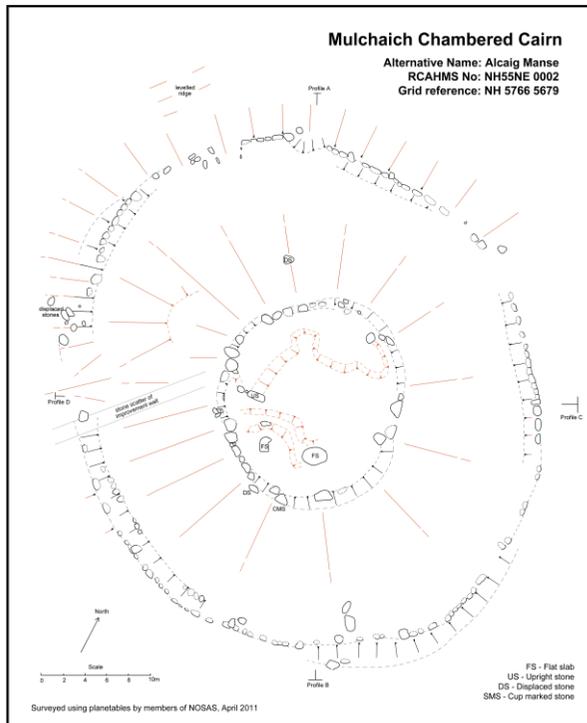


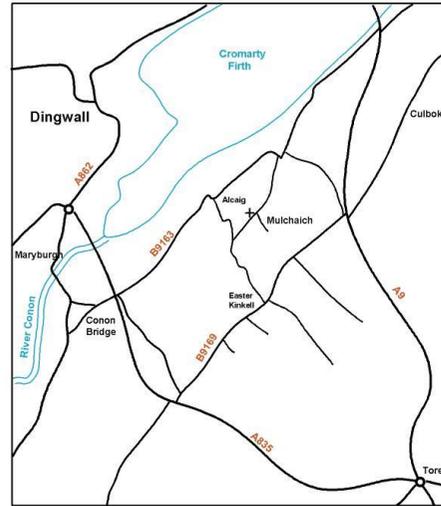


The chambered cairn is a scheduled monument and unusual in that it has two kerbs. The inner kerb, of larger stones, has a cup marked stone in its south quadrant. Both the chambered cairn and the stone date to prehistoric times and are thought to have served ritual purposes. The large flat slab at the centre almost certainly has a chamber underneath it and other disturbances on the summit of the cairn are most likely the work of antiquarian investigators.



Directions

The site is approached by minor roads between Easter Kinkell and Alcaig, east of Conon Bridge, it is close to Ferintosh Free Church. The grid reference is NH 576 568. Parking in the area is limited but we have secured



permission to use the Free Church car park, however we request that you avoid Sunday mornings and evenings when the car park gets very busy. From the car park there is a 300m walk - go north and take a right turn, signposted "Mulchaich", the entrance to the site is the second gate on the left. Please do not park in this entrance.

Please keep dogs on leads on the site as the enclosure is used for grazing sheep. And beware of various trip hazards; the site is steep and rough.



Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Morris Dalgetty, the farmer, for allowing us access to the site and the Free Church minister and congregation for use of their car park, also the neighbours for their interest and co-operation



The North of Scotland Archaeological Society and the Adopt-a-Monument scheme (Archaeology Scotland) present:

The site of an 18th century Ferintosh whisky distillery at Mulchaich on the Black Isle, Ross-shire



Mulchaich Farm is located in fertile land on the shores of the Cromarty Firth opposite the town of Dingwall and Ben Wyvis. 300 years ago the area of Ferintosh had a thriving whisky industry. Oral tradition has it that the remains of a distillery dating back to these times are located at Mulchaich, the only known remains of an industry which thrived for nearly 100 years between 1690 and 1786. Such was the fame and popularity of the whisky that, when production ceased, Robert Burns lamented in his poem "Scotch Drink":

"Thee Ferintosh! O sadly lost!
 Scotland lament frae coast to coast!
 Now colic grips, an' barkin' hoast
 May kill us a';
 For loyal Forbes' charter'd boast
 Is taen awa'!"

Together with the nearby chambered cairn the site gives an interesting and tantalising glimpse into our past.



The site of the Distillery

The remains of seven buildings came to light when heavy vegetation was cleared. We can only speculate as to the purpose of most of the buildings but it is possible to determine the function of some of them. At the centre of the site is a pond fed by a well; the drainage of the area will have been significantly altered by more recent field drains and the pond is now silted up and appears as a bog. The still-house was probably the building with several compartments below the pond; it is possible that a wooden lade ducted the water from the pond into this building. A kiln with two barns is located in the north part of the site; here the barley, which had been allowed to germinate, would have been made into malt by gently heating it until it was dry. All the buildings have solid stone foundations and it seems that they have been constructed to a plan, making a positive case for this site being one of the distilleries built in the 1760s. The NOSAS Ferintosh

JSB 11/2 Mulchaich W



Project of 2009-2011 aimed to survey and record the buildings at Mulchaich and investigate the history of the industry. Unfortunately, so far, we have found no firm evidence linking the site at Mulchaich with Ferintosh whisky, but the oral evidence and the fact that the site has many of the features of a distillery are pretty convincing.

A Brief History of Ferintosh Whisky

In 1690 Duncan Forbes secured the privilege of distilling whisky free of duty at Ferintosh for services rendered to the Crown during religious unrest; his estate had been sacked by the Jacobites in 1689. The "privilege" produced a boom in the production of whisky and it became increasingly popular throughout the country both because of its quality and its price. The Forbes family continued to support the Crown in the 1715 and 1745 Jacobite rebellions at great expense to themselves. The 5th Laird of Culloden, also Duncan Forbes, made heroic attempts to reconcile the two sides in the "45" Rebellion but in the end took the side of the government and as a result left his estates heavily in debt on his death in 1747. His son, John Forbes, set out to restore the family fortunes and in the 1760s built three distilleries at Ferintosh. Production grew dramatically; in 1763 the output of whisky was 41,200 gallons, in 1770 it was 89,700 and by 1780 it was 123,900. In 1782 a further large distillery was built. This was the last straw for other distillers who could not compete; there was an outcry and the government withdrew the privilege in 1786.

The Roy military map of c1750 has a densely populated area at Ferintosh with at least seven large townships. These are the townships which would have been involved in distilling whisky which at the time would have been a cottage industry. Mulchaich is not mentioned by name but it is almost certainly one of the townships.

More information on our website: www.nosas.co.uk

