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Rhynie, A Powerful Place of Pictland

Edited by Gordon Noble

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Chapter 5

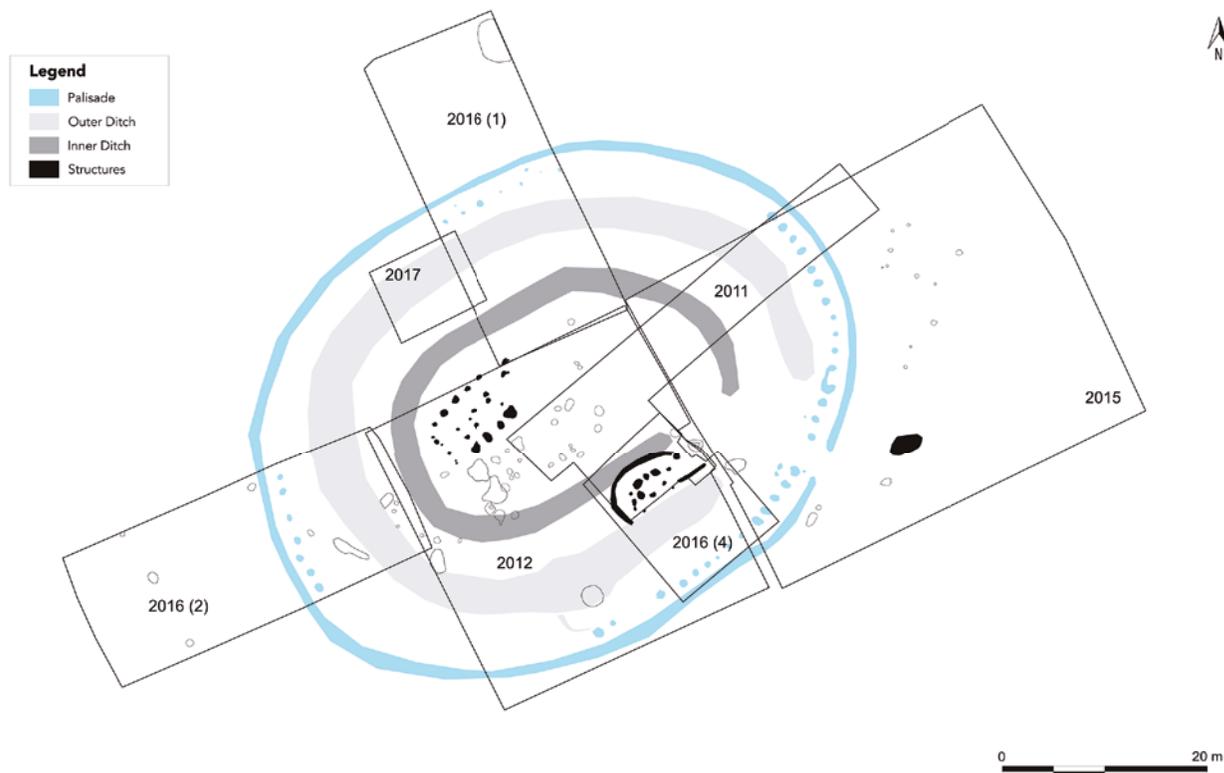
EXCAVATION RESULTS: THE CRAW STANE COMPLEX

GORDON NOBLE, MEGGEN GONDEK, DANIEL MACLEAN
AND CATHY MACIVER

5.1 Background

Following the discovery of the Rhynie Man symbol stone in March 1978, aerial reconnaissance identified a series of circular enclosures in close proximity to its findspot (Aberdeen Archaeological Surveys 1979: 12) (Illus 5.1). Analysis defined the complex as a series of enclosure boundaries, comprising an inner and outer ditched enclosure and an outer palisaded boundary, that surrounded the site of the in situ Craw Stane and a distinctive knoll at the end of the sand-and-gravel ridge

upon which the symbol stone stood (Fraser & Halliday 2007: 122). The inner ditch encompassed an area of around 32m x 20m, the outer an area of around 45m x 30m, and the outer palisade enclosed an area of 60m x 40m (Fraser & Halliday 2007: 122) (Illus 5.1). Even before the site was excavated, the enclosure complex was considered unusual and traces of internal features such as pits or post holes suggested a complicated and perhaps multiphase settlement (Fraser & Halliday 2007: 122).



Illus 5.1

The Craw Stane complex with location of 2011–13 and 2015–17 trenches.

Aerial photography in 1994 revealed further cropmarks closer to the modern village of Rhynie, including two large square enclosures (NJ 499 268) that were first identified by Moira Greig as part of the Aberdeen Archaeological Survey programme (Greig 1994) (Illus 2.4). The larger enclosure measured around 20m across and the smaller around 16m across, both with entrances on the northern side. The two enclosures were transcribed by RCAHMS and were interpreted as square barrows due to their morphology and proximity to the findspot of human remains and burial monuments uncovered in the 19th century (as recorded on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map, ONS Name Books and by Logan (1829)).

The first excavation season at the Craw Stane complex took place in 2011 and involved a relatively long and narrow evaluation trench. Subsequent years (2012 and 2015–17) expanded the scale of the excavation and utilised much larger trenches that were investigated using a strip-and-map methodology (cf Carver 2009: 101). This approach characterised a large proportion of the complex, whilst leaving more than 85% of the archaeology in situ (Tables 5.1 and 5.2) (Illus 5.1). The 2013 programme centred on identifying and characterising the nature of the two square enclosures, as well as testing the area for presence/absence of early medieval burials. The excavation involved opening a trench measuring 44m north/south by 32m east/west that again employed the strip, map and sample approach. In 2014, investigations conducted as part of a Heritage Lottery Fund community archaeology grant identified additional funerary elements a short distance to the north-east of the 2013 trench, some of which are likely to have been prehistoric in date. The results of these excavations are outlined below and are preceded by a brief consideration of the methodology used and the impacts that modern agriculture has had on the Craw Stane enclosure complex. Within the text on the excavations the radiocarbon dating evidence for the Craw Stane complex is not referenced in detail as this is the subject of dedicated consideration and modelling in Chapter 8 with dozens of dates available for the complex as a whole. Individual dates for the prehistoric features are referenced in text and tabulated individually. This chapter ends with a consideration of some new motifs found on Rhynie No. 5 symbol stone through photogrammetry study that was conducted in the latter stages of the project.

Year	Trench	Area (m2)	Max length (m)	Max width (m)
2011	1	382	45	16
2012	1	1017	33	30
2015	1	1533	43	36
2016	1	512	35	15
2016	2	535	36	15
2016	3	46	15	3
2016	4	204	17	13
2016	5	396	21	19
2017	1	82	10	8

Table 5.1
Trenches excavated at Rhynie 2011–17

Total area stripped (m ²)	2025
Total estimated area of site (m ²)	2793
% Site stripped	72.5%
% excavated of stripped features	18.83%
% left in site	86.35%

Table 5.2
Percentage of enclosure complex revealed by strip-and-map and percentage of deposits excavated

5.2 The effects of modern agricultural practices on the Craw Stane complex

While post-abandonment activity appears to have had an effect on the survival of the archaeology at Cairn More (see Chapter 6), there is no doubt that later activity has had a serious impact on the archaeology of the Craw Stane enclosures and the survival of burial features near the village. The result is that interpretations and hypotheses about the complex and cemetery are more limited than any other site reported on in this volume.

The underlying drift geology around Rhynie consists primarily of sand and some gravels, with the modern ploughsoil on the field in which the complex stands generally extending to a depth of around 0.2–0.3m. Thicker ploughsoils and hillwash found on the slopes of the knoll had in some cases partly protected the archaeology, revealing deeper ditch and palisade sections. However, the majority of excavations at the Craw Stane demonstrated high levels of plough attrition, with features on the summit of the knoll being particularly affected. Extensive and very obvious modern plough furrows up to 0.2m in depth ran south-west/north-east across the majority of trenches opened, obscuring and damaging all features uncovered (Illus 5.2) and 5.36. These furrows were removed prior to the excavation of features in the Craw Stane complex (Illus 5.2). Cattle in the field had also played a detrimental role in archaeology survival, eroding deposits down



Illus 5.2
Modern plough marks evident in a 2016 drone image

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to the sandy subsoil in places and causing the topsoil to survive as only a skim of grass in others. The area immediately around the Craw Stane, especially to the south, was particularly affected and had exposed the whole of the modern concrete base of the stone. In 2005, erosion of this area led to the discovery of sherds of Bronze Age pottery from the largest cattle scrape around the stone (see Cook 2005).

Farm records show that the site was ploughed 14 times from 1977–97, with the field thought to have been ploughed before then too, though no records have been retained pre-1977. The site was scheduled in 2003 (Scheduled Monument SM69), with an informal agreement that the farmer would keep the field in pasture. In all years from 2012 onwards there were efforts to test the ploughsoil for archaeological potential during excavation; test-pits were dug prior to machine stripping to assess the depth of ploughsoil and a small percentage of soil sieved to assess the presence/absence of artefacts in the ploughzone. Metal detecting was also conducted, which in 2011, 2012 and 2016 involved detection prior to cleaning the trenches and an assessment of spoil heaps. In 2015, the 43m x 36m area of excavation was metal detected prior to topsoil stripping. The small-scale sampling of the ploughzone from 2011–16 produced no artefacts other than modern finds. The metal detecting of spoil heaps also yielded no diagnostic metal finds of early medieval date. Metal detecting prior to the topsoil strip of 2015 again produced no definitive early medieval finds, with a small assemblage of mainly modern finds retrieved.

In 2017, a large ploughzone sampling exercise was mobilised through student and community efforts. This was conducted as part of a student dissertation project by Peter Lamont at the University of Aberdeen, which examined the impacts of ploughing on archaeological sites. The 2017 trench was more modest than in previous years (Illus 5.1) but still provided an area of 64m² to assess, with an average ploughsoil depth of around 0.3m. The trench also targeted a portion of the outer ditch of the Craw Stane complex, whose upper fills had produced the majority of finds during the 2011–16 excavations, meaning that artefact recovery from the ploughzone was more likely than elsewhere on site. The ploughsoil was removed by a team of up to 12 students and volunteers over seven days. The topsoil was removed as one context using shovels and directly passed through 5mm sieves. Any artefacts retrieved were plotted on a 0.5m grid. While some artefacts were recovered in situ, the majority were found through sieving. After obvious modern finds were removed, a total of 30 artefacts were logged, averaging around 1.5 artefacts per cubic metre of soil. The artefacts included categories of finds found during the full excavation, such as moulds and imported pottery; however, the objects (moulds in particular) were highly fragmented and abraded. Abrasion on the ceramic moulds recovered from the ploughzone was such that the majority did not preserve any diagnostic morphological or design features, and many were only identified by their ceramic texture and matrix (Illus 5.3).

There were also notable absences in the ploughsoil assemblage. No early medieval metalwork was recovered from the ploughzone – through test-pitting, open area stripping of topsoil by hand or through metal detecting – suggesting that any early medieval metalwork incorporated into the ploughzone through plough disturbance had not survived (cf Haldenby & Richards 2010: 1160). The sandy, well-drained and acidic nature of the soils at Rhynie is



Illus 5.3

A comparison of some of the moulds found during excavation of the outer ditch during the full-scale excavation (top row) and from above the outer ditch during the ploughzone sampling exercise (mid and bottom rows)

not conducive to material survival and likely contributed to this absence of metalwork, particularly if the material had already been broken up in the ploughsoil (Soil Map of Scotland 2018). Soil sampling at Rhynie provided an average pH of 5.8 (Gross 2017) and this combination of factors is known to promote the leaching of calcium, potassium and magnesium from objects, resulting in the eluviation of clay from poorly fired ceramics – as would appear to be the case with the moulds (Karen Milek pers comm).

The results of the ploughzone experiment at Rhynie was published in 2019 (see the full report in Noble et al 2019b). The article concluded that, given the very low artefact densities found over a known artefact-bearing feature, the possibility of mapping activity areas or even identifying sites through a methodology that involved sampling the ploughzone on a large scale would have been very limited. It would also have required the removal and sifting of large volumes of soil by hand, which the Rhynie assessment showed to be very labour intensive (clearing and sieving even the small area of the 2017 trench took seven days). The lack of metalwork finds from these contexts, combined with the very eroded state of any moulds in the topsoil, suggests that further ploughzone studies would therefore have limited or no success in characterising the presence of high-status metalworking at the site. The fact that this was the case on a site that has seen relatively little ploughing in recent years indicates that the effects of ploughing on sites in more intensively cultivated fields is likely to be even more bleak.

As numerous studies have highlighted, ploughing is a destructive force and the only way to preserve sites and subsoil features is

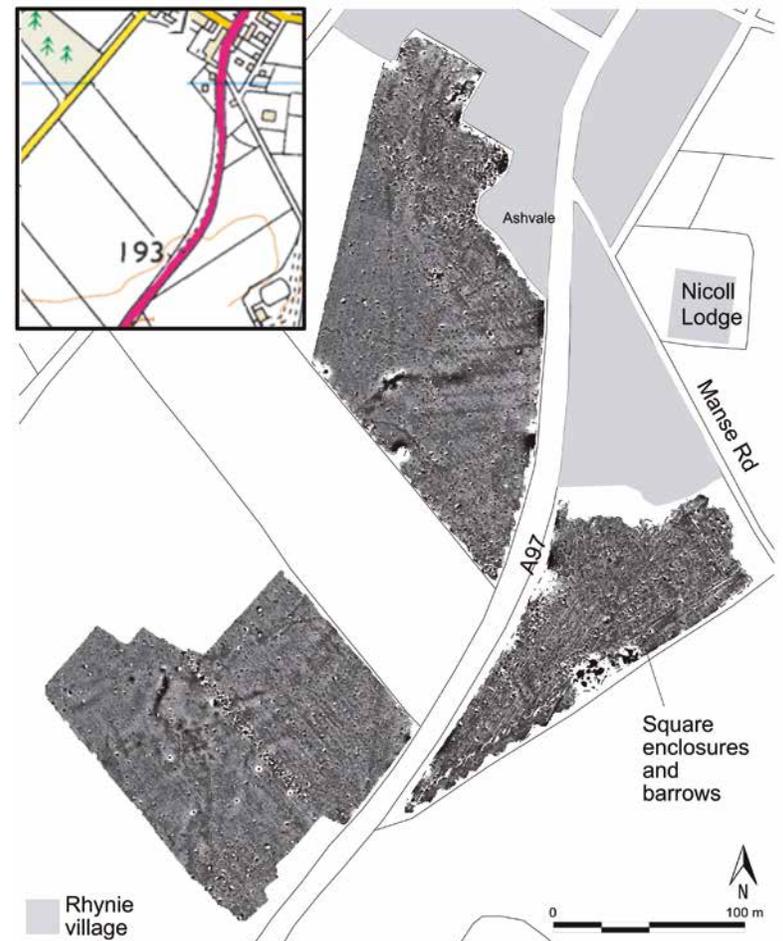
to cease all cultivation practices (Lambrick 1977: 32–40; 2004: 188–92; Oxford Archaeology 2002, 2010; Dunwell & Ralston 2008: 70). Studies also suggest that well-defined cropmarks and sites that lay within or adjacent to areas of pronounced topographic variation, particularly those in loose sandy soils or on crests of terraces or knolls, are highly vulnerable to plough damage (all of which characterise the Craw Stane complex) (Dunwell & Ralston 2008: 25, 42, 50–1; Cowley 2011: 51). The cumulative effects of ploughing means that if the Craw Stane complex had been as intensively ploughed as some sites in recent years there would have undoubtedly been less evidence to assess the character of the site, with subsoil deposits even more truncated and perhaps even less material surviving in the topsoil. Many of the richest artefact-bearing deposits at the Craw Stane enclosures were found in the upper fills of features, suggesting that significant loss has already occurred at the site. It is fortuitous that ploughing was curtailed at the site in 1997, though that was almost 20 years after the initial discovery of Rhynie Man and Rhynie No. 8 by ploughing.

The general lack of information retained in the ploughzone justified the strip-and-map approach at Rhynie and it proved to be an effective means of assessing a cropmark site of this nature, resulting in a characterisation of its date, structural components, material assemblages and preservation conditions. If a keyhole trenching approach had been adopted, it is unlikely any of the buildings associated with the enclosure complex would have been recognised or understood, and the spatial layout of the complex or artefact distribution would not have been recoverable. While the ploughzone experiment at Rhynie was a valuable undertaking, it suggests that unless a site is particularly finds-rich (of an order of magnitude exceeding that of Rhynie), testing ploughzone assemblages through fieldwalking, metal detecting or any form of sampling is likely to provide very limited results. Strip-and-map is likely to be a much more effective means of evaluating cropmark sites of this nature, particularly when they are threatened by ongoing damage through agriculture.

5.3 Geophysical survey and cropmark mapping

JAMES O'DRISCOLL AND GORDON NOBLE

As part of the Leverhulme-funded Comparative Kingship project, a total area of 23.1ha was surveyed in 2019 in the vicinity of Rhynie utilising a Sensys MXPDA 5 sensor gradiometry unit. This programme targeted two areas: one surrounding the concentration of square enclosures and barrows abutting the southern side of Rhynie village, and another within and surrounding the Craw Stane enclosure complex. The former comprised a 4.87ha area which incorporated grazing pasture and newly ploughed fields around the southern side of Rhynie village. Here the land gradually slopes from east to west, with the lower western extent of the survey area prone to flooding. Many of the anomalies detected within the survey here were associated with drainage and farming practices, though a number of possible archaeological features could also be identified. In Illus 5.4 and 5.5, anomalies G1a–G1g represent modern ferrous material (such as gates, wire fences, buried building debris, etc.). A series of linear striations G2 and G3 characterise two distinct tillage patterns, with the wider



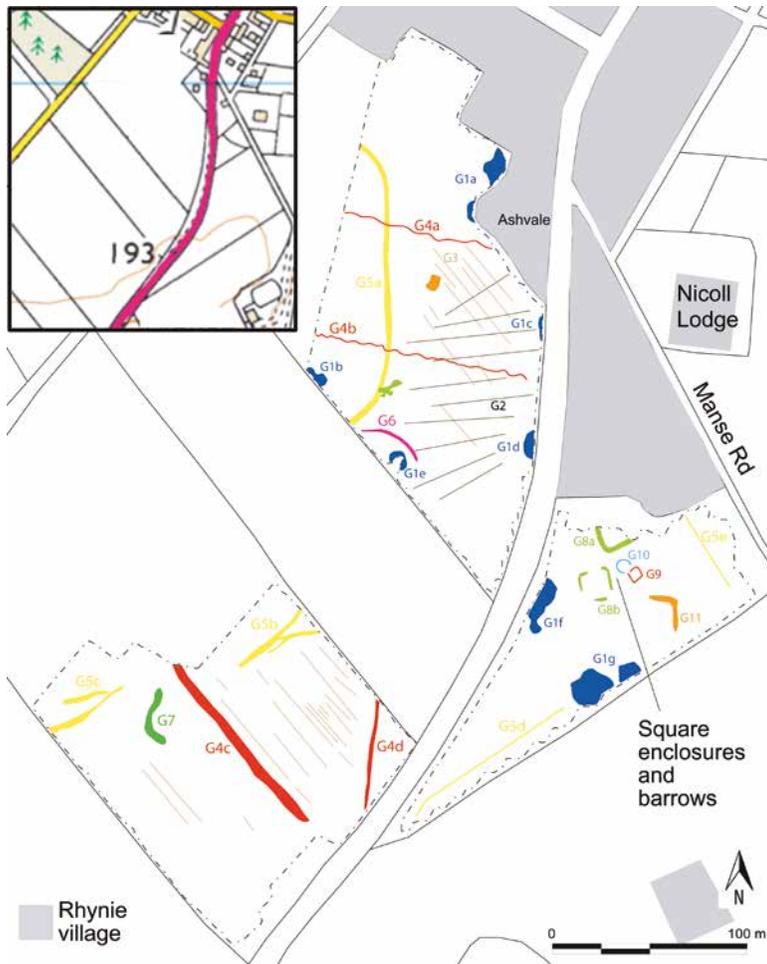
Illus 5.4

The results of the geophysical survey by the village – the field with the square barrows and enclosures is bottom right with the road approaching the village evident in the centre of the image

setting of G2 indicating an earlier, probably medieval, farming landscape. Within the eastern surveyed field, a close pattern of linear striations can be attributed to recent ploughing activity, whilst G4a–G4d represent levelled field boundaries, some of which may be associated with the narrow-stripped field systems visible in the 19th-century Ordnance Survey six-inch mapping. Attempts at improving water-drainage issues on the lower western part of the survey area (towards the bog area located on the General Roy map – see Chapter 2; Illus 2.7 and 2.8) are indicated by multiple drainage channels G5a–G5c, as well as two further modern drainage ditches visible on the ground at the time of surveying the easternmost field (G5d–G5e). Two curving positive magnetic anomalies G6 and G7 may also represent drainage ditches, though the latter is positioned on a slight topographical rise and so could also be indicative of an archaeological feature.

