6 FEATURE TYPES

The Feature Types listed here are the main forms of cultural/historic remains you will find in the countryside. Within each group there will be a number of different archaeological sites. Thus the term settlement could define an 18th-century fermtoun as readily as a prehistoric roundhouse site 3000 years old, or a mound might be a 5000 year old burial cairn or the remains of a 19th century windmill. In some cases they may even be both! Equally the distinction between different Feature types, such as Bank and Dyke, may not always be clear or significant. In terms of archaeological management this does not really matter, as in general the methods of protection will remain the same. The individual forms or feature types described here are meant to be guides to recognising archaeological and historic sites, not precise definitions.

No distinction is made here between individual features and aggregations of features that combine to make larger features. Thus clearance cairns may be grouped together to form field systems and settlements are formed from individual structures, walls and fields. The divisions between features are merely meant to aid recognition in the field.

In terms of understanding the landscape history, it might be important to interpret and date the different features but this would require more specialist knowledge and may only be achieved by detailed interventions such as archaeological excavation and C14 dating. Through experience and reading you will learn to identify the different classes of archaeological monument and site.

How to define importance

Some archaeological features are more important than others because of their rarity or because they retain special features. Many have been identified as being worthy of protection as Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

It is not always easy to define importance from viewing a monument in the field. A well-preserved archaeological site is likely to be more important than one in a poor state of preservation and management should always aim to restore archaeological monuments to a stable habitat or vegetation.

If in doubt, consult your local archaeological adviser who should be able to tell you which monuments are of local, regional or national importance. In general all archaeological sites should be considered worthy of preservation, as they contribute to the specific landscape history of their area. If there is a conflict between preserving an archaeological site and other environmental interests, these should be resolved by discussion with your local archaeological adviser.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index of Feature Types</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>p24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buried Remains and Find Scatters</td>
<td>p26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>p28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cropmark Sites</td>
<td>p30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivation Lines (rigs and terraces)</td>
<td>p32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Sites</td>
<td>p34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designed Features</td>
<td>p36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ditches</td>
<td>p38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dykes</td>
<td>p40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Buildings</td>
<td>p42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fields and Enclosures</td>
<td>p44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedges and Trees</td>
<td>p46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hollows</td>
<td>p48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Sites</td>
<td>p50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mounds</td>
<td>p52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads and Tracks</td>
<td>p54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing Monuments</td>
<td>p56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structures</td>
<td>p60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Features</td>
<td>p62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A more detailed view of the settlement seen on p16.
BANKS

Description
Banks can vary from substantial defences for prehistoric and later forts to slight bumps in the ground. The most common banks belong to former field boundaries. They may not form straight lines, as many curve or are irregular in direction.

Some banks mark the obscured line of former turf or turf and stone dykes. As banks decay and slump, they may no longer be obvious boundaries. Their original form is likely to have been substantially larger than their present one.

How to recognise them
Banks belong to many different types of structure and so their position cannot always be predicted. Look for continuous lines or unnatural curves. Aerial photographs, distance or height may show the lines in the landscape that are formed by banks. It is sometimes less easy to spot these when close to them. Variations in vegetation such as bracken and heather can often help mark the line of banks.

Check old maps to see if there are records of earlier field boundaries that have been removed. They may still be visible on the ground even if not recorded on current maps.

Value
Banks may define unrecorded or incompletely recorded structures such as forts or even the footings of small buildings. The insubstantial nature of a surviving bank may belie its original importance and in context even a slight bank might be important to preserve. Banks may mask significant archaeological deposits, important enough to justify preservation or scientific excavation.

The Antonine Wall, with its substantial bank and ditch constructed by the Romans nearly 2000 years ago, is an obvious feature running through Callendar Park, Falkirk. The trees here, although potentially damaging to the archaeology, are also significant elements of the landscape – indeed, they form part of a much later designed landscape, itself recorded in the HS/SNH Inventory.

The dyke running from left to right across the centre of the picture is fairly obvious. The turf bank or dyke running up the centre is only visible because of slightly raised ground on the left and a lighter strip of ground to the right, that shows the line of a former track caused by cutting material to build the bank/dyke. Originally this would have been a turf bank/dyke high enough to prevent stock from straying.
They are also extant landscape features, forming definite boundaries in the countryside. As boundaries they may explain vegetation and planting differences, justifying their preservation because they define distinct landscape units.

**Threats**

Banks are vulnerable to erosion by animals or access tracks cut through as shortcuts. Rabbits and other burrowing animals can cause serious damage to banks. Once a cut has been opened in a bank it is difficult to stop it eroding further. Scrub and trees not only obscure banks in visual terms, their roots may also be doing considerable damage to the structure and archaeology of a bank.

