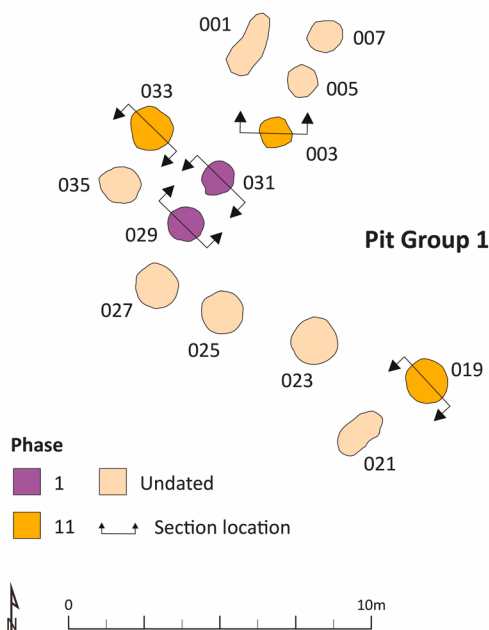


### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK AT CRAGGAN

Twelve phases of activity were identified at Craggan through excavation and post-excavation analyses.

#### 3.1 Phase 1 Mesolithic-Neolithic transition

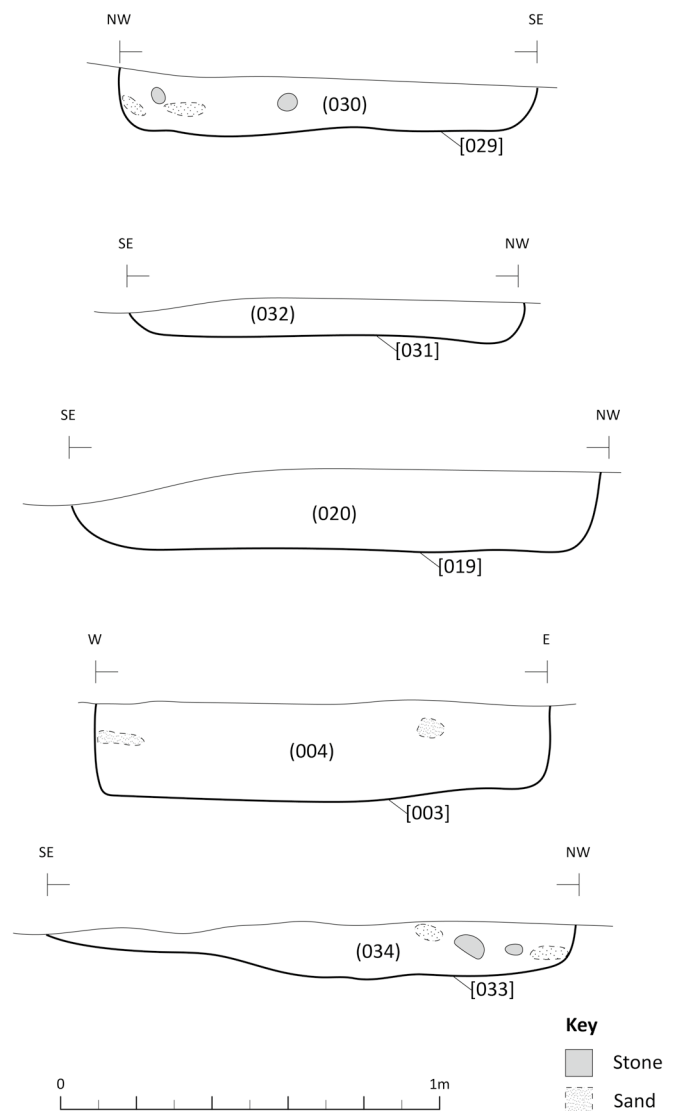
The earliest evidence for activity identified on-site relates to the Mesolithic-Neolithic transition. The material identified is likely residual material which had been deposited into later features (Illus 3). A radiocarbon date of 4241–4049 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-104057) was obtained from pine charcoal from the fill of pit [031], and pit [029] contained a Late Mesolithic lithic (see below). The pits from which this material came are part of an L-shaped pit alignment (Illus 4); most of the pits within this alignment were sterile of finds and ecofacts and contained lenses of windblown sand, suggesting they were likely left open and gradually infilled. It is thought that this L-shaped pit alignment is medieval in date and it is discussed further below.



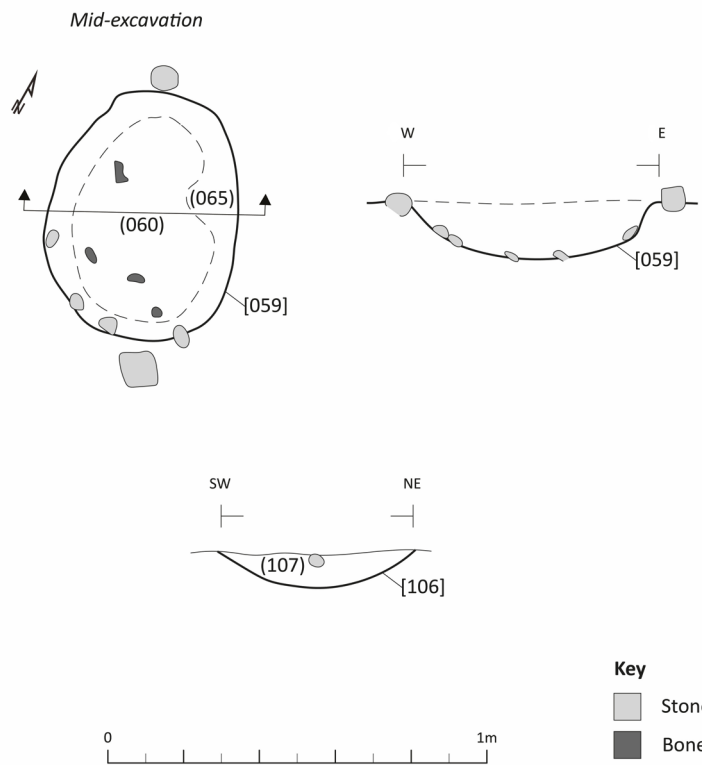
**Illus 3** Plan of Pit Group 1 (Lindsey Stirling, AOC Archaeology)

