the settlement at night. This applies especially to the men - for the women, their chores may well be focused on areas within the settlement, though not necessarily on the dwelling, itself. Areas where the women might meet to work together then need to be identified. Other members of the community will, by necessity, be involved in the care, and particularly herding, of animals on the common grazings and shieling grounds - in the summer, not even returning to the home settlement in the evenings. In this way the emphasis of the settlement moves away from the individual building to the work areas between the buildings, the fields and the wider grazings and the routes by which these are linked. The siting and location of the settlement can only be understood in the context of its immediate and particularised landscape, where minute differences in topography become paramount to the way in which its elements interrelate. The means by which the settlement is then depicted seems to become dependent on how the inhabitants conceived of their settlement and its bounds. This is an issue that perhaps provides an avenue into the vast amount of survey material now available in Highland Scotland, providing a starting point for future study of Medieval and later rural settlement.

4 Landscapes of experience: the ethnographic history of the Highlands

The elements of order within a community will be expressed through all aspects of its behaviour and practice. To begin to comprehend this, it will be necessary to examine the discursive relationships between the entities, both physical and ideological, of which that community consists and the ways in which these are conceived and explained by the people who encounter them everyday. These relationships will mediate the ways in which the community and the individuals that make up that community describe their own realities - both in a more abstract form through social structures and practice, language and perceptions of the wider environment, and in a physical sense through architecture and the definition and use of space. It is these relationships which should allow for the continuing definition and recreation over time - and space - of the place of individuals within their own communities.

It seems possible to elucidate these concerns through the exploration of verbal and architectural classifications. The limitations of the available evidence suggest that such an approach will be most successful in a period where the documentary record is extensive. In this respect, therefore, the later history of Scotland provides a wealth of contemporary accounts and vernacular tradition, written down from the eighteenth century onwards, which can be set alongside a vast amount of, even if little understood, archaeological evidence ranging from settlements to entire landscapes.

In this context of Medieval and Early Modern Highland Scotland, it would seem possible to approach the material from a variety of directions. Through field remains (and careful use of the predominantly eighteenth century evidence from the few excavated settlements) and contemporary descriptions and accounts, an attempt has been made to visualise the appearance of the buildings and settlements that would have formed the framework of daily life (chapter 4.4). This includes also the landscape of

exploitation - the fields, glens, woods and moors - whose resources were drawn upon in the search for food and materials (chapter 4.2).

This can be extended to examine more closely the elements of the natural world that govern the experiences of everyday life (chapter 4.1). These will be the topographical features which become places of significance through the explanations given for their form and origin and through their incorporation into the history of human experience. The sun and moon, the weather and the seasons give shape to this physical world, and become, in consequence, the focus of peoples' beliefs about the ways in which the world works. Such an analysis must, therefore, include all the flora and fauna - both domesticated and wild - that also occupy that world, their significance stemming from their role in economic and agricultural strategies, for their usefulness in healing, or, less tangibly, as a source of superstition and custom (chapter 4.3). This will again have an eighteenth and nineteenth century bias, since it draws heavily on written accounts of the Highlands and its folklore. Nonetheless, this approach to writing the landscape makes sense of it as the context in which all lives were lived and identities negotiated.

These issues will be understood and made relevant to the human framework of experience through the cycles and routines of life - whether on a daily, weekly, monthly, seasonal, yearly or lifetime scale (chapter 4.5). This will not only involve the daily mundane chores, but the major, transitional events of individual lives - birth, marriage, and death. These will be governed by the cycles of human life, but also by the life cycles of the plants and animals that co-exist alongside people. This perspective will hopefully unite all the strands raised by the preceding discussion of the domestic, agricultural and natural worlds into an understanding - albeit a biased and a partial one - of the daily lives of the inhabitants of the Highlands in the post-Medieval period.

4.1 The natural world

“The mythical world receives its substance in rock and hill, in the changes in land and sea. The pierced sea-passages, the cleft boulders, the petrified human beings, all these bring the mythological world close to the natives, make it tangible and permanent. On the other hand, the story thus powerfully illustrated, reacts on the landscape, fills it with dramatic happenings, which, fixed there for ever, give it a definite meaning”

(Malinowski, quoted in Tilley 1994, 58)

Natural features, in any landscape, become absorbed into the familiar world of the individual, through the acquisition of a history made real through people and events. In an upland landscape, this is perhaps doubly important in that it provides landmarks and known features where views tend to be broad and expansive and distinctive points of reference are not common. In the closeness of the glens, where much of the population would have been concentrated, an attempt to appropriate specific places to the honour and possession of the clan or settlement, may have been of greater concern. The creation of place (and a sense of belonging) is a part of the continuity of life and experience that allows individuals to situate themselves, both temporally and spatially, within the community of which they are a part. As such, each individual's view of their world will be highly personal, a product of interaction with their own particular cultural and intellectual background and inheritance. To try and grasp this individuality and its dependence on age and gender (and therefore its fluidity during any particular life-time) is incredibly difficult - it is merely hinted at in the local and regional diversity of customs and folklore (e.g. Banks 1939a & b, 1941). Nonetheless, and in spite of all the problems inherent in Victorian 'translations' of this material, vernacular tradition should give an unrivalled view of how people understood the world they inhabited, one that can shed light on the lived-in landscape and peoples' engagement with and experience of it.

If there is no division between culture and nature (see chapter 2), there can be no entirely natural or entirely artificial features in an acculturated landscape. This view makes it possible to examine the lived-in landscape as a whole, as a network of interconnecting places where everything is imbued with meaning by its occupants. Yet a

landscape of places and paths, although it may possess layers of meaning, is still a rather one-dimensional world. Above all, it is the sun and the moon - along with the weather and the seasonal variation they generate - which must have been responsible for many of peoples' perceptions of how the world worked. They govern the moods of the landscape, turning the world from light into dark, from night into day, replacing the bright green of spring with the fullness of summer and then the sterility of winter, turning the sea from a flat and friendly calm to a rolling, all-engulfing mass. The sun and the moon provide the constants that created a view of the world centred on an endless cycle of regeneration and around which life was structured (cf. Ingold 1993, 163). Yet they also caused the lightning changes in the weather that, through their unpredictability and often catastrophic consequences, ensured death and starvation stalked the people. It is the weather, the atmosphere, the elements of the landscape and the ways in which these are brought to life which will provide the focus of this chapter.

The essential elements - fire, air, water and the earth - as the fundamentals on which all life is based will underpin much of this discussion. Only water, both within the landscape and taken into the sphere of everyday life, and fire (but not wild-fire) find a direct and prominent place in vernacular tradition. The earth finds little mention, whether in terms of the soil in which things are grown or as the foundation of the land, although stone was considered an important and separate entity particularly in contexts where human impact is more clearly visible. At the time of death, a plate of earth placed on the chest of the corpse symbolised the corruptible body, but was far less common than a plate of salt as signifier of the soul (Bennett 1992, 234). This less than auspicious association perhaps confirms that it is the products of the soil, the plants and the animals, that do carry more significance. In contrast, air was not thought of as a sustainer of life - rather it is the other, more visible, constituents of the atmosphere (see below) that people were concerned with.

Early Modern Scotland was a world, both physically and metaphorically, which revolved around the sun and the moon. The passing of the year and of the seasons was the essential framework for measuring the rhythm of life and death. Although the major Irish festivals do not tie in with the cycles of the sun, it is the competing of light against dark that appears to structure both the conception of the seasons (so that winter is dark, cold, rest, female, north, profane but also generative, while summer is light, warm, work, male, south and sacred (Patterson 1994, 119; Mytum 1992, 88)) and of the beginning and ending of the year. In Early Medieval Ireland, the day began and ended at dusk, just as the year began and ended at *Samhain* (Patterson 1994, 119). This ending of the year at *Samhain* is reflected in the long-held perception that all crops had to be collected and processed by the 1st of November or they would become poisoned by spirits (ibid., 121-2). However, the 1st May (*Beltane*), the date more traditional in later Scotland for the beginning of the new year, also had an important role to play in the agricultural year, since it was the day on which the animals with their young were moved to new grazings and rents were submitted.

On a more immediate scale, it would be the passing of night into day that provided the framework for action. The first glimpse of the rising sun or the new moon was always greeted with a salute - the sun viewed with awe and respect as the source of the light and life, the new moon, as the guide along the path of life, with joy and love (Carmichael 1940, Vol. III, 274). The sun seems too important to be (often) engendered - it stands above and beyond such human concerns. The moon is patently female, often addressed as if a young and beautiful woman (ibid., 285).

In a myriad of less visible ways, the sun and the moon structured daily routines. Both were thought to create propitious circumstances and conditions favourable to the start of an enterprise. Walking sunwise around a person or a feature could ensure luck, be a thank-offering or bestow honour or respect (e.g. Martin 1703, 118, 16-7, 20). At Halloween, lighted torches were carried '*deiseal*' round the farms and the fields, and particularly the houses where there were new mothers and their babies, both as a thanksgiving for the crops safely gathered-in and as protection from thieving fairies

(Banks 1941, 116-7). Reverence for the sun is the most consistent and conspicuous feature within Scottish custom - on the embarkation of any venture, however mundane, turning sunwise or performing any task with a sunwise action would not be forgotten. Especially if they were for an important occasion, even the hole in the centre of a bannock was made by turning the right (lucky) thumb sunwise (Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 226).

The sun provided luck and good fortune for individuals and more particularly for the community - the folklore surrounding the moon is far more specifically concerned with the generation of fertility. The rejoicing at the moon's continual rebirth at the start of its monthly cycle lent it added import in a world concentrated on ensuring the cyclical nature of life. The waxing, rather than the waning, of the moon was perceived as an auspicious time for all activities, but principally those where the quality and abundance of the crops was involved - either those grown from seed or those gathered from nature such as seaweed. Part of this must be a simple correlation made between the growth in size and radiance of the moon and growth and increase in plants and animals, but this cycle is given great symbolic significance. No animal would be killed at the waning of the moon since its flesh would have no goodness or taste (Carmichael 1940, Vol. III, 278-80). Wood cut at this time would be brittle from lack of sap and useless for working; peat would not burn well - although Martin states the opposite (1703, 222). Cutting hair would leave the person concerned open to evil influences. Journeys were hurried on or postponed until the influences of the moon were favourable. To those who lived by the sea, the moon perhaps had even more consequence, since it provided light and guidance for night voyages. The phases of the moon directly structured many of the activities of the farming year since, even though the weather might not be suitable, tasks had to be performed in accordance with its phases; on it, therefore, depended the livelihoods of the people.

The weather, in a more general sense, gives vitality to the landscape and the lived-in world through the continual modification of the nature of light and sound. This varies perspectives - on distance and the ways in which sound is carried - thus transforming the

landscape from a known environment to one where individuals could be cocooned and isolated in their own private world. As a consequence, people believed the changing weather revealed the nature of their relationship to the natural world, and through this, to the spirits that guided that world. It is here that, in its written form at least, the folklore most clearly reveals the Christian milieu of the Highlands; the weather expressed God's feelings and opinions to His people. Thunder was the voice of God in all His majesty (Carmichael 1940, Vol. III, 273). On the day of a funeral, if the weather was calm and good, it was thought that God was pleased to welcome the soul of the departed to heaven and to allow the relatives and friends to travel to the burial. If the weather was bad and relatives and friends could not reach the funeral, God was angry. If it was raining or misty, God was seen to direct his anger at the earth; if black and stormy, His anger was directed onto the soul of the deceased; if it snowed, His rage was still levelled at the soul, but this time the latter was anguished and repentant (ibid., 369).

Much of the folklore surrounding the weather is descriptive and this is particularly true of the wind. Seasons of the old style, of periods as short as a week and determined by the care of livestock and crops and the concerns of fishermen, could be summarised in terms of the wind to be expected (Banks 1939b, 1-7). These often referred to the sound of the wind as if it were the howling of a wolf or likened its speed to an old woman shuffling along (Banks 1939b, 1-7). In early spring, *Gearran* was the galloping wind, and *Feadag*, the sharp, piping wind (Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 288). Just as they reflect a span of time that is of primarily human concern, they are seen within a human frame of reference.

Alongside these defining qualities, the wind, like the moon, could have a determining effect on the quality of the food gathered - in Skye, the shellfish were believed to be more plump if there was a south-west wind blowing (Martin 1703, 145). The wind, as with much of the weather, also had predictive qualities. On the first of January, the direction of the winds provided just one means of foretelling the character of the seasons in the year to come:

*'The wind from the west, fish and bread;
The wind from the north, cold and flaying;
The wind from the east, snow on the hills;
The wind from the south, fruit on trees'*

(Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 343)

Other elements of the weather - mist and fog, frost and snow are mentioned only very occasionally. This may imply that a layer of meaning had slipped through the hands of the Victorian collectors or that their remembered significance had simply disappeared. Both these suggestions seem surprising as the fog rolling in from the sea creates a world lacking solid form, while a rainbow hanging over the glen will inevitably draw all eyes. The power and enormity of a lightning storm embodies all the changeability, the beauty and the danger inherent in the landscape. As such, all these elements fit into the general framework outlined above and their potential role is perhaps confirmed by the complexity of the analysis seen in the description of God's potential pronouncements on the day of a funeral. The only other entity missing is the stars and, in the light of the reasoning above and despite the danger of being too simplistic, the apparent closeness of their links to the moon may explain their absence. The stars appear to be dependent on the moon - they were invoked alongside it in any appeal (Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 275) and, in an Early Christian poem, were extolled as the proud and jewel-like children of the cheerless moon (Jackson, K. H., 1971, 80).

There seems to be a clear recognition of the relationship between the moon and the tides, thus ensuring that a flowing tide held the same significance in terms of fertility as the waxing moon and a similar role in the structuring of everyday life and belief. Perhaps surprisingly, it is the impact of the tides on the fertility of the land that appears to be of most importance. The figwort (possibly cow-wheat), a plant which grows in sight of the sea and which supposedly resembles the udder of a cow in shape, epitomises the closeness of these links between the produce of the land and the cycles of the tides:

*'I will cull the figwort,
With the fullness of sea and land,
At the flow, not the ebb of the tide,
By thine hand, gentle Mary'*

(Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 87)

If gathered at the flow, not the ebb of the tide, and hung around the byre, the plant would assure a supply of milk for the season to come. Part of this significance, at least, must stem from the importance of seaweed as a manure (Carmichael 1928, Vol. I, 163). On Lewis at Hallowtide, a cup of ale, brewed from the grain of all the islands, was sacrificed at night to the sea-god, Shony (Martin 1703, 28) - both to say thank you for the harvest and to ensure the success of the next. All assembled in the church for a vigil while the sacrifice was made, before going to the fields to drink and celebrate the harvest with the rest of the ale. Again in Lewis, the time of sowing the seed was governed by the tides. To ensure a good harvest, sowing was begun as the tide was rising - if these were also the spring-tides then success was assured (Banks 1939b, 12).

Water itself, for its purity, was a powerful medium, and, in any form, it acted as the threshold between the worlds above and below ground. This ensured rivers, burns, lochs and pools were also therefore closer to the world of the dead. Figures from the Otherworld and other spirits, evil and otherwise, were thought to inhabit watery places. These spirits could be malicious in intent, or simply mischievous - many had a female form and, like the winds, these possessed the supposedly more sinister aspects of the female character. They were therefore old women, such as the *loireag*, the water-sprite who oversaw the warping, weaving, waulking and washing of the cloth. She was so fiercely protective of the customs that gathered around these tasks that if, for instance, a waulking song - or even a verse of it - was repeated she would reduce the cloth to its original state (Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 320-1).

Water spirits could also take on animal forms. The numerous water kelpies or water-horses, such as the one who lived on the Ardle, just above Kirkmichael and near the Black Mill, were wicked and mischievous spirits (Fergusson 1888-9, 292-3), who created fear in any who had to pass the spot which they inhabited. Water-horses were far more terrifying than water-bulls. Animals, particularly the water-vole, that live partly on land, partly in the water, were viewed with considerable suspicion, even fear, as the bearers of illness and death both to people and cattle (Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 287;

Pennant 1774, Vol. I, 175). Their ability to be as at home on land as in the water and therefore in contact with the Otherworld may have led to belief in these perceived powers.

Watery features, especially where the water sprang directly from the depths of the earth as a well or a spring, could have strange or protective powers or the ability to make predictions (e.g. Martin 1703, 7). The power to cure toothache or madness is often allied to the powers of a saint and it is here perhaps that the veneer of Christianity, superimposed on a series of older beliefs, is most obvious. For others, such as Maolrubha's well on Isle Maree, the beneficial effects were attributed more directly to the powers and former presence of the tutelary saint (Banks 1941, 66). In springs and wells are coupled the elements of water, in its purest form welling up out of the earth, the earth itself, often linked - as at Kilmory Oib in mid-Argyll (RCAHMS 1992) - to the sky and the light by an upright stone slab or cross (cf. Thomas 1994, 11). None of these elements need be contemporary - in many cases these are sites whose meanings seem to have been continually incorporated and reinvented within different religious and social frameworks, the last of which gave them a central position within eighteenth- and nineteenth- century folk belief and, at Kilmory Oib, a place in the physical and metaphorical centre of a fermtoun (RCAHMS 1992, 172-3).

The beliefs and practices surrounding such wells can be illustrated by an example taken from Skye. Here, people undertaking a vow drank from the celebrated Loch Siant well, walked sunwise around it three times and then laid a small offering on the stone that covered it (Martin 1703, 140). A tree near the well on Isle Maree had coins pressed into its trunk (Munro 1994, 126), but often gifts of food find more prominence (see chapter 4.5). Consistently, offerings were of everyday things, such as bread and cheese, while the wells of the north-east and the Black Isle were decorated with rags and scraps of brightly coloured material. The dew, particularly on May Day or the first of any month, had special powers - perhaps the consequence of its almost magical appearance with the dawn. Washing your face in the dew of those particular mornings could bring luck or aid a person's recovery (Banks 1939b, 222ff, 248).

Evil spirits were thought to be powerless to touch people across running water (Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 142-3). The places where three streams met (Carmichael 1928, Vol. I, 52-3, 167-8) or those burns also forming a boundary, particularly if they were south flowing (see chapter 4.2), drew added power from these coincidences. The meeting of three streams symbolised the Trinity and could, in the name of Bride (Bridget), be both a place for ritual purification and a place of sacrifice (ibid.). Here again - in the face of the continual sacrifice of black cockerels - the veneer of Christianity is very slight. Burns were in this way also liminal places, places where transactions or agreements could take place in safety. For example, the Siller Burn, dividing the lands of Balnakeilly and Balnald at the back of Kirkmichael, formed the focus of all deals that took place at the fairs and markets held there. The buyer stood on one side and the seller on the other, while the goods and the money were exchanged across the water (Fergusson 1896-7, 93).

The old washerwoman by a ford, foretelling doom for an individual through her washing of an item of their clothing while bewailing the death, occurs both in Early Christian tales and in the collections of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 227). Such fords, where the dead and the living might cross, were highly significant - water from there, drawn in absolute silence, not allowed to touch the ground, and drunk on New Years Day, would protect you from all witchcraft and supernatural happenings (Grant Stewart 1822, 253).

In seeming contrast to the powers inherent within them, the Gaelic names of rivers and lakes appear to be plainly descriptive. The river Brerachan (*Briathrachán*), a tributary of the Ardle, means 'the little talkative one', evoking both the sound that it makes and its ability to predict storms and bad weather by the particular tone of the water (Watson 1926, 451). The way in which hills, knolls, and so on are named seems also to be essentially practical and, in effect, repetitive. A dramatic coastline, will only have reinforced the significance of this boundary zone between the land and the sea, yet this is not reflected in the way that individual features are named. The more strange or unusual topographic features were often assigned a supernatural origin - a result of the

interference of giants or fairies on the natural world. For example, in a story recorded by Carmichael that appears now to find its basis in truth, two giants - the embodiment of Frost and Ice - moved a huge boulder, the *Clach Mhor Leum nan Caorach* - to balance precariously across a gully in order that their horses could cross. However, another giant, Thaw, chanced upon them and destroyed them in the attempt.

Such explanations do find their way into the numerous place-names which refer to natural features, but, customarily, these refer rather to the aspect or appearance of the place, or to the wild animals, birds or plants that inhabit it. Colour forms a prominent constituent of these names. Apache place-names tend also to comprise lengthy descriptions of the physical locality; in stories, these names serve as a mnemonic for the description of the place they refer to (Tilley 1994, 19). The Gaelic names, in the form they survive today, might possibly be the remnants of a similar system. This process of naming can be illustrated through the place-names of the 1:10000 map sheet which includes Pitcarmick (Appendix 1; plan 1). All the main topographic features in this upland world are named, yet large stretches (including those occupied by most of the archaeological remains) seem empty. On the coast, by comparison, every single cove and promontory has a name, although these gradually peter out inland (fig. 60). If this does reflect differing survival, it suggests that one level of names, those applying to smaller, more intimate places, have been lost, unrecorded perhaps because much of the land had been left to sheep and deer early in the nineteenth century. The naming of coastal features as vitally important landmarks to those sailing by is probably partly responsible for their prominence, but it is from those living and working the land that most of the names given to the first Ordnance Surveyors would have originated.

The vegetation which clothed the hills and glens of the Highlands did little to lessen the impact of their sterility on Dr Johnson, as he noted on leaving Inverness:

“An eye accustomed to flowery pastures and waving harvests is astonished and repelled by this wide extent of hopeless sterility”

(Chapman 1924, 34)

For Johnson, accustomed to the broad rolling fields and meadows of the archetypal image of England, this is not an unexpected comment to note down on his first entry to

the Highlands. Many of these hills and glens must have been coated in rough moorland vegetation and scrub - the bogs providing the only green beyond the arable and pasture of the settlements. The remnants of the Caledonian forest would only close down these views with splashes of darker green extending up the sides of the hills. But this is not a never-changing, apparently lifeless, world - the scrubby woodlands of the glens would become white with the blossom of blackthorn at the end of winter, turning into the bright, fresh green of spring while autumn brought the brilliant purple of the heather, followed by the gleam of red berries, amidst the rich browns of the bracken and the infinitely varied colours of the turning leaves on the trees. Even the pine forests of the north do not equate with the black, dense forests of the Medieval imagination that existed beyond the bounds of the inhabited world (cf. Jackson, J. B. 1984, 45ff) - they are far more open and possess an infinitely wider variety of plants and animals. What gave rise to Johnson's description was not the landscape itself, but the lack of enclosure and the intimate spaces of the English landscape that he would have been comfortable with. Perhaps, it is also simply the fact that the human elements of the Highland landscape fitted into a very small part of the whole. To its inhabitants, it would not be an unknown world - familiar through the changing seasons, embedded in their consciousness through their possession of an almost innate knowledge of its resources and in despite of the respect due to it for its power to destroy and kill. To them it would be alive.

In an endeavour to consider the landscape as a sum of all its parts - an arena in which all people, animals and things act out their lives - all named features become places, through their incorporation into that known world (cf. Tilley 1994, 18-9). They are no less significant nor permanent (even if the original reason for so designating them may have been forgotten) for the fact that they possess no man-made monument. In a sense, the Otherworlds are so closely linked in with the visible and with everyday occurrences, that each are mutually dependent. In the same way that the sun and the moon were personified, many Otherworldly spirits possessed a vaguely human form or some human

characteristics. As such, they were an integral part of the means by which people sought to make sense of and give meaning to all the natural features and things with which they were surrounded, brought together and explained through some form of creation myth.

This same indivisibility is clearly demonstrated in the preoccupation with foretelling the future, both through recognition of signs, but more importantly, in active attempts to divine prospective happenings. In this sense, maybe, the Christian world and its creation myth becomes one of these Otherworlds, interpreted and understood through an underlying stratum of 'pagan' beliefs. This would provide an appropriate context for the addition of a Christian layer of meaning to places such as the spring at Kilmory Oib and for the continuation of what contemporaries saw as 'pagan' customs within specifically Christian festivals (see also chapter 4.5). It is within this context that the ways in which people modified the elements of the landscape for their own purposes must be seen. The means by which they dwelt within and occupied these landscapes is discussed in chapter 4.2.

It is stone - and not earth - that immediately rises to prominence. Standing stones, far from any settlement, seem to be personified - the result of men changed into stone, monuments to the great heroes of the forgotten past (Martin 1703, 9), memorials to friendship or markers of places of worship and assembly (Pennant 1774, Vol. II, 178-9). This is true, too, of cairns - to which everyone who passed had to add a stone and to move sunwise around them in honour of the person commemorated (Martin 1703, 151-2; Chapman 1924, 48), a mark of the respect for tradition and family that was all pervasive in Highland society. To damage a cairn thought to have such associations was considered sacrilegious (Burt 1754, Vol. II, 209). On South Uist, 'Tours' round such cairns could be part of the religious life of the Sabbath and of other holidays (Martin 1703, 85). To add a stone to a cairn is an action in which all members of the community could take part - to do so, as part of a process which may have been going on for centuries, would be to leave a part of themselves along with each stone, binding themselves ever more firmly into the community.

It was customary to mark the first sight of the church in some way and, again on South Uist, this consisted of bowing in the direction of the church and repeating the Lord's Prayer (*ibid.*, 88). At this spot, a mile to the south of the church, a standing stone was erected by the people, presumably as a means of reinforcing - through the appropriation of what they would perceive as an ancient custom - the importance of this observance. Standing stones, even if erected for the whole community, are monuments that appear to be linked primarily to an individual or groups of individuals - therefore they possess, however slightly, a vaguely authoritarian air and the implication that this authority will be maintained through the permanency of stone. That this is a benign authority in many cases is indicated by the protective qualities of stone and its perceived abilities to absorb evil powers. As a consequence, even unworked pebbles find a place in many charms and rites of divination. On Islay, for example, a beach pebble in one of the hollows at the foot of the fifteenth century Kilchoman cross, had to be turned sunwise while making a wish (RCAHMS 1984, 200).

Sacred places appear to become significant through affiliations with people, both religious and secular, rather than with events. Fergusson's descriptions of the standing stones and cairns of Strathardle reinforce this need to tie in such prominent features to individuals. A large proportion of these stones (around thirty in all) are, in fact, linked to a known historical - and generally secular - person and their deeds of a quite recent date although many must undoubtedly be of prehistoric date (1888-9, 283ff). To these were added new places, similarly distinguished by monuments of a very long-standing form. This is demonstrated by the erection of the standing stone described by Martin on South Uist, and by the cairns that line roads and tracks. The latter were the resting places for funeral corteges on their way to burial grounds, by the nature of Highland distances, often miles away. Some do acquire a connection to a specific and generally well-known person, others, of less individual significance, must again be a reminder of continuing age-old practices.

As with other place-names, Gaelic settlement names tend to refer to prominent local features (Appendix 1). Many refer to burns or to small knolls, the homes of fairies, both

points in the landscape where the boundaries between the known and the unknown worlds were particularly fluid. They are also one of the few places where people passed through to the Otherworld, to be trapped there for at least a year and a day. There are few hints here of a separation between the everyday world and the Otherworld. Some settlement names appear to incorporate personal names - the exceptions, like Pitcarmick (the Irish saint, Cormac?), are, significantly, largely of a religious nature. This is in marked contrast to the Scandinavian farm names of other parts of Scotland, which contain many personal names more likely to refer to the founder or owner of the farm than a religious figure. The apparent simplicity of both these groups of names appears to conceal deeper meanings. The individuality implied in the Scandinavian settlement names appears to reflect in some way the structure of the society in which they were created. In opposition, the Gaelic names as a whole confirm the conception, proposed above, of a world made sense of through an indivisible view of the natural and human spheres.

From all the examples discussed above it is apparent that sacred places and the manner in which those places were defined, interpreted and reinterpreted, reflects the importance of many of the same landscape elements. How earlier settlement sites were incorporated into this scheme is far less evident. There are conspicuous and obvious associations between hut-circles and later settlements. At Rosal in Strathnaver, the hut-circles lie just outside the ring-dyke (fig. 4). In addition, at this site there is a souterrain in the centre of the area enclosed by this same dyke. Similarly close proximity is demonstrated in the Strath of Kildonan and occurs throughout much of the rest of the Highlands (RCAHMS 1993). In the north-east of Perthshire, the closest links are between the hut-circles and the so-called Pitcarmick-type buildings, of Early Medieval date. There are much later settlement elements here also - as around the Pitcarmick Burn, shieling clusters form a notable part of these landscapes (RCAHMS 1990, 70-74) (fig. 46). In the west of Perthshire, many of the later settlements contain the place-name element, *dun-*, assumed to derive from the circular ring-forts of the area with which they are closely associated (Taylor 1990, 85).

These few examples illustrate some of the potential associations represented in the archaeological record, over a range of areas and dates. How these might have been understood by the people living so close to the old and the new is unclear. This has to be partly due to the difficulty in establishing the nature and distribution of Medieval rural settlement. Earlier settlement sites and their remains find little place in the accounts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and this may be significant in itself. Certainly Robertson in his account of Perthshire (1799, 109), recognised the remains of earlier agriculture in the form of rig-and-furrow as being very widespread over the hills, way above any more recent enclosure. He could not assign any date or reason for the presence of this cultivation at such a height and therefore coupled it to the earliest inhabitants of these areas, those Caledonians pushed back in front of the Agricolan advance. This suggests that agricultural remains were easily recognised as of human origin, even if their significance could not be assessed. Perhaps, the limited availability of good agricultural land in the Highlands had always ensured that living and working close to the locations of previous settlement was an accepted part of life. But beyond this, the return to places previously settled, and the re-use of buildings - whether as quarries for building materials, more positively as foundations for new structures or in some more abstract way - highlights the endless cycle of life and regeneration in which people found themselves to be minor players.

This is an impressionistic glimpse of the natural world in the Highlands. Nonetheless, it is one that gains validity from its depth and breadth. The establishment of the conceptual framework within which the elements of the physical world were seen and understood enables a clearer perception of how these elements were then incorporated into and modified in everyday life. The sense of apparent timelessness inherent in such an all-encompassing view of peoples' engagement with the elements of the natural world is perhaps its most valuable contribution. The picture gleaned from the folklore is reinforced by the more disparate comments of the earlier travellers to the Highlands and is hinted at, too, in the nature poetry of the Early Christian world; it survives today as mere fragments of superstition but is of sufficient weight to underlie many current

perceptions of the so-called wilderness and to explain the need of many people for a greater awareness of the world around them, whether this is as expressed as a return to the 'simplicity' of rural life or an obsession with some of the wildest places on earth. This is not to suggest a static view of popular belief but one that can take into account its wide range and diversity and read it as part of the contextualised landscape within which people construct their own world views.

4.2 The settlement and landscape of exploitation

“That is The Land out there, under the sleet, churned and pelted there in the dark, the long rigs turning their clayey faces to the spear-onset of the sleet. That is The Land, a dim vision this night of laggard fences and long-stretching rigs. ... That is The Land - though not quite all. Those folk in the byre whose lantern light is a glimmer through the sleet as they muck and bed and tend the kye, and milk the milk into the tin pails, in curling froth - they are The Land in as great a measure”

(Grassic Gibbon 1967, 67)

The natural world provides the context for the day-to-day occupation of the landscape; their consciousness of this living world will govern the ways in which people attempted to glean a livelihood from the landscape. By concentrating on some of the most recent periods of exploitation of the Highlands, this section provides a logical follow-on from the previous chapters and allows for the constraints imposed by the lack of comprehensive sources prior to the eighteenth century. Nonetheless, change can be illustrated, both through comparison with the modern landscape of Clearance and Improvement and by striving to find links back to earlier periods. Such a visualisation of the everyday world, one that stretches from the settlement and its environs to the less intensively utilised high ground, should demonstrate how closely integrated were all the constituents of the lived-in world. In approaching the landscape of settlement and exploitation from this perspective and by not attempting to concentrate specifically on the development of any particular landscape, it is hoped that a meaningful picture of Highland settlement can be built up.

Existing descriptions of fermtouns present them as loose clusters of buildings with little form or coherence (figs. 2, 3). This is exemplified in the reports on the excavated sites of Lix and Rosal (Fairhurst 1960; 1967-8; 1968-9), but also finds a place in the descriptions of travellers and observers of the Highlands in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Dorothy Wordsworth, describing “hamlets” on the side of Loch Katrine, states that “where there is any land belonging to the Highland huts there are so

many out-buildings near, which differ in no respect from the dwelling-houses except that they send out no smoke, that one house looks like two or three” (Wordsworth 1803, 84-5). On the island of Rona, which Martin Martin visited at the end of the seventeenth century, each tenant had a “dwelling house, a barn, a house for their best effects, a house for their cattle, and a porch” (1703, 22) - yet in Argyll in 1794, by contrast, barn, byre and stable were all under one roof (Fenton and Walker 1981, 138). To Burt (1754, Vol. II, 130), a township consisted of a few dwelling huts, with smaller barns, all very irregularly arranged. A similar view reminded Pennant, however, of a little village (1774, Vol. II, 176). Variation in the quality of the buildings is forcefully highlighted by Johnson: “Huts are of many gradations; from murky dens to commodious dwellings” (Chapman 1924, 91). Sir John Sinclair, in his introduction to the Old Statistical Account, describes a fermtoun thus: “The houses were not built according to any general plan but scattered in every direction. The roads and alleys were inconceivably bad, 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 1964-5, 73).

These statements clearly highlight the problems in visualising these types of settlement as possessing any consistent form, while implying that the quality of the built remains is liable to be poor. The quotation from Martin further provides a caution in assigning particular functions to individual buildings. Barns and granaries could be of better construction than any of the other buildings, perhaps testimony to their perceived relative importance (Fenton and Walker 1981, 129), yet this, too, can vary according to location. For example, on the wetter west coast, hay barns were usually larger than elsewhere, simply to allow for some of the drying of the crop to be done inside (*ibid.*, 78). Undoubtedly, the impermanence of the construction materials and their easy availability ensured that the buildings themselves were transitory (see chapter 4.4). Dwellings near Connel ferry, in the early nineteenth century, could be “easily rebuilt for a couple of men will make one of them in two, at all events, three days” (Anon., 1806, *Diary of a Tour Through the Highlands*, quoted in Mechan and Walker 1989, 24).

Lying behind these more practical concerns are the social requirements and necessities that are expressed through architecture and settlement layout. The potential for fluctuations in population - or, at least, rearrangement of family or other groupings - may have enhanced the incoherence of settlements in the archaeological record, but in the absence of a clear idea of what each cluster in the framework of the *fermtoun* may mean, economically and socially, their effects will be very hard to grasp. Therefore, an attempt will be made here to integrate the physical remains (of the settlements and the farmed landscape) with what is known of the archaeology and vernacular history of the period. Nonetheless, the consistency of such layouts implies that, whatever their source - whether it be local social development, the result of necessity or a landowner's decision - they fulfilled the social and ideological requirements of the people who lived in them.

The grouping of the clusters at East Lix (nr. Killin, Perthshire) around a knoll, so reducing their intervisibility, does imply some form of unity within the smaller units of the settlement, with a concomitant impact on social relations among the occupants of these holdings (fig. 3C). This is reinforced by another excavated example, that of Lianach in Balquhiddy (Perthshire), where a hollow way runs between the buildings (fig. 3A). On the ground, this is also evident at Easter Bleaton (Glenshee, Perthshire), where each cluster of buildings and enclosures branches off from a trackway that runs the full length of the settlement (fig. 3B). Each unit is surrounded by its enclosures and sits on the edge of a river terrace, with the fields it must have exploited stretching out below it.

These trackways are the more ordinary equivalents of the very elaborate - and probably later - village street on St. Kilda, this elaboration perhaps a response to the need to survive and create structure in extreme conditions. The history of St Kilda demonstrates that the street provided a focus for meetings (the most important of which was the "Parliament"), a place for the women to sit, work and exchange news and the children to play - a context for the negotiation of many of the public relationships that would constitute an important part of the community's fabric. The arrangement of possible dwellings around "yards", though not clearly defined by walling and so on, at

Tirai (Johnstone and Scott Wood 1991) and at Easter Bleaton (fig. 3B), indicates a similar need for a focal space in these communities, but at the level of each settlement unit. In all these examples, less significance seems to be placed on defining a framework of spaces and boundaries around each unit.

If these clusters represent small groups, communicating and operating as part of a larger whole (the *fermtoun*), this lack of conceptual separation from other members of the community must reflect an overall sense of communal identity. Within this was retained an individuality of identity that would agree with the general picture of the Highlands in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. There is no desire here for a particular landlord to express his authority through the creation of a planned settlement, a feature that only arrives in the west Highlands with crofting communities (fig. 7). Since identity is largely socially generated, the lack of a tightly ordered village-like plan need not, therefore, imply a lack of community or a sense of belonging. Neither did the agglomeration of settlement depend on the location of services and amenities - the church, mill, inn, or laird's house - usually seen as epitomising that community identity (Yeoman 1991, 115-16; cf. Glassie 1975, 140-3). Even though none of these may then have been within easy reach, coherency of the community was presumably expressed and maintained by less tangible social and ideological means.

The regularity of layout of the *fermtouns* at Lix and Easter Bleaton must indeed reflect the social patterns of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (figs. 3B, 3C). In contrast, the dispersal of settlement at Rosal and Balquhiddar (figs. 4, 3A) into amorphous clusters may be more representative of an earlier period, though the work of Dodgshon (1993a) and Crawford (1965), suggests that this need not have particular chronological significance. It is possible that townships, made up as in the western Highlands of farmsteads, either singly or in groups of two or three and associated with a system of enclosed, rather than open, fields (Dodgshon 1993a; Dodgshon 1995), may in fact constitute the earlier settlement forms, though how far these may go back is impossible to say. The locations of individual houses and settlement clusters were involved in ongoing cycles of use, disuse and reuse that did not depend entirely on the

transience of their building materials or on occupancy by particular tenants (Dodgshon 1993a, 422-424; 434). Without contemporary descriptions or discussion of such situations, however, these issues are difficult to incorporate here, although the existing evidence raises the implication of a far greater independence for individual farmsteads and their inhabitants.

The complexity of, and regional variation in, the appearance of these farms is a reflection of the highly individual adaptation of the system to the prevailing environmental, social and economic conditions of the Highlands in the Early Modern period, and perhaps earlier. It is unfortunate that it is only when these strategies begin to falter that first-hand accounts and commentaries start to appear, often from people who had no conception of their workings. This is not to deny that this is farming at a subsistence level and therefore liable to frequent and painful disaster.

On returning from the field in the evening, the township would be familiar and comfortable, dirty and cluttered, smelly and noisy. Though many of the women, and probably also the children, would have been out in the fields or pasturing the animals, fires would have been kept alight, pervading the air with the smell of wood or peat smoke. The youngest and oldest members of the group would probably have been at tasks or playing around the buildings and the environs of the settlement. Many of the animals too would have returned to the settlement in the evening - particularly true of the milch cows - to fill byres and stables. These, along with the ponies, may have been tethered during the day on areas of grass around the buildings of the township. If, as at Auchindrain, the community bull was housed in his own building, he too might have been tethered out to graze close to the settlement - with someone to watch over him. Poultry, cats and dogs would have added to the cacophony of sounds as they wandered unhindered in and out of dwellings and buildings. Both animals and people would have helped clutter and muddy the farm. Amidst all this, the performance of regular tasks - feeding, watering, washing, cooking and so on, and the observation of others at similar occupations - would reinforce the vision of a well-known scene, of which the observer

was an integral part. This is the point at which the mediations between the natural and the human worlds would be most apparent, yet the most difficult to isolate.

The earthy colours of all the buildings, their roofs and their long, low structure, not even relieved by a chimney or the glint of glass in the windows, would not generate a marked physical separation from the surrounding fields, enclosures and garden plots, trees, bracken and gorse, blurring the boundaries of the settlement and its distinction from the natural world it occupied. This is exemplified by the fact that grass grew on the roofs, providing an additional 'field' for adventurous sheep (Burt 1754, Vol. II, 60). The buildings appear to snuggle closer to the ground for protection - though to travellers, such as Burt, they were nothing but "smoking dunghills" and "pretty near the same in Colour, Shape and Size" (1754, Vol. II, 63-4, 130), miserable to some observers, yet cosy to others. It would seem that this both reflected and engendered a sense of unity with the landscape, a feeling that it was not a dangerous and unknowable world that lay outside the bounds of the settlement. This engagement forced people to be aware of their connectedness to the natural world and to each other (cf. Glassie 1990, 272-6).

Such harmony can perhaps also be seen in the use of natural materials (turf, heather, bracken, broom and so on) for building and roofing. These were eventually returned to the land as fertiliser. Part of the roof, with the addition of a year's soot, was removed to the fields each summer, leaving the roof with an undulating skyline where the new was not entirely integrated with the old (Fenton 1985, 74). The transformation of these into a usable form is apparently slight in many cases; their external appearance is not changed to any great degree, but they remain both adequate and functional for their purpose. The resources of the land were, therefore, available with only the effort of harvesting and were recyclable, returning often much needed fertility to the land.

The degree of transformation that these resources (whether they were for building - or for bedding or eating (see chapter 4.4)) undergo before they return to the natural world is an index of the value put on the natural order of things. The explicit indication of this, therefore, is the level of technology involved in their processing (Glassie 1990, 272). In Scotland, the technology used is limited where building materials are concerned

until the arrival of shaped stone blocks, white mortar and paint in the Improvement period and is in contrast, too, to the vernacular architecture of the same period in Virginia, where wood was split into planks and then painted. The artificiality of these smooth and brightly coloured surfaces removed their occupants from a natural environment into one on which a clearly man-made order was imposed (*ibid.*, 273-4). Such strident attempts to disguise and subdue the natural world do not seem to exist in the pre-Improvement Highlands dealt with here.

The recognition of the cyclical nature of life, of nature and its resources, forms a significant part of the symbolism inherent in the songs and stories of this period. It also finds physical expression in the progression from building material into fertiliser, described above, and in the midden, where all animal (including perhaps human) and vegetable waste would go to start the process of decomposition. The presence of the midden in a prominent position - at the front of the gable end of the byre of Macallum's House at Auchindrain (Fenton 1979, 9-12), or even in front of the house itself, just beside the door (Robertson 1799, 52), is confirmation of its importance to the occupants. In many ways, the continued success of the family is dependent on that manure heap. Its focal position is perhaps not surprising - though the attendant smell in the summer must have been a continual reminder of its presence. Even in farms of the Improvement period, the dung heap tended to retain a central place within the yard, despite the separation of the working areas of the farm to a place out of sight behind the house (*ibid.*, 52).

Many of these household units were longhouses - with the humans living at one end, the animals at the other, all entering by the one door and turning one way or the other (fig. 13). At all levels of society, from the tacksman to the cottar, there was no division between the people and their cattle. It was not until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that partitions between the animals and the rest of the house - and therefore the hearth, the other central element of the house - appear (see chapters 4.4 and 4.5). As with the appearance of the settlement, the close physical links and dependence between each element of the daily life and survival of the occupants, whether human or animal,

implies that harsh divisions and distinctions between the human and the natural worlds may not find visible expression. Such distinctions do not seem to have been physically, and perhaps not conceptually, present when the people lived so close to the land they farmed.

Such farms tend to lie close to the centre of their arable lands or on the periphery, often a break of slope between the hill land and the best agricultural land below it (e.g. Fairhurst, 1967-8, 153-5; Stewart 1990, 98). The sounds of running water from the requisite burn or spring would have joined those of the people and animals. The burn provided a focus not only as the source of water, but also as another centre for activities like washing and bleaching. At such times, the linen laid out to dry on the grass, would have made a bright, incongruous splash of white. Many settlements lie on broken ground - thus leaving the precious arable and pasture free - in areas where the stone has not been cleared and often surrounded by marshy areas. Nevertheless, they exploit both slopes and naturally sheltered places. This is exemplified by one of the building clusters (Group 3) at Inverreddrie in Glenshee, which sits surrounded on three sides by higher ground, its yard facing outwards across the glen and the fields below extending to the river (fig. 6). Others add the shelter of trees to topography - clusters at Easter Bleaton and Stronamuck have a single, now old and decaying, tree (ash and elder, respectively) at the corner of their attached enclosure (plate 12). At Macallum's house at Auchindrain, mountain ash line both the path to the cottage and the western edge of the enclosure. In large part, these provide symbolic (rather than literal) shelter and protection for the house, through their powers to keep away witches and other supernatural beings (see chapter 4.4).

Not all are so tightly enclosed as that at Inverreddrie, but as Roy's map for Strathardle suggests, the location of the settlement as the central point of all its resources was important (fig. 6). This has a practical and functional aspect, but it also provides a feeling of control and security for the inhabitants. It creates a landscape in which people are the physical and conceptual centre, one on which they could impose their authority

in order to supply themselves with food, however notional a security this may seem in the light of current farming practices and ethos.

Numerous enclosures around the settlement served as animal pens, either at night or for daytime grazing for those byred at night. Many of these exploited old and decaying buildings; for example, dwelling C at Auchindrain, which now survives as wall-footings in one corner of a stackyard (RCAHMS 1992, 460), while the secondary room of the main house in Group 1 at Stronamuck serves as a lamb creep today. These are more examples of recycling and renewal, this time of spaces as well as materials. Other enclosures would have been a bright splash of green - the kitchen garden, full of kale and later potatoes and turnips, plus carrots and onions and probably a variety of herbs (Fenton 1979, 15; Buchanan et al. 1988, 16). There were also unenclosed areas - the door-land - that served for grazing and on which the animals would have had to be tethered or very closely watched (Marshall 1794, 30-1). Pathways into and through the arable fields would have formed other patches of greenery, a useful source of grass for tethered animals. These were defined by, at least, low banks or walls or cairns to encourage cattle, in particular, to follow the required route; sheep and goats probably needed rather more active control.

The Perthshire agricultural reports of the late eighteenth century divided agricultural land into four categories - "arable, meadow, green pasture, and muir" (ibid., 29). The arable, in parts of Perthshire at least, was divided into two categories - infield and outfield, though there are no specific Gaelic terms for this (Bil 1990, 119-20). Infield land was the most important - as the ground that was continually cropped for grain and other crops - while the outfield was only exploited on a rotational basis. The entire manure resources of the settlement went on to the infield; at the fermtoun of Invereddrie these areas still stand out as beautifully flat, green fields over which the houses, amidst their scattered boulders, look (fig. 6). Yet this probably belies their appearance when in use for arable. Descriptions refer to their foulness, the result of constant cropping, and to the concentrations of weeds between the rigs and on the waste areas left as boundaries

between two different tenants' rigs that became another source of fodder for tethered cattle (*ibid.*, 121). As at Lix, and in marked contrast to Invereddrie, the arable was usually composed only of tiny plots amidst a sea of uncleared pasture and stone (figs. 3C, 6). Such plots had no regularity of shape or form and the stones amongst them were simply heaped into cairns or ridges (Marshall 1794, 53-4).

The cattle and sheep would come back to graze the stubble as soon as the weather on the hills closed in and the harvest was gathered in. By the end of the winter they were scrabbling for the few remaining blades of grass and attacking the new shoots of the cereals as soon as they appeared. The ground was by this time essentially bare earth, strewn with dead sheep and the barely moving survivors (*ibid.*, 37-8). Marshall admits that this description refers to a very severe season - one that occurred at a time when traditional forms of agriculture could no longer support the population that lived on the land. Nonetheless, the "Lifting Day", when the cattle were carried to the pastures at the end of winter, finds a regular place in calendars of farming dates (Bil 1990, 129), perhaps the first celebration of the arrival of spring. By early July, the ground was covered in oats - swamped by a riot of weeds, such as corn marigold and scabious that must, in flower, have replaced the brown of winter and the green of spring with a flood of colour (Marshall 1799, 38). Towards the end of summer this would turn to the duller gold of the ripened corn, remaining there in stooks to dry if the weather was good, before being carted back to the fermtoun, leaving the stubble to be grazed by the returning cattle and sheep. None of these fields were enclosed; only colour and the appearance of the rigs, in Robertson's eyes (1799, 393) "like a piece of striped cloth", separating them from the rest of the cultivated land.

The outfield would have appeared even more discontinuous than the infield, since it consisted of both arable and pasture. It tended to lie either amongst the pasture below the head-dyke or often, according to Marshall (1799, 30), on the level ground in the bottom of the glens. Here, in the summer, some of the cattle were enclosed at night by fences of turf or alternating stone and turf. This process of tathing ensured manure enough for oats to be grown in the following years, until the land was exhausted and the

plot was left fallow to recover. By the Early Modern period at least, flax, since it sapped the soil rapidly, was being planted on such newly reclaimed ground - thus creating vivid patches of blue amidst the green of summer. Potatoes, in lazy-beds, were another increasingly frequent option, their leaves producing a harsher green. The outfield would have been exploited also for turf, as an important resource in its own right, as manure (on the infield), building materials or animal bedding.

These plots would have been carved out from the pasture and meadow lands that filled the rest of the area below the head-dyke. Within the ring-dyke at Rosal, such rough and heather-covered land constituted at least one third of the total available (Fairhurst 1967-8, 138-9). The meadow was the ground “too wet, too woody, or too stoney to be ploughed” (ibid., 30). It was neither cleared of stone nor drained and, therefore, provided a very small quantity of poor, coarse hay - only gathered if good weather conditions allowed the time for it. Burt’s account shows how difficult the English soldiery found the lack of fodder for their horses and how the older women in the neighbourhood of the forts turned this to their own profit (1754, Vol. II, 153). Such ground must have appeared straggly and unkempt at the end of summer, as the grass turned brown and set seed, before being cut and set to dry, draped over bushes (Marshall 1794, 41-2).

The meadow land must have been indistinguishable visually from the rest of the pasture lying on “the faces of the braes, roots of the hills, the woody or rough stoney wastes of the bottom” (Marshall 1799, 30-1). These were used in the summer as grazing for the animals kept close to the township, while in winter they became vital grazing for all the animals. Turf for building, roofing, animal bedding and for direct use as manure tended to be cut from the pasture lands, “another square of rock being laid bare” (ibid., 20). These must have been stark reminders of the limited nature of resources and the ever present need for recycling. Roy’s map in particular shows the extent of woods on the floors of glens like Strathardle; much of this is likely to have been scrub, but nevertheless it would have provided shelter, wood for burning and for manufacturing

and, in its new shoots and leaves in spring, supplementary food for hungry animals. A line of bee hives might too have found shelter under these trees.

All these descriptions suggest the degree of effort invested in the infield, something which is in marked contrast to the other resources that were exploited. The arable, therefore, seems to have been important as the main supplier of food to the family; as such, it required much of the womens' time, since they were responsible for most of the manual labour in the fields. Cattle and other animals provided milk and, to a lesser extent, meat for food, plus other by-products such as skins and so on (see chapter 4.3). It was the cattle that maintained and generated the wealth and status of the people, both allowing them to pay their rents and to maintain their social standing. Their status is indicated by their presence in and around the house, in their taking over of abandoned dwellings and in the time expended in watching over them. Sheep and goats must also have played a significant role in the provision of resources, but not in the provision of prestige.

Below the head-dyke, the infield and outfield lands belonged to the individual farm - though these seem to have been separated by a man-made boundary only in rare cases, natural features and particularly burns serving adequately if the animals were under close control and folded at night (Robertson 1799, 107-8). It is a landscape where differential access to places by different groups of people appears not to have been an issue. If it was, the perceptions of the tenants of those farms did not require it to be reinforced by visible structures. Between the estates of different proprietors - where the issue of ownership would be important - march dykes were, however, frequent even before the period of Improvement (Marshall 1794, 16). These too could exploit burns or a rocky ridge or, on lower ground, simply be lines of single stones or cairns (Robertson 1799, 49). Some boundary stones were inscribed with symbols or initials (Bil 1990, 74), an even more definite indication of ownership. At this level, the privileges that attended the ownership of land were defined and presumably defended.

March-dykes were clearly recognised and respected - this is evidenced by their role in superstition. As boundaries, they are seemingly liminal places where everyday things

could take on supernatural powers. Stones from a march burn, if placed under a pillow, would reveal the prospective husband - and his image would also appear to turn a garment washed in such a stream as it dried by the fire at night (Banks 1941, 137-140). That the siting of these boundaries might be seen as given, with divine sanctity, is perhaps indicated by the way in which they are set; in Strathardle, the boundary of Straloch was determined by the flight of a hawk (Fergusson 1893-4, 250-1; cf. Jackson, J. B. 1984, 49). However, it does not indicate how the boundary, itself, was considered - whether it kept people within the area it defined or if it extended protection from the uncertain influences outside those bounds. Neither does it shed light on the way in which the area of land defined by that boundary was constituted in the thoughts of the laird and the tenants.

The origin of the head-dyke seems to have been lost somewhere in the distant past (Robertson 1799, 108). Marshall (1794, 30) believed that the head-dyke need not require physical expression but could simply be an imaginary line. This suggests an accepted and symbolic division, and that other boundaries, if they were present, could have been seen and perceived in a similar way. This implies not only a deep knowledge of the country, but also close integration and communication between those that exploited it. That the head-dyke did act as a symbolic division finds confirmation in eighteenth century Shetland, where lepers found shelter in turf huts built beyond the head-dyke, with food brought and left for them on the dyke itself (Crawford, B., pers. comm.). If this suggests that there was an idea of inside and outside, farmed and wild, controlled and uncontrolled, inherent in the head-dyke in Shetland, such distinctions may be valid elsewhere. According to Martin (1703, 174), turf-dykes on Skye were only erected when the moon was waning, otherwise they would fall down. This may reflect a need for the dyke to be unsullied in order to be (symbolically) effective. Above the head-dyke was the muir, land that was often shared between several farms and used by all as rough pasture, although parts of it (particularly around the shieling huts) may have acted as an extension to the outfield at times. Perhaps this distinction in the type of control and

access to the land above and below the head-dyke and the use to which it was put makes up part of its meaning.