**Enhancement**

Rabbits should be controlled, fencing may be necessary to restrict vehicle or animal access across banks (though fencing should be avoided where possible, because of its visual impact on the landscape) and poaching scars filled in with materials obtained from an location approved by your local archaeologist or Historic Scotland as appropriate. Mature trees should be trimmed or felled before the root mat can cast up due to tree throw.
Many archaeological sites are not visible above ground and even with upstanding sites much of the archaeological evidence may extend beyond the visible remains. In addition, standing monuments can hide the remains of earlier occupations. While these remains may have little visual impact on the local landscape, they can still be intrinsically valuable.

Given 5000 years of settlement and another 5000 years of earlier nomadic camps, traces of human occupation can be found in most areas of Scotland. As most of this has been or is now under cultivation, considerable archaeological information still lies hidden.

**How to recognise them**

Arable land is unlikely to be examined in detail as part of an environmental audit and Cropmark sites (discussed on page 30) will only exceptionally be recorded on the ground. But visual clues in ploughed soil, such as areas of fire-reddened areas, charcoal spreads and collections of less perishable objects like shaped stonework, metalwork and spreads of pottery and shell (depending on the pH of the soil), may all mark sites. The observations of farmers and ploughmen are particularly important in this context and initial discussions before carrying out a survey could be crucial in getting such sites recorded. Most of them will not be listed on Sites and Monuments Records.

Stray finds such as flint arrow heads and single coins do not necessarily mark sites and are best recorded as casual losses. However, when groups of finds are made they may well mark the disturbed remains of archaeological sites.

In pasture and uplands buried remains are only going to be exposed in scars and animal burrows and the recognition of individual sites is likely to be by chance.
discovery. Early spring is a good time to examine mole hills before the vegetation has grown too strongly. Look for charcoal, pottery sherds, traces of burnt clay, flint tools, animal bones, shells and iron slag – all possible indicators of human settlement nearby.

In coastal areas wind blow may erode sand dunes exposing previously hidden sites. Animal scrapes and erosion along the banks of burns and rivers may also reveal sites.

**Value**

Buried remains may be as archaeologically significant as the standing remains, particularly if they extend the range and nature of a visible feature. While this may not be established without excavation, the precautionary principle of giving a buffer around sites under threat of cultivation and forest planting affords some protection.

Many archaeological sites such as mesolithic camps and medieval iron workings were first discovered as scatters of finds and this is an important tool for recording the distribution of such sites both geographically and across time.

**Threats**

Because these sites are not obvious the main threat is destruction through ignorance. Buried remains and find scatters are vulnerable to many forms of damage including erosion, cultivation impacts, burrowing animals, root damage and casual removal of material.

**Enhancement**

Buried sites and finds scatters are best protected by being removed from cultivation and being excluded from planting. Conversion to minimum tillage and no-drilling cultivation are alternatives where reversion to permanent pasture is not feasible. However, this must be accompanied by restrictions on drainage and sub-soiling.

Detailed archaeological survey, including non-intrusive geophysical survey, may help define the extent of these features. Voluntary groups across the country are helping to mark out the extent of sites and identifying new ones by plotting the location of finds in ploughed fields.

Within the agri-environment programme the removal of these sites from cultivation with an appropriate buffer can help to preserve them for the future. Monitoring is important to prevent such sites becoming overgrown with scrub or damaged by burrowing animals such as rabbits.
CAIRNS

Description
Cairns come in many forms and sizes. Small cairns may be the result of field clearance and are often found in groups known as cairnfields; sometimes the edges of fields can be defined by where the cairns are placed.

How to recognise them
Cairns are formed out of piles of stones. However, they may be obscured by vegetation, modern field clearance or other dumped material and look similar to mounds. It is not always easy to distinguish a burial cairn from a clearance cairn. Burial cairns tend to be larger than clearance cairns and to have a more regular shape. They also tend to be in more prominent positions in the landscape. Because cairns are often covered by grass or scrub, it is worth checking mounds that rise up out of the landscape. Sometimes erosion, rabbit burrows and animal scrapes will show you how these have been made. However, they may be natural features, perhaps the result of glaciation, and only experience will enable you to distinguish man-made from natural cairns. It is worth checking cairns that are recorded as monuments on existing OS maps and in guide books so that you can get a feel for what a cairn is and where you are likely to find them.

Value
Many cairns were deliberately sited as markers in the landscape to show ownership or as signs of respect to the ancestors buried below. Some continue to be locally significant with legends and myths attached to them. Besides their own archaeological value they can often seal buried soils of considerable pollen and other environmental interest, evidence that is not preserved in adjoining fields.
Larger cairns are strong landscape forms giving considerable character to the local topography. This landscape value might be enhanced by mature trees that have sometimes been planted on these sites.

