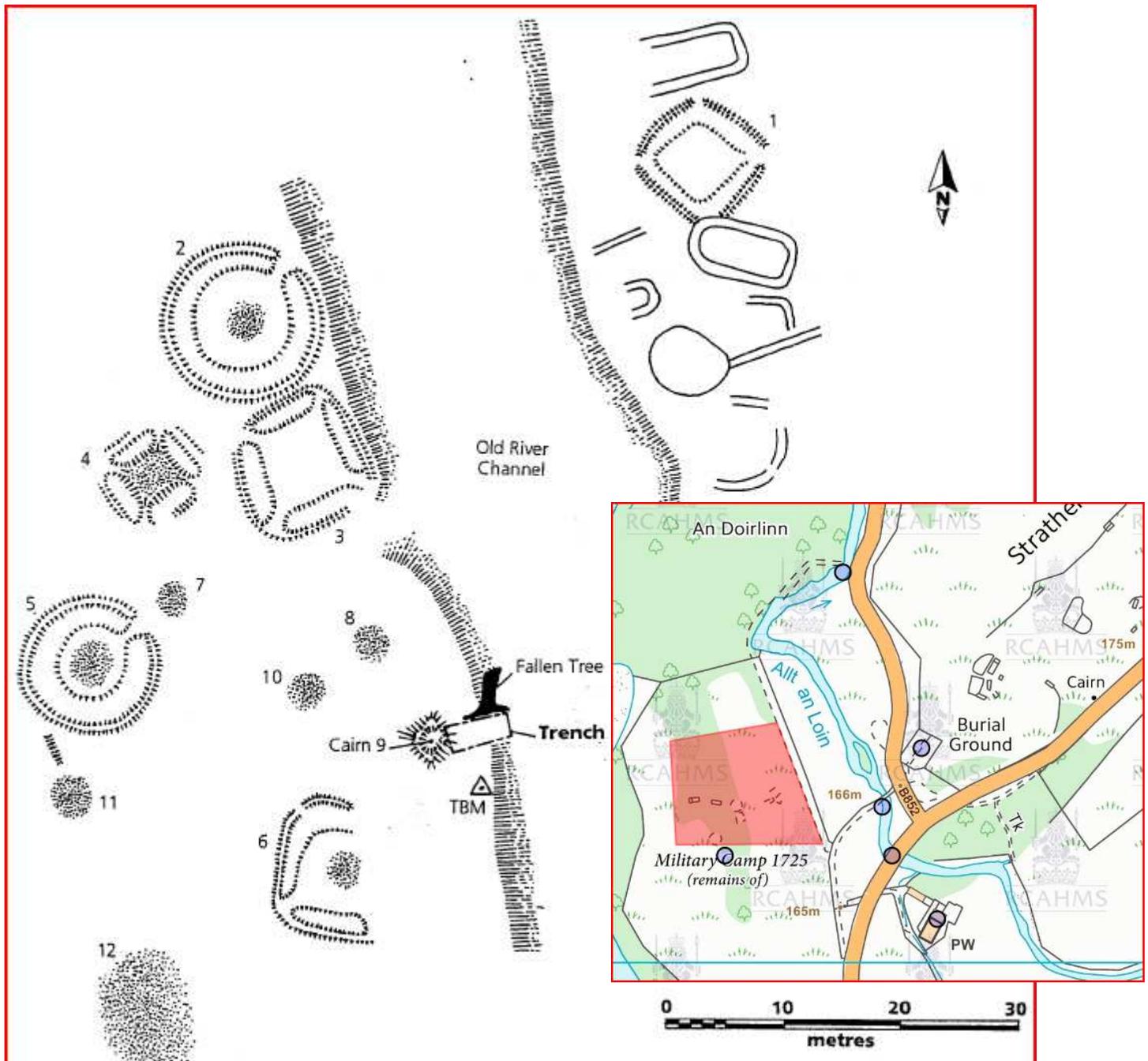


Whitebridge Pictish Cemetery NH 4928 1711

The site was originally thought to be a Military camp dating from 1725 but was reassessed in the 1970s. The upstanding remains are a mixture of round and square barrows and ditches which represent an outstanding survival of this type of monument.

Only one small excavation was carried out in 2000 where a tree had fallen on the edge of cairn 9: "No trace of a surrounding ditch or bank was recovered and there were no indications of a buried ground surface below the cairn".



JB Stevenson (1984): The barrows at Whitebridge are situated 1.8 km NNE of Whitebridge village and lie on two adjacent gravel ridges at the neck of a promontory formed by the confluence of the River Fechlin and the Allt an Loin (NH 492 171). Later settlement and agriculture have encroached on the site, and it is possible that originally the cemetery was more extensive.

The cemetery comprises four square barrows, two ditched round barrows, five unditched cairns, and an indeterminate mound. Three of the square barrows (Nos 1, 3, 6) closely resemble one another, measuring up to 14 m square within a bank and internal ditch. The ditches are generally interrupted by causeways at the angles, although in some cases there is no corresponding break in the banks. The area enclosed by the ditches at Nos. 1 and 3 is level with no trace of a mound visible, and within No 6 there is only a thin spread of stones which may be no more than the result of a tree pull. At No. 4, however, the central, flat-topped mound (0.6 m high) forms the most prominent feature.

