

Using maps to investigate Scotland's rural past

Detailed maps of Scotland have been created from the 16th century onwards and are a fantastic resource for charting the many changes that have taken place in the countryside, showing the rise and fall of particular places, regions and features through time. By comparing maps printed at different times we can find out a lot of clues to help us build a picture of how people lived in the past. We can find out where they built their houses, where they grew their crops and where they grazed and housed their animals. Maps show us the size of the communities they lived in and the sorts of environmental conditions they had to survive in.

When investigating a rural settlement site archaeologists will study a range of historic and modern maps to see if they can identify what the site looked like in the past, and observe how a landscape developed over time and record how settlements grew, changed and eventually became abandoned.

The following maps showing Margdow have been used in this case study, along with suggested discussion ideas of how to use them. The maps cover a time period of about 130 years and show how different mapmakers have depicted the site.

- Roy Map 1747 – 1755 (see <http://geo.nls.uk/roy-highlands/>)
- John Farquharson's 1769 Survey of the North Side of Loch Tay
- Ordnance Survey 1st edition – Perthshire 1867, sheet Ixix

Locating Margdow

Use an Ordnance Survey map to locate the settlement of Margdow. Its national grid reference is **NN639367**.

You can find Margdow on the Ordnance Survey Landranger Map, sheet 51 Loch Tay & Glen Dochart, scale 1:50 000, and on the Ordnance Survey Explorer Map, sheet 378 Ben Lawers & glen Lyon, scale 1:25 000

or use the following online resources:

<http://getamap.ordnancesurvey.co.uk>. This allows you to input the national grid reference to see a 1:25000 scale map of the site

Google maps: <http://maps.google.co.uk>

Google Earth: <http://earth.google.com>

Live Local: <http://maps.live.com/>

Multimap: <http://www.multimap.com/>

192.com: <http://www.192.com>

Look at a modern map

- Talk about the kind of landscape the site is located in today. Has it always looked as it does now?
 - Margdow is today surrounded by in a farming landscape sloping down between the main road and the North bank of Loch Tay, among regularly enclosed fields. There is a strip of woodland along the loch side, and further pockets of woodland within many of the nearby fields.
- Try to find the nearest modern settlement.
 - The nearest town is Killin, to the west of the site at the mouth of the River Dochart, but there are small settlements all along Loch Tay. In the past there were numerous townships along the loch.

Roy Map

The Roy Map was surveyed between 1747 and 1755 at an approximate scale of one inch to 1000 yards (or about 1:36,000). It is a military map drawn shortly after the Battle of Culloden and was created by the British army to depict the landscape, roads and settlements of Scotland. Many now-abandoned rural settlements are depicted on it, along with details of the cultivated land associated with each settlement.

You should have already located Margdow on a modern map. Now try to find Margdow using the National Library of Scotland's Roy Map website <http://www.nls.uk/maps/roy/index.html>. To open up the map browser click on '[Full Screen map – Highlands](#)'.

A copy of the Roy Map showing Margdow (Roy Map 16/4d: Area around Ben Lawers, in Perthshire) is also available on the SCRAN website <http://www.scran.ac.uk>.

Margdow is on the north shore of Loch Tay In Perth and Kinross. On this sheet of the Roy Map it's approximate position is just above, and between the 'O' and the 'C' in the word 'Loch' which identifies Loch Tay. It is not named on the Roy Map but it's position can be found between the townships of Cruitavallach and Maricknaha.

Examples of how to use this resource

Use the Roy Map to study the site and make observations about the settlement at Margdow, the surrounding landscape and the people who lived there.

The following key to colours in the Roy map will help you to decipher it:

- red is used to show buildings and man-made structures
- brown is used to show roads
- blue-green is used to show water
- green is used to show woodland
- yellow is used to show cultivated ground
- buff is used to show moorland

The following questions provide ideas for discussion with your class.

