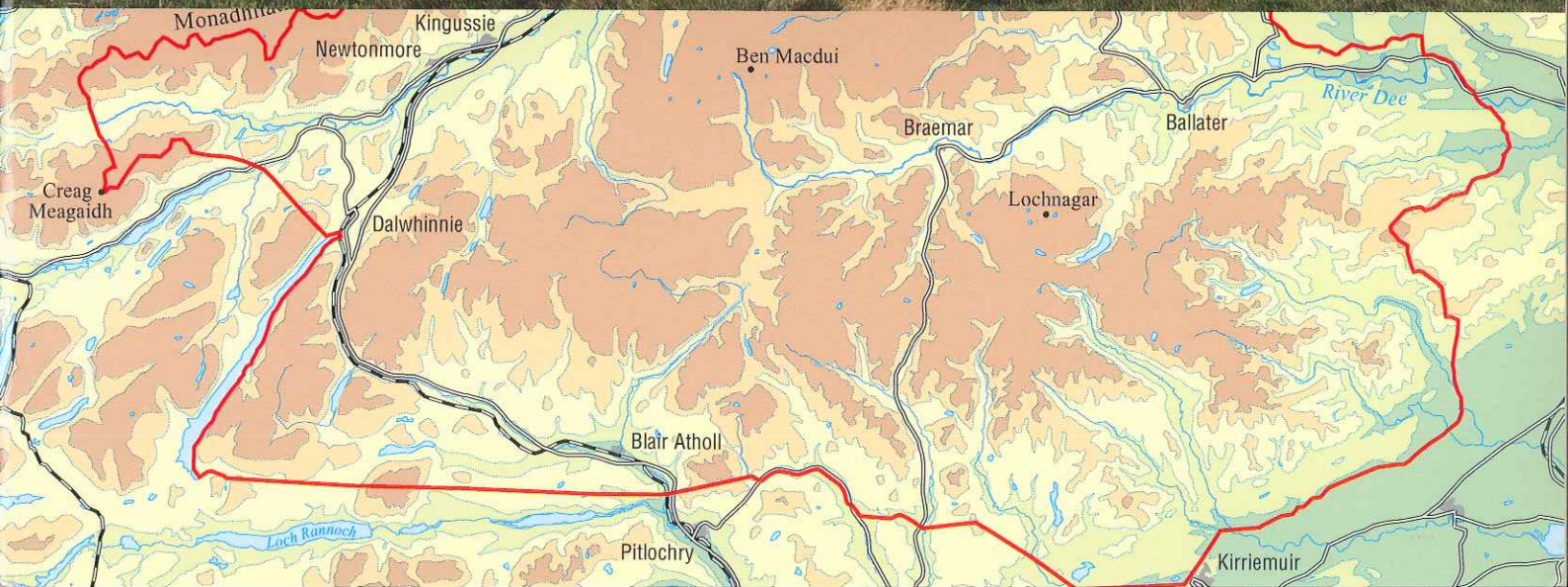
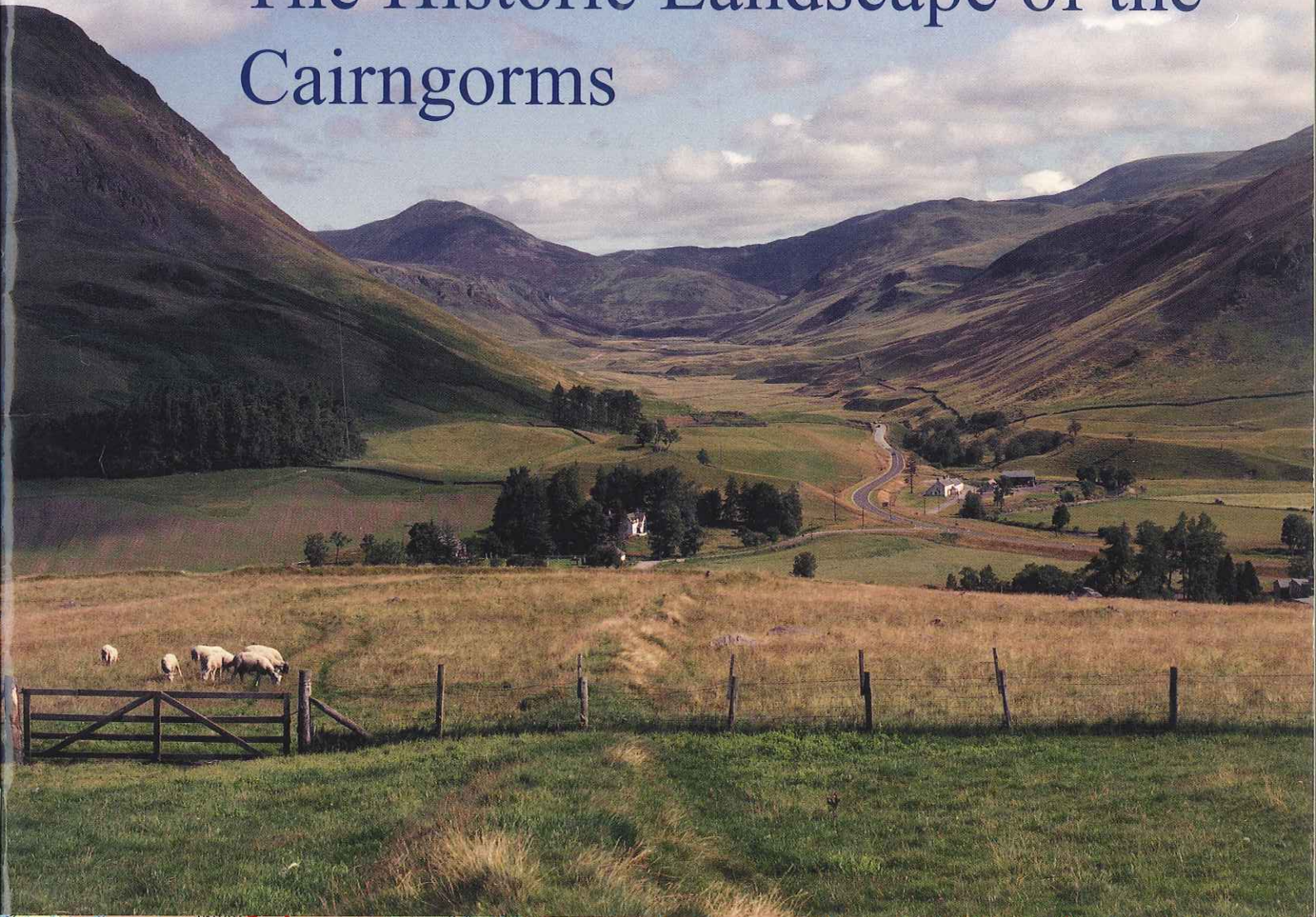




The Historic Landscape of the Cairngorms





The Historic Landscape of the Cairngorms



Aerial view of Gleann Beag, Perthshire, looking north-eastwards along the line of the Blaigowrie-Braemar road from Spittal of Glenshee towards the Glen Shee ski slopes. The ruins of 18th and 19th century farmsteads are scattered throughout the glen. SC 621707

Royal Commission on the Ancient and
Historical Monuments of Scotland

Historic Scotland



This aerial view looks south along Glen Shee, Perthshire, and shows the traces of pre-Improvement ridge and furrow in the foreground, with rectilinear improved fields beyond. SC 621700

Front cover: View looking north-eastwards over the Spittal of Glenshee and along Gleann Beag, with The Cairnwell on the skyline. SC 621588

Back cover: Aerial view of Loch Wharral on the north side of Glen Clova, Angus. Even in this upland landscape human presence can be detected in the patches of heather burning for grouse and access tracks onto the hill. SC 621704

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PREFACE

This report has been written by Mr D C Cowley (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland) and Ms S Govan (Historic Scotland) and edited by Dr L Macinnes (HS) and Mr J B Stevenson (RCAHMS). It draws on a Historic Landuse Assessment conducted by Ms L Dyson-Bruce and Miss C O'Neill and an analysis of the existing archaeological records by Mr D C Cowley. Additional advice has been provided by Mr S D Boyle, Dr P J Dixon, Dr I Fraser, Mr S Green, Mr S P Halliday and Mr P McKeague. The maps have been prepared by Ms G L Brown. Photographic services have been provided by Mr S Thomson and Mr R M Adam. The layout of this publication was prepared by Mr J N Stevenson. Unless otherwise noted, all those mentioned above are staff of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS).

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Historic Scotland offers advice and grant aid for the survey, repair and management of ancient monuments, historic buildings and historic landscapes. It also provides strategic advice to other bodies on policies for the protection of the historic environment and on associated grant schemes.

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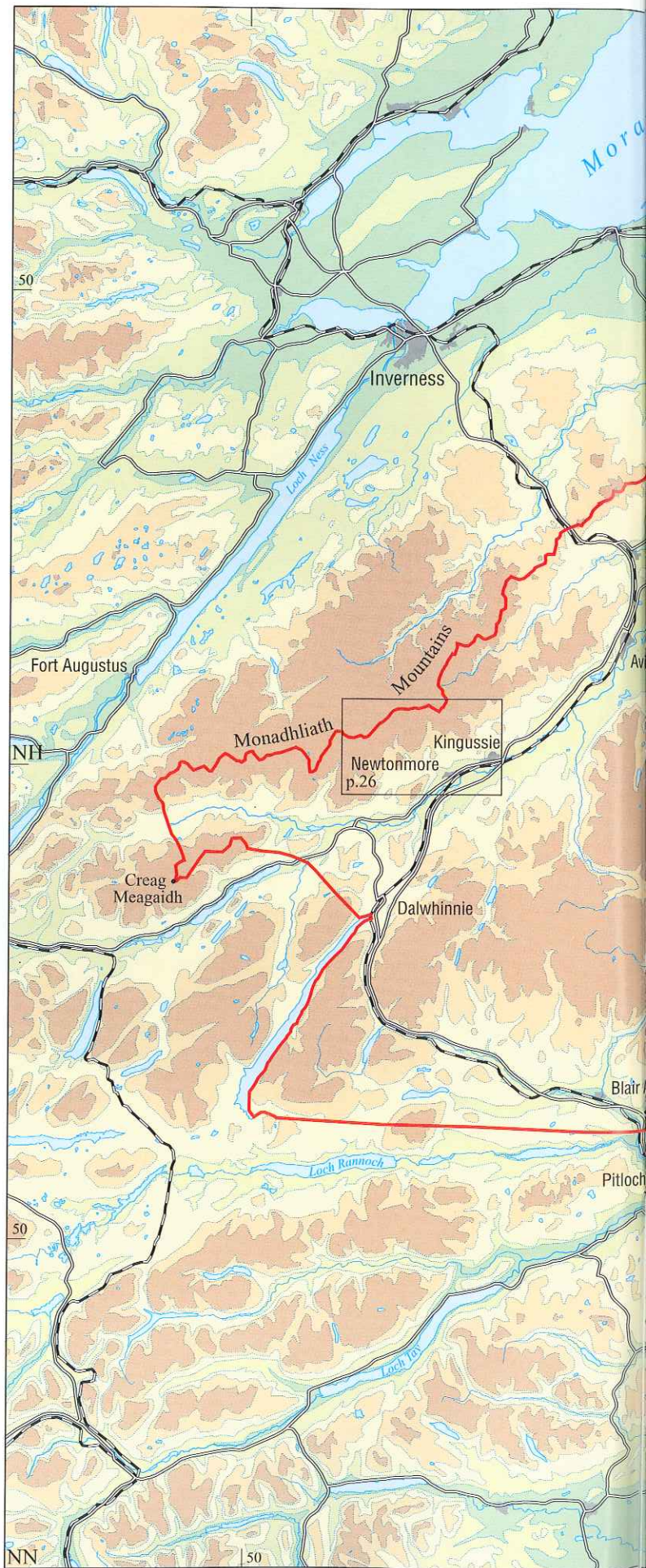
INTRODUCTION

The Cairngorms have been proposed for designation as a National Park following the passing of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 by the Scottish Parliament. This legislation enshrines the importance of conserving and enhancing the cultural heritage alongside natural heritage, and this commitment is recognised in the consultation document outlining the proposals for the Cairngorms (Scottish Natural Heritage 2000). The present report seeks to explain the main strands of the historic landscape within the proposed Park and to explain the fundamental role archaeology can play in the understanding of this landscape. It should be understood that this is a broad overview, aiming to outline the general trends in the cultural heritage of the area.

At the time of writing, the boundaries of the Park have not been fixed, but the consultation document outlines three options for the area. These range from an area concentrating on the mountain core of the Cairngorms and the adjacent moors and straths taking in 2100 km², to one more than three times the size which extends to include the whole of Badenoch and Strathspey, the upper reaches of the River Don and the Angus Glens. The three options include a wide range of landscape types, from the large areas of the Cairngorms above 900m to low-lying farmland in the middle reaches of the Rivers Dee and Don. For these reasons the following commentary draws out themes that can be identified across the region as a whole, and which will apply regardless of where the final Park boundary is drawn.

The Cairngorms form part of the Grampian Highlands, which are bounded on the south by the Highland Boundary Fault and on the north-west by the Great Glen Fault. At the mountain core there are large tracts of ground between 600m and 900m O.D., while rocks of varying hardness have been eroded differentially to produce the major glens, which are steep-sided, U-shaped formations characteristic of a glaciated landscape. The Spey is the largest valley, cutting along the main deposit of weaker strata to produce the wide and open profile of Speyside. The topography of the area is thus relatively simple; large expanses of high ground are dissected by tightly-defined, U-shaped valleys, which emerge on to the rolling lowlands of the east coast and the Moray plain. These extremes of topography have had an enduring impact on the cultural heritage, conditioning aspects of the distribution of settlement, landuse and lines of communication over the millennia.

