

North of Scotland Archaeological Society



**The Report on the  
Archaeological Survey of Inner Loch Hourn  
April 2002**



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**The Report on the  
Archaeological Survey of Inner Loch Hourn  
By Members of NOSAS April 2002**

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## **Preface**

This report is an account of the archaeological survey of the north shore of Inner Loch Hourn carried out by members of the North of Scotland Archaeological Society (NOSAS), from the 21<sup>st</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 2002.

A chain of events spread over 15 years led to this survey, some more significant than others. The establishment of the Aberdeen University (AU) Certificate in Field Archaeology in 1996 has enabled many people from all walks of life to become better informed and to develop some of the basic skills in archaeological field work. Those who have completed the course are now spread out all over the Highland area. The first group of students to qualify decided to form NOSAS as a means of staying in touch and continuing to develop their interest in archaeology. Membership of NOSAS now exceeds 40, and continues to rise steadily. Events include field trips, and a spring and autumn short residential to survey an area in more depth.

In the second year of the AU course there is an assignment requiring students to prospect and record an area of 2sq Km for archaeological remains. At the last minute late in 1999, John, who was half way through the AU course, changed his mind over which area to look at and decided to have a look for sites around the head of Loch Hourn. Nothing spectacular turned up, but many new sites not in the SMR were discovered, sufficient to persuade him after the assignment was completed, to explore the north shore of Inner Loch Hourn further, and it was on a mid-January day in 2000 that he first came on the numerous sites that were to be the subject of the detailed survey by NOSAS in April 2002.

Members of the NOSAS committee made a reconnaissance visit in December 2000, and after a memorably rough boat journey, walked back from Allt Mhogh Sgeir to Kinloch Hourn. Plans for the survey week were then worked out. Contact with Tom Dawson of the Scottish Archaeological and Palaeoenvironmental Trust (SCAPE) was made and he very ably guided us through to obtaining a grant from Historic Scotland (HS), to carry out the survey then planned for April 2001. This date had to be cancelled due to the outbreak of foot and mouth disease, but we were able to re-schedule for April 2002.

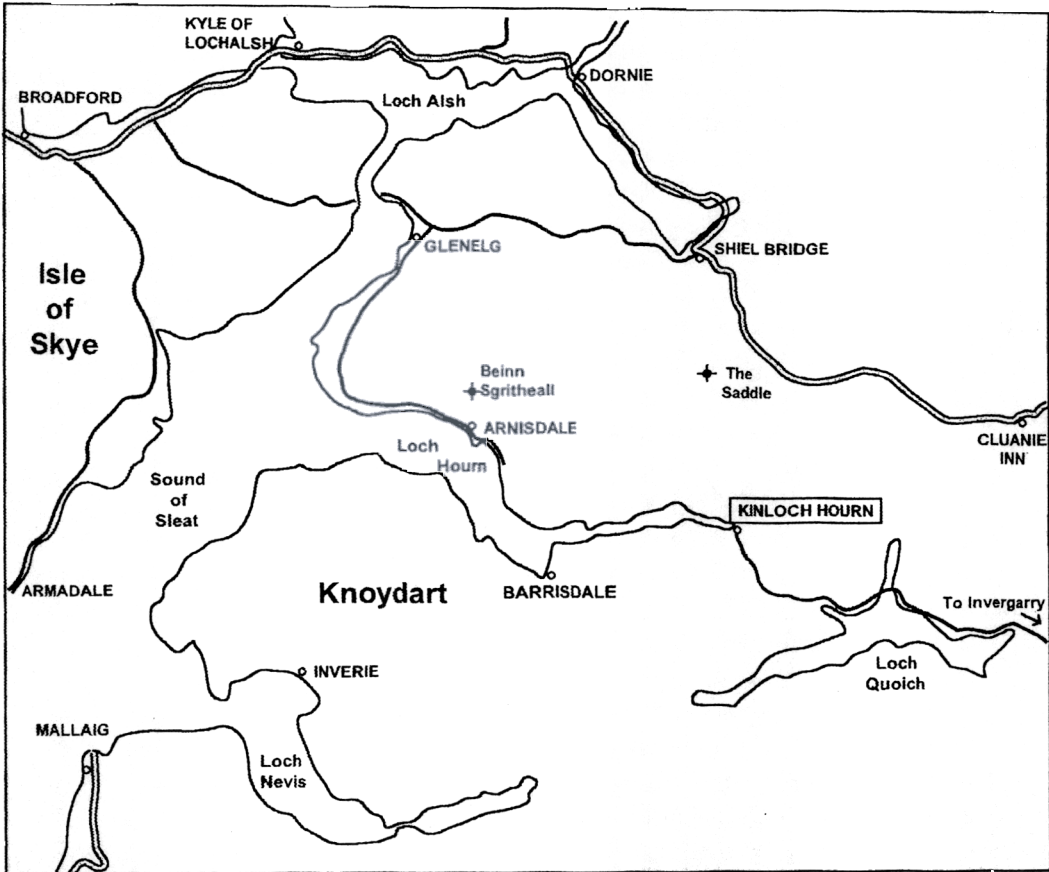
Four sections from the project design for the survey i.e. the introduction, project aims, historical and archaeological background, and a piece on herring fishing, plus all of the references, are included with this report to provide further background information. One aim of the survey was to gain an insight into the economy of the earlier native population by looking for clues as to how the land might have been managed, in particular the woodlands, and Graham Tuley's report on this is also included.

NOSAS hopes that this project will be ongoing, and that this report is interim in nature, to place a record of what has been discovered in the public domain, in an easily accessible format. All of the NOSAS members who took part in the survey are amateur archaeologists, and there will undoubtedly be mistakes in our interpretation of some of the sites found. Much more work in the field and by way of historical research still needs to be done before we can be at all sure about many issues.

The excellent maps of the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), kindly provided by Highland Council (HC), should be regarded as indicative only. During the course of compiling and editing this report it has become clear that there remain some small errors with some of the National Grid References (NGRs), which were all determined by Geographical Positioning System (GPS). Ten or twenty metres can make a lot of difference at the principal scale used of 1:5000. Also, we realised during the course of the survey that several of the smaller burns, critical as fresh water supplies to numerous sites, are not shown on the Ordnance Survey maps.

JW May 2003

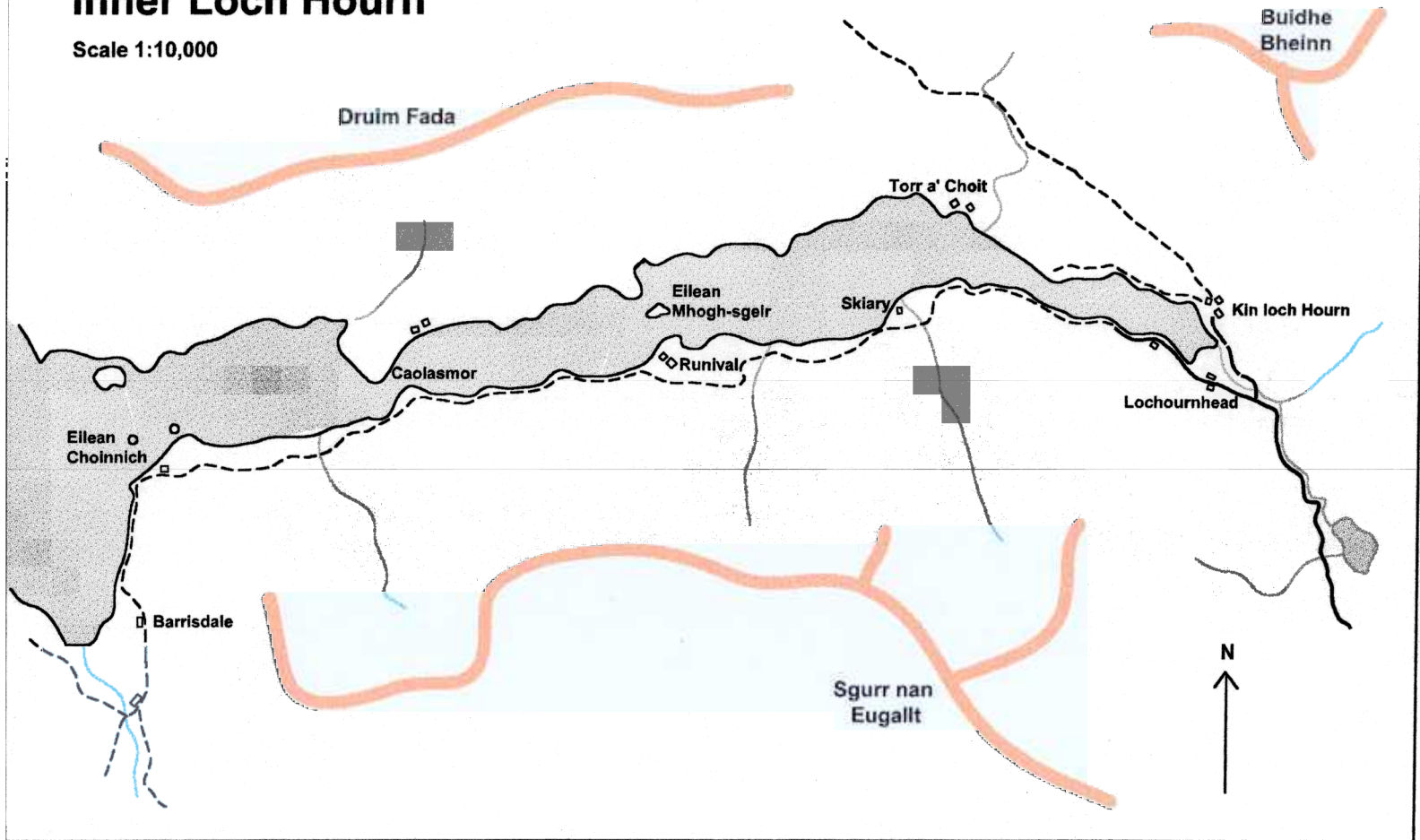
LOCATION OF KINLOCH HOURN



# Inner Loch Hourn

Scale 1:10,000

4



## **Introduction** (extracted from the project design for the survey)

Loch Hourn lies on the West Coast Mainland of Scotland, and the mouth of the loch opens opposite to the Sleat District of the Island of Skye, from which it is separated by the Sound of Sleat. It also lies on the boundary between the administrative areas of Lochaber, and Kyle and Lochalsh, both under the control of the Highland Council.

Loch Hourn is generally regarded as the best example of a fiordic sea loch in Britain. It is 22.5km long, slightly dog-legged, and divides conveniently into three parts. Loch Beag at Kinloch Hourn is just .9km long and .3km wide, separated by narrows, which almost dry out at spring tides, from the Inner Loch which is 7km long and .9km at its widest. The Outer Loch lies west of Barrisdale, bounded by the Knoydart Peninsular to the south and the Glenelg Peninsular to the north. It gradually widens over a further 14km to meet the Sound of Sleat. The Inner Loch is bounded by ridges, rising to an average height of 2275ft (700m), with Sgurr a Mhaoraich at 3340ft (1027m) guarding the head of the loch above Kinloch Hourn. The loch and surrounding area is a National Scenic Area.

The effect on the senses at Loch Hourn is dramatic, as the mountains reach down to the sea loch on all sides. The hillsides above the north shore of the Inner Loch are heavily wooded in places, mainly mixed deciduous in type, with one fragment of native pinewood on steep cliffs. On the north shore west of Rasay and Arnisdale, there are extensive conifer plantations, on land that was previously covered in oakwood. The south shore is more sparsely wooded but there is a notable pinewood above the Inner Loch, native Caledonian in appearance, but possibly planted during the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The area is one of the wettest in Scotland, averaging around 150 inches (3850mm) per year. Three rivers and too many burns to count, tumble down into Loch Hourn. During wet weather the loch is an amphitheatre of sound and vision, created by these many watercourses.

Cultivable land is at a premium, and settlement both past and present is focussed in the main, but not entirely, on the small fluvial deposits along the shores. Today few people reside permanently around Loch Hourn, apart from the small communities at Arnisdale and Corran. Employment is estate work, fish farming or tourism. In summer several isolated farmhouses and cottages are occupied as holiday homes. Many visitors come to go hill walking. Deer stalking is the main activity on most of the estates, followed by sheep farming. Small herds of feral goats, descended from those kept by the crofters of long ago, still frequent the wilder crags.

The 50 acre (20ha) woodland garden at Kinloch Hourn was laid out between 1890 and 1905 by Robert Birkbeck, the great uncle of the present owner Henry Birkbeck, and is well known for its collection of Tasmanian eucalyptus. Robert Birkbeck printed a catalogue of the names of every plant in his garden in 1906, providing a unique record.

Whilst much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and late 19<sup>th</sup> century history of the settlements and people around Loch Hourn has recently been published in the book “Arnisdale and Loch Hourn”, by Peter English (January 2001), beyond that, knowledge of the people who populated these shore grows progressively dimmer, with the one exception being the Forfeited Estates Records pertaining to Barrisdale Estate, dating to the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The Royal Commission for the Historical and Ancient Monuments of Scotland (RCHAMS), carried out a detailed survey of that part of the south shore of the Outer Loch owned by the John Muir Trust, opposite to Arnisdale, in 1992. The report of that survey will be available for study at Kinloch Hourn during the NOSAS survey week, as will a copy of the book by Peter English, and all of the other books or extracts listed in the references. Otherwise there are just a few general entries in the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), relating to the south shore, and to part of the north shore around Arnisdale. Some of the sites listed in the SMR have been identified as a result of the RCAHMS First Edition Survey Project (1995 –2001). At Kinloch Hourn, Lochournhead, Arnisdale and Barrisdale, extensive 19<sup>th</sup> century developments, especially those of the late Victorian period, mask earlier settlements.

That Loch Hourn was a major seasonal herring fishery at times during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries is well known from the writings of early travellers, the Statistical Accounts, and later Fishery Board records. Little is known on how this fishery operated, how it developed over time, and how it impacted on the local population. Many of the large number of archaeological structures recently identified by John and various assistants, on the north shore of the Inner Loch in particular, most probably relate to this fishery. Herring fishing is covered in more detail in a separate section of these notes.



## **Project Aims**

1. Many of the foreshore and backshore sites have suffered from varying degrees of erosion. A key aim of the project is to establish the present condition of these eroded sites, assess the risks to these sites for further damage, and to make recommendations on possible stabilisation and conservation measures.
2. It would seem from the considerable extent, nature and position of cultivation remains at Kinloch Hourn and Lochournhead, that there was a sizeable pre-clearance settlement at the head of the loch. Today there are but few traces of dwellings from that period. Progressing westwards down the Inner Loch as far as Barrisdale, there is very little by way of obvious pre-clearance cultivation remains on either shoreline, but there is a wealth of remains, varying greatly in character, of both permanent and temporary dwellings. It is possible, in an area where good house sites are at a premium, that later dwellings occupy older house stances. A further aim of the project is to identify the extent of the various periods of settlement, and to gather sufficient environmental information to give an insight into the economy of the earlier native population.
3. The third aim of the project is to identify the full extent of seasonal fishing camps and fishing stations around the Inner Loch, to see if there is evidence to justify Pennant's observation of "multitudes of little occasional hovels and tents on the shore" when he surveyed the scenes of herring fishing in 1792.
4. There appears to be differences between the nature and extent of remains on the north shore of the Inner Loch and the south shore. The two shores have similar numbers of house ruins but the north shore has in addition, possibly 90% of the temporary huts and cleared boat landings. The south shore has a well developed footpath linking the clachans, but the almost trackless north shore has by far the better woodland resource and more obvious large enclosures. The final aim of the project is to see if there is any evidence that the waters of Loch Hourn, in dividing two great historical estates, also represented a cultural divide in earlier times.

## Historical and Archaeological Background

For possibly 1,000 years or more Loch Hourn has been the boundary between two great estates, the relatively fertile Glenelg to the north, and infertile Knoydart to the south. To what extent Loch Hourn was a boundary before then is open to conjecture

Mesolithic (early stone age) sites have been discovered in Loch Sunart and the Small Isles to the south, on Skye opposite, and around the Applecross Peninsular to the north, with an increasing number of sites having been discovered in recent years. It is hard to imagine that these early people did not venture into Loch Hourn on a seasonal basis. One promising cave site has been found, just west of Arnisdale.

There are no known Neolithic or Bronze Age sites, but there is one intriguing structure on the low lying headland at Caolasmor, which we should look at in detail during our survey week. It has all the appearance of a small eroded ring cairn c5m in diameter with a single anomaly near its centre, but the structure may be no more than the supporting cairn for a 19thC navigational aid!

Just over the hill from Arnisdale, 7km as the crow flies, are the Iron Age brochs of Dun Telve and Dun Troddan in Glen Beag, and the half-broch of Dun Grugaig at the head of that glen, guarding the pass to Kinloch Hourn. It is too much to believe that these well established Iron Age people did not find their way around the headland into Loch Hourn. Maybe they too had a taste for the “sgadan beag”, or knew of the useful cod fishing marks in Loch Hourn.

There are also numerous dun sites on the south side of Skye and there is one known dun site in Knoydart. There is no known evidence of the Picts or the Scots on Loch Hourn-side, but there is one early graveyard in Knoydart and a very fine Early Christian carved stone, with Scottish or Dalriadic associations, rather than Pictish. There is a Catholic burial isle in Loch Hourn, close to Barrisdale called Eilean Choinich. The burial isle has numerous plain stone head and foot markers, and several flat grave slabs. Many more graves are marked by small cairns of stones, which have become grassed over with the passage of time. Following a visit in 2001, it became clear that parts of three rows of graves on the seaward side of the island have been eroded. Possible graves and cairns lie partly cut away at the present edge of the eroding backshore. Precisely what period this burial isle relates to is open to research.

The Norse period here is as enigmatic as anywhere else on the West Coast. Evidence exists of Norse influence through land assessment, place names, and topographical names. Kinloch Hourn was a 1 penny-land, a subdivision of the Norse ounceland (or davach). The place names of Barrisdale and Arnisdale both suggest Norse influence, and the Norse way of name inversion, when the expected word order is reversed, is demonstrated by Ladhar Bheinn in Knoydart, and by Buidhe Bheinn above Kinloch Hourn.

Glenelg had traditionally belonged to the Kings of Man, and from the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century through to 1808 the Macleods of Dunvegan and Harris, with their strong Norse connections, owned all of that part of Glenelg bordering the north side of Loch Hourn. From the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century the strongly Gaelic Macruari branch of the Macsorleys, descendants of Somerled, owned Knoydart to the south, a part of Garmoran, the “Rough Bounds”, the land lying between Loch Sheil in the south and Loch Hourn in the north. Knoydart later passed to the Gaelic Lordship of the Isles, in the form of the Macdonalds of Islay, and from 1613, to their branch, the Macdonnells of Glengarry, who held on until 1857.

Over a period of centuries the Macleods fought a rearguard action against the northern expansion of Somerled’s family. For the whole of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the people of Knoydart had a dreadful reputation for thieving and general lawlessness, and were regarded as being the last refuge of native Catholicism in Scotland.

Comparable cultural references for the people of Glenelg, have not yet come to light. Maybe some of the people who lived on the north shore of Loch Hourn were involved with their near neighbours to the south, but the Glenelg people may have been of different stock, and had better land, so possibly they did not need to thieve to survive.

There are certainly many more cleared boat landing places and small hut ruins, by a factor of at least 12, on the north shore of the Inner Loch as compared to the south shore. If these ruins are associated with itinerant fishers, is this an indication of greater tolerance, or did they just prefer the sunny-side of the loch?

Both Glenelg and Knoydart estates went through a succession of 19<sup>th</sup> century landowners and sub-divisions. It has not been possible to research the process of clearance for sheep runs in Glenelg, but there is possible evidence on the ground e.g. at Inbhir an Dubh Uillt, west of Torrachoit, of sheep clearance dwelling houses clustered on very poor ground close to the shore, and again at Caolasmor and beyond. In Knoydart where the estate was not sold until 50 years after Glenelg, the clearances by the Macdonnells, as they rid the land of their kinsfolk to make it more saleable, are both notorious and well documented. It is hard to say whether Skiary and several other small stone built settlements on the south shore of the inner loch started as sheep clearance settlements, or whether they are on the sites of much earlier settlements where the houses were all built of wattle and turf, known as “creel” houses. Skiary in particular looks today as if a one time housing boom took place, possibly in response to the developing herring fishery. There was an inn at Skiary for over 100 years, remaining open until World War 2. What we do know is that throughout the late 18<sup>th</sup> and the early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries massive clearance and emigration of the native peoples of Glengarry, Glen Quoich and Knoydart took place.

On the ground at Kinloch Hourn and at Lochournhead there is evidence of pre- sheep clearance settlement, in the form of low turf-wall house footings, turf-dyked enclosures, platforms, and extensive lazy beds.

The dating of the older part of Kinloch Hourn Lodge and Stalkers Cottage is intriguing. They were most probably built early in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century for an incoming sheep farmer, but whether the Macleods had the money to build them at that time, or whether they were built by the first outside purchaser of the estate in 1807, has not as yet been possible to find out. There are two very substantial stone dykes at Kinloch Hourn, one above the good grazing on the lower slopes and one just above the cultivation remains on the flats, that may also relate to the same period as the oldest part of the lodge and the cottage. These field walls were systematically robbed for stone when the Lodge was extended and the gardens laid out by Robert Birkbeck, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The only intact section of these walls to remain, complete with turf cope, lies at the west end of the garden.

All the early census returns for the head of the loch were under the heading of Lochournhead, (the south side of the river as we know it today), so we are left guessing as to who lived on the north side of the river at Kinloch Hourn. From an examination of the Valuation Roll, 1876 is the first date when 2 houses with separate shootings are recognised at the head of Loch Hourn. Robert Birkbeck is recorded as being the tenant of the Glenelg shootings and house at Kinloch Hourn from 1877, finally becoming the proprietor in 1892. The estate was known then as Old Arnisdale Farm, and extended to c 14,000 acres. It was after that date that Robert Birkbeck extended the Lodge to its present form and laid out the woodland garden. He sold off the land west of Caolasmor, what is now Arnisdale Estate.

As the main focus of the estates changed from sheep to shooting, a further clearance took place Lochournhead. The 1851 census records 5 families and 31 souls living there (3 shepherds plus a “manager of sheep farm”), whilst in 1861 there was just one family of 5 souls living here (1 shepherd).

At Lochournhead the farm was well developed over time and provided a living for a tenant farmer until quite recently. All visible evidence of any earlier workings of the haugh fields at Lochournhead has long since been ploughed out. It is thought that the drovers stance was somewhere on the tidal flats on the Lochournhead side of the river. At Kinloch Hourn, just over the bridge, it is quite a different story. The making of a deep back-drain at the foot of the hill-slope was not possible, due to the proximity of the rock-head, and the farm appears to have been of less importance than the gardens and deer stalking. The flats here are a tapestry of lazy beds, horse ploughing rigs, peat diggings and more, which would be a study in itself to unravel. In a fine location just above the flats, and close to the small burn, there is a possible substantial burial ground, bisected by one of the sheep farm dykes previously referred to. This may confirm the total removal of the native population from here in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, for such a thing to have happened. This possible total clearance of people is in line with what is known to have happened in nearby Glengarry and in other parts of Knoydart around that time.

## **Herring Fishing**

Whilst rather more has to be said about the herring fishing in order to understand some of the archaeological remains around Loch Hourn, this is but a sketch based on the record provided by the Statistical Accounts, early travellers, government records, the work of local historians and a provisional interpretation of the archaeology.

Generally the history of the West Coast herring fishing is poorly documented compared to the North and East Coasts Industries. The only exception to this generality is the documentation of the Loch Fyne industry further south by Angus Martin in his excellent book "The Ring Net Fishermen".

Over the centuries the key factors affecting the development of herring fishing in Loch Hourn have been the distance from essential supplies of salt and barrels for curing, the distance from markets, and the poverty of the native population.

The Dutch, having perfected the process of curing herring in salt, completely dominated European herring fishing from the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. They evolved a fishing boat, called a herring buss, which with a crew of 17, took barrels and salt to follow the herring shoals, and to catch them and cure them as they sailed the open seas.

Fast cargo vessels, or "Vent Juggers" as they were known, followed the herring fleet to whisk the barrels of cured herring away to markets in Mainland Europe. There was great jealousy of this Dutch domination, especially by England. There was many a failed attempt to tax the Dutch or forcefully contain their operations by several nations, including England. It is no surprise then, that Dutch fighting ships also accompanied their fishing fleet.

The Dutchmen went as far north as Shetland, starting fishing on the 24th June. They then fished their way down the North Sea to finish up off the east Coast of England in November. In 1618 it is said that there were as many as 3,000 Dutch busses at the North Sea herring fishing.