- Why do you think the Roy Map was created?
 - The Roy Map was drawn by the British Army shortly after the Jacobite Rebellion. It would have been a vital reference in case any further trouble broke out in Scotland. It shows many features which would be of interest to an army commander needing to plan a battle or move troops around the country. Features such as roads, rivers, the positions of villages and hamlets, as well as different types of land-cover and terrain are shown in detail.
- Can you describe how Margdow is depicted?
 - Margdow has been included in the township of Maricknaha, which on today's maps is called Margnaha. Maricknaha township is shown as a group of seven red buildings on land between Loch Tay and the road (today's A827). The township is nestled between two areas of sloping moorland, one to the West, and another to the East. The township's cultivated fields are depicted in yellow as irregular and overlapping shapes on the hillside's flatter lower slopes to the east and north of the settlement. The dashed lines within the fields represent where the land had been ploughed. Has an area of woodland on it's Eastern side. There are many similar townships nearby.

- Why do you think Margdow does not have its name written on the map?
 - Perhaps the mapmakers could not find out or didn't ask anyone what it was called! There are other settlements nearby which similarly have not been named either. The Roy map is full of inconsistencies like this.

- What can we say about the township from this map?
 - From the cultivated fields we can see that in the mid-18th century the township was still occupied by a farming community who grew their crops in fields nearby. It was built on land above the north shore of Loch Tay, below the road. The land here is less steep than the slopes of Ben Lawers above the road, and the land more suited to farming. Many of the essentials for daily life in the township would have been available in the landscape around them – food from the fields, water from the rivers and wood from the woodland. The hillsides would provide grazing for their animals and peat for their fires. The Margdow people would have had neighbours and perhaps family in the townships close by and could use the road running along the strath to travel west to Killin or eastwards to Aberfeldy.

- Do you think the Roy Map a reliable historic source?
 - The Roy Map isn't as accurate as the Ordnance Survey maps we have today. It gives an overall impression of what the landscape and settlements were like rather than show them in measured detail. For example, we know from other maps made around the same time that Mardow was a separate community to Margnaha. However, the map would have been fit for its original military purpose.



Margdow township as depicted on Roy Map 16/4d: Area around Ben Lawers, in Perthshire

John Farquharson's 1769 Survey of the North Side of Loch Tay

John Farquharson's Survey of the North Side of Loch Tay was drawn in 1769, at a scale of approximately 1:5400. It is an example of an estate map, and was probably made for the landowner, the 3rd Earl of Breadalbane to calculate the rents paid to him by his tenants. The map shows the layout of the township at the time and the types of land cover around the site.

Examples of how to use this resource

Use the 1769 Survey to study the site and compare it with the Roy map. The following questions give you some ideas for discussion with your class.

- How does this map differ from the Roy Map?
 - This map is more detailed, showing the relative positions of buildings within the township. The mapmaker has also drawn the shape of the farmland more accurately and shown the difference between the arable and pasture land.
- How many buildings are shown on this map?
 - Within Margdow, there are 6 buildings drawn on the map. They have been drawn as small rectangles, all varying in size and orientation. Two enclosures are also depicted.
- What do you think the buildings were?
 - The buildings, enclosures and the arable land indicate a farming settlement.
- What can you observe about the positioning of the buildings within the township?
 - Three buildings are oriented in an east-west direction and are positioned within and at the edge of an enclosure. Another building, the longest, is positioned in a north-south direction and has a rectangular enclosure on its western side. Two further buildings orientated diagonally northeast – southwest. The buildings are surrounded by the township fields. These six buildings form a discrete unit, and has two neighbouring townships, Marragnaha to the west and Marragphuil to the east. One building in Marragphuil is shown with a thatched roof.
- Does Margdow look like a modern town on this map?
 - The buildings seem to be scattered and are not planned in any kind of regular order, unlike towns today.
- Why has the land within the township been drawn in two different styles?
 - The mapmaker has depicted two different kinds of land use around Margdow. The lined areas show where the township's fields were located. Arable land. The unlined land is labelled as "Improveable", which means it would have been suitable land to turn into arable fields for growing crops, if it was drained, rocks removed and given extra nutrients with manure or lime. This improvable land would have been where the people from the townships grazed their cattle.
- What did farmers do with the animals when the fields were in crop?
 - When crops were growing in the township's fields, the animals would need to graze elsewhere. During the summer the cattle were taken to the shieling grounds in the hills. Here the cattle would forage and graze on the hillside vegetation.

