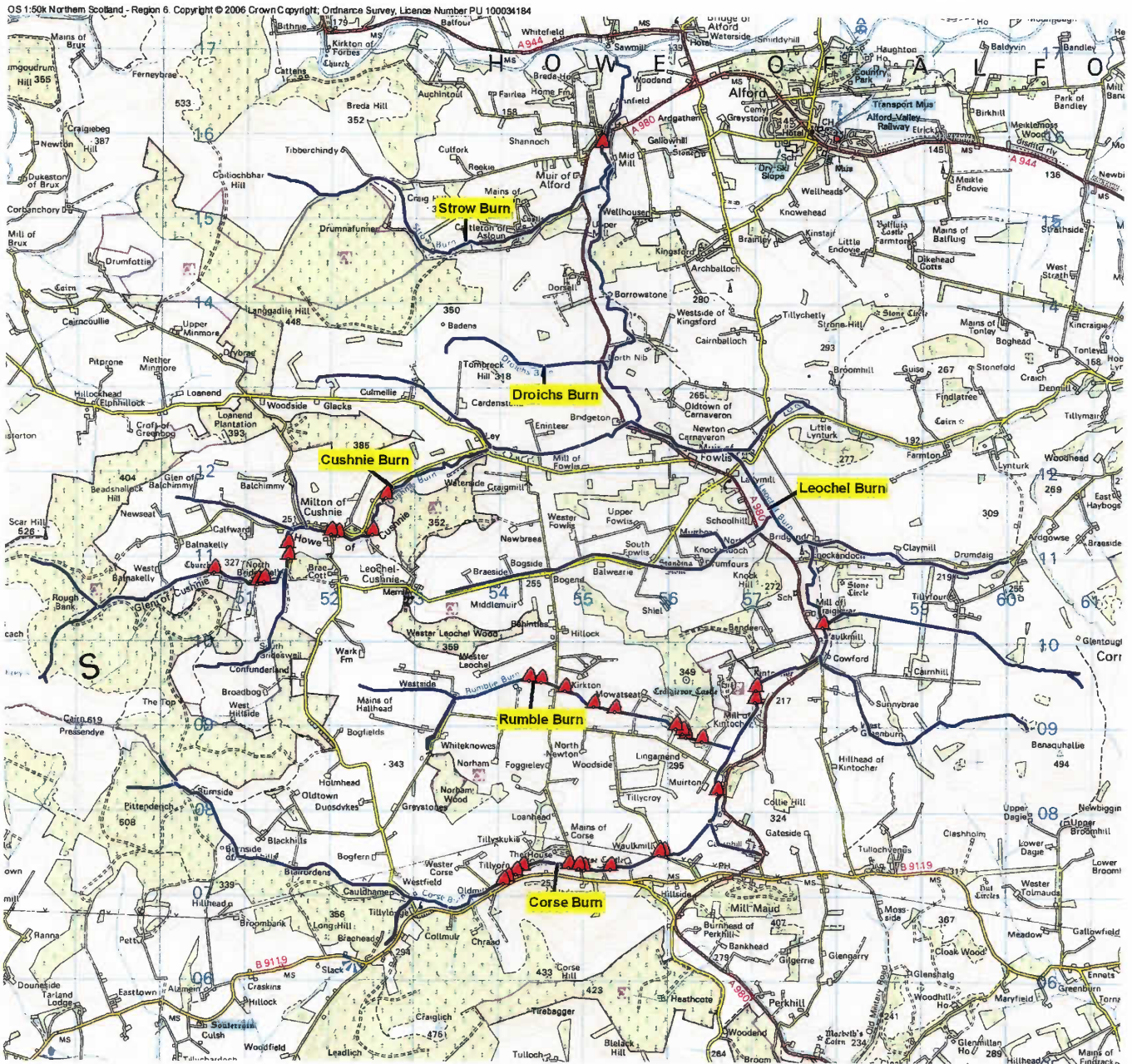


**THE DON DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD
HABITAT IMPROVEMENT WORKS
LEOCHEL BURN**



Picture taken by Jim Kerr

Leochel Burn catchment area



The Red triangles on the map represent blockages over the Leochel catchment area

The Leochel Burn is made up of 5 small tributaries and numerous small run off streams which are almost dry during times of dry conditions. The Leochel Burn starts her journey as the Corse burn in the North of Coull Parish at a altitude of 970 feet above sea level, before flowing North Westward for 9¾ miles before entering the river Don ½ mile above Alford Bridge. The five burns that make up this tributary are the Corse burn, Rumble burn, Cushnie Burn, Droichs burn, and the Strow burn. These 5 burns have all got stocks of young salmon and Trout within them, which make them very valuable to the Leochel system and the River Don catchment area.

A habitat survey was carried out in 2010 by the RDT and assisted by the DDSFB staff; during this survey 32 obstructions were identified over the Leochel catchment. On the map of the Leochel catchment area, you will see red triangles; these are blockages of all



different types. During the month of April the DDSFB staff has been busy clearing all 32 obstructions from the Leochel catchment. Some of these blockages are man made weirs; others consisted of discarded tractor tyres, fencing, farm gates, wooden pallets, and livestock feeding buckets. All together over the Leochel catchment we removed 9 discarded tractor tyres.

Other obstructions were caused by over grown willow trees that had collapsed at some stage, rerooted and were growing into the stream as you can see in the picture on the right.

This type of obstruction causes considerable damage to bank habitat, the water can't go over them during high flows, so will simply squeeze round the sides of the obstruction, undermining the banks causing the banks to collapse therefore losing vital habitat.

Pic 1

Before clearing



Pic 2

After clearing



As you can see by the picture above how the channel looks now, the willows have been cleared and the stream is now flowing freely once more.

Pic 1 before clearing



Pic 2 After clearing



These two pictures in this section of the Corse burn of before and after is a good example of other serious damage caused by blockages, in Pic 2 you can clearly see how fine sediments of sand have smothered out all aquatic vegetation, spawning gravel and I suspect there would be very little aquatic insects for fish stocks to feed on. Now the DDSFB staff has successfully cleared the 32 blockages over the Leochel catchment area, this should add to more spawning habitat and improved bank habitat. The areas that have also been coppiced will let in more natural light to the stream banks which will create improved bank vegetation and insect life. We have now moved on to the Goval Burn at Dyce.