In the eastern field, two large square enclosures (G8a and G8b) excavated as part of this project (see below) were only faintly apparent in the survey results and the smaller square barrows excavated within this area were not visible at all. Outwith the area excavated in 2013, the geophysical survey detected two

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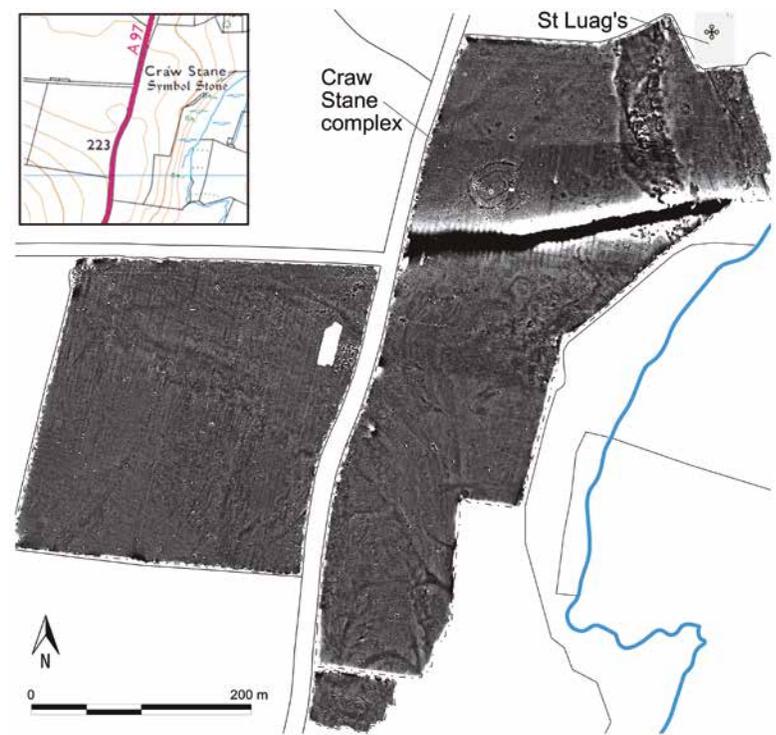


Illus 5.5

Interpretation of the survey results by the village with features labelled G1–G11

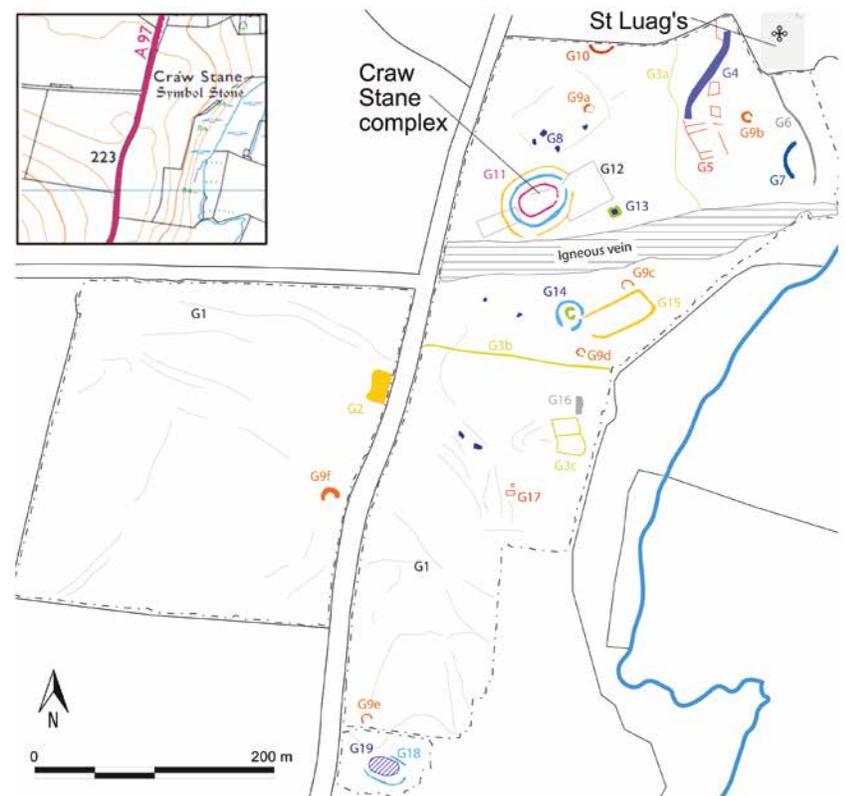
possible features of archaeological potential, G9 and G10. G9 comprised a curvilinear band of negative magnetic readings which, when projected, had a diameter of approximately 8m, whilst G10 consisted of a faint band of negative magnetic readings measuring approximately 9m x 9m. It is possible that both of these features represent burial monuments such as round/square barrows, similar to those excavated outside the larger square enclosures G8a and G8b. Alongside the other factors discussed in Chapter 11, this would indicate that the early medieval cemetery is probably more extensive than previously identified. A larger faint band of positive magnetic readings with a distinct right angle (G11) may also suggest that another large square enclosure exists in this group of monuments, though more survey and excavation would be needed to clarify this.

A larger area of 18.23ha was surveyed in and around the Craw Stane enclosure complex (Illus 5.6 and 5.7). At the time of the survey, the eastern field was being used for cattle grazing while crops in the western field had recently been cut. Unfortunately, a change of landowner curtailed the area available for survey and only some of the Mains of Rhynie fields could be studied. A series



Illus 5.6

Geophysical survey results around the Craw Stane



Illus 5.7

Interpretation of the survey results in the vicinity of the Craw Stane with features labelled G1–G19

of broad, faint geological responses (G1) were apparent throughout the survey area, as well as a distinct igneous dyke which runs east/west immediately south of the Craw Stane enclosure. G2 represents an area of disturbance likely associated with a levelled sheepfold, while a series of relict field boundaries (G3a–G3c) were also identified in the survey area. A possible trackway (G4) leading to a series of probable structures (G5) near the Water of Bogie may be associated with the nearby church or a farming settlement. Attempts to manage the drainage of this waterlogged area can be identified by the presence of drainage ditches G6 and G7. Immediately to the north of the Craw Stane enclosure complex, up to four small sub-rectangular areas of positive magnetic readings were identified (G8). While it is difficult to contextualise these features without further survey or excavation, their close location to the Craw Stane complex and their curious shape suggest that they may be archaeological in origin. Given the presence of a building outside the enclosure at the Craw Stane enclosure complex these could potentially be further structures of early medieval date.

Up to six curvilinear bands of positive magnetic readings (G9a–G9f), ranging in size from 8m to 11m in diameter, were scattered throughout the survey area and most likely represent the remains of prehistoric roundhouses. G9a was excavated by the REAP project in 2006, which confirmed that it was a Bronze Age structure. The identification of an additional five structures within this area suggest this landscape was densely occupied in the Bronze and Iron Ages. On the northern edge of the survey area, the partial remains of a curvilinear band of positive magnetic readings (G10) indicates the presence of a large ring-barrow or small enclosure. The most apparent anomaly within the survey area is that of the Craw Stane enclosure complex (G11), with the geophysical survey identifying all three enclosing elements as well as the limits of backfilled excavation trenches (G12). Immediately outside one of these trenches, a square anomaly (G13) comprising a band of negative readings surrounding a central area of positive readings, and measuring approximately 12m x 12m, may represent an unrecorded square barrow, though excavation would be needed to clarify this. South of the Craw Stane enclosure complex, a sub-circular enclosure measuring approximately 20m across and comprising a broad band of positive magnetic readings surrounding a smaller sub-circular band of positive readings (G14) may represent a small enclosure or another burial monument. Abutting this to the east is a rectangular anomaly (G15) measuring 65m x 30m. Whilst it is difficult to interpret the significance of this feature, it could be related to the enclosure or a much later field system which incorporated the enclosure into its perimeter. G16 represents a small rectangular area of positive magnetic readings that may indicate a sunken-floored structure, while G17 is suggestive of a rectangular structure whose distinct band of negative readings may indicate that it is built of stone. At the very edge of the survey area, a possible oval band of negative readings (G18) surrounding an area of disturbance (G19) could represent settlement activity. Placed on a natural knoll overlooking the Water of Bogie, these faint anomalies may be archaeological in origin or could derive from geological features.

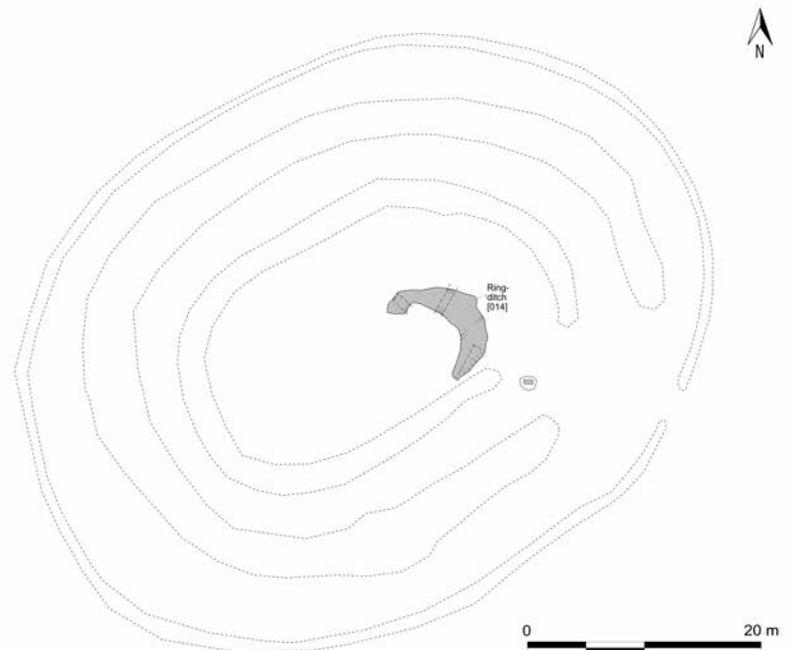
Overall, the geophysical survey results suggest that the Craw Stane enclosure complex and barrow cemetery are just small parts of a busy archaeological landscape. Only further fieldwork could

begin to tease these apart; however, the most obvious geophysical anomalies appear to represent a number of prehistoric ring ditch roundhouses alongside possible burial monuments in close proximity to the village. Additional elements of early medieval settlement are also potentially identifiable, with sub-rectangular anomalies G8 and G16 being particularly intriguing. As noted above, the project was not able to access the field directly opposite the Craw Stane enclosure complex at the Mains of Rhynie, nor could it study a series of small strip fields extending down towards the village. Aerial photography has identified various sites within these areas, including during some very recent aerial reconnaissance work carried out in 2018 by HES. These sites include possible square barrows identified in 1997 (NRHE ID 80306) and in 2018 (NRHE ID 361343). The most intriguing remains identified by the recent HES survey are two possible sunken floor buildings (NRHE IDs 361342 and 361230) and a large palisaded enclosure (NRHE ID 361229). One of the sunken floor structures measures around 6m x 4m, while the other is large, sub-square or round in plan, and approximately 10–12m in diameter. The palisaded enclosure measures around 40m east/west by 28m north/south.

5.4 Excavation results: the Craw Stane complex

5.4.1 Prehistoric features

Over the course of the Rhynie investigations, a small number of prehistoric features were found in the vicinity of the Craw Stane. Excavations in 2005 revealed a c 8m diameter ring-ditch roundhouse dating to 1615–1300 cal BC downslope from the cropmark complex (for a full list of dates, see Gondek & Noble 2015: table 2). Burnt structural timbers, charred grain and a large deposit of Mid Bronze Age flat rimmed ware was recovered from the fill of the ring ditch.



Illus 5.8

The Iron Age ring ditch identified in the Craw Stane complex interior

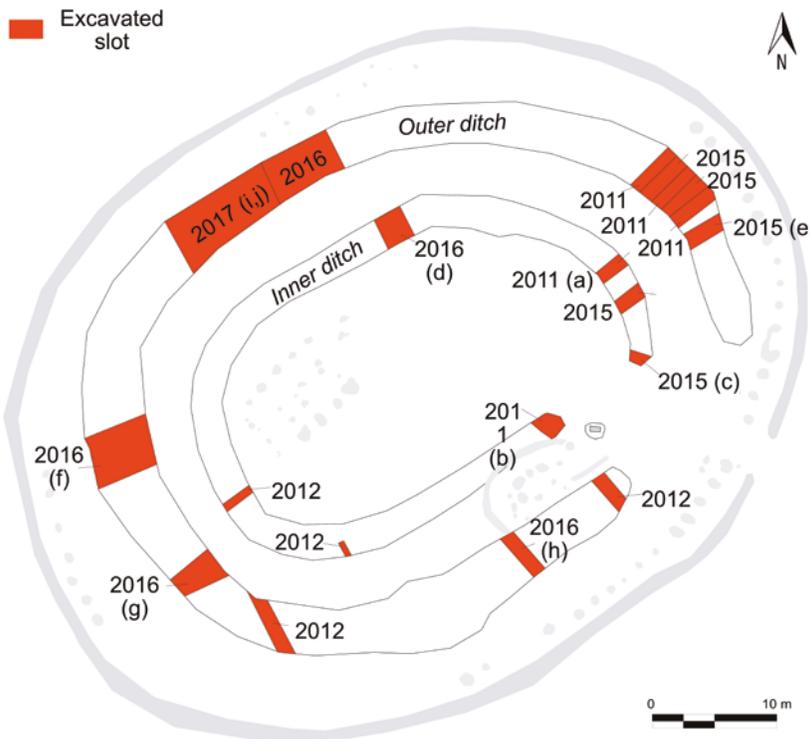
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Within the Craw Stane complex itself, very few features dating to the prehistoric period were identified. In 2011 and 2012, a very truncated ring-ditch roundhouse [014] measuring ≈ 8 m in diameter and dated to 400–200 cal BC (SUERC-35633; 95% probability) was revealed at the centre of the complex (Illus 5.8). The ring ditch had a single charcoal- and burnt bone-rich fill with significant quantities of stone towards the centre of the ditch. The fill also showed patches of orangey-brown silt that may have been the remains of turf from an outer wall of the structure. The ring ditch only survived to a maximum depth of 0.35m and in most places was much shallower. No finds were recovered from any of the sections excavated. The only other indications of a prehistoric presence at the Craw Stane complex were a fragment of Bronze Age faience bead found redeposited in a ditch fill and sherds of a Bronze Age Beaker found in the cattle scrape at the site in 2005 (Cook 2005).

5.4.2 Inner Ditch

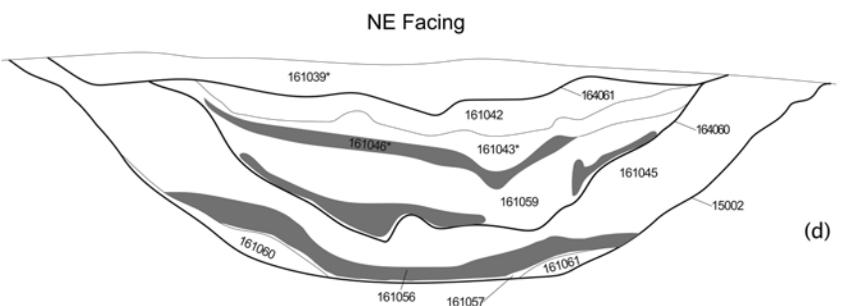
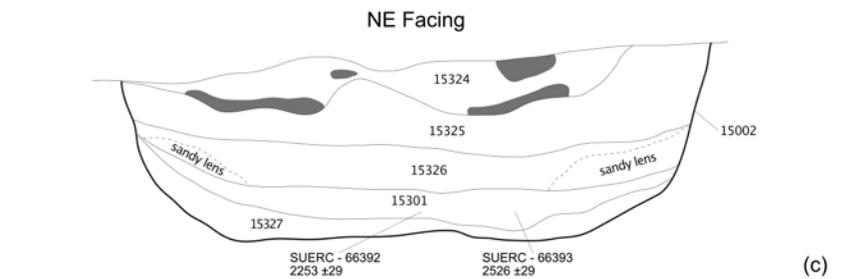
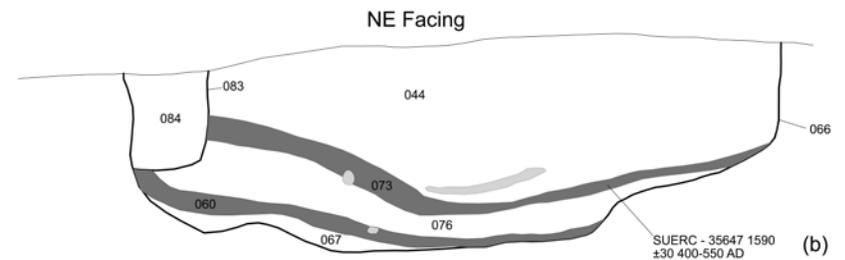
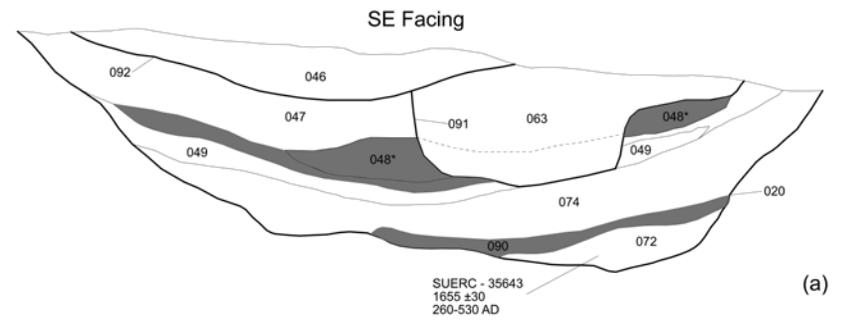
Seven sections were cut across the inner ditch of the Craw Stane enclosure complex during the five seasons of excavation (Illus 5.9). In 2011, a single section transected the north-eastern side of the inner ditch, whose cut [020] measured almost 3m wide and 0.7m deep (Illus 5.10a). The stratigraphy included a series of sand fills with two organic layers (048/090) that may have represented a turf lining or more gradual silting of the ditch (Illus 5.10a). Two recuts [091] and [092] were evident in the upper ditch profile.

The south-west terminal of the inner ditch was rounded in plan and U-shaped in profile, with five ditch fills evident in this



Illus 5.9

Slots excavated through the ditches at the Craw Stane complex



161039*	Finds in layer
U	Cut / Recut
■	Decayed turf

Illus 5.10

Examples of sections through the inner ditch – see Illus 5.5 for location of sections



Illus 5.11
Turf impressions in fill (161056) in the inner ditch



Illus 5.12
Upper recut of the outer ditch excavated in 2017 with finds- and charcoal-rich upper fill

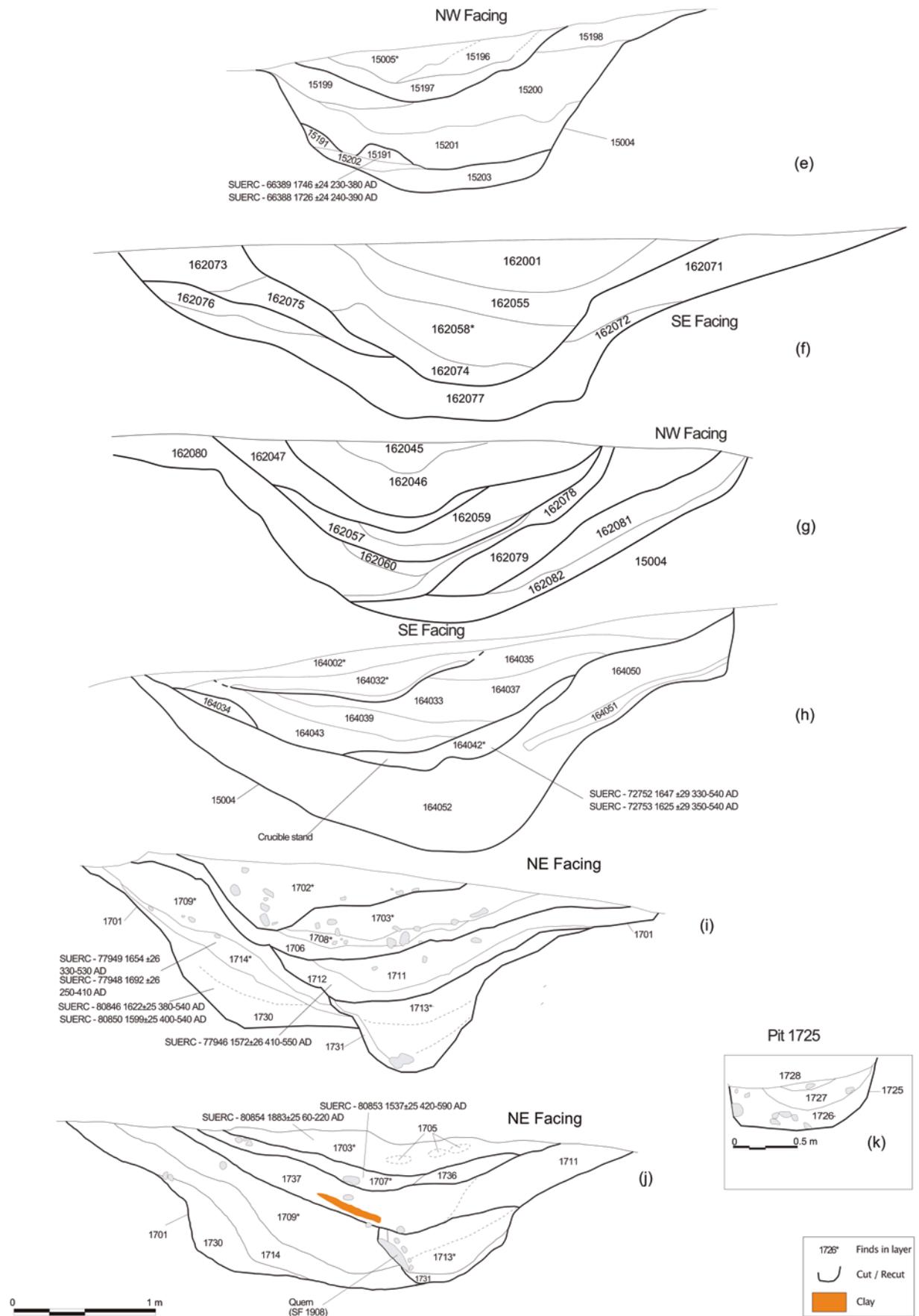
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section of the ditch (Illus 5.10b). Two of these, (073) and (060), were much more organic than the other sandy fills and may have been a turf lining to the ditch (Illus 5.10b). The uppermost fills of the ditch were cut by slot [164003/083] of Structure 3. The northern terminal of the inner ditch was also excavated in 2015, which was around 2m wide, 0.7m deep and terminated in a rounded cut (Illus 5.10c). Like the southern terminal, the sides of the ditch were sharply dug into the natural on both sides and contained a series of five silty sand fills.