I have found just one reference to the Dutch being active in the Hebrides, around 1550, so maybe they ventured into Loch Hourn at that time, and later. There are also written accounts of early Dutch busses sending out their own small catching boats, and of them buying fish from local boats.

From the 17<sup>th</sup> century English busses are known to have been built and one reference notes that the Scottish West Coast Burghs "had long fished for herring by the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century". Whether the latter was using Scottish built ships of buss type cannot as yet be confirmed, as the first reference to busses being built at Greenock is not until 1720 - vessels of about 50 tons laden. By 1600 it is said that the East Neuk of Fife was sending fleets of half decked "crears" to the Western and Northern Isles (a crayer being a small trading vessel), thought to be something in between the usual Scottish

inshore boats and the Dutch busses. The crews could fish in season and carry cargoes out-with.

In 1630 it is claimed that there were 200 “bigish cowper boats” (a couper boit being a herring buyers boat) dependent on up to 1500 small catcher boats to provide them with herring. There is no detail of where these boats were fishing and most probably they were East Coast.

A tax on imported salt was introduced in 1712, after the union in 1707, supposedly to protect the English salt industry (no word of the Scottish salt industry!). This tax was to restrict small boat involvement in catching herring for over 100 years, under the misguided notion held by governments of the time, that the Dutch buss method, having worked well for the Dutch in the past was the best way forward for the United Kingdom. The tax was finally repealed in 1825. Incentives to emulate the Dutch system and to encourage export were introduced in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century by way of tonnage bounties to build new busses, plus a generous bounty per barrel for curing on the busses, and exemption of the salt tax for exports. Restrictions were placed on board busses to try to dissuade them from buying herring from the small inshore boats.

Busses were built at Greenock and at Campbeltown. Clyde buss numbers are said to have peaked at 294 in 1776. Forth busses are also known to have fished the West Coast lochs between 1771 and 1782. Campbeltown became the key port on the West Coast for buss activity. However, although the busses could follow the shoals with all the essential supplies and cure on board, they could never match the catching efficiency of the small 4 or 6 man inshore boats. Much of the small boat catch in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century from Loch Fyne went to the fresh market in Glasgow, but the government still wanted to encourage curing for export. So in 1786, whilst still giving busses a reduced tonnage bounty to build, and 4 shillings per barrel to cure, a bounty of 1 shilling per barrel was introduced for the small boats, which later was increased in 1795 to 2 shillings per barrel. Official restrictions on curers purchasing from the small boats were also lifted.

By the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, busses it seems were on the way out, except possibly for journeying to the more distant fisheries such as Loch Hourne. William Daniel’s wonderful sketch of busses lying off Skiary in 1819 were most probably right at the end of the buss era. No further references to busses have been found after 1835.

Pennant in 1792 recorded scenes in Inner Loch Hourne of “an agreeable view of a great fleet of busses, and all the busy apparatus of the herring fishery, with multitudes of little occasional hovels and tents on the shore, for the accommodation of the crews, and of the country people who resort here at this season to take and sell herring to the strangers”. From the First Statistical Account of Scotland 1795, we read “in Lochurn they (the herring) make their appearance so early as July, and continue from that period to the middle of autumn. Here the busses from the Frith of Clyde commonly assemble first, besides a vast number of boats which crowd together from the neighbouring parishes and isles adjacent. It is computed for some years back 30,000 barrels have been annually caught in this loch, but the want of salt prevents the

natives from turning to advantage this bounty of Providence". This figure of 30,000 barrels attributed to Loch Hourn might just be taken with a pinch of curing salt, as the same figure is quoted elsewhere for the whole of the West Coast during that same period.

The practice of fishermen camping away from home is generally considered to be very old, and was common practice until the First World War. Legislation passed in 1705, during the rein of Queen Anne, allowed fishermen "for their greater conveniency to have the free use of all ports, harbours, shoars, fore-lands, and others for bringing in, pickleing, drying, unloading and loading the same, upon payment of the ordinary dues where harbours are built". This became known as the "Queen Anne Charter", and in 1775 a more comprehensive act was passed granting "free use of the shores below the highest water mark, and of 100 yards inland of foreshore on waste or uncultivated ground, for landing nets and casks, and erecting sheds for curing etc." In addition to building crude huts on shore, tents were commonly used. Larger smacks were also sailed to distant fishings and kitted out as accommodation for the crews of the small catching boats.

Certainly in Loch Fyne, particular families became associated with certain bays for temporary living on shore away from their home village, and this may well have been the case in Loch Hourn, with crews from afar returning to the same huts and beaches each year. Sometimes the boats were moored close into the shore, and often the ballast was thrown out and the boats hauled up on wooden rollers. One of the more interesting things to be found on one of the cleared beaches is a very corroded and broken heavy iron pulley block with anti reverse ratchet. From the late 18<sup>th</sup> century small boat fishing, either drift netting or ring netting, dominated as the most efficient method of catching, with shore based curing slowly becoming the norm. The key to the eventual success of the Scottish herring industry, and to European dominance, was effective government organisation to superintend and guarantee the standard of curing. However, if the herring in the remote sea lochs was to be harvested successfully, the necessary supplies had to be taken there, and the fitting out of fishing smacks for this purpose by curers took over from the busses for these locations. Curing could still take place on the smacks if the setting up of a temporary shore based station was impractical. The curers smacks are said to have sometimes taken 2 or 3 small catching boats to the fishing on their decks, but in the main, they relied on "local boats" to catch for them. Fast sailing cargo boats, and later steamers, were used to transfer the barrels of cured herring from the smacks or shore stations to market.

Until 1770, when salt stores were built at Oban and Tobermory, the nearest bonded warehouse for salt had been in Campbelltown, and until the salt tax was finally repealed, "the want of salt" was the greatest drawback to the development of the remote fisheries. At the time the salt tax was still imposed, curers had to account for all salt used. With stories of West Highland fortunes being made in salt smuggling, e.g. by the innkeeper at Inveroran, one can easily imagine contraband salt having found its way to Loch Hourn.

In 1812 the new road from Invergarry to Lochournhead, engineered by Thomas Telford, was opened, primarily to facilitate the local Inverness-shire herring trade.

We know from the work of local historians that Arnisdale and Skiary flourished in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, from the seasonal herring fishery. It is well recorded though that the West Coast inhabitants as a whole never had much desire to fish for the herring, preferring if they fished at all to work the long lines for cod or ling, which could be preserved by drying. They were always said to prefer to work their “little bits of arable land and to tend their stock”, than to go to sea. The West Coast men who did fish for herring were always playing catch-up with their East Coast cousins, purchasing the second hand boats from them as they built their bigger and better boats each season. Nets cost nearly as much as the boats, and it is recorded that the native West Coast country folk could afford only a few suitable nets. Township families tended to share small multi purpose boats and a net or two, so that should both the herring and the curers appear together, they could join in the fishing.

Of significance is a Fishery Board statistic of 1882 which states “vast shoals of herring in Loch Hourn, 780 boats catching, 80 vessels curing on board, 10 steamers carrying to market, in 1 week 10,000 crans (c1,000 tons) landed. As well as local men the fishery gave employment to nearly 4,000 Skye and South West Ross fishermen and associated workers who congregated for the season”. But by 1900, the industry on the West Coast had collapsed, and only 31 boats and 50 fishermen remained at the fishery. Disastrous blank years were recorded from time to time throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Herring fishing in the 20<sup>th</sup> century became increasingly spasmodic.



## **Survey Methodology**

Twelve of the team members were based at Kinloch Hourn, and were split into smaller survey teams of two or three. Everyone was taken down the Loch by boat to the survey areas by launch whenever possible. A smaller boat was used for flitting between launch and shore, and for moving teams between areas separated by awkward or impassable terrain. Each team had a radio to keep in contact for health and safety reasons. A base camp was established at Allt Mhogh Sgeir with two tents, one of which was wrecked in a gale on day 2 of the survey. After a glorious early April in 2002, the week of the survey was wet and windy every day except for one.

The survey was mainly confined to the coastal strip, up to 200m deep, and forays beyond this were rare and only to explore interesting looking ground. A plane table survey of the whole of Eilean Choinich, the small tidal burial isle in Barrisdale Bay was our intention, but the bad weather restricted this to just half of the isle. The main target to survey all of the 6 Km north shore of Loch Beag and Inner Loch Hourn, and three sites on the south shore, was achieved by a sweeping up operation to cover one or two isolated sites, during the second week of May.

Here it must be recorded just how critical the timing is for survey work in areas plagued by bracken infestation. On average, we feel that the end of April is the optimum time, when vegetation is just beginning to green up, but before newly emerging bracken fronds begin to obscure features. That said it was noticeable that during the second week of May, certain features were made to stand out by the greening up of grassy areas, but by that time new bracken fronds were up to 1m in height and becoming a real nuisance. All survey needs to be completed by the 10<sup>th</sup> of May in any case, as this is the start of the midge season, and the midges beside Loch Hourn are legendary in their numbers and venom.

A standard recording sheet for the survey was devised, and the completed record sheets for each site, plus black and white and colour prints of each site, and also general slides, form the archive for the survey. We devised a method of flagging each site with a cane and small numbered plant label, to avoid the possibility of overlapping survey teams recording a site twice. We agreed that the location should be Loch Hourn, and that every feature should be recorded as an individual site with our own discreet survey number, with sites being identified by the nearest and most logical named feature on the 1:10,000 Ordnance Survey map.

All NGRs were identified using GPS. All sites recorded were entered into the Highland SMR in August 2002.

It was decided not to deliberately look for finds on this occasion, although there are tempting amounts of pottery, stone jar and glass fragments scattered on the beaches near to some of the small huts.

A sketch plan of the core area at Allt Mhogh Sgeir was made, plus a plan of the largest of the buildings there. An artist friend of Kinloch Hourn who has visited several of the sites, kindly produced some sketches of what the scenes might have looked like during the herring fishing season two hundred years or more ago, and two of these are light-heartedly included in the report.

## GAZETTEER

### Notes

Every feature and structure recorded has been regarded as a site, with a discreet NOSAS survey number (not in any particular order), and Highland SMR number. This decision was made when it was realised that there were structures built within structures most probably of different periods and for different purposes. All photographs relate to the NOSAS numbers.

Sites are generally listed from east to west, and have been drawn together by area according to the nearest named place or feature on the Ordnance Survey 1: 10,000 Map.

Introductory notes are given for each named area.

### **Kinloch Hourn**

Most of the visible archaeology at Kinloch Hourn is of the Victorian Period, and still occupied or forming part of the estate policies. The low lying ground at the head of the loch to the north side of the Loch Hourn River is a tapestry of early cultivation remains, (areas of intersecting lazy beds and later horse ploughed rig and furrow), drainage channels, peat diggings, and the remains of a much robbed dry stone dyke. To record this area in detail would be a minor project on its own, but the team did record 2 interesting features as an exercise at the start of the survey week. JW also recorded the footings of a small hut at 260m directly above the gardens at Kinloch Hourn, found by accident whilst taking landscape photographs.

**Site: 101, NGR: 95340669, SMR: NG90NW0007.** A linear earth feature approx 16m in length, 2m wide overall and .7m max height. Associated with Site 102 adjacent, could be possible flood protection bank for Site 102, or part of a droving stance, or a driving wall for Site 102.

**Site: 102, NGR: 95320670, SMR: NG90NW0008.** A rectilinear open mouthed enclosure, formed by 3 low double sided banks. Approx 13m x 9m o/a. Appears to have been truncated by a later hand cut ditch. Purpose of structure unclear, may have been an early sheepfold, possibly for shearing.

**Site: 67, NGR: 95170758, SMR: NG90NW0009.** The low turf covered stone footings of a small building, possibly a hut, sitting on a small knoll which commands superb views to the east and west. Oval in shape, approx 5m long and a max of 4.5m wide external. There is a small burn close by. Could be a sheiling, but it is rather close to the settlement below, or could have been a look-out.

### **Allt Chadha Mhor**

This is the distinctive steep pass, starting just above the Kinloch Hourn policies, through which the path to Arnisdale goes. Only one site was recorded. The area was not a part of the main study area.

**Site: 68, NGR: 94660746, SMR: NG99NW0044.** Sits in a prominent position some 200m outwith the policies. A distinctive sub rectangular building of dry stone construction, with walls remaining in good condition to a max height of 1.2m. Approx 6m long by 4.5m wide o/a. Commands a clear view from the doorway to the east. A short scramble up behind the building affords a clear view down the full length of the Inner Loch, and the pass to Arnisdale. A possible look-out. This is an isolated building with no other associated sites.

## **Glac nan Sgadan**

This is generally the area of steeply wooded slopes forming the north side of Loch Beag, the innermost part of Loch Hourn, separated from the Inner Loch by narrows, which are very shallow at low tide. Loch Beag provides reasonably sheltered deep water anchorage. There is clear evidence of beach clearance for boat landing, and of individually cleared boat landing places. Only one single building, the footings of a small hut, have been discovered to date, despite much careful searching. There appear to have been many falls of boulders from the steep slopes above, which confuse the present day scene at the shoreline.

The cleared landing places found are relatively close to the settlements at Lochourhead, and Kinloch Hourn. The landing places are right beside the deeper water, and indeed only accessible close to high tide. Camping and fishing activity by outsiders so close to the settlements might not have been welcome, and the relative absence of huts in comparison to the Inner Loch might suggest that the locals used the landing places here when shoals of herring came right up into Loch Beag. This bears in mind that fishing took place at night, and that the regular creeks for hauling boats out at the head of the loch dry out completely at low tide. Also taking into account the historical record of vast shoals becoming stranded in Loch Beag, it could be that beach based ring netting took place, with fishermen left on shore holding one end of the net, and a small boat rowing out and round in a semicircle back to the beach to trap the fish.

**Site: 51, NGR: 94300736, SMR: NG90NW0153.** A cleared landing place, approx 2m in width at the seaward end, on the beach at the foot of a steep south facing slope.

**Site: 52, NGR: 94260735, SMR: NG90NW0154.** A cleared landing place formed on the beach with a single entry channel from the sea, leading to 3 possible bays at the head of the beach. This area of beach is somewhat confused by the tumble of boulders from the steep slopes above.

**Site: 54, NGR: 94240735, SMR: NG90NW0155.** The low vegetation covered boulder footings of a sub-rectangular hut, c 3m x 2m internal, sitting on a small level platform, cut into the hill-slope, and revetted at the front. Situated a short distance up from the beach. Small burn nearby.

**Site: 53, NGR: 94230734, SMR: NG90NW0156.** A cleared landing place, by way of a 20m wide area of cleared beach, with a confusion of large boulders which may have come down from the slopes above.

**Site: 151, NGR: 94190736, SMR: NG90NW0210.** A level platform cut into the hill-slope some distance above the shoreline. Size c 5m x 2.5m. No evidence of any structure.

**Site: 72, NGR: 94020733, SMR: NG90NW0240.** Recorded May 2003. A cleared landing place, visible only from the water without some steep scrambling. C 2m wide, short, only accessible near to high tide.

**Site: 73, NGR: 9400733, SMR: NG90NW0241.** Recorded May 2003. A rough platform formed with 2 side of large boulders, alongside landing place Site72, possibly used as a quayside / storage area. Eroded by the sea.

**Site: 71, NGR: 94020734, SMR: NG90NW0242.** Recorded May 2003. An eroded rough platform alongside landing place Site 70. "Arrow" shaped c 2.5m x 3m, formed by edges of large boulders. Eroded by the sea.

**Site:70, NGR: 94020734, SMR: NG90NW0243.** Recorded May 2003. A short landing place c 2m wide at the top. This is the last landing place heading west on the north shore of Loch Beag.

### **Caolas an Loch Beag**

This is the tidal narrows at the entrance to Loch Beag. There is evidence of buildings close to the shoreline, with a small area of lazy beds alongside, and another much larger area of lazy beds some distance up the hillside. Higher still, there is evidence of further land improvement and more lazy beds, which may or may not be associated with the buildings down near to the shore. Directly opposite, on the south bank of the narrows, (not in the survey area), are the footings of two more small rectilinear buildings and a few lazy beds. At a low spring tide the occupants of the two sides would have been able to conduct a conversation over the narrow channel.

**Site: 7, NGR: 93850729, SMR: NG90NW0195.** 3 small platforms, possibly natural or enhanced, just above the shore but well above the high tide line, which could have been used for tent camping or for storage.

**Site :6, NGR: 93770704, SMR: NG90NW0194.** The footings of 2, possibly 3 buildings, all adjoining, just above the shoreline. The central building is the most defined of the group, and is sub-rectangular, c 3.5m x 2.5m internally. The possible building to the east may have been a storage hut or boat shelter, whilst the scant remains to the west may have been a more temporary building, or net drying / repairing area. There is also a small unrecorded platform, in one corner of the substantial stony beach fronting the buildings, formed by a single course retaining wall of large boulders, now eroded by the sea.

**Site: 5, NGR: 93760741, SMR: NG90NW0193.** An area of 7 lazy beds close to building Site 6, with a small burn running down through the area. The beds are c 1.5 to 2m wide, and 5.5m to 8.5m long. They are well sheltered. A possible path runs above the beds up to another area of lazy beds, and the path which goes from Kinloch Hourn to Torrachoit.

**Site: 251, NGR: 93690753, SMR: NG90NW0150.** A substantial area, c 60m x 20m, of lazy beds on steep ground above Sites 5 and 6. The area is now cut by the unmade path to Torrachoit.

**Site:252, NGR: 93680754, SMR:NG90NW0151.** An oval enclosure just above the area of lazy beds (Site 251). Surrounded by possible man made earth banks and large stones. Size c 9m x 7m.

## **Allt a Choire Reidh**

The Allt a Choire Reidh is one of the most substantial rivers flowing into Loch Hourn. It has a spectacular waterfall about 300m inland from the shoreline. Below the waterfall there is a huge area of boulder strewn outwash, masked by heavy bracken infestation. Branching off east from the main watercourse are 2 side valleys heading into steep cliffs, the latter frequented only by feral goats and deer. Nearer to the shoreline is a large enigmatic level grassy area, also infested by bracken, and today very wet. It is a difficult area to prospect and record, mainly due to the bracken and boulders on the outwash.

A considerable number of structures have been identified, possibly sheiling huts and their associated enclosures, and possibly some ploughed rig and furrow on the level ground near to the shore. The area is very exposed to the westerly winds coming straight down the loch. Some of the sites away from the shoreline, and outwith the main survey, were recorded briefly for general interest. As there is no evidence of any farmstead here, the area may have always been summer sheilings, possibly for the settlements at the head of the loch.

**Site: 255, NGR: 93590772, SMR: NG90NW0145.** A possible rectangular sheiling hut measuring c 5m x 3.5m externally, with earth and stone footings remaining to a height of c .3m, and a spread of c 1m.

**Site: 253, NGR: 93720761, SMR: NG90NW0152.** Cultivation remains on the bealach between Caolas an Loch Beag and a small valley leading down to the Allt a Choire Reidh. It comprises of an area of lazy beds and an area of improved grassland, measuring c 40m x 20m in total. A further small area of lazy beds lie a short distance up a little side valley.

**Site: 258, NGR: 93500774, SMR: NG90NW0148.** A small bracken covered enclosure c 3m x 2.5m set on a revetted platform. A possible animal pen.

**Site: 55, NGR: 93500760, SMR: NG90NW0209.** Cultivation remains comprised of 4 broad rigs, c 68m long and 6m wide. Rig height c 1m. The associated photograph has the 4 surveyors standing in the furrows between the rigs to emphasise the form of these remains. It is possible that these rigs were hand dug, but it is also possible that a horse was walked over from Kinloch Hourn, and a plough brought in by boat. This plot is extremely exposed to westerlies and subject to salt spray, being adjacent to the shoreline. Not conducive to growing arable crops. No nearby buildings.

**Site: 256, NGR: 93530773, SMR: NG90NW0146.** A small roughly circular enclosure, c 5m in diam, but with one straight wall. The remains consist of a line of bracken covered stones to c 2m in height.

**Site: 257, NGR: 93530777, SMR: NG90NW0147.** Cultivation remains consisting of a small area of lazy beds.

**Site: 56, NGR: 93550760, SMR: NG90NW0157.** A small enclosure, possibly a small animal pen, set under a rock face, c 2m x 2m internally formed mostly by rock flakes set on end.

**Site: 152, NGR: 93500762, SMR: NG90NW0211.** A clearance cairn c 2m in diam, most probably associated with the lazy beds Site 153 nearby.

**Site: 153, NGR: 93450762, SMR: NG90NW0212.** Cultivation remains comprising a small area of 6 lazy beds, c 6m long and 1.7m wide.

**Site: 259, NGR: 93490768, SMR: NG90NW0149.** 3 clearance cairns, the largest being c 3m x 2m and .5m in height. Possibly associated with the area of lazy beds some 30m up slope to the NE.

**Site: 13, NGR: 93450768, SMR: NG90NW0201.** Various structures forming a complex of possible buildings and enclosures, with an adjacent area of lazy beds. The remains are bracken covered footings with some stone showing to c .25m high and .5m wide. There are 2 enclosures, and a building c 3m square. There are 3 lazy beds c 18m long and 2m wide.

**Site: 9, NGR: 93430764, SMR: NG90NW0197.** Various structures heavily covered in bracken forming a possible sheiling site. Straight line settings of stones with gaps, curved settings of stones and a short section of two courses, indicate a possible enclosure and 2 more indistinct structures.

**Site: 10, NGR: 93430765, SMR: NG90NW0198.** A possible structure indicated by a number of large stones set in a straight line. Site very heavily infested with bracken, the removal of which would be essential to confirm the nature of this site.

**Site: 8, NGR: 93400760, SMR: NG90NW0196.** A possible hut in an area of heavy bracken infestation, indicated by a raised area of stone scatter with sufficient definition of the edge to indicate a possible structure. Close to the mouth of the river. The site could have been eroded by flooding and the sea.

**Site: 12, NGR: 93400765, SMR: NG90NW0200.** A complex site of 3 possible structures, indicated by sub circular settings of stones in heavily bracken infested ground. Possible enclosures or buildings. The best defined structure is a possible hut c 3m in diam. The raised nature of the site indicates a possible sheiling.

**Site: 14, NGR: 93390763, SMR: NG90NW0202.** 3 possible structures, either enclosures or huts. The most clearly defined is indicated by sub-rectangular footings c 4m square external. The generally raised site indicates a summer sheiling.

**Site: 11, NGR: 93390763, SMR: NG90NW0199.** A complex raised site. 3 possible structures in heavily bracken infested ground, indicated by a row of large stones that may be the base of a wall, and a semi circular setting of stones possibly part of another building. The raised nature of the site again may indicate a summer sheiling.

**Site: 57, NGR: 93360770, SMR: NG90NW0158.** A small field or enclosure, formed by the river on one side, the beach, and the remains of a dry stone wall on the third side.

## **Torrachoit**

The occupied cottage at Torrachoit was built by Robert Birkbeck late in the 19thC, primarily as a watchers house, presumably for deer poachers coming in by boat. The cottage sits on a fine south facing site, close to the shore in a sheltered bay. The site may well have had earlier dwellings on it. Recording here was restricted to unoccupied structures and features only. The only cultivable ground, apart from the enclosed cottage garden, lies some distance to the west. The boulder strewn ground above Torrachoit rises continuously and steeply, with many exposed crags, until extensive peat diggings are reached. There are also several substantial boundary dykes, of turf construction, rising way up the hill-slope, none of which have been recorded.

There are numerous clearance cairns on the mounded bracken covered peninsular between Torrachoit and Inbhir an Dubh Uillt, and also the indications of drains, but there isn't a lazy bed to be found. The nearby houses at Inbhir an Dubh Uillt have no obviously associated cultivable ground. How the land was divided up and how it was worked remains a mystery. There are the remains of a typical 19thC iron fence, more or less enclosing the peninsular. There are also 2 possible quarry sites. The best preserved sheepfold on Kinloch Hourne Estate is situated on low lying ground between Torrachoit and Inbhir an Dubh Uillt.

**Site: 58, NGR: 93240785, SMR: NG90NW0159.** A small enclosure, c 6m x 5m externally, defined by moss covered stone footings. Situated on a wet but level area above and to the east of the cottage.

**Site: 265, NGR: 93120787, SMR: NG90NW0139.** An elongated rectangular grass covered platform, c15m x 3m, cut into the hillside. Possibly a site for a temporary building, or a cultivation terrace.

**Site: 59, NGR: 93120782, SMR: NG90NW0160.** A cleared landing place, c 3m wide leading up to a small level grassy area with the stone footings of a possible small hut.

