

# WRESTLING WITH SOCIAL VALUE: AN EXAMINATION OF METHODS AND APPROACHES FOR ASSESSING SOCIAL VALUE IN HERITAGE MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION

## Case Study Report: The Brown and White Caterthuns, Angus

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Full acknowledgement and grateful thanks are given to all the individuals who participated in this study.



Image 1: Transect walk on the Brown Caterthun, looking towards the White Caterthun



Image 2: Stone rampart and ditch formation on the White Caterthun, view to the South East



Image 3: Boundary marker on the White Caterthun surrounded by fruiting bilberry bushes. Marked VR, the markers were installed in 1885-87.



Image 4: Cup-marked stone on West side of the White Caterthun.<sup>1</sup> Top left is the remains of a wreath and card and to the right is a patch of burned ground

All images taken August 2019 © Elizabeth Robson

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<sup>1</sup> In 1921, the cup-marked stone rolled down to the bottom of the hill. In 1922, it was returned to its present location, just below the inner rampart, and the broken parts were joined using metal clamps (now removed). The stone bears around 70 simple, small cup marks.

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### 1. Summary

This was a **rapid, researcher-led study** into the social values associated with the Brown and White Caterthuns, a pair of Iron Age hillforts in Angus. Activities were principally conducted over three days during August 2019. A bank holiday weekend was chosen to maximise the potential for on-site contacts.

People visit the site for a variety of reasons, individually and with family or friends. The research identified a number of **different communities** for whom the site is of significance and a variety of **inter-connected values** associated with the site. Key findings:

- The opportunity for **solitude** was explicit in how people valued the site.
- The experience, atmosphere and activities at the site are influenced by **natural phenomena** - changing seasons, time of day, and weather – and this was described in **multi-sensory** terms.
- The **sense of place** is connected to its history, location, memories and experiential aspects.
- For many people the hills are a place of **peace and contemplation**, which may be partly why the site is attracting **memorial practices**.
- Knowledge of the site is an expression of **belonging and connection** to place. Visiting was a regular practice for some people, but connections were also maintained from a distance.
- The site provides a connection to the **wider landscape**, of which it forms a part.

This report provides a stepping off point for further research or future actions. It concludes with some of the **implications** of the findings. Key points:

- **Memorialising activity** is likely to be more widespread and significant in how the site is valued than previously thought, involving a community of interest that is not necessarily based on location.
- Changes within the **wider landscape** – in particular those affecting the sightlines to or from the site and the ‘natural’ setting – may impact the values associated with the site.

It is recognised that the limitations of this study (time and access) mean that there are communities whose views are not represented. Further research would help to address recognised **limitations in participation and scope**, particularly with regard to:

- people involved in memorialising activities;
- owners, workers, and users of the estate and farm land on which the Caterthuns are located;
- younger people and those involved in family or communal events taking place in different seasons.

## 2. Description of Site

**The site:** The Brown and White Caterthuns are a pair of Iron Age hillforts near Edzell in Angus. The forts take their names from the hills (Ordnance Survey Name Book 1857-1861), although Caterthun is thought to derive from ‘cathair’, a circular stone fort (Canmore record 34969). The summits are about 1km apart and both hills provide wide views of the surrounding landscape – to the North West, the hills that rise up at the edge of the Grampian Mountains, and to the South East, across flatter wooded and farmed land towards the sea (see Map 1 in Annex IV). The forts are visible as earth banks, ditches, and (on the White Caterthun) stone ramparts and other man-made features (see image 2). The site is dotted with evidence of past management, such as engraved boundary markers (see image 3), metal posts, and the concrete base of an Ordnance Survey triangulation station; as well as evidence of recent use, such as burned wood. A road passes between the hills and there is a small car park with a picnic area and interpretation board on the side of the White Caterthun. Well defined footpaths lead up to the summits, the White Caterthun being the shorter but steeper walk and the Brown Caterthun being a more gradual ascent. The ground is mostly covered by grass and low-growing plants, such as heather and bilberry/blaeberry bushes, with a few lone trees on the slopes of the White Caterthun and denser stands of wood at the base of the hills.

