

6. CONCLUSION

The excavations at Lower Slackbuie revealed a site that undoubtedly formed part of a busy wider prehistoric landscape. The Neolithic pits give an insight into depositional practices and the possible curation of material. The distinctive polished stone axehead and the later Neolithic Grooved Ware indicate links to and participation in wider cultural networks. The evidence for early flax cultivation is rare in Scotland, with the occupants making use of the fertile soils in the region. The later prehistoric phase is a palimpsest of activity, with a possible earlier phase of settlement overlain by a central roundhouse and palisade. The lack of stratigraphic and chronological resolution makes a detailed

analysis of the phasing problematic. The small number of radiocarbon dates fall on the Hallstatt plateau but nevertheless indicate activity in the earlier Iron Age. A comparison of the roundhouses from the site with others from across the region supports the interpretation that the majority of features date from the later Bronze Age to the Iron Age. There is extensive evidence for Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement at neighbouring sites. The features excavated by Headland Archaeology at Lower Slackbuie are likely linked to those immediately to the west at Lower Slackbuie (Garry 2015), further west of the A8082 at Slackbuie (Farrell 2010) and to the east (Fyles 2007), indicating a thriving later prehistoric community.