The hill ground attached to the farms was used for grazing in very different ways, of which the complexities of the shieling system form only part. These grazings were used at different times by different groups of animals. The 'small flitting' might take place in the spring, in April and May, and involve the yeld and young animals; it seems still to have been attended with much celebration, at least in the early nineteenth century (Bil 1990, 173ff). For the 'big flitting', the women and children, and perhaps the whole family, with all the milch animals, whether cows, sheep or goats, went up in June (ibid., 174), the men going up a few days before to set the huts in shape, repairing rooves, making beds and creating a store of peats.

The shielings areas in some cases formed a very small part of the whole muir, their bright patches of green amidst the heather (still often visible today) appeared very striking to observers of the period (Robertson 1799, 339). The attendant huts, enclosures and small plots of cultivation would melt into this background. However, where the shielings of two or three farms were close to each other, the number of buildings could be quite large - so extensive that they were described as 'deserted villages' in nineteenth century Glen Lyon, twenty years after they had become disused (quoted in Bil 1990, 304). On Lewis, at least, the buildings were similarly arranged to those of the wintertown, reflecting the relationships visible in the clusters there (Thomas, quoted in Fenton 1985, 76).

The huts, themselves, were of a wide variety of forms - varying from the 'tepees' of Jura seen by Pennant to round, corbelled beehive huts or three-sided rectangular structures. These might have two doors, their use dependent on the wind's direction, with the fire in a shallow recess in the wall between them (Fenton 1987, 64). There were other recesses in the walls for the vessels and utensils. The bed, of young springy heather, took up most of the floor - a seat in front of the fire provided by it's edging of stones and turf (ibid.). A smaller hut, for sheltering the new born calves and for storage, particularly of the milk and cheese, might be close by (ibid.). Individually, some of these

huts were large, "consisting of two or three apartments, besides a proper place for the milk" (Robertson 1799, 336), but most were only large enough to take the bed with enough space to move around it. Any other structures or pens were not needed and, when possible, most of the work would be done in the open air. In the eighteenth century, there was a gradual change from round to rectangular huts - perhaps those to which Robertson refers (above) - a break with a building tradition that finds its origins in the prehistoric period and part of the new Improving spirit (Robertson 1799, 64-5). The consequent changes in the traditional practices and beliefs surrounding the shieling time are less clear.

In areas of bleak moorland, the position of these sites must have been fixed in memory through natural features. They were also fixed by the routeways up to them. This might explain many of the hollow ways that run up into the hills from Strathardle (see chapter 5.2.3), well used and travelled paths, often lined by stones. Many shieling sites are in sheltered spots near a constant water supply - though others are on the watershed or a ridge, where they were often employed to demarcate an estate boundary (ibid., 64-6; Gaffney 1967). The shielings high above the Pitcarmick-type buildings and roundhouses at Wester Pitcarmick seem to exemplify the latter (fig. 47). Other shielings - the 'home shielings' - could be just beyond the head-dyke, and in view of the settlement. These may have been in use at various times of the year - as a stage on the way up to the more distant shielings, or daily from the wintertown, perhaps more likely from the outfield, where the animals could be folded at night (Bil 1990, 57, 261; Fenton 1987, 29).

When the milch cows arrived, the yeld animals moved higher - wandering the whole of the hill pastures before they returned in the autumn, after the harvest, to the main settlement. Horses and goats seem to have roamed over the hills throughout the year, with very little care and attention and, as there were often too many, to the detriment of those grazings and themselves (Marshall 1794, 44). Particularly as the pressures grew for the commercial output of beef, cattle and their herdsman may also have stayed out on the hills in the winter (Fenton 1987, 30). There are references - usually contained in

place-names - to other animals, particularly pigs, geese and hens, being on the hill-grazings, though there is little specific information on their relative importance (Bil 1990, 168ff).

This was seemingly a time of almost complete freedom, not loneliness, for the people who looked after these groups of animals; certainly it gave rise to a heightened experience of the supernatural world and many sightings of ghosts (Grant 1961, 73; see chapter 4.5). Even though the people may have been visible to each other, it seems that such stock were gathered into corries, as naturally created pens, at night, though these could have been very close to the shieling settlement (Bil 1990, 185). However, for a set, if short, period in the shieling season, all the farm stock do appear to have stayed together (*ibid.*, 179). The gathering-together at the end of the day must have been a joyful cacophony of sound, as the animals were reunited with their offspring for milking, the youngsters and the dairymaids competing for the available milk (for a description, though not specific to the shieling time, see Mackenzie 1921, 12-4). These seem to have been perceived as long, lazy days - for spinning, bleaching cloth and collecting lichens and so on for dyes (Fenton 1987, 32) - in the company of gossip and laughter.

This is a landscape where human impact must have appeared to be minimal, ensuring peoples' assurance in the maintenance of a world in which their own place and that of their family was secure must often have seemed notional in the extreme. In everyday life, people lived at the whim of their landlord and always under threat of possible disaster - but it may be responsible, in part at least, for their tenacity in retaining and working within this framework of traditional yet (within certain limits) adaptable series of beliefs. This visualisation has provided the context, when read - with the other elements of this section - against the archaeology of the period, for a deeper analysis of both the workings and the development of such landscapes and, more particularly, for a discussion of the role of individuals as active and knowledgeable agents in the construction of their lives.

4.3 The animals, birds and plants of the farms and the wild

*“He who is merciful to his soul,
Will not be unmerciful to his beast”*
(Carmichael 1914-6, 47)

Perhaps more than any other facet of life in Highland areas, agricultural practice labours under the full weight of the prejudices of those from south of the Highland line. Very few recognised that the agricultural systems they observed were highly adapted to the particular social and environmental conditions which the Highlands presented. This chapter, therefore, concentrates upon attitudes to the floral and faunal world rather than directly on farming practices. The subsistence economy of the Highlands was founded upon the domestic animals, birds and plants from which were derived the food resources that people depended upon for life. As such, they must be integral to any discussion of the inhabited world. Many aspects of the historical record are drawn upon here in order to examine the role of each of these animals within the everyday lives of Highland communities, in an attempt to reconcile those sources with a more economic bias with those noting the customs and superstitions of the Highlands. The resulting picture, although impressionistic, involves each creature and plant, and its relationships - to people and to other animals and plants - within the world of which it was a component. In this context, the animals, birds and plants of the wild cannot be ignored. They will have a similarly active role in defining the environment as their domestic counterparts, even if their effect on the economy of the community is not so substantial.

Strikingly and perhaps unsurprisingly, the Bible appears to govern many of the recorded views and perceptions of the flora and fauna that have survived. Beneath this, however, are traces of underlying beliefs that must predate Christianity and which appear to give meaning and relevance to those views taken from the later, dominant religion. The harmonising of these two diverse threads of belief underlies the routine

practises of peoples' daily lives and gives rise to the several general themes that form the focus of the discussion below.

It was believed that all living things - animals, birds or plants - had the ability to foretell the future (Forbes 1905, 58, 60, 240-2). This could be a result of their substance or their actions at a particular time or place. Predictions of the coming changes in the weather and of the fortunes of individuals are of particular prominence in the stories and tales recorded in the nineteenth century. This ability to foretell future events appears to stem from the ancient belief that spirits entered the bodies of animals and birds - that these could be 'human spirits' is suggested by the human attributes attached to animals and other elements of the natural order (ibid., 58; Hunter 1995, 80). A further corollary, implicit in the quote given at the head of this chapter, was the supposed restrictions this put on the mistreatment of animals, although there is no indication that people who had a natural ability to handle animals were regarded as in any way special. The treatment of animals is, therefore, another theme that must run through any discussion of the creatures with which humans shared their world.

Cattle present a paradox. They appear to be, in terms of monetary value and prestige and in their contribution to a primarily pastoral economy, the most valuable animals. In the Highlands they were thought to be sacred and were well-loved. Each was given a name from those traditionally handed down through the (cattle) generations (Henderson, quoted in Banks 1941, 10). Cattle had strong connections to some of the major saints, both male and female (Patrick, Bridget, Columba and the Virgin Mary), all of whom were invoked during for protection at any time, but particularly during milking (Banks 1939b, 148-9, 184, 189; Banks 1941, 8-10; Carmichael 1928, Vol. I, 258ff). The festivals of *Beltane* and *Samhain* were the days on which the cattle went out to grass or returned to the settlement (Grant 1961, 66); therefore the major transitional points of the year revolved around the life-cycle of the cow (but see also the discussion of sheep below, pg. 93).

Most of the superstitions surrounding cattle focus on the means to prevent witches stealing their milk and the depredations of cattle rustlers. Yet, in spite of this, cattle were the charge of the women, the less favoured and more mysterious sex, and were sometimes protected by a personified female spirit - the *gruagach* (Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 306-7). In a dairy-based economy, most animals would have been cows and perhaps there was a linking femaleness that made women more suited to tend and nurture them and their calves. In contrast, the men of the community took it in turns to care for the single bull, which, because of their unstable temperament, often had their own house (as at Auchindrain (A. Morrison, pers. comm.)). These things perhaps imply the significance of cattle to the economy of the Highlands, rather more than they suggest the perceptions of the cattle themselves.

In the longhouses of the eighteenth century, people and cattle entered by the same door and separated to pass either side of the hearth into their own part of the house. For the cattle, as much as for the people, there was no physical barrier between them and the all-important fire. Fire was seen to have powerful protective qualities (see chapter 4.4), whether as the hearth or the need-fire, lit at *Beltane*, other major transitional points in the calendar, or in times of famine and disease. It symbolised the heart of the house, and the lives of those who lived within it. The need-fire became the protector of the community and its animals and crops, through its ability to unfailingly regenerate. In all these forms, cattle were closely allied with fire - allowed to gather round it or driven between the two fires of Beltane. If the cattle were healthy and fertile, the community would also be healthy and fertile.

If the prestige of cattle appears ultimately to be firmly tied to their economic value, then horses seem to find their status through their own inherent qualities. Again there seem to be paradoxes; in particular, it is difficult to establish from contemporary accounts of the Highlands how horses were considered and treated. Burt indicates that their lot was a harsh one, that they were simply work animals left to roam on the hills in large numbers and breed indiscriminately, to be broken only when needed (1754, Vol.

II, 139-41, 145-6). However, in contrast to cattle, horses were looked after by the men. They were held in high respect for their speed and beauty, and especially at the festival of St Michael, their patron saint, became the centre of the festivities in the Western Isles (Martin 1703, 23, 52). Horses - and cattle - were significant enough to be given the first and the last sheaves, saved from harvest, and fed to the most precious animals at the start of ploughing or to those in calf or in foal during the winter (Grant 1961, 110-11). Although this is probably also partly common-sense, the breeding of the most valuable horses (and probably also cattle) was not just left to chance.

In the sources, a certain degree of power and mystery surrounding the horse is visible. Horses could only be killed by the hangman (Burt 1754, Vol. I, 115). This proviso, associated uniquely with the horse, must in part stem from the fact that horses were not food animals, but this alone would not seem to be enough to reserve this right to them. It confers on the horse almost human qualities - whether they were regarded as intelligent is not specifically noted, but since this is generally a common characteristic of the horse, it may be responsible for this perception. In the Western Isles, there remained a superstition that horses could communicate with the spirits in heaven (Carmichael 1914-16, 47). The sensitivity of the horse to feelings and subtle changes in atmosphere may also be responsible for its recorded ability to foretell death (Bennett 1992, 183). This is again an almost human quality, for other animals such an expression of 'sympathy' was regarded as exceptional (cf. Bennett 1992, 197-8).

Although the sight of the first foal of the season could be fortunate, the powers of the horse were not always to the good: the back view of the same foal was viewed as an indication of imminent bad luck (Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 349). The *kelpie* or water-horse was considered to be a significantly more terrifying being than the water-bull (Grant 1961, 67). In some places, horses were never ridden to church, even though racing them was an important part of religious festivals everywhere, particularly at Michaelmas.

Horses and cattle were animals predominantly associated with the upper classes - the tacksmen and the more substantial tenants. For the majority of the smaller tenants and cottars, the economic foundation of their lives was probably more closely linked with sheep and goats, although they might potentially have a house cow and her attendants (cf. Megaw 1963, 201; Fenton 1976, 170-1). Such potential prominence for sheep or goats is, however, not reflected in the sources, whether these are vernacular songs or travellers' accounts (Megaw 1964, 214). As a consequence, much of the information that can be gleaned from the sources is contradictory; in the nineteenth century accounts, not even the importance of these animals in the Highlands could be agreed upon (e.g. Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 249). Nevertheless, in spite of these constraints, the roles of sheep and goats do require analysis and discussion.

In Early Medieval Ireland, the significance of sheep was enormous - because their milk had a higher fat content than that of a cow and was therefore more valuable, particularly during the period of 'hungry spring' when, with the cows not yet due to calve, the majority of food had been consumed and the ewes had just begun to lamb (Patterson 1994, 131ff, 143ff). The biological cycle of a sheep is, supposedly, more fixed than that of any of the other primary agricultural animals and, in Ireland, it is these patterns that seem to underlie the seasonal cycles of movement and activity (ibid., 147). It is just possible that similar beliefs underlie the position of sheep at the head of the Beltane procession to the shielings in the Western Isles (Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 190). Yet economic significance does not necessarily equate with cultural significance - in Early Medieval Ireland to be a shepherd was to be considered outwith society and sheep were associated with women and explicitly, therefore, with the devil (Patterson 1994, 84-5). In many respects, this appears to reflect an attempt in a country and a society where status was reckoned in cattle, to reinforce conceptually the importance of cattle as the mainstay of the social hierarchy. However, it may also draw upon the difficulties of maintaining sheep in a damp, if not wet, climate and the frustrations of managing animals which can destroy the vegetation cover and can become mentally insecure if moved from their home pastures.

Notably, in Scotland, where the power of cattle was not so overwhelming (at least in this period), brief mentions in the Scottish sources do suggest a contrasting picture. Here, sheep were seen as beautiful, were treated well and were often thought of as familiar friends. This is attributed, by Carmichael, to their perceived close associations with Jesus as the Good Shepherd (*ibid.*, 248-250), but is possibly simply a Christianization of earlier notions. Confirmation of such hypotheses can be sought in the role of sheep in many religious rituals. An unblemished male lamb was deemed to be a suitable 'sacrifice' on the eve of St. Michael's Day and the ewes were retained in milk until this date so that their milk, also perceived as sacred, could be used to moisten the St. Michael cake or *struan*, which was then baked on a lamb-skin (Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 200). A burning strip of skin (the *callaig*), taken from the breast of a sheep killed at Christmas (or another sacred festival), was carried around the township to the head of each house. He then passed it sunwise around his family, to protect them from fairies and other evil spirits in the year to come (*ibid.*, 243; Banks 1939b, 59ff). If the *callaig* went out, it was thought to bring ill-luck to the person who held it. In some accounts of this ritual, cow-skin was used instead and, as with cows, when a sheep was slaughtered, its most important parts became the requisites of specific officers (Forbes 1905, 214). In all these cases, it seems that these animals had come to represent the bounty of the herds and flocks of the township - and therefore did have some economic significance. Few evil spirits or inclinations were attributed to sheep, although witches were thought to disguise themselves as black sheep in order to remain hidden behind the stupid expression in the eyes of their host (*ibid.*, 213).

The nineteenth-century agricultural reports, albeit at the point where traditional farming practices in the Highlands were beginning to come under pressure are equally contradictory. Many writers state that no care was taken of the sheep, particularly in winter when they were left outside to fend for themselves, with no additional food (e.g. Marshall 1794, 49-50). This was, apparently, as true of the Improvement sheep-farmers and their Cheviots and 'Black-faces', as for the old tenants and their white-faced sheep. In seeming antithesis, Marshall also notes that the old types of sheep were often very

tame (perhaps because they were tethered during the day) and were housed at night all through the year (ibid., 47); both imply that more active care was taken than is indicated by his previous statements. As Bil (1990, 161) suggests, sheep may well have been pastured alongside cattle (since they have complementary grazing patterns) and the rates at which cattle were soumed on Islay in 1722 allowed for two sheep with each cow and her followers, an entitlement not applicable to horses (Smith 1895). If, as is implied here, sheep had a similar economic consequence to cows within a dairy-based society, their milk - along with their meat, skins and wool - may have formed the major element in the provision of food and clothing for the household, leaving the sale of cattle to pay the rent and create wealth (Grant 1961, 79). Their welfare, equally with that of cows, would determine the success and survival of the community, but on the backs of the cattle would rest the maintenance and creation of social distinctions.

The position of goats is also problematic. They are mentioned even less in the sources than sheep, perhaps because it is only to families like that of the old woman and her children met by Dr. Johnson on the shores of Loch Ness that they were important (Chapman 1924, 27-8); they were primarily a subsistence, rather than a marketable, animal (Megaw 1964, 215; Smout 1965, 186). By the end of the seventeenth century, however, a phenomenal number of skins (100,000 in 1698) were being exported from Scotland to England (Smout 1965, 187). Pennant (1774, Vol. II, 194) notes that goats were killed for winter food, even though goat flesh, like that of shellfish and seabirds, was considered very definitely to be "poor mans mart" (Fenton 1976, 170-1). In eighteenth century rentals, kids formed part of the lairds' rent at Whitsun, just at the point in the year when there were likely to be shortages of meat or of food in general (Campbell, M., 1965, 183-4). Once this is set alongside their advantages in keeping sheep away from dangerous ground, their general resistance to disease, and their ability to both raise two kids to a ewe's one lamb while surviving on very poor food (ibid.; Megaw 1963, 304), the goat seems to require a place in the economy of the Highlands as an animal of some import.

There were clearly large flocks of goats at the time travellers, such as Johnson, visited Scotland, but, as the Improvements began to change conditions in the Highlands, their popularity seems to have declined. This resulted from a rise in the economic value and importance of commercial woodlands and of new breeds of sheep, which were both larger and produced better wool (ibid., 184-5; Smout 1965, 187-8). In such circumstances, goats could be banned by some landlords - that this was opposed by the small tenants who depended on them suggests their economic standing (Megaw 1963). In certain areas (e.g. Perthshire), the importance of the goat remained, as it became fashionable for high society to retire to the Highlands to drink goats' whey in the later eighteenth century (Bil 1990, 163-4; Campbell, M., 1965, 182-3)). Even in the later nineteenth century, Mackenzie remembered there being far more goats than sheep in the Gairloch area (1921, 190), which suggests that their economic importance remained in remoter areas.

Once away from economic concerns, the goat is rarely mentioned. That the link between a lack of tuberculosis in children and goat's milk was identified is clearly demonstrated by its later popularity and, more significantly, in the long-standing belief that a goat could protect cows from the same disease (Campbell, M., 1965, 182-3). In the Bible, goats symbolise both strength (stubborn obstinacy?) and impurity (Forbes 1905, 163); the former may explain why the man who held out against his neighbours was referred to as 'the goat's tooth' and the latter why the last sheaf of the harvest is sometimes called 'the cripple goat' in the Highlands (ibid., 164; Macfarlane 1924-5, 39). Martin mentions the use of a male goat-skin attached to the mast of a fishing boat to ensure favourable winds for the boat and its crew, but states that this was rarely practised in his day (1703, 109). Goats were generally included along with the other domestic animals in any procession on a festive occasion, but do not have the importance of sheep. Goats find a similar place, too, in invocations and charms. There seems to be an acceptance of goats within society, but it is not a role that suggests any singular significance for this animal.

At least on the surface, the role of pigs in Highland society is clear. The considerable anathema against eating the flesh extended to the keeping of pigs, themselves. This stems from the Biblical precept of the pig as a dirty and unclean animal. Such universal condemnation has to be set against the evidence of numerous place-names and the documentary record for pigs (Bil 1990, 167ff; Forbes 1905, 198). Pigs were certainly associated with mills (see chapter 5.1.1), since they were easily fed on the waste and they are also recorded as present on the hill pastures (Bil 1990, 168-9). This function - the ability to exist on the waste products of other activities - made them very useful animals, even if they were never eaten. In the eighteenth century, the eastern glens of Perthshire, including Strathardle and Glenshee, became the centre of pig-breeding in the Highlands - all these pigs were exported to the lowlands for farmers, millers and distillers there (Robertson 1799, 325-6). This is in spite of the fact that Robertson also notes that the dislike of pork had died out in the years before he wrote (*ibid.*). It is possible that the increasing prominence of pig rearing had as much to do with the rise of the potato as any other factor (Fenton 1976, 172).

There appear to be only a few superstitions surrounding pigs - their bite was considered dangerous and to dream of them was seen as a forewarning of trouble. However, the meat of a pig made into soup was believed to be a remedy for many diseases (Forbes 1905, 199). In contrast, the significance of the pig, both symbolically and practically, in Early Medieval Ireland and in Medieval England is undeniable (Patterson 1994, 83, 124-6; Hanawalt 1986, 53). These are areas, however, which would contain larger areas of woodland, perhaps the main source of food for the vast majority of pigs, than Highland Scotland. The pig will take on a certain amount of significance simply because it occurs in wild and domestic forms (both of which could interbreed). This is not highlighted in the Scottish sources, but this, along with its liking for acorns (poisonous to other animals) and its inherently intelligent and ferocious character, may have been partially responsible for its perceived supernatural associations in early historic Ireland (Patterson 1994, 83, 126). The magic potency of the pig ensured that, in

Ireland, despite its universal value as a food source, it could only be kept by the farmers and not the nobility (*ibid.*, 83).

In this context, it would seem that prohibitions against pigs were largely based on Biblical precepts, if perhaps these were only of real significance in the western Highlands and Islands. However, it is possible that their tenuous position was compounded by the problems which pigs could create in fragile ecological situations, thus giving a practical basis to the Biblical precept and one that is supported by the available archaeological data from the late prehistoric period onwards (F. McCormick, *pers. comm.*). For many other areas of the Highlands, where there were only small areas of available agricultural land, this hypothesis may have nearly equal relevance. Therefore, pigs may indeed have occurred in significant numbers only in those areas from where they could be easily exported to the Lowlands. If pigs did have a marginal role in the lives of most people in the Highlands, this would explain their lack of prominence in the folklore.

Within the townships, dogs would have acted as herd and guard animals. Dogs bred solely for hunting would be owned by the upper classes and these valuable dogs must be those to whom the epithets of bravery and faithfulness were attached. The usual run of dogs seem to be regarded as lazy, dirty and greedy (Forbes 1905, 134). Nonetheless, their close ties to individuals were possibly responsible for their perceived sensitivity to their state of health - avoidance of an ill member of the household by the dog was a sure sign of that person's impending death (*ibid.*, 148; see below). Cats were ratters and mousers, viewed as treacherous and revengeful and all possessing the ability to turn into witches and demons (*ibid.*, 76). There is no real prominence given to the cleanliness of cats, nor is there any indication of any understanding of their relationship with wildcats. Both cats and dogs probably survived primarily on the scraps tossed to them.

As part of the animal world, cats and dogs found their place as the general harbingers of good or bad news. The howling of a dog at night was an almost universal sign of impending death and the Highlands were no exception (Bennett 1992, 183). If a dog or

cat passed over a corpse laid out in the house before the funeral, this was considered to be such a bad omen that the animal was immediately killed (Pennant 1774, Vol. I, 98). Dogs could also bring ill-luck to the bride and groom on their wedding day by passing between them (ibid., 187), but to see a dog as the first animal of the New Year - or to have a stranger's dog follow you - was favourable. In contrast, to see a cat first at New Year (as on any morning), especially if it was black, would bring luck only to a Mackintosh - throwing iron at it was the only antidote to the terrible misfortune to follow (Forbes 1905, 78). Cats seem to have more power to preserve good luck for the household, as much as for individuals, although it was disastrous for one to die within the house (ibid.). On Hogmanay, all the ill luck of the previous year was swept out of the house on the eve of the new, and the cat was kept inside in case an unlucky first foot arrived, when the evil they brought could be removed by throwing out the cat (Beaton, quoted in Banks 1939b, 28).

Poultry are even harder to find in the sources than any of the other domesticated animals and their role and significance is very hard to quantify. Hens' eggs and meat figure prominently in the food given to travellers and, although apparently hard to acquire at certain times, seem to form a substantial part of the diet of the majority of people. Roast chicken - along with mutton - was probably eaten only at special events. Eggs too were used on festive occasions, mixed as a batter to smear on 'cakes' like the St. Michael *struan*. As an ordinary foodstuff, eggs must also have been very important, because they keep fresh for a few weeks. Hens formed an important element in rents and do figure in shieling place-names (Bil 1990, 171). The nineteenth century accounts record hens living in the house and roosting on the rafters. However, the importance of ducks and geese is almost impossible to establish - although geese are included in the calculations of grazing allocations (souns) in some areas (Forbes 1905, 277) and Robertson states that there were innumerable ducks, geese - and turkeys - in almost every district of Perthshire (1799, 331).

As with dogs, a cockerel crowing at night was an indication of an approaching death, especially for those on whom the bird looked (Bennett 1992, 177). The cockerel consistently had the power to foretell future events - although they were not always of such import (Forbes 1905, 288-9). If a hen crowed at night, the sound had even more portent - and the hen would be killed immediately (ibid.). If there was a corpse in the house, the hens were kept shut up in case they should enter the dwelling and fly over the body; it was believed that the next person who saw them would go blind (ibid., 289).

However, hens also have a few more unique traditions attached to them. If a farm was broken up and the stock sold, the hens could only be given away or ill-luck would ensue. To ensure hen chicks, the eggs were laid under the mother during an ebb tide - if the opposite was done, the outcome would be male chicks (ibid.). Cockerels or pullets could be live sacrifices, as they were believed to cure the patient if buried under the bed (ibid., 290) or to propitiate St. Bride (Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 167-8). In contrast, ducks - though this may only apply to wild ones - had a reputation for being a good omen (Forbes 1905, 242).

Bees were undoubtedly kept and Marshall states that they were a normal part of the livestock on any Highland farm (1794, 43). However, a proportion, at least, of the honey collected could have been the produce of wild bees. The abundance of heather moorland makes them eminently suitable, as long as there were any sheltered areas for their hives. The significance of honey - as a valuable sweetener and a cure for many illnesses (Robertson 1799, 334) - will have made the bee of great value to all levels of society. As a consequence, the few people who were tolerated by and could manage bees might also have had some standing. The few superstitions recorded revolve around the humming of bees; they were believed to mark the birth of Jesus and the end of the old year by singing on a different note (Banks 1941, 202, 210, 230). It is, however, the honey rather than its producers that finds the most prominent place in the sources.

In a primarily pastoral economy, the plants grown in the Highlands take a definite secondary place to animals. Transformed into foodstuffs, plants still played a subsidiary role - oatmeal and kale were always mixed with animal products, even potatoes were predominantly eaten mashed with milk if it was available (Wordsworth 1803, 156-7). Care and attention was certainly not paid to the growing of cereals or the making of hay; by the early summer, the former tended to be swamped by a colourful array of weeds (Marshall 1794, 38). Some of these weeds were, however, used as fodder during the summer months for those animals that stayed behind at the wintertown. Of the arable crops, barley and oats were the most significant; both provided food (and drink) for people and animals. Peas and beans were grown as part of rotations on the infield, chiefly as winter food (ibid., 39). Kale in various forms was probably grown from the Medieval period onwards in yards or gardens. Root vegetables may have also been cultivated in these gardens - but certainly wild carrots seem to have had far more importance than any of their domesticated cousins. Turnips and potatoes originally found their place in these same contexts, before they became field crops in the eighteenth century (Fenton 1976, 110). Fruit trees were perhaps not consciously grown and fruit may have been gathered from the trees which found a place as shelter for the buildings of the township, just as they were from wild trees living close by.

Ground into meal and mixed with animal products, cereals formed a very important part of the diet, although arguably as the basis of ale and whisky, they were of even more significance. Most of the grain grown would have been kept for use by the family; the resources to generate surpluses for the rent came from animals. Even so, grain had to be imported into many areas as a matter of course, simply to provide for the people to eat, let alone enough grain to sow in the spring. The safe harvesting of the crop was the time for celebration - and this took primacy over carting home the stooks and stacking them (Fenton 1987, 123-4). The last sheaf to be cut was the most favoured in the lowlands, although often the least favoured in the Highlands. For the lowlands, it was an indication of individual success, tantamount to ensuring the survival of the family for another year, even though all the community would have contributed their human (and

horse) power (ibid., 124). In the Highlands, to be last in finishing cutting was to hinder one of the most important projects of the community as a whole, and possibly to hold up the arrival of the stock to graze the stubble (ibid., 125).

It is cereals, transformed into cakes, bannocks, and so on, that became meaningful as a material for thank-offerings and for divination (see chapters 4.3 and 4.6). As such, the grains of oats and barley must represent the fruits of the harvest - just as the sacrificial lamb at Michaelmas (see above, pg. 94). The act of making and eating/drinking of a 'sacrificial' cake or ale forms an important part of many festive occasions (e.g. Martin 1703, 28, Carmichael 1928, Vol. I, 200; Banks 1939b, 51; Banks 1941, 88ff). The breaking of the *struan* while it was being prepared brought bad luck to the girl making it; breaking it after it was baked heralded bad luck for the whole household (Carmichael 1928, Vol. I, 201). Individual little cakes were then made for each of the members of the family, both present and absent, and to these were added the fruits of the wild - berries and honey (ibid.). Oatmeal in hot gruels and barley in whisky had the added benefit of being general cure-alls (Grant 1961, 304, 315).

The role of hunting, fishing and gathering in the lives of the Highlanders - at least below a certain social level, where its purpose was primarily recreational - is of doubtful importance. Its main significance seems to be in early summer, when the men would spend much time hunting and fishing while at the shielings (Robertson 1799, 336). Robertson's reference is a rare mention in an otherwise sparse record. The value of fresh meat and fish in the summer at least, alongside the sweetness of wild fruits, in an otherwise fairly mundane and uniform diet would seem unquestionable. They were a seasonal bounty - a treat, but unreliable perhaps because of the time needed to gather them during the periods when the farming year was at its busiest. These foods would be of immediate value, since they were unlikely to be preserved in any way. Soft fruit did not rise to prominence for the ordinary people until sugar became more available in the seventeenth century (probably later in the Highlands), and raspberries, gooseberries and so on began to be increasingly grown in gardens (Fenton 1976, 179-80).

Although there are, therefore, practical elements in the folklore surrounding wild animals and plants, most of it seems to stem from their own intrinsic character and attributes. In this respect, the same themes and issues consistently arise for wild animals, birds, fish and plants as for their domestic counterparts - even if relatively little detail for each species can be recovered. Consequently, the discussion presented here is intended merely to give an insight into the role of wild animals and plants. This is not a comprehensive account of the range of wild creatures and plants likely to be encountered, since this will be very specific to an area. Plants have been examined more fully since they receive less prominence in a pastoral economy as a food source, but achieve their importance through healing and medicine.

Animals, and particularly birds, are peculiarly the dwelling places of spirits (Forbes 1905, 241) - they were also able to pass between this world and Otherworlds (Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 266). The remarkable knowledge of the behaviour of wild species that comes from living so close to the land must be largely responsible for the assigning of almost supernatural abilities to foretell the weather and forthcoming events to such animals and birds. In many cases, this gave rise to awe or an affectionate regard for particular species. Golden eagles are universally the king of birds and their feathers were used as emblems of rank in the Highlands (Fergusson 1884-5, 242). Salmon, in spite of the fact that they were highly prized when caught for food, were thought to embody wisdom (Forbes 1905, 381). Wild geese were often tamed as young birds (Pennant 1774, Vol. II, 243); the skylark, for its songs, was well-loved and protected from harm and wanton destruction (Forbes 1905, 301-2). In contrast, the yellowhammer - because it was believed to have sung on Calvary at the time of the Crucifixion as the consequence of the drop or drops of the devil's blood in it - was "industriously persecuted" (ibid., 350; Fergusson 1885-6, 39). Affecting animals in any way, whether accidentally or not, could bring down consequences on individuals - to kill a bat or a magpie was liable to create very bad luck for the killer (Forbes 1905, 66, 303). Deer and boar hunts are prominent in stories told in the Highlands, whether the tales are

‘descendants’ of mythological tales from Early Christian Ireland or attached to more recent chiefs and clans.

The traditional names of the most distinct of the wild plants seem to derive from Christianity - their origins and their particular uses, whether for food, dyeing or manufacturing, and their powers of healing and protection being attributed to individual saints. The dandelion, for example, was ‘the notched plant of Bridget’ - *am béarnan Brìghde* (Macfarlane 1924-5, 23). A few plants came under the auspices of the Otherworld, including the fairy flax - in Gaelic, the Fairy Queen’s flax - *Lìon na mna sìthe* (ibid., 22). Other names tend to be highly descriptive of the character and aspect of the plant - henbane is ‘the dangerous one’, since its seeds sent hens mad, and colts-foot, ‘grey ear’ (ibid., 24, 26).

Plants found a variety of purposes - from the practical to the marvellous, but it is the lore surrounding the magical and medical properties of wild plants that is of greatest significance - these were perhaps the most exploited and best understood of all wild things. Many plants were valued for their healing or protective powers, both where people and their domestic animals, particularly cattle, were concerned. Watercress was one of the plants employed in incantations to steal the milk of a neighbour, while others, such as groundsel, could be used as counter-charms (ibid., 36). There were innumerable variations of the charms to prevent witches and fairies from entering the dwellings and byres and wreaking mischief on the inhabitants. Particularly at *Beltane* and *Samhain*, the branches and berries of rowan or juniper were hung around doors, windows and byre stalls - and also placed under the milking pail - to protect who or what was within (Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 245-6; Banks 1939b, 216-7). A fire of the same wood had equivalent powers (ibid.). Crosses of rowan might be put in the centre of the midden since witches were often thought to abide there (Grant Stewart 1822, 259ff) - despite the sacred nature of rowan, these crosses might be taken to the need-fire at *Beltane* so that its powers could be added to theirs (Banks 1939b, 235). A fire of juniper branches in or near the house was believed to prevent the spread of disease by purifying the air and carrying off infection (Fergusson 1877-8, 145).

Unsurprisingly, the rowan and its fellow trees possess the greatest powers amongst the members of the plant kingdom. The symbolic and long-standing nature of these beliefs is perhaps best epitomised by the use of tree-names as mnemonics for the Gaelic alphabet (Hunter 1995, 61). In ancient texts, each species was classified according to its uses, a fact that could be equated with status distinctions in Early Medieval Ireland (ibid., 62-3). Restrictions placed on the uses to which particular woods could be put remains a prominent feature of the Early Modern period; only the wood from those trees which were sacred could be used to manufacture anything, even the stick used to drive the cattle up to the shielings (Fergusson 1877-8, 149). A coffin made of rowan-wood was treated with special reverence and sacred fires on *Beltane* and at other times were often made of rowan (Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 246). The hazel alone is an unlucky tree and linked to loss and damage, despite its widespread uses (Fergusson 1877-8, 144; Macfarlane 1924-5, 33). However, hazelnuts - particularly if two were found joined together - were lucky, having the potential to reveal the future to a prospective bride and groom on Halloween (Fergusson 1877-8, 144). Hazelnuts were also responsible for the wisdom of the salmon (ibid.; Hunter 1995, 80). Trees (ash, oak) were a good preservative against snakes - who were believed to go through fire rather than through ash leaves (Fergusson 1877-8, 133, 147).

The life cycles of the floral and faunal world will be as integral a component in determining people's conception of time as their own longer cycles of life and death. It is these rhythms of fertility and growth which governed the farming year and which have been summarised in figs. 9-11. The information included there has been gleaned from nineteenth century sources, such as the Statistical Accounts and the Board of Agriculture reports. Although there is not the detail present in these to suggest the number of hours people were involved in particular tasks, as has been done in New England at the end of the nineteenth century (fig. 12), it is still possible to compare the nature of the work undertaken during each season. A more visual illustration of these interconnecting rhythms is provided by Ingold's analysis of Breugel's painting, 'The

Harvesters' (1993). Here, the tree embodies the seasonal cycle of flowering and fruiting, as well as the longer cycle of life and death; as its roots penetrate the soil, it provides the link between the relatively unchanging forms of the landscape and the transience of animate beings (1993, 168). In contrast, the fields of standing corn privilege the present, incorporating the whole landscape and the people who reap the grain, in broad sweeps of gold (ibid.). Within these broad outlines, the daily activities of the people are structured by the practices involved in the harvest, in cutting and stooking, in moving back and forth between the village and the fields, in eating, drinking and sleeping. It is these, the concerns of daily human existence, which will be examined in more detail in the succeeding chapters.

4.4 The centre of the world: the house and the hearth

“The walls of the cottages were built of such rough unhewn stones as could most readily be procured, without cement, or of alternate layers of stones and turfs, to the height of about six feet, inclosing a space of about eight feet broad, and of about three times that length. The natural wood of the country easily supplied the little timber required for the huts, which were thatched with straw, fern, or heath, the thatch being secured with hay or straw ropes; called, in the language of the country, *siaman*. A hole was left in the roof above the part of the earthen floor intended for the fire place; and another square hole, near the fire place, of the size of two ordinary glass panes, in the wall, by way of a window; which in bad weather was secured with a board, or, where that piece of luxury was wanting, as was often the case, with old clothes, turf peat, or whatever material came in the way. The fire-place was sometimes in the middle of the floor, but commonly at one end of the cottage; and near the other end, in the side wall, was the opening for the door, in entering at which it was necessary for a man of ordinary size to bend almost double. The door was formed of rude planks, or of sticks wattled together. The furniture and accommodation within corresponded with the style of architecture. Near the fire, which was placed on some flat stones in the floor, and along the side-wall, stood the principal seat, called *deish*, resembling a crude church pew; and some three-footed or four-footed stools of the rudest wooden materials were scattered about, one of a larger size than the rest being designed to serve the purpose of a table. The *aumrie*, or press, for holding the milk dishes, and the *beisail*, a sort of rack for holding some wooden plates and horn spoons, were also usually arranged along the side-wall; and between the door and the fire-place, across the floor, commonly stood a close bed-stead, which served the purpose of defending the fire-side from the cold blast of the door, unless the occupant happened to be so luxurious and effeminate as to have a cross wall, rudely lathed and plastered, in that situation. The rest of the beds were usually placed at the end of the cottage, opposite to the fire-end. An old highlander would have spread some heath on the floor of his bed, and have disdained any other covering than his tartan plaid; but the degeneracy of later times introduced chaff beds and coarse blankets.

(Anon 1819, Sketch of a Tour in the Highlands of Scotland, 40-2)

The lengthy quotation given above, sums up the typical dwellings of Strathardle and Glenshee at the beginning of the nineteenth century - subject to all the biases and prejudices of this particular observer. Nonetheless, it fits in with the general tone of the documentary record of this period, and, in the precision of its details, provides a useful background to this chapter. What it lacks is a comprehensive appreciation of the historical dimensions and local variation inherent in the history of the house in the Highlands and attempts to deal with both these aspects form a prominent part of the discussion below. Most significantly, this description lacks the people who built, lived and worked in these dwellings; their perceptions of these buildings as the framework of their everyday lives would determine the role of - and meanings inherent in - the house.

Vernacular houses were built by those who occupied them - there were few, if any, craftsmen, and certainly no architects, involved in the practice of design and building. These buildings were the product of the collective experience of the builder - placed within the social context of which they were a part; they became the builder's response to his needs and those of his family (Glassie 1990, 274-5). Houses, because of this, are perhaps the aspect of material culture that changes least (Braudel 1981, 266-7), despite the frequency with which they may be replaced (see below, pg. 117ff). They draw on what was familiar and useful and what fitted in with their occupants' expectations of the world. Their purpose and form would be instantly recognisable from the outside. This 'recognition' extends beyond the exterior to an expectation of the arrangements inside and the social behaviour required on entering (Glassie 1990, 277; aspects of which are discussed in chapter 4.2). The traditional houses of the Highlands were not concerned with external appearance, but the provision of a social space, the sole room where all activities and interaction took place and into which a visitor would enter, often without any mediation other than the front door (fig. 13). Changes to these forms were brought about only by alterations in social perceptions of space and its uses - in the Highlands as elsewhere, this occurred as the primacy of the individual, and the consequent need for privacy and separation from the world outside, became the overriding concern (ibid., 279-80).

Inside, the appearance of these dwellings would not seem to belie their outward seeming of a lowly earth-bound structure (see chapter 4.2). The smoke-hole, if there was one, was never above the central hearth, so that rain coming in would not put out the fire, but neither would the smoke escape easily (Chapman 1924, 28). The result was relatively clear air below a thick cloak of smoke swirling among the rafters (Grant 1961, 163). This had the practical purpose of impregnating the roof with soot and, as they firmly believed, of keeping the occupants' warm (Burt 1754, Vol. I, 64). By the end of the winter the people, themselves, were also black with soot (ibid., Vol. II, 135-6). If it rained, the soot tended to drop from the roof and run down the pot-hook in large, wet

globules (Grant 1961, 151). If it was dry, the insect inhabitants of the roof and walls replaced the soot droplets (Burt 1754, Vol. I, 60). Smoke could also escape through the low, narrow doors, usually the only other admitter of light - though there might be small, open windows. The walls too were low, and tended to lean slightly inwards, whatever the building material (Chapman 1924, 28). The impression 'given is of dark, cave-like interiors, enlivened only by the glow of the fire and the chatter of the occupants. Walls were constructed to maximise insulation, but, nonetheless, both walls and rooves allowed for ventilation. A turf and thatch roof kept the house warm in winter and cool in summer, and retained the heat of the fire (Grant 1961, 151-3).

The floor would be of earth - dry around the fire and in the corners, but a boggy and uneven mire elsewhere (Burt 1754, Vol. II, 59). The all-important focus was the hearth, the source of heat and light and, therefore, life. The hearth would greet each person's entry; it formed the heart of the house, not divided from any part of it by physical partitions. It would constrain movement, a continual reminder of its presence and of its role within the life of the family. It would be the focus of nearly all activities and communication, as the family and its animals gathered at the end of the day. At Rosal, this centrality is even further enforced by the fact that the hearth sits on the summit of a hillock, with the house and byre extending down either slope (Fairhurst 1967-8, 155).

The all-important cooking pot hung over the fire from a chain, or even pieces of wood, attached to one of the roof timbers (Grant 1961, 163-4). If there were additional sources of light - probably fir candles - these might be slotted into the chain or hung from the girdles above the fire (*ibid.*, 184), again keeping everybody around the heart of the house. Tongs for the peat seem to have come to represent the fire and all it embodied: they were given by the husband to his bride when she first entered and took possession of her new home as his wife (*ibid.*, 189).

The hearth is not only central, its separation from all other elements of the house is reinforced by the clear space of the floor around it. Only stone, to retain the fire and act as a fire-back and with its own sacrality, remains close to it (fig. 14A and B). The walls of the house seem to provide an envelope round this space - reserving the power of the

fire to the occupants of that house (even though its origin will be in a fire lit for the whole community). It is a monumental shift in conception, therefore, for the central fire to become one pushed away into a recess in the gable wall, and this may partially explain why the process took several stages to complete (fig. 14C-E). The development of the fire-back gradually created a distinction in Caithness between the 'fore 'e fire', where the family gathered, and the 'back o' the fire', a place for storage (Fenton 1987, 88). This was further formalised as a permanent wall, which the fire simply abutted. Only then could it be consigned to a fireplace within the wall - thus allowing, perhaps, for the formation of separate rooms each with their own individual fireplaces.

The kitchen fire continued to perform all its practical functions and people still placed their chairs in a half-circle around it, but the work and play of the household could no longer revolve around it and its visibility was much reduced. The division of the fire into two - one in the kitchen and another in the parlour/bedroom (fig. 13D) - implies another change in conception. The fire in the best room may not have been perpetually alight; it was not anymore a life-giver, but simply provided light and comfort. This is an indication, corroborated by the slow introduction of grates and stoves, that the fire had to be primarily efficient. Smoke and soot, with their own perceived properties of warmth and fertility, were now directed up and out of the house, via some kind of chimney, and those virtues lost as the smoke mingled with the air outside. This must also be the point when the cattle are finally separated from the fire - and from people - and consigned to their own separate place in the byre. The modern elements of efficiency and privacy - and perhaps also hygiene - were now paramount.

As the walls of the house restrict the influence of the fire to those inside, so the fire becomes the symbol of the life of the family - and through its potential for continual renewal, the emblem of their hopes for perpetuation of health and prosperity (Carmichael 1928, Vol. I, 231). As a consequence, the fire comes to embody the luck of the household. To give out fire, or even the kindling for it, on the Quarter days (e.g. *Beltane*) - especially to a neighbour - allowed them to take all the goodness of cow's milk. If necessary, it could be counteracted by combining the powers of fire and water

and placing a burning ember or peat in a bucket of water (Campbell, J. G., 1900, 234ff; Banks 1939b, 79, 89). On Hogmanay, it was exceptionally unlucky to let the fire go out and any visiting friends would bring a piece of wood or a peat for it as a contribution to keeping away evil from the house (Banks 1939b, 28-9).

Every crumb and scrap were returned to the fire - so that the essence of the whole contained within them could not be put to a malignant use by a spirit or a fellow human. This was especially important where hair and nail clippings, especially from a baby, were concerned (Bennett 1992, 16-18). The chaff used as bedding would be burnt, when it needed replacing and all the personal effects, as well as the bedding, of a deceased person would be similarly destroyed after their funeral (*ibid.*, 34, 259ff). On the Quarter days, to put outside the house the ashes of the fire (or dirty water or anything else) was considered to bring ill-luck on the household (Campbell J. G., 1900-3, 238). This has practical corollaries - it suggests that there would be less for the consumers of such food waste, the hens and pigs. Vegetable and other waste, in the form of ashes, would go, via the byre, to soak up urine or straight to the midden or compost heap. If the fire received all the by-products of the household, it may suggest that the latter were kept relatively clean and, by extension, explain the sparsity of finds in excavated Highland dwellings. As manures, the soot-impregnated roofing material and the ashes would benefit from the addition of the power of fire - to these were added other materials - for example, turf and seaweeds - deliberately reduced to ashes before they were used as fertilisers. These inter-relationships have been neatly and graphically illustrated by Harmon (1997, 17) for St. Kilda (fig. 8).

Above all, it is the image of the fire as a guardian of the dwelling and its occupants that figures most prominently. This capacity for protection extends far beyond the sphere of the house - to the animals, the crops, the land and the boats. Fire could combat any evil, whether generated by spirits or disease. Only the 'need-fire' could control the cattle murrains that so easily placed tragedy firmly in the heart of the community. These fires were sometimes also seen to have the power to protect children and to drive out the evil from criminals (Banks 1939b, 225ff). The purity of fire reinforced that of water

boiled at a *Beltane* fire and entered cakes toasted on it - these could be transferred to the person who ate and drank from them (ibid., 230). Fire, as in most of Medieval Europe, could also be used in judgement, not so much on people (witches aside) - as on spirits from the Otherworld. In the Highlands, this places emphasis on fairies suspected of taking human babies and replacing them with their own, particularly fractious, offspring. The deceit could be revealed by exposing the changeling to fire, when it would immediately disappear in a cloud of smoke and brimstone (Bennett 1992, 18-9).

If an individual died in the house, the fire, as symbol of life, had to be extinguished while the corpse rested there before burial (Pennant 1774, Vol. I, 98). Its relighting indicated that life could begin again. Apart from *Beltane* (May 1st), this was the only occasion when the fire would be deliberately quenched. *Beltane* was the time of the symbolic death and rebirth of the community and the family - originally perhaps a more important signification of the birth of the new year (since all plants were springing back into life and young animals being born) than the date that has now become traditional. All fires were extinguished, each family receiving a flame from the 'need-fire', kindled anew on a hill overlooking the lands of the township. If members of one of the receiving families were in debt, had not paid the rent or were guilty of a crime, the fire was denied them (Banks 1939b, 230), a catastrophic occurrence since this represented symbolic and actual exclusion from the community. For the very poor, a permanent fire may never have been possible, particularly after the break up of traditional communities and mechanisms of support which made possible the gathering of peats. The poor had to forage for shorter term fuels, such as broom and whins (Fenton 1987, 83-4); this again was a form of exclusion from the main body of the community.

There is a marked sexual division of labour surrounding the hearth. The maintenance of the fire was the responsibility of the woman of the house. Despite her perceived ill-starred nature (see chapter 4.6), she held the life of the family in her hands and, through her children, was as much the visible, if unacknowledged, manifestation of the renewal of the family as the fire was its emblem. Since giving birth involved laying herself open to the possible ravages of the spirits of the Otherworld, the woman might need the added

protection of the life-giving fire. The association of the Devil and witches with fire and light (Banks 1939b, 162), suggests, however, that fire did have the potential to be both good and evil. These unchancy attributes ensured that - at the times of the year when the fire had to be imbued with all its force and purity, whether Hogmanay, Beltane or when a murrain or other disaster struck - the men took control. The women were not permitted to touch either the hearth or even the fuel to be used (Martin 1703, 113; Banks 1939b, 29, 226ff). If one of these men was not himself pure, the fire, as the embodiment of the substance of the community, would not be empowered (Banks 1939b, 230). This potential of the fire to become base was likely to be even greater if left in the hands of a woman. Simply, a woman might protect her own family, but could not be noble enough to subordinate this to the good of the whole community - a trait that was solely male.

Away from the hearth, furniture must have been the minimum necessary (fig. 13). There would have been stools, maybe a bench, large kists for meal, clothes and blankets - and on which the most valuable items and china were displayed, other presses and neuks in which to store food, utensils and so on (Grant 1961, 167ff). Not even a table was necessary, if all gathered close to the fire to eat on their knees, often sharing the one pot and the one spoon (ibid., 176 and see below, pg. 115). Chairs were a luxury, inherently symbolising the official (male) sphere and raised up from the ground level and the bench and the stool, the seats of the everyday (cf. Braudel 1981, 290-2). The bench was a functional and simple answer to seating in a small space, but could only exist where intimacy between individuals was expected (Grant 1961, 175). Stools fall somewhere between these two poles - perhaps reserved at first for the most important members of the family and their guests. Most of the furniture, plain and functional as it was, served to contain things - in themselves, these chests and kists were luxuries, but further they implied the quality and quantity of the possessions they held.

In the west, the beds tended to be built into the thickness of the wall (fig. 13C) - a cave within a cave - elsewhere they may have been placed behind partitions or had their own curtains. A few members of the household therefore had some privacy, the others

would have found a place as close to the hearth as possible. The beds themselves were made of whatever came to hand, whether straw, heather or bracken - again the natural world coming inside the dwelling little altered and doubtless mingling its scents with the reek of the peat to give a strong earthy smell to the whole house.

Very few of the internal features of a house were incorporated into its fabric (fig. 13); they were as moveable as the people themselves. If tenancies were short and people moved on at regular intervals (see below, pg. 117ff), their goods and chattels had to go with them. All were likely, therefore, to be kept to a minimum and to be easily replaceable. It was only after the Improvements, when women were needed less in the fields, that housework and the house as a possession on which to lavish care and attention as a form of status display became important (Burt 1754, Vol. I, 91). An important part of this was the ownership of furniture; it became both more elaborate and more permanent. Included in this was the insertion of cupboards and aumbries - alongside fireplaces - into the thickness of the walls.

In contrast, each house would have had a quantity of white linen - 'shop cloth' (Grant 1924, 122) - seemingly far exceeding their needs, but the pride and wealth of the women of the house. This must replace the linen that was formerly the responsibility of each young woman to make before her marriage, a statement of her status and her competence for the care of her prospective family. Linen was not, therefore, handed down through the generations - except perhaps as a Christening gown or other such formal garment. This must in part be due to its lack of survival in a damp climate - what was passed on were the techniques and the traditional designs that would be found on the elaborately-wrought death shrouds prepared by every newly married bride. These, along with the tartans of each family and the patterns on the sweaters of fishermen, provided the link between the generations, again perhaps suggestive that identity was constructed through inter-personal relationships (see chapter 4.5).

The dwelling encapsulated both the important events and the mundane happenings of everybody's lives. From it, people faced the prospect of another day's work and to it they returned in the evening to eat, to relax and to sleep. In this context, for the adult

occupants, the dwelling's significance was almost as a place through which to pass - where much of their time was spent asleep, but where nevertheless the most significant day-to-day interactions between the occupants were likely to take place. This applied in the main to the working population who would have spent most of their time attending to the crops or the animals. For adult women, the house may have provided a location for craft activities (spinning, weaving, etc.), that could in good weather, take place on the front doorstep, where the children playing could be kept in view and talk and gossip exchanged with the other women. This must have been particularly true in areas where spinning was a vital part of the family's income (Burt 1754, Vol. I, 91). For the older and perhaps less mobile members of the household, however, the house perhaps provided the setting for the tasks that they could perform. The very young children might have remained with them - and one person in particular may have been designated as teacher to the older children. The house then probably served as a schoolroom - in winter at least.

The dwelling, as a place where food was prepared, cooked and eaten, was, however, important for all. Many meals during the day were probably carried and eaten outside, particularly by those working some distance from the settlement. In such farming communities, both food and drink were apparently consumed at frequent intervals (Fenton 1976, 169; Pred 1985), giving a regular and binding structure to the day. The last and main communal meal of the day was eaten sitting around the hearth, possibly "all helping themselves out of the same vessel, and the little children put in their dirty hands to dig out of the mess [of potatoes and milk] at their pleasure" (Wordsworth 1803, 156-7). The preparation of food involved only a part of the social group living within the dwelling, probably again the women. This ensured their significance, in their responsibility for the creation of food and sustenance for that group - one that may well have been in addition to other hard and manual labour on the farm. In this endeavour, the fire, as provider of energy for cooking and heating, was as central as its place within the house.

In this context, the house became the focus of important transformations - from recognisable natural products (grain, kale, fish, animals) into food for consumption. In many respects, these transformations would have been extensive; much of the Scottish diet seems to have been made up of gruels and stews, in to which most things must have gone. Milk, in particular, could be transformed in a myriad of different ways: as a base for oatmeal gruels, into butter or cheese, and even into a thickened, frothy mixture, *anhan* (e.g. Fenton 1976, 157). Foods in their natural state, such as fruit and berries, were perhaps viewed differently - as something purely seasonal and a supplementary, if special, food. The importance of their role is unclear. According to Burt (1754, Vol. II, 74-5), bilberrys' were especially esteemed, but were the only fruit that was eaten. Possibly more representative, though presumably reflecting a much later period, both red- and blackcurrants, and gooseberries were grown in the gardens at Auchindrain (Buchanan et al. 1988, 16).

