

## CROFT HISTORY – BURNSIDE

*Draft for review and comment; created by CHM 4/2017, last updated 6/4/17.*

*Please note – This is a working document. Permissions, acknowledgments and sources have not been finalised. The layout of the images needs to be improved and the quality of some images upgraded. The contents are currently for internal use only in connection with the Bennachie Landscapes Project and University of Aberdeen CLH.*

Draft text is in BLUE; uncertain material requiring further checking is in RED.

### Name(s)

Burnside

### Record number

CH7 v2

**National Grid reference:** Main house NJ 6847- 2160- .

### Historic (pre-OS) mapping *[an additional heading]*

Commony division plan base map, surveyed c.1844.



*[credit as appropriate]*

### Contemporary OS mapping

1<sup>st</sup>-edition 25-inch , surveyed 1867 – includes field numbers (in an old numbering series) but not acreages; kailyard, with garden paths, in front of house; buildings shown roofed; no place-names.



2<sup>nd</sup>-edition 25-inch Sheet "Aberdeenshire 054.05" revised 1899: buildings shown unroofed; enclosures under woodland except for kailyard; no place-names. It appears that no revised sheet to the west of the extract depicted below was published, perhaps because the area was remote and (possibly) unpopulated at the time of the 1899 revision.



2<sup>nd</sup>-edition 6-inch Sheet "Aberdeenshire LIII.NE", revised 1899, covers the area to the west of the house for which no 25-inch sheet was available.



Sheet "25-inch Aberdeenshire 054.05" revised 1924: Woodland felled; kailyard now rough grazing with scattered trees, no longer enclosed or cultivated. No revised sheet to the west (as per 2<sup>nd</sup> edition above).



Also on equivalent 6-inch editions, but without field numbering.

**Current OS mapping** (as of *xx/xx/xxxx*)

***Other mapping***

*[Insert CS's survey plan; also any plane table survey plan]*

**Current photos**



*Burnside -- house, looking west, 2011. C University of Aberdeen*



Burnside – house, looking east, 2016



Burnside – aerial view, 2013 credit??

*LIDAR 2015 [courtesy of University of Aberdeen]*

**Civil parish:** Oyne

**Protection status:**

(Proposed) Special Landscape Area (Aberdeenshire Council)

**Brief description:**

House, with walls surviving up to 1m above ground level, facing SE. Associated fields and kailyard have some surviving portions of drystone dyke boundaries. Land converted to woodland, currently clearfelled and partially replanted with amenity native broadleaves.

**Croft history**

The available sources do not state when the house at Burnside was built and by whom. It is close to the Clachie or Clochie Burn -- the largest watercourse in the Colony area -- so it probably acquired its name soon after it was built. The evidence does not show whether it was the Findlater residence from the start, but equally there is no evidence to indicate otherwise. A house is shown at the appropriate location on c1844 Commonly map, but the first occurrences of the actual name Burnside so far discovered are in the 1859 "Conditions of Lease" (the "Croft on the Burnside") and in the census of 1861.

The Findlaters came to Bennachie from Bograxie on Balquhain Estate in the mid 1830s. Their household is one of only four present in the Colony in the 1841 census (when the Colony's total population was only 19). The Findlater household comprised James (55), his wife Ann (50), with their daughter Sarah (16) and son Robert (11). James is described as an Agricultural Labourer. Ann died in the late 1830s or early 1840s. In due course, Sarah married John Esson in 1847 and moved to Boghead of Tullos (see CH4). In 1851, James's household included a daughter Susan (29) – a “House Servant” – and two young sons from a more recent relationship with Isobel Cooper. Susan does not appear in the household listed in the 1841 census, which suggests that she may have been away in service at that time. James Findlater died in 1854.