Clearance cairns give a depth and texture to landscapes, especially in upland areas, showing how areas of species-rich grassland or peat-covered moorland were once used to grow crops. They can help to interpret both past climate history and present variations in habitat.

Threats

Cairns have often been robbed of stones in the past for building houses, roads or dykes. Farmers should be made aware of the importance of leaving cairns intact. There is a tendency for farmers to cultivate right to the edge of a monument, but because features of archaeological interest may extend below ground well beyond the visible, surviving monument, a generous uncultivated buffer zone is appropriate.

Dumping of stones on existing cairns is not to be encouraged, even on cairns that have previously been robbed. Careless dumping can alter or mask the form of the original monument.

The roots of mature trees and of vigorous vegetation, such as bracken rhizomes, growing on cairns may be doing considerable damage to the archaeological deposits. This damage may extend to associated buried archaeological features adjacent to cairns.

Scrub and tree regeneration can also obscure cairns, so having a significant landscape impact.

Enhancement

Burial cairns
These are powerful symbols from the past and they need to be respected in the modern landscape. This may require the careful clearing of encroaching scrub and other vegetation off the monument itself and clearing of lines of sight to make the monument visible in the modern landscape.

Clearance cairns
As these are generally slighter monuments than the burial cairns, they are often obscured by woodland or rank vegetation. This should be removed where possible to make the cairns more visible features in the landscape. If there are strong nature conservation reasons for not removing the vegetation, these will need to be discussed with your local archaeological adviser.
CROPMARK AND LOW RELIEF SITES

Description
Cropmarks are formed by differential crop growth over buried archaeological features such as pits and ditches, roads and walls. In times of crop stress such as drought conditions, differential crop growth either produces parch marks where the crop burns out or more vigorous growth because buried deposits are supplying more nutrients and moisture to the growing crop. These are only occasionally visible from the ground and are generally recorded by aerial photographs.

Variations in soil colour after ploughing can define sites such as fort banks and ditches or old plough furrows. Occasionally these can be viewed from the ground, but are best recorded from the air.

Low light conditions, such as evening sunlight, can accentuate slight archaeological remains by casting long shadows. A similar effect is caused by shallow falls of snow around earthworks. These shadow marks defining low relief sites are also best observed from the air.

How to recognise them
Aerial photograph sites are usually invisible at ground level, except under exceptional conditions. It is therefore necessary to have either an accurate plot of a cropmark site or reliable aerial photographs that are referenced to existing field boundaries. It is unlikely that new sites of this nature will be recorded at ground level, but new sites can be found on existing aerial photographs. Sites are usually identified by the regularity of their features, such as ditches and lines of pits. If you have access to aerial photographs, it is worth examining them for any unrecorded archaeology, not just for cropmarks.

The remains of the major Roman Legionary Fortress at Inchtuthil show up as strong cropmarks in this aerial photograph. Note how the cropmark varies according to the different cropping regime in adjoining fields.

Differential crop growth over a 2500 year old ditch at Douglasmuir, Angus, shows how the crop grows better where the deposits are deeper. Conversely crops grow less well over buried roads and walls - see the photo at top of page 14.

Snow and low-light help to define a defensive ditch around this small fort or enclosure near Rhynie, Aberdeenshire.
Value

Within the lowland area of intensive cropping, the majority of archaeological sites survive only as cropmarks. Though the upper levels of these features have been lost, there can be considerable archaeological value and depth in the deposits that do survive. Some of the most productive of archaeological sites lie within the plough zone because historically these have been the most fertile areas.

Cropmarks are generally of low landscape value, though many are recorded on mounds or rises that could be enhanced by different cropping regimes or the removal of sites from cultivation.

Upland sites revealed by low-light or light snow falls may have a higher landscape value because the enhanced fertility and restricted cultivation that has allowed these features to survive probably supports a more diverse range of species and vegetation. This will be emphasised by differential growth at different times of the year.

Threats

Cropmark sites are highly vulnerable to damage, because they are not visible on the surface. Ploughing to a greater depth, destoning, subsoiling, drainage, rutting in wet conditions, feeding of stock in winter conditions, will all lead to damage or destruction of cropmark and soilmark sites.

Shadow mark sites can be damaged or even destroyed by vehicle ruts, feeding stations and cultivation. They can also be obscured by inappropriate vegetation such as bracken, scrub or woodland. Badly sited fence lines can bisect sites making them more difficult to be seen, and even cause damage to the underlying deposits both through the fence posts themselves and from the focusing of stock in specific areas. They can also damage a site’s landscape integrity, particularly if different management is followed in each portion of a bisected monument.