The 2016 section across the inner ditch proved to be one of the most interesting and revealing (Illus 5.10d). This section was located on the north-west side of Trench 1 and showed that the ditch here measured 2.7m wide and up to 0.8m deep. The section also showed that the ditch had been recut on at least two occasions by [164060] and [164061] (Illus 5.10d). One of the lower layers (161056) was dug in plan and gave the impressions of individual slumped curves in the base of the ditch (Illus 5.11), suggesting that the more organic deposits within the ditch fills were redeposited turf that had been used as a lining or collapsed from a bank. Two further organic layers (161059) and (161046) lay in a recut of the ditch.

5.4.3 Outer Ditch

A total of 13 slots were excavated across the outer ditch (Illus 5.9). Three slots dug in 2011 were located on the north-eastern side of the enclosure complex and targeted 'hotspots' identified during the metal detecting survey. The outer ditch proved to be up to 4m wide and up to 1.1m deep in this area. The lower fills were sterile and sandy, representing natural silting and/or deliberate infilling of the ditch. The uppermost fills were charcoal-rich sandy deposits that lay within a recut of the ditch



Illus 5.13
Examples of sections through the outer ditch

RHYNIE

(Illus 5.12). These contained significant quantities of quarried stone fragments, charcoal and animal bone and a large quantity of artefacts including numerous sherds of Late Roman amphora, fragments of bronze pins, amber beads and iron fragments. The nature of the finds-rich deposits suggests they were dumps from a period of destruction and/or clearing of nearby structures.

Subsequent seasons found further evidence for recutting of the outer ditch, with at least two recuts identified in a 2015 outer ditch section (Illus 5.9e and 5.13e). One of the lower fills (15191) that lay below a recut was dated to 230–380 and 240–390 cal AD (SUERC-66389 and SUERC-66388) (See Chapter 8 for full discussion of dating), providing some of the earliest dates from the ditch (aside from redeposition of Iron Age material). This layer was charcoal-rich and had slumped into the ditch from the exterior edge. The character of this fill suggested that it may have included cut turves and other organic material. The upper fills of the ditch, which lay within at least three later recuts, were largely sterile fine sands and silty sands.

The 2016–17 seasons explored the outer ditch further and concentrated on evidence for the dumping of metalworking-related artefacts. One slot in 2016 was a 4m wide section excavated across the western side of the outer ditch (Illus 5.9f and 5.13f). This section identified a basal fill of sterile yellowish-brown sand (162077)

which had been subject to some burrowing and disturbance. Overlying the basal fill on the eastern side was a series of layers of mixed sand (162076), (162075) and (162073), and on the west side similar sand deposits (162077), (162072) and (162071) were recorded. Layers (162073) and (162075) lay within a probable recut of the ditch and all of these lower fills were in turn recut by a narrower ditch cut which had four major fills – (162074), (162058), (162055) and (162001). Layer (162058) was a charcoal-rich sand with mould and crucible fragments and a furnace base that appears to have been dumped into the ditch from the outer edge.

Another ditch section excavated in 2016 also showed evidence for the dumping of metalworking debris (Illus 5.9g and 5.13g). The basal fill of the ditch in this section was redeposited yellow sand (162082) which was overlain by clay-rich sand (162081). The ditch here showed evidence of being recut and filled by a gravelly sand (162079), which in turn was recut and filled with a series of sandy deposits (162078), (162080) and (162060). A further recut occurred with fills (162057) and (162059), then another recut with fill (162047) and a final recut with upper fills (162046) and (162045). Just below these final two layers, but not appearing in section, was a layer of yellow-brown sand (162054) which again represented a depositional event from the outer edge of the ditch (Illus 5.14 and 5.15). This contained around dozens of



Illus 5.14

Working shot of Trench 3, Sondage 3 from 2016 showing finds-rich layer (163054) with zoomorphic moulds slumping into the ditch from the outer side of the enclosure

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Illus 5.15

Recording a large group of mould fragments from the finds-rich layer (163054) in the outer ditch, Sondage 3, 2016

clay mould fragments, including all the zoomorphic moulds for making animal figurines (Chapter 7) along with numerous crucible fragments.

A third slot dug in 2016 was located near to Structure 3 (Illus 5.9h and 5.13h). Here, recutting of the ditch was less obvious than elsewhere but there were at least three recuts that were shallower in profile than the recuts found elsewhere along the length of the outer ditch. A mid-fill (164042) of the ditch produced samples for two radiocarbon dates that were relatively early in the sequence from this feature. Finds were few in this part of the outer ditch, although a crucible stand was recovered from context (164042).

The 2017 season produced the most detailed information on the recutting of the outer ditch. The trench this year was established to solely target an 8m wide stretch of the enclosure boundary on the north-west side of the complex, and multiple sections were excavated to provide detailed profiles on the ditch fills (Illus 5.16 and 5.17). The lowest ditch fill identified was (1730) – a loose orange silty sand (Illus 5.9i; Illus 5.13i). Overlying the basal fill was a layer of black charcoal-rich sandy silt with frequent burnt bone (1714) and a layer of coarse sand (1709). Samples from (1730) and (1714) produced radiocarbon dates, with those from (1714) being older than those (1730) suggesting the incorporation of residual material within (1714) (see Illus 5.13i).



Illus 5.16

Photograph of the 2017 east-facing section of the outer ditch showing the multiple recuts



Illus 5.17

Photograph of the east-facing section of the outer ditch with rotary quern within recut excavated in 2017

The westernmost part of the trench in 2017 trench showed evidence of extensive reworking of the outer ditch. Deeper, more V-shaped ditch recuts were evident in two sections (Illus 5.13i, 5.13j and 5.17). The earliest recut was filled on the east side of the trench by a thin layer of pink clayey silt (1731) that may have been decomposed turf. This produced two Iron Age dates (SUERC-77953 and SUERC-77954), demonstrating the incorporation of redeposited charred material – perhaps from turves dug to line the recut (Illus 5.9j and 5.13j). At the west side of the trench, the top stone of a rotary quern was found slumped into the basal fill of the recut (Illus 5.9j and 5.13j) and the upper layers of this recut were sands with thin lenses of more organic material. The ditch showed evidence for having



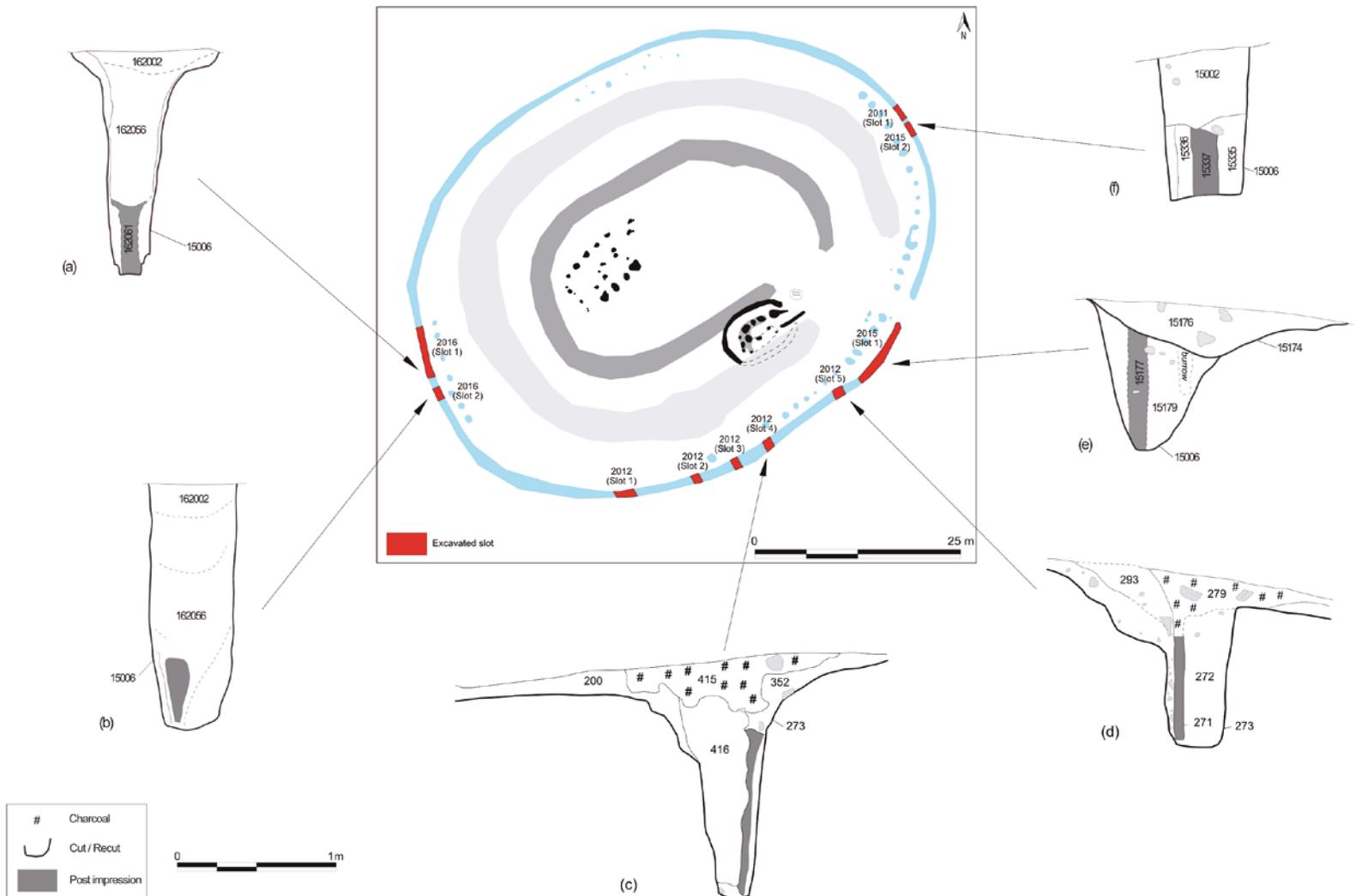
Illus 5.18

Pit [1725] cut into the outer ditch and backfilled with metalworking waste

been recut for a second time by a shallow bottomed cut, that was set slightly further to the north than the primary ditch cut (Illus 5.13i and 5.13j). This was filled with silty clay and sand fills (1711),

(1712) and (1737). The ditch was then recut for a third time by another shallow cut set back again to the south, which was filled with a series of relatively sterile sand fills (1706), (1708) and (1703). A final shallow recut was filled with (1702/1703), a charcoal-rich black sand with burnt bone that contained the majority of finds. This layer included residual charred material, suggesting that the uppermost fills may have come from deliberate infilling of the ditch with earlier midden material (Illus 5.13i).

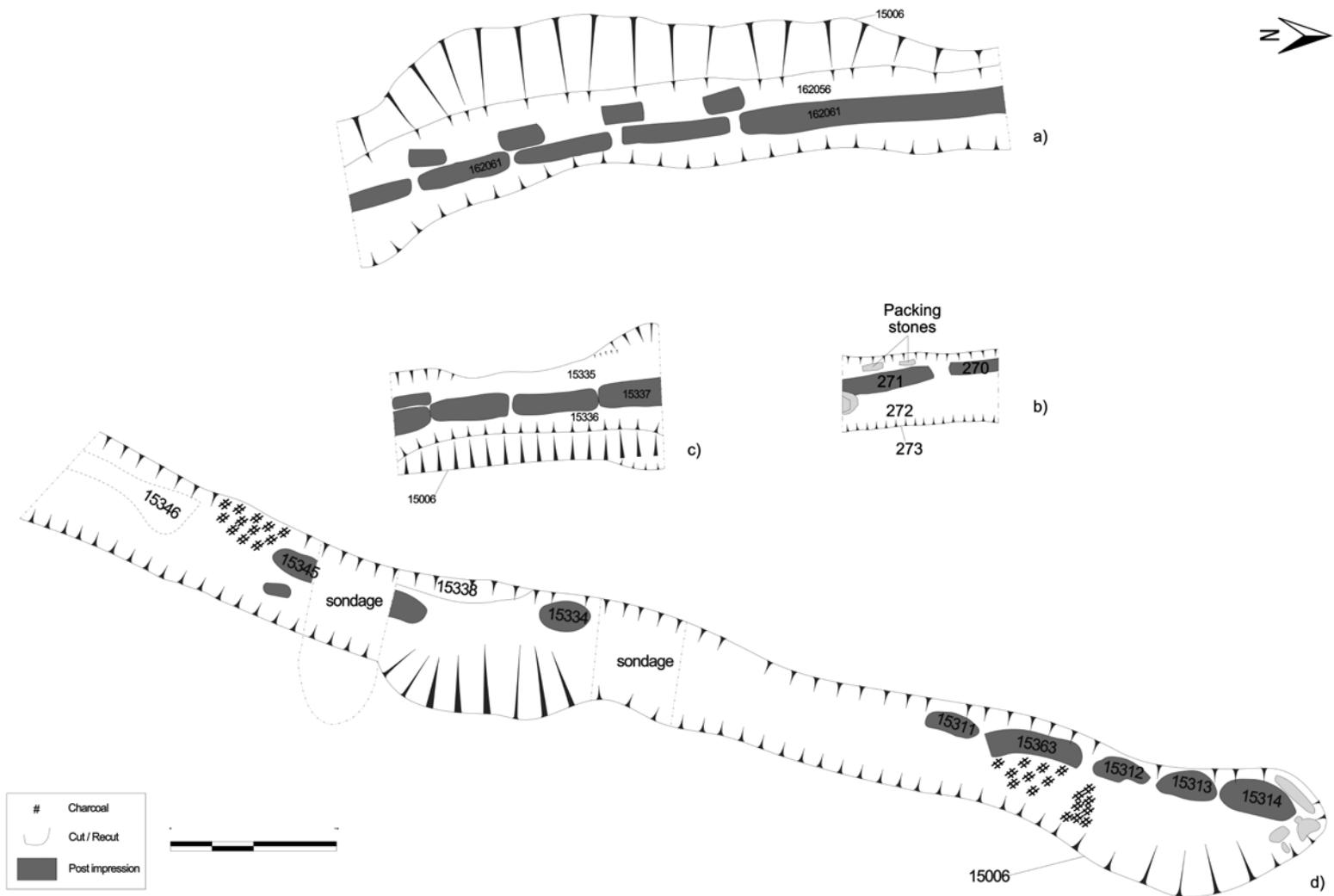
In the 2017 trench, a pit [1725] had been cut through the middle fills of the outer ditch (Illus 5.13k and 5.18). The pit was circular and bowl-shaped in profile and was around 1.1m in diameter and 0.75m deep. It was filled with (1726) – a dark charcoal-rich layer that appeared to line the outer edge of the cut. The edges were very distinct and the fill contained some severely burnt bone, cattle teeth and fire-cracked stone. There was also metalworking waste including clay moulds and a concentration of crucible fragments. The upper fills of the pit, (1727) and (1728), were silty sands with frequent charcoal. It is likely that this pit was used as an area for metalworking within what must have been a largely infilled ditch by that time. The pit may have been an emptied bowl-hearth that was later reused for dumping metalwork debris.



Illus 5.19

Sections excavated across the palisade and examples of the profile of the palisade slot

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Illus 5.20

The plank and post setting impressions preserved at the base of the palisade

5.4.4 The outer palisade and post setting

The outer enclosure boundary was formed of plank and post settings (Illus 5.19 and 5.20). This was referred to as a palisade in pre-excavation publications and interim reports on the site, though the excavated evidence suggests a more complex outer boundary than the term palisade may imply. However, the term palisade has been retained for the outermost continuous foundation trench which held a plank and post setting. Around 2m inside the palisade foundation trench, an internal post setting was identified.

With regards to elucidating the architecture of the outer boundary, the most revealing investigations took place in 2016 when a 4m stretch of the palisade trench on the south-western side of the enclosure complex was excavated in plan. The preservation of plank and post shadows was such that the structural elements were evident in more detail than had been located elsewhere (Illus 5.19 and 5.20). The excavations revealed a deep foundation trench [15006] around 1m wide at the top that narrowed to around 0.3m wide at the bottom and was 1.4m deep (Illus 5.19a and 5.20a). A mid to dark yellowish-brown mottled sand (162002) that contained a piece of early medieval vessel glass filled the top of the palisade. Below this lay a lighter brown sandy fill (162056), which composed the main fill of the trench. Visible at the very base of the sequence was a fill of coarse dark-brown

sand (162061) which preserved the impressions of planks and posts. Some of these structural elements may have been charred in places, as there were frequent inclusions of charcoal at this level. Once (162056) was fully removed, there were visible shadows of decayed timbers. Soil staining from at least four individual planks (162061) was visible along the centre of the base of the foundation trench, and the impressions of squared posts were identified at the interstices of the planks on the exterior side of the plank wall (Illus 5.19a and 5.21). The plank impressions were up to 0.5m long and around 0.1m wide, while the post impressions had maximum dimensions of 0.25m by 0.15m. In section, the lower fill (162061) that contained the post and plank impressions was visible for around 0.4m depth at the base of the cut. Soil staining on the other side of the plank line suggested that other timber or organic components were set on the internal side of the planks, but no clear post impressions were identifiable. The mid-fill (162056) of the foundation slot above the post and plank impressions was largely a homogenous sand that showed little evidence of features or differentiation (Illus 5.19a). Like the other slots dug through the palisade, none of the structural detail of the palisade construction was visible at the surface or in the upper fills. It would therefore appear that the planks and posts had been removed at some point in the site's history, leaving stumps or post impressions in only the lowermost fills.



Illus 5.21

Photograph of the plank and post settings at the base of the palisade



Illus 5.22

Possible plank/post impressions at the entranceway of the palisade

Clear plank impressions were also evident in the mid to lower fill of a small 1m section dug across the palisade slot next to the northern trench edge in 2012 (Illus 5.20b). Here, the palisade slot was up to 1.6m wide at the top and included destruction deposits that extended downslope. The cut was around 1.1m deep and was ramped on the inner side. Impressions of planks were evident on the inner side of the feature, which had been backfilled with loam and gravel (293) on the interior side and coarse sand (272) on the exterior (Illus 5.19d). In section, the plank impressions survived to a height of around 0.6m, but the upper portion had decayed or been deliberately dug out. Evidence of a possible recut containing a sandy fill of charcoal, burnt bone and stone (279) on the exterior side supports the latter interpretation. In plan, the plank impressions were again around 0.1m wide and at least 0.3–0.4m across. No posts were identified at the interstices but this may be due to the fact that only a very small slot was dug in this location. Packing stones for the planks or additional supports were found on the interior side of the planks.

Another slot dug across the palisade in 2012 showed that, in places, the palisade cut extended into the subsoil to at least 1.5m

in depth (Illus 5.19c). The upper part of the cut was up to 1.4m in width and narrowed to 0.3m towards the base. A thin band of dark greyish-brown silty sand (352) on the interior side represented the remains of a decayed or partially removed plank, and a silty sand (416) had been backfilled around the timbers. A charcoal-rich deposit (415) with burnt bone filled the top of the palisade cut and extended to a depth of 0.3m. This may represent the deliberate digging out of structural timbers or the upper decay cone of timbers rotting in situ, followed by later infilling of the resulting voids.

Plank and post impressions were also identified in the two slots dug across the palisade line during the 2015 excavations. One 2m slot, located downslope on the east side of the enclosure complex, revealed plank impressions in a foundation trench 1m deep (Illus 5.19f). Here, the plank impressions (15337) suggested timbers around 0.12m wide and up to 0.45–0.50m across (Illus 5.20c), though the distinction between individual planks was not entirely clear suggesting that the planks were closely set together or perhaps jointed. No external or internal post impressions were found; however, an organic fill (15335/15336) either side of the

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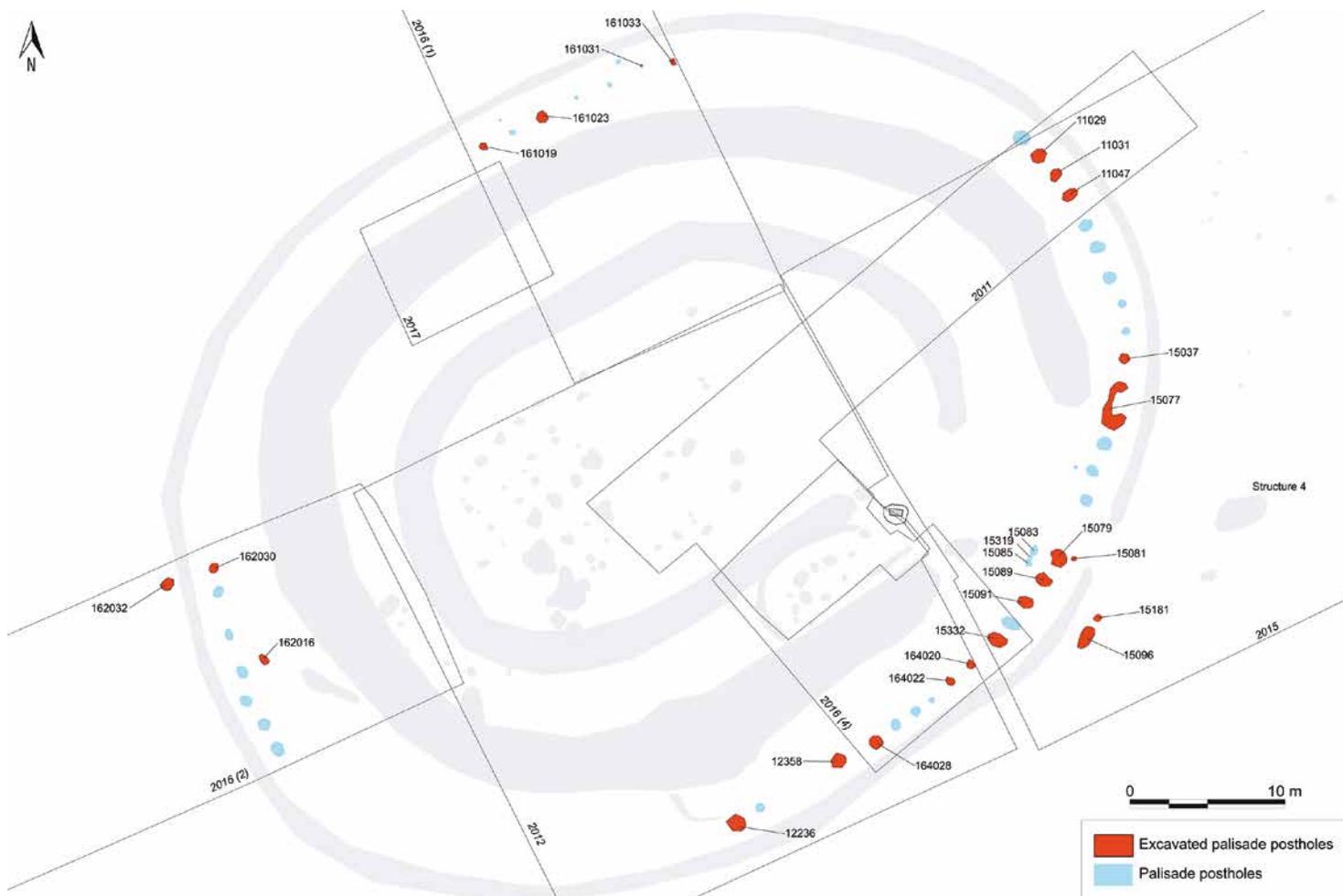
vertically set planks suggested the presence of other structural timbers, horizontal planking or turf packing. Fragments of bone and charcoal were found in the upper fill of the foundation trench and no evidence of planks could be traced at the higher level. There was also no decay cone, suggesting that the upper portions of the planks had been removed. In section, the siltier fill (15337) associated with the plank impressions could be identified to around 0.45m in depth, with a reddish-brown homogenous sand filling the top half of the feature (Illus 5.19f).