The emphasis of this report lies in identifying general patterns in the historic components of the landscape, the character of which has been significantly influenced by the nature of landuse over the last 200 years. These patterns, characterised by the Historic Landuse Assessment (HLA), are important to understanding the human influence on the landscape and in considering its cultural heritage. They further help to clarify the relationship between landuse change and the distribution of archaeological monuments, and enable an outline of the history of settlement in the area from the earliest times to the present to be drawn. The patterns of human settlement and landuse are explored in more detail through a study of Glen Banchor, near Newtonmore, in Speyside, together with the interplay of various sources of information, such as archaeological survey, HLA and historic maps. The report ends with a discussion of the implications of this wealth of material for the effective management of the cultural heritage within the wider landscape of the Park.







This aerial view looks westwards along Glen Geusachan to The Devil's Point, with Glen Dee beyond, and Ben Macdui to the upper left. Even in remote areas, such as this, there are archaeological remains of at least a transient human presence, whether for hunting or summer grazing. SC 621595



A complex mix of managed moorland, pasture and woodland can be seen in this aerial view looking westwards into the head waters of the Spey, with Loch Laggan, dammed as part of a hydro-electric scheme, in the distance. The A9 cuts a swathe across the photograph, with improved fields on the valley floor beyond, contrasting with the surrounding unimproved ground. This mosaic of landuse has its origins in the 18th and 19th century Improvements. SC 621691



Aerial view looking north-westwards along Glen Clova, one of the Angus Glens that drain the south-east fringe of the proposed Park. A classic U-shaped glaciated valley, it has seen expansion of forestry, but recent survey by RCAHMS has recorded large numbers of prehistoric and post-medieval monuments. SC 621600



This view looking south along Glen Shee, from above Dalhenzean, illustrates the variety of landuse types in this Perthshire glen, from Improvement-period fields and managed woodland to rough grazing and 20th century forestry. SC 621711

Sources of Information

This report is based on two principal sources: firstly, a Historic Landuse Assessment covering the greater part of the largest of the options for the Park and, secondly, existing archaeological data recorded within the NMRS.

Historic Landuse Assessment is a tool, developed jointly by RCAHMS and Historic Scotland, to map the extent of past and present landuse areas in order to aid the understanding of time-depth in the cultural landscape. Using aerial photographs, land cover data from the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute, 19th- and 20th-century Ordnance Survey maps and existing archaeological records, a mosaic is produced which identifies the historic nature of the modern landuse based on elements that exceed one hectare in extent, as well as any relict components that may also survive. The end product is a map, or series of maps, with a related database, which provides a broad overview of the historic use of the land and which can be used to analyse the forces of change that have acted upon the landscape. Such an overview highlights the dynamic nature of the landscape and the pressures on surviving historic elements within it.

Archaeological records for the Park are held in the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) and also in the Sites and Monuments Records maintained by local authorities. The compilation of archaeological records in Scotland has its origins with 19th-century antiquarians, but was not put on a formal footing until after World War II. These records have been collated from a variety of sources, including field survey, aerial reconnaissance, discoveries by members of the public, antiquarian references and historic maps. It is certain that much more remains to be discovered within the boundaries of the Park, and the distributions of sites and monuments illustrated here are by no means complete. The existing record does, however, provide a solid basis from which to outline the general patterns of settlement in the area.

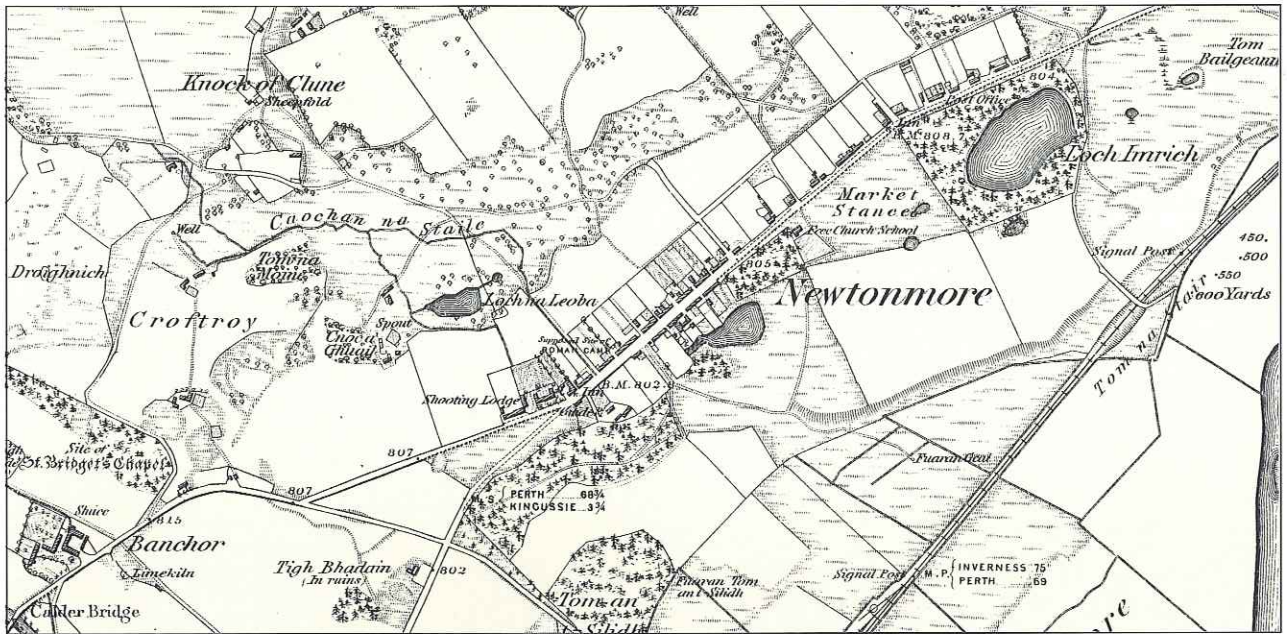
The archaeological record for the Park is a composite of various campaigns of work. Many of the records were created by the Archaeology Division of the Ordnance Survey during

the 1960s and 1970s to document antiquities published on their maps. Systematic mapping of archaeological remains has been undertaken by RCAHMS only in relatively limited areas within the Park, in North-east Perthshire, Mar Lodge in the upper Dee valley, around Newtonmore and Kingussie, Glen Clova and also the upper reaches of the Don. These surveys have consistently revealed large numbers of hitherto unrecorded sites, emphasising the potential of areas that have not been surveyed in detail. Another major contribution to the formation of the archaeological record has been a systematic programme to identify and record settlements shown as derelict on the first edition of the OS 6-inch map, surveyed during the second half of the 19th century. This has significantly enhanced the known distribution of post-medieval settlement. Finally, a rolling programme of aerial reconnaissance, undertaken by RCAHMS and locally-based fliers, has produced a heavy crop of new sites. Each of these programmes underlines the quality and quantity of the archaeological remains in the Park, and the enormous potential both for further discoveries through ongoing programmes of fieldwork and for enhanced understanding of known features.

Excavations within the Park area have been very limited in number and scale, but several recent projects have highlighted the potential for the exploration of material revealed through survey in expanding our understanding of the past. Of particular note has been the excavation of buildings dating to the 1st millennium AD at Pitcarmick, in northern Perthshire. Here, subrectangular buildings identified during survey, have been dated to between the 7th and 11th centuries AD, a period during which virtually nothing was previously known about the rural landscape. Our understanding of post-medieval buildings is also being enhanced through excavations in the township of Raitts, near Kingussie, and the reconstruction of such buildings at the Highland Folk Park, Newtonmore.



The shieling-huts in the foreground lie at over 750m in the upper reaches of the Allt a' Chaoraim, on the south-east of the Monadhliath Mountains, and were discovered during recent RCAHMS field survey.



Historic maps can be a valuable source for the archaeologist and landscape historian. This extract from the 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey 6-inch map (Inverness-shire 1872, sheet C1) provides a detailed snapshot of the landscape when it was surveyed in 1870, including depictions of sites that no longer survive, such as the ruined farmstead of Tigh Bhadaid at the bottom left.



This aerial view shows the footings of a farmstead near Invereddrie, in Glen Shee, Perthshire, surviving in rough grazing just beyond the limit of the improved ground. SC 621710



The reconstruction of post-medieval buildings on the Highland Folk Park, Newtonmore, has an important role for education, recreation and tourism, and in our understanding of how these buildings were built and used.

THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

This map summarises the Historic Landuse Assessment of the Cairngorms, and it clearly shows that both past and present landuse patterns reflect the general suitability of the ground for agriculture and settlement. In broad terms, the pattern of modern landuse can be divided into three main categories – moorland and rough grazing, improved grazing and arable, and forestry and woodland. Moorland and rough grazing generally occurs on the higher ground, above 250m, but below about 700m; human activity in the highest mountain areas is largely recreational. Improved grazing and arable are confined to the valleys, with arable occurring on the lowest ground surrounded by a fringe of improved pasture. Forestry and woodland can be found in the ground lying between that occupied by the other two categories. This pattern of landuse is a relatively modern, cultural creation, set in place between about 1750 and 1850, during the Improvements in the Highlands. During that period the face of the Scottish landscape was effectively recast, leaving only isolated fragments as a reminder of earlier agricultural regimes and settlement patterns.

In area, by far the dominant modern landuse in the Park is rough grazing, in part servicing the livestock that underpin the regional farming. Shooting and fishing for sport were established as a major draw for visitors to the Highlands by the mid-19th century, and since then the greater part of the Park has been owned by extensive estates which have managed most moorland for game. Such management is most visibly manifested in the burning patterns in heather moorland and in the many stalkers' tracks which penetrate deep into the mountains. The shooting lodges and ancillary buildings associated with the 19th-century estates are still a distinctive facet of the built heritage. However, in recent times, the need for outlying lodges has diminished due to improved access to remote areas, and many of these buildings have consequently decayed. More generally, though, archaeological remains survive well under this form of landuse.

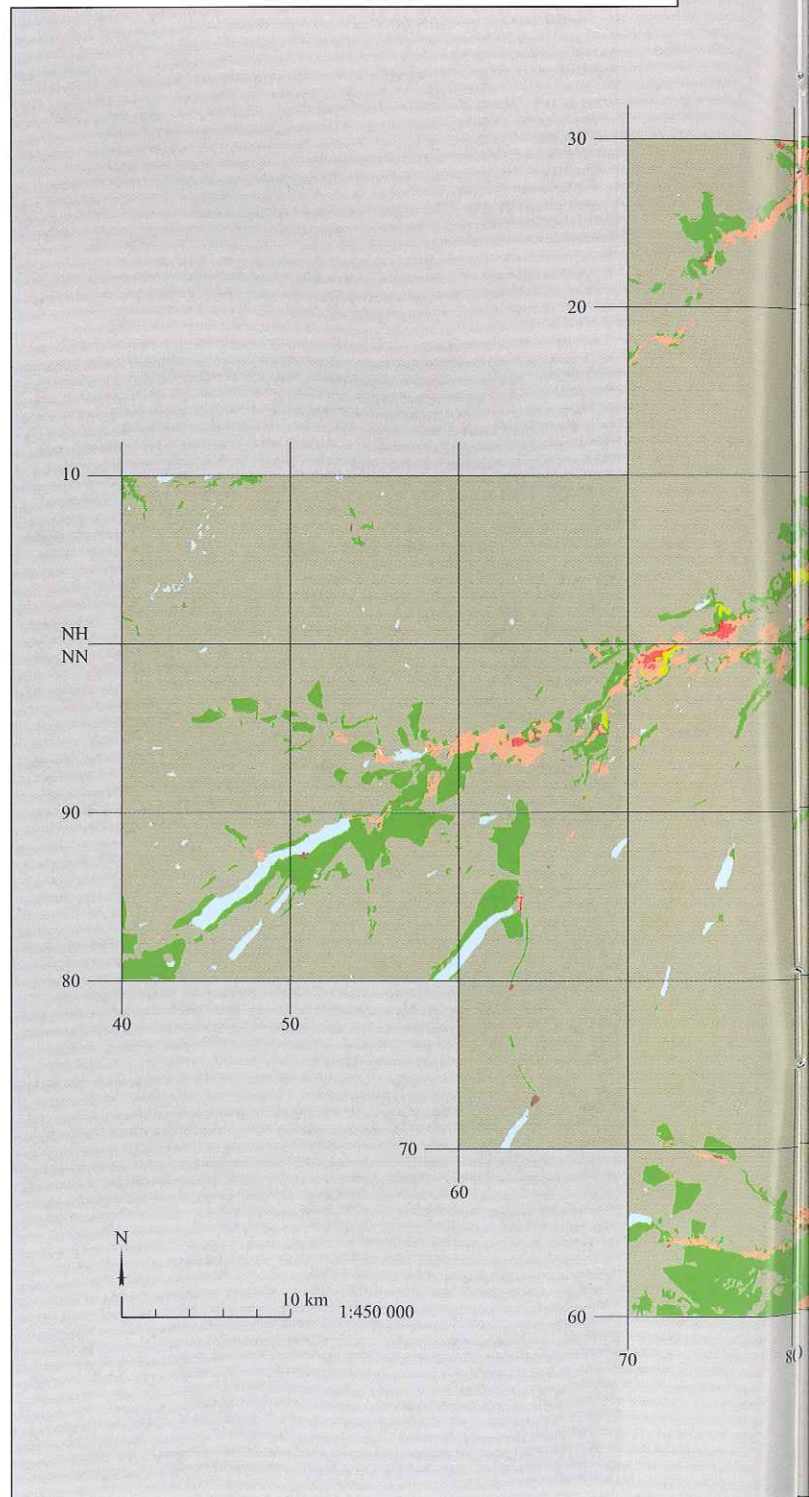
In the lower-lying part of the Park, pastoral landuse, to which arable crops make only a small contribution on the northern and eastern fringes, dominates. Agricultural Improvements saw the laying out of patterns of regular fields, a sense of order also reflected in the formal layout of 19th-century farmsteads. Stands of trees, planted as decorative clumps and shelter belts, dotted this landscape, and many still survive, though often replanted with conifers. The character of buildings was also set during the Improvements, and many farmsteadings, cottages, and townscapes are of 19th-century date. The popularity of the Highlands as a holiday destination during this period is also evident in the character of the towns, many of which have outsize hotels and large numbers of guest houses.