Enhancement

Cropmark sites are best preserved by being taken out of cultivation and subjected to a light grazing regime. Differential cropping will enhance these as landscape features. Where this is not possible the farmer’s attention must be drawn to the effects of inappropriate management.

The resiting of feeding stations and tracks and the removal of dumped material can all enhance shadow mark sites. By accentuating these areas and by using an appropriate grazing regime, slight archaeological features can become more prominent in the landscape. Removal of rabbit scars and areas of poaching by stock will preserve the integrity of these sites. Treatment of bracken and the removal of scrub will also make these features more prominent in the landscape.
CULTIVATION LINES

Description

Though often showing as only slight variations in height traces of earlier cultivation can often be found as distinct lines in unimproved grassland. The most common of these earlier cultivation remains survive as raised ridges or rigs. This type of cultivation has been recorded from the prehistoric period to the 20th century and many examples still survive. Rigs were formed either by spade cultivation or by ploughing and it is not always possible to distinguish how or when they were formed. Rigs provided deeper soils and better drainage. In some areas there are several different sizes of rig showing a complex landscape history. There are many terms to describe the different forms of rig such as lazy-bed, feannagan and rig & furrow.

Ploughing across the slopes over many years has produced distinct cultivation terraces. Also known as lynchets or less commonly celtic fields they usually date in Scotland to the medieval period.

Other areas of former cultivation are defined by lines of stones, dating mostly to the post-medieval period before the introduction of modern farming methods. Similar lines can also be seen in crofting areas reflecting farming practices before modern machinery was introduced.

How to recognise them

Rigs are most visible from a distance or on aerial photographs and often are difficult to spot in long heather or bracken. In some areas they are found within distinct enclosures but in other areas they lay within open fields, stock being kept off the crops by herding.

On the ground, where well-preserved, they are visible as corrugations with crests from 2-5 metres or even more apart. In most cases they run down slope, but occasionally they can be found to lie across the slope. In

The narrow rigs here, known as cord rig, respect the banks and ditches of the fort at Woden Law also visible in this picture (see page 44 for a general view of the same picture). No rigs are visible inside the fort and it is possible they were being cultivated at the same time the fort was in use, some 3000 years ago. The sequence of features can often be untangled by detailed observation and recording without the need for excavation (see pages 64–66).
the north and west where available land was in short supply for a large population, the rigs utilised all available ground. Large areas of these rigs still survive.

Lynchets/cultivation terraces are less common and mostly survive in southern Scotland. Ploughing has produced distinct terraces, sometimes defined by a low wall. They are generally less than 10m wide. In form they are similar to terraces found around the Mediterranean and the Far East.

Linear stone spreads are also not common, having been frequently ploughed up by later farmers. They may be associated with abandoned settlements. They can usually be distinguished from the random spreads of clearance cairns which tend to be prehistoric in date.

Value
Rigs, cultivation terraces and stone spreads are important for demonstrating the extent of former cultivation. They may also be the first sign that a settlement may be sited nearby. In areas where there are different sequences of cultivation types they can be used to interpret a complex history of land use. For example, a particular narrow form of rig cultivation, known as cord rig, has been identified as being of prehistoric date and is important for defining areas of former cultivation, not otherwise distinguishable from areas of unimproved ground.

Cultivation lines give distinct character to the landscape and are important for showing the nature and extent of past settlement.

Threats
All these features are easily removed by ploughing when old pasture is reseeded. Small area of rigs in lowland pastures can be removed when farmers tidy the edges of fields.

Scrub, bracken and tree regeneration will all obscure rigs as landscape features.

Enhancement
Scrub can be cleared off rigs, heather burnt and trees cut to make the rigs more visible features in the landscape. Clearance of large areas may be inappropriate because of the costs involved and in some areas regeneration may be acceptable. Justification for preservation will depend on the quality and type of rig surviving. Take advice from your local archaeology service as to what is appropriate.
CULTURAL SITES

Description
All the sites described in the other sections had cultural importance to the people who built them and these can be as or more important as the archaeological value of the individual site. Events in the past have given particular cultural importance to certain features and landscapes. Some of these can leave little physical trace, either because past events made little impact on the landscape, for example battle sites, or because the association is with natural features not obviously associated with archaeological monuments. These features and landscapes may continue to be important to local people and visitors because of their cultural associations.

How to recognise them
Historically identified events such as battle sites should be marked on maps and recorded in the Sites and Monuments Records. Farmers and local people should also know of sites important to them, even if they are not officially recorded.