The second 2015 slot comprised an 8m long section dug across the palisade line at the southern side of the entrance (Illus 5.19e, 5.20d and 5.22). The palisade slot was noticeably shallower in this area, suggesting that truncation on the downslope side was more severe and/or that attempts were made to level the top of the palisade. A noticeable step in the palisade trench around 3m from the entrance, where the foundation trench became deeper, lends further credence to the levelling interpretation. Evidence of five post impressions – (15311), (15363), (15312), (15313) and (15314) – were found at the northern end of the foundation trench by the entrance gap (Illus 5.20d and 5.22). The post impressions comprised semicircular or D-shaped silty sand deposits around 0.4–0.5m across, perhaps representing planks or split posts with the flatter side of each facing towards

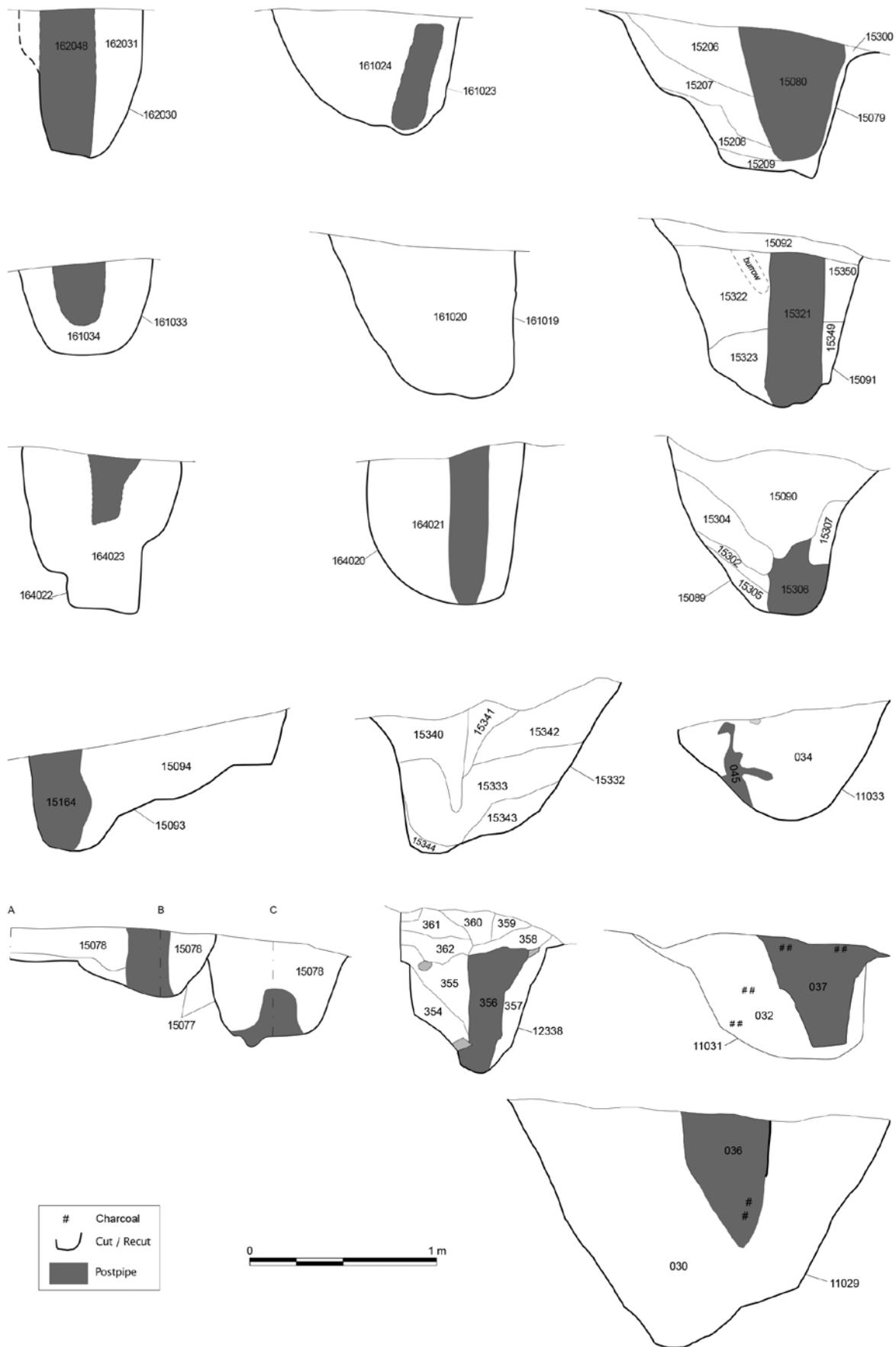
the exterior of the enclosure. Stone packing was evident around the end post at the entranceway. However, structural details were difficult to discern in the rest of the excavated slot, though further possible plank impressions (15346/15345) were identified in the southern portion of the foundation trench. The post impressions contained a mixed assemblage of species of wood charcoal suggesting that the charred material was redeposited in the voids left by removed or decayed timbers. Post removal would undoubtedly have impacted what remained in terms of post impressions, and the variable evidence for the presence/absence of plank and post impressions in this excavated slot would suggest at least some of the palisade was deliberately removed or dismantled. The post impressions in this part of the palisade were directly against the inner face of the palisade cut and it may be these were elements of a more complex construction, with further features present in the centre and exterior side of the trench that have not survived as post impressions.

5.4.5 Palisade post holes

Closely associated with the palisade trench was a setting of post holes that lay inside the line of the palisade trench (Illus 5.23 and 5.24). Where excavated, the posts were found around the entire



Illus 5.23
Excavated palisade post holes and miscellaneous features



Illus 5.24
 Sections of palisade post holes – in most cases clear post-pipes were evident

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circumference of the palisade, though the exact position of many of the post holes in the 2012 trench was obscured by hillwash and destruction deposits. The post holes were around 1.6–1.8m apart and were each set a very regular 2m away from the projected line of the planks in the palisade foundation trench. The post holes were generally fairly uniform in shape, with 20 examples excavated in half-section or in full. Most were around 0.8–1m in diameter and 0.6–0.8m deep and were ramped in the majority of cases. Post impressions or decay cones were evident in many examples and were on average around 0.3m wide (Illus 5.24). Where identifiable, the post-pipes stood on the side of the post hole closest to the palisade line.

The palisade post-hole settings around the entranceway were found to be more complex in form and were more closely set. Architectural elaboration around the entrance included two additional linked post holes [15083] and [15085] on the south side of the entrance (Illus 5.23). These were found set back around 1.8m from the main line of palisade post holes and an additional

small post hole [15081] was located between the entrance post hole and the terminal of the palisade trench. Upslope, the smaller post holes [15083] and [15085] were linked by a shallow dark-brown silty sand spread (15319) that may represent a very truncated plank or beam slot, but it survived to only 0.03m in depth. Similarly, between the fourth and fifth post holes along from the northern side of the entranceway, two adjacent palisade post holes [15077] were linked by a beam slot (Illus 5.23). The beam slot may have supported a timber structure built up on the interior edge, such as a stairway that gave access to a wall-walk or similar structure.

In addition to the architectural elaboration around the entrance, the character of two further palisade post holes is worthy of detailed comment. Palisade post-hole [12236] on the south-east side of the enclosure complex was one of the most intriguing features excavated at the Craw Stane complex. This was the most obvious palisade post hole revealed during the 2012 season, due to the substantial levels of burnt deposits and stone visible from the first cleaning. It was clear that this post had been removed or dug out and the void backfilled with a charcoal-rich mixture containing burnt and broken stone (Illus 5.25 and 5.26). This material was found throughout the feature and packed densely in the backfill. This was also the only palisade post hole excavated that had artefacts associated with it, which included the exceptional find of a set of metalworking tongs placed near the top of the feature that had seemingly been deliberately bent and broken prior to deposition. A fragment of a two-piece clay mould for a small penannular brooch was also found towards the base, and unburnt animal bone and teeth, probably from cattle, were found throughout the fill along with significant quantities of small fragments of burnt animal bone. A similar feature – post-hole [164028] – was identified in 2016 which was also evident from the surface and contained animal bone in a central fill. Excavation of both these palisade post holes proceeded in plan to allow the bone and finds to be plotted in situ, and revealed that the animal bone in [164028] was



Illus 5.25

Post-hole [12236] with unburnt animal bone and fire-cracked stone evident at the very base of the backfill



Illus 5.26

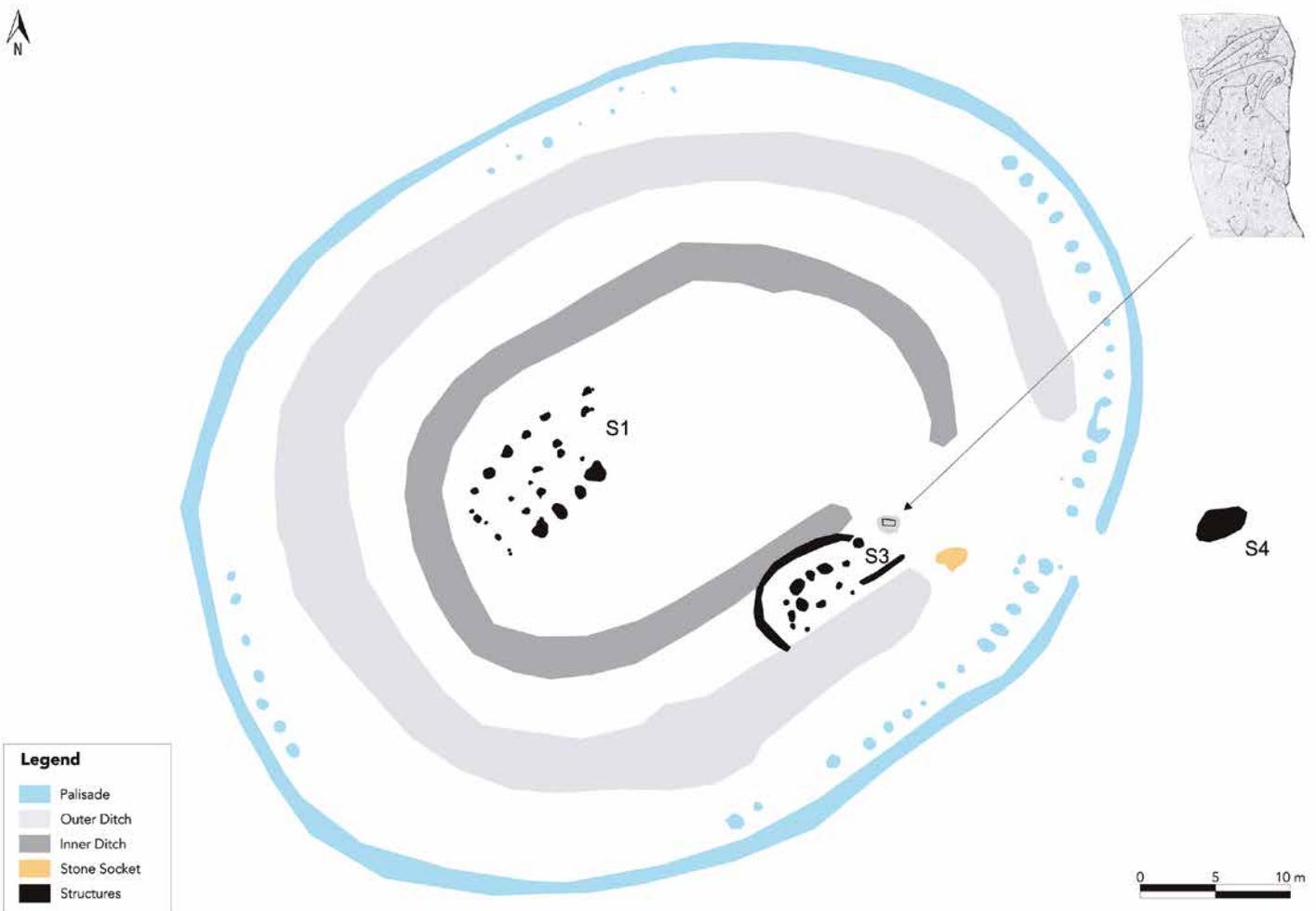
Post-hole [12236] showing fire-cracked stone found in the backfill



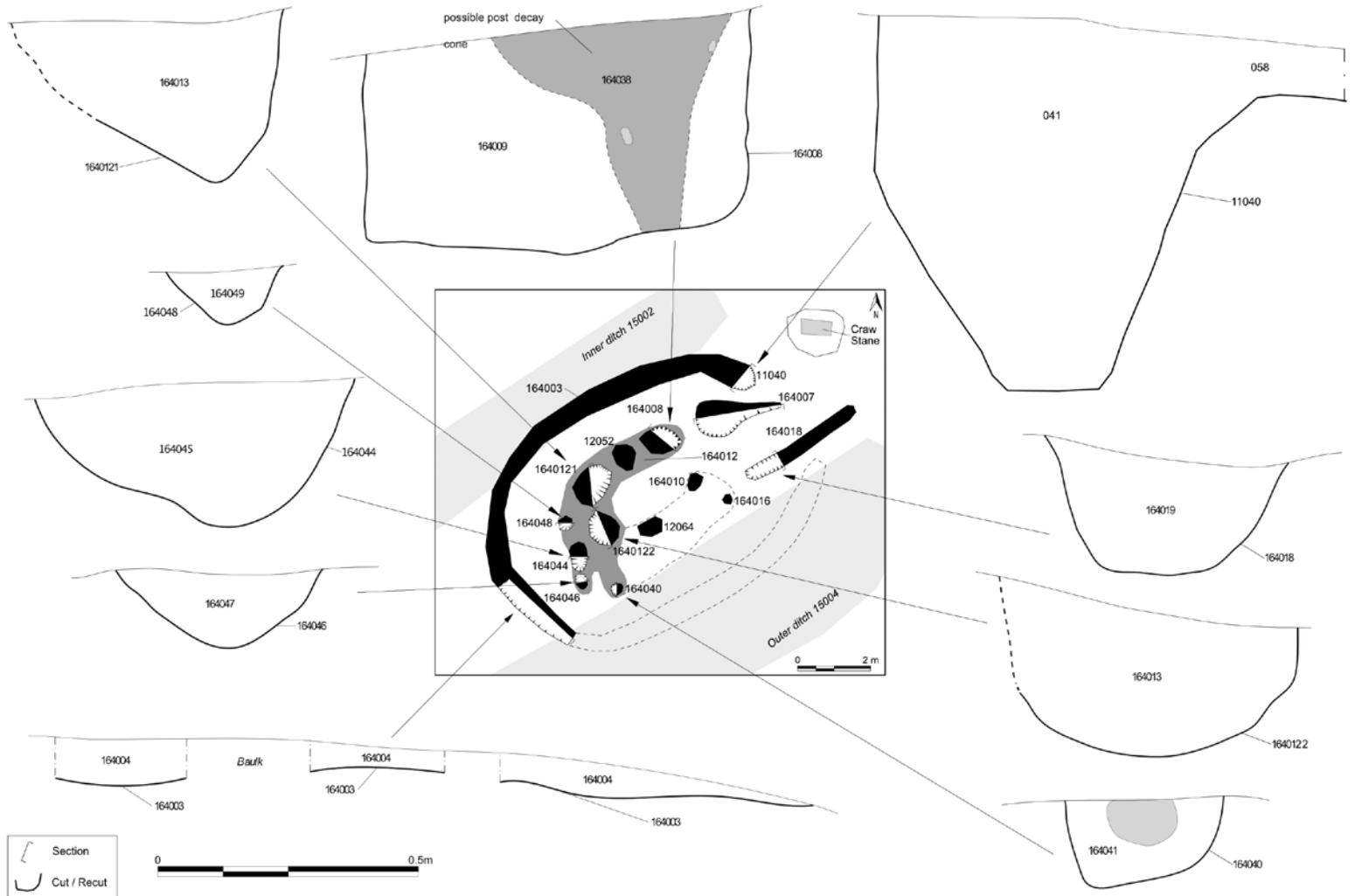
Illus 5.27
Post-hole [164028] with fire-cracked stone and animal bone in the post-pipe

packed in the post-pipe fill created by the removal of the post (Illus 5.27).

In contrast to the interior, few features were identified on the exterior side of the palisade trench. In 2015, cleaning near the entrance exposed a linear area of disturbed soil (15096) that contained substantial quantities of burnt material including fragments of stone, charcoal and burnt bone (Illus 5.23). Removing the upper horizons revealed a small but deep post hole [15181] at the northern end that was 0.4m in diameter and 0.8m in depth, with a central post-pipe fill containing significant amounts of charcoal. Two fills at the side of more sterile sands, and an upper fill (15182) that extended across the width of the feature and 0.2m in depth, were also identified. The linear spread (15096) extended south-west from this post hole and was up to 2m in length, 0.7m in width and 0.15m in depth. The depth of post-hole [15181] and the associated spread that followed the line of the palisade may suggest that these features were part of some sort of timber structure built up against the external plank slot wall face near the southern entrance terminal. Another feature [162032] was found on the western exterior side of the palisade, opposite a palisade post hole on the interior (Illus 5.23). This feature was pit-like and sub-circular in plan, measuring 1.0m x 0.83m, and was filled with a basal fill of loose



Illus 5.28
Plan of the Craw Stane complex showing the three buildings identified



Illus 5.30
Features defining Structure 3

holes were evident in the interior, and together the features suggest a building of at least 9m x 5m. However, should the structure have included turf walls or non-earthfast timbers, Structure 1 may have been a much larger building of which the surviving remains represent only the main roof-bearing supports or remains of a cruck frame.