**Site: 264, NGR: 93110790, SMR: NG90NW0140.** A clearance cairn of mixed sized stones, c 3m long and 1m high, built up against a large boulder.

**Site: 263, NGR: 93100789, SMR: NG90NW0142.** A circular moss covered clearance cairn, c 2m in diam and .6m high.

**Site: 262, NGR: 93090789, SMR: NG90NW0141.** A roughly square clearance cairn of large boulders, c 1.5m x 1.5m and 1m high.

**Site: 260, NGR: 93090787, SMR: NG90NW0144.** A circular clearance cairn, c 3m in diam and .7m high.

**Site: 261, NGR: 93080786, SMR: NG90NW0143.** A clearance cairn, c 3m long and 1.5m wide, with a height of .4m.

**Site: 60, NGR: 93070788, SMR: NG90NW0161.** A circular clearance cairn, c 1m in diam.

**Site: 61, NGR: 93070787, SMR: NG90NW0162.** A circular clearance cairn, c1m in diam

**Site: 62, NGR: 93060786, SMR: NG90NW0163.** A circular clearance cairn, c 1m in diam.

**Site: 270, NGR: 93050787, SMR: NG90NW0134.** A possible structure with low earth banks forming the wall footings. Size, c 4m long and 3m wide. Bracken covered.

**Site: 63, NGR: 93050785, SMR: NG90NW0164.** A circular clearance cairn, c 1m in diam.

**Site: 64, NGR: 93050784, SMR: NG90NW0165.** A circular clearance cairn c 1m in diam

**Site: 269, NGR: 93040787, SMR: NG90NW0137.** A circular clearance cairn, c 4m in diam and .7m in height, with a horse-shoe shaped opening to one side.

**Site: 268, NGR: 93030787, SMR: NG90NW0135.** An oval clearance cairn, c 4m x 2m, and .5m in height.

**Site: 65, NGR: 93030786, SMR: NG90NW0166.** A circular clearance cairn, c1m in diam.

**Site: 266, NGR:93020786, SMR:NG90NW0138.** A possible quarry site, with a rear face height of c 4m, and some 4m deep, and 5m wide. Situated reasonably close to the sheepfold, Site 154.

**Site: 154, NGR: 93010792, SMR: NG90NW0213.** A substantial sheepfold, c17m x 14m overall. Standing walls of dry-stone construction to an average height of 1.6m, with a turf cope. Walls at base c1m wide, tapering to c.5m at the top, roughly coursed. Some evidence of stone robbing on one side.

**Site: 267, NGR: 93010788, SMR: NG90NW0136.** A possible quarry site, c 13m long and 3m wide, with a face height of c 1.5m. Moss and tree covered.

**Site: 66, NGR: 93010785, SMR: NG90nw0167.** A circular clearance cairn, c1m in diam.

### **Inbhir an Dubh Uillt**

This is a small bay just west of Torrachoit, and directly opposite to Skiary on the south shore. A substantial burn comes down from the Lochan Torrachoit, high on the ridge above. The catchment for this lochan is very peaty, possibly reflecting in the name of the burn.

There are the remains of four substantial dwelling houses at Inbhir an Dubh Uillt, three of which sit close to the shore-line, in what today is very boggy ground. The fourth house sits some 60m or so back from the sea and close to the burn. These houses appear as unroofed on the first edition ordnance survey, but to date we have not found historical records for a settlement here. The intriguing thing is that within all but one of the houses there are the low walls of later small huts, constructed by robbing out the walls of the main buildings. Clearly, after abandonment of the houses, another group of people moved in who required only small temporary accommodation. We are deducing that they were some of the seasonal herring fishermen.

The nearby beach is stony, and there is no real evidence of clearance for boats, but this bay is quite exposed, and over time any clearance could have been redistributed. There are no obvious working areas or drying greens in the vicinity of the houses, nor is there any cultivable land near to hand. The slopes above are strewn with boulders and very steep. We can only assume that the original occupants of the houses had a share of the peninsular between here and Torracoit, where the many clearance cairns are, and that they also made a living in part from the sea.

Just west of this settlement a substantial area of predominantly oak woodland reaches right down to the shore.

**Site: 273, NGR: 92960793, SMR: NG90NW0131.** The remains of a rectangular stone built hut, c 4m x 3m external, lying within and on the east side of the larger building Site271. Walls of rough stonework, standing to c1m in height. There is no evidence of an entrance. A substantial multi stemmed ash tree is growing up in the middle of this structure.

**Site: 272, NGR: 92960793, SMR: NG90NW0132.** The remains of a second rectangular hut, c 4m x 3m external, lying within and to the west side of the larger building Site 271. Walls of rough stonework stand to c 1m.



**Site: 271, NGR: 92960793, SMR: NG90NW0133.** The remains of a substantial rectangular building, most probably a dwelling house, c 9m x 5m external, in wet boggy ground. The remaining wall footings are in two parallel courses, and c .8m in overall width, with square corners, inside and out. There is no evidence of an entrance, or of internal walls. There is much tumble to the inside in addition to Sites 272 and 273.

**Site: 157, NGR: 92940795, SMR: NG90NW0215.** The remains of the walls and the footings of a substantial building, most probably a dwelling house, c 9m x 3m external, with later internal alterations. Outwith and to the south of the main building is a revetted level area with the revetment faced by stone. The original entrance on the south side appears to have been made up when the building was altered. The back wall is revetted into the hillside with a drainage ditch above.

**Site: 156, NGR: 92940795, SMR: NG90NW0214.** The substantial remains of a small rectangular hut, c 2.5m x 2m internal, built within the east side of Site 157. The hut was built with secondary walls within the outer walls of the larger building. The west side of the older building appears to have been robbed for this purpose. There is also a possibility that this hut may have been used at a later date as an animal pen.

**Site: 20, NGR: 92930790, SMR: NG90NW0208.** This site lies away from the shore and the other houses, between the main burn and a secondary burn. 2 possible structures are indicated amongst the boulder outwash by straight line settings of stones, but they are less visible than the other buildings nearby. Only excavation would reveal more.

**Site: 18, NGR: 92920792, SMR: NG90NW0206.** The remains of a building c 7.5m x 4m overall, a possible dwelling house, close to the shore-line, in wet boggy ground. The corners are rounded inside and out. Within the primary wall footings of this building, are the remains of a small hut, Site 19. The original house doorway to the south appears to have been blocked up. Outwith the building on the south side there is probably a cobbled path c1m wide.

**Site: 19, NGR: 92920792, SMR: NG90NW0207.** The remains of a small hut, built within the footings of Site 18. The hut measures c 4m x 3.5m external.

**Site: 15, NGR: 92910792, SMR: NG90NW0205.** The remains of a substantial building, probably a dwelling house, c 9m x 4m, built close to the shore-line in wet boggy ground. Only the lower walls remain to 2 or 3 courses, as the walls have been substantially robbed to build 2 smaller huts, Sites 16 and 17, within the walls of the primary building. The building appears to have had a paved area at the west end, and along the front, with a drain and retaining bank at the rear.

**Site: 16, NGR: 92910792, SMR: NG90NW0204.** The tumbled remains of a rough stone built hut at the west end of Site 15, c 3.25m square internal.

**Site: 17, NGR: 92910792, SMR: NG90NW0203.** The tumbled remains of a second hut inside Site 15, but smaller at c 2m internal, and built at the east side.

**Site: 85, NGR: 92870795, SMR: NG90NW0168.** A dry-stone boundary wall, roughly built using medium to large boulders. This wall starts at the shore-line and runs uphill. Editors note: this wall is known to continue up as far as Lochan Torrachoit, and at some point it changes from stone construction to turf. Another turf wall heads off in a westerly direction at an angle to this wall above Glac an Tobair.

## **Glac an Tobair**

Almost a kilometre of shore-line covered under this name. There are increasing numbers of cleared landing places and associated hut remains. The woodland descends steeply to the shore in several places. Several of the best preserved huts are also in this area.

The “long dyke” also starts here and progresses up from the shore then westwards on approximately the 90m contour for about 1.5km, and finishes abruptly at the Allt Mhogh-Sgeir. This same dyke project was also started from a western position at Rubha Leac an Aoil, opposite to the Barrisdale moorings, when it was taken in an easterly direction as far as the Allt Granda. The 2 km in middle was never completed, and it remains a mystery as to why this “long dyke” project was started and what event caused it not to be completed.

**Site: 284, NGR: 92720793, SMR: NG90NW0106.** The low walls of a hut, c 2m internal, built on a sloping platform using a small in situ crag as the back wall. Tumble on the floor of the structure, and bracken covered.

**Site: 283, NGR:92710792, SMR: NG90NW0105.** A possible hut platform cut into the slope just above the shore-line, revetted on the lower side, bracken covered, c 2m x 2m internal.

**Site: 21, NGR: 92700789, SMR: NG90NW0019.** A cleared landing place, c 8m in width. This is one of the largest and best cleared landing places on the north shore of the Inner Loch apart from those still in use at Caolasmor and Torrachoit.

**Site: 285, NGR: 92700719, SMR: NG90NW0107.** A platform, possibly for a temporary hut or for storage at or slightly below the high water mark as it is today, defined by a squarish stone setting, to enclose an area roughly 2.5m square.

**Site: 22, NGR: 92690792, SMR: NG90NW0020.** A tiny structure, oval in shape, c1.5m x 1m, close to the shore-line. Bracken infested.

**Site: 23, NGR: 92680792, SMR: NG90NW0021.** A sub rectangular structure on the shoreline, formed by an edging of boulders, c 3m x 4m. The likely fill to form the original base has all been washed out by the sea. May have been a hut, or a storage area handy for the nearby landing place.

**Site: 24, NGR: 92680792, SMR:NG90NW0022.** The stone and boulder footings of a circular hut, c 3m x 2m internal. There is a possible associated structure not recorded close by, in the form of a small circle of stones below high tide level, which could be another washed out loading / unloading platform.

**Site: 286, NGR: 92670792, SMR: NG90NW0108.** A substantial cleared landing place, c 6m wide, and extending 10m down the beach. 2 large boulders on the shore-line may have been tying up points.

**Site: 287, NGR: 92650794, SMR: NG90NW0109.** The boulder footings of a roughly constructed, oval shaped hut, c 2m at its narrowest internal. Several large in situ boulders incorporated into the walls of the structure. There is a small rough platform alongside.

**Site: 158, NGR: 92620794, SMR: NG90NW0216.** A cleared landing place with a main slipway c 26m long x 4m wide, leading into 3 separate bays at the shoreline for boats to lay up.

**Site: 159, NGR: 92020794, SMR: NG90NW0217.** A small 3 sided structure on the high water mark formed from large boulders and stones. Possibly a storage or loading platform.

**Site: 88, NGR: 92580791, SMR: NG90NW0171.** One of a pair of the best preserved huts beside Loch Hourm. A generally square building, c 3m x 2m internal, constructed from large boulders and slabs. Beside the entrance on the south side there is a setting of 2 upright slabs with a gap between, filled with small stone tumble, under which there is charcoal, indicating that it was a fireplace. The site is heavily bracken infested, and removal of dead bracken from the floor area indicated that the floor was paved.

**Site: 87, NGR: 92560792, SMR: NG90NW0170.** The second hut paring with Site 88. The remains consist of bracken infested wall footings or low walls, roughly circular in shape, c 2m in internal diam. Close-by is a very small structure consisting of a large slab sitting on 2 flat topped boulders. This may have been a larder for the 2 huts.

**Site: 25, NGR: 92580795, SMR: NG90NW0023.** A small oval structure of a single stone setting, set against a rock face on a level platform. There is another possible "larder" close-by formed of a slab on top of 2 boulders.

**Site: 289, NGR: 92550787, SMR: NG90NW0111.** The moss and bracken covered boulder footings or low walls of a rectangular hut, c 3m x 2.5m external. A possible semi circular platform nearby at a lower level.

**Site: 288, NGR: 92550788, SMR: NG90NW0110.** A structure below the shoreline formed by a circular setting of large stones, c 2m diam internal, utilising a large in situ boulder as one "wall".

**Site: 86, NGR: 92550789, SMR: NG90NW0169.** A cleared landing place, c 25m long, narrowing from c 2m wide at low water level to 4m wide at the top, leads to 5 places to lay up a boat.

**Site: 301, NGR: 92510787, SMR: NG90NW0113.** In the lee of a rocky bluff, the stone footings or low walls of a small rectangular hut, c 3.5m x 3m external, with a possible semi circular platform to one side. A small circular area beside the entrance to the building might have been a hearth.

**Site: 300, NGR: 92510787, SMR: NG90NW0112.** A cleared landing place, c 9m long, 2.5m wide at the top, narrowing to 1.5 m lower down.

**Site: 89, NGR: 92500791, SMR: NG90NW0172.** A cut channel or trench, leading from a small burn down to a platform at shore level. The channel is c .3m deep and 1m wide, and appears to have been re-dug and diverted at least once. Editors note: a similar but less dramatic channel has been recorded leading to platforms on the south shore near to Fraoch Eilean.

**Site: 26, NGR: 92480783, SMR: NG90NW0024.** Two grassy platforms with some possible structural steps between, and possibly paved, close to the shoreline, which could have been used for storage.

**Site: 27, NGR: 92480783, SMR: NG90NW0025.** 2 or possibly 3 cleared landing places meeting at the shoreline.

**Site: 302, NGR: 92390780, SMR: NG90NW0114.** A cleared landing place c 12m long and 2.5m wide.

**Site: 303, NGR: 92380780, SMR: NG90NW0115.** A cleared landing place, c 12m long and 3m wide.

**Site: 304, NGR: 92370779, SMR: NG90NW0116.** A cleared landing place, c 11m long and 3.5m wide.

**Site: 305, NGR: 92360776, SMR: NG90NW0117.** A cleared landing place, c 3m wide lower down and 2m wide at the top.

**Site: 28, NGR: 92360780, SMR: NG90NW0026.** The square shaped, slightly bow fronted, boulder footings of a small hut, c 1.5m x 1.5m internal. Heavy bracken infestation.

**Site: 307, NGR: 92360781, SMR: NG90NW0119.** A roughly rectangular platform, maybe for a hut or other temporary structure, c 2.5m long x 1.5m wide. Appears to have a slab floor.

**Site: 90, NGR: 92350780, SMR: NG90NW0173.** The boulder footings or low wall of a small circular hut, c 3m internal, built just below the start of the "long dyke" boundary wall. A possible platform area close-by.

**Site: 306, NGR: 92340777, SMR: NG90NW0118.** Dry-stone boundary wall nicknamed the "long dyke" for easy reference. Well built with a turf cope, but somewhat ruinous near to the shore. Heads NNE to start with then veers west higher up, to contour at around the 90m level.

**Site: 164, NGR: 92260775, SMR: NG90NW0222.** A cleared landing place, c 38m long x 2m wide. Hut Site 163 lies immediately above.

**Site: 163, NGR: 92260775, SMR: NG90NW0221.** A stone built hut, c 3m x 2m internal, with walls remaining to .8m high, set under a steeply wooded and boulder strewn slope. A seemingly inaccessible place to land a boat and build a hut, but the evidence is there.

### **Cnap an t Sear**

This proved to be a most interesting area, as it is almost certain that a farmstead once occupied much of the ground here, with the dwelling house being close to the shore in the shelter of the Cnap an t Sear. To date, no historical evidence has been found referring to this place, but higher up above the house site there is a remarkably well laid out field system, with walls and ditches, and areas of lazy beds, which will require considerable further survey. Doubtlessly there will also be a sheiling site to be found.

There is clear evidence of later alterations to the main house with one or possibly 2 hut structures built within it. The surveying and recording was done at the end of a blustery wet day, when the whole team had walked in from Kinloch Hourn. Fortunately, the wind abated enough for the launch to come and pick everyone up, or it would have felt like an even longer walk back to base.

**Site: 308, NGR: 91880761, SMR: NG90NW0102.** The remains of a small oval hut, c 3.5m x 2.5m. The back wall is formed by a crag some 5m high. The walls are made of rough angular stones. There is a possible entrance in the E wall, and the lower (front) side is revetted. There is a possible small platform to one side c 1.5m in diam.

**Site: 166, NGR: 91930762, SMR: NG90NW0223.** The tumbled and moss / bracken covered remains of a roughly square building, possibly a later hut, or part of the primary building which was probably the original dwelling house. Size c 4m x 4.5m external. Apparently separated from Site 165, a smaller hut, by a cobbled area c 1m wide and 4m long, (the width of the whole structure).

**Site: 165, NGR: 91930762, SMR: NG90NW0223.** The tumbled remains of a small hut, c 1.7m x 1.5m internal. Editors note: This site, and 166 would benefit from revisiting, as they were recorded at the end of a long wet day. The clearing away of loose moss and bracken, might reveal the full extent and nature of any primary building or buildings.

**Site: 310, NGR: 91830751, SMR: NG90NW0104.** An enclosure wall, or possibly a boundary wall, closing the narrow gap of c 17m between the Cnap an t Sear outcrop and the main hill-slope. Partly formed by a line of large boulders, and partly by a stone and earth bank.

**Site: 91, NGR: 91800763, SMR: NG90NW0174.** The remains of a hollowed out rectangular building, c 6m x 3m overall, consisting of heavily bracken covered stone footings. There is evidence of a dividing wall within the structure. The building sits high up on a south facing slope above the bay.

**Site: 74, NGR: 91800770, SMR: NG90NW0188.** A substantial field system as identified by a group of features comprising: a field or enclosure system, areas of lazy beds, clearance cairns, and an enclosing outer wall. The site was not fully surveyed and recorded as it was some distance inland and away from the main survey area.

**Site: 381, NGR: 91770752, SMR: NG90NW0239.** A cleared landing place c 17m to the half tide level and 3m wide.

**Site: 380, NGR: 91750754, SMR: NG90NW0238.** A substantial cleared landing place, with room to haul out boats onto the grass above the beach.

**Site: 75, NGR: 91650764, SMR: NG90NW0187.** A pit or scoop on a steeply sloping site adjacent to a wall. May have been a source of material for the wall.

**Site: 76, NGR: 91650764, SMR: NG90NW0185.** An enclosing dyke running parallel to a burn. The dyke follows the burn down from a level area about 70m above sea level to the beach.

**Site: 77, NGR: 91650765, SMR: NG90NW0186.** A pit or scoop nearby to Site 75, similarly adjacent to the wall.

**Site: 381, NGR: 91600760, SMR: NG90NW0183.** A cleared landing place.

**Site: 78, NGR: 91580759, SMR: NG90NW0184.** The remains of a roughly built circular hut, c 3m in diam, with stone walls standing to c 1m in height.

## **Allt Mhogh Sgeir**

The area covered by this name is focussed on a small fluvial delta, with two streams dividing it into three parts. The core area is roughly rectangular in shape, c 150m wide x 50m deep, on which there is a settlement and a fishing station. There are a few additional sites lying outwith the core area.

The core area has been improved and appears to be quite fertile, but is covered by rampant bracken in the summertime, masking all of the structures and features.

It is a multi period area which may have been used over a long period of time. Some of the structures show evidence of alteration and re-use. Strangely, we have to date not found a single historical reference to this place.

Fifty four structures and features were recorded in the core area, and a plan of this area was drawn up at a scale of 1:1,000.

The structures and features comprise: a jetty and several areas of cleared beach, the wall footings of a row of buildings on the immediate foreshore, the wall footings of two larger buildings set well back from the shore, one measuring 9m x 4m and the other 20m x 5m, eight rectangular or sub-rectangular flat areas roughly 9 to 12m square which may have been either cultivation plots or net drying greens, several small structures which may have been temporary dwellings or storage facilities – three were substantial and constructed within and using stones from the previous buildings – of the eight other structures, four were rough stone alignments using large natural in-situ boulders as part of their construction, several platforms and other features of unidentified use, and two areas of lazy beds and other cultivation remains.

On a separate expedition to look at the woodlands higher up on the slopes between Caolasmor and Coire Mhogh Sgeir, two sheilings were discovered in Coire Mhogh Sgeir. They were briefly recorded and await more detailed survey.

**Site: 206, NGR: 91010802, SMR: NG90NW0050.** The low stone walls of a small enclosure c 5m in diam, in bracken infested ground, high up in Coire Mhogh Sgeir.

**Site: 205, NGR: 90980801, SMR: NG90NW0049.** The square shaped stone footings of a sheiling hut, c 2m x 2m internal, on a bracken covered made up mound, high up in Coire Mhogh Sgeir.

**Site: 203, NGR: 90940798, SMR: NG90NW0047.** The low stone footings of a sheiling hut set into the slope, c2m x 1.5m internal, possibly for storage. Part of a larger grouping of structures. Bracken infested site.

**Site: 204, NGR: 90940798, SMR: NG90NW0048.** The low footings of a small sheiling hut, c 2m x 1.5m internal. Part of a larger grouping of structures.

**Site: 202, NGR: 90860804, SMR: NG90NW0046.** The oval shaped grass covered footings of a small sheiling hut, c 1.5m x 2m internal. Close to site 201. An excellent spring rises from the bank just below sites 202 and 201.

**Site: 201, NGR: 90860804, SMR: NG90NW0045.** The oval shaped grass covered footings of a small sheiling hut, c1.5m x 2m internal.

**Site: 378, NGR: 91550758, SMR: NG90NW0235.** The dry stone remains of a small hut, using natural in-situ rock outcrop for part of the walls, c 2.5m x 2m internal.

**Site: 96, NGR: 91540761, SMR: NG90NW0179.** The variable remains of an enclosure dyke.

**Site: 377, NGR: 91480756, SMR: NG90NW0236.** The dry stone walls of a small hut, c 3m x 3m overall. Incorporates several large in-situ boulders into the walls.

**Site: 373, NGR: 91460757, SMR: NG90NW0232.** A cleared landing place, with a single slipway leading up to 3 bays for laying up boats.

**Site: 375, NGR: 91430756, SMR: NG90NW0234.** The tumbled stone walls of a roughly built hut, c 3.4m x 1.5m overall, situated just above the high water mark.

**Site: 374, NGR: 91420755, SMR: NG90NW0231.** A double channel cleared landing place.

**Site: 376, NGR: 91420756, SMR: NG90NW0233.** The partly tumbled roughly built dry stone walls of a small hut, standing just above the high water mark.

**Site: 95, NGR: 91370754, SMR: NG90NW0178.** The remains of a small hut, c 3m x 4m internal, constructed with a semi circle of boulders, and using a natural rock face as the back wall. The hut lies c 15m above high water mark.

**Site: 371, NGR: 91340750, SMR: NG90NW0230.** The remains of a storage platform or possibly a hut, c 2.5m x 1.5m internal, built using large stones and in-situ boulders. Close to a cleared landing place.

**Site: 170, NGR: 91320751, SMR: NG90NW0228.** The remains of a storage platform or small hut, c 2m x 1m internal, set against natural in-situ rock and boulders.

**Site: 169, NGR: 91320751, SMR: NG90NW0227.** The remains of a small hut, with walls of large boulders, c 2.6m x 2m internal, with a clear entrance facing the shore. Also set against natural in-situ rock. There is a possible larder or small storage area in one corner of the structure.

**Site: 167, NGR: 91310753, SMR: NG90NW0225.** A stone built hut, c 3.5m x 2m internal with walls still standing to c 1m, also some tumble, built on a rocky bluff some 30m away from the sea with no direct shore access. Apparent doorway in one corner. Maybe a building associated with the nearby core settlement, rather than seasonal herring fishing.

**Site: 168, NGR: 91300759, SMR: NG90NW0226.** The remains of a rough stone built platform or hut base, revetted into the hillside.

**Site: 94, NGR: 91300759, SMR: NG90NW0177.** An enclosure dyke, possibly a continuation or extension to Site 93, also an enclosure dyke.

**Site: 272, NGR: 91290753, SMR: NG90NW0229.** A platform, possibly enhanced from a natural hollow in the hillside, with stones piled to the downside. Possibly associated with Site 169, a small hut.

**Site: 93, NGR: 91280758, SMR: NG90NW0176.** An enclosure dyke which fills in the gap between 2 rock outcrops. Possibly continues as the separately recorded Site 92.

**Site: 92, NGR: 91250756, SMR: NG90NW0175.** An enclosure dyke, roughly built using large boulders and visible as a low bank. Length c 50m, with a right angle bend in the middle.

**Site: 140, NGR: 91230751, SMR: NG90NW0063.** A small area of lazy beds, c 5m x 5m, just above the shoreline on the edge of the core area..

**Site: 139, NGR: 91230753, SMR: NG90NW0182.** The wasted roughly built walls of a small sub-circular hut, c 2m internal, set on the slope some 15m back from the shore-line.