Value
These features are important in defining local identity and are often valued by the local community. Even if the recorded event is mythical or spurious, it can still be important in giving historical depth to a local landscape because there may be a long tradition behind it.

This sense of place is increasingly recognised as empowering rural areas. Making them distinct from their neighbours and from other areas may become a key factor in any rural regeneration.

Culloden Battlefield is an important cultural site visited by thousands of people each year. Because the land is not being farmed the battlefield site is being obscured by scrub. The recent introduction, by the National Trust for Scotland, of sheep and goats to graze the site should eventually restore the open landscape at the time of the battle.

This multi-stemmed yew grows above Loch Ness with a canopy 25 m in diameter and a central stem nearly 2 m thick. It has strong landscape value in its own right, but is also of great cultural value because of its associations with the Frasers of Stratherrick. Sprigs were reputedly worn by clansmen for identification during battle.

The number of rags tied to the trees around the Clootie Well on the Black Isle show it is still valued as a healing well.
Threats

Ignorance and neglect, particularly amongst new owners, are the biggest threats to these sites. Once the importance of these sites is known, most landowners and land managers are happy to protect them.

Inappropriate development and excessive visitor numbers can also damage such sites.

Enhancement

Battle sites may be overgrown and key features recorded in the past now obscured. Sensitivity is required to balance historical accuracy with local perceptions of fact. To some, the dereliction of sites is part of their physical charm and sites can be over restored or damaged by inappropriate monuments. Cultural sites are particularly prone to conflicting views on appropriate management. Extensive consultation with both statutory consultees and local people may well be necessary.

Historic sites can be enhanced by clearing away obscuring scrub and bracken.

Increased public access and awareness of these sites is also desirable. By being aware of their significance, local people are more likely to protect them. Through their link with local communities, additional funding sources such as the Local Heritage Initiative, Local Capital Grants Scheme and the Rural Challenge Fund, may help to enhance these sites for public display.

This modern cairn marks the remains of a house in Glen Spean linked to the 17th-century Gaelic poet Ian Lom. The house is almost invisible in summer because of the dense bracken and the cairn does makes it easier to view this historic site. However, it would have been more appropriate to place the cairn outside Ian Lom’s house, as it may have damaged archaeological deposits within the building.

Similar house sites survive across Scotland and many of them can be tied to individual families who were cleared off the land when sheep farms were established. Increasing interest in family history means that many people, both at home and abroad, are interested in tracing the physical places of their ancestors.

Prehistoric people also had special places. While cairns and stone circles are obvious monuments, stone carvings such as this cup and ring marked outcrop are more difficult to identify.

As the detail below shows these are significant and powerful symbols of great cultural importance.
DESIGNED FEATURES

Description

The majority of Scotland is a designed landscape in the sense that it has been shaped by the deliberate actions of various people to produce its present form. The cairns, circles and standing stones of the prehistoric period can be seen in this way, as they were placed to be visible monuments, and some archaeologists would argue that every feature in the prehistoric landscape was ritually important. Only particular areas such as Kilmartin Glen and parts of Orkney can now be recognised as forming part of a specific organised landscape.

The term ‘Designed Landscape’ is a more particular term used to describe a unified concept of landscape planning associated with large estates. Although such planning stretched back into the medieval period, the majority of surviving designed landscapes date back to the 18th and 19th centuries. This was a period of considerable reorganisation of estates and increasing wealth of landowners was often invested in the design of an estate into a particular form. This landscape will have changed over time as plants and trees have grown and later owners have decided to alter the original plan. The best preserved and most important designed landscapes have been recorded in a national Inventory compiled jointly for SNH and HS. This contains only a small proportion of the designed landscapes found in Scotland and there may well be individual designed features found during survey.

How to recognise them

Designed Features were constructed to be seen and so look for elements of design, vistas and viewpoints. At the centre of a designed landscape there will usually be, or have been, a large house with outward views enhanced by the designed element.
On the ground the following should be looked for:-

- Avenues of trees
- Artificial mounds
- Exotic plantings
- Follies
- Ha-ha’s
- Ponds and lakes

(See SNH Review 82 for further details)

Remember that there may well be archaeological and historic features surviving from before a formal garden or designed landscape was laid out. These may be equally worthy of preservation.

**Value**

Designed Features represent a unified and particular concept of design within more diverse landscapes. This unitary character has significant landscape impact, though, equally, evolving landscapes can also be valuable. The individual elements of the design, whether of architectural, historical or botanical importance, may all have their own importance both locally and nationally. Some features such as sundials, walls, fountains and bridges may be additionally protected under Listed Building legislation.

