

**A Project to Identify, Survey and Record
Archaeological Remains in Strathconon, Ross-shire**

**Report of Phase Three
Loch Meig to Dalbreac
Feb 2008 to June 2008, Aug 2009 to Oct 2009**



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This report is produced with financial assistance from the Marc Fitch Fund**

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of a Project to Identify, Survey and Record Archaeological
remains in Strathconon, Ross-shire
carried out by the North of Scotland Archaeological Society,**

Loch Meig to Dalbreac, Strathconon

Feb 2008 to June 2008, Aug 2009 to Oct 2009

Members of the team

Beth Blackburn, David and Susan Findlay, Lynne Fraser, Elspeth Kennedy,
Hazel Kiero, Linda Lamb, Cait MacCullagh, Allan Mackenzie,
Jim and Meryl Marshall, Alistair Morton, Marion Ruscoe, Graham Tuley, Jackie Wilson,
John and Trina Wombell

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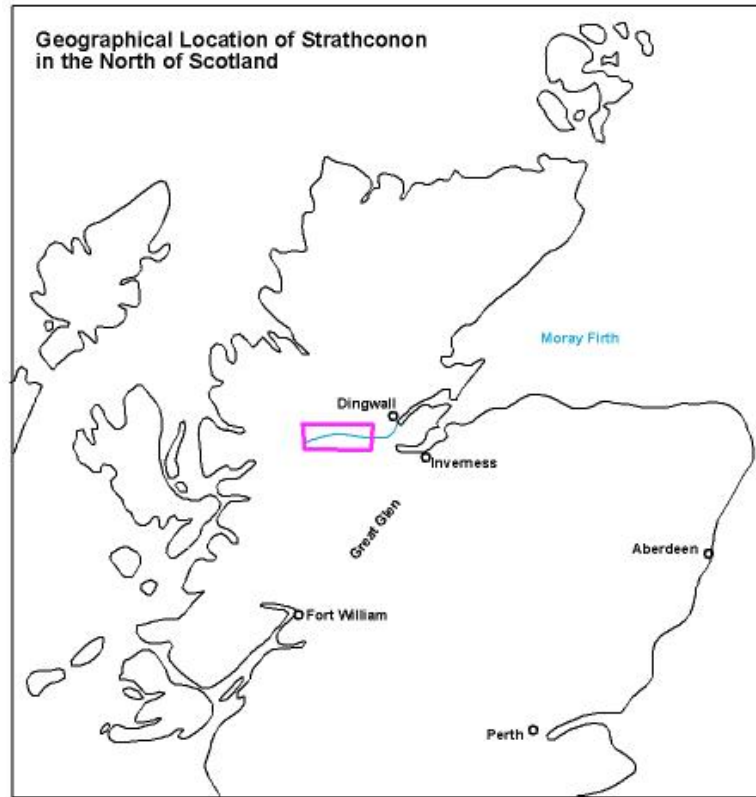
Scotland's Rural Past is a five-year nationwide project that has been set up to support local communities to research, record and raise awareness of abandoned rural settlements. The project is hosted by RCAHMS, with partnership funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and The National Trust for Scotland.

Front page: Top - inspecting the ruined mill at Achlorachan, and bottom – Balnault from the southeast, showing the upper part of Loch Meig and the former croftlands now flooded; Drumindarroch is on the far side of the loch.

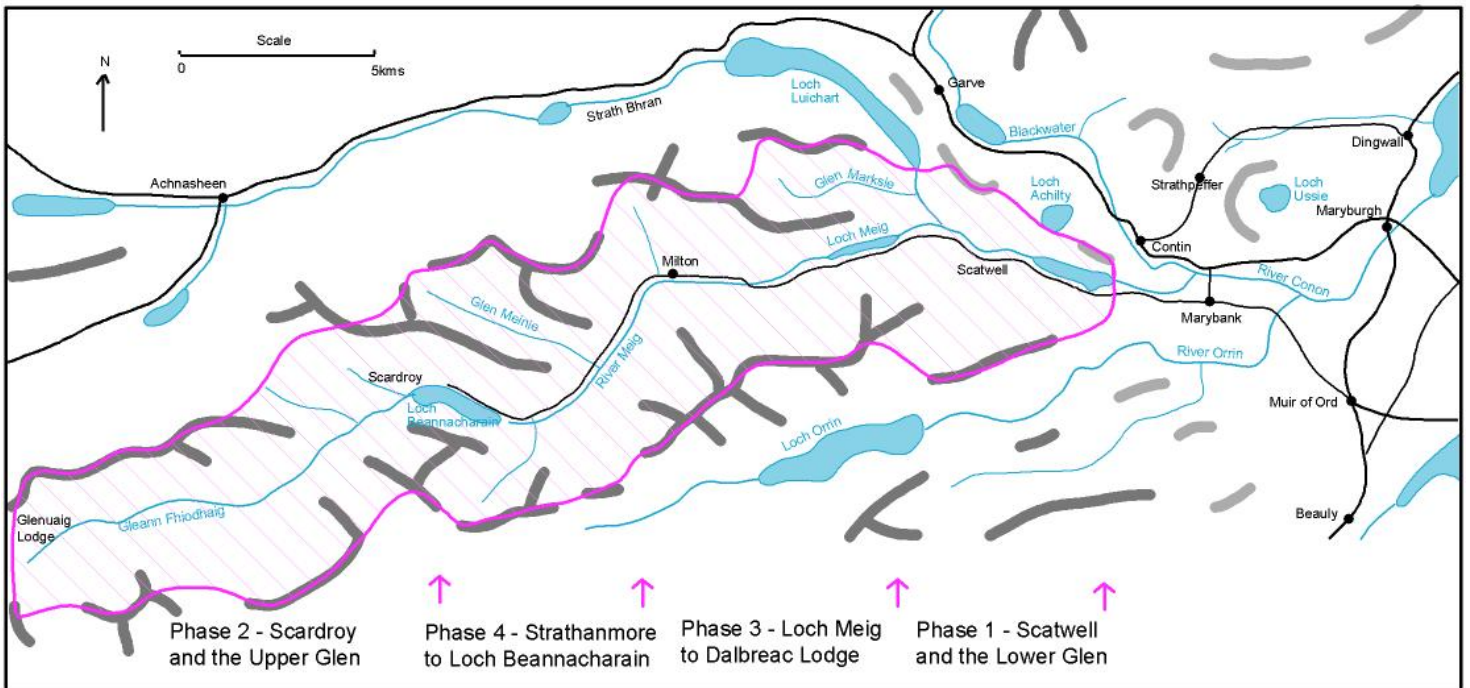
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1. Location of Strathconon and the different phases of the project



Location of the Strathconon Project and the different Phases



2. The Strathconon Project: Phase 3 – Loch Meig to Dalbreac

2.1 Introduction

The fieldwork for Phase 3 of the project took place at two different periods, between Feb 2008 and June 2008 and from August 2009 to October, it was in fact, the last part of the whole project to be completed. This section of the glen has two distinct types of terrain: the eastern part is narrow with steep heathery side slopes, it is reasonably well wooded and was therefore better explored in the winter months and the western part has more fertile ground with the main settlements of the glen. This western part has seen so much improvement and development over the last 150 years that most of the evidence of the rural activities before this time has not survived.

Because the whole glen extends over quite a large area, we divided the project into 4 separate phases:

Phase 1 - the lower glen, principally the Estate of Scatwell, east of the Meig Dam. This part of the project was the first to be undertaken and was completed in April 2007

Phase 2 - the upper glen, from Scardroy westwards to the watershed. This is an area of 25 km² of remote hill country and was completed between May 2007 and December 2007.

Phase 3 - the east part of the middle section of the glen, from Loch Meig to Dalbreac, all of which is part of the Strathconon Estate. It has most of the populated settlements and includes Milton, Porin, Dalnacroich, Bridgend and Achlorachan in its west part, and Glacour, East Balnault and Loch Meig in the east part. It was completed in October 2009

Phase 4 - The west part of the middle section of the glen which extends from Strathanmore to Loch Beannacharain and includes Druimfean (Carnoch Church), Invermeinie and Glen Meinich, Blar na Beithe, Inverchoran and Carnoch. It is also mostly part of the Strathconon Estate and was completed between May 2008 and June 2009.

Phase 3 was the smallest of the phases in geographical terms and had fewer sites. In general the going was fairly easy. Although we did not explore some of the steeper forested slopes in the east part, we felt that as it was such very rough steep ground it was unlikely to have any sites. Several enclosures and former cultivated land were flooded when the Meig dam was constructed circa 1957. In the west section, the gentle south facing slopes of the flat valley floor were turned over to croftlands in the middle part of the 19th century and a few of these are still worked. The farm of Mains of Dalbreac is situated on the valley floor on the south side of the river to the east of Dalbreac Lodge and the slopes above and to the south are part of the shooting policies, which extend to the watershed; there are several tracks accessing the hill.

2.2 Method

Historical and documentary research has continued and several visits to the new Archive Centre in Inverness were made. The old photographs from the period c1870 were more relevant to this phase and the one of Balnault was particularly useful. The Roy map of c.1750 was not particularly helpful, but the Estate map of 1825 (RHP 2525) and the plan of 1853 (RHP 2521) (*Figure 15*) which depicted the populated area around Milltown, Dalbreac, Porin, Dalnacroich and Bridgend were very interesting – the latter is an example of a “gentlemans map” and is likely to have been commissioned as much for its decorative purposes. As ever the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1881 (surveyed 1875) was useful. British Parliamentary Papers Vol VII “Inquiry into the Revenue Arising in Ireland etc”, 1823, provided on microfiche by Dingwall library, gave some much needed background to the illicit whisky distillation in the glen and the surrounding area.

The recording and, where appropriate surveying, continued in the manner described in previous reports. Briefly, each site is recorded by taking a 10 figure grid reference using a GPS and written details; measured sketches are also drawn where possible. On some occasions, rough measurements were taken by pacing, on others tapes were used. An overall plan of the more complex sites was produced so that the features can be seen in relationship to one another. The features were photographed using a digital SLR camera - only selected photographs are reproduced here in the report, the complete set of photographs is available on a DVD. Each sub-site or feature was given its own three figure number. All associated features were then grouped together for entering on the record. Copies of the full report are to be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (Highland Council), National Monuments Record of Scotland, Historic Scotland, Dingwall Museum and the North of Scotland Archaeological Society.

2.3 Historical background of Strathconon

The Earlier Years

NOSAS is very grateful to Aonghas MacCoinnich of the University of Glasgow for his paper “*Strathconon, Scatwell and the Mackenzies, c1463-c1700*” which is included in this report. The paper involves some new and previously unpublished research into the early documents. It is highly appropriate to Strathconon and our project and we are very pleased to be able to publish it here, as Section 2.4.

Two ancient place names, which probably refer to lands in the area of Phase 3 of Strathconon, are Meyne, variously spelled as Meinn or Maine, and Eskadale or Eskadellis. These names appear in documents going back to 1487 but they have fallen out of use over the years; the most recent document in which they appear seems to be a rental of 1726¹.

Watson(1914) puts forward the suggestion that “meinn” means “ore” in Gaelic and that the term is usually applied where the water is coloured by the rust of oxidized iron. Reinforcing this connection with iron, Aonghas MacCoinnich makes reference to documents connecting Strathconon with Kinlochewe, where it is known that the resource of iron was exploited in the late 16th Century. Duties were paid to the Mackenzie Estates for the iron and tenants of Strathconon were to work on the iron in both Strathconon and Kinlochewe². The lands of Meyne or Maine appear to refer to the western part of the area surveyed in phase 3. In the rentals of 1726-28³ “Meyne” comprises the following settlements, (*the spelling is that of the old names as they appear in the rentals and any explanations are in italics*); Balnault (*west*), Tornishiangain (*location unknown*), Delnacroich, Poulrin Easter, Poulrin Wester, Knockdow, Baillespoutan (*location unknown*), Strathanmore, Mullich and Delbreck. The name Meyne or Main also apparently survives in Cladh Meinn, the burial ground at Porin, and perhaps in Glenmeanie and its river.

Today the area of Milton, Dalbreac, Porin, Dalnacroich and Bridgend retains the majority of the population and it is probable that it has been a meeting place for the people of the glen and a centre of administration throughout the centuries. A route from the north and west comes over the hill at this point; from Badinluchie, near Achanalt, in Strath Bran, where there was an Inn. Porin has the old burial ground of Cladh Meinn, and the place name Dalnacroich provides evidence of a gallows, “There is a hillock called Cnoc na Croiche where malefactors are supposed to have been buried”(Watson 1914). The Allt Bail’ a’ Mhuilinn, at Milton, has provided water power for a series of mills, the earliest documented one being that on the 1825 estate plan; it may however have had its origins well before this date. More recently a saw mill and a grain mill appear on the Ordnance Survey maps; the grain mill is now an interpretation centre and picnic site. The smiddy at Porin would have had an important and central function in the glen; it also appears on the estate plan of 1825. These places had a favoured south facing aspect, but the summer grazings available to them in the vicinity were very limited. The inhabitants would have had quite a distance to travel to their sheiling pastures; perhaps to Glen Marksie in the northeast or Glen Orrin over the hills to the south. Perhaps the inhabitants of these settlements made their living by providing services for others in the glen and there was not the same need for them to rely on cattle and sheep for their livelihood. This fact is possibly reinforced by the early rentals of 1726-28³ which indicate a smaller rent being paid by the tenants here than those of the other settlements. Whatever the answer this area certainly became a central focus when Dalbreac Lodge was built, after the Balfours bought the property in 1839.

The name Eskadellis or Eskadale possibly refers to the eastern part of the area surveyed in Phase 3, which includes Loch Meig, Balnault, Druminriach, Glacour, Druminbuie and Achlorachan. “Eskadale in Strathconon” appears in early 15th century charters and in the Exchequer Rolls but it has been lost over the centuries(REFS). The most recent reference to it was found in a Seaforth rental of 1726: under “Strathconin and Strathbren”, tenants are named as in “one quarter of Eskadel” and “the other western quarter of Eskadell in Strathconan”. Most of the other place names of Seaforth lands in Strathconon are mentioned in the same rental but those in this particular area are not. We can therefore, reasonably assume that Eskadale refers to this part of the glen, especially when we realize the meaning of the name. Barbara Crawford puts forward the very plausible suggestion that it is Old Norse; the first element meaning “askr” or “ash tree”, and the second element “dal” or valley (Crawford 1995). This narrow part of the glen even today is well wooded. The name, Eskadale is yet another ON place name which may refer to timber and, along with “Scatwell”, may indicate that the glen was used by the Norse for its timber reserves. The place name, Eskadale, is still extant in Strathglass where it is applied to an ancient religious site in the middle reaches of the glen; a similar location in Strathglass to this in Strathconon.

Illicit Whisky Distillation

Some of the different aspects of the history of Strathconon have been explored in other reports of the project. In this report it is the intention to dwell on the illicit whisky scene in the glen. Two hundred years ago the illicit distillation of whisky had a significant part to play in the lives of many people in the Highlands. From the

number of possible still bothies found in Strathconon, it clearly played a vital role here too. Passing mention has been made to the industry in previous reports, but it is the intention here to give more background to the process, to the circumstances which led to the people turning to the industry and to the eventual outcomes. The following piece has been written with significant input from Tom Devine's *"Clanship to Crofters War – The Social Transformation of the Scottish Highlands"*, 1994, which presents a good account of the illicit industry. References to the situation in Ross-shire and Strathconon will then be explored.

General background

First a brief explanation of the processes involved in the distillation of whisky is required. The ingredients needed were grain, usually barley (or its variation, bere), a constant supply of running water and a plentiful supply of peat. The barley is allowed to germinate into malt and the germination halted by heating it and drying it gently. The malt is next milled and mixed with hot water to make wort which is then fermented. The resulting wash is heated in a still (preferably copper) and the alcohol vapour cooled by being passed through a "worm" with cold water running over it. The cooled spirit is collected from a spout at the bottom of the worm.

In the late 18th century and for several decades afterwards excise law was defied on a remarkable scale in the Highlands. In 1782 over 1,000 illicit stills were seized, a figure which represented only a fraction of the total number of stills in operation and the flow of illicit liquor was so great that, according to some observers, it threatened to engulf the market of the Lowland licensed producers. Two decades later the industry had intensified:

"The illicit distillers have lately extended themselves so widely and have assumed a character so alarming that further interference of legislature has become a matter of immediate necessity..... It leads to the conclusion that from the fatal prevalence of illicit distillation their (the peoples) moral condition is rapidly approaching to the lawless and disorganised state existing in parts of Ireland" (*British Parliamentary Papers VIII 1816*)

It was alleged that magistrates, themselves in receipt of illicit spirits, refused to deal effectively with the Culprits and respectable farmers in Ross, Aberdeen, Banff and Kintyre acquiesced in and profited from smuggling. Most excise men, it was rumoured, were susceptible to corruption and collusion between officers and smugglers was commonplace.

Industrialisation accelerated the movement of young migrants to the growing towns and cities. Both legal and illegal manufacturers were able to exploit the growing demand, but the illicit advantage was dependent ultimately on the development of government revenue legislation. In the late 18th Century the government levied duties on malt, on the distilling of the spirit and on the finished product; in the 1790s the vastly inflated revenue demands of the Napoleonic wars produced a marked rise in all these taxes. Thus the incentive to cheat the revenue by avoiding payment of duty became most pressing precisely at the same time as the consumption of whisky was on the increase. Licensed producers reduced their malt tax assessments by employing large amounts of unmalted raw grain in the production process and as a result there was a sharp deterioration in quality. The way was open for the illicit distiller to exploit the selective market at the more affluent end of the social scale.

Stills below 40 gallon still-content were declared illegal. This legislation created the basic precondition for illicit distillation because it was broadly unsuited to the nature of the legal manufacture as practiced in northern Scotland. The outlawing of small stills drove private household and family production underground and it was small surprise that for many years illicit whisky-making was considered not to be a crime in many parts of the north. License fees for 40 gallon stills, which rose from £40 in 1786 to £100 a decade later, effectively prohibited small scale local manufacture for the market.

Thus between c1780 and 1820 demand for whisky was rising and government regulation ensured that much of the market was supplied by illegal producers, but several other stimuli helped to boost production. Throughout the Highlands, rising population, fewer employment opportunities and substantial increases in rent compelled a search for alternative sources of income. The fact that illicit distillation was a clandestine activity was all to the good because earnings from it were less readily estimated and appropriated by avaricious landlords and some argue that the element of risk involved in illegal practices lent a certain colour to drab lives:

"It presents all the fascination of the gaming table..... In smuggling there is a spirit of adventure and hazard which has the charm for the mind of the peasantry. An escape or a successful resistance is remembered as heroic achievement; men encourage each other and a fraternity of feeling is produced among them by a sense of common danger. (Stewart of Garth, *Quarterly Journal of Agriculture 1829-30*)"

Yet it is plain that necessity and expected cash drove the tenantry to illicit distillation. The capital required for the process was not an effective barrier to involvement and it remained one of small units in order to avoid detection. In the early 19th century the apparatus for pot-distillation could be purchased for less than £4 and

the other major cost was the outlay on raw materials. In parts of Argyll a period of seasonal work in the Lowlands could provide the necessary cash to begin operation:

“Sons of small farmers will go during the summer and harvest months to the low country and earn a few pounds with which they come back and purchase an illegal still about which two or more join. Then they bargain with local farmers for a number of bolls of barley in return for cash” (*British Parliamentary Papers VII 1823 p432*)

Distilling took place most commonly in late autumn when the harvest was gathered and when the burns were in spate; the operations were well suited to an agrarian society and the process of manufacture blended well with the traditional pastoral economy.

The attitude of the landed class was of vital consequence. Not only were the gentry the basis of law enforcement in their capacity of justices of the peace, but as landlords they controlled tenancies and had the power to evict delinquent persons; almost certainly illegal production could not have developed as it did if the majority of the landowning class in the relevant regions had not acquiesced in it and indeed abetted it. In fact magistrates were most lenient in those counties where illicit distillation was most endemic. Economic self interest partly dictated their policy. For the farmers it was rumoured they were able to gain 20% more for their bere by selling it to the illicit distillers than they could on the ordinary grain market. For the landlord distillation of whisky was one means of raising the rental yield of inferior land out of all proportion to its real value and estimates suggest that on some estates the rental could be tripled if the owner turned a blind eye to illegal practices. By the second decade of the 19th century illicit distillation had become so deep-rooted that even the most zealous magistracy was largely reduced to impotence. The dilemma of the justices was put most forcibly by Sir George Mackenzie of Coul:

“Having daily opportunities of observing its ruinous effects, our anxiety to suppress illicit distillation is very great, but when we sit in judgement, we see before us our own tenants, we know that when we inflict even the lowest penalty directed by law, if the tenant be able to pay, he will not pay his rent and if he is not able to pay, we must send him to prison where he can do nothing to help his affairs; in the meantime his family is starving on account of being deprived of help or attempting to find relief by conduct far worse than defrauding the revenue. In punishing delinquents under the laws of excise we are directly bringing ruin on our tenantry; if our tenants fall we must fall along with them” (*British Parliamentary Papers VII 1823*)

Given the tacit approval of the smuggler on the part of many landlords, the role of the excise man was an unenviable one. The nature of the terrain and the scale of illegal operations made detection difficult in some regions and in others the armed strength of the smuggling communities rendered them immune from excise interference. Allegations proliferated in the first two decades of the 19th century concerning the wholesale corruption of the revenue services.

In certain districts there was large scale manufacture of illicit whisky for sale at a distance and often outside the Highland zone. These centres were likely to be located and to flourish most strongly in the deprived areas fringing regions of grain surplus; Highland Perthshire, Banff-shire, Aberdeen-shire, Ross-shire and Sutherland. The relative inaccessibility of such localities made them natural fortresses secure against all but the most determined forays of the excise. The structure of production in these specialist regions of illicit manufacture was more elaborate than that of most parts of northern Scotland. Customs officers rarely penetrated such regions for fear of assault and it was therefore not essential to conceal the plant too carefully. One distillery in Ross had:

“regularly built low stone walls, water-tight heather thatch, iron pipes leading cold spring water to the still rooms and such an array of casks, tubs etc as told that gaugers never troubled their owners” (*Osgood Mackenzie, Hundred years in the Highlands*)

But illicit whisky makers were unlikely to be able to gain the maximum monetary gain for their efforts. They were charged a higher price for grain than that sold in the market and distribution was controlled by professional smugglers who dealt directly with retailers and customers in the south. Rising rents and grasping middle men ensured that the income for the distiller would remain stubbornly low. Landlords and distributors of the illicit liquor regarded it as very lucrative and there evolved an elaborate system of grain supply to the manufacturing districts of the northeast and a similar clandestine network of distribution of the finished product. After distillation the product was conveyed to market by regularly trained smugglers, normally strangers from outside the district of manufacture and generally Irishmen or Lowlanders. Heavily armed convoys thirty to forty strong carried the liquor to Lowland towns.

But the more extensive and elaborate that manufacture of illicit spirits became the more rapidly it was likely to invite destruction by concerted government action. Two major investigations, in 1821 and 1822, exposed the extent to which the law was being flouted and the revenue cheated, but more serious and damaging were the social effects on the smuggling regions themselves. Some thought that in parts of Ross and Argyll a generation of *baditti* had been bred, decadence and intoxication were said to be rampant and whole areas had become immune to the enforcement of the excise laws. From 1822 the government began a radical alteration of its revenue policy with the intention of destroying illicit whisky making in Scotland: fines were

increased, new penalties were laid on landowners who allowed the practice on their estates and the powers of the excise were extended. In the following year the Excise Act (1823) was passed: duty was reduced by over 50% and payment of a uniform license fee of £10 gave permission to distil. The 1823 Act substantially eroded the illicit producer's advantage over his licensed rival, in practical terms it amounted to a drop in the malt tax. The product of licensed Highland distillers improved markedly in quality as licensed distillers were able to use malting barley in the production process.

While vigorous attempts were made to minimise still duty and malt taxes, more effective punitive measures were developed to combat those who continued to break the law, the excise was encouraged to intervene in a more aggressively by using the army and navy. By every measurement the new policy would appear to have been extremely successful. In general large scale whisky-making outside the law was doomed and there was a substantial expansion in the number of licensed malt whisky plants, no doubt encouraged by the absorption within the legal sector of the skills of the "sma still" operators of the illicit days.

Illicit distilling in Ross-shire and Strathconon

We are fortunate in having the contemporary observations of two people who had close experience of the situation in Ross-shire, Sir George Mackenzie of Coul, who was resident at Contin, and Hugh Munro of Teaninich, near Alness. Both gave evidence to the Parliamentary Enquiry of 1822 (*British Parliamentary Papers Vol VII 1823*). Sir George Mackenzie was unwell at the time and gave written evidence; he had "thirty years residence among smugglers or illicit distillers in Ross-shire and was acquainted with the subject minutely". Hugh Munro attended Edinburgh in person to give his evidence under oath; he "had resided in Ross-shire ever since 1795 and been connected with the distillery at Teaninich since Nov 1817" (*almost certainly he would have had a vested interest in painting a "black picture"*)

Sir George writes "The entire home consumption of spirits in the County of Ross continues to be supplied by illicit distillation. The extreme cheapness of illegally distilled spirit is to be attributed to the fact of the traffic being carried on not merely by a number of idle fellows who have no other means of support, but also by classes of tenantry considerably raised above the lowest".

Hugh Munro was aware that "There is not a justice of the peace who can say that he does not in his own family consume illegally made spirits.....illicit distillation is going on to a very great extent in this part of the country and I think it is increasing." He says "*they are generally composed of small highland farmers, persons to whom these farmers give a footing or a but to live in, and many desperate characters also. Strathconan and Strathglass are both great smuggling districts*"

"A smuggler is not a person to pay £2-300 for rent per year, they pay not above £50, many of them under £20 and some perhaps under £5.....The illegal distillers use stills from 40 to 70 gallons; they have copper worms and tin, a still would cost £6-£10.....They probably do not distil on the farm but upon some concealed part of the highlands; in the highlands there are numberless recesses and inlets where they carry on their illicit distillation.....The smugglers purchase their barley from the farmers in the country and from dealers as well. Every 8 to 10 days a supply of barley from the south goes up to Strathconan and Strathglass to the smugglers. The dealers bring vessels loaded with barley into the Beaully Firth; they then send scouts out to give notice of where the vessel is lying and the illicit distillers come down and buy it".

"There is no malt sold on the market; there are no public maltsters in the Highlands....the smuggler sometimes distils from malt that has been paid duty on. He enters malt as the law directs with the excise officer of the district; but undercover of one quarter he malts 2 or 3 because the excise officer has to go perhaps 10-15 miles from his house to check and in an extensive district it is impossible for him to do that; the maltster gets off with a great deal for the little he enters"

"In the hills of the neighbourhood of highland farms they build a hut which is common to the smugglers of that district; when one person finishes his smuggling or what he calls his broust, the next neighbour does the same; they take it in turns"

Sir George concurs "When one of them has a broust he invites his neighbours and they pass the night in watching the whisky pot and in drinking. When his neighbours have a broust he is invited in his turn and thus it goes round, a constant state of intoxication and carousing is kept up. The children are taught to lie and steal and poach and kill fish from their infancy. They see their parents live in the constant breach of the laws and thus pay no regard to the laws themselves and as it is the nature of every species of smuggling to render those engaged in it daring and desperate, the illicit trade has now reached a length in many parts of the Highlands particularly in Strathconan, that it is dangerous for an excise officer to make a seizure or to attempt to demolish the utensils.....It was reported that, in Strathconan, 15 bottles a day are distilled by smugglers, amounting to 120 ankers of 9 gallons each week. The smuggled whisky is openly carried to market by smugglers escorted by armed men in defiance of the laws."

Sir George has seen it "When going about here I often meet smugglers returning with their empty casks, they go down during the night but return openly during the day"

Inevitably the illegal practice was to have an effect on the population. Sir George writes "The morals of the peoples of the Highlands have undergone a great change since the prevalence of illicit distillation; it is clear

to all who are acquainted with them. Formerly they were mild sober and inoffensive: now they are daring profligate and full of insubordination; insomuch that in some parts a sheriff's officer dare not execute summons of removing and an informer was even lately murdered.....One of the evils attending the illicit trade is that it creates a numerous and idle population in remote parts where there is no employment for them except that arising out of the whisky pot. These parts are accordingly nests of vice. The farms are reduced by sub sets to mere patches the occupiers of which live by smuggling". In Hugh Munro's opinion "It is not possible to conceive a school of rebellion greater or worse than the smuggling"

The law continued to be defied and the authorities, the justices of the peace in Dingwall, seemed unable or unwilling to do anything about it. Hugh Munro "The grand cause of all this, the hidden reason which has hitherto rendered the legislation for the prevention of smuggling ineffective is unquestionably, is that the legislation is left to be carried out by the landed proprietors many of whom are justices of the peace; in short by the very persons who have a direct interest in nourishing and promoting the smuggling system. A Highland proprietor sets his small highland possession to smugglers who pay him double or triple the value of the land for carrying on their smuggling operations. The low country farmer too, sells his barley to the smugglers at a high price"

Sir George Mackenzie "Even this year barley fetched from the smugglers in Ross-shire 30-32s per boll, while the licensed distillers have bought theirs from Montrose at 18-20s. It is unfortunate for us that it is not only the quality but the price which induces the distillers to reject barley of home growth; for they cannot afford to give so high a price as that offered by illegal distillers. The smugglers will ever be able to give more than the fair trader, from paying no excise duties. The inflated returns enable the farmer of the low country to pay higher rents and renders it as much in the interest of the proprietor of low country arable lands as it does that of the proprietor of a highland property that the illicit system should continue.....The highest classes of farmers and even proprietors are under the necessity of indirectly encouraging this traffic because they have no other means of disposing of the product of their farms. It is a very great aggravation that the proprietors should see the bread of their tenants and the means which they themselves have of supporting their station in society procured by unlawful means.....Even the sheriff of the county, Mr MacLeod of Geanies, encourages it; his carts have been seen carrying his grain upwards of 20 miles to be disposed of to the smugglers and when remonstrated with on the subject he answered "How then do you suppose we sell our barley?" This gentleman has for more than 50 years been in receipt of £400 a year from the Government for carrying the laws into effect.....Both the low country and the highland proprietors accordingly attend the excise courts not for the purpose of carrying the laws against illicit distillation into effect but to protect their own interests by an evasion of the laws. Accordingly the excise provincial courts have long become an absolute farce. Fines were imposed merely to save appearances and not with any hope that they would suppress the evil in question".