#### 3.2 Phase 2 Late Neolithic

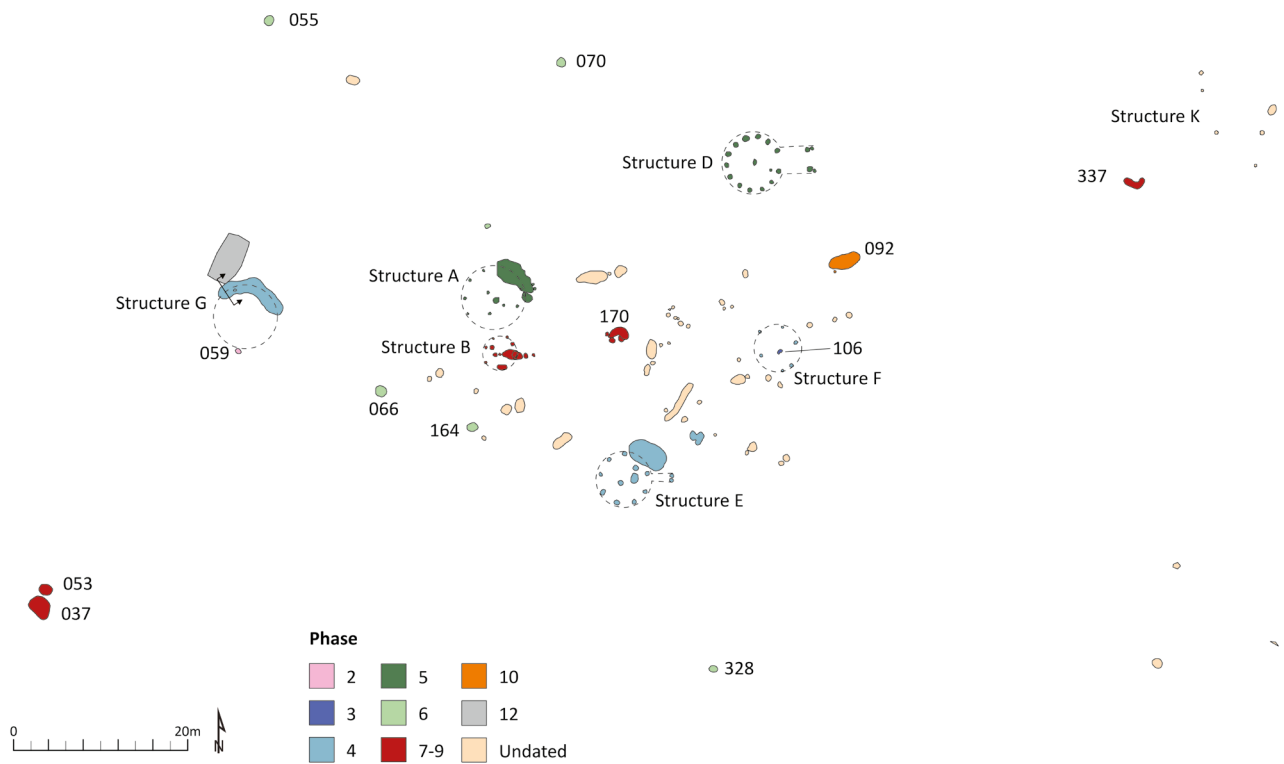
The second phase of activity is represented by a single isolated oval pit, [059], located in the area of later Structure G (Illus 5 and 6), which contained cremated human bone dated to between 2915 and 2774 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-104060). Analysis of the cremated remains determined the presence of at least one adult, possibly a male under the age of 50 (see Section 5 Cremated Human Skeletal Remains, below).



**Illus 4** Section drawings of Pit Group 1 (Lindsey Stirling, AOC Archaeology)



**Illus 5** Drawings of cremation (060) and fire pit [106] (Lindsey Stirling, AOC Archaeology)



**Illus 6** Plan of Structures A, B, D to G, and K (Lindsey Stirling, AOC Archaeology)

### 3.3 Phase 3 Late Bronze Age

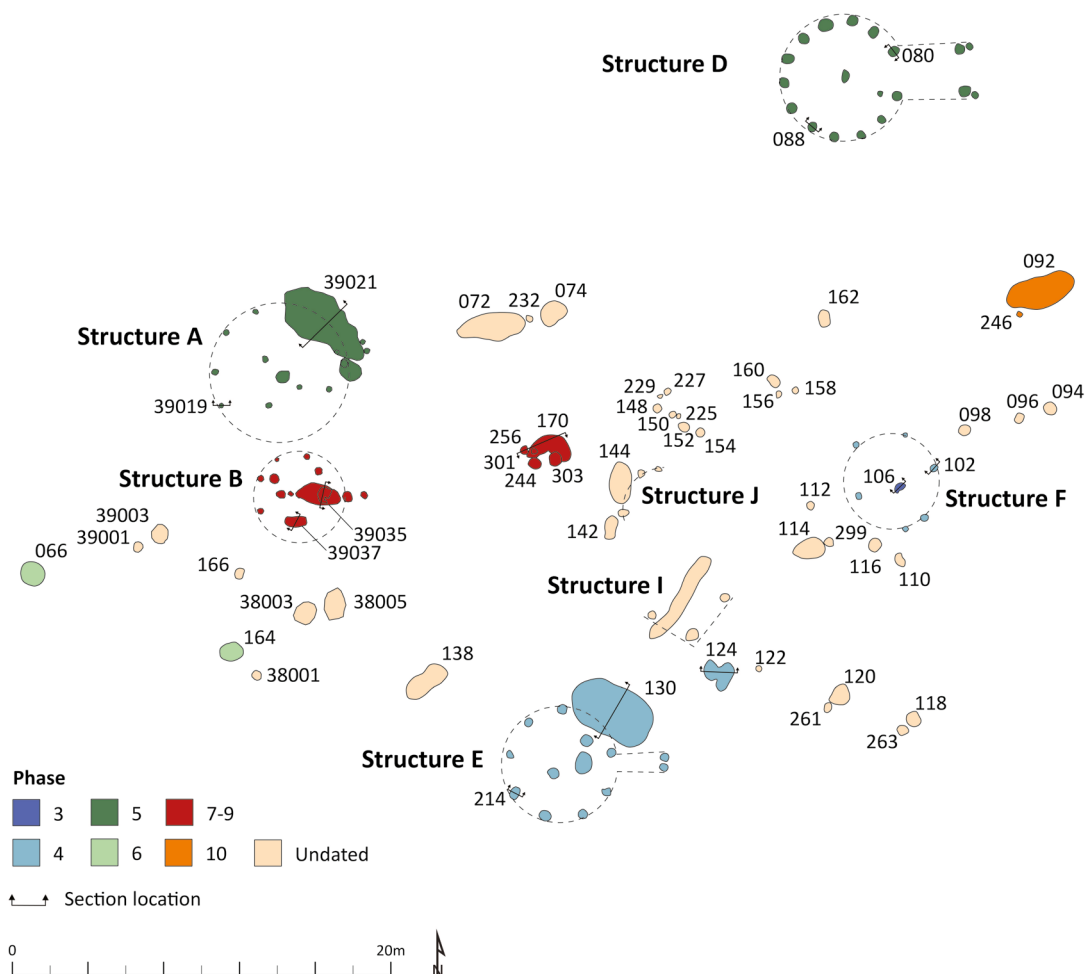
A single Late Bronze Age date was obtained from pit [106], located at the northern end of the site (Illus 5, 6, and 7). A large fragment of pine, which likely represented a post or structural element, was dated to 903–808 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-104035). This feature was originally interpreted as a very shallow and truncated fire pit within a roundhouse structure (see Structure F). Due to the shallow and truncated nature of the feature, it is likely that it was not a part of Structure F but happens to be placed near it. This is the only feature that was dated to the Late Bronze Age on this site and it suggests that there was some activity on or near the site in this time period, but no larger-scale settlement.