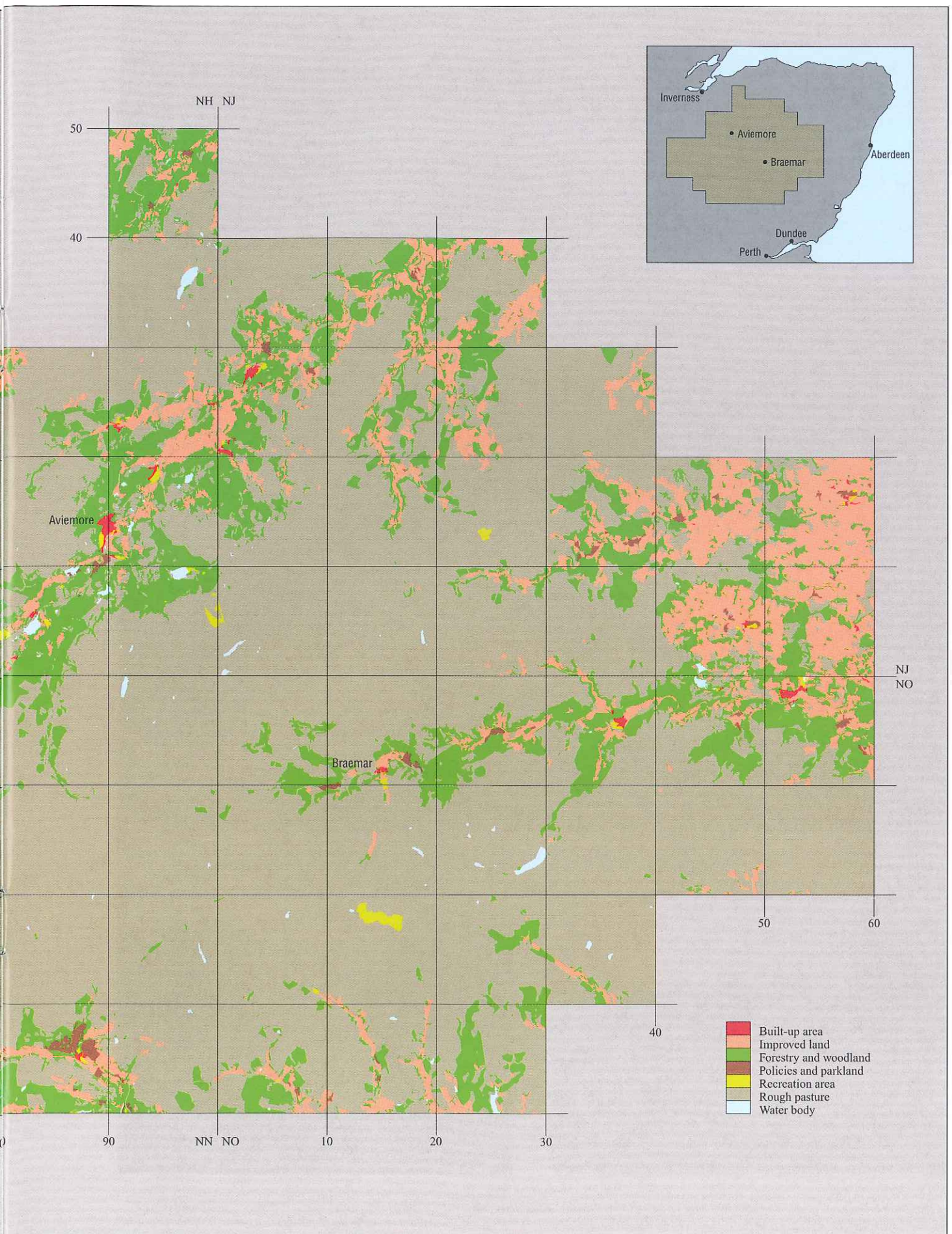
The visual impact of forestry and woodland in the Park area is emphasised by their disposition along the major glens in view of the main routeways, though very little planting has occurred outside the main valleys. While much of the modern woodland is coniferous, there is now an increasing emphasis on broad leaf species and natural regeneration of native species. Pinewoods with pre-18th-century origins survive in some parts of the Dee and Spey, both in remote areas and on the fringes of lower-lying ground; many, such as those on the Rothiemurchus estate, are known to have been actively managed.

In summary, human activity has touched even the most remote areas of the Cairngorms. This is reflected in the distribution and character of the vegetation, much of which has been modified through human actions, such as heather-burning or woodland-management. However, the cultural dimension of the landscape is most easily recognised in lower-lying ground, where patterns of enclosure, shelter belts, and the disposition and character of buildings, are imprinted with

clues to the economic, social and historical makeup of the area.

Yet this landscape is not static; changes in farming and forestry are affecting the pattern of fields and landuse which was established in the 18th and 19th centuries. Moreover, the evolving structure of shooting estates and the changing demands on farm buildings as mechanisation increases have had a significant impact on the stock of 19th-century buildings that add so much to the character of the area.







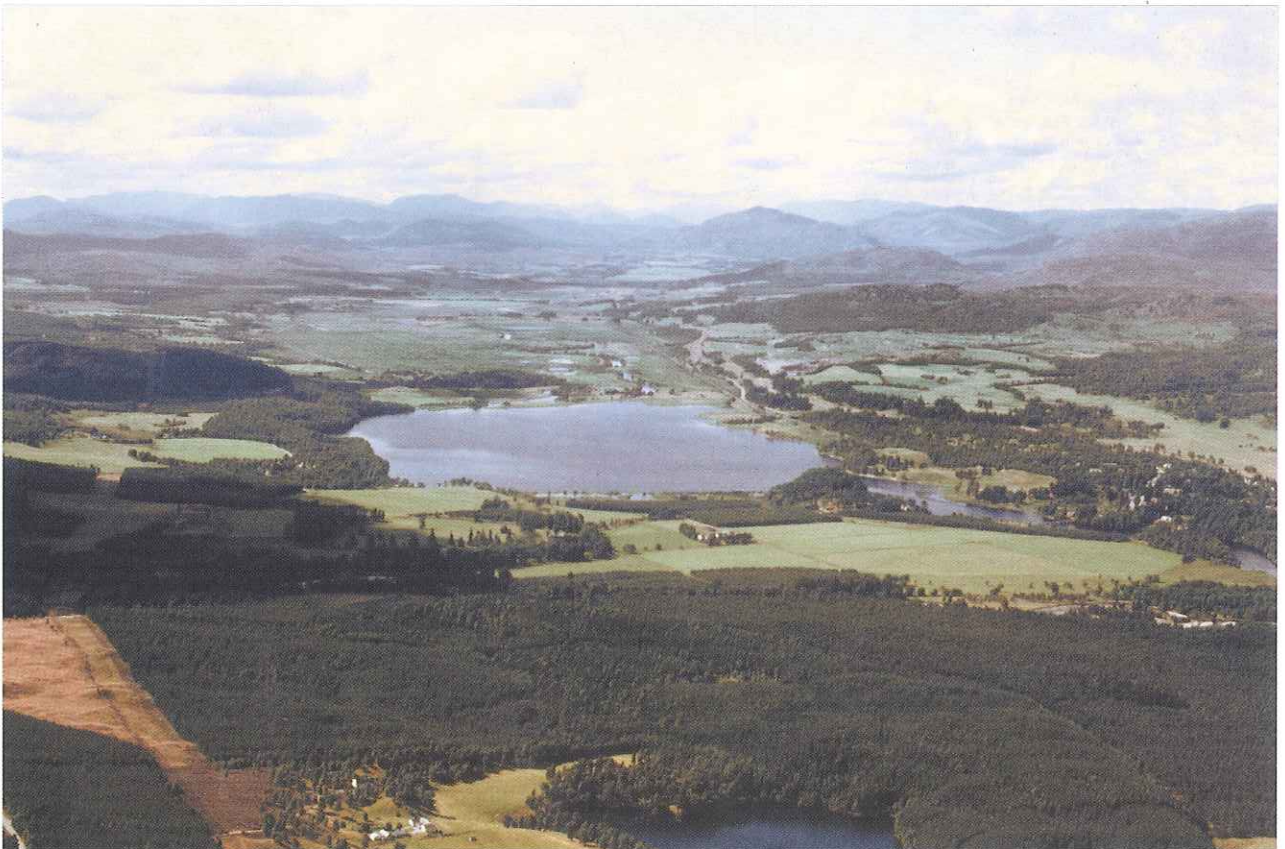
This aerial view looks north-west along Glen Shee, Perthshire, and illustrates the broad categories of landuse into which the landscape can be divided. Rough grazing dominates the higher ground, most of it heather moorland managed for shooting, with some conifer plantations. Archaeological remains are found throughout the landscape, although they survive best on the rough grazing which extends down to the edges of the drystone-walled Improvement-period fields. On the floor of the glen there is limited arable, in this case root crops, interspersed with improved grassland, and small mixed-species plantations. SC 621602



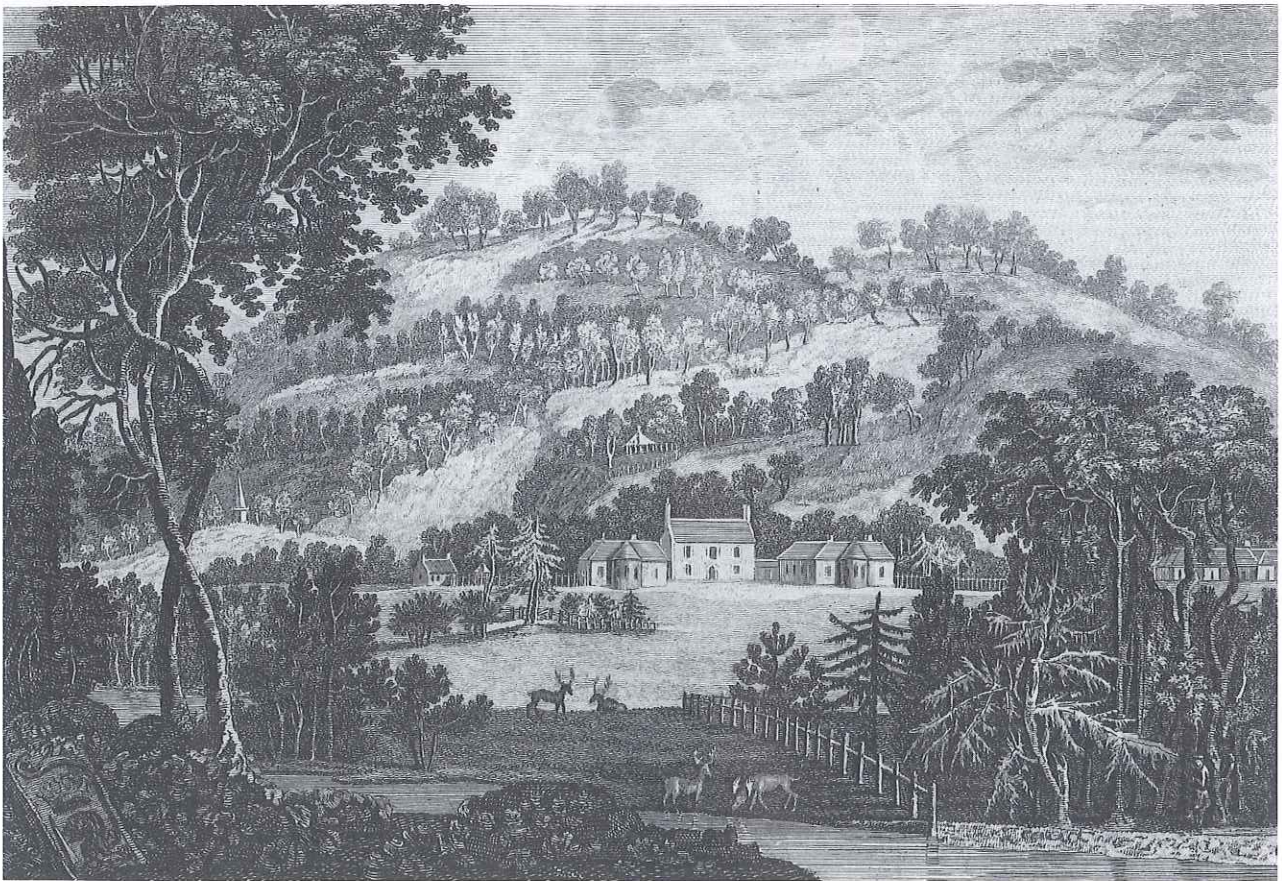
Improved access to remote areas and the changing structure of shooting estates has made many outlying lodges redundant and they are increasingly vulnerable to decay, as illustrated in these two examples on the Mar Lodge estate, in Upper Deeside. While Derry Lodge (left) is still in reasonable condition, Bynack Lodge (right) is in an advanced state of decay. Both will require active management if further deterioration is to be arrested and illustrate one of the challenges that can arise in conserving the cultural heritage. SC 621608 (left) and SC 621610 (right)



Stalkers tracks, such as this one in Gleann Tainmeach at the head of Glen Shee, penetrate deep into remote areas and, together with heather-burning, are often the only signs of management of land for shooting. SC 621604



This aerial view looks south-west across Loch Insh and along the Spey. The lower parts of the Park have a diversity of landuse, including the woodland and forestry in the centre and foreground, interspersed with limited arable and improved pasture, giving way to rough grazing and heather moors on the hills beyond. This pattern was established in the 18th and 19th centuries. SC 621657



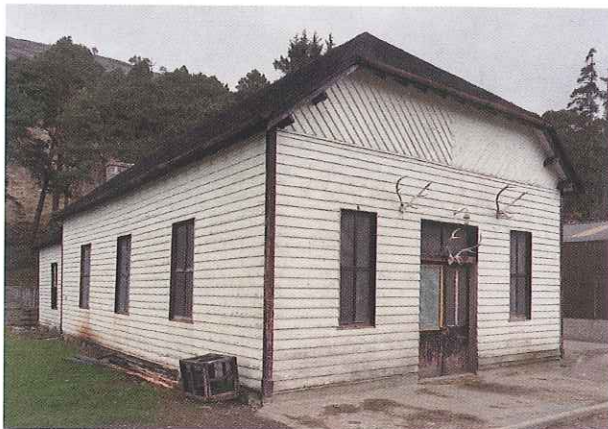
A: SC 621618



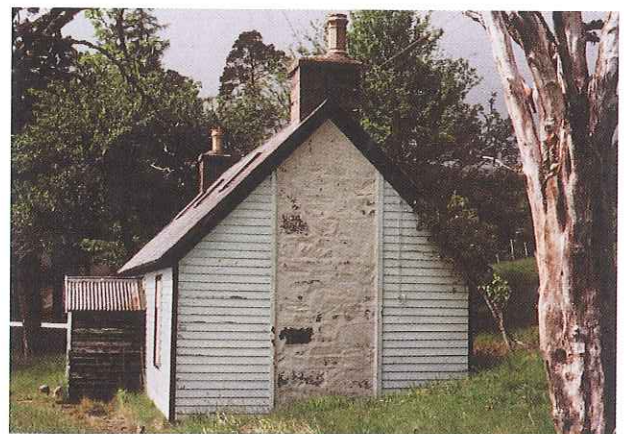
B: SC 621637



C: SC 621624



D: SC 621638



E:

Mar Lodge Estate

The use of the upper reaches of the Dee as a hunting forest is on record from the medieval period, and the 18th century lodge is depicted by Charles Cordiner in 1780 (A). The present-day lodge, built by Marshall Mackenzie for the Duke and Duchess of Fife in 1895, survives as a potent example of the wealth and patronage brought to Upper Deeside by the Royal Family, and is one of our best surviving late Victorian estates.