Structure 3 was located near the Craw Stone and comprised a series of features which were originally exposed in 2011–12 and re-examined in 2016 (Illus 5.30 and 5.31). The later excavations revealed most features in plan and section, including an upper arcing slot [164003], a lower arc or spread of material [164012] and a series of post holes (Illus 5.30). The upper arc [164003] consisted of a foundation slot around 0.2–0.3m wide and 0.05–0.30m deep, that deepened towards the north-east part of the structure. The slot terminated on the north-east side in a substantial post-hole [11040] that was only around 0.3m in diameter but 0.6m deep. Feature edges were particularly hard to define across the lower arc, which was recognised by a spread of dark charcoal-rich material containing segments of burnt timber plank. Once cleaned, it became clear that this spread was collapsed debris from a burnt structure that had sealed a series of post holes filled with

similar charred material, presumably forming part of a structure that had been at least partially burnt. The individual post holes identified included [164040], [164046], [164044], [164048], [1640122], [1640121], [12052] and [164008]. These were around 0.3–0.5m in diameter and 0.2–0.4m in depth, with the deepest tending towards the north-east and shallowest towards the south (Illus 5.30). They were all filled with a black-brown mottled sand with diffuse and indistinct boundaries, suggesting they had been dug out and dismantled leaving only backfilled deposits behind. The pattern of larger post holes formed a semi-circle that mirrored the arc of the shallow slot [164003]. Fragments of charred planks of oak and alder were found redeposited in the upper fills, and two further cut features, [164010] and [164016], were found to the south-east of the lower arc where they most likely represented truncated post holes but survived only to 0.05m in depth. A more substantial feature [12064], measuring 0.4m in diameter and 0.3m deep with a charcoal-rich fill (065) and a large flat stone at the base, may have served as a post pad. Together, this gave the impression of a structure that had been reworked and disturbed over several phases of construction/repair and was ultimately destroyed. Several additional features were also found

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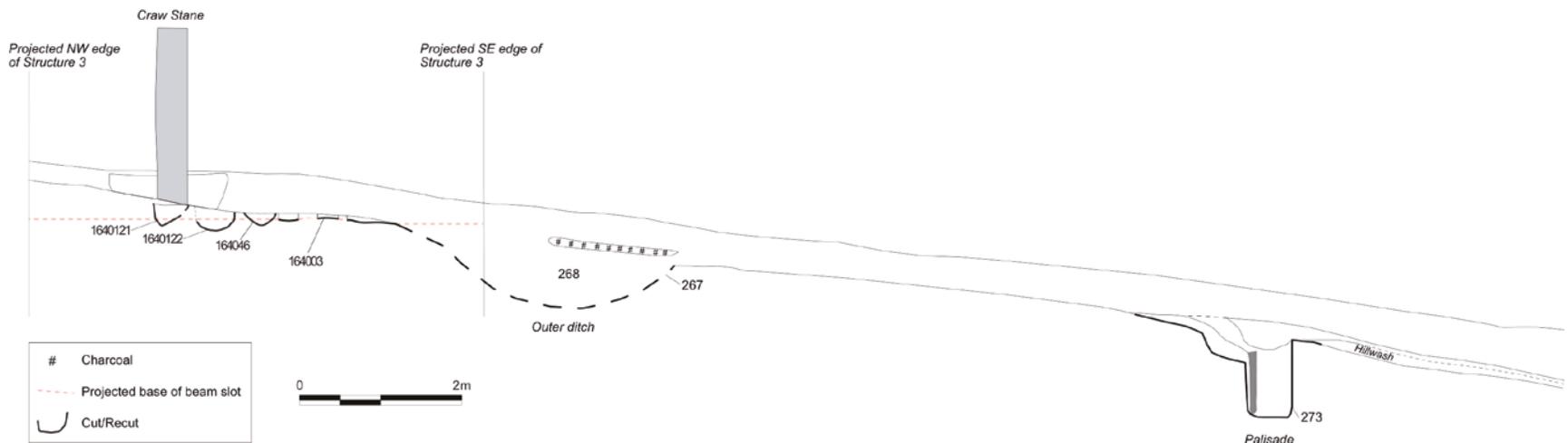


Illus 5.31
Structure 3 under excavation

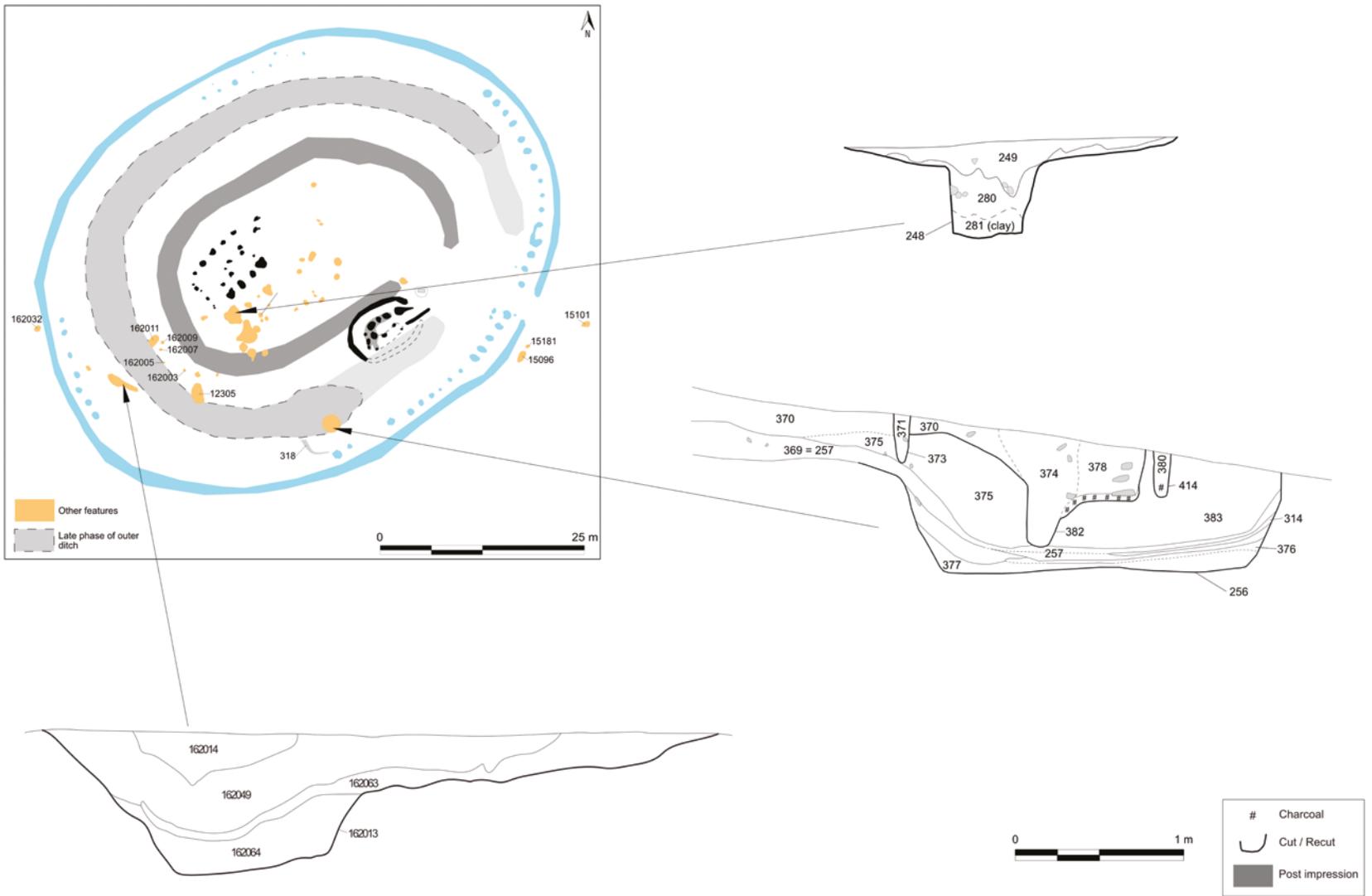
around the entrance of the structure, including a shallow post hole with a ramp or plank setting extending to the east [164007] and a U-shaped, shallow linear feature around 3m long, 0.45m wide and up to 0.25m deep [164018]. This linear feature could have been part of the structure but had a sterile yellow sand fill and therefore is probably unrelated to the building.

Structure 3 overlay both the inner and outer ditches, indicating that by the time it was constructed both ditches had been backfilled in this area and any banks/ramparts associated with the ditches had been removed. This extensive reworking made it difficult to resolve features and at least some structural features

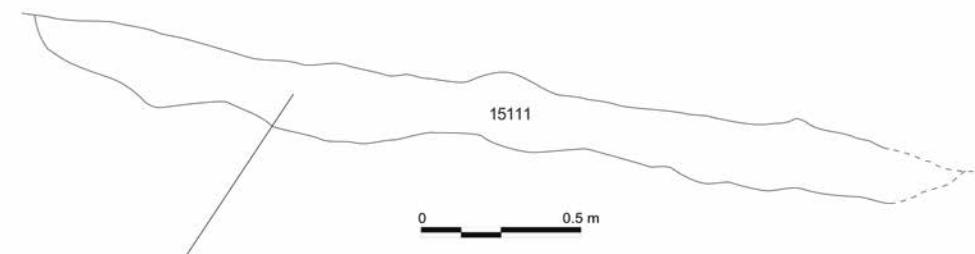
had been dug through the upper ditch fills and filled with similar material to the ditch. The south-east half of the structure had also not survived and may have been cut away by the outer ditch (though the upper slot [164003] appeared to cut the edge of the outer ditch and would challenge this interpretation – Illus 5.32). The other reason for the absence of the south-east side of the building relates to topography. The hillslope is notable in this area; there is a drop of around a metre in the ground surface from the outer edge of the inner ditch to the inner edge of the outer ditch, meaning that features could well have been truncated away on the downslope side of Structure 3 and/or features of the



Illus 5.32
Projected depth of Structure 3 cut features in relation to hillslope



Illus 5.33
Miscellaneous features identified in the Craw Stane complex



SUERC-66390 1563±29 420-560 AD
SUERC-66391 1572±29 410-560 AD

Illus 5.34
Structure 4 floor layer under excavation and section

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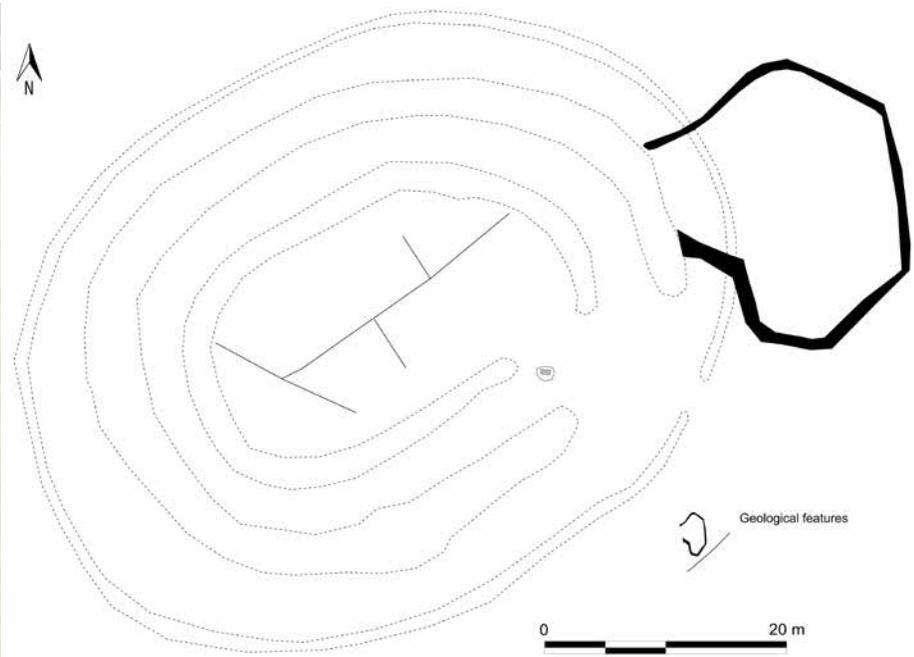


Illus 5.35
Frost-wedging evident in the 2012 trench

building on the south-east side did not extend into the subsoil (Illus 5.32). Thus, though the evidence is admittedly not clear-cut, it seems most likely that Structure 3 post-dated both ditches.

Other structures are likely to have existed in the interior of the Craw Stane complex. For example, an arc of post holes found at the edge of the outer ditch may have been part of a structure. Four shallow post holes – [162009], [162007], [162005] and [162003] – were identified here and may be related to other pits/post holes found adjacent or cutting into the inner ditch in 2012 (Illus 5.33). A shallow curving slot [318] associated with the outer ditch may also represent parts of a highly truncated structure (Illus 5.33). The slot appeared to be the foundation for planks or small posts and curved towards the palisade post settings. The fill was full of charcoal and small stones likely to have been used for packing, suggesting it may have been a structure built up against the palisade/post-hole setting.

Structure 4 was identified in an area downslope from the Craw Stane entrance, indicating that settlement associated with the complex also extended outside the enclosing elements. The



Illus 5.36
Plan of natural frost-wedging present within excavated area

building survived as a sub-circular deposit around 3m north/south by 2.8m east/west that was interpreted as the vestiges of a highly truncated floor (Illus 5.28 and 5.34). The deposit appeared to be preserved by a deposit of hillwash on the east-facing slope of the Craw Stane field and the floor survived up to 0.22m in depth. A Late Roman amphora handle and two iron buckles from a horse harness or saddle girth straps were recovered from the spread, which consisted of silty sand with evidence for burnt turf and charred timbers. The charcoal assemblage was dominated by large quantities of oak from timbers but a small amount of hazel charcoal was also recorded. The remains indicate that Structure 4 was an oak built structure which may have had outer turf walls. Carbonised cereal grains of barley and hulled barley found in the floor layers suggest that the structure was used for food preparation or the storage of grain (Niehaus and Ramsay, Chapter 6).

An additional (but now dismissed) structure was identified in 2012. This consisted of what appeared to be a linear setting extending for around 23m WSW to ENE, with a transverse setting extending for around 6m midway along the linear setting to the south-east. These features proved difficult to resolve in plan and a number of box sections were dug to help clarify their character. On the surface, particularly in the northern portion, thin lines of pea gravel a few centimetres wide bracketed a medium-brown silty sand fill. When sectioned, the pea gravel could be seen extending down up to 0.35–0.70m into the subsoil, while the siltier infill appeared to terminate in a sharp edge at the base of this deposit. These could be interpreted as plank settings driven into the subsoil but on reflection it is more likely they are natural features and may represent frost-wedging of a kind found elsewhere on site in subsequent years (Illus 5.35 and 5.36). The transverse setting proved to be similar, with shallow cuts and sterile fills evident when excavated. The very regular plan of these ‘settings’ led to initial confusion about the nature of these

features. Attempts were made to try and identify a southern wall to the putative structure but it proved impossible to trace, with further box sections on the projected line of a southern wall line proving negative. While the linear features were very regular compared to other examples of natural frost-wedging found on site, they had similar sterile fills and were very different in nature to the beam slot associated with Structure 3.

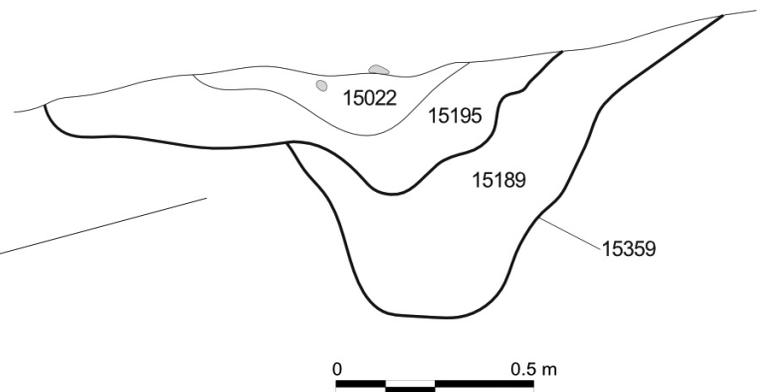
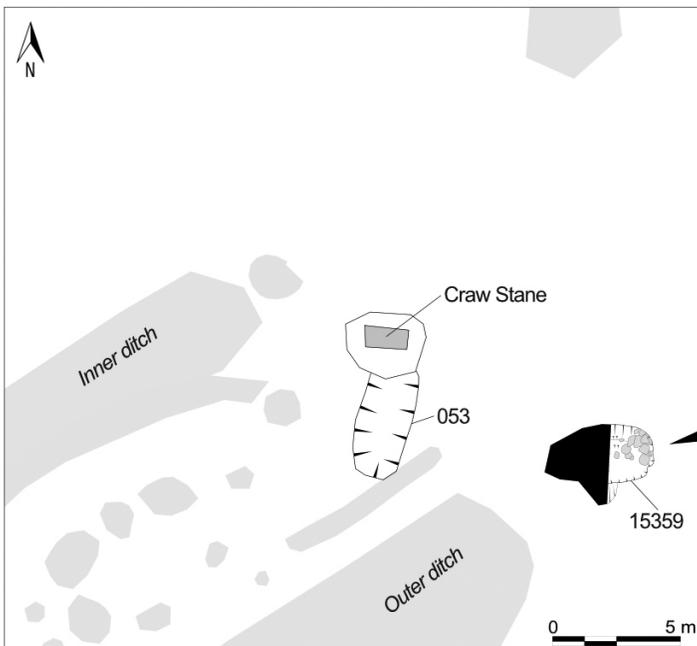
Various pits and post holes were located in the same general area as the frost-wedging, particularly in the western part of the 2012 trench (Illus 5.33). These included feature [248], a large amorphous spread of brown silty sand (max 1.8m x 2.2m diameter) interpreted as a post setting that had been removed or dug out. When excavated, its fill (249) consisted of a shallow 'halo' at the top that obscured a much smaller cut filled with the same material around 0.7m deep and 0.5m wide. Fill (249) was a homogenous dark-brown silty sand with frequent charcoal inclusions and occasional pieces of burnt bone. No finds were made but the impressions of one or two posts were found at the base of the feature. The large 'halo' and homogenous fill implies that the posts had been dug out and purposefully removed. An isolated post hole and a scatter of other features were found nearby but no definite pattern to the layout of these features could be established. While the linear settings can be ruled out, the scatter of post holes and pits in the same area suggests that some form of structure or series of structures stood in this area.

5.4.7 The *Craw Stane* symbol stone and stone socket

The *Craw Stane* stands directly on the line of the entranceway of the outer enclosure and between the terminals of the outer and inner ditches. Its position is recorded here since the middle of the 19th century, though the stone is known to have been reset in concrete following storm damage in the 1930s. It is currently aligned south/south-west and oriented towards Structure 3 rather than the entranceway of the complex – though whether this reflects the original



Illus 5.38
Stone packing from feature [15359]



Illus 5.37
Craw Stane and stone socket [15359]



Illus 5.39
The base of feature [15359] with animal bone deposition

orientation of the stone remains uncertain. A shallow sub-rectangular cut feature [053] measuring around 2.2m x 1m was found extending to the east of the Craw Stane during excavations in 2012 (Illus 5.37). This survived only 0.03m in depth and may have been a feature associated with the stone falling and being reset in the 1930s.

In 2015, an oval pit [15359] was found at the terminal of the outer ditch, 4m south-east of the Craw Stane. The pit measured 1.3m north/south by 0.9m east/west and was 0.65m deep, with stone packing arranged tightly around a central sandy fill (15189). The packing stones had varied geologies that included angular fragments of red and yellow sandstone and river-worn or gravel-derived stones, measuring a maximum of 0.22m in size (Illus 5.38). The packing and size of the feature were distinct from any post holes found during the Craw Stane excavations, giving rise to the interpretation that this feature represented a socket for a standing stone. As the packing was concentrated on the north and east side of the feature, the standing stone was most likely contained within the southern part of the socket. Beneath the stone packing, a cattle jaw and small assemblage of animal bone were identified at the base of the pit on its southern side (Illus 5.39). A second later and shallower cut containing two fills represented clear disturbance of the standing-stone socket, and likely resulted from the falling and/or subsequent extraction of the stone. These upper fills were rich in charcoal and burnt bone and were similar in nature to the final fills of the outer ditch and palisade trench,

suggesting that many of the major elements of the site came to an end as part of the same decommissioning event.

5.4.8 Other features

Feature [256] was a very large stratified pit found near the exterior edge of the outer ditch in 2012. The pit measured a maximum diameter of 2.25m and was around 0.9m deep, with the lower fills consisting of multiple lenses of sterile sands and sands with a higher organic/charcoal content (Illus 5.33 and 5.40). The upper fill of the pit consisted of redeposited sand, which in turn was cut by later features including a large pit or post-hole [382]. The fill of the later pit/post hole resembled the dumps of material found in the uppermost fill of the outer ditch.

Other features included two oval pits [12305] and [162011] that were found in close proximity to one another and had both been cut by the outer ditch. The pits were large (up to 2.5m in length) but comparatively shallow in depth and had single homogenous brown sterile sand fills. Nearby, located between the outer ditch and the palisade trench on the west side of the complex, was an unusual, elongated pit [162013]. This feature was oriented north-west/south-east and measured around 4m x 1m and up to 1m deep (Illus 5.33). The profile in section was shallow for approximately 2m at the east end but steepened to form a flat-based U-shaped pit with steep sides at the western end. One of the fills

RHYNIE



Illus 5.40
Massive pit [256] found adjacent to the outer ditch

comprised an upper compact clayey sand fill (162014) with frequent charcoal deposits, including in situ fragments of larger diameter charred wood. The interpretation of this feature is uncertain but it could have been a bowl furnace for metalworking that had largely been emptied prior to its final backfilling.