### 3.4 Phase 4 Middle Iron Age

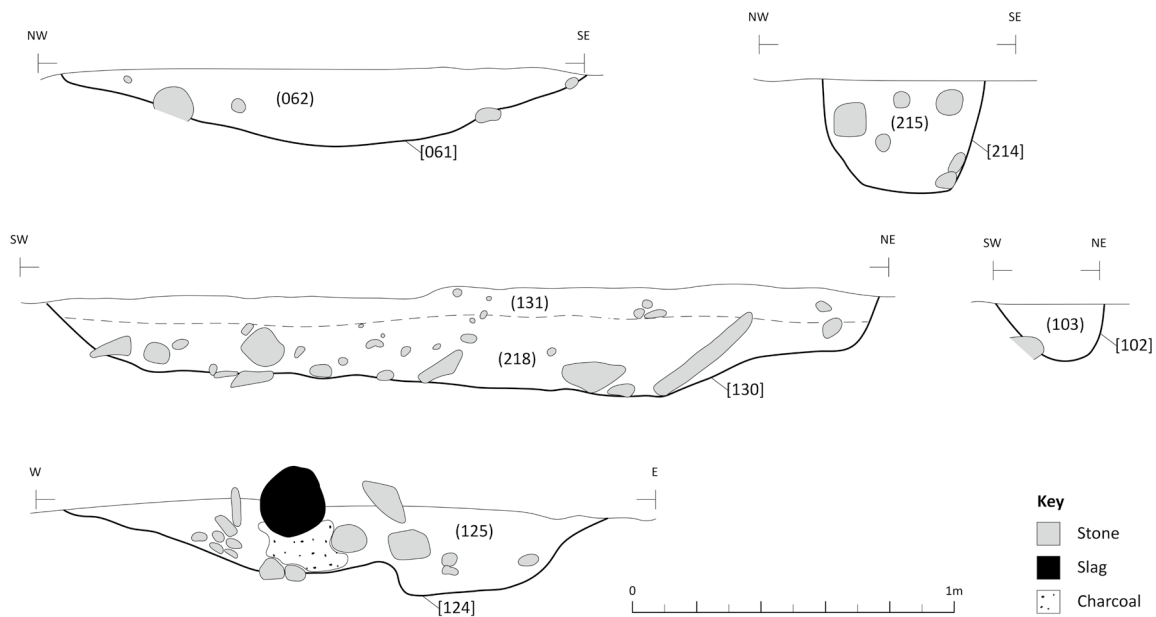
Three post-defined structures were dated to the Middle Iron Age: Structures E, F, and G.

#### 3.4.1 Structure F

Structure F was a small, heavily truncated sub-circular structure, measuring 5.5m NW/SE by 4.6m NE/SW and comprising six postholes, located in the north of the site (Illus 7 and 8). Material from posthole [102] dated to between 400 and 209 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-104036) indicate that the roundhouse was constructed and in use in the Middle Iron Age.



**Illus 7** Plan of Structures A, B, D, E, F, I, and J (Lindsey Stirling, AOC Archaeology)



**Illus 8** Section drawings of Structures E, F, and G (Lindsey Stirling, AOC Archaeology)

### 3.4.2 Structure E

Structure E comprised eight postholes, which together formed the post ring of a roundhouse measuring 6.1m in diameter (Illus 7 and 8). Most of the postholes contained burnt cereal and charcoal, representing redeposited domestic and fuel waste. Posthole [214] contained birch charcoal dating to between 336 and 51 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-104034), which could be the remains of a structural post or stake. Due to the dated charcoal possibly being part of a structural element, this date may closely relate to the construction and use of the feature, indicating the roundhouse was constructed in the Middle Iron Age and was broadly contemporary with Structure F. Two postholes were located to the east and likely formed a porch with an entrance to the east.

A substantial segment of ring ditch [130] was identified on the north-east edge of the post ring, which was associated with activities taking place within the roundhouse structure. At the base of the ditch, a thin basal fill (259) had formed, containing burnt mammal bones and runned slag as well as domestic food and fuel waste. Overlying this fill was a series of 12 large flat stones [258]

(mostly schist or granite) that had been laid along the base of the ditch to form a flat surface, likely for a working platform (Illus 9). At the northern end of the structure, the stones sloped downwards, suggesting the surface had slumped either during use or after the structure was abandoned. Above the stone surface, yellowish brown silt deposit (218) contained an iron fragment (RT218) as well as burnt mammal bones and domestic food and fuel waste. A fragment of alder charcoal, from this lower sealed deposit was dated to between 196 and 43 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-104030). Fill (218) was then sealed by greyish brown silty sand fill (131), which contained burnt mammal bone, domestic food and fuel waste, as well as runned and mixed slag. Micromorphological analysis of these infill deposits shows they accumulated in an open and exposed environment, subject to chemical and biological weathering processes (L Roy 2022). They likely formed over a long period of time as material in the vicinity of the feature silted into the hollow once the structure was no longer maintained. Within the post ring of Structure E, three internal features (unlabelled on Illus 7) were identified: one posthole, [240], and two possible hearth features, [132] and [134].





**Illus 9** Ring ditch of Structure E showing the stone surface [258], facing northwest (AOC Archaeology)

#### 3.4.3 Metalworking feature

Directly to the north-east of Structure E, a small truncated ironworking furnace [124] was identified (Illus 7 and 8). It was filled with several different types of metalworking waste, including large fragments of smelting furnace bottom, runned slag, unclassified iron slag, and atypical slag spheres, as well as frequent charcoal (see Section 8. The Metal, below). One oat grain, four six-row hulled barley, one barley, and two hazelnut shell fragments were also identified, which were likely reworked into the furnace after it went out of use. Charcoal from this feature dated to between 361 and 154 cal BC (at 95% probability; SUERC-104048), indicating iron metalworking related to smelting was taking place in the Middle Iron Age, broadly contemporaneous with the Middle Iron Age structures.

#### 3.4.4 Structure G

Structure G comprised a segment of curvilinear ditch [061] with a single small posthole cut

into the southern edge, towards the western end (Illus 6 and 8) of the site. These features likely formed another roundhouse which had later been truncated. The ring ditch and postholes contained domestic food and fuel waste, which was likely unintentionally deposited once the structure went out of use. Micromorphological analysis of the ring ditch infill deposits shows that, similarly to Structure E, the fill accumulated in an open and exposed environment subject to chemical and biological weathering processes, indicating that the ring ditch filled in with surrounding material slowly after it was no longer maintained (L Roy 2022). Two dates were obtained from this feature, one between 394 and 208 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-104037) and the other between 196 and 46 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-104038), which indicates the feature was in use in the Middle Iron Age.

Activity on-site in the Middle Iron Age was therefore evidenced by a settlement of at least three roundhouse structures utilised for domestic activities, such as cooking, food processing, and small-scale ironworking.

### 3.5 Phase 5 Late Iron Age

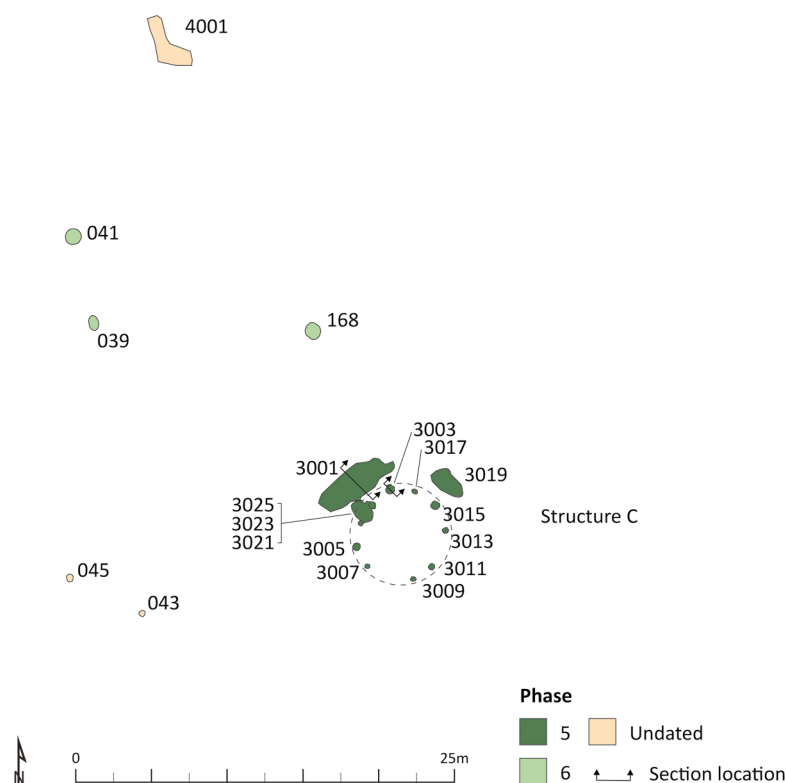
#### 3.5.1 Structure C

Structure C was located at the southern edge of the site, on a flat terrace on the edge of steeply sloping ground overlooking the River Spey. It comprised ten postholes, which formed a 5.7m diameter post ring, with an entrance either to the west or to the south (Illus 10 and 11). Most of the postholes had significant quantities of burnt cereal and charcoal, which related to redeposited refuse. A sample of hulled barley caryopsis from the fill of posthole [3003] was dated to cal AD 20–206 (95% probability; SUERC-95364), indicating the structure was likely constructed and in use in the Late Iron Age.