**Site: 141, NGR: 91220751, SMR: NG90NW0064.** The wasted remains of a small rectangular hut, c 2.5m x 1.5m internal, close to the shore-line. There is an apron of stonework c 1m in height to the lower side, and a small revetted platform below that.

**Site: 145, NGR: 91220752, SMR: NG90NW0062.** An area of improved ground, c10m x 10m, interpreted as a possible working area for drying and mending nets.

**Site: 137, NGR: 91220755, SMR: NG90NW0180.** An apparently levelled sub-circular platform or structure, c 3m x 2m internal, cut into the slope with an indistinct edge of buried stones.

**Site: 142, NGR: 91210751, SMR: NG90NW0061.** The moss and bracken covered remains of a roughly circular stone built hut, c 1.5m internal, cut into the slope beside the east burn, and with an apparent entrance in the SE side. Also close to the shore-line.

**Site: 138, NGR: 91210753, SMR: NG90NW0181.** The tumbled remains of a sub-rectangular hut, c 4m x 2m internal, with walls remaining to .5m in height. A substantial ash tree has established itself inside this structure.

**Site: 322, NGR: 91200753, SMR: NG90NW0069.** A linear feature, being a double sided earth bank, c.5m in height, close to the side of the un-named east burn. It may have been constructed as flood protection, or representing the side of a trackway leading up out of the settlement.

**Site: 103, NGR: 91190750, SMR: NG90NW0079.** The remains of a small rectangular building, c 5.2m x 3.6m external, sitting on its own on the west side of the east burn, on a built up platform above the shore-line. The walls stand to c .4m, and are .8m wide at base. There are 2 possible entrances.

**Site: 104, NGR: 91190752, SMR: NG90NW0077.** A rectangular structure, c 5.6m x 3.3m, in the form of a low level platform, with stone revetment, and possible stonework under the long walls. Also evidence of a back ditch. Possibly the platform for a timber shed.

**Site: 106, NGR: 91180748, SMR: NG90NW0080.** The cleared landing place to the east side of the jetty, measuring c 15m wide and 7m deep. It appears to have been deepened by cutting into the shoreline. A further cleared area immediately adjacent to the jetty is c 4.6m in width, and also appears to have been deepened into the shoreline. Possibly the material arising from the deepening work was used to create the raised platforms at the top of the jetty. A few obvious large boulders at the top of the cleared landings were used as tying up or hauling out points.



**Site: 105, NGR91180751, SMR: NG90NW0078.** A possible boat naust at the top of Site 106. The feature is c 7.6m long, 2.2m wide, .7m deep, and curves slightly, making it possible that it is an enhanced old run of the burn used a naust.

**Site: 232, NGR 91180752, SMR: NG90NW0072.** A roughly circular clearance cairn, c 3m diam and .5m high, closely associated with Site 231, (lazy beds).

**Site: 323, NGR: 91180752, SMR: NG90NW0068.** A circular paved platform at ground level fronted by a single row of stones revetting the down-slope, c 3m in diam.

**Site: 136, NGR: 91180753, SMR: NG90NW0070.** A small clearance cairn built up against a smooth rock outcrop.

**Site: 126, NGR: 91180757, SMR: NG90NW0055.** A platform or possible base for a temporary structure, c 6.4m long x 2.4m wide and .6m in depth. Lined at outer edge with random stones. Situated well above the main settlement and close to the Allt Mhogh Sgeir.

**Site: 231, NGR: 91170753, SMR: NG90NW0071.** 2 apparent lazy beds, c 2m wide and 10m long, and a double sided bank, c 10m long, running off at right angles from the foot of the 2 lazy beds, with a cleared level area of ground in the angle of the 2 features.

**Site: 107, NGR: 91160748, SMR: NG90NW0053.** The wasted remains of a substantial pier or jetty. Total length 32m, with a slight dog leg. Built from large boulders, all covered in seaweed. The max height of the main jetty is c 1.2m, and the average 1m. There is also evidence of an earlier jetty in the form of a straight line boulder setting c 5m long. The dog leg is c 12m long, and ends in a wall at right angles, only exposed at low water. One section of this dog leg is c 2m high for 7.5m of length. This appears to be an adaptation of the older jetty.

There is a working area, c 4.5m wide on top of the jetty, seen as a grassy area today, with a tumbled retaining wall to the west side.

**Site: 130, NGR: 91160750, SMR: NG90NW0087.** A linear feature made by 2 settings of stones forming the north and south sides of a flat working area, Site175.

**Site: 108, NGR: 91160750, SMR: NG90NW0081.** The east most of a row of buildings which lie parallel to and immediately above the shoreline. The building is rectangular in shape, c 4.5m long and 3.8m wide internal, with the footings only remaining as a single row setting of stones. Grass and bracken covered. May have been the base for a timber building.

**Site: 175, NGR: 91160750, SMR: NG90NW0076.** A cleared possible working area, trapezoidal in shape, c 14m x 12m, bounded by stone settings on 3 sides. Sites 108 and 109 are immediately adjacent.

**Site: 109, NGR: 91160750, SMR: NG90NW0073.** The moss and bracken covered stone footings of a building, c 9m long and 3.9m wide external, in the row of buildings just above the shore-line. Sits between Sites 108 and 110. The north side is slightly revetted into the slope and an opening, c 1.7m wide leads into a depression, c 3m long and 2m wide, which is recessed deeper into the slope.

**Site: 171, NGR: 91160750, SMR: NG90NW0054.** A linear feature being a tumbled retaining wall, supporting the long raised platform on which buildings Sites 108, 109 and 110 are constructed. The feature curves off around the shoreline in an “L” shape. The tumble has landed onto the working area above the jetty. Editors note: This feature may have continued right along the shoreline as far as the Allt Mhogh Sgeir at one time, and has been lost to storm damage. Similar features have been noted at Skiary and at Caolasmor, to protect and possibly raise the edge of valuable land immediately above the shoreline.

**Site: 131, NGR: 91160751, SMR: NG90NW0052.** The bracken covered wasted remains of a dry-stone building, c 2m x 1.5m internal, and 3.7m x 4.6m external. Possible entrance in SE. Probably a temporary dwelling hut or store, from its internal size. It is thought that it may overlay an earlier more complex structure.

**Site: 125, NGR: 91160755, SMR: NG90NW0056.** A curved setting of substantial angular boulders, c 9m in length, forming a linear feature. May have been a retaining wall for a trackway or for ducting water away from the area below.

**Site: 176, NGR: 91150748, SMR: NG90NW0074.** A cleared landing place, 2m to 3m wide, which may also have been a former course of the Allt Mhogh Sgeir.

**Site: 111, NGR: 91150749, SMR: NG90NW0083.** The large stone and boulder footings of a building, c 5.4m long x 3.5m wide internal, in the same line of buildings as Sites 108, 109 and 110, but set back by c 2m, also slightly cut into the slope on a platform deeper than the actual building. Apparent entrances in the W and N walls. There is a small curving ramp at the SW corner, and large boulders retain the cut slope just to the W of this building. May have been a further structure adjacent on the west side.

**Site: 110, NGR: 91150749, SMR: NG90NW0082.** The moss and bracken covered tumbled remains of a substantial building, c 4.2m x 4.2m internal, in line and abutting building Site 109. Sizeable stones used in the footings, which remain to .6m high and .8m wide.

**Site: 115, NGR: 91150751, SMR: NG90NW0059.** The tumbled bracken covered footings of a small rectangular building, c 4.7m x 4.3m external. This building is just N of Site 114, and abutting Site 128.

**Site: 129, NGR: 91150751, SMR: NG90NW0060.** Constructed within Site 128, the tumbled moss and bracken covered remains of a substantial square shaped hut, c 3.4m by 3.4m. Walls remain to .9m in height.

**Site: 128, NGR: 91150752, SMR: NG90NW0051.** The moss and bracken covered stone footings of a very substantial and complex long building, c 20.2m x 5.2 at the N end and 4.5m at the S end. Notable not only for its overall size, but that it is the only building at Allt Mhogh Sgeir with its long axis orientated N/S. An annotated sketch plan is appended to this report.

**Site: 127, NGR: 91150754, SMR: NG90NW0057.** A pit, recessed into the slope, possibly cut into the bed-rock, c 4m long, 2m wide and 1.5m deep at the back. Bracken and bramble covered.

**Site: 112, NGR: 91140749, SMR: NG90NW0084.** A pit, recessed into a bank, c 2.5m long, 1.5m wide and .8m deep. Grass and bracken covered.

**Site: 114, NGR: 91140750, SMR: NG90NW0086.** A cleared flat working area, grass and bracken covered, c 9m x 10m, bounded on the W side by a rising revetted slope.

**Site: 113, NGR: 91140750, SMR: NG90NW0085.** A grass and bracken covered flat working area, c 8m x 10m, divided from the lower working area Site 114, by a stony revetted slope, and also bounded on the E side by a rising revetted slope. Editors note: clearly a lot of effort was put into the construction of these working areas, which we think may have been used for the drying and mending of nets. Poles may have been erected on a least some of these areas.

**Site: 144, NGR: 91140751, SMR: NG90NW0091.** A possible working area, c 6m x 5m, grass and bracken covered, adjacent to the long building Site 128.

**Site: 116, NGR: 91140751, SMR: NG90NW0088.** The moss and bracken covered footings or low walls of a small circular shaped hut, c 3.3m external, also using a large in-situ boulder as one wall. The footings are a single alignment of large stones.

**Site: 117, NGR: 91130750, SMR: NG90NW0075.** The remains of a small rectangular hut, c 3.6m x 3.2m external, set against a very large boulder, (c1.7m high) which acts as one wall. The stone walls remain to .8m in height, and there is an entrance in the SW corner. The large boulder is on the very edge of the Allt Mhogh Sgeir.

**Site: 118, NGR: 91130751, SMR: NG90NW0089.** A flat grass and bracken covered working area, c 11m x 10.4m, set into a depression, with banks on 2 opposite sides to 1.5m in height.

**Site: 119, NGR: 91130752, SMR: NG90NW0090.** The bracken covered footings or low walls of a substantial building, c 8,9m x 5.2 external, cut into the slope, and incorporating a large in situ boulder into the E wall. There are 2 compartments, that to the E measuring 5.2m internal, and to the W 2m internal. No evidence of an entrance in the south (front) wall. Editors note: having studied this building on several occasions, it is possible that the smaller W compartment, where the walls are higher, may be a secondary hut, and similar to building Site 157 at Inbhir an Dubh Uillt, where there is evidence of the original house entrance being stopped up when the secondary building was constructed.

**Site: 120, NGR: 91130754, SMR: NG90NW0065.** The bracken covered footings or low walls of a small hut, c 4.2m x 2.5m external. The hut uses a large in-situ boulder as the back wall, and the built walls consist of a single course of roughly positioned large stones.

**Site: 132, NGR: 91130755, SMR: NG90NW0101.** A linear clearance cairn, c 12m long, beside Site 121.

**Site: 149, NGR: 91120748, SMR: NG90NW0095.** A cleared landing place, c 2m wide, situated just to the S of site148, and may be associated with it.

**Site: 148, NGR: 91120748, SMR: NG90NW0096.** A structure of much tumbled stone, recessed into the bank behind the shoreline, c 6m long, 3m wide and 2m deep at the back.

**Site: 133, NGR: 91120749, SMR: NG90NW 0098.** A flat working area, c 15m x 10m, just above Site 148, with a revetted stone edge on the W side.

**Site: 121, NGR: 91120754, SMR: NG90NW0066.** A working area or possible cultivation plot surrounding hut Site 120, c 20 square m.

**Site: 123, NGR: 91120755, SMR: NG90NW0067.** The bracken covered footings or low walls of a small circular hut, c 2.8m internal, using a large in-situ boulder as a back wall. An entrance of c.9m width is in the SW side.

**Site: 150, NGR: 91110749, SMR: NG90NW0094.** A working area c 12m square, with a small clearance cairn on the N side.

**Site: 146, NGR: 91110750, SMR: NG90NW0093.** A large clearance cairn, c 3m in diam, and .8m high, sits within the rectangular area Site 133.

**Site: 122, NGR: 91110754, SMR: NG90NW0058.** A possible structure, c 3m x 3m, in the form of a scoop within a raised area to W of improved ground Site121. Barely discernable surrounds of stone settings on 3 sides. No visible evidence of the footings of any building.

**Site: 124, NGR: 91100757, SMR: NG90NW0092.** A possible retaining wall at the side of the Allt Mhogh Sgeir, on a bend, probably constructed to prevent flooding of the core area below.

**Site174, NGR: 91090748, SMR: NG90NW0097.** A cleared landing place, c 6m wide, with a very large boulder on the shore line at the top, making an ideal tying up point.

**Site: 173, NGR: 91070748, SMR: NG90NW0099.** The square shaped, moss and bracken covered stone footings of a small hut, c 2m x 1.5m internal. Set against large boulder, c 1.5m high.

**Site: 172, NGR: 91000743, SMR: NG90NW0100.** A possible boat naust in an enhanced natural rock recess above the shoreline, c 2.5m wide and 15m long. A substantial spike of rock at the top end could have been used as the anchor point for hauling up a boat.

### **Rubha na h-Uigaig**

This is a distinct rocky peninsular with a very sheltered anchorage to the east, and a more exposed bay to the west. The east bay also has deep water in the lee of the peninsular and a substantial beach, a large part of which has been cleared. The east bay is the most densely hatted area along the north shore, but there was no evidence of any permanent buildings.

Above are steep craggy cliffs with remnants of Caledonian pine, and only one small area of lazy beds was found. Being close to Allt Mhogh Sgeir, it is possible that at the height of fishing activities, many of the small boat crews camped here, but landed their catches for processing at Allt Mhogh Sgeir.

**Site: 1, NGR: 90890743, SMR: NG90NW0189.** A possible carved stone, showing curved lines on one face.

**Site: 2, NGR: 90880745, SMR: NG90NW0190.** A area of 2 lazy beds, c 1.5m wide and 5m long.

**Site: 3, NGR: 90850746, SMR: NG90NW0191.** The moss and bracken covered footings or low walls of a small oval shaped hut, c 4m wide and 2m deep internal, cut into the slope, just above the shore line. No obvious entrance.

**Site: 226, NGR: 90820740, SMR: NG90NW0043.** The bracken covered boulder footings or low walls of a sub-rectangular hut, c 3m x 2.5m internal, built on a raised platform just above the shoreline. Walls crudely built by infilling the gaps between in-situ boulders with smaller boulders.

**Site: 4, NGR: 90820741, SMR: NG90NW0192.** A cleared landing place.

**Site: 50, NGR: 90810740, SMR: NG90NW.** The bracken covered footings or low walls of a substantial hut, c 3m x 2.5m internal. Built on a raised platform with the walls being a single setting of boulders, all c .5m in diameter. Entrance on the shore side.

**Site: 47, NGR: 90760735, SMR: NG90NW0039.** The grass and bracken covered low stone walls of a raised circular hut, c 2m internal. Clearly defined walls to .5m in height. There are the possible oval footings of another structure, or storage area immediately adjacent to this hut.

**Site: 48, NGR: 90760740, SMR: NG90NW0040.** A cleared landing place, in effect a cleared beach, c 45m deep, 8m wide at low tide, and 15m wide at the shore-line. The shore line is quite straight, somewhat odd in a round bay, and may have been cut back to enlarge the top of the beach in order to make room for more boats. This is the beach where a heavy severely rusted and broken pulley block, with anti reverse ratchet was found.

**Site: 49, NGR: 90760739, SMR: NG90NW0041.** A paved rock shelter, c 3m x 1.5m, with small apron. No evidence of a front wall. Could have been covered by a tarpaulin.

**Site: 43, NGR: 90740737, SMR: NG90NW0035.** The bracken infested boulder footings or low walls of a small circular shaped hut, c 2m internal diam, built amongst rock fall at the base of a small cliff. Uses a number of in-situ boulders in the construction. There is a small level space alongside.

**Site: 45, NGR: 90740737, SMR: NG90NW0037.** The distinctive low walls, being 2 courses of boulders, of a small hut, c 1.5m x 2m internal, built amongst the rock-fall below a small cliff. May have been a passage behind the hut leading into a small cave, which could have been used for cool storage.

**Site: 44, NGR: 90740737, SMR: NG90NW0036.** The low walls of a small hut built amongst rock-fall at the base of a small cliff. The method used was to infill the gaps between in-situ rocks with low stone walling. Very difficult access into this hut and hut Site 43 due to the entangled branches of a large bird cherry.

**Site: 41, NGR: 90740735, SMR: NG90NW0033.** The grass and bracken covered footings of a circular hut, c 2m internal, crudely built into what appears to be the top of an outwash mound left by the small burn which runs through this area.

**Site: 42, NGR: 90730736, SMR: NG90NW0034.** A bracken covered circular platform structure, c 3m in diam, with crude stone revetment at the front.

**Site: 46, NGR: 90450736, SMR: NG90NW0038.** The possible base of a hut set into the top of an outwash mound. May have been robbed out to build the more substantial hut Site 47 close-by.

**Site: 30, NGR: 90700726, SMR: NG90NW.** A substantial square shaped hut, c 2m x 2m internal, situated to the west side of the peninsular, crudely built with large stones, but unusual in that one wall remains to a height of 1.5m, and the floor of the hut is paved with flag-stones, the largest being c 1.1m x .9m in size. Entrance to NE. Also a possible storage area c 1.5m x 1m just to the S of the hut.

**Site: 40, NGR: 90680723, SMR: NG90NW0032.** The low moss and bracken covered footings of a possible oval shaped hut, c 3.5m x 1.5m, set into the lee slope of a small knoll. The front wall is of earth and stones, probably excavated from the slope. This structure is quite different to most of the huts found, and could be of a different period and use.

**Site: 37, NGR: 90650727, SMR: NG90NW.** The moss and bracken covered tumbled walls of a substantial rectangular shaped hut, c 3.5m x 1.5m. Built using a single setting of large stones to infill the gaps between in-situ boulders. Close to hut Site 30.

**Site: 39, NGR: 90650728, SMR: NG90NW0031.** A cleared landing place, c 4m wide at the top. This is a very boulder strewn beach area, and very exposed to westerlies, but it appears that there has been some moving around of boulders, possibly to create space for a boat to be pulled out onto the land. There is also a small cairn on the rocks nearby, possibly modern, but there is no obvious sign of picnicking or camping fires nearby. There is also a possible small platform above the boat pull-up, and c 4m of rough wall, which has no obvious purpose.

**Site: 38, NGR: 90610728, SMR: NG90NW0030.** A rough platform structure, c 4m x 1.5m, set amongst rock-fall below a cliff. There are a few stones clearly set on top of other stones between the in-situ rocks, indicating some structure to the platform.

**Site: 320, NGR: 90510726, SMR: NG90NW0130.** The bracken covered single stone footings of small circular shaped hut, using a large in-situ rock to form the back wall.

**Site: 319, NGR: 90490726, SMR: NG90NW 0129.** A cleared landing place, c 2m wide at the top, narrowing to 1.5m lower down the shore.

**Site: 318, NGR: 90490726, SMR: NG90NW0128.** A structural platform c 2m in height, and 3m x 2m, built up off the beach using flat stones to form the floor.

**Site: 162, NGR: 90490723, SMR: NG90NW0220.** The much tumbled bracken infested stone footings of a small hut, c 2m x 1.3m internal. Uses an in situ boulder in one wall. Possible entrance in SE.

### **Allt Gormaig**

This is an area of steep rocky shore-line, with small bays in between, all with cleared landing places, and one or two huts. At the foot of the Allt Gormaig there is a fluvial fan with several small but substantial scattered stone buildings, and a small amount of cultivated ground. The walls of all but one of the buildings still stand in some cases to wall head height. There are also a few roughly built huts, but none of the better buildings show signs of adaptation or re-use. Isolated from these buildings, nearer to the shore, sits the only other substantial building we found that has its long axis running N / S. It may have been a byre, as it has a small extension at its N end which might have been a dairy. There is a possibility that the buildings in the core area may have been sheilings, possibly for the larger settlement of Caolasmor, which lies c .5km to the west, with a very inaccessible and steep rocky shoreline in between.

**Site: 388, NGR: 90210712, SMR: NG90NW0127.** The bracken covered oval shaped remains of a small hut, c 2m x 1.5m internal. Distinct walls remain on all sides to .5m in height built of rough stone, and recessed into the slope. Possible entrance to SE.

**Site: 387, NGR: 90200712, SMR: NG90NW0126.** A cleared landing place, c 2m wide, on a short steep beach.

**Site: 386, NGR: 90160713, SMR: NG90NW0125.** The moss and bracken covered low stone built walls, of a roughly rectangular hut, c 3m x 2m internal, situated c10m above the shore-line on a steep grassy spur. The hut sits on a platform supported by a well constructed retaining wall c 1m in height. Possible entrance in SE corner.

**Site: 384, NGR: 90100780, SMR: NG90NW0123.** A sheltered cleared landing place, protected by a rocky islet. It is in the form of a small cove, with 2 cleared entrances, and is c 28m wide at the top, with both entrances being c 2m to 3m wide.

**Site: 385, NGR: 90080707, SMR: NG90NW0124.** The moss and bracken covered low stone walls of a rectangular hut, c 3m x 1.5m internal, built on a platform recessed into the slope.

**Site: 383, NGR: 90070706, SMR: NG90NW0120.** The moss and bracken covered low stone walls of a square, c 3m x 3m hut. Seems open to one side.

**Site: 97, NGR: 90060706, SMR: NG90NW0121.** The bracken covered boulder footings or low walls of an oval shaped hut, c 3m x 2m internal. Set against an in-situ crag. Possible entrance to E.

**Site: 382, NGR: 90050703, SMR: NG90NW0122.** A possible cleared landing place, c 6m wide.

**Site: 100, NGR: 89900707, SMR: NG80NE0047.** A small rock shelter c 60m above sea level on a sloping terrace. A small section, c 1m long and 1m in height of stone wall closes off a triangular space under a large flat slab of rock. Possibly a pen for holding lambs.

**Site: 84, NGR: 89820702, SMR: NG80NE0072.** The remains of a hut, c 4m x 2.5m, built from large flat slabs, with walls remaining to c 1m in height. Entrance in S wall.

**Site: 280, NGR: 89790702, SMR: NG80NE0052.** The substantial footings of a rectangular building with long axis running N / S, c 11m long and 4m wide external. The wall footings are up to c 1m wide and stand to c.5m high. There is a possible internal cross-wall dividing off the N third of the building, and there is a small depression to the N of the N wall, c 2m x 1m, which might have been a dairy.

**Site: 281, NGR: 89770704, SMR: NG80NE0051.** A shallow stone lined structure, "U" shaped, c 2m x 1m and .5m deep, filled in with tumble and vegetation. Sits just to the NW of building Site 280.

**Site: 31(b), NGR: 89740699, SMR: NG80NE0074.** A narrow enclosure, close to the burn and the shore, formed using a natural gully, c 1m wide and 8m long, with tumbled walls at either end, but still standing to .5m in height. Possibly close enough to the shore to store a small boat in, or for other storage.

**Site: 31, NGR: 89710699, SMR: NG80NE0073.** The remains of a small boulder built square shaped hut, c 2m x 2m, the walls being of 3 to 4 courses, with a possible entrance in the S wall. A boat naust or pull up is situated just to one side.

**Site: 34, NGR: 89730709, SMR: NG80NE0048.** The remains of a building, c 4.5m x 3.5m external, with substantial well built walls, c 1m to 1.2m wide, and standing consistently to 1m high. The entrance is in the SE corner, partially blocked by some fallen stones. There is a linear stone setting dividing the building inside into 2 parts. A wattle divider may have sat on this stone setting. There is no evidence of a paved floor, but there is a small aumbray in the SW corner.

**Site: 282, NGR: 89720704, SMR: NG80NE0050.** Cultivation remains in the form of an area of bracken covered lazy beds, c18m long x 8m wide. Elongated clearance cairns, c 6m x 2m at the SW corner and similar at the NW corner.

**Site: 35, NGR: 89720711, SMR: NG80NE0049.** The substantial remains of a building similar in construction to Site 34, situated further up the slope, beside the burn. It is c 5.5m long x 4m wide external, with well built walls of stone c 1m thick, standing to a consistent level of c 1m to 1.2m and to 1.5m at the N end where the building is set into the slope. There is an entrance c .6m wide in the S wall. There is stone paving in the N half of the building which is separated off by a setting of elongated stones, which possibly supported a wattle divider. There is a small nook in the inside wall beside the doorway. To the W of the building and attached at the N end is either a secondary building or an enclosure, c 2.5m wide and 5.5m long, with no wall on the S side.