A possible annexe enclosure evident in aerial photographs of the site (but not apparent during geophysical survey) was targeted as part of the 2015 excavations (Gondek & Noble 2011: fig. 8.5) (Illus 5.36 and 5.41). The putative enclosure initially showed up well after the first cleaning of the trench but became very difficult to identify thereafter. The enclosure measured around 20m north/south by 28m east/west and appeared to extend from the outer ditch downslope to the north. The feature was polygonal, with straight sides evident on the east, west and north, and curved ditches on the south side. From aerial photos it appeared to have been cut by the palisade and post setting but perhaps respected the outer ditched enclosure. Various slots through the line of the annexe enclosure boundary failed to show conclusive evidence



Illus 5.41
The putative annexe enclosure identified as geological in nature. Craw Stane and enclosures to left of picture. Extensive plough marks can also be seen in this image



Illus 5.42
Prehistoric features within the cemetery area

Site	Lab No	Material	Context	Radiocarbon Age (BP)	δ13C (‰)	Calibrated date (95% confidence)
Rhynie, Cemetery area 2013	SUERC-52937	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i> charcoal	Large pit cut by Square Barrow 1; lower fill. Context 574; Sample 537	7941±30	-26.2	7030–6690 cal BC
Rhynie, Cemetery area 2013	SUERC-52931	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i> charcoal	Square Enclosure 2 lower ditch fill South section. Context 579; Sample 532	7723±27	-27.4	6620–6470 cal BC
Rhynie, Cemetery area 2013	SUERC-52927	<i>Salix sp.</i> charcoal	Pit [544] within Square Enclosure 2. Context 545; Sample 518	5415±27	-27.8	4340–4230 cal BC
Rhynie, Cemetery area 2013	SUERC-52921	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i> charcoal	Massive pit/post hole within Square Enclosure 2. Context 547; Sample 514	4651±28	-24.5	3520–3360 cal BC
Rhynie, Village 2014	Poz-69683	<i>Corylus cf avellana</i> charcoal	Cairn in Ashvale/2 South Road house; deposit just above natural. Context 2304; Sample 2302.	3030±35	-25.6	1410–1130 cal BC
Rhynie, Cemetery area 2013	SUERC-52939	<i>Betula sp.</i> charcoal	Ring ditch [535] cut by Square Enclosure 2. Context 536; Sample 540	3098±29	-26.8	1430–1280 cal BC
Rhynie, Cemetery area 2013	SUERC-52917	<i>Corylus cf avellana</i> charcoal	Standing stone socket within Square Enclosure 1; upper fill. Context 524; Sample 503	3092±30	-26.5	1430–1270 cal BC
Rhynie, Cemetery area 2013	SUERC-52926	<i>Alnus sp.</i> charcoal	Standing stone socket within Square Enclosure 1; lower fill. Context 549; Sample 516	3038±29	-29.3	1400–1210 cal BC
Rhynie, Cemetery area 2013	SUERC-52938	<i>Alnus sp.</i> charcoal	Post hole associated with ring ditch [535] cut by Square Enclosure 2. Context 581; Sample 538	2900±27	-26.9	1200–1000 cal BC
Rhynie, Cemetery area 2013	SUERC-52936	<i>Alnus sp.</i> charcoal	Post hole associated with ring ditch [525] within Square Enclosure 1. Context 577; Sample 536	2886±25	-26.7	1200–970 cal BC
Rhynie, Cemetery area 2013	SUERC-52940	<i>Corylus cf avellana</i> charcoal	Post hole [607] within Square Enclosure 2 may be associated with ring ditch [504]. Context 608; Sample 542	2850±29	-27.4	1120–920 cal BC
Rhynie, Village 2013	SUERC-52915	<i>Corylus cf avellana</i> charcoal	Ring ditch within garden of Nicoll Lodge, Rhynie village. Context 512; Sample 501	2811±29	-28.1	1050–890 cal BC
Rhynie, Cemetery area 2013	SUERC-52919	<i>Corylus cf avellana</i> charcoal	Upper ditch fill of Square Enclosure 2 East section. Context 503; Sample 509	2533±29	-26.6	800–540 cal BC
Rhynie, Craw Stane complex 2015	SUERC-66393	<i>Betula sp.</i> charcoal	Basal fill of inner ditch terminal. Context 15301; Sample 15025	2526±29	-26.5	800–540 cal BC
Rhynie, Cemetery area 2013	SUERC-52929	<i>Betula sp.</i> charcoal	Post hole [550] within Square Enclosure 2 may be associated with ring ditch [504]. Context 551; Sample 524	2508±29	-25.4	790–540 cal BC
Rhynie, Cemetery area 2013	SUERC-52925	<i>Corylus cf avellana</i> charcoal	Mid fill of Square Enclosure 2 East section. Stratigraphically earlier than Sample 509. Context 556; Sample 515	2455±29	-28.2	800–410 cal BC
Rhynie, Craw Stane complex 2017	SUERC-77953	<i>Betula sp.</i> charcoal	Outer ditch initial fill of first recut	2400±23	-25	730–400 cal BC
Rhynie, Craw Stane complex 2015	SUERC-66392	<i>Betula sp.</i> charcoal	Basal fill of inner ditch terminal. Context 15301; Sample 15025	2253±29	-26.4	400–200 cal BC
Rhynie, Craw Stane complex 2011	SUERC-35633	<i>Corylus cf avellana</i> charcoal	Ring ditch [014], fill 015	2250±30	-27.2	400–200 cal BC
Rhynie, Village 2014	Poz-67868	<i>Betula sp.</i> charcoal	Cairn in Ashvale/2 South Road house; old ground surface directly below cairn material. Context 2303; Sample 2301	2195±30	-28.7	370–180 cal BC
Rhynie, Craw Stane complex 2017	SUERC-77954	<i>Corylus cf avellana</i> charcoal	Outer ditch initial fill of first recut	2159±24	-26.6	360–210 cal BC
Rhynie, Craw Stane complex 2017	SUERC-77947	<i>Betula sp.</i> charcoal	Outer ditch initial fill of second recut	2147±26	-25.9	360–90 cal BC

Table 5.3
Prehistoric dates from REAP excavations arranged from oldest to youngest

for a ditch or any other enclosing feature, and phosphate analysis did not show any clear patterns of enrichment associated with the area. The conclusion was that the annexe enclosure was not an archaeological feature but rather one of geological origin.

5.5 Excavation results: the cemetery area

5.5.1 Prehistoric features

Excavations in 2013 revealed numerous prehistoric features in the cemetery area where two square enclosures had been identified through aerial photography in a field on the southern outskirts of the village (Illus 5.42 – see sections 5.5.3 and 5.5.4 for additional discussion of the enclosures). These included pits dating to the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods (Table 5.3) that are adding to a growing corpus of prehistoric pits in Aberdeenshire which have been dated through radiocarbon rather than artefactual association (Noble et al 2016a: table 9.1). One of these Mesolithic dates (SUERC-52937: 7030–6690 cal BC), from a large pit [575] cut by Square Barrow 1 (see Illus 5.42), is particularly interesting given the size of the feature which was around 3.5m in diameter and up to 0.46m deep. This may represent the floor of a sunken dwelling or similar structure, although the exact nature of the feature remains undetermined. There was also a residual Mesolithic date from a

lower fill of the ditch of Square Enclosure 2 and a pit [544] found within the enclosure dated to the late Mesolithic (SUERC-52927: 4340–4230 cal BC; Table 5.3). Pit [544] was around 0.9m in diameter and 0.83m deep, and its rich fill of charcoal, ash and fire-cracked stone suggests it may have been a cooking pit or used for the disposal of domestic debris. A very large pit [546] lay at the centre of Square Enclosure 2 but proved to be Early Neolithic in date (SUERC-52921: 3520–3360 cal BC). This was an unusual feature – up to 2.4m in length, 1.5m in width and 0.7m deep – whose fills consisted of redeposited sands, possible burnt turf deposits and distinct charcoal lenses with charred branches in the upper fill.

All of the other prehistoric features in the cemetery area were dated to the Mid Bronze Age or later, including a series of very truncated ring ditches (Illus 5.42). Ring-ditch [535] was cut by Square Enclosure 2 and charcoal from the fill of the ring ditch was dated to 1430–1280 cal BC (SUERC-52939). One intriguing feature within the 2013 trench was a large pit [523] found within Square Enclosure 1 at the western edge of the interior (Illus 5.42 and 5.43). This measured almost 1.5m in diameter and survived to a depth of 0.74m. The basal fill had large packing stones concentrated in the western side of the fill and the feature was interpreted as the socket for a standing stone. Radiocarbon samples from both the basal fill (SUERC-52926: 1400–1210 cal BC) and an upper fill (SUERC-52917: 1430–1270 cal BC) suggest that the standing



Illus 5.43

Feature [523] interpreted as the socket for a standing stone, situated adjacent to the western ditch of Square Enclosure 1

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stone was erected in the Mid Bronze Age. Whether this was still standing when Square Enclosure 2 was constructed is uncertain.

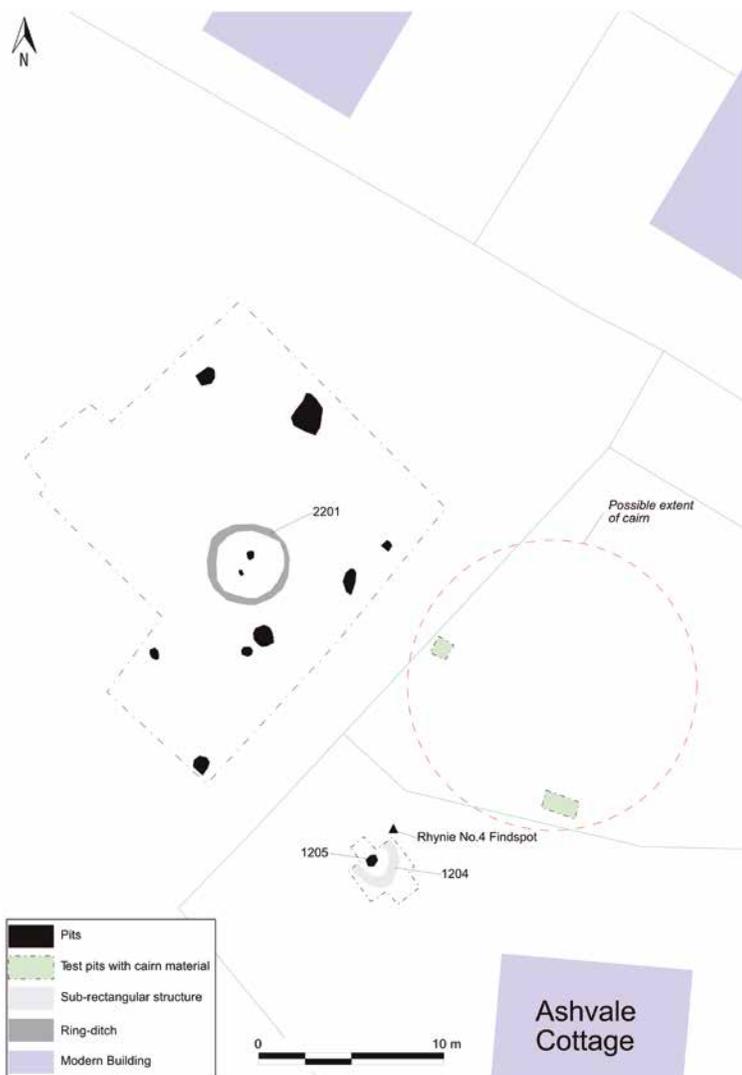
Samples from the mid and upper fills of the eastern section of the ditched enclosure boundary in Square Enclosure 2 were dated to the Early Iron Age, providing radiocarbon dates of 800–540 and 800–410 cal BC (SUERC-52919 and SUERC-52925). While these could date the infilling of the ditch it seems more likely that they represent residual dates, as a Mesolithic date (SUERC-52931) was obtained from charcoal in the basal deposit underlying these two fills which itself must derive from residual material. A post hole/pit at the end of ring-ditch [550] was dated to the Early Iron Age (SUERC-52929: 790–540 cal BC), indicating that Square Enclosure 2 must post-date the two ring ditches and associated features.

5.5.2 Features around Ashvale Cottage

The 2014 excavations focused on Rhyinie village and the findspots of the symbol stones Nos 2–4, particularly that of the lost Rhyinie No. 4, which had previously been recorded as being in the grounds of a house known as Ashvale Cottage on the South Road (Illus 5.44). The stone was removed from this area in 1803 but, as noted in Chapter 2, may have already been moved from its original spot

to this location by the time of its recording on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map. An excavation centred on the OS coordinates of the findspot revealed the remains of a sub-rectangular structure centred around a large pit. The pit [1205] was around 0.5m in diameter and 1.2m deep and had a single homogenous sand fill. The structure was L-shaped in plan and consisted of a foundation cut [1204] filled with sub-angular stones up to 0.2m in maximum dimensions and a sandy matrix. The stone matrix may have been the base of a turf wall that was at least 3m long east/west and 2m north/south; however, neither feature had suitable material with which to date their remains. While the spread could conceivably be associated with the Pictish stone, it seems more likely to be of a recent, and perhaps relatively modern, date.

To the north of the sub-rectangular structure [1204], a 1m x 2m test pit revealed a spread of angular stone with a charcoal-rich matrix. This feature was further investigated in the garden of the adjoining property, where another 1m x 2m test pit revealed a very similar stone spread up to 0.25m in depth (Illus 5.44 and 5.45). The spread overlay two earlier deposits, both likely to be earlier ground surfaces. The lower deposit returned a Mid to Late Bronze Age date (Poz-69683: 1410–1130 cal BC) and the layer immediately underlying the stone matrix provided a terminus



Illus 5.44

Features adjacent to Ashvale Cottage on the southern edge of the village, including the findspot of Rhyinie No. 4 according to the Ordnance Survey 1st Edition map. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey



Illus 5.45

Cairn material within village test-pits



Illus 5.46

Kite photograph showing barrow [2201] and location of the two test-pits that revealed cairn material and structure [1204] in the garden of Ashvale Cottage and the adjoining property

post quem of 370–180 cal BC for the spread (Poz-67868). The most likely interpretation of the feature is that it was the base of a denuded cairn, the majority of which was perhaps removed during the construction of the turnpike road in the 19th century. Rhynie No. 3, the warrior figure stone found in proximity to this location, is said to have been associated with a cairn (Logan 1829: 6) and the stone spread may represent the remains of that cairn or another monument.

In the field next to Ashvale House, a large open area excavation was conducted in 2014 (Illus 5.44 and 5.46). A trench of 18m x 20m dimensions was opened by machine, revealing a circular ring ditch [2201] around 4m in diameter, 0.4m wide and up to 0.3m deep. The feature had no entranceway and was interpreted as a burial mound, though no central burial was found. The only dating evidence was a flint flake found in the ditch fill. Several



Illus 5.47

Ring-ditch [511] found in the grounds of the Old Hospital during driveway works

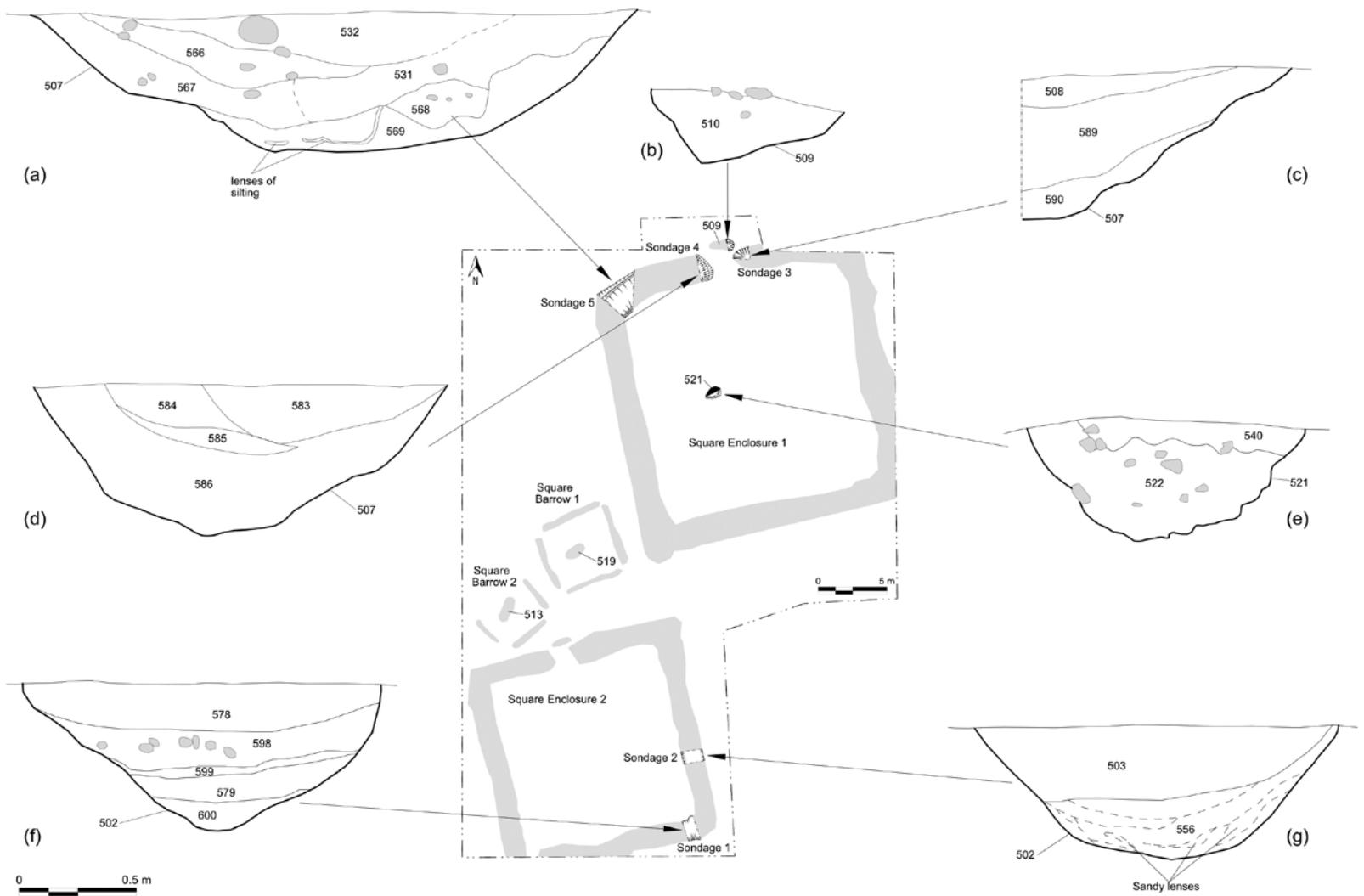
small pits and one larger pit in the region of the ring ditch contained charcoal-rich fills; however, no diagnostic finds or obvious pattern to the features was identified.

A ring ditch was also investigated in the grounds of the Old Hospital (now a private residence) during works to install a driveway (NJ49912 26954). A large, scooped feature full of burnt material and stone was identified by the house owner, Alan McIntosh, in an exposed section that had been created by digging into a raised area of his garden (Illus 5.47). The cut [511] was up to 5.8m in length and 0.6m in depth and was filled with a charcoal-rich sand with rounded and angular boulders and small stones towards the base. The feature was dated to 1050–890 cal BC (SUERC-52915) and interpreted as a probable ring-ditch round-house.

5.5.3 Square Enclosure 1

Of the two square enclosures identified by aerial photography in 1994, the northernmost one was the largest (Illus 5.48). Square Enclosure 1 measured around 20m across and enclosed an area of around 16m² (Illus 5.48 and 5.49). The main enclosure ditch was sectioned in four areas – at both entrance terminals, at the north-west corner and near the possible Bronze Age standing-stone socket [523] (Illus 5.42 and 5.43) – and was found to be around 2m wide and up to 1m deep. All excavated slots identified a basal orange-brown fine sand suggestive of gradual silting and upper deposits of more homogenous sand that alluded to more rapid backfilling events. The fills were largely sterile and the ditch appears to have been recut at least twice in its history. A date from the uppermost fill (532) suggests the ditch had been largely back-filled by 560–660 cal AD (SUERC-52920: Table 5.4).

An entranceway around 1.5m wide was located on the north side of the enclosure and was defined by a hard-packed area of subsoil between the rounded terminals of the ditch. Immediately



Illus 5.48
Plan of the two square enclosures and barrows with sections of major features



Illus 5.49
Kite photograph of Square Enclosure 1 with ring ditches evident inside the enclosure

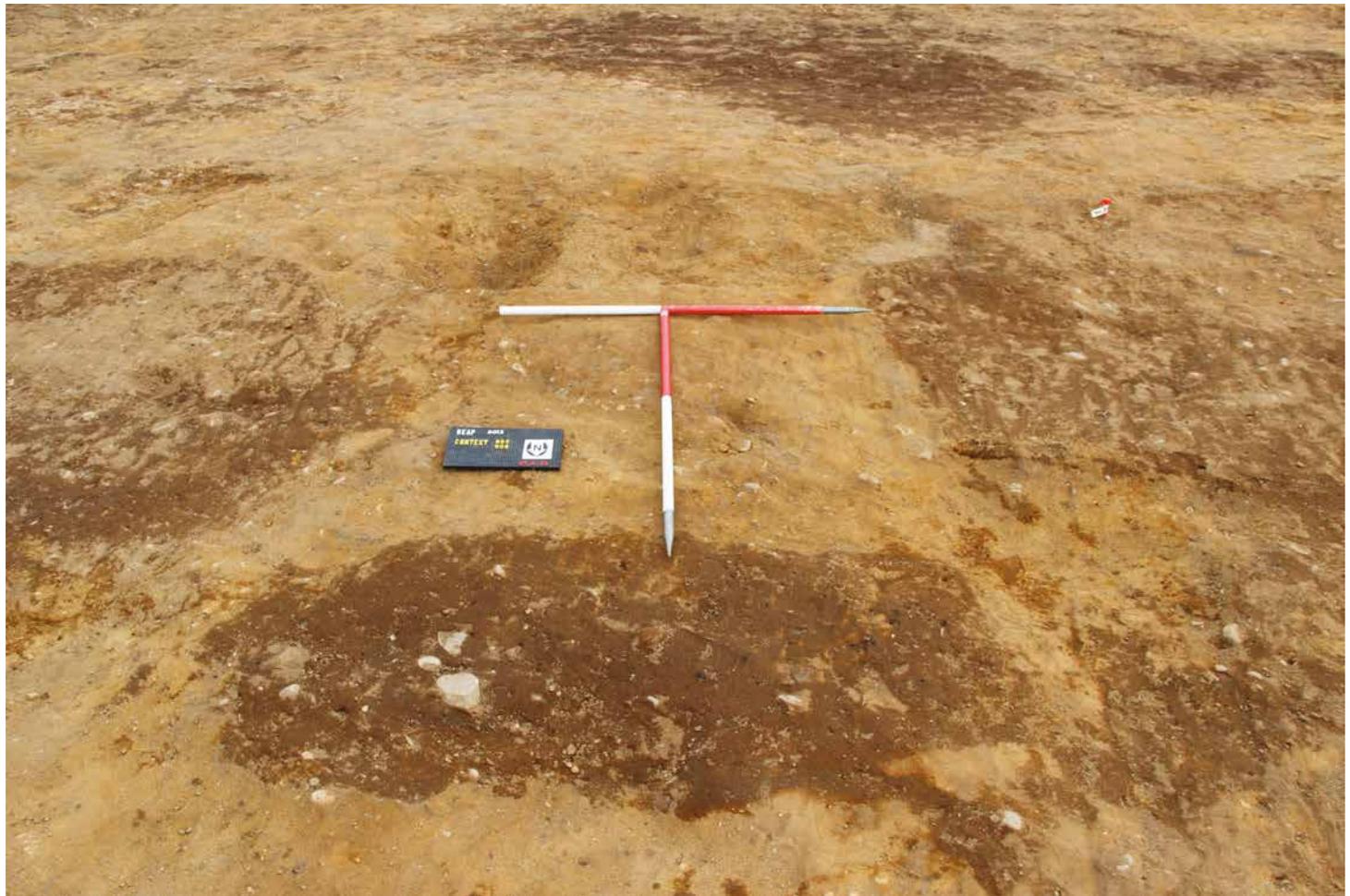
RHYNIE

Site	Lab No	Material	Context	Radiocarbon Age (bp)	δ13C (‰)	Calibrated date AD (95% confidence)
Rhynie, Cemetery	SUERC-52916	<i>Betula sp.</i> charcoal	Fill (522) of pit [521]	1519±29	-26.4	420–610
Rhynie, Cemetery	SUERC-52918	<i>Corylus</i> charcoal	Fill (522) of pit [521]	1578±29	-25.8	410–550
Rhynie, Cemetery	SUERC-52920	<i>Betula sp.</i> charcoal	Square Enclosure 1 upper fill (532)	1446±29	-24.7	560–660
Rhynie, Cemetery	SUERC-52935	<i>Human bone</i>	Square barrow 2 burial	1559±30	-21.6	420–570
Rhynie, Cemetery	MAMS-21252	<i>Human bone</i>	Square barrow 2 burial	1602±21	-19.3	400–540

Table 5.4
Early medieval dates from the cemetery area

in front of the entranceway was a short, shallow stretch of ditch [509] that survived to a maximum of 0.3m in depth, 1.9m in length and 0.7m in width. The presence of this ditch would have left only small gaps (c 0.8m at the west and 0.25m at the east) between the entrance feature and enclosure entrance, suggesting its function was to define, curtail or perhaps even close off access to the enclosure (Illus 5.48 and 5.50). The fill (510) of this short segment of ditch was a single, homogenous mid-brown sand.