**Archaeological interpretations:** Excavations have shown that both hilltops have been the sites of multiple phases of occupation (see Dunwell & Strachan 2007). The Brown Caterthun was occupied during the 1st millennium BCE and the White Caterthun from the early 2nd millennium BCE to the 1st millennium CE. The large number of gaps in the outer banks of the Brown Caterthun suggest that it was not purely or principally a defensive structure but may have been used for gatherings, with evidence of multiple structures and possible indications of cultivation and crop processing. The stone structures of the White Caterthun seem more clearly defensive or intended to affirm dominant status. However, many questions remain about the forts, including the relationship between them and with the other early settlements in the surrounding landscape. The discovery of two cup-marked stones at the White Caterthun provides a link to human activities in earlier periods. The larger Stone, featuring about 70 cup-marks, is on site (see Map 2 in Annex IV and image 4) and the other is in St Andrews University Archaeological Museum.

**The surrounding area:** The Caterthuns form part of a private estate. The immediate surroundings are farmland (with areas around the monuments used for grazing) or managed for forestry and grouse shooting. The nearest settlements are Tigerton, Kirkton of Menmuir and Bridgend of Lethnot. The nearest village is Edzell, which is about 5 miles distant by road. The Caterthuns are visible from a considerable distance in good weather, including from the A90 Forfar bypass.

**Formal heritage status:** The subject of antiquarian and archaeological interest since the 18<sup>th</sup>-century, the Caterthuns were amongst the first monuments in Scotland to be given official scheduled status (1882) and taken into State Care (1884). The site, which consists of both hillforts, is currently under the Guardianship of Historic Environment Scotland.<sup>2</sup> This is an unstaffed site that is open year-round, free of charge.

## 3. Research Process

This was a *rapid, researcher-led study* that principally trialled semi-structured (3) and structured (14) interviews, in combination with transect walks (3), multi-sensory/embodied reflections and observation (15.5 hours). This was complemented with a document review and online search of public participatory

<sup>2</sup> Statement of Significance for the Brown and White Caterthuns: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=379e4ca6-ef05-4b79-b45e-a8b800949867>

media (such as YouTube) and websites (such as WalkHighlands.co.uk). The total time spent on research activities, including preparation, was around 7-8 days FTE. This included 3 days spent researching at or around the site over a bank holiday weekend (3-5 August 2019), but excludes travel time and analysis. A bank holiday weekend was chosen to maximise the potential for on-site contacts during daylight hours.

#### 4. Communities

This research identified a number of *different communities* for whom the site is of significance, including:

Local residents	Runners*
Residents in the wider area	Cyclists*
People originally from the area	Berry pickers
Relations and friends (either visiting or commemorating)	Drone pilots <sup>3</sup>
Walkers	Photographers
Dog owners	Owners, workers and users of the estate
	Campers

\* As well as private/individuals, there have been running and cycling races that incorporate or pass between the hills.

It is recognised that the limitations of the study (time and access) mean that there are communities whose views are not represented. These are noted below under Implications as avenues for further investigation. The data gathered is in no way comprehensive, but there is some triangulation, providing a degree of confidence in the findings.

#### 5. Findings

This study identified a variety of *inter-connected values* associated with the site, which are summarised below (see Annex I: Statement of Social Values for further elaboration and supporting references):

**5.1 Experiential aspects:** People visit the site for a variety of reasons, as individuals and for communal/family orientated activities:

- The opportunity for *solitude* was explicit in how people valued the site.
- *Seasonal activities* were more often communal or family orientated. Given the timing of the research, berry picking was referred to and observed, though other activities were mentioned.
- The experience and atmosphere of the site are influenced by *natural phenomena* - changing seasons, time of day, and weather – and the experience of the site was described in *multi-sensory* terms.
- The sites display characteristics of *liminal spaces*, physically changeable places people go to step away from their day-to-day lives and to remember others.

**5.2 Spiritual values:** The Caterthuns are not a formal religious site, but they do have spiritual aspects:

- For many people the hills are a place of *peace and contemplation*.
- This may be one reason why the site is attracting *memorial practices*.

<sup>3</sup> Respondents indicated that the site was popular with drone pilots and the presence of videos online would seem to support this. There is a potential conflict with use of the same airspace by low-level aircraft. Angus Council's protocol on drone use indicates that drones are not allowed in recreational areas:

[https://www.angus.gov.uk/noise\\_neighbours\\_pets\\_and\\_pests/community\\_safety/drone\\_use\\_protocol](https://www.angus.gov.uk/noise_neighbours_pets_and_pests/community_safety/drone_use_protocol).

- The history of the site as an ancient human settlement, its location in the landscape, people's personal memories and experiential aspects combine to create a presence or **sense of place**.