**Site: 32, NGR: 89700703, SMR: NG80NE0075.** A single lazy bed, c 1.5m wide x 20m long. There are also the remains of a low wall, c 10m in length to the E of the lazy bed, possibly taking the stone clearance from the bed.

**Site: 36, NGR: 89700709, SMR: NG80NE0079.** The substantial remains of a building, c 4m x 3m internal, with walls c 1m thick, and standing consistently to c 1.25m high. The building sits on the W side of the burn, well separated from the similar buildings Sites 34 and 35. There is an E facing entrance, and an internal division to the N of the entrance. The walls have rounded corners internally and externally.

**Site: 33, NGR: 89680710, SMR: NG80NE0076.** Possibly 2 or 3 structures in the outwash debris and scattered woodland to the E of the burn.

**Site: 99, NGR: 89660701, SMR: NG80NE0046.** A "V" shaped cleared landing place, each slipway being c 2m wide and when joined up at the top, c 6m wide.

**Site: 98, NGR: 89660701, SMR: NG80NE0045.** The moss and bracken covered low walls of a small hut, c 3.5m x 2m internal, on a platform built out onto the shore which is c 1m in height. A crag forms the NW wall, and other in situ boulders have been worked into the structure.

**Site: 197, NGR: 89640698, SMR: NG80NE0041.** A low rock shelter, formed by a large chunk of rock falling into a cleft in the rocks, leaving a space underneath. It is c 1.5m wide at the entrance, and extends back c 1m. It could easily have been extended to the front by a tarpaulin.



**Site: 196, NGR: 89640698, SMR: NG80NE0040.** A cleared landing place, c 3m wide at the entrance, widening to 10m at the shoreline. There is a fine area of grass above the landing place for boats to have been pulled out onto. The rock shelter Site 197 is immediately above the grass area.

**Site: 195, NGR: 89640698, SMR: NG80NE0039.** The bracken covered tumbled boulder footings of a small circular hut, c 2m in diam internal.

**Site: 194, NGR: 89640698, SMR: NG80NE0038.** The bracken covered remains of the footings or low walls of a small oval hut, consisting of a single setting of boulders. There is a possible cleared working area c 4m x 6m nearby, and several small natural platforms for storage.

**Site: 193, NGR: 89640698, SMR: NG80NE0037.** A roughly cleared landing place, c 10m average in width.

**Site: 200, NGR: 8956069, SMR: NG80NE0043.** The bracken covered footings or low walls of an oval hut, c 5m x 1.5m internal. Natural rock outcrop used as the back wall. Rough stone settings and 2 larger boulders form the other sides. Possible entrance in the S side.

**Site: 199, NGR: 89540697, SMR: NG80NE0042.** A cleared landing place, c 11m in width, virtually the whole of the beach in this small cove.

**Site: 198, NGR: 89540699, SMR: NG80NE0044.** A rectangular structure on a sloping platform extending out onto the beach, c 3.5m x 1.5m. Incorporates natural rock on one side with well built walls of stones to c .5m in height forming the rest of the structure.

## **Caolasmor**

This is the area around the occupied cottages and buildings, none of which were included in the present survey. From the public records and other sources, there is some historical information available on Caolasmor and the people who lived there, certainly relating to the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Caolasmor has a sheltered bay providing safe but relatively shallow anchorage with strong currents further out.

We are aware that there was a focus on fishing activity at Caolasmor at one time, and that a forester stayed there for several decades in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a tailor. The forester also had an assistant at one time. Significantly, there are no temporary huts here.

There is undoubtedly more detailed survey work to be done here, which would not be complete without exploring the higher slopes for sheilings, boundary walls and peat cuttings.

**Site: 277, NGR: 89310695, SMR: NG80NE0055.** A roughly constructed dry-stone wall, c 5m long and between 1m and 1.5m high, to the E of building Site 276.

**Site: 276, NGR: 89310695, SMR: NG80NE0054.** A substantial rectangular building, c 11m long and 5m wide external, with walls standing to 1.5m high, of dry construction using dressed stone. The N wall appears to have been rebuilt. The S wall has a blocked up entrance 1m wide in the centre. The present entrance also 1m wide is in the E half of the building.

There is no evidence of any internal walls or cruck slots, and no evidence of windows. There is a ditch running behind the length of the N wall. There is a jetty close by in front of the building and evidence of a made up and revetted terrace in front of the building, continuing W beyond it. Use of the building may have changed over time.

**Site: 278, NGR: 89300694, SMR: NG80NE0056.** A cleared landing place, c 20m long and 5m wide, with a line of large boulders forming a low jetty alongside.

**Site: 279, NGR: 89280694, SMR: NG80NE0057.** A cleared landing place with possible boat naust at the top, c 15m long, and 3m wide.

**Site: 29, NGR: 89220694, SMR: NG80NE0081.** The remains of a large building, c 12m long x 4m wide of dry stone construction, surviving as a back wall and two gable walls. The front wall has gone, but there are the footings of another wall running parallel to the main building which may either be another building or a garden wall. The NE gable survives to 4 courses. There is an entrance in the SE, and an internal division creating a room c 2m x 2.5m.

**Site: 30, NGR: 8914 0692, SMR: NG80NE0080.** The remains of a building, c 7m x 3m, possibly used in the more recent past, as it is partly covered with old corrugated iron and stone tumble. The outer limits are indicated by possible pad stones, and at the N end there are small sections of wall remaining.

**Site: 28, NGR: 89080686, SMR: NG80NE0082.** A structure situated on the wooded promontory overlooking the valley between Caolasmor and Camas nan Gall. The structure is a possible shelter set into the natural rock face, the base of which is a level grassed area c 6.5m x 4m. The N edge is formed by large upright boulders set into the slope, with a possible E entrance.

### **Corran a Chaolais Mhoir**

We have applied this place name to the low lying pasture on the point of the peninsular jutting out into the narrows, presumably cultivated in the past, although similar to the low ground at Allt Choire Reidh, in that it is very exposed to westerlies and salt spray, and it is hard to imagine crops surviving there, even though it looks idyllic on a nice sunny day.

There are only a handful of structures and features in this area, and no apparent huts.

**Site: 27, NGR: 88960669, SMR: NG80NE0083.** The remains of a building, c 7m x 2.25m external, below the cliff on the S side of the wooded promontory, on the back edge of the grassland. The remains consist of a single visible course of stones, c .25m wide, with one internal division. The E end of the building is c 1.25m wide, with no S wall. The central section has a S facing entrance. To the W of the main building is the faint outline of a structure c 2m x 2.25m. There are shallow drains to the front and rear of the building.

**Site: 26, NGR: 88910658, SMR: NG80NE0084.** A stone, c .5m high set on the edge of the grassy promontory. It is earth-fast, irregular in shape, with no marks on its surface. It has no apparent use or significance.

**Site: 25, NGR: 88860662, SMR: NG80NE0085.** A large cairn on the W side of the grassy promontory, above HWM, but within range of storm water as evidenced by seaweed on the cairn. It is c 5m in diam, with the majority of the cairn stone visible above the grass. There are 2 large boulders visible on the cairn, whilst the rest of the stones are smaller, and all may have come from the shingle beach. On the edge of the cairn are 3 stones that could suggest a kerb, but there is limited evidence for any continuous kerbing. It is possible that it is a burial cairn, and the dating of it would be most interesting.

**Site: 24, NGR: 88840662, SMR: NG80NE0086.** A structure in the form of a raised oval area, c 5.5m x 1.5m, with a slight depression to one end. There is nothing to suggest what it is, but one thought is that it could be the shadow left by an abandoned upturned boat. It sits within the area of drained pasture, with visible grassed over drainage ditches creating a chequerboard effect.

### **Camas nan Doth**

This is a small grassy indent into the west side of the peninsular at Caolasmor. There are only three sites here, none of them buildings. This side of the peninsular is very exposed, and collects piles of flotsam and jetsam. The translation of this Gaelic name could be “the bay of the scorching”, which has intrigued the survey team. The only scorching visible is by salt spray to the trees on this side of the peninsular, which also have few lower branches. There is no archaeology to shed any other light on this name.

**Site: 23, NGR: 88790673, SMR: NG80NE0087.** The site consists of a boat naust just above HWM, and another area higher up the shore where a boat could be pulled up for the winter. Above this are 3 or 4 platforms on various levels, the largest being c 2m x 8m.

**Site: 22, NGR: 88680684, SMR: NG80NE0088.** The site lies at the back of the deep grassy indent, with wooded cliffs on both sides. It is a raised platform, c 5m square, defined by cliffs at the back on 2 sides and a scatter of boulders on the other 2 sides. There may be a second narrow platform above the first, set into the cliff.

**Site: 21, NGR: 88630685, SMR: NG80NE0089.** A boat naust and platform, tucked in behind Eilean Camas nan Doth. The naust has a small grass covered level platform alongside, c 2m x 2m, and a higher platform above, c 15m x 4m, and an area that may have been cut for turf at one time.

### **Camas nan Gall and Allt Granda**

These two names cover virtually the same area, being to the west of Caolasmor, and linked by a narrow valley, very wet today, but with the remains of an old raised path on the top side. Camas nan Gall also represents the west boundary of Kinloch Hourn Estate. There are several buildings here and extensive areas of lazy beds.

The First Edition OS shows a path leading west to Corran and Arnisdale. Between Corran and a point in the lee of A Chiste Dhubh, opposite to the small islands guarding the Inner Loch, the path was built to a high standard, similar to the path between Lochournhead and Barrisdale. Between A Chiste Dhubh and Caolasmor the path was not built, but it is still traceable today with some care.

There is a story relating to Camas nan Gall and the origin of its name. A family from “the south” is said to have abandoned a man, a relative who was ill, on the nearby dry island of Eilean a Gharb Lain, presumably at high tide, not realising that the channel to the mainland dried out at low tide. This chap recovered and built a small house at Camas nan Gall, where he then lived for many years.

The bay runs very shallow and is not the easiest place to land a boat at certain stages of the tide. This could be the reason for the nausts in nearby Camas nan Doth, where it is easier to land. There are no apparent temporary huts here.

**Site: 274, NGR: 89030716, SMR: NG80NE0053.** The moss and bracken covered tumbled remains of a rectangular building on a south facing slope near to the lower Allt Granda. The external size is c 10m x 4.5m. The N wall is cut into the slope and there is a doorway in the centre of the S wall. The dry stone walls remain in one corner to c 1m in height, and in another corner to 1.5m in height. The interior of the building is divided into 3 rooms. Most probably used as a dwelling house.

**Site: 83, NGR: 88940697, SMR: NG80NE0071.** A small and overgrown disused peat cutting, with the bank being c 23m long and .5m in height.

**Site: 76, NGR: 88820696, SMR: NG80NE0064.** A small pit, c 2m x 1m x .5m deep.

**Site: 73, NGR: 88770703, SMR: NG80NE0061.** A small clearance cairn, c 1.5m square, moss and bracken covered, with a semblance of structure to it, in that edging stones are set vertically on one side. A second cairn Site 74 lies 15m to the west.

**Site: 75, NGR: 88750700, SMR: NG80NE0063.** An area of 6 ridge and furrow cultivation remains, c 25m long.

**Site: 74, NGR: 88720704, SMR: NG80NE0062.** A cairn of boulders, c 2m square and .5m high, set on the edge of woodland, which might have some structural significance.

**Site: 72, NGR: 88720704, SMR: NG80NE0060.** The wasted remains of a substantial building, situated close to the shoreline, most probably a dwelling house, c 7m x 4m external and 6m x 3m internal, of dry-stone construction, reduced mostly to footings only, but with one small section of wall standing to c 1m in height. No obvious internal divisions. There are several associated structures: the footings of an outbuilding on the E gable, c 4m x 2m, and a boundary wall to the W, running up from the shore, which has been used as one wall of another building, c 4m x 3m, the N wall of which is a large in-situ boulder. There appears to have been a secondary smaller building, c 3m x 2m, constructed on top of the primary building.

**Site: 71, NGR: 88720701, SMR: NG80NE0059.** A cleared landing place, c 3m wide, on the gently sloping beach.

**Site: 70, NGR: 88700704, SMR: NG80NE0058.** A cleared landing place c 2m wide at the lower end and c 6m wide at the top, with a setting of large boulders to one side which could have been used as a jetty.

**Site: 80, NGR: 88900711, SMR: NG80NE0068.** The slightly raised, turf and stone remains of the footings of a building, c 10m x 4m, with a gap in the footings at one end and further footings, c 3m x 3m, and an entrance from the small building into the larger one. The

building is situated on top of a knoll at c 60m above sea level, overlooking the bay, in bracken covered ground. A possible dwelling house from an earlier period.

**Site: 78, NGR: 88880705, SMR: NG80NE0066.** An extensive area of lazy beds, c 80m x 50m, now gone back to wet heathland.

**Site: 79, NGR: 88880705, SMR: NG80NE0067.** The bracken covered stone footings of a small building, c 4m square external, with an entrance on the S side, beside the lazy beds Site78.

**Site: 77, NGR: 88820697, SMR: NG80NE0065.** A low stone and turf enclosure dyke, c 15m long, .75m high on the seaward side, and .25 high on the landward side, and a thickness of .5m. It is situated at the head of the bay, c 3m above improved ground.

**Site: 82, NGR: 88900690, SMR: NG80NE0070.** A low stone boundary dyke, c .5m in height, on W facing steep slope, forming the E bank of the Allt Granda. Additional co-ordinates are NG88920701, and NG88900689.

**Site: 81, NGR: 88850712, SMR: NG80NE0069.** A dry stone boundary dyke, generally to 1.5m in height, well built with a turf cope. Additional co-ordinates are NG 88740705 and 88930718.

### **Fraoch Eilean**

This is the nearest named place on the OS map to a small area surveyed on the south shore, about 350m east of the Barrisdale moorings. The site was spotted when idling past in a boat in 2001. We think that it is most likely the site of a temporary fishing station. Although the site has naturally deteriorated since abandonment, it is 200m or so off the path to Barrisdale, and seems to be more or less as it was when abandoned.

There are no obvious buildings on it, but there is a small pier, with 3 berths for laying up small boats, evidence of quays, and a curious structure just above HWM alongside the top of the pier, which appears to be a naust, but it seems rather large for that, and has a setting of 3 large retaining boulders across its mouth. To get a boat in there would have required a timber slipway. It might have been used as a repair dry dock, and the whole site might have been a boat repairers yard. The site is in a rather exposed position, and there has been considerable erosion of the landing area due to the sea.

The several platforms above the landing place have some structure to them, and this is the second site to be identified with a water channel or lead to divert fresh water from a small burn down to the platforms. If there were buildings on the site, then they were most probably of temporary timber construction.

**Site: 192, NGR: 87860606, SMR: NG80NE0036.** A cleared platform, c 8m x 8m, with a crude revetment wall on the lower side.

**Site: 191, NGR: 87860606, SMR: NG80NE0035.** A level platform, c 5m x 3m, with crude stone revetment to the front edge. There is short length of stone wall to the rear of the platform, c .5m in height, with no obvious purpose, but the lade passes not far away, and we wonder if the wall might have supported a sorting and washing table.

**Site: 190, NGR: 87860606, SMR: NG80NE0034.** A lead, c 15m long and .5m wide. An artificial water channel leading to platform Sites 191 and 192.

**Site: 189, NGR: 87860606, SMR: NG80NE0033.** A level platform, c 6m x 4m, crudely revetted with stones to the lower side. A possible stone setting on the platform, and possibly a raised shelf to the rear.

**Site: 188, NGR: 87860606, SMR: NG80NE0032.** A possible boat naust, boat shaped, c 2m wide and 5.5m long, base part covered by stone tumble from the end of the adjacent pier, and part showing evidence of paving. The naust is open fronted to landing place Site 187, and the front edge is retained by 3 well set boulders. As seen today, a timber slipway would have been required to haul a boat up over the front boulders. A large pointed boulder is set into the ground at the "bows" of the naust, and would have provided the winching point.

**Site: 187, NGR: 87860606, SMR: NG80NE0031.** A cleared boat landing place, with small pier alongside, and with a single cleared channel leading into three tying-up bays and the boat naust Site 188. The pier is of heavy stone and boulder construction, much wasted by storm damage, and most probably had a working quay on top of it originally. There also appears to be another collapsed quay between the first and second tying-up bays.

#### **Eilean Choinich (Burial Isle)**

This small burial isle was first put onto the SMR in 2001 by members of the survey team. It is joined to the mainland by a tidal causeway.

The isle extends to c 33m x 22m. The flat, dry and grass covered open area contains 4 small standing head stones, and one visible horizontal grave slab, and what appears to be a number of head and foot marker stones. There are no inscriptions. The whole area is dotted with small grassy mounds, some of which have stones beneath and some of which are sandy loam.

There are 2 large washed out areas on the west side of the isle, still actively eroding. One of the eroded faces was the subject of professional inspection. No human bones were visible at the time, but red stained layers were clearly visible in 2001 at the same face. Two of the small turf covered stone cairns have been cut by the erosion and the nature of them can be clearly seen. It is almost certain that they mark the positions of early graves, and that several rows of graves, or at least the earth above them, have already been washed away. There could easily be the remains of graves under the stony beach. As evidenced by some of the wash-out, some graves at least may have been covered by stone capping, c .3m to .4m below the surface.

The first general impression is that there are 9 rows of graves in the flat grassy area, running N-S, with the graves orientated E-W. There appears to be effectively a second area of burials on the isle, scattered in small groups in hollows on the higher rocky ground to the NW of the main area. The ground cover there is of course grasses and heather.

All of the lower part of the isle was plane-tabled in April 2002, and a copy of the plan is attached to this report. It is very much hoped to return to the site and to complete the plane table survey of the remaining half of the island in the not too distant future. It is highly probable that there are also unmarked graves on the isle.

**Site: 391, NGR: 87170613, SMR: NG80NE0030.** Eilean Choinich burial isle. As described in the notes above.

**Site: 394, NGR: 87150624, SMR: NG80NE0090.** An extensive ballast beach appears to more or less surround the burial isle. There are neat rows and piles of stones of various sizes dotted around several hectares of the sandy beach which stretches out into Barrisdale bay and the channel leading into the Inner Loch.

It is understood from local anecdotal evidence that the dumping of ballast was controlled by the landowners. Boats were not allowed to dump ballast wherever they wanted. Much more research is required on this subject.

**Site: 395, NGR: 87350591, SMR: NG80NE0015.** The standing but roofless remains of the Quoad Sacra Church at Barrisdale. This was already on the SMR, but the opportunity was taken to update the record during the 2002 survey.

## Analysis

A total of 282 sites were surveyed and recorded, including a number which were for various reasons recorded as single sites but had more than one type of feature, so the figure of 282 does not fully reflect all that was recorded, by maybe 20 sites.

Out of interest, the 282 sites have been totalled under each site type recognised, and the following list in descending order of frequency, is the result.

<b>Huts</b> - possible temporary fishermen's dwellings or stores	<b>68</b>
<b>Cleared landing places</b> - of various ad-hoc types	<b>41</b>
<b>Buildings</b> - possible dwelling houses, stores or byres	<b>28</b>
<b>Platforms</b> - inc. small quays, wharves, and for temp. structures	<b>25</b>
<b>Clearance cairns</b> -	<b>22</b>
<b>Huts</b> - possible sheilings	<b>13</b>
<b>Cultivation remains</b> - lazy-beds	<b>11</b>
<b>Working areas</b> - cleared areas of ground possibly for drying or mending nets, typically c 10m square	<b>10</b>
<b>Enclosures</b> - all types	<b>9</b>
<b>Enclosure dykes</b> - typically rough built shorter features	<b>7</b>
<b>Structures</b> - misc., unlikely to have been roofed, and unassigned	<b>6</b>
<b>Boundary walls</b> - typically well built longer features	<b>5</b>
<b>Boat nausts</b> - constructed boat shaped boat storage places above HWM	<b>5</b>
<b>Pits</b> -	<b>5</b>
<b>Linear features</b> - typically low earth banks	<b>4</b>
<b>Rock shelters</b> -	<b>3</b>
<b>Buildings and huts</b> - possible look-outs	<b>2</b>
<b>Quarries</b> -	<b>2</b>
<b>Retaining walls</b> -	<b>2</b>
<b>Leads</b> - trenches for ducting water from a burn to a platform	<b>2</b>
<b>Cultivation remains</b> - broad rig and furrow	<b>1</b>
<b>Cultivation remains</b> - improved land, possibly for pasture or hay	<b>1</b>
<b>Carved stones</b> -	<b>1</b>
<b>Peat cutting remains</b> -	<b>1</b>
<b>Field systems</b> -	<b>1</b>
<b>Sheepfolds</b> -	<b>1</b>
<b>Piers and jetties</b> -	<b>1</b>
<b>Stones</b> -	<b>1</b>
<b>Cairns</b> - possible burial	<b>1</b>
<b>Burial isles</b> -	<b>1</b>
<b>Ballast beaches</b> -	<b>1</b>
<b>Churches</b> -	<b>1</b>

Some 163 sites in total appear to have been associated with the seasonal herring fishery dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. We have no evidence to date of herring fishing activity in Loch Hourn prior to the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Although we found many examples of alteration and adaptation of buildings most sites give the appearance of little or no human disturbance since they were finally abandoned. All sites have suffered natural decay however and some sites close to the shore have suffered storm-wave damage.

It is not possible to say for sure how many of the 68 possible fishermen's huts were used as temporary dwellings, and how many as stores. Use could have changed from season to season. Several huts were paved with flags or stones, and at least one had a fireplace within.



Several were noted to have possible fireplaces nearby outside. Several close to the shore had numerous scattered pieces of pottery and jars on the beach, and almost without exception huts were sited close to a small burn for a handy supply of drinking water.

The possible fishermen's huts fall into several different types of construction, all built from stones or boulders – those built inside primary buildings using material robbed from the walls of the primary building, those built of moveable boulders or stones set up against and utilising one or more large in-situ boulders as a back-wall, those infilling suitably placed in situ boulders with stones or other boulders, those built of stone on raised mounds typical of many sheiling sites, and those built of stones or boulders on revetted platforms. Were these types simply ad-hoc according to the resources of each site, or did they reflect the traditions and skills of the places from where the fishermen came? We can only speculate at this stage. We also speculate that generally we are looking at the variously tumbled remains of what were very low walls of these huts, rather than footings. Turf may have been used to plug gaps.

Many of the huts are very small inside but the men who crewed the herring busses out of Campbeltown in the 18<sup>th</sup> century were small compared to the average height of men today (Crew members sailing on Campbeltown and Tarbet busses or with Kintyre birthplace – Bigwood 1999).

We have also speculated as to whether women accompanied the men during the fishing season. Several of the huts are built in pairs, in one place a small burn separates two huts. One for the men and one for the women? Was female casual labour used for fish gutting and packing on the West Coast in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, or was it an all male affair? The busses gutted, packed and cured on board, which was almost certainly all male, but there is evidence of general cargo vessels, not registered as herring busses, working in the autumn and early winter at the West Coast herring fishing in the 1750's, and of having "shore based" operations on Isle Martin (The Peggies and Mary – Brig of Campbeltown 1753 – 1762 – Bigwood 1999).

The cleared landing places generally reflect the nature of the beaches or coves that were cleared. The larger gently shelving pebbled beaches, tend to be more comprehensively cleared, particularly where such a beach occurs within a sheltered bay, whilst the steeper rocky coves frequently have shorter and narrower slipways only usable close to high tide. Possibly many smaller catching boats were left out on moorings most of the time, only being brought ashore for maintenance and repair, or in stormy weather. All variety of landing places were found, and quite frequently with one cleared slipway leading up to several places where a boat could be beached or pulled up above HWM.

The buildings found also show a variety of type. Some remains appear to be the footings of possible creel houses, whilst the walls of others remain standing to wall head height. Some of the footings found, particularly at Allt Mhogh Sgeir may well have been for temporary timber buildings. Only two buildings were found where the long axis was end on to the sea. One at Allt Mhogh Sgeir and one at Allt Gormaig. The remains of both of these buildings are reduced to footings only, and may have been robbed out for later buildings. We found no evidence in any building of cruck slots.

Many of the platforms recorded appear to have been small quays beside landing places, or used as small wharves, but others were found close to huts and buildings and could have been used for many purposes. At this point it is worth recording that many natural platforms were noted, some of them fine level and today grassy, which would have made excellent pitches for tents. Fewer than a handful of these platforms were recorded during the survey.

Some 11 possible sheiling hut sites were recorded. These fell into two groups – low level near to the Allt Corie Reidh, and at high level in Corie Mhogh Sgeir. All of the sites were heavily infested with bracken and none were cleared for detailed recording. The sites in Corie Mhogh Sgeir were of familiar shape and form on low raised mounds, whilst those near to the Allt Corie Reidh showed more variety of shape and form, and it was speculated that some may have been of great age.