Very little would have gone to waste. The few vegetable scraps went to poultry and pigs, bones to dogs and cats, and even the water from boiled potatoes was used to enrich hay or straw for animals in especial need (Grant 1961, 188) - so re-entering the cycle of life and renewal (see above, pg. 111). Waste was not a concept that was apparently understood - perhaps because much was recycled. Where the idea does appear, it is to portray an attitude rather tight-fisted than otherwise. Metal utensils were never cleaned - to clean them would remove some of their precious surface (Burt 1754, Vol. II, 146). To build a permanent enclosure (rather than a feal dyke round a tathing fold) was to waste land that could be put to far better use (ibid., 154).

As some natural materials were transformed into food, so others were transformed into tools, furniture, clothes and so on. These again were activities that took place in and around the house, even if preliminary preparation was done outside (e.g. retting and drying the flax, spinning the wool at the shielings in the summer). Very few would have been able to sit around the hearth in the long winter evenings without their hands set to some useful task, unless they were too young, too old or were absorbed in entertaining the others. Every conceivable raw material would have been turned to some purpose,

and the degree to which it was transformed from its natural state was often very slight. Stools could simply be strong tufts of grass, cut and trimmed to shape (Firth 1922, 11). In contrast, wool, once washed, carded, spun and dyed, underwent a final and dramatic transformation into cloth - then to be worn or used as bed furnishings.

Similarly, the spaces within the house were routinely transformed. At the all-important times of life - birth, marriage and death - the house was an arena for the negotiation of the most important events and relationships of peoples' lives, all of which would have taken place there. The dwelling, and the spaces within it, took on a whole series of differing meanings separate from those of the everyday. This is most significant at birth and death, or during an illness, when one room (or a partitioned area) would have become separate and isolated, subject to different rules of behaviour and access. In the remotest areas, the house was also likely to become a religious focus - as the only building which could become, however temporarily, the place where services could be celebrated. The transformation of living space into sacred space was easily but respectfully achieved. It would be, in the main, dependent on peoples' perceptions, fostered by the universal need to incorporate ritual (whether particularly religious or not) into their everyday lives - this might involve the Bible placed in a niche by the fire or simply the saying of Grace. For the feasting and dancing that accompanied the celebration of a marriage or a funeral wake, the house became simply a single space, within which the whole of the community could be accommodated.

Within the settlement, a particular dwelling would embody several different meanings for each person. As such they represented a (partial) record of their own life histories, and possibly that of their families and communities. The roofing timbers, likely to be the most worn and repaired element in the whole structure would be the one constructional element removed and reused - as such they become symbolic of those lives and histories and came to embody the house as the home of a particular family group. Toasts were made to the roof-tree as it represented all the house stood for - a unity of the social group in spite of the constant movements of tenants around the lands

of their chief. In certain areas the valuable wood of the crucks was the property of the tenants themselves, in others they scraped together only the smaller timber for the walls - whether or not they owned the roof-tree seems not to have lessened its significance. The life of a cruck could well have far outlasted their own.

Since it probably was easier to build again than to repair the dilapidated shell of a building (Fairhurst 1960, 71), the close proximity of the buildings, now in use as pens and kailyards, in which the generation before had lived and died, would be a token of the attachment felt to ancestors in all similar rural and agricultural societies. They may be both a stark reminder of the time depth of a landscape and a mode of life, of which the present occupants were now an integral and situated part. It is a part of the continual procedure of recycling materials, but here also it is the physical and the conceptual cluttering up of the settlement with the debris of the past and all its associations. There are issues, other than convenience, potentially involved in the desire to keep building anew. None of the 'clutter' described above appears to extend back beyond the eighteenth century - this is one of the single largest problems facing any study of Highland dwellings in the Medieval and Early Modern period. Those remains that do exist from these later centuries (as suggested above, pg. 117ff and see chapter 4.2) were, themselves, quite ephemeral and impermanent. Even in use, they appeared ramshackle and - at least, to upper-middle class English eyes - barely fit to live in. Nonetheless, they seem to have adequately served their purpose.

In England, the idea of being born, living and dying in the same house was possibly a product of the change from building in wood to building in stone and brick, a feature of sixteenth and seventeenth centuries - it may not have been appropriate in Medieval society (cf. Jackson, J. B., 1984, 94-5; Huebner 1918, 166). Medieval houses, as in the frontier lands of the United States, were of wood, simply transient and temporary shells for the family to live in before they moved on - when the ground became exhausted, the man of the house died or the lord began to exact too much (Jackson, J. B., 1984, 95ff). In an environment where wood was plentiful and easily available, a new dwelling might be built simply because the old one had become dirty and ramshackle (ibid.).

The corollary of such impermanent architecture is that in Medieval society, houses were often deemed to be movable property (Jackson, J. B., 1984, 92; Huebner 1918, 166ff; the situation in Anglo-Saxon England may, however, have been rather different (Charles-Edwards 1979, 104)). The house as moveable property is articulated most clearly in Germanic law where it derived from the legal texts of the Early Medieval period. In Germany, firstly churches and town-halls, then the houses and castles of the rich - but only if they were built of stone - were conceived of as immovable (Huebner 1918, 166). As with the land on which they stood, buildings were heritable property, subject to all the limitations on inheritance that this imposed. If, however, the building was moveable and, in consequence, a chattel, the house could be separated from the land that supported it and, as important, since the rules of (male) primogeniture no longer applied, could be more easily passed through the female line or to the younger children (ibid., 172). In Medieval English law, similar principles seem to have applied (e.g. Bracton c. 1250 (1968), 45-6). A building that “merely rests on the ground by its own weight” is still, in modern English law, considered to be moveable property (Megarry and Wade 1975, 712-3). In Scotland, this law of fixtures very closely follows that of England (Walker 1989, 11ff).

Somewhat in opposition to the conception of buildings as merely temporary shells, the designation of a house as moveable property might be of more long-term advantage to its occupants. Retaining what might appear to be a flimsy dwelling could ensure that all members of the deceased’s family would be supported after the husband or father’s death. The lifetime of a wooden building might only be equivalent to that of one human generation, but this could still allow it to remain as the home of the widow or unmarried daughters, assuring them of at least a degree of independence. If this was so, it is not inconceivable that the building would be physically moved to a new location.

Whether simply a temporary structure or a potentially valuable asset, the detachment of the house from the land on which it stood, suggests that both the idea of the home and of place may be rather different from that understood by people living in a permanent dwelling. In a modern sense, the family is synonymous with the creation of a family

home. It is, perhaps, the combining of valued relationships between a group of people, both within and outside the family, made real through a sense of identification with place - in effect, the house and the land surrounding it. The naming of the dwellings at Auchindrain after the families who built or who lived in them (Fenton 1979; RCAHMS 1992), appears to be a tangible reflection of such a connection having developed at some time in the nineteenth century. However, prior to this, identity would seem to be constructed entirely around social relationships (see chapter 3.3). Not to be tied to one house, and as a consequence one particular place, need not have been a problematic situation, but an accepted part of life.

If very short tenancies were the norm, then this was a situation exemplified by the particularly harsh and changeable conditions of the Highlands. Turf, mud and stone took the place of wood in other areas - yet even the eighteenth and nineteenth century change to stone does not necessarily imply the same permanence in Scotland as it appears to elsewhere. Boulders were not shaped but simply fitted together; they could as easily be recycled. Yet, stone, as product of the earth, has its own inherent qualities of monumentality and timelessness - its adoption as a building material in Scotland is perhaps the beginning of an alteration in perception that later made possible the solid stone farmhouses of the Improvements, firmly situated in the middle of their fields. There are additional dimensions to the Highland situation. The presence of the wooden structural elements of the house, the quintessence of the family, would appear to turn a temporary building into a family home. If people were as mobile within the territory of their clan as is likely, then a shift to a different township still involved moving among their own people and ancestors - wherever they were, the decaying buildings surrounding them would still abound with meaningful associations. On the taking up of a lease, the house already there tended to be abandoned, replaced by the incoming tenants' new dwelling. The building of the new house would then become a regular act of renewal for the members of the household, structuring and maintaining their identity. It is not then one particular house that becomes the physical embodiment of the history

of the family, the place where its inhabitants lived out the major events of their lives - but several.

Vernacular architecture incorporates as one of its essential features the necessity of constant maintenance. It is this that, in the early history of the colonial United States, provides one of the means of continuing and maintaining the traditional social relations of the settlers (Shackel 1993). Maintaining the house was an occasion for neighbours and friends to come together in shared activities, in this case an act of renewal of the wider relationships of reciprocity and friendship that extended through the community. The breakdown of this practice, as more permanent building materials were adopted, had two main consequences. For the ordinary householder, the comfort of a corrugated iron roof and sturdy walls replaced the joys - and graft - of the mutual involvement in a project in which everybody could have a part (Glassie 1990, 276). The attendant implications of increased costs and the degree of specialised skills required had a further corollary - those that had the necessary money could use low-maintenance building materials, thus requiring individuals with the necessary knowledge to do the building, to separate themselves out from such traditional relations of reciprocity and reinforcing the new-found barriers between different social levels (Shackel 1993).

In the Scottish situation, these ideas remain applicable. Even if the input, in terms of effort and manpower into building seems minimal, it would still have been present. It may have been most evident in the collection of building materials - whether turf or stone - if not in the actual construction of the house (cf. quote from Mechan and Walker 1989 given in chapter 4.2, pg. 74). The roof of the house was a different matter. This would, as a matter of course, need regular maintenance on a relatively low level but, if part of it was returned to the fields each year as fertiliser, then the effort required would be correspondingly greater. Since its fertility would benefit the whole community, there may have been a shared involvement and responsibility in the process. In the farmhouses of the Improvements and the croft houses of the west, through their stone blocks and mortar, are imposed those values of independence and self-sufficiency that

are further reinforced by their isolation, both physically and mentally, from other farms and crofts.

In any discussion of everyday life, the house will loom large, but it is only in the light of a conception of the house as an inhabited and functioning whole that the archaeological remains will come to life. None of the ideas presented above provide a full explanation for the lack of Highland settlement prior to the eighteenth century - nor do they provide a way to find it. However, it is perhaps only a clear visualisation of the appearance and the meanings of the house and the settlement, alongside the motivations of their occupants, that will enable us to further our understanding of the transitory clues that lead back into the Medieval period and beyond.

4.5 The cycle of life

“... time was of little value, space of no account, an errand was a day’s work, whether it took the day or only an hour or two”

(Mrs. Grant of Rothiemurchus 1898, 118)

“The inhabitants were for a long time perhaps not unhappy; but their content was a muddy mixture of pride and ignorance”

(Dr Johnson (Chapman 1924, 81))

“They are all gentlemen, will take affront from no man and insolent to the last degree. But certainly the absurdity is ridiculous, to see a man in his mountain habit, armed ..., walking down High Street [Edinburgh] as upright and haughty as if he were a lord, and withal driving a cow”

(Letter from Defoe to Harley 1736, quoted in Grant 1961, 321)

Social interaction is firmly rooted in both space and time and understanding is therefore only possible if the routinised character of life (on daily, seasonal and lifetime scales) can be accounted for (Giddens 1985, 292); in these practices the structuring principles of society will be implicated. To seek such an understanding of social relations through reliance on the somewhat biased accounts of the Highlanders, which became the received wisdom of British social circles in the nineteenth century, would seem to be a dangerous occupation. The level of evidence available makes it appear difficult to write an account of the rituals and routines of everyday life (over the different time scales involved and from the varying perspectives necessary) which would provide an adequate picture of the reality of those lives. Such a task requires an immense amount of (unbiased) detail on the roles of men, women, adolescents, children and the old in the community which is simply not present in the sources. Neither can the responsibilities of varying elements in the social hierarchy, ministers, schoolmasters, tradesmen and so on, be ignored. Nonetheless, careful assessment of the available material makes it possible to begin to examine the roles of particular gender and age groups in the community and the ways in which their experiences of life, both large and small, were encountered, experienced and overcome. The purpose of this section,

therefore, is to link together aspects of the materiality of the world already encountered with a clearer sense of peoples' negotiation of their surroundings on an everyday basis.

In any subsistence agricultural economy, most peoples' everyday lives will be constituted around a never-ending series of mundane chores - the upkeep of the fire, the feeding and care of animals, the tending of crops and a multitude of other small maintenance tasks that needed doing. Many of these would be performed in a solitary manner, though others, such as milking, might involve other members of the household. Occasionally, this daily round would be enlightened by larger-scale operations such as the preparation of the ground for sowing, the shearing of sheep and the harvesting of the crops, when many of the community - above and beyond the individual household - might be working together. These, despite the hard graft involved, were times of joining together in pleasure and laughter.

The conception of the time that any task took is unlikely to have been linear, in the sense of a modern, capitalist society. Pennant (1774, Vol. II, 285-6) notes that the time taken to waulk the cloth was thought of as the number of songs that could be sung before the job was completed (cf. Grant 1961, 235-6). On the day of a wedding or another special occasion, there was a 'proper' route to the church that had to be observed - however long it then took to get there. Mrs. Grant of Rothiemurchus's view (quoted above), summarises such an outlook very well. If all tasks were thought of in this manner, the tedium inherent in them must have been severely reduced, giving rise to that reasonable contentment and satisfaction in life that was observed by travellers such as Dr. Johnson (also quoted above). There is also an inherent security in the carrying out of a familiar routine, a confidence resulting from being visibly part of the larger scheme of things. Patterson (1994, 57) has suggested the presence, in the law tracts of Early Medieval Ireland, of a perception that time was almost continuous. If this was so, there would be no tension between the past and the future, the past becoming essentially no different from the present. This would ensure that peoples' sense of continuity and identity - with both the past and the present - was even stronger. In Ireland, the purpose

of the written versions of the law tracts may have been to fossilise their contents as immutable. However, in other situations, a similar conception of time might still allow for the fluid interpretation of tradition, while confirming the constants of the framework (in this case, to greater or lesser degrees, the natural world, the elements, the land, social structure, the economic base and folk belief) within which that interpretation took place.

The singing at a waulking or when grinding the corn not only created a rather more joyous atmosphere amongst the participants than Pennant (1774, Vol. II, 281) had expected, but allowed for the learning of traditional ballads and songs. It provided a meeting place for the women and a means of socialisation for the younger girls. Since many of the songs and stories recited were 're-invented' to include the people present, the active mediation of the past history and current situation of certain members of the community was possible. There were plenty of other occasions at which a similar process took place - perhaps, principally around the family hearth in the long winter evenings - involving some, or all, of the members of the family or community at any given time. The wide range of subjects brought up in conversation astounded contemporary observers - the probable result of interchange with those of a higher class rather than the direct and actual experience of events or places. Within this dynamic atmosphere, each individual came to intensely identify with their own and their family's histories and affinities; thus providing them with the context for their active place in the community and within the broader scheme of things.

This self-awareness ensured that both sexes took great care of their appearance and had a pride of bearing and manner that surprised all English observers (see the quote from Defoe above). To what extent this concern extended to personal hygiene is unclear - certainly dealing with all bodily functions, in the absence of privacy, cannot have been treated as of any great matter. Neither was personal property likely to be of much significance - perhaps a few trinkets alongside their own clothes and jewellery. Of the latter, the finest became family heirlooms in the nineteenth century and where everything else was home-made, men, in particular, had tailored clothes (Grant 1961, 331, 244). This was a very tight-knit social world in which the majority of people must

have had to create, and maintain, their identities through personal communication and interaction, entirely reliant on their own personalities - and therefore helped by appearance - rather than wealth, goods or a trade (since these were restricted to a very few or tended to be seasonal). That there was a certain security surrounding these identities in Highland society is suggested by the ease in which members of all classes mingled freely with each other (*ibid.*, 121ff). This is in part a result of need - the precarious nature of survival would ensure ties of mutual dependence and obligation between all those who lived and worked on the land. This ensured that individuals possessed a firm sense of group identity. However, this, alongside an almost complete lack of privacy, does not seem to have resulted in the underdeveloped sense of the individual as an important and self-willed agent, which occurred in peasant populations in England and France (*cf.* Duby 1988, xii).

An extension of this was the tradition of hospitality in the Highlands that ensured the house was open to all who passed by. Any stranger would be made welcome, offered a bed, and incorporated into the everyday life of the family, being given the place of honour around the hearth. Family privacy, expressed through the possession of a private space, would seem, therefore, to be a thing of little importance (something that has already been seen reflected in domestic architecture, see chapter 4.4). By custom, strangers might be met at some distance from the house and offered milk (*e.g.* Chapman 1924, 37), but however poor or however crowded the cottage, accommodation and food would always be provided. This is perhaps an environment where generosity, derived from the security of inter-dependence within a community (since reciprocity was integral to these traditions), was combined with a respect and an overriding desire for the knowledge and the stories to be gleaned from one who came from outside the immediate social group. Comparatively few, after all, would have been complete strangers, at a time when family connections were so important. In a society constructed around reciprocal relations of sharing, privacy - and therefore the hiding of the household's affairs behind closed doors - would only have fostered mistrust and discontent.

The people of the Highlands were seen as essentially pragmatists. Life was taken at face value, although the obsession with divining the future and propitiating favourable circumstances seems rather to offset this feeling (see below). In other aspects of religious life, it is made abundantly clear. Where formal religion was concerned, people seem to have attended whatever service was available - of whatever cult (Pennant 1774, Vol. II, 275). The primary motivation appears to have been the chance to meet the rest of the community, as above all, services provided an occasion for gossip:

“... and neither men nor women thought of dispersing but stood in clubs about the Chapel, conversing some of them upwards of an hour. I have seen many people who appeared to pay more attention to the service, but I never saw any who appeared to enjoy the crack after the sermon so much”

(a description of the Chapel of Ease at the Spittal of Glenshee, from Chambers Journal c. 1840-60, quoted in Gordon 1948, 410-11).

This is not to deny that there was deep religious feeling, but that it found a different means of expression. In a Scotland where religious festivals - and services - were few and far between (Pennant 1774, Vol. II, 178), births, marriages, deaths (and the seasonal festivals that derived from an older pagan background) took their place in importance (Martin 1703, 52). It was not until the arrival of Presbyterianism, that - for some people - formal religion became the foundation stone of their lives.

The need to secure a favourable outcome for any task or venture which they were about to undertake, ensured that peoples' behaviour was subject to a whole series of taboos. Many of these were determined by natural phenomena, such as the sun and the moon, and have been discussed earlier (see chapter 4.1). The means by which each task was performed, and by whom, was equally important. For example, various customs were linked to the days of the week which governed even the simplest of tasks (see Grant 1961, 356, for further examples). Sheep could be marked on a Thursday, St. Columcille's day, but it was unlucky to do so on a Friday (Carmichael 1928, Vol. I, 288). Counting any livestock on a Friday was tantamount to losing them immediately in some unfortunate accident (Forbes 1905, 87, 216). The customs surrounding other times of the year, whether these were of transitional significance or not, could also be

extremely proscriptive. The month of May (except *Beltane*) was unlucky for embarking on major undertakings, but especially marriage. If nothing else, the sense of historical depth that these 'rules and regulations' appear to possess, must have given people a firm sense of their own place in the world.

The emphasis placed on 'first-footing', not only at New Year but at the beginning of the month and at the start of an important journey or task, serves to illustrate this point. There were a myriad of different ways in which the appearance of a person or an animal could have some bearing on the prospects for the coming days or the task ahead (e.g. Banks 1939b, 77; see chapter 4.3). In the case of the person, the potential affects could be determined by gender, age, disability, dress, appearance or simply the things that they carried (*ibid.*, 84ff). A person could indeed bring bad luck on others through no fault or wish of their own (Martin 1703, 123).

The desire for good fortune necessitated the constant warding off of any evil spirits lingering close by. This was especially important at times of the year, such as Halloween, when it was easy to pass between this world and the Otherworld and at particular happenings, such as childbirth. Following the birth of a child, it was believed that both mother and baby could not receive the protection of the Church until the Christening had taken place (Bennett 1992, 9). Protection in the interim, however, could be assured by a variety of objects, both natural and man-made. As in healing, these operated through sympathetic magic or by transferring the evil spirit to something or someone else (Grant 1961, 307-8). Here perhaps the most significant things are those - the elements of fire and water and articles such as iron, salt and money - that must have had great symbolic value for most people; some of this obvious, some perhaps as a consequence of their rarity (cf. Braudel 1981, 209). The Bible and the cross find a place amongst these symbols, but had no particular prominence (Pennant 1774, Vol. I, 101, 162). Rowan twigs were sometimes made into crosses before they were hung in the byres (Grant Stewart 1822, 259; see also pg. 104), and at Hogmanay the sign of the cross was made over the fire before and after it was smooored (Banks 1939b, 29).

For the protection of people and animals at propitious times in the year, the materials that could be exploited were more numerous. They could be elemental (e.g. water, fire), or the products of the elements - as soot is of fire, urine of water, plants of the earth (see chapter 4.1), united in the former cases, with some essence of the person or animal. Soot and urine were used to smear the heads and shoulders of the cattle and horses and urine could also be sprinkled over the whole family (Pennant 1774, 186; Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 285; Banks 1939b, 9ff, 93). A similar explanation may also lie behind the use of milk and butter on such occasions. The use of soot and urine as manures, and therefore the knowledge of the latent fertility, may also underlie their appropriateness, again as a necessity for ensuring the continued cycle of life.

Gifts to a person or to propitiate helpful spirits such as Brownies, offerings for religious reasons, and prizes at religious festivals were generally made from the produce of (domesticated) animals and plants (Martin 1703, 110; Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 295). These included bread, cheese and brose, with particular attention paid to the way in which they were made and by whom (Carmichael 1928, Vol. II, 226). Again, because these items were products of the elements, they were both symbolic and meaningful - if, in actuality, neither bread or cheese had material value. However, the possession of enough food to sustain the family through the coming winter would be a precious success for the community, which could not be rivalled by monetary or other artefactual possessions. It might seem entirely fitting, therefore, to offer up part of this bounty as a gift or a sacrifice.

Just as significant in ensuring attendant good luck were attempts to divine the future. This was a preoccupation of all members of the community, whether men, women or children. Every little sign on an individual day or after a particular event could foretell good or evil. Nothing, even the direction an animal was facing when it was encountered on leaving the house in the morning, could be ignored in this continual quest for information. The unpredictabilities of life in these sorts of environments may have engendered these obsessions; harvests could be ruined in one freak storm or by one raiding party and the family left on the brink of poverty and starvation. Security of

health and abundance of resources was unlikely to be a lasting situation. Death, for animals as well as people, may have seemed to strike quickly and unexpectedly.

Perhaps as a consequence, divination could also be an active process. Again, on auspicious days in the year, every endeavour was made to establish the possible outcome of a journey or a change in state (e.g. marriage). In the search for a spouse, the height and appearance and even the name of the marriage partner could all be ascertained. More or less any material or situation could be employed in divination - but most practices revolved around foodstuffs or plants. Scattering corn at the foot of the bed or putting ears of corn under the pillow at night allowed the sleeper to dream of his, or her, future spouse. Such ideas must have played on minds already open to the supernatural world, thus enhancing the likelihood of visions in the long, dark mysterious hours of the night. Rather inexplicably, stolen articles gave the best results; at Halloween both eggs and kail-stocks were commonly used (Banks 1941, 122-4, 149).

People with second-sight feature quite prominently in the travellers' accounts, as a curiosity peculiar to the Highlands. Giving warning of imminent deaths, disasters or important arrivals was the preserve of those with second-sight (Martin 1703, 20). It was an ability that tended to be associated with the more elderly (of either sex), although it could appear and disappear throughout a person's life. Although not classed as second sight, those people in the community with a particular responsibility in matters concerning death, seem to have had an innate sense of foreboding; each had their own sign, such as a bird tapping on the window, which presaged a death to follow. People with the 'sight' do not seem to have been treated with any particular fear, but neither were they regarded with a far greater degree of respect - they were simply an accepted part of the community (Grant 1898, 160).

The birth of a child was, not unexpectedly, a cause of great celebration. All the women who were able, seem to have attended both the birth and the subsequent rejoicings; a welcome resource if there were problems, a hindrance if everything went well. The father seems to have been as proud of his child as the mother - however, his

role, if he was present, was less demonstrative and did not amount to much apart from the likely consumption of a large quantity of alcohol. Above all, it was a dangerous time for both the mother and baby. Each could be carried off, either by the devil, a witch or a fairy; these are all probable metaphors for the high chance of death during or immediately after childbirth. On this particular occasion, the Bible and the cross were especially important talismans for the protection of the woman and her child, although water, salt, sugar and iron also had their own individual uses.

Great, if not obsessive, care was taken over all aspects of the confinement, the birth and the first days of the baby (cf. Bennett 1992, 3ff). Both the woman and the child lay beyond the help of the Church until the former was 'churched' (i.e. had taken part in her first church service after the birth) and the latter baptised. However, some children cannot have been Christened for weeks, if not months, after their birth - suggesting a rather more indifferent attitude to the procedure that went beyond the problems necessitated by living long distances from Church. The naming of the child required deliberation. The father had the right to name his first child, the mother the second child. The names could not be disclosed until the baptism in case it allowed anyone, human or otherwise, power over the baby (ibid., 66). Each baby would have a name-father and a name-mother (the equivalent of godparents), to keep a guiding eye on the child and impart their own virtues (Firth 1922, 78-9).

The amount of care and attention that a child received was likely to taper off as it grew towards adolescence, particularly if and when younger siblings arrived. Although children were valued for themselves, it is unlikely that they were treated as anything other than young - and gendered - adults as soon as they passed beyond infancy and were capable of work. The possession of learning had prestige in Highland society, so formal education - where it was possible - was seen as important, for both boys and girls. This, however, particularly for the girls, did not extend far beyond the basics and was entirely dependent on the quality of the teacher. The perceived importance of schooling had a rather seasonal bias - and was very much determined by the needs of the farming year.

Much of the childrens' early learning took place at - and under - the feet of their parents, during the daily round of chores. They could also be passed over to an elderly person, who enjoyed teaching and was therefore delegated with the responsibility of looking after the township's children. This allowed the children to absorb, not only the skills they would practise in the years to come, but also the traditional stories and lore surrounding their clan and their glen, the land and the animals, which had been passed down through the preceding generations. The transmission of information in this way - in the real and immediate form of words and stories must have made it all the more tangible in comparison to the dry recitations of the schoolroom. For the children, the respect for their elders, absorbed along with the stories on these occasions, ensured their involvement in the continual functioning of the community into which they had been born. The next generation will always have rebelled, to a degree, against the requirements of their elders - however, it is not until this respect starts to disintegrate fundamentally that social structure begins to crumble. In the New Statistical Account for Fortingall, this is related to the breakdown in wider patterns of interaction between all levels of society and is expressed in very bleak terms:

“and the reign of ancient faith and brotherly neighbourhood which knew no guile, is usurped by mercenary and selfish aims which have completely done away with that clannish and family attachment, for which Highlanders in former times were so celebrated”

(quoted in Bil 1990, 343)

Female relatives - and perhaps the other women of the community - would have had by far the greatest role in this learning process. The children, in their earliest years, must have lived in an essentially female world, however close the family structure. As the children grew up, they seem to have remained part of this tight family unit - although gender-related divisions, in terms of work and expectations, must have become more visible. When they were old enough, the boys were sent off into the loneliness of the hills, as herds, in the summer (Bil 1990, 200-1; Fenton 1987, 29). This isolation and independence from the rest of their own community, although not necessarily from each other, continued throughout their adult lives, as they went to the Lowlands for seasonal harvest work or to market with the cattle. The girls remained with the women of their

own families - though life at the shielings, at least, may have granted them a certain amount of contact with members of other communities and during the nineteenth century (and perhaps earlier) they too had to venture further afield to find work. Nevertheless, it would be a greater wrench for a girl to marry outside her known world of friends and acquaintances.

There appear to be no particular rites of passage into adulthood (this role might have been taken on by marriage). Adolescence and coming of age do not seem to be of especial importance. In all respects, youngsters seem to be treated as fully assimilated figures in society; on a social level, mixing freely with older people, but spending most of their 'free' time with those of their own age. Violent games and competitive sports were an active part of the lives of the young men, fostering their identity with the community (cf. Jackson, J.B., 1984, 128-9). Further, this must have enforced an identity between them that made possible the complete interdependence required of them in co-operative farming at a subsistence level. In a quieter way, the girls must have learnt this same trait - from their elders - on occasions, such as the cloth-waulking, through the medium of gossip, stories and song. Their 'free' time is likely to have revolved around sewing or knitting, since it was more difficult for a woman to be idle.

The divisions between the sexes can be examined further. In a firmly patriarchal and Christian society, where prestige and status from military prowess were important, the man had an unassailable position as head of the family. This created the role of decision maker and arbiter of authority within the family and the community. Women played the subordinate role in this society; Burt was appalled to see the women carrying both the fish and the men, as the boats were unloaded (1754, Vol. I, facing page 113). This may have been exceptional, but the women certainly seem to have done much of the heavy carrying work. During and after childbirth - until they were 'Churched' - women were thought to be unchristian and consequently open to any influences, evil or otherwise. This supposed openness made women susceptible to the predations of inhabitants from the Otherworld, and some, through the possession of Otherworldly powers, dangerous in

their own right, if crossed or thwarted. This, within a Christian milieu, perhaps provided additional, if unacknowledged, reasons for their subjugation by men.

In practice, what this meant in terms of the sharing of work and responsibilities between men and women is less clear. The role of men is difficult to establish - they must have worked in the fields, ploughing, harrowing and harvesting, but the women were also involved in much of this work, even though they also had to care for the children and cook and clothe the family (Pennant 1774, Vol. II, 177-8). There is a possible distinction between the men, responsible for digging and preparation of the soil and cutting the peats, and the women who carried out the more mundane tasks of carrying and weeding, but who also undertook the larger part of the sowing and tending of the crops. If so, this seems to incorporate a contrast between the perceived greater powers of the man, able to overcome and subdue the earth, and the woman's ability to encourage fertility and growth. The horse was considered a worthy animal of association with the men - the cattle, despite their importance, left to the women, again perhaps because they needed a greater degree of care and nurturing (see chapter 4.3). This ensured that some of the men spent their summer at the wintertown, 'spring-cleaning' and repairing (Fenton 1976, 131), while the women remained with the animals. The rest of their time was spent in hunting and fishing - whether at the shielings or the wintertown - or with the yeld and barren stock ranging the high hills.

Young people were accorded a fair degree of freedom and licence - within the probable constraints imposed by a very close community, much of whose entertainment would come from gossip, malicious or otherwise. There would be plenty of opportunities in the long evenings - of summer and winter - for both sexes to meet together apart from the potentially stifling presence of the adults (Bennett 1992, 93). In winter, when the men were more likely to be at home, privacy, even within the home, for a courting couple could be contrived - although only with the connivance and acceptance of the parents (e.g. Bennett 1992, 94-5). This may have, in part, given rise to the impression that, "temperance and chastity were not in the Highland code of morality" (Grant 1898, 142). Prior to the discovery of Presbyterianism, tolerance,

especially where sexual relations were concerned, is both apparent and likely in a society that needed healthy children, but where divorce was unthinkable. As religion placed greater restrictions on this freedom in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries, mothers devised the means of preventing sexual intercourse prior to marriage, while still allowing a degree of intimacy and privacy (Bennett 1992, 93).

The Reformation, and perhaps more particularly the rise of the stricter forms of Protestantism, disposed of the tradition of hand fasting - the declaration of intention to marry after which the couple lived together for a trial period of a year before the actual marriage took place (Martin 1703, 114; Bennett 1992, 95-6). This was seen as a practical solution to the problem of marriage where divorce was not possible, but is more likely to have originated in the further practical need to establish whether the woman was fertile and could produce a healthy baby. No shame was attached to either party if they decided to separate after this year - and the father kept any children (Martin 1703, 114; Bennett 1992, 93). Nor were there any recriminations for a woman who found herself pregnant by a 'gentleman' - since any connection to a family of higher degree (even if the liaison did not result in marriage) could bring the girl and her family unforeseen advantages. All this is very pragmatic, but does amount to a considerable freedom of choice for the couples involved (Bennett 1992, 93).

There was as much superstition and custom surrounding the betrothal as the marriage itself - although the former, as well as the 'ceremonies' leading up to the marriage, were often the source of the greatest fun and entertainment. The practice of 'thigging' involved the bride and groom going the rounds of their friends and family to receive presents; this community collaboration often comfortably set up the couple for their new life together (Burt 1754, 188-9; Bennett 1992, 123). The marriage celebration would be a gathering for the whole community - an occasion for conspicuous consumption, hosted by the bride's family, but aided by all those who knew them (Bennett 1992, 142). The gifts received on such occasions were generally contributions to the feast or the entertainment (*ibid.*, 137) - and all would set out to enjoy themselves, both cementing and forming new relationships of sharing and dependence. The marriage took place

either in the house of the minister, or the home of the bride, perhaps because it was seen as a contract primarily with the civil community rather than the Church. The culmination of the marriage formalities would be the 'churching'. Similar reasons applied here as after childbirth; the ceremony recreated the bride and groom, now each an inseparable part of a couple, as new members of the community.

After a harsh and active life, age came quickly and inexorably. However - barring accidents, famine and disease - it affected looks, not health and fitness, leaving people weather-beaten and smoke-dried, but still active (Pennant 1774, Vol. I, 117 & Vol. II, 379ff). It is ailments that affected bones and joints, as the result of broken limbs or arthritis, which created the majority of problems. Many people seem to have lived to a good age, able to look after and support themselves. However, even if they could not - perhaps if widowed or without the help of children - they would probably not have to ask for help from the community. If they did, then begging was not frowned upon in Highland society, since the requirements of generosity and hospitality meant that nobody could be turned away from the door. Only in time of disaster might the old be the first to suffer. There are sound and practical reasons for this care of the old. They were considered the source of all the traditional wisdom and lore that made sense of life, its successes, dangers and pitfalls for the generations of children who listened to their stories. For the older men, this role was more formalised, since they became the arbiters of disputes over land or property - and after the Reformation, elders in the Church.

When death came, it was never hidden but viewed as a part of the accepted cycle of life. Death - whether it touched humans or animals - must have visited so often that it had to be rationalised in some way. Death came like sleep, a passing from the drudgery of the world to a better place beyond (Carmichael 1928, Vol. I, 379ff). The body had to be carefully and meticulously prepared for this journey. This world of the beyond, had always figured largely in Celtic mythology and seems to have retained this significance when transposed into and reinvented in Christianity. The corpse, itself, became a talisman - if touched, it could prevent illness and ill-fortune, and to touch it ensured that

the image of the deceased would not return to haunt you (Bennett 1992, 196-200). This applied also to the bodies of suicides - even the rope by which they had hung themselves could bring prosperity, although the idea of suicide was anathema and the body would not normally be buried in the churchyard, but on a march boundary (*ibid.*).

The rituals surrounding the funeral and the burial were protracted; the accepted formalities providing the time and the distance for the individuals most closely involved to come to terms with the death (Firth 1922, 84). A funeral, like a marriage, was a reason for the coming together of the whole community; this united expression of grief extending to restrictions on work for everybody (Bennett 1992, 220-1, 248). Women, perhaps because they were perceived to be in less danger from Otherworldly spirits, were responsible for the dressing and laying out of the corpse. The young people usually undertook the watching of the corpse, helped by generous amounts of alcohol and the opportunity to socialise with the opposite sex (Firth 1922, 84; Bennett 1992, 243). All attended the house of the deceased to make their last farewells before the burial, but only the men, walking in procession to the church, attended the funeral; the women remained at home to prepare the food for the subsequent feast. As the coffin left the house for the church, all the animals were driven from their stalls - if they chanced to follow the funeral it was seen as an indication of their sympathy for the deceased and viewed with awe (Bennett 1992, 197-8).

If it is assumed that the account of everyday life presented here (and in the preceding sections) is as biased as it is partial, a clear feeling for the complexity and the uniqueness of Highland society has been achieved nonetheless. Although of primary relevance to the period to which the material studied relates, this has a wider significance because it reinforces the immediacy of peoples' daily lives. Throughout these sections, the driving motivation has been the visualisation of the world in which people lived and the concrete expressions of their experiences and encounters with that materiality. This has considerable archaeological import, since, ultimately, a sense of how people dealt with the particular contingencies of living in the Highlands should

assist in the interpretation of the archaeological residues encountered in the succeeding case-studies.

5 Pitcarmick: narratives of place

A desire to explore the possibilities of expanding upon the recent landscape-oriented survey work undertaken by the RCAHMS was responsible for the initial interest in the area of North-east Perth, which in 1990 became their first publication of this kind. The new approach emphasised the RCAHMS belief that, while trying to remain as comprehensive as possible, rapid documentary and field survey of areas smaller than the county would not only solve the dilemmas surrounding the practical problems of field survey procedures - and their publication - in the light of current time and resource constraints, but, as importantly, result in a synthetic view of the upland landscape that had not been possible (nor really attempted) previously (1990, vii). By utilising this wealth of data to provide the context for a more intensive study, it is proposed in this chapter to explore our current understandings of such upland settlement in Highland Scotland. This will not only allow an assessment of the validity of the RCAHMS approach, but also provide an effective means of building upon the resource made available through the publication of North-east Perth in what is still a relatively unknown area of the Highlands, both archaeologically and historically.

The area chosen for more detailed analysis was that known to the RCAHMS as Pitcarmick North, an area of grouse moorland lying around 350m above sea level and forming part of the Pitcarmick estate on the west side of Strathardle (figs. 1, 15). This choice was largely the result of the RCAHMS's classification of a new building group - the Pitcarmick-type buildings - and the assignation of a possibly Medieval, or earlier, date to it (1990, 12). These buildings were supposedly epitomised by the remains on the estate (in the areas known as Pitcarmick North and West) and were consequently named after the structures found there (*ibid.*). Since the apparent lack of physical evidence for first millennium A.D. settlement in Highland Scotland is, in general, so striking, this

seemed an invaluable opportunity to attempt an analysis of a new - and very different - building type within its historical and landscape setting. In reality, the Pitcarmick-type buildings constitute only a small component of the vast array of remains which formed, at that time, the largest legally protected area in Scotland. With the main thrust of this research project being the examination of the ways in which a clearer and more meaningful sense of the inhabited world can be achieved, the multi-dimensional landscape of Pitcarmick North appeared to provide the perfect case-study.

Pitcarmick sits on the west side of Strathardle, on the eastern fringes of Atholl, its position within Perthshire more marginal now than it probably was in the past (Plan 5). Strathardle, and the adjacent Glenshee, border the fertile lands of Strathmore to the south, while the mountains of Atholl and Grampian surround them to the north. As such, these areas lie open to a myriad of widely divergent influences. Pitcarmick is quite central - both physically and socially - to the life of the strath. It lies a few miles to the south of its main focus of population, Kirkmichael, and, more importantly perhaps, on the old main road up the strath. Pitcarmick North, in the days when foot travel over the hills was an accepted part of life, is only a little more marginal - it is a shorter walk from there to Kirkmichael than it is from the modern-day house and steading of Pitcarmick. This is a fertile strath - particularly in the central area around Pitcarmick, where the floodplain of the Ardle is at its widest - and it provides both good arable and pasture land which is not subject to extreme climatic conditions. The variety of resources evident in the glen are supplemented by those of the surrounding uplands, none of which reach the heights of the hills at the head of the strath. The old parish, centred on Kirkmichael reflects the diverse nature of this area, incorporating as it did all of Strathardle (bar its northern part), Glenshee and the Blackwater (fig. 15; the parish boundary approximately follows that chosen for North-east Perth). Its history as not only the religious, but also the social, economic and administrative unit dominating the area will be vital to its overall understanding.

Detailed research undertaken on the later history of the Pitcarmick estate, and the strath and the parish in which it lies (chapter 5.1), has been complemented by topographic survey and analysis of the physical remains at Pitcarmick North (chapter 5.2). By firmly rooting this within its landscape context, it has been possible to build up a picture - albeit an often fragmentary or conflicting one - of the glens of eastern Perthshire as a lived-in world (chapter 5.3).

5.1 A documented history

To understand the habitation and working of the land at Pitcarmick North, and to find a context for the archaeological remains, requires the construction of a (social, economic and historical) geography of Strathardle above which it lies. In the Highlands, a particular glen or strath will largely determine the boundaries, both physically and administratively, of its occupants' lives. In this case, however, Strathardle is linked with the adjacent Glenshee into the parish of Kirkmichael and the potential impact of this larger, more intangible, unit on church and administrative affairs and perhaps also on everyday social interactions cannot be disregarded.

Such a geography calls for an intimate knowledge and comprehension of the social, political and economic elements that determine the wider occupation of these glens. It requires both a historical dimension and an attempt to consider the conceptualisation of this world by those who lived within it. This understanding, while exploiting the more traditional sources of Scottish history, needs to veer away from the doings of the great families, and those of their rulers, to those that encompassed the everyday lives of the majority of people who lived in the glen. However, Strathardle acted as a major routeway, linking the lowlands with the northern and eastern Highlands and it cannot have remained aloof from the processions of armies and the direct participation in some of the great actions of Scottish history, and these will therefore be touched on below. Again, the changing attitudes and influences of the elite cannot be ignored where they have tangible effects on the lives of these Scottish rural communities.

Within these parameters, this chapter has drawn heavily on late nineteenth century accounts of the parish of Kirkmichael and particularly those of the Reverend Charles Fergusson in his lengthy accounts of Strathardle (1888-1901). In spite of the emphasis in these sources on the biographies of the local gentry and on national events, the extensive local knowledge and lore that these authors possessed can be turned into more

productive avenues for the unravelling of a geography more relevant to the inhabitants of the farms in the area. Much of their information came from charters and other references to land exchange, most of which still survive (although not all are easily accessible). At a very local level, this was supplemented by the history of the parish church and its ministers, and by the family records of the Fergussons, the Spaldings and the Robertsons. However, just as the nineteenth century compilers of local histories were hindered, more recent research still founders on the scarcity of detailed estate records. For the Early Modern period, detailed discussion (see chapter 5.1.3) of the cartographic evidence provides an illustrative context which somewhat rectifies the lack of primary documentary sources.

Within the broader sweep of the region's history, it will be difficult to achieve a full comprehension of the role of personal histories, to gain an idea of each individual's responsibility for their own lives and their ability to deal, mentally and socially, with the mundane and tedious repetition of the everyday. These lives, however, can be tackled through other types of written documents, such as wills and inventories, valuation rolls and the census returns. These provide the details of tenants and their families, their holdings and the types of rents they had to pay. In addition, the inventories taken of an individual's possessions at death, are both a description of those goods and their worth and a vital record of the deceased's relationships to and dealings with other people. Within the framework outlined above, this material has been examined, in detail, for the three settlements of Pitcarmick, Dalvey and Stronamuck, all of which lie on lower ground immediately south-east of Pitcarmick North (Appendices 3-6).

5.1.1 The place, the strath and the parish

“The writing of the history of many districts of the Highlands ... is comparatively easy, as, in general, it is simply the history of the great families who ruled there, and whose deeds and doings are part of Scotland’s history ... But in Strathardle, as in some other districts, it is more difficult, not for want of material, as I do not think there is another district of the same extent in the Highlands where so many historic scenes can be pointed out; but from the fact that no great historic family ever ruled there ...”

(Fergusson 1888-9, 280)

The glens of eastern Perthshire - Strathardle and Glenshee - first appear as hunting forests, belonging either to the king or the Earl of Atholl, in the twelfth century. *Stratherdel* is one of the four royal manors of Gowrie, recorded in a foundation charter of Alexander I in the middle of this century (Skene 1890, 275; Fergusson 1891-2, 230). The traditions that Moircloich (now Whitefield) castle was founded by Malcolm Canmore or that Robert the Bruce hunted on the hill of Pitcarmick seem to have been part of the local story-telling tradition (Fergusson 1888-9, 301; 1891-2, 238), but whether they were founded in fact or were later romantic inventions is unclear (see also chapter 5.1.2). The status of royal hunting forest need not have prevented the local population from making use of these lands, but whether this amounted to anything more than poaching is unknown. It is the Church that is most prominent in the historical record of this period. Kirkmichael is noted as one of the few abthanages found in Perthshire around the same time (Cowan 1975, 19; see also Chapter 6.1). It is, therefore, possible that this could reflect a division between the north and south of the glen, between the Church and the Crown respectively. Both this term - and the presence of a (secular) thanage - suggest the presence of a local administrative structure. Consequently, this area cannot be considered simply hunting waste.

The ever-increasing needs of the Church for money ensured that these glens were a part of a wider economic region - one that incorporated most of Highland Perthshire and which had important connections with the lowlands to the south. That these relationships were primarily exploitative is demonstrated in the records of the abbey of

Coupar Angus. In the first quarter of the thirteenth century, the abbey rented - from the bishop of Moray - 400 acres of grazing at Tullochurran, just to the north-west of Kirkmichael, and probably stretching up into Glen Derby (Franklin 1952, 37). Much of what had once been the royal forests of Athole and Strathardle eventually found their way into the hands of the abbey. Those lands, which had once been part of the forest of Cally, around the lower Ardle and the Ericht, came to be administered by the granges at Drimmie and Tullyfergus (*ibid.*, 35-8). In addition to Coupar Angus, the abbeys of Dunkeld, Dunfermline and Scone held extensive lands in the area, all of which were retained until the Reformation. The four great abbeys would appear to have been the mainstay of the economy; Coupar Angus, in particular, seems to have kept a rigid yet benevolent eye on its lands and tenants (*ibid.*). Even in the early thirteenth century, the occupants of Strathardle must have been aware of the constraints and benefits of living and working in the shadow of a large (and distant) money-making operation.

The church at Kirkmichael is the first place mentioned in Strathardle; in 1182, it is recorded that the king granted the church, and its teinds, to the abbey of Dunfermline (*Regesta Regum Scottorum*, ii, 242). This presumably involved only the exercise of patronage, as a papal bull of AD 1234 allowed Gilbert, Bishop of Dunkeld, to confirm the revenues of the church for the use of the abbey, while a vicar was to be appointed to serve in the parish itself (Cowan 1967, 190). The church in the adjoining parish of Moulin was incorporated in a similar grant to Dunfermline by Malcolm, earl of Atholl, and the histories of the two parishes seem to have remained very similar in succeeding centuries (*ibid.*, 152, 190; *Regesta Regum Scottorum*, ii, 337). All this suggests that the administrative organisation of the Church, extending down to the level of the parish, was firmly established by this date (a point developed in chapter 6).

The next reference to the parish and church of Kirkmichael comes in Bagimond's Roll of the late thirteenth century. In both the returns for this ecclesiastical tax (full details are given in appendix 9), the value of the parish seems to be relatively high in comparison to the others within the bishopric of Dunkeld. Consequently - and in spite of

the fact that, in terms of physical area, it is one of the largest parishes in Perthshire - this implies that the parish was a thriving agricultural area in the earlier part of the Middle Ages. Most of the profits were probably removed for the maintenance of a church hierarchy many miles away, one that is likely to have put very little back into the care and education of the people of the parish. Nevertheless, a dynamic agricultural landscape and an expanding population in this period could provide a context for the multitude of settlement and agricultural evidence high in the hills at Pitcarmick North that appears to date to the thirteenth- and fourteenth- centuries (see chapter 5.1.2).

Strathardle and Glenshee, although lying on the eastern bounds of the earldom of Atholl, seem never to have been directly subject to the Atholl Dukes. These areas became the lands of small, competing families - the Robertsons of Straloch, the Fergussons of Balmachreuchie and the Spaldings of Ashintully (Ferguson and Fergusson 1895, 29). The Spaldings, who later became one of the most important families in the area, are recorded as holding leases from the abbey in more southerly districts of Perthshire in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Spalding 1914, 3). This may have been one of the mechanisms by which they acquired lands in Strathardle, first as the equivalents of tacksmen and then as owners of the lands (cf. Franklin 1952).

Much of the central part of Strathardle comprised the core of the barony of Douny, created in 1510 (presumably regularising existing arrangements) when John Ferguson of Dunfallandy added to his lands of Balmachreuchie (Fergusson 1893-4, 260; Appendix 3). Each of these families heeded its own chief, but more importantly the latter retained enough independence to choose which overlord to follow. Spalding of Ashintully generally supported the Duke of Atholl, even though as the Duke himself noted in his roll of fencible men in 1705, he was not actually a tenant (Spalding 1914, 85). The Robertsons of Cultalony (here including Stronamuck, also held by Robertsons who could claim the title of laird) were also listed in this roll (Moncrieffe 1954, 16). Nonetheless, the power of overlords, such as the Duke of Atholl, is demonstrated by an order, issued in August 1711, to many of the parishes in the earldom. This summoned

all the Duke's vassals and fencible men to parade at Blair castle four days later as part of a great deer hunt (Spalding 1914, 85). That he could - or, at least, thought he could - expect a comprehensive turnout at such short notice is impressive. It also reflects on the power and strength of the clan system and its traditional allegiances at the beginning of the eighteenth century, a fact that was confirmed by the quick response of the men of Strathardle in both 1715 and 1745 (*ibid.*, 95ff).

In all sorts of documents, legal and otherwise, individuals are commonly linked with the place in which they lived, a mode of identification very necessary to status in Medieval and Early Modern Scotland from the thirteenth century onwards. These are the most tangible records of where people lived and, although the main bulk of charters and documents date to later centuries, a settlement pattern, recognisable within that of the present day, is clearly visible (Appendices 2-4). This must be inference, yet the potential importance of Kirkmichael, testified to in the history of its parish church, the early references to baronies like Balmachreuchie, first occurring in 1358 (Fergusson 1891-2, 246), and the degree of involvement by the abbeys, suggest that the main framework, within which the townships and their lands were continually recreated, was perhaps present as far back as the twelfth century. The relatively few secular places of importance that are noted imply that the Church still held considerable sway; although its lands are mentioned, there is no castle or other large building noted at Ashintully, home of the main branch of the Spaldings, prior to the sixteenth century. Areas of land are mentioned from the thirteenth century onwards (e.g. the lands of Balmacoychely (Balmachreuchie?) and Upper Blavalg (at the head of Glenderby) in 1280 (Fergusson 1891-2, 236-7)), but farm names only appear in recognisable form a couple of centuries later. Pitcarmick, Cultalonie and Stronamuck (the former two now farms on the Pitcarmick estate and the latter abandoned sometime around the beginning of the twentieth century (see chapter 5.1.2 and Appendix 4) are first mentioned in a charter of 1510. These are units of land that remain throughout the history of the glen, although extent, ownership and settlement form must vary.

However, major disruptions, generated by natural disaster or human action, could and did occur. One such event was the great plague - *An Galar Mor* - of 1500. This generated such fear in the inhabitants that they supposedly took to the hills to live in huts of turf and heather (Fergusson 1893-4, 256-7). This was clearly no defence against disease and, consequently, large numbers died. Many must have gone to shieling sites, perhaps associating the simplicity and isolation of life there with the hope of successfully evading the disease. This may also provide a context for buildings and use or re-use of the land in other parts of the hills as there are no indications of how long it took the plague to run its course or if fear kept people in the hills long after any real danger had gone. It would be a strange glen to which people returned - one where the people they expected to encounter no longer came to greet them and where settlements might now be deserted or shrunken. The terror that the plague generated was such that the area of the churchyard where its victims were buried lay untouched and feared in its turn, until the main road had to be widened in 1984 (Reid 1992, 14).

The sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries brought the localised political concerns of Atholl, all seen through the competing eyes of the Fergussons, the Spaldings, and the Robertsons, even more to the fore. However, local family interests were inescapably linked to those of the more important branches of the clan and local disputes were, therefore, inseparable from regional politics. The incredible lawlessness that resulted is demonstrated in injunction after injunction, issued throughout the 1560's and 1570's against the Earl of Atholl in an attempt to make him restore order within his own earldom. His attempts to achieve this by force in 1565 are recorded in the chronicle of Garth and Fortingall, which notes that many men were slain in Strathardle by both the men of Atholl and the Stewarts of Lorn (Campbell, D., 1888, 316). Such alliances, however, could break down very rapidly and, forty years later, the Earl was in trouble with the Crown for harbouring the renegade Baron Reid, head of the Robertson family, in trouble because he - alongside the Earl - had harboured a notorious cattle raider (Fergusson 1896-7, 87ff). After the Reformation, religious divisions further exacerbated these family feuds - particularly for the Robertsons who, as staunch Protestants, isolated

themselves from the general tenor of Atholl's religious politics. As the patronage of the parish was in the hands of these same local families, it ensured that the standing of the Church itself must have been liable to fluctuate (Fergusson 1896-7, 70ff).

The ordinary people partook not only in their chief's battles with his neighbours, but also in their political concerns at a national level. Andro Spalding's expedition to Flanders in 1577, would have brought the male occupants of Strathardle - and the families to whom they recounted their stories on their return - into direct contact with a world far beyond their everyday experience (Fergusson 1894-6, 263). In a period of bad weather and poor harvests, and whilst they were also harbouring the outlawed Macgregors (*ibid.*, 248-58), the ordinary people who survived these events must have done so out of pride and loyalty to their clan, perhaps their main security amidst a welter of confusion.

Hatred of the Macgregors enhanced conflicts with both the Argyll and the Glenlyon Campbells and led, in 1602, to the men of Lochaber carrying out the most devastating raid that this eastern part of Atholl suffered. Many of the people in Glenisla, Glenshee and Strathardle were murdered, their houses plundered and burnt and 2700 cattle and 100 horses stolen. In the resulting battle at Enochdhu, "fyftene or sextene special gentlemen of the country" were slain, as were a "grite nowmer of uthir personis" (quoted in Fergusson 1896-7, 77-8). With the realisation that they were going to be defeated, the Lochaber men "maist barbarouslie and crewellie hochit, slew, and gorrit the maist part of the said guidis to the gret hurt and prejudice of the common weal" (*ibid.*, 78). Such waste and destruction could still be justified by pride in the clan (at least by the lairds), but, even allowing for some degree of exaggeration, it must have destroyed many of the families of the glen, making it difficult for them to regain a foothold on the land even if such raids and counter-raids had not continued.