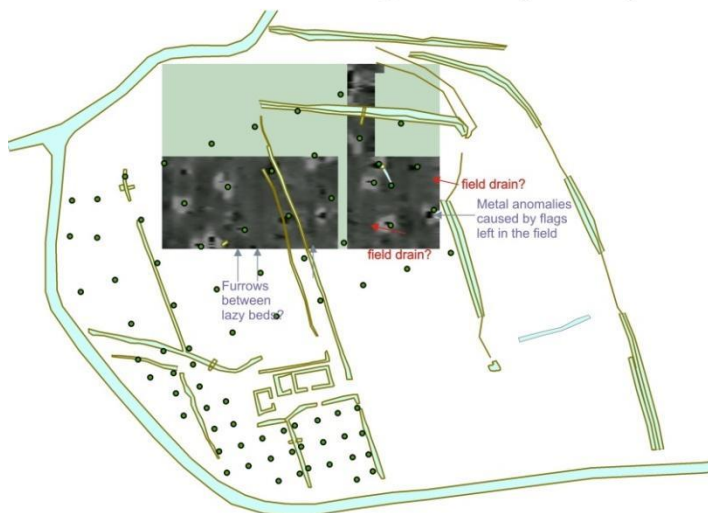
The 1859 Conditions of Lease are confusing to the researcher, because the “Croft on the Burnside” is a prospective tenancy of James Esson, not the Findlaters. Also its area “as now laid off” is more than 8 acres – far larger than was ever enclosed in the vicinity of today's Burnside. Meanwhile the same conditions list “Susan Findlayter [sic] offers for her house and yard One Pound Sterling of yearly rent”. Given the 1861 census evidence, this house and yard, although un-named in the Conditions, is almost certain to be Burnside. One might speculate that an arrangement had been reached whereby James Esson tenanted the croft, while Susan Findlater was tenant of the house itself. Since by that time, Susan's sister Sarah was married to John Esson, the family connection may have facilitated this. The 1861 census lists Susan as the sole resident at Burnside. Her occupation is listed as General Labourer. In 1871, still at Burnside, her occupation is given as Laundress. It is not known if she carried out this occupation in the Colony (local demand seems improbable given the remoteness of the site and the independence and limited means of the Colonists), or if the entry refers to employment in a household elsewhere. A rough setting of stones (date unknown) in the Clachie Burn, downstream from Burnside, suggests a damming of the stream, but no further evidence has come to light of its purpose. Allan (1983, p62) states: “Susie Findlater, a sister of Mrs Esson, ..... knitted stockings, doing what was called “Faactory” work, working wool handed to her by the travelling grocer”. When the house became vacant is unknown, but by the time of the 1881 census Susan Findlater was at Boghead of Tullos as housekeeper to the recently widowed John Esson and his son George. Boghead was the only occupied house in the Colony by that time. By the time of the revision of the OS map in 1899, the buildings at Burnside are shown as unroofed, and the croft fields (apart from the kailyard in front of the house) are planted with trees.

**Family history links** (*within this digital archive*)  
*(to be completed)*

## Additional images

Photos

### Burnside Soil and Magnetometry Survey



*From survey by University of Aberdeen, 2013 © University of Aberdeen*

LIDAR

Other

## Archaeology notes

Floor area of house disrupted by amenity tree/shrub planting in early 21<sup>st</sup> century, which was subsequently removed. Considerable depth of improved soil was found in the kailyard (check image location).



(Obtain original image)

(credit/date)

Evidence of stone-built field drainage was found by excavation in field 738 by K Milek et al (University of Aberdeen), 2013. Also, a wide, open ditch skirts the north margin of the fields. This may be of Colony date, reflecting a condition in the "Conditions of Lease" following the

1859 Division of the Commonty. Traces of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century north-south access track to the house are visible after it leaves the existing public path which is on the line of the original east-west part of the trackway.

Link to Aberdeenshire SMR: [tbc](#)

Comments on LIDAR image:

**Natural environment notes** *Insert summary of any soils data from K Milek files on “My Aberdeen”.*  
*[BLP, FCS, NESBREC may have further data]*

**Papers** *(Include the full contents or extracts of a paper where appropriate. Otherwise, list under “References”). Insert soils paper if extant and permissible. Insert AK NEFHS, CF Leopard, and KL Rental papers if applicable and permissible.*

**References** *(Include any papers reproduced above under “Papers”. Also include links to related site record webpages, e.g. Aberdeenshire Council Sites and Monuments Record).*  
*(to be completed)*

#### **Current ownership and land use**

Owner: Scottish Government (managed by [Forestry Commission Scotland](#)). Land use: former fields used for commercial forestry from late 19<sup>th</sup>-century to date; clearfelled in 2007, with some areas replanted with amenity native broadleaves.

#### **Current management and activities**

Periodic Bailies of Bennachie work party visits to control vegetation in and around structures.

#### **Access**

“Colony Trail” skirts croft. Open access, unmanaged scrub and woodland with brash debris, uneven ground; care required to avoid damage to structures.

**Contacts** *Note: this might be better placed on the home page of the website, rather than being repeated (with risk of errors and redundancy) in each Croft History file.*

*(Via website “Contact Us” details.)*

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