**5.3 Expression of belonging:** As a familiar local feature, the site is connected to individual belonging and the connection between people and place:

- Some people expressed a very direct connection to the site as part of their **personal/family history**.
- **Knowledge** related to the site and of the wider area was seen as evidence of belonging.
- Visiting was a **regular practice** for some people, but connections were also **maintained from a distance**, whether passing on the road or from seeing the hills from further away.

**5.4 Connection to the landscape/setting:** The hills are dominant and omnipresent features in the landscape, part of an **every-day landscape** that is not always consciously reflected upon.

- They are **reference points**, used when moving through or situating places within the landscape.
- As **vantage points**, the open aspects on all sides and unimpeded views were central to the experience of the site.
- The **vegetation and 'natural feel'** are important to the character of the site, with people expressing attachments to or associations with certain trees and types of plants.

## 6. Implications

The communities and values identified in this study suggest a number of implications for future management of the site and potential areas of conflict:

**Memorial activities:** The responses from this limited sample suggests that the extent to which memorialising activities have been formally requested or identified (i.e. one request to scatter ashes in 2013, an urn placed in a cairn in 2017, and an application to install a bench) is an under representation of this type of activity and there may be a sizable community of interest who value the site as a place of memory. The scattering of ashes and depositing of flowers are not necessarily damaging to the monument, unless accompanied by the movement of stones, e.g. to create a cairn.<sup>4</sup> Approaches to such 'unauthorised works' and the removal of artificial flowers or other items placed at the site requires sensitivity and consideration of the emotional connection people may have to the site.

**Visibility/Setting:** The fact the sites can be seen from, and provide views over, a large area, mean that changes within the wider landscape have the potential to impact the values associated with the site. This has been seen in the past with disputes over the siting of wind farms in the area: "An awful lot of people's connections were at a distance. If the forts had been on a flat plain then no doubt we would have had a fraction of the objections" (7.1). The current windfarms did not provoke much comment in this research, but there were comments related to other aspects of setting and land use, including cows grazing on the Brown Caterthun (seen as and churning up the paths) and trees obscuring the views. An increase in commercial forestry (promoted under the government's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029) was also noted as potentially impacting on the look and feel of the wider area. Felling and planting applications are made through Scottish Forestry and, unless exempted, require consultation with the local planning system and consideration of land designations/areas of interest, including scheduled monuments.

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<sup>4</sup> It is noted that cairns may be formed as memorial actions without the obvious inclusion of human remains and as a form of place-making practice unrelated to memorials. Understanding the values of the cairns on the White Caterthun requires further research to identify the communities and motivations involved (also see comparators in Annex II).

The approach taken in this study was to engage with formally organised groups and official representatives with a responsibility or stated interest in the site and to complement this with approaches to individuals (at the site and in local settlements). This was a rapid study undertaken over a fixed period and the scale and range of the engagement reflects this. In terms of addressing recognised **limitations in representation and scope**, complementary research could be conducted with:

- **Owners, workers, and users of the land** – The hills on which the forts are sited are privately owned, forming part of an estate, which has been in the same family for multiple generations, and individual owner-occupied farms. It was not possible to access to the owners’ information ahead of this study, but it would be a significant addition to include the land owners and those involved in managing, working on, or using the wider estate for sport/leisure in any further assessment.
- **Families interested in memorialising activities** – This activity is reflected in this study but not as a result of targeted sampling. The scale of memorialising activities is unclear and a specific focus on understanding the communities and values involved could be useful.
- **Group or Communal events** – due to the timing of this study, it was not possible to observe or participate in many of the seasonal or communal activities mentioned by participants. This could reveal additional communities or values connected with the site.
- **Younger people** – there is a bias in the respondents in this study towards people over-50 years old. Younger people were observed at the site, either children with family members or young adults by themselves, however when approached they were less inclined to formally participate. Additional research with younger people could potentially identify additional values or help clarify the extent to which the values identified in this study are held by younger generations.

## Annex I: Statement of Social Value

This Statement is an attempt to illustrate the range of values associated with the Brown and White Caterthuns. Values are not static and are liable to change over time. In addition, this Statement is based on a limited number of inputs and individuals who do not claim to speak for or represent the views of their entire community. It should therefore be considered as indicative of the diversity of values for communities with interests in the site, rather than comprehensive or definitive.