Life did, however, retain some normality and people could and did recoup from raids such as that of 1602. In 1615, a charter under the Great Seal was granted to David Spalding for the erection of his lands into the barony and free forest of Ashintully and

Kirktown (Fergusson 1896-7, 93ff; Spalding 1914, 44ff). The barony consisted of one third of Strathardle, with all that appertained to it, including settlements such as Tomyecharrow just to the north of Pitcarmick. It allowed the baron the privilege of two yearly fairs - to be held on the lands of the Kirktown (apparently commonly called Kirkhillock, with the Gaelic form being Tomchlachan), or upon Balnauld or Balnakille, just to the west of Kirkmichael. The Michaelmas fair, lasting for five days, was one of the great cattle fairs of Scotland between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries (OSA, 671). A weekly market was also to be held at Balnauld or Balnakille. Both the fair and the market suggest that this central area of Strathardle and Kirkmichael, itself, had remained one of the nodal points of the whole region - the place of meeting and exchange for the local populace, for a wider area of Atholl, and for much of the trade in the north and east of Scotland.

These rights of barony may have further regularised existing arrangements - after they had expanded to a level where this was necessary - confirming their importance but, above all, bringing the economic life of the glen under the even closer control of the most powerful local family. This is a potential consequence of the Reformation - the decline and then dissolution of the abbey at Coupar Angus would leave an open field for exploitation of the lands it had once held. The consequent rise in power of the local families was partially responsible for the lawlessness of these same centuries. The patronage of the church at Kirkmichael was also included in the charter; all aspects of life in the glen were now firmly under the auspices of secular authority. The 1615 charter was confirmed several times - including in 1681, when the lands incorporated in the barony were expanded to include, amongst others once within the barony of Balmacruchie, Easter and Wester Pitcarmo and the attendant corn mill (Spalding 1914, 72ff).

This charter of 1681 brought the whole of the central part of the glen under the auspices of the one family of Spalding. The power reflected in this finds visible expression in architecture. The tower house of Ashintully, along with that of Whitefield, two miles to the north, were both built - or rebuilt in their present form - to very similar

designs, at the end of the sixteenth century, by the Spaldings (Macgibbon and Ross 1892, 222ff). Whitefield belonged to a cadet branch of the family and sits on the crest of a ridge looking down over Strathardle. From Pitcarmick North it is distinctly visible, providing this valley with a very permanent reminder of the authority expressed in the building of that tower house. These towerhouses encapsulate the replacement of the abbeys with a more secular and immediate power structure, dominated and enforced by a few families and their dependants. Both towerhouses retained their form (although Ashintully was considerably enlarged) while other family seats, such as Straloch and Kindrogan, were continuously remodelled; testimony perhaps to the eclipse of the Spalding family by the Robertsons in the eighteenth century (Fergusson 1896-7, 74-5). Whitefield remained roofed (although it is not stated whether it was occupied) into the nineteenth century; it was then partially demolished to provide building materials for a shepherd's house (Macgibbon and Ross 1892, 226), an evocative illustration of another (much later) change in authority in the glens.

The Earl of Atholl held lands at Dalgarnes (Dalnagairn), a township just to the north of Kirkmichael, and in 1669 he gained an Act of Parliament allowing him to hold a yearly free fair on these lands on the 29th September (Fergusson 1896-7, 362). At around the same time the Earl was also buying up other lands in the barony of Dounie (*ibid.*, 363). By 1696, his privilege had been extended to the holding of weekly markets on the usual day Friday (Fergusson 1898-9, 169). How successful this shift away from the traditional location was, is questionable - the Siller burn is always referred to as the site of the market and Dalnagairn is on the opposite side of the river to the old main road. Furthermore, the Old Statistical Account confirms that the fair was based at Kirkmichael at the end of the eighteenth century. These appear simply to be blatant attempts by the Earl to establish a firmer foothold in the glen, both as an attempt to challenge the growing power of local families such as the Spaldings and to bring an important part of Atholl more firmly under his direction.

The strategic importance of these eastern glens, particularly as through routes, brought them into direct and violent contact with the national political and religious conflicts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Kirkmichael, itself, finds a place in the broader history of Scotland in the seventeenth century when Cromwell's troops were stationed there over the winter of 1653-4. For part of December and January, no services were held in the church and on the 8th January "in the midst of the sermone, the wholl people were raised, because that some countrymen and sojers had fallen in blood" (*Fasti Ecclesianæ Scoticanæ*, iv, 164). The minister, Francis Pearson, must have had a hand in the spreading of much of this dissent. He is recorded as forming a separate presbytery in the 1660's, although he later reformed and was recorded as still actively preaching in 1693 (*ibid.*).

In the September of 1715, supporters of the Jacobite cause, probably under Duncan Shaw of Crathnaird (chamberlain to the Earl of Mar), gathered at Bannerfield in Kirkmichael, before marching west through Glen Derby to join the rest of the rebels (Third SA, 298; Marshall 1880, 210-11). The successor of Francis Pearson as minister - his son John - had the same inflammatory effect on his congregation. John, himself, was deposed in 1717 for "disaffection to the government ... as he had influenced his people to rebellion, prepared them to take up arms against the reigning family, and mounted his horse with that view" (quoted in Marshall 1880, 211). From the seventeenth century onwards the wider significance of national political events in Scotland must have been an element of the consciousness of everybody within the parish - the ministers, in large part, responsible for disseminating this knowledge as a justification, however partial and biased, of their own actions. These events required the direct involvement of the inhabitants of the glen, their families and their friends through the death and disruption they brought.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, Kirkmichael had become one of the principal cattle fairs in Scotland. The fair lasted for around three days to a week (OSA, 671) and took place just a few days before the tryst at Falkirk (Haldane 1952, 147). This

prominent position, historically, is emphasised by the confluence of drove roads at the village (fig. 17). Cattle from the north and north-east were brought down from the Spittal of Glenshee over the open hills to Enochdhu, while those from further west came through Glen Fearnate and so to Kirkmichael. There was also a track from Lair which passed close to Ashintully (Caird 1971, 19). From Kirkmichael, much of the traffic went up Glenderby and out into the open hills again before dropping down onto lower ground near the junction of the Tay and the Tummel. The drovers then headed upwards again and over the hills to Crieff.

The presence of such a fair must have put considerable pressure on the farmers in the straths around to exploit the commercial opportunities offered and to breed black cattle as a form of cash crop - although whether the incentive came from the lairds or was merely co-ordinated by them is unclear. Balnakeilly, and later Market Moor on the higher ground above the village, where the fairs were held (Third SA, 298), lie at the bottom end of Glen Derby and are, therefore, almost within sight and sound of Pitcarmick North. To the inhabitants of this area, the long lines of cattle following the drove road up the glen (fig. 17) must have been a tangible reminder of their role in a world of which they were a part, but were unlikely ever to see. The range of people, and ideas, that they came into contact with would become very much enlarged - the disappearance of the cattle towards a world to the south, made real through the stories of the drovers, was perhaps a yearly temptation to seek a better life beyond the restrictions of their own glens. The number of people, both men and women, who did indeed go to the lowlands for seasonal work (Anon. 1819, 43), even if they did return, is a potential consequence of these widening horizons. Beyond these perhaps disturbing influences, the paramount importance of such gatherings for bringing people together from their widely dispersed homes in the straths and hills - and from further afield - cannot be underestimated. It would have served to create and cement certain social relationships and break apart others.

The political and social developments of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, altered not only the social, but also the physical geography of the glens. Wade's military

road, from Blairgowrie to Braemar, built between 1750 and 1756 (Haldane 1952, 4-8) and running the length of Glenshee, is one of the most obvious features, both physically and metaphorically, of that landscape. It would deliver more people into the area - even if, conversely, an improved road would also have meant that these soldiers, traders and travellers could move more quickly through the glen, therefore not stopping to refresh themselves as often. For the local inhabitants, the travelling time to Blairgowrie and Rattray must have enabled the regular sale of produce and so on. The road would also have an impact in that it - and the road along Strathardle, which ran on the opposite side of the river from the modern one and therefore on the line of the track through Pitcarmick, Stronamuck and Cultalowie (fig. 17), to end up in Kirkmichael in front of the original coaching inn (Reid 1992, 23-4) - were both maintained by the "statute labours" of the people of the county (OSA, 672). Those people would have been dragged forcibly into contact, through their requirement to maintain the road, with the powers and authorities of an English-speaking world that manifested itself physically through the existence of the road and the people who passed along it.

For the latter half of the seventeenth and the eighteenth century, wills and inventories, despite their infrequency, are the most informative and intimate source of people's affairs (the inventories of Pitcarmick, Stronamuck and Dalvey are transcribed in Appendix 5; hereafter, each one is referenced by the deceased's name and place of origin). Although the inventories clearly refer, in the main, to the individuals who possessed a certain degree of wealth, they nonetheless provide an idea of the goods and resources available to the inhabitants of the glen in this period. The inventories begin around 1650 and continue right up to the present day, but for the purposes of this study, begin to lose much of their interest towards the end of the eighteenth century when goods were no longer itemised and money, deposited in banks or in the safekeeping of the landowner, became of primary concern. This in itself must indicate massive changes in the disposable wealth which people had access to, with consequent alterations in their view of their own lifestyle and economy that this will have generated. Reciprocal

arrangements surrounding money (as bonds and loans) remain, but the presence of a money-oriented economy would - by starting to break apart relationships centred on reciprocity in kind - loosen the links between all members of the community.

In the earlier inventories, the closeness of the community is suggested in various ways. Most wills are, unsurprisingly, concerned with providing for the families of the deceased or, if they were drawn up after the person's death, at least regularising the disposal of that person's goods. However the limited number of inventories studied makes it difficult to establish the exact nature of settlements on the wives, children and so on. Many of the inventories were drawn up by the wife, which suggests that during the life of her husband she had an awareness of - and perhaps some joint responsibility for - the family's affairs and was trusted to continue with the management of his and the family's interests after his death (e.g. John Robertson, Stronamuck). For women, whether married or single, there are a few inventories suggesting that their power in their own right was limited (e.g. Grizell Doulich, Wester Pitcarmick). Others suggest the importance of the deceased's siblings, usually, but not always, in cases where the deceased remained unmarried. On his death in 1725, Thomas Bruce, brother of John Bruce, portioner of Easter Pitcarmick, was still trying to sort out the debts assumed on the death of his brother in 1703. The spouses of the deceased's children could hold equal weight as executors with those children - the inventory of John Bruce was drawn up by his two daughters and the husband of one of them.

The role of other extended family - or of friends or landlords - is hard to assess since in most cases, of the numerous people mentioned as trustees or executors, their relationships to the deceased are not defined. The people who acted as valuers and cautioners - or those who came to the public roup of the deceased's goods - were, in the main, the close neighbours of the deceased. The rest came from the parish, although there were occasionally outsiders with commercial interests, such as a merchant from Coupar Angus present at the roup of John Bruce's goods at the milntoun of Pitcarmick in 1765. Even though they are infrequent, the wills and inventories do reveal a small, yet consistent, group of surnames. In these, Bruce and Robertson dominate but without

further, more precise, details of familial relationships, it is impossible to suggest how close the blood ties between people with the same name might be. In spite of all these problems, the inventories can be taken to indicate that this society possessed a stable infrastructure, where family and clan affiliation were still important.

The types of possessions included in the wills and the ways in which they are described, does reveal something of the occupations and households of their owners. In these lists, it is the animals - if there were any - that come first, followed by corn, whether as seed grain or the growing crop. This implies the significance placed on the agricultural aspects of the economy and, therefore, their role in providing peoples' main sources of food, rental payments and surplus wealth. The number of animals appears to be one of the clearest indications of wealth; this, perhaps unsurprisingly, places the millers at Pitcarmick at the head of the social hierarchy of these three settlements. Of the eighteenth century inventories of women, only Christian Fleming of Stronamuck who, in 1697 predeceased her husband and brother, had - amongst the few goods in her own name - four young sheep.

Cattle, horses and sheep are all mentioned - but only John Meall, the miller at Pitcarmick before his death in 1720, kept pigs. Amongst his successors, however, John Bruce in 1765 had two 'swineboats' for salting pork and George Farquharson in 1772 had a knife for killing swine, confirming that pigs must, at least, have had a role to play in the economy of the mill. The OSA (670) at the end of the eighteenth century notes that "some parcels of swine" were kept in the parish, but gives no further details. Throughout the eighteenth century, sheep are far more numerous than any other animal and their impact on the economy is likely to have been as striking as their numbers. Cattle for fattening are perhaps most numerous in these inventories, but do not occur in the quantities implied by the Kirkmichael cattle fair. Either cattle breeding was in the hands of the larger landowners or sheep were already well in the ascendant. The outlines of this picture are again confirmed by the OSA (670), where sheep outnumbered cattle by over four to one (9000 to 2000). The cattle, still the small, black animals of traditional Highland type, were important because they paid the rent, but, in contrast, the

role of sheep is not specified. However, unlike the cattle, a third of the sheep were animals of Improved type brought up from the south (ibid.). The number of horses noted as old may suggest that a few were kept on each farm and that, after a long working life, they were at least given an honourable retirement. The inventories appear to corroborate the statement contained in the OSA (670) that only the minimum number of animals required were kept to work the land.

Goats are not mentioned in the inventories and, according to the OSA, their numbers were few (ibid.). Without implying that this is representative, bee skeps (but not bees) are mentioned twice - but, rather inexplicably, poultry not at all. Since hens form one of the most commonly recorded forms of payment in rentals, rents must either have been paid in money or practices were rather different in this area. Even if the latter is true, it seems strange that hens (and their eggs) as valuable food sources find no mention. The few notices of corn confirm that both bear and oats were grown, but again there is little additional detail. The prominence of the millers of Pitcarmick does, however, imply that the growing of corn was important to the eighteenth century economy of the strath. Beyond stating that the harvest was hampered by the shortness of the season (the heavy winter and spring frosts ensuring that the grain was often not cut until October), the OSA (668) does not provide any further information.

Artefactual possessions were both very varied and, for the wealthier members of the community, very abundant. Agricultural tools, maybe because of the bias in this group of inventories towards people whose main source of income was not farming, are relatively few. Nonetheless, John Bruce of the milntoun of Pitcarmick prior to 1765 possessed his own plough and plough gear, three harrows and one, perhaps two, wheeled carts. John Meall, of the same mill, in 1720 had two axes and two picks - but, significantly, any other tools he might have had were lumped together. Carrying baskets, particularly creels - occasionally designated for carrying peat - occur frequently and in large numbers in nearly all the inventories. George Farquharson, the under-miller until his death in 1772, obviously supplemented his income through carpentry since he possessed a colossal range of tools. Spinning wheels and other articles for processing

wool are the most frequent craft items listed among the general household goods. However, slightly further down the social scale, Christian Fleming merely left woollen yarn on her death and may not have had the means to process it further.

Whatever else might seem to be lacking, each inventory includes many household furnishings. Of these, chests - often of a particular type (e.g. for meal or an aumbry for everyday goods) or in varying states of repair - provide the most common form of storage. John Bruce had both cupboards and chests of drawers, examples of more modern and fashionable pieces of furniture in the eighteenth century Highlands. The number of chairs and armchairs - while stools are rarely included - might also reflect similar modernising tendencies. Few tables are mentioned, suggesting that it was easier to fit chairs into accepted patterns of behaviour than tables; the idea of sitting around a table, rather than the hearth, was a bigger conceptual leap than replacing a stool with a more comfortable chair. Beds, too, were very important items of furniture (John Bruce had nine, perhaps to provide for the servants of the mill) and they take several forms - box beds, feather beds and chaff beds. The former two would be luxury and expensive items, since a lot of wood would go into their construction. A chaff bed perhaps consisted just of a mattress for the floor and, therefore, did not involve potentially valuable wood. The importance and value of wood is further attested by the frequent mention of old and decrepit articles of furniture, as well as bundles of timber and entire doors.

Other household goods consisted of plentiful pots, pans, plates and cups whose forms are not distinguished. Various other, more specialised, containers and bowls, used, for example, for storing salt, or for cooking or preparing food are, however, noted. Alongside these are the artefacts - the crooks, tongs and girdles - that transformed the hearth into a cooking area. The relatively few distinct cooking utensils and the fact that spoons seem to be the most common eating utensil provides corroboration of the general picture of Scottish cooking discussed elsewhere (see chapters 4.4 and 4.5). The materials that all these articles were made of is rarely mentioned, although John Bruce at the milntoun of Pitcarmick had both pewter and horn plates. It is possible that the

majority of the utensils were therefore made of wood. The one mention of china cups suggests that china was a rare and potentially valuable material. Two candlesticks, also the property of John Bruce, are the only mention of light sources above and beyond that provided by the fire.

Beds are never listed without a quantity of coverings, sheets, blankets, bolsters and pillows. Sheets and blankets, in particular, must have constituted a large part of the value of the household furnishings and were possibly produced within the household itself. Tablecloths and napkins, one of the few visible touches of elegance, are also listed within the largest households. As the nineteenth century evidence confirms, wool is far more significant than flax in this area of Perthshire (e.g. OSA 1793, 667) - in this group of inventories, linen seems to be mentioned only once. The number of lengths of woven cloth, distinguished by colour or type (e.g. tartan or tweeding), suggest that these may have also been home-produced. In comparison, clothes - the end product of all this industry - seem to be of little importance. Shoes are the only item mentioned specifically (twice), other clothes are simply listed, as in the case of another John Bruce, who resided at Easter Pitcarmick and died in 1769, as the "defunct's body habiliments".

The people who stand out for the sheer wealth of goods they possessed are the millers or other occupants of the milltoun of Pitcarmick. The John Bruce, who died there in 1765, owned nine beds and a clock. The latter alone was worth £57-0-0 and was sold to a merchant from Coupar Angus. It took two days for the goods of George Farquharson, the under-miller who died in 1772, to be sold, and this still left a long list of "trifles". These were clearly the people who had the accessories of an affluent and pleasant life - feather beds and pillows, a tea set, a snuff mill, a fishing rod, a riding saddle and a viola. In terms of educational value, however, only George Farquharson had a selection of books - and these were so old and tatty that they were not worth selling. There is the suggestion here, too, that he had acquired his large sermon book by less than honest means. Weapons (either guns or dirks) are mentioned in just two inventories. George Farquharson in 1772 had only the barrel of a gun, while John Bruce of Easter Pitcarmick in 1703 had two guns, a pistol and a dirk. If, however, there had been a successful clamp

down on the ownership of weapons and a change in attitude during the eighteenth century - at least after 1745 - then (without placing too much weight on very limited evidence) weapons may have either disappeared or were no longer declared openly.

The inventories seem to confirm, on a more individual level, the view of Strathardle portrayed in the earlier historical evidence. Its position on the Highland fringes allowed its population to accept and incorporate the influences of the lowlands and the wider world beyond within the more traditional practices of Highland life. This left its inhabitants in an unenviable position in the centre of the political disturbances of the Early Modern period, but - as throughout the Medieval period - these also presented them with the opportunities to enrich their world both economically and spiritually, while retaining a firm sense of their own social and personal identities. Within this framework, the overall picture of the glen can be developed by particularising the history of the area even further, both through the later, more comprehensive, historical evidence (chapter 5.1.2) and by beginning to set the topography and the archaeology, through the cartographical evidence, into this context (chapter 5.1.3).

5.1.2 An ordered world

“The ladies amidst their busy avocations discovered that whenever they ran downstairs and into the next house to fetch something, their wet feet brought muddy steps to dirty the stair ... Soon afterwards the shrill sound of ‘cheep, cheep, cheep,’ was heard with a resounding ‘schu, schu, schu,’ from Miss Keir. This was an invasion of young chickens who made sure that their presence would be acceptable and wished to force their way upstairs! Their dirty little foot-prints were very distressing to the inner garrison, but by a combined effort, they were discomfited and forced to retreat to the door where the hollow of an old mill-stone formed a comfortable basin for their small beaks to sup up the rain ... At noon Mr Keir’s carriage drove down the narrow road with its several turnings, and through the small archway formed unintentionally, between the range of barns and stables on either side, with a wooden trough overhead, conveying water from the Burn to the Thrashing Mill. Just room to alight at the foot of the grassy knove pertaining to the house, and the carriage turned away to the stables, whilst its inmates walked up the slope and entered the first Dwelling”

Miss Amelia Murray Macgregor’s account of the preparations made for the arrival of Queen Victoria at Pitcarmick, where she “took some wine and biscuit” (quoted in Kerr 1992, 123)

The Statistical Accounts, both Old and New, paint a picture of Kirkmichael parish that accords well with accounts of other parts of upland Perthshire and with the rest of the central Highlands. By 1793-4, when the Reverend Stewart wrote the Old Statistical Account, not enough food was being grown within the parish to supply its inhabitants, although (according to the Moulin account) most of them were still involved in procuring their own subsistence (Caird 1971, 18). Steps towards the improvement of agriculture had obviously begun - potatoes were now the most productive crop and turnips had recently been introduced - but the Improvements had not yet extended to the enclosure of the arable lands (OSA, 667-8). Most leases still involved a certain number of days of manual labour on the laird’s lands and the writer of the OSA believed that the consequent reduction of the people to dependence on their landlords (ibid., 678-9) did not provide an environment in which ‘Improvements’ in agriculture and lifestyle were likely to take place. The paradoxes seemingly present here in the mind of the minister, perhaps confirm the rapidly changing nature of social structure in the late eighteenth century, although the situation that Stewart describes seems to have changed little by the time the New Statistical Account of 1842 was written by his successor, the Reverend Drummond. Whether these similarities had more to do with ecclesiastical disinterest than reality is not immediately obvious. For the rest of the nineteenth century, the census

returns and valuation rolls (examined at five year intervals) complement the information contained in the Statistical Accounts and can be usefully contrasted with the earlier documentary material.

The numbers of landowners are noted in the OSA and, although neither their names nor the lands they held or farmed were noted, this does give some idea of the patterns of landholding within the parish (*ibid.*, 669). Forty-two landowners were recorded, twelve of whom (including the Earl of Atholl) were of a standing to be non-resident within the parish. Twenty-four were described as smaller landowners, most of whom did live on their lands and farmed a part of it themselves. Members of this category will have been the owners of estates such as Dirnanean and Kindrogan, Ashintully and Straloch. The remaining six were termed portioners, each with a small parcel of their own, for the cultivation of which they were entirely responsible. The Robertson families of Cultalowie and Stronamuck, styled as lairds in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, may have fitted into either of the latter categories. In spite of the lack of detailed historical records, this difficulty in assigning status suggests that there may have been no huge differences in social equality in the latter half of the eighteenth century. In consequence - as over much of the Highlands - a fair degree of interaction between all members of society may have occurred (*cf.* Grant 1961, 121ff and see chapter 4.5). Already, following the Jacobite rebellions, the traditional and absolute power of families like the Spaldings had been broken and, even if there were replacements to buy into these lands and titles (Reid 1992, 23-5), some realignment of the relations of power and support in the glen must have occurred. However, of these new landlords, some such as the Smalls of Kindrogan (who later styled themselves as the Small Keirs of Kinmonth (outside Perth), having married into this estate), were branches of existing Strathardle families and did continue to maintain a proprietorial interest in their tenants, as witnessed by those same tenants' wills (Appendix 5).

Below the landowners were two hundred and twenty-six farmers, only nineteen of whom were heritors (*ibid.*, 669). If family succession was, therefore, not the norm, then

a certain amount of fluidity in the tenancy of the individual farms is implied which would be compounded by the probable short term nature of leases at this time (see chapter 3.3). That a similar situation applied in the nineteenth century is suggested by the census returns (hereafter all personal names, unless specified, have been taken from transcriptions of these returns, contained in Appendix 6). These indicate that the population of individual settlements might be very variable indeed (fig. 156); at Dalvey, no person is mentioned in more than two returns and of these, Robert Murray moved on his retirement (to Stronamuck) while Donald Stewart and Alexander Stewart both moved there as adults to obtain work. The histories of particular individuals - like Elspeth Murray, who was probably born at Dalvey, but then moved away, before returning to Stronamuck and finally ending up at Pitcarmick - suggest people shifted around quite frequently, even if generally between the same few settlements. This is not to deny that many of the children entirely disappear from the record when they reach adulthood and that there seems to be an increasing number of incomers. All the latter were however from Highland Perthshire and came mainly from the neighbouring parish of Moulin. Where the people who left the parish went is more problematic - but it is probable that most must have gone to seek work in the south. The grandchildren of Robert Campbell, mason at Stronamuck, visiting their grandparents in 1891, came from Kingoldrum in Fife.

Stewart suggests that most of the parish was suited to pasture rather than cornland, and that this was now being directly exploited by some landowners through the creation of sheep farms (OSA, 668), centuries after the monks of Coupar Angus had first made their profits from wool. This again suggests that the disruption of the traditional forms and organisation of farming was only just beginning in the parish - yet the considerable reduction (c. 500 people) in population numbers since Webster's census in 1755 (OSA, 668) must be partly the responsibility of changing agricultural practices. The social consequences of this depopulation are virtually unquantifiable, but this number in itself is likely to have had a disrupting effect on the existing social relations within the parish,

separating families and destroying the network of interdependent relationships that kept such an agricultural society afloat. By 1801, a further five to six hundred people had left the parish (NSA, 787) and, overall, the population numbers had been reduced to about half their position of fifty years before. Over the succeeding forty years the population fluctuated, but people were certainly not leaving in the same large numbers (figs. 19-21). That the population did stabilise somewhat in the middle of the nineteenth century is confirmed by the census returns - and this could not have happened if an equilibrium had not also been reached in economic and social terms. This, however, could not prevent a more gradual yet unremitting decline - and the final collapse of population numbers which occurred in the 1880's.

Indications of changes in agricultural practice can be gleaned from changes in the acreage of land under cultivation; although the precise accuracy of the figures must be questionable, the impression they give is dramatic. In the OSA, an area greater than 1920 acres was cultivated as arable or pasture, while in the NSA, this had become 4419 acres or more (OSA, 669; NSA, 788), with around 400 acres of waste having recently been brought into cultivation. This last figure is perhaps the most informative in the light of the decline in population. If it can be assumed that much of the existing and new cultivateable land represents grazing for sheep, then a new class of larger landowners must have been created at the beginning of the nineteenth century from the wealth generated by the sheep and at the expense, presumably, of the smaller farmers and cottars. As liming and "modern husbandry" were also widely applied by the mid-nineteenth century (NSA, 788), the smaller farmers would simply not have had the capital to keep up with the increased productivity that such improvements generated - even if they could afford to pay the increased rents for their land.

It is the sheep farmers who would have been living in the neat and comfortable houses praised in the NSA (788), not the large number of small farmers described in the OSA. These would be men like Donald Stewart, who in 1861 farmed 56 acres of the lands of Dalvey with the help of seven labourers and one girl and lived in a house with six windows. Ten years later, because of his marriage and the birth of four sons, he

appears to have only employed two labourers and one girl (unless the servants no longer lived under his roof, although the amount of land he held had increased to 140 acres, of which 60 acres were arable. These new farmers were often outsiders, men such as William Reid, the overseer of the farm at Pitcarmick from 1871, who brought his family from Moulin. His shepherd, Alexander Stewart and his family, who must have arrived from Fortingall at around the same time, came from even further afield.

Stewart notes that “many” tenants sub-let small portions of their lands, such as a garden or a small croft, to cottars (*ibid.*, 669-70). The terms under which these sub-lets were undertaken are not specified, but for some people, at least, this must have involved work on the tenant’s lands, while others became craftsmen or common labourers. In contrast to the rather bleak picture painted above, the valuation rolls, between 1855 and 1900, suggest that there were still several such small parcels of land, consisting of a house and garden, around each of the farms. As these were usually worth under £4, their numbers or the names of the tenants who occupied them are not recorded. In addition to these cottages, there were obviously larger plots of land, described as pendicles, which were worth a few pounds more. Even so these did not generate an adequate living for their occupants - the three pendicles at Cultalowie, created (perhaps through the amalgamation of smaller holdings) in the 1860’s and which were in fact at Stronamuck, were worth respectively £8-0-0, £6-0-0 and £5-0-0. Two of the tenants, John McIntosh and Elspeth Murray, were described as agricultural labourers in the census returns, the third - Robert Campbell - supplemented his income as a mason.

Others were not so fortunate - Patrick Small Keir of Kindrogan, the proprietor of much of the land in central Strathardle, gradually took more and more of it into his own or his son’s hands - thus displacing the original inhabitants and creating the small estates mentioned in both the valuation rolls and the censuses. By 1860, the McNab family had been replaced as tenants of the 200 acre farm at Pitcarmick by Patrick Small Keir, junior. In 1875, the valuation rolls confirm that Dalvey was also operated directly by the Small Keirs. John Rattray, who briefly succeeded his father as the sole remaining farmer at Stronamuck, was no longer a tenant by 1851 and had been relegated to the status of

labourer on the lands of others. There must be countless other such stories of displacement which forced people to leave the parish altogether.

That the process of agricultural change encountered difficulties can be inferred from the trouble surrounding the division of common land in the parish - in parts of the Forest of Alyth in Glenshee, the process of enclosure met with physical violence from the people of the townships (Adams 1971, 181-2). In 1797, a summons of division of common raised by Neil Fergusson of Pitcullo and Patrick Small of Kindrogan against Charles Fergusson and others, became deadlocked over the right of common on the lands of the Mill of Pitcarmick (Adams 1971, 193). The lands in question formed part of those of Balmachreuchie - their extent is not known, but they lay above Strathardle and may well have included the areas of Pitcarmick North and West. A later lawyer's report records the inclusion of the mill itself in the valuation. However, the whole process had to be abandoned in 1811 and in contrast to much of the rest of the parish, none of the farms in the area - except Dalnabreck - have boundaries extending up onto the moor. Dalnabreck, in the 1873 List of Lands and Heritages (Scotland) is noted as a holding larger than a glebe or ordinary feu (Ferguson and Fergusson 1895, 21), and this may explain the greater prominence given to its bounds.

Overall, a rather traditional view of the common lands held not only by the people but also by their landlords, is suggested. In the middle of the nineteenth century and only slightly later than the dispute noted above, the common lands still survived, but the conception of them appears to have changed radically. The will, drawn up in 1854, of James Rattray, a farmer at West Mains of Cultalowie, implies that he considered the "undivided" common lands to be the possession of himself and several other proprietors. He also notes the recent erection of a march dyke and paling between his own lands and those of John Rattray of Croft of Cultalowie; in the whole of this group of inventories, his concern for the delineation of his boundaries stands out. It suggests also that the processes of enclosure and modernisation of agricultural practice were still ongoing in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

For much of the second half of the nineteenth century, the proportions of people involved in agricultural rather than other pursuits is, comparatively, small. In 1841 when the population appears to be still self-sufficient, there is a balance apparent between agricultural and craft pursuits (fig. 19, 22). Most people, both male and female, were simply agricultural labourers and, of these, a few had distinct roles, such as ploughman or cowfeeder. Similarly, for many of the wives and daughters of a household, specific duties were not itemised; alongside the household duties and the small-scale craft activities that brought in additional money, they will undoubtedly have helped in the fields. At Pitcarmick, where there are few such women, the number of people described as specifically involved in agricultural pursuits is - in relation to the settlements of Dalvey and Stronamuck - comparatively high (fig. 22). This both confirms the potential role of women in outdoor work and suggests that a greater number of people who remained at the latter two settlements were cottars, each with a small amount of land, but who had to find additional income by labouring on land owned by other people. However, the lack of detail in this respect makes it almost impossible to further define the relationships between all members of the household and, specifically, the roles of women.

At around the same time as the Small Keir's were placing the bulk of the land under their direct control, a bothy-like system first appeared at Pitcarmick. This perhaps confirms that the old patterns of agricultural practice (where servants had lived as part of the family) had declined to the point where the few remaining cottagers could be dispossessed of their land to make way for larger, more commercial enterprises. The implication that landowners now preferred servants, housed in separate accommodation, to work the land for them is significant in this respect. However, as the three pendicles of land at Stronamuck demonstrate, some responsibility for the inhabitants did still remain. One of these plots supported Robert Murray in his retirement and later gave his daughter Elspeth her independence. The valuation rolls suggest that they also allowed John McIntosh, who had been the ploughman for Donald Stewart at Dalvey in 1860, to acquire, albeit briefly, his own plot of land.

The wages of day labourers, hired for the main working period of the agricultural year (i.e. March to harvest), and for male and female servants hired for the year are also listed (OSA, 670). The former class were given food in addition to their eight pence a day, but must have faced rather uncertain winters when work would have been harder to come by. It does suggest that this class of workers was by then an accepted part of life in the parishes of the Highland fringe, but whether they were immigrants or tenants forced off the land is not stated. Further, it implies that some formalisation of the landlord-tenant relationship had already taken place in the eighteenth century, if not the degree to which this was the result of the rearrangement of landholding practices. Neither can it suggest its impact on individuals as it is unclear whether the numerous agricultural workers of the census returns were day labourers or had a more stable relationship with their employers. Certainly John Murray of Dalvey is recorded in the census of 1851 as an agricultural labourer, but in the valuation roll for 1855, he and his father, Robert, are noted as jointly running the farm. Without a clearer idea of the reasons behind such arrangements, the means by which the land was worked continue to remain hidden.

In the 1790's, the poor fund of the parish was supporting fourteen people at regular intervals, though this apparently could not prevent begging by others not included in the parish's charity (OSA, 672). In 1842, the capital of the poor fund had virtually halved from the figure given in 1793, yet fourteen people were still being supported by it (NSA, 789). The general tenor of contemporary Scottish history suggests that, although other beggars are not mentioned, they are likely to have existed. These are further, if brief, indications that social disruption was becoming more and more of a problem at the turn of the nineteenth century. By the 1840's, the scale of the problem seems to have gone beyond the ability, and more importantly, the interest, of the parish worthies to deal with. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, people who had worked as agricultural labourers all their lives (such as Jane, the widow of the John Rattray, who for a while had farmed at Stronamuck) were reduced to seeking parochial relief to support themselves, in part at least. In Jane's case, this had occurred even though she

had a grown-up daughter, Margaret. In 1891, both are recorded as living in the Old Distillery house at Pitcarmick; at least she had managed to keep a roof over her head.

The creation of the pendicles at Stronamuck - two survived in 1875 but only one in 1880 (that of Robert Campbell, who may have had a more secure income from his work as a mason) - seems to have been a fairly short term solution, either in response to the needs of the landowners for working the land, or possibly to those of particular individuals for whom their landlord still felt some responsibility. It is the census returns that most clearly reveal the gradual abandonment of these cottages during the second half of the century (fig. 16, 23). Dalvey, made up of six households in 1841, had halved in size by 1851. In 1891, only one household (tenanted by the shepherd, Alexander Stewart) remained - and, although there have been fluctuations in the population since, only one cottage survives there today. Stronamuck, which was made up solely of cottagers and whose land must have formed part of the farm at Cultalowie, disappears entirely, probably soon after the death of Robert Campbell in 1899 (Appendices 4-6).

At the end of the eighteenth century, Kirkmichael seems to have been well-provided with a wide variety of tradespeople (ninety-one in total), although not all of these can have relied solely on their trade or craft to provide them with the means of subsistence (OSA, 670). By far the largest proportion were weavers (forty people), followed by tailors of whom there were fourteen. Professional weavers had appeared by the seventeenth century, taking yarn prepared by the female spinsters and for which they were paid in kind (Grant 1961, 241-2). The tailor, like the blacksmith, has a prominent role in folklore and many of the mens' clothes, in particular, were made by itinerant tailors who travelled round the townships (*ibid.*, 244). Finally, there were four shoemakers; they seem to have eventually lost out to those from Atholl, who came regularly to Kirkmichael's market. That they were still doing so in the early nineteenth century is clear from Larkin's description in 1818 (quoted in Haldane 1952, 147), when they appear to have been joined by sellers of bog-oak (perhaps for fuel or tanning) from Badenoch. All the above categories are represented in the census returns for the three

settlements examined in detail here - although their numbers drop from the 1850's onwards, another indication that the population could no longer maintain itself effectively (fig. 22).

Of the craftworkers, those who worked with wool and textiles are (comparatively) the most prominent - perhaps because raw wool, as a side effect of the sheep farms, was easily available. Preparation of the yarn and spinning provided an important source of income for the female members of the household. Perhaps more importantly, it could give single women and widows a measure of independence, although at the end of the eighteenth century such work paid only two or three pence a day - while a tailor received six pence and a wright one shilling (OSA, 670). In all the different sources examined, there is only one mention of flax or linen - and this is to the third part of the Lint Hill of the Croft and West Mains of Cultalowie in a sasine of 1808 when Alexander and Janet Rattray, and their children, John and James, took these lands in liferent and fee respectively. Although rather later in date, the dam on the slope above Cultalowie, noted on the OS First edition map, could then be explained as a retting pond. The OSA notes that flax was unsuited to the climate (667); therefore, growing and processing it might have been a matter of individual choice, an option only for the more enterprising of the cottagers.

There were ten squarewrights and four wheelwrights, in comparison to only five (?black-)smiths. This perhaps confirms the importance of furniture and wooden artefacts, in comparison to goods involving the much rarer, more valuable and longer-lasting iron (cf. Grant 1961, 241). Five smithies were still operating in the parish up until the end of the nineteenth century, but all had disappeared by the first part of the twentieth century (Third SA, 299). No stoneworkers are mentioned in the Statistical Accounts; however, throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, Robert Campbell of Stronamuck obviously found enough work as a mason to maintain himself and, as he got older, a young assistant. There were also fourteen shopkeepers, far more than there are today, although what they sold is not described. Most were probably based in Kirkmichael, but some, such as William Fergusson of Pitcarmick, lived in the

settlements they served - William was described as a shoemaker and a grocer in 1861. Although they are not listed as tradesmen, there were also seven licensed retailers of spirits, none of whom were distillers. There is no detail of this sort in the New Statistical Account, but it is noted that there was a small distillery owned by Patrick Small Keir of Kindrogan, and run by a Mr. Alexander Fraser at Pitcarnuck (NSA, 788). Buildings associated with it are noted in the census (and are still visible on the ground, close to Wester Pitcarnick), but the people living in them are not described as working there.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, people sold the yarn spun that week at Kirkmichael's market, in exchange for the weekly supply of tobacco, snuff and lamp oil (plus other groceries), indicating that there was at least a little surplus for such luxuries. Stewart commented that the market had in the past been viewed as an excuse for idleness and immorality (OSA, 671), yet he passes no such observation on the fairs, which by their very nature must have provided far more opportunity for iniquity. His description of the market implies that the majority of the population may indeed have visited it on a regular basis. Since it is mainly the women who did the weaving in their own homes, it could have been part of their role to attend the market and to undertake the buying and selling of the goods they themselves had produced.

In spite of the Earl of Atholl's attempts to exert more control (see chapter 5.1.1, pg. 150), the OSA reveals that the fair at Kirkmichael was still held at Michaelmas. It was believed to have originated in the St. Michael's Day festivals that were so important in the Highlands (cf. Martin 1703), but it is not recorded whether there such festivities still occurred alongside the fair. Two fairs were also held at the Spittal of Glenshee (OSA, 671), their importance presumably stemming from the position of the Spittal on the military road. Regardless of the evidence for a decrease in importance of the Kirkmichael tryst in the middle of the century, the Reports of the Commissioners for Highland Roads suggest a need to develop the drove routes - by building better bridges and, in 1811, by extending the road from Kirkmichael over the hills to the Spittal (Haldane 1952, 130). None of this seems to have ever come to fruition. The Commission's interest in such hill tracks stemmed from the presence of so much open

country, which allowed unhindered access and grazing for the cattle as far as Strathtay (ibid., 130; fig. 17). This suggests that cattle breeding was still important to the economy, even if these were primarily the economies of the glens further to the north; however, even around Strathardle, the sheep-farmers control of the moorlands might not yet have been absolute. The building of the current main road through the glen in 1830 subtly altered this emphasis on upland routeways and, by the 1920's, the inhabitants were driving their own cattle on foot to Blairgowrie to be sold (Third SA, 298). From Pitcarmick, this was an undertaking that must have taken at least a couple of days to complete. It would no doubt have been a collective operation and one that would have directly exposed the visitors to all the unsettling impressions and temptations of the town.

The concern for access to these areas, expressed both in the military road (see chapter 5.1.1., pg. 153-4) and in the Commission's intentions for Improvement, did not extend to the re-building of a bridge over the Ardle at Kirkmichael, the previous one having fallen down about forty years before (OSA, 678). The lack of a bridge - although supposedly there were wooden planks laid across the river (Reid 1992, 26) - at whatever period, would have had a considerable effect on determining the geography of the parish as a whole (fig. 17). For Pitcarmick and the west of the strath, this is significant in that the main commercial and residential focus of Kirkmichael also lay on the west side of the river, separated from the church and its adjacent school on the opposite side. For the rest of the glen - and Glen Shee - the implications are not so clear. The military road in Glen Shee would presumably have reduced the need for its inhabitants to visit Kirkmichael's market, but up until it became a parish in its own right in 1858, the inhabitants did still travel there (although there was a Chapel of Ease and a graveyard in their own glen) for communion during the summer. These affairs, lasting from Tuesday to Thursday, provided an opportunity for attendance at the religious services which took place at least three times a day but, perhaps more importantly, an occasion for the whole parish to meet and exchange news (Reid 1992, 29). For those in the upper part of Strathardle, a monthly Sunday service was held at Straloch - on the other Sundays the

congregation walked over into Moulin (*ibid.*). The frequency of church services for many people therefore remains open to question, and, for much of the winter, the parish could have been effectively cut in half. There appears to have been only one traditional ford across the Ardle, at a point just below Balnabroich and near modern Pitcarmick (Third SA, 297), but this is unlikely to have been passable for much of the winter. By 1841, the bridge at Kirkmichael had been replaced by public subscription, bringing untold benefits to the area in the eyes of the minister (NSA, 788). As symbols of the collective magnanimity of the wealthier part of society, roads and bridges were clearly a worthier expression than the poor fund.

The physical separation of the religious life of the glen was visibly enforced in 1843 by the construction of the Free Church, next to the main road up the valley and on the edge of the village. The focus of the village had apparently now shifted to this, the east side of the river (visible on Stobie's map of 1783; Reid 1992, 29; Third SA, 300) and the new church was the most visible expression of this. This is perhaps the appropriation of a traditionally important place, as undoubtedly was the congregation's prior use of the ash tree on Bannerfield as a place of worship, but, in reality, the choice may have had more to do with proximity to the main thoroughfare. The conflicts that the establishment of the Free Church involved perhaps mark the final passing of the established order of the glens; as communities broke apart so did their traditional patterns and modes of thinking and believing.

Both at the parish school in Kirkmichael and in teaching undertaken voluntarily by individuals, generally during the winter months, English and writing were the primary subjects (OSA, 673); the situation was not significantly different by the time of the NSA (789). The census returns suggest that all children went to school between the ages of five and ten, although the reality may have been rather different. The Old Statistical Account for Moulin notes that children were already travelling to the lowlands for summer herding work, if they were not leaving altogether by the age of eleven (Caird 1971, 16). Certainly, after the age of ten, only the boys (up until about fourteen) remained at school, the girls perhaps becoming domestic servants - within their own

home or placed in wealthier households. For some boys, however, like Charles Robertson, a servant at Pitcarmick in 1841, and James Drummond, another servant, this time at Dalvey in 1861, reality forced these eleven year olds to grow up much more quickly.

Although this area of the Highlands was clearly becoming more firmly a part of the wider world and Gaelic had intermingled with a dialect of Scots (OSA, 673), Gaelic remained the most common language spoken. Queen Victoria, at Kindrogan in 1866, commented that some of the inhabitants of Strathardle could “not speak a word of English” (quoted in Dingwall 1975, 30). Certainly, the censuses indicate that the emphasis on teaching English in school did not result in many people being able to speak the language (Reid 1990, 33; Appendix 6). Nonetheless, in 1895, the last full communion service solely in Gaelic took place. The horizons of most of the occupants must have extended beyond the Highland line, but perhaps only as far as the adjacent lowlands of Perthshire. From the end of the nineteenth century, however, such relationships could only have become more extensive and rather more concrete and speaking English would have been a necessity.

In the manners and customs of the people, the traditional patterns of Highland life are still visible in the Old Statistical Account. Hospitality to strangers was firmly adhered to, and the independence of spirit and protection of themselves and their household which find such a prominent place in all writings on the Highlands remained (see chapter 4). This protection of their own rights extended to a liking for litigation that kept three sheriff officers and a constable in work within the parish bounds of Kirkmichael itself. A partiality for certain traditional festivals, such as *Beltane*, with their emphasis on fire, had also been retained - while holy days were still celebrated in proper Medieval fashion with shooting matches and dancing (ibid., 677).

In the face of the lack of interest displayed by the minister in the NSA, expanding this brief characterisation of the population is reliant on the census returns. This involves not so much customs and beliefs, therefore, but an examination of household structure and the ways in which individuals supported themselves and their families.

The data for the three settlements of Pitcarmick, Dalvey and Stronamuck is a useful illumination of the general picture of the Highlands (presented in Chapter 4) and the earlier history of the parish. In 1841, the population seems to be a viable one - with a reasonable balance between the sex and age groups and the types of occupations that they were engaged in (figs. 19-22, 25-6). Ten years later, this balance had gone and, by 1891, the population was a fraction of what it had been. In a sense, therefore, the census data seems to span the final breakdown of the traditional patterns of life in the glen. How different people's roles and beliefs were from those of their predecessors who had lived in the same settlements when the OSA was written, is impossible to tell, but what the 1891 returns do suggest is that farming practices or social requirements no longer allowed the community to maintain itself from the land.

The inventories and the census returns indicate that families - particularly perhaps where the parents were of slightly higher status and therefore more secure - could have five or more children (figs. 25-6). On the other hand, there is not enough data to confirm if indeed poorer members of the community were discriminated against in the producing and maintaining of children. The death rate for children was probably still fairly high - they were often born at frequent intervals and gaps in the sequence may well indicate that a death had occurred. The age of marriage was variable for both men and women. Ann Robertson gave birth to her only daughter at the age of eighteen - four years later (1841) she was living, either unmarried or widowed, with her father at Stronamuck. In contrast, Ann, the wife of Donald Stewart at Dalvey, was thirty-one when her first (surviving) child was born. Single parent families were common, but, as in the case of Ann Robertson, people could and did return to their own parents for support. Janet Clark of Pitcarmick appears to be the only example of a parent with no support, for whatever reason, from her own parents. At the age of twenty-eight, she had two daughters, aged six and four. Where neither parent survived, the children - such as Isabella Robertson - had to be deposited with their grandparents. In this instance, John and Jane Rattray of Stronamuck, at the ages of sixty-six and fifty-six respectively, may not have undertaken the task lightly. There appear to be no childless couples - however,

again limitations in the data prevent a complete assessment of the percentage of individuals who remained unmarried or who moved away as a result of marriage.

Counterbalancing this apparent high infant mortality, it is evident that people did live to a considerable age, remaining active well into their sixties and seventies; Robert Murray was still working the farm at Dalvey at the age of seventy-three. Three-generational households were not that common, but at least one child, often unmarried, remained with their parents throughout their adult lives and supported them in their old age. Elspeth Murray, and her ten-year-old daughter, moved back in with her father Robert, perhaps on his retirement and shortly after her own (probable) widowhood. Most children must have found that they had to move away to find work - John, the eldest son of Alexander Fleming, a farmer at Pitcarmick who retired to Dalvey, lived in Dundee until his death. He was replaced as a trustee of his father's estate by the fourth son, Peter, who lived in Perth. However, not all his children (sons and daughters) moved so far away - on the death of Alexander himself, the second son, Robert, was a gardener at Waterloo (noted on the OS First edition map) on the opposite side of the glen - but only the third son, Alexander, had remained at Dalvey.

It is only the farmers who seem to have employed paid labour and, if these are indeed sheep farms, then they were still providing work for a number of servants (figs. 24, 26). Donald Stewart, a bachelor, employed seven labourers and one girl to work his 56 acres and run his household at Dalvey in 1861. John McNab, farmer at Pitcarmick in 1851, even though he had a wife and three grown-up children, had five servants living in his house (only one of whom had general, rather than outdoor, duties). However, Donald Stewart released all but three of his live-in servants after his marriage. Occasionally a girl, such as Margaret Stewart, the daughter of the shepherd at Dalvey, working as a servant lived at home with her own family, but most must have moved to the employer's home. In most cases it is impossible to know how many of the servants - or indeed any of the labourers - were related to the people they worked for. There are only two examples clearly visible here - Alexander Stewart lived in the bothy at Pitcarmick, after the rest of his family moved to Dalvey, while William Reid, ten years later also moved

into the bothy, even though his father was still farm manager there. The numbers of servants did decline throughout the nineteenth century; in general, the servants who remained were part of this bothy-like system, with no land of their own to provide a distraction from their work on the landlords farm. Family servants had reduced in number, usually consisting now only of one girl who lived-in and had domestic duties.

What is striking about the material contained in the last two chapters is the potential for large-scale disruption, both in personal and more general terms. Nonetheless, people managed to retain a semblance, at least, of their traditional beliefs and customs and, perhaps, a certain acceptance of their tough and hardworking lifestyle. By the 1840's, a recognisably modern framework of landholding and agricultural practice is visible in the NSA for Moulin (Caird 1972, 18-9), but this is less easy to identify in the Kirkmichael account. For this less wealthy and well-favoured parish, improvements in agricultural technology and infrastructure could not outweigh the physical constraints of the upland environment and the slow, yet constant, drain of human resources. The role of personal actions and choices in the course of these events cannot be ignored, but nor can they be accurately accounted for by the stark statistics of the census returns. In spite of much apparent continuity - or at least stability - throughout most of the nineteenth century, the situation was radically different as it drew to a close. Reliance on the relationships stemming from wider kin-based ties had perhaps been replaced by family bonds. To maintain the security of the family - in light of the needs of the children to find work outside the parish - must have proved a difficult struggle.

5.1.3 The intimacy of landscape

The history of cartography in Scotland is both impressive in its quality and in the breadth of its chronology. From Pont's map of the 1590's to the first maps compiled by the Ordnance Survey (in Perthshire these date to the 1860's), these maps provide a valuable insight into the appearance of contemporary Scotland. This is particularly true of Strathardle, where there are no estate plans to complement the smaller scale maps. For a part of central Strathardle, the most significant maps - such as those of Roy (1747-55) and Stobie (1783) - have been re-drawn (at approximately the same scale) and set alongside each other (fig. 16). In conjunction with a compilation, displayed chronologically, of the place-names inscribed on the same maps, this should give a very visual impression of the settlement structure of the area (Appendix 2). This, read against the wider historical and geographical context constructed in the last two chapters, provides a more graphical dimension to the discussion of the historical landscape in Strathardle.

The first map of a scale useful in revealing information on a local level is that of Pont, probably completed by 1596 (Stone 1989; fig. 16). This suggests that there were perhaps two settlements at Pitcarmick, in the general area of the present buildings of this name; both are given Pont's usual symbol for a typical farm township. Although there are slight discrepancies in the physical distances apparent between settlements of the same name today and on the map, the picture given is one of fairly dense settlement running along the lower slopes of the strath where the modern farms now lie. The hills above appear to be empty of occupation. Only in Glen Derby - where the two townships of Easter and Wester Glengeynet are located - is there settlement approaching the height of that at Pitcarmick West and North (c. 350m OD).

Beyond the immediate environs of Pitcarmick, Kirkmichael is distinguished as a settlement of some size by a church and several houses. There is no note of Whitefield

castle, suggesting that it did not exist prior to the late sixteenth century. This contradicts local tradition which suggests it was a hunting lodge founded by Malcolm Canmore (Marshall 1880, 208; Third SA, 298), as well as the date of 1577 on the sill of an arch-shaped niche above the door (RCAHMS 1990, 92). Ashintully is, however, present, as the date of 1583 above its door indicates it should be (Macgibbon and Ross 1892, 224). The road along Strathardle does not run down into Pitlochry, as it does today, but up over the hills and straight down into the heart of the Atholl estates to Blair Atholl itself.

The next map of importance is that of Gordon of Straloch in Blaeu's Atlas of 1654, which includes the whole of *Braid-Allaban* (here referring to the whole of Highland Perthshire and much of the mountainous area to north and west). This map probably draws to a considerable extent on that of Pont, although alterations to the originals were made. The same settlement names are present on both maps and, overall, the picture is very similar to that of the previous half century. The settlement pattern in the straths is indeed very regular, although, in central Strathardle, it is perhaps more dense on the east side of the Ardle than it is on the west. In the case of both Strathardle and Glenshee, settlement density unsurprisingly decreases towards the heads of the glens. The greater extent to which this occurs in Glenshee perhaps confirms the smaller amount of suitable agricultural land and the harder winters suffered by this glen (these are noted in the Statistical Accounts). The *pit-* element in the place-name Pitcarmick stands out as one of only two in the whole of the two glens; the other is Pitcainick, near Enochdhu, north of Kirkmichael, which is no longer recorded on the OS maps.