The interior contained a range of features, few of which were demonstrably contemporary with the enclosure. This included two ring ditches and a range of pits and post holes, only a small section of which were sampled. Towards the centre of Square Enclosure 1, a large oval pit [521] around 1.2m in diameter was identified (Illus 5.48e). This had a distinctive fill of fire-cracked stone and ash that survived about 0.4m deep. This fill was very rich in charcoal but not diverse in composition, with only birch



Illus 5.50
The short section of ditch [509] at the entranceway of Square Enclosure 1

EXCAVATION RESULTS: THE CRAW STANE COMPLEX

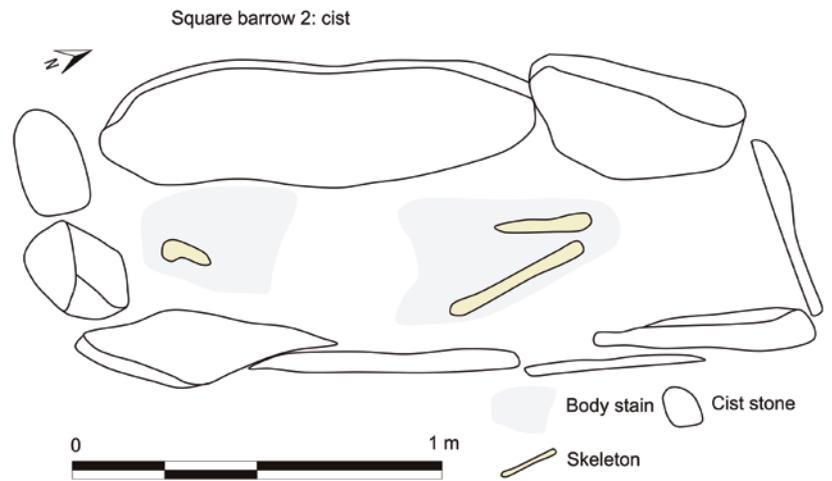
and hazel types present. The fragments of charcoal were relatively large and were predominately roundwood. Two samples from the fill produced radiocarbon dates of 410–550 and 420–610 cal AD (SUERC-52918 and SUERC-52916: Table 5.4).

5.5.4 Square Enclosure 2

The smaller square enclosure was around 16m across, with a 1.5m wide ditch defining an internal area of $\approx 12\text{m}^2$ (Illus 5.48). Two sections across the ditch on the south and east sides revealed that the ditch cut was around 1.7m wide and 0.5–0.6m deep, with up to five friable sand fills. Gradual silting was identifiable in the lower fills, while thicker deposits of more deliberate backfilling were evident in the upper parts of the ditch (Illus 5.48f and 5.48g). The fills were again relatively sterile and inorganic. As with Square Enclosure 1, a small section of ditch projected in front of a narrow entranceway at the northern side.

5.5.5 Square barrows

Immediately to the north of the entrance of Square Enclosure 2, two square barrows were identified following repeated cleaning of the sands and gravels in this area of the trench (Illus 5.48 and



Illus 5.52
Plan of the Square Barrow 2 cist grave



Illus 5.51
Kite image of the two square barrows under excavation



Illus 5.53

Section through the central grave of Square Barrow 1 with soil micromorphology sampling; traces of a possible log coffin are visible at the base of the cut



Illus 5.54

The stone cist in Square barrow 2 showing: a) the upper fill over collapsed capstones; b) collapsed capstones; c) the surviving skeletal remains within the grave

EXCAVATION RESULTS: THE CRAW STANE COMPLEX

5.51). Square Barrow 1 was around 5m x 5m and was defined by four shallow ditches that survived around 0.12m in depth and to a maximum width of 0.4m. The central grave was difficult to identify, with multiple redeposited sands obscuring the edges of the grave cut. The grave was aligned WSW/ENE, and traces of what may have been a log coffin were evident in section at the base of the grave cut (Illus 5.53). The possible coffin was around 0.4m in width and survived as a shallow stain in the soil; however, soil micromorphology failed to identify any traces of decayed wood or wood impressions.

Square Barrow 2 was slightly smaller, around 4m across, with very truncated ditches surviving only on the south-west, north-east and south-east sides (Illus 5.48). A finely made stone cist was found in the centre of Square Barrow 2 (Illus 5.52 and 5.54). The grave cut [513] was sub-rectangular and slightly wider at the north-east end, with a relatively flat base and vertical sides (1.90 x 0.94 x 0.70m) that was aligned NNE/SSW and lined with flat stones. The cist stones were mainly formed of split sandstone in a blueish pink hue that can be obtained locally, with a similar stone available at the quarry at Quarry Hill around 1.5km to the south-west of the village. The capstones of the grave had collapsed, partly preserving the remains of a skeleton. The skeleton lay on a shallow layer of sand with a body stain visible where the bones had decayed. A layer of sand had infiltrated the broken capstones and overlay the skeleton, with an upper fill of sand overlying the capstones themselves. Intrusive material including a piece of medieval redware was incorporated into the fill immediately below the capstones.

The skeleton was poorly preserved but survived better in areas where the collapsed capstones had provided protection. Bones were lifted along with grave fill and surviving parts included the upper legs, part of the pelvis, upper vertebrae and part of the jaw. The body was extended on its back with legs and knees closely set together suggesting that the body had been wrapped prior to burial. Survival of some portions of the hand/wrist bone may indicate that the hands were crossed over the pelvis. The individual was clearly an adult and may have been female (Chapter 8). Isotopic analysis showed a predominately terrestrial diet and was consistent with a local origin for the individual (Chapter 8). More barrows/graves could have been present to the north; however, the north-eastern quadrant of the trench was never fully cleaned as the scale of the trench outstripped the available resources and time that funding allowed.

5.6 New motifs identified on Rhynie No. 5

GORDON NOBLE, ANDY HICKIE, HAMISH FENTON AND JOANA VALDEZ-TULLETT

During the project there were various uses of new visualisation technologies to examine the symbol stones from Rhynie. Photogrammetry study was utilised for a 2020 article on the first-millennium AD warrior carvings of eastern Scotland including that of Rhynie No. 3 (Hall et al 2020: 130–2, fig 4) (Chapter 2; Illus 2.11–2.13). The survey of the stone helped clarify some of the details of the carving. A more dramatic discovery through new visualisation techniques came in the final stages of the project write-up when several unusual motifs were identified on Rhynie No. 5. During photogrammetry processing of images

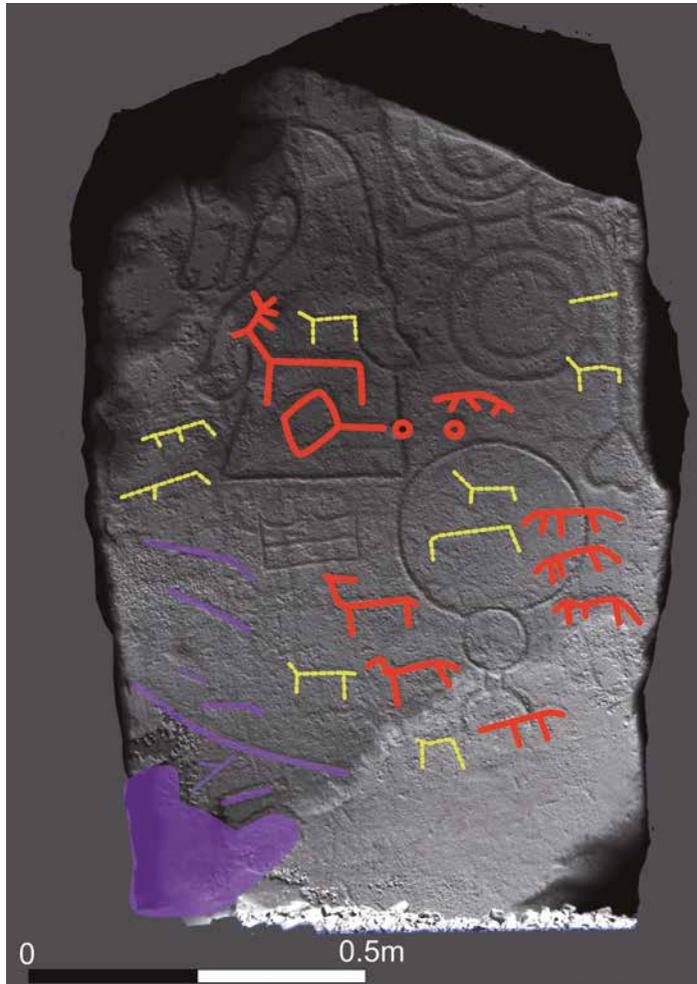
of Rhynie No. 5 for the monograph, Andy Hickie and Gordon Noble identified a whole series of new motifs and independently, Hamish Fenton had also previously spotted these motifs (Illus 5.55 and 5.56). The combined work of these discoveries was subsequently brought together to provide analysis and commentary on the identified motifs and their potential date and parallels (this chapter, Chapter 11).

The newly identified motifs were found on the symbol side of Rhynie No. 5 (Illus 5.55), and were revealed through photogrammetry and various processing techniques including QGIS relief visualisation modelling, processing with Meshlab and RTI with the computer programme Blender. Although these motifs had not been previously referenced in publication, they are in fact visible in previous images of the stone including on conventional photography such as on Tom Gray's image of Rhynie No. 5 from 1990 (Illus 5.57). The motifs are also evident on an early rubbing of the stone made by J Romilly Allen during the preparation of the *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland (ECMS)* (1903) publication (Illus 5.58). The rubbing was presumably taken to form the basis of the outline image published by Allen and Anderson (1903: 183, fig. 198), but not published in the final ECMS volume.



Illus 5.55

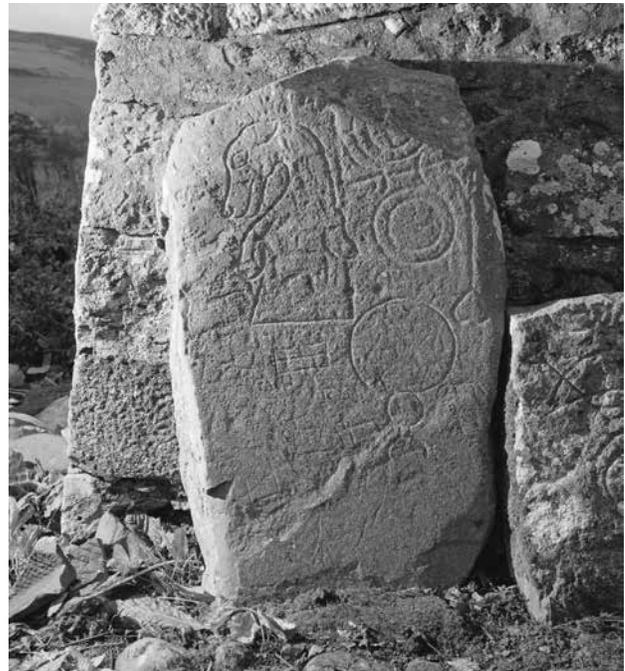
Photogrammetry model of Rhynie No. 5 (Image by Andrew Hickie)



Illus 5.56

Photogrammetry model of Rhynie No. 5 with interpretation of the earlier rock art. Solid line vs dotted line indicates certainty, while purple lines/shaded area on the left are modern or likely modern damage. Base image © Andy Hickie

The largest newly identified motif on Rhynie No. 5 appears to be a stag with antlers depicted in profile, consisting of a simple pecked line with the animal shown with its head facing left and two vertical lines representing its legs (Illus 5.56 and 5.59a). Two figures below could also be depictions of deer – they are too shown in profile and with a similar pose facing left (Illus 5.56 and 5.59b). While their antlers are not clearly represented, short pecked horizontal lines on top of their necks could be interpreted as smaller sets of antlers. Unlike the central stag they have short tails, which are typical of cervids and commonly represented in carvings of deer. The group of quadrupeds to the right are even more schematically depicted with a single top line denoting the head, body and tail and two to three downward projecting pecked lines depicting the legs (Illus 5.56 and 5.59c). The lack of anatomical detail in these animals makes it difficult to suggest the species to which they belong. The length and position of the tail could suggest these are horses, another common animal theme in rock art, but they can equally be interpreted as representations of canines, suggesting this could be a deer hunting scene. Other possible animal motifs are located to the left and below the mirror



Illus 5.57

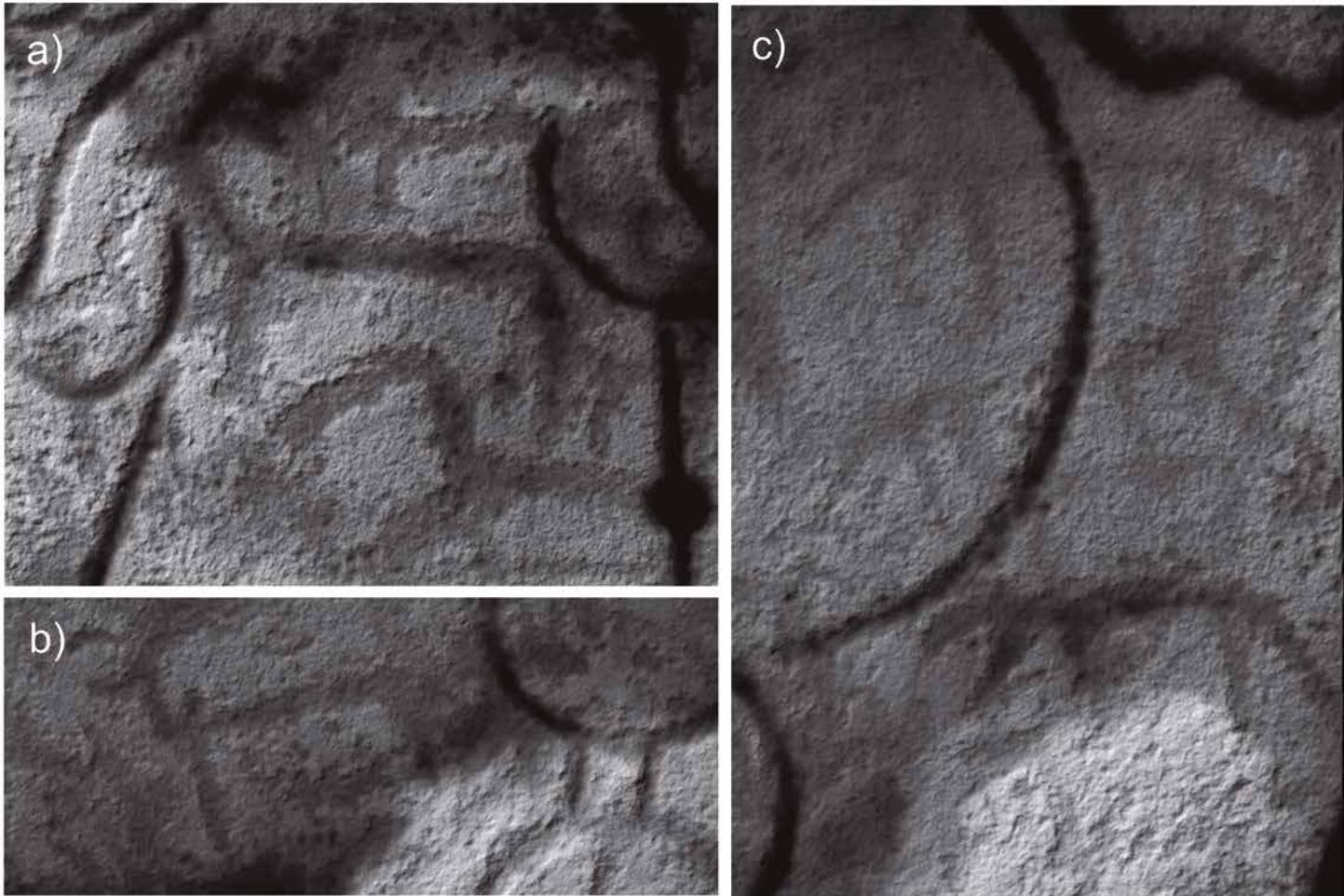
Tom Gray photograph of Rhynie No. 5 – the early motifs can be seen on the photograph which was taken prior to the stone being moved into its current shaded shelter. Image © Historic Environment Scotland



Illus 5.58

Photographic copy of rubbing showing face detail of Rhynie No. 5 Pictish symbol stone, St. Luag's Churchyard, Rhynie, c 1890–1903. Image © Historic Environment Scotland

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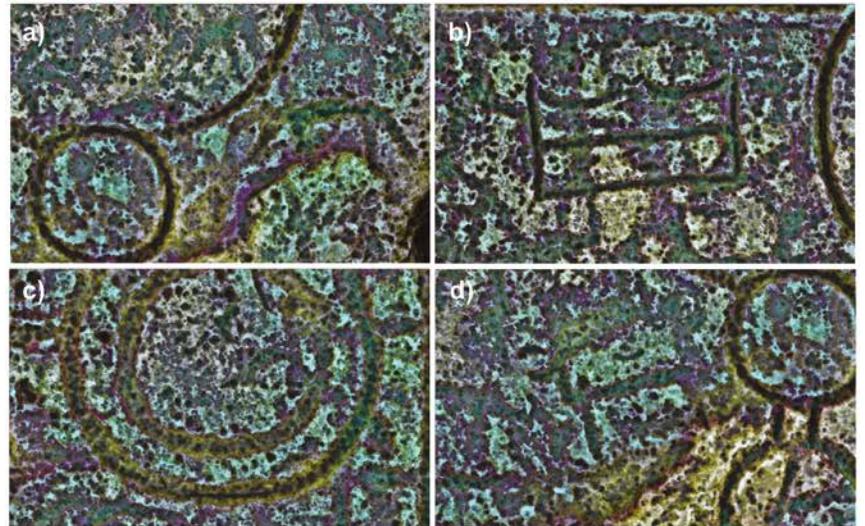


Illus 5.59

Detailed photogrammetric processing of a) the stag b) deer c) quadrupeds cut by later Pictish mirror symbol carving. Images produced © Andy Hickie

symbol, but these are less certain. They are located towards an area of modern damage to the stone and its surface, including the broken left-hand edge and areas of linear scoring. These more modern marks intersect with at least some of these possible earlier designs making the certainty of forms on the left-hand side of the stone less clear.

In terms of their production, photogrammetry survey highlights that the conventional Pictish symbols were made using a metal point chisel. The mirror symbol is particularly sharply carved, with the impressions of the chisel very obvious in the photogrammetry visualisations (Illus 5.60a). Point chisel marks are also evident on the comb and to an extent on the double-disc and Z-rod (Illus 5.60b,c). On the lines the latter, however, were seemingly carved with a much broader profile tool and the execution less precise than that of the beast head and the mirror and comb. This could potentially indicate that the beast head, the mirror and comb were carved by a different hand to that of the double-disc and Z-rod, that the two sets of carvings were created in different moments, or there was a change in tool type. The carving techniques for the zoomorphs are less clear as they appear to be much shallower or less well preserved. However, there are hints that a pointed tool, perhaps a point chisel,



Illus 5.60

Detailed photogrammetry analysis showing the tooling marks evident on the symbols: a) mirror and quadruped; b) comb; c) double-disc; d) one of the lower 'deer' figures. Images © Andy Hickie

may have also been used to make these. Such marks are most evident on one of the lower deer depictions (Illus 5.60d). In terms of phasing it seems likely that the zoomorphs are earlier than the symbols – the zoomorphs are much more faintly carved, and the mirror appears to cut through two of the quadrupeds, with no indication of a continuation of the line of the back of either quadruped across the outline of the mirror face.

5.7 Discussion

5.7.1 Recent history of the site

There is little doubt that the archaeology of the Craw Stane complex has been seriously compromised by modern agriculture. The location of the complex on a sandy knoll to the south of the modern village has left the site particularly vulnerable to modern agricultural practices; ploughmarks were very notable across the site and were significantly more obvious than the occasional ploughmarks evident in the cemetery area, where the topography is much flatter. The ploughzone study demonstrated this disturbance by showing that artefacts had made their way into the ploughzone and survived very poorly once there. This is particularly unfortunate, as nearly all the artefacts found on site came from either the uppermost fills of the outer ditch or the uppermost fills of the palisade and had derived from deliberative infillings in the majority of cases. Within the outer ditch, for example, the uppermost deposits where many finds came from were clearly deliberate backfill from surface middens and deposits. As a result, the main artefact-bearing deposits were found in closest proximity to the plough and, given the cumulative effects of ploughing, it is likely that significant artefacts and deposits have already been lost during the ploughing of the site from the 1970s to 1990s. Indeed, ploughing went on for around 20 years after the discovery of Rhynie Man and is likely to have led to significant loss even after that major discovery. Despite the relative artefactual richness of the site and the small percentage excavated (less than 14%), what survived to excavate from 2011–17 must be just a small portion of what was left behind upon abandonment of the site in the 6th century. The impact and loss at the site through agricultural practices therefore makes the findings at Rhynie all the more notable.

5.7.2 Prehistoric activity

Relatively few prehistoric features were found at the Craw Stane complex. These consisted of a ring ditch, fragments of a Bronze Age Beaker and a faience bead. More features were found at the cemetery and included a probable prehistoric barrow and a standing stone, which the later Square Enclosure 1 enclosed (though whether the putative stone was still standing at this point is difficult to ascertain). The area was clearly an attractive one for prehistoric settlement, with aerial photographic and geophysical survey data indicating the presence of multiple Bronze and Iron Age ring ditches close to and within the modern village (see Section 5.3).