**Experiential aspects:** People visit the site for a variety of reasons and spoke about the experience of being at the site in two quite different ways; the first was principally individual/solitary and the other was more communal/family orientated. The same people may value both aspects, but they were quite distinct.

- The opportunity for **solitude** was explicit in how people valued the site: “Generally speaking, often no one there when I’m there, or don’t make contact, they’re on the other side. Probably gone up to be by themselves anyway” (7.12); “last time we came there was one other car, they came up this one [the Brown Caterthun], so we went up the other” (7.7).
- The experience and atmosphere of the site are influenced by **natural phenomena** - changing seasons, and weather: “Have photos in different lights and different types of weather, you see it all up here” (7.10). These encounters were reflected in people’s memories: “the walk in the snow - how peaceful it was on a fine clear day - great views - snow covered” (7.18).

- Several people mentioned seeing aircraft at the site, notably jets practicing low level flying: “so large and low, could see the pilot” (7.4). This connects the site to the various airbases that have existed in the wider area, but also emphasises the **elevation** of the hilltop locations and their **liminal nature**, physically (between earth and sky, one moment open and expansive, the next enveloped in low cloud), and as places people go to step away from their day-to-day lives and to remember others.
- **Seasonal activities** were more often communal or family orientated, undertaken with, or memories from being, children: sledging, Easter-egg rolling, picnics in the summer, and berry picking in August. One respondent recalled, “My mother and grandmother lived in farmhouse at the bottom there in the ‘40s, used to go up to gather bilberries” (7.5). There are extensive berry patches on the back of the White Caterthun and people were observed gathering and eating berries during the study.
- People visit at different **times of day** - early morning when it is likely to be quieter (for solitude), sunrise/set, and at night to see the stars and northern lights, or for parties, and occasionally to mark key events (such as a millennium bonfire): “[talk of] a crock of gold up [the White Caterthun]. Been up here early in the morning to see the sunrise, that’s the crock of gold” (7.11).
- The experience of the site was registered in **multi-sensory** terms – the silence/bird song, the taste of the berries, the views and familiar landmarks, the effort of the walk, the effects of the weather.

**Spiritual values:** The Caterthuns are not a formal religious site, but they do have various spiritual aspects:

- Connected to solitude (above), for many people the hills are a place of **peace and contemplation**. “This is [my husband’s] walk really, comes up at silly o’clock in the morning with the dog, watches the sun come up. His magic place [...] quite spiritual up there if just you. He said it was and I said ‘I don’t see it’. Went up on my own sitting there, nice day, up there about an hour, then someone else came and it was time to go, not my place anymore” (7.10). (Also see values of belonging below).
- This sense of peace may be partly why the site is attracting **memorial practices**.<sup>5</sup> Three participants in this study had first or second-hand knowledge of scattering ashes on the White Caterthun or people leaving flowers. These activities seemed to be focused on the White Caterthun, although that requires further investigation, and physical evidence observed at the site suggests an association with the cup-marked stone. “When mother died a few years back in her 90s, she said scatter my ashes where I can see the hills. Was a place she had come to visit as had come as a kid, met up with friends used to come up on bikes, so that’s where we scattered her ashes” (7.2).
- There is a **sense of place**, which is linked to the site’s history as an ancient human settlement, its location, people’s memories and experiential aspects, such as the wind creating or carrying noises and the weather. It has a presence: “Wouldn’t say they were eerie at all, on a misty night, think ‘oh there were people here’, but not spooky” (7.12).

**Expression of belonging:** As a familiar local feature, knowledge of the site is an expression of belonging, individually and in terms of the site itself being ‘belonging’ (not in a proprietorial sense) to people and place:

- Some people expressed a very direct connection to the site as part of their **personal/family history**. For example: “Come from this area, so always known about them” (7.3); and “I’m a son of Angus, interested in family history, earliest ancestors were just the other side of the Caterthuns, [we] have been in the area a long time, could have been involved with the forts! [laughing]” (7.5).
- **Knowledge related to the site** was seen as evidence of a local connection. This included where the best berry patches are, the location of the cup-marked stone, stories of buried gold (see quote in experiential aspects), and the effects of the hillforts on the environment: “Neighbour lived in Tigerton

<sup>5</sup> Responses suggest that the time-depth and visibility of the site, memories of family/communal activities, and associations with belonging/home may also play a part in a complex and varied mix of motivations (see quote in text).

all his life, sadly passed away year ago. He told me that the fields round here have very few stones in them, all hauled up to build. Don't know how true that is but he was a cast-iron local, probably born in that house certainly lived in it all his life, and that is the local story" (7.12).