The large range of stables (B) lies at the centre of the practical management of the estate, and in the past accommodated carriages and horses, and most importantly the ponies used to transport stags off the hill. The range also housed the grooms and coachmen, and later, the motor cars. The lodge can be seen in the distance.

The Ballroom (C) is a powerful and unique symbol of the late Victorian shooting estate, celebrating the stag, stalking and a particularly Victorian romantic view of Highland life.

In the game larder (D) deer were gutted, skinned and jointed; the prized antlers were preserved and, if a full mounted head was required, it would be sent to the taxidermist. The sawn timber work of the exterior of the larder is also a feature of a traditional late Victorian estate workers cottage (E), possibly only intended to be used seasonally. This was built with economy in mind, and only the two stone chimney-stacks required a mason; the estate sawmill would supply the sawn softwood planks and the railways provided access to corrugated iron sheeting for the roof.

ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

Each of the landuse zones discussed above carries different implications for the survival of archaeological remains. This map shows known remains within the Park area, divided into two categories; firstly, prehistoric monuments spanning the period from about 4000 BC to about AD 1000 and, secondly, medieval and later sites, the majority of which are post-medieval farms, townships and shielings. The map indicates that archaeological sites have survived best in the glens.

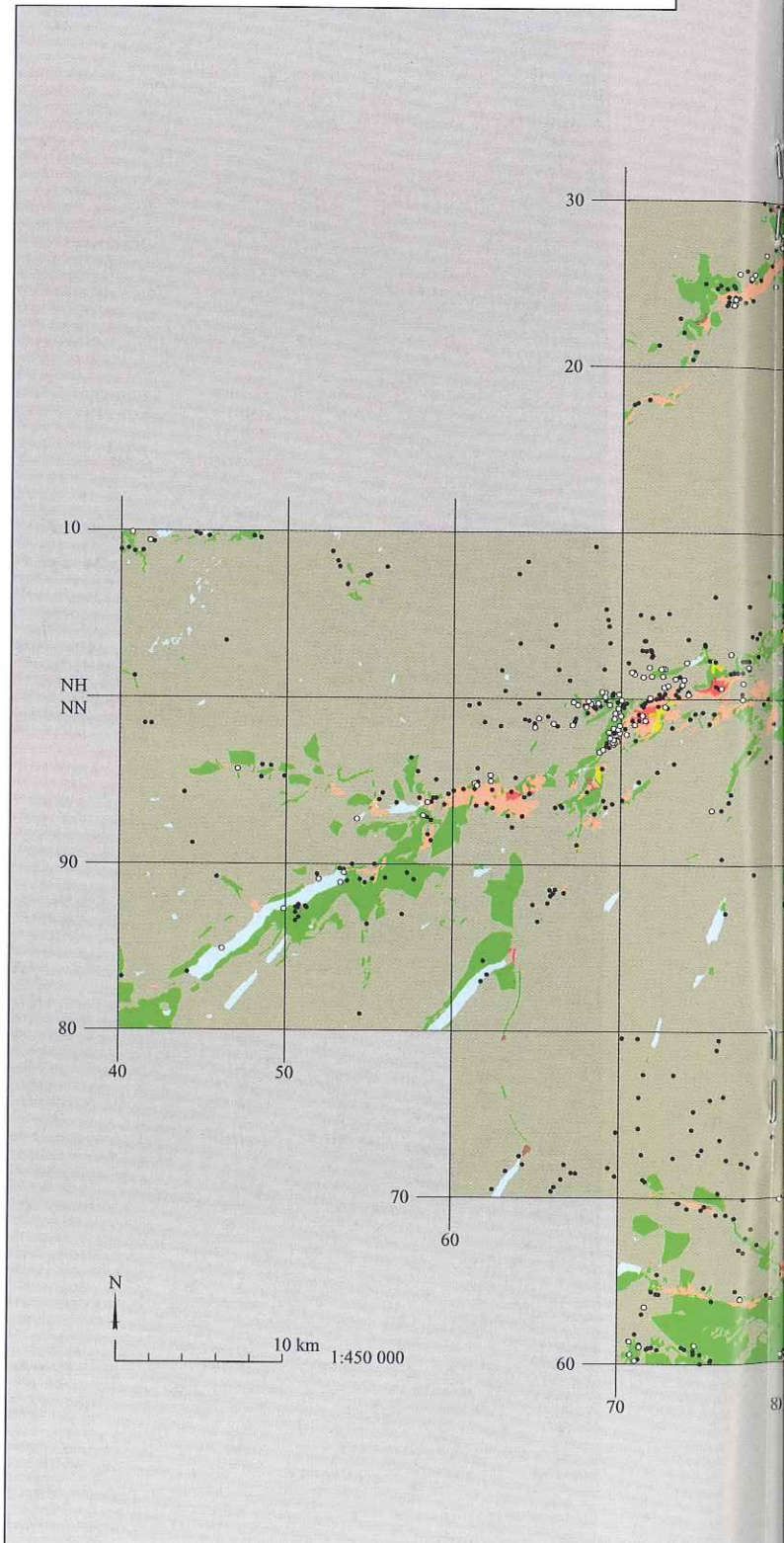
In order to interpret this map properly, it is important to understand the factors that condition the location, survival and destruction of archaeological remains in the landscape. The limited extent of systematic survey in the area of the Cairngorms, and the impact that this has on the distribution of known sites can be appreciated by comparing the concentrations of sites in some of the RCAHMS survey areas, for example in north-east Perth and around Newtonmore, with adjacent areas. This is particularly noticeable in the distribution of prehistoric monuments, which cannot be identified from historic maps, and so require fieldwork to identify them systematically. Artefacts have a more general distribution across all zones of the Park, indicating that human activity has been widespread across the landscape. The presence of prehistoric stone tools across lowland areas testifies to human use of the best soils. In fact, settlement is always likely to have concentrated here, but continuous activity has removed much evidence for earlier settlement and left few monuments readily visible within agricultural land. In contrast, the lack of evidence on the Cairngorm plateau no doubt reflects an absence of permanent settlement. Nevertheless, the few isolated finds there include a flint arrowhead, indicating that exploitation of the mountains for game has taken place for at least 4000 years, though this form of landuse is barely detectable in the landscape.

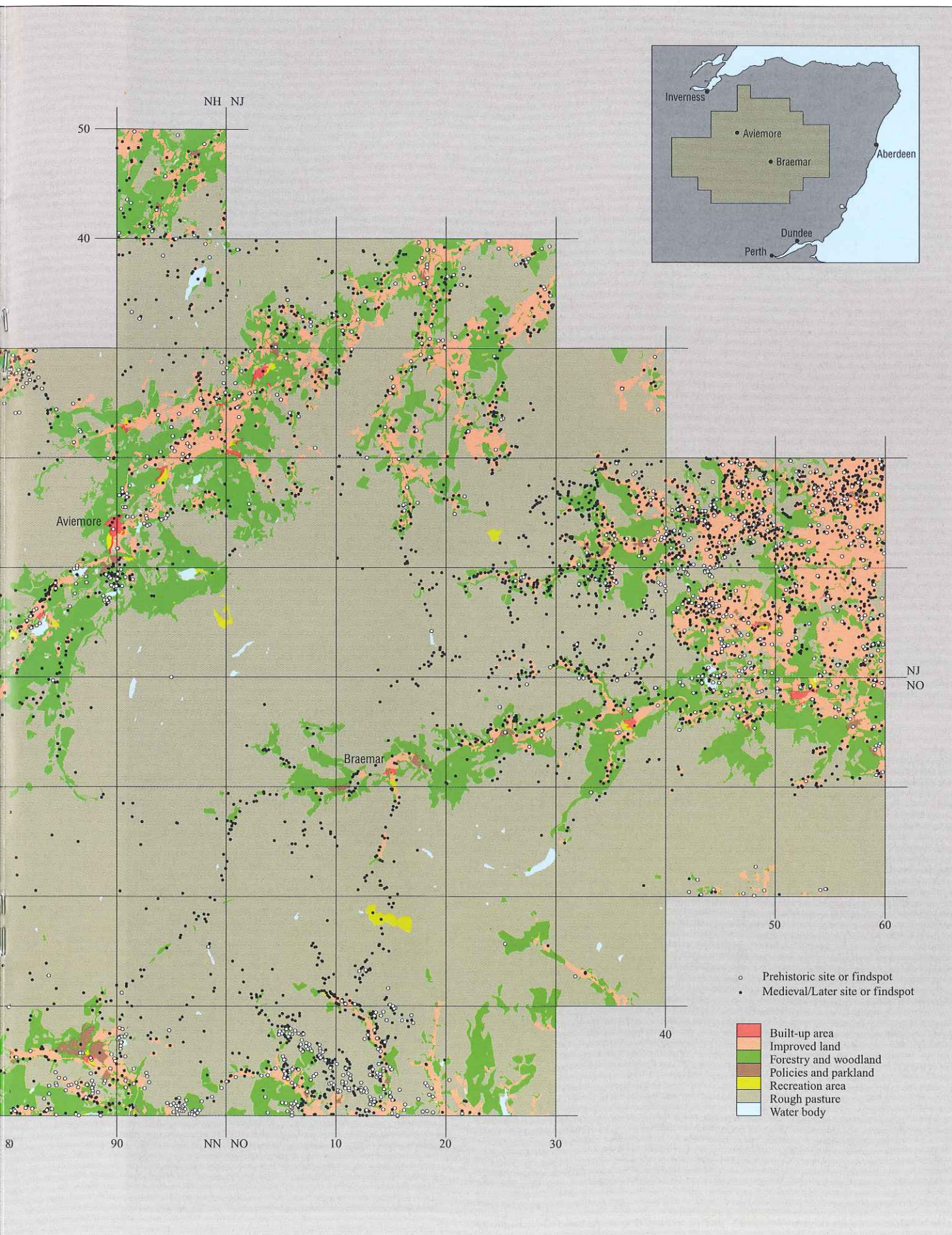
Over the Park as a whole, then, the distribution of recorded sites clearly shows that settlement has concentrated in the major glens, and here there are variations in the nature of the remains. Most upstanding archaeological remains survive in unimproved or only partially improved ground, as they are vulnerable to removal during agricultural improvements or forestry operations. The survival of field monuments has depended on benign management regimes, such as grazing or encouraging game: this has implications for the impact of future landuse change on the cultural heritage of the Park.

By-and-large, upstanding monuments are rarer on lower-lying ground, as only the most robust will survive the impact of agriculture, especially with the increased mechanisation seen since the early 20th century. Pockets of mature, hand-planted woodland, have also helped to preserve sites. Many of the features in the lower-lying ground are either of post-medieval date or are no longer upstanding monuments. Even where sites are no longer visible as surface remains, however, the record of their location is valuable, as important evidence may be preserved below the surface. Indeed, under certain conditions, the presence of features below ground level, such as ditches or walls, can be revealed through differential vegetation cover when seen from the air. Sites recorded in this way as cropmarks are relatively rare in the Park, but repeated aerial reconnaissance has revealed a scatter of sites along Speyside and in the east-draining catchments of the Dee and Don. These cropmarks include a range of later prehistoric settlements and rare examples of early medieval cemeteries, while some later buildings recorded on the 1st edition of the OS map also survive only as cropmarks. These discoveries further underline the potential for recording 'hidden' archaeological sites and features.

Historic woodlands, such as the pinewoods in Deeside and Speyside have generally been managed, and, as such, form an element in the record of human action in the landscape. Indeed, many plantations and shelter-belts may contain

fragments of landscapes which have generally been swept away by continuous agriculture in the lowlands. It is important to identify the potential for such sites through archaeological prospection and documentary research, so that they can be managed effectively in future. At the same time, however, it is important to recognise that the process of tree planting, as well as root growth, can damage or obscure elements of the historic landscape, and to take steps to avoid or minimise this risk.







This view looks north up Glen Dee, which is flanked on the left by The Devil's Point and on the right by Ben Macdui. Even here, in remote areas in the heart of the Cairngorms, there is a thin scatter of archaeological remains, and in Glen Geusachan, which extends to the left, there are the remains of stone-walled folds, probably for sheep.