5.7.3 The Craw Stane complex: ditched enclosures

Phasing the enclosing elements of the Craw Stane complex is difficult, given that both the ditches and palisade or post setting show clear evidence for having incorporated residual material (Chapter 8),

and because the 5th–6th century AD is a notable plateau in the radiocarbon curve. However, the fact that Structure 3 was built over the backfilled inner ditch, and probably the backfilled outer ditch, suggests the ditches were an early component of the complex that were at least partly replaced by the timber enclosure in a secondary phase of the complex. This phasing is tentatively supported by the direct dating evidence presented in Chapter 8.

The inner ditch was the smaller of the two ditched enclosures and relatively few finds were recovered from its sandy fills. The inner ditch did show evidence for the use of turf – for example, the impressions of individual slumped turves at the base of the ditch in context (161056) – that may have lined the ditch in order to stabilise the sandy subsoils. Alternatively, these turf layers could have come from slumped or collapsed banks, or may reflect a combination of these elements. The outer ditch was a larger and more impressive feature and appears to have had a more complex development. The sections excavated in 2017 showed that the outer ditch had been recut at least four or five times, though other recuts may have occurred. Layers of clayey silt that likely represent layers of decomposed turf suggest that the outer ditch, like the inner, was also lined with turf at various points in the lifespan of the feature, presumably again to try and consolidate the loose sandy soils of the cut. The dumps of artefacts and the homogenous soil profiles found in the upper fills of the outer ditch indicate the upper part of the ditch was deliberately infilled at a late stage in its use. This may have occurred as part of site clearance and/or remodelling events, or perhaps even as part of the final abandonment of the site. Regardless, it appears that parts of the outer ditch remained at least partly open while others were completely backfilled. For example, if the reading of Structure 3 is correct, this must have been built when an area of the outer ditch was completely backfilled. Radiocarbon dates from elsewhere in the outer ditch, however, suggest it may have remained partly open until the end of the lifespan of the site – though again we face the issues of the radiocarbon plateau which is likely to obscure the true chronology of deposits. Given the presence of metalworking pits and furnace bases in the outer ditch on the northern and western parts of the site, it may have been that the outer ditch in these areas was deliberately left open as sheltered spots for metalworking. The ditch certainly appears to have had a complex use life through time and more ephemeral evidence of smaller-scale recutting and pit-digging events are likely to have been difficult to identify in the sandy fills.

In terms of artefactual evidence, finds-rich layers were found slumping into the outer ditch from both sides of the feature, suggesting metalworking activities took place in close proximity to the outer ditch and that it was used as a dump for waste products both before and during the late remodelling of the site (Illus 5.14). In contrast, the inner ditch showed little evidence for use, with few finds and generally more sterile fills suggesting that metalworking took place towards the periphery of the enclosures. Indeed, as noted above, metalworking appears to have been carried out in the outer ditch itself. Pit [1725] which cut into mid-ditch fills of the outer ditch, and a furnace bottom found in one of the 2016 slots on the west side of the enclosure complex, indicates that at times metalworking took place within the confines of the base of the outer ditch. Large dumps of moulds and other materials were also deposited in the ditch fills during the

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lifetime of the site, perhaps as workshops were cleared out or a phase of work was completed. Throughout the history of the outer ditch, the feature may have also received dumps of material redeposited from elsewhere and from earlier activity. The zoomorphic mould cache, for example, came from a mid-fill layer within the ditch yet was associated with dates relatively early in the overall sequence – though once again the radiocarbon plateau makes this less than certain. There were much fewer finds in the outer ditch towards the terminals, with the exception of a crucible stand in a lower fill near the southern terminal (Illus 5.13h). Together, the evidence suggests that parts of the ditch were treated in different ways to others and that certain areas may have been backfilled later than others, with the ditch remaining open during the later history of the site at least towards the north-western areas of the interior. In contrast, both ditches must have been fully backfilled near the entrance when Structure 3 was built – see Chapter 8 for a consideration of the dating.

5.7.4 Palisade

The sections above propose that the ditches were an early component of the complex that were at least partly replaced or augmented by the timber enclosure in a secondary phase. It could be that the palisade or post setting was built at the same time as the two interior buildings (Structures 1 and 3) as part of a new investment in timber architecture at the complex, perhaps replacing the earthwork components of the ditches and banks and possibly more ephemeral internal buildings that utilised fewer earthfast components. The palisade or post setting certainly reflects a massive investment in resources. If the spacing of post holes was consistent around the whole circumference, it would suggest around 100 large timber posts were used in the post setting and many more within the palisade slot. The outer component of the palisade was clearly of complex carpentry, with both planks and squared posts utilised in the outermost boundary. Architectural elaboration of the palisade and post setting was evident at the entrance, with an elaborate gateway around 3m wide and facing the Water of Bogie giving access to the interior. Areas of silt and gravel that extended downslope from the entrance to the east may represent erosion from human and perhaps animal traffic entering and exiting the enclosure complex.

Given the very regular spacing of the interior palisade post holes, the foundation trench and the suggestion of a substantial gated entrance, it seems very likely that all the timber elements of the outer enclosure were a contemporary part of an integrated enclosure boundary. They likely represent the foundation elements of an outer timber wall with the inner posts perhaps supporting a box-framed rampart and possibly a breastwork/wall-walk. It certainly seems likely that the interior posts and plank wall would have been linked by longitudinal timbers, though any such beams would have been above ground and are unlikely to leave an archaeological trace on a plough-truncated site such as Rhynie. The timber enclosure encircled the knoll upon which the site was situated and would have formed a formidable boundary. The rampart may have been reminiscent of the inner rampart at Cairn More (Chapter 6) but even more complex in terms of its timber framing.

At the end of its life, the palisade appears to have been dismantled and some of the posts removed. The majority of the slots dug

across the palisade identified a charcoal-rich upper fill with occasional artefacts that would appear to represent redeposited midden material infilling the voids left by the decayed or removed structural components of the palisade. For example, the upper fill (15176) at the entranceway to the complex can be seen to occupy a wide but shallow cut 0.3m deep (Illus 5.19e). Similarly, the 2012 palisade sections had upper fills (279/415) that seemed too wide to be simply decay cones from the rotting of timbers in situ (Illus 5.19c and d). It seems more likely that the profile of the palisade slot and associated fills are evidence for the timbers having been dug out. Where post impressions occurred, these were located only in the lower sections of the palisade slot, implying that the posts had been removed leaving the ‘ghosts’ of the lower parts of the timber in place. In other sections, no clear post-pipes could be identified and the fill of the slot was heavily disturbed with mixed fills and uneven sides suggesting the posts had been removed in such a way as to leave no post impressions behind. Two examples in particular – posts [12236] and [164028] – showed clear evidence for the removal of the post and structured deposition of material within the post void, including high concentrations of animal bone and a set of metalworking tongs in the uppermost fill of [12236]. These suggest that the dismantling of parts of the palisade followed a structured process, with some of the post holes targeted for deliberate infilling events that perhaps marked the end of the timber structure in a formal way (for discussion of termination deposits in Anglo-Saxon buildings, see Hamerow 2006: 18, 27–8).

5.7.5 Buildings

In the later phases of the site, at least two timber buildings stood within the enclosure and other structures were located outside of the enclosure complex. Given the level of truncation encountered of the site, only the foundations of these buildings are retained and any above-ground traces have long since disappeared – with the exception of Structure 4, where an area of hillwash appears to have partly preserved traces of a floor surface. Structure 1 consisted of a rectangular arrangement of posts, with large post holes on two sides and more modest post holes on the south-west side. The posts on the south-east side appear to have been renewed at some point in the lifespan of the structure and could represent either the exterior wall posts of a building or the central roof supports of a building with turf or beam-supported outer walls. It is even possible that they are the remains of post-supported walls where the posts were more shallowly founded than inner roof-bearing posts, although the poor levels of preservation preclude any further detail.

Structure 3’s location on the slope of the sandy knoll resulted in particularly severe truncation. Traces of an outer wall were found on the upslope side of the building but even here the slot for the outer wall survived to no more than a few centimetres in depth for the majority of its length. This shallowness meant that the outer beam/post slot of Structure 3 would probably not have survived another year or two of ploughing, and its identification was fortuitous. The slot may have held planks or posts for revetting a turf outer wall, and the building was likely clad in planks judging by the presence of burnt oak and alder plank fragments found in the inner arc of features. Based on the abundance of charcoal and the presence of these burnt plank fragments, it appears that Structure 3 was destroyed by fire.

The missing south-east side of Structure 3 made reconstructing the plan of the building difficult. Presuming the structure was symmetrical, projecting the line of the inner and outer arcs would suggest a horseshoe-shaped structure that would have measured approximately 6m x 9m internally. It would have broadly resembled the later, and larger, 8th-century Pictish ‘bag-shaped’ (horseshoe-shaped) buildings (S1 and S9) excavated at Portmahomack on Tarbat Ness. Here the excavator interpreted the inner posts of S1 as a cruck frame for a large building, with the perimeter slot acting as the foundation for a turf or stone wall that contained a stone or plank internal revetment (Carver et al 2016: 240). The post holes in the centre of the Rhynie structure are too closely set together to have been a cruck frame but they may have supported the roof of the building. If contemporary with the Craw Stane, the Pictish stone would have stood directly next to the building’s entrance. The socket that may have contained the Rhynie Man or another stone was also located nearby.

Despite its preservation by hillwash, even less is known about Structure 4. It appears to simply be the remnant of a floor surface in which large burnt oak timbers were identified and from which a Late Roman amphora handle and two iron buckles were recovered. The fact that the floor lay directly on the subsoil may suggest that the topsoil had been stripped prior to the construction of this building. Burnt grain was found in the floor layer – a rare find for the Craw Stane complex – suggesting that the processing or drying of grain may have been carried out with the enclosure complex. The geophysical results (Section 5.3) suggests that there may be other sub-rectangular buildings near the Craw Stane complex that would merit further investigation in future years.

5.7.6 Stone socket

The large pit-like feature with stone packing found just downslope from the Craw Stane was the only feature of this type found during the excavation at the complex. Its character differed from the large post holes of the palisade post setting and had much more obvious stone packing than any of those features. Its position towards the terminal of the outer ditch mirrors the position of the Craw Stane, which stands near to the terminal of the inner ditch. Given that the Craw Stane fell over in the 1930s and was re-erected at that time, this could be the original socket for the Craw Stane. However, it seems most likely that the original socket would have been reused when the stone was reset in concrete. It would also be highly coincidental for the new location to mirror that of the original only in respect to the inner rather than outer ditch. The most likely interpretation is that there were two standing stones near the entranceway to the complex but only one remaining today.

When found during ploughing, the Rhynie Man symbol stone was located downslope from the Craw Stane. It was suggested that, given the steepness of the field in this area, the stone may have been dragged by the plough ‘from an original position on the crest of the hill shoulder, near the Craw Stane’ (Shepherd & Shepherd 1980: 211). As no alternatives were identified over the course of the investigations, the feature uncovered in 2015 is the most likely candidate for a socket of the Rhynie Man, albeit two other Class I stones were found in the nearby church graveyard and it is possible that the socket relates to one of these stones (or

of stones that no longer survive or have yet to be discovered). The upper fills of the stone socket contained charcoal and burnt bone of a very similar nature to the final fills of the outer ditch and palisade trench, suggesting that the Rhynie Man may have fallen or been deliberately removed at the end of the lifespan of the site. The overall narrative is therefore one in which the major elements of the site came to an end during the same episode of decommissioning.

5.7.7 The cemetery

Burials and human remains have been recorded in close association with some of these stones since the 19th century, and the modern Rhynie excavations would appear to support these finds. In 1836, two of the stones from the village (Nos 2 and 3) were removed during the construction of a turnpike road and a ‘quantity’ of human bones was found near the stones at this time (Logan 1829: 560). Logan also stated that Rhynie No. 3 was found in association with a cairn, and a cairn was discovered in the garden of Ashvale Cottage during the 2014 excavation. Three parallel cists had been revealed during the construction of Ashvale Cottage (Henderson 1907: 163), and the 2014 excavations identified a small ring ditch in the adjacent field, though no central burial was found. These findings indicate that numerous funerary monuments were disturbed and destroyed during the construction of the southern part of the modern village.

Around 200m south of these funerary features, the 2013 excavations had revealed two square enclosures and two square barrows with central graves. This might suggest a much larger cemetery existed here prior to its partial destruction by 19th- and 20th-century development of this part of the village. The square barrows are typical examples of barrows of the Pictish period and are towards the smaller end of the scale for barrows of this type (Mitchell & Noble 2017: 12). However, the two square enclosures next to the barrows are unusual and are only really paralleled by the square enclosure at Forteviot, Perthshire (Campbell et al 2019; Campbell & Driscoll 2020: 55–7). Dating the square enclosures proved difficult, although Square Enclosure 1 is known to be present in the period AD 560–660 when material of that date was backfilled into the ditch. Morphologically, the ditches of the square enclosures resembled the barrows of the ditches and the entrance arrangement of both is reminiscent of the closely set ditch terminals found at square barrow monuments. Thus, it seems likely that the square enclosures date to the same period as the square barrows. The geophysical survey results (Section 5.3) suggest there may have been at least one more large square enclosure and further smaller burial monuments in the near vicinity of the square enclosures and barrows excavated in 2013.

5.7.8 Rhynie No. 5

The discovery of a new set of carvings on one of the Rhynie stones was an exciting development for the project and shows the potential of new visualisation and recording techniques for understanding more about the Pictish symbol stone tradition and revealing hitherto unrecognised motifs and carvings. The simplicity of the designs, in addition to the extensive weathering of the grooves, makes them very difficult to detect, particularly in the shelter they

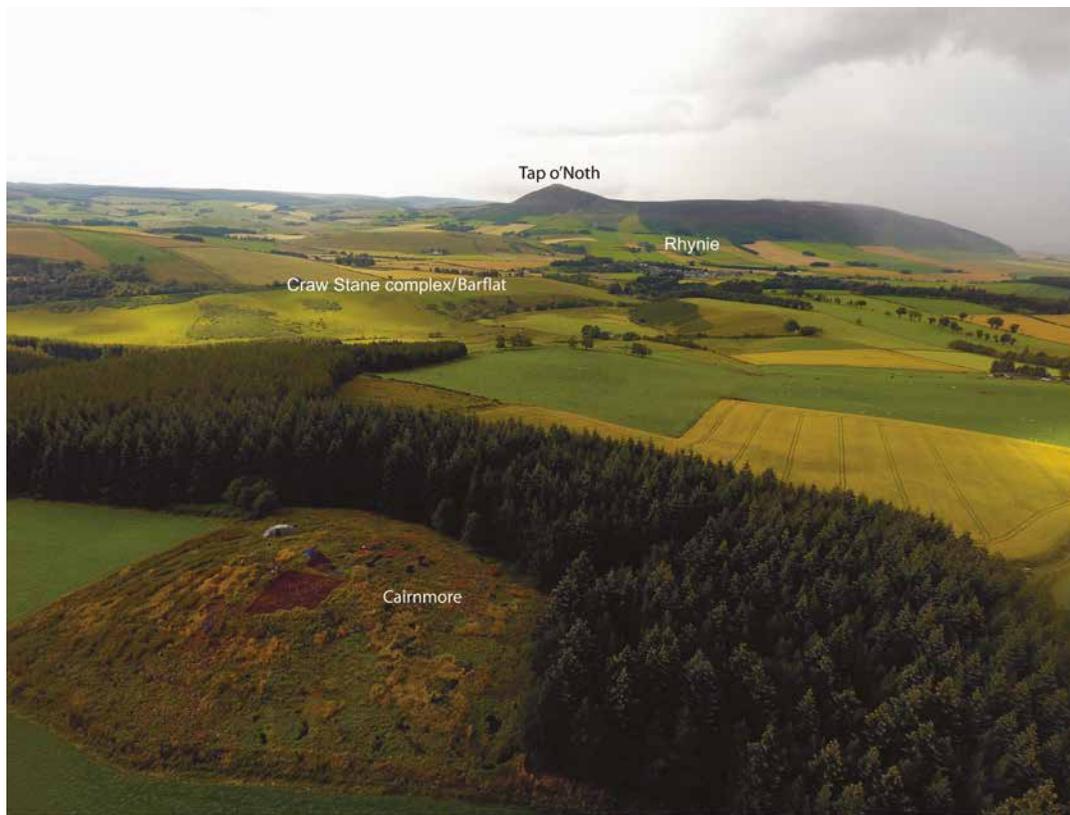
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now sit. The presence of peck marks, however, and the regularity of the quadraped depictions on the right, reassures the authenticity of the depictions, ruling out fortuitous geological or accidental markings accounting for the designs. The weathering of the grooves, and the fact that the Pictish symbols appear to be superimposed on top of some of these animal figures, also shows that these markings cannot be modern graffiti, and they also appear on the late 19th-/early 20th-century rubbing of the stone by Romilly Allen which must have been made only *c* 12–25 years after the initial discovery of the monument (Illus 5.58). While the motifs on Rhynie No. 5 are an important discovery, placing these images chronologically and contextually is much more difficult – the parallels and dating for the motifs on Rhynie No. 5 are discussed in Chapter 11.

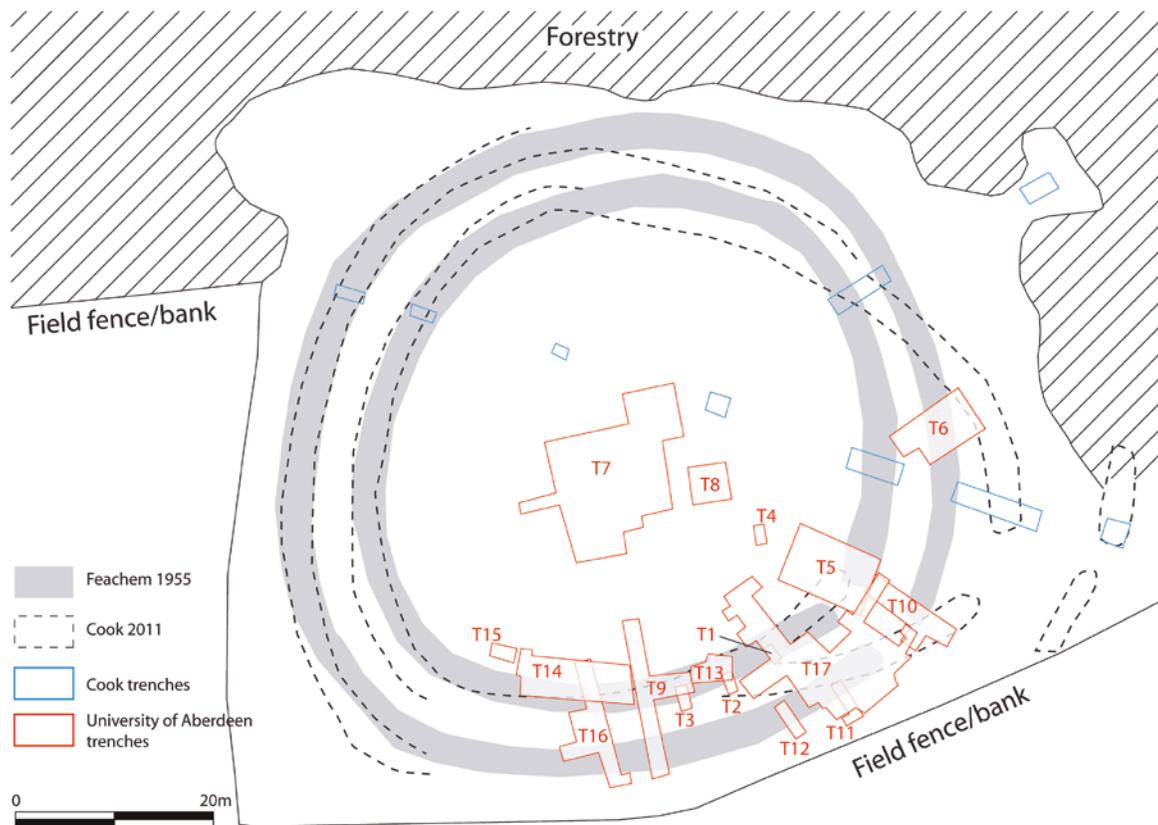
5.8 Conclusions

The investigations at the Craw Stane set the whole Rhynie Environs Project in motion with the exciting discoveries of the 2011 season allowing the project to grow and attract further research funding that enabled the project to grow in scale and ambition. The excavations at the Craw Stane have provided much needed context for the symbol stones from the Rhynie area and the discovery of the likely stone socket in the 2015 excavations provides a potential context for the Rhynie Man monument discovered downslope from the enclosure complex during ploughing in 1978. The strip-and-map approach of the project proved highly

successful in characterising the archaeology of the Craw Stane complex with most of the deposits left in situ for future analysis. The programme of investigation led to the identification of multiple buildings within and outside of the complex and identified a rich assemblage of artefacts that illuminate the function and status of the enclosure complex (Chapter 7). The excavations also successfully characterised and dated the enclosing works and revealed the complexity of the outer enclosure – a complex timber setting that may have defined a sophisticated box rampart. Down by the village the excavations of 2013 revealed the traces of a contemporary cemetery including one partially preserved 5th–6th century burial within a square barrow and two intriguing square enclosures with unusual entrance arrangements. Geophysical survey has also mapped out some of the features that can form the focus of future investigation in the wider environs of the valley bottom. As well as the important findings made through excavation, the project also led to important new results through utilising new digital approaches to archaeological monuments – here the identification of a new series of motifs on Rhynie No. 5 is an excellent example of the potential for new technologies to lead to fascinating new information on long-studied monuments. Overall, amongst many new discoveries, the project has produced a rich dataset for considering the development of a major Pictish power centre during the Late Roman Iron Age through to the 7th century AD. The evolution of this complex and its parallels are explored in the final discussion chapters of the monograph (Chapters 11 and 12).



Illus 6.1
Cairn More looking north-west towards Tap o' Noth



Illus 6.2
Trenching at Cairn More 2018–22, along with Cook's trenches projected on to Feachem's plan