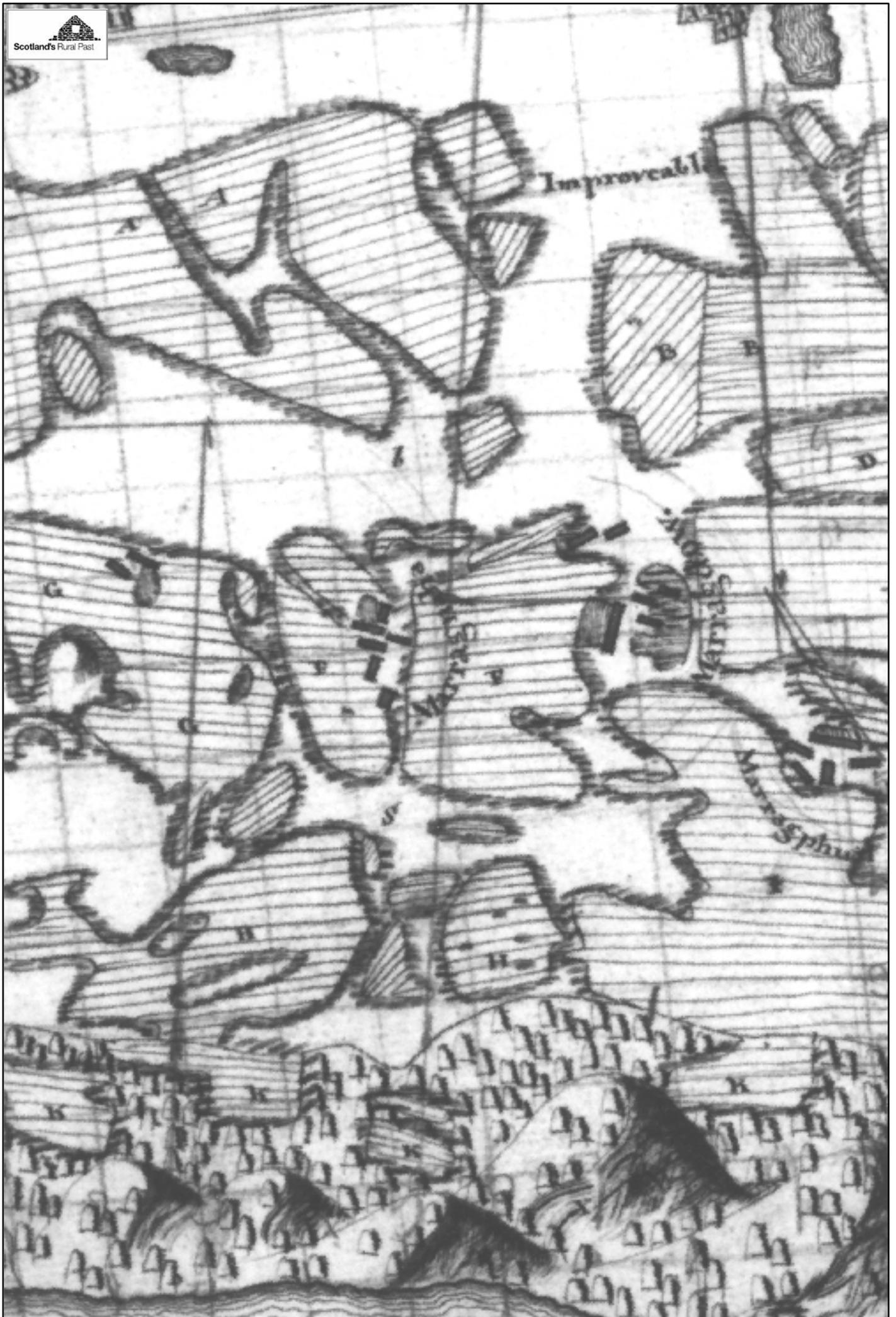
- Why has the mapmaker labelled each of the arable fields?
 - This was probably done to refer to a list of acreage, showing how much land was farmed at the township. This would be done for the benefit of the landowners so they can calculate how much rent the people in Margdow should pay them. Within a township it was usual for the landowner to rent the land to a tacksman, who would himself rent it to sub-tenants and landless cottars. The tacksman would be responsible for gathering the rent from the others and paying it to the landlord.