There was inadequate provision for the courts to operate effectively, fines and punishments were hardly ever imposed: Hugh Munro "For an act of illicit distillation by the law they cannot legally lay less punishment than £20 or 6 months imprisonment. I have seen acts of illicit distillation fined at no more than from £1 to £3-5 and often if the smuggler had good interest at court he has got off without a fine at all.....The courts (in Dingwall) are not held very often; some years back I have seen a great number of cases, I think I may safely say, there were 100 (in one day)"

Sir George reports that "The excise officers, for what reason I cannot tell, allow cases to accumulate to a prodigious number before the justices are called upon; the consequences of this is hurry, confusion and a very imperfect justice.....The accommodation for our prisoners, at from 50 to 100, is not at present sufficient in the counties and our jails are quite inadequate to contain the numbers who are sometimes convicted"

The excise officers too had abandoned trying to enforce the law in many parts of Ross-shire. Hugh Munro says "In several straths such as Strathconan, Strathcarron and etc, the excise officers are now often deforced and dare not attempt to do their duty as the smugglers are too strong; smuggled whisky is openly carried to market by smugglers escorted by armed men in defiance of the laws.....There was an officer at my distillery, who had been for a short time in Strathconan, he told me that no officer could do his duty in that quarter and last year I was informed by another officer that he was obliged to retire being confronted by a large party of smugglers who were escorting spirits with nearly 20 horses"

Many excise officers were corrupt and exploited the situation. Sir George Mackenzie writes "With the conduct of the sheriff and the justices as an example, a strict performance of the duty of the excise officers could scarcely be expected. It is obvious that they, as well as the proprietors, have an interest in the continuance of the illicit system, and if both are entrusted with the suppression of the industry, is it a wonder it should be in a flourishing state.....First, in addition to the excise mans salary he receives one half of the fines imposed on the smugglers at the excise courts; the aggregate of these frequently amount to a sum nearly equal and sometimes exceeding his salary. Instead therefore of proving an inducement to the officer to do his duty to the utmost of his power it has a direct contrary effect; and when he makes a seizure from a smuggler and gets him fined at the excise court he takes care thereafter to give him time to recover his loss by avoiding his smuggling haunts. The smuggler is prevented from being discouraged and all, viz. proprietor, gauger and smuggler continue to draw their respective shares of the emoluments and the trade flourishes.

Secondly, in a district where there is a numerous population of small smugglers it is hither to been the practice with the smugglers wives to send to the gaugers wife presents of meal, mutton, poultry, whiskey, butter, cheese, fish and game in abundance for information on the whereabouts of the riding officers, so that the smuggler should be prepared for their reception. Third, in such a district it is an easy matter for the officer to appropriate for himself a great part of the malt duties with very little risk of detection; for how could each sum he receives at different periods from perhaps 500 small smugglers be proved."

"The Act of Parliament leaves it in the discretion of the officer to destroy the utensils if he thinks proper. It is commonly observed in our country that the utensils are not destroyed; were they to be destroyed it would throw many obstacles in the way of the illegal distiller and in, many instances prevent him going on with his work.....Of all the minor regulations for the suppression of illicit distillation among small smugglers the most useful would be to demolish the utensils and spill the ale and low wines etc. Every utensil of every description should be destroyed and nothing allowed to be carried away as a prize."

Sir George relates a story about a different approach that was tried in his neighbourhood "Because of the expense and trouble of hunting about the mountains for stills a different plan was tried two or 3 times with complete success; the distillers were allowed to carry on their processes without molestation and night patrols were established on the roads; this country is easily watched on account of the rivers forcing the people to pass at particular places; watches were set at all the passes into the low country and the finished article was seized" But whilst being successful on some occasions, this action did not always produce the required result. Sir George also reports that; "those who were watching have seized the spirits and gone away with their booty instead of destroying it on the spot and seeking the smuggler.....In every point of view the manner in which the excise department is conducted is a perfect farce, the smugglers are a privileged set allowed by the proprietors and gaugers almost to do as they like, all the efforts are directed to useless checks on the licensed distillers as if the fair traders and not the smugglers were the enemies of their country".

In the later 1820s, after the implementation of the new legislation, specialised squads of sailors from the revenue cutter *Atlanta* helped to suppress smuggling in Ross and Cromarty, riding officers were employed to support local excise men and when desired the aid of the military could be called upon. The decade after 1823 saw a series of violent incidents between the revenue service and groups of illicit distillers determined to brook no outside interference in their activities. From the *Inverness Advertiser* 22 May 1829;

"A General Surveying Officer of Excise, and his party, were deforced, yesterday week, at Strathconon, by the country people, who used so much violence as to render it necessary for the Excise party to leave that part of the country without completing their survey, or destroying two illicit stills which they discovered. On Friday the party again proceeded to the spot, but were met by a mob, chiefly women, who poured upon them showers of stones, when the commander of the party, very properly, retreated, finding it impossible to effect his object; he then sent off a messenger to Fort George, requesting that a party of the Royals, at present stationed there, should be sent to his assistance; accordingly, on Monday, twenty-one rank and file marched to Strathconon, by whose assistance the stills were destroyed and a considerable quantity of spirits seized".

And 1 April 1831;

Assault on a Party of Excise Officers - An Excise Officer, assisted by two of the seamen belonging to the Revenue cutter, while on a survey in Strathconon, discovered on Wednesday, last week, a still at work; but on endeavouring to seize the spirits and destroy the utensils, the party was deforced, and obliged to retreat. Having however, been reinforced by two additional assistants, they, at twelve o'clock p.m. of the same day revisited the bothy, where they found eight sturdy Highlanders round the fire – a scuffle ensued, and both parties were severely hurt, some of them to the danger of life. Two of the smugglers have been taken, and will probably be tried before the ensuing Circuit Court.

There were also several court cases relating to "the crime of assaulting, beating, wounding, obstructing and deforcing the Officers of the Revenue". Two of which were located in the area surveyed in Phase 3: in September 1818, Murdoch and Donald Macdonald of Milntown of Strathconnon, and in September 1825, Donald Beg Mackay of Dalnacroich, who was transported for 7 years.

And then in December of 1834 a tragedy: the case of the supposed murder of James Macdonald of Achlorachan by Duncan Grant, also of Achlorachan, was brought to the Dingwall Sheriff Court in March 1835. A sketch of the location⁴ (*Figure 6, Section 3.3 Selected Photographs*) with annotated details of the events, was produced for the case and a comprehensive account appeared in the *Inverness Courier*. Grant and Macdonald had been at work in the hills above the township together with at least four others; the smugglers' bothy was remotely located at Loch Chor-lea (*Figure 7, Section 3.3*), 3 kilometres north of Achlorachan. Both had partaken of the finished whisky and had left the hut sometime after 3am in an intoxicated state to proceed home. Somewhere between the hut and the ruins of a bothy called Blatach (*Figure 8, Section 3.3*) James Macdonald collapsed and Grant took him on his back and carried him until he himself became so fatigued and overcome with the liquor himself he could not continue. Macdonald was laid inside the ruined hut at Blatach, covered with dry moss and turf to keep him warm and Grant went to the deceased's house to inform his parents. Angus Macdonald, father of the deceased, recollected that the prisoner had called at his

house about Christmas, a little before daylight and told him that he had left their son at Blatach. He and his wife went up to Blatach, but concluded that their son was dead; they noted signs of a struggle and a red mark around his neck. Mr. McDougall, on behalf of the prisoner, contended that the deceased was intoxicated and that Grant had assisted him (the deceased), and being himself intoxicated, his assistance might not have been rendered in the most judicious manner, he had hauled him along, carelessly and brutally. The prisoner was found guilty of culpable homicide, suitably admonished, and sentenced to four months' imprisonment.

By 1837 illicit distillation in the glen seems to have been on the wane; the New Statistical Account of that year has the following reference to the industry:

“For many years smuggling prevailed in the interior of the parish to an alarming extent and must have been hurtful to the morals of the people, but it has been so completely suppressed that illicit whisky has now become almost as rare as foreign spirits”

Improvements in Strathconon

An account of the improvements, the introduction of sheep farming to the glen and clearance of the people appears in the Phase 4 report. In the area surveyed in Phase 3, 1803 saw significant reorganization of the leases. Two large tacks were given to incoming sheep farmers; both were on the south side of the river, the lower, consisting of three farms, Glacour, Annate and Easter Balnault, went to John Cameron and John MacLaren from Glenalmond for 19 years rent of £150 (Macdonald 2005). The other, an even larger tack, which included Dalbreck and Wester Balnault, (also Cranich, Balnacraig and Inverchoran, to the west) was given to a James MacCallum for 21 years at a rent of £450 per annum. It seems both these tenancies failed, possibly as a result of the high rents and long leases; by 1811 Glacour and Balnault are again for let and by 1818, James MacCallum is in difficulties and has left Dalbreac. Almost certainly there must have been some relocation of the tenantry in 1803 and it is possible that some of the original tenants were given leases on the tacks in the upper part of the glen which were let as multiple tenancies.

The 1850s was another period of great change. By this time the estate was in the ownership of James Maitland Balfour, the son of Sir James Balfour who had originally bought the estate in 1839. James Maitland Balfour was to make many improvements and alterations in his short tenure of the estate, before his death at the age of 36 in 1856. The destitution of the large population in the glen had been a constant problem for many years and was brought to a peak in 1846 with the potato famine. A comprehensive plan to improve the situation was embarked upon. The plan involved improvement of the whole land by trenching and draining and reclamation of lands on the valley floor with reinforcement of the river embankments to prevent flooding. Six farms of 4 acres each were established at Balnault (East) and the arable ground of Milton, Pourin and Dalnacroich was divided among 19 tenants. The miller, the blacksmith and the schoolmaster were to have the smaller of the crofts of about 3 acres each. The other crofts average from 6 to 7 acres each⁵. At all these places the people were expected to have other forms of part time employment. At Glacour and Achlorachan (which now included Druminbuie) larger sheepfarms were established. The plan culminated in the removal of several families in 1850. Sheepfarming continued to be the mainstay for the people of this part of the glen; the 1881 census has sheep farmers in Balnault, Glacour, Achlorachan and Drumanreach.

Notes

¹ NAS E655/3/5 and MacPhail(1916) p332

² See section 2.4

³ NAS E655/3/5, E655/3/4 and E655/3/2

⁴ NAS RHP 140009

⁵ “*Inverness Advertiser*” July 9, 1850 – Strathconon Clearances

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2.4 Strathconon, Scatwell and the Mackenzies in the written record, c. 1463–c. 1700¹

Although some writers have considered the earlier history of Ross, these studies tend to focus on dynastic and political events and not much is known about the internal workings of Ross-shire far less Strathconon in the historical record prior to the end of the fifteenth century.² Strathconon, strategically situated in central Ross, was the key to the control of the earldom of Ross in that possession of these lands secured control of the few good access routes from coast to coast. The earldom of Ross and the possession thereof in turn was pivotal to the fortunes of the Macdonald Lords of the Isles in the fifteenth century who were fatally undermined by their loss of the area to the Stewart monarchy in 1475. This essay will consider the Strathconon and Scatwell area from the time of its earliest appearance in the historical record at the end of the fifteenth century (at much the same time as the Mackenzie clan themselves) and go on to concentrate on the area in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. An attempt will be made to pull together a variety of written sources in order to try to build up a picture of the area in this period inasmuch as the evidence will allow. These lands, Strathconon and Scatwell, which form the focus of this investigation, were a small part of a much wider (and expanding) estate that was controlled in this period, c.1463 to 1700 by the Mackenzies of Kintail / Seaforth.³ (see the map at the end of this paper, appendix one)

I Early mentions of the Strathconon area, and the Mackenzies ante 1508

The parish of Contin, of which Strathconon and Scatwell seem to have been a part, was served by a vicar named John in 1227. Other than that, the earliest mention of ‘Strathconon’ or the immediate

¹ I would like to thank my colleagues Professor Thomas Clancy and Dr Simon Taylor in *Roinn na Ceiltis is na Gàidhlig* (the Department of Celtic and Gaelic) in the University of Glasgow and also thank Dr Alasdair Ross and Dr Alison Cathcart, in the history departments of the Universities of Stirling and Strathclyde respectively, for their patient and helpful comments and suggestions all of which have saved me from a great many errors. All remaining mistakes are, of course, entirely of my own making.

² For the pre and immediately post Norse period in Northern Scotland (1266-) see Barbara Crawford, ‘Earldom Strategies in Northern Scotland and the Significance of Place Names’ (105-124) in G. Williams & P. Bibre eds., *Sagas, Saints and Settlements* (Brill, Leiden, 2004). R.A. MacDonald, ‘Old and New in the Far North: Ferchar Maccintsacairt and the Early Earls of Ross, c. 1200-1274’ 23-45 in S. Boardman and A. Ross, eds., *The Exercise of Power in Medieval Scotland c.1200-1500* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2003). Alexander Grant, ‘The Province of Ross and the Kingdom of Alba (pp. 88-126), Norman MacDougall ‘Achilles Heel ? The Earldom of Ross, the Lordship of the Isles and the Stewart Kings, 1449-1507’ (pp. 248-275): these last two essays are to be found in E.J. Cowan & R.A. MacDonald, eds, *Alba. Celtic Scotland in the Medieval Era* (Tuckwell, East Linton, 2000).

³ The Mackenzies, by 1602, effectively controlled much but not of all of Easter Ross, most of central Ross (excepting some Munro and Ross lands) and the western seaboard between Assynt and Kintail. A list of the lands controlled by Kenneth Mackenzie of Kintail when he became chief in 1594, giving an indication of the extent of this can be found in the National Archives of Scotland [‘NAS’ hereafter], *NAS GD 128/23/1/3*; *NAS GD 305/1/166/7*; and in print in G. Burnett & G. P. McNeill eds., *The Exchequer rolls of Scotland 1264-1600: Rotuli Scaccarii Regum Scotorum 1264-1600* (Edinburgh, 23 vols, 1878-1908) [referred to as ‘ER’ hereafter] *ER* xxii, 504-6. For the lands of Strathconon and Scatwell on which this essay is focused, see the map (on page 3) of the *NOSAS* or *North of Scotland Archaeological Society* report, entitled ‘A Project to Identify, Survey and Record Archaeological Remains in Strathconon, Ross-shire. Report of Phase One, Scatwell and Lower Strathconon. November 2006 - April 2007.’ This is published on the internet at:

< <http://www.nosas.co.uk/publications/siterecords/SC1%20Report.pdf>>

See also the map at the end of this paper.

area is a reference to a (now lost) grant by King Robert I to Earl Hugh of Ross around 1309.⁴ These isolated early references apart, the earliest substantial body of historical evidence dates from the later fifteenth century. The earliest surviving credible reference to a Mackenzie in the historical record is around the same time: to Alexander (Alasdair ‘Ionraic’) Mackenzie in 1463/4. This document, a charter to Alexander from John Macdonald of Islay, Lord of the Isles and Earl of Ross, does not survive. Moreover, this charter (1463/4) would appear to have been the earliest title deed that was in the possession of Colin Mackenzie, the first earl of Seaforth around 1627, the chief of that name, when a notary, possibly ‘Johne Williamson,’ made an inventory of Seaforth’s charters. This inventory survives and is preserved in the Cromartie Papers in the National Archives of Scotland.⁵ This inventory is headed with the earliest and first title deed held by the Mackenzies: a note of a charter by John Macdonald Lord of Islay and Earl of Ross to his ‘cusing’ or cousin, Alexander Mackenzie of Kintail as follows:⁶

In the ffirst Ane chairtor gevin be Johne of Ila Earle of Ros and [Lord] of the Yllis to his cusing Alex[ande]r Mckenze of Kintail off the fyve merk lands of Ki[[llin ?] the fyve merk lands of Garve. The tua m[er]k land of Corriewulzie, the thrie m[er]k land of Kenlochluichart, the tua merk land of Garbat, the tua m[er]k land of Dalnatwa, the four merk land of Auchlask, the four m[er]k land of Taag lyand within the Earldom of Ros and She[rrri]ffdome of Invernes haldin of the earles of Ros be s[e]rvice of ward & relief and is daitit at Dingwall the sevint day of Ja[nua]r 1463. Gevin under the gevaris seill w[i]thout ony sub[scripti]on.⁷

Alexander Mackenzie, the first Mackenzie chief for whom we have surviving contemporaneous documentation was succeeded sometime around 1479 by his son Kenneth. This Alexander was styled ‘of Kintail’ and had held his lands in this period, according to this note, from the Macdonald earls of Ross. However, King James III (1460-1488), forfeited the earldom of Ross in 1475, taking it from the Macdonalds without having enough strength to make good the royal claim against them. Such was the context for Kenneth’s short, bloody period as clan chief (c.1479-1491), as Stewart monarchs struggled for over a quarter of a century to realise their claims to the earldom against Macdonald counter-claims. Kenneth was known in Gaelic as ‘Coinneach a’ Bhlàir’ (of the battle). Kenneth seems to have turned on his erstwhile allies, the Macdonalds, against whom he fought at

⁴ C. Innes, ed., *Origines Parochiales Scoticae* (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1850-1855) vol. ii, part 2, p. 504. cf NAS GD 90/1/23 ‘Mora’ (Main?) in ‘Strathonan’ in 1321.

⁵ A. MacCoinnich, ‘Kingis Rabellis to Cuidich’n’Righ ? Clann Choinnich and the Emergence of a Kindred, c. 1475-c. 1514 (175-200) in S. Boardman & A. Ross, eds., *The Exercise of Power in Medieval Scotland* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2003) 178-9 (& n. 16), 188-9. A. MacCoinnich, *Tùs Gu Iarlachd, Eachdraidh Chlann Choinnich, c. 1466-1638* (Tràchdas PhD, Oilthigh Obar Dheathain, 2004) 405-435.

⁶ J. Munro & R.W. Munro, eds., *Acts of the Lords of the Isles, 1336- 1493* (SHS, Edinburgh, 1986), no 81, p. 129.

⁷ ‘Inventar of Seaforth Charters’ (c.1627) NAS GD 305/1/166/7. J.M. Thomson & J.B. Paul eds., *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum: Register of the Great Seal of Scotland, 1306-1668*, (Edinburgh, 11 Vols, 1882-1914: Clark Constable Reprint, 1984) referred to as ‘RMS hereafter’ RMS ii, no. 801, p. 171. This is also cited by R. & J. Munro eds, *Act of the Lords of the Isles 1336-1493* (SHS, Edinburgh, 1986), no 81, p. 129-130. The Munros’ source was Sir George Mackenzie (1630-1714), styled Lord Tarbat and made a peer as Earl of Cromartie in 1711. Tarbat/Cromartie was intent on “proving” a fictitious ‘Fitzgerald’ origin for the Mackenzies and claimed to possess documents from the thirteenth and fourteenth century which would surely have appeared in the earlier inventory had they existed. MacCoinnich, ‘Kingis Rabellis’ p. 178-9, n. 14-16.

least two battles in Ross-shire, Lag a' Bhrèid sometime in the 1480s which he lost, and Blàr na Pàirce (c.1489-91) which he won. This final battle broke the Macdonald stranglehold on Easter Ross, resulting eventually in Crown domination of the area and a great increase in the power of the Mackenzies.

The Mackenzies were, as we have seen above, strongly associated with the Strathconon area in the Macdonald charter of 1463 which specifies the immediately adjacent areas of Kinlochluichart and Corriemoillie. This association is confirmed in surviving documentation associated with Kenneth Mackenzie of Kintail, Alexander's heir and successor. Kenneth (or Coinneach a' Bhlàir †c. 1433-91), who succeeded his father as chief sometime around 1479, was involved not only in serious conflict with the Macdonalds, but he was also in dispute with the Crown over the rights of possession of various lands. This latter dispute with the Crown over rents and rights of possession is of interest to us for the purposes of this paper. Between 1479 and 1487 Kenneth Mackenzie withheld his payments to the Crown and claimed that he had a 'right' to the lands of 'Eskadellis,' (Eskdale) 'Meyn' (Glenmeanie) in 'Straquhonane' and 'Innerquhonray' (Inverchoran), Kenloch Benquharane (Ceann Loch Beanncharain, near Scardroy) all in Strathconon, suggesting that their claim to these lands, based perhaps on continued possession, may have stretched back over several generations.⁸ It seems in any case that these lands while they had been in the possession of the earls of Ross prior to 1475 and had belonged to the Crown thereafter, they were, by the later fifteenth century in any case, under Mackenzie occupancy, as were lands in the lower country such as Fairburn, Moy, Brahan, Contin and 'Skatolmor' (Meikle Scatwell).⁹

II The strategic importance of the Strathconon and Scatwell area

Barbara Crawford has plausibly suggested that the Strathconon corridor may have been an important strategic east-west thoroughfare in Viking times (as no doubt was Strathgarve-Strathbran).¹⁰ The importance of these straths in central Ross in controlling east-west access was not lost either on the Macdonald earls of Ross (c.1411-1475) or on the kings of Scots (1475-). Strathconon seems to have

⁸ *ER* viii, 595. *ER* ix, 405-6, 532. See R.W. & J. Munro, eds., *Acts of the Lords of the Isles 1336-1493* (SHS, Edinburgh, 1986) at p. 201-202, for a discussion of these lands. For 'dùthchas' or 'kindly' tenancy, a right to occupancy acquired by possession over several generations, see M.H.B. Sanderson, *Scottish Rural Society in the Sixteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1982) 58-62.

⁹ John Mackenzie of Kintail was a tenant in the 'Lordship of Ardmannoch' for the lands of 'Skatell Meikle' and 'Scattel Beg' and he paid rent to the Lordship (belonging to the Crown) for these lands as early as the 1497-1507 period (and continued to do so thereafter). The names of the tenant(s) earlier than this are more obscure. They may have been possessed by John Mackenzie's predecessors but there is no way of knowing. He did not, however, claim a longstanding right of association with this area as he did with the Strathconon lands. *ER* ix, 406. John obtained a charter to Meikle Scatwell in 1528, but it was not until 1591 that his grandson, Cailean Cam obtained a feu charter to Little Scatwell. MacCoinnich, *Tùs gu Iarlachd*, 407, 417.

¹⁰ For a discussion of the possible strategic use of Ross, including the Strathconon area, by the Norse see an article by Barbara Crawford, 'Earldom Strategies in Northern Scotland and the Significance of Place Names' (105-124) in G. Williams & P. Bibre eds., *Sagas, Saints and Settlements* (Brill, Leiden, 2004) at 111-116. B. E. Crawford, *Earl & Mormaer, Norse-Pictish Relationships in Northern Scotland* (Groam House, Rosemarkie, 1995) 24.

been one of the routes used to access the east coast by the Macdonald forces that tried to reclaim the earldom of Ross sometime around 1490. An account in a seventeenth century Mackenzie history indicates that Macdonald and Lordship of the Isles forces used the same route shortly afterwards to retreat home to the west following their heavy defeat at the hands of a Mackenzie led force at Blàr na Pàirce (c.1489-90) near modern Strathpeffer.¹¹ One party of retreating Macdonalds, were, it seems caught by pursuing Mackenzies at Inverchoran; some were killed there and others escaped.¹² This (admittedly late) account of Macdonald forces plundering their enemy lands in Strathconon as they passed through to the Dingwall area prior to their retreat by the same route, seems plausible. The placing of the Mackenzies athwart such strategic passes, by granting them the lands of central Ross enabled them to control movement through the straths: Strathconon itself, Strath Bran, Strath Gairbh and Strath Mòr.¹³ This had been recognised initially by the Macdonalds (in or before 1463) who may even have placed the Mackenzies there in the first place, and later, ironically, by the Crown who benefitted from the Mackenzie presence in the area at the end of the fifteenth century at the expense of the Macdonalds. The strategic importance of Strathconon and adjacent lands which had been recognised by the Macdonald grant of 1463 of lands in central Ross to Alexander Mackenzie was paralleled by the grant issued by James IV of exactly the same lands to Alexander's grandson, John Mackenzie of Kintail in 1508/9.¹⁴

III Ownership of the Strathconon area post 1508/9

James III had, arguably, instigated much of the chaos that visited the west Highlands and Islands due to his attempt to oust the Macdonalds from Ross in 1475. It took thirty-three years before his successor James IV achieved a measure of control in the area, although Macdonald discontent died hard and lingered for generations. In 1506 James IV suppressed a rising by supporters of Dòmhnall Dubh (Macdonald), who had probably hoped for a restoration of the Macdonald lands previously

¹¹ For the location of Logiebride or (Lagaidh Bhrèid ?) see W.J. Watson, *Place Names of Ross and Cromarty* (Inverness, 1904: Evanton reprint, 1996) 113-14. 'Logiebride' or 'Logivraid' is well attested in the medieval period up until the seventeenth century after which it is harder to find. Watson located it next to 'Balvraid'. It may be that the 'Bal' pre-fix replaced 'Logie' and that 'Baile Bhàird' supplanted 'Lagaidh Bhrèid' placed by Watson about a mile north east of Muir of Ord. For the location of the battle of Park (see Watson op.cit., 100), probably near modern Strathpeffer, and for dating see MacCoinnich, 'Kingis Rabellis,' p. 190-193 & n. 73.

¹² A. Mackenzie, *History of the Mackenzies* (Inverness, 1894; Clan Mackenzie Society reprint, Ontario, 1998) 95.

¹³ MacCoinnich, *Tùs gu Iarlachd*, 147-148. See also Alasdair Ross's discussion of the 'Lords and Lordship of Glencarnie' in central Strathspey where there were similar issues of lordship and control. In S. Boardman & A. Ross, eds., *The Exercise of Power in Medieval Scotland, c. 1200-1500* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2003) 159-174 at 159, 164-5.

¹⁴ The King confirmed the granting and of the barony of Eilean Donnan to John Mackenzie of Kintail in 25 February 1508/9. This included various lands in Kintail, Garve, 'Corriemullie,' the lands of 'Kenlochbenkerane,' 'Invercorachane' (Inverchoran), 'Invernesny' (Invermeannie?), 'Meyne,' and 'Eskadellis.' *RMS* ii, no. 3313 p. 708. Some of the place names in this such as Eskadale in Strathconon, may almost have been almost obsolete at the time of this transaction, but remained in use due, presumably, to prior usage in documentation. The Barony of Eilean Donnan of which Strathconon was a part, survived as the core lands of the Mackenzie of Kintail / Seaforth until the heirs of that family broke up and sold the estate in 1844. A deed from that date lists the townships associated with these lands. 'An Act for vesting in Trustees certain parts of the estate of Seaforth to be sold...' 29 July 1844. Anno Septimo & Octavo, Victoriae Reginae. *A Collection of Private Acts printed by the Queen's Printer. Passed in the Seventh and Eighth Year of the Reign of H. M. Queen Victoria* (London, 1844) Cap. 16. p. 394-5.

held by his grandfather, John Macdonald of Islay, last lord of the Isles (and the last Macdonald earl of Ross).¹⁵ The crown settlement of 1508/9 installed supporters of the Stewart monarchs in or adjacent to territories formerly controlled by the Macdonalds. The Campbells, Frasers, Grants and Gordons all benefitted at the expense of the Macdonalds and by being granted these lands and thus had a vested interest in holding future Macdonald rebellions at bay.¹⁶ In the earldom of Ross this function was largely performed for the Crown by the Mackenzies, former supporters of the Macdonald earls but who from now on had a close and mutually beneficial relationship with the Stewart monarchs which was to be both the making and eventual downfall of the clan in the later seventeenth century. They were confirmed in their possession of much the same lands as they had held as tenants of the Macdonalds, only now, from 1508, they were tenants in chief, holding their lands directly of the crown rather than as subordinates of another clan.¹⁷

The Mackenzie hold of the lands of Strathconon, Kintail, and adjacent lands became stronger during the sixteenth century as the clan, favoured by the Crown, and benefitting from competent leadership not least that of John of Kintail, (chief c.1500-1561), strengthened their grip of these and other lands in Ross-shire, often at the expense of less fortunate neighbours.¹⁸ Indeed it was at Inverchoran in Strathconon that John Mackenzie of Kintail, ended his career, dying aged around 80 in January 1561.¹⁹ Jean Munro has recently drawn attention to the way in which the clan developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, which found its expression on the ground with the establishment of numerous cadet families, many of whose substantial buildings remain.²⁰ A succession of deeds name the lands of Strathconon as an integral, if a small, part of the burgeoning Mackenzie 'empire' bound up (from 1508-9) with the lands of Kintail as part of the barony of Eilean Donnan.²¹ The

¹⁵ D. Gregory, *The History of the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (2nd ed., Glasgow, 1881. John Donald Reprint, Edinburgh, 1975) 96-103. Macdonald pretensions to recovering Ross, although by now an impossibility were still sung about by Iain Lom, the Macdonald bard, in the mid seventeenth century. A. I. Mackenzie ed., *Òrain Iain Luim: The Songs of John Macdonald, Bàrd of Keppoch* (SGTS, Edinburgh, 1964) lines, 1580-1590; 1848. pp. 124, 126, 148.

¹⁶ MacCoinnich, *Tùs gu Iarlachd*, 130-134.

¹⁷ *RMS ii* no. 3313, p.708.

¹⁸ One of these less fortunate neighbours were the Mackenzies of Gairloch. Eachann Ruadh the first of Gairloch was John's uncle and attempted, unsuccessfully to supplant his nephew (1500-11). Although John patched up relations with his uncle from 1511 onwards, tension continued between both houses for over a century, turning murderous in the late 1540s when the head of the Gairloch branch was captured and killed by Mackenzie of Kintail in Eilean Donnan castle. The Earl of Cromartie, *A Highland History* (Berkhamstead, 1979) 132-4. MacCoinnich, "Kingis Rabellis," to 'Cuidich'n' Rìgh,' 197-8.

¹⁹ He is said to have died in January 1560/1 and to have been buried at Beauuly with his father Coinneach a' Bhlàir. W. Fraser, ed., *The Earls of Cromartie, Kindred Country and Correspondence* (Edinburgh, 1876) ii, 492. J.R.N. MacPhail ed., *Highland Papers ii* (SHS, Edinburgh, 1916) 33. He died in January and his son Kenneth (chief 1561-69) was 'retoured' as his heir by an inquest of his peers, 15th April 1561. *NAS SC 29/1/1* fol. 43v-45r. R. Adam, ed., *The Calendar of Fearn, 1471-1667* (SHS, Edinburgh, 1991) 121.

²⁰ J. Munro, 'The Mackenzies' in R. Oram & G. Stell, eds., *Lordship and Architecture in Medieval and Renaissance Scotland* (Birlinn, Edinburgh, 2005) 273-291.

²¹ *RMS ii*, no. 3313, p.708. MacCoinnich, 'Tùs gu Iarlachd,' 147-149.

