

# The crofting township of Melvaig



Centred on NG 74261 86716

Melvaig is one of the Gairloch crofting townships created in 1845 by John Mackenzie, although early documents show that people lived here in 1660. The name Melvaig in Gaelic is 'Mealabhaig' meaning 'bent grass bay', and with *aig* associated with Viking *vik* it is possible that the area was settled before this. The Gairloch Estate maps show two main areas of settlement (see map) before the crofts were established and the older boundary head dyke can still be seen within the crofting township head dyke.



The township is situated on steeply sloping ground running from E to the shores of the Minch in the W. However the ground on the lower slopes is fairly fertile. Two corn drying kilns were found in the township, one beside the older boundary head dyke and a later one on croft 10 showing that crops have been grown and oral history confirms this.

A footbridge was built over the Melvaig river in 1895 and the road upgraded in 1954 at approximately the same time as the road continuing on to Ruadh Reidh lighthouse was begun

Access between the crofts was by 'pasaidh' and these can still be seen today.



There is a substantial slipway beside the river Melvaig in the neighbouring township of Aultgrishan, and below Melvaig the remains of two 'ports'. Fishing was once very important to supplement any agriculture.

The outline of the 'port' is just visible



Numerous walls and ruined buildings indicate that the river terraces by the Melvaig river were widely used



There were shops, butcher/abatoir, fish curer, schools, religious meeting houses, in Melvaig which have all closed. Today apart from some livestock there is no agriculture or fishing in the township.

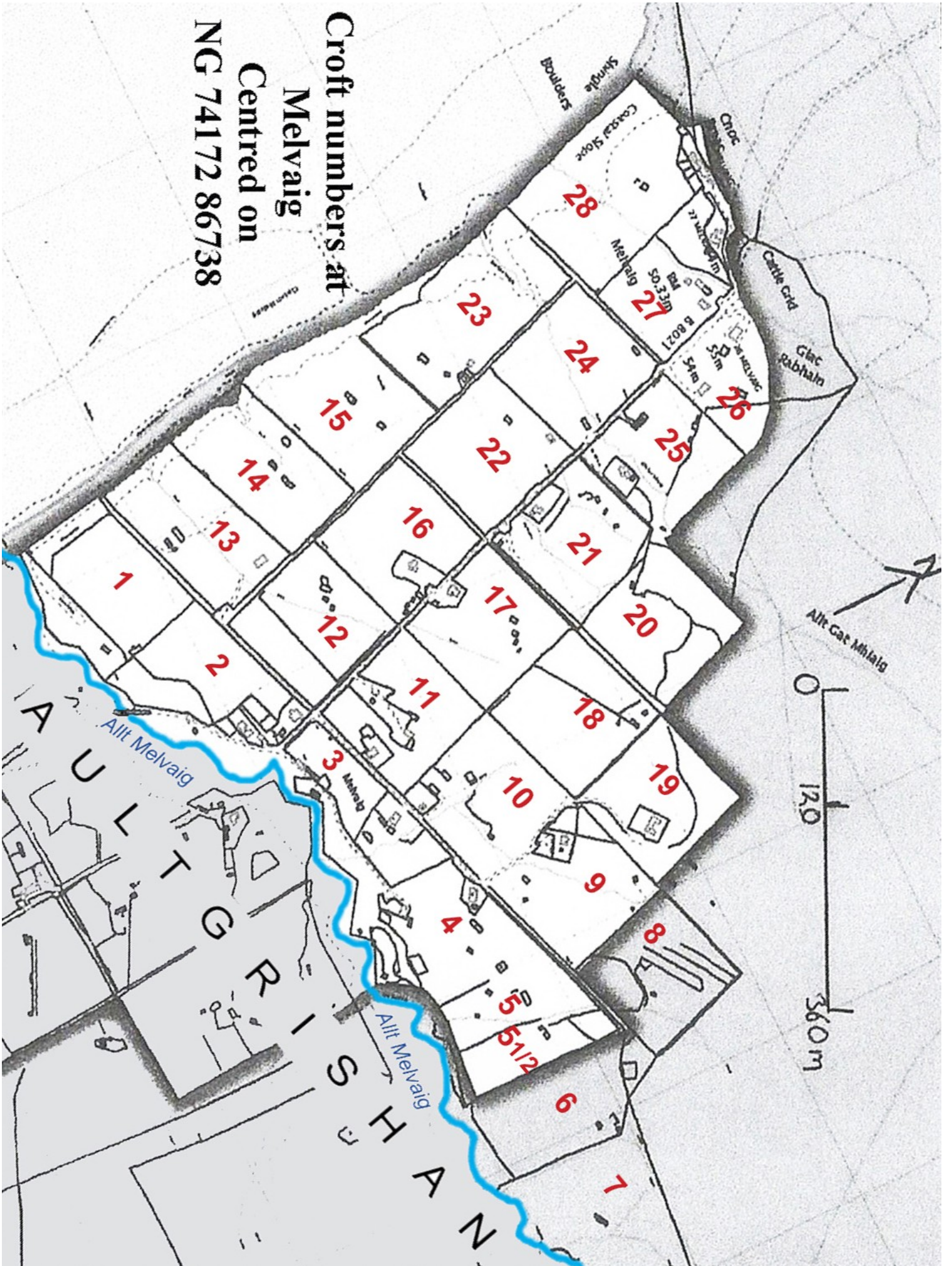
To learn more about the people and past activities in Melvaig read 'The Road to the Lighthouse' available in Gairloch Heritage Museum and local shops.