- Belonging was also expressed through demonstrating **familiarity with the wider area** and how it has changed, whether that be the vegetation (more or less wooded), wildlife (fluctuations in the presence of different species), or human settlements (identification of farms and settlements).
- Visiting formed part of a **regular practice** for some people, whether they walk their dog or "go up once a week from here on a Sunday evening to get ready for the next week" (7.12).
- However, connections were also **maintained from a distance**. The Caterthuns are visible over a large distance and the White Caterthun has a recognisable flat-topped shape, making it a distinctive part of the skyline. It is visible from the A90 Forfar bypass, if not further: "See them every day. Sit in garden and see them. History on your doorstep." (7.8).

**Connection to the landscape/setting:** The hills are dominant features in the landscape, impressive, intriguing, and omnipresent. Widely associated with expansive views to the South and East, encompassing many of the nearby settlements, they also look to the "closed-in, secret landscape" (7.1) to the North, providing a sense of perspective on the wider area.

- The sites form part of an **every-day landscape** that is not always consciously reflected upon: "When grow up with them it's difficult [to describe them] compared to seeing them for the first time" (7.4).
- They are **reference points**, used when moving through the landscape: "People talk about 'going over the Caterthuns', the road between the two" (7.2).
- The hilltops provide **vantage points**, used for situating places within the landscape and 'sign-posting' places of importance. The open aspects on all sides and unimpeded views were central to the experience of the site: "Good place to take visitors. Marvellous views down to the coast. Great showcase for visitors to Angus and introducing the place" (7.12).
- The **vegetation and 'natural feel'** were important to the character of the site, with people expressing attachment to or associations with the trees and plants: "Two furthest away trees [on righthand side of White Caterthun], every picture we have they're in it, every season. Don't know what we'll do if they fall down while we're still alive" (7.10); and "Heather is lovely, didn't see so much of this on the [White Caterthun], or perhaps it was different time of year. Like the natural feel of the place" (7.7). This contrasted to other comments, such as: "Continues to be managed as a grouse moor, not letting natural vegetation re-establish" (7.11)

## Annex II: Comparators and References

As noted in the report, the motivations for **memorialising activities** are likely to be multiple and complex – cutting across several of the social values associated with the site and potentially including others not identified by this study. Unlike sites designed as memorials or commemorative landscapes, this spontaneous practice is driven by other attachments to place. The initial action has a performative element that can be actively remembered and re-enacted in practices such as climbing the hill, adding a stone to a cairn, stopping at a familiar spot to catch your breath or take in the view. These are forms of 'memory work', involving an "interaction between the object as historical and material witness, and the moment of recall in the mind of the person in the present" (Leslie cited in Harrison et al 2008: 5).

Connected in some cases with memorial practices, the removal of stones from the monument to construct **cairns** is damaging to the archaeology and scientific values of the site. Such 'unauthorised works' may be

officially prosecuted under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979). Considering the case of walkers cairns in the North York Moors National Park, Emerick suggests that “releasing” the social values behind these practices could be more important to the future of the site than adopting a punitive approach; noting that a more creative and flexible approach to may be needed to the legislation (2014: 207). His discussions with walkers showed that, even where not expressly associated with memorialising activities, cairn building is an emotional and attentive act that connects people with community and place (see *ibid*: 204-206). Such actions have their own histories and may be seen by participants as putting a site into active ‘use’, in a way that contributes to, rather than detracts from, its significance. If similar factors are driving cairn building at the Caterthuns, then how the archaeological significance is communicated and whether the site is seen to be actively maintained may be important in moderating behaviours that are, for the most part, not undertaken maliciously or to wilfully damage the site.

Values related to landscape and setting were prominent in this case. Research has shown that the understanding and application of ‘*setting*’, which is a material consideration in planning processes, “has evolved over the past decade, in part as a result of testing through onshore wind energy developments, and the work of heritage professionals of all kinds, whose different roles and remits have contributed to strong differences of opinion” (Green 2018: ii). Green’s study is helpful in outlining some of the challenges and contradictions that have emerged around setting. Her recommendations include greater participation by interested communities in assessment processes and consideration of perceptual and multi-sensory (not just visual) aspects when thinking about setting (*ibid*: 278-279). Studies of atmosphere and the impact of weather on the experience of a site, could also contribute to appreciation of these values (e.g. Ingold 2010): “For the walker out of doors... the weather is no spectacle to be admired through picture windows but an all-enveloping infusion which steps his entire being” (*ibid*: S131).