‘wastelands’ of Monar and Ned were added to John Mackenzie of Kintail’s list of titles in 1542, and these were grouped together with Strathconon for exchequer purposes in 1588.²²

While many nowadays might consider the moors and hills of these lands a ‘wasteland’ or wilderness, they were a keenly contested resource in the sixteenth and seventeenth century in terms of not only their hunting and fishing potential but especially their value as summer grazing.²³ Such resources were jealously guarded and neighbours on both sides of the boundaries were keenly aware of the extent of their rights.²⁴ Mr James Fraser, writer of the Wardlaw MS (1660), gave an account of a regality court held by the Tutor of Lovat at Beaully in June 1589, following which he gave the lands of ‘Ardnacraske’ to a Donald Maciver and his brother John to keep the [Fraser] marches along the river Orrin between Ardnacraske and up into the wilds of Coire Chairbe secure ‘against the Strathconon men.’²⁵ Of these ‘Strathconon men’ perhaps the one who attracts the most in the way of historical ‘column inches’, although for matters relating to areas outwith Strathconon, was ‘Torcal Conanach’ or Torquil MacLeod (c.1535-c.1612), son of Ruairidh Macleod of Lewis by one of his spouses, Janet Mackenzie. This unfortunate Torquil MacLeod was the unsuccessful Mackenzie-backed claimant for the lordship of Lewis. He was known as ‘Torcal Conanach,’ due to his being raised and fostered in the region of Strathconon.²⁶ Torquil’s *oide* or foster father was his maternal uncle, John Mackenzie of Kinlochluichart (or Ord), second son of John Mackenzie of

²² (1542) RMS iii, no. 2817, p. 654; M. Livingstone et al eds., *Registrum Secreti Sigilli regum Scotorum: Register of the Privy Seal of Scotland 1488-1580* (Edinburgh, 7 vols, 1948-1966) [‘RSS’ hereafter] RSS ii, no 4944, p. 748. (1588) ER xxi, 337. Frith Mhonair / Forest of Monar [Ordnance Survey reference, ‘OS’ hereafter, NH 083 435], Nid an Fhainich / Nest of Fannich [OS NH 145 705].

²³ A. Ross, ‘Assessing the Impact of Past Grazing Regimes: Transhumance in the Forest of Strath’an, Banffshire.’ *AHRC Centre for Environmental History, University of Stirling, Short Report 3*.

<http://www.cehp.stir.ac.uk/resources/short-reports.html> See also the discussion of ‘soums’ – the grass requirements of one cow by the same author for the late medieval / early modern period. A. Ross, ‘Scottish Environmental History and the (mis)use of Soums’ *The Agricultural History Review* 54/2, 2006, pp.213-228.

²⁴ Martin Martin observed (c.1695) that the best way to ensure the continued remembrance of the boundaries between two estates was to take the youngest boys from each side of a march to attend the perambulation of the bounds. The agreed bounds were then marked by burying some ashes with a cairn and by beating both the boys soundly to help them remember the day. M. Martin, *A Description of the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland, circa 1695* (Birlinn, 1999) 78.

²⁵ W. Mackay, ed., *Chronicles of the Frasers... ..the Wardlaw Manuscript* (SHS, Edinburgh, 1904) 185. ‘Ardnacraske’ OS NH 504 487, ‘Coire Chairbe’ and ‘Allt Coire Chairbe’ can be seen on the OS 1:50,000 map, NH 310 455. The 1:25,000 OS map shows the placename ‘Coracharabic Forest’ in the same area. For Coire Charabic, see Simon Taylor’s database under the headword ‘Coracharabic.’ Simon Taylor, *Beaully, the Aird, and Strathglass Place Name Survey* (St Andrews, 2005) published on the internet at <<http://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/beaully/>> Accessed 21/10/2009.

²⁶ "By his first and only lawfull wyfe he [Ruairidh Macleòid, last undisputed Macleòid chief of Lewis] haid Torkill who being fostered with his uncle, John McKenzie, at Strathconon, was agnamed Torkill Conanach." 'History of the family of Mackenzie,' by Sir George Mackenzie, First Earl of Cromartie, in Sir W. Fraser, ed., *The Earls of Cromartie, Kindred Country and Correspondence* (Edinburgh, 1876) ii, 512. For more on Torcail see, A. MacCoinnich, ‘Siol Torcail and their lordship in the sixteenth century.’ pp. 7-32 in: *Crossing the Minch: Exploring the Links Between Skye and the Outer Hebrides* (The Islands Book Trust, Port of Ness, 2007) p. 12 & n. 18. Available on the internet at: <http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/4622/>

Kintail (chief 1500-61) and brother to Kenneth Mackenzie of Kintail (or Coinneach na Cuilc, chief 1561-69).²⁷

IV Cailean Càmh's Estate Accounts, 1569

While it is clear that boundaries of estates were keenly observed and contested, the activity within these bounds is not always clear. An estate account prepared by Mr Alexander Mackenzie of Kilchrist for Colin Mackenzie of Kintail (or Cailean Càmh, chief 1569-94), the chief of the Mackenzies of Kintail survives for the first year of Cailean's chiefship in 1569.²⁸ This supplies us with some fascinating vignettes of life on the large estates of the Mackenzies of Kintail including Strathconon. The lands of 'Strathconon' returned rents to the chief in that year together with separate returns for 'Scatoll M[e]ikle' and 'Litill Skatoll.' The names of the tacksmen, let alone the tenants remain elusive, although a Duncan 'Bane'²⁹ is named as the person paying the rents for his lands of Little Scatwell, £3 6s 8d for the term of Martinmas 1569. Further downstream John Mersell (*John Marshall*) & the rest of the 'tenentis of kingis Urray' (who were not named) paid 20s for their lands.

Some other individuals are named too. A man referred to as 'mc Dow Moir' (*mac Duibh mòir*) in Scatwell made a payment of 6s 8d in lieu of the heriot horse he owed his chief following, presumably, his father's death. The 'heriot' was a sort of 'death duty' levied in Scotland at that time whereby the lord/clan-chief could take the best horse or cow of the deceased from the deceased's next of kin, as a return to the chief for a lifetime's protection of his clansman.³⁰ Despite the evident circulation of cash, payments in kind remained common. The 'customis' or renders (taxes) of Kintail and Strathconon were paid to the estate in merts ('marts' or cattle). Strathconon supplied four that year which were then sent by the estate onwards to the port of Cromarty. Other cattle were sent sporadically to the chief on demand. Such was the case when the 'bowman' (cattle-farmer) of Corriemoillie in 1569, a man named mc Ane Reoch (*mac Iain Riabhach*), delivered two marts to Tormot mcCowlew (*Tormod macAmhlaigh*) which were slain at Redcastle, presumably after having been driven there from Strathconon (or Strathgarve), for the laird's Christmas dinner.

²⁷ D. Warrand, *Some Mackenzie Pedigrees* (Inverness, 1965) 85-6. For the custom of fosterage, common among clans in Gaelic Scotland at this time, see MacCoinnich, 'Daltachas, Fineachan agus Alba anns anns an t-Siathamh agus an t-Seachdamh linn deug' in G. Munro & R.A.V. Cox, eds., *Cànan & Cultur: Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 4* (Dunedin Academic Press, Edinburgh, forthcoming 2010).

²⁸ *British Library Additional Manuscripts* ['BL Add MS' hereafter'] 39210 ff. 7-17. MacCoinnich, *Tùs gu Iarlachd*, 380-404.

²⁹ This Duncan Bayne (1569) could, possibly, have been a relation to Alexander 2nd laird of the Baynes of Tulloch (laird from 1559-1600), or, equally likely been called 'Bain' as a by-name or nickname. For the family of the Baynes of Tulloch, see D. Mackinnon, 'Old Ross-Shire Families: The Baynes of Tulloch' in *The Scottish Genealogist* 1955 vol. 2, no. 1, p. 3-5. Kenneth Bayne 'son lauchfull' to Duncan Bayne 3rd laird of Tulloch (laird 1600-1620) was witness to a Sasine related to the transfer of the lands of Kinlochluichart to Kenneth Mackenzie, third son of the tutor of Kintail in 1619. *NAS RS 37/1* fol. 106.

³⁰ A.I. Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart, 1603-1788* (East Linton, 1996) 12. See the definition in the Dictionar o the Scots Leid: <http://www.dsl.ac.uk/dsl/>. See also M. Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands* (Birlinn, 1999) 78-9.

A ‘Ferchir mcConchie Dow’ (*Fearchar MacDhonnchaidh Duibh*), gave 13s and 4d to ‘ane puir wyfe of StrathCho[nn]an’ in this account from 1569. Unfortunately the reason for this expenditure is unrecorded, and we have no way of knowing why Fearchar would make such a payment to the ‘poor wife.’ Ferchir mcConchie Dow was the ‘officiar’ of Strathconon and he disbursed 40s that year which was given to the ‘blawaris of the Irne.’ The ‘irne’ or iron referred to here is unclear. ‘Blawaris’ of the iron would seem to imply that some tenants on this part of the estate had a duty, perhaps, to man bellows in the production of iron. Forty shillings seems like quite a large sum. It is unclear where this iron was being worked, and the Loch Maree area over to the west would seem more likely than the immediate environs of Strathconon and this area was parcelled together with the Loch Maree area in terms of estate management at this time (see discussion of iron works below).³¹

Further down the glen, John mcConchie Moir (*Iain mac Dhonnchaidh Mhòir*), ‘officiar’ of Skatwell in 1569, paid 13s 4d for a horse hide to be used on the curra[ch] or coracle presumably used for crossing the river Conon. Although pitch is not named in conjunction with this entry it does appear elsewhere in the account and one hopes that John’s currach was watertight. In any event it appears that the ferry at Scatwell for which the curach, presumably, was used was a profitable concern as it generated enough revenue to be liable to taxes to the tune of 20s in 1588. It was not an occupation that was without its hazards as crossing the river by boat could be a risky business. Mr James Fraser reported nearly 100 years later (6th February 1667) that twenty-two persons had drowned in the Conon due to overloading of the ferry, which sounds like a larger craft than the earlier coracle.³²

V Cailean Càim’s last will and testament, 1594 and Jane Ross’s testament, 1604

The rental of 1569 is a document that is related to the beginning of Cailean’s time as chief and the next document that sheds light on matters in the Scatwell and Strathconon corners of his estates appears at the death of Cailean Càim at Redcastle in 1594. Cailean’s last will and testament includes a lengthy list of debts owing to the deceased and this included items related to Strathconon. The sum of £148 was owed to Colin’s estate in both money and victual (beir) by ‘Tormot mcIwer (*Tormod MacÌomhair*), Donald McEwir (*Dòmhnall MacÌomhair*), and the remanent tenantis & occupiaris of the ground and lands of Strath[ch]onane.’ The lands of Strathconon were parcelled together with the

³¹ For a discussion of Mackenzie iron production on their estates, c. 1569-1630 see A. MacCoinnich, ‘‘Cleiffis of Irne’: Clann Choinnich agus Gnìomhachas Iarainn, c. 1569-1630’ in W. McLeod, J.E. Fraser & A. Gunderloch eds., *Cànan & Cultur / Language & Culture. Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 3* (Dunedin Academic Press, Edinburgh, 2006) Available online at

<http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/7732/>

³² *ER* xxi, 332. W. Mackay, ed., *Chronicles of the Frasers... ..the Wardlaw Manuscript* (SHS, Edinburgh, 1904) 472-3.

lands of Kinlochewe in terms of another commodity appearing in the inventory: iron. A John mcCondochie (*Iain mac Dhonnchaidh*), Donald mcGillespie (*Dòmhnall mac Gilleasbuig*) and a Thomas mc[Inglas] (*Tòmas mac Iain Glais*), tenants and occupiers of the lands and ground of Strathconon and Kinlochewe ‘paid the dutie on 1500 cleiffis of irne’ to Cailean Càrn their chief, coming to a sum of £1500.³³

This £1500 was a substantial sum, amounting to 10% of the estate’s income, and Cailean’s estate compares favourably with that of his fellow nobles. He was a very wealthy man by the standards of the day and this income from iron was a significant sum.³⁴ Colin was succeeded by his son Kenneth Mackenzie of Kintail. Kenneth married Jane Ross, a daughter of Ross of Balnagowan in 1593. Jane died in 1604 and her last will and testament included reference to the payment of mails or rents due to her from the part of the Mackenzie estates bestowed on her. This included a reference to a John mcConneil (*Iain mac Dhòmhnail*), Donald mac Ewir (*Dòmhnall mac Ìomhair*) and other tenants in Strathconon in regard of the meal and bere they owed the estate. A separate entry appeared for those who were to work on the iron in both the Strathconon and Kinlochewe areas. Jane Ross’s testament in 1604 showed some of the same names which had appeared in her late father in law’s testament ten years earlier: John mcCondochie (*Iain mac Dhonnchaidh*), Donald mcGilleis (*Dòmhnall mac Gill’Iosa*), and Thomas mcInglas (*Tòmas mac Iain Glais*), all named as tenants in Strathconon.³⁵

The recurrence of Strathconon tenants in an entry related to iron in 1569, 1594 and 1604 (as discussed above) raises some interesting questions. Although it has long been recognised that there was significant iron working on the ground in the Loch Maree area, the linkage of this area with Strathconon in connection with iron working is new. In terms of the place-names, almost all in the Strathconon area are of Gaelic origin with earlier substrata including a Norse element. Some toponymic elements in the place-name bank of the Strathconon area, such as ‘ruadh’, ‘mèinne’ and ‘iarann’ are suggestive of iron working but these are also fairly generic words and this might be reading too much into limited evidence. The dearth of source materials makes such interpretation of the place-name evidence very tempting. Scardroy, or *An Sgàrd Ruaidh*, for instance, means a reddish scree - a reddish marking on rocks, indicating the presence (perhaps?) of traces of iron ore

³³ NAS CC 8/8/29 fol. 68.

³⁴ MacCoinnich, ‘‘Cleiffis of Irne’’: Clann Choinnich agus Gnìomhachas Iarainn, c. 1569-1630’ in W. McLeod, J.E. Fraser & A. Gunderloch eds., *Cànan & Cultur / Language & Culture, Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 3* (Edinburgh, 2006) 142-143 & n.30. Available online at <<http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/7732/>>

For the relative wealth of Scottish nobles at this time see K.M. Brown, *Noble Society in Scotland, Wealth, Family and Culture from Reformation to Revolution* (Edinburgh, 2004) 105-108.

³⁵ Although these may have been surnames, it is more likely that these names were patronymics. NAS CC 8/8/43 fol. 731-732.

although this seems difficult to prove without geological analysis.³⁶ The name element ‘Mèinne,’ (Glenmeanie) however, would seem on the face of it to signify a ‘mine.’³⁷ Although the British geological survey’s report on the area would not appear to support economically viable concentrations of ore nowadays, this might not always have been the case.³⁸ The Highlands may also have had very different definitions of economic viability in the sixteenth century than those of today. What is economically marginal nowadays might have been feasible with a large labour pool in a very different economic climate. This being so, and with documentary sources telling us that Strathconon men were engaged in iron working, but being unable to satisfactorily identify iron-working sites in Strathconon, it does raise a further question. Were people from the Strathconon lands used as a labour force in iron production activity in the Loch Maree area, for which we have better evidence, or were they engaged in iron-working closer to home?³⁹

VI The economy

The economy of the area based on the strength of these two documents, despite the significant reference to iron, and a significant salmon fishery, was based largely on cattle production. Perhaps not surprisingly bere (barley) and meal are listed as an exaction from the tenants of Strathconon in 1604, which implies the existence of mills necessary for the production of such meal together with activities attested elsewhere on the Mackenzies’ estates such as brewing and presumably distilling.⁴⁰ While there was cultivation in some sections of the strath, most of this land was marginal agricultural land. Cattle production, rather than arable farming, was the main focus of activity on the Strathconon section of the wider Kintail/Seaforth estates. This is reflected in the explicit mention in

³⁶ However, a local Ross-shire tale is suggestive of a quite different etymology. J.H. Dixon collected a tale in the Gairloch area (1886) that said that Lochaber men had raided cattle in Easter Ross sometime perhaps around 1600. They returned with their *creach* (rustled cattle) through Scàrd Ruaidh, stopping there for the night. It was they who named the place Scàrd Ruaidh as the cattle were so hard pushed they bled, staining the rocks. J.H. Dixon, *Gairloch in North West Ross-shire* (Edinburgh, 1886) 50. The ‘bleeding’ origin explanation for reddish rocks may have been a popular one in Gaelic storytelling. There is a similar one for ‘Clach na fala’ in my home parish on Habost Machair, Ness, the Isle of Lewis, where blood is meant to have stained a prominent rock red as enemies of the local clan were despatched over the stone - an explanation that would probably not find favour with geologists.

³⁷ W. J. Watson, *The Place Names of Ross and Cromarty*, 154. See also the placenames in neighbouring areas such as Strathglass and the Lordship of Lovat, where ‘Main’ and its variants are also found, as collected and discussed by Simon Taylor, *Beauly, the Aird and Strathglass Place Name Survey* (St Andrews, 2005) <<http://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/beauly/>>

³⁸ MacCoinnich, ‘Cleiffis of Irne’ 143. <<http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/7732/>>

³⁹ Future research may unearth records of tacks which specify such service in return for land, but I have yet to discover these.

⁴⁰ For a brief assessment of agricultural activity on Seaforth estates see A. MacCoinnich, *Tùs gu Iarlachd*, pp. 270-274. For recent work on mills and milling in another part of what was the Seaforth estate, 1611-1844, see (in Gaelic) F. MacLeòid, *Muilnean Beaga Leòdhais* (Acair, Steòrnabhagh, 2009) 20-25; and (in English) F. MacLeod, *The Norse Mills of Lewis* (Acair, Stornoway, 2009) 20-23. Examples of milnes and alehouses proliferate in the manuscript sources relating to Mackenzie lands. Only a small selection of documentary references is offered here to illustrate this point. Meikle Suddie Alehouse in 1566, Alehouses of Kynnculledrum (Ord), Kessock and Lochbroom, 1569, *BL Add./ MS 39210* f. 5, ff. 7-17 (this same source also refers twice to aqua vitae: i.e. *uisge-beatha* or whisky). Kilchreist (1666), *BL Add Ch. 61669*; Alehouse and Milne of Fodderty (1522), Alehouse & Milne of Allangrange (1564), Alehouse and milne of Coul and of Tarradale (1593), The farm, still and alehouse of Easter Kessock, 1594 (*NAS GD 305/1/166/7*). These were commonplace across the Mackenzie estates. MacCoinnich, *Tùs gu Iarlachd*, n. 987.

a number of conveyancing documents (and evident in the place-names) of grazings and sheilings.⁴¹ These place-names would not be mentioned in such documents unless there was a distinct economic angle to the transaction, although often this is implicit rather than explicit, and we have - unless future research clarifies this - little to quantify the precise nature of the cattle-rearing operation on the Kintail/Seaforth estates, including Strathconon, other than confidently saying it was substantial.⁴² Research by Dr Alasdair Ross on the Stratha'an estate, and on Breadalbane lands where documentation does exist clearly indicate the importance of such intensive cattle-farming on highland estates during this period. It would seem that the Mackenzie management of their estates including the Strathconon area, with an emphasis on cattle farming on marginal lands, closely paralleled what was happening elsewhere in Highland Scotland during this period.⁴³

VII The lands and the church

Colin Mackenzie the first earl of Seaforth (c.1594-1633) was praised by late seventeenth-century clan chroniclers for his piety. He laid the foundation, apparently, for a church in Strathconon of which the walls are 'still to be seen in Main in Strathconon, the walls being built above the height of a man above the foundation, and he had a mind to endow it further had he lived longer.'⁴⁴ This source used by Alexander Mackenzie (1879 & 1894) was probably a late seventeenth or early eighteenth-century Mackenzie clan manuscript history – possibly the 'Ardintoul MS,' written c. 1680, and it is not clear if this church was left unfinished or if it ever came into use. Certainly by the time of the Old and New Statistical Accounts, of 1793 and 1834, there was no mention of such a church, any previous building having been superseded by the new churches at Kinlochluichart and at

⁴¹ The mentions of grassings and shielings are a commonplace in deeds at this time. A few examples are offered here to illustrate the point. The grassings of the forest of Monar with sheilings and fishings (1620) *NAS GD 46/20/6/5*; *NAS RS 37/1* fol. 216. The half-grazings of Corriemoillie and Strathvaich (1600,1607, 1610) *NAS GD 1/1149/4 & 25*, *NAS RS 36/1* fol. 267-8. The lands, shielings and grazings of Kinlochluichart (1619) *NAS RS 37/1* fol. 106. The davoch land of 'Dauchnaclerich' (Fodderty parish), with its sheilling of the Garbet (1619, 1637) *RMS vii*, no. 1995, p. 722; *RMS ix*, no. 634, p. 228. The lands of Comrie, Tarvie and their grazing in 'Glenuiack' (OS NH 110 479) in the upper reaches of the River Meig (1667), *NAS GD 1/1149/26*. The lands of Drynie with their grassings of Strath Sgitheach (1618) *NAS RS 37/1* fol. 73. Further research in estate papers and the deeds in the Register of Sasines should be able to add more detail to this picture. A casual glimpse at the Ordnance survey map shows a number of place elements that one would associate with transhumance activity: Càrn Airigh Chàrn [NH 302 578], Loch Airigh Lochain [NH 287487] Allt Airigh Leitreach & Arrileitreach [NH 373602], Mòinteach Coir a' Bhuic [NH 170520] all of which point circumstantially to sheiling or grazing activity, while place names such as Meallan nan Uan, Maoil nan Gamhnach, Coire nan Each, Glac nan Each, Càrn na Bà Brice, Meall nan Damh, all in the Strathconon area may also add to such circumstantial evidence which hint at the presence of livestock.

⁴² MacCoinnich, *Tùs gu Iarlachd*, 274-276. See also the discussion of the Strathconon section of the Mackenzie of Kintail estates above, in 1569. While casual references to cattle and related activity abound in the sources the only detailed deed I have discovered thus far specifically relating to cattle was a contract worth £10,000, whereby George Mackenzie, second earl of Seaforth undertook to supply James Barnes an Edinburgh merchant with 1500 head of cattle, his 'best ky' from his lands on Lewis over a five year period from 1641. *NAS GD 201/1/54*.

⁴³ A. Ross, Assessing the Impact of Past Grazing Regimes: Transhumance in the Forest of Stratha'an, Banffshire. *AHRC Centre for Environmental History, University of Stirling, Short Report 3*. <<http://www.cehp.stir.ac.uk/resources/short-reports.html>>

⁴⁴ Mackenzie, *History of the Mackenzies* (1894) 245.

Strathconon built in 1821 and 1830. The placename ‘Cnoc Ministeir’ by Scardroy hints at a more ad hoc arrangement.⁴⁵

The lands of Strathconon fell under the parochial watch of the vicars or ministers of Contin and, seemingly, Urray and Fodderty. Of these parishes not too much is known prior to the Reformation. A vicar named John is on record in 1227 for Contin and the next surviving reference to a clergyman for this parish seems to be in the early sixteenth century. There is a record of a man surnamed ‘Fores’ (‘For[b]es’ or ‘Forres’?) as the incumbent of Contin parish prior to 1550, when he was succeeded by a David Stewart.⁴⁶ A Mr Robert Burnet was the parson of Contin – or at least in receipt of the parochial income at the time of the Reformation, 1560 – and Sir Alexander Peddir and a Mr David Halyburton were in receipt of vicarage and parsonage fees in the adjacent parish of Urray although it is not clear whether any of these persons actually performed any ecclesiastical duties.⁴⁷ A Donald Adamsoun is named as an exhorter of Urray and Dingwall in 1569, but the same record does not mention Contin.⁴⁸ Master Robert Burnet, son of the previous parson of Contin seems to have succeeded his father in the vicarage of Contin in 1587.⁴⁹ More research will doubtless add to this and bring further clarity to this picture. But it seems that formal clerical provision may have been patchy in the Strathconon area if not in Scatwell.

This impression of a patchy clerical provision for Strathconon around the Reformation and earlier is reinforced when the historical record does become fuller during the seventeenth century. Dingwall Presbytery records from the latter part of the seventeenth century give us more information about Strathconon and its difficulties in securing the services of a minister due to the area’s reliance on surrounding parishes. Mr Farquhar MacLennan, minister of Fodderty and Mr Donald MacRae, minister at Urray were ordered in 1649 to go and preach in Strathconon as this ‘was incumbent on them.’⁵⁰ The moderator of the Dingwall Presbytery in a meeting of 1666, commented that all the ministers present were ‘diligent in their preaching and catechising save that Strathconon alone was neglected.’ The brethren ordered Mr George Cumine, minister of Urray (1658-1705) and Mr Donald Ross, minister of Contin (1651-1674) to take action regarding the serving of Strathconon.⁵¹ Mr Donald Ross in any case seems to have acted on this and was recorded as having preached at

⁴⁵ *New Statistical Account* 14, 238. OS Pathfinder 158. NH 212 518.

⁴⁶ C. Innes, *Origines Parochiales* ii, part 2, p. 505.

⁴⁷ J. Kirk, ed., *The Books of the Assumption of the Thirds of Benefice: Scottish Ecclesiastical Rentals at the Reformation* (Oxford, 1995) 635, 640, 645. G. Donaldson, ed., *Accounts of the Collectors of the Thirds of Benefices, 1561-1572* (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1949) 210-211.

⁴⁸ Donaldson, ed., *Accounts of the Collectors of the Thirds of Benefices, 1561-1572*, 208.

⁴⁹ C. Innes, *Origines Parochiales* ii, 505.

⁵⁰ W. Mackay ed., *Records of the Presbytery of Inverness and Dingwall, 1643-1681* (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1896) [‘Mackay, *Records*,’ hereafter] p. 145-146, 166.

⁵¹ Mackay, *Records*, 315. H. Scott et al eds., *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae* (Edinburgh, 11 vols, 1915-) [Hereafter ‘FES’] FES vii, 30, 49.

Strathconon in 1664.⁵² The presbytery did record that they were mindful that it was difficult for ministers to serve at Strathconon, and they seem to have built a house for itinerant ministers visiting the area and a reference to such a house appears in a surviving fragment of Gaelic verse attributed to the Rev. Angus Morison, minister of Contin, at the end of the seventeenth century.⁵³

It seems, according to Cosmo Innes, that the parish of Urray contained a davoch of land in Strathconon.⁵⁴ The lands of Main in Strathconon may have been attached to the parish of Fodderty, as Mr John Mackenzie, minister of Fodderty 1666-1721, refused to preach in Strathconon in 1672 as he had, as minister of Fodderty, been deprived of these lands. However, the dispute was resolved by the following year with Mr John promising in June 1673 to ‘discharge ministerial dutie to that part of Strathconon that belongs to the parish of Fottertie.’⁵⁵ Mr John Mackenzie’s predecessor in this charge, Mr John MacKillican, minister of Fodderty 1656-1662, had also appeared extremely reluctant to serve Strathconon and had come under pressure from the Presbytery to fulfil his duty to this area.⁵⁶ Although more research would, no doubt, give better definition to our understanding of the division of duties in Strathconon between the ministers of neighbouring parishes, the compromise in terms of the division of Strathconon into attached portions to different parishes can be glimpsed in a later rental of the Seaforth estates from 1726 where the parishes relating to various townships are specified such as Eskadale, Scardroy, Kinlochbencharane, Corribuic in Contin parish; Main and Porin in Fodderty parish and Inverchorain seemingly allotted to Urray.⁵⁷

The Presbytery records also afford us an occasional fleeting glimpse of the lives of the inhabitants. Mr Farquhar Maclellan, minister of Fodderty had to turn detective as in April 1650 he was ordered to travel to Strathconon in order to discover the identity of the perpetrators of an alleged murder.⁵⁸ Unfortunately this source reveals no further information about any homicide. The Kirk Session were also trying to summon a Mr Murdo Mackenzie from ‘the hight of Strathconon’ for a thorough inquisition before the presbytery in Dingwall, in 1649. The Session had not been placated by the written representation he had sent to them prior to this with his son and threatened him with excommunication unless he made an appearance in person.⁵⁹ A Mr Hector Mackenzie from the area was summoned by the Kirk session in Dingwall in 1664 charged with habitual drunkenness and unruliness.⁶⁰ The inhabitants of Strathconon, like those of any other area of Scotland committed a

⁵² Mackay, *Records*, 307.

⁵³ ‘...Bha mi oidhch an Strath Chonain an Taigh a’ mhinisteir chorraich...’ W. Matheson ed., *The Blind Harper (An Clàrsair Dall) the songs of Roderick Morison and his Music* (Edinburgh, SGTS, 1970) 225.

⁵⁴ C. Innes, ed., *Origines Parochiales*, ii, pt 2, p. 518.

⁵⁵ Mackay, *Records*, 1672 p. 328-9. *FES* vii, 37

⁵⁶ Mackay, *Records*, 294. *FES* vii, 26.

⁵⁷ For full details see the ‘Rental of the Seaforth Estates, 1726’ in J.R.N. MacPhail, ed., *Highland Papers ii* (SHS, Edinburgh, 1916) 332-36.

⁵⁸ Mackay, *Records*, 181. *FES* vii, 36.

⁵⁹ Mackay, *Records*, 166.

⁶⁰ Mackay, *Records*, 306.

variety of misdemeanours to which further research may be able to add detail. And, while their language was in no way categorised as a misdemeanour, it is clear that the inhabitants of Strathconon spoke Gaelic (or ‘Irish’ as it was called by contemporaries), a language viewed as an impediment to progress by authorities in the south.⁶¹ Mr John McKillican, minister of Fodderty, 1656-62, was directed by the Dingwall Presbytery in 1657 ‘to indeavour to pray in the irishe language and to own a portion of Strathconon for part of his church,’ presumably Invermeanie and Porin.⁶²

VIII The language, naming patterns and river systems

Only 6.9 % (or five persons) in the Strathconon area still spoke Gaelic according to the census of 2001, a low percentage which is paralleled by language usage in neighbouring areas.⁶³ While the medieval period saw some Norse presence and possibly settlement attested by some of the place-names they have left in the area, not least Scatwell and Dingwall, the language of Strathconon (and of the surrounding area) for most of the late medieval and early modern period was Gaelic.⁶⁴ As recently as 1891, post clearance, three quarters of the remaining 249 residents of Strathconon still spoke Gaelic.⁶⁵ (That 75% figure is as high, proportionally, as that of the strongest Gaelic speaking area anywhere in Scotland at the last census, 2001.) At least two natives of Strathconon from the late eighteenth century have left us examples of their Gaelic, *Fearchar a’ Ghunna* (1780-1866) and *am Bàrd Conanach* (1780-1832), even though the subject matter in these surviving examples of their Gaelic was not directly related to their native district.⁶⁶

We are largely reliant on place name evidence for Gaelic usage in the area prior to 1700. Another indication of language usage can be seen in the personal names of the tenantry recorded in the Forfeited Estates rental of 1719-24 and in the personal names noted, above, in the account from

⁶¹ V. E. Durkacz, *The Decline of the Celtic Languages* (John Donald, Edinburgh, 1983) 5, 24-30. MacCoinnich, ‘Where and how was Gaelic written in late medieval and early modern Scotland? Orthographic practices and cultural identities’ (309-356) in: C. Ó Baoil & N.R. McGuire eds., *Caindel Alban. Fèill-Sgrìobhainn do Dhòmhnall E. Meek = Scottish Gaelic Studies, XXIV* at note 13, p. 334. <<http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/4940/>>

⁶² Mackay, *Records*, 294. MacPhail, ed., *Highland Papers ii*, 334-5.