Roy's map, surveyed during the period 1747-55, has a small sketch plan of each settlement, so yielding - with that of James Stobie fifty years later - an intricate picture of Strathardle in the late eighteenth century (fig. 16). The pattern of clusters of buildings and enclosures along the contour has not substantially altered, but to this Roy has added further layers of detail with the inclusion of the layout of each cluster and their field systems. There is confirmation here that the process of Improvement had begun in this area of Perthshire, as there is a stark contrast between farms laid out around a courtyard and other settlements shown with just one long building, perhaps with another smaller

one close by, and a linked enclosure. The settlements are shown accompanied by their rigs and, even where the buildings have a regular plan, their layout seems to indicate a distinct lack of Improvement. There are no suggestions of boundaries between the settlements, nor divisions into different possessions within each farm. There are rigs above the buildings themselves, but all seem to fall roughly within the present extent of improved land. The rigs also extend below the settlements, down to the river, so that each farm sits in the centre of a densely worked landscape. A certain degree of woodland is depicted, probably only scrub at this period, since it appears to be thinly scattered. The drove route, running through Glen Derby and up over the hills south-westwards to the valley of the Tay, is depicted for the first time here (fig. 17). Change was continuing to take place, therefore, both in the type and number of settlements and perhaps, in the addition of a new route out of the glen to the west, suggesting increasing emphasis was now placed on good connections with a world further afield. These changes were in no way uniform and were perhaps dependent on the energy and foresight of individual proprietors and tenants.

James Stobie's map of 1783 appears to show settlement in the glens at its peak and here more detail of their form and layout is given (fig. 16). There is, again, an apparent distinction between improved farms, with courtyard or L-shaped plans, and townships, with several rectangular buildings, probably longhouses. At Uppertown, there is a courtyard arrangement in association with two rectangular buildings, perhaps cottages (or possibly other agricultural buildings). Such distinctions are not present at Tomgarrow, which consists of five, similarly sized, rectangular buildings. The very regular arrangement of these buildings is the sole hint of a convincing move towards Improvement. Although it would be dangerous to read too much into this comparison, many of the settlements have a greater number of structures than are indicated on Roy's map. Differences in scale are still considerable; the settlement at Claggan, for example, has only two buildings. The locations of the settlements and farms are similar to that of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries - they run along the contour at the top edge of the best agricultural land. A few trees are depicted close to the banks of the Ardle,

amidst what were probably the meadows of the farms. There was a mill at Balnauld - that at Pitcarmick, mentioned in 1771 in the Valuation Rolls, is not distinguished as such.

Settlement was clearly beginning to expand more rapidly into the side glens and in Glenderby, in particular, the increased number of settlements is dramatic - the two clusters depicted on Gordon's map have now become six named settlements, all widely spaced but still concentrated in this one area of the glen. In the light of the population statistics for the parish at this time, the number of settlement names recorded on the map may indicate the break up of townships into smaller holdings. This is possible, as the first graphical depiction of the splitting of townships like Pitcarmick is provided by Stobie's map, although such divisions had occurred further down Strathardle in the middle of the fifteenth century (RCAHMS 1990, 11). The creation of sheep farms was already occurring at this point, and these could have provided homes for people displaced from elsewhere in the parish, forced to reclaim small areas of land for new farms. However, it is equally probable that the population was fluctuating more rapidly than is indicated by two sets of figures half a century apart (OSA, 668) and that some of these new settlements represent migrants from further north in the highlands, who used these areas as staging posts (however unconsciously) before the final move into the lowlands and the towns. The road along the length of Strathardle now continues down into Pitlochry, perhaps as much a reflection of the decline in the importance of Blair as the cultural heart of this region, as the difficulty of the road over the hills to Blair Atholl. There are few large houses - Tullochurran, Ballintuim and Blackcraig - in this middle part of Strathardle, both Ashintully (though this was later reoccupied) and Whitefield are depicted as ruins.

The picture created by Stobie's map suggests a landscape undergoing profound changes. Generally the impression is of expansion, but it is expansion and change that was beginning to take on very different forms from that which had gone before. In the main strath, expansion of agriculture involved the creation of individual land-holdings. Although perhaps not individually owned, they suggest increasing reliance on the

immediate family and servants to farm the land rather than a wider framework of co-operation within the fermtouns. The creation of single farms meant that contact between members of the community could not so readily take place on an everyday basis and social relationships would have to be re-negotiated on a different footing (see chapter 4.2). At this period, any areas of waste land still remaining in the main straths would have come under escalating pressure and human control of, rather than co-operation with, the landscape must have been increasingly evident - even in the more remote areas. The occupants' perceptions of their world must have been subtly altered; this was now a landscape where buildings and their associated small plots of cultivated land would dominate, a landscape where the processes of change were becoming visible within the timescale of a generation. These were changes, however, instigated from above, in a world in which it may have become increasingly difficult to recognise your own place and where the links between the close-knit rural societies were disintegrating.

For nineteenth century Strathardle, the most important maps are the First edition OS maps of 1867, a century later than the maps discussed above and therefore representing the dramatically altered landscape of the Improvements (fig. 16, 18). At Pitcarmick, the site of Easter Pitcarmick had already become the rectangular courtyard steading that exists today, although the cottages and outbuildings around it, revealed both on the map and in the Valuation Rolls, are now gone. An elaborate and complex sheepfold on higher ground to the north denotes the site of former Wester Pitcarmick. In spite of the quantity of stone that must have gone into the building of the sheepfold, the footings of at least twelve buildings and a kiln still surround it. None of these structures are recorded on the map and they are likely, therefore, to have been empty for a considerable length of time before the map was made. Lying closer to the burn is the location of the distillery mentioned in the NSA and the census returns. It forms part of a cluster of buildings, some seemingly ruinous, on a track (the old main road) that runs along the west side of the strath, linking it to Dalvey and beyond.

The sheepfolds depicted along the lower flanks of the hills all the way up the strath are clearly indicative of a new agricultural emphasis. Loose clusters of buildings, with a small garden or stackyard enclosure, do still remain amidst the more co-ordinated courtyard plans of other farms. The big farm at Cultalowie is surrounded by several smaller buildings and enclosures, while Stronamuck appears to be still a series of individual houses or cottages (fig. 16). All these may represent the houses of crofters, dependent on working on the lands of the main farm but perhaps with their own garden and few animals (see chapter 5.1.2). The very long building portrayed at Croftannoch appears to survive on the ground as a subdivided range of similarly sized rooms. If this is not just a later development, then it may represent a different response to settlement requirements - either the remnants of an older form of longhouse or a series of small, closely-linked cottages.

Each cluster of buildings sits firmly within an area of both improved and unimproved land, outlined by boundaries that run up from the river to the head-dyke. At Wester Pitcarmick, the head-dyke turns down the hill to run through the settlement itself. From Dalnabreck, in contrast, long field walls run up from the strath to finish high up in the hills at the parish boundary, a striking imposition over a huge area of moor (see chapter 5.2.2). Common lands are recorded in the general area west of Strathardle as belonging to the parishes of Dunkeld and Dowally and Logerait, as well as Kirkmichael. This may be significant because on Stobie's map of 1783, all the parish boundaries meet in this area, providing therefore ideal locations for the shielings associated with the settlements in the main glens, a place where the people could meet each summer to renew acquaintances and to make new ones. By the time the First edition OS map was published in 1867, the parish boundaries appear to be further to the west, dividing in half the moorland area between Strathardle and Strathgarry, Strathtummel and Strathtay. This is now a landscape dominated by people, the completion of the process first seen at the end of the previous century. It is a landscape in which such boundaries implied more rigid divisions, allied to the parcelling out of land to individuals and, more subtly than this, the reinforcement of human control of the land and all its resources.

The extent of the break-up of the old settlement forms and their replacement by Improved farms is perhaps most clearly visible in Glen Derby. The four clusters of Roy's map are now in ruins, in the midst of which sits the mains farm of Glenderby. This, with its regular layout of enclosures and fields, is still a striking element in the present landscape, although now abandoned in its turn. The imposition of the new on the old could not be more clearly expressed - the importance of place legitimizing the new ideology through its appropriation of it. In addition to the sheepfolds, each settlement now has its own limekiln, clear signification of the technological improvements in agriculture of the nineteenth century. These generally sit on the lower ground below the buildings. Cultalonie has a (mill) dam, perhaps a transferral from the eighteenth century mill at Pitcarmick (but see above, pg. 181), or a reflection of the increasing need for each farm to be self-reliant.

The occupied farmsteads sit amidst the ruins of others - this depth of history must have been firmly lodged within the consciousness of the living occupants of these sites, since in their everyday lives they would have to negotiate their activities around these remains, whether using them actively as animal shelters or simply aware of them as the house in which their grandparents were born and grew up. Many of the settlement names represent continuity in the relatively unchanging forms in which they occur (Appendix 1 and 2). This is a landscape, despite all the transformations, in which people could still find a place of their own, perhaps mediated through their family's history and certainly known through the continuity of the agricultural cycle. It was probably one of the more stable elements in a quickly changing world - one whose whole ideology had been transformed by the Improvements.

On the Second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1900, the settlement density is further reduced. The steading at Easter Pitcarmick now sits in isolation - there are no longer cottages and enclosures around it. The numbers of buildings at other farms are also reduced, and certain settlements are not named at all. This decline is as equally true of the larger houses; although the buildings were still there, the gardens at Dalnabrick have disappeared. The presence of a sawmill implies a more commercial bias was

present in the world of the glen, mirroring quite well the population patterns indicated by the census returns that span this period (chapter 5.1.2; Appendix 6). The distillery was still in existence and at the Mains of Glenderby, high above the main strath, only the farmhouse itself appears to be roofed. This is a picture of a settlement pattern centred around large farms, often with cottages adjacent to them (e.g. Dalvey). There are indeed very few cottages depicted; Stronamuck, once a large settlement, consists of only the small building that had been occupied by a mason, Robert Campbell, and his family throughout the second half of the century (plate 12). The narrow strip fields below Upper Balcrochan are the sole suggestion of a cottage being worked as a croft. Complementing the evidence from other parts of the historical record, the second edition map indicates a more stable landscape, readjusting after the major changes of the preceding centuries - but still suffering a constant drain of human resources as the pull of the towns and cities became greater.

On the two maps of the nineteenth century, the hills above the strath to the west are clearly covered in tracks and some of the prehistoric and later structures are noted (cf. Plan 1). None of this, however, gives much impression of the use to which these areas were put, especially in the absence of information on earlier maps. The prominence of the tracks on the OS maps could be the consequence of the rise of shooting and stalking as a commercial enterprise on some of the bigger estates at the very end of the nineteenth century (Reid 1992, 31ff; Dingwall 1975, 30-1). The most striking indication of this change in use of the hills is the appearance of Pitcarmick House as a shooting lodge on the map of 1900. The valuation rolls reveal that it was built in 1899 and that its value had risen from £210-0-0 in 1855 to £510-0-0 in 1900, a striking instance of the economic clout held by hunting as a recreational activity in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The mainly eighteenth century descriptions of the common lands belonging to the parishes lying around these hills clearly indicate shieling structures and activities in these areas. In the Forest of Cluny, deserted settlements, such as Roughsheal and Craigsheal, which appear on the first edition OS maps in the vicinity of Loch

Benachally, some in the areas of the shielings recorded by the RCAHMS and clearly with shieling elements in their names, are first recorded in around 1600 (1990, 6). There is only one indication on Roy's map of activity at this height, and this is much further to the west at Hosefield, but it does clearly represent the presence of two townships within a ring-dyke. Much of this evidence has since been lost, because the entirety of this area was almost completely under coniferous trees by 1867.

These two complementary strands of evidence suggest that, in the centuries when a documentary and graphical record does exist, these hills were not as empty as they may appear at first. However, by the time the OS arrived in the 1860's, a clear separation had been established between the high and low ground. Whether this was a consequence of the attitudes of the OS (and of the educated, landowning classes from which their surveyors were derived) or reflected a deeper reality in the minds of the people who utilised this landscape is unknown. Certainly, much of this attitude can be seen to derive from the increasing grip of landowners on the resources they owned; the uplands, because of sheep and deer, had become almost the exclusive preserve of stalkers and shepherds. Whatever the underlying reasons, this has allowed the preservation of a wealth of archaeological material. While not always shedding light on the specific areas which were the subject of archaeological investigation, the preceding three sections, in re-creating the world of these straths, have been important in the initial search for a context for the remains on the hillside known as Pitcarmick North.

5.2 The archaeology of Pitcarmick North

For Pitcarmick North (fig. 15), the primary data has been derived from field survey. On the upland areas of the Pitcarmick estate, an area of 1km² was recorded, part of the wider area of Pitcarmick North, which had initially been defined by the RCAHMS on the basis of aerial photographs and a brief topographic survey of a part of this area (1990). Through the use of a total station and by machine-storing the data, the original survey was extended between 1993 and 1995 to produce a comprehensive record (at a very fine resolution of detail) of the archaeological remains at Pitcarmick North. This ensured that the buildings, field systems and the potentially ritual elements of this landscape over what is clearly a long time-scale (Bronze Age to Medieval/post-Medieval), could be set against a detailed record of the intricacies of the topography. This survey was intended to achieve a far more comprehensive knowledge of the occupation of this hill; it was soon realised that the work served an additional, purely practical purpose. The situation, encountered in 1993 and succeeding years, revealed that the areas under thick heather when the RCAHMS undertook their survey had since been burnt. As a consequence, it was possible to concentrate on the remains in areas where the 1988 surveys had lacked resolution, although, conversely, areas which had appeared most interesting to the RCAHMS team were now almost completely obscured (P. Corser, pers. comm.).

The survey area comprises two ridges, both running in parallel, roughly east-west (Plan 2). Each ridge possesses a topographical integrity which appears to be reflected in the archaeological remains and which has been maintained in the approach taken to the archaeology of this hillside. The RCAHMS had concentrated on the more southerly of these ridges (154.4; NO 15 NE 17, 84, 102, 136; RCAHMS 1990, 76-8), where a cluster of hut-circles, field-systems, Pitcarmick-type buildings, other rectangular buildings and two possible burial cairns had been identified. During their survey, carried out in 1988,

the heather had been most dense at the west end of the ridge, somewhat obscuring the one Pitcarmick-type building and a series of rectangular structures in this area. Returning five years later, changes in the vegetation cover revealed that this group of rectangular buildings stood out from the other possible shieling huts on the ridge, as different in both form and size. This led to the hypothesis that they formed a building group in their own right, the validity of which could only be determined through further detailed analysis. It was decided, therefore, to concentrate on producing a large-scale plan of these buildings, given the name of cots, which would also include the one Pitcarmick-type building at Pitcarmick North, which had not been planned by the RCAHMS (Plan 3).

In addition, detailed descriptions (including some re-interpretation) of those structures in the central part of the south ridge - where the heather had also been burnt subsequent to the original survey by the RCAHMS - were compiled and are included in Appendices 7 and 8. This was also done for the buildings at the east end of the ridge, but as their descriptions no doubt reveal, the level of information that could be gleaned from them was far more limited and consequently more reliance has been placed on the original RCAHMS descriptions in these cases. The results of this work are shown on Plan 2 which, building on the original RCAHMS plan for this ridge, has attempted to depict, in addition to the structural evidence, at least some of the rig and furrow visible on the hill. The numerous aerial photographs taken for the North-east Perth volume enabled an overall impression of these cultivation remains to be gained, but, again because they were taken at the same time as the RCAHMS's ground-based surveys, it was not always possible to cross-check this information on the ground during the present study.

The north ridge had not been subjected to topographical survey prior to this study, being only summarised briefly on the basis of the aerial photographs in the published volume (154.3; NO 05 NE 16; RCAHMS 1990, 77-8). The absence of heather in 1993 and later years meant that, around the hut-circles and two rectangular buildings noted by the RCAHMS, a further series of small rectangular buildings were identified during this

study. These appeared to be closely comparable to the cots on the south ridge and, set alongside the rather different character of this ridge, determined the choice of a second area for detailed topographic survey (Plan 4). The time taken up by the survey of these two areas unfortunately precluded any more detailed work on the hut-circles which formed another discrete area on top of the bluff at the very west end of the ridge (154.5; NO 05 NE 15; RCAHMS 1990, 76-7; these had again not been surveyed on the ground by the RCAHMS). This was applicable also to the more isolated hut-circles and field-systems, which - as they are hundreds of metres apart - appear to have been rather arbitrarily given the name Pitcarmick North by the RCAHMS (154.1-2, .6; NO 05 NE 18, 32, 104-5, 107, 145; RCAHMS 1990, 75-77).

Comparative material has been drawn from the other main settlement clusters on the estate (Pitcarmick West, East and South), all of which incorporate the building types found at Pitcarmick North. For the vast areas of moorlands in between, it has been possible to assess the surviving remains primarily in those areas recently burnt as part of estate management policies and, therefore, clear of heather. Much of this effort has been concentrated on identifying potential routeways, in an attempt to establish the wider connections of this apparently isolated settlement high in the hills. A swathe of ground was fieldwalked immediately above and below the head-dyke, and the later township remains within the adjacent glen have also been examined in the hope of determining their relationship to the possible shieling settlements on the hills.

One of these townships, Stronamuck, has been isolated for more detailed examination, as - of the three seemingly most important settlements (Pitcarmick, Stronamuck and Cultalunie) on the west side of the Ardlie - it is set apart by the quality of the archaeological remains and by the fact that it is now entirely deserted. It appears - on surface evidence alone - to incorporate at least four phases of occupation prior to its final abandonment at the end of the nineteenth century. Archaeological analysis of this landscape, providing details of building form, settlement layout, use of the environment and the possible relationships between all these elements, while being of interest in itself, should help to illuminate the phasing, use and function of the settlements and

agricultural remains on the hill. Although still in its preliminary stages, this material forms the second half of chapter 5.2.3.

The provisional chronology, constructed on the basis of field remains alone, has been reinforced by the results of the two seasons of excavation which formed the main thrust of the wider Pitcarmick project directed by John Barrett and Jane Downes (1993, 1994, 1996, in prep.). This concentrated on the examination of two of the three Pitcarmick-type buildings at Pitcarmick North, the area around the two possible burial cairns, the possible yard of a hut-circle and the complete excavation of a clearance cairn. Reference is made to the results of these excavations at the relevant points in the discussion, but the radiocarbon dates are given here as they have determined the structure of the subsequent chapters. Of most significance were the three dates from the excavated Pitcarmick-type buildings, since this project represented the first work carried out on this building group. Two dates from the hearth of the larger building fell into the range 600-664 A.D. and 666-852 A.D., both calibrated to two sigma variation. The date from the smaller building - calibrated to 897-1012 A.D. - although somewhat later, confirms that the Pitcarmick-type buildings appear to possess a degree of chronological integrity.

As part of the wider project, the interpretation of the topographic survey has also benefited from a detailed study of the architectural form of the Pitcarmick-type buildings (Jack 1995, in prep.) and from geophysical examination (Banks 1996) and depth testing of the soils on the two ridges. Environmental work on samples from the basin below the two ridges on which most of the archaeological remains lie, involving both pollen and soil micromorphology, is ongoing and, although it is at too preliminary a stage to be included in this thesis, in the future it will hopefully complete the portrayal of Pitcarmick North.

The survey material, presented graphically on the three plans already referred to, provides the basis for the succeeding three chapters. Larger scale plans of each of the surveyed buildings are presented as figures 29-40, while the details of all the structures

examined are included in Appendices 7 and 8. Within the area of Pitcarmick North, each building has been assigned a unique three-digit number; these are included on Plan 2. Throughout the text, the clusters of buildings, both at Pitcarmick North and at other sites, are referred to by the number given to them in the North-east Perth volume, followed by their NMRS number.

**PAGE
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5.2.1 The expanse of the hills: the prehistoric period

“Cairns and Druid circles [hut-circles] abound in this parish [Kirkmichael] more than in any other of which we have yet written. ... How shall we account for such a crowd of cairns and circles in this locality? ... Were we to indulge in conjecture on it we might say, first, that the locality, must at some very distant date, have been the scene of great carnage, and that the cairns within it were reared in honour of the Lamented dead, whose remains they covered and protected; and, second, that the devotion with which the memory of those dead was cherished led to temples being multiplied about the spots where their dust reposed”

(Marshall 1880, 207)

Monuments of stone - circles and pairs of stones - constitute the earliest evidence of human activity in the glens of north-eastern Perthshire. These give a sense of permanency, a feeling that the people who built them were settled and attached to this place. This permanency perhaps resulted from the perceived presence in the glen of their ancestors, and a communal need to show them honour and respect. It suggests a need to display and celebrate these values, to communicate them to other members of the social group and perhaps to those people from outside it who chanced to enter this world. In central Strathardle there are standing stones on the floor of the strath (60-1; NO 05 NE 2, 79), while a stone circle and its outlying stone sit just above the edge of the Improved land, the whole of the strath laid out below and oriented perhaps on the head of the glen with its horseshoe of hills (59; NO 15 NW 16). Nonetheless, these are monuments - as they now exist at least - suggestive of the creation of quite intimate spaces within the wider landscape, more at home in the closeness of the glens than on the broad sweep of the hills.

Whether the houses of these people shared a similar monumentality cannot be determined in the absence of any traces of such structures. The complete invisibility of the domestic sphere can only be taken to suggest that most of peoples' lives were concentrated on the floor of the strath and that any evidence has since disappeared due to the ravages of later agriculture. What forms these lives took is unknown - if it was structured around the rhythms of crop growth or the needs of animals, whether it was settled or transient. The presence of ritual monuments has, as its consequence, the

creation of fixed places, redolent with personal and collective memories; they embody the need to assign and confirm the 'ownership' of those particular places. This might mean both a lifestyle gradually becoming more settled - if not yet in the sense of a sedentary arable economy, perhaps in the regular use of important and special places as groups of people moved along set routes around their 'territory' - and a density of population that made necessary such statements.

This may be a deceptive picture; the dating, even relatively, of all these monuments is difficult. The sole clue is differences in distribution. With one exception (Balnabroich (fig. 28)), stone circles and standing stones are not found in close association with areas of later prehistoric settlement (RCAHMS 1990, 2). The dating of the stone cairns on the fringes of the main glen is perhaps even more problematic; they could be contemporary with the monuments discussed above, but are usually found in closer association with later settlement, both in the valleys and the hills. Some of the larger ones may be almost as early - as may the ring cairns - and one at Balnabroich, excavated in the late nineteenth century, may have contained a passage, reminiscent of a chambered tomb (ibid., 2).

An explanation can be sought in the pollen evidence for Neolithic and Early Bronze Age clearance (ibid., 1-2; Stewart 1964, 156-7). This implies a landscape undergoing considerable change and transformation, with the monuments therefore representing fairly rapid expansion of settlement and people. In particular, the pollen record from Carn Dubh, Moulin (near Pitlochry) implies that the uplands were already utilised and managed as grassland by the later Bronze Age, although it does not suggest that this was linked to actual settlement on the higher ground (Tipping in Rideout 1995, 181ff). To offset this, hut-circles 3 and 4 at Carn Dubh appear to have been built on land that had already been cultivated for arable, since traces of ard marks remained underneath them (Rideout 1995, 149, 161). Seen in this light, therefore, any expansion from the valleys would not have been into the unknown. The hills stretching away along the side valleys and visible above the ridge that closes down the glen were part of the everyday world of these people, since they defined the limits of that world (plate 11). The side valleys,

such as that of the Allt cùl na Coille (plan 1), may already have become a focal point for activities, whether for settlement, for grazing or cultivation or as the goal of gathering or hunting expeditions. The cairns and cupmarks on the lower flanks of these hills may represent the first permanent imposition of human influence on these areas, thereby establishing a conceptual right to these new territories.

To follow up the valley of the Allt cùl na Coille or to take one of the shorter routes up and over the ridge from Cultalunie or Glen Derby brings you into the large basin under Creag na h-Iolaire (plan 1; fig. 27, Profile 1; plate 2). This appears to be a self-contained world of its own - clearly separate from the main strath that appears, quite deceptively, to be miles away (plate 1). Its main feature, the steep bluff at its western end, is visible only briefly from the floor of the strath to the south-east (fig. 27, Profile 2). The basin is backed on the south and west by high hills. On the south-east, the ground slopes away - halted by a single ridge appearing to form the lip of the basin - to give views along the length of lower Strathardle (plate 2). This prospect is framed by the crags of Creag Shuilleir and Creag Mholach to the east. To the north and east stretch out much broader vistas - over Strathardle towards the massive Cairngorms at the head of both this strath and the adjacent Glenshee.

Within this isolation, the land is not flat and uniform, but distinguished by low ridges, drumlins and dramatic rock outcrops (plate 3). To the south of the Allt Cùl na Coille, the ground stretches gradually up to Creag na h-Iolaire. Immediately to the north is the ridge that formed the focus of the RCAHMS's work in the area (fig. 27, Profile 2). Further to the north again, on top of a ridge which then slopes uninterrupted down into Glen Derby (fig. 27, Profile 3), is the second main concentration of settlement which forms part of Pitcarmick North. To the west, any view from the more southern ridge is broken up by the bluff at its back, which clearly delimits the area below it (plate 3). From the higher north ridge, the views stretch in all directions, limited only by the horizon. Under grouse moorland, this seems a bleak and inhospitable world of stony slopes and boggy hollows, firmly set apart from the brighter greens of the improved

farmland in the main strath and the darker greens of the planted forestry on its slopes. Yet, as you move around within it, this basin dissolves and reforms into discrete and intimate areas, each with its own physical constraints, its own perspectives on this view. Each of these retain their identity as part of the larger whole; small worlds suitable for human habitation.

Whether the impression given by the basin to its first inhabitants was as bleak as it now seems is unlikely. A forest of pine, elm and alder (visible around Carn Dubh (Tipping in Rideout 1995, 181ff)) would create a world of small clearings and broken vistas, a landscape of few landmarks apart from the trees themselves. It would probably have been quickly cleared, scattered trees surviving in isolation and in small groups on the higher slopes and perhaps on the lower, wetter ground. The original forest would have been replaced by hazel and birch scrub, suitable browsing for sheep and goats, interspersed among tiny fields, visible as green, cleared spaces. At the bottom of the basin, the Allt cùl na Coille is large enough to provide an adequate and permanent water supply and perhaps, therefore, to remain the most important landmark. Only after the process of clearing was well underway and agricultural practices had begun to alter the balance of the soils would the trees retreat further and the peat that now smooths out the bottom of the basin begin to grow. As a consequence of these transformations, the landscape would become one that is recognisable in the modern day.

In the centre of the southern ridge - and seemingly in the centre of the basin at Pitcarmick North - are two large, kerbed cairns (35; NO 05 NE 102)). If these are indeed prehistoric burial cairns, they are probably the earliest monuments within this basin. Such burial cairns, some very large indeed, have a degree of solidity not matched by the standing stones; these are monuments intended to have an immense impact on their surrounding landscape. Their nature suggests a very clear statement of control and (perhaps) ownership. Visibility from these monuments is extensive and this is as true of the two cairns sitting on the ridge as it is of the cairn below Cultalunie, with its views up and down the strath (7; NO 05 NE 98). In their present form, the question of visibility

from these monuments seems more significant than the visibility of the monument itself; the two grass covered cairns at Pitcarmick North melt into their heathery background, barely disturbing the skyline (plate 4). This is not as applicable to the massive cairn at Cultalowie, whose grey stone - probably partly the result of much recent clearance - stands out from the flat green field surrounding it. The two cairns at Pitcarmick North, built perhaps as people first laid claim to territories in the hills, may have once been far more striking; what would not change is the implication of greater organisation and control of the landscape over which these cairns look.

The burial cairns at Pitcarmick North lie above hut-circles (the details of these buildings are contained in Appendix 8; plan 2). At Balnabroich (fig. 28), the ritual monuments (a stone circle, two ring cairns, the exceptionally large Grey cairn and another cairn (9; NO 05 NE 1, 44) are, in turn, surrounded by hut-circles, walls and field cairns, some now doubtless lost under forestry. Although this close physical association cannot be fully explained and need not imply contemporaneity, such juxtapositions of settlement and ritual landscapes are a frequent occurrence in North-east Perth. In some degree, at least, an attachment for individual areas is likely to endure, stemming from association and memory, as much as from their suitability for exploitation, whether economically or ritually.

Nonetheless, the limited dating evidence and the similarity seen at Balnabroich between the deposits in the hut-circles and the cairns, with the prominence given to white quartz pebbles (Stuart 1866, 407-8), lends a coherency to these landscapes in North-east Perth. The few excavated hut-circles - including those at Pitcarmick North (Barrett and Downes 1996, 1) - suggest, on the basis of radio-carbon and pottery evidence, a date range extending from the late second millennium B.C. into the early part of the first millennium B.C. In line with the majority of areas in Scotland, only one of the hut-circles at Carn Dubh appears to have been constructed in the second half of the first millennium B.C. (Rideout 1995, 158-9). However, in Sutherland and Caithness, the more elaborate hut-circles, at least, are consistently of Iron Age date (Fairhurst

1971b; Mercer 1980, 1981, 1985a); they appear to fit into a sequence of aggrandizement that culminates in broch architecture (see chapter 3.1). The degree of elaboration demonstrated by the numerous, double walled hut-circles of North-east Perth is strikingly similar to those found at Kilphedir in Sutherland (Fairhurst 1971b, 5-6), a sophistication which is conspicuously absent amongst hut-circles to the west of the Tay (Cowley 1997). Therefore, the unique character of the hut-circles of eastern Perthshire could be the outcome of a similar, albeit earlier, phase of social tension, producing a similar effect to that which occurred in later Iron Age Caithness and Sutherland.

The sequence of building at Carn Dubh, Moulin (near Pitlochry), while confirming this general dating scheme, suggests that only a few (perhaps two or three) of the seven roundhouses were occupied at any one time (Rideout 1995, 183-4). At least where this site is concerned, the seeming density of settlement may therefore be merely the product of the final development of the hut-circle landscape. This could be a result of seasonal use of the higher ground or of low stocking rates ensuring that the uplands were not heavily exploited (Tipping in Rideout 1995, 182); this need not also imply that population density was low, but simply that people pursued economic strategies which did not require extensive utilisation of the uplands. The eight partially or wholly excavated hut-circles at Carn Dubh are consistent in suggesting that there was considerable activity within or close to these buildings in periods following their abandonment and collapse (the very similar situation at Pitcarmick is discussed in more detail below, pg. 198-9). Much of this activity cannot be characterised and some is clearly Medieval in date (and is therefore discussed in chapter 5.2.2), but it implies that post-abandonment use of these sites is potentially a widespread feature of these uplands (Rideout 1995, 184ff).

The only evidence for cereal growing in the pollen record from the Carn Dubh area dates from 1000 B.C. to 600 B.C. cal. and ties in relatively well with the major period of hut-circle occupation (there are in addition a few barley grains from the excavations themselves). This phase of cultivation is combined with evidence for potentially high intensity grazing but, after this date, activity on these hills seems to have revolved

around a period of “low-intensity” grassland management (Tipping in Rideout 1995, 183). As only hut-circle 2 is built in this period (around 745-385 B.C. cal. at two sigma variation (Dalland in Rideout 1995, 175)), this might provide a context for the post-abandonment use of the other hut-circles. This highlights the problem of identifying the Iron Age in North-east Perth, a period for which the evidence is neither very extensive or easily characterised.

The hut-circles are certainly the most numerous element in the earlier landscapes of North-east Perth, perhaps their most dominant feature. Even with recent excavations, such as those at Pitcarmick North and Carn Dubh, the development and working of this landscape of hut-circles is little understood. Through detailed study of the form and architecture of the hut-circles and their relationships to the other elements of the landscape of which they are a part, it would seem possible to begin an exploration of both these problems.

The majority of hut-circles on the south ridge at Pitcarmick North lie on or near the crest of the ridge, barring 312 and 313, which are located within the fields (plan 2). The most elaborate, 325 and 324, which from a distance can look more striking than the adjacent burial cairns, sit on the summit of the ridge. Two, 327 and 328, sit on the top of an adjacent knoll, while 305, 309, 350 and 351 are tucked cosily into its south-facing slope. Whether on, or just below the crest, these roundhouses are in dominant positions. Below them fan out terraced fields defined by walls and lynchets and occupied by numerous clearance cairns (plan 2). On the north-facing slope, however, there are only short lengths of walling, in spite of the fact that this slope has been obviously cultivated at some period in its history. None of the fields link in with the buildings and contemporaneity can only be presumed on the basis of their close physical relationship and seeming coherency (but see below, pg. 205).

To begin work in the morning, one would look out over these fields, before walking down into them. The return home in the evening would be to come up the hill, the houses melting into the hillside, lost in the browns and greens of the surrounding

vegetation, distinguished only by the muddy scar of the yard and the shape of the roof, with its spiral of smoke, breaking the skyline. Smaller huts, perhaps for storage or shelter, lie within these fields [313; 327; 328; ?324]. Only the most elaborate hut-circle [325] sits firmly isolated, now slightly apart from the fields. This situation is likely to have been a product of the, presumably later, ploughing which appears to run right up to its walls.

On the north ridge, the hut-circles also lie stretched out along its crest, while further roundhouses lie on the summit of two knolls, separated from the western end of the main ridge by a marshy area (154.3; NO 05 NE 16; plan 4). Any relationships to fields and clearance cairns here are even more obscured by the considerable amount of later ploughing, which has reduced many of the cairns to barely visible humps in the ground. In four cases, long stretches of walling do run up to the roundhouses as though they may be defining enclosed areas and hint at the prospect of once more extensive field systems [511; 516; 517; 519]. They need not, however, be contemporary as they are more reminiscent in scale of the possible strip field boundaries described below (pg. 200). The hut-circles, themselves, have clearly been respected as they remain untouched by ploughing. Roundhouses 516 and 517 have well-preserved external wall faces, particularly around their entrances and on the south-facing side where the slope of the ridge drops away (plate 5). This heightens the impact of the buildings in the same way as the kerb around the Bronze Age cairns and is confirmed by the defined nature of those doorways examined by excavation (e.g. Dalnaglar 1 (Stewart 1964, 138)). Furthermore, the largest hut-circles [516; 517] sit higher than their smaller counterparts. Strung out along the ridge, they give an impression of greater isolation from each other than those hut-circles on the south ridge, as if part of smaller units in some form of loose confederacy.

On the northern knoll, the hut-circle [511] on the highest point lies partly over the remains of its predecessor [512](fig. 39). On the southern knoll, the two hut-circles [514; 515] do not overlap but the relationship of their doorways seems to suggest that they are unlikely to have been in use at the same time (fig. 39). The large and regularly

shaped cairn south-east of 515 may have a further, mainly obscured, hut-circle lying underneath it. On the southern ridge, the flat platform that creates a working area in front of the most elaborate double-walled roundhouse [325] appears to be the base of an earlier building [326]. Again on the southern ridge, excavation has proved that, what on surface evidence appeared to be a wall forming part of a yard attached to 351, was also the remnants of an earlier hut (Barrett and Downes 1993).

This evidence confirms that there might indeed be a greater time depth than is implicit in the dates from other excavated examples, even if its range can still not be assessed with any accuracy. Equally, each house may have had a short life-span, leaving only the most recent - and perhaps most monumental - as testimony to this phase of occupation. There is enough evidence at Pitcarmick North itself to suggest that the continual rebuilding of houses, while using the previous one as a yard or enclosure, was a feature of this period. Moreover, it must be likely that any such substantial remains could - and would - support the continual rebuilding of houses upon them. The evidence from the excavated roundhouses at Carn Dubh suggests the validity of the above propositions but, unfortunately, cannot confirm the significance of one over another. There is clear evidence of phases of expansion and contraction into the hills throughout the Bronze and Iron Ages to set alongside the apparent re-use of buildings, even after their walls had partially collapsed (Rideout 1995, 186).

Beyond these practicalities, it suggests that the people who inhabited these buildings needed to draw on the traditions of past occupation on that site. As they were surrounded by the remains of the past, they would be constrained to incorporate them into their daily lives. This takes the cairns and any earlier roundhouses beyond their mere physicality and convenient placement, shaping them into active mediators in the history of the people living there, a reminder of their intrinsic place within this landscape and that community. There may also have been other aspects of more portable material culture - such as the shale bracelet (of possibly prehistoric type) found in the occupation layers of the excavated Pitcarmick-type building (Barrett and Downes 1994; see chapter 5.2.2) - remaining to add their weight. This could imply continuous

occupation; the replacement of one house as it fell down by its successor as part of an ongoing process. However, since many of these remains must have been clearly recognisable for many generations to come, it is possible that the ideas and meanings behind these decaying buildings remained a part of peoples' consciousness. If so, their footings could have provided a focus for more sporadic re-settlement of the area by those whose main focus of settlement now lay within the glens.

Another element in this chronological depth is suggested by the presence of standing orthostats in two of the roundhouses on the north ridge [512; 514]. These sit amidst the collapse of the walls and appear, therefore, to be later than the occupation of the buildings. They represent both a re-use of selected facing stones from the walls and the shape of the hut-circle itself as an enclosure or amphitheatre. The two stones in 512 stand at the back of the roundhouse, directly in line with the gap between the lower walls of 512 and the more definite walls of 511 (fig. 39). This creates the impression of an entrance way and lends a dramatic aspect to the setting of these stones, especially as the ground then drops away from behind them. The incised letters (certainly a 'D' - the others are unrecognisable) on the more northerly stone suggest that - if the stone is a boundary marker - at least one phase of this re-use of the roundhouse could be very late indeed, although it does not necessarily date the erection of the stone itself. The stone in 514 (fig. 39), even if it is the sole upstanding remnant of an internal wall face, may have been chosen deliberately. Although it is less than a metre high (as are the other stones), its impact derives from its prominent position on the top of the knoll and its consequent visibility from all sides, but most notably from the north and west, where the ground drops away more sharply. These acts of re-use gain much of their significance from the presence of the building remains and, even if their original use had been forgotten, may stem from a period when the hut-circles still retained a significant place in the memory of the people who inhabited this landscape.

The hut-circles of the two ridges display a variety of forms. Most are found at the lower end of the size range (25m^2 - 105m^2) represented at Pitcarmick North. The

majority of the smaller (30m^2 - 50m^2) structures occur on the south ridge, while the north ridge has a greater proportion of the larger ones (over 60m^2). The amount of stone in their build suggests a degree of permanency that is the probable basis of the elaboration of the roundhouse form. In many cases, this involves the use of upright slabs, generally on the inner face and perhaps acting as a retainer for a turf wall (RCAHMS 1990, 2). A more comprehensive use of organic building materials is only apparent in two buildings. A single hut-circle of bowl form [513](fig. 39), with no stone visible in its build, finds parallels elsewhere in North-east Perth, as an unrecognised part of the group which the RCAHMS view as providing a revetment for a timber building (*ibid.*). The heather covered structures 327 and 328 may also be of this type. Another [519](fig. 40) has what seems to be a ring-ditch running around its interior, in which a timber wall could have stood (*cf.* Hill 1982, 24-5).

Building 519 and the other isolated roundhouses on the north ridge [516; 517] are part of a group of hut-circles of large diameter which, although they do contain a large amount of stone in their build, are perhaps not as elaborate as the hut-circles on the south ridge (fig. 40). These distinctions are matched in hut-circle groups throughout North-east Perth and do not seem to be attributable to differential stone-robbing. The two groups outlined above appear to constitute a more representative typology for this area than that of Harris (1985) and the RCAHMS (1990, 2ff), albeit a very rough one, since it is based - as are theirs - largely on observation of the surface remains. In this categorisation, the relatively few double-walled hut-circles are seen as the ultimate elaboration of the first group. This, however, need not mean that they occur in strictly chronological succession. The tiny hut-circle [518] appears rather anachronistic, set apart both by its size and the insubstantiality of its construction (fig. 40). For this reason it may be associated with the adjacent, but later, building 508 and the amorphous structure set against the large field wall (see below, pg. 209 and Chapter 5.2.3). Building 312 is not particularly reminiscent of a roundhouse in form and is also discussed below, alongside the shieling huts (Chapter 5.2.3).

There are now seven excavated hut-circle sites in North-east Perth (Persie, Dalrulzion, Dalnaglar, Tulloch Field, Carn Dubh and Pitcarmick North), all variable in extent and in the quality of the data, the latter largely because of the date of excavation (Stuart 1866; Thorneycroft 1932-3, 1945-7; Stewart 1964; Thoms 1979; Rideout 1995; Barrett and Downes, in prep.; the small-scale excavations undertaken by Rideout (appended to the main Carn Dubh report) on a hut-circle near Alyth are not discussed here). In spite of problems in utilising such published information, it was decided - in light of earlier discussions on the character of prehistoric settlement in the Highlands (see chapter 3.1) and because of the potentially unique character of North-east Perth - to concentrate solely on these sites in the subsequent discussion. To characterise the occupation of the buildings explored here is difficult in the absence of complete excavation of many of the structures examined, particularly as little emphasis has been placed on the external areas of the house and on clear recording of artefact distributions in the past. There is clearly a danger in beginning to extrapolate from scanty archaeological remains to complete buildings and in postulating the uses to which the spaces in and around them were put. Nonetheless, this process is necessary if any attempt is to be made to establish how their inhabitants lived and worked within them.

Even accounting for the probable collapse of turf walls, the floor area of these buildings is large - adequate for the people occupying them, for storage space and even to house some of their animals. The internal arrangements of these houses do not appear elaborate - if there is paving, it tends to concentrate around the entrance and the centre (e.g. West Persie) and only one house there is described as having an entirely flagged floor (Stuart 1866, 406ff). Just as it forms the centre of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century rectangular buildings (see chapter 4.4), the hearth - surrounded by a public area in which people could gather - is generally assumed to be the nucleus of the roundhouse. Excavation has demonstrated that this was not always the case, although the hut's circular form would appear to suggest a conscious need for a central point around which all activities could revolve (cf. Hingley 1990, 128-35). In the case of the excavated examples in North-east Perth, the hearths or fire-pits, if present at all, do appear to be

either in the centre or very slightly off-centre. At Dalrulzion, at least, larger artefacts such as querns were also found close to the centre, as were concentrations of occupation debris (Thorneycroft 1932-3, 195). This evidence would suggest that these buildings were occupied quite intensively both by people and animals, most probably on a regular basis.

In the case of House 4 at Carn Dubh, the intramural space in this double-walled hut-circle was utilised as a store for fire-cracked stones. However, the precise nature of this feature could not be characterised on the basis of the excavated material from this (or, in fact, any other) site (Rideout 1995, 149, 163). A similar paucity of structural evidence means that both the nature of the roof and of any internal divisions will also have to be inferred. It is possible that the sloping roof of the house might engender, through height differences, its own divisions (cf. Cunningham, quoted in Parker Pearson and Richards 1994a, 17). People, activities and animals would tend to concentrate around a central fire where the roof would be higher, while objects were pushed away into storage spaces under the eaves. In a roundhouse, the creation of separate and self-contained spaces is perhaps easier to achieve than in a rectangular building since, around a central focal point or space, the provision of access is not difficult and individual, and unconnected, compartments can open off it.

Amongst the examples dug by Stuart (1866, 406ff), postholes were recognised in only one hut-circle, part of an enclosed pair at West Persie. There a central posthole was found, with another seven presumably arranged around the edge of the circle. These, even if primarily roof supports, could divide the hut into compartments, reminiscent in form, if not in substance, of the wheelhouses of the north and west. Post rings were also found in two, possibly four, of the seven Carn Dubh houses (Rideout 1995, 187), in hut-circle Q at Dalrulzion (Thorneycroft 1945-7, 132) and in the hut platform at Tulloch Field (Thoms 1979; RCAHMS 1990, 81). However, in House 5 at Carn Dubh, the presence of circular gullies and a post-ring seems to deny the presence of radial divisions (Rideout 1995, 167), while implying more concentric divisions. For other hut-circles, the problem of a lack of internal structural detail can only be seen in the light of

the variations in construction demonstrated even within a single house (e.g. Dalnaglar 1; Stewart 1964, 139). This may provide more insight into the problems of archaeological recognition and survival than into the structural history of the roundhouse (Rideout 1995, 187ff) and, in this context, the evidence for some sort of partitioning in these buildings must take precedence.

However, in opposition to the compartmentalisation proposed above, recent work in Wessex has suggested rather more simple divisions. There a group of large double-ringed Iron Age roundhouses were apparently firmly segregated, through find distributions, into a living area on the right and a sleeping area (with very few finds) on the left (Fitzpatrick 1994, 68-70). There are also very slight hints in the excavation reports, again at Persie (north and west sides) and at Dalrulzion F and Q (south and south-west), for the finds being concentrated on one side of the building (Stuart 1866, 408; Thorneycroft 1932-3, 195ff; Thorneycroft 1945-7, 133; cf. Parker Pearson and Richards 1994b, 48-9). The three examples from North-east Perth are perhaps internally consistent but, since the majority of the evidence from the excavations in this area suggest that artefactual debris had been swept under the walls to keep clear the floor area (e.g. Stewart 1962, 136), remain inconclusive.

If the doorway can be seen as one of the most important points in a roundhouse - because it provides a meaningful, and perhaps the most obvious, point of articulation in these buildings (as has already been observed in the survey data from Pitcarmick, see above) - then the division between the inside and outside of the building, mediated by an entrance passageway (a very common feature in both surveyed and excavated houses) or a porch (e.g. Carn Dubh 5), may be more significant than any internal partitions. It marks the separation of the domestic world to which access can be controlled from the large - and uncontrollable - world outside. The doorways of roundhouses consistently open towards the south or south-east and, if the house can be seen as a microcosm of the wider world, this perhaps emphasises the importance of a daily rebirth of life, reflected in the rising sun (Parker Pearson and Richards 1994b, 47). The evidence for any of these

hypotheses is necessarily limited, but it all coalesces to hint at the ordering principles behind the structuring of the spaces within the house.

This need for clearly ordered spaces seems to be confirmed by the landscape with which the roundhouses are associated. Many of the hut-circle groups lie within a yard, whose defining walls are often linked in to the buildings themselves and which are entered by means of large defined trackways. For the more elaborate double-walled hut-circles, the most reasonable explanation for some of the larger enclosed areas is a function as a yard or pen - although the flat area inside the enclosure of 325 would provide a suitable stance for a timber house. Yards are not so prominent around single or paired houses, but excavation and detailed examination at Pitcarmick North has shown that the remains of earlier buildings appear to form yards for the building currently in use. The spaces with immediate access to the house are therefore limited, not so much perhaps to restrict access to them (by people at least), but to serve as a reminder of the closing down of the world as the visitor approached the house - the point around which that world articulated.

Extending beyond the immediate vicinity of the buildings, many groups of hut-circles appear to be integral to the field systems that surround them. Such field systems have already been described for Pitcarmick North (see above) and can also be clearly visualised from the plans of larger areas published by the RCAHMS (Knockali and Drumturn Burn are described below; for Middleton Muir, one of the largest areas of all, see RCAHMS 1990, 64). Large areas of land appear to be enclosed, although - even if this is the case - they often open unhindered into an area of bog (*ibid.*, 4-5). The field walls, themselves, where they have not been diminished by ploughing, are substantial (often c. 2m wide and 0.5m high), a considerable imposition on wide areas of the landscape. To look up from below at the south-facing slopes of the ridges at Pitcarmick North is to be struck instantaneously by the scale and coherency of the fields (plan 2). Drumturn Burn (fig. 41) provides the clearest indication that the same structuring principles seen in the orientation of the house might equally apply to field layouts; the

entrances to the fields also tend to open to the south or south-east (124.4; NO 15 NW 13, NE 12-4). Defined access to resources, whether in terms of indicating the differential ownership of particular fields or simply separation of areas for intensive human use from those over which they needed to exert less control, would seem to be very important in these settlements.

Within the fields are slighter walls, lynchets and small clearance cairns amidst a clutter of rig and furrow of varying widths. It is impossible to be clear about the relationships between all these cultivation traces from the surface remains - and would probably be equally so on excavation, since previous work has indeed only proved the time-depth of such field systems and the difficulties of finding dateable material (cf. Rideout 1995, 185). Any discussion of these remains, therefore, will have to rely on huge assumptions.

In this context, the south ridge at Pitcarmick North is perhaps the most important since the lack of such intense later ploughing has left intact the broad outline of small fields swinging around the slopes below the roundhouses (plan 2). Massive lynchets, suggestive of a great deal of soil build-up, form some of the enclosing walls of these fields and each field contains a scatter of clearance cairns. A huge lynchet and a series of narrow terraces running across the slope to the west of hut-circles 325-328 give a similar impression to that of the more enclosed fields. The relative survival and varying widths of the rig on these hillsides is the only way of implying that some may be of roundhouse date (but see below, pg. 235). Intense cultivation is indeed confirmed by the soil depths collected through probing over the south-facing slopes of the ridge and by the overwhelming predominance of soil in the make-up of the clearance cairn excavated during the 1995 season (J.C. Barrett, pers. comm.). The size of the walls and lynchets, alongside the surprising depth of soil, confirms the permanency of occupation suggested by the construction of the houses. In addition, the physical remains provide an impression of the scale and degree of human impact which implies a rigidly controlled and segregated, if not especially hierarchical, world.

Stone clearance would be essential to all agriculture on these hills, and the contrasts between the cleared and uncleared areas are striking (plan 2). The ways in which such large amounts of stone were dealt with seems likely to be one of the most archaeologically apparent features and, indeed, small clearance cairns are not only the most dominant feature numerically, but also the most dominant physically, on these hillsides. To pile the stone into heaps close to their original location is the simplest way to solve the problem of unnecessary and surplus stone litter, one found throughout the span of the archaeological record. However, if it is less tortuous to clear the stone into small heaps, this results in the problem of cultivating the tiny patches of ground left between these clearance cairns. This would seem to throw the emphasis on to hoe and mattock, rather than plough, cultivation (Graham 1956-7, 9-10), although the amount of rig in and around the cairns rather negates this hypothesis (*ibid.*, 23; plan 2), while suggesting that clearance cairns are not, in fact, so impractical a solution as they may first appear. On parts of the south ridge, the cairns do seem to form small and irregular plots, leaving cleared areas in the middle (e.g. near the bottom of the ridge (cf. Mercer 1980, 77)). Their resemblance in size and shape to burial cairns and the difficulty in telling them apart (to modern eyes at least) may lend an added import to these cairns. There are, indeed, many examples of supposedly simple clearance cairns that do contain burials (Graham 1956-7, 18-9).

Within the very well-defined fields on the south-facing slopes, there are comparatively fewer cairns than elsewhere on the south ridge (plan 2). To build a wall is presumably an extension of the practice of building cairns (with no particular chronological significance). Nonetheless, it seems also to embody a need to encircle a space, to separate it from the uncultivated land, or imply possession and ownership, both permanently and clearly. It may help to keep animals away from the crops or from each other, but this does not automatically require a boundary - especially if there is sufficient available manpower to look after those animals. There is the merest hint here that the walled fields are part of a more developed system associated with the largest and more elaborate hut-circles.

Inside the large enclosure walls at several sites in North-east Perth are strip fields, but perhaps only in the case of Drumderg (fig. 42), is the association to the adjacent hut-circles convincing (122.9; NO 15 NE 5). However, on the south and east facing slopes of the north ridge, there are linear alignments of mounded stones; these are consistently around ten metres apart and are suggestive of plot boundaries (plan 4). These walls head straight downslope; there are a few other walls of a similar scale over the rest of the ridge (and they are found next to hut-circles 327 and 328 on the south ridge) which, although they are not so regular, may also form part of the same system. Though quite slight, these walls appear too distinct to be simply the result of stone build-up on each rig and it is likely that any later ploughing, short of removing them entirely, would have had to respect them. If they are the remnants of strip fields, then their presence implies that the definition of who could claim ownership of which patch of land was of importance. There are not such clear correlations between the location of the roundhouses and these fields, nor the same complexity and grouping of buildings, on this ridge as at Drumderg; these strip fields - as with those at Ranageig (310.15, 16; NO 05 SE 20, 51) - could, therefore, be of a very much later date.

As on the south ridge at Pitcarmick North, hut-circles do seem to occur in clusters suggestive of nucleated farming communities - the buildings often arrayed around a yard and with a trackway leading away into the fields (RCAHMS 1990, 4). On the south-facing slopes of Knockali (fig. 43) are a group of five hut-circles, with an enclosed yard in front of their doors formed from a widening of the track running around the contour of the slope and opening out in the saddle on either side of the knoll on which the buildings sit (124.4; NO 15 NW 13, NE 12-14; *ibid.*, 45-6). The field walls and clearance heaps below the houses appear to form a coherent unit perhaps contemporary with them, although in their present form they are of a number of builds (*ibid.*, 45). For both the hut-circles and the field layout, the appearance they now give is undoubtedly the culmination of a long process of development. Such a conclusion is perhaps equally applicable to the very extensive, yet ostensibly quite simple and straight-forward, layout

of hut-circles at Drumturn Burn (124.10; NO 15 NE 10) (fig. 41). These clusters appear to reflect small groups of apparently well-organised farmers, operating within what seems to be a fairly stable environment.

As Plan 1 indicates, the numbers of more isolated hut-circles distributed around the field systems are likely to have formed an integral part of this organisation, although none have been excavated to confirm whether they are indeed contemporary. It is conceivable that they may have been used for the storage of grain and other agricultural produce, while people and animals could have utilised them as shelter, perhaps on a seasonal basis. There are perhaps not enough dissimilarities between these isolated examples and the build of the larger hut-circles to imply the presence of a social hierarchy, with the implication that the single hut-circles were the homes of poorer members of the community. The smallest buildings of all (internal diameters c. 4m or less) tend to be found amongst the clusters of larger hut-circles (e.g. Loch Benachally, 140.18; NO 04 NE 10). Some are clearly secondary features, as they overlie other hut-circles and could therefore be shieling huts (see the discussion of 518 in chapter 5.2.3), though others are more likely to have had a storage or other function (e.g. Drumturn Burn, 124.4; NO 15 NW 13, NE 12-4). A use as storage huts could account for all the smaller hut-circles on the southern ridge at Pitcarmick North, if less clearly for any of those on the northernmost ridge. There, the large, apparently separate hut-circles (including the successively occupied examples on the south-westerly knoll) may represent more individual and self-contained farmsteads within the wider community. An examination of the map of the whole Pitcarmick, Glen Derby and Tullochurran area (plan 1), suggests that there are many other such farmsteads (e.g. 154.1, .6; NO 05 NE 32, 104-5, 107, 145; RCAHMS 1990, 76). These could have been more closely involved in the animal element of the subsistence base, although others do sit within an area of cultivation remains (e.g. 154.2; NO 05 NE 17). At present, in the absence of dateable evidence, there is nothing to support the suggestion that they represented a simpler - whether earlier or later - phase of social organisation and it seems preferable to see them as operating in conjunction with the nucleated groups of hut-circles.

