
2 Introduction by *O Lelong*

The Blackshouse Burn Environs Project was designed to investigate and record through survey a complex of upland prehistoric archaeological remains and to examine the adjacent valleys for evidence of prehistoric settlement. The project was conceived as a landscape study which would build on the results of limited excavation and survey carried out in the 1980s under the direction of Peter Hill on behalf of Historic Scotland's predecessor department (SDD/HBM), the results of which were published in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* (Lelong & Pollard 1998a).

In that earlier programme of work a very large late Neolithic sub-circular enclosure in an upland basin at Blackshouse Burn (centred at NGR NS 9528 4046) and a smaller adjacent one were investigated through trial excavation. The 1980s fieldwork also included preliminary survey of the ridge that half-encircles the upland basin, recording the presence and general locations of hut circles,

clearance cairns and burial cairns, although not in detail.

The density and monumentality of the archaeological remains on these uplands indicate the area's importance to those living in or travelling to the Upper Clyde Valley during prehistory. The topographic and geophysical surveys, field walking and trial excavation undertaken as part of the project reported upon here, along with the results of the 1980s fieldwork, have produced a more informed understanding of the character and development of the monuments on the uplands and of how the surrounding landscape was inhabited.

The Blackshouse Burn Environs Project coincided and collaborated with the much larger Upper Clyde Valley Landscape Project, being carried out by Professor Bill Hanson and Lorna Sharpe of the University of Glasgow (Hanson & Sharpe in prep; Sharpe forthcoming), and the complementary relationship between the two projects has added value to the results of both.