- Is this an accurate plan?
 - If you compare the 1769 map with later maps and photographs you can easily see the similarities in the shape and layout of the settlement. It made good sense for landowners to map their estates accurately in order for them to calculate their rents, or make plans for changes to their estate.

- Is this a reliable historic source?
 - Such an accurate and measured portrayal is vital evidence for archaeologists and historians who want to find out about rural settlements. Because the map was drawn up for the estate it is valuable first-hand evidence of life in Margdow in 1769. Archaeologists have used this map to identify and locate settlements on the North side of Loch Tay, and it was found to be a very accurate and reliable map.

Further ideas

- Identify, classify and measure or estimate the different kinds of "land uses" found on your school grounds, for example - playground, grassed areas, car park, and playing field. Draw a map to show your findings.



An extract of Farquharson's 1769 Survey of the North Side of Loch Tay, showing 'Marragow'
National Archives of Scotland, RHP973/1 plan 7

Ordnance Survey 1st Edition Map – Perthshire 1867, sheet Ixix

The Ordnance Survey began mapping Scotland in 1843, at a scale of six inches to one mile. These maps are called the first edition Ordnance Survey maps. They are useful for tracing deserted rural settlements because they span a period when many old townships and farmsteads were abandoned,

The six-inch scale is large enough to show individual buildings and the maps distinguish between those which are roofed and those which are not: roofed buildings are shaded in dark ink and unroofed buildings shown in outline only. The unroofed buildings generally indicate houses and outbuildings that were recently deserted at the time of survey. Very decayed buildings were sometimes depicted as '*Ruins*', or not shown at all.