Two segments of a ring ditch, [3001] and [3019], were located along the northwest and northeast edge of the post ring. The larger ring ditch segment, [3001], contained three lower stones from a rotary quern (SF 01, SF 02, and SF 03), which appeared to have been deliberately placed in a line along the base of the feature (see below; Illus 12). The deposition of these querns occurred during construction as they

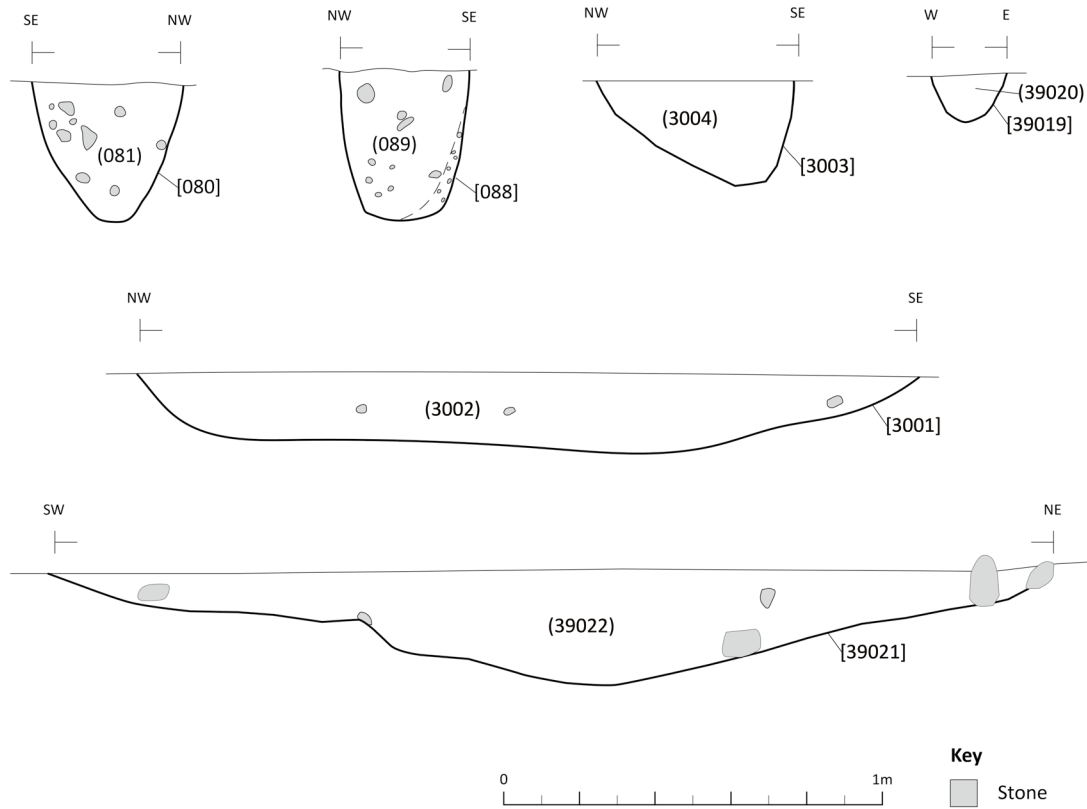
were placed on the base of the feature, therefore suggesting that this building was primarily for grain processing. It also contained an iron nail or hinge pin (SF 05), and a fragment of a possible sheet-iron vessel (RT3002; see below). One of the largest assemblages of charred macroplant remains from the site was recovered from this feature. The macroplant assemblage comprised mostly six-row hulled barley, barley, and some naked barley, as well as a very small number of oats. Additionally, two hazelnut shells, three fragments of heather, and three fat hen seeds were identified. These remains and the quernstone assemblage suggest this structure was used to grind grain, perhaps on a relatively large scale. The fill also contained charcoal, including a fragment of possible alder post or stake that was dated to cal AD 68–217 (95% probability; SUERC-95363). This suggests the roundhouse was constructed and in use during the Late Iron Age.

The second segment of ring ditch, [3019], contained the largest concentration of cereal caryopses from the site. This part of the ditch was likely related to the deliberate disposal of food waste,



**Illus 10** Plan of Structure C (Lindsey Stirling, AOC Archaeology)





**Illus 11** Section drawings for Structures A, C, and D (Lindsey Stirling, AOC Archaeology)



**Illus 12** Mid-excavation view of Structure C, facing east (AOC Archaeology)

either during the use of the roundhouse or as it went out of use. A large assemblage of charcoal, including hazel roundwood and a possible iron knife blade tip (RT3020), was also identified in the fill of the ring ditch.

Pit [3023] truncated the ring ditch [3001] and the post ring, indicating it was likely cut during or after the use of the roundhouse. Pit [3023] also contained a large macroplant assemblage and charcoal, likely representing deposition of waste material.

### 3.5.2 Structure A

Structure A was located to the east of Middle Iron Age Structure G (Illus 6) and consisted of a truncated post ring with at least four definite postholes, however, the remaining southern half was likely truncated by later activity (see Structure B). The structure that these postholes formed would have been at least 6.3m in diameter and likely formed a roundhouse similar to the better-preserved examples elsewhere on the site (Illus 7). Posthole [39019] contained cereal caryopses dating to cal AD 29–211 (95% probability; SUERC-95365), indicating the roundhouse likely dates to the Late Iron Age.

A segment of curvilinear ditch [39021] was identified on the northeast corner of the post ring, likely representing the truncated remains of a ring ditch (Illus 11). It contained birch charcoal (which may have formed part of a post), some hazel charcoal and cereal, representing the remains of food debris reworked into the ditch, and the upper stone of a rotary quern (SF 04; see below). Material from this feature dated to cal AD 893–1015 (95% probability; SUERC-95366), considerably later than the date from the post ring. As the curvilinear ditch respects the post ring and is in a similar location to where ring ditches have been found in the other roundhouses, the date was likely from intrusive material which might have come from the early medieval Structure B.

Four small postholes were identified at the southwest end of ring ditch [39021], on the edge of the feature. They likely represent a small structure arranged around the ring ditch, perhaps a screen or other partition related to the activities taking place in this part of the roundhouse. Pit [39047] could have been a continuation of ditch [39021]. Within the structure, four postholes and one pit were

identified, which likely relate to internal structures, such as partitions or an internal post ring related to roof support.