View looking north-eastwards across Glen Shee some 2 km south of the Spittal of Glenshee, Perthshire. There are extensive archaeological remains on the heather moor in the distance, with a landscape of largely 18th and 19th century date on the valley floor: SC 621648



A wide range of archaeological remains has been captured on this aerial photograph of a ridge of rough grazing in Glen Isla, Angus. The hut-circles are of later prehistoric date, while the subrectangular buildings may be early medieval in date. Heaps of cleared stone are likely to have been produced by agriculture across the millennia, though the fine lines of rig are probably post-medieval in date. Such remains are vulnerable to afforestation, visible on the right. SC 621640



Aerial photograph showing a cemetery of round and square barrows, of Pictish date, on the south-east bank of the River Spey near Boat of Garten. Nothing is visible on the surface but differential parching of the vegetation has revealed the ditches defining round and square enclosures (e.g. A), and in some cases an internal burial pit, for example to the left of the central fence line (B). SC 621649

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE LANDSCAPE

The way in which historic landuse patterns provide a framework for the survival of archaeological remains has been outlined above. It is an archaeological truism that the survival of monuments from earlier episodes of settlement or landuse is dependent on the extent and intensity of subsequent activity on the same site. The majority of the surviving areas of relict landscape now survive in those areas where contemporary and past landuse has been least intense, that is rough grazing and moorland. Both the extent and the intensity of settlement and landuse has fluctuated considerably through time, leaving evidence of different episodes of use in the landscape and forming the character of the cultural landscape described in more detail below.

The Landscape of Improvement

As with the rest of rural Scotland, the landscape of the Park was transformed during the late-18th and 19th centuries, and its present character was established at this time. This transformation was prompted by an Improving movement that sought to bring the ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment into the agricultural sphere, driven in part by a desire for increased production and profit, but also by a broad ideological mission to improve society. In agricultural areas the whole landscape was reorganised as regular fields were laid out, farmsteadings replaced, farms amalgamated into larger units and improved cropping regimes were introduced alongside other measures to

improve productivity, such as underground drainage. Shelter belts and decorative clumps of trees were planted, in particular on some estates as an adjunct to the policies that were being created around the grander houses. In the uplands the reorganisation saw the wholesale depopulation of large areas to create extensive sheepwalks and shooting estates.

The general character of rural settlements, farmsteadings, cottages and estate buildings was also established in the 19th century, particularly with the increased use of stone for building and with the adoption of features particular to a locality or estate. Townscapes, too, clearly show their debt to the burgeoning tourist industry through the provision of large hotels, while the development of the railway enabled local markets to develop as the rural economy became increasingly intertwined with the mushrooming conurbations elsewhere in Scotland.

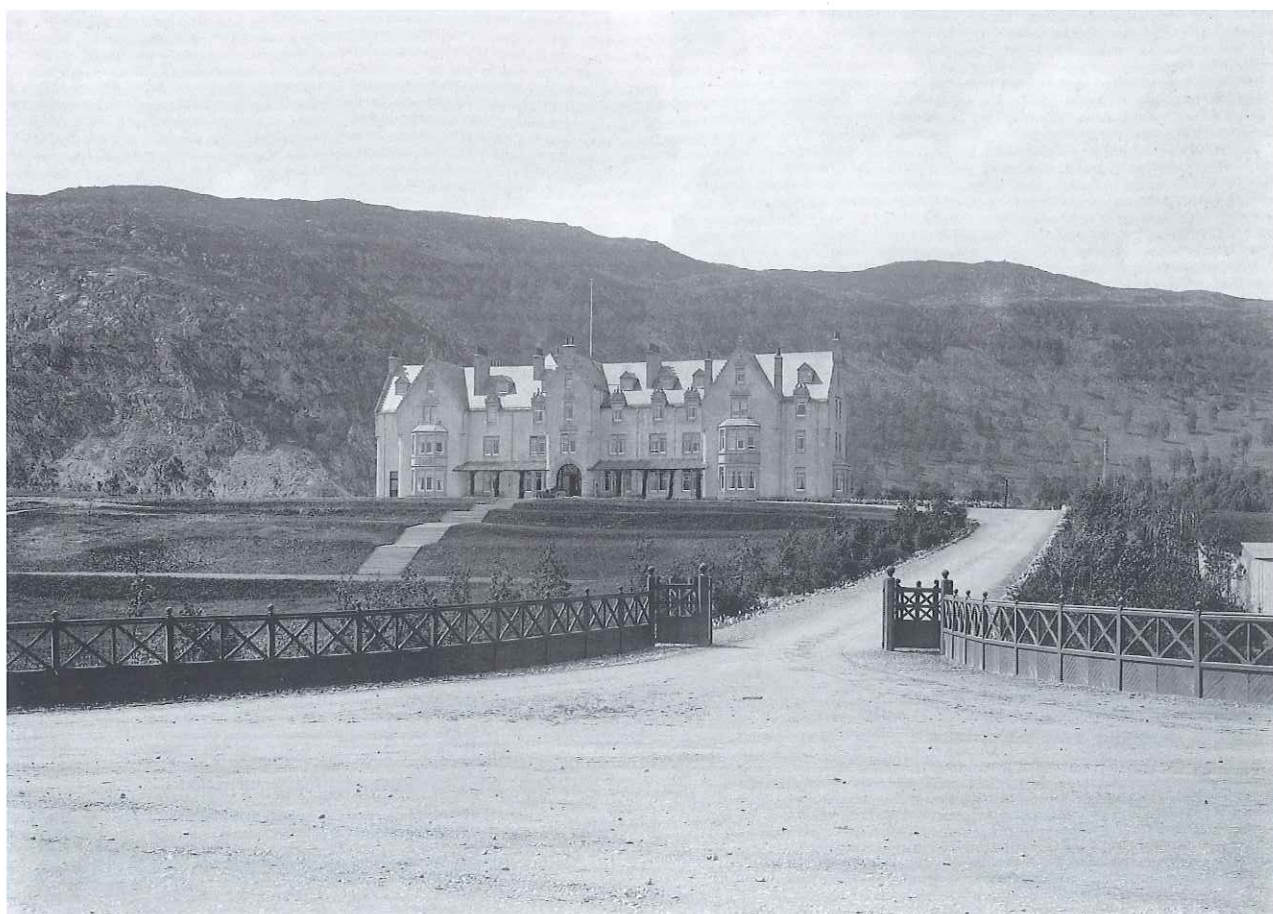
This Improvement landscape has survived fairly extensively. However, it is under pressure, through the impact of modern landuse both on traditional farm buildings and steadings, and on the pattern of fields. While it will be for the Park Authority to balance change for the future with continuity from the past, an important consideration should be how to retain the character, and maintain the quality, of the landscape of Improvement which has had such a major influence on the personality of the modern landscape.



View of the farmstead at Westerton of Runavey in Glen Shee, Perthshire. Farm buildings of this type were built throughout Scotland in the mid-19th century. SC 393515



This aerial view of Blair Castle places the house in the context of its policies. The combination of tree-lined avenues, open grassland, clumps of trees and blocks of woodland were designed to reinforce the status of the house and link it to the surrounding landscape. SC 621655



The popularity of the Highlands as a holiday destination saw the provision of large hotels even in small towns, such as the Aviemore Hotel, shown here in a view from the 1930s. SC 621666

The Pre-Improvement Landscape

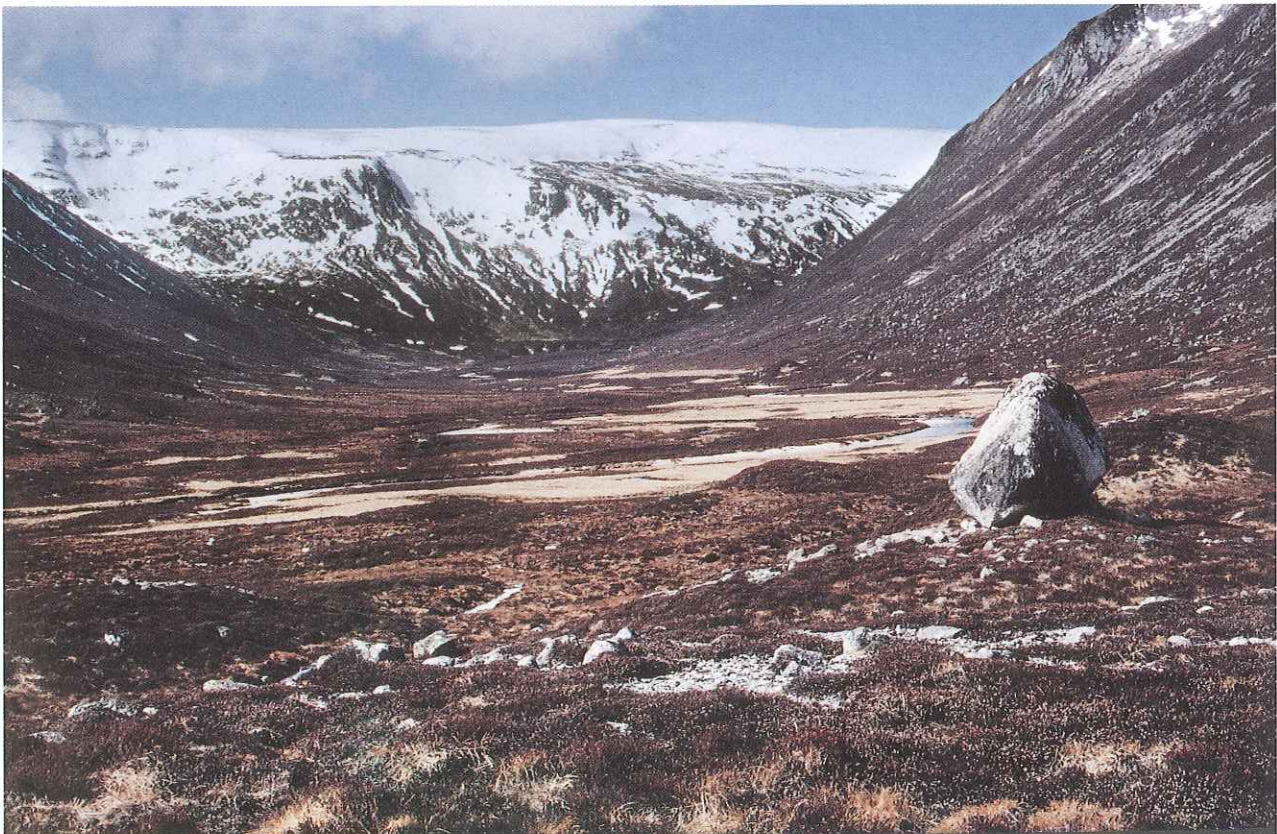
The transformation of the landscape during the agricultural improvements swept away a system of multiple-tenancy farms, within which houses were usually clustered together in townships, with ridged fields sometimes bounded by a head-dyke, and which had grazing grounds beyond. These settlements and their associated field-systems are by-far the most extensive archaeological remains in the Park, and reflect a peak in the size of the population of rural Scotland during the late 18th century. Rural population numbers declined during the course of the 19th century, both as changing patterns of employment opportunity prompted the migration of population to the towns and the Industrial Belt of Central Scotland, and as changing patterns of landuse saw piecemeal depopulations. Pre-Improvement settlement and rig survive in those parts of the landscape that were put over to rough grazing following the reorganisation of the late 18th and 19th centuries, and they are often truncated by the upper edges of the regular Improvement period fields. At the other extreme, shieling-huts have been discovered in side valleys at altitudes of over 800m, showing just how extensively the landscape was utilised during this period.

The townships are often depicted in outline on the 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey map, surveyed in the mid-19th century, decades after many of these settlements had been abandoned. The majority of the medieval and later monuments shown on pp.16-17 are the remains of these farmsteads and townships, which are generally situated along the floors and sides of the main valleys. The scatter of sites at higher altitudes are almost entirely the huts built on shieling grounds to service the summer grazings. There is relatively little visible evidence for chronological depth in the remains of these townships, perhaps because the peak in settlement at the end of the 18th century effectively obliterated the surface traces of earlier remains. In addition, the reuse of building materials, together with the use of turf in earlier buildings, will have reduced the chances of earlier structures surviving.

Indeed there is very little archaeological evidence across the Park as a whole for settlement pre-dating the 18th or perhaps the 17th century. There are few map sources to provide clues to the locations of settlements earlier than Roy's map of Scotland, surveyed between 1747 and 1755, and while there may be documentary references to sites before that date, they rarely provide an accurate location. While the pre-Improvement remains survive in niches created by subsequent landuse regimes, medieval rural settlement appears to have been consistently situated in areas which have seen the most intensive use. As a result, remains of the medieval period have proved elusive. Indeed, beyond the few castles, towers and churches for which a medieval date can be suggested, medieval rural settlement is conspicuous by its absence, a problem common throughout Scotland. However, this absence does not mean that it was non-existent, and further research is likely to reap rewards.



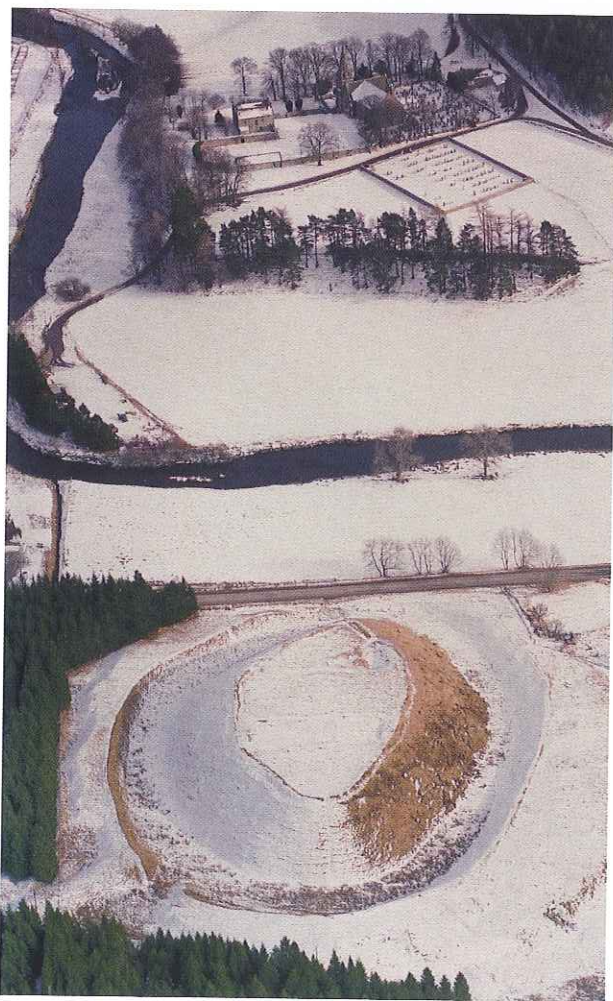
Glen Lui, Mar Lodge Estate, Deeside: the stone footings of a typical township building. SC 357541



This view, looking westwards along Glen Geusachan, a side valley off Glen Dee, at first presents an inhospitable prospect. However, the grassy sward along the banks of the river would have been a valuable source of summer grazing. Remote areas in the Cairngorms were exploited in this way in the post-medieval period and, probably, earlier.



