

## Tomnaverie Stone Circle

There are about ninety stone circles like this one in North East Scotland. The stones are arranged in a circle and the biggest stone, the 'recumbent', is lying down between two other very big stones, called 'flanking stones'. Because 'recumbent' means lying down they are called Recumbent Stone Circles and Tomnaverie is a very fine example.



In the 1900s the quarry, beside the stone circle was being worked and the granite was cut or blasted out with dynamite and used to build most of the houses in Tarland. The quarrymen took so much granite from beside the stone circle that the 'flankers' and the 'recumbent' stone were in danger of falling down into the quarry. There was a danger that someone might be killed so they toppled the big stones so that they were lying down and rolled the recumbent forward away from the edge. Lord Aberdeen, who owned the quarry, decided that quarrying work should be stopped altogether. Much more recently the quarry has been filled in and the whole hill, with Tomnaverie on top is almost back to its original shape.

Tomnaverie was excavated between 1999 and 2001 to discover more about the way it was built and its history. The grass and the earth were all stripped away and archaeologists, carefully exposed the layers of stones underneath. Everything was photographed and planned before some of the stones were removed to look deeper

into the earth for more information about what had happened at Tomnaverie in the past.

They found the place where a missing stone had once been and were able to prove



that a big stone found in the quarry had once stood in that very place. The stone was eventually put back there. At the end of the excavation the stones and the turf were replaced and the flankers and the recumbent stones were put back in their original positions, by people working for historic Scotland. Historic Scotland look after Tomnaverie today.

Charcoal was found that has been carbon dated and proves that the Tomnaverie site was first used around 2,500BC (more than 4000years ago) as really good place for a beacon to be lit so that people nearby could see it. It was used for gatherings and ceremonies. Cremated bone was also found and that tells us that cremations had also taken place there thousands of years ago.

**Below some of the finds are listed:**

Burnt bone – radio carbon dating 1000BC (more than 3000years ago)

Beaker pottery of about the same period

Later Bronze Age pottery

Early Bronze Age pottery

Flint – blade, retouched blade and other unworked flint

Quartz worked and unworked

Natural Chrystal

Charcoal

It is still a very good place for a celebration. There was a bonfire lit at Tomnaverie to celebrate the coronation of our Queen's father, King George the sixth and I know some people who went up there to have a birthday party just a short time ago. It 's a great place to visit with a fabulous view all around The Howe of Cromar.

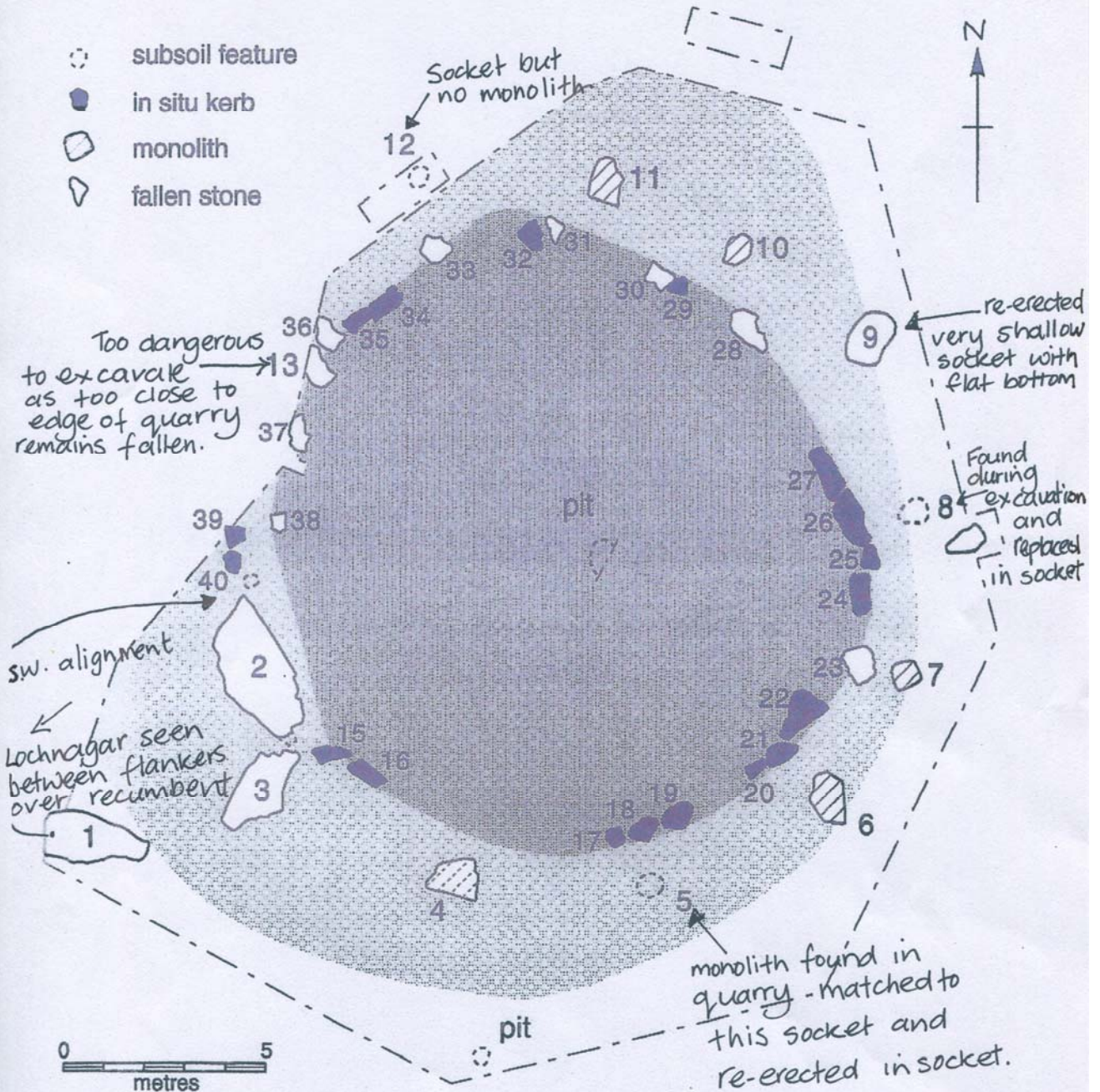
On the next page is a plan of Tomnaverie, see if you can identify all the stones when you are there.

Tomnaverie before reconstruction.

Nos. 1-13 monoliths  
 Nos 15-40 kerb stones.

----- quarry edge

Cup marks found on recumbent and one of flankers. and some kerb stones.



- Recumbent (2) rolled towards centre of circle by quarry men repositioned in original shallow hollow, held by massive chocking stones.
- Flankers repositioned. Flankers were added after platform was built - evidence from <sup>deep</sup> sockets - neither was cut into bedrock. Both have tapered bases the product of deliberate modification