5.2.2 A unified landscape: the Early Medieval and Medieval periods

“In North-east Perth, a series of buildings of a kind hitherto unrecognised has now been identified, at least forty-eight of which have enough characteristics in common for them to be usefully designated as a separate category within Medieval and later settlement. They are referred to as Pitcarmick-type buildings, as all of their defining characteristics are seen amongst the group that has been recorded at Pitcarmick”

(RCAHMS 1990, 12)

The bluff at its western end frames the world of the southern ridge, defining its limits and structuring action upon it. How this feature of the landscape may have been exploited is unknown. Only from the top of the bluff is the whole of the ridge visible and as the dominant feature in the immediate landscape, its bulk lends it its own significance (plate 2). From the top of the bluff, all other features, especially the two burial cairns - in their present grass-covered form - are flattened out. This view does, however, highlight a natural triangular boulder, sitting above its own small - yet dramatic - change in slope and with its flat side facing down the ridge (plate 6, 7). In addition to its seemingly too precise shape, this rock, because it is composed of much more coarse schist, is very different in colour to the boulders that litter the ground around it. Again the coincidence of form and location has leant this boulder a particular significance (plan 3). The boulder - although it was not altered in itself - was clearly employed in the creation of the architecture of this part of the ridge, though to assign it to any specific period during the occupation of the hill will, by necessity, have to be founded on huge assumptions.

The immediate surroundings of the triangular boulder are emphasised, on the west side, by lines of small stones, radiating out from the boulder at its centre and seeming to define a cleared, slightly hollow, area in front of it. On the south side, the line of stones culminates in a larger, upright stone. This upright stone is matched by a small cairn on the other side of a narrow path, which curves up the slope from the bottom of the small bluff. The cairn is suggested on the RCAHMS plan to be part of a wall, but appears to be far more discontinuous than that description would imply; perhaps more usefully it

can be seen as a small amount of stone clearance to define this path. In addition - and in conjunction with the stone - it suggests the existence of an 'entrance' into the level space to the west of the triangular boulder. The path appears to peter out beyond the entrance, although it probably does run around the head of the hollow and up the slope beyond. A further path, coming in from the north-east, delimits the western edge of this level area. This impression is further enhanced on its north-west side - on the opposite side of the path to the triangular boulder - by what seems to be an irregularly shaped, flat-topped mound of stones and earth. This has the appearance of a low platform - on which people participating in any activities around the boulder could stand. As a corollary, perhaps, it defines and delimits entry into an inner space close to the stone, reinforcing the impression of the area on either side of the triangular boulder as a stage on which the movement and positioning of the participants was directed on a very intimate scale.

Immediately to the east of the boulder is a square depression, neatly lined with small upright stones, some of which are now loose. This seems to be a relatively shallow socket for an upright monument - of stone or wood - rather than a hollow for a hearth or a basin for water (since probing suggests it does not have a stone lining to its base). Such a monument could therefore have drawn on the substance of the main bluff behind it to stand out as the one upright feature in an undulating landscape. From immediately below, it would break the skyline in dramatic fashion - as the flat face of the boulder still does. The socket is a more delicate structure and its level of survival suggests that it is perhaps of a later date than the other anthropogenic elements around the triangular boulder. East of the level area on which the socket is situated, the slope falls away as a series of tiny terraces, apparently artificially edged with stone. To the north of the stone, a natural hollow, set into the slope of the bluff, is again outlined by small upright stones. Its purpose is unclear and it may have more in common with the areas defined by similar upright stones on the top of the bluff.

Certain elements of this description hint at possible differences in the use of the two sides of the boulder. This may or may not have implications, reinforced by the fragility

of the stone-lined socket, for the relative dating of these remains. Any upstanding monument in the socket must have been intended to face out over the lower part of the ridge, if only because it would be partially obscured by the boulder if viewed from the west side. It would also gain extra height and impact if viewed from below. In this respect, therefore, the monument might represent a focus for action without the need of other permanent architecture.

The area around the triangular stone appears to be one of the most important focal points of the south ridge, no doubt subject to continual re-interpretation and re-appropriation of its significance. Its seeming elaboration and emphasis on stone as an important substance may indicate an association with the roundhouse phase of occupation. This is corroborated by its position demarcating the limits of the field systems associated with the hut-circles. At some later stage, the significance of the triangular stone was altered through the erection of an upright monument in front of it, an extension of its natural consequence, perhaps necessitated in a period that required human influence on the natural order of things to be made rather more explicit. Such an attitude recalls cross marked stones such as Camusvrachan in Atholl (see Appendix 9) and, perhaps most explicitly, Clach na Caiplich in Caithness (NMRS no. ND 13 NW 4), a small cross-slab in a very remote moorland location close to the present parish boundary of Latheron. The purpose of such carved stones in remote areas is unclear, but they may have acted as foci for worship. On the north ridge, there is a small cairn with a hollowed top, the hollow filled with stones placed on edge. Although this is on a much smaller scale, it is reminiscent of the socket on the south ridge, and may have contained a similar upright monument. This perhaps indicates a conception of the two ridges as separate, possibly quite distinct, areas of occupation, each with their own identity - which was expressed, at least at one point during their history, through these two monuments.

On the southern ridge at Pitcarmick North, there are a possible three buildings of so-called Pitcarmick-type, two of which have undergone either complete or partial

excavation and both of which have been dated to the Early Medieval period (303.1-2; NO 05 NE 84, 136; Barrett and Downes 1993, 1994, 1996, in prep.; the building details are contained in Appendix 7; plan 2). This building type, as a whole, has been the subject of a detailed examination of its architectural form (Jack 1995; Jack, in prep.). This has concluded that, while these buildings do not form a particularly coherent group (fig. 44), consisting rather of a wide variety of buildings (that might also include those buildings considered by the RCAHMS to be unclassifiable), they, nonetheless, appear to present a similar functional response to a specific problem in the Early Medieval period (Jack 1995, 70ff, 101; RCAHMS 1990, 12). Pitcarmick-type buildings are clearly longhouses, with a narrower and lower byre end and a wider living area with a central hearth, both entered through the single door. The floor areas of buildings 300 and 412 (each around 100m^2), suggest that these structures are far larger than the majority of the hut-circles. Many have porches and suggestions of paving outside the door. Beyond this, there are considerable differences in the actual form, the ratios of hollowed floor to living space and the presence or absence of internal divisions and, externally, annexes and enclosures (Jack 1995, 70ff). While the larger of the two excavated buildings [300] at Pitcarmick North appears to be a straightforward longhouse, with a well built hearth at the west end and a rather more poorly-constructed sump (rather than a proper drain) at the eastern end, the size of the hearth in the smaller structure [301] would seem to preclude any other activity taking place in the building; this has led to the suggestion that it could have functioned as some sort of sauna or workshop (Barrett and Downes 1993, 1994, 1996, in prep.). Even allowing for individual choice, if this degree of difference is present amongst others of the relative small number of buildings (forty-nine) identified as belonging to this group and these differences go as deep - as seems more than likely - as the social and conceptual frameworks of those who dwelt in these buildings, then further justifications need to be sought for their classification as a coherent type. Location appears to have been one of the primary motivations behind the RCAHMS's assignation of a date later than that of the hut-circles to the Pitcarmick

group (*ibid.*, 12). It is the landscape and environment, therefore, that forms the focus of the following discussion.

The two excavated Pitcarmick-type buildings [300; 301] lie along the contour, just to the south of and below the crest of the south ridge (plan 2). If these were turf buildings with low walls on stone footings, they would barely break the skyline, melting completely into their similarly earthy background. They sit half way along the length of the ridge, possibly central both to the activities upon the ridge and to those going on in the basin below. This potential centrality in the life of the ridge must also draw upon the significance of the existing remains lying around these two buildings. On this part of the ridge are both the two burial cairns and the main concentration of roundhouses (35, 154.4; NO 05 NE 17, 102). The Pitcarmick-type buildings do not impose upon this landscape of the hut-circles and their fields, nor do they seem to have any associated features; the physical juxtaposition of buildings appears to be of significance only in that it allows the later buildings to draw on the weight of previous activity on the hill for their own purposes. This may also partially explain the elements of continuity seen in the material culture (particularly white, roughly worked, quartz pebbles) from these sites. Apart from the lack of pottery, there is indeed little to distinguish the finds from these Pitcarmick-type buildings, or the post-abandonment phases at Carn Dubh, from those of the roundhouses themselves (Rideout 1995, 184). Nonetheless, the apparent lack of a constructed Pitcarmick landscape may be indicative of greater social and economic differences (see below, pg. 215ff).

The third Pitcarmick-type building [412] is not quite so central to the roundhouse landscape but it does sit on the main crest of the ridge between the cairnfields on either side (plan 3). The structure itself appears to be an amalgamation of elements, yielding a rather superficial resemblance to a coherent building and several enclosures (fig. 34). It is possible that there is a Pitcarmick-type building underneath a subsequent alteration of the structure into a series of enclosures laid out around an embanked trackway, along which animals could have been driven into the area under the bluff (plate 8). There is a short length of walling, inside the current end of the building or enclosure, which is

suggestive of the end wall of a round-ended building. The supposed west end of the building is marked by a slight change in level and a vegetation difference, presumably the remnants of a once more definite wall. This is in marked contrast to the long walls of the structure, which are comparatively quite massive in scale. On close examination these walls do not, however, appear to be of one phase. The southerly wall seems to have two faces within it, one of which could tie in with the short length of wall described above. The more northerly wall curves outwards at its east end and appears to continue as the wall of the large enclosure to the north of this building. Amidst all this complexity, it is hard to assess the original nature of the building.

The structure of these longhouses - with the prominence given to animals, both in the provision of living quarters inside the building and their subsequent close association with people - suggests the potential economic importance of a pastoral system of land utilisation at this time. The patterns of exploitation reflected in the pollen record in the post-roundhouse phases of Carn Dubh confirm this proposition and also imply that this was undertaken on a fairly small scale (Rideout 1995, 184ff). If so, this would entail a more extensive use of the areas surrounding the buildings than that suggested by the tightly enclosed system of fields associated with the hut-circles. The system of field walls already in existence on the south ridge might, therefore, have provided sufficient suitable divisions, particularly if the animals did not have to be rigorously separated from other areas of activity. If this was the case, this phase of occupation of the hill might leave very little trace in the structural record. It is possible that, once the environmental work is complete, it will - as seems to be the case at Carn Dubh - be possible to identify such a phase, if it does exist, in the pollen record and soil profiles on the hill.

This idea of re-use of existing elements of the landscape can be taken further. An arable system of agriculture cannot be maintained without the input of large amounts of manure. In the context of Highland Scotland, it seems likely that much of this would come from animals. This will be as true for the roundhouse landscape as for the

Pitcarmick one. If this is so, then the people who lived in these longhouses could simply have continued to operate within the field system already laid out for them by the people of the hut-circles. This need not imply a close association in time, merely that the landscape they found suited - or could easily be adapted to - the requirements of these later inhabitants. While it is possible to dismiss this as simple economic necessity or, perhaps more likely, as indicative of small-scale occupation over a short time period (somewhat offset by the evidence of the radiocarbon dates), the social consequences of operating within a divided and contained landscape would seem to have to be accounted for ideologically. Lying behind this is the implication that the understanding of their world held by the people who lived in these Pitcarmick-type buildings did not depend on their creating a 'landscape' of their own.

Exploration of these ideas with reference to other supposed Pitcarmick-type buildings throws up interesting similarities and differences. Many of these buildings are found within pre-existing settlement and agricultural landscapes, but very close relationships to individual elements of these landscapes are rare, therefore recalling quite closely the situation at Pitcarmick. In the survey data collected by the RCAHMS, there are two Pitcarmick-type buildings overlying roundhouses (244; NO 05 SE 16 and 309; NO 14 NW 54; cf. RCAHMS 1990, 12) and, to these, a potential excavated example at Carn Dubh (Rideout 1995, 153ff; fig. 45) can be added. This sub-rectangular building runs east-west along the contour and is both narrower and sunken at its eastern end. It exploits the existing walls to create an area 15.00m by 12.50m, a space that suggests the shape of buildings at Balnabroich, but which does not fit in easily with the 'classic' Pitcarmick type. However, the excavator's belief that the builders of the house were uncomfortable with the width that the roundhouse imposed upon them and had tried to decrease it at the east end (*ibid.*, 159), may provide at least a partial explanation for this. As with the larger of the two excavated buildings at Pitcarmick North, this structure has a central hearth (from which a date of A.D. 660-850 cal. was obtained) and paving

extending away from the entrance. All this does suggest that this structure could find a place within a very broad definition of the Pitcarmick-type group.

In marked contrast to Pitcarmick North, at Pitcarmick West there are a whole series of Pitcarmick-type buildings strung out over the south-facing slopes of a large basin (figs. 46-7) - with a complex of two and their associated enclosures in the bottom of the same basin (302.1-8; NO 05 NE 22, 73). These buildings are part of a much wider landscape of hut-circles, field systems, clearance cairns and shielings. On this scale, it should be possible for those elements belonging to the Pitcarmick landscape to be isolated, but in reality this is much more difficult to achieve. The Pitcarmick-type buildings are situated within the areas of field walls and clearance cairns, assumed to be connected to the hut-circles that lie on their fringes. There are few specific relationships to be found between any of these features. Building J is attached to a short length of walling, which while it could be contemporary, seems to fit better within the context of the other field walls around it. Building H seems to be associated with the field wall that begins close to its doorway and then curves away down the hill, thus incorporating one wall of a small hut-circle. The relationship to the hut-circle suggests this wall might indeed be contemporary with the two adjacent Pitcarmick-type buildings. Although very limited, this evidence appears to corroborate the idea, postulated at Pitcarmick North, of small-scale adaptation of the pre-existing landscape during a period when it was being extensively used.

At Knockali (288.1-5; NO 15 NE 25, 33, 39, 40, 44), the situation appears to match that at Pitcarmick West, although here the three Pitcarmick-type structures (A-C), recall those at Pitcarmick North, in their very close proximity to hut-circles (fig. 43). Balnabroich (227.1-2; NO 05 NE 45-50, 58) is slightly different, because, although two of the Pitcarmick complexes are in very close proximity to roundhouses, the others are quite separate, situated on higher, rougher ground (fig. 28). Nonetheless, all these buildings are still close to field walls, linear clearance heaps and clearance cairns and two appear to be aligned on a large burial cairn. This landscape therefore seems to stem from the roundhouse phase, although the slight suggestion of fields outlined by

rectilinear clearance heaps may be significant here, since they recall the regularity of the, possibly later, strip fields at Pitcarmick North. In antithesis, at Lair (290.1; NO 16 SW 35, 51, 127, 135) - the only other major concentration of Pitcarmick-type buildings - the Medieval and post-Medieval landscapes are far more prominent than their prehistoric equivalents.

Lair, where there is a sequence of three successive building phases on one site (290.1; NO 16 SW 35; fig. 48), most clearly confirms that this is not a short term period of undocumented expansion (RCAHMS 1990, 12). There are other examples, too, with more or less clear suggestions of earlier remains underneath the latest structure and which are not restricted to those found amongst the large concentrations of buildings (e.g. 222; NO 16 SW 14). The solitary Pitcarmick-type structures are found in a wide variety of locations, most of which find parallels with those already described. None appear now to be in areas entirely free of previous settlement, although - as at Lair - there is a greater tendency for these structures to be found in locations that were later to become the focus for settlement. All these buildings are situated over a wide range of elevations, but always above the present extent of improved land.

This picture of the Pitcarmick world stands in marked contrast to the recent assessment of landscapes around Strathbraan where Pitcarmick-type buildings were first discovered in 1993, again by the RCAHMS (Cowley 1997; see also Appendix 9; the relationships between Pitcarmick-type buildings and other settlement types of potentially Early Medieval date are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6). Here, especially in Glen Cochill and in the valley of the Ballinloan Burn, it has been proposed that it is the more “formal field-systems” which are contemporary with the large clusters of Pitcarmick-type buildings, leaving the hut-circles to operate within systems of small irregular fields. However, the more regular components of an extensive field-system at Glen Cochill seem to be as closely associated with a burial cairn (the White cairn) and hut-circles, as they are to the rather poorly preserved Pitcarmick-type buildings. There are also several rectangular buildings, which may be closer in form to cots (see below, pg. 220ff) than shieling huts, in amidst this same field-system. At Ballinloan Burn,

where Pitcarmick-type buildings form the major component of the landscape and there are no hut-circles, it is possible that (in the absence of a pre-existing field-system) the field-walls are contemporary with the Pitcarmick-type structures. Again, however, the field system around the Pitcarmick-type buildings is closer in form to a discrete series of sub-rectangular fields (D on plan), which occur solely in association with the later buildings and which are, therefore, suggested to be of Medieval or later date (Cowley 1997).

At Newton of Ballinreigh, where there are three Pitcarmick-type buildings and a few hut-circles, it is small, rectangular buildings which are predominant. To the north of the dispersed group of Pitcarmick-type buildings and hut-circles, there is an extensive area of small regular enclosures, associated with sub-rectangular huts and one hut-circle, running down a south-facing slope to the Glenfender Burn. These are clearly of two phases and must predate the construction of the military road in 1730; they are described as “characteristic of the pre-improvement field-systems” (ibid.). More importantly, they recall the supposed ‘Pitcarmick-type field systems’ seen at Glencochill and Ballinloan Burn. It seems impossible, therefore, to date any of these field systems convincingly (without excavation) and, in spite of the probability that the variation inherent in the Pitcarmick-type buildings themselves reflects similarly loose co-ordination of the society which occupied them, none of these three examples seem persuasive enough to outweigh the evidence from North-east Perth for more extensive use of the landscape.

On the south ridge at Pitcarmick North, behind the triangular stone and leading up to a hollow below the bluff, is an area of the ridge that stands apart from the rest. Its gently sloping surfaces remain stone covered, apparently no attempt having been made to clear them in anything like the systematic way of those areas of the ridge enclosed by fields and smothered in a mass of clearance cairns and rig. This does not seem to be due to any inherent lack of fertility or suitability, but simply that this part of the ridge was not needed by the people who occupied the hut-circles as arable land. At a much later date, however, this part of the ridge did become the focus for settlement, during a period of

settlement and exploitation of these hills that appears quite different to that of the hut circles, although, as will become apparent, it may draw more closely on the Pitcarmick tradition. There does, however, seem to be a time lapse between the Pitcarmick-type buildings and this phase of the settlement, even if its duration is less obvious.

This top part of the ridge consists of a relatively flat area, immediately behind and to the south of the triangular boulder where the small bluff becomes a far more gentle rise in slope. To the west of the boulder, the ground runs down to an irregular hollow, once probably more marshy than it now appears. Beyond this and extending up to the bluff is an area of ground that rises more steeply and which forms the bulk of the land utilised in this period. The flat ground immediately in front of the small bluff, within the northern edge of the cairnfield, is also exploited during this phase of use, as is the spur on which sits the supposed Pitcarmick [412]. The coherent unit of land thus created acts as a self-contained element in the landscape of the south ridge (plans 2 and 3). Its positioning suggests that the settlement on this higher ground made extensive use of all the ground that fans out in front of the triangular stone.

On this part of the hill are eleven sub-rectangular buildings of varying size and complexity (306.4; NO 05 NE 83). These have been classified as a distinct type, entitled cots (the building details are contained in Appendix 7). All but three consist of structures surviving as probable turf walls spread over low stone footings; the exceptions are stone-built, but nevertheless stand only several courses high (figs. 29-32, 35-7; plate 9). These buildings are almost as broad as they are long, rectangular but with very rounded corners. Where a doorway is apparent, it is in the centre - or slightly off-centre - of one of the long sides. Though there seems to be no set orientation for the buildings themselves, the doorways, in the main, face south or east. Most are situated amidst fairly flat ground, ensuring that the majority of their floor areas are also level, though others do run down very gentle slopes. Those doorways that are recognisable as such seem to open out onto areas of similarly level ground, suitable as working areas, grazing for tethered animals or other such activities.

There is no particular consistency in the dimensions of these structures, with the floor areas varying between 5.80m^2 and 46.80m^2 , although the majority range from 20m^2 to 35m^2 . This tallies with the single excavated example [302] and implies that the surface appearance of these buildings is not too far removed from their actual form (Barrett and Downes 1994, in prep.). The exceptionally large building [401] is set apart only by its size (fig. 29); it may however be one of the more significant buildings on the hill because of its close proximity to the Pitcarmick-type building [412]. Examination of these measurements also isolates four other buildings [405; 409; 410; 411], which have much smaller floor areas or are made up of a series of small compartments. Of these, buildings 409, 410 and 411 are those with a greater degree of stone in their make-up and floor areas divided up into definite compartments (figs. 31, 33; plate 10). These can perhaps be isolated as later shielings, and find parallels with some of the sub-rectangular buildings at the base of the ridge (plan 2). Although heather covered, these buildings have rather more clearly defined walls - because of the quantity of stone employed in their construction - than the majority of those at the top of the ridge. Building 405 is far more reminiscent of the cots and perhaps can be seen simply as a smaller example of the same type (fig. 31). This is further confirmed by an examination of the length and width measurements of these buildings. These do suggest a coherent group of buildings clustered between 8m and 14m long externally (5m and 10m internally) by 5m and 9m broad externally (2m and 5m internally), and with the majority lying in the middle part of this range. Building 405, therefore, easily fits in with this group, particularly as its walls are so spread. In contrast, these measurements appear to isolate - as smaller, both in length and, if less dramatically, in width - those structures suggested to be potentially later shielings. Even the total floor area of 411's three compartments is only 21.21m^2 , at the smallest end of the cots' range.

Some of the cots appear to have had internal divisions indicated by a slight change in level or variations in vegetation type. In building 404, this division seems to follow the line of the south side of the door, thus creating a raised platform at the north end of the building (fig. 30). Similarly, in building 408, a rather more definite division - albeit still

slight in comparison to the main walls of the building - follows the south side of the door and here, as the doorway is more central, the building is divided into two compartments of equal size (fig. 32). However, there are no indications of particularly rigid compartmentalisation of space; these structures give the impression of being utilised as unitary spaces. This does not negate the possibility of their being temporarily divided up for use as separate working or living spaces, or for such divisions to be conceptually created, yet still as firmly held. None of the buildings are immediately adjacent to each other, although they do appear to fall into loose groupings of two or three (plan 3). This may go some way to confirm the fact that different activities were indeed isolated and kept separate in individual structures.

Many of these assumptions can be set alongside the data from an excavated building on the south ridge [301]. This structure lies east-west along the contour, with a doorway opening southwards and overlooking much of the top part of the basin. It overlies the west end of a Pitcarmick-type structure and the stretch of walling that runs out at right angles to its north wall, recalling the annexes of the cots already described, could be associated with it rather than the earlier building. Excavation revealed a floor area 7.40m by 3.80m, yielding a space of 28.12m² (Barrett and Downes, 1994; in prep.). Externally, the building retained its rounded corners, but internally some of this rounded feel has been lost as a consequence of more right-angled corners. The wall was very neatly built, faced both on the inside and outside. These may have supported a turf superstructure, which had slumped across the floor following the abandonment of the structure. The entrance, defined by angular stones, was slightly off-centre in the south wall. The central hearth re-utilised that of the earlier building and was surrounded by a floor made up of paving slabs and earth. On this surface were found coarse stone tools, the debris of quartz working, and two sherds of thirteenth or fourteenth century pottery. In addition, the handle of an earthenware jug, suggested to be of fourteenth to fifteenth century date (Robert Will, pers. comm.), was found in a rabbit scrape in building 506.

The excavated data appears to substantiate many of the impressions yielded by the surface descriptions of these buildings; it confirms those features already identified and suggests that these structures were indeed primarily utilised as single, undivided spaces. The presence of a hearth implies that some could be dwellings, and this is further reinforced by the gradiometer scans of several buildings (see plans of 408; 503; 506; 507; also 409 and 411 included in Appendix 7). Here higher readings may imply discrete areas of burning that, although they are not necessarily in the centre of the structure, could represent a hearth. As with all the building-types already described there are few, if any, tangible clues to its superstructure or to the way in which it was roofed; turf is likely to have formed a large component. The remains of the Pitcarmick-type building perhaps functioned as an enclosed yard during the period of occupation, with hardstanding being laid immediately outside the south east corner of it. Both the latter suggest that animals could have played an important part in the agricultural practices centred on these buildings. A hearth, overlying the sump of the earlier building, may also stem from activities at this time.

The cots find parallels elsewhere at Pitcarmick North - most often in areas where there is pre-existing settlement or agricultural evidence. This includes building 302, which provides a clear stratigraphic relationship to the earlier longhouse over which it lies. It is possible that building 340 (306.3; NO 05 NE 80), further down the ridge, can also be included in this group as it is of similar dimensions to those of the main cluster and appears to be of slighter construction than the possible shieling huts that surround it (plan 2). The wall apparently associated with it overlies another sub-rectangular building [339]. Although the latter is of smaller dimensions, the stratigraphic relationship suggests that it may be an earlier cot. Building 344, now severely damaged by the field wall that runs across it, and both 336 and 337, which appear only as hollows in deep heather, are other potential candidates.

On the north ridge (plan 4), there are a further eight buildings seemingly akin to the cots described above (including 306.1-2; NO 05 NE 85, 93). The north ridge has

undergone considerable ploughing subsequent to this building phase; consequently the surface remains of these buildings possess far less definition than those of the south ridge. This lack of detail has been further exacerbated by the fact that many of these buildings [502, 506 and 507, in particular; (figs. 35-7) appear to have been constructed primarily from turf. The significance of this variation in the stone and turf content is unclear in the absence of further excavation. To place, both chronologically and functionally, too much weight upon it in the presence of the other concordances which suggest a coherent building type may serve to obscure the consequence of these similarities. The record has been further complicated by a large field wall, which deviates to run along what are presumably the long walls of several of these buildings [503; 504; 505](figs. 35-6; plan 4).

Again, most of these buildings lie on level ground or run very gently downhill. Their orientations are consistent, both with each other and, to a lesser degree, with those on the south ridge; all bar building 501 run just off the east-west axis (plan 4). As the structures on the south ridge show greater variability in orientation, this degree of similarity may simply be due to the more deterministic topography of the north ridge. The northern buildings draw greater prominence from their positioning. They are aligned along the crest of the main ridge and structures 506 and 507 indeed sit on the highest ground on the ridge. These buildings command a view of all the ground on either side of them - southwards, running across the bog to the next ridge and, to the north, dropping away into Glen Derby. In contrast, buildings 501 and 502 sit below a knoll, and although the views from them are extensive (principally in the case of 501), they would not have been intervisible. The loose clusters of two or three buildings occurring on the south ridge are not so readily apparent here, again perhaps because of topography (plan 4). Most of the complete sub-rectangular buildings on the north ridge fit within the size limits defined for the structures on the south ridge. However, buildings 506 and 507 are at the smallest end of this range. This must be in part due to their construction from turf - their walls (as with those of 502) are spread to over 2m wide - and it is probable that originally these buildings (and possibly 504 if it was

complete) may not have been too dissimilar from the rest of the group. The exceptions are the probable shieling 509, with its three tiny, stone-filled compartments (fig. 38), very reminiscent of building 411, and the unusual building 508 (fig. 38) (discussed alongside shieling huts in the next chapter).

The most notable difference between the cots on the north ridge and those at the top and bottom of the south ridge is the former's juxtaposition with earlier structural remains. The immediate landscape of these buildings is dominated by hut-circles. The knoll below which structures 501 and 502 lie is capped by two roundhouses [511; 512]. In contrast, those on the crest of the ridge sit above the closest roundhouses [516; 517]. The excavated building overlies an earlier longhouse, its floor levels separated from those of the building below by a phase of agricultural activity, confirmed by ard marks. However, the hearth of the longhouse must have been visible enough for it to be re-made and re-used as an equally central focus in the later building. The significance of these relationships is perhaps again similar to that of the Pitcarmick-type buildings - if an extensive use of the landscape is assumed, one that made very little impact on the physical architecture and appearance of that landscape, then the people who constructed and lived in these buildings must have still felt the need to draw on the authority of those previous occupants' activities. The relationship may not have taken on any very definitive form, yet - out of all the land available - these locations were chosen.

If it is suggested, as here, that this type of building forms part of a coherent group, then similar buildings need to be examined in other localities within North-east Perth. Even within this area, it has not been possible to carry out this search in any systematic fashion (because of time constraints), but some fieldwalking has established the presence of buildings reminiscent of this group elsewhere on the Pitcarmick estate. At Pitcarmick East (fig. 49), there are several buildings of the same size and form (305.4; NO 05 NE 116). They are part of a cluster including two structures closer in size to building 335 at the bottom of the south ridge at Pitcarmick North, though of a far more rounded and bowed form. These buildings are again in close physical association with roundhouses and are succeeded by later shielings (153.6-7, 305.1-3.; NO 05 NE 6, 19,

115, 117, 119). There is an isolated structure just above the farm at Cultalunie that closely parallels those beyond the head-dyke and raises the possibility that there are more to be found in similar situations (further possible examples close to Stronamuck are discussed in the next section). It would appear that all these buildings are relatively close in terms of physical distance to buildings normally characterised as of later Medieval or Early Modern date (if the presence of the Cultalunie building within the head-dyke and its nearness to the later township can be taken into account here). That this lack of topographical separation might also equate to an absence of chronological distance is not implausible.

This is perhaps given greater weight by a close analysis of the remains of the township at Easter Bleaton (258; NO 15 NW 22; fig. 3). Here the township is strung out along a terrace above the fertile agricultural ground on the floor of Glenshee. Easter Bleaton, like many of the townships of the area, is mentioned in the historical record from the fourteenth century onwards until its abandonment in the 1860's for the present farm on the valley floor. This settlement therefore possesses a considerable time-depth, some of which should be visible in the surface remains; the character of the footings at the south end of the terrace is indeed rather different from those forming part of the presumably eighteenth and nineteenth century clusters at its opposite end. At the south end of the settlement, there are several small structures consisting of low stone footings and of similar form and dimensions to those at Pitcarmick North. They occur in groups of two or three and are linked into each end of the same enclosure. The terrace narrows at this point and the buildings are crowded onto all the available flat land. It would seem that the focus of the settlement shifted further along the ridge as the demands for space around and within buildings grew, perhaps a process that can be assigned to the apparent eighteenth century decision to build entirely in stone (see chapter 4.4).

If the examples given above do form part of a similar building type, then there appears to be a series of structures in North-east Perth, situated both in the glens and on the hills, which are potentially Medieval or later in date. The Medieval finds from Carn Dubh which, although not particularly numerous, all date to the eleventh to fifteenth

centuries (Rideout 1995, 184-5), add another dimension to this structural evidence. They corroborate the rather slight dating evidence from Pitcarmick North and, whether they reflect direct occupation of the uplands centred on the re-use of the hut-circle foundations, or come from midden material perhaps associated with the sub-rectangular buildings at Aldshiel, just upslope from the roundhouses at Carn Dubh (Rideout 1995, 145, 185ff), this material appears to confirm that people were indeed occupying the uplands, possibly quite intensively, in these few centuries. Rather further afield, some of the scooped, sub-circular structures at Manor, Peebleshire seem to have originated in this period (Stevenson 1941). Importantly, the wide range of locations and associations of the cots implies that there is less of a distinction between the methods of exploitation of the uplands and lowlands than is represented by the later shieling system. This may confirm the impression of the extensive - yet still closely integrated - use of the landscape indicated on a smaller scale at Pitcarmick North.

Defined spaces for animals inside the cots would seem to be lacking. The answer to this may be found in the series of outshots and enclosures tacked onto each of the buildings (e.g. fig. 32). These annexes would seem to be either extremely transient or very impermanent structures. The surface traces generally consist of a slight hollow outlined by a change in vegetation. This hollowing of the ground suggests that if these were indeed pens, they were in existence long enough for their animal occupants to trample away the surface covering - and though this could occur over a summer shieling period, particularly if the weather was wet, it perhaps indicates a rather more permanent occupation. If they were put to other uses, then considerable wear and tear may have been necessary to create a similar effect. The footprints of these outshots imply that any superstructure was more flimsily built than the rest of the building - perhaps with a wattle surround or constructed solely from turf, either of which could have been replaced each year. Such transient remains may explain the lack of such features on the north ridge where subsequent ploughing has been far more intensive. The two buildings

[501; 507] that do have annexes find very close parallels, both in form and size, with those on the south ridge (figs. 36-7).

The enclosures, unlike the outshots, do yield an impression of greater permanency. The most visible is that linked by a length of wall to building 405. This is of reasonably substantial construction, though it does make use of natural rock outcrops and is quite irregular in form (fig. 31). The other enclosures appear to be less detached from the main buildings - perhaps the clearest example is that which appears to be attached to building 402 (fig. 29). This encircles a gently sloping area of ground on the south and east of the building and, if the doorway is indeed in the south-east corner, it would open directly into it. As part of its construction, the wall of the enclosure seems to have incorporated two cairns from an earlier agricultural phase. The enclosure associated with building 406 again sits right in front of the building, but is not linked into it (fig. 31). The prominent positions of these enclosures and their close proximity to the buildings serves to highlight their probable significance to the workings of the buildings occupants.

These pens and enclosures suggest that animals had a large part to play in the activities taking place in and around these buildings. This is perhaps confirmed by the lack of stone clearance on this part of the hill and the number of heavily worn paths (now exacerbated by sheep) in and around this area which appear to lead out into the wider expanses of the basin (plan 3); one example even passes through what appears to be a pair of entrance stones and is still respected by present-day sheep. Such a function may also explain the modifications to structure 412 (see above, pg. 214). However, the animals were not kept in as close proximity to the people as they would be in a longhouse of Pitcarmick or later type. A degree of separation and difference seems to have been imposed between people and animals and, as a consequence, the conceptual base by which animals were treated would seem to have changed. It is possible that this might stem from a period of use of the strath and adjacent hills during which external demands had created an economic climate in which animals became essentially a commodity to be bought and sold for profit. If so, this could reflect the importance of

the abbeys in this area at the start of the Medieval period (see chapter 5.1.1), thus corroborating the rather tentative dating evidence provided by the pottery recovered from these buildings.

The numbers and complexity of the pens and enclosures do not themselves fit in with the normally accepted idea of shieling practices. On most shieling grounds, only some of the youngest animals and their mothers would be kept penned and separate, leaving the majority of animals under the constant attendance of people. If the latter was the case, then most animals did not require to be penned at all, even at night. Out of the almost three hundred shieling huts recorded in the Mar Lodge survey, fifty had outshots or extensions and nine had attached pens or enclosures (RCAHMS 1995, 21). If some of these are accepted as dairies or possibly the remains of earlier buildings, then this appears to equate well with the established picture of shieling life (cf. Bil 1990). The picture presented by the cots at Pitcarmick is rather different - it implies more rigid control and management of the animals, suggested here to be a likely consequence of year-round exploitation of these high pastures during the Medieval period.

5.2.3 The closeness of the glens: the Early Modern period

“But in the hills and high moors of the county timelessness is easier to feel... I think of how gradually, after the shepherd’s house at the head of Glen Gennat [Glen Derby] ..., a certain path grows faint, and fainter, and at last loses itself in a tangle of grass and reeds. The last thin thread is broken that joins this loneliness with the distracted world without. Beyond here are no signs of men or men’s work, except for an old dry-stone dyke that borders the end of the grazing land. It stands grey and impassive, as it were a dam to hold back the overpowering solitude of the high hills from the kindly hollows beneath. A century ago, perhaps, men must have ruffled for a space the unending calm of the corrie as they toiled to raise it, stone by stone, yard by yard. But now the very memory of their labouring is lost like the sound of their voices, and their dark stones seem to acknowledge no builder, seem to be absorbed into the strength and silence of the hill they traverse”

(Miles 1930, 179)

The upland settlement and land use of North-east Perth can at no time in its long history have remained entirely independent of the glens. These provided shelter and fertility; shelter for houses and settlements, routes of communication, well-drained slopes for arable fields, the lush grass of river meadows and a range of other habitats and resources, of which woodland may have been one of the most important. Changes of emphasis would have occurred as the climate, and social and economic requirements altered; nonetheless, both glens and the hills would be part of most peoples’ daily round of experience. The continual re-use of the valleys as the focus of settlement and agriculture has complicated our picture of activity prior to this century. However, the historical geography of Strathardle, which was presented in chapter 5.1, suggests the presence of a coherent landscape of the last few centuries which can, at least partially, be charted on the ground.

In the Medieval and Early Modern period, the pastoral element of the economy is assumed to have revolved around the practice of transhumance, thus enabling the exploitation of upland pastures alongside the more densely settled lower ground. At some juncture, however, the system began to crumble; as the markets changed, the requirements of the lairds for rent became more rigorous and rising population made the existing patterns of exploitation harder to maintain. This may have been a slow evolutionary process, subject to considerable local variation - perhaps heralded by the

collapse of the wool markets generated by the abbeys in the thirteenth century, yet only coming to a head in the later eighteenth century. Cattle became the all important cash crop in many areas, while increasingly greater emphasis was also put on arable crops and, therefore, the cultivation of land within the glens, both for food and, again, to pay the rent. The hills provided not only the grazing for those animals to be sold to pay the rent and those that supplied one of the mainstays of people's diets - milk and milk products (see chapter 4.4) - but also extra arable land that could be cropped on a rotational basis.

If, as has been suggested in the previous chapter, the Medieval period at Pitcarmick North involved an intensive phase of exploitation of the uplands, shieling practices might have originated there towards the end of the Middle Ages. In a similar form, these practices probably then continued into the nineteenth century, as is attested elsewhere in Highland Perthshire (Bil 1990). Within this context sit the buildings 409-11, 509 (figs. 33, 38; plate 10) and the majority of the sub-rectangular structures in the cluster at the base of the south ridge [333; 334; 338; 341-343] (plan 2). These small, often subdivided, buildings give the impression of tight and cramped spaces, not designed for prolonged occupation - and certainly not outside the good weather of the summer months. They are probably not the large and elaborate buildings described by Robertson (see chapter 4.2, pg. 87), but, like his buildings, they do possess two or three 'apartments'. Much of the space may be taken up in storage of the milk and cheese, although sometimes these were stored separately in tiny huts such as 338.

Shieling huts occur either as isolated buildings or in clusters. In each case they were attached to a specific township or settlement, and the numbers reflected both the size of the parent settlement and the function of the individual shieling grounds (see chapter 4.2). As suggested above in the context of the pens attached to the cots (Chapter 5.2.2), associated structures of this type are not a common feature on the shieling grounds - although here, anyway, there would be enough extant remains in the vicinity to serve as enclosures if they were needed. The Early Modern era was a period of extensive, seasonal exploitation of the uplands, its impact perhaps reflected not in structural terms,

but in the production and maintenance of the moorland now so characteristic of those uplands.

In practice, a concentration of buildings could result at the main location of summer shieling activities, particularly if the members of several townships gathered in one place. The presence of the possible kiln [333] in the southern group, if indeed that is what it is, would not be unusual within such a shieling cluster. There are also remains of old peat cuttings, almost completely regenerated, in the bog just below it, suggesting there was a greater demand for fuel here - or the manpower available to cut and dry it for winter use at the main township. That peat cutting might have gone on in this general area well into the nineteenth century is suggested by a sasine of 1819 that records an agreement by Donald MacDonald of Balnakilly and Peter Dowe, a barrister residing at Bannerfield, to pay rent for the "Privilege or Servitude of Casting Peats in the Moss of the Hill of Cultalunie" to Patrick Small Keir of Kindrogan and John Rattray of Cultalunie. In contrast, the herds or boys sent out with the yeld and youngstock in the spring or autumn might need only a single hut for their own use, and these would be hard to distinguish in the mass of structures at Pitcarmick. They may indeed be found among the more isolated buildings littered across the hills in areas not exploited during the main summer shieling period (plan 1). The length of time during which the shieling system may have been in operation - at least two or three centuries (Bil 1990) - also suggests that some chronological depth should be expected. Building 334, which appears to be of three phases, is the clearest indication of this at Pitcarmick North.

This leaves three buildings whose form has suggested a different meaning and function from any of the other building types so far described [508; 518; 312]. On the lower slopes at the east end of the north ridge, 508 stands out from the rest of the sub-rectangular buildings for its length, the number of compartments (five), and its substantial stone and earth construction (fig. 38). In plan, this structure appears more like a shieling hut than a cot and it is made up of a series of compartments similar in size to a single shieling hut. This, in the absence of any parallels at Pitcarmick, seems to be the best explanation for it. There are, however, buildings of very similar form and

size in the Halladale area of Caithness, which Mercer has suggested were - if not shielings - then structures of Early Modern date representing similarly transient utilisation of the uplands (in the case of Sutherland, perhaps for fishing shelters or, less likely, whisky distillation (1980, 58)). The small, round building [518](fig. 40) could be an associated dairy (Miller 1967, 208). The amorphous, yet substantial, sub-circular structure sitting against the large field wall just to the north may also be included in this group (plan 4). It has no obvious function and the association made here is largely based on its apparent stratigraphic relationship to the large field wall, one of the latest structures on the hill. If surface appearances can be taken as slightly deceptive and it is set into the slope - rather than the field wall - then it could conceivably have been a kiln, later robbed of all its stone to build that same wall.

Structure 312 is a substantial two compartment building, possibly of two phases. It lies right on the edge of the large uncleared area on the south ridge, running down the slope of a promontory just above (but outside) the main area of terraced fields (plan 2). In shape - although it is larger - it recalls the form of building 333 more than it does a hut-circle. If it is assumed to have been robbed out, it is again in a suitable position to be a kiln but, like 333, could as easily be a large shieling hut. Within the shieling cluster itself, the large building 335 seems anachronistic. It could be an enclosure, not a building, although it is now so deeply buried in heather that it cannot be examined in detail. If this is the case, it may be associated with the two possible cots [336; 337] that lie beside it (plan 2).

The hills are scattered with hollow ways, known locally as 'peat roads' and which may also relate to this period of utilisation (plan 1). They can be traced over much of their length as they curve round the steeper slopes, diverge and rejoin, before snaking off onto flatter ground and perversely disappearing. In some respects, they leave behind the most enduring impression of human impact on these hills - a striking testimony to the people who fixed their paths, as if they had no conception of the possibility of these routes, and the patterns of land use they represented, ever becoming obsolete.

Undoubtedly, these routes could have originated very much earlier, a supposition which gains weight from the way in which the hollow ways run close by earlier hut-circles (e.g. above Cultalunie, 154.2; NO 05 NE 18) (plan 1). Although the hut circles could simply have provided good landmarks, nonetheless, the number of coincidences is remarkable. Close associations between earlier building and cultivation remains are a feature of the vast majority of shieling groups found in North-east Perth, these juxtapositions perhaps reflecting something more than the attraction created by the debris of earlier occupation. Not only were people taking advantage of the more fertile ground of the old fields and of readily available quarries of building stone, they were declaring, in their turn, their right to the land claimed by their ancestors. For the hollow ways this seems to allow for the suggestion of considerable continuity in their use. For the shieling huts, the relationship seems to be rather more specific, although less readily explicable; many of these huts are found close to hut-circles, often inside or directly overlying them (e.g. West Pitcarmick (see 151, 307); 141.1; 293.3; Loch Charles; NO 05 SE 2, 66).

Establishing the permanent settlements to which these shieling grounds relate is difficult in the absence of specific historical documentation. It is perhaps significant that the one remaining right-of-way (a hollow way for much of its length) leading up into the hills starts at the eighteenth century township of Tomgarrow or Stylemouth, runs around the back of Creag Shuilleir, from where it turns westwards, continuing parallel with the present track until it disappears into the new forestry plantations (plan 1). Pitcarmick North would also be a convenient distance from settlements in and around the foot of Glen Derby; there are hints of hollow ways which do head off in this direction, before becoming lost in the forestry (plan 1), while no traces of shieling activities were recorded on the northern slopes of Glen Derby, prior to the planting of the large forestry plantations which now cover them. It is possible that the buildings at Pitcarmick North could have been utilised as part of a system of intermediate spring and autumn grazings on the way to the larger shieling groups in the valley of the Pitcarmick Burn (307, 308; NO 05 NE 50, 57, 67-71, 74-8, 86-90, 103, 106, 109-110, 113, 120) (plan 1). The

hollow ways that run up into the basin from the townships in Strathardle (particularly Cultalowie and Pitcarmick) split and appear to peter out once they reach the basin, although they do give the general impression of heading for the hills on the south side of the Allt cùl na Coille and towards the higher shieling clusters there.

In opposition to this picture of a largely pastoral world, the amount of rig and furrow at this height (360m O.D.) is enormous (plans 2-4). Explanations for it and its dating are difficult, in the main because there are no buildings - or even field walls - which can be clearly associated with it. Although some of the rig is likely to be contemporary with the roundhouse phase, it is impossible to isolate, since later rig may just as easily respect both pre-existing buildings and walls (the presumption within the enclosed fields at Drumturn Burn (RCAHMS 1990, 49)). The excavation revealed evidence of ard marks between buildings 300 and 301, indicative of an agricultural phase that was not apparent on the surface and hinting at the presence of many more. Further, overlying the Pitcarmick-type building [300], relatively narrow rig (approximately 1.5m wide) was visible both on the surface and more clearly in excavation. This does not appear to run to the west of the large field wall which also overlies the building, although it does continue across the crest of the ridge at the back of the structure and west towards hut-circle 325. It presumably dates to a period long after the Pitcarmick-type buildings had fallen into disrepair and this would seem to be confirmed by the sherd of ?eighteenth century pottery retrieved from two furrows which ran through the narrow gap between the Bronze Age cairns; these were also 1.5m apart. Elsewhere on the hill, narrow rig can be seen and physically perceived, if not precisely recorded or assessed, amidst the mass of broader rigs. Again it may, therefore, be earlier than the broad rig, although it is unclear either if it is the same as the 1.5m wide rig or whether more than one phase is represented.

The broad rig, of widths clustering around 4m, is often very distinct, its level of survival indicating that it must form one of the latest phases of activity on the hill. Although it is very prominent, this is not the much broader, "high-backed, sinuous rig"

that Cowley (1997) suggests is Medieval because of its occurrence in unimproved corners of valley floors in and around Strathbraan. The rig at Pitcarmick respects the buildings in most cases, except those which were of the slightest construction (primarily the cots). This differential treatment suggests that buildings, whose significance had been forgotten and which were not sufficiently substantial to impinge on the plough, were ignored; as with the rig over the Pitcarmick-type building, a considerable time period could have elapsed to make this situation possible. The massive field walls, so reminiscent of a head-dyke and which almost certainly cut across this broad rig - at least on the east slopes of the north ridge - appear to represent the very last phase of agricultural use on the hill (plan 4). Nonetheless, their builders were obviously aware of the remains from earlier periods and seem to have imposed their supposed 'superiority' by smashing through the centres of the hut-circles on the top of the north ridge, then kinking deliberately to take in the long walls of each of the cots (plan 4). The significance of these relationships are hard to discern - they are neither constructive (i.e. respectful) nor entirely destructive; overall, the positioning of these walls would still seem to allow for some attempt to incorporate the remains of the past into the present, if the precise nature of this desire is harder to determine. The isolated character of the two long stretches of wall partially encircling the west end of the south ridge implies that they should also be seen as belonging to this phase of occupation.

In consequence, only broad statements can be made about these cultivation remains. Some must be associated with the known periods of occupation on the hill, since the products of arable crops are present, to a greater or lesser degree, in all diets from the Neolithic onwards. The lack of definite associations complicates our view of its chronology, since it is not clear how much was in use at one time - or whether this was small-scale patchwork cultivation, shifting as soils became exhausted, or large-scale, intensive exploitation of much of the area. The latter seems a more accurate reflection of the broad rig and, in line with Cowley's interpretation of the majority of rig-and-furrow found in the recent Strathbraan survey (1997), can be set alongside the assumption that it formed an element in the systems of exploitation directed by the townships in the

glens. The cultivation of shieling grounds was quite common and is very well displayed, at an altitude of 410m O.D. (fig. 47), by the rig around the shielings on the saddle high above Pitcarmick West (307.7; NO 05 NE 71). In comparison, the re-use of the old fields at Pitcarmick North, around 60m lower, seems a far more reasonable proposition. In North-east Perth, as elsewhere, some shieling grounds were converted to permanent farms in the intense periods of expansion prior to 1600 - and perhaps for shorter periods in the eighteenth century; Roughsheal (at 350m O.D.) and the farmsteads around it are probable examples of this phase of expansion (310.10; NO 05 NE 24; cf. RCAHMS 1990, 6). The rig is, therefore, a likely result of undocumented and short term expansion at various times into the hills. At Pitcarmick, this does not seem to have been sufficiently successful to warrant permanent buildings. However, if the expansion was only for a short period - or perhaps involved only the summer exploitation of these uplands by people still living in the glens - the shieling huts, or any of the other building foundations, could have been utilised for shelter and storage.

The large field walls have to find a place within this context, too, since - in spite of the presence of the inscribed stone in roundhouse 512 and one in the basin (Sir M. Nairn, pers. comm.) - they do not seem to be boundaries or march dykes. While the marches of each farm were clearly being defined with stone dykes, it is noteworthy that in the nineteenth century the muir of the mill of Pitcarmick was never enclosed because of an inability to reach an agreement on the part of the interested parties (see chapter 5.1.2, pg. 166). Although in the glen itself, the lands of each farm are very clearly defined, if the common land in the hills remained undivided, then boundaries would not have been so necessary (plan 1; fig. 16). The lands involved in the dispute referred to above are probably not the lands of Pitcarmick North, but nevertheless they may form part of a local trend which finds support in the lack of any boundaries extending on to the muir above the head-dyke between Dalnabreck and Croft of Cultalowie (although this is not the case to the south).

Within the basin and situated close to hollow ways, are two long, narrow dry-stone structures (the more westerly has been identified by the RCAHMS (NO 05 NE 108) (plan 1). They are completely unlike any of the other rectangular buildings on the uplands around Strathardle, both in their form and construction. Both are around 20-25m long, 3-4 m wide, and built from angular boulders, one course wide and five to six courses (1m) high. One has as its west wall a large, very square natural boulder that is considerably more substantial than any of the rest of the walls, which retain massive gaps between each stone. Such natural boulders are noted in shielings described by Bil elsewhere in Perthshire (1990, 242), where they served to keep the milk and cheese cool. The other building lies further up the basin of the Allt cùl na Coille, at the base of the shoulder of Creag na h-Iolaire and above a marshy area. A hollow way curves away from it around the shoulder and towards the Pitcarmick Burn. In form and in size (although the majority are larger), these structures recall sheep cots associated with the abbeys of the Medieval period. In light of the fragility of their construction, the degree of survival suggests that these buildings must be fairly late in date and, if the analogy suggested above is relevant, then they may relate to the second half of the nineteenth century and the period of the large sheep farms centred on Pitcarmick and Dalvey (see chapter 5.1.2).

These two buildings lead us back towards the limit of the Improved land and, appropriately, towards the main glen where the majority of the population will have lived at this time. The context for the occupation of the glen has already been traced through the historical and cartographical record (chapter 5.1) and, here, an attempt will be made to delineate, however coarsely, some of the developments and changes revealed in the historical documentation for the Early Modern period in the surface remains of the township of Stronamuck. The documented history of this settlement, extending from 1510 to 1899, is given in Appendices 4 and 5.

Stronamuck lies just below the old main road between Bridge of Cally and Kirkmichael (plate 11). It covers a large area of broken ground, which will have at least

facilitated its division into the present, quite dispersed, clusters (fig. 50). There are many deciduous trees - oak and birch - both in copses and dotted over the fields but, apart from the two elderberry trees within Group 1 (plate 12), which may have had both a ritual and symbolic significance (see chapter 4.3), there are none around the buildings themselves. A birch-lined burn runs south-east through the site and a mesh of rivulets criss-crosses the area before being absorbed by the larger stream. A sizeable pond fills the base of a hollow to the east of the settlement - it is shown as clear water on the OS First edition map, but is covered today, in the main, by reeds. If nothing else, there would have been a wide variety of natural resources available to Stronamuck's inhabitants, even if it is also likely that for much of the year its inhabitants would have been surrounded by a sea of mud.

As depicted on the OS First edition map, the entire area of the settlement now lies within improved pasture, with the present head-dyke running roughly 600 metres to the north. The buildings occupy two of the river terraces above the long east-facing slope down to the Ardle. The impression of being enclosed within a sheltered bowl is strong, enhanced both by the steep bluffs to the north and the closing down of the hill slopes above the settlement in a blanket of (modern) forestry. However, there is no protection from the east wind. Analysis of the surrounding landscape is hampered both by the forestry plantations and the amount of Improved land that encircles the settlement, but various hollow ways - and the modern track, once the old main road up the strath - remain to suggest both the links within the settlement and those extending beyond it.

A few of the buildings extend down a very gentle slope, but in general they run along the contour and so most have an orientation roughly northeast-southwest; nonetheless, the main concentrations of buildings and field walls are situated amidst some of the roughest and marshiest parts of the area. In spite of some improvements, natural stone still litters these areas. Although large quantities must have been re-used in successive building phases, in field walls and in the make-up of the old road, there are still considerable differences in the amount of stone in the build of even those structures that survive only as footings. It can be suggested that, as the ground immediately adjacent to

the clusters was not worthy of Improvement, the remains have retained much of their integrity. This level of survival makes possible the detailed examination of the layout of the latest, if only broadly dateable, phases of the settlement.

