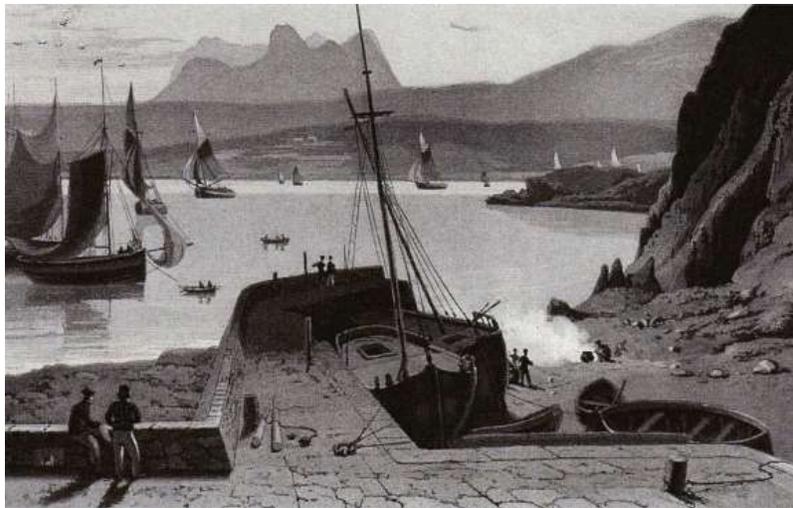




REPORT (incomplete)
of an Archaeological Survey of the Island of Tanera Mor
by members of NOSAS - Saturday, 20th October 2007



with the kind permission and help of Bill Wilder

Short Introduction

NOSAS members visited Tanera Mor in October 2007 with the intention of taking details of the Fishing Station and recording previously unrecorded archaeological sites on the island, particularly those connected with fishing – the visit was part of a wider study of West Coast Fishing Stations. Some initial documentary research was undertaken. Several archaeological sites had been identified and recorded in walkover survey by Headland Archaeology Ltd survey in 1998; the survey was completed ahead of forestry planting and the sites had been recorded on the national databases Canmore, and on the HC HER website. More recently a plan of Tanera dated 1784 by David Aitken has been located at Castle Leod.

For our visit three smaller groups of people were allocated different parts of the island; they were to explore, locate and take notes and photographs of the sites encountered; very few new sites were identified. The information gathered was to be brought together in a report, but unfortunately for several reasons, this never happened. What is produced here, 10 years later in August 2017, is a compilation of the information which has been retrieved. MMM



1. Fishing Station and Quay, Tanera Mor

GR - Centred on NB 98990 073700 Canmore ID; 4444 HC HER: MHG

The site is "B" listed (HB No 7766 -19, 1989) and comprises a substantial 2 storey building and quay which lies in a sheltered position on the east side of the island at the head of the large NE facing bay known as the Anchorage. The site lies on a NE-SW alignment; the building is situated just 14.5m to the SW of the pier.



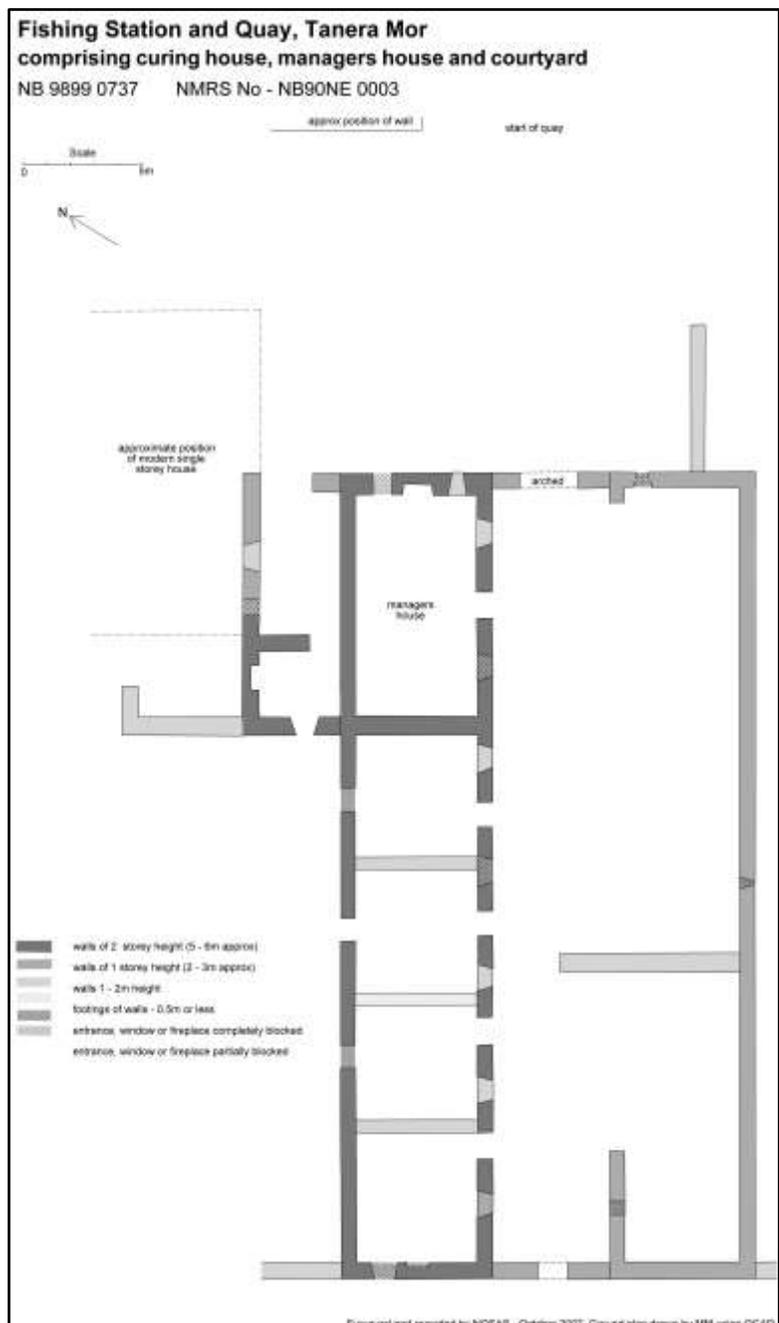
The Pier (or Quay) - information on this has not been found. The pier has a slight dog-leg and a wall on its NW side – see photographs.