### 3.5.3 Structure D

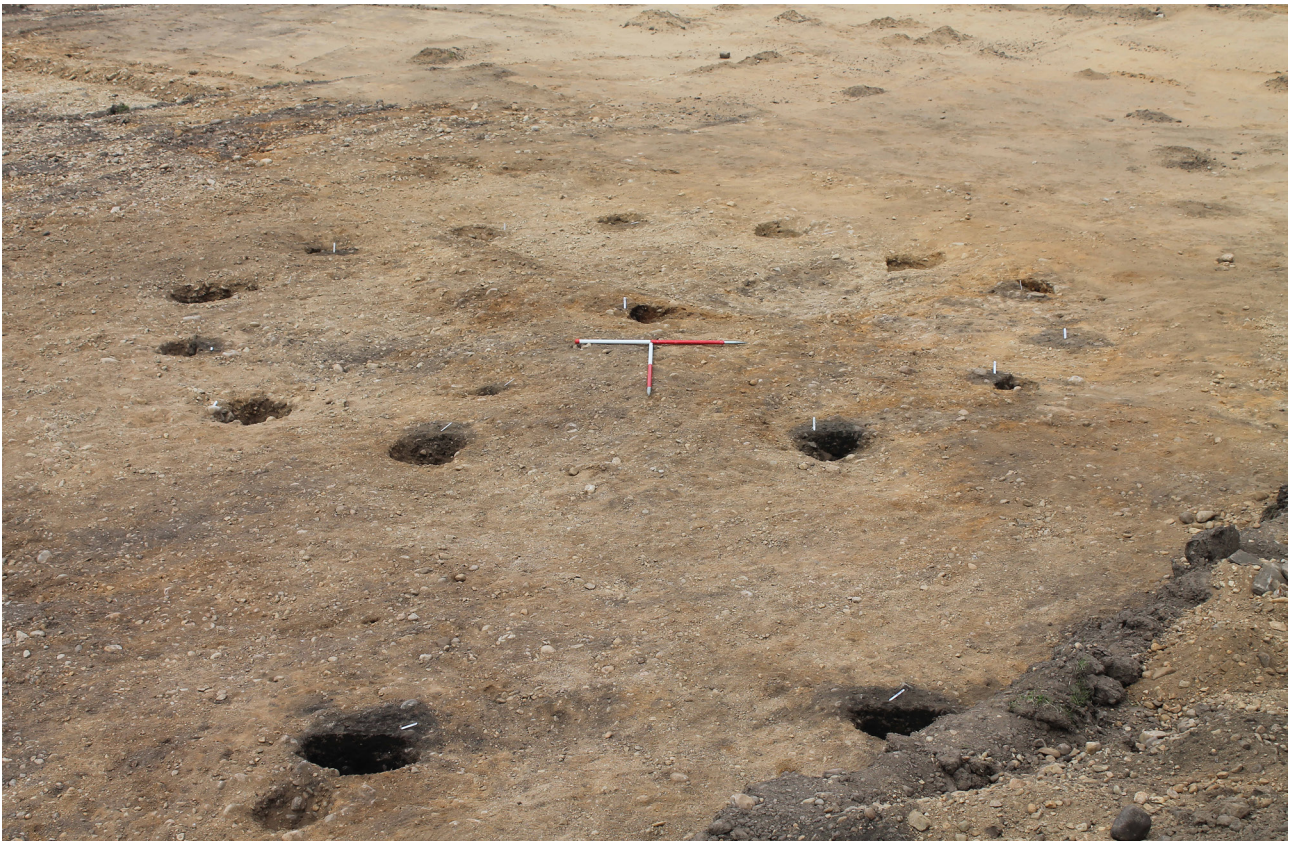
Structure D was located slightly to the northeast of the focus of the Middle Iron Age settlement and comprised 13 postholes, which formed a 6.5m diameter post ring (Illus 7, 11, and 13). A substantial porch was identified to the east of the post ring, which comprised two large postholes, with two small postholes or pits set next to them. Six of the postholes of the post ring had a visible post pipe. The post packing fills had rare burnt bone and one posthole contained runned slag. The fill of posthole [082] also contained a natural mica-rich schist cobble (SF 19) with a severely heat-affected face (see Section 7 below). Radiocarbon dates were obtained from two postholes: charcoal from posthole [080] was dated to cal AD 120–237 (95% probability; SUERC-104028) while alder charcoal from posthole [088] was dated to cal AD 70–216 (95% probability; SUERC-104029), indicating that the structure was likely constructed and in use during the Late Iron Age, broadly contemporary with Structures A and C. Two internal features were identified: pit [315] in the centre of the post ring, which may have represented a very truncated internal hearth or fire pit, and internal posthole [178].

Structures A, C, and D represent three roundhouses of similar construction, two of which were placed close to the Middle Iron Age settlement, while one was located down the slope overlooking the River Spey. The specific location of the structures, respecting the location of the Middle Iron Age settlement, suggests that remains of this earlier settlement may have been visible at the time the Late Iron Age settlement was constructed. The radiocarbon dates from both settlement phases indicate two distinct periods of activity, perhaps with a short pause in activity between the Middle Iron Age and Late Iron Age phases.

## 3.6 Phase 6 early medieval

Two pits had charred material dating to Phase 6, post-dating the Late Iron Age settlement. One of these, fire pit [039], was located on its own about





**Illus 13** Post-excavation view of Structure D, facing east (AOC Archaeology)

22m northwest of Structure C, at the south end of the site (Illus 10). It contained fire-cracked stones and birch charcoal dating to between cal AD 265 and 536 (95% probability; SUERC-104047), perhaps representing the remains of a structural element. In close proximity, two more fire pits, [041] and [168], were identified which also contained fire-cracked stones and birch charcoal as well as evidence for wattle screens, providing more evidence for burnt structural remains (Illus 10). All three pits had a similar shape in plan and profile and had a similar function and therefore it could be suggested that they were contemporary. Other fire pits identified on site with charcoal that suggest structural elements include [055], [168], and [199]. The seemingly isolated nature of these fire pits could indicate successive, short-term use of the site, or perhaps that settlement activity occurred within structures that have not left an archaeological trace, for example, turf or earth-built structures.

Pit [273] was located in the middle of the site, north of Structure C (Illus 14). It had two fills: the basal dark grey silt fill (307) contained cereal

caryopses and hazel roundwood, while the upper brown sandy silt fill, (274), contained six-row hulled barley, poorly preserved cereal caryopses and a hazel roundwood fragment, representing a possible structural element. The fills likely represent remains of redeposited food waste, and the charcoal could possibly relate to a wattle screen. This material dated to between cal AD 420 and 542 (95% probability; SUERC-104045), indicating some form of settlement activity involving food processing around the 5th to 6th centuries AD.

Although only a limited number of the fire pits were dated, evidence of food processing waste, wattle, and other roundwood structures indicate settlement-related activities persisted after the Late Iron Age settlement in the southern section of the site. These features demonstrate there was either continued or, perhaps more likely, intermittent settlement activity between the 3rd and 6th centuries AD. It is possible that the settlement's nature or scale changed, or the type of structures evolved, leaving less archaeological evidence than the substantial post-built roundhouses observed in the Late Iron Age.

### 3.7 Phases 7 to 9 early medieval

Phases 7–9, which may form a single, relatively prolonged period of activity, were represented by several features, primarily located across the north of the site, dating to the early medieval period.