The visible history of this place begins with isolated sub-rectangular, turf-covered buildings, almost invisible now even in the short turf of sheep pasture (a further building has been identified by the RCAHMS in the tree-covered area to the south-east of the main settlement area (NO 05 NE 100), but this appears to be more substantial). The best-preserved of these, the single building in Group 2, is attached to a smaller enclosure and sits on a small promontory that has been cleared of stone and is, itself, enclosed by a turf wall (fig. 50). The floor area of the building stands out as very green and is deeply hollowed, particularly at the northwest end. Although close to a large field wall, the slight nature of its walls and their spread suggests that there was a large turf component in its build. If Group 2 is representative of a largely turf built phase, then the numerous level, grassy platforms throughout the main settlement area may have provided suitable locations for similar buildings, all traces of which have been removed by later activity. Around the fringes of the clusters (e.g. Group 3) are the slight remains of buildings that also appear to have a high turf content in their make-up. The building in Group 3 is most closely analogous to that in Cluster 2 - both in terms of size and in its partially hollowed floor area, although here this may be outlined by a partition wall and the building, itself, is possibly of two phases. The impression given - most explicitly by Group 2 - is of a dispersed settlement pattern made up of individual, perhaps self-contained, farmsteads.

The first drystone buildings, surviving now as low, turf-covered footings (plate 13), appear to maintain this idea of small clusters with attached enclosures - retaining the sites of existing clusters and creating new ones. Group 6, lying in the midst of the settlement area, is situated between a flat, green plateau immediately to the rear of the buildings and the very marshy and broken ground onto which the doorways open. Here there are two, perhaps originally four, long sub-rectangular buildings, which show varying levels of survival. Two of the buildings appear to have been re-used in a

subsequent phase, while the two which were abandoned became what seems to be a small enclosure. The walls that link these buildings together - and link them into the wider settlement - possibly date to this same phase of re-use. The buildings have rounded corners and very wide doorways in the centre of one long wall. Like the turf structures of the first phase, none of these buildings have internal divisions, but, in contrast, their floor areas are relatively level. The footings consist of rough, unshaped boulders of average size and, even if much of the stone has been reutilised in more recent buildings and structures, these may not have supported stone gables or a heavy roof. Buildings that are potentially of the same type are found amidst other clusters (e.g. Group 4). The similarities between the form of the buildings of these first two phases suggest that the differences in the make-up of the walls may not be that significant, either chronologically or functionally.

The next phase consists of long, broad buildings, all coarsely built from large boulders, even if the faces created are relatively smooth. These form by far the most substantial structures at Stronamuck and, in addition, suggest that at least part of the settlement had coalesced into one large cluster (Group 7; fig. 50; plate 14). There is one similar building in Group 4, but other structures of this type are few indeed, perhaps because they underlie those later buildings which have similarly massive foundation stones to those of Group 7. There are visible marks of improvement in Group 7, including the addition of separate compartments, although these may not necessarily all be contemporary with the original structure. Areas of cobbling, to create working spaces outside the buildings, and drains in three of the structures, also suggest Improving tendencies, even if the latter need not necessarily indicate the presence of animals in these buildings since the area is, in general, so wet. There are enclosures attached to the back of some of the buildings of the cluster and grassy platforms in the adjacent marshy areas immediately to the north-west appear to have the remains of small turf structures upon them. There is a corn-drying kiln set into the slope to the north and it is possible that the more isolated lime kiln may also relate to this cluster and this phase. The extent

of external pressures in the eighteenth century may have created a need for the relative independence seen earlier to be subsumed within a more co-operative system. This implied coherence is enhanced by the indications of a central space around which most of the buildings of the main cluster are arranged.

By the 1860's, this dramatic process of agglomeration had been reversed as the settlement split into the five sets of buildings, each with their own garden plot, represented on the OS First edition map (fig. 16). These form possibly the final phase on this site. In the main cluster, two buildings remained in use, while two others were depicted as unroofed. Although earlier buildings were clearly reutilised, the structures of this phase present a complete contrast to the crudeness of the previous ones - they are neatly built from shaped stone blocks in regular courses, have clay mortar bonding and still stand to a far greater height (plate 12). These buildings also give the impression of greater coherence, partly because both external and internal corners are square. The main building of Group 1 may have been occupied even later as it is both lime mortared and retains walls almost to gable height.

These buildings are divided into separate compartments, the division walls often appearing to be secondary. The smaller, perhaps subsidiary, buildings are made up of a series of quite small and narrow compartments (e.g. Group 7; Group 3) - the main buildings retain larger spaces, perhaps for living and working in. However, these Improvements do not involve the insertion of many features into the fabric of the walls themselves. The main building of Cluster 1 has a possible fireplace, now blocked up; one of the buildings in Cluster 7 has blocking in its north-east gable (which is associated with other features that, because of their scale, may be industrial, rather than domestic, in nature) and the original structure of Cluster 5 has a tiny cupboard in one corner. In contrast, the splayed windows are both relatively large and very neatly built, with well-shaped, flat stones for the sills, particularly in the main building in Cluster 3. Despite the windows, the overall lack of permanency and investment in the structure of the house seems to reflect the mobility of their occupants visible in the census returns (see chapter

5.2.2). It is possibly also linked to a need to retain more traditional types of furniture, such as kists, alongside the modes of practice that went with them.

Not unsurprisingly, within the entire settlement area, buildings have clearly shifted around, yet the time-depth suggested by the clusters recalls the seeming identity of the individual units seen at Lix and Easter Bleaton. It is possible that townships, comprising farmsteads (as in the western Highlands), occurring either singly or in groups of two or three and associated with a system of enclosed, rather than open, fields (Dodgshon 1993a; Dodgshon 1995), may in fact constitute the earlier form of settlement. The field systems to confirm this proposition are unfortunately lacking here, but each cluster appears to consist of one or two buildings. Neither of these first two phases is dateable. The first note of Stronamuck in 1510, as part of the lands of the barony of Douny (now a series of farms on the opposite side of the strath), can only confirm that it already existed within an established framework of landholding that perhaps can be taken back into the fourteenth century (see chapter 5.2.1). The existing remains would easily fit in with this time-scale, but the presence of the turf-built structures at least confirm a time-depth not often so apparent in Highland townships.

At some juncture the formation of the large cluster was triggered - although, at most, it constituted only six dwellings. These massive, yet crude, buildings would seem to fit in well with the expansive period of the eighteenth century (see chapter 5.2.2). In the historical record, Stronamuck was divided into Eastern and Western halves (see Appendix 4), and there are hints that these were even further divided - into their sunny and shadow halves. In the physical remains, such a division is not readily apparent, although as the western half is of lesser value, it might be represented in the slighter evidence provided by Group 4 or conceivably by an earlier phase at Crostrannoch, just up the hill, but now almost obliterated by trees. Not only does this confirm, archaeologically, the rise in population depicted on Stobie's map at the end of the eighteenth century, but it implies something of the organisational infrastructure in place at this time.

After the Improvements, independence was reasserted - amidst the removal of population from the land and the break-up of traditional farming practices (see chapter 5.1.2) - with the creation of the crofts run by the cottagers recorded in the census returns. All bar one of these (Group 1) remained on the site of a former cluster; thus the maintenance of links with the past was of significance, despite the fact that social practices and traditions - even the people inhabiting the settlement - may have been radically different. However, individual buildings, apart from the lime-mortared and most recently occupied building of Cluster 1 (plate 12), which can be linked to the last inhabitants of the settlement, Robert Campbell and his family (see Appendices 4 and 6), cannot be matched with specific households.

It seems unlikely that new houses were being built during the period when the censuses were compiled. Children, when they grew up, moved away and if they did take on the farm or plot of land, then the parents and unmarried siblings perhaps moved to a vacant cottage on an adjacent settlement. Without the widespread support mechanisms provided by a close-knit community, it would have been more difficult to build new structures if the future occupants were old or single, even if massive foundations remained. Buildings may simply have been maintained, in some cases adapted, as part of a long, slow process of Improvement. All the buildings of the final two phases do indeed show considerable evidence of structural alteration, including the insertion or removal of partitions and the addition of extra compartments. If this does not extend to the building of fireplaces and so on, it might be responsible for the number of windows. Structure 1 (Group 1), with its two pairs of (almost) opposed windows, wide central doorway and white plastered walls would be a long way from the dark, murky buildings encountered by earlier travellers to the Highlands (see chapter 4.4). The presence of these elements must reflect the rapidly changing requirements of internal domestic space in the nineteenth century as much as - or more than - the length of time each building was occupied.

The inventories of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries do little to directly enhance the picture of Stronamuck gleaned from the standing remains, but they do

confirm the impermanent nature of the furniture and other furnishings, both in terms of the materials they were made of and the need for them to fit in with a lifestyle where people had to remain relatively mobile. Only if things - such as the china once displayed on dressers or kists and, indeed, some of the pieces of furniture on which they stood - became heirlooms, will they have had a chance of survival. However, the scale and nature of the Improvements ensured that, in many cases, the meaning behind these items was lost; without it they became simply the materials of which they were made. In many respects too - and not only in the poorest households - these artefacts came to represent the poverty and harsh conditions of a life to which no-one wanted to return. This leaves the bare bones of the ruined buildings empty of artefactual possessions, but certainly not lacking, through the inventories and the more general picture of the house attempted in chapter 4.5., in detailed impressions of how they were occupied and what they once contained.

5.3 The story of Pitcarmick North

The preceding chapters have presented one interpretation of the history and archaeology of Pitcarmick and the adjacent area. This can never be entirely comprehensive but, in spite of the problems in comparing information taken from often very disparate historical sources and the potential difficulties on relying (primarily) on topographical survey data, a picture has been built up of peoples' lives in this area. That this is both ambivalent and sometimes apparently completely contradictory will be a product of those peoples' lives, as much as the uncertainties generated by the nature of the sources. The means by which personal and social identities were constructed have underlain all of the preceding discussions, but will perhaps benefit from a more direct articulation here. The intention of this concluding section is, therefore, to draw together the linking threads that run through these individual periods and stories.

The structural remains of the Bronze Age landscape - the hut circles and field systems - suggest a sense of self-awareness and confidence that, in many respects, is not repeated at Pitcarmick North. There is a danger that this may be an impression generated by the visibility of the final phase of occupation of the hut circles, but the visible remains do appear to reflect a period where human control of the landscape could be imposed to dramatic effect. This control reflects an ability to manage the environment to the point where its appearance was radically altered; the use of stone, as one of the fundamental products of the earth, strikingly illustrates both a dominance of the natural world and a belief that this would be lasting. Although the first settlers in these uplands entered a world untouched by human influence - this was a landscape quickly buried and lost beneath centuries of building and agricultural activity. The measure of their success in creating an 'artificial' world of their own is a still visible legacy within the

present landscape, and provides perhaps the most important illumination of the views of the occupants of these buildings and of the people who worked the fields.

This was a bounded landscape, defined both by walls and by the natural form of the land. Although there are more isolated buildings and field systems, the location and arrangement of the main groups of structural remains, stresses the self-contained nature of each small unit of houses and fields. This interpretation would stand even if the form of the hut-circles divides them into two phases, since the more elaborate of the structures at Pitcarmick closely overlies earlier ones. This allows, too, for the potential for substantial re-use. However, despite the extent to which spaces within the settlement itself are closed down, particularly around the main buildings, and movement directed on very proscribed paths, the boundaries between the world inside and outside the settlement are blurred by the presence of cairns in areas of the hill which were only roughly enclosed. Human control of the natural world was, therefore, set within limits, however fluid the conception of these may have been.

In spite of the clear definition of the settlement and agricultural areas, the ritual focus of this Bronze Age landscape is less obvious. It is possible that in initial phases of expansion into the hills, ratification for action may have been sought from the ancestors, through existing monuments. These may have represented the sanctity of unchanging authority in a rapidly changing world. The monumentality of the buildings and fields would seem to derive their conception of scale from the natural world around them. This may imply that it is the natural 'monuments', such as the triangular boulder and possibly the bluff, itself, which came to structure the social and religious life of the people who lived on this hillside. In all periods, the hills surrounding Pitcarmick North would have been a continual reminder of the power of nature and, in the phase when the hut-circles were in use, it is likely that beyond the confines of the ridge, human impingement on the natural world was limited. Reinforced in this way, harnessing the volatile power of nature, through the incorporation of physical features into the cultural landscape, would have been of paramount concern.

The lack of an Iron Age - or rather the present inability to identify the remains of this period - is of considerable significance at Pitcarmick North and in much of North-east Perth. In light of the often spectacular architecture of other areas of the north and west of Scotland in this period, it may seem very strange indeed. To account for hundreds of missing years as merely phases of expansion and contraction, involving the re-use of extant foundations and impinging little on the environment and landscape of these hills, might seem possible - if rather uninspired. Nonetheless, it remains a possibility that only further work, building on the historical and social framework already established, can resolve.

The impressions of a rigidly controlled Bronze Age landscape, in which the identity of each settlement cluster was clearly asserted, are enhanced by the almost complete absence of a landscape surrounding the Pitcarmick-type buildings. This is expressed architecturally, in the lack of definition given to the form of the buildings and the delineation of the spaces within them, as much as in their extensive use of the landscape. In a sense, the longhouse form suggests a self-sufficiency of each household as the roundhouse landscape suggests a unity for each cluster. This self-sufficiency may have determined the degree of physical and conceptual proximity between people and animals. The clear provision of functionally distinct (but not physically separate) areas within each building suggests that people were, in this period, more dependent socially and economically on their animals than in the roundhouse phase. Although the Pitcarmick-type buildings probably do reflect a period of loosely co-ordinated expansion into the hills and, therefore, a density of population and occupation that does not compare with that of the roundhouses, deeper conceptual concerns do seem to underlie the choices made by the people who built and lived in the Pitcarmick-type buildings.

Taking this further implies that, in this phase, group identity was not expressed tangibly (to the archaeologist) in the remains of buildings and fields, but principally through inter-personal relationships. The relationships between individuals in the group and between groups were no longer spatially proscribed to the extent that they once were. However, this should not deny the importance of a ritual or social focus for the

community interaction that must have taken place, and may even have made it more necessary. A place with similar all-encompassing functions to that of later Kirkmichael, and possibly even on the same site, could have provided the linking mechanism for people dispersed widely in the hills. Equally, political control may no longer have been negotiated at such a local level. The more extensive access to the land and its resources that seems to be reflected in this period could imply the subordination of these people into wider patterns of social and political interchange. In the Early Medieval period, this does occur and the potential role of the kingdom of Atholl or even the Pictish state in this respect will be explored in the next chapter.

Following the end of the Pitcarmick phase, these upland areas were apparently still in use, although the character of the succeeding occupation is harder to define. The cots seem to represent a quite structured approach to the utilisation of the hills, one that demonstrates a clear relationship to later shieling activities, but which nonetheless appears to be quite distinct. Continuity with the previous phase is suggested only by the retention of the rectangular shape of the buildings; however, it must be significant that all of the three Pitcarmick-type buildings on the south ridge are found in very close association to cots. It seems possible to suggest that there are three areas of occupation at Pitcarmick North (the west and east ends of the south ridge and the north ridge (although the latter could also be sub-divided)). These appear to be maintained in the positioning of the later shieling huts; further confirmation of the proposed close links between these two building phases. Nonetheless, the differences in form and construction of the cots and their tendency to cluster are striking, both in contrast to the Pitcarmick-type buildings and the shielings. Without closer examination of the possible antecedents of settlements on the lower ground in the glens, the search for a context - beyond suggesting an association with the wool trade of the Middle Ages that was probably of quite short duration - will be difficult.

It is only with the benefit of the later historical evidence that the power of individual agency and responsibility can be recognised more easily. In the context of a rich oral culture, the overriding authority of the Church, and a firm belief in the identity of the

social groupings of which they were a part, the discrete nature of these communities could be maintained amidst the turbulent conditions of much of the Early Modern period. The depth of history visible at settlement sites, such as Stronamuck, highlights dramatically this maintenance of identity. This must have occurred in spite of the incorporation of feudal notions of landholding into the clan-based relations of kinship and ensured that, although changes of ownership were frequent at a high status level and the fortunes of individual families might rise and fall (sometimes catastrophically), continuity for those of tacksman status was often realised. For their tenants, the situation cannot have been so secure and their histories, so dependent on the attitudes of their landlord, must have varied considerably. In spite of this, there appears to be clear attachment to place which continues well into the nineteenth (and twentieth) centuries.

As the general trend of Scottish history proves, within this social framework, the potency of the individual could still be paramount, albeit that the archaeological record has little to say on this account. The testaments and inventories confirm that, although the power of women economically, and individually, was not as great as that of men, they nonetheless could support themselves when necessary. Throughout this period, the idea of the nuclear family, which respected individuals and valued its older members, remained intact; reliance on the extended family seems only to have become of predominant importance in the later nineteenth century.

Political power seems to have been concentrated in local hands or in the local representatives of more distant families; no doubt largely responsible for much of the instability of the area. These status distinctions would be expressed in architecture - from the tower house down to the meanest turf-built shieling - although few structures remain to tell their story. However, as accounts of shieling practices reveal, the material conditions of living in these buildings were not that disparate (Robertson 1799; see also chapter 4.2, pg. 87). By the nineteenth century, this was beginning to change and, to a certain extent, some of these developments are preserved in the extant architectural forms of the later nineteenth century. The number of elegant 'gentlemen's seats' testifies to the competing desires still present, not so much as a consequence of local family

politics, as of changing expectations generated by the new social norms present in nineteenth century Scotland. Below this, the structured layout of the farms ensured that the recently erected barriers between tenants and labourers (and animals) were maintained. However, the increasing distance between the different social classes is perhaps most clearly reflected in the huddle of cottages at Stronamuck and Wester Pitcarmick; the lack of evidence here for improving conditions must reflect the increasing alienation and exploitation between members of a once close-knit society. The culmination of the need on the part of the landowner to produce greater material wealth, as concerns beyond the parish impinged on their lives, is attested by the wholesale remodelling of the landscape into one where productive capacity was paramount. Almost as a sideline, this resulted in the gradual reduction of population in the latter half of the nineteenth century, leaving as testimony the stark remains of roofless buildings.

In the absence of other strands of evidence to add to the general understanding of agriculture in Scotland, much of what we can say about the economic practices of this area is based on inferences drawn from the surface archaeological remains. The picture presented by the monumental Bronze Age remains is of a mixed animal and arable economy, that suggests each settlement cluster was, in the main, self-supporting. Its impact on the landscape is immense - strikingly visible both in the build-up of soil in the enclosed fields and in the coherency and planning implied in the layout of the buildings and fields themselves. There is a sense of permanency here, too, both in the visible structures on the hill and in the potential storage function suggested for the smaller of the hut-circles. The role of the animal components of this economic structure is unclear and, beyond the provision of manure, cannot be characterised. Although the nature of the archaeological remains is such that they will obviously draw attention to the arable elements, the numerous fieldwalls seem to have had more to do with the need for the monumentality, seen also in the hut-circles, as any reference to functionality. Present knowledge of the vegetation and environment of the area, combined with a lack of

analysis of the internal structure of the roundhouses, does not allow for an assessment of the types of animals that could be kept on these hills. The pollen evidence from Carn Dubh implies a mixed environment of open grassland and scrub woodland, in which cattle, sheep and goats could all find a niche; therefore choice was perhaps reserved to individuals.

The Pitcarmick-type buildings, with their emphasis on the close relationship between people and the animals with which they shared their living space, presents a marked contrast to the hut-circle landscape. Again, in the absence of faunal or environmental evidence, it is debatable whether sheep or cows were of equal or differing significance. Although there are few clear indications of the extent to which the old fields of the hut-circles might have been used for growing crops, an animal oriented economy will radically change the roles of members of the community. If these were dispersed farms, perhaps with a few larger settlement agglomerations providing supplementary services, then each individual unit may no longer have been so self-reliant. Furthermore, the potential isolation of people in their own settlements would have been enhanced by the constraints imposed by the care of animals and, in particular, in herding them over the large expanses of the uplands. Even though animals may have been kept in roundhouses, there is little provision in any excavated example to suggest that this was a permanent arrangement. The layout of a longhouse and the implications inherent in the closeness of relationship between the animal and human occupants of the building is rather different.

This is a situation that perhaps also applies through much of the Medieval period. Here, it is possible to suggest that arable crops played a larger role in the subsistence of these straths and that, to some degree at least, the general patterns of agricultural practice that were to continue right up into the modern period were beginning to take shape. What changed, often rapidly and to the detriment of individuals, was the value of animals to create wealth and confer status. The expansive period of the early centuries of the second millennium A.D. is one where wool - and a growing market in land - brought economic gain to the area. This did perhaps begin to break down the close

relationships between people and animals into ones primarily focused on exploitation. This is perhaps the economic environment that made possible the small clusters of cots and the widespread use of the hills as pasture. If this was so, then people would have perhaps turned towards the lower ground to grow arable crops for food, thus fixing the outline of the present settlement pattern.

The decline of the wool trade and the rise in export of cattle would bring about changes in the role and relative value of each animal type and, potentially - since cattle require a larger initial investment - the ability of members of the community to partake in these changing economic practices. For people of lower status, sheep provided more practical benefits in terms of subsistence and wealth acquisition than cattle, as large numbers could be run over smaller areas of rougher ground. The rise in the economic importance of cattle, therefore, may have enhanced the rather less obvious status divisions present at the end of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a situation made more changeable and uncertain by a rapidly expanding population. As the law tracts dealing with status in Ireland in the Early Medieval period suggest, people might become more and more dependent on those of higher status to provide them with animals in form of a loan or wadset (Patterson 1994). The social framework that resulted provided the basis of the personal and economic relationships of the succeeding centuries.

Material culture and, more generally, the uses to which the available raw materials were put, gives the impression of extraordinary continuity. Such continuity, in itself, may have lent added import to the materials utilised. Yet, in a situation where material culture in the archaeological record of this area is sparse, there are few indications of how representative a picture this might be. Pottery, alone, appears and disappears - although it is possible that the technology (or rather the need to make use of a known production method) of ceramic production was only utilised locally in the prehistoric period, as provenancing on the clays used to make the pottery at Dalrulzion seems to indicate (Thorneycroft 1932-3, 199ff). For the Medieval period, the pottery is likely to

be non-local, although produced within the eastern region of Scotland (Turnbull in Rideout 1995, 171). Whether its exotic nature - perhaps combined with an element of rarity - made it more valuable is unknown, but the number of sherds found at Carn Dubh, although not paralleled at Pitcarmick North, presumes a fairly widespread currency even in this remote area.

In these uplands, the uses to which stone was put is perhaps more interesting. Stone was everywhere, but as the triangular boulder and the emphasis placed on it in the construction of the roundhouses confirm, stone - in any form - retained a particular prominence. Colour must have formed a major element in this - the schists of this area are a uniformly dull grey until the light catches the glint of mica or reddens the garnets buried in its surface. The contrast with the white quartz which seems to have formed such a large part of peoples' toolkit throughout the settlement history of the area must have been one to delight each growing child. The easy availability of quartz, and the need to frequently replace even the coarsest of tools, must have ensured that stone provided one of their earliest lessons in the transformation of natural materials into objects that were not only functional but, once discarded, returned easily and comfortably to the natural world. The prominence of cooking pits in the excavated hut-circles, and the unexplored nature of the burnt mounds in the area (RCAHMS 1990, 5), suggests that stone also had a large role to play in the production and transformation of natural materials into food.

Hidden behind all this are the organic materials which acted both as components of the structures in which people lived, the artefacts they used, and the food they ate. The role of turf and wood in the superstructure of any of the building types examined at Pitcarmick North cannot be assessed accurately, but neither can it be ignored. This is equally applicable in the usage of wood to make vessels of all sorts, to create furniture, for tools, to pen animals and, not least, to burn as fuel. Throughout the history of this area, demands on the woodland (and scrub) resources would have been one of the most important aspects of peoples' transformation of natural resources. They, themselves, were possibly aware of their power to manipulate not only access to, but also the

availability of, this resource. Amidst the generally low-growing vegetation of the uplands, the longevity of any tree will have perhaps appeared to equate with that of stone, potentially making them the (earlier?) equivalents of the triangular boulder. The perennial struggle against encroaching heather would have been one which was fought in each generation, particularly if the uplands were only occupied during phases of expansion. The source of the remnant fertility which 'greens' the two ridges even today and brought people back to previously occupied areas would have been understood by the new arrivals. Viewed in this light, it does not seem possible that people considered the hills and mountains to be especially wild and dangerous, even if they were environments that needed to be treated with care and respect (see chapter 4.1).

One of the major issues that any consideration of the settlement history of an area will raise is the role of the dead within the community, and their consequent visibility in that landscape. For much of the history of Pitcarmick North, this is a problem with an apparently simple solution. People would have taken their dead for burial at the place which formed the focus of their religious lives, the parish church of Kirkmichael. Those born outside the parish might be taken back to their place of origin, but, as the census returns infer, this was generally not that far away. The expense of these formalities would probably not have dissuaded a community, which at least observed the rites of Christianity at the major transitional points of life (see chapter 4.6). For the occupants of most of the smaller farms, only a few grave markers from the later nineteenth century survive - perhaps because these people could not afford a permanent marker or, because, over the several centuries in which it was in use, the graveyard has become so full that those stones (and their attendant graves) not part of the more important family plots were pushed aside and their location lost in the ongoing process of living. For the majority of people, individuality in death probably lasted only as long as the people who knew and remembered them remained alive.

For the preceding periods, the role of the dead is not so clear. Those occupants of the longhouses at Pitcarmick North were possibly a part of an already Christian milieu. If

so, then the antiquity of an ecclesiastical site at Kirkmichael would have to be extended further back than the twelfth century. The presence of an already secure infrastructure, both in religious and secular terms, is strong in twelfth century Strathardle and its foundations will be explored in the succeeding chapter. If such an infrastructure can be assumed, then this begins to bridge the apparent archaeological gap visible between the end of the first millennium A.D. and the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, discernible both at Pitcarmick North and throughout much of Scotland (see chapter 3.2). The funerary practices of those who lived in the Pitcarmick-type buildings may not have differed greatly in form from those of the Medieval and later periods, although more subtle differences in perception are now lost.

Prior to the revolution brought about by Christianity, the question of how the dead were treated remains rather more open. The problem of the lack of visibility for the Iron Age is part of the wider mystery surrounding the apparent absence of these centuries from the archaeological record at Pitcarmick and, again, in light of the relative lack of fieldwork in this part of Perthshire, this may simply be a problem of recognition. In the Bronze Age, the almost complete invisibility of the dead remains. Since most of the stone cairns in the area, whether they seem to have a funerary role or are simply for clearance purposes, are situated on acid soils, these are problems that will not be easily solved. The few, more obviously, burial cairns suggest quite dramatic statements were being made through them, whether these refer to the identity of individuals or to groups. The similarities to domestic structures in the ways in which stone is employed to define the most important elements, suggests a closeness between the domestic and ritual spheres. This is confirmed most strikingly, whether or not all the structural elements are contemporary, by the position of these cairns within the main areas of settlement.

The most striking feature of this study of the eastern glens of Perthshire is the potential for the extreme localisation of developments even within this relatively small geographical area. This is historically contingent, partly the responsibility of local family histories, but also the product of more general historical processes in the

Highlands as a whole. Since the majority of peoples' experiences did take place on this local (and therefore human) scale, the success of the histories drawn here can only be judged on their ability to approach the motivations and knowledges relevant to the lives of the people who occupied Pitcarmick North.

6 The Early Medieval Kingdom of Atholl: the power of place

The detailed local studies which have comprised the work at Pitcarmick have dwelt primarily on building and landscape analysis, combined (for the later phases of occupation) with attempts to reconstruct the immediate historical framework within which these activities took place. For the Early Medieval period, establishing a coherent understanding of the Pitcarmick-type buildings and the social setting of which they were a part, has proved difficult as both the building remains and the nature of landscape exploitation appear to be very amorphous (see chapter 5.2.2). If, as has been assumed there, identity was constructed and expressed primarily through inter-personal (i.e. face-to-face) relationships, the nature of the social structure that made possible these identities must be understood. It is to provide a broader appreciation of these factors which has led to the concentration of the second part of this thesis on the Early Medieval kingdom of Atholl (plan 5), within whose boundaries Pitcarmick lies. The wider geographical frame of analysis chosen here has necessitated a closer chronological focus; this should enable the effectiveness of the approach in understanding of peoples' lives taken here and in the preceding chapter to be compared.

The development of the Pictish kingdoms has largely been ignored since the pioneering work of Skene in 1876, originally because of a lack of archaeological data and now a problem obscured by the mass of new information. Academic inquiry is indeed beginning to establish a clearer picture of the political structure and history of Pictland, and the emergence of the Scottish kingdom in the ninth century (Barrow 1973; Driscoll 1991; Broun 1994). However, this knowledge remains rather superficial, because the appearance and coherency of the Early Medieval kingdoms, even in the Pictish heartland, is so little understood. The location of Atholl on the southern borders of the Highlands has ensured that it has lain open to a wide range of influences from

north and south, east and west. This, combined with an historical accident which has blessed the area both with a wide range of primary archaeological remains, apparently dating to this period, and a sense of identity which survives into the present day, makes it an intriguing region for study.

In trying to seek an understanding of the history and development of the kingdom of Atholl in the Early Medieval period, the focus here is on the re-creation of a sense of the local infrastructure, both secular and ecclesiastical. It is these elements which would seem to be the medium through which the social and political unity of such a large and disparate area was effected. By assessing the relevance of this seemingly rather ephemeral entity in peoples' everyday lives, an idea also of the role of secular and church authority in the creation of personal identity should be possible. This cannot be limited to the Early Medieval period, although this will be its main focus, as the sources for the identities embodied by the Early Historic kingdom will originate in the previous period, and the nature of those identities, as they have come down to us, will be mediated by the perceptions of later times.

The basis of this chapter is, therefore, an examination of the information contained in the NMRS, set alongside the historical sources and local traditions of the area. A short summary of each relevant site is contained in appendix 9 and is also presented graphically on plan 5. Within the remit of this thesis, detailed fieldwork over this area - beyond a fairly basic acquaintance with many of the places and sites involved - has not been possible. In particular, the majority of the discussion of circular homesteads has had, because of the uneven quality of the excavated and survey data, to be based on published accounts (cf. Taylor's own reservations (1990, 41)). Without a further campaign of fieldwork, this situation cannot be easily rectified.

6.1 The material context of social relations

“North of the earldom of Stratherne, and within the range of the Grampians, lay the ancient earldom of Atholl. It is from this district that the royal dynasty emerged which terminated with Alexander the Third, the founder of the house having been lay abbot of Dunkeld [Crinan], and possessor of the *abthanrie* of Dull, and from his son Duncan proceeded not only the kings of Scotland, but likewise the ancient earls of Atholl”

(Skene 1890, 270-1)

The ancient provinces of Scotland have a very long genealogy which extends back into the middle of the first millennium A.D. These kingdoms are the political and administrative units through which, first the Pictish kingdom, then the Scottish Crown, sought to exert its overlordship. They must have originated in a period when political cohesion, and possibly also social, religious and economic cohesion, were both desirable and necessary. Each province was ruled by a sub-king, potentially the equivalents of the later *mormaers* and then earls (Skene 1876, 49ff; Wainwright 1955, 22). Each of these petty kings or earls was the vehicle for the expression of the king’s authority. However, even after David I had subtly altered the relationship between the *mormaers*/earls and the people who followed them, to one with feudal overtones and a greater concern with the physical ownership of land (Skene 1876, 63-4), they were as much embedded in local concerns as they might, at times, be in national ones.

The kingdom of Atholl (fig. 51) is first noted in the Annals of Ulster in 739 when its king, Talorcan, was drowned by Angus, his rival for the kingship (Wainwright 1955, 22). In the introduction to the Pictish Chronicle, Atholl is described as comprising the entire area between the Spey and the mountains of Druim Alban (Skene 1890, 46). The name Atholl means ‘*New Ireland*’ (Watson 1926, 111), a name that immediately attracts attention because the mountains of Druim Alban run along the spine of Scotland, dividing Pictland from the west and *Dál Riada*. The kingdom was divided into two districts - Atholl, itself, bounded on the south by the Tay and the Isla, and Gowrie, lying to the south-east of the Tay (RCAHMS 1994, 88; Skene 1890, 43-6). Following the formation of Alba in the ninth century, lowland Gowrie became separated, now linked

to Fife and Fothrif to form the heart of the new Scottish kingdom (Skene 1890, 46-7). Unlike Atholl, Gowrie as an entity then disappeared, becoming even more politically invisible than prior to the ninth century, and will not be considered here.

Atholl is a large and disparate area (plan 5; fig 59) dominated by the two broad, fertile straths of Strathtay and the Vale of Atholl (taken here to incorporate Strathgarry and Strathtummel (plate 15) to its junction with the Tay). Around these are deep narrow valleys, such as Glenlyon (plate 16) and Glenshee, interspersed by wide sweeps of moorland. Topographically, the river valleys constrain and direct movement, while, as Burt noted in the early eighteenth century, the main straths set apart their inhabitants from the entirety of the Highlands, as well as the adjacent moorlands, by their green and fertile aspect (1754, Vol. II, 84-5). Yet the boundaries of Early Medieval Atholl parallel very closely those of the nineteenth century (fig. 59). The earl of Atholl, solely of the seven ancient earls of Scotland, has retained something of the trappings of authority into the present day; the duke is the only person in Britain to retain a private army. In a myriad of less important ways, and perhaps not only because of the tourist trade, this area appears to retain a sense of identity that still pervades its day-to-day life. This chapter will, therefore, explore the potential sources of this identity through the archaeological and historical evidence for the Early Medieval period.

Although there is now an increasing amount of settlement evidence available for Early Medieval Scotland, analysis - even at a regional level - is often very limited, because of the disparate nature of much of this material (see chapter 3.2). Atholl is however quite unique, because it possesses, in addition to the Pitcarmick-type buildings, another distinct Early Medieval settlement form. This is the circular homestead, the main concentration of which lies within the borders of Atholl. For whatever reason, circular homesteads, although they have been recognised as a distinct settlement form (analogous to duns or ringforts) have not generated much detailed scrutiny. W.J. Watson undertook a programme of survey and excavation in the second decade of this century (1912-3, 1914-5), which was built upon by Margaret Stewart in her excavations at

Queen's View I and Litigan in the late sixties. These excavations and further attempts to create a comprehensive gazetteer of sites were completed and published by D.B. Taylor (1990). Unfortunately, this paper appears to have been rather distracted by the need to identify further examples of homesteads in other areas of Scotland. Apart from this, two homesteads have been excavated in advance of road widening (Triscott 1980). None of this excavation and evaluation has produced any real insight into the function and significance of this settlement-type. Further, initial examination of the NMRS revealed that the Ordnance Survey field workers had listed a considerable number of potential sites (some recorded as duns) which Taylor had not included in his gazetteer. A very brief description of the fifty-one definite sites and a further twenty-two possible examples is included in Appendix 9. In light of this confusion and an ill-defined sense of the nature of these sites, it seemed a summary of the available evidence - which could then be set against the recently acquired knowledge of Pitcarmick-type buildings within a wider study of Highland Perthshire - was necessary.

Circular (although they are sometimes oval) homesteads are all of a similar size and have - in most cases - an inner and outer face of coursed drystone walling around a rubble core (Taylor 1990, 7). This is laid directly on the ground surface and as a consequence of this, and of much later stone robbing, the majority now appear to be very roughly built (Appendix 9). In contrast, those examples which survive well demonstrate a certain architectural finesse (plate 17). The faces are well-constructed and some of the sites retain entrance passages, vaguely reminiscent of the elaboration that is fully developed in brochs (plate 18). The building of these sites would seem to require a degree of status on the part of the commissioner or, at least, the ability to draw on a group of people and a certain amount of resources to aid in their construction. In most cases, the walls of these structures are thick enough to have supported a roof and the rather limited evidence from excavation of these sites (Litigan (fig. 52); Queen's View I; Aldclune) does suggest the presence of structural posts in the interior (Taylor 1990, 15, 29; Triscott 1980, 82-3). This caused Taylor (1990, 18) to draw a comparison between the homesteads and large and elaborate hut-circles. However, the diameter of Litigan is

15.5m internally and that of Queen's View, 16.5m, yielding floor areas of 188m² and 214m² respectively (the largest hut-circle at Pitcarmick North has an internal diameter of 11.5m and a floor area of 103.87m², although the RCAHMS give 15m internal diameter as the upper limit of the range for the (larger) single-walled hut-circles (1990, 2)). Further, the post-holes at Aldclune occur in circles, suggestive of free-standing structures, each with their own hearth and sequence of floor levels (Triscott 1980, 82-3).

Four circular homesteads have undergone at least partial excavation (Watson 1912-3, 1914-5; Stewart 1969; Taylor 1990). Borenich II was "cleared out" by Watson in the early part of this century, providing no dateable finds (1914-5, 28-31). The few strands of excavated evidence from the other three sites, however, do suggest that circular homesteads may date to the first millennium A.D. A yellow glass bead, supposedly of Anglian origin and dating to 700-900 A.D., and part of a stone lamp, similar to those found on other Scottish and Irish Early Christian sites, were recovered during excavations at Queen's View I, Loch Tummel (Taylor 1990, 33; the former is not from a secure context). These corroborate the radiocarbon date from Litigan, near Keltneyburn, which covers a range between 840 and 1020 A.D. (*ibid.*, 17). This date was derived from charcoal at the base of a disturbed layer of dark soil, which lay just above the sub-soil but did not form a recognisable floor (*ibid.*, 15). More secure must be the four, more recently obtained, dates from the two circular homesteads at Aldclune, although here the archaeological levels had been subjected to recent disturbance (at present, only the initial DES report (Triscott 1980) and the dates themselves are available for this site (Wilson and Triscott 1996)). Two of the dates came from initial phases of construction and two from phases of internal refurbishment. The dates from the refurbishment phase are, unfortunately, slightly earlier than those from the primary deposits, but, nonetheless, all relate to the end of the first millennium B.C. and the first century A.D. (Wilson and Triscott 1996, 141). This discrepancy recalls the lengthy date range for duns (see chapter 3.2) and can only be resolved by future work; at present it appears to reinforce the relative lack of knowledge concerning these sites.

These few, comparatively small-scale excavations, have resulted in a paucity of occupation debris. At Litigan, there were two fragments of a rotary quern, seven pieces of iron slag, and some firecracked and coarse stone objects, including two stone discs (Taylor 1990, 17). Queen's View I is remarkably similar, although the quantity of slag (25kg) is rather different (ibid., 33-5). At Aldclune, rotary querns were again recovered, alongside spindle whorls, loom weights and four fragments of pottery, one of which was Samian (Triscott 1980, 83). At each of the four sites, there is evidence for hearths which, alongside the querns, would seem to suggest domestic occupation. At Litigan, a large firecracked slab appears to have formed the base of a hearth in the centre of the structure (Taylor 1990, 17). Watson recovered evidence for three hearths at Borenich II, in varying places around the interior (1914-5, 30-1). At Queen's View, by contrast, the evidence is rather for smithying, although, on stratigraphic grounds, this - and a corn drying kiln - may post-date the main phase of occupation (Taylor 1990, 28-9, 37). At Aldclune there is also evidence of post-occupation metal-working, amidst which a ninth century penannular brooch was found (Triscott 1980, 83). At the three sites excavated earlier this century, no clear floor levels have been recovered, although at Aldclune there were floor levels within the possible internal structures (ibid., 82). In all cases, the occupation levels seem to consist of a thick dark layer, containing abundant charcoal, whose only characteristic appears to be a degree of disturbance and trampling (Taylor 1990, 15, 18, 27, 38).

Circular homesteads occur singly or, less frequently, in groups of two or three (e.g. Garrow, Aldclune). Apart from these clusters, few homesteads are found in the immediate vicinity of each other and, even if the physical distance is small, the sites give the impression of isolation from each other. For example, the two homesteads on the slopes above Queen's View, while only 100m apart, sit on either side of a ridge - one facing out over the area to the west, the other to the east. Around the west end of Loch Tummel, at the mouth of the pass leading from Fortingall and Garth, eight confirmed homesteads and three more possible sites cover an area roughly 6km by 3.5km east to west (fig. 53). Of this group, *Caisteal Choise* (NN 75 NE 7) and two other

unnamed homesteads (NN 75 NE 9, 10) near Kirkton of Foss form the most compact cluster. Even so, the sites are still 200m or more away (over rough ground) from their neighbours. This is a distance that most homesteads respect - only the two at Garrow (c. 80m apart) and Aldclune (c. 50m apart) are found in far closer proximity to each other. As with the Pitcarmick-type longhouses, circular homesteads appear to possess no clearly associated contemporary features (Taylor 1990, 50).

Circular homesteads have a very different distribution pattern to that of the Pitcarmick-type buildings, although one circular homestead - at Ballinloan Burn - is found in fairly close association with the three groups of Pitcarmick-type buildings on the opposite side of the burn (Cowley 1997). In marked contrast, the homesteads do occur in the heartland of Atholl, although most are found in the more remote western glens such as Strathtummel (before it joins the Garry) and Glenlyon (plan 5). The universal lack of structural features that could be termed defensive is paralleled by the location of the homesteads in strategic, rather than defensive, places (Taylor 1990, 7). Many are situated on knolls or bluffs, but these have no natural strength (*ibid.*, 41-3) or are overlooked by higher ground (Stewart 1969, 26-9). Others, often the more remote examples, are in fact on low-lying ground close to the valley floors (e.g. the four at Cashlie (plate 19)). The circular homesteads are characterised by their position along routes of communication, particularly at the openings to the passes that link each of the main concentrations of settlement in the area (Watson 1912-3, 56-8; Stewart 1969, 30; Taylor 1990, 41, 61). This, combined with their situation on the top of prominent landscape features, lends many of these sites a visual superiority which may have deeper significance in terms of the land over which they look. These locations also ensure that the homesteads are on ground rather more suitable to pasture than arable (Taylor 1990, 41). To the north of Queen's View, an extensive area of pasture opens out (now afforested) and the pollen record suggests that the site stood in the midst of open woodland (birch, hazel and some alder) dominated by the "main pastoral weeds" (Caseldine in Taylor 1990, 70).

The physical locations of the homesteads, adjacent to what is now pasture land, has ensured, in many cases, a close relationship to areas of prehistoric settlement. This is most clearly expressed along the north side of Loch Tummel and in Glenfincastle, where there are large groups of hut-circles and field systems. However, where the circular homesteads are concerned, associations with the earlier settlement pattern are far less prominent than those to later settlement. The ninth century Aldclune brooch and the related evidence for metalworking came from the post-abandonment layers of one of two circular homesteads sited close to a traditional crossing point of the river Tummel (Triscott 1980, 83; Stevenson 1985, 236). Rather more directly, a fairly large percentage of the homesteads contain or are surrounded by rectangular buildings that clearly belong to Medieval or post-Medieval townships (e.g. Tomtayewen). Further, many sites are skirted by hollowways (e.g. Tombreck; see Taylor 1990, 50 for more examples) which appear to place them firmly within the context of later settlement. In other cases, the form of the internal buildings suggests that they are shieling huts. Only at *An Dùn Geal*, near Fortingall, are there small, circular structures which seem to be bonded into the wall (Stewart 1969, 24). Yet even in this well-preserved case, it is difficult to determine whether the homestead walling and the internal structures are contemporary.

Margaret Stewart has suggested that the siting of later townships may be influenced by the earlier homesteads, as indicated both by their close physical association and the evidence of *dun-* place-names (1969, 31). Although her belief was largely centred around four rather dubious circular homesteads near Duntaylor in Strathhtay, the homesteads certainly have a far closer relationship to the areas favoured by Medieval and later settlement than Pitcarmick-type buildings. Perhaps partly as a consequence of their physical presence (something which Pitcarmick-type buildings cannot claim), the circular homesteads have retained a more prominent role in the (social) landscape than Pitcarmick-type buildings. This extends to the widespread attribution of legendary associations to the circular homesteads; for example, the area of Glenlyon known as Fincastle takes its name from the "twelve castles of the Fionn". This attribution, first brought to wider notice by Pennant (Watson 1912-3, 32), is paralleled by Glenfincastle

itself which runs north-west from the east end of Loch Tummel. The homesteads were also known collectively as the 'Black castles' (Taylor 1990, 7).

The disturbed and trampled floor layers, alongside the locations of these sites and in line with some of the Irish ringforts (Stout 1997, 33), has given rise to a proposition that the homesteads were simply animal enclosures within a pastoral system of land utilisation (Stewart 1969, 31; Taylor 1990, 18). This, despite disparities in altitude, recalls the prominence of the apparently pastoral use made of the Pitcarmick landscape (see chapter 5.2.2). However, in Pitcarmick-type longhouses, the intimacy with which living space is shared does suggest a more dependent relationship between people and animals. In both cases, these are landscapes comprising dispersed and self-contained settlements. There are four groups of Pitcarmick-type buildings, consisting of six to eight structures, six clusters of up to four buildings and fifteen isolated buildings (Appendix 9). The clustering of Pitcarmick-type buildings into larger groups in fact recalls the locations of homesteads around Loch Tummel, although the spacing is somewhat closer. At Balnabroich, for example, within the larger cluster, there are two groups of two buildings which are c. 50-80m apart. At Pitcarmick West, the buildings are generally around 100m apart, but again there are groups of two buildings which are in closer association. On balance, this perhaps implies more immediate relationships between individuals and groups than is indicated by the homesteads, but more knowledge of the latter's function and status, and whether they were indeed settlements at all, would be needed to support such a hypothesis. Despite such limited knowledge, their form has led to comparisons between the homesteads and the Irish ringforts (Stewart 1969, 21). In the sense that the majority of ringforts are generally associated with a particular grade of farmer - that of the *boaire*, the lowest grade of free farmer - this may provide a useful clue to the status level with which the circular homesteads may be linked. However, and particularly in the light of the current re-evaluation of the nature of ringforts in Ireland (Stout 1997), this is a comparison probably best left dormant until circular homesteads are themselves better understood.

In contrast to these settlement types, evidence for other contemporary settlement in Highland Perthshire is, at present, both inconclusive and disparate. Forts, crannogs, cropmarks and place-name evidence are all worthy of mention in this context (plan 5). For the crannogs, the biases inherent in past fieldwork (unrectifiable now because of the deepening of Lochs Rannoch and Tummel) are partially offset by the number of sites in Loch Tay, which are noticed in the historical period. Evidence from Loch Tay (Dixon 1982), and from the west of Scotland, for the function and dating of crannogs (e.g. RCAHMS 1988, 33), suggests these sites could have been used or re-used at this time, even if all were not initially built in the Early Medieval period. Many of the Early Medieval crannogs in western Scotland and Ireland are of high status; the role of Priory Island, Loch Tay as the site of an Augustinian priory, and later, as the first stronghold of the Campbells in Breadalbane (Dixon 1925, 20-3) appears to confirm the validity of this impression. However, bearing in mind the number of crannogs in Loch Tay, this status could apply to a very few sites, leaving the majority to fulfill far more minor roles. It is noticeable that the crannogs are found adjacent to good land and that there is a remarkable correlation between their locations and the boundaries of later townships (Morrison 1985, 76-8). If this is true, it may suggest that crannogs, which, if reconstructed, would appear to be of similar size and of the same circular form as the homesteads, are of comparable status. Although there are a few homesteads along the north side of the loch (Appendix 9), the concentration of crannogs in Loch Tay would seem to define the southern limit of the homesteads, at the same time perhaps confirming the proposition made above (*ibid.*). Morrison takes this slightly further by suggesting that the crannogs and the homesteads performed complementary roles within a mixed farming economy; the crannogs being more concerned with arable farming, the homesteads with the pastoral side (*ibid.*, 76-80). While there is no specific evidence to confirm this, it is a potentially valid model which requires further evaluation.

The evidence from the relatively few forts in Atholl is even more sparse, largely because it is limited to surface descriptions and the local traditions linked to these sites. Again, as with all the settlement types previously examined, the forts may have multi-

period use. This is most clearly expressed, if only historically, by the small multivallate fort at King's Seat, Dunkeld (see below, pg. 274). The surface form of this fort, with the enclosures surrounding the summit citadel, is suggestive of a nucleated fort (at least in its final phase), a type seen as typical of the Early Historic period (Alcock, Alcock and Driscoll 1989, 206-14). Although much simpler in form, Tom Buidhe, at the west end of Loch Rannoch, is the only other fort which appears to be defined by the hierarchical division of space (*ibid.*). Similarly, only one other of the eleven forts in Atholl has an historical association. This is *Caisteal mac Tuathal* on Drummond Hill, where the name traditionally refers to Tuathal, a son of a ninth century abbot of Dunkeld. This site overlooks the early chapel site at Inchadney and is in a central position at the west end of Strathtay. The roughly rectangular shape of Drummond Hill and of one of the forts at Innes Buidhe distinguishes them from the majority of forts known to be of Iron Age date; this could, therefore, imply that they were built in the Early Medieval period. The position of Innes Buidhe within the centre of Killin is interesting and recalls that of the cropmark fort, close to the castle at Logierait. The majority of the forts are indeed strung out along the high ground on the edge of Strathtay and the Vale of Atholl (plan 5), often above sites (like Killin and Logierait) of Early Medieval significance. Although hampered by the poor preservation of many of the sites, this seems to suggest that the forts of Atholl, even if they are not all of hierarchical form, did have a significant role to play in the power structure of Early Medieval Atholl.

The cropmark evidence from Atholl is, unsurprisingly, concentrated in the two main straths, where there is the greatest density of fertile land receptive to aerial photography. What is striking about this material is the clustering of sites at locations such as Logierait, Fortingall and the area of Strathtay between Dull and Weem (Appendix 9). Each of these clusters comprises a wide variety of different cropmark sites, probably prehistoric and later, which could reflect both religious and secular activities. In terms of upstanding sites, the importance of Strathtay in the prehistoric period is confirmed by the concentration of ritual monuments (Stewart 1958-9; Bradley 1995, 15-7). Stone circles and burial monuments are usually found on the valley floors, while cup marks,

on the higher ground, appear to draw people in to areas such as Fortingall and Dull (among others). In all these cases, the density of cropmarks, in combination with the upstanding monuments, suggests that the particular significance of Logierait, Fortingall and Dull was of long-standing. This is confirmed by their historical and archaeological consequence in the latter half of the first millennium; the combination of possible secular and ritual evidence implies that these sites are minor parallels for places such as the royal palace at Forteviot. In particular, at Fortingall, two large, sub-rectangular enclosures appear to surround the church and could perhaps be the monastic enclosure (Smith 1996, 34-5). Beyond this, it suggests a return to places where the memory of previous (perhaps primarily religious) significance led to their appropriation and reinterpretation in the Early Medieval period.

Sites of possible first millennium A.D. date which could appear as cropmarks (e.g. souterrains and barrow cemeteries) are not readily apparent in Atholl. However, there appear to be four souterrains in the two main straths of Atholl, three of which are cropmark sites (RCAHMS 1994, 70) and to which can be added another possible example at Logierait. These are at least a tentative indication of settlement in these areas which, although the souterrains themselves are earlier in date, may imply continuing settlement nearby (see chapter 3.2). There are as yet no square or round barrows which could conceivably represent Early Medieval cemeteries in Highland Perthshire, but in South-east Perth, there are such cemeteries alongside the Tay and the Isla (RCAHMS 1994, 15). In addition, the possibility that the solid cropmarks of rectangular and sub-rectangular shape identified in South-east Perth (examples of which were excavated at Easter Kinnear in Fife and dated to the second half of the first millennium A.D. (Driscoll 1997)), may also be Early Medieval is very significant (RCAHMS 1994, 68-9, 75). The potential for Early Medieval cropmark sites to be identified in Atholl seems, therefore, quite probable.

One of the few place-names that is indicative of potentially contemporary settlement is the *pit-* or *pett-* prefix, seemingly referring to a 'dependent estate' within a larger

administrative unit (Whittington 1974-5). These have a primarily eastern distribution, with Atholl lying at the western edge. Between the dense concentration of *pit-* names in Angus and the main arterial valley of Atholl, Pitcarmick is one of the relatively few places containing the *pett-* element. This refers to the later fermtouns in the glen, presumably always the main focus of settlement; the Pitcarmick-type buildings on the hills above were probably dependent components of such settlements. Indeed, there appear to be no close relationships between the place-name element and the Pitcarmick-type buildings (plan 5), as *pit-* names only reappear in the straths which form the heartland of Atholl. The original status of the *pit-* names is suggested by their association with the largest farms in the vicinity (e.g. Pitcastle and Pitcairn in Strathtay). There are a few more isolated examples farther to the south and west (e.g. Pitkerril, Pitmackie), one of which (Pitleoch in Strathbraan) is found c. 3km to the south of Pitcarmick-type buildings (and one circular homestead) in the valley of the Ballinloan Burn. Similarly, a low proportion of the total number of circular homesteads are found close to *pit-* names. The exceptions are found at the two Pitcastles; one located in Strathtay, one in Strathummel. The modern farm (including a ruined seventeenth century laird's house) of Pitcastle in Strathummel lies c. 200m to the north-west of a circular homestead, while the name, Pitcastle in Strathtay, probably does derive from the two homesteads to the west of the present site (Watson 1912-3, 32-3). While hesitating to dismiss these names as the result of later romantical associations, similar to those already discussed, it is perhaps more significant that the three more isolated *pit-* names (Pitkerril, Pitmackie and Pitleoch) are found within a few kilometres of circular homesteads. The modern farms of Pitkerril and Pitmackie are in fact within a kilometre of a circular homestead(s). Overall, this place-name evidence, in light of the archaeological evidence for both structural types, would seem to indicate that, although the circular homesteads and the Pitcarmick-type buildings were probably both of somewhat lower status than the settlements now referred to by the *pit-* names, circular homesteads are found in closer association to the *pit-* names.