⁶³ Analysis of 2001 census figures in a report by Kurt C. Duwe (p. 34). Published on the internet at http://www.linguae-celticae.org/dateien/Gaidhlig_Local_Studies_Vol_24_March_2005-a.pdf. Accessed, 28 January 2009.

⁶⁴ For the earlier period see B. E. Crawford & S. Taylor, ‘The Southern Frontier of Norse Settlement in North Scotland: Placenames and History’ *Northern Scotland* 23 (2003) 1-76.

⁶⁵ Srath Chonainn & Gleann Oirrin (Strathconon & Glen Orrin): Càrnach, Inbhir Chòmhrainn, Monar, Sgàrd Ruaidh, A’ Ghlaic Odhar, Pòrainn, An Srathan Mòr & Dail Breac. This based on Kurt C. Duwe’s analysis of 1891 census figures available on the internet (accessed 28 January 2009) at:

<http://www.linguae-celticae.org/dateien/1891_GLP_029_Srath_Chonainn.pdf> Many families, (estimated at 500 people according to Alexander Mackenzie) were removed from Strathconon during the nineteenth century a process that reached its greatest intensity in the 1840s. E. Richards & M. Clough, *Cromartie: Highland Life, 1650-1914* (Aberdeen, 1989) 222-7. E. Richards, *The Highland Clearances* (Birlinn, Edinburgh, 2000) 22-30.

⁶⁶ A.B. MacLennan (?), *Fearchair-a-Ghunna. The Ross-shire Wanderer* (2nd Ed, Inverness, 1868). This is written in English, but the comments attributed to Fearchar (aka Farquhar MacLennan) are all in Gaelic. For *Am Bàrd Conanach* (Dòmhnall Dòmhnallach / Donald Macdonald), see J. Mackenzie, ed., *Sàr Obair nam Bàrd Gaelach. The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry and the Lives of the Highland Bards* (Edinburgh, 1907) 377-382.

1569 and the testaments of 1594 and 1604.⁶⁷ They did not all necessarily have ‘surnames’ as we would know them. This custom of formal surnames was, the clan chief and his next of kin and his immediate relatives apart, a feature of the Scots and English-speaking world. Nevertheless, had it been put to tenants on the Seaforth estates in an external setting what their names were, they might well have replied, ‘Mackenzie,’ ‘MacRae,’ ‘MacLeay’ or ‘MacLennan,’ but these were ‘external’ names that were not widely used within the Seaforth estates, and they were little used either by the estate tacksmen/factors or by the tenants themselves prior to the nineteenth century. The names that mattered to them were family names, patronymics and by-names.⁶⁸

There may well be some more examples in print of which this writer (a *Leòdhasach*) is not aware of relating to Strathconon Gaelic (with apologies, of course to any in or from the area who do still speak Gaelic!). Most of the rest of the direct evidence available to W. J. Watson (Watson was himself a native Gaelic speaker from the Evanton area) around 1900, when Gaelic speech was still common, has gone. Watson, however, together with the place name materials, recorded an enigmatic local saying.

Abhainn Mìg tre Srath-chonuinn
Abhainn Conuinn tre Srath-bhràinn
Abhainn Dubh-chuileagach tre Srath-ghairbh
Tri aibhnichean gun tairbh iad sin.⁶⁹

[translated as: *The River Meig through Strathconon, The River Conon through Strathbran, The river of Black nooks⁷⁰ through Strathgarve; three rivers without profit, these*]

While the reason for this verse is not clear to me, the sentiment in it, perhaps ironic, that the rivers were without profit, is contradicted by all the other evidence which suggests that the river systems were harvested to good effect on the Mackenzie/Seaforth estate.⁷¹ The recurrent appearance of

⁶⁷ The rentals of the forfeited Seaforth Estate from 1726, showing the names of the tenantry appear in J.R.N. MacPhail, ed., *Highland Papers, vol. ii* (Edinburgh, 1916) 332-336.

⁶⁸ This was also a feature of the naming patterns on the Isle of Lewis, another part of the Seaforth estates as late as 1800. For a contemporary description of naming practices and the uses of patronymics see E. Burt, *Burt's Letters From the North of Scotland, as Related by Edmund Burt* (1754. Birlinn edition, Edinburgh, 1998) 198-199. A.I. Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, 5.

⁶⁹ W.J. Watson, *The Place Names of Ross and Cromarty* (Inverness, 1904) xxvii, 149. Interestingly the name of the river that flows through Strathgarve, ‘Abhainn Dubh’ englished ‘Blackwater’ seems to have been quite recent and to have supplanted an earlier name of Norse origin, ‘Rassal.’ It was referred to in deed as the ‘Rasary’ in 1610 and 1625 (NAS RS 37/1, fol. 106); and as ‘Rasay’ in 1610 and 1642, although it was probably becoming an obsolete form by then. W. Macgill ed., *Old Ross-shire and Scotland as seen in the Tain and Balnagown Documents* (Inverness, 1909) [no. 410] p. 160-1.

⁷⁰ This could also be translated as: ‘The river Meig through Strathconon, The river Conon through Strathbran, the Black-flyridden river through Strathgarve, these are three rivers that bring no profit.’ Watson, op cit., 149.

⁷¹ Charter granted by Kenneth Mackenzie of Kintail to Alexander Mackenzie of Coul, 1610, of the fishings in the Lin of Coul, called Rogie, and the Conon in the barony of Braeross (Brazrose) and the lands and grazings of Corriemoille...’, which were to be held by Alexander as a vassal off his brother. *NAS GDI/1149/4*, W. Macgill ed. *Old Ross-shire and Scotland as seen in the Tain and Balnagown Documents* (Inverness, 1909) [no. 410] p. 160-1. A charter was granted by Murdo Mackenzie of Kenlochluichart of the lands and fishing of Kinlochluichard to Kenneth Mackenie (son of the tutor

fishings, lochs and rivers in title deeds indicates that this was a valuable resource that was being actively exploited, implying the use of river systems for mill-lades, yairs (fishtraps) and weirs. While the destination of the end product from the rivers, presumably salted and barrelled salmon is unknown, the fact that they were using ‘Hamburg’ measures in this period, the sixteenth century suggests they may have been sent to a Baltic market.⁷² The earldom of Ross was reserved to the king (or to the duke of Ross, a title reserved to a son of the Stewart monarchs), with the associated lordship of Ardmannoch (the Black Isle) reserved for the consorts of the monarchs after 1475. The existence of the office of ‘caner’ of the salmon, i.e. the royal collector of ‘càin’ or tax related to the salmon in the area also highlights the economic importance of this resource for both the local inhabitants and the Crown.⁷³

IX The Mackenzie families of Coull, Kinlochluichart & Ord

As noted above, the lands of Strathconon were an integral part of the estate of the Mackenzies of Kintail/Seaforth. As the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries progressed, and the Mackenzie clan amassed land and power, cadet families such as the Mackenzies of Ord, Kinlochluichart, Coull, Scatwell slowly established themselves as landed families while remaining (in this period anyway) under the wing of the senior family or ‘chief’ of Kintail/Seaforth who was their feudal superior.⁷⁴ At some point in the sixteenth century John Mackenzie of Ord, brother of Kenneth Mackenzie of Kintail, became possessor of the lands of Kinlochluichart and probably Strathconon. John of Ord was a shadowy figure about whom little is now known and whose existence was only realised by genealogists in the early twentieth century. His son, however, Thomas Mackenzie of Kinlochluichart appears more frequently in surviving documentation from about 1580.⁷⁵ Thomas had seemingly lost 400 ‘scheip, mearis and horsis’ (sheep mares and horses) which were lifted from him in Kinlochluichart by followers or ‘servandis’ of George Ross of Balnagownan in March 1590/1.⁷⁶

of Kintail) in 1619: ‘in all and hail the half davoch of Scatwell (little) with fishings river and loch.’ Kenneth Lord Kintail wadset or mortgaged some lands in lands to his brother, Alexander Mackenzie of Coull, in May 1610. These wadset lands included ‘the whole davoch of Coull and pertinents, mill ailhous... [etc] ... [the] salmon fishing on the water of Rasary [or Blackwater river] and Connan in [the] barony of Bray Ross ... and also half the lands and fishings of Corriemulzie p[rese]ntlie possess be the said Alexander [Mackenzie of Coull], and the two sheilings and grassings thereof...’ This wadset was redeemed by Colin Mackenzie 1st Earl of Seaforth, son and heir to Kenneth Lord Kintail in June 1625 for a payment of 5000 merks. *NAS RS 37/1* fol. 106.

⁷² *ER* xiii, p. 47, 147-148. For an overview of Scottish trade at this time with Europe see D. Ditchburn, *Scotland and Europe: The Medieval Kingdom and its Contacts with Christendom 1214-1560* (East Linton, 2000) 146-8.

⁷³ *ER* xix, 213. For an account of another salmon fishery in the highlands in the sixteenth century with a ‘kanar’ or a ‘kinner’ see A. Murray, ‘The Salmon Fishings of Strathnaver, 1558-1559’ (pp. 77-83) in *Review of Scottish Culture* 8, 1993.

⁷⁴ For this process in the Mackenzie lands see J. Munro, ‘The Mackenzies’ (273-291) in R. Oram & G. Stell, *Lordship and Architecture in Medieval and Renaissance Scotland* (John Donald, Edinburgh, 2005) 279, 283-289. MacCoinnich, *Tùs gu Iarlachd*, 184-196. For cadets and related expansion on Campbell lands. J.E.A. Dawson, *The Politics of Religion in the Age of Mary, Queen of Scots. The Earl of Argyll and the Struggle for Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge, 2002) 59-69.

⁷⁵ Sasine, Thomas Mackenzie of Kinlochluichart & Annabel Mackenzie his spouse: the lands of Ruiffs, from George Sutherland of Ruiffis, 24 June 1594. BL Add Ch. 61522. Warrant, *Some Mackenzie Pedigrees*, 86.

⁷⁶ It took over seven years before Thomas was able to get compensation from Balnagown. BL. Add. Ch. 62148.

Thomas Mackenzie of Kinlochluichart died sometime between 1598 and 1600. He was twice married. His eldest son from his first marriage, Murdo (*fl.* 1600-20), succeeded him in the lands of Kinlochluichart while his eldest son from his second marriage, John of Ord (*fl.* 1600-42), followed his father in the lands of Ord. Thomas of Kinlochluichart was survived by his widow, Anabella (or Mirabell) a daughter of Mackenzie of Fairburn who married Alexander Mackenzie of Coul in 1600. By 1607, the half-lands of Strathvaich and Corriemollie, together with the town of Ord were being transferred from Annabel's guardianship into the hands of her son from her first marriage (to the late Thomas of Kinlochluichart) John of Ord and his wife, Isobel Cuthbert, with the approval of Kenneth Mackenzie of Kintail, from whom all these lands were held as feudal superior.⁷⁷

X The Mackenzies of Ord and the new Mackenzies of Scatwell

John of Ord (1607-42) known in Gaelic as 'Iain Dubh a' Ghiuthais' and his spouse Isobel Cuthbert did not get all of his father's lands.⁷⁸ His elder half-brother Murdo (*fl.* 1611-19), seems to have succeeded to the lands of Scatwell formerly held by his father and, confusingly, also seems to have retained the designations of 'Kinlochluichart' and 'Ord.'⁷⁹ Murdo had a close connection with Roderick Mackenzie of Coigeach, known as the tutor of Kintail (progenitor of the earls of Cromartie). Although Murdo was married to a Catherine Mackenzie, the couple seem to have been childless. Murdo and Catherine fostered Kenneth, Roderick of Coigeach's son and, in a deed of 1619, resigned these lands of Scatwell to the young Kenneth in exchange for 'certane sums of money and good deeds' performed for him by Roderick, on the proviso that Murdo and his wife would themselves remain childless.⁸⁰ This document is of interest as it clearly states that Colin Mackenzie, Lord Kintail, was the feudal superior of these lands. It also defines the boundaries of the lands of Kinlochluichart, lying in the barony of Eilean Donnan, as being bounded at the south west and north west by the grassings (or sheilings) of the heirs of the late Murdo Mackenzie of Fairburn, and at the north and north east, the lands of Corriemoillie, presumably marching with lands held by Alexander Mackenzie of Coul. This was tied in with the 'half davoch' lands of Little Scatwell

⁷⁷ Annabel, widow of Thomas Mackenzie of Kinlochluichart married Alexander Mackenzie of Coul in 1600. NAS GD 1/1149/25. Isobel Cuthbert daughter of Alexander Cuthbert married John Mackenzie of Ord, son to the late Thomas of Kinlochluichart and his wife Annabella. *NAS RS 36/1 fol. 267r-268r.* Mackenzie, *History of the Mackenzies*, 595-7. Warrand, *Some Mackenzie Pedigrees*, 86-9.

⁷⁸ A. Mackenzie, *History of the Mackenzies* (Inverness, 1894: Clan Mackenzie Society reprint, 1998) 527. His Gaelic by-name might mean something like dark (haired / featured ?) John of the Pine-woods/Fir trees.

⁷⁹ *BL Add Ch. 62158.* Warrand, *Some Mackenzie Pedigrees*, 87.

⁸⁰ For the custom of fosterage among the Mackenzies and other Highland clans in this period see MacCoinnich, 'Daltachas, Fineachan agus Alba anns anns an t-Siathamh agus an t-Seachdamh linn deug' in G. Munro & R.A.V. Cox, eds., *Cànan & Cultur: Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 4* (Dunedin Academic Press, Edinburgh, forthcoming 2010).

including the river and Loch fishings.⁸¹ These lands remained in the hands of Kenneth's descendants, the Scatwell family, for many generations after this (1619-).⁸²

XI The Mackenzies of Scatwell, Ord & Kinlochluichart (2)

Kenneth (†1662), the first of this branch of Little Scatwell was succeeded by three of his sons in turn, the first two dying young. In 1688 Kenneth Mackenzie of Scatwell having outlived his brothers, succeeded his father as heir male in the lands of Little Scatwell with its pool and salmon fishing, the lands of Kinlochluichart with fishing illustrating that despite the Gaelic saying quoted above, the seventeenth century lairds clearly saw the rivers as a resource worth exploiting.⁸³ Kenneth married Lillias Mackenzie, heiress to the lands of her father, Roderick Mackenzie of Findon, who inherited her father's lands in 1693.⁸⁴ This inheritance gradually drew the family's centre of gravity away from Scatwell. According to Alexander Mackenzie (1894) the family removed from Lochluichart to Findon (in the Black Isle) in 1696, although retaining an interest in the original lands until 1844.⁸⁵ Indeed, although most of the lands listed in the document drawn up to disentail or break up and sell the estate of the heavily indebted Sir James John Randoll Mackenzie in 1844 were in and around the Findon area, the lands of Little Scatwell and Kinlochluichart had remained an integral part of the Mackenzie of Scatwell family lands until then.⁸⁶

The proliferation of Mackenzie cadet branches makes tracing these families tricky, however. This is compounded by the presence of another, lesser known, cadet family – the Mackenzie family of Meikle Scatwell. Mr John Mackenzie (†1620) minister of Dingwall held the lands of Tolly, which he passed on to his son Murdo. Murdo succeeded Mr John in these lands with the addition of Meikle Scatwell, granted him by Kenneth Mackenzie of Kintail in 1608. This family continued to hold these lands of Meikle Scatwell, which seems to have had grazings in Strathconon attached to it, until the family faded out of the historical record about 1700.⁸⁷ Malcolm Bangor-Jones noted in his study of

⁸¹ 19-21 January 1619 at Cultaleoid and Chanonrie. *NAS RS 37/1* fol. 106. A late eighteenth century document, 'a decreit of transumpt at the instance of Sir Kenneth Mackenzie of Scatwell,' 1782, incorporates the text of several older documents including the 'bounding of Kinlochluichart' which would repay further examination. *BL Add Ch. 61880*.

⁸² A. Mackenzie, *History of the Mackenzies* (Inverness, 1894: Clan Mackenzie Society reprint, Ontario, 1998) 566-572.

⁸³ T. Thomson, ed., *Inquisitionum ad Capellam Domini Regis Retornatam quae in Publicis Archiivis Scotiae adhuc servantur abbreviato* (3 Vols., Edinburgh, 1811-16) [Hereafter 'Retours'] Retours II, Ross & Cromarty, no. 148. Service of heir, 'Kennethus Mckenzie de Scatwall,' as heir in the lands of Strathconon., 6 Nov. 1688.

⁸⁴ Retours II, Ross & Cromarty, no. 157.

⁸⁵ Mackenzie, *History of the Mackenzies*, 567.

⁸⁶ 'An Act to allow Sir James John Randoll Mackenzie of Scatwell, baronet, to add certain lands...' (29th July 1844) *Anno Septimo & Octavo. Victoriae Reginae. 7 & 8 Victoria. A Collection of Private Acts printed by the Queen's Printer. Passed in the Seventh and Eighth Year of the Reign of H. M. Queen Victoria* (London, 1844) Cap. 16. p. 373. A. Mackenzie, *The History of the Mackenzies* (1894: 1998) 572.

⁸⁷ There is a note of an instrument of Sasine of toun and lands of Meikle Scatwell lands & grassings of Achair (?) & Srathconon, Crombell [Srath Chrombuill NH 140 643 ?] & others in favour of Alexander Mackenzie, eldest lawful son of Rorie Mackenzie of Tolly in 16 Sep 1653. This is 'Inventory of Writs relating to the parks of the Estate of Seaforth,' in *NAS GD 46/21/2*. The Rev John Mackenzie of Tolly (†1620), second son of Mackenzie of Fairburn, was succeeded in

Lochbroom that the establishment of cadet families as landed families in their own right was 'largely determined by the financial difficulties of the Mackenzies of Kintail/Earls of Seaforth.' These difficulties became particularly acute from the latter half of the seventeenth century onwards partly due to the unfortunate choices (with the benefit of hindsight) made by the clan hierarchy in their support for the Stuart monarchy.⁸⁸ While the focus in these last sections has been on cadet families it is worth noting that the senior family, the Mackenzies of Kintail/Seaforth, retained an interest in the Strathconon area from our earliest records in the mid fifteenth century until their estate was also broken up in the mid nineteenth century.⁸⁹

Conclusion

By the end of the period under consideration here, at the end of the seventeenth century, as at the beginning, the lands of Strathconon and Scatwell were under the control of the Mackenzies. While the Kintail branch of the family remained dominant, the families of Tarbat/Cromartie, Scatwell and Coul became increasingly important. Iron seemingly played an important if little understood role in the local economy, while salmon-fishing, agriculture and especially cattle rearing were all mainstays of the economy on the Mackenzies estates during the seventeenth century. Considerable research remains to be done on the untapped wealth of source material from the seventeenth century in collections of family papers and in official collections such as the Registers of Deeds and the Sasines in the National Archives of Scotland that would do much to illuminate patterns of landholding and conditions in the Strathconon and Scatwell area in the seventeenth century, in much the same way as Malcolm Bangor Jones has done for the Barony of Lochbroom. Such a detailed survey is outwith the scope of this more limited investigation, which, nevertheless, does offer a framework for further historical and archaeological research on the Strathconon area.

the lands of Tolly (and Meikle Scatwell) by his son Rory (1620-53) and then by his grandson Alexander (fl. 1653-c.1682). Retours II, Ross & Cromarty, no. 139 (Apr 19 1681). Warrant, *Some Mackenzie Pedigrees*, 153-155.

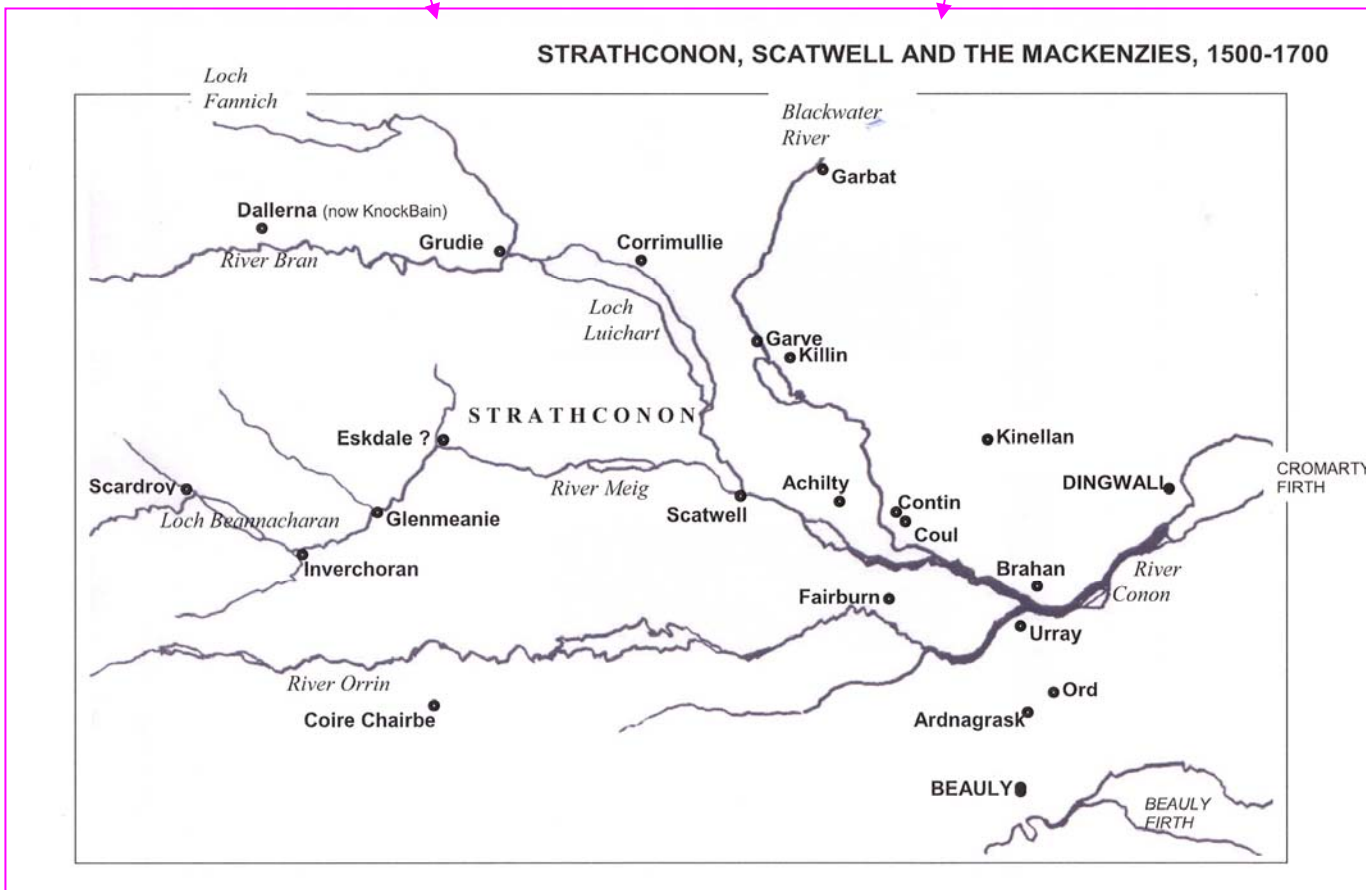
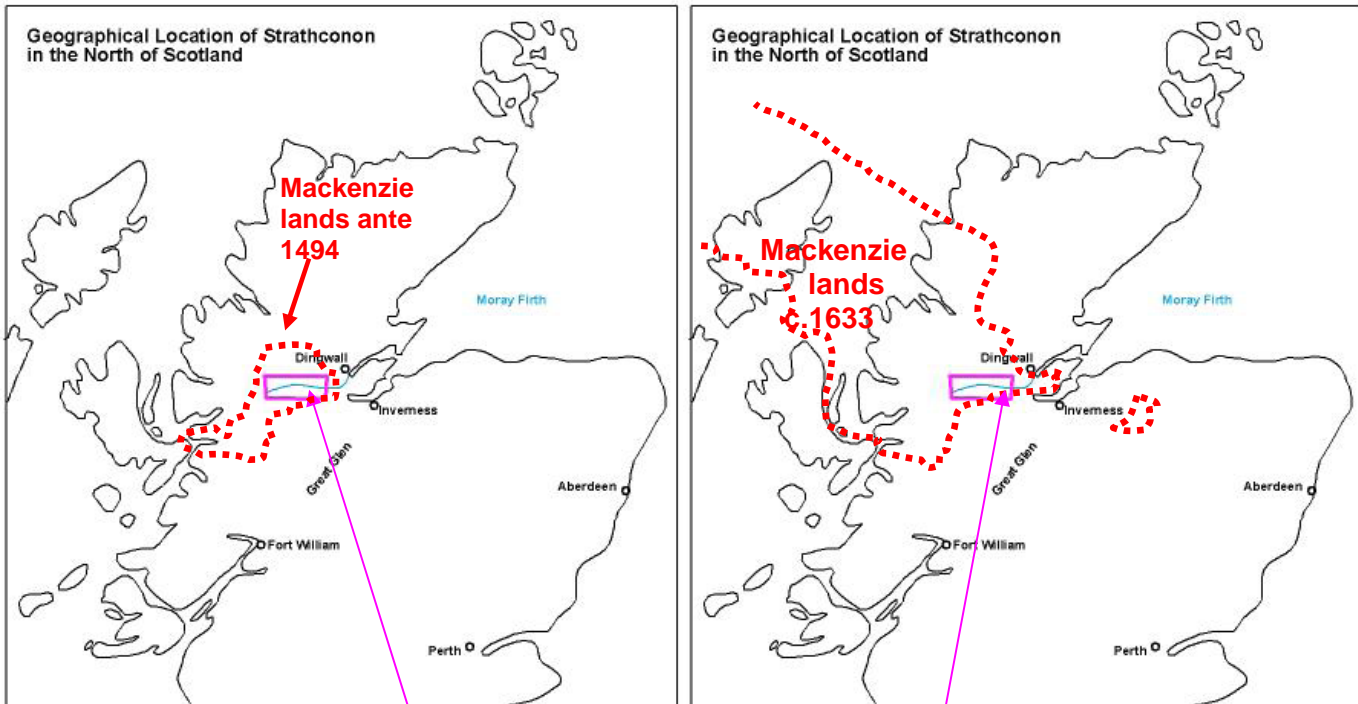
⁸⁸ M. Bangor-Jones, 'The Mackenzie Families of the Barony of Lochbroom' (79-117) in J.R. Baldwin, ed., *Peoples and Settlement in North West Ross* (Edinburgh, 1994) 86-9, 90-93, 110. For the wider context of the indebtedness of Highland lairds in this family and the consequences thereof see A.I. Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart, c. 1603-1788* (East Linton, 1996) 210-34.

⁸⁹ Francis Lord Seaforth drew up a deed in 1810 that listed these lands that remained integral to the core barony of Eilean Donnan which included Garve, Kenlochluichart and Corrimoillie, Garrowbad (Garbad), Dalernie (Knockbain)... ..Kenlochbeancharan, Inverchoran, Invermaine, Mainzie.' This is in, 'An Act for vesting in Trustees certain parts of the estate of Seaforth to be sold...' 29 July 1844. *Anno Septimo & Octavo, Victoriae Reginae. A Collection of Private Acts printed by the Queen's Printer. Passed in the Seventh and Eighth Year of the Reign of H. M. Queen Victoria* (London, 1844) Cap. 16. p. 395, 398.

Appendix 1:

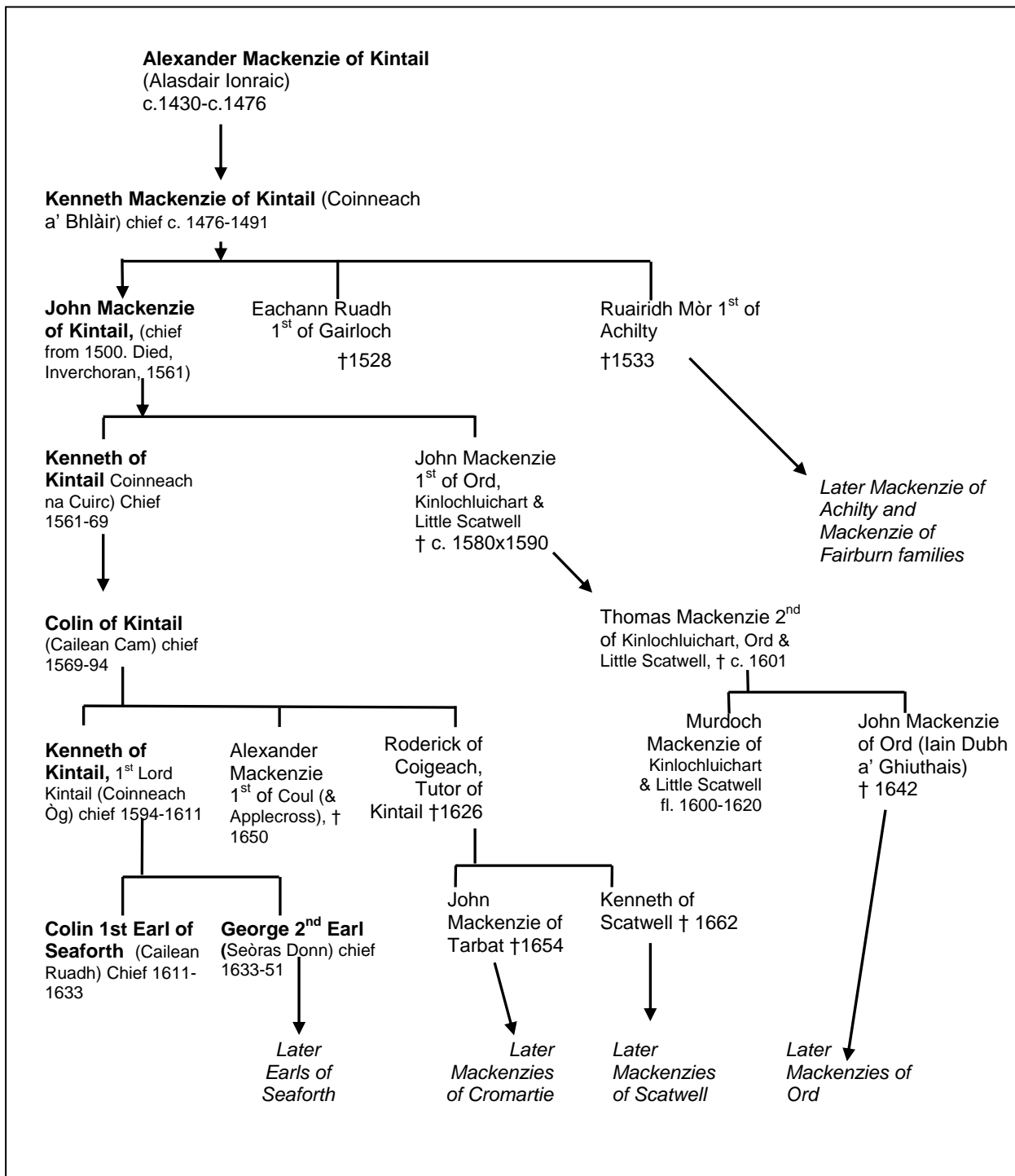
Strathconon within the Mackenzie of Kintail lands

These base maps showing the location of Strathconon taken from the NOSAS report have been copied and superimposed with a red line showing the approximate extent of Mackenzie controlled lands a) prior to c.1493, and b) in and around 1633



Some Mackenzie family connections

(Kintail / Seaforth line in **bold**)



Simplified family tree showing some of the Mackenzies mentioned in the text.