The Building has 2 parts to it:

1. The main part is a long building to the NW. It is roofless, 2 storeys in height and measures 34m x 6.5m overall. The manager's house occupies the N end and the curing house the S end.
2. The courtyard is to the SE of the building and is entered through a wide arch at the NE end. It is surrounded by a wall of 1 storey height and measures 34m x 10.9m overall. There is evidence of a long building occupying the SE half of the courtyard; two small sections of its NW wall are seen at the N and S ends. This building would have been of similar size to the main building and parallel to it.

All the walls are of weathered dressed red sandstone. They are mortared and there is evidence of external rendering not necessarily contemporary with the original construction. The walls are in a reasonable state of preservation although there are two lintels in the upper windows of the manager's house that are in a precarious state. To the rear, northwest, of the manager's house there are the remains of a further building which is contiguous with it but which has no connecting access. A modern single storey bungalow has been built next to this, using part of its wall. An enclosed garden lies to the west of the site. Inside all the buildings there is an assortment of wooden sheds and general detritus.



The Manager's House - occupies the northern third of the main range of the building and has overall measurements of 11.5m x 6.5m. The external north wall is 0.95m thick, but otherwise the walls are 0.65m thick. There is a central entrance in the SE wall with a small window above it and 4 windows, 2 up, 2 down, on either side of the entrance. One of the windows is completely blocked with stonework. The NE wall has a partially blocked entrance at its W end with a window above, a small window at its E side and 2 fireplaces, 1 up and 1 down, in the centre. Of all the walls in the building this NE one is in the poorest state of preservation. The only feature in the other 2 walls is a fireplace in the upper level of the SW wall. All the windows and the entrances have external stone lintels and internal timber lintels.

The Curing House - occupies the southern two-thirds of the main range of buildings. It is divided into 4 rooms with later partitions between them, 1 of the partitions is abutting a blocked window. The rooms are roughly similar in size, the smallest being 4.8m x 5m internally and the largest 5.3m x 5m. Each room has one window and an entrance in the lower storey facing SE into the courtyard, there are no windows in the upper storey or in any of the other walls. Three of the rooms have entrances in the rear/NW wall, 2 of which have been completely blocked up and the third has been increased in height with a makeshift timber lintel. There is a blocked up fireplace in the SW external wall and also a blocked entrance here which does not have a lintel. All the entrances and windows in the curing house have external stone lintels and internal timber lintels. The joist sockets for the timbers of the upper floor are a particular feature on both the internal front/SE wall and the rear/NW wall.

The Courtyard is completely enclosed by a wall of roughly 2.5m height, possibly constructed to provide a sheltered working area. The wall is 0.65m thick and has the same construction as the main building, although there are two sections of rougher stonework each adjacent to the main building and each having an opening to the outside. The north opening or entrance is arched and 2.45m wide, the south entrance is 1.2m wide. The internal dimensions of the whole courtyard are 32.3m x 10.3m. As mentioned above it may be that the courtyard has originally started out as a separate building as there is a return at both the north and the south end. The north return is c0.8m in length, the south 4.65m in length and forms the wall of a roofed shed; it has a blocked window halfway along. A more roughly constructed dividing wall in the southern half of the courtyard may be a later addition. There are two other features in the courtyard wall; halfway along the SE wall a tapered slit window of width 0.2m on the outside (0.5m inside) and in the NE wall 2 possible fireplaces which are back to back, indicating that the external wall of 6.2m length and 1m height here may have been part of an abutting building

Selected Photographs



Buildings and courtyard of Fishing Station viewed from SE



Fishing Station viewed from south



NE end of Fishing Station from north



Arch at NE end of Fishing Station and range of buildings within, Managers House close to and Curing House beyond



Front SE wall of Managers House from S



Inside front wall of Managers House from N



Inside NE wall of Managers House



Front SE wall of Curing House from E



Inside front wall of Curing House from W

Full list of Photographs of Fishing Station Buildings

1. Fishing station and pier from E
2. Fishing station from E
3. Fishing station from E
4. Fishing station from W
5. Fishing station from W
6. Fishing station from W
7. Fishing station from SW
8. Fishing station from SE
9. Fishing station from NE
10. Main building from E through arched entrance
11. Main building SE wall from E
12. Main building SE wall managers house from SW
13. Main building managers house from SE
14. Main building managers house internal SE wall
15. Main building managers house internal N part and NE wall
16. Main building N part of SE wall from SW
17. Main building S part of SE wall - Curing house - from E
18. Main building S part of SE wall - Curing house - from E
19. Main building N part of SE wall - Curing house - from SW
20. Main building S part of SE wall - Curing house - from E
21. Main building S part of SE wall - Curing house - from E
22. Main building - Curing house - internal NW wall from S
23. Main building - Curing house - internal SE wall from N
24. Main building - Curing house - internal SE wall from W
25. Main building - Curing house - internal S part from SW
26. Main building - Curing house - internal S part from SW
27. Main building - Curing house - internal SE wall (S part) from W
28. Main building - Curing house - internal NW wall (S part) from SW
29. