
2 Introduction by Alistair MacLaren

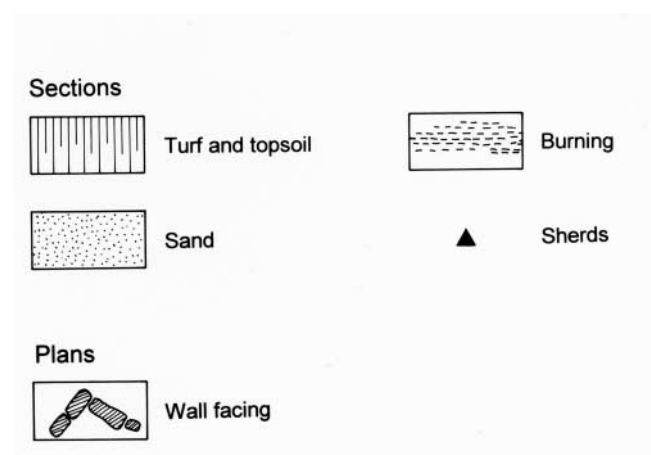
The work outlined in this report was done by the author (at that time a final year student in the Department of Archaeology, University of Edinburgh) over a period of six weeks between 1 October and 12 November 1955, at the invitation of the then Ministry of Works (henceforward MoW). The locations of the two sites excavated are shown on [Illus 1](#).

The two sites were apparently threatened by a dam built to provide a water supply for the Dounreay nuclear establishment, then under construction. In the event, the monuments were not threatened, and have survived: they are monument nos. FOR 360 and 339 in Mercer's survey volume ([Mercer 1985](#)) and Lambsdale Leans has been scheduled as AMH 459. The Project Archive will be deposited in due course with the NMRS in Edinburgh, to rejoin the drawings already lodged there. The location of the finds will be determined by Historic Scotland's Finds Disposal Panel. The Lambsdale Leans skeletons are among the material the National Museums of Scotland inherited from Edinburgh University's Anatomy Department in 1992 (*pers inf* Alison Sheridan).

The strategy of the excavations was determined in discussion between the author and Mr P R Ritchie of MoW. Messrs Tawse, the firm building the dam, undertook to provide two workmen to help at Lambsdale Leans, for a limited period while work was being carried on a road diversion at the upstream end of Loch Shurrery. The intention was to spend six weeks, allocating a fortnight or so to each

site, thus leaving time for survey and drawing at the beginning and end; indeed, to all of those above must go any credit for what the excavations may have achieved, while the shortcomings are mine alone. The imperial measurements quoted in the original report have been converted here to metric ones; where it was clear that an approximate or 'rounded' measurement was intended, the metric conversion has been expressed only to the nearest 0.1 m.

The first stage of the project was to make a contour survey of the mound at Lambsdale and a plan of the visible remains of the hut circle at Loch Shurrery, and to lay out grids of pegs for excavation.



Illus 2 Loch Shurrery hut circle and Lambsdale Leans mound: section and plan conventions