Kieran Baxter’s short film (2016) was produced as part of a PhD investigating how aerial photography and creative visualisation technologies could be used to connect the archaeological interpretation of ancient monuments with the landscapes of which they form a part. It shows that aerial photography can provide a unique perspective on the sites, complementing the sense of elevation, views and connection to the wind and weather experienced at ground level.

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- Ordnance Survey Name Book: Forfar (Angus) 1857-1861 Vol. 69: Menmuir Parish, Brown Caterthun (p9) and White Caterthun (p11): <https://scotlandspplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/ordnance-survey-name-books/forfarshire-angus-os-name-books-1857-1861/forfar-angus-volume-69>.

### Annex III: Table of Contributors

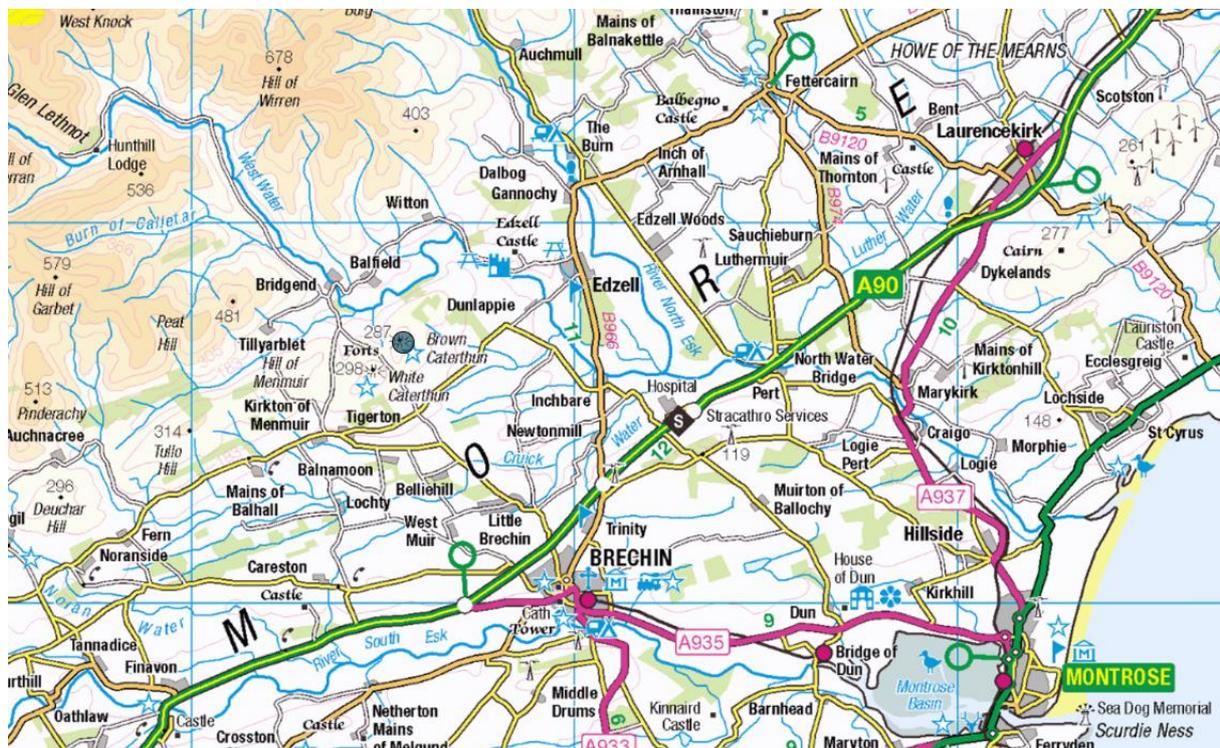
#	Method	Gender (age range), where resident – visiting pattern (where activity occurred)
1	Semi-structured	Male (not given), non-local - Council staff member with remit (by phone)
2	Semi-structured	Male (not given), local - Community Council member (at home)
3	Structured	Male (55-65), local - visits weekly (at site)
4	Structured	Female (55-65), local - visits monthly (in Edzell)
5	Structured	Male (not given), local – every few years (in Edzell)
6	Structured	Female (45-55), non-local, not visited for years (in Edzell)
7	Transect Walk	Female (not given), Montrose - occasional visitor (at site)
8	Structured	Male (55-65), local – visited 4x in few months (at site)
9	Structured	Female (not given), Forfar – 1 <sup>st</sup> visit (at site)
10	Structured	Female (55-65), Brechin – regular visitor (at site)
11	Structured	Male, (55-65) Brechin – thousands of visits (at site)
12	Semi-structured	Male (over-65), local - Community Council member (at home)
13	Transect Walk	Female (over-65), Forfar Ramblers Association – frequently as a child, 3 times in recent years (at site)
14	Transect Walk	Female (over-65), Forfar Ramblers Association – 4 <sup>th</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> visit (at site)
15	Structured	Male (over-65), Forfar Ramblers Association – 3 times in recent years (at site*)
16	Structured	Female (over-65), Forfar Ramblers Association – 3 <sup>rd</sup> visit (at site*)
17	Structured	Female (over-65), Forfar Ramblers Association (at site*)
18	Structured	Female (over-65), Forfar Ramblers Association - visited previously (at site*)