The two ditched circular barrows (Nos.2 and 5) are similar in design; both comprise a periannular ditch and outer bank (with causeways on the NE), which surround a low stony mound separated from the inner lip of the ditch by a berm. The cairns (Nos.7 - 11) are simply stony mounds up to 0.5 m high, and at No.11 a low stony bank may link it with No.5. The nature of the stony mound (No.12) is uncertain; Wallace (1911, 327-8) described it is rectangular but it may be no more than a field-clearance heap.

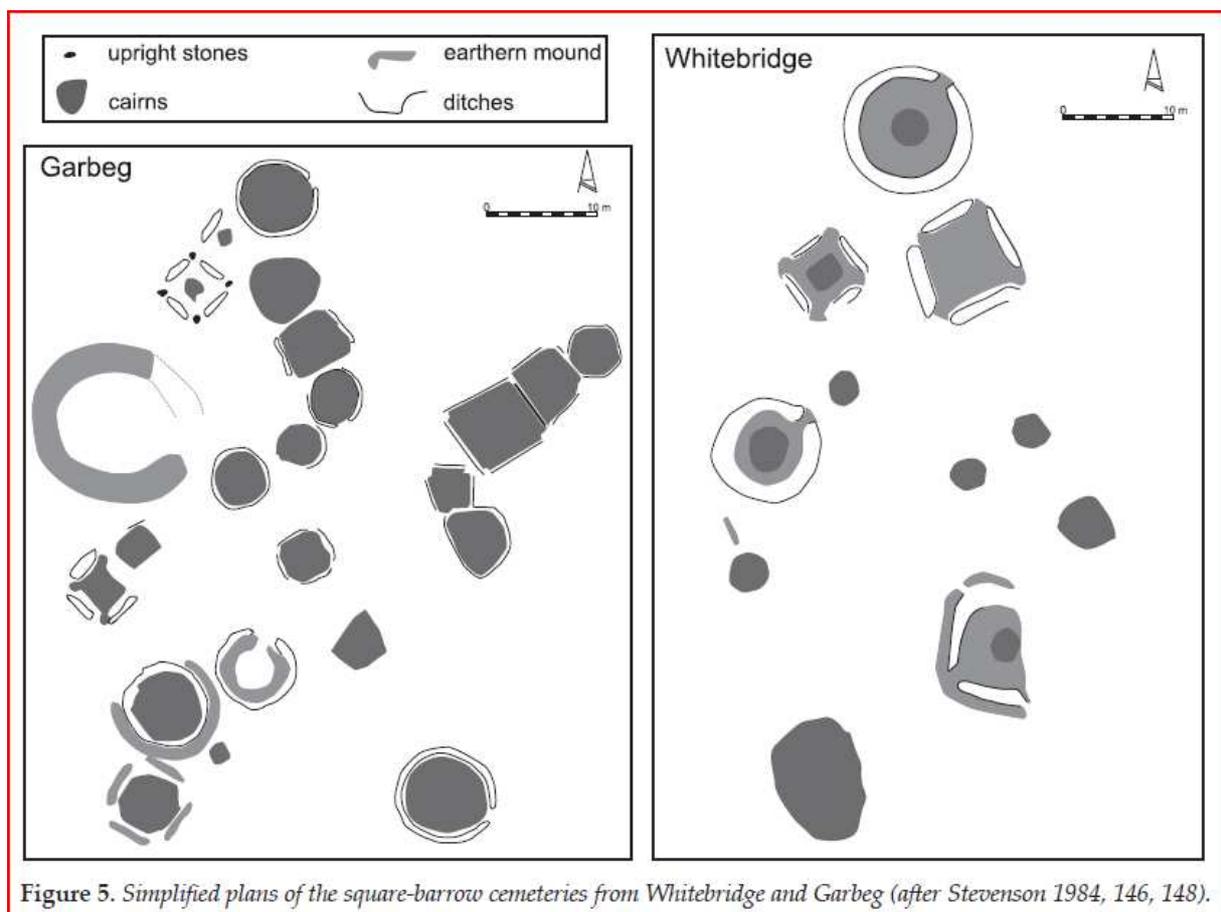


Figure 5. Simplified plans of the square-barrow cemeteries from Whitebridge and Garbeg (after Stevenson 1984, 146, 148).

Conclusions (OS 1979): In comparing this site with the Cairn Cemetery at Garbeg near Drumadrochit, excavated by L M Wedderburn in 1974/5, certain analogies are apparent. The circular and square cairns strongly resemble a number of the features here except that the Garbeg sites are slightly smaller in size and do not appear to have outer banks (except in one instance). In addition, the angles of some square barrows appear to have been cut away or never closed, but no corner stones were detected as at Garbeg.

The Stratherrick site has apparently been re-used in more recent times with the introduction of rectangular buildings, enclosures and kiln; but no reason for the utilisation of the circular and trapezoidal structures in the recent times can be given... The stony mounds may be field clearance dumps, but their close setting within the complex tends to lean to their being probably funerary.