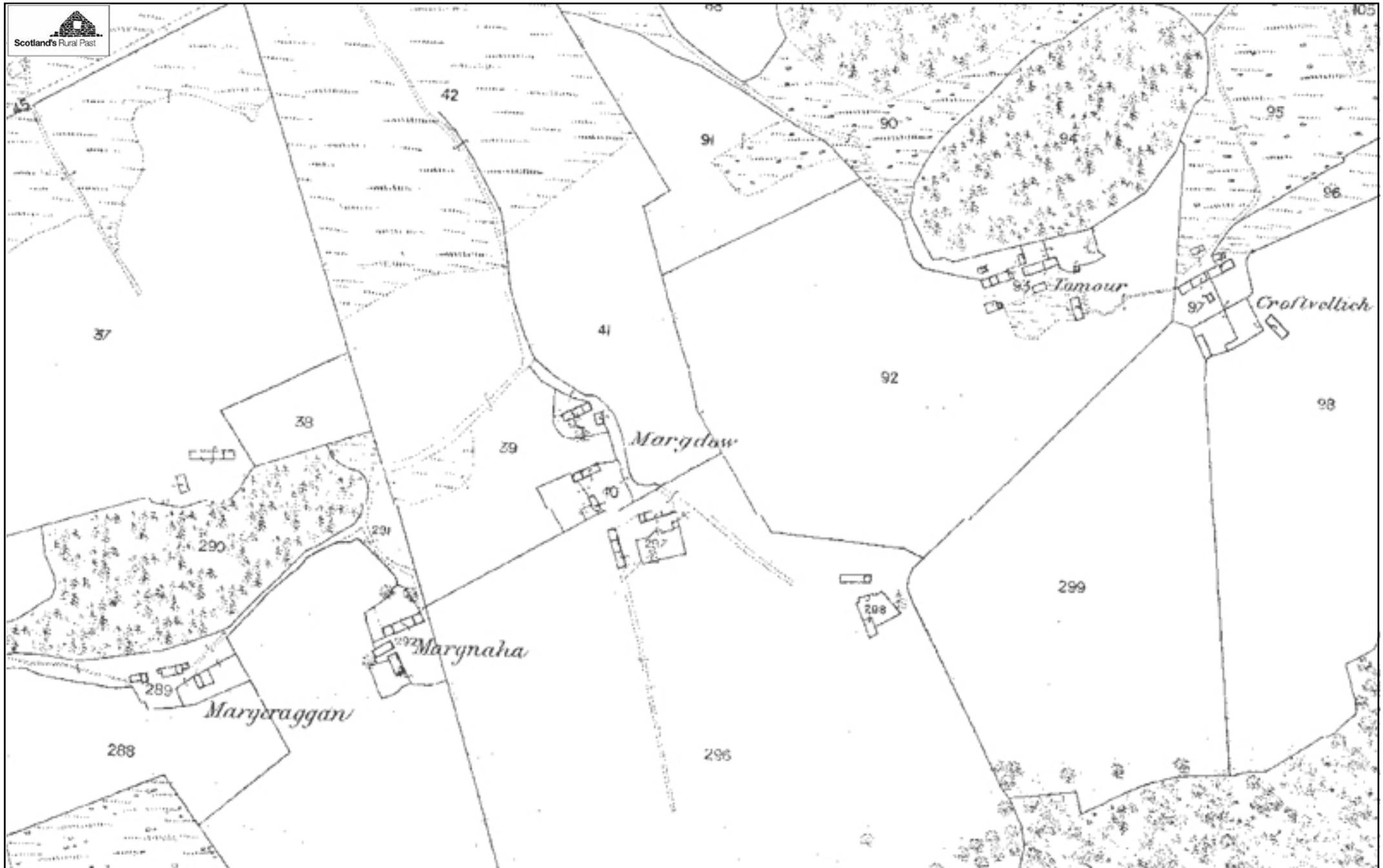
Use the Ordnance Survey 1st edition map to study the site and compare it with the earlier maps. The following questions give ideas for discussion with your class.

Examples of how to use this resource

- How many buildings are shown in Margdow on this map?
 - There are seven buildings shown in Margdow on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition map.
- Are the buildings roofed or unroofed?
 - Each building has been drawn as an unshaded rectangle, which is the symbol for an unroofed building.
- Why have these buildings lost their roofs?
 - The buildings have lost their roofs because sometime in the 98 years between 1769 and 1867 the people who once lived in them abandoned them. Without anybody to live in them and repair them the township buildings soon decay and lose their roofs.
- Are there any occupied buildings in the nearby townships?
 - Every building in the townships nearby has been drawn as an unroofed structure. In 1867 each of these townships would have been abandoned and unoccupied.
- Discuss where you think what you think happened to these townships, and where you think the families who lived there went.

Further ideas

- Use the National Library of Scotland's maps website to find Margdow on two other historic maps
 - Stobie, 1783 <http://www.nls.uk/maps/early/664.html>
 - Stobie, 1805 <http://www.nls.uk/maps/early/counties.cfm?id=668>
- Use <http://www.oldmaps.co.uk> to see what the area around your school looked like in the past.
- Draw a map of your school and surrounding area as it looks now, and as you think it might look in 250 years time. Design an appropriate key to go with the maps.
- Create a timeline to show the main historical events during the 250 years covered by these maps.



Margdow and nearby townships



Margdow in detail

Map base First Edition OS Perthshire 1867, sheet Ixix