# The Gairloch Estate Map of 1845

Showing two groups of settlement at Melvaig where crofts 11/3 and 21/25 are now situated



Croft numbers at  
Melvaig  
Centred on  
NG 74172 86738



## The names of the Melvaig crofts in Gaelic and English

- Croft 1 Lot Fhearchair or Farquhar's croft
- Croft 2 Lot Ruairidh Bhig or Small Roderick's croft
- Croft 3 Lot Uilleam Dhuibh or Black William's croft
- Croft 4 Lot Dhomhnaill Bhain or fair Donald's croft
- Croft 5 Lot Fhionnlagh Eachainn or Finlay (son of ) Hector's croft
- Croft 51/2 Lot An Iainich or (the) John's croft
- Croft 6 Lot Dhomhnaill Fhearchair or Donald (son of) Farquhar's croft
- Croft 7 Lot A Chleirich/An Coire Buidhe or people of Priest Island's croft or The Yellow Corrie
- Croft 8 Lot Marsail or Marjory's croft
- Croft 9 Lot Ruairidh Choinnich or Roderick (son of) Kenneth's croft
- Croft 10 Lot An Dotair or the Doctor's croft
- Croft 11 Lot Mhurchadh Dhomhnaill or Murdo (son of) Donald's croft
- Croft 12 Lot A Choinneachan or (the) Kenneth's croft
- Croft 13 Lot Uilleam 'An Shiosal or William (son of) John Chisholm's croft
- Croft 14 Lot A' Pheant or Lot Iain A' Ghillebhan or the 'Paint's' croft or John the Fair Lad's croft
- Croft 15 Lot a' Cheannaiche or the Merchants croft
- Croft 16 Lot Choinnich Ruaidh or Lot a' Rosaich or Red haired Kenneth's croft or the Ross's croft
- Croft 17 Lot na Grandach or the Grant's croft
- Croft 18 Lot Uilleam Ruairidh or William (son of) Roderick's croft
- Croft 19 Lot Mhoroaidh or Murdo's croft
- Croft 20 Lot An t-Achadh/Achadh Thormoid or the Field/Norman's field
- Croft 21 Lota na Mathanach or Matheson's croft

Croft 22 Lot a' Qhraidhean or the Dear One's croft

Croft 23 Lot Bel aig Leacsaidh Lexy Bell's croft

Croft 24 Lot a' Choirneal or Lot Choinnich Bhioraich or the Colonel's croft or sharp Kenneth's croft