For more details see D. Warrand, *Some Mackenzie Pedigrees* (Inverness, 1965)

Aonghas MacCoinnich
 Roinn na Ceiltis is na Gaidhlig
 Oilthigh Glaschu

2.5 Results

In total 12 field days took place; just five of these were full field days with numbers of people varying from three to thirteen. There were also several ad hoc hill days made by small groups. Forty four sites were recorded during the project with approximately 155 individual features located. All are detailed in the gazetteer and only selected photographs are included in this report; the complete set of photographs is available on a DVD.



East part of SC3 - An extract from the 1825 plan by James Flint RHP 2525, reproduced with the permission of AM Brander

The earliest sites located were sheilings, but unlike the other areas of the project there were very few in this phase. All were of the earlier type; typical oval grassy mounds with dished centres. Two were on the south side of the glen in Coire Mheogaidh and the other six, were in a group at Carnan na Gaoithe, above Milton.

Only one example of an earlier type of building with a turf wall and rounded corners was found on the valley floor; this at Glacour. The rental of 1726 has 13 tenants in "Eskadel", the eastern part of the area surveyed in Phase 3, but we are not certain that this name refers to this area. However the 1798 list does include the names of the places. It has 18 householders: in Knockanrerig/Fearnoch - 3, Dromanreach - 2, Lagnabeist - 3, Dromanbuie - 2, Achlorachan - 1, Balnault - 3 and Glacour - 4. It is probable that the earlier habitations of this particular period have been destroyed by development and by subsequent buildings: the sites chosen for previous habitations, after all, would have been the most suitable for later ones. Remains of many later rectangular, stone built dwelling houses and buildings were located at all of the above places.

Illicit still bothies were well represented in this phase. Nine "probable" bothies and a further four "possibles" were added to the record. One of the sites, that of Loch a'Choire Leith, site 813, appeared on the sketch concerned with a court case in 1835 as "smugglers hut of bothie" (*Figure 6 and 7, Section 3.3*): it is the only one for which we have positive documentary evidence. Not surprisingly the location of these places was kept secret. All the bothies in this phase are in secluded spots, high in the hills and beside small burns, well hidden from the lower valley. All, without exception, were recessed into a slope or against a crag so that they would have been easily camouflaged by laying branches and turves over them. In some there was a sub-circular stone recess or feature in one of the rear corners and at one, possibly two sites, there was a second building which may have been living accommodation. Many of these characteristics had been noted in the still bothies of the other phases. A total of nearly fifty still bothies have now been recorded in the glen. With this large number, many of them with the same or similar characteristics which could define them as still bothies, and with the documentary evidence we now have, we are at the stage where we can say with some confidence that many of the bothies are sites where illicit distilling has taken place. Certainly we can say that those we have classed as "probables" are "positives" and those classed as "possibles" are "probables".

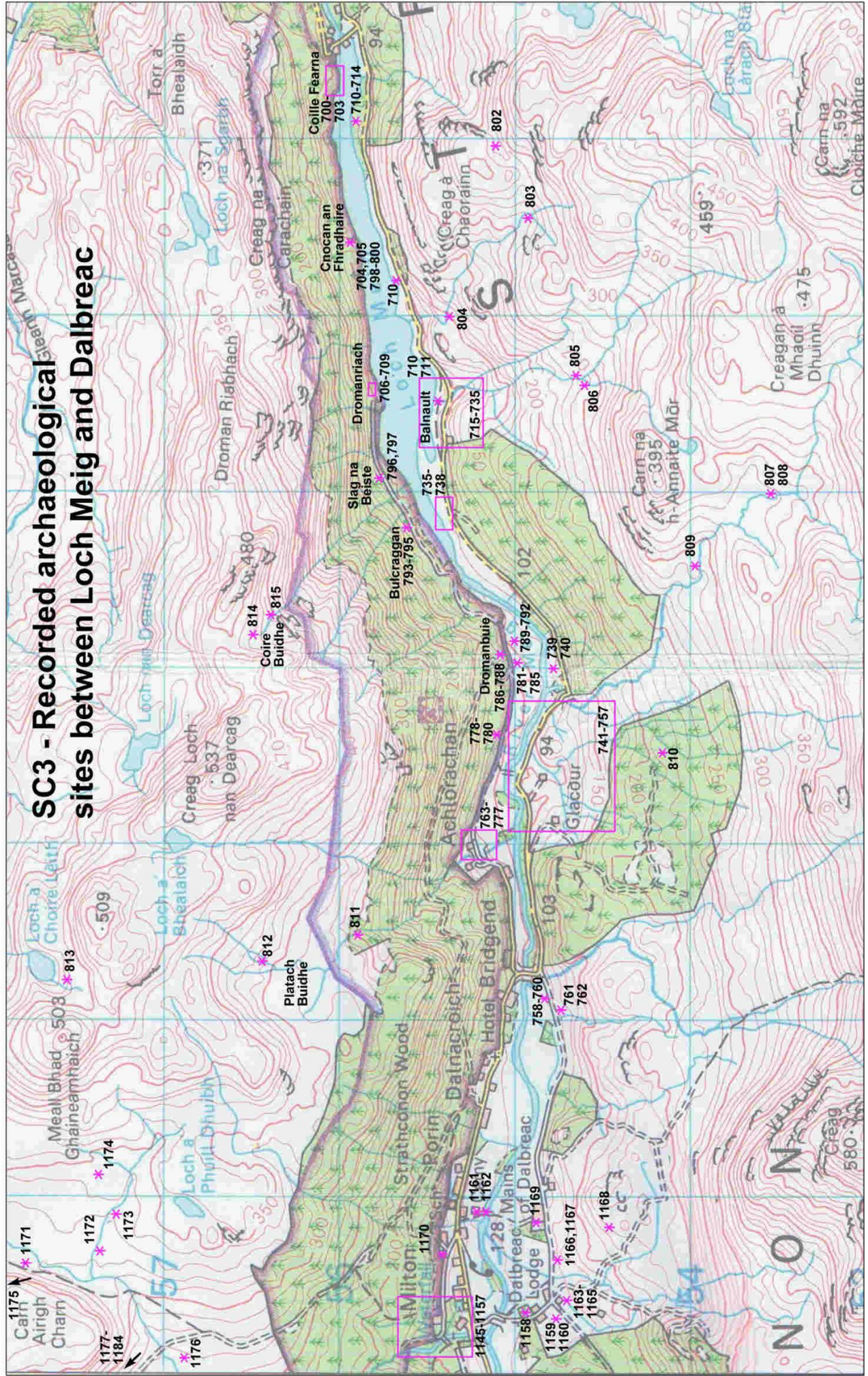
A road traversing the glen on the south side of the river is clearly shown on the Roy map of circa 1750, it crosses to the north side of the river near Balnacraig, west of Dalbreac. This road is continuous from Fairburn in the east to Lochcarron in the west and may indicate that it was the main route from east to west at that time; no other roads are seen on the Roy map, not even through Strathbraan via Achnasheen, as at present. A road taking the same line through Strathconon is also shown on the 1825 plan. But it seems that a new road was built soon after 1835 as an advertisement appears in the *Inverness Journal* inviting contractors to construct it. The new road crosses to the north side of the river by a new bridge at Bridgend rather than by a ford at Balnacraig. In the western part of Phase 3, it is probable that the original course of the road, pre 1835, which continued along the south side of the river, provided a private entrance to Dalbreac Lodge; a bridge does not appear at Dalbreac until the 2nd edition OS map of 1900. The 1835 road is particularly evident in this phase of the project; most likely because of the realignment of the road when the Meig Dam was built in 1957. The older road takes a lower course and can be seen “dipping” in and out of the loch. A well constructed bridge over the burn at Balnault on the line of the old road is submerged at times and in danger of collapsing. A further bridge, in good repair, was recorded on the old road to the SW of Bridgend.

The archaeological remains of sheep farming and improvement were well represented in Phase 3. Substantial complex sheepfolds were found at Achlorachan, Druminbuie, Druminreach and Glacour; also at Balnault but this had been truncated by the road. The remains of early sheepfarms were found on the upper terrace at Balnault, and also at Dalbreac; here the low turf footings of a building and attached enclosure, sites 1166 and 1167 (*Figure 10, Section 3.3*), may be the farmstead occupied by James MacCallum in the early part of the 19th Century.

Dalbreac Lodge (*Figure 16, Section 3.3*) was probably constructed in the early 1840s, certainly before 1848 when documents refer to “additions being made”. There was significant building work carried out in the vicinity of Dalbreac, Milton and Porin in the 1840s and 50s, following the purchase of the estate by the Balfour Family. Documents itemizing specifications were found in the National Archives of Scotland: in 1839, for cottages at Bridgend; in 1848, for a schoolhouse; in 1851, for a new meal mill and kiln at Milltown; in 1853, for a blacksmiths house and office at Milltown; and also in 1853 for a keeper’s house and dog kennels at Dalbreac. The 1853 plan (NAS RHP 2521) (*Figure 15, Section 3.3*) gives a good idea of the buildings in the area of Dalbreac, Milton, Porin and Dalnacroich at that time. Threshing mills were found at one, possibly two locations, Achlorachan and Mains of Dalbreac, but no reference to the building of these mills was found in the documents. The Balfours had extensive estates in East Lothian and it is known that they were very progressive in their agricultural innovations; perhaps they were responsible for introducing these mills to Strathconon. The mill at Achlorachan is a good example of a threshing mill with a horse engine platform, sites 771 and 772 (*Figures 11 and 12, Section 3.3*). It is very similar to the one at Corribhuic in the upper glen, and has the central turning mechanism of the circular horse walk still in place. There is also possible evidence for a horse walkway with an overhead shaft into the adjacent threshing barn at Dalbreac Mains Farm, site 1169; a rectangular aperture at head height in the threshing barn may have held the shaft and the small circle marked on the 1st edition OS map (*Figure 17, Section 3.3*) on the outside of the building may have been a covered walkway.

We were fortunate in having the old photograph of Balnault c1880 (*Figure 2, Section 3.3*), it together with the 1st edition OS map gave a good impression of the settlement at that time and before it was demolished and leveled, ahead of the flooding of the glen. Balnault figures in the re-organisation of the estate in 1850 when six families were settled there and required to build themselves “modern” houses. Of interest too in this area was the managed woodland, site 738, where there was evidence of coppicing and also of enclosure of the woodland to protect the trees from livestock.

SC3 - Recorded archaeological sites between Loch Meig and Dalbreac



3. Gazetteer

The sites are listed from east to west from the Meig Dam, taking the north side of Loch Meig and the River Meig first, and then the south side. Individual features have been given a three figure project number, not in any particular order. For reporting purposes the features have been grouped together as a site and though they are geographically associated they may not be contemporary with each other. The site name is generally that of the nearest named place or feature on the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map

3.1 North Side of the Glen

Coille Fearna

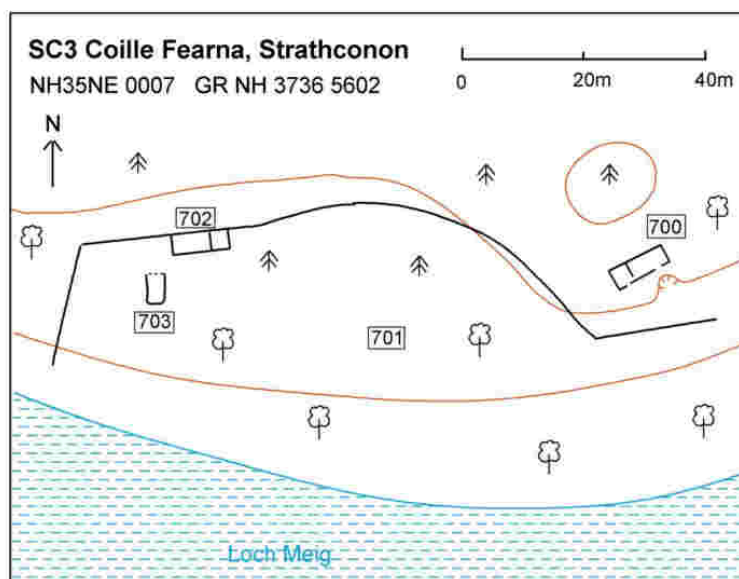
Farmstead and Enclosure (700 – 703) centred on NH 3736 5602 (Nmrs No NH35NE 0007) Alternative name Fearnach, T(F)rannoch. The site is on a south facing slope at a narrow part of the glen, 200m west of the Meig dam. It comprises 3 buildings and an enclosure; part of the enclosure has been inundated by water from the reservoir, much of the rest of the site has been planted with coniferous trees, but a section next to the water has sparse birch

700 Building - NH 37415 56020 The substantial moss covered stone footings of a rectangular building on a NE-SW axis are on a steepish SE facing slope. The overall measurement of the building is 16m x 4.5m and it has 2 compartments; the main NE compartment has internal dimensions of 7m x 3m and the SW compartment is 3.5m x 3m. The remains of the walls are generally 0.5m in height (but 0.8m at the west end) and have a thickness of 0.8-1m, although there is a considerable amount of tumble making a spread of 2m in places (at the east end). There is an entrance at the east end of the south wall 1m in width and a possible entrance to the SW compartment in the S wall (0.6m in width). A large hollow in the slope is located to the south of the east entrance; it is roughly 8m x 6m and 1.5m deep.

701 Enclosure - centred on NH 3736 5600. An irregular enclosure lies to the SW of building 700; it is approximately 100m x 50m, much of it has been inundated by the water of Loch Meig which bounds it to the south. On the north side the enclosure is bounded by the footings of a curving stone wall; these are generally 0.4m in height and 0.6-0.8m in thickness and much wasted. Building 702 abuts this wall in the west section.

702 Building - NH 37337 56029 (taken 10m to N of building) This building is covered by coniferous trees apart from the rear/N wall footings. It is rectangular and on an E-W axis measuring 16m x 4.5m overall. It has two compartments, the main/west compartment has internal measurements of 9.5m x 3.5m and the east compartment, which is at a lower level (by 0.7m) is 5m x 3.5m. The rear/N wall is 0.5m in height and has a spread of 1m, there is a back ditch here. The front/S wall is defined by a stone revetment 0.5-0.8m in height; it has probably been robbed of its stone.

703 Building - NH 37338 56008 This building is a few metres to the SW of 701. It is on a N-S axis and has internal measurements of 5m x 3m although the line of the rear/N wall is unclear. The stone footings have a spread of 1m and are generally 0.5m in height although at the south end the outer face is 0.8m height. It is planted with trees.



Farmstead and enclosure 704-705, 798-800 - centred on NH 3645 5590. (Nmrs No NH35NE 0006) Alternative names Cnocan an Fhradhaire, Knockannirig. The site is on a south facing slope on the N shore of Loch Meig, 1 kilometre to the west of the dam. It comprises a large enclosure and the footings of several buildings - one to the east of the enclosure and 2 to the west. Part of the enclosure has been inundated by the water of the reservoir. Most of the site has been planted with coniferous trees which are now quite mature. An enclosure appears on both 1st edition and current OS map

798 Platform - NH 36680 56025 A small recessed platform oval in shape c 4m (E-W) x 3m, south facing on the hillslope c60m above the glacial terrace.

799 Building - NH 36654 56025 The low footings of a stone walled building, rectangular in shape with square corners, c8m (E-W) x 3.5m internally. The moss covered walls are 0.6m thick to a max height of 0.2m. The west gable end is clear and the east less so.

704 Enclosure - NH 36600 55950(east end) - NH 36340 55910 (west end) A large linear enclosure on an E-

W axis, roughly 260m in length and 80m in width, but narrowing at either end. The majority of the enclosure lies under Loch Meig to the south, which bounds it to the south. A substantial dry stone wall surrounds the remaining part of the enclosure; this is largely intact, although tumbled in a few places, it is generally 1.2 - 1.5m in height, and reaches 2m in places. The wall is tapered in cross-section being generally 1m thick at its base and 0.5m at the top

705 Building - NH 36280 55887 What are probably the footings of a rectangular building lie 50m to the west of the west end of enclosure 704. It is on a flat grassy piece of land which is clearly flooded at times. The footings are bracken covered and barely discernable, more apparent at the west end. The building is on an E-W axis and measures 8m x 3.5m internally, although the limit at the east end is not apparent. The footings have some stone content and are 0.2m in height and 1m in spread.

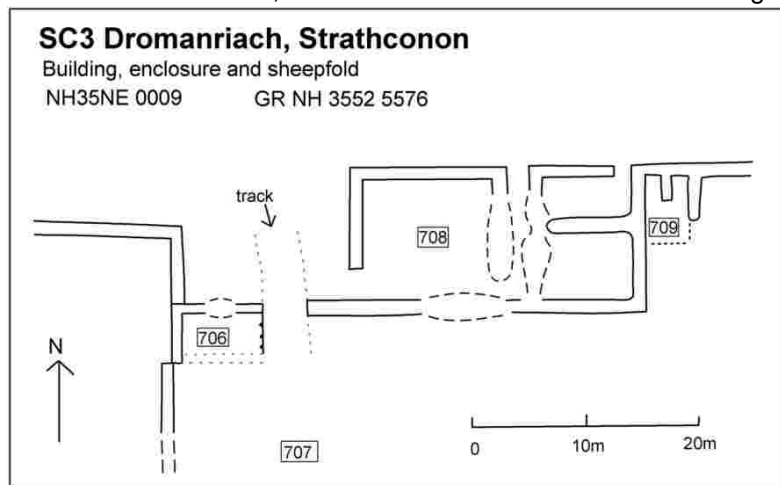
800 Building - NH 36216 55912 A long rectangular building with a large midden scoop below it, measures 9m (ENE-WSW) x 2.5m internally. It sits in a forest ride close to the front edge of the glacial terrace. Low moss covered footings are no more than 0.2m in height with 1.2m spread. No visible stone.

On the sloping bank immediately below this building is a deep midden scoop, oval in shape 6m(ENE-WSW) x 4m rim to rim.

Loch Meig, Drumanreoch Alternative name Dromanriach

Farmstead, enclosure, sheepfold and probable sheepdip (706 – 709, 801) - centred on NH 3552 5576 (Nmrs No - NH35NE 0009) Alternative name Loch Meig. The site is on a south facing slope on the N shore of Loch Meig, 2 kilometre to the west of the dam. It comprises a large linear enclosure, a building, a sheepfold and a probable sheep dip. A large part of the enclosure and a couple of buildings (marked on 1st edition OS map) have been flooded by Loch Meig. The north part of the site has been planted with coniferous trees which are now quite mature; the south part is grassy but has gorse bushes. On the 1st edition OS survey this site appears as a settlement with several roofed buildings and photographs taken in the 1950s, before the construction of the reservoir, suggest a much larger main building, 706, than the footings would indicate today.

706 Building - NH 35490 55773 The remains of a rectangular building on an E-W axis, measure 6.5m x 3.5m internally. The west wall is of dressed stone and mortared; it is 0.6m in thickness and 1.5m in height, but reaches 2m in the NW corner. There is a small alcove, 0.4m wide x 0.5m high x 0.15 deep, in the south part of this wall. The north wall is recessed into the slope, tumbled in places but reaches 1m at its east end. The south wall is barely discernable in the grass. The east wall is formed by the stone face, 0.5m in height, of a retaining wall for an adjacent sloping track. This may well be of more recent construction and may overly the east part of the former building. Photographs taken in the 1950s, before the construction of the reservoir, suggest a much larger building than the footings would indicate.



707 Enclosure - NH 35441 55761 (west end) - NH 35609 55740 (east end) A linear enclosure on an E-W axis, roughly 160m in length but only 70m in width and narrowing considerably to either end. The majority of the enclosure and adjacent fields have been inundated by the reservoir. A building, 706, lies roughly centrally and the sheepfold, 708, and sheepdip, 709, are adjacent to the north abutting the surrounding wall of the enclosure. This wall, which defines the north of the enclosure, is substantial and largely intact. It is 1.2-1.5m in height and generally 0.8m in thickness tapering towards the top.

708 Sheepfold - NH 35515 55777 A rectangular sheepfold lies to the north of enclosure 707. The wall of enclosure 707 forms the south and east wall of the sheepfold and this is largely intact but the rest of the sheepfold is very wasted and tumbled. The dividing walls of the compartments are 0.4-0.7m in height and have variable spreads of 1-2m - see plan

709 Probable sheepdip - NH 35532 55780 A substantial structure on a N-S axis in the angle of the wall to the east of the sheepfold, 708, and south of the main wall of enclosure 707. Two compartments each 1.5m in width are defined by 2 substantial walls each 1.5m in height the west/internal one is 2.5m in length, the east/outer is 4m and borders a concrete base which extends south a further 2m forming a possible floor to the structure - see plan. This structure may be a sheepdip which has been filled in for safety reasons (although there is no access from the sheepfold), or it may be a shearing shed

801 Building - NH 35470 55820 A small rectangular stone built building cut into the hillside on the east side of a burn. South facing, it is 3m (E-W) x 2m internally. Three walls are double faced and to 0.6m height, the retaining wall to the rear stands to c1m. Moss covered and under trees.

Allt a'Chuil, Slagnabeist Alternative name - Allt Sluic na Beiste (1st edition OS)

Building and platforms (796 and 797) - centred on NH 3510 5576. The site comprises the remains of one building and three possible platforms. It is SE facing and on a glacial terrace. The whole area is forested and it appears that the trees may soon be harvested. A track runs tight to the front of the building. The site is marked as an unroofed building on the 1st edition OS survey

796 Building - NH 35060 55775 A rectangular building at the rear of the terrace. It is c10m(ENE - WSW) x 2.5m internally, moss covered and with walls 0.6m thick to a maximum of 0.3m height. A further wall, a possible outshot, runs off to the WSW for 6m, it is likely that this has been destroyed by the forest track and the ditch beside it.

797 Platforms - NH 35110 55750 Three vague platforms all c5m x 6m

East of these two sites, at NH 35175 55795 there is a late 20th century rubbish dump on the lower side of the track.

Allt na Leac Ruadh, Bulcraggan Alternative names Balcraggan,

Buildings and Wall/enclosure (793 – 795) - centred on NH 3484 5636 (SMR No - NH35NE 0009). The site comprises the remains of 2 conjoined buildings and a wall. It is SE facing and on a glacial terrace which is traversed by a track. The whole area is forested and it would appear that the trees may soon be harvested. The burn to the E, the Allt na Leac Ruadh is hugely eroded through the glacial moraine and one side of the enclosure shown on the 1st edition OS map may have been carried away. The 1st edition OS survey as a roofed building and an enclosure.

793 Wall - A stone wall traverses the glacial terrace, roughly parallel to the track, from Dromanbuie in the SW to Druminriach in the east, a distance of roughly 1.5kms

794 Building – NH 34840 56360 The larger of 2 buildings at this site. It is to the WSW and measures 6m (ENE-WSW) x 3m internally. The building has double faced dry stone walls and square corners - WSW gable stands to 0.4m height.

795 Building - The smaller of 2 buildings to the ENE of 794 above. It measures 4m (ENE-WSW) x 3m internally. The building has double faced dry stone walls and square corners

Coire Buidhe

Buildings (814 and 815) – centred on NH 340 562 (Nmrs No - NH35NW 0006) In a small SE facing corrie at an altitude of 380m above and to the NW of Slagnabeist

814 Building/possible shieling/possible still - NH 33990 56235 The substantial remains of a dry stone structure on a WSW-ENE alignment are located in the upper east side of the corrie. It measures roughly 7m x 3.2m internally and is recessed into the slope on its N side and at its NE corner. The stone walls are generally 0.5m in height and 0.6m thick although at the west end there is much tumble down the slope and at the NW corner 1.2m spread. At the east end the stone faced wall is 1m in height and there is a curious free standing SE corner 1.3m in height with a possible corbelled overhanging curved internal face, much tumble here. This could be the remains of a still but there is no watercourse nearby. Appears as a ruin on the FES.

815 Building/possible shieling/possible Still - NH 34060 56124 150m lower down the corrie to the SE, the vague remains of this oval structure are on an E-W alignment and measure 5m x 4m. An obvious feature is a small ?pen in its east part, this measures 1.5m x 1.2m and has crudely constructed stone walls 0.3-0.8m in height and 0.6m thick. The underlying structure is defined by a recessed rear "wall" or turf edge 0.3m high, and a curving stone edge to the south, this has a possible entrance in the centre. There is a small watercourse a few metres to the south. This also could be a still bothy, it is reasonably well hidden, above the lip of the corrie.

Achlorachan Wood, Dromanbuie - Alternative name Achlorachan

A multi-period site in three parts with the majority of the buildings set on a glacial terrace. In the field to the south of the track there are 2 buildings, an enclosure and a possible midden scoop. To the north of the track in the forest there are 2 buildings and a sheepfold and in the lower field to the north-east there are 2 possible shielings and 2 storage pits. The large grassy fertile area, adjacent on the valley floor, to west and east, is surrounded by the wall, 781.

Buildings/Possible shielings and pits (789 – 792, 821) - centred on NH 3415 5499 In the field below and to the east:

789 Building/Possible shieling - NH 34205 54981 On a south facing slope and in the middle of a field. Oval in shape, this measures 3m(NW-SE) x 2m internally. The walls are c 0.75m in thickness and there is a clearly defined dished centre.

790 Building/Possible shieling - NH 34105 54981 Close to 789 a larger hut c4.5m (SW-NE) x 2.5m internally. Sub-rectangular in shape with a clear internal wall dividing it into 2 roughly equal compartments. Both compartments are dished and there is an entrance in the south of the west compartment.

791 Storage pit - NH 34090 55002 A slightly wasted pit c1.5m in diameter and 0.5m deep

792 Storage pit - NH 34079 54995 An entire pit, oval in shape, c 1.8m x 1.5m and 0.5m deep

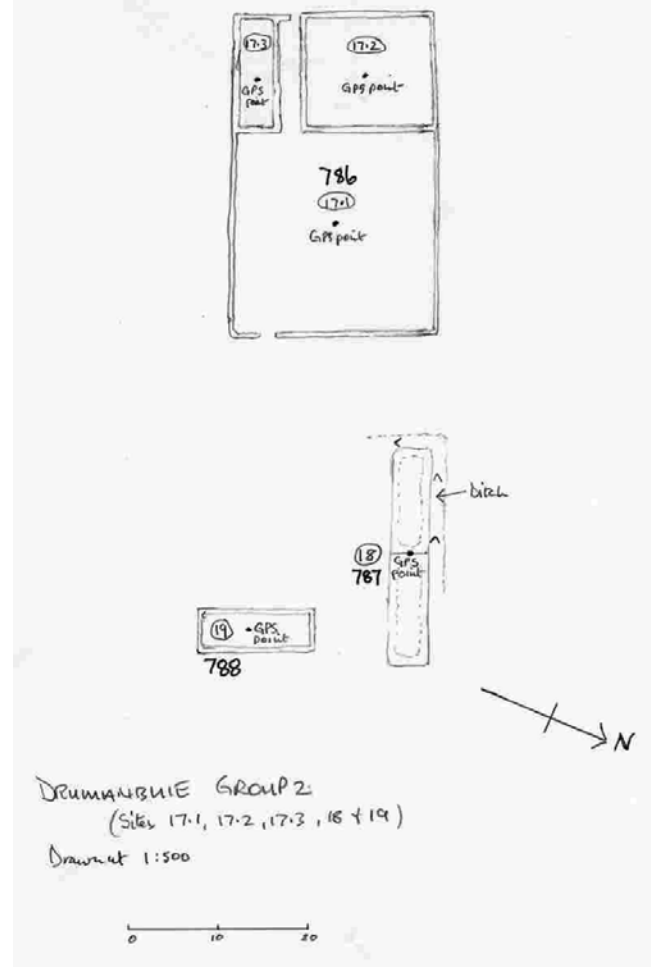
781 Wall - parallel and on the south of the track this wall surrounds a large grassy area to the south, between the track and the river. This area is approx 600m x 150m. The wall is substantial, of dry stone construction and largely intact.

Sheepfold and buildings (786 – 788) – centred on NH 3413 5508. (Nmrs No - NH35NW 0008) A sheepfold and an unroofed building are marked on 1st Edition OS survey. To the north of the track and within the forest this site is planted with trees:

786 Sheepfold - NH 34113 55051 Comprises a large square enclosure c 22m x 22m internally with 2 compartments and a pass adjoining to the west. The larger compartment is 12m x 12m internally and the smaller 12m x 4m internally, the pass between is c2m wide with a c2m entrance to the largest enclosure whilst the pass entrance to the west is just 0.75m wide. The double faced dry stone walls, c 0.6m in thickness are 1m high in places, they are moss covered and the whole has been planted with trees. Shown on 1st edition OS survey as a sheepfold

787 Building - NH 34151 55081 A long range of buildings, roughly on 2 levels and in 2 halves, with the east half slightly lower than west is represented by low turf covered walls. It is rectangular c24m (NE-SW) x 4m overall with a distinct cut-off ditch on the long NW side and the SW gable. The 2 halves are vaguely depressed in the centres. Not planted with trees.

788 Building - NH 34148 55102 Rectangular building c11.5m (NW-SE) x 3.5m internally, dry stone built, double faced walls c0.6m in thickness to 0.75m height. Much tumbled



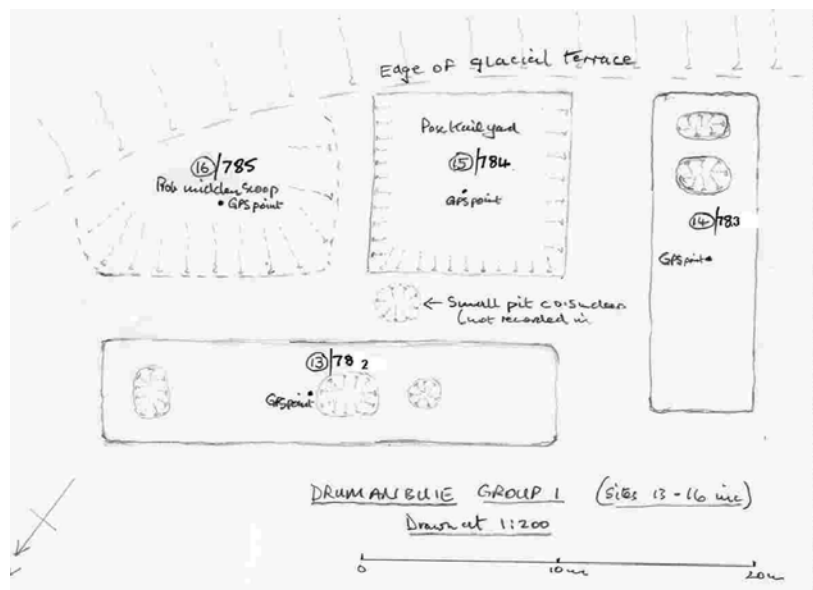
Buildings, Enclosure and possible midden (782 – 785) – centred on NH 3402 5500. Situated to the south of the track, in open ground:

782 Building - NH 34033 55004 Rectangular long range of buildings, c16m (NW-SE) x 5m overall, covered in fine turf and barely discernable. The walls of the component buildings and the divisions are hard to discern. There are three distinct dished depressions along its length

783 Building - NH 34016 55000 Rectangular long range of buildings c23m (NW-SE) x 5m overall at right angles to 782 and a few metres to the SW of it. The lower part at the east end shows 2 clear dished depressions; the upper NW part is less distinct. Turf covered.