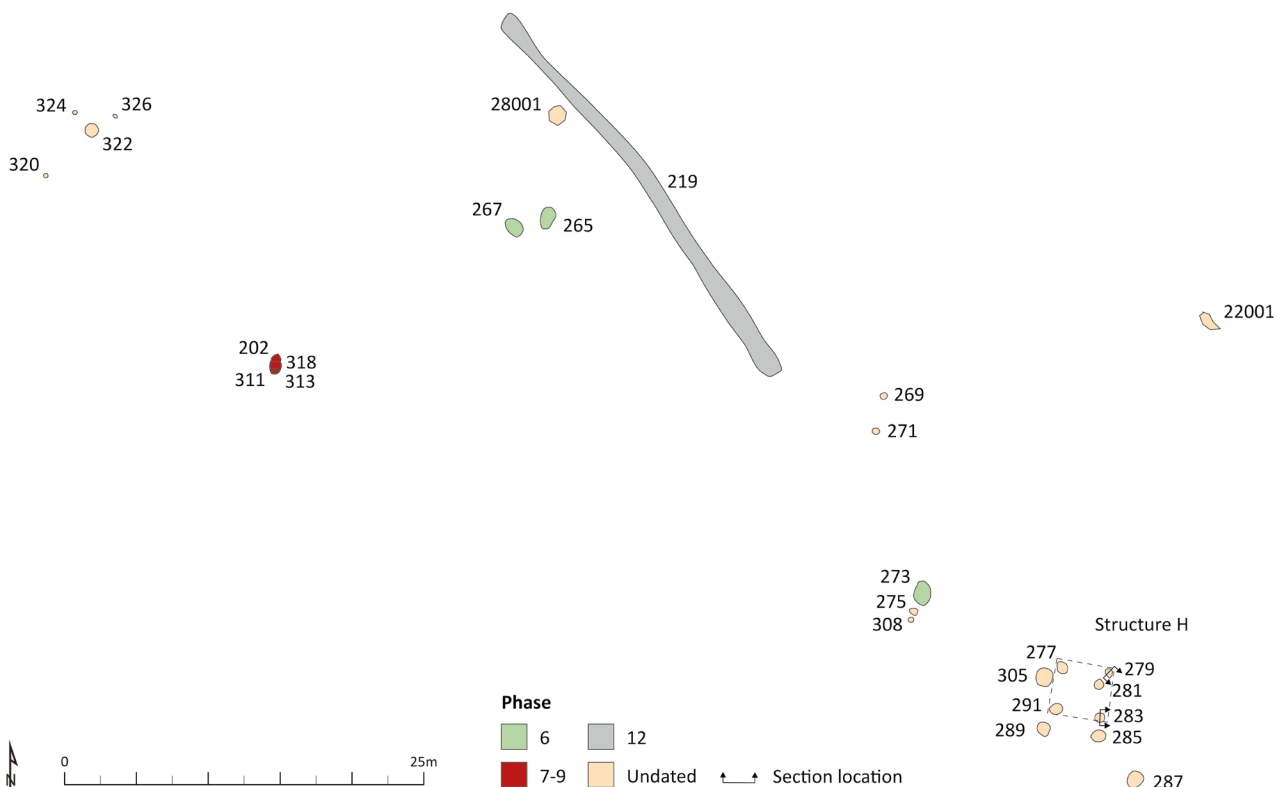
#### 3.7.1 Pit Group 2

Pit Group 2 comprised four features, located in the northwest of the site and cut into natural sand deposits, unlike most of the other features, which were located on low gravel rises (Illus 15 and 16). The features were mostly sub-circular with a bowl-shaped profile and measured 0.4m to 0.45m wide and 0.8m to 1m long. Pit [017] was sub-circular at one end with a curvilinear continuation. The fills of these pits were generally composed of light reddish yellow sand with frequent charcoal and heat-affected redeposited subsoil. The macroplant and charcoal assemblages from these features was very similar and comprised cereal and charcoal derived from domestic food and fuel waste. The cereal assemblage from these features was large, with most having been

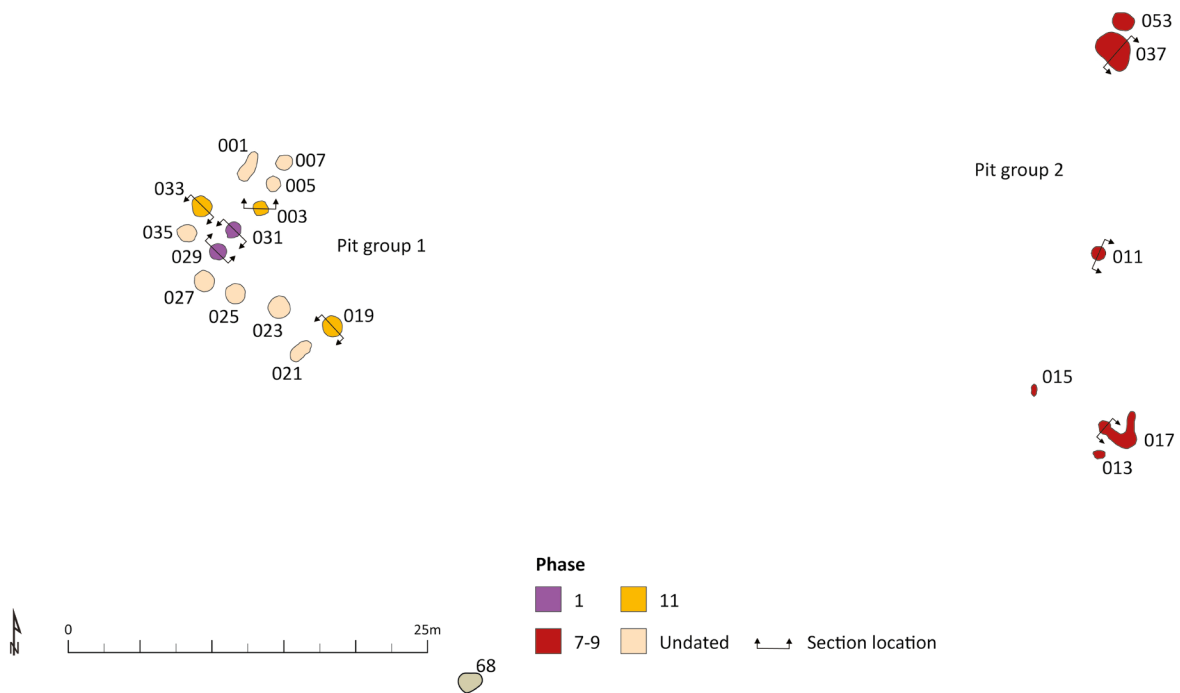
found in pits [011] (400 caryopses) and [017] (183 caryopses). A sample of hulled barley caryopsis from pit [011] dated to cal AD 657–775 (95% probability; SUERC-104058). Birch charcoal from adjacent feature [017] had a similar date of cal AD 663–776 (95% probability; SUERC-104059). This feature contained cereal caryopses, fragments of straw, and charcoal, which may represent residual domestic food and fuel waste left in situ. The curvilinear shape of this feature could represent a flue, with the rounded end containing the in situ food and fuel waste, which could indicate that it was used as a rudimentary grain dryer.