That few areas of cultivation remains were found came as no surprise bearing in mind the nature of the terrain and lack of cultivable ground. The one big surprise was the discovery of a sophisticated and quite extensive field system at Cnap an t-Seir. Only two larger areas of lazy beds were found, one above Caolas an Loch Beag, and the other at Camas nan Gall. All of the others tended to be small, and at Allt Gormaig a single lazy bed was found. The beds were all in the region of c 1.5 to 2m in width, with a maximum height difference between the bottom of the furrow and the top of the bed of about .5m.

The possible working areas found were of considerable interest. Without exception they were found close to the fishermen's huts, or in the case of Allt Mhogh Sgeir, close to larger buildings as well. It seems as if a lot of work went into the construction of these areas with some of them being revetted on one or more sides, and some with banks to one or more sides. They all seem to have been meticulously cleared of stones, and it is our speculation that they were greens for the drying and mending of nets. One intriguing possibility at Allt Mhogh Sgeir, where there are no more than a few sq m of cultivation remains in evidence, is that the fishermen levelled areas of lazy beds to make their greens, after the primary settlement had been abandoned. Only excavation could determine this and also whether any of the greens had poles erected on them.

The few enclosures found showed great variety, from small fields down to tiny animal pens. Walls also showed great variety, from crude alignments of boulders to very well built stone walls with turf copes, with a few stone and turf dykes with ditch alongside. Two pits were found in association with a wall, presumably borrow pits.

The pier at Allt Mhogh Sgeir requires special mention, due its sheer size, and that it appears to have had an earlier smaller version. A great deal of effort was put into its construction, and it would no doubt have been even more substantial in its day, and most probably paved, as it has a substantial quay built at right angles to the main pier just above the low water mark.

The burial isle, Eilean Choinich, in Barrisdale Bay, is covered in some detail in the Gazetteer notes. It is thought to be an early catholic burial place. There are no inscriptions on any of the few grave stones. The turf covered small cairns are we believe grave markers, but the more plentiful small turf covered earthen mounds are more of a puzzle. Are they all or just some of them grave markers? Are some of them fertility mounds, or could some of them have developed around the bases of wooden crosses long since rotted away? The isle is actively eroding on the west side, but expert opinion is that it is impractical and possibly inappropriate to try to halt this natural process. There is no human skeletal material in evidence.

The realisation that the beach surrounding the burial isle had in all probability been extensively used as a ballast beach continues to intrigue us. There are undoubtedly many natural boulders lying around, but far too many stones of a handleable size are piled up in heaps or in neat rows, with clear areas of sand between them, for this to be a natural phenomenon. The ballast area covers several hectares. We surmise that ships coming in with relatively light cargoes of barrel staves and salt, were also in ballast, and had to unload this in order to take on cargoes of herring.

## Conclusions

In addition to the NOSAS survey in April 2002, the coast-line between Caolasmor and Corran has been walk-over surveyed, and there are only three obvious huts along that section of the coast. The footpath between Lochourhead and Barrisdale has also been walked on several occasions, and the south shore-line of the Inner Loch has been closely observed from the water on a number of occasions, with landings to explore interesting places. This is how the small fishing station near to Fraoch Eilean was first discovered. Very few huts have been noticed. So we are able to say with some confidence that the main concentration of what we believe to be herring fishermen's huts and their cleared landing places, are located on the north shore of Inner Loch Hourn between Kinloch Hourn and Caolasmor.

It is well known that Arnisdale thrived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century from the herring fishing as did Skiary, Caolasmor, and Lochourhead, with the majority of the men from these settlements recording "fisherman" as their occupation in the early censuses. There are accounts quoted in Peter English's book "Arnisdale and Loch Hourn" 2000, of there being up to 1,000 small boats working the herring in Loch Hourn in some years in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and of being able to walk from one shore to the other near to Skiary and Runival, and the same between the Cruadh Ard and Eilean Tioram at Arnisdale, both distances are about 1Km. It is too early to look critically at these accounts and others, to try to relate them to the archaeological remains, as we can have little idea as to the extent of camping under canvas, accommodation on the curing ships or possible billeting on shore.

Also along the north shore of the Inner Loch we were surprised to discover several small farms and settlements without names, and without any historical information on them. We can only speculate that these farms and settlements were abandoned as a result of clearance for sheep-runs in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century or early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and after that time they were taken over by the seasonal herring fishermen. There are relatively few cultivation remains associated with these farms and most are small in area, the main exception being the farmstead at Cnap an t-Seir. It is fairly certain then that the economy of these farms and settlements centred around cattle, goats and a few sheep, and possibly some involvement in fishing. We also wonder whether some of the settlements such as Allt Gormaig were post sheep clearance.

Whether there was a period of cheerful co-existence between the local residents of these isolated farms and settlements and the seasonal herring fishermen is also speculative. One can imagine a boost to the economy of these places when the herring busses arrived and the small catcher boats came in from all around, with opportunities for trade and for providing casual labour. But there may also have been a lot of aggravation between the locals and the strangers. There is also the matter of the considerable investment in the substantial pier and buildings at Allt Mhogh Sgeir, and the arrangement over tenure with the landowner. We still cannot answer the question as to why the fishermen's huts are concentrated on the north shore of the Inner Loch. We also cannot be sure how far back the settlements, the farms and the fishermen's huts etc go.

More work in the field and more historical research may start to answer some of these questions.

On the issue of site decay and erosion, only the shore-line sites exposed to westerly gales and storm damage are at risk. Most of the damage seems to have already occurred long since, with piers and shore-line platforms being well tumbled in exposed places, but generally the north shore of the Inner Loch is very stable. There is no need for any conservation action, but it might be desirable to plan-draw some of the shore-line sites. The east side of the peninsular at Caolasmor is eroding, but no archaeological sites there are under threat. Several sites elsewhere are under threat from trees growing within them. There is no threat from rabbits.

### **Opportunities for further research**

Complete the plane-table survey of Eilean Choinich.

2. Clean down a selection of sites without moving any stones and plan draw.
3. Carry out a detailed survey of the archaeology on the south shore of the Inner Loch.
4. Survey and record the cultivation remains at Kinloch Hourn.
5. Excavate a trial trench through Site 128 at Allt Mhogh Sgeir.
6. Excavate one selected hut site.
7. Carry out a walkover survey of the hinterland on the north side of the Inner Loch, in particular to record any boundary features and to look for sheiling sites.
8. Re-visit certain sites surveyed in 2002 to carry out a more detailed survey.
9. Survey the possible fish traps noted in Barrisdale Bay.
10. Continue with broad based historical research.

Visit known fishermen's bothy sites at other locations.

12. Look at possible unrecorded burial sites in more detail, and consider covering these sites using geophysical survey equipment.
3. Cut down the trees growing within archaeological sites, and take sections for growth ring counting.

# WOODLANDS NEAR LOCH HOURN ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES

## WOODLAND CLASSIFICATION

Within 7 km of the eastern end of Loch Hourn along the north shore are examples of 5 of the 8 semi-natural woodland types recognised by the Forestry Commission (Forestry Commission, 1994). These are Mixed Ashwoods, Oakwoods, Birchwoods, Pinewoods and Wet Woodlands.

The National Vegetation Classification (NVC - Rodwell, 1991) recognises 25 woodland and scrub types and at Loch Hourn there are:

### Mixed Ashwoods

W9<sup>1</sup> *Fraxinus excelsior*<sup>2</sup>-*Sorbus aucuparia*-*Mercurialis perennis* (rich sites)

### Oakwoods and Birchwoods

W11 *Quercus petraea*-*Betula pubescens*-*Oxalis acetosella* (moderate sites = oak)

W17 *Quercus petraea*-*Betula pubescens*-*Dicranus majus* (poor sites = birch)

### Pinewoods

W18 *Pinus sylvestris*-*Hylocomium splendens* (rock faces)

### Wet Woodlands

W4 *Betula pubescens*-*Molinia caerulea* woodland (poor wet sites)

W7 *Alnus glutinosa*-*Fraxinus excelsior*-*Lysimachia nemorum* (richer wet sites)

## HISTORY OF WOODLAND COVER

About 5000 years ago woodland cover in this area is believed to have reached a peak and since then it has declined due to climate and the increasing influence of man which has been considerable during the last several hundred years.

To the north east of the existing woodland above Torr a Choit there are the remains of pine stumps and some stems from a more extensive pinewood cover. At NG932084 there are pine stems about a metre below the current peat level and about a metre further down there are more tree remains. Outside the new deer fence at NG935081 there are a considerable number of pine stumps. There is an extensive area that has been worked for peat on the south west side of the river from about NG933085 to NG936081. The only area where a small peat bank was found near to the loch was at Caolasmor.

It appears that in the recent past there have been surges of regeneration during periods of reduced grazing pressure and in these birch is the dominant species but in time the proportion of oak (and in restricted areas ash) should increase if grazing pressure permits. Active management of the woodlands is now very slight in comparison with the past although the grazing pressure still exerts a massive influence.

## PINEWOODS

Near Loch Hourn are 3 pinewoods (W18) in the *Caledonian Pinewood Inventory* (Forestry Commission, 1998) which were originally called "Barrisdale" (Steven and Carlisle, 1959):

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<sup>1</sup>W - abbreviation for woodland used in NVC

<sup>2</sup> *Fraxinus excelsior* (ash) *Sorbus aucuparia* (rowan) *Mercurialis perennis* (dogs mercury) *Quercus petraea* (oak) *Betula pubescens* (downy birch) *Oxalis acetosella* (wood sorrel) *Dicranus majus* (moss - mound) *Pinus sylvestris* (pine) *Hylocomium splendens* (moss - creeping) *Molinia caerulea* (purple moor grass) *Alnus glutinosa* (alder) *Lysimachia nemorum* (yellow pimpernel)

Glen Barrisdale - trees from NG849057 to NG915042

Loch Hourn - south side of loch from NG885057 to NG915066 plus on cliffs on north side

Lochourn River - along river and on cliff at NG959057 plus scattered trees to NG972033

The Inventory recognises 7 regions and there is little difference between 5 of these and the pine now growing in central Europe. The scattered fragments in the South West are different from other areas but there is little difference between them; the North West group are different from other areas and there are differences between these larger pinewoods. Although the "Barrisdale" is included in North Central Region these 3 pinewoods are really different from any others.

It is thought that the North West, "Barrisdale" and South West are the result of separate colonisation of the west coast by pine which survived the last interglacial somewhere to the west. This means that the "Barrisdale" genetic resource is unique and must be protected. The origin of the pines planted in and near to the garden and near to cottages on the north shore is unknown and in the long term these should not be allowed to regenerate and should be replaced by stock raised from seed collected from native trees.

It is probable that there would have been a very small number of pine growing within the broadleaved woodlands but it is likely that any patches of pine on the north shore of the loch have been restricted to the cliffs by natural conditions after the peat started to develop. The amount of pine timber available for use by man would be very small compared with what was growing on the south shore.

## **BROADLEAVED WOODLANDS**

Many west coast oakwoods (W11) have been intensively managed for charcoal<sup>3</sup> production and other species have been removed (so the trees on a W7, W9 and W17 site may appear like W11 but the ground vegetation should still show the diversity) and there has been considerable planting with oak which may have come from England or even further away. No charcoal hearths have been found at Loch Hourn and the oakwoods are more varied although there has been considerable modification. This modification may be due to selective felling and grazing rather than deliberate large scale planting but there are records of planting in Glen Barrisdale about 250 years ago.

### Overall view of woodland 1km either side of Caolasmor

The western end of this area is outside the archaeological study area but is a good guide to existing tree cover further east. Only limited ground inspection of the woodland has been carried out and almost none at high elevations.

Near to the shore on the steep rocky slopes there is oakwood with birch (W11 and W17) and ash (W9) depending on site richness but above this, where the slope is more gentle, the area is largely treeless. Where the slope remains steep dense woodland can go from the loch right up the slope and there are oak up to about 200m (W17). At high levels there is open birchwood with smaller trees (W4) and in some places this can come down to much lower levels. Downy birch is a variable species and sub-species are recognised and the tree like form will grow with the oak (W17) and the shrub one on the wet sites (W4). It is likely that above the birch that there was a form of high elevation willow scrub but this has been severely affected by heavy grazing and so only isolated individuals (if any) may now be found. Alder occurs near the burns at low level (W7) and could grow at higher levels if the site was suitable.

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<sup>3</sup>charcoal - partially burnt wood which is used in the production of iron

This largely treeless band with the remains of a wall through it is a mystery. It has quite a number of holly trees in it which suggests that it was oak woodland. If the wall was to keep stock in the low ground then trees should start just above the wall and if it was to keep animals out of the lower woodlands then trees should be right up to it. There are other walls further east which do not appear to be associated with woodland management and so must be for livestock management. Where trees were coppiced<sup>4</sup> then it is essential to exclude stock from those areas to allow the shoots to regrow but there may have been temporary wooden structures or herding of animals to keep them out of regenerating woodlands.

Elm is a component of ashwood but is very rare near Loch Hourm which may be because these ashwoods are rather poor and the sites are marginal or because of human activity. No juniper was seen but it does occur in the "Barrisdale" pinewoods and may exist on some cliffs or at higher elevations.

Within some of the archaeological structures there are substantial trees which are of similar size to the trees nearby. It is probable that they originated at the same time when there was a change in the grazing pressure on the area. This may be when the area was cleared for sheep and/or when the grazing changed from sheep to deer. In some places there are a lot of small trees, mainly birch, which are prevented from becoming more than a metre tall due to grazing pressure. The 2 fenced enclosures show how trees and the ground vegetation change when this pressure is drastically reduced. Even before the area was cleared for sheep there would have been fluctuations in the grazing pressure due to domestic animals which would have affected the regeneration of the woodland.

#### Oakwood on promontory at Caolas Mor

This is the most accessible woodland and the most likely to be harvested for charcoal. It has been intensively managed with the oak and birch (and perhaps even the rowan) being coppiced but it appears that it may have been managed as coppice with standards<sup>5</sup>. Management has stopped and trees are being killed due to competition and some trees have blown over because the amount of available soil is insufficient for such large tall trees. Some blown material is still being utilised for firewood.

The site is a mixture of deep soil in gullies with shallower soil and rock in between and there is a mixture of oak and birch with rowan. There are some holly with 2 patches of aspen on the west edge (aspen regrowth is very susceptible to animal browsing). There may be some hazel in the wood but it was not noticed and it should have been present which suggests active removal.

A Forester was recorded in this area in the 19th century censuses and this indicates that this woodland may have supplied material for many other people living near the shore of the loch. Trees near to houses would have been used for fuel but perhaps the "forester" provided specialist material for building as well as firewood.

#### Cliff above burn at Caolasmor

At the bottom of the slope near the shore there is a narrow band of ash which has been coppiced many times. The shoots are thin and bent and may still be providing firewood to the cottages

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<sup>4</sup>coppice - trees cut at ground level and then regrowth cut again at a fixed interval of years to provide crops of small diameter poles

<sup>5</sup>coppice with standards - part of area cut frequently for coppice but some trees grown to large size (standards)

nearby. Moving up the steep slope with large rock slabs the richness of the soil declines and the woodland becomes oak with birch (occasional hazel) which has been coppiced. Coppicing ceased many years ago and some trees are blowing over because they are too large. There is the remains of a stone wall some distance above the wood but this stops further east but there are remains of it on both sides of a small burn (cNG888070).

The small burn is much richer and the tree cover should be an upland ashwood but this has been modified so that in the past it was a hazel wood on a steep slope. The hazel would have been coppiced to produce material for making containers etc. but on this steep rocky south facing slope may have been selected as the most suitable site for producing nuts for food. The wood has been neglected but there are hazel stems up to 0.2m diameter and coppice stools are over a metre wide across the slope (not circular as is usual on flatter ground). There are a few large trees over the coppice which make the woodland look like a mixed woodland but this is misleading and the result of decades of no management.

The main burn has alder along the banks near where it enters the sea but further east there is an admixture of alder. Between the burn and the wood on the steep slope there is evidence of a flow of nutrient rich water through a poor treeless area. This flow is marked by a lot of alder regeneration which is being prevented from getting taller by browsing. A few years of reduced pressure would allow a band of alder to become established. The alder along the burn appear to be of a similar age and may have appeared during a limited period of reduced grazing pressure. There are a few very large alder which have been coppiced many times and these could have been the source of seed for the earlier expansion.

#### Cottages at Caolasmor NG893069

The patch of alder (W7) has been coppiced in the past and may the result of a surge of new growth during a period of reduced grazing pressure. It likely that it was more actively managed for firewood 50 years ago than it is at present.

#### Allt Mhogh Sgeir NG912076

This flatter area near the loch has very few trees where the soil conditions indicate that good tree growth would be possible.

#### Torr a Choit NG925079

The steep slope behind the present cottage has a range of tree species although there is a lot of bracken where there is little tree growth. These bracken areas may be better soils where the trees were cleared and the bracken domination is recent.

The western edge of the cleared area has a number of rather large hawthorn trees in a "savannah" like appearance. This does not appear natural and hawthorn is a very rare component of the woodlands. The birch appear to be of a similar age and might be the result of a massive surge of regeneration during a period of reduced grazing.

### RECOMMENDATIONS ON TREES CONCERNING ARCHAEOLOGY

1 - If trees growing in or near archaeological features are to be removed the age of the trees should be determined by counting the number of rings in a disk cut as near to ground level as possible.



The species of tree must be noted and a photograph of the tree should be taken. If it appears that the tree has been coppiced then additional samples should be taken above where it was coppiced.

2 - Ideally a disk should be taken at ground level, 1m and 2m and the age of each one determined which might indicate that it took many years for the trees to get above the browsing level.

3 - It would be helpful if the diameter of the tree was determined when felled and every 10 years before that to give an indication of the rate of growth. Forestry measurements are normally done at breast height (1.3m) and so measurements may be ground level, 1.3m and 2.0m.

4 - As well as photographs of the disks it may be desirable to keep the dried samples for reference and perhaps adjoining samples (for owner, NOSAS, Historic Scotland and a local museum).

5 - To gain a better understanding of the existing woodlands, sampling of the age of some trees not near archaeological sites could be carried out. It is not easy to read cores taken out of birch trees and oak is a hard wood and extracting cores is hard work. There are windblown trees but many fall over and because some of their roots are still in the ground they continue to grow. Sampling should be restricted to windblown trees which have died or are to be used for fuel (it may be possible to cut a few standing live trees near to the holiday cottages). A preliminary survey of an area would be necessary before a chainsaw operator obtained the samples. Sampling should include some pine trees (a tree in Glen Loyne was recently found to be 523 years at breast height).

6 - If someone studies the pollen profile in the peat or studies the peat cutting then it would be desirable to get several radio-carbon ages for the pine samples and to determine the age of some of the trees/stumps.

## CONCLUSIONS

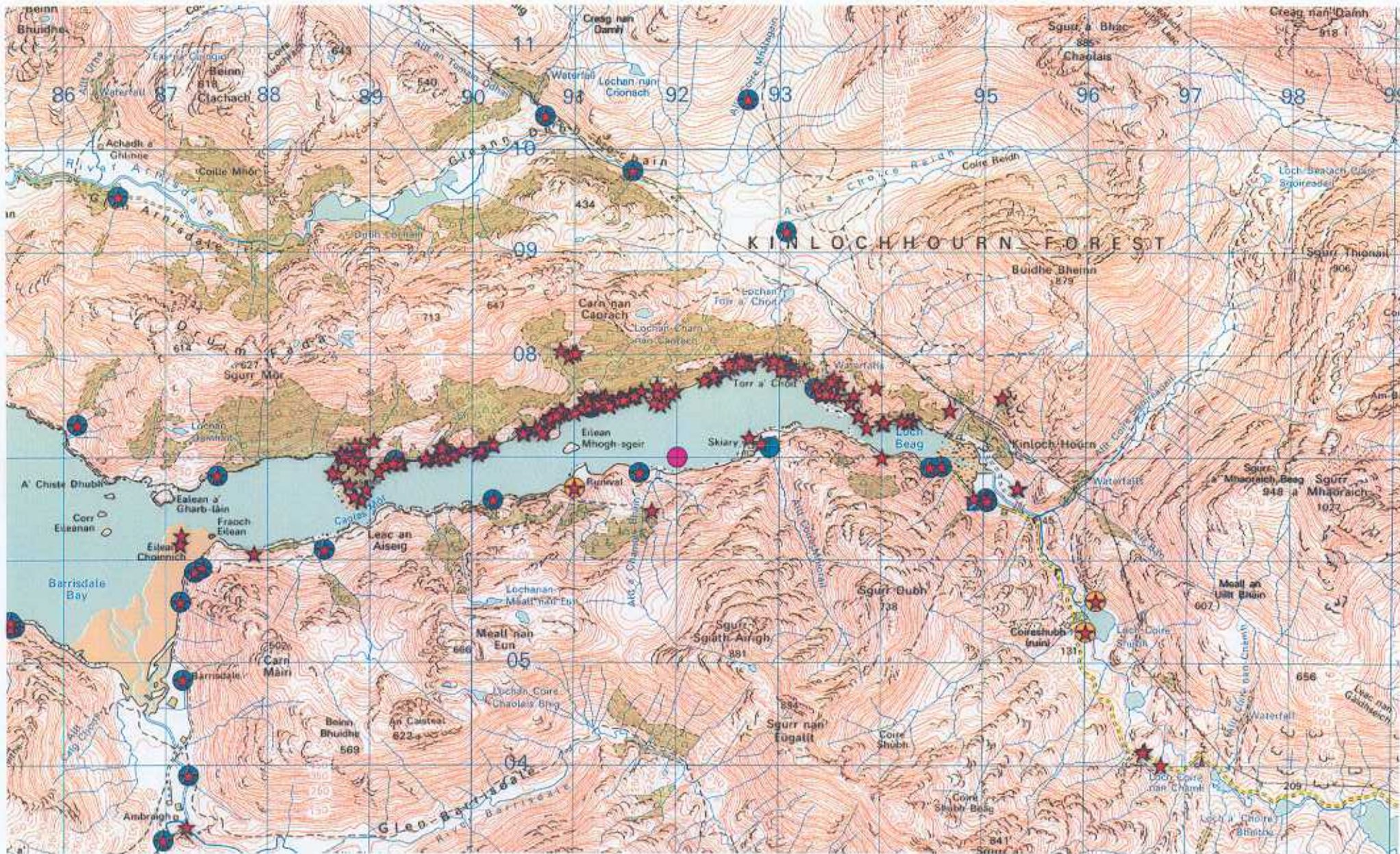
The woodlands have been coppiced and some areas may have been managed as coppice with standards. The composition of the woodlands have been changed, hazel increased and decreased, but there is no evidence of large scale planting and conversion of mixed woodlands to pure oakwood. There are one or two trees which may have been pollarded<sup>6</sup> but there is a young ash tree cNG944074 which has been broken by a nearby tree falling down and it is resprouting and in due course this could look like a pollarded tree. The few examples that were seen may be the result of some form of damage (including deer or goats)

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<sup>6</sup> pollarding - cutting shoots off trees above browsing height to yield poles and allow them to regrow