This pre-Improvement period township in Glen Lui, Aberdeenshire, is typical of many that survive in the Park. The buildings and enclosures are loosely grouped along a terrace above the haughland of the Lui Water which, although subject to flooding, was prime agricultural land. The township was cleared in 1776 to make way for deer hunting. SC 621669



The Doune of Invernochty lies on the north bank of the River Don near the village of Strathdon. This impressive motte dates to the late 12th and early 13th centuries and is one of the finest earthwork castles in Scotland. SC 621671



Corgarff Castle is an imposing presence in the head waters of the River Don. The tower originates in the 16th century, but was modified considerably, particularly in 1746 when it was purchased by the Government to house a garrison. © Historic Scotland

The Prehistoric Landscape

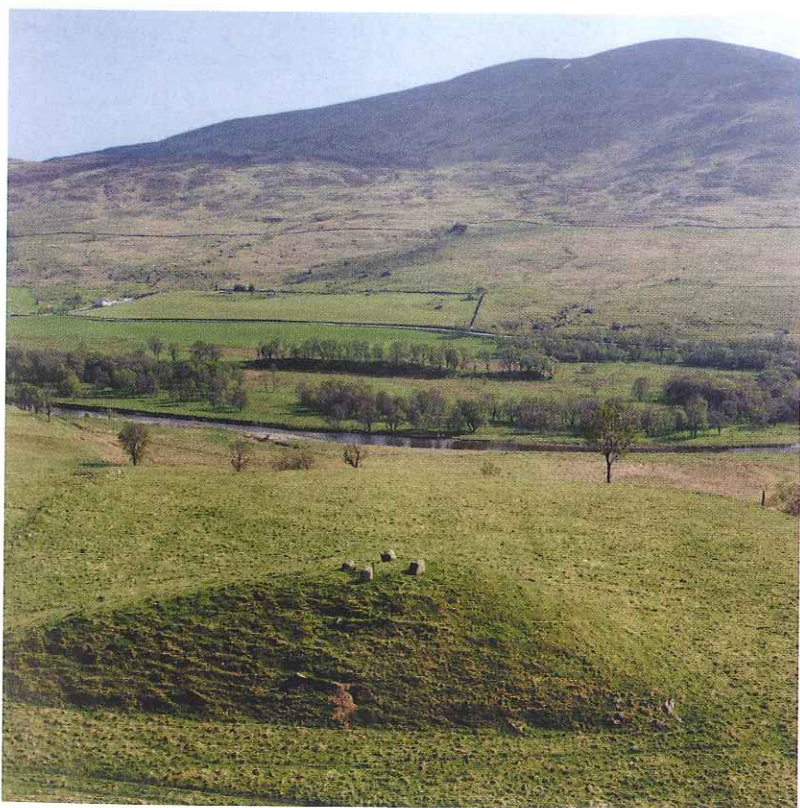
The distribution of prehistoric monuments largely lies in a zone of survival beyond the fringes of the pre-Improvement remains, in a pattern illustrated on pp.16-17. The exceptions to this general rule are large monuments, such as cairns, which can be difficult to remove and which have survived subsequent agriculture and settlement in lowland areas. The general zone of survival for prehistoric monuments, lying beyond the Improvement and pre-Improvement period landscape, represents a high-tide mark for settlement within the Park, showing the ebb and flow of settlement and landuse through time. Different episodes of settlement are often difficult to disentangle and for this reason the prehistoric landscape covers the period from the earliest human activity some 9000 years ago to about AD 1000. Overall, there has been a general spread of human activity across the landscape over this period, but with a marked emphasis on the main glens as the focus for settlement, and a cycle of expansion and contraction in the higher ground.

The archaeological record gives us only the most fleeting glimpses of the earliest inhabitants of the area in the form of a few flint tools, but it is likely that as flora and fauna colonised the Highlands after the ice sheets melted, a human presence will have followed from about 7000 BC. It is from the Neolithic, beginning about 4000 BC, that people began to build structures that now survive as visible monuments. We know little of what settlements may have looked like, but the ritual and funerary monuments, such as chambered cairns and stone circles, tend to survive even in low lying ground, where their sheer size has protected them from removal. Similarly, the few enigmatic cup-and-ring markings, which are also thought to be of Neolithic date, have survived because of their locations on earthfast boulders.

By about 2000 BC and later the character of remains begins to change in a period traditionally called the Bronze Age.

Burial monuments continue to be built but now usually as large round cairns, and during the 2nd millennium BC evidence of settlement, in the form of hut-circles, becomes more common. This building tradition appears to have been highly successful and was probably maintained as the dominant style of housing until around the early centuries AD. Heaps of field-gathered stone often litter the ground around the hut-circles, and with the occasional field-bank, provide the first concrete indications of cultivation, though evidence elsewhere suggests that this is likely to have been practised much earlier. During the earlier 1st millennium BC large burial cairns cease to be built and the character of the archaeological record for the next 1000 years or so is predominately of settlement and landuse remains. From about 700 BC a range of enclosed settlements emerge alongside the hut-circles, suggesting a distinct hierarchy of sites which was maintained through the Iron Age to the mid 1st millennium AD. The enclosures include those with timber stockades, the majority of which are now visible only as cropmarks, but extend to embrace the massively defended fort at Dun-da-lamh, Laggan.

Of the nature of settlement during the 1st millennium AD little is known, but recent field survey and a subsequent programme of excavation have established that at least some buildings of subrectangular plan date to the 7th to 11th centuries AD, going some way to filling the lacuna in evidence between the Iron Age and the 18th century townships. Cemeteries of 1st millennium AD date have also been discovered, both as earthworks and cropmarks, comprising inhumations bounded by round and square ditched enclosures and sometimes covered by a barrow. Other more visible monuments of the early historic period in north-east Scotland are the sculptured stones, in particular the cross-slabs. These illustrate the establishment of Christianity in the area, often subject to the prevailing culture of the Picts.



A: The four-poster stone circle in the foreground, known as the Grave of Diarmid, Glen Shee, Perthshire, occupies a prominent point in the landscape, and is one of a number of late Neolithic and Bronze Age ritual monuments in the Park. SC 385386

B: The simple ring bank of stones shown on this aerial view of the northwest flank of Deskry Hill, overlooking the River Don, is typical of many hut-circles in the Park. Close spaced grooving and the field-banks picked out by the snow may represent the remains of prehistoric agriculture. SC 621680

C: The flat-topped knoll in the middle distance supported a small fortification enclosed by two concentric lines of timber stockade, the lines of which can be seen as shallow trenches, one of which is visible in this photograph. The date of the site is unknown, but, may fall between about 500 BC and AD 500. Situated at the mouth of Glen Banchor, Newtonmore, it dominates the locality. SC 621681

D: This cross-slab, probably of 9th century AD date, was discovered in the foundations of the former parish church of Migvie, in the Howe of Cromar. The cross is flanked by a horseman and three Pictish symbols – a double-disc and Z-rod, an arch and V-rod, and a pair of shears or tongs. © Tom and Sybil Gray Collection. SC 627191

E: This aerial view shows a palimpsest of archaeological remains near Wheen in Glen Clova. Two burnt mounds (A) may be Bronze Age in date. A hut-circle (B) and enclosure (C) are likely to be of later prehistoric date, while the rectangular building foundations are of 18th and 19th century date. Clearance cairns and field-banks are scattered across the area and are likely to span a wide date range. Many other landscapes bear similar evidence of multi-period use. SC 579196

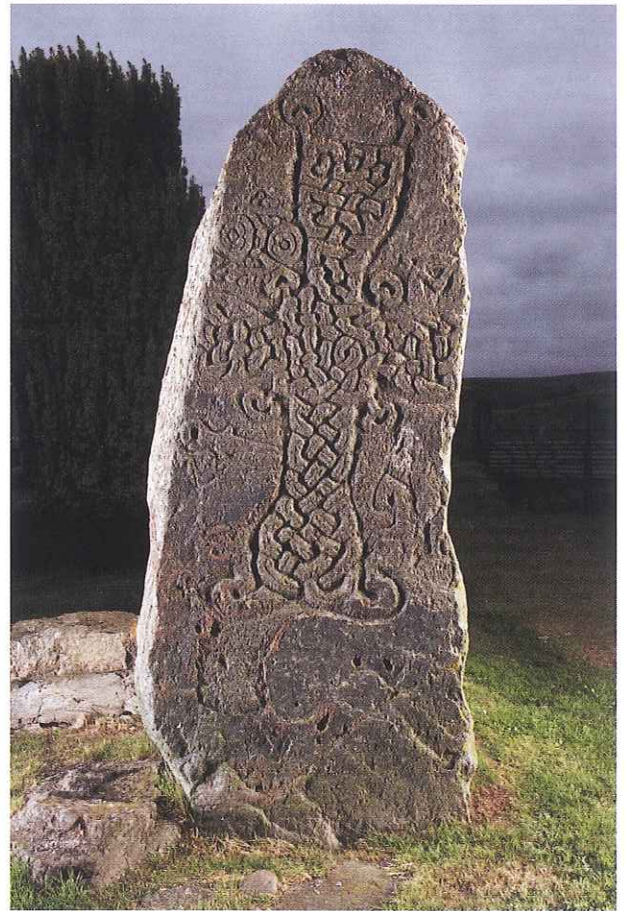
A



B



C



D



E

GLEN BANCHOR

Glen Banchor opens out of the north side of Speyside at the foot of the Monadhliath Mountains, the easterly extension of the Cairngorms. The glen is typically U-shaped in profile with an open valley floor. Five tributaries feed down through steeply incised valleys on the north and west of the glen into the River Calder which empties into the Spey to the south-west of Newtonmore.

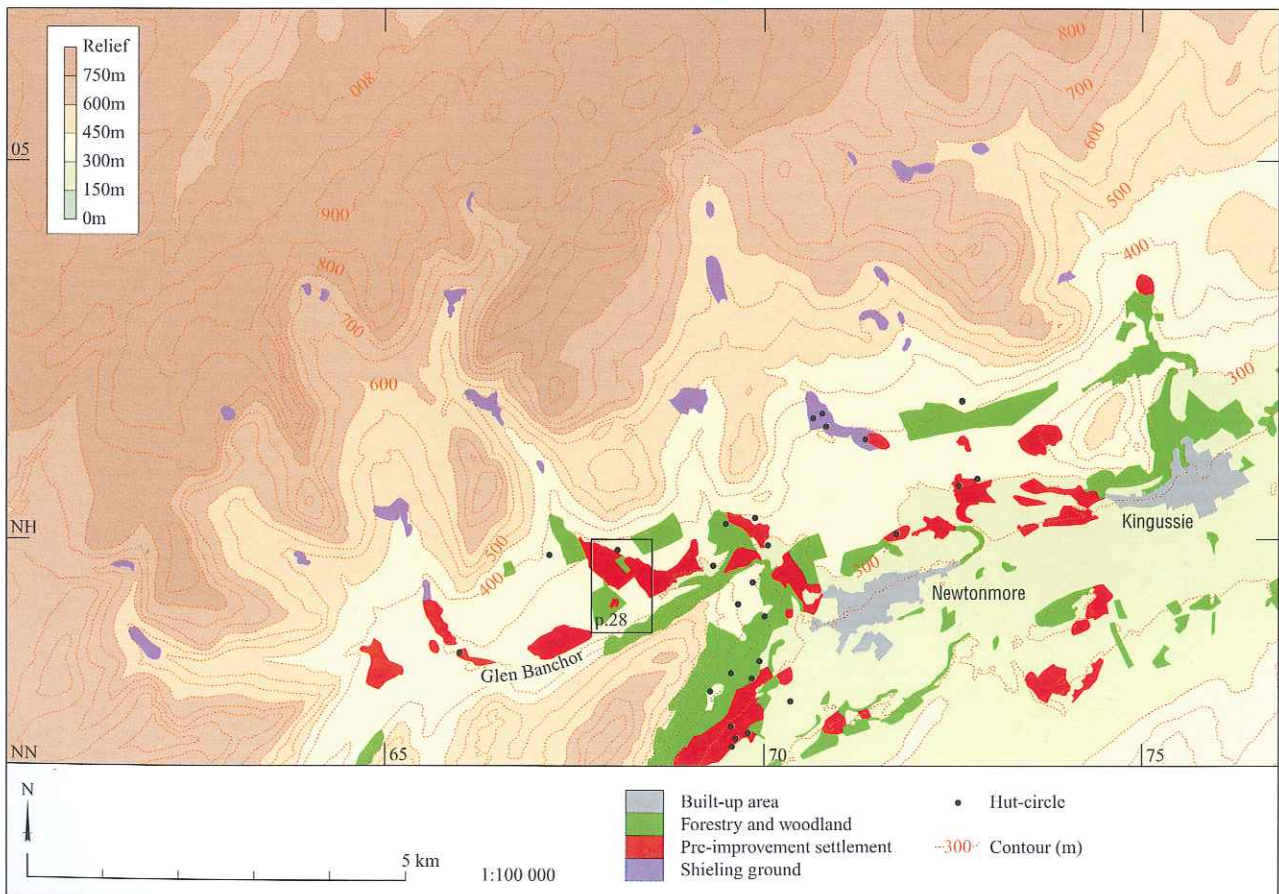
The landscape that we see today, dominated by rough grazing and moorland managed for shooting, is typical of upland areas in the Park. The glen was put over to shooting in the 19th century, with a consequential reduction in arable agriculture, and improved grassland is limited in extent outside the main valley of the Spey. There has been some recent afforestation, and self-seeded birch woodland has established itself along the side of the hillside on the south of the glen. Some of the birch woodland, particularly on the south-facing side of the same hill, has subsumed the remains of prehistoric settlement and agriculture, an indication of the vulnerability of previously cleared ground to regeneration.