#### 3.7.2 Large pit [037]

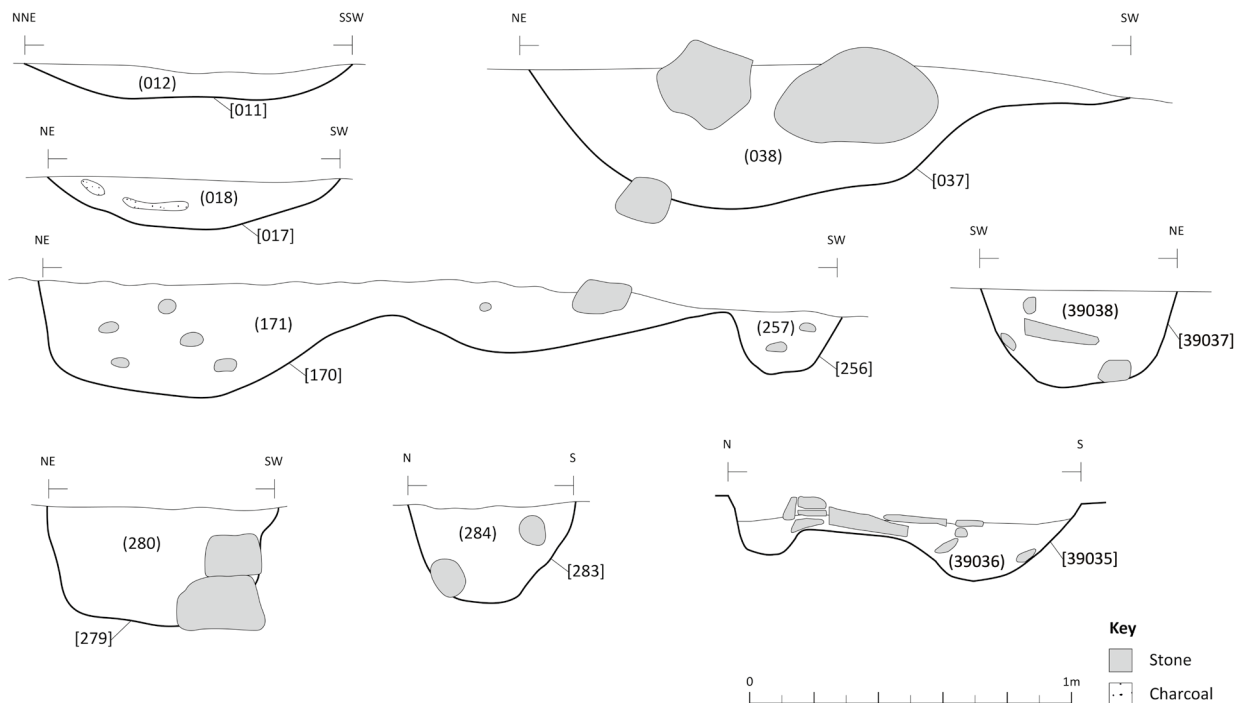
A large pit [037] was located north of Pit Group 2 (Illus 15). This feature contained SF 13, a roughout for a millstone or lower rotary quernstone (Illus 17) and SF 12, a lightly used quern or grinding stone (see below). The macroplant assemblage comprised cereal caryopses and some charcoal. The cereal was likely derived from crop processing, while the charcoal is fuel waste. The deposition of macroplant



**Illus 14** Plan of Structure H and pits [202] and [273] (Lindsey Stirling, AOC Archaeology)



**Illus 15** Plan of Pit Group 1, Pit Group 2, and [037] (Lindsey Stirling, AOC Archaeology)



**Illus 16** Section drawings of pits [011], [017], [037], [170], [256], [39037], [39035], and postholes [279] and [283] (Lindsey Stirling, AOC Archaeology)



remains in conjunction with an unfinished mill or quernstone, could indicate the nearby presence of grain processing, with waste material disposed of together into the large pit. Oat cereal from this pit dated to cal AD 772–979 (95% probability; SUERC-104044), suggesting grain processing occurred sometime between the late 8th and the late 10th century AD. Located directly to the northeast of pit [037], another sub-oval pit [053] was excavated, its fill containing cereal caryopses, hazelnut shells, and charcoal. Pit [037] and [053] had similar environmental inclusions, and may be contemporary. The presence of two larger pits used to deposit waste material could indicate a substantial repurposing of the settlement area, with deliberate disposal of waste material either during restructuring or abandonment of the site.

### 3.7.3 Structure B

Structure B was located directly south of Late Iron Age roundhouse Structure A (Illus 7). It comprised a rectangular stone-lined hearth [39035] with five

postholes surrounding it (Illus 18). The postholes did not form a coherent pattern in plan but probably related to the roof support of the structure, which likely had a turf or earth component which has not survived. Additionally, six pits were located within the structure (Illus 7 and 16). Hearth [39035] had a raised central base, which was paved with flat stones. It also had a small channel around the edge, perhaps related to erosion from repeated rake-out events. The subsoil around the edge of the feature appeared heat-affected. Its fill contained a small amount of barley and charcoal, and birch charcoal from this was dated to cal AD 777–971 (95% probability; SUERC-95370), indicating the structure was likely in use between the late 8th to late 10th century AD, broadly contemporary with the grain processing evidence from pit [037]. This activity could also account for the truncation of the southern part of the earlier Late Iron Age roundhouse, Structure A, and the unusual date of late 9th–early 11th century AD acquired from the fill of the ring ditch.

Pit [39037] contained a heavily distorted iron nail and alder charcoal dated to cal AD 776–969 (95%



**Illus 17** Mid-excavation view of pit [037] showing roughout for a rotary quern or millstone SF 13, facing northeast (AOC Archaeology)



probability; SUERC-95371), broadly contemporary with the hearth. The nail was distorted, implying it had been removed from the wood prior to its deposition, suggesting the structure might have been deliberately demolished at the end of its life. Pit [39031] contained a tiny clear and colourless shattered glass shard (RT 39032; Bateman 2022). Structure B likely forms the remains of a post-defined building dating to the 8th–10th centuries AD, associated with nearby activity, including metalworking.

#### 3.7.4 Metalworking features

A series of features associated with metalworking were identified dating to around the same period as Structure B. Pit [337] was located to the east of the Iron Age settlement features, 40m from Structure D (Illus 6 and 19). It was L-shaped in plan, and was filled with fire-cracked stones, charcoal, burnt mammal bones, and metalworking waste (see specialist reports in Sections 9. The Slag and Industrial Materials, 10. Animal Bone, and 11. Environmental Analysis, below). This feature was

likely the truncated remains of an in situ smelting furnace (see below). Alder charcoal from the feature was dated to cal AD 885–994 (95% probability; SUERC-104055), suggesting ironworking was contemporary with Structure B.

Although only one definite furnace was identified relating to this period, further metalworking waste was present on the site, which could represent waste from features now lost to truncation. To the east of Structure B, a range of intercutting pits were identified (Illus 7). Pit [303] and posthole [301] were cut by pit [170]. The sandy gravel fill of pit [170] contained frequent alder, rowan, and birch charcoal, as well as cow teeth, cattle bone, and a mix of mammal bones, with a sample of rowan charcoal dated to cal AD 894–1025 (95% probability; SUERC-104049). It also contained various types of metalworking waste (see below). A second pit, [244], and posthole [256] were identified immediately next to [170] and also contained ironworking slag and charcoal. This cluster of intercutting features was associated with the repeated deposition of metalworking waste; the



**Illus 18** Post-excavation view of Structure B, facing northeast (AOC Archaeology)





**Illus 19** Southwest facing section of pit [337] (AOC Archaeology)

presence of several postholes implies some sort of structural feature, now indiscernible, in this area.