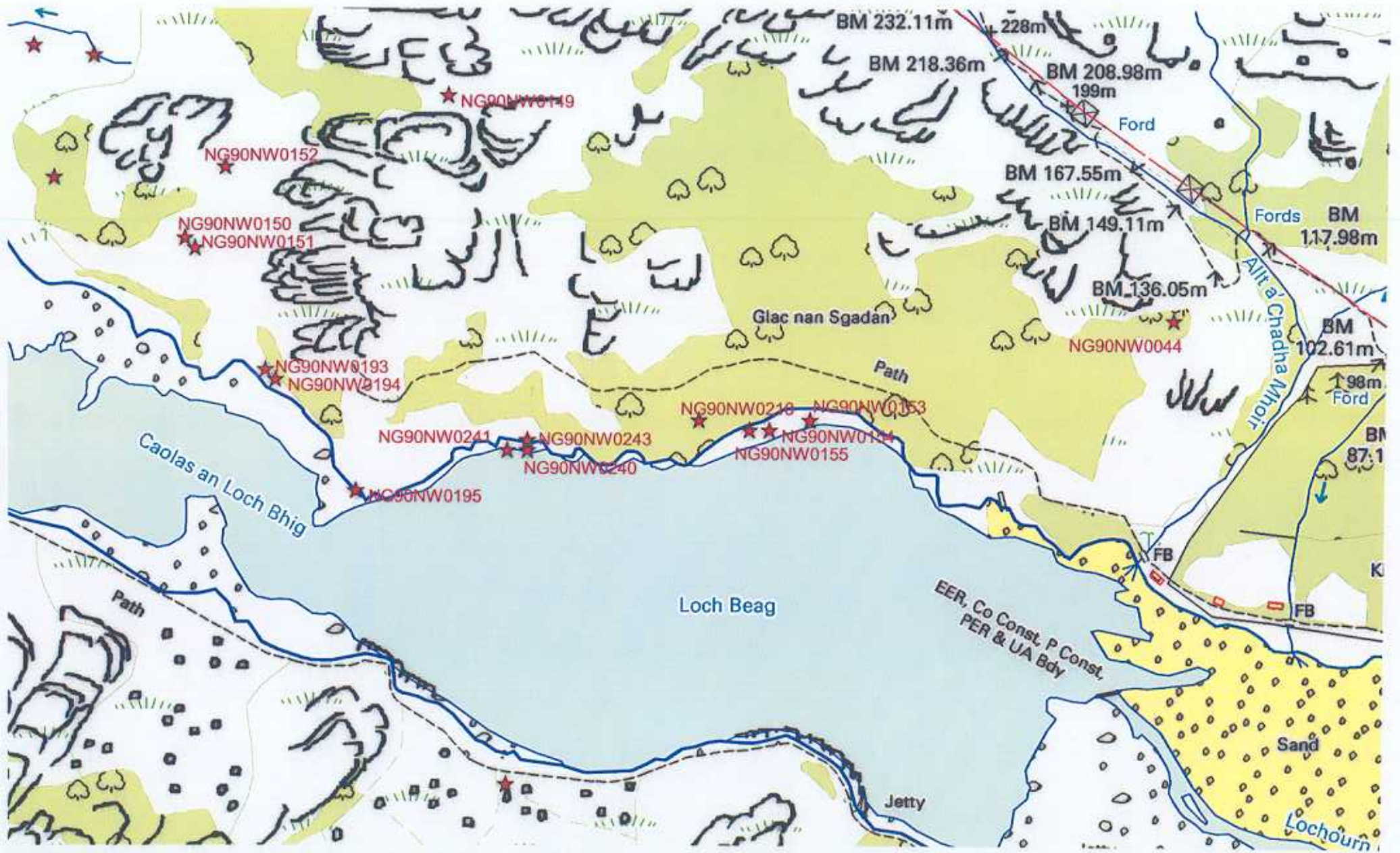
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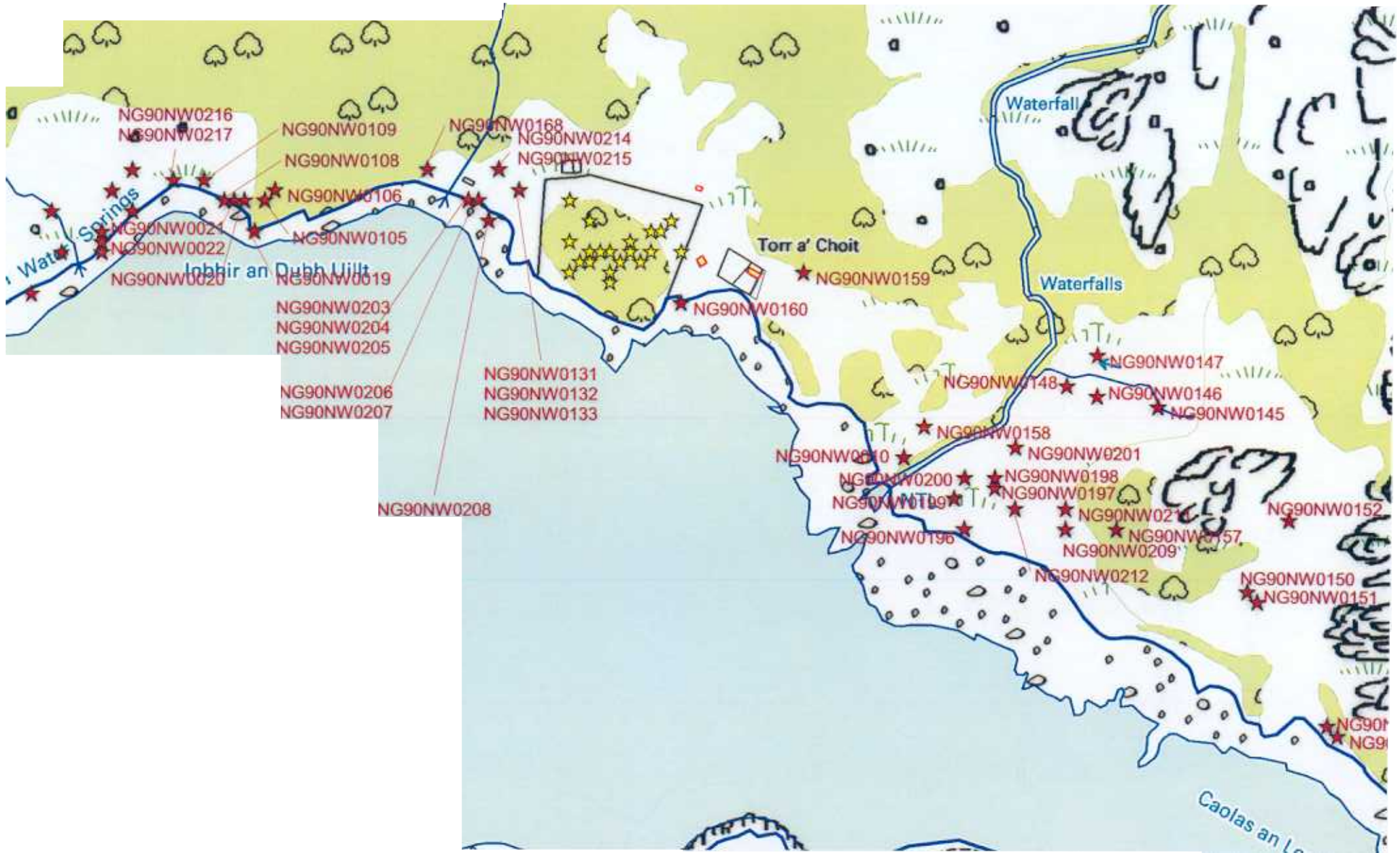


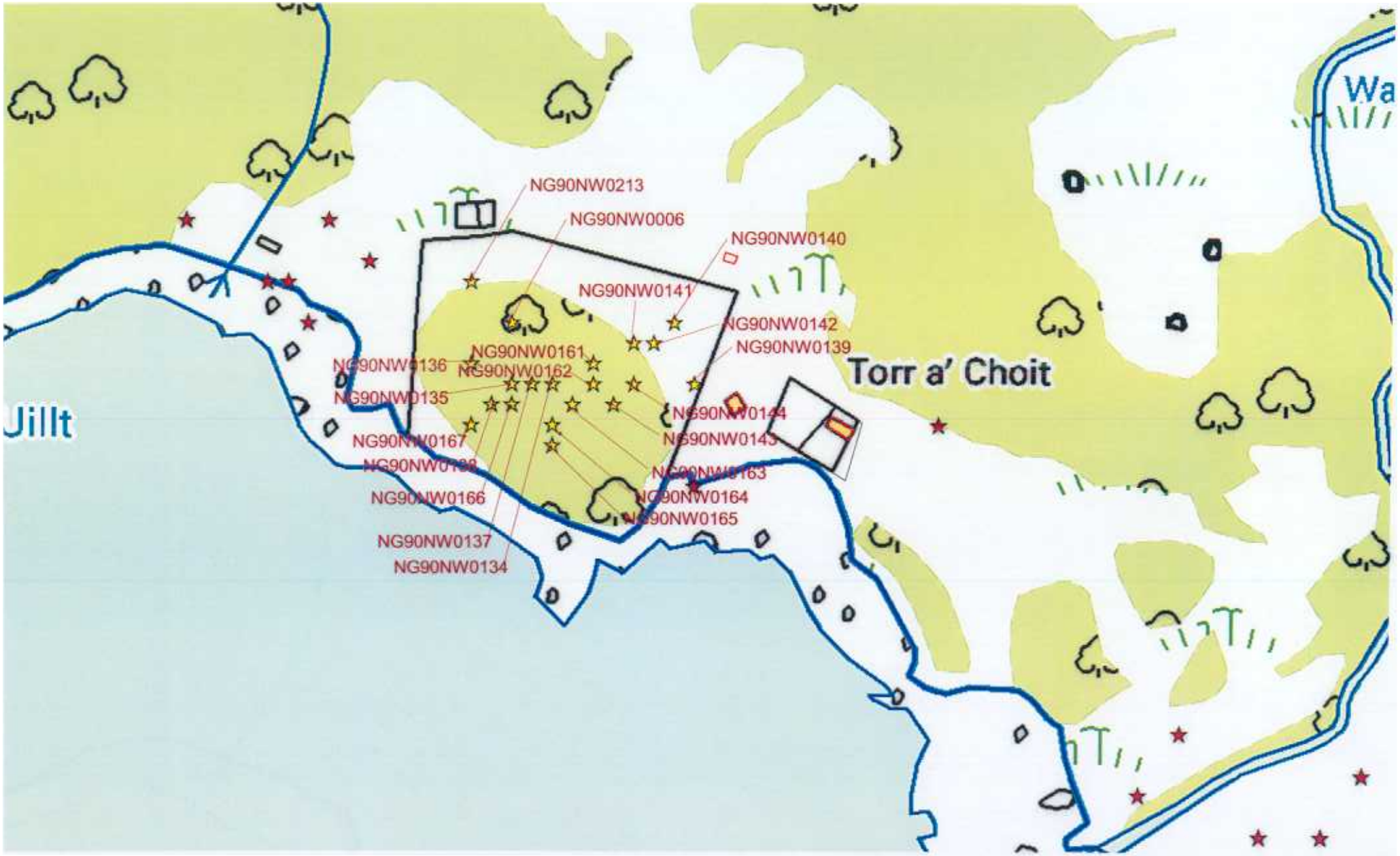
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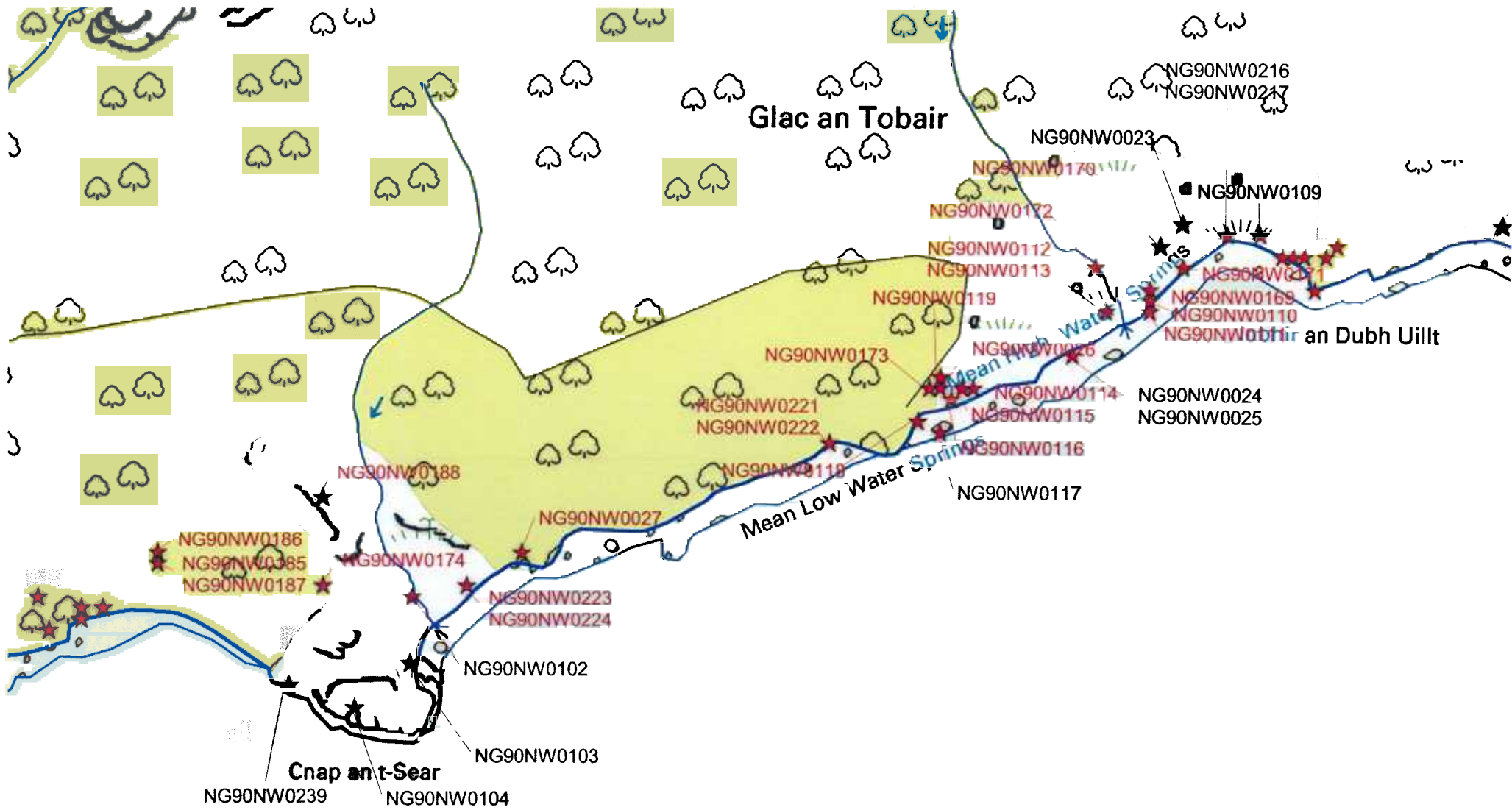
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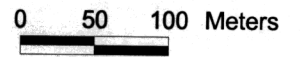
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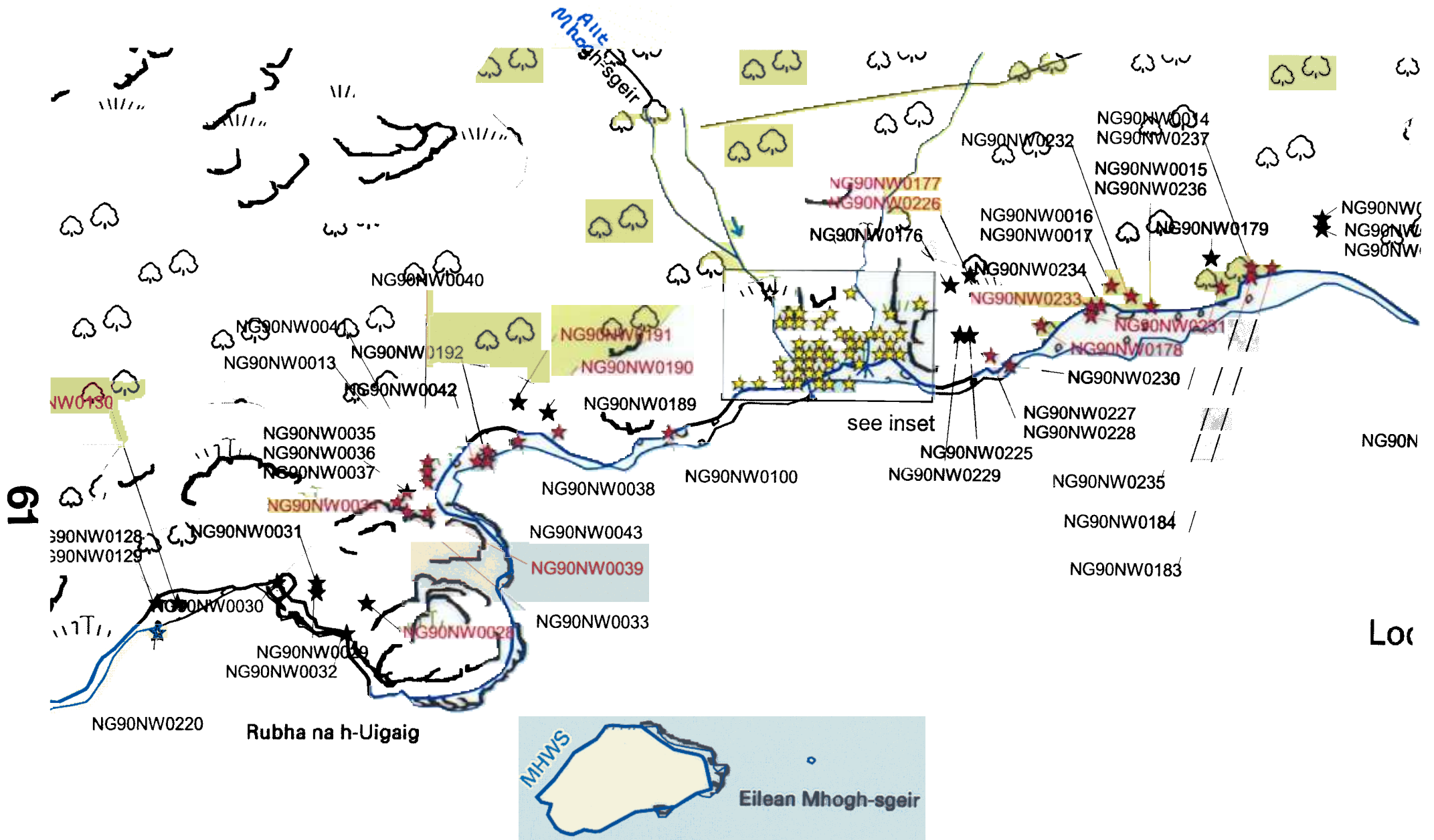
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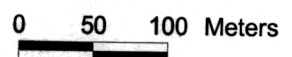
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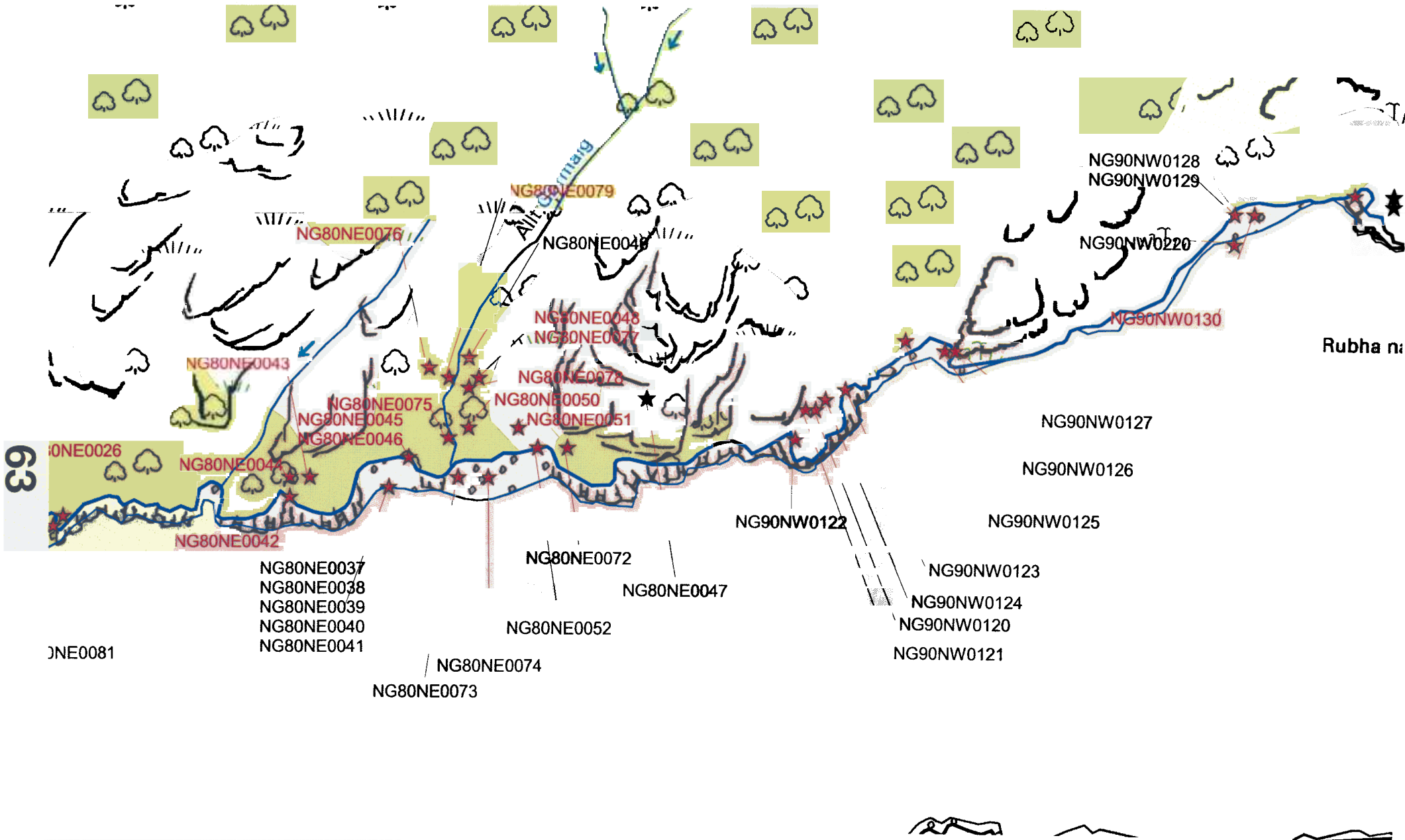