**Threats**

The most critical threat is ignorance leading to the removal of significant features or later accretions that obscure the overall plan. This includes ill-considered planting and management regimes, poorly sited buildings, inappropriate new design, construction of new tracks, earth-moving, dumping and felling of trees. Remember that individual features may be protected as listed buildings.

**Enhancement**

The shape of a designed landscape and the importance of individual features can be enhanced by appropriate plantings and the removal of later accretions. Collapsed walls, terraces and ha-has can be rebuilt. Major remedial work is beyond the scope of the current agri-environment schemes but further funds may be available from HS or SNH. Any proposed works in a Designed Landscape must be discussed with both SNH and HS.

Emphasis on features forming part of designed landscapes in the current Inventories should not be at the expense of designed features in the more ordinary landscape. The repair of dykes and hedges and the planting of hedgerow trees can all have a significant landscape impact, of value to the wider community as well as to the individual owner.
DITCHES

Description
Ditches are cut for two main reasons, as boundaries to define and drain fields, and as markers for important sites, dug both for defence and for reasons of prestige to define a higher status site. Most ditches will originally have been associated with banks created from the upcast material. However, in lowland areas the bank may have been removed, leaving the ditch as the only indicator of an archaeological site and sometimes only visible as a cropmark.

How to recognise them
Dug ditches can be distinguished from natural watercourses by the regularity of their form. They are generally cut in straight lines or in regular curves, often linking with other ditches to form a distinct pattern or network of patterns. Check their location on OS maps or aerial photographs, if these are available. Modern drainage ditches can be distinguished from older ditches because the former are usually machine cut in a rectilinear pattern.

Value
Ditches are important for defining prestige sites and field systems that are otherwise no longer visible. Ditch fills are often waterlogged and may contain organic material from the archaeological sites they were built around. Even dry ditches can preserve pollen in their silts and this can be used to build up a botanical history of the local area. Because ditches rarely silt up in one event, these pollen profiles can cover quite a span of time. There may be considerable deposits built up in a ditch contributing to significant archaeological and environmental interest.
Threats

Shallow ditches are under threat from ploughing and all ditches are threatened by levelling and amalgamation of fields that may remove a ditch as a surface feature, leaving it visible only as a cropmark site under certain conditions. Alterations to the water table by means of modern drainage can affect waterlogged deposits preserved in old ditches. Ditches around archaeological sites that are still functioning as drains can be damaged by the removal of silts, especially by mechanical cleaning. Take advice if considering clearing a ditch near a possible archaeological site.

Enhancement

Ditches around archaeological sites should be cleared of loose rubbish. Such clearance should not involve excavation without archaeological supervision. Brush cutting, subject to other environmental constraints, may be appropriate in order to make ditches more visible features in the landscape.

Ditches should be related directly to the archaeological sites of which they form part. If a fence or track bisects this relationship, consider rerouting the fence or track so that the archaeological site forms a single unit with its ditch or ditches.

In cultivated areas consider taking the ditch and the site it surrounds out of cultivation and placing it in permanent pasture. A suitable grazing regime will, however, be required to prevent the site becoming swamped by rank vegetation or invaded by burrowing animals.

A sequence of different fills is evident in this profile of the ditch around the monastic settlement at Tarbat, Easter Ross. A variety of environmental information on the past history of the area can be obtained from this profile. Note the water present at the base indicating that organic materials are probably preserved here, increasing the quality of information available.

Note the regular spacing of drainage ditches cutting across the larger enclosure ditch of the Roman Fort at Steeds Stalls, near Blairgowrie. Each drainage cut will have destroyed a portion of the archaeological deposits. If organic deposits survived at the base of the Roman ditch, they are likely to have been denatured as the water table has been altered.
DYKES

Description

Dykes have been used to divide the land and form enclosures from the time of the earliest farmers, over 5000 years ago. Few of these early divisions survive but large areas of the countryside contain dykes built of turf, earth, stone or a combination of these. Other field divisions were made with timber such as wattling or pale fences for deer parks, but these survive as ephemeral traces, usually only revealed by archaeological excavation.

Both prehistoric and medieval dykes tend to be irregular in form in contrast to the more regular rectilinear fields laid out as part of the 18th/19th century agrarian changes. It is these later dykes that define much of the present form of the countryside.

How to recognise them

Turf or earth and stone dykes have often slumped over time and may not be obvious as field and stock boundaries. In some areas, turf dykes were robbed as a source of fuel in place of peat and only short lengths may be visible. The line of such a robbed dyke may still be visible as a linear strip of soil set in a slight trench. The material for turf and earth and stone dykes was generally excavated adjacent to where it was required and can be seen as a shallow cut up to 3 m wide following the line of the dyke.