784 Enclosure - NH 34031 54996 A small square enclosure, slightly cut into the slope c 10m x 10m has low turf walls. Possibly a kail yard.

785 Possible midden scoop - A roughly triangular scoop adjacent and to the NE of enclosure, 784 and in front of the east end of the range of buildings, 782



Achlorachan Wood

Buildings and Wall/enclosure (778 – 780) - centred on NH 3360 5510 (SMR No - NH35NW 0004)

The site comprises the footings of 2 buildings and a length of wall which bounds a grassy field. It is on a glacial terrace along which runs a track. The remains of the buildings are in a ploughed and newly planted forest on the north side of the track. The wall is on the south side of the track.

778 Wall/Enclosure - NH 33658 55123 (east end) to NH 33490 550110 (west end) The remains of a stone wall, c180m in length, are seen along the edge of the glacial terrace. It generally comprises just large single boulders and may have been robbed of its smaller stone. Below and to the south, beside the river, there is a fertile improved area. It is possible that a track may have run along the north side of the wall at one time.

779 Building - NH 33604 55087 A rectangular building on an NW-SE axis within a recently felled and replanted forest. It measures 11m x 3.5m internally. The substantial stone footings are 0.5m in height and have a spread of 1m. There are 2 compartments, that at the west end is 6.5m x 3.5m, that at the east 4m x 3.5m.

780 Building - NH 33610 55077 A rectangular building on the same alignment and a few metres to the SE of 779, measures 9m x 3m. The heather covered footings are 0.5m in height and have a spread of 1m

Achlorachan (Figure 9 and 6)

These sites are in a sheltered SE facing position on the east bank of the Allt Ach'-Lorachain. A good track runs through the sites and to the SE there is an extensive area of improved land, 777. Adjacent and on the south side of the track there is an area of scattered stones, with access to the field being gained by a grassy track which runs through this. Also to the south of the track there is a deeply eroded channel which descends the grassy slope from NNW to SSE and several platforms which may have held buildings. A mill and sheepfold are on the north side of the track. Clearly the area has seen much activity over the last 200 years. On the old estate plans and also on a plan for a court case of 1835 it is referred to as a township. Several roofed buildings appear on the 1st edition OS survey of 1881, with one having the ground plan of the mill, the sheepfold however does not appear.

Mill, Horse engine platform and channel/possible tail-race (771, 772 and 767) - centred on NH

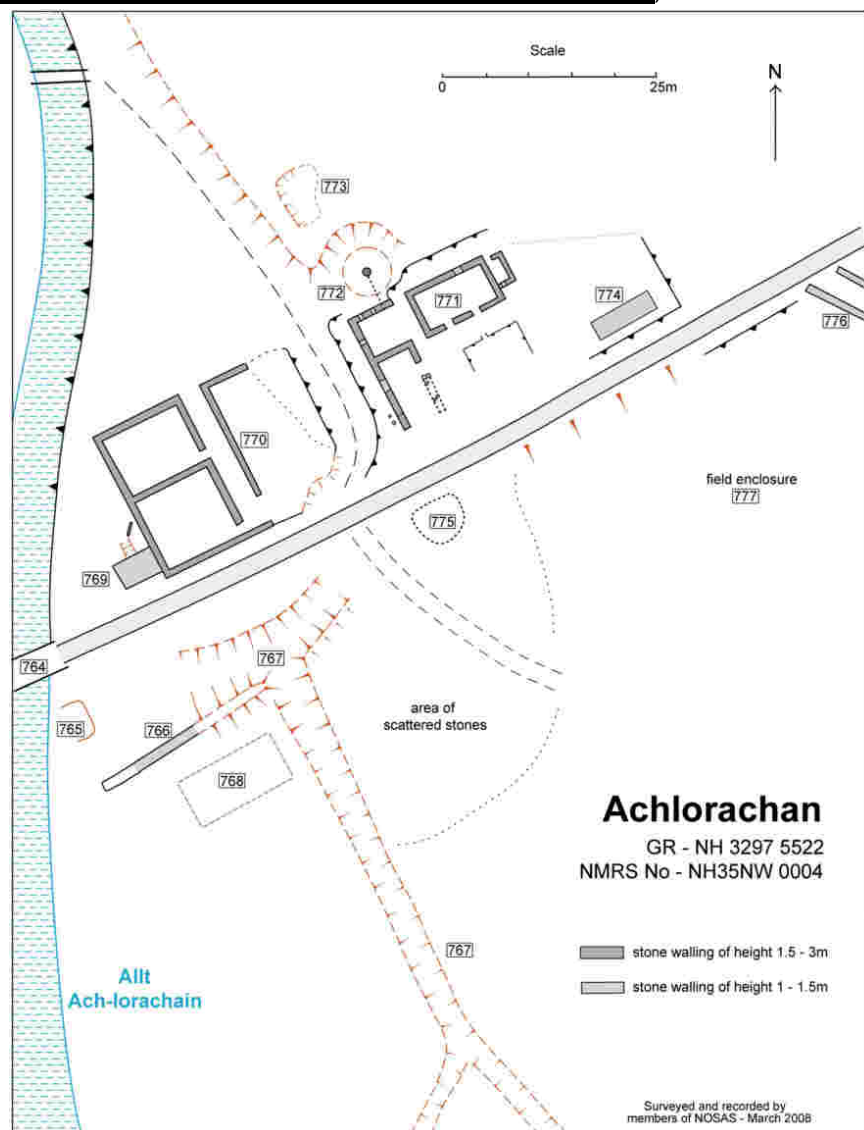
32972 55216. (Nmrs No - NH35NW 0004) Although there is a horse engine platform to the rear of the mill, it is speculated that the mill may have been water powered at some time either before or after the time of the horse gang. There is a 1m deep gangway or channel down the west side of the mill which may have held a wheel, and there was evidence in the south part of the west wall of an entry point for a shaft; there is also the possibility of a lade running along the line of the present footpath from the burn to the NW. The ditch, 767, may have been the tailrace for the mill.

771 Mill - NH 32980 55229 A complex L shaped building of three working rooms, recessed into the slope with an external gangway, 2 - 2.5m in width, around the west and north sides. This gangway has a stone faced retaining wall to 1m height.

The main part of the building, to the east, measures 8.6m x 4.5m internally and has 2 entrances in the S wall; both have substantial lintels. An aperture with the remains of slatted wooden vents is seen at the apex of the east gable. This may be a byre.

To the front/south of this part of the building there is a rectangular concrete depression 6.8m x 6.2m and 0.3m deep with a possible entrance/step down into it on its north side. The purpose of this is unknown, but it may be a midden for horse manure or etc (as those found at Inverchoran and Corriefoel)

The section of the mill to the SW is at right angles to the main part of the building; it measures 8.6m x 4.7m internally and appears to have been open at its SE end, although there may have been a wooden door. There is evidence of an entrance in the NW wall, although the majority of this wall has been levelled to the



ground. At the south end of the SW wall there is a small aperture through the wall and on the outside the remains of two short timber posts.

The working room in the angle measures 7m x 4.5m internally. It has two opposing entrances and three slit windows. To the rear of this room is the horse gang, 772.

772 Horse engine platform (Figures 11 and 12) - NH 32972 55239. A level circular platform, 6.5m in diameter, to the rear/north of the mill, 771, is recessed into the slope. The mechanism of the central iron turning disc (Figure 12), gearing and drive shaft is still in place and there is a (bent) rod, 3m in length with a hook on the end. The turning disc is 0.85m in diameter and has the words "Ben Reid, Bon Accord Works, Aberdeen" embossed around the edge. The drive shaft is still in place; it is 4.5m in length, and enters the building through a square aperture 0.15m width by 0.20m deep

767 Channel/Possible Tail race - NH 32961 55198 (NNW end) A dry, deep, ditch has been scoured out of the slope to the south of the road; its upper end is just 30m to the SW of the mill. It is on a NNW-SSE axis and the main part is 50m in length. In the upper part it is 5m in width and 2m deep but lower down it narrows to 2-3m in width and 1m deep. At the south end it bifurcates into 2 smaller channels and at the north end there is a T junction with the cross "ditch" 4.5m in width and 20m in length, at its deepest this is 2m but it grades to zero at each end. The excavated material from this area appears to have been deposited to the SW where it makes the large earth bank which is a continuation of the stone wall, 766. The ditch may have been a tailrace for the mill just 30m to the NE. Although the remains of a horse gang were found behind the mill it is speculated that at one time, possibly even recently, the mill may have been water-powered.

Sheepfold, sheepdip, platforms/possible buildings, enclosures and bridge (764 – 770 and 773 – 777) - centred on NH 32972 55216

764 Bridge - NH 32931 55190 The wasted stone abutments of the original bridge are seen under a more recent bailey bridge. The burn is in a small gorge at this point and the east bank is contained by a stone faced retaining wall c2m in height and extending roughly 60m upstream

765 Possible building - NH 32935 55183 A rectangular recess in the steep river bank to the SE of the bridge. The west part of the building appears to have been destroyed by the stream. The recess measures 5m (N-S) x 2.5m, it is 1m deep and there is some stone composition in the back wall. A roofed building appears in this position on the 1st edition OS map.

766 Wall - NH 32941 55178 An 8m stretch of a dry stone wall is 0.8m thick and 1m in height. To the east it continues as a large earth bank, 1.5m in height and c8m in length. To the west the wall becomes much wasted before disappearing altogether. But the wall reappears on the west side of the burn where it continues southward for 100m or so, in a much wasted condition. This may be a continuation of the wall that surrounds the enclosure, 777.

768 Platform/Possible building - NH 32950 55180 A level grassy platform on an E-W axis, 12.8m x 7.2m may have been the base for a building. The platform is recessed into the slope at the N edge and platformed out at the S.

769 Sheepdip - NH 32941 55200 Situated to the west of the sheepfold, in between it and the burn there is a concrete platform 4m x 2.9m and 0.7m in height. Immediately to the N of it, and much overgrown there is a rectangular hollow, 0.3m deep with a concrete slab set on end adjacent.

770 Sheepfold - NH 32951 55216 A rectangular sheepfold on a ENE-WSW axis and measuring 26m x 18m overall, see plan. The east compartment is much wasted and the SE corner has been truncated but the SW compartment appears to have been used as a garden.

773 Platform/Possible building – NH 32960 55253 A few metres to the north of the mill and horse gang this platform on a N-S axis and measuring 6.8m x 3.4m may have been the base for a building. It is recessed into the slope at its west edge where it is 0.5m in height

774 Platform - NH 33001 55229 A platform to the east of the mill and on the north side of the track is 12m x 9m. It is retained by a dry stone wall 0.5m height and an area 7m x 3m in the south part has been concreted.

775 Cairn/Possible building – NH 32981 55203 A pile of large stones, roughly 5m x 8m lies to the south of the track. A roofed building is marked in this position on the 1st edition OS map, but no wall footings could be seen.

776 Pen – NH 33032 55239 Two parallel concrete walls are c1m in height and 4m apart. The south one is 8m in length and continues as the dry stone wall that surrounds enclosure 777. The north one is just 5m in length

777 Field/Enclosure To the SE of the main site and on a gentle SE facing slope, this field enclosure is roughly 200m x 100m. It is bounded on its south side by the river on the west side by a burn, the Allt Ach'-Lorachain, and the wall 766 and to the NE by a substantial dry stone wall which is tumbled in a few places.

763 Possible Building - NH 32866 55140 On the west bank of the Allt Ach'-Lorachain, within a fenced area of young forest, a recessed rectangle platform could be the site of a house. It is roughly 6m x 4m and the embankment which has some stone composition is 1.5m in height. Bracken covered. A ruined building appears at this site on the 1st edition OS survey. The plan for the court case of 1835 also has "Duncan Grants fathers' house" in the position of this building, on the west bank of the burn. Duncan Grant was found guilty of the culpable homicide of James Macdonald.

Allt na Platach Buidhe

This bothy is located 1km to the north of Achlorachan, on the west bank of the Allt na Platach Buidhe which descends the north side of the glen above Achlorachan and joins the Allt Ach'Lorachain.

811 Probable still bothy - NH 32495 55874 (Nmrs No - NH35NW 0005) This structure is at an altitude of 290m and in a coniferous plantation although light birch woods are in the immediate vicinity. The structure is at right angles to the burn and aligned NW-SE. It is difficult to determine the shape of the structure because there is considerable tumble within it, but it appears to be roughly bag-shaped, 4m x 3.5m internally, narrowing to 2.5m at the SE end near the burn. The straight SW and NW walls are of rough dry stonework, they are clearly defined and roughly 0.8m in height externally (0.5m internally). The wall to the NE and part of the NW wall are recessed and more difficult to make out. The N corner appears to be 1m in height but there is considerable tumble in this half of the structure. The building is open to the SE but there is a stone edge just 0.5m from the burn. The whole structure is grossly overgrown with bracken and moss. 811 appears as a ruin on the FES

Platach Buidhe

Platach Buidhe is a flat area of peatland situated above and 1.5kms to the north of Achlorachan

812 Probable still bothy (*Figures 6 and 8*) - NH 32317 56427 This site is situated on the east side of Platach Buidhe at an altitude of 350m. The remains of the structure are located at the foot of a small niche in the angle of the junction of two small burns. It appears as a rectangular platform on a N-S alignment and measures 7m x 3m internally. The east wall is recessed and 1m in height; the lower part of 0.5m height being faced with grossly overgrown stonework. The remains of the north and west wall footings are of turf and barely discernable; they are just 0.15m in height and with a spread of 1m. A small burn runs parallel to these walls. The south wall is absent and the whole is moss and reed covered.

This structure is in the location of the hut marked on the plan produced in connection with the murder case of 1834. It is referred to as a hut in this document and from its hidden position close to the small burn it would appear to have probably been a former still bothy.

Loch a'Choire Leith (*Figures 6 and 7*)

Loch a'Choire Leith lies in the hills 3kms to the north of Achlorachan and on the north side of the watershed.

813 Probable still bothy - NH 32188 57582 On a north facing hillside in marshy peat ground just 100m to the south of the Loch a'Choire Leith, the remains of this remote bothy are at an altitude of 430m. It is tucked under the lip of a north facing slope and well hidden from the higher slopes to the south. It appears as an oval recessed depression aligned E-W measuring roughly 6m x 3m internally. The walls have no apparent stonework (there are no rocks or stones in the immediate vicinity). The rear, south wall is recessed, 1.5m in height and in 2 "tiers". The curving north wall is 0.5m in height and has a spread of 2m. There is a possible entrance at its east end. A small watercourse runs down the hill c15m to the east.

This structure is in the location of the "smuggling bothy" marked on the plan produced in connection with the murder case of 1834.

Porin

Burial ground and footbridge (1161,1162)

1161 Burial ground (*Figure 15*) – centred on NH 3087 5526 (SMR No – NH35NW0021) There are two parts to this burial ground. The older portion has the shape of an irregular rectangle. It is surrounded by a large unmortared stone wall with a line of mature trees internally and has an even spread of graves from the 19th century up to mid 20th century; no trace of a chapel building could be seen but the central area was slightly raised. To the south a more modern graveyard is surrounded by a fence. The former name for this burial ground is Cladh Meinn and it is possible that it is of great antiquity.

1162 Footbridge – NH 3080 5530 The ruinous remains of a collapsed wire and timber suspension footbridge over the River Meig

Milton Alternative name – Milltown (*Figure 15*)

Community Hall (1170) (*Figure 14*) NH 3067 5540 This building, which was constructed circa.1900 by Captain Christian Coombe, is a fine example of its kind. It houses an impressive collection of stag "trophies" which were retrieved from Dalbreac Lodge at the time of its burning in 1941.

Mills, lades, ponds and sluices (1145 – 1157) - centred on NH303 554 (Grain mill, site 1157, - Nmrs No NH35NW 009) These sites are situated on the east bank of the Allt Mor, a large burn that drops steeply down to the River Meig in a series of waterfalls. The area has forestry plantation in its upper part, and is overgrown with rhododendrons and thick undergrowth. There are several phases of water management represented by the courses of two lades and two mill ponds, with at least four sluices. Evidence of 4 mills has been found. The mill (site 1157), pond (site 1150) and lade (site 1149) are marked on the 1st edition OS map of c1870 and also on an estate map of c 1853 and a specification, dated 1851, for the construction of a mill

replacing an existing one has been located in NAS - GD433-3-3-6. The mill/wheel pit (site 1152), pond (site 1150) and lade (site 1146) are marked on the current OS map as "sawmill". An earlier mill is depicted on the 1825 estate plan in the position of the building, 1145.

1145 Possible Mill - NH 30121 55500 A rectangular platform immediately above and just 4m from the main burn. It is rectangular, on a N-S alignment and 7m x 4m. At the NW corner there is a free standing crudely built piece of wall, 1m in height. The remains of the N wall have stone footings 0.4m high and of 1m spread. The E wall is slightly recessed into the slope; the course of the old lade, 1149, runs parallel just 2m distant. The whole site has been planted with trees. This may be marked on an 1825 plan of the estate as "mill"

1146 Lade - NH 30120 55527 (NW end) to NH 36267 55445 (SE end) The most recent of the two lades is substantially built but grossly overgrown with rhododendrons. It has a NW-SE curving course and is c350m in length. For much of its length it is stone lined (bottom and sides); at the NW end it is 0.8m deep x 1m width. It enters the mill pond, 1150, at its SE end.

1147 Sluice - NH 30125 55531 Two sections to this wooden and iron sluice are hidden in the rhododendrons. One section controls the water into the lade, 1146, and one controls the water into the spillway back into the burn; this initially takes the course of the old lade, 1149, and after a few metres turns abruptly down to the main burn. The sluice here is 1.5m in width.

1148 Dam - NH 30120 55527 (E end) A stone faced dam 2m in height and c25m in length across the main burn appears to have had at least two phases. At its east end a length of concrete "wall" 0.7m high x 0.7m thick which rises above the present level of the dam wall may represent the old dam and may have extended right across. The lade 1146 penetrates it at the east end. The top edge of the dam over which the water runs is 2.5m thick and faced on its upper edge with stones which deflect the water into the lade.

1149 Lade - NH 30120 55527 (NW end) The older of the two lades has a NW to SE course. It is c800m in length and on the lower side of the track. For most of its upper course it descends quite steeply and is an overgrown dry ditch which is as much as 1m deep in places. In the lower part it is fed by a small burn and the "tail race" from the pond, 1150. A sluice, 1155, has controlled the water before it enters the mill pond 1154, ducting it off down a spillway to the west of the pond; this now takes the majority of the water

1150 Mill pond - NH 36267 55430 A small rectangular pond is c 40m x 20m in dimensions. It is entirely artificial and has a large earth bank retaining it on its west and south sides, which is heavily overgrown with rhododendrons and vegetation. At the SE corner there is a substantial sluice

1151 Sluice - NH 30279 55428 A largely intact substantial sluice with stone and concrete retaining walls 1.5m high and with wooden gate, 1m height x 0.8m width in place.

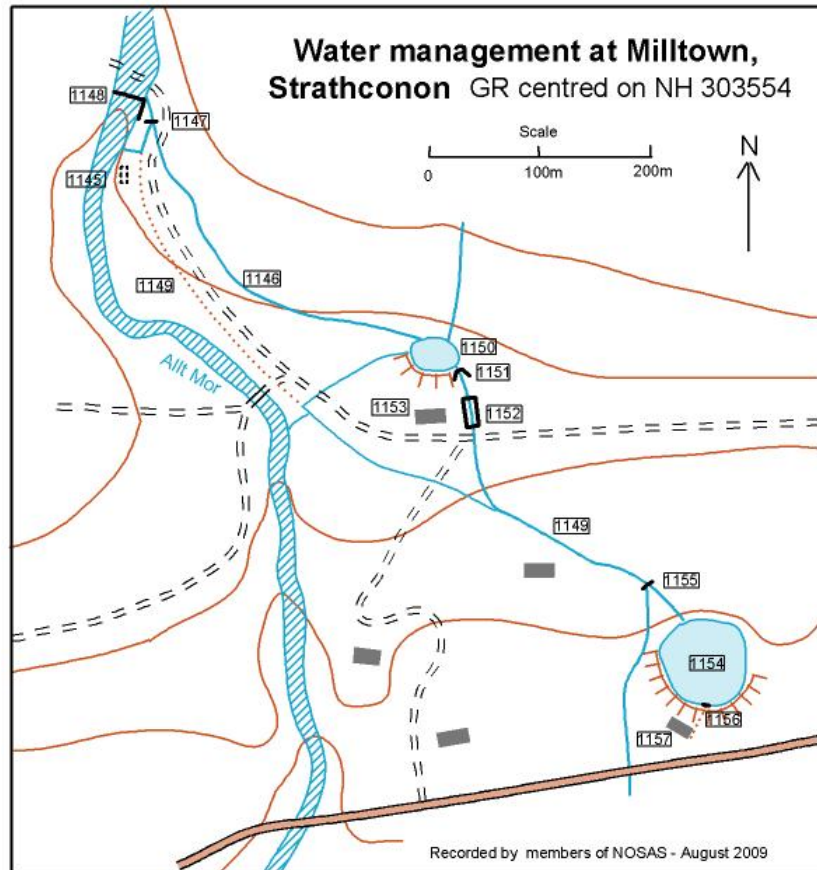
1152 Waterwheel pit - NH 30286 55402 A rectangular pit constructed over the course of the outlet of the pond just a few metres to the south of sluice, 1151. It is c14m in length x c1.7m in width x 2.5m deep. At its north end the retaining wall slopes and rises a further c1.8m above this level (a grid has been placed over this area presumably for safety reasons) Two bolts are seen in the top of the east wall (these may have supported the wheel) A concrete wall, 1.8m high, divides off the deeper north end of the pit, so that the water is retained and it may be that this is a more recent alteration made in connection with a trout hatchery nearby.

1153 Building - NH 30250 55402 A wooden building with a tin/corrugated iron roof in quite good state of repair. Most recently used as a trout hatchery, the tanks are still in place inside.

1154 Mill Pond - NH 30385 55292 The lower of the 2 ponds and the older according to the maps. It is about 80m in diameter but difficult to assess as it is so heavily overgrown. It is retained by an earth bank in its southern half; this may have been constructed by enhancing a natural knoll

1155 Sluice - NH 30377 55318 The remains of this iron and wooden sluice are very wasted.

1156 Sluice - NH 30381 55272 A wooden sluice at the south side of the mill pond. May have been a part of a modern reconstruction associated with the former grain mill, 1157, just a few metres to the south. The remains of a plywood chute are seen in the undergrowth between the two.



1157 Grain Mill (*Figure 13*) - NH 30371 55258 (Nmrs No NH35NW 009) A building in good state of repair on the north side of the present motor road. It has been renovated and is now used as a picnic place and display centre. It is on a NW-SE alignment and has a wheel pit 0.5m width x 4m length x 0.5m deep along its SE end, the entry point of the axle can be seen in the wall of the building as a blocked up square stone setting.

Allt Feith a'Bhadain

Improved ground 1176 – centred on NH 30033 57105 1.5m due north of Milton on the west side of the main track and bisected by the Allt Linn a'Mhuillin, there is an area of improved ground. There was no evidence of structures, but to the NW there were some old peat cuttings

Allt a'Ghrianain

The Allt a'Ghrianain is a tributary of the Allt a'Mhuillin which drains an extensive area of impoverished waste bog lands to the north of Milton. The Allt a'Ghrianain has a SE - NW flow and the surrounding area has evidence of peat workings. Two probable still bothies are located on its south bank at around an altitude of 330m. The stalkers path, 1171, is not marked on 1st Edition OS map, but the older track, 1174, is.

Tracks 1171 and 1174

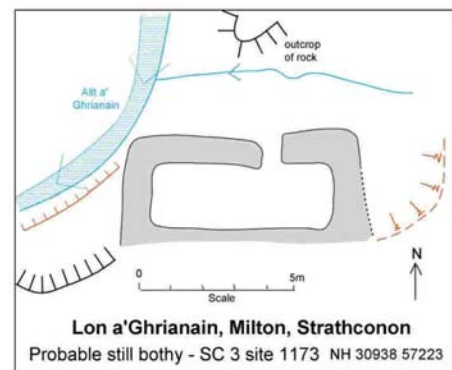
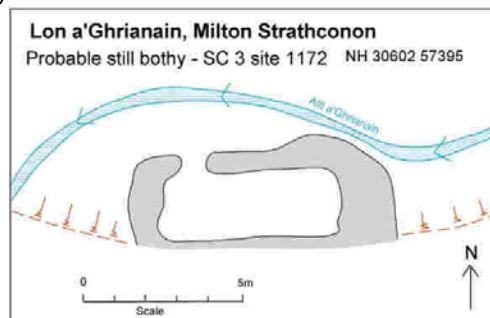
1171 Stalkers track - NH 302 568 (S end) to NH 326 618 (N end disappears into Loch Luichart) A track which traverses the "wastelands" between the Allt Feith a Bhadain and Loch Luichart a distance of approximately 6kms. It is well defined in its S part (not explored to the north) A bridge, at NH 30463 57189 has some well preserved dry stone faced abutments and there is a cairn NH 30722 58105

1174 Track - NH 31186 57093 (S end) NH 31477 57904 (N end) but probably continues southward towards Milton and northwards towards Loch Luichart, taking a line east of the stalkers track 1171. It is marked on the 1st Edition OS map and may be an old drove route. The stretch recorded here is very evident on the ground as a worn track between 5 and 6m in width.

Probable still bothies (1172 and 1173) - centred on NH 3078 5731 (Nmrs No NH35NW 0007 - site 1172.) Alternative name, Lon a'Ghrianain. Two probable still bothies, within 500m of each other, are located on the south bank of the Allt a'Ghrianain at an altitude of c330m. The bothies are just 2kms north of Milton.

1172 Probable still bothy (*Figure 3*) - NH 30602 57395 A well preserved rectangular structure on an E-W alignment is close to the burn. It has internal measurements of 5.5m x 2m and the walls of boulders/stones are 0.5m high. It is recessed into the slope on its south side and there is a distinct entrance in the north wall. Overgrown with rushes.

1173 Probable still bothy - NH 30938 57223 A well preserved and well hidden structure on an E-W alignment is close to the Allt a'Ghrianain but also has a small side burn to its north. The internal measurements of the structure are 6m x 2.25m and the dry stone walls are upstanding, those on the west side to 1m height, There is an entrance at the east end of the N wall. Rushes internally



Loch an Eilein

1175 Boat house - NH 30345 68348 The stone built footings of this collapsed structure are seen on the north shore of the loch. It measure 5.5m x 2m internally

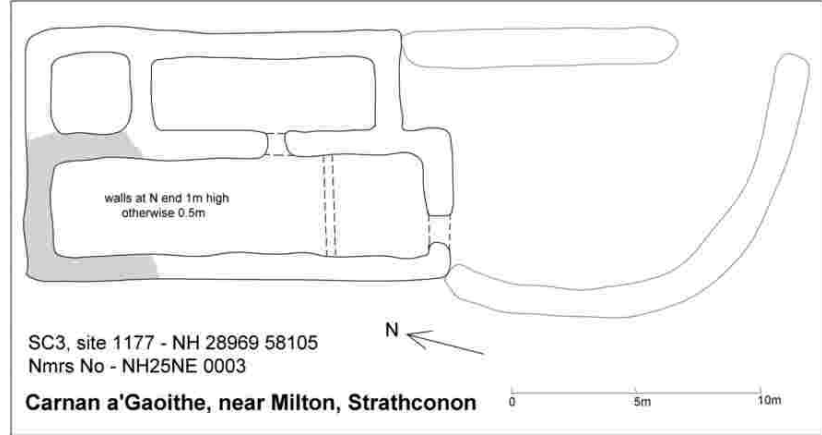
Carnan na Gaoithe

These sites are located 3kms NNW of Milton, at a point where the valley of the Allt Feith a'Bhadain becomes steeper and where there is a meeting of two burns with a track following each. The main route or track which has been in use for centuries and is mentioned in several travellers accounts, heads northwest towards Strath Braan and Badinluchie; an inn was recorded in the late 18th Century here. The sites comprise a building with a small enclosure attached and 6 shieling mounds on the flatter lands to the SW in the angle between the two burns.

Building/Possible farmstead, improved ground/possible lazy beds (1177, 1178) - centred on NH 2897 5810 (Nmrs No. NH25NE 0003) An area of improved ground or possibly lazy beds are to the SW of the

famstead. The main track passes to the west side of the building and not the east as marked on the current OS map.

1177 Building/Possible farmstead - NH 28969 58105 The remains of a rectangular building are on a NNW-SSE alignment and comprise a main compartment with a possible division and an outshot of 2 compartments to the east. The main compartment measures 15m x 4m internally. There is a conjoined enclosure to the south



with a possible entrance into it from the main building; also a further entrance into the outshot to the east. The south compartment of the outshot is 9m x 3m and the north 3m x 3m. The dry stone walls appear to have been double faced but are much tumbled, with a height generally of 0.5m and a spread of 1.7m on the west side and 2m to east, however they remain to a height of 1m in the N part of the main compartment; they may have been rebuilt here. A small enclosure is contiguous with and in line with the main building. It measures 11m x 9m and is surrounded by a low curving turf and stone bank. It may have an entrance in the SE corner

1178 Improved ground/Probable lazy beds - centred on NH 29115 58601 There is an area of improved ground with lazy beds, measuring 31m x 18m on the west side of the track to the SW of the building. It has at least 5 drainage channels traversing it and has been truncated at its east/lower side by the track. There are 4 clearance cairns associated.

Shielings 1179 - 1184

1179 Shieling - NH 28949 58113 Sub-circular grassy mound with a dished centre on an E-W alignment. The structure measures 4m x 3m internally.