\*Note: these questionnaires were self-completed at the site and returned by post to the researcher

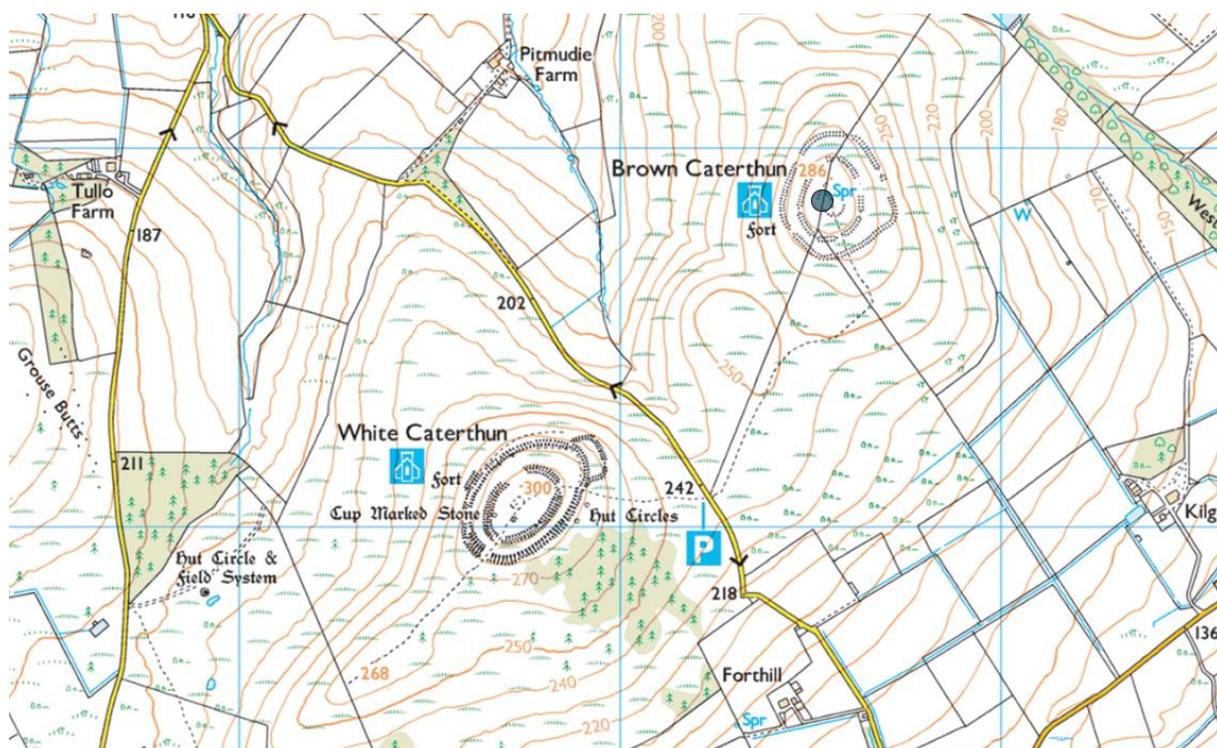
### Annex IV: Location Maps

Maps from Canmore. The Brown Caterthun (ID 34969) is marked with a grey dot in both cases.

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Map 1: The Brown and White Caterthuns' position relative to major settlements and landscape features.



Map 2: The Brown and White Caterthuns and immediate surrounds.