A similar cluster of intercutting features was identified 75m to the south of Structure E (Illus 14). Pit [202] contained charcoal, as well as metalworking waste (see below). Alder charcoal from this feature dated to cal AD 774–993 (95% probability; SUERC-104050). This pit was truncated to the south by pit [311], which contained charcoal as well as fragments of plano-convex slag cakes and unclassified iron slag. Birch charcoal from its fill was dated to cal AD 887–1012 (95% probability; SUERC-104054), indicating slightly later reuse related to the disposal of metalworking waste. At the southern end of pit [311], two postholes, [313] and [318], could represent the remains of a small structure.

Ironworking waste was identified in at least three locations across the northern half of the site. On-site metalworking was likely supported by settlement, but only one possible structure was identified, Structure B, suggesting that there might have been more settlement in the area. As well as the metalworking remains, there was evidence for grain processing and quern or millstone manufacturing,

indicating that this was a specialist activity area, with other elements of the settlement possibly located elsewhere or not surviving in the archaeological record.

### 3.8 Late prehistoric to early medieval features

Structure H was a four post structure measuring 3.1m E/W by 3m N/S with four associated pits, located in the middle of the site (Illus 14). Each posthole was paired with a small pit located directly to the southwest of the posthole. The postholes were circular to oval in plan, each with a U-shaped profile. They measured between 0.50m and 0.75m wide and were filled by a dark brownish black silty sand. Each posthole was paired with a small pit located directly to the southwest. Pits [281], [285], [289], and [305] were generally sub-circular in shape with steeply sloping sides and a rounded base and measured 0.85m to 1.1m in diameter. The pits were generally filled by a dark brown to brownish grey silty sand. All the pits and postholes contained significant macroplant assemblages, comprising between 30 and 279 cereal caryopses, and some





**Illus 20** Mid-excavation image of pit [092], showing stone surface [234], facing west (AOC Archaeology)

contained hazelnut shells. The charcoal assemblage was relatively small. Samples (SUERC-104039 and SUERC-104040) from two of the postholes, [279] and [283], were dated to 763–423 cal BC (95% probability) from hulled barley and cal AD 772–972 (95% probability) from birch charcoal, respectively. As the early date came from hulled barley and there are no other dates from the earlier time period, it is interpreted that this early material is likely residual. The macroplant assemblage from the structure points toward it being used as a granary. As a millstone was also found at the site, in a pit dated to the early medieval period, and as there were two additional pits in the surrounding area of Structure H that had an early medieval date, it is most likely that Structure H is early medieval in date. The macroplant assemblage and the shape of the structure would suggest that this structure represents a four post granary.

### 3.9 Phase 10 medieval

Large pit [092] was located to the northeast of Structure F (Illus 7). It contained a basal fill with

charcoal and burnt bone, underlying stone surface [234] (Illus 20). Hazel charcoal from the fill was dated to cal AD 1053–1260 (95% probability; SUERC-104046) and likely dates to the use of the feature. A stone surface, [234], was comprised of very large, flat stones that varied in size, forming a flat surface. On top of the stones was a loose silty sand deposit (093), which contained rare charcoal, cereal caryopses, burnt mammal bone, fuel-ash slag, unclassified iron slag, and heat-affected soil, indications the area might have been used for metalworking. This stone surface would likely have been part of a larger structure but only one small posthole [246] was identified next to pit [092]. As medieval structures in the north of Scotland often appear to have a turf or earth component to them, it is possible that these flat stones were an internal element of a turf or earth building.

### 3.10 Phase 11 medieval

Pit [033] was part of Pit Group 1, which was located in the northwest corner of the site, to the west of the L-shaped pit alignment (Illus 15). The alignment

comprised ten pits, all with the same shape in plan, the same profile and very similar dimensions. The fills were also very similar and were mostly sterile with frequent lenses of windblown sand, making it hard to date these features. Environmental analysis also indicated that these features contained a very small amount of redeposited fuel debris, including the only oak material identified on the site. As noted above, two of the features contained likely residual material dating to the Mesolithic-Neolithic transition. Three pits from the pit group contained material suggesting the alignment was medieval or later in date. Pit [033] contained two oat caryopses, one of which dated to cal AD 1232–1378 (95% probability; SUERC-104056). This material was not entirely secure but the presence of other finds makes this date appear more plausible than an earlier, prehistoric one. The mixed nature of the fills indicates that this pit group is difficult to directly date and it is likely that some of the early material is residual. Other finds from this pit alignment included a possible iron nail in pit [003] and a large fragment of window glass from the 17th to 20th century in pit [019] (Bateman 2022). The topsoil covering these features was deep and did not contain medieval or modern material, and therefore it is more likely that the L-shaped pit alignment is medieval in date with residual Mesolithic-Neolithic material unintentionally redeposited within.

### 3.11 Phase 12 medieval and later

From the medieval period onwards, the site likely primarily saw agricultural or pastoral use. Drainage ditch [219] and modern ground investigation pit [063] are the most recent features identified on the site (Illus 14). Drainage ditch [219] likely represents a spade-dug drainage channel related to post medieval ground improvement for agricultural or pastoral purposes.

The area where archaeology was concentrated at Craggan was covered by a very shallow 0.2m topsoil, suggesting that the area had not undergone regular deep ploughing. The topsoil along the western edge of the site overlying Pit Groups 1 and 2 was the deepest, with material up to 0.9m. Much of this depth is presumed to be derived from colluvial deposits eroding off the higher ground to

the north. The southern part of the site had a more consistent topsoil depth ranging from 0.35m to 0.6m. Notably, no ceramic sherds were identified within the topsoil across the site, suggesting the site had not seen significant agricultural intervention. The fields appear to have avoided intensive cultivation, as no evidence of plough scars was seen, which has allowed for the preservation of fragile archaeological deposits under shallow topsoil.

### 3.12 Undated features

A range of isolated features and small feature clusters identified on-site remain undated. These features remain undated due to a lack of artefactual evidence, and the limited number of radiocarbon dates that could be obtained during the present works; although further datable material was present within some features, not all were taphonomically secure – with truncation often being present. A number of these features were observed surrounding a cluster of structures in the northern part of the site. The features are most likely related to one of the phases of settlement activity, from the Middle Iron Age to Late Iron Age or early medieval period, to which the main structural remains and activity could be dated. In this area, two possible structures or feature groupings can be proposed. Structure I, comprising three postholes, [126], [210], and [212], could be the truncated remains of a four post structure similar to Structure H with the fourth posthole truncated by a linear feature (Illus 7). Structure J comprised three postholes: [146], [221], and [223], arranged in an arc which could tentatively be all that remains of a post ring of a round, post-defined structure. Two large oblong pits, [142] and [144], directly to the west of the postholes, could have formed a ring ditch running along the outside of the post ring (Illus 7).

Two post alignments were identified close to Structure F. Each alignment comprised three postholes arranged in a straight line. Postholes [094], [096], and [098] likely formed the remains of a post-defined fence line or boundary aligned east/west. Postholes [110], [112], and [116] likely also formed the remains of a post-defined boundary aligned northwest/southeast. These fragments of fence lines could have once formed part of a more

extensive boundary or enclosure system related to defining spaces within the settlement. It is uncertain, however, whether they are associated with Structure F.

Features in this area, such as the possible structural remains and fence lines, were all generally very truncated, making it challenging to determine their function. This truncation could indicate they are related to one of the earlier phases of settlement and have been truncated by subsequent activity. Another possibility is that they were related to turf

or earth-built structures which do not survive well in the archaeological record.

Near the early medieval ironworking furnace, [337], was a cluster of three postholes: [330], [334], and [343], which could form another very truncated post ring (Structure K).

The full reports of the specialist analyses below can be found in the site archive to be deposited with the National Record of the Historic Environment of Scotland (NRHE).