Many prehistoric dykes, particularly in the wetter north and west, only survive as a line of upright boulders and these may disappear in an area of peat moss as the peat has formed and spread after the dyke was abandoned. Drystone dykes are easier to spot because of the line of tumbled stones, though these may have been robbed to supply stones for other purposes. If there are sudden gaps in a dyke, it is worth walking a bit further on the...
same line to see if it reappears. Since some dykes were built of both stone and turf, it is necessary to look carefully in areas where stone dykes are incomplete to see if a turf dyke links the stone sections. This is particularly evident where stone dykes extend into bogs.

**Value**

Dykes are important as indicators of former land use. Without studying their location and date it may be difficult to understand the landscape history of particular areas.

Dykes may seal evidence of earlier forms of land use, particularly in areas of intensive land-use such as much of the lowland area.

Dykes are also important as features giving character to the present rural landscape. Much of the public concept of ideal countryside is based on the survival of dykes giving character and form to the landscape. Certain areas have distinct forms of dyking related to available resources and local traditions (cf Galloway dykes or Caithness flagstone fences). These maintain regional identities.

**Threats**

Dykes are vulnerable to changes in land use, particularly when fields are being amalgamated. They are also seen as a source of materials such as metalling for roads. The main threat is due to ignorance and laziness. Rather than drive round a dyke, tractor drivers are prone to drive across former dykes leading to rutting and degradation of the original dyke. Turf and earthen dykes are particularly vulnerable to this form of damage. They are also prone to damage from burrowing animals and animal scrapes.

Repairs to dykes may be inappropriate and alter their character.

Remember that dykes may be of environmental interest for other reasons (eg as botanical, biological or mycological reserves).

Trees and scrub may obscure or damage dykes.

**Enhancement**

Damage to turf and earthen dykes, such as wheel ruts and cattle poaching, can be repaired by filling in and returfing with materials from a site approved by your archaeological adviser. Photographs should be taken before and after the repair to show where the repairs have taken place.

Trees and scrub can be cleared from dykes, but only after discussion with SNH and your local council archaeological representative.
FARM BUILDINGS

Description
Older farms often contain a number of buildings, formerly part of the farm unit, that are now abandoned. Modern farming often requires new buildings and these older buildings have been converted to other uses, removed or left to decay.

Some of these buildings may have been for practices, such as horse-milling, that are no longer carried out. Others, such as farm workers’ cottages or ploughmen’s bothies, reflect a former, more labour-intensive use of the land. Most of them should be visible as buildings on earlier OS maps. Few rural farm buildings survive from before the 19th century as earlier buildings were often built of more perishable materials such as turf and timber. These slighter remains, which are more difficult to observe, are described under the separate heading of Settlements, although there is clearly an overlap between the two categories.

Buildings in the countryside are sometimes termed ‘vernacular’ buildings to distinguish them from architect-designed great houses, churches and castles.

How to recognise them
Older farmers and farm workers may recollect where buildings were sited and what they have been used for. Earlier maps, particularly the OS 1st edition survey, are a useful source of information as to how farms were laid out and should show where buildings were located. Old tracks, not heading for fields or access to other places, may lead to earlier buildings. Buildings can be sited in various places according to local need and it is not always possible to predict where they will be found. Not all early buildings were recorded by the OS surveyors and there may be later buildings that are also of interest. So be aware when carrying out a conservation audit that the unrecorded remains may be significant.
Stone clearance and rubble can often obscure an earlier building, but look for a rectangular shape with a possible hollow. This may mark a building. Dressed stone in rubble heaps is usually an indication that a farm building lies nearby. Many buildings, however, were built of unshaped rubble, their walls secured with clay rather than with lime or cement mortar.

Value

Farm buildings show how farms were organised in the past. The layout and number of workers cottages can inform how the farm labour was organised. Individual buildings may record special industries connected with individual farms.

Buildings from the 18th century or earlier are rare and should be protected by listed building legislation. However not all such buildings have been recorded.

Each geographical area had its own building traditions, related to available raw materials and local customs. These variations are important for defining local character in the rural landscape, an aspect which can easily be lost by the use of modern textbook designs and mass-produced materials.

Threats

Buildings may be demolished because they become dangerous to the public or stock. Others are destroyed for more modern developments such as new barns or housing developments or used as a source of raw materials. The removal of roofing can lead to the rapid deterioration of buildings, as water will get into the wall heads and wash out the mortar, especially if the walls are clay rather than lime or cement mortar-bonded.

