



THE SUTHERLAND LONGHOUSE PROJECT



ARCHAEOLOGY, GEOGRAPHY

SURVEY TECHNIQUES

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

SURVEY OF DALNAMAIN, PRE-CLEARANCE SETTLEMENT IN DORNOCH PARISH, WITH YEAR 2 PUPILS FROM DORNOCH ACADEMY

THE WORKSHOP



On 27th November 2019, thirty Year 2 pupils from Dornoch Academy, led by archaeologist Anne Coombs, spent 3 hours at the pre-clearance settlement site of Dalnamain. Working in three separate groups, each group undertook a series of three different tasks in turn and began to think about what it would have been like to live in the eighteenth century.

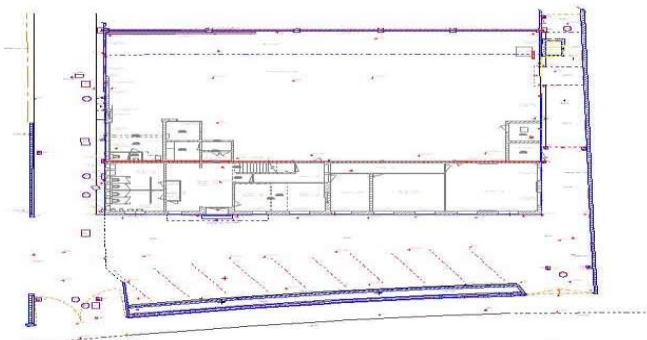
David Coombs demonstrated how to use the survey technique of pacing, and students used this method to measure a stone walled enclosure and fank, recording their findings on a scaled plan.

Anne Coombs conducted an archaeological walkover, demonstrating how to 'read' the site by looking at the archaeological remains and features on it, such as longhouses and other buildings, run rigs, potato pits and the remains of a corn drying kiln.

Leading the students on a geographical walkover, Geography teacher, Kathryn Roper, drew their attention to the natural resources available to those who had lived at the site. Jessica Mellis, History teacher at the Academy, helped to set the historical context.

Through their activities, the students gained a new insight into the ways in which people of the eighteenth century interacted with the landscape around them, and how they sustained a living at Dalnamain. In addition, the walkovers helped the students not only to envisage the landscape of a pre-clearance settlement but also to recognise post-clearance changes to the site and its buildings.

Although not the best of weather (drizzly and cold) the Dornoch Academy students remained engaged and interested, participating enthusiastically in every survey aspect shown them. Tramping through mud and climbing up and down the hillside, their interest did not wane as they questioned the use of buildings and the lifestyle that would have been led by the tenants of Dalnamain. All participants learnt a great deal from the visit, thanks to Anne Coombs' vast knowledge of the area and her subject.



An example of the results of pacing out a site – one of the survey techniques used in the survey workshop



Here the students undertake pacing out of the site, recording the findings as they go



Anne Coombs sets the context of life in the eighteenth century, describing everyday life in pre-clearance times

A further workshop led by Anne Coombs to the Dalnamain site is scheduled for early next year. Follow this blog on the Historylinks FaceBook page for further details and the dates for this and other upcoming workshops