Croft 25 Lot ' an Chrubaich or cripple John's croft

Croft 26 Lot Mhurchaidh Cheanas or Murdo (son of) Kenneth's croft

Croft 27 Lot a'Bhodach or the Old Man's croft

Croft 28 Lot Ali Dhuibh or Black Alick's croft

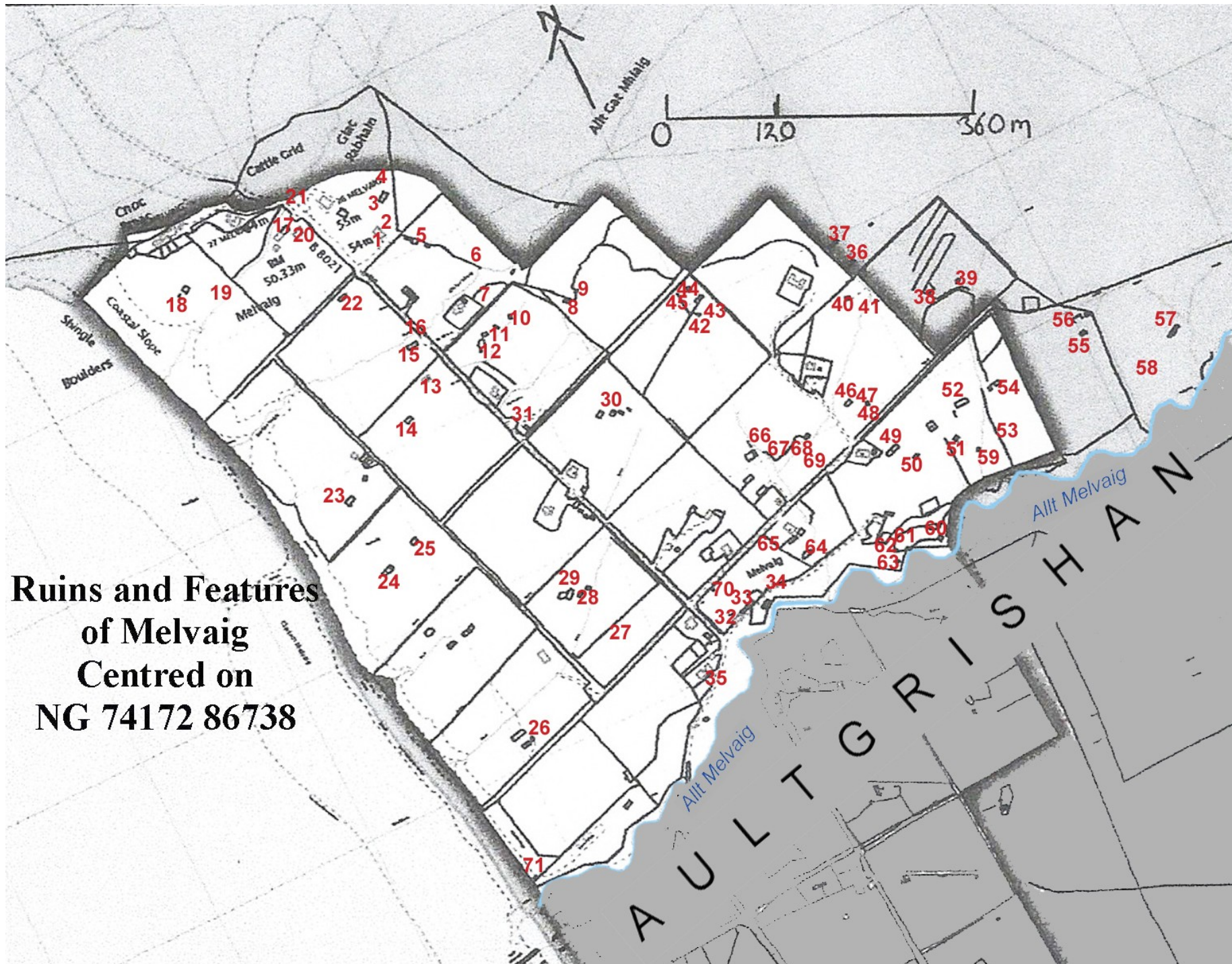
This research was compiled by Roddie and Alice Mackenzie