Scrub and woodland regeneration will obscure and potentially destroy buildings through root penetration. Dumping of farm rubbish and stone clearance heaps can obscure buildings, making them less accessible for study. Inappropriate restoration may destroy the original character of a building.

Enhancement

Removal of rubble and the clearance of scrub can make a building a more visible feature in the landscape and prevent further decay. This needs to be balanced by safety considerations.

Repointing the walls and general repairs may maintain the life of a building. This is no longer an option under current agri-environment legislation for usable buildings, but these schemes can be used to protect more ruinous remains.

Limited grants may be available from Historic Scotland for architecturally significant buildings and other sources of funding such as grants from local enterprise boards and lottery funds may be possible where it is proposed to convert a standing building. Such restoration needs to be done sensitively respecting the character of the original building and should be discussed with an architect and your local conservation adviser. Remember that not all buildings can be saved and it may be appropriate to discuss with your local archaeological adviser what are the important features to preserve in your area.
FIELDS AND ENCLOSURES

Description

Much of the countryside has been parcellled into fields and enclosures both in the distant and the recent past. Traces of these fields survive in many areas and can also be the basis of the modern farming countryside. In some periods the fields were not defined by walls or fences (see Banks, Ditches, Dykes and Hedges) and are only visible as areas of rig or clearance cairns. Stock would have had to be kept off these areas by herding. The rectilinear field pattern familiar in the Scottish countryside is mostly a recent phenomenon dating to the agricultural improvements of the last two and a half centuries.

Cultivation terraces caused by soil creep to now vanished boundaries through continuous ploughing and forming narrow horizontal strips along the contours of a hillside, rarely form distinct fields, though they can be quite distinctive landscape features.

Enclosures are generally smaller areas that were used for stock control or garden areas, though the term can be used to describe fields or even more extensive areas such as Deer Parks. It generally refers to an area with a well-defined dyke, bank or hedge. It can also include features such as forts that had a definite defensive function. They can, if not obscured, form strong landscape features.

How to recognise them

While enclosed fields are easy to spot, unenclosed fields are only visible as areas of clearance cairns or patches of rig cultivation. Looking at an area from above, on a hill slope, often helps to give perspective. More verdant areas in rough pasture or hill ground may indicate a former field and it is worth checking the fringes of such areas to see if there are remnants of a decayed bank or dyke defining it.

The faint traces of prehistoric and later fields at Drummie near Aboyne seen in the foreground contrast with the modern regular field pattern behind. All landscapes are subject to evolution and change, but the underlying features should be studied before any changes are proposed. Removing or altering these earlier fields would have a severe impact on this landscape.

A more general view of the hillfort at Woden Law shown on page 30. It shows how these forts dominated both the prehistoric and now the modern landscape.

Animal enclosures, such as this sheepfold at Dundonnell, make a strong impact on the landscape and should be repaired where appropriate.
Modern maps may not show the remains of low former boundary dykes, banks and hedges. It is worth checking earlier OS maps to see where other 18th and 19th-century boundaries were located. Lines of mature trees may mark a former hedge or wall. Earlier forms of field can only be recorded by ground examination or from the air. Look for regular forms and unnatural patterns in the landscape.

It is often difficult to decide whether an enclosure on a hill top was used for controlling stock or as a simple defence. This may only be answered by excavation and should not affect the management of these features.

Value
Fields and enclosures give definition to the landscape, explaining the way the land has been managed in the past and is still managed today. Individual fields, enclosures and more extensive field systems explain how the land was used in the past. This is important not only for understanding the cultural history of specific areas. It also informs how the floral and faunal remains have been adapted by changing human impacts to create the diversity that survives today. Any reconstruction of habitats must be informed by the farming practices of the past.

Enclosures can be strong landscape features, particularly if managed as a single unit.

Threats
Fields are threatened with destruction by plough damage, poaching, levelling of boundaries, robbing of dykes and clearance cairns, and afforestation. They can be obscured by bracken and other rank vegetation or by tree and scrub regeneration. Enclosures and fields are very vulnerable to piece-meal damage which will reduce their landscape impact.

Enhancement
Fields and enclosures can be enhanced by clearing scrub and vegetation from boundary walls to make them more visible features in the landscape. The interiors of fields can be cleared of bracken and scrub and an appropriate grazing regime introduced. Muirburn can also make fields more visible elements in the landscape and it may be appropriate to carry out such burning so that fields are exposed as a whole rather than as strips of different aged vegetation.

The enclosures here at Evelix, Perthshire, were probably constructed later than the prehistoric fort on the hill above. Though less prominent features, they contribute to the depth of the local landscape history and their preservation should be considered in any landscape management for this area.