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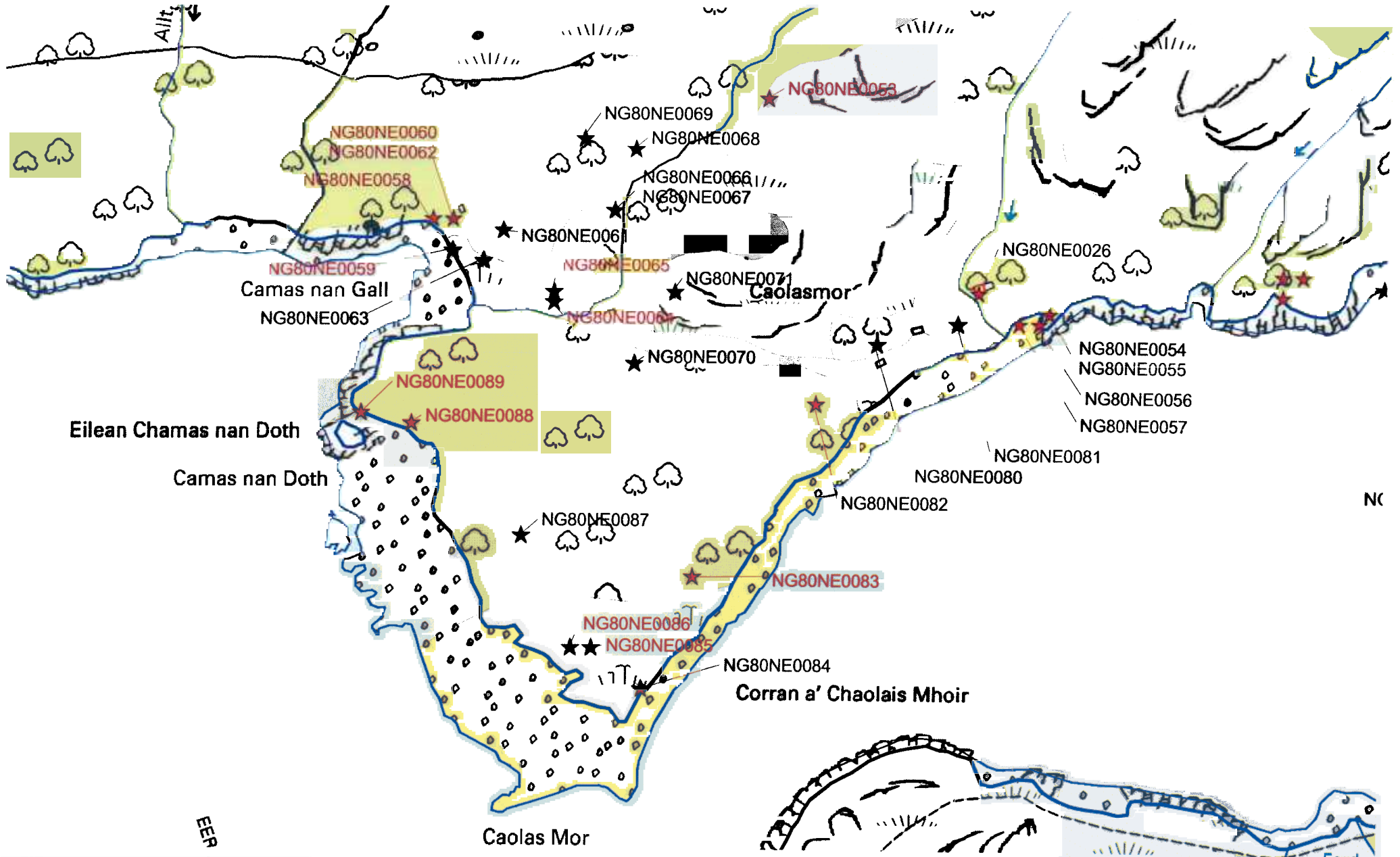
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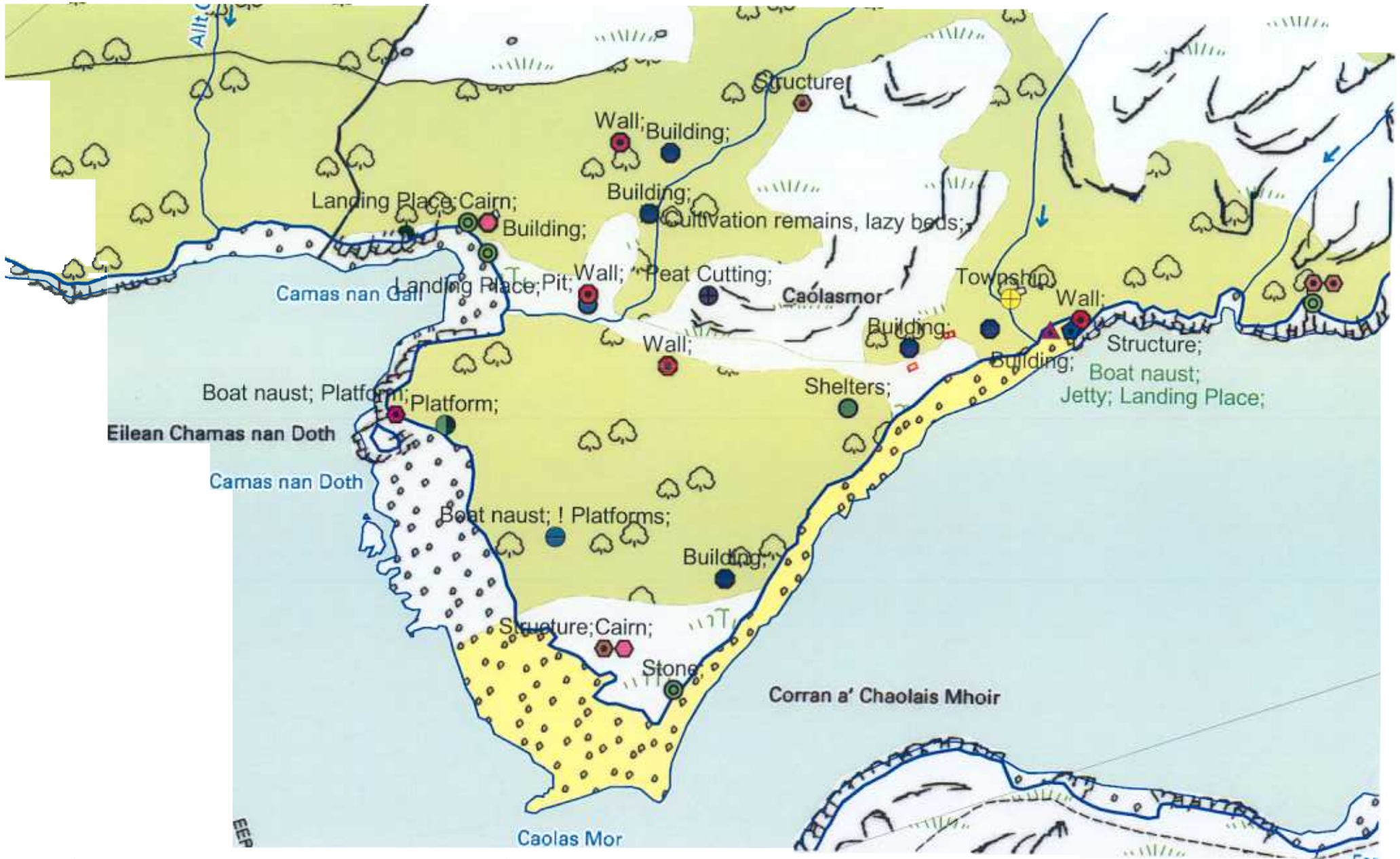
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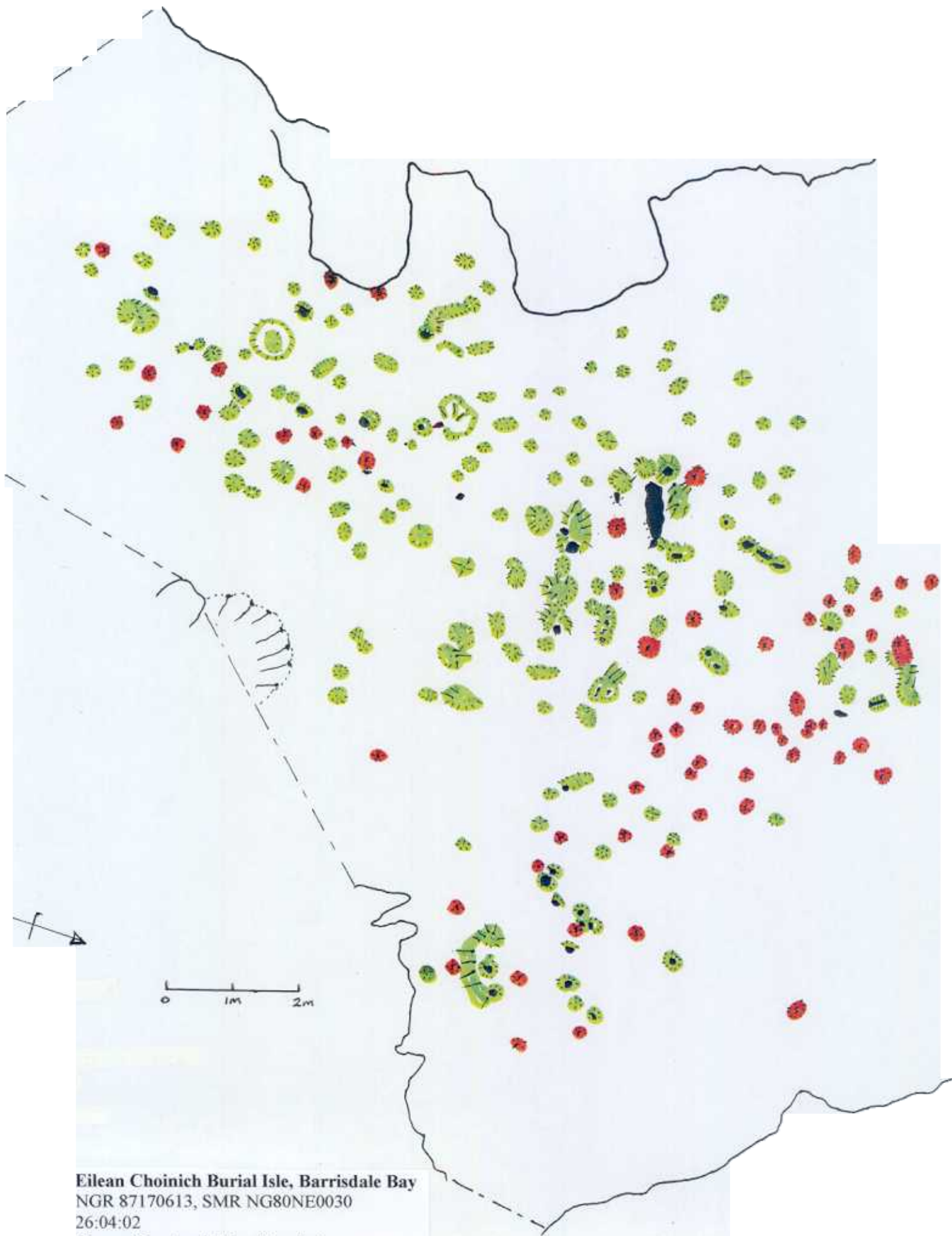


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**Eilean Choinich Burial Isle, Barrisdale Bay**

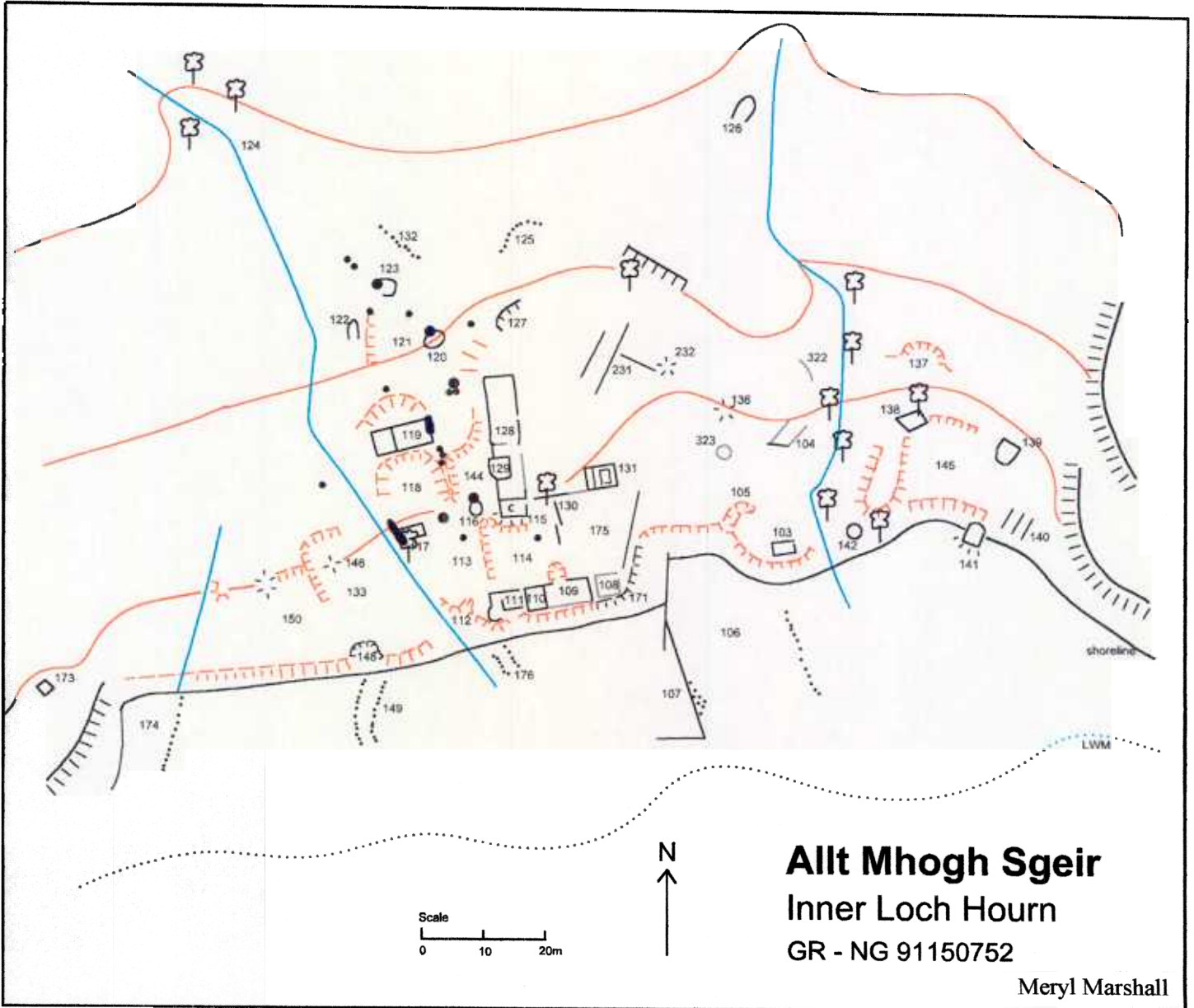
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George Grant and Trina Wombell

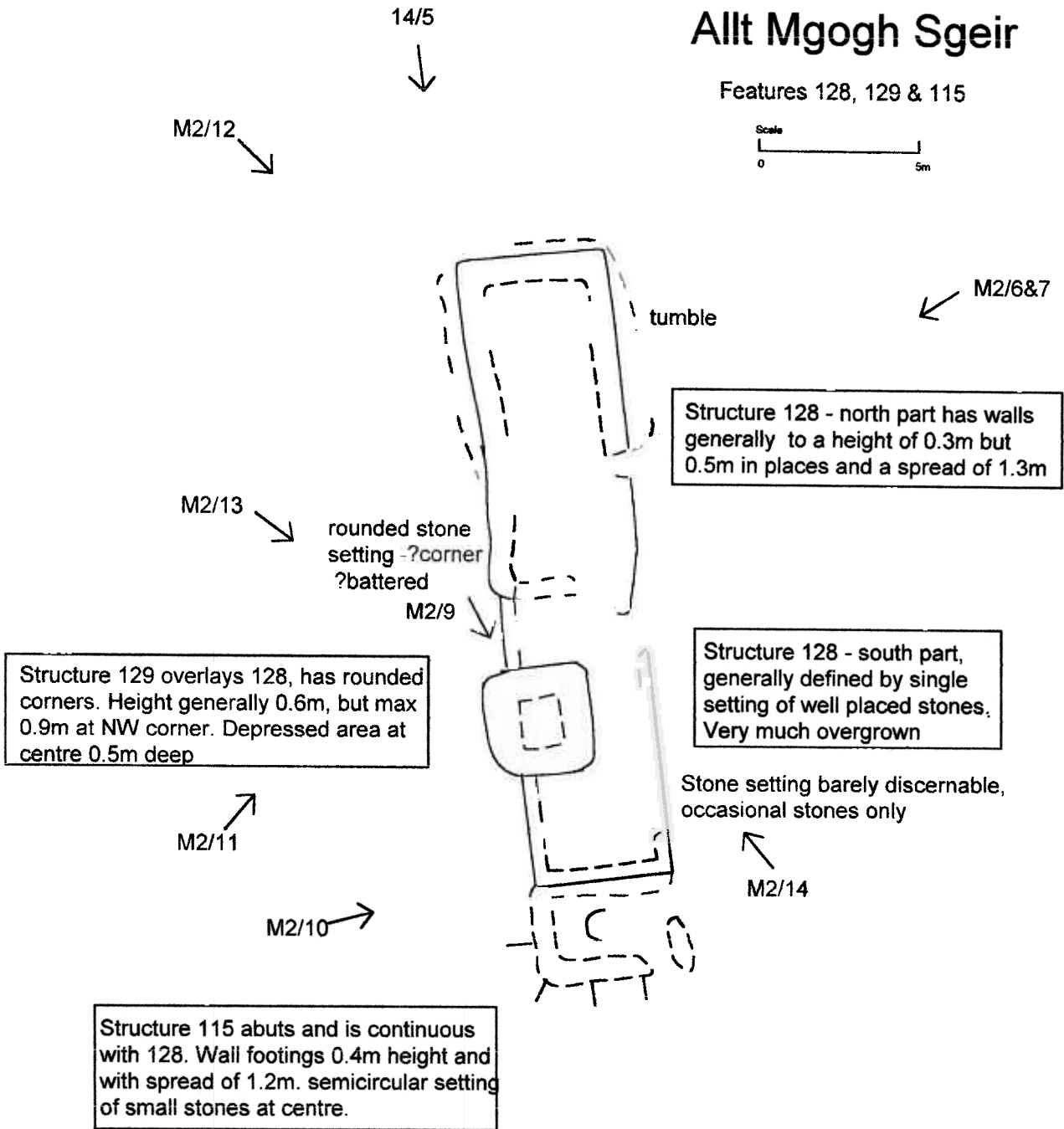
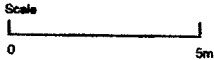
Scale c 1:71 (This reproduction photographically scaled down from the original at 1:50)

Colour legend:  
 black = stone grave markers  
 green = turf covered earth mounds  
 brown = turf covered mounds of stones



# Allt Mgogh Sgeir

Features 128, 129 & 115





**The Team Photograph**

Most of the team ready to head off on day one, with Loch Beag in the background, and the first of many showers that day covering Drum Fada in the distance.



**Members of the team being collected from Cnap an t-Seir**

This was at the end of a long squally day when the team had walked in, due to the rough seas in the morning preventing use of boats. Note the fine sheltered landing place here.



**Site 138, NGR 91210753, SMR NG90NW0181, at Allt Mhogh Sgeir**  
 Photo taken from the S, of a sub-rectangular stone and boulder built hut, c 4m x 2m internal, with walls remaining to .5m. This building could belong to the original settlement, or could be a fishermen's hut or store. Note the substantial ash tree growing within the structure.



**Site 88, NGR 92580791, SMR NG90NW0171, at Glac an Tobair**  
 Photo taken from the N, of a small hut built of boulders and rock slabs, c 3m x 2m internal. Shows the entrance and a fireplace beside it. Some of the floor paving is visible, and a fragment of glazed pottery was found inside the structure. The associated cleared landing place just shows in the top left hand corner of the photo. Most probably a fishermen's hut.





**Site 377, NGR 91480756, SMR NG90NW0236, at Allt Mhogh Sgeir**

Photo taken from the NW, of the remains of a circular shaped stone built hut, c 3m in diam, set against several large in-situ boulders. This structure lies some 300 m east of the core area.



**Site 117, NGR 91130750, SMR NG90NW0073, at Allt Mhogh Sgeir**

Photo taken from the E, of a small rectangular hut, c 3.6m x 3.2m external, set against a large in-situ boulder embedded in the bank of the burn. This site lies within the core area, and must have been a very noisy place to put the head down when the burn was in spate, unless of course it was only a store.



**Site 304, NGR 92370779, SMR NG90NW0116, at Glac an Tobair**  
Photo taken from the N, of a good example of a cleared landing place with tying-up places at the top of the cleared slipway.



**Site 59, NRG 93120782, SMR NG90NW0160, at Torrachoit**  
Photo taken from the NW. A cleared landing place.



**Site 34, NGR 89730709, SMR NG80NE0048, at Allt Gormaig**

Photo taken from the NE, of one of 3 similar buildings at this small settlement, possibly dwelling houses. It is c 4.5 x 3.5m external with evidence of an internal division. Note the small aumbray in the SW corner of the building.



**Sites 156 and 157, NGR 92940795, SMRs NG90NW0214 and 0215, at Inbhir an Dubh Uillt.** Photo taken from the W, of the remains of a small rectangular hut, c 2.5m x 2m internal, built within the walls of a substantial primary building, most probably a dwelling house, c 9m x 3m external.



**Site 107, NGR 91160748, SMR NG90NW0053, at Allt Mhogh Sgeir**

Photo taken from the N, of the remains of the very substantial pier and slipway at Allt Mhogh Sgeir, with grass covered quayside above and to the right. The pier still stands to a height of c 2m in places.



**Site 107, NGR 91160748, SMR NG90NW0053, at Allt Mhogh Sgeir**

Photo taken from the SW, of the end of the pier, which turns at a right angle. The scale pole gives an idea of the size of this structure, despite wasting, and the work which was put into its construction.



**Site 128, NGR 91150752, SMR NG90NW0051, at Allt Mhogh Sgeir.**

Photo taken from the NE of a substantial and complex building, c 20m x 5m external, near to the centre of the settlement. Please refer to the plans of Allt Mhogh Sgeir and this building, pages 67 and 68. The photo also shows numerous other features, in particular several cleared grass covered areas for possible net drying and mending.



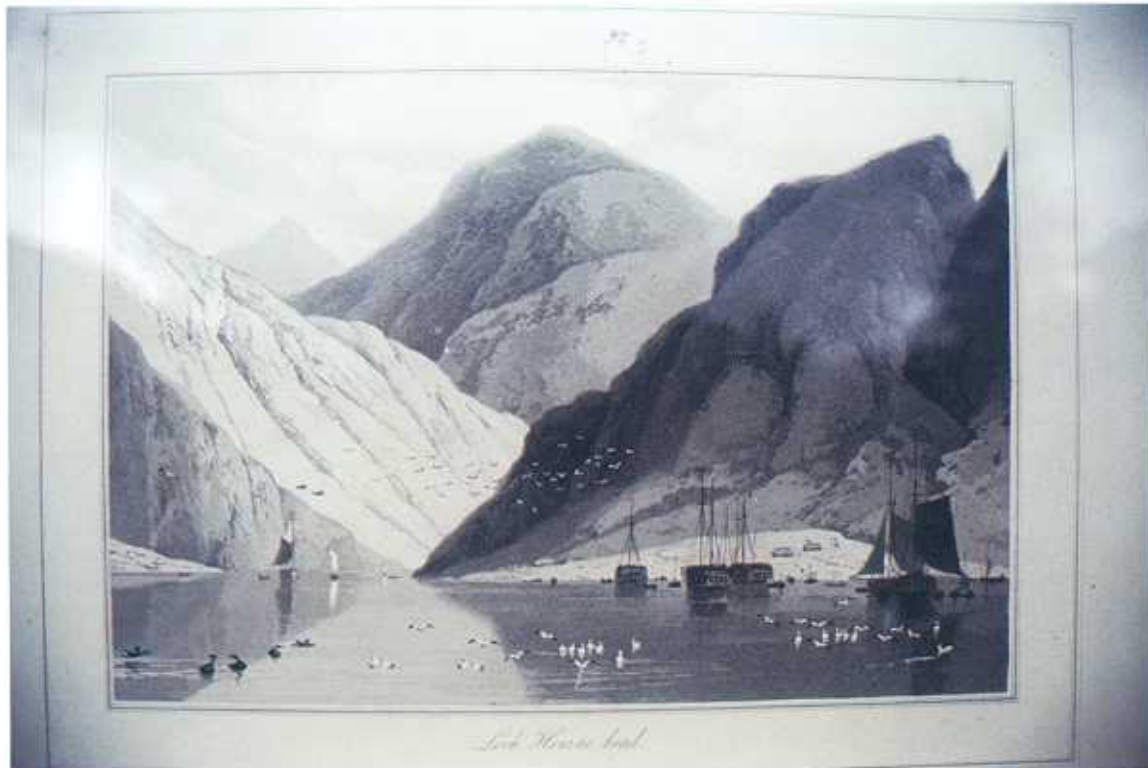
**Site 128, NGR 91150752, SMR NG90NW0051, at Allt Mhogh Sgeir.**

Photo taken from the NW shows the footings of this building in more detail, and hut Site 129, with a walking pole beside it, built within the primary building.



**Site 188, NGR 87860606, SMR NG80NE0032, at Fraoch Eilean**

Photo taken from the S, of the remains of a large boat naust, c 5.5m long, and 2m wide, with the tumbled remains of a small pier to the right, and the wasted remains of a small quay or wharf to front left. Note the setting of three boulders across the front of the naust, and the substantial pointed boulder at the "bows" of the naust, possibly used as the anchor point for a pulley winch. Above the naust is a series of platforms, and a lead to bring water from a burn to the lower platform.



**Sketch of Inner Loch Hourn by William Daniel 1819**

The sketch shows herring busses and other small boats lying or working off Skiary. Loch Beag and Lochournhead lie out of sight through the narrows.



**Site 391, NGR 87170613, SMR NG80NE0030, Eilean Choinich – Barrisdale Bay**  
Photo taken from the NW on the high part of the isle, showing the difference in vegetation, the numerous turf covered grave marking cairns, several grave stones, and the areas of erosion. Ballast heaps can be made out on the beach beyond the isle, and the roofless Quoad Sacra church can be seen on the mainland, with the footpath to Barrisdale above it.



**Site 391, NGR 87170613, SMR NG80NE0030, Eilean Choinich – Barrisdale Bay**  
Photo taken from the S, shows plane tabling in progress.



**Site 391, NGR 87170613, SMR NG80NE0030, Eilean Choinich – Barrisdale Bay**  
Photo taken from the SE, shows the burial isle surrounded by a possible ballast beach, and the tidal connection to the mainland. Also shows one or possibly two fish traps and several cleared landing places. The island was part surveyed in detail, but the other features were not.



**Site 391, NGR 87170613, SMR NG80NE0030, Eilean Choinich – Barrisdale Bay**  
Photo taken from the W is a close-up of one of two erosion faces on the west side of the isle, showing truncated grave marker cairns, various layers of staining and a possible burrow.



Artist's impression of a possible 18th century scene, North Shore Inner loch Hourn



Artist's impression of a possible 18<sup>th</sup> century fishing station scene, near Fraoch Eilean,  
South Shore Inner Loch Hourn





**References for the Introduction and Historical / Archaeological background.**

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