1180 Shieling - NH 28941 58128 Grassy mound with dished centre on an E-W alignment measuring 7m x 4m. Entrance in S

1181 Shieling - NH 28907 58121 Grass and heather covered mound with dished centre on an E-W alignment measuring 5m x 4m internally

1182 Shieling - NH 28944 58099 Sub-circular grassy mound on an E-W alignment measuring 6m x 5m. Entrance in S

1183 Shieling - NH 28935 58105 Grassy mound on an E-W alignment measuring 6m x 5m

1184 Shieling - NH 28907 58104 Grassy mound with semi circular turf wall, 4m diameter. On north side of small burn

3.2 South Side of the Glen

Feadan a' Chaorainn

This defile, at an altitude of 279m, has a NE-SW orientation and is situated in the hills 1.5km to the ESE of Balnault to the southeast of the rocky knoll, Carn a' Chaorainn.

Probable still bothy 802 (Figure 5) - NH 36887 55072 (Nmrs No. NH35NE 0011) The building is situated on the north side of the heathery defile known as Feadan a'Chaorainn at the foot of a crag and in very boggy ground. It is on a NE-SW axis and measures 6m x 3m internally. The remains of the heather covered walls are very distinct and are of rough stone construction. The crag, 3-4m, in height forms the back/NW wall. The east wall is 0.5m in height and has a spread of 1m. The S wall is low, 0.3m in height and has an entrance of 1.5m width in the centre. The west wall is substantial, to 1m in height and with a spread of 1.5m. There is a roughly constructed stone structure (Figure 5) in the NW corner. Sub circular, it is 0.8m internally and the rear wall is 1.2m in height while the front/SE wall which is 0.6m high has an aperture of 0.25m width at its centre. The structure is filled with tumbled stone material; it appears as an unroofed building on 1st edition OS map

Allt Creag na h'Uaig

Probable still bothy 803 (Figure 4) - NH 36550 54918 Situated in the upper part of the Allt na h'Uaig at an altitude of 266m at the junction of several streams. This site is at the foot of a steep bank, on the west bank of the main burn; it appears as a small grassy spot in an otherwise heathery and boggy area. The rectangular building is on a N-S axis and measures 5.5m x 2m internally. It is recessed into the slope on the west side where there is a stone built face of 1m height. The remains of the S and N walls are 0.5m in height and have a spread of 1.5m. The E wall is low, mostly only 0.3m high. There is tumble at the south end and a possible entrance in this wall. The probable still bothy, 802, at Feadan a'Chaorainn lies just 400m to the NE.

Building/possible still 804 - NH 35987 55382 This building is in the lower reaches of the Allt na h'Uaig on the east side of Creag na h-Uaig and just 400m to the east of Balnault. The site is at an altitude of 149m and in the junction between two small streams on the west bank of the main burn, the Allt Creag na h'Uaig. It is at the foot of a steep bank and the surrounding area to the east has been much eroded. The site appears to have been badly damaged by flooding and deposited material washed down from the hill above. It comprises a heather covered stone built wall 1m in height which may be the gable of a structure or it may be the dividing wall of a building of 2 compartments on a NW-SE axis. To the SE of this wall there is a rectangular recess in the hillside, 3m x 2m, and to the NW of the wall there is a grassy platform 4m x 2m with evidence of possible stone footings adjacent to the wall

Loch Meig

This part of the glen is comparatively narrow and has steep sides. Loch Meig was formed by the construction of the Meig Dam c1957. The present road traverses the south side of the loch along a strip of birch clad land. Sections of the former, now abandoned, road are very clear to see at a lower level, although much of it is underwater.

Building and wall (712, 714) - centred on NH 3713 5590

712 Building – NH 37157 55908 Within a small wooded area between the loch and the new road, just 400m west of the dam, this rectangular structure appears as indistinct mounds only 8 m E-W by 3m N-S 4m north of old road. Possibly a dwelling house.

714 Stone dyke - NH 37118 55900 (west end) to NH 37095 55915 (east end) Curvilinear stone wall running roughly E-W parallel to the old road, 710, and just 10m S of it.. It is 26m in length, up to 1.5m high and 3m thick.

Old road and bridge (710, 711 and 713) - NH 372559 (east end) - NH 351555 (west end)

710 Old road - Three sections of the old road are clearly identifiable. Much of it is a grassy track but the original metalling appears in several places. The road is generally 2 - 2.5m in width and all the sections are prone to flooding at periods of high water

A - NH 37218 55908 (E end) to NH 36864 55880 (W end) - a 350m section of the road, predominately mossy at this point, has a spur/track (713) to a possible old quarry

B - centred on NH 36026 55654 - a 100m section

C - NH 35682 55459 (E end) to NH 35055 55405 (W end) - a 650m section which lies adjacent to the settlement of Balnault and which has a bridge (711) crossing the Allt Bail an Uillt Shios.

The road appears on 1st edition OS and on current OS map

713 Track – A spur of the old road, 710. It leaves the old road at NH 37122 559056 and runs towards the new road, where there is a possible quarry. The track is metalled, 5m wide by 100m long and may have provided access to the quarry.

711 Bridge - NH 35516 55448 A well made bridge over the Allt Bail an Uillt Shios at Balnault constructed of dressed stone. It is largely intact although the keystone of the north arch has slipped and is threatening to fall out. The bridge is 9m in length and 4.5m wide. The stonework of the abutments is roughly 2m in height. The bridge is probably inundated at times of high water.

Allt Bail an Uillt Shios Alternative name Coire Buidhe

The Allt Bail an Uillt Shios has a SSE-NNW course entering Loch Meig at Balnault. The 2 buildings are situated close together in a secluded grassy depression 1km to the south of Balnault. They are at an altitude of 240m and at the junction of two streams. One building, 805, is on the east bank of the main burn, above and 10m from it, whereas the other building/probable still, 806, lies 40m to the SW on the other side of the main burn and on the w side of a smaller burn

Building and probable still bothy (805 and 806) centred on NH 3562 5463 (Nmrs No NH35SE 0001)

805 Building - NH 35629 54630 A rectangular building on a NW-SE axis, this structure measures 6m x 2.5m internally. It is recessed into the slope on the NE side where there is a stone built face of 1m height. At the N corner of the building there could be a small recess but equally it could be tumble (rigorous heather made it difficult to investigate). The remains of the SE wall is 0.6m in height and has a spread of 1.2m, the NW wall is 0.7m height x 1m spread and the low SW wall which is of dry stone construction has a well defined entrance, 0.9m width at the centre. This wall is double faced at the N end, 0.3m height x 0.6m thick, and tumbled at the south end, 0.5m height x 1.5m spread. Marked as a ruin on the FES

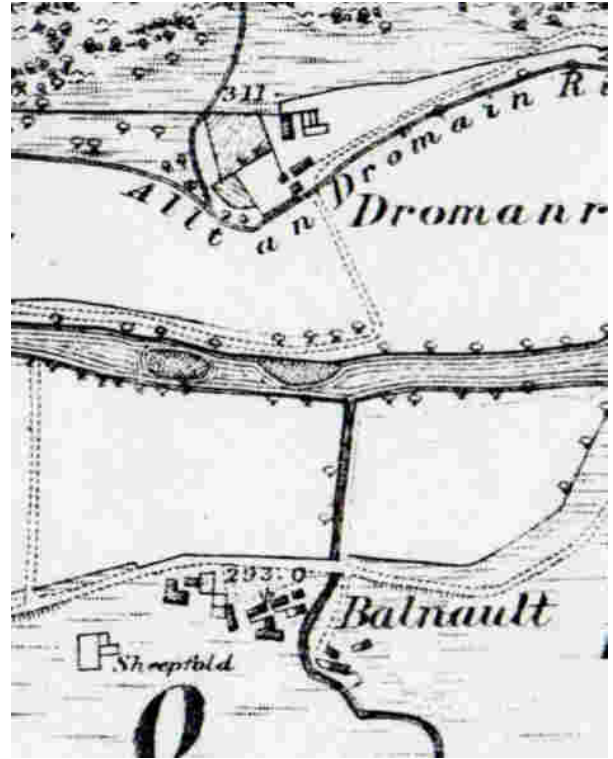
806 Building/Probable still - NH 35616 54601 This building takes the form of a rectangular recess on the SE side of a knoll made up of large boulders. It is on an ENE-WSW axis and measures 3.8m x 2.4m internally. The NNW face is made up of large in situ boulders and is 1.5m height; the ENE face is a single in situ boulder 1m in height. The WSW wall is crudely constructed of irregular stones; 0.6m height x 0.8m spread x 1.5m length. The structure is open to the SSE although there is a short stone setting which seems to define its limit. A small burn runs parallel and just 1m away here

Clearly it must have taken a considerable amount of effort to "excavate" the recess for this building. The

structure had very squared internal corners and it is difficult to imagine that the internal material was anything other than the awkward large boulders that make up the faces of the recess. It may be that the building 805 was a dwelling place for the folk that worked the still

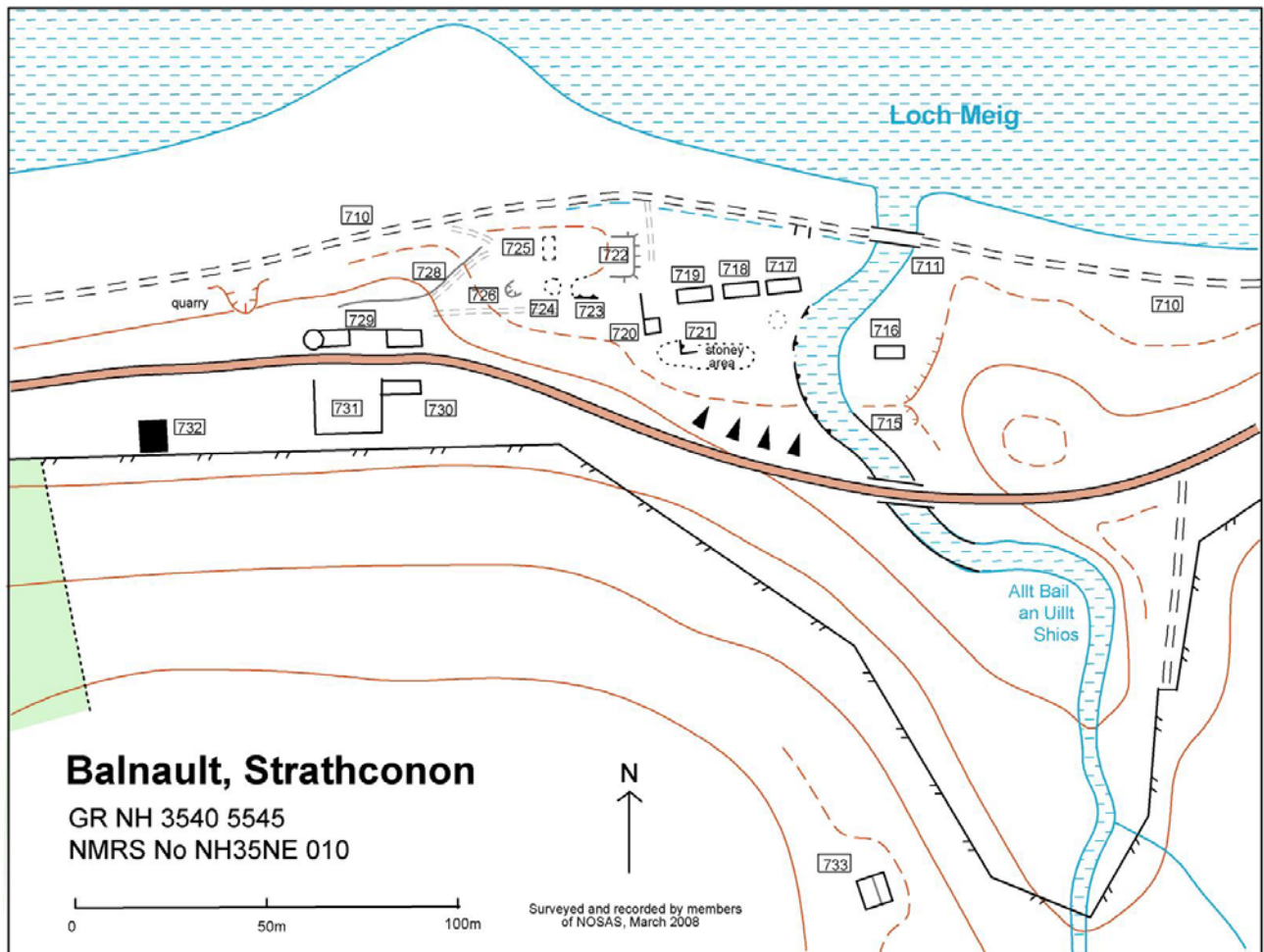
Allt Bail an Uillt Shios, Balnault (Figure 2)

On the S side of Loch Meig, the remains of the main settlement of Balnault are situated on both sides of the Allt Bail an Uillt Shios, at a point where a delta has formed as it emerges onto the valley floor. Broad flat haughs are seen besides the river, particularly to the west of the settlement, but they are often flooded by Loch Meig. The site is in two sections; a lower part to the east on the delta and an upper part on a terrace to the west. The lower settlement appears on 1st edition OS map (right) and on a photograph of circa 1870; it figures in the re-organisation of the estate in 1850 when 6 families were settled here; they were required to build themselves “modern” houses



Township, Farmstead and Enclosures (715 – 732) - centred on NH 3540 5545

The buildings of the lower settlement have been levelled to the ground, most probably at the time of the flooding of the glen c1957, when the Meig Dam was constructed; much of the site may be flooded at times of high water. The position of many of these buildings is difficult to determine. Little now remains apart from humps, bumps and scatters of tumble. Without the aid of the c.1880 photograph it would have been very difficult to make sense of the remains in their current condition. On the other hand, just to the W, at a higher level and close to the present road, there are the well defined stone footings of 2 buildings and an enclosure on the north side of the road and the substantial remains of a further building and



attached enclosure on the south. A stretch of the old road, 710, now abandoned, passes to the north of the settlement and a bridge over the Allt Bail an Uillt Shios, site 711, is largely intact.

Main, lower settlement :

716 Building - NH 35516 55448 On the east bank of the burn, a rectangular building on an E-W axis has external measurements of 11m x 6m. The walls are very wasted and it appears more as a rectangular depression 0.4m deep. There is tumble internally and a possible dividing wall at the mid point.

715 Bank/retaining wall - centred on NH 35509 55410 To the east of building 716. This steep revetted bank is generally on a N-S axis and in two parts - the north part is 2.5m in height and 18m in length, the south part is in the form of a recess 1m in height and 4m in length

717 Building (B1) - NH 35482 55434 This building lies to the west of the burn, its NE corner being c12-13 metres from the burn and c15 metres from the old road. The building appears to be rectilinear in outline and is approximately 10 x 6 metres, roughly aligned East-West. The extensive demolition makes it hard to define the walls accurately but they may stand to c. 0.50-0.75 metres high. The presence of many large stones in the demolition tumble suggests quite substantial walls. There is no evidence for a door or window openings. There is a natural looking bank running immediately behind the building, as viewed from the North.

718 Building (B2) - NH 35468 55431 Lies approximately 2 metres to the west of building 717, on the same or similar alignment. Building 718 has the same approximate dimensions as 717 and is in identical condition.

719 Building (B3) - NH 35455 55428 Lies 2-3 metres to the W of Building 718, again with the same approximate dimensions, on the same or similar alignment and in the same condition.

720 Building (B4) - NH 35441 55421 To the SW of building 719, this building appears to be aligned at right angles to the row of buildings 717-719. Its north wall projects approximately 2-3 metres beyond the building line of the row 717-719. 720 is approximately 5 x 5 metres but the walls are tumbled, up to 0.3m high and very difficult to define clearly. The dyke to the north is 8m length x 0.3m high x 2m thick.

721 Possible Building - NH 35449 55410 There is a hollow behind and to the S of 720. To the S of this there is a length of built wall 3-4 courses high and on a different alignment to 717-720. This may be the rear wall of a fifth building but it is very difficult to make out any evidence for another 3 walls. At NH35447 55418 (C7) there is an area of linear rubble, 27m long, tapering from 5m thick from west to east.

Other features of note close in this area are:-

1. Slightly to the S of the natural looking bank behind 717-719 and close to the burn, there is a circular depression which could be a midden.

2. To the North of 717 there is a ditch with a possible causeway, 2-3 metres in width, to the old road. A large stone lintel at the western side of this feature appears to indicate a carefully constructed bridge across the ditch, forming perhaps one formal entrance to the settlement site.

3. At NH 35478 55389 - NH 35487 55416 (C8) A dry stone retaining wall on the W curve of the burn – flood prevention. It is 45m, has a height of 2m and becoming eroded at the N end.

722 Enclosure/Possible Platform – Rectangular platform aligned N-S and approximately 15m x 10m, has a distinct east edge with a height of 0.5m.

723 Possible Pit (C4) - NH35411 55434 A rectangular feature, 10m (W-E) x 4m, excavated out of the bank to S of 722 and filled with random stones. No obvious entry.

724 Possible Pit (C3) - NH35405 55433 A rectangular feature, 5m (W-E) x 7m, excavated out of bank to south of 725. Contains large stone tumble. No obvious entrance.

725 Possible Building (C2) - NH35397 55444 A stone feature including concrete and brick 6m by 7m. Very much trashed possibly most westerly cottage (from the 1880 photo, it appears as if there is a cottage slightly behind the line of the next three with a barn/byre at right angles to west)

726 Possible Kiln (C1) - NH35390 55428 A possible kiln 30m S of old road with a trackway leading up the bank to SW. This semi circular feature is recessed into the side of the hill on its SW side. The bowl has a diameter of 5m and height at recessed side of 3m. It has large stones up to 0.7m inside

728 Earthbank and Track - NH 35387 55441 (E end) to NH 35343 55425 (W end) A substantial earth bank with a track on its south side curves up the slope from the main settlement towards the group of buildings to the west. It is 0.8m in height, has a 2m spread at its base and is about 60m long.

West/Upper farmstead of Balnault (adjacent to present road) This part of the settlement does not appear on the first edition OS map and is probably of earlier date than the lower settlement.

729 Building (3.1) - NH 35386 55405 (NE corner) Stone footings of a building 2m north of the motor road. It is 30m E-W x 5m N-S, and the substantial rubble walls are up to 1m. There could be 2 or 3 conjoined buildings but the divisions are unclear. A circular stone mound at the west end has a diameter of 4m, it is 0.6m in height and has a dished central area; a possible kiln.

730 Building (3.2) - NH35378 55401 (SW corner) The stone footings of a building on the S side of the road NE corner is rectangular and the walls are of large stones, up to 0.5m in size. It is aligned E-W and is 12m x 5m x 1m height. N wall could be truncated by the road.

731 Enclosure (3.3) – This enclosure abuts building 730, on its W end and measures 18m (N-S) x 20m (E-W). The large stones in the walls are up to 1m high. The site is open to N, probably truncated by new road.

732 Tin hut - NH 35281 55392 This roofed corrugated iron hut is rectangular and in good order. It is aligned N-S and measures 6m x 4m. It has a roofed verandah to the east, 1.7m in width.

West of the burn, Allt Bail an Uillt Shios

733 Building/Possible Enclosure - NH 35498 55255 (Nmrs No – NH35NE 0010) The remains of this substantial structure are situated 200m to the south of the main settlement at Balnault on a steep E facing slope. The structure is trapezoidal in shape, measures 9m x 9(11)m overall and is in two parts. The main/west part, which measures 6.5m x 4m internally, is surrounded by the remains of a substantial stone and turf wall, generally 0.5-0.6m in height (externally) although the south wall is 0.9m. The internal area appears dished and the walls here are only 0.2m high. The east compartment is at a lower level and there is a short steep (0.3m high) intervening slope which has no stone composition. The east compartment is more of a level platform, 7.5m x 3m, built up with a stone and turf retaining wall at its east side. The north and south walls are mostly of rough stone construction and there is a possible entrance in the north wall 0.5m in width

Woodland and earthbanks (735 – 738) - centred on NH 3477 5530 Situated on a NW facing slope between the road and the river. The lower ground is rough and waterlogged in places. The enclosure 735 is to the east of the woodland. The two earth banks are roughly parallel to the road and appear to enclose the woodland, but in fact they converge at the east end. 736 appears on 1st edition OS

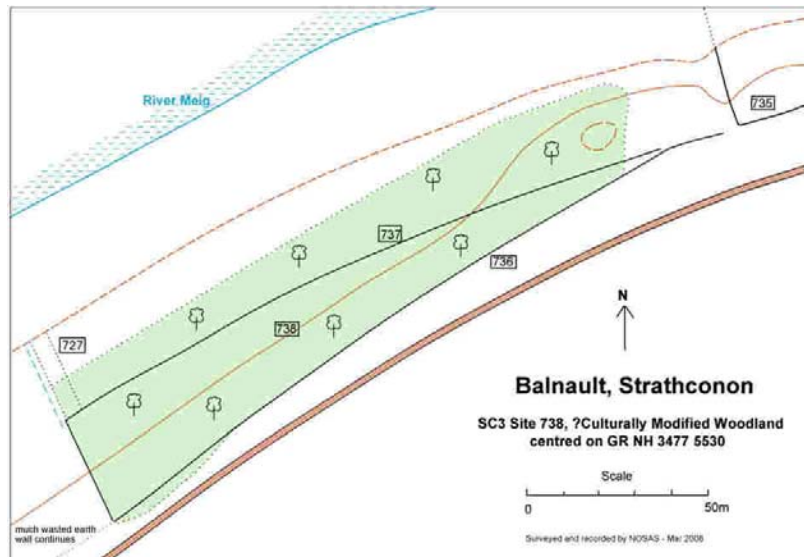
735 Enclosure - centred on NH 3500 5544 This linear enclosure is between the settlement of Balnault and the woodland. It is roughly 250m x 50-80m on the valley floor is prone to flooding. The enclosure is bounded on its S and W side by a dog-legged stone wall (E end NH 35139 55433, SW corner NH 34859 55360). The E and N sections of this wall at either end are wasted and prone to flooding, the middle section is very substantial, consistently 1m in height and 2m thick at its base.

736 Earth bank - NH 34847 55358 (E end) to NH 34679 55250 (W end), but it continues SW in a much wasted condition. This earthbank is roughly 200m in length and parallel to the road. It is generally 0.3-0.5m in height and has 1.5m spread. To the east the continuing line is taken up by the S wall of enclosure 735.

737 Earth bank - NH 34838 55355 (E end) to NH 34666 55279 (W end) Situated to the north of 736 from which it diverges at the east end. It appears to be of earlier date to 736 as it has the same alignment as 735 at the E end and is generally smaller and more wasted than 736. It is 180m in length and generally 0.3m in height and with 1-1.5m spread. It bisects an area of woodland that has possibly been culturally modified, 738.

738 Woodland - centred on NH 3477 5530 This discrete linear area of woodland measures roughly 170m x 40m. It is bounded on its S side by the earth bank 736 and the road, on the west side by the remains of a much wasted earth and stone wall and is bisected by a further earth wall, 737. Many of the ?alder trees appear to have been coppiced

727 Enclosure - centred on NH 34664 55293 This possible enclosure is rectangular and situated to the north of the woodland 738 at its west end. It is on a N-S axis, measures 28m x 6m and is bounded by an extremely wasted stone wall.



Coire Mheogaidh

Coire Mheogaidh is a broad shallow corrie in the upper reaches of the Allt na Annaite. The corrie has a green grassy appearance although much of it is marshy. There is a line of metal fence posts, a possible boundary, running down the west side of the corrie which crosses to the east side lower down.

Shielings (807 and 808) – centred on NH 3499 5353

Situated at an altitude of 340m in the centre of Coire Mheogaidh, these two shielings are on the east bank of the main burn, one on a low knoll and the other at its NW side.

807 Shieling - NH 34996 53530 On a NE-SW axis this rectangular building, with rounded corners, measures 4.2m x 2m internally and is on a low knoll to the east of the main burn. The remains of the turf and stone walls are 0.3m in height and have a spread of 0.8m. The building is covered with grass, heather and blueberry.

808 Shieling - NH 34966 53540 This oval mound is on a NW-SE axis and measures 7m x 4.5m overall. It has a dished centre and is covered with moss and reeds

Allt na h- Annaite

Building/possible still site 809 - NH 34581 53954 This structure is situated at an altitude of 295m on a steep S facing bank on the NE side of the Allt na h- Annaite. It is 20m from the burn and well above it. The situation is well hidden and opposite an obvious crag on the SW side of the burn. The structure is a substantial rectangular stone faced recess into a south facing bank. It is on a WNW-ESE axis and measures 4.5m x 2m internally. The rear/NNW bank is 1.5m in height and has stone facing of 0.8m height. The WNW and ESE banks form part of the recess; the ESE has stone facing only to a height of 0.5m. The front/SSE wall of stones is 0.3-0.5m height, with an entrance of 0.6m width in the centre. No other features were noted. A considerable amount of effort must have been expended to "excavate" the recess of this structure. It may be that the building was a dwelling place for those who worked a nearby still, now no longer extant. A brief exploration of the surrounding area revealed no other structures

Clach na h'Annaid

Burial ground and enclosure (739, 740) - centred on NH 34039 54789 (Nmrs No NH35SW 001) Marked on on 1st edition OS as "Infants Burial ground" This site is on the valley floor, close to the river and must on occasions come close to flooding.

739 Burial ground - NH 34039 54789 A slightly raised bracken covered area, the extent of which could hardly be defined. It is roughly rectangular and on an E-W alignment measuring c.22m x 15. The wasted turf bank, mentioned before as enclosing it, could not be discerned but there were several humps and bumps within the area.

740 Enclosure - centred on NH 3400 5479. A rectangular area on the valley floor, roughly 100m x 40m. Bounded on its south and west side by the remains of a stone wall and on the north side by the river. The burial ground, 739, is within its east part.

River Meig, Allt na h-Annaite

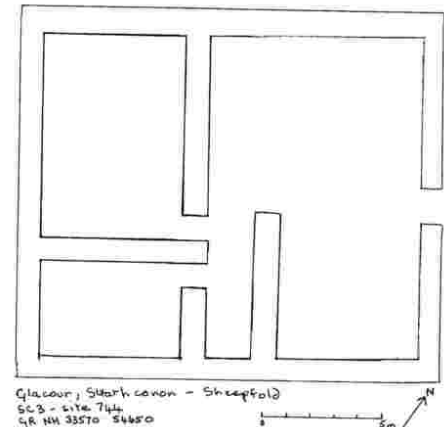
Buildings, enclosure and sheepfold (741-744) – centred on NH 3370 5476 Two buildings, one on the N side of the road, an enclosure and a sheepfold are west of the Allt na h-Annaite and 500m east of Glacour

741 Building - NH 33774 54787 The remains of this rectangular building are on the north side of the road a 100m to the west of the bridge over the Allt na h'Annaite. It is on an E-W axis and measures 7m x 2.8m. The turf and stone walls are to a height of 0.2-0.3m, with a spread of 1-1.2m. There is an entrance in the north wall 0.9m in width

742 Enclosure - NH 33585 54842 On the west side of a prominent knoll, this sub-circular enclosure is roughly 10m in diameter. The stone and turf walls are 0.5m in height and recessed into the slope on the west side where an in-situ crag also bounds the enclosure.

743 Possible Building - NH 33713 54756 This barely discernable structure is bisected by the fence and on a NNE-SSW axis, internal measurement of 8.8m x 2.4m. The walls appear as vague linear features; it may be a byre

744 Sheepfold - NH 33570 54650 This rectangular sheepfold on a NNW-SSE axis measures 18m x 16m overall; it is situated in a saddle to the east of Glacour, within an fenced area that is being developed for duck shooting. The walls of the sheepfold are double faced with batter to 1.5m height and reasonably intact. The entrance is in the NE wall

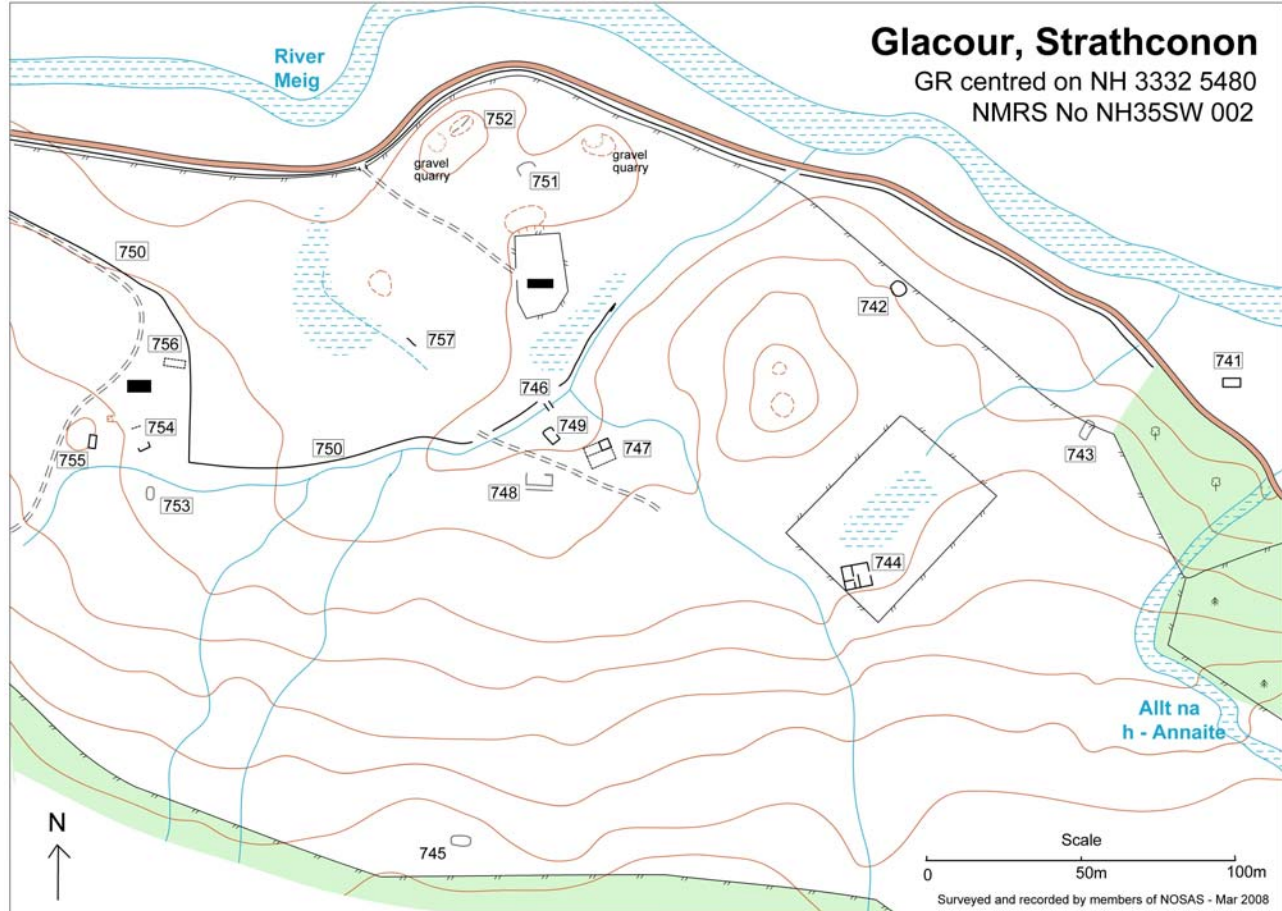


Allt na Glaic Uidhre

Enclosure/Sheepfold 810 - NH 33525 54150 (SW end) Situated at an altitude of 210m above and 300m to the SE of Glacour in a coniferous plantation. The remains of this enclosure which is sub-rectangular and aligned NE-SW, occupy a relatively flat spur of land between two burns; it measures roughly 100m x 5m. The low moss covered stone walls are grossly wasted. The enclosure has been planted with coniferous trees some of which are windblown, the rest may soon be felled (the upper part of the wood has been felled) A track clips the SW edge of the enclosure. Marked on FES and on current OS

Glacour Alternative name - Glaic Odhar (Figure 1)

The settlement of Glacour is on the south side of the river Meig and comprises a large grassy north facing, improved area which is sheltered on several sides by large knolls; see plan. An enclosure occupies the majority of the good level ground and there is a roofed holiday cottage within it. A further roofed cottage lies to the SW, partway up the hill. The remains of 2 clusters of buildings, both marked on the 1st edition OS survey, lie outwith the enclosure on marginal ground, one to the SE and one to the SW, and a sheepfank, 744, also on the 1st edition OS map is located 150m to the SE. These multi-period features have been grouped together and are described below starting first with the large enclosure and then from east to west.