As in the Cairngorms generally, the surviving cultural heritage in the glen can be grouped into three main categories: Improvement-period spanning the late 19th century to the present; pre-Improvement remains, mostly of 17th- and 18th-century date; and prehistoric monuments. Improved fields of 19th-century and later date are largely confined to the main valley of the Spey and its flood-plain, with late-19th- and 20th-century remains in the glen limited to several buildings and enclosures associated with a sheepwalk and the management of shooting. The remains of pre-Improvement townships, with adjacent areas of relict cultivation remains enclosed with a stone dyke, and their shielings are the most extensive archaeological remains in Glen Banchor itself. The townships are disposed along the valley floor, while the shieling-huts of

the pre-Improvement pattern of transhumance summer grazing are dispersed along the side valleys, generally in relatively sheltered locations supporting a verdant grassy sward. Visible prehistoric settlement, best illustrated by the distribution of hut-circles, generally lies on a broad terrace beyond the fringes of the pre-Improvement settlements.

Some of these patterns can be seen in greater detail in the area around the township of Glenbanchor. Of the most recent remains, the farmsteading at Glenballoch is the most visible, but it has been given up and the stock which graze the glen are managed from outside the valley. The abandonment of the steading is the tail-end of a process initiated during the second half of the 19th-century as the majority of the population of the glen was cleared. Some of the buildings in the two larger clusters of buildings were occupied in 1872 when the 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey map was published. These locations also provide a focus for the pre-Improvement settlements and these are likely to correspond with the East and West Glenbanchor townships identified on a survey of the Duke of Gordon's estate of 1771. Prehistoric monuments are represented by a hut-circle and a burial cairn. The former lies in rough ground just beyond the limit of pre-improvement cultivation, which might otherwise have destroyed it. The cairn has been robbed to provide building stone for the adjacent farmstead, but, in common with a scatter of larger burial cairns on low-lying areas and even in improved ground, its size has gone some way to ensuring that it was more trouble to remove than work around.

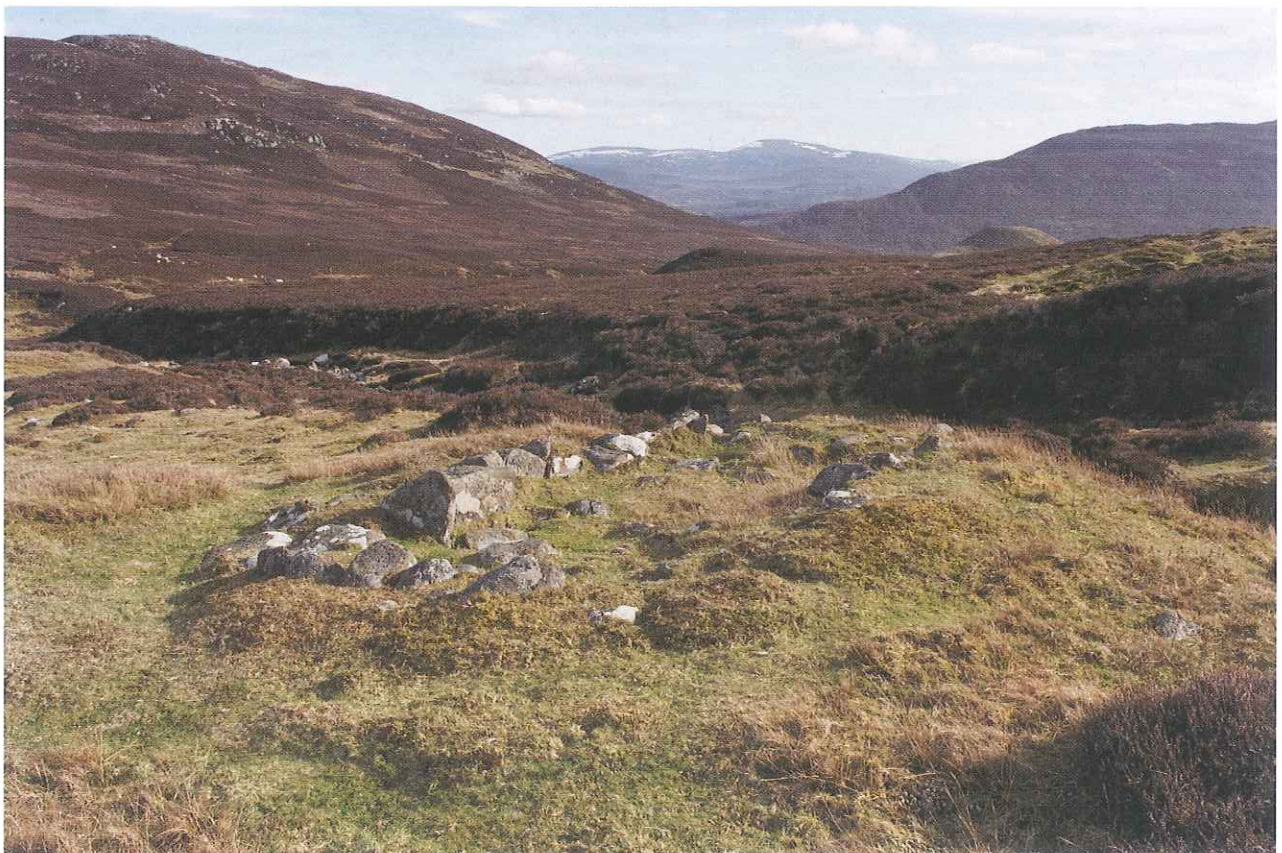
The character of the cultural landscape of the glen, and the survival of individual monuments within it, is likely to be maintained unless landuse changes away from the current regime of management for grazing and shooting, which is generally beneficial for the cultural heritage.



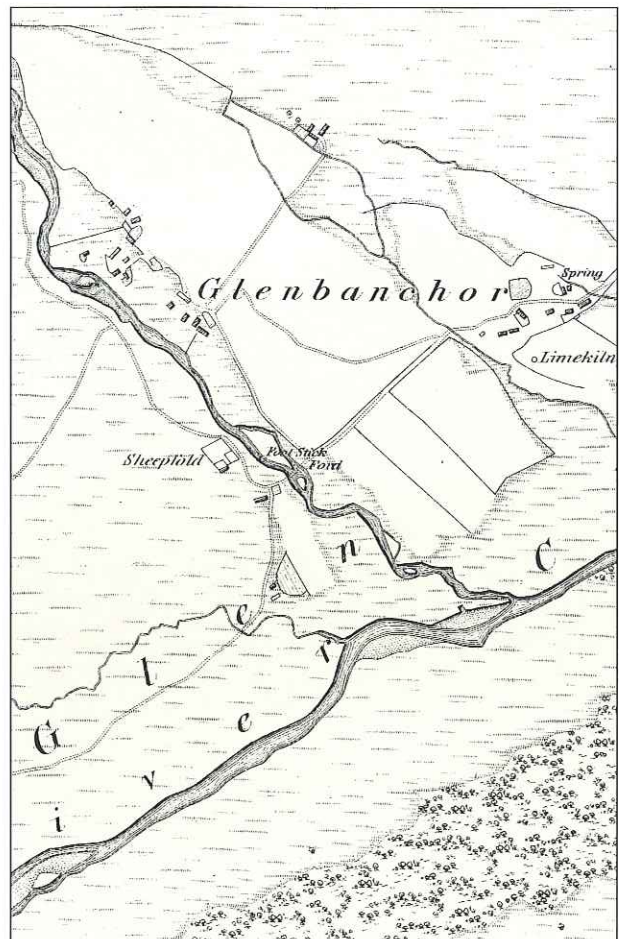
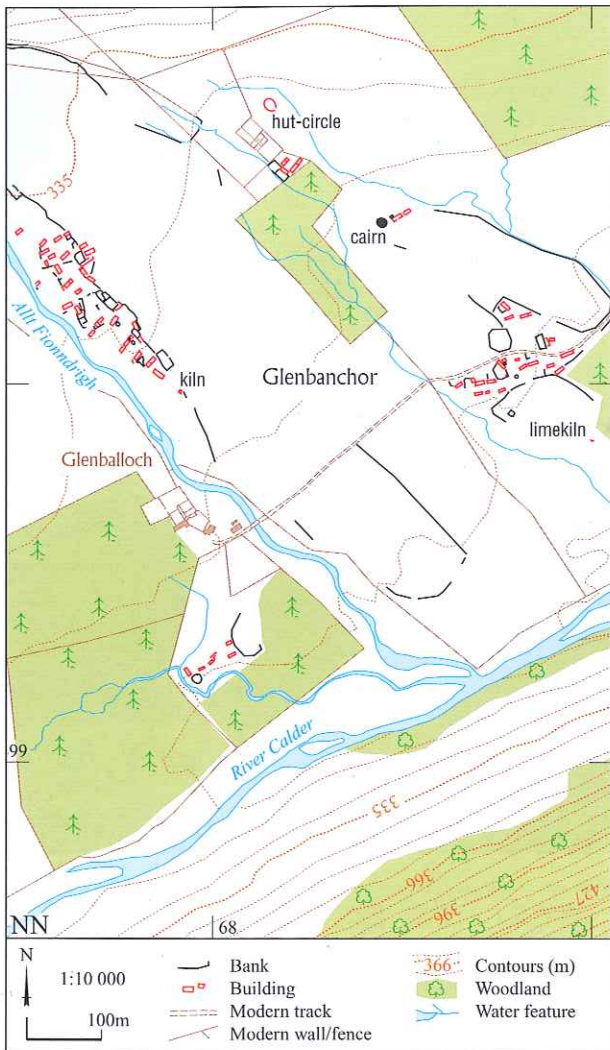
This map of the area around Glen Banchor, Newtonmore, combines an outline of pre-Improvement settlement and shielings derived from field survey by RCAHMS and the HLA, with a distribution of hut-circles recorded by survey in 1995. Pre-Improvement settlement lies along the valley floors, with shielings in the side valleys. The prehistoric hut-circles survive on the fringes of pre-Improvement settlement and have also been discovered in areas of birch woodland, i.e. bottom of the map.



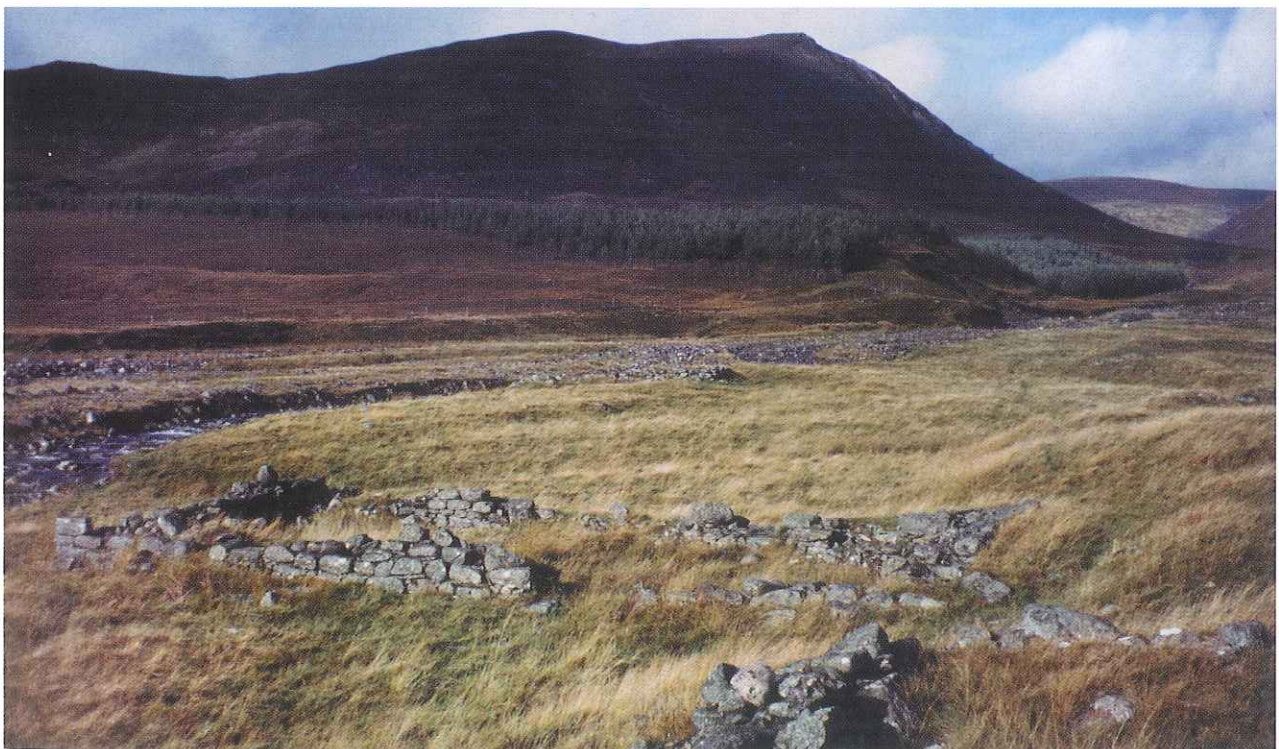
This view shows the wide valley floor of Glen Banchor on which the majority of the townships survive, generally in good condition, with shielings in the side valleys. Small plantations have been established in the glen, and active management is needed if damage to the archaeological remains is to be minimised. SC 621684



This shieling-hut lies beside the Allt a' Chaorainn, one of a series of valleys on the north side of Glen Banchor. SC 621686



These two maps illustrate the importance of collating complementary sources of information in studying the historic landscape. The map on the left depicts the remains that were mapped during survey by RCAHMS in 1995, while on the right there is an extract from the 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey 6-inch map (Inverness-shire 1872, sheet C1). RCAHMS recorded large numbers of buildings not shown on the 1st edition, probably because they had long fallen out of use, while the 1st edition records which buildings were roofed and outlines the disposition of improved ground in 1870 when the map was surveyed.