# The ruins and Features of Melvaig



Centred on NG 74172 86738





1 NG 74112 87021 63m ruined house



2 NG 74133 87048 74m footings of two compartment ruin, probably a byre dwelling



3 NG 74133 87055 73m footings of a three compartment building



4 NG 74158 87097 84m footings of building



5 NG 74157 86993 73m ruined building with attached footings



6 NG 74194 86944 78m enclosure attached to head dyke



7 NG 74203 86913 74m ruined three compartment building attached to wall



8 NG 74295 86862 91m footings of two compartment building attached to stackyard



9 NG 74295 86862 91m corn drying kiln



10 NG 74211 86868 75m ruin of small barn/byre



11 NG 74193 86863 69m ruined barn/byre with platform



12 NG 74176 86859 68m ruined barn/byre



13 NG 74094 86839 53m ruined house



14 NG 74057 86810 47m ruined house and barn with footings indicating another building adjacent to these.



15 NG 74100 86890 57m ruined house with attached barn/byre



16 NG 74108 86897 57m stone bridge under road



17 NG 74007 87076 56m group of ruins comprising a byre dwelling, a barn, two smaller barns, and footings of a building



18 NG 73883 87066 47m ruin with three compartments and adjoining walls that run down slope towards cliff edge



19 NG 73930 87042 40m stone bridge



20 NG 74028 87068 52m ruin of concrete shuttering overlying older sandstone footings





21 NG 74040 87105 61m stone clapper bridge under main road



22 NG 74054 86969 50m ruined one compartment building with four windows and a door



23 NG 73957 86752 34m ruined barn



24 NG 73957 86662 20m ruin of a phased barn/byre with a semicircular wall built into slope above ruin



25 NG 73998 86683 31m ruined byre with byre drain



26 NG 74008 86422 23m ruined byre dwelling with adjacent barn. Cruck slots visible



27 NG 74167 86497 37m ruined building filled with stone clearance



28 NG 74160 86528 36m well shown on 1st OS



29 NG 74140 86536 36m ruin of phased house with cruck slots with two outbuildings and a stackyard ( see detailed survey)



30 NG 74261 86716 68m group of four ruins comprising two byre/barns on platforms with two small outbuildings



31 NG 74172 86738 59m building which was butchers shop



32 NG 74294 86428 37m old mission house



33 NG 74312 86435 45m old shop, contents in Gairloch Heritage Museum



34 NG 74349 86437 39m footings of building down river embankment



35 NG 74253 86391 41m footings of building down bank



36 NG 74597 86751 185m ruin of house ( house that Roddie Mackenzie from croft 11 's father grew up in)



37 NG 74595 86786 127m footings of barn/byre within enclosure wall



38 NG 74664 86685 117m enclosure



39 NG 74698 86679 118m ruined barn/byre



40 NG 74607 86701 108m ruins of small building



41 NG 74572 86713 110m ruined barn/byre



42 NG 74411 86772 99m ruin of small building



43 NG 74420 86786 103m ruined two compartment phased building



44 NG 74416 86804 104m walled circular stackyard





45 NG 74393 86802 104m former house site with stones ready to build but uncompleted



46 NG 74517 86604 82m ruined barn



47 NG 74547 86601 88m footings of pre crofting ruin



48 NG 74546 86592 80m ruined barn



49 NG 74549 86532 79m older footings of house overlain by barn structure



50 NG 74569 86516 78m stone footings of building overlain by concrete platform filled with stones



51 NG 74617 86515 84m ruined barn/byre on a platform steep slope



52 NG 74640 86547 95m ruined house



53 NG 74678 86531 94m footings of known barn/shed with rounded end wall



54 NG 74689 86547 98m ruined house,barn/byre built on a platform with box fireplace



55 NG 74801 86557 109m ruined barn



56 NG 74810 86576 116m ruined house



57 NG 74895 86515 107m ruined byre dwelling



58 NG 74882 86484 104m footings of ruin built into bank



59 NG 74634 86490 79m ruin built into bank



60 NG 74550 86414 56m ruined barn built into bank of river terrace



61 NG 74510 86433 51m ruined bridge over old river meander



62 NG 74500 86424 52m ruined barn



63 NG 74492 86415 48m ruined hen house



64 NG 74406 86464 53m footings of ruined building



65 NG 74402 86486 57m ruined building partly reused as shed , otherwise filled with stone clearance



66 NG 74383 86644 74m footings of building



67 NG 74435 86602 71m ruin of small building



68 NG 74463 86588 70m corn drying kiln with barn





69 NG 74478 86597 70m ruin built into slope



70 NG 74282 86479 32m small ruin filled with stone clearance



71 NG 73974 86281 14m

Infant burial ground