Township, enclosure, sheepfank and slit trenches (741-757) - centred on NH 3332 5480 (Nmrs No - NH35SW 002)

Main enclosure and features within it

750 Enclosure Bounded on the north by a dry stone wall, a deer fence and the road and on the SE and SW by the remains of a stone wall, this large enclosure is in the shape of an irregular elongated triangle. It is undulating grassy ground, grazed by deer, and has several knolls, some of them rocky. On two of the larger knolls there are quite large borrow pits. In the east part of the enclosure there is a well kept holiday cottage with a garden surrounding, and also the slit trenches, 752, and the platform, 751. See plan

751 Platform/?Building - NH 33359 54932 This rectangular platform is on an E-W axis and measures c15m x 3.5m. It is built out to north where the steep slope of stone, turf and bedrock is 1m in height.

752 Slit trenches - NH 33330 54962 On the top of a grassy knoll with a commanding view of the glen these 2 slit trenches almost certainly relate to WW2 defences. The larger one to the east is 4m x 1m x 0.5m deep and the smaller one to the west is 2m x 1m x 0.3m deep

757 Possible Building - NH 33270 54820 A setting of large boulders, 4m in length, could be the footings of one of the walls of a building. The setting is aligned NW-SE, parallel and close to a small water course.

The central area of Glacour

This area comprises a cluster of buildings to the SE of the main enclosure and a bridge. Buildings 747/E, 748/F and 749/G are situated in quite close proximity to each other to the south of an old 'clapper' bridge, 746. The bridge carries a track over the burn; the track runs roughly from west to east through the site. There is a small tributary burn running between building 747 and buildings 748 & 749. The stone wall of enclosure, 750, runs parallel to the main burn on its north side just a few metres to the north of the buildings. A building/possible sheiling, 745, at a higher level to the south overlooks the site.

746 Bridge (Possibly clapper) - NH 33374 54773 The bridge has been carefully constructed using an artificially built up central pier in midstream and stone revetted embankments c4 metres wide to support the outer ends of stone slabs forming the bridge surface. Four stone slabs remain in place, making 2 pairs spanning the whole stream. On either side other slabs have collapsed but remain in situ. It appears there were originally 5 pairs of slabs. Each slab measures c. 0.5 x 1-1.25 metres. Thus the bridge would originally have been wide enough to carry a wheeled vehicle e.g. carts.

747 Building and enclosure (E) - NH 33401 54744 This building is on a ENE-WSW axis and best preserved in its East wall where both faces can be traced; over a 6 metre stretch there are 2-3 courses of stones still standing. To the East there is a small extension of the wall at right angles bordering an area of tumble beyond which is an area of reeds. The other 3 walls of the building can be faintly traced by low, linear mounds; the west wall is the least clearly discernible, lying very close to the old track which comes up from the 'clapper' bridge. Attached to Building 747 on the south side is what appears to be a small enclosure some 14 x 8 metres. Again the enclosure walls are only traceable from low linear mounds.

748 Building (F) - NH 33366 54727 This building is on a NW-SE axis, has a very clear SE wall, some 5 metres in length (externally) and evident from 3 large, basal stones, 2 at the corners. Fairly prominent linear mounds indicate the position of the south and west walls, but there is little clear evidence for the north wall.

749 Building (G) - NH 33375 54751 This building is orientated E-W, has even larger basal stones at the corner, indicating its extent. 3 corner stones remain, between 0.6 and 0.9 metres in width. The external dimensions of the building are c11 x 6 metres. There is some linear mound evidence for the south and west walls but little remains clearly of the others, especially the east wall.

745 Building/Possible Shieling - NH 33312 54494 On an E-W axis and measuring 7m x 4m overall and 3m x 1.5m internally. The walls are substantial, generally of turf and have a 1.5m spread but the west wall is thicker and has a 2.5m spread. The central interior part has a depth of 0.5m. There is an area of verdant grass to the north 6m x 5m

The west area of Glacour including the cluster of buildings to the SW of the main enclosure.

753 Building - NH 33156 54715 The remains of this rectangular structure are on a small grass covered area in the middle of boggy ground. The building is on a slight platform and aligned N-S axis measuring 4m x 2.5m internally. The walls are of turf are barely discernable and have a spread of 0.7-0.8m. The ends of the building are very rounded.

754 Building - NH 33128 54739 A possible building (marked on 1st edition OS map as partially roofed) on a NW-SE axis is defined at its SE end by a recess into a knoll; it is 3m width by 2m deep. A vague setting of stones at the north end of a grassy platform would make the building 12m long

755 Building - NH 33079 54738 A rectangular building on a NE-SW axis measuring 6m x 2.5m internally is recessed into a knoll on its west side. There are substantial stone footings to S and N, which are 1m thick and 0.4m in height but the east wall has almost disappeared, possibly robbed of its stone.

756 Building - NH 33126 54800 This building, close and to the NE of the roofed cottage, is on an E-W axis and measures overall 8m x 2.5m internally. It is on a slight platform and defined by occasional moss-covered stones. A partition divides the internal area into two, with the outshot to the east measuring 2.5m x 2.5m and the main/west compartment 5m x 2.5m.

Bridgend

Situated on the south side of the river, this site is on both sides of a minor burn, with an extensive area of improved ground on the valley floor to the north. The site is at a point where the main road turns abruptly to cross the river from the south bank to the north; a track continues on the south side and may have been the original approach road to Dalbreac House.

Wall, enclosures, pits and bridge (758 – 762) - centred on NH 3204 5476 Alternative name - West Balnault A roofed building is marked on both the 1853 estate map and the 1st edition OS map and on the 1825 estate plan the township of West Balnault is seen in this position.

758 Bridge - NH 54950 32150 A well maintained bridge over the Allt a'Bhogair on the south side of the River Meig. It is constructed of dressed and mortared stone. Although there is a central stone arch, there is also an edge on either side indicating that the abutments may originally have been vertical.

759 Wall - NH 32102 54801 (east end) A substantial wall running parallel and on the north side of the track. It is of dry stone construction and "turfed up" on the north side, so that it has a substantial spread of 2-2.5m. It is generally 1m in height and continues west for several 100 metres

760 Enclosure - NH 32069 54812 On the north side of a track and on a glacial terrace above the valley floor, this enclosure is 200m west of the bridge, 758. It is triangular in shape, and bounded on the south by the wall, 759, which is 60m in length; on the west it is bounded by a low turf bank on the edge of a steep bank with the field below and on the NE by a vague grassy track which descends the bank to the field below. There is disturbed ground in the centre of the enclosure but no form could be made of the low humps.

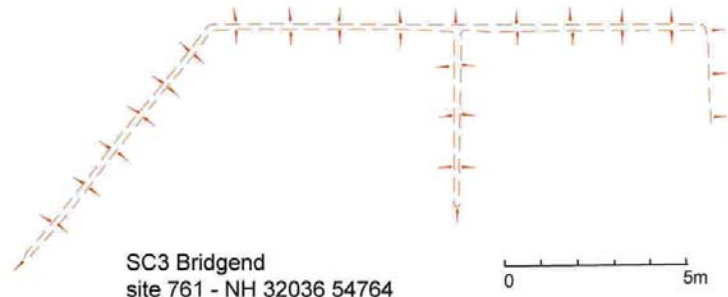
761 Enclosure/Possible building - NH 32036 54764 This feature is situated on the south side of the track on a glacial terrace to the east of a small burn and is in the position of the rectangular roofed building which appears on the 1st edition OS map and on the 1853 estate map. The low turf walls have a spread of 1-1.2m, and are 25m in length, in the form of a "dog-leg". These may define an enclosure or possibly a building; the track may have truncated other features.

20m to the south at the foot of a steep bank there is a straight edge recessed into the slope with some stone composition, there is a small return, 1.5m in length at the NE end.

762 Pits/Possible storage pits – centred on NH 3199 5473 Two pits on the west side of the small burn.

- Southmost - NH32002 54719 is on dry ridge above burn. It is circular, 1.4 m diameter and depth 0.4m.

- North most - NH 31981 54744 is on a small knoll on the valley floor. It is 2m in diameter and 0.5m deep. There is a shallow recessed area, possibly an entrance, to the north. This may be a kiln



Mains of Dalbreac (Figure 15 and 17)

Threshing barn and possible site of horse gang 1169 - centred on NH 3088 5490 Situated to the east of Dalbreac Lodge on the floor of the valley, this farm appears on the 1853 Estate plan and on the 1st edition OS survey. The current roofed buildings appear to be as depicted on these two maps; they are in good condition, the eastmost being occupied.

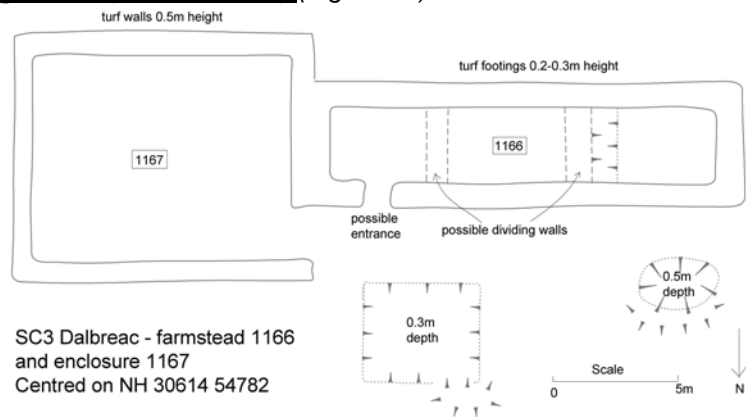
1169 Threshing barn and site of possible horse gang - NH 3088 5490 The NW building of a complex of buildings which make up Dalbreac Mains Farm. The building is roofed and in reasonably good repair. It has had many alterations and is currently used as a wood store. The east wall has evidence of three slit apertures; one has been blocked up and all measure 1.2m height x 0.1m width. The west wall has a small rectangular aperture at a height of 1.7m above ground; it is 0.38m width x 0.2m depth. It is speculated that this may be the entry point for the overhead drive shaft of a horse gang; an adjacent circular feature on the outside depicted on the FES may have been the walkway for the horse.

Dalbreac Lodge (Figure 15)

On the south bank of the river and to the northeast of a prominent wooded hill are the remaining buildings and gardens of Dalbreac Lodge. The Lodge itself was burnt down in the 1940s but several of the ancillary buildings remain and are in use as Estate offices and dwelling houses. Some of the gardens and lawns are still maintained but much is overgrown by rhododendrons. 250 metres to the east of the Lodge, on the south side of the track and halfway between Dalbreac Mains and the Lodge, are the remains of a farmstead and enclosure

Farmstead, Enclosure and improved ground (1166 – 1168) (Figure 10)

1166 Building/Farmstead - NH 30607 54782 A rectangular building on an E - W alignment has 3 compartments. It measures 17m x 5m overall and the walls, which are very low, barely 0.2-0.3m have a spread of 1m. Two depressions to the north are probably associated - the west one is oval 3m x 2m x 0.5m deep, the east is rectangular 4.5m x 4m x 0.3m deep. The enclosure, 1167, to the east is most certainly associated. This may be the sheep farm of the early 19th century and was probably abandoned when Dalbreac was built in c1850



1167 Enclosure - NH 30620 54785 A rectangular enclosure contiguous and to the east of 1166; it measures 10m x 8 internally. The turf walls are low, 0.2m high in the north part but 0.5m in the S part

1168 Clearance cairns - centred on NH 30717 54434. At least 5 clearance cairns are seen on a north facing slope above Dalbreac. The central and largest one measures 4m diameter and is 0.7m high.

Lodge, earthbank and golf tees (1158 – 1160) - centred on NH 3035 5484 (Nmrs No - NH35SW 004)

1158 Lodge (Figure 16) - NH 30319 54945 (NMRS No - NH35SW 004) Low moss covered stoney mounds mark the site of this Lodge which was burnt to the ground in 1941. A rockery and walkways to the west are overgrown with rhododendrons. To the SW a walled garden marked on the old estate plan of 1850 and the 1st edition OS survey has been levelled and replaced by a yard and sheds

1159 Earth bank - NH 30291 54775 (corner) In a field to the SW of the old lodge a possible pair of parallel turf banks run in a N-S alignment, 5.5m apart. The east most of the two and the most obvious is 0.5m high x 1.5m spread and 29m length, it turns at its N end and runs NE for a short distance.

1160 Platforms/Golf tees - centred on NH 3035 5481 3 raised platforms in the field to the south of the lodge

A - NH 30333 54788 Rectangular 3m x 5m x 0.3m high (a few metres to east a turf bank 2m spread x 17m length)

B - NH 30350 54843 4m square x 0.5m high

C - NH 30370 54809 4m square x 0.5m high

Buildings and pit (1163-1165) - centred on NH 3047 5477 (Nmrs No - NH35SW 0003)

1163 Pit - NH 30502 54797 On top of a knoll on the south side of the track. 2m diameter x 0.5m deep

1164 Platform/Possible building - NH 30387 54745 A discrete rectangular platform of thistles and nettles on a N-S axis and measuring 5 x 4m. It is surrounded on W and S sides by an earth bank 0.5m high.

1165 Building - NH 30473 54768 Rectangular and on a N-S alignment this building is recessed into the S side of a knoll. It is filled with stone rubble and nettles but a stone face 0.5m high is evident at N end. A possible entrance may be in SE corner

3.3 SC3 Selected Photographs



Fig 1. Glacour from the east with Achlorachan in the distance, right

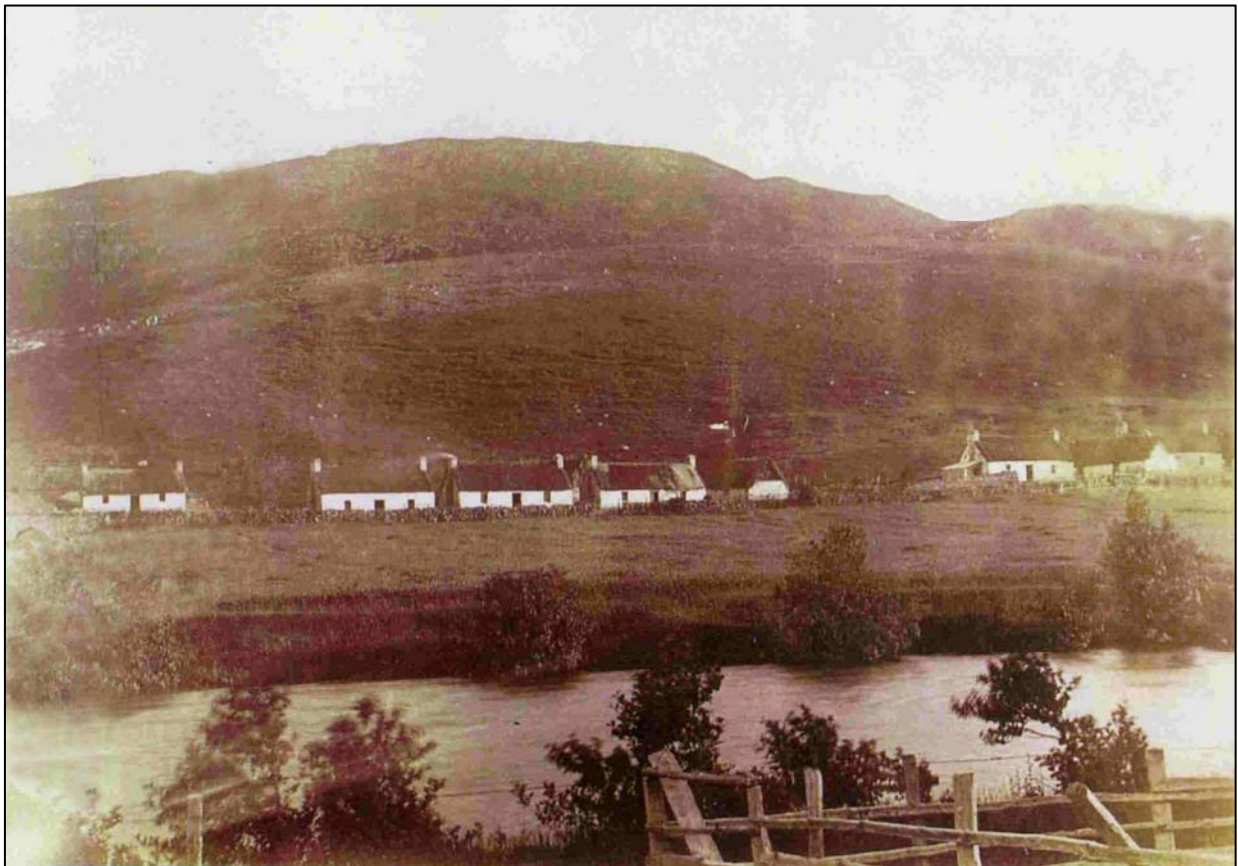


Fig 2.. A photograph circa 1870 of Balnault from the north, reproduced with the permission of AM Brander

Fig 3. Probable still bothy, 1172, Lon a'Ghrianan, above Milton, viewed from the SE



Fig 4. Probable still bothy, 803, Allt Creag na h'Uaig, above Balnault, viewed from the SE



Fig 5. Sub-circular feature in NW corner of still bothy 802, Feadan a'Chaorainn.



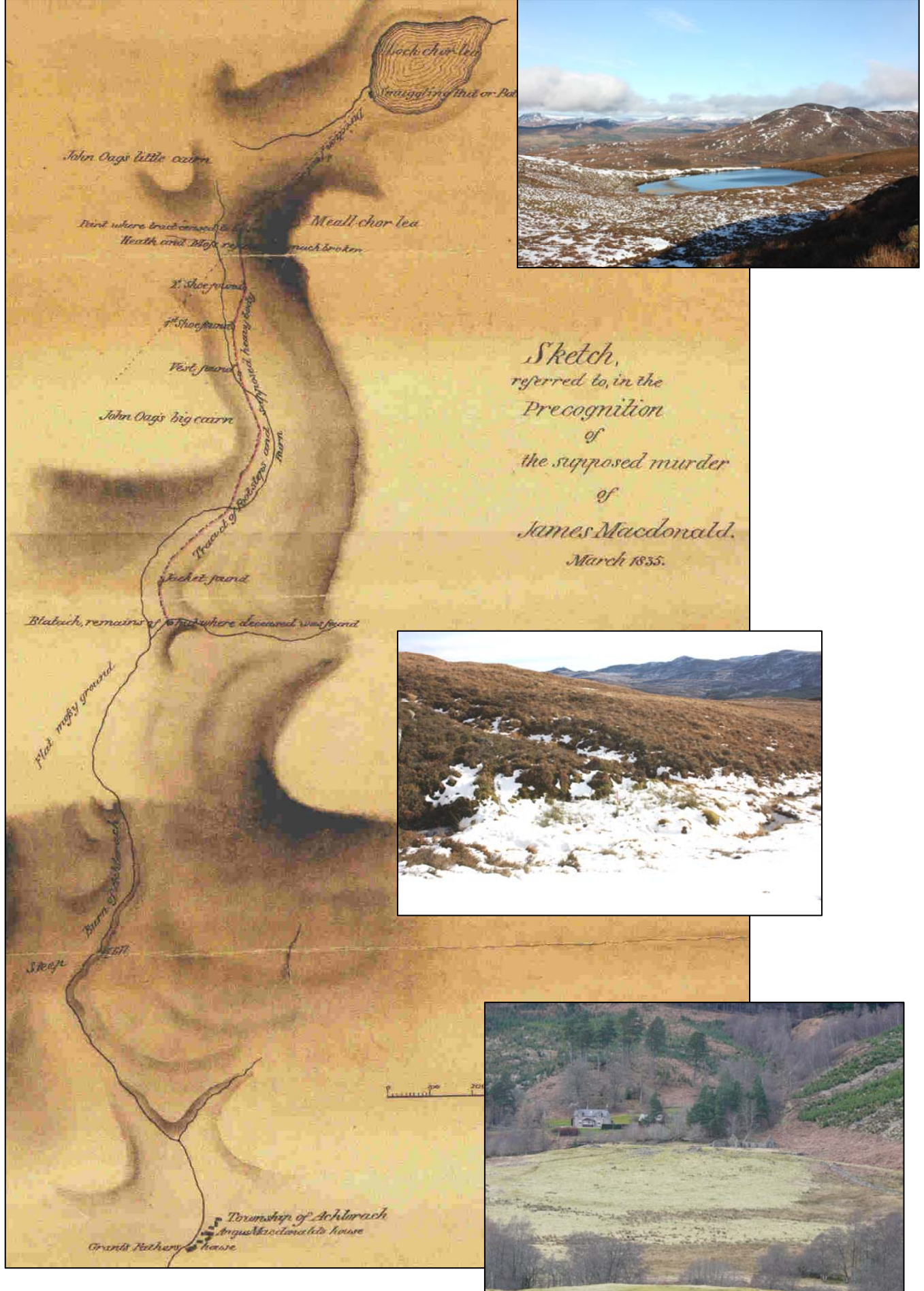


Fig 6. NAS RHP 140009 - Route of James Macdonald and Duncan Grant on the night of 24th Dec 1834, Fig 7. (inset top) Loch a'Choire Leith from the south, Fig 8. (inset middle) the remains of the probable still bothy, 812, at Platach Buidhe and Fig 9. (inset bottom) site of the township of Achlorach, today it has a keepers house, a ruined mill and a sheepfold.



Fig 10. Probable sheep farm 1166 (left) and enclosure 1167 (right) at Dalbreac



Fig 11. Achlorachan – the circular platform of a horse engine, 772, with the mill, 771, to the right and Fig 12. (inset) the central mechanism



Fig 13. Grain Mill, site 1157, Milltown



Fig 14. Milton Community Hall



Fig 15. NAS RHP 2521 - Plan of the Dalbreac, Fearn Park and Milltown, 1853.

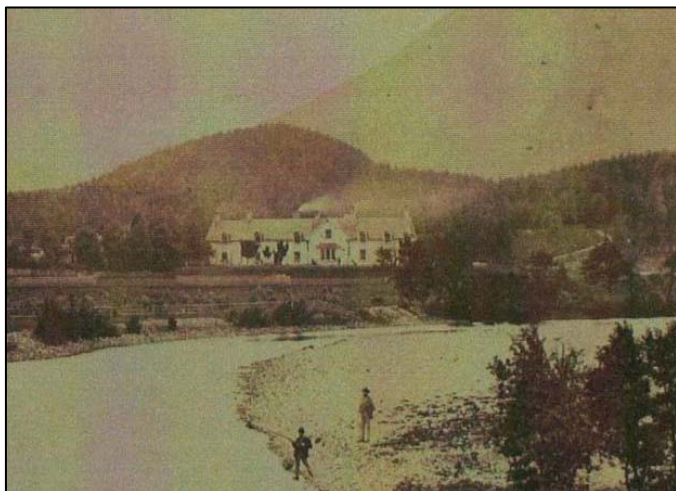


Fig 16. Dalbreac Lodge, circa 1880, sadly burnt to the ground in 1941, photograph reproduced here with the permission of AM Brander

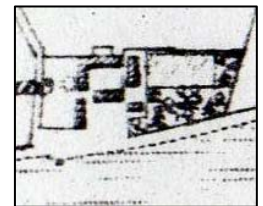


Fig 17. Dalbreac Mains Farm with above left the plan of 1853 and right 1st edition survey 1881

3.4 Strathconon Project – Phase 3

List of Photographs

North side of Loch Meig and the river, from east to west

1. Coille Fearna

Coille Fearna	700 from NE
	700 from SW
	702 from NE
	703 from W
	704 E wall from NE
Cnocan an Fhradhaire	799 from NW
	705 from N
	705 from SE
	800A from NE
	800A from WSW
	800B from W

2. Drumanriach

	General view from S
	708 from ESE
	708 from SW
	709 from SE
	709 from S
	706 from SE
	706 W wall from SE
	706 W wall from W
	801 from SW

3. Slagnabeist and Bulcraggan

Slagnabeist	796 from SW
	Rubbish dump
Bulcraggan	793
	794 from SW
Coire Buidhe	General view of Loch Meig
	814 from NW
	814 from NW
	814 from SE
	814 SE corner from NW
	814 SE corner from SW
	815 from NW
	815 from NW
	815 from SW

4. Druminbuie

	General view from S
	General view from SW
North of track	786 from N
	786 from NW
	787 from NE
	787 from SW
	788 from NW
	788 from W
South of track	789 & 790 from WNW
	791 from NW
	792 from N
	782 from SW
	782 from SW
	783 from NW
	783 from NW

	783 from W
	783 lower part from NW
	784 from W
Achlorachan Wood	779 from E
	780 from E
	778 from E

5. Achlorachan

	General view from E
	General view from E
Mill	771 from NE
	771 from NE
	771 from S
	771 W part from SE
	771 E part from SE
	771 E part from ESE
	771 E part from NE
	771 from W
	771 internal E end
	771 internal W end
Horse gang	772 from NE
	772 from W
	772 from W
	772 central mechanism from W
	772 central mechanism from S
	772 central mechanism from E
	772 central mech inscription
Environs	776 from W
	777 from NW
	775 from W
	767 from W top part
	767 from NNW
	768 from SW
	770 from SE
	770 from NE
	770 from NW
	764 from SE
	Retaining wall
763	763 from SW
Allt na Platach B	811 from SE
	811 from W
	811 from NE
Platach Buidhe	812 from NW
	812 from WNW
	812 from S
L Choire Leithe	General view from SW
	813 from SE
	813 from SE
	813 from ESE
	813 from ESE

6. Porin

	1161 from N
	1161 W part from E
	1161 W part from SE
	1162 from N

7. Milltown

Hall	1170 x 2 photos
Mill	1157 from SE
	1157 from W
	1157 wheelpit

	1157 doorstep
Dams and lades	1148 from SE
	1148 E part from NE
	1145 from S
	1145 NW corner from SE
	1147 from SW
	1147 W part
	1146 NW end
	1149 upper part from SE
	1149 mid part from SE
	1149 meeting point
	1150 from SE
	1151 from S
	1152 from N
	1152 N part from SW
	1153 from SW
	1155 from NW
	1155 from SE
	1154 from NNE
	1156 from SE
Above Milltown	1176 from N
Allt a Ghrianan	1174
	1174
Lon a Ghrianan	1173 from SSE
	1173 rear wall from N
	1172 from SSE
	1172 from NE
	1172 from E
	1172 from W
Stalkers track	Bridge abutments
	Cairn
	N part
Loch an Eilean	General view
	1175 from NE
	1175 from W
	1175 N part from W
	1175 E part from N
	eilean
Carnan na Gaoithe	General view from NW
	General view from S
	General view from E
Farmstead	1177 from S
	1177 from S
	1177 from SE
	1177 NE outshot from NE
	1177 from N
Lazy beds	1178 from NE
	1178 from E
	1178 from SW
Shielings	1179 from E
	1180 from NW
	1181 from NW
	1182 from N

South side of Loch Meig and the river, from east to west

8. Balnault

Feadan a'Chaorainn	802 from SE
	802 from N
	802 from NW

	802 int structure from NE
	802 int structure from S
	802 int structure from SE
Allt Creag na h'Uaig	803 from E
	803 from SSE
	803 from SE
	803 from W
	803 S end from N
	804 from SW
	804 from NW
	804 NW end from SW
Loch Meig	710 from W
	710 from W
	714 from NW
	711 at Balnault
Balnault general views	From SE
	From SSW
	From E
	From E
	Old river bed
Lower settlement	711 from S
	711 from SE
	715 from W
	716 from E
	719 from W
	717-719 from W
	Recording 717-719
	720 from SW
	720 E part from SW
	721 from W
	726 from NNW
Upper farmstead	728 from W in foreground
	728 from NE
	729 from W
	729 from NE
	729 W end from W
	729 W end from S
	730 from NW
	731 from SE
	732 from NE
	732 from NW
Enclosure 733	From NNW
	From W
	From SW
	From SSW
	NE corner from NE
	S wall from WSW
Woodland	735 SW corner from SW
	735 SW corner from W
	738 from SW
	738 from W
	738 & 727 from N
Allt Baile an Uillt Shios	Environs of 805 and 806
	805 from SW
	805 from SSE
	805 from SE
	806 from SE
	806 from SSE
	806 from W
	806 W wall from E

9. Glacour

(Above G) Allt na h'Annaid	807 from NW
	807 from SE
	808 from SE
	808 from S
	809 from SE
	809 from S
	809 from W
	809 from WNW
	809 from NW
Clach na h'Annaid	739 from S
	740 W wall from S
Glacour general views	S part from E
	N part from SE
	Central part from S
	W part from S
Glacour East	741 from W
	743 from SW
	742 from W
	744 from S
	744 from SW
	744 from NW
Glacour central	745 from W
	745 from W
	745 from W
	746-749 from S
	747 from E
	747 from S
	748 from W
	749 from S
	746 from NE
	746 from NW
	746 from SW
	750 E part from SW
	757 from SW
	757 from NW
	751 from NW
	752 from NE
	752 from W
Glacour West	753 from S
	754 SE end from NW
	755 from NW
	755 from SE
	756 from W
Glacour	Footbridge

	1167 & 1166 from SE
	1167 & 1166 from SW
	1166 from S
	1166 from W
	1168 from S
Dalbreac Lodge	1163 from SW
	1158 N part from E
	1158 N part from W
	1158 S part from W
	Gardens from S
	Sheds/formergardens

10. Bridgend

Bridge	758 from SW
Bridgend	759 E end from E
	759 E end from SE
	759 E end from SW
	759 E end from W
	761 from SE
	762 N pit from S

11. Dalbreac

General view	From SSE
Dalbreac Mains	1169 from S
	1169 from SW
	1169 detail from W
	1169 from E
	1169B from SW