The low stone footings of this building in Glenbanchor township are typical of those in the glen. Such remains generally survive well under grazing, but are vulnerable to landuse change, particularly afforestation and natural regeneration.

SUMMARY

This report has outlined the influence of human activity on the character of the Cairngorms landscape through time. A diverse range of evidence for past patterns of landuse and settlement survives in the modern landscape, including some of the character of the modern vegetation cover which has been produced by long term human activity in the landscape. Given the altitude of the Cairngorm plateau it is not surprising that there is little evidence of human impact on the highest ground. However, the isolated finds show that people moved throughout the Park area while travelling or hunting from at least 2000 BC and probably much earlier, while the shieling-huts, whose distribution extends to over 800m, demonstrate the continuing significance of the upland zone in the post-medieval period. The extensive areas of managed moorland and rough grazing in upland areas have helped to preserve these remains.

Comparatively, the fertile lowland areas have experienced greater change, and the greater part of the historic component

of this landscape dates to the 18 and 19th centuries. However, there is also considerable potential for archaeological remains to survive beneath the ground surface where they may be detected as vegetation marks from the air or discovered by excavation, or hidden amongst more recent adaptations to much older buildings. This mix of upland management by large sporting estates and lowland agriculture, and the distinctive vernacular buildings traditions of the 19th century combine to give the Cairngorms landscape its unique character. It will be important for future management of the area to continue to reflect this complex cultural history and to conserve the fragmentary archaeological and historic remains within this landscape, recognising that these are a finite resource that cannot be replaced. Yet, while modern landuse places many pressures on the cultural heritage, this need not be incompatible with its protection, conservation and enjoyment.



This aerial view, taken during winter flooding, looks north-east along the Spey, with Loch Insh in the middle distance. The Park area takes in a variety of landscape types, each with a different mix of archaeological features and challenges for management. SC 621612

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Three distinct zones of modern landuse have been identified and described earlier in this report: upland areas of rough grazing and managed moorland; woodland and forestry; and lowland areas. Each zone carries differing implications for the character of the cultural heritage and its effective management. On the significant proportion of the Park area that has long been managed as moorland or rough grazing there are a large number of archaeological remains. This form of land management is generally beneficial to the survival of the cultural heritage, though changes in landuse may threaten this balance. Any significant reduction in grazing in these areas, for example, is likely to have an adverse impact on archaeological features through a concomitant increase in woodland regeneration unless appropriate mitigation is set in place.

Woodland management has been an important aspect of the cultural landscape for many centuries, if not millennia, and presents its own unique management challenges. Plantations, particularly in lowland areas, have helped preserve some monuments, while managed woodlands, such as the pinewoods of the Dee and Spey, are cultural artefacts in themselves. The identification of monuments within woodland, whether by documentary research or survey, is an important step in an integrated approach to management. New planting schemes and natural regeneration also present challenges as they can affect archaeological monuments and historic landscapes preserved by previous management regimes.

Agriculture has both a positive and negative impact on archaeological remains. Land managed for grazing can promote stability for earthwork or stone monuments, such as stone circles or remains of settlement, provided such monuments are not used for feeding or shelter. However, activities associated with arable production, such as deep ploughing and sub-soiling, will gradually erode and eventually

completely destroy even those remains buried beneath the ground surface. Indeed, much has already been lost in lowland areas, including remains from the more recent past. As this zone has always been the major focus for settlement, it is important to manage what survives in the best possible condition.

Diversity and local distinctiveness is recognised as an important aspect of the cultural landscape and it is important that the character of the Park area is respected when further development is taking place. The National Planning Policy Guidance for the Historic Environment (NPPG 18) and for Archaeology (NPPG 5) give advice on how to ensure that the essential character of an area is retained while enabling necessary change to take place. Whatever arrangements are set in place to manage planning in the National Park, these issues can be considered in detail through the development planning and control process, and the provision of tools such as landscape character assessments and design guides to ensure continuity of a sense of place and vernacular architectural traditions.

The natural heritage of the Cairngorms is diverse and recognised for its international importance. It will be evident, even from the broad overview presented above, that the cultural heritage is also diverse and of considerable importance. The management of both the natural and cultural heritage can go hand in hand and in many cases there can be a positive symbiosis between the two. Cultural heritage can provide important habitats for flora and fauna, for example, while natural habits can contain important cultural evidence. Their management can, therefore, be integrated; for example, organic remains that form evidence of past human occupation, such as crannog sites, can be enhanced by stabilisation of water levels in a wetland habitat. It will be important to ensure the potential for positive integration of management strategies



The proposed Park runs from lowland farmland, dotted with farms and woodland, to high plateaux and mountain tops. This diversity is reflected in the variety of archaeological remains, aspects of which have been illustrated in this report. Maintaining this diversity will be one of the challenges in the future management of the Park. SC 621697

for both the natural heritage and the cultural heritage is fully embraced.

Existing guidelines and grant schemes can assist in establishing appropriate management for the cultural landscape in general and for specific features within it. They also help towards integrating the management of the cultural heritage with other conservation and land management objectives. These will be an important tool for the National Park Authority to use, and develop, if it wishes to ensure that its cultural heritage is managed sustainably for present and future generations.

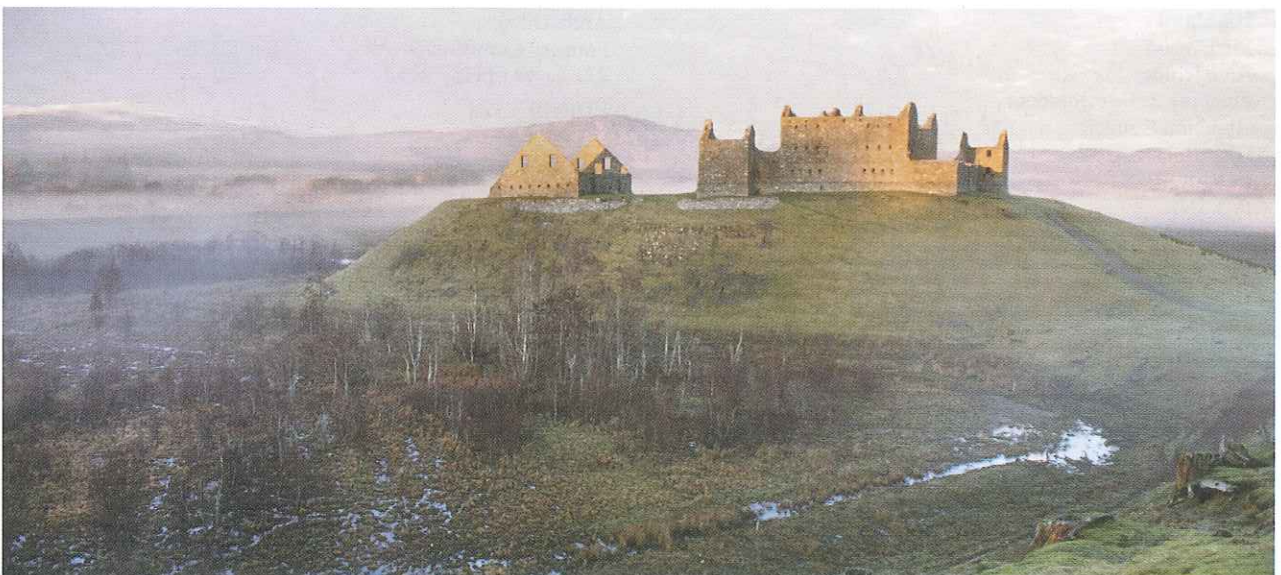
The cultural heritage is one of the special qualities of the Cairngorms, and its understanding and enjoyment must be seen as a management priority. There is a wealth of evidence for human occupation and use through time that can be interpreted for all ages and nationalities. Visitors to the Park should be able to appreciate both the present landscape and those landscapes of the past as places where people lived and

worked, not only through its buildings and field monuments, but also through the wider patterns of land use and settlement. The aesthetic and educational qualities of these landscapes can make a significant contribution to the economy of the Park through tourism. Existing centres, such as Ruthven Barracks and the Highland Folk Museum at Kingussie, already draw many visitors to the area, but there is considerable potential to demonstrate and explain the long history of human settlement in the Cairngorms more fully through the full range of the cultural heritage. Long term planning of visitor management is essential both to enhance the visitor's experience and, at the same time, to ensure that this valuable resource is not lost through visitor pressure.

In achieving the aims for the National Park, one major challenge facing the Park Authority will be how to balance continuity from the past with change for the future and to ensure that the rich tapestry left by millennia of human activity is effectively conserved for future generations to enjoy.



This aerial view looking westwards along the Dee from near Braemar illustrates the management regimes within the Cairngorms, which include game, farming, woodland and recreation. Each has differing implications for the management of the cultural heritage. SC 621583



Ruthven Barracks, in the care of Historic Scotland, is a major tourist attraction in Speyside. Alongside other attractions, such as the Highland Folk Museum, these monuments have an important role in explaining our cultural heritage. © Historic Scotland

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

RCAHMS 1990

North-east Perth: an archaeological landscape
HMSO

RCAHMS 1995

Mar Lodge Estate, Grampian: an archaeological survey
Edinburgh

RCAHMS & Historic Scotland 2000

The Historic Landscape of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs
Edinburgh

SNH 2000

A proposal for a Cairngorms National Park
A consultation by Scottish Natural Heritage on behalf of the
Scottish Executive under Section 3 of the National Parks
(Scotland) Act 2000

Smout, T C & Lambert, RA (eds) 1999

*Rothiemurchus - Nature and People on a Highland Estate
1500-2000*
Scottish Cultural Press

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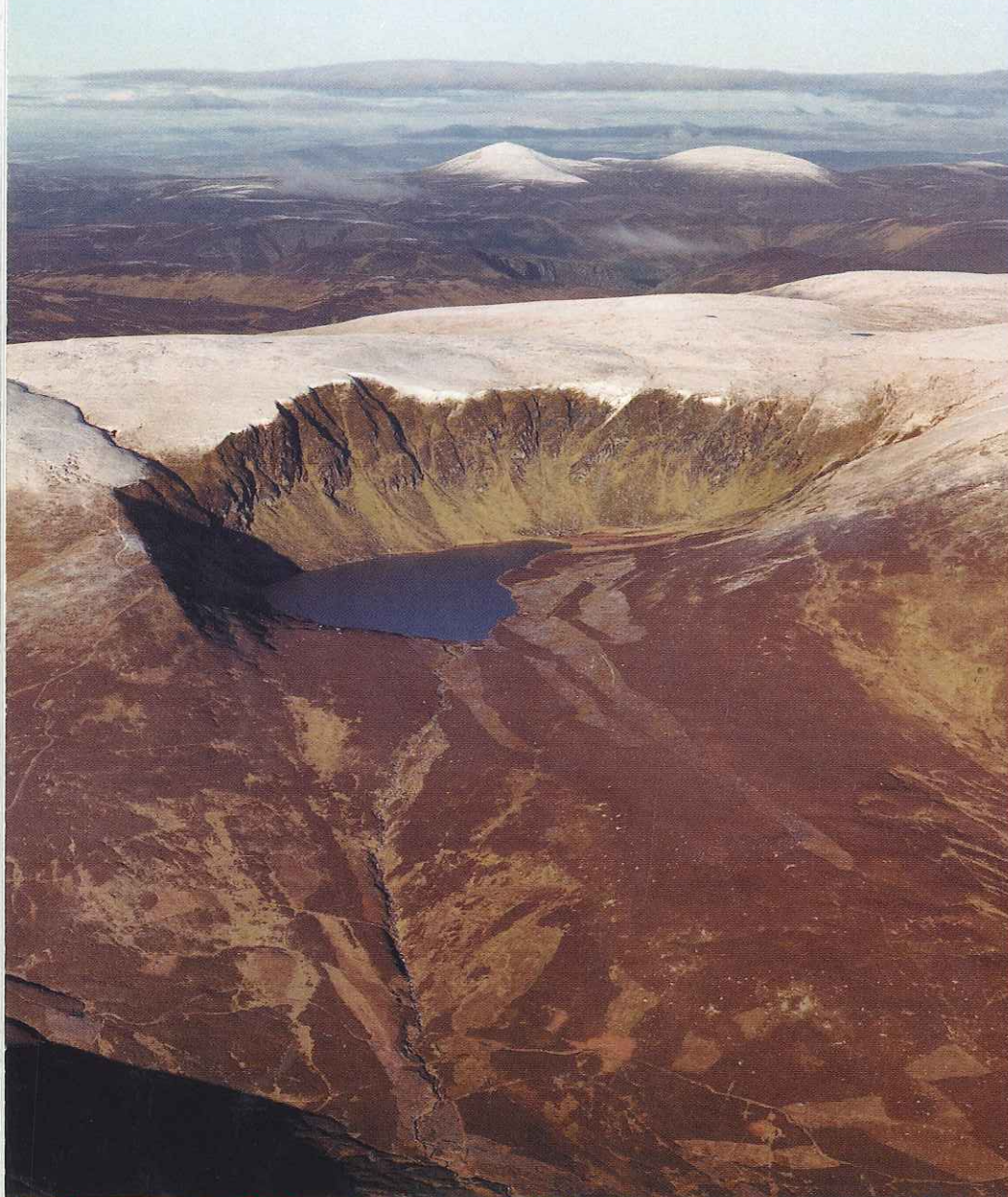
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Lying at the heart of Scotland, the Cairngorm area has long attracted visitors to enjoy its natural heritage. The human impact on the landscape of this area has, however, received less attention, but is of national importance in its own right. The proposals to designate a National Park centred on the Cairngorm Mountains has provided an opportunity to present a general overview of this important historic landscape. Drawing together the diverse strands of past landuse from prehistory to the present, this report illustrates the fundamental role archaeology can play in the understanding of this landscape and will be of interest to the general reader as well as heritage managers.