If the Pitcarmick-type buildings and circular homesteads can be taken to represent a coherent stratum of settlement within a *pett* estate, the patterns of exploitation and social structure they seem to represent, although still unclear in detail, reflect several linking themes. Examination of the rest of the archaeological and place-name evidence has given further insights into the settlement pattern of Highland Perthshire, but has not substantially clarified the social context within which these sites were occupied. Therefore, the source of these similarities and differences should perhaps be sought amidst the contemporary expressions of secular and ecclesiastical power in Early Medieval Atholl.

The valleys of the Garry, the Tummel and the upper reaches of the Tay are the physical and symbolic arteries of Atholl. Stretching from Dunkeld to Blair Atholl and west from Logierait to the foot of Loch Tay at Killin, these rivers are the articulation of the region's infrastructure. At each important confluence, the links between religious and lay authority are clearly visible. At Struan, where the Errochty flows into the Garry (fig. 54), this is denoted in the name itself; Errochty (*Eireachdaidh*) means 'assembly' (Watson 1926, 439). At the site of the church at Old Struan, there is a Pictish Class I symbol stone (fig. 55) and a pillar stone (plate 20), which may have provided the site's ecclesiastical focus prior to the building of a church (Allen and Anderson 1903, 285-6, 343). There is also an Early Medieval bell associated with the church's tutelary saint, Fillan (Kerr, 1993, 112; Bourke 1983, 467). The large motte of *Tom-an-tigh-mhor*, 'knoll of the great house' (plate 21), adjacent to the church, is said to have been the home of the most important branch of the Robertson clan from earliest times (Kerr 1993, 111).

At Logierait, the potential role of the sub-kingdom of Atholl as the motivating force behind a similar combination of secular and ecclesiastical evidence, is confirmed. Here, within a triangular spit of land high above the present river junctions, there is a large complex of cropmarks which seems to contain both earlier and later prehistoric elements (e.g. a souterrain). In Early Medieval terms, the presence of the multivallate fort on the

edge of the promontory is given added consequence by Logierait's place-name. In its earliest form (*Login Mahedd*), this appears to imply the chief church, situated at the *caput* or chief residence of Atholl (Taylor 1996, 102). Archaeologically, this is corroborated by the ninth century cross slab in the graveyard (fig. 56), which links the authority of the Church with the emblems of Pictish aristocratic power - the symbols and the rider on horseback (Allen and Anderson 1903, 291-2) and by another stone, now in the church. The latter may be slightly older and more elaborate, but both stones appear to be of similar style and form (Ritchie 1994, 23). That not only aristocratic but kingly power was associated with this site is suggested by the possible depiction of a royal inauguration scene on the cross slab at Dunfallandy, just to the north (Allen and Anderson 1903, 286-9).

Logierait lies at the point where the two most important straths in Atholl unite (plan 5) and it clearly formed the focal point of secular and religious identity in this area. This role continued well into the early modern period, although the emphasis became more secular over time. The ruins of a Medieval castle, which may have originated as a royal hunting seat, stand on the east side of the promontory, overlooking the Tummel. The place-name Kings Stables, noted on the OS maps just to the north (plus other names recorded by Marshall (1880, 162)), is interesting in this respect. The surviving earthworks now form the immediate setting for the huge 'Celtic' cross set up in memory of the sixth Duke of Atholl (who died in 1864) by his tenants (Dewar 1989, 8). This castle protected the site of the barony court and prison of the regality of Atholl; the place-name, *Tom-na-Croiche*, the gallows hill, lying immediately to the north-west of the castle, is gruesome testament to the reality of this power. The prison was probably still in use around the turn of the eighteenth century, as Rob Roy was traditionally held a prisoner there (Marshall 1880, 162). The court building, supposedly the largest built structure in Perthshire at the time, was completely destroyed in the early nineteenth century (*ibid.*), although the present hotel within the village (on the south-west side of the promontory) is presumed to sit on the same site (Dixon 1925, 34, 137). The later earls and dukes certainly no longer lived at Logierait, dividing their time between

Dunkeld and, at least from the thirteenth century, Blair Atholl. Nonetheless, Logierait, as the symbolic centre of the regality, provided a suitable place for the expression of its judicial power.

Dunkeld provides a similar evocation of the authority of Atholl, although here there is an additional layer of meaning and history that hints at a wider significance. Hemmed in as it is by the steep slopes at the lower end of Strath Tay and dominated by the slow, wide river, this is a dramatic location enhanced now by the glowering ruins of the cathedral. It also is a confluence, although, in this case, the Braan is rather dwarfed by the Tay. This place possesses both the impact of its location and the distinction of being one of the few places beyond the Highland line which is named in sources of the Early Medieval period.

Dunkeld's place-name suggests that it was the home of the late Iron Age tribe known as the Caledones, who could have occupied the fort at King's Seat in its earlier phases. Such tribal groupings often underlie those apparent in the Early Medieval period (Jackson 1954, 14-6) and it is possible that King's Seat, dominating the triangle of flat ground that provides the only level area in the vicinity, served as the stronghold for both groups. Dunkeld's emphasis was seemingly altered from secular to ecclesiastical by the arrival of Columba from Iona in the sixth century. He is said to have stayed for a period of six months, founding a monastery and converting the people of the surrounding area with the aid of either Conal, son of Comgal, king of Scots, or Bridei, King of the Picts (Dunkeld OSA, 352; Marshall 1880, 149-50). This is given vague substance in an elegy commemorating the saint (written soon after his death), which contains the statement that Columba converted the 'tribes of the Tay' (Taylor 1997, 48). Whatever the truth behind these traditions, they do suggest that the importance of Dunkeld continued unbroken into the Early Historic period.

This suggestion of local significance is given added weight by better documented, if slightly later, events (a more detailed summary of Dunkeld's early history can be found in RCAHMS 1994, 89-90). Constantín mac Fergusa is credited with the foundation of a major ecclesiastical centre at Dunkeld in the early ninth century (Skene 1876, 305;

Foster 1996, 99-100) - in local tradition, this became the rebuilding of the earlier complex in stone (Dunkeld NSA, 970). However, Dunkeld only rose to prominence after Cináed mac Alpin transferred to the church a part of Columba's relics in 849 (Skene 1876, 310, 316; Foster 1996, 100). That Cináed, having just formed a united Scottish kingdom which included a subjected Pictland, should choose Dunkeld as the ecclesiastical focus of his new kingdom - alongside the new secular power centre at Scone, further down the Tay - is intriguing. Both these places must have been emblematic of former Pictish power, important enough for the new king to try and link the supreme ecclesiastical power of Columba to these pre-existing Pictish sites (Foster 1996, 111). The new location of Columba's relics certainly did not preserve them from Viking attack - Dunkeld was plundered on more than one occasion and, in 1027, was burned to the ground (Anderson 1922, vol. i, 288, 399, 569). Nonetheless, Dunkeld continued to prosper, becoming a bishopric, whose importance almost rivalled that of St. Andrews in the latter part of the first millennium A.D. (Foster 1996, 113).

In the archaeological record, traces of Early Historic activity in and around Dunkeld are fragmentary. There are carved stones, including one of the two Class I symbol stones found in Atholl (fig. 55); this stone is of further interest because it is one of the few illustrations of a solitary human figure (in this case armed) on sculpture of this type (Allen and Anderson 1903, 284-5). Three Class III stones and two further cross slabs, with no other ornament, were also recovered from the vicinity of the cathedral (*ibid.*, 317-9, 342)), as was a pin of Viking style (Fanning 1983, 338, no. 29; findspot unknown). The early history of Dunkeld remains buried under the present massive cathedral and the formal layout of the town. The considerable landscaping undertaken by successive Dukes of Atholl in the environs of the town has added further layers of obscurity. This aspect of Dunkeld's history is most clearly represented by the cropmarks of the unbuilt Dunkeld House (intended to be the home of the Earls) and the creation of the area around the partially ruined cathedral into a wooded grove (Pennant 1774, Vol I, 80-1). Today, the appearance of the town and the surrounding area is largely a product of the influence and ideals of the dukes (and duchesses) of the seventeenth and

eighteenth century. As such, it seems to epitomise the continuing secular and ecclesiastical authority of Atholl in these centuries.

Elsewhere in Strathtay, the site of Dull immediately draws attention. In the historical record, Dull is first mentioned as the centre of the *abthanrie* of the same name. The abthanage, founded by Abbot Crinan of Dunkeld, seems to have included a large part of the western area of Atholl, comprising the two thanages of Dull and Fortingall (Skene 1890, 271). This is a much greater area than that now known as the Appin of Dull, but it must be significant that the core of this unit has stayed intact. Dull passed from Abbot Crinan into the hands of the Crown. Nevertheless, the lands remained closely linked to the family of the Atholl earls; Skene (1890, 271) believed that they formed the original patrimony of the house of Atholl (and, consequently, the royal house). During the Medieval period, the two thanages became Crown lands; only the church (and lands) of Dull - and the two chapels of Foss and Branboth in Glenlyon - remained in the hands of the family of Atholl (and were later transferred to their deputies, the Menzies family (*ibid.*)). In local tradition, Dull is the reputed burial place of Adomnán, at which a monastery (a dependency of Dunkeld) was later founded. Some of the free-standing crosses (fig. 57) which supposedly marked out the boundary of that monastery still survive (although they are not in their original locations). As at Logierait, there is a large, if very disparate, complex of cropmarks on the flood plain below the present village and church.

Blair Atholl cannot be added to this list of sites, because although its name appears to be of great significance, this seems to stem only from the foundation (by the Comyn family) of a castle there in the thirteenth century. While it lies close to a confluence and the church may be early (see below, pg. 282), there is nothing to confirm the Early Medieval importance of this place even though, as it is recorded in Bagimond's Roll, it must have been the centre of a parish by the 1290's. This historical obscurity may be exacerbated by the fact that it became the Atholl family chapel. Blair Atholl's proximity to Kilmaveonaig, which the *cill*- name (see below) and the possible dedication to

Adomnán suggests was a place of significance in the Early Medieval period, implies that it was perhaps the latter site which had more consequence in the first millennium A.D.

If Struan, Logierait, Dunkeld and Dull were the most important locations within Early Medieval Atholl, then there is further historical and archaeological evidence to suggest a series of less (at least, politically) significant places. Atholl contains a cluster of place-names, incorporating the Gaelic element *cill*-, 'church', which Taylor has isolated as one of only two such groups in eastern Scotland. Killin should also be added to Taylor's list since it lies to the east of the spine of *Druim Alban* and therefore just within the western boundary of Atholl. All the *cill*- names (e.g. Kilmaveonaig, Fortingall) are found in central locations (plan 5); furthermore, with two exceptions, these sites are found in the Vale of Atholl or stretched out along Loch Tay and Strath Tay. Of the other two, Killichonan is central to the Rannoch area and Kirkmichael forms the heart of Strathardle and Glenshee.

Yet only five out of a total of nine sites form the focus of the Medieval parishes of the area. This must stem partly perhaps from the fact that the *cill*- element in Atholl appears to predate the spread of Gaelic in the ninth century (Taylor 1996, 99), well before the formation of the parochial system in the late twelfth century. At this time, Killiechassie, Killichangie and Kilmichel of Tulliemet (alongside Dunfallandy) were dependent chapels of Logierait (ibid., 102; *Regesta Regum Scottorum*, ii, 336). As the latter church lay at the heart of the kingdom of Atholl, these chapels may not have been as insignificant as their present, rather secularly oriented, form might suggest. Killichassie and Dunfallandy are the centre of estates (the latter is the home of an important Fergusson sept), while the other two are simply farms. Dunfallandy and Killichangie also have Early Medieval or Medieval cross slabs to attest to their former prominence. There is a further *cill*- name, Kilmorich, in the same immediate area; it is again a series of farms, adjacent to one of which is a cross-slab. A similar function can perhaps be assigned to Kilmorich, although, since there is no record of it, the church may already have been in disuse by the twelfth century.

Taylor takes the *cill*- element, alongside the dedications of various other churches in Atholl (discussed below, pg. 281ff), to reflect a period of Irish, specifically Columban, influence in Atholl in the late seventh and eight centuries. Yet apart from the dedication of Dunkeld cathedral (which can be fairly precisely dated), traces of Columba in Atholl are difficult to find. Close to Dunkeld itself, Moulin's dedication to Colmag or Colman could, in fact, be a hypocoristic form of Columba (Taylor 1997, 48; *contra* Mackinlay 1914, 93; *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ*, iv, 168); this is supported by a well in nearby Pitlochry known as *Tobar Chalmaig*. The farm at Rotmell in Dowally parish, which may be the early centre of Dowally parish, is called St. Colme's; however, this is traditionally the site of a castle, not a church. Away from the heart of Atholl, only the name of the chapel above Ardeonaig (*Cill-mo-Charmaig*), on the south side of Loch Tay, seems to include a form of Columba (Taylor 1996, 102), although the additional possibility that a similar form is found in the farm name, Aldcharmaig (NR 797 596), near Tressait on the north side of Loch Tummel, needs to be examined in more detail.

In terms of dedications and place-names (plan 5; Appendix 9), Adomnán, author of the life of Columba in the 690's, is far more prominent than his predecessor (Taylor 1997, 48-49). Adomnán is patron saint of the parish churches at Dull and Ardeonaig and, less certainly, of Kilmaveonaig. The mill close to *Cladh Bhranno* in the centre of Glenlyon, and a further two topographical names in the immediate vicinity, are named after Adomnán. There is a further topographical place-name near Grandtully, in the heart of Strathtay (Watson 1926, 270; Taylor 1997, 68). In addition, there are numerous traditions and stories associating Adomnán with the area and especially with Dull. Place-names and dedications to other Iona abbots are equally significant. The churches at Logierait, Inchadney (later Kenmore), Fortingall and Foss are dedicated to another of Columba's successor's at Iona, abbot Coeddi (Mackinlay 1914, 417; Anderson 1881, 180, n. 1; Taylor 1997, 61). The dedications of these four important churches would seem to raise this eighth century abbot to a significance comparable to that of Adomnán. Finally, *Tobar Fheargáin*, just to the east of *Tobar Chalmaig* in Pitlochry, may commemorate Fergna, the fourth abbot of Iona, who died in 623 (Taylor 1997, 57).

Even if this activity was not generated by Adomnán or Ceoddi in person, this evidence seems to confirm Taylor's suggestion that it was Iona, and its emissaries, which had the most important role to play in the evangelisation of Atholl (1996, 103; 1997, 47ff). If a conflation of knowledge can be assumed, this appears to give credence to all the local traditions surrounding Columba's presence in Dunkeld a century earlier; Dunkeld could have been one of the unidentified Columban monasteries in Pictland mentioned by Adomnán (Taylor 1997, 49). The apparently contrasting importance of Columba and the later saints is taken by Taylor (*ibid.*) to reflect a period of disruption in the affairs of Atholl, either on the death of Talorcan in 739 or as a result of the expulsion of the Columban community from Pictland in 717. The position of Atholl on the east-west route between Argyll and the rest of central and eastern Scotland makes the suggestion of Irish influence in this area, especially in light of the '*New Ireland*' derivation of its name, quite likely. Taylor (1997, 61), on the basis of the dedications of Kenmore and Logierait, even suggests that the purveyors of Columban influence followed this particular route from Dál Riada, along Loch Tay and Strath Tay, into Atholl. To both Taylor and Foster this indicates actual immigration (Taylor 1996, 102-3; 1997, 49; Foster 1996, 111), although they do not indicate whether this implies the presence of a few charismatic preachers of the Columban school, perhaps present at the behest of the secular hierarchy of Atholl and based at Dunkeld or migration on a larger-scale.

In the absence of more precise chronological information, the question of when all these sites were founded has to remain unanswered for the present. The Atholl evidence could date either to a period of early Columban influence, prior to the arrival of Nechtan's 'Northumbrian' derived Christian traditions in the early eighth century, or to a reassertion of the Columban tradition following the translation of Columba's relics to Dunkeld in the mid-ninth century (cf. Driscoll 1991, 87; Foster 1992, 231-3). In spite of Taylor's certainties, the second question of whether this Irish influence reflects a fundamental role for Columban Christianity in the conversion of Atholl or simply a

veneer, resting on a locally derived ecclesiastical structure (as is the case in most of Pictland (Donaldson 1985)), is also still open to debate.

There are, however, further ecclesiastical place-names and dedications in Atholl which can help illuminate this situation. Even more obscure today than many of the *cill*-names are the three places which include the *annat* element. This is taken to refer to a church, already old - and perhaps abandoned - by the time the term was coined in the ninth or tenth centuries (Macdonald 1973, 139; Clancy 1995, 92, 110-1). Further, it can be proposed that the term, on analogy with Ireland, refers particularly to churches (although not necessarily large themselves) which held precedence in a local parochial system (Clancy 1995, 97-101). In Atholl, this provides another three church sites of similar date to those with a *cill*- name, whose western distribution fills in some of the gaps in the former group (Appendix 9). Again these sites are all situated in the heart of areas of contemporary settlement, although each is now just a small farm or cottage.

However, only at Balnahannait in Glenlyon (NN 64 NW 3; NN 6233 4716), is there tangible evidence (discussed below, pg. 285) for an early Christian site. Clancy suggests that because the *annat* element generally occurs as a compound - with a word such as *baile* - that they refer to a dependent location of the main ecclesiastical site which was often a parish church (ibid., 102ff). This would certainly explain the obscure location of the three Atholl examples even within a local context. It allows Balnahannait in Glenlyon to be the 'town of *Cladh Bhranno*' and Baile na h-Annaide on Loch Tay (NN 63 NE 6; NN 6690 3800) to be the 'town of Killin'. Finally, Annat (NN 65 NW 4; NN 635 594) on Loch Rannoch, having lost all trace of a possible compound but again the site of a township, could be linked either to Killichonan or Innerhadden, both of which had Early Medieval ecclesiastical foundations. However, there are strong local traditions, usually involving a burial ground, at all of these sites - and actual graves and a 'Celtic' bell from Balnahannait - as testament to their former ecclesiastical significance. It is possible, therefore, that all these sites could be dependent chapels (with associated settlements) of the larger churches; this would imply the presence of a very comprehensive ecclesiastical infrastructure, even in these remote areas.

There is one other place-name element which may indicate the presence of a very early church. This is *both-*, in Gaelic an element which means hut or shieling, but which, from the number of its occurrences in parish names in Wales, Scotland and Ireland, seems also to have religious connotations, tendencies which appear to be particularly developed in central and eastern Scotland (Taylor 1996, 94-8). Taylor would see the resulting names as a parallel for the *cill-* element, although perhaps representative of more immediate British or Pictish influence (ibid., 103). The main concentration occurs in central Scotland, but there are examples in Fife, Angus and Aberdeen and three possible examples in Perthshire (ibid., 94-8). Balquhiddy is not discussed here as it lies outside the boundary of Atholl; this means the most convincing of the remaining two examples is Borenich, which appears in 1509 as *Montrainyche* alias *Disart*. The *diseart* element (the Gaelic word for a hermitage) certainly implies a possible ecclesiastical association (ibid., 105). The second occurrence is the *capella de Branboth*, the more usual form of which is *Bhranno* or *Branwo*. Although there is some doubt about the identification of the *both* element in this name, this place, on the basis of other historical and archaeological evidence (discussed below, pg. 285), can be firmly identified as an Early Medieval ecclesiastical site. Its 'connections' are Irish or to Iona, and Watson would rather see the place-name as deriving from the personal name, *Branub* (1926, 312). The site is traditionally dedicated to St. Brendan. Therefore, the element *both* may provide evidence for another possible early church in Atholl, but does little to suggest a role for locally derived Christian influences in the creation of the ecclesiastical structure in this area.

As outlined above, the dedications of these churches often corroborate the place-name evidence. They also allow an equally early date to be postulated for many of the other churches in Atholl. The list given below provides a tabulation of all the known and possible dedications:

Columban saints	Irish saints	British saints	Roman saints
Columba x3 (6 th) Finan (6 th) Adomnán x3 (7 th) Coeddi x4 (8 th) ?Kellach (9 th)	Bridget (6 th) Ciaran x2 (6 th) Brendan (6 th) ?Colmag (6 th) Conan (7 th)	?Beoghna (7 th) Cuthbert (7 th) Fillan x2 (8 th) ?Asaph (8 th) ?Ronan (8 th) ?Coemhi (pre 9 th) ?Muireadhach (12 th)	Michael x2 (12 th)

The consistency of date for the Irish saints acknowledged in Atholl is striking, although this does not provide similarly close dating for the foundation of the church itself. This would be as early as any connection to Ireland, via Columba himself and could, therefore, suggest a parallel (if not completely disassociated) strand of evangelism in the area. If so, this would seem to centre on Glenlyon and the areas adjacent to it; *Cladh Bhranno* is associated with Brendan, Invervar with Finan, while both Gallin and Fearnan are linked to Finan’s pupil, Ciaran of Clonmacnois. All these sites have archaeological evidence to support their claims for an ecclesiastical presence, whether it be a burial ground, sculpture or one of the so-called ‘Celtic bells’.

The only Irish dedication which is isolated from this group is, significantly, Old Blair. This site, situated on a small circular knoll above the later castle, is dedicated to Bridget. Both the natural form of the knoll and Bridget’s origin as a possible pagan goddess are suggestive of a long-held significance for this site that could predate Christianity. Weem is dedicated to a saint (Cuthbert) of the Northumbrian school (Mackinlay 1914, 240, 257; Taylor 1996, 102) and the stories surrounding Cuthbert’s activities there, like those of Adomnán at Dull, are deeply rooted in local tradition (Wheatear 1981, 4, 9). These would seem, therefore, to reflect a local interest in his cult which originated in the Early Medieval period. Further than this, it is hard to assess the real significance of such dedications.

Commemorations of other British saints represent a very wide range of dates and origins for the individual saints. Many are quite obscure figures, although only St. Fillan is a local Perthshire saint. His cult was centred on Strathfillan in Glendochart, west of the mountains which form the western border of Atholl. Again this would seem to be further evidence of Atholl’s connections to the west. Although Fillan is commemorated

at two of the most important places in Atholl (Struan and Killin), his cult appears to have been only of subsidiary importance in the area. The seemingly minor role played by these British saints in Atholl is perhaps a consequence of the importance of Columban associations at the centres of Christianity in this area. The two dedications to Michael, a saint of the Roman world, are interesting because both are found in association with the Gaelic element *cill-* (*Kylmichel* (Kirkmichael), *Kelmichel* of Tulliemet) and both are first recorded around 1190 (*Regesta Regum Scottorum*, ii, 242; Taylor 1996, 106). However, although they appear rather exotic, Scone's dedication to St. Michael could provide an adequate explanation.

This possible Columban network of sites encompasses the entire area of Atholl, extending it firmly eastwards into Strathardle and, more significantly, westwards - into Glenlyon and along Loch Tay. Archaeological evidence of Early Medieval activity to reinforce the place-names and dedications usually consists of very simple incised cross-slabs or pillars. These include the cross-incised boulder at Newton of Ballinreigh (plate 22), close to the head of Strathbraan and to a possible Pitcarmick-type building, and that at Tombreck, on the western fringes of the cluster of circular homesteads around the west end of Loch Tummel. The presence of the crosses suggests a Christianity taken out and preached in the wider world. In particular, the pillar-stone at Struan is believed to have provided a focal point for services prior to the building of the church (Kerr 1993, 114). A similar role for St. Adomnán's Cross, standing beside one of the early routeways along Glenlyon, is equally possible (plate 23). High quality sculpture appears to be an indication of the wealth and authority of the church, with which the lay patrons - who perhaps commissioned these pieces - wanted to be associated (Foster 1996, 93-5). These very roughly carved and shaped slabs seem to be a reflection of a more intimate expression of Christian faith by members of the local community.

Atholl is rich in natural resources and this is, in general, reflected archaeologically; however, Atholl lacks obviously high status sculptured stones. The bias in the sculptural record is towards monuments which are less overtly 'Pictish' in style - there are only

four Class I or Class II stones in the whole of this area (plan 5). This is in marked contrast to the adjacent areas of Strathmore, in the province of Gowrie; an area which includes the remarkable collection of monuments at Mieggle. The sculptured stones of Atholl demonstrate a tendency towards styles and influences which have a wider distribution. These include the rather unusual free-standing crosses at Dull (fig. 57) and Weem (NN 84 NW 10.1, 6), and cross-slabs which, although clearly Pictish in style, appear to draw on inspirations from all over contemporary Britain. The comparative absence of overtly 'Pictish' style monuments from the Atholl glens might suggest the persistence of local political authority here. Few attempts have been made to characterise the simple cross-incised slabs and boulders, but Henderson (1987) has proposed that some, at least, could represent the earliest examples of Christian sculpture. Further, it seems possible that those crosses with expanded terminals - and there are, at least, three examples of this cross-type in Atholl (Appendix 9) - might be a further instance of Columban influence on the development of Christianity in this part of Pictland (cf. Campbell 1989; Henderson 1987, 49). Such stones would prove a fruitful area for future study.

The 'Celtic' handbells are a more portable source of archaeological evidence in the Early Christian period. These early handbells are sparsely distributed in eastern Scotland (fig. 58; plan 5); this ensures that the group of three 'Celtic' bells within the area of the Appin of Dull and the two further bells (one of which is slightly later in date) from the centre of Atholl form a striking cluster (Anderson 1881, 178-83; Bourke 1983, 464-8). Bourke would see all the bells as indicative of Irish monastic influence from the eighth and ninth centuries onwards (Bourke 1983, 465). Adomnán, in the *Life of Columba*, is one of the few contemporary authors to note the use of bells (in the *Vitae Columbae*, they are used to summon people to the abbey on Iona). Once again, this appears to corroborate much of the evidence already outlined above for Irish, specifically Columban, activity in Atholl (ibid., 465-6; Sharpe 1995, 269, n. 82). In summary, a direct Columban association can be suggested for the bells found at Little Dunkeld church (originally probably from Dunkeld itself), Fortingall, *Cladh Bhranno* and

Balnahannait in Glenlyon. Less securely, Struan, through its association with the Robertsons who claimed descent from Columba himself, also has a claim to a Columban association.

As with the cross-incised boulders and slabs, these simple bells return us to the idea of calling the faithful to worship; the sound of the bell symbolised both the presence of the saint and the extent of his authority over the area within which it could be heard. The preservation of these handbells suggests too that they have always been valuable relics, because of the belief that they had been used by the saint himself. Of the Atholl bells, only St. Fillan's bell at Struan and, to a lesser extent, St. Adomnán's bell at Innerwick have local traditions surrounding them (Kerr 1993, 112; Appendix 9; fig. 58). However, it is clear from the local customs that such bells acquired, that many commemorated not only the saint, but also reflected peoples' attachment to a particular place. The bell from Balnahannait was found just across the river Lyon from St. Adomnán's cross and provides, alongside the place-name and the grave-slabs at the farm itself, firm indications of an early church. The other bell from Glenlyon, which came from the burial ground of *Cladh Bhranno* near Kerrowmore and is now in Innerwick church, confirms the potentially early Adomnán place-names in the same area. Both these locations are physically striking because they mark the junction of the Lyon and some of its major tributaries - recalling, on a smaller scale, the situations of some of the major sites (such as Struan) in the heartland of Atholl and suggestive of an equally early significance for the sites in Glenlyon.

6.2 A political landscape

The preceding chapter has surveyed the secular and ecclesiastical fabric of Early Medieval Atholl. This indicates the presence of administrative structures and institutions, whose influence appears to have reached far beyond the main straths into the remotest glens. The combination of secular and ecclesiastical features noted at all of the sites is remarkable in their consistency and early date, seeming to outweigh some of the problems of relying on each individual class of evidence. Together, they begin to suggest the motivations which have resulted in their partial survival into the present - although it cannot account for the fluidity of local circumstances or the power of individual personalities which has ultimately mediated the situation visible today. It has created a picture of a densely acculturated landscape, a world where the social and political elements were very closely interwoven into the substance of daily life.

The circular homesteads and Pitcarmick-type buildings have created a very real sense of the framework of settlement in these areas of Highland Perthshire in the Early Medieval period. Alongside crannogs, these appear to form the fundamental units of settlement in the upland areas; clearly more analysis of the aerial photographic record is necessary to assess the potential for contemporary enclosed and unenclosed settlements on the fertile lands of the main straths. Moreover, if the crannogs do represent another element within this strata of settlement, then those examples in Loch Tay, where the landscape is heavily determined by geography, provide the clearest impression of the ways in which this settlement pattern may have been articulated. The previous chapter has depicted a densely occupied and ordered landscape.

If this impression of a coherent pattern of fairly low status settlement is correct, then it should be possible to provide a more positive elucidation of the modes of social reproduction which maintained the kingdom of Atholl and within which these

settlements operated. This requires the identification of those units which underpinned secular authority in this area. The evidence presented in the last chapter suggests that Logierait, described in the Early Medieval period as the *caput* of the whole of Atholl, was the place of greatest secular significance in this area. In the Early Medieval period, although not specifically in Scotland, the *caput* is usually taken to refer to the residence of the principle authority within a hierarchical administrative structure (Driscoll 1987, 316); in this case this must be the kingdom of Atholl itself. The multivallate fort, which appears as a cropmark enclosure almost on the tip of the promontory at Logierait and close to the later castle, could have been the site of this *caput*. In addition, Logierait possesses many of the attributes (church, local court, prison and gallows hill) which might be expected at the social and political centre of the kingdom, even if the evidence for these is predominantly Medieval or later in date. Furthermore, Logierait seems to have a significance, evidenced most clearly by the complex of cropmarks on the promontory, which predates the Early Medieval period.

If Logierait held pre-eminence in Atholl, then there are a whole series of central places which were probably responsible for enacting this authority at a more local level. All these places had significance in the Early Medieval period, a significance which tended to be retained into the Medieval period, albeit generally within an ecclesiastical context. However, sites - such as the motte at Struan and the less certain 'motte' at Kerrowmore near *Cladh Bhranno* (which is now covered by trees), plus the moated homestead near Fortingall - could have acted as the *caput* or residence of a paramount local authority in the Early Medieval period, just as they did in the Medieval period. If the role of the Church in the organisation of the *caput* is given prominence (Driscoll 1987, 317-8; Driscoll 1991, 94; this is explored in more detail below) this could explain the bias towards the survival of ecclesiastical sites in Early Medieval Atholl. It is possible that - as perhaps at Dunkeld - the shift from centres of secular authority (such as the fort of King's Seat) to those with ecclesiastical authority (in this case, Dunkeld itself, in the person of the abbot) had already occurred by the time the structure of these

administrative units was formalised. Again, although less clearly represented than at Logierait, these sites appear to have acted in an analogous way as local meeting places.

It remains, therefore, to characterise the organisation of those settlements which came under the authority of the *caput*. In the twelfth century, Logierait received the rents from the thanages of Dalmarnock and Findowie (*Regesta Regum Scottorum*, ii, 336). In the same period, the abthanage of Dull comprised the two thanages of Dull and Fortingall (Skene 1890, 271). Since these units appear to incorporate places which were of importance in the latter half of the first millennium A.D., it is possible that the thanage, as the administrative unit by which political authority was effected in Atholl, finds its origin in this period. Thanages have been reconstructed elsewhere in Scotland in the Early Medieval period - most particularly, in an archaeological and historical context, in Strathearn (Barrow 1973; Driscoll 1987, 1991). The structure of a thanage, therefore, seems to be a useful framework within which to explore the organisation of settlement in Atholl.

The thanage acted as a structuring mechanism for the redistribution of agricultural produce upwards in the social hierarchy. Implicit in this, and already partially confirmed by the presence of what appear to be central places, is the suggestion that the internal structure of a thanage was essentially hierarchical. It is likely, therefore, that below the *caput* would have been a series of settlements and farmsteads, housing the majority of the population and responsible for the production of this agricultural wealth. In the model of a thanage suggested by Driscoll for Strathearn, the principal farmsteads seem to have been associated with the *pett* place-name (1987, 319ff). Since these tend to occur on better agricultural land, the arable component of a mixed-farming economy is firmly stressed. *Petts* certainly appear to be present in the heartland of Atholl, represented by a *pit*- name attached to a large modern farm, each of which is found on some of the most fertile land in the area. In addition, there are perhaps enough place-names containing this element in the surrounding glens to suggest that their distribution was once more widespread. If this is the case, it implies that, in Highland areas, the *pett* could act in a similar capacity to co-ordinate a more pastoral economy.

If this is an accurate reflection of the settlement hierarchy of Atholl, this would place the circular homesteads, crannogs and the Pitcarmick-type buildings as settlements within one of these dependent estates. The closer association of homesteads to *pit*-names suggests that some, at least, had a more important social and economic role than the Pitcarmick-type buildings which occur on the fringes of Atholl. The potential investment in the structure of a crannog (as in a circular homestead) implies also that its inhabitants possessed higher status than those who lived in the poorly built, unenclosed Pitcarmick-type buildings. Even if this is so, characterising the nature of the economic practices undertaken by their occupants is still difficult. If production, as in much of the Early Medieval period, was concentrated on the re-distribution of wealth upwards to an elite, much of the agricultural wealth had to be moveable. As a consequence, cattle were particularly important in Early Historic Scotland and Ireland (cf. Patterson 1994). Again, this would seem to heighten the importance of areas, such as Atholl, where an animal oriented economy was of primary concern. It would also appear to provide confirmation of the posited role of some of the circular homesteads as cattle enclosures (although people would probably also have shared these spaces), and of the Pitcarmick-type buildings as longhouses designed to house both animals and people.

The wide date range and varying quality of remains of the homesteads is offset by their apparent consistency of size and location, but the question of function remains as open as when these sites were first classified as a group. The variation within the physical appearance of circular homesteads apparent today suggests that, as with the ringforts of Ireland (Stout 1997), those of a more substantial nature may be of higher status. Those sites that survive best seem to be more elaborate than any animal enclosure would require - unless they were designed to deliberately reinforce the importance of the animals gathered within them. Therefore these, on analogy with duns and ringforts, and assuming a degree of disturbance of the primary archaeological layers through later re-use, could be small enclosed farmsteads. This sense of enclosure and separation from the surrounding landscape, applicable also to crannogs, sets apart the Pitcarmick-type buildings. Although it is hard to evaluate the wide variation present within this building

group, it must represent a very different response to the particular conditions present in the Early Historic period. More certainly, it is too easy to assume that, drawing on later Scottish tradition, it is cattle that were kept in the byre end of Pitcarmick-type buildings; sheep, again on the evidence of later custom, were just as likely to be kept indoors (although in the Medieval period, evidence from the Border abbeys suggests they were housed in separate buildings (P. Corser, pers. comm.)).

From the surviving physical remains, the broad outlines of the Early Medieval settlement pattern can be posited for Atholl. More detailed work should therefore enable a more comprehensive reconstruction of the social and economic strategies which maintained the political and religious hierarchy of Atholl. Such refinement of the secular infrastructure may resolve some of the functional ambiguities associated with circular homesteads and Pitcarmick-type buildings which have been raised above. This should also allow for the closer definition of the individual units through which the landscape was organised at a local level. Ultimately this will enable a more meaningful assessment of the social and political processes which determined the chronological development of the Early Medieval kingdom.

In Atholl, as elsewhere in Scotland, the majority of the folklore revolves around the saints associated with individual churches and their locales. It is these saints, particularly those who were active in the Early Medieval period, who are commemorated in place-names, who have a role in the success of commercial activities (as the patrons of fairs) and about whom stories were told well into the twentieth century (see Appendix 9). This is especially true of more remote areas, such as Glenlyon, where there appears to be an intricate network of ecclesiastical sites (most with closely associated settlement evidence). The Church, through its control of modes of communication (particularly those involving the written word) had a political monopoly on the administrative process. Nevertheless, all these sites appear to be ultimately dependent upon secular lordship, a fact most clearly reflected at Dunkeld, Dull and

Logierait. At Logierait, the place-name appears to suggest that it was the church associated with the *caput* which held primacy in Atholl (Taylor 1992, 102).

The kings of Atholl would seem to be the only figures capable of exerting political control over such disparate activities, particularly if the missionaries (at least in the last few centuries of the millennium) originated primarily at Dunkeld. At times, however, the abbots of Dunkeld - particularly a figure such as Crinan, who was involved in the foundation of the abthanage of Dull, an entity that epitomises the close links between secular and ecclesiastical authority - may have been the dominant influence in Atholl's politics. A contemporary parallel for the maintenance of a political entity through the evangelism of the Church occurred in northern Pictland, where the association of the Peter dedications with high-status abandoned broch sites seems, here, to reflect the directing influence of the Pictish state (Barrett and Foster 1991, 54-5; Foster 1992, 233). If the Church did act as a major landholder, subsuming the role of secular authority into itself, this could explain the density and seemingly even distribution of ecclesiastical sites, particularly in remote Glenlyon. As this area was part of the Appin of Dull, where the role of the Church in the secular sphere is perhaps most clear, this would seem the most reasonable explanation. The primacy of the ecclesiastical elements in the local story-telling of this area may represent the last tangible remnant of this authority.

Further confirmation of the close links between secular and ecclesiastical authorities can be sought in the origin of the parishes. The ecclesiastical picture constructed for Atholl in the latter half of the first millennium A.D. suggests a myriad of very local chapels, serving the communities of which they were a part and firmly embedded within a pattern of contemporary settlement. There are strong hints that the location, and perhaps relative importance, of areas and individual sites within Atholl, where ritual and secular functions are united, makes clear reference to its prehistoric background. Many of those sites which have evidence of very early Christianity (although indications of equally early secular activity are far more difficult to pin down) become, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the parish churches of the area. This would seem to confirm the belief of Barrow (1989) and Rogers (1992) (both quoted in Clancy 1995, 104-5) that the

parish structure was indeed centred upon pre-existing settlement units. Again, this part secular, part ecclesiastical structure appears to be epitomised by the abthanage of Dull. If this is the case, it would seem that local conditions had a greater influence in determining the true character of the church in Atholl, than any perceived divisions generated by the origin of this Christianity in Iona or in Pictland. However, this need not denigrate the role of specifically Columban influence, radiating out from Dunkeld, in guiding the processes of Christianization in this area.

The links between secular and ecclesiastical authority in the construction and maintenance of Atholl's identity is reflected most evocatively in the origin myths of the earls' themselves. These postulate a descent from the kindred of Columba, through Abbot Crinan of Dunkeld, killed in 1045 (Moncrieffe 1954, 5-8). This abbot married a daughter of Malcolm II of Scotland, and from their son, Duncan, stem all the succeeding kings of Scotland, either through the male (up to and including Alexander III) or female line. The first earl of Atholl was a great-grandson of Crinan and it is this line which also gave rise to the Clan Donnachaidh, which was led by various Robertson septs. Although the line of the Atholl earls has passed by marriage into the Stewart and, finally, the Murray families, the Robertson clan retained its prominence into the nineteenth century.

Whether a sense of belonging to the kingdom of Atholl had a relevance to those living beyond Strathtay, Strathgarry and Strathtummel is less obvious. Throughout the Medieval and early modern period, Strathardle, over the hill from Strathtay, apparently revolved around its own concerns (see chapter 5.1). This glen - and others like it - was dominated by small, competing families, such as the Robertsons, the Fergussons, the Spaldings and the Stewarts (Ferguson and Fergusson 1895, 29); the remembrance of their common allegiance to the earl of Atholl, as overlord, was only asserted in times of war. The earl could indeed be directly snubbed - despite their frequent attempts, in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, successive earls singularly failed to affirm their authority over the all important markets and fairs which were the lifeblood of the area's economy (see chapters 5.1.1 and 5.1.2). Around Loch Tay and the western areas, the rise

of the Campbells of Glenorchy, culminating in the creation of the Earldom of Breadalbane and the building of the huge, imitation Gothic castle at Taymouth, created a different and far more all-encompassing sense of identity. From at least the sixteenth century and in spite of the close associations between the two earldoms, this began to obscure many of the earlier affinities and loyalties between local families; surprisingly, however, the creation of Breadalbane does not seem to have removed all traces of the much more ancient ecclesiastical history which links this area to Atholl.

For those living today in the Vale of Atholl and lower Strathtay, the Victorian expressions of Atholl identity - such as the fairytale castle of Blair and the huge 'Celtic' cross at Logierait - are physical reminders of their past. These static remembrances are reinforced in less physical, if equally romantic, ways through the marketing of Atholl Brose (now made in Elgin) and, for some of the men at least, through their participation as members of the Atholl Highlanders on occasions such as the Atholl Gathering. While treating superficially the deeper traditions on which it draws, the identity of Atholl maintains and transforms itself partly through the tourist industry.

Underpinning these later developments is a consciousness of an almost legendary past, embedded in a close identity with place, which appears to encompass the occupants of Atholl. This past, made tangible through a wealth of both religious and secular monuments which stretched back to the prehistoric era (e.g. hut-circles, stone circles and cup marks), appears to have structured the ways in which the landscape was re-interpreted and re-ordered in the Early Medieval period. The landscape - and particularly water in the form of the rivers or in the powers vested in wells, each of which were attached to saintly figures - subtly guided these remembrances. The study of Pitcarmick North has suggested how this cultural landscape was negotiated on an intimate scale. At a broader level, the evidence from Atholl hints at a similar relationship to the land and to place. Through this becomes apparent a closely integrated secular and ecclesiastical hierarchy, whose source must be the intimate association of these authorities, made manifest at places such as Dunkeld and Dull. Many of the small chapels which originated in the Early Medieval period survive as isolated burial

grounds; they provide a concrete expression of the links between secular authority (articulated by family tradition) and the Church at a local level. These close associations do not seem to be a constraining influence; through it a sure sense of identity, mediated by people's situated perception of this history, was communicated. This makes possible, at certain times, the establishment of a larger view which could encompass regions such as Atholl.

7 Conclusions

This study has been concerned with the historical dimension of the cultural landscapes of Highland Scotland. In stressing the perspectives of those people who lived closest to it, it has touched on the meanings and experiences which underlie the densely acculturated landscapes encountered today. This has required a middle line to be trodden between the need to write the history of the social processes which generated these landscapes and the myriad of individual life stories which lie behind them. It has also had to resolve the conflict between the need to know the source of particular social strategies and their subsequent dialectical effect on the structure of society. A wide variety of sources, both archaeological and historical, have been exploited in an attempt to understand, over a wide time period, the ways in which the problems inherent in everyday life in Highland Scotland were negotiated.

Much of the effort at Pitcarmick involved recording those archaeological remains present in a very small topographical area. Out of the experiences and information gained from these encounters grew a desire to contrast them with a more discursive approach to a larger area where the archaeology, at least in outline, was already fairly well known. However, the scales of analysis chosen by Tilley, for example, in his phenomenological study of chambered tombs in west Wales (1994) appeared to lack the very sense of place he was seeking. Therefore a compromise had to be achieved between a sense of the wider influences which impinge on a particular area and the intimacy of dwelling within it. Without a rigorous awareness of people's active engagement with the land on which they dwell, any archaeological study will continue to flounder in a one-dimensional world which perpetuates the recording of individual sites. Again, close association with the landscape of the Strathardle and Genshee provided a sense of the means by which these individual sites became places in the landscape of the parish of Kirkmichael, the administrative and social construct within which people lived and

worked. In this respect, most effort was donated to the visualisation of the landscape and the potential inter-relationships between people living in different parts of that landscape. Particular stress was placed on the effect of the forms of the landscape in shaping the architecture of the archaeological sites. This made possible both an assessment of the potential relationships between sites and their contemporary landscape and the influence upon this of the pre-existing archaeological remains. In particular, it has - while not elaborating upon the question of function to any great extent - further broken down the arbitrary size and morphological distinctions between areas of landscape which might once have been treated as single, separate entities. Within these two glens, at various times, a visualisation of them as a lived-in world has been possible, one which begins to approach the nature of living in this landscape.

The second case-study, Atholl, by concentrating on a single time period (albeit situated within the context of earlier and later developments), has attempted to encompass a landscape at a regional scale. Since there was no previous comprehensive survey of the settlement or ecclesiastical evidence in this area, this section was intended to provide a preliminary gazetteer of the available archaeological and historical information. Nineteenth century accounts of the area suggested a framework of ideas and impressions with which to encounter the physical reality of the Early Medieval kingdom. These stories created a sense of place, which, while very situated in the conceptions of its own time, dealt - sometimes erratically - with the historical dimension of the landscape. From this grew a sense of the importance of the Church and of particular saints in local affairs. It also made possible the recognition of the importance of water in guiding the signification of place. This was clearly of long-standing because the incorporation of sites of pre-existing significance into the contemporary social and political framework became a determining feature of encountering the world of Early Medieval Atholl. A clear articulation of the political hierarchy provided a context in which the rather disparate settlement evidence, which had proved both difficult to quantify and to contextualise, could be evaluated. In light of the general problems in

defining the character of Early Medieval settlement in Scotland and particularly in the Highlands (see chapter 3.2), Atholl has proved the value - if they are built upon firm local knowledge - of coherent geographical studies.

In the case of Pitcarmick, it appears (in Scotland with the added benefit of the later vernacular traditions explored in chapter 4) that a long-term view of small-scale settled landscapes was a valid approach to take to the multilayered archaeological record of the Highlands. If it loses something in the detail of each period, it gains in a sense of the intimacy of dwelling amongst the remains of the past. This, combined with an understanding of the natural parameters of these settled worlds, takes such statements beyond the simple mundanity of association. From this has arisen a sense of the dialectical relationships between social structure and material culture, which proves meaningless the usual rigid archaeological dichotomy between change and continuity. This rendered equally difficult attempts to depict graphically the possible chronological phases at Pitcarmick; all the earlier monuments appear to have had a role to play in drawing people continually back to this part of the hill, just as they exerted a powerful effect on the archaeologists who came to study and 'dissect' them. Such influence is unquantifiable, particularly in a landscape that was used intermittently. More importantly, the archaeological remains cannot be divorced from the landscape utilised by these monuments. To reduce the temporal dimension to splashes of colour on a page appears to trivialise it.

At a larger, regional scale, it was possible to divide the archaeological remains chronologically, perhaps because this scale - in reducing the intimacy of the landscape - ensured that the specificity of human encounters was lost. The resulting distance between the physicality of the environment (natural and artificial) made it possible to analyse the material in ways alien to its original intention. The result is, in essence, distribution maps, the value of which has to be questionable unless the material they contain has been very carefully thought through. These processes are, of course, exacerbated by the size of the geographical area encompassed by the Early Medieval

kingdom of Atholl. This, while acting as a methodological contrast to the preceding case-studies, was intended to provide an overview of the kingdom which would begin to suggest the motivations that generated its formation and subsequent history. Nonetheless, it was intended to examine the relevance of these social and political constructs to the people who lived within its bounds at varying times and in different places. In this case, by first examining a series of individual places, a sense of the motivations underlying the distribution of the sites presented on Plan 5 appeared. Only at this stage, through the maintenance of a clear sense of the underlying human referents of the material, was it possible to move back out towards the regional scale. This, while it may appear to state the obvious, is a sequence of thought which requires very clear articulation within the structure of landscape research. If it does receive attention in this context, the question of scale tends to become simply a question of logistics.

If these caveats are borne in mind, it is still possible to assess the value of such regional approaches at different times and in different places. At this scale, however, the problem of chronological breadth cannot be so easily resolved. For Atholl, it was only possible to examine briefly the earlier and later material; to take the understanding of the kingdom in the Early Medieval period further will, ultimately, depend on closer analysis of the Iron Age evidence. Moreover, detailed local studies (as at Pitcarmick) will be a necessary requirement of any future work. Nonetheless, the Atholl case study does demonstrate the merit of incorporating a close analysis of the meaning of place into a study undertaken on this scale.

These case-studies have described a landscape redolent with meaning, producing a series of conflicting and contradictory stories. While these have been important in their own right, future work (whether this be survey or excavation) will be necessary to resolve some of these contradictions, although it will undoubtedly highlight a series of further problems. In North-east Perth, the relationships between the Pitcarmick-type buildings and their landscape context must be explored at other sites in the depth of detail that was possible at Pitcarmick North, particularly in light of the rather differing

hypotheses put forward for Pitcarmick-type buildings in Strathbraan (Cowley 1997). Further analysis of the potential distinctions between the large groups of buildings and the more isolated examples may help in assessing the extent of architectural variation in relation to these apparent differences in location and layout which have been already outlined. More excavation should form a part of any such proposal, since (at present) only the buildings at Pitcarmick North have been examined.

Each of these statements is equally applicable to the cots. In this case, further preliminary survey will be necessary to assess the validity of the cots as a functional and chronological category. A detailed characterisation of the distribution of the cots must be established. In upland areas, this should concentrate on the fieldwalking of those areas where large groups of shieling huts have already been found; evaluation of those buildings which are found on lower ground and in close relation to the site of post-Medieval settlement (e.g. Easter Bleaton), but which appear to be comparable in form, is also a priority. Finally, in North-east Perth the problem of the lack of an Iron Age can perhaps only be solved by further excavation and assessment of the large morphological variations present within the hut-circles. A detailed topographic and standing building survey at Stronamuck (plus trial excavation to assess the date of what appear to be the earliest buildings and the presence or absence of earlier remains under those clusters which were continually rebuilt), would perhaps resolve many of the problems in defining relationships between the uplands and the lowlands. The quality of the remains and apparent time depth displayed by this site, which can be set within the context of a detailed social history, makes further work there (not possible within the time constraints of this thesis) essential to complete the study of Pitcarmick. In a more general context, this will enable a more site-specific assessment of the value and accuracy of the picture generated, through the study of later vernacular tradition in Chapter 4, of rural settlement and society in Highland Scotland.

In Atholl, the brief accounts of each site contained in the appendix have provided the groundwork for localised studies. Of primary concern here would be fieldwork in areas which would complement the as yet relatively restricted coverage achieved by the

RCAHMS in Highland Perthshire (1990; Cowley 1997). Moreover, detailed documentary work focusing on the history of individual churches, and worked against a deeper knowledge of the means by which Dunkeld operated at a local level in this period, would benefit the understanding of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Atholl. This is necessary if a further assessment of the role of the potential secular units of authority is to be completed; the importance of places, such as Dull and Logierait, has already been clearly highlighted. In this context, the abthanage of Dull, which appears to have possessed authority both as an administrative and religious construct in this period, a role which continued into the second millennium A.D., seems to be worthy of detailed study. Further, although its boundaries are ill-defined, the abthanage appears to incorporate fertile areas of Strathtay and more remote Glenlyon, thus allowing also for an assessment of the quality of the surviving archaeological remains in two very different environments. In this context, a rigorous re-evaluation of the nature of circular homesteads is needed, both in their own right and within the context of wider settlement patterns in Atholl. A combination of detailed survey and trial excavation to elucidate the nature of this settlement type within its social and historical context should begin to resolve many of the question marks surrounding the assignation of particular sites to this group. Also, a more comprehensive exposition of the relationship of the circular homesteads to the landscape and to earlier and later settlement should enable a more detailed assessment of the potential relationships between the homesteads, Pitcarmick-type buildings and other settlement types, essential to understanding the nature of settlement in Atholl.

To develop a sense of the landscape as a lived-in world, an increasingly intimate knowledge of that landscape has to be gained; only then can a complete sense of how it operates through time begin to emerge. Part of this involves the simple process of observation, not just of the archaeological remains, but of the environment in which the archaeologist too lives and works. At Pitcarmick, sheep moved into and through the basin along particular routes and, by returning to the same places, highlighted the best

grass. Almost as an aside, this indicated those areas of more intense human activity. The daily flight pattern of a barn owl, materialising without sound from the new plantations on the slopes of Glenderby, created a strong sense of time and place; in the same way, the appearance of the small white stars of chickweed wintergreen amidst the coarse moorland vegetation during July, was a magical happening. The decay of a sheep carcass over the matter of a few weeks gave a sense of the ongoing processes of life and death, change and development. It also brought home the reality of modern perceptions of this moorland landscape as bleak and barren, something that became increasingly easy to forget as knowledge of Pitcarmick grew.

This intimacy turned Pitcarmick North into a place. Only through this understanding of the layers of meaning which moderate a sense of place is it possible to realise the true materiality of the archaeological remains; it raises topography from a mere backdrop to an active determinant of context and form. The identification of even the most minor details of topography enabled the recognition of the slight rectangular buildings on the north ridge and, more importantly, the annexes to the cots, some of the most ephemeral remains encountered on the two ridges. A further consequence of these processes was the recognition that the archaeological work undertaken on this hillside was yet another phase in continuing cycles of use and disuse, interpretation and re-interpretation. The daily rituals of our lives on the hill - overcoming the fear of modern technology in the hard shape of a total station and the creation of our own paths between the places that were of significance to us (site huts, excavation trenches, survey stations) - tempered these experiences. By establishing the frameworks of names and places which gave life to the archaeological remains, the historical documentation became integral to the archaeological work; another facet of penetrating the depths of this landscape and its history. Personal experience and discovery continually guided the development of understanding of this hillside.

Since landscape is a chronological and spatial construct, it must be recognised that any understanding of it must be both historically contingent and socially situated. The historical record has to be integral to any understanding of its present form; although

periods of time can be abstracted from the entire scale of human existence, it is geographical scale that appears to be of most importance if the development of these landscapes is to be understood on a level that is relevant to people. It is this, the human scale, that should be of most concern - the traces of past lives that we see in the landscape are what give it meaning in our own present. This is not the sole preserve of a modern society, where cultural activities involve the packaging of the past into parcels which the leisure industry can appropriate for the public's consumption, but one which will have been of concern to all members of society coming to terms with their own past, as they turn to negotiate their future. From this can perhaps be built up larger studies of form and process, as has been done with Atholl, but only if that feeds back into a better understanding of the intimacy of life and experience.

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Abbreviations:

BAR: British Archaeological Reports

DES: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

EUP: Edinburgh University Press

HMSO: Her Majesty's Stationery Office

PSAS: Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland

RCAHMS: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland

RCHME: Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England

SAF: Scottish Archaeological Forum

SFSA: Annual Report of the Scottish Field Studies Association

SGM: Scottish Geographical Magazine

SRS: Scottish Record Society

SHS: Scottish History Society

SS: Scottish Studies

TAF AJ: Tayside and Fife Archaeological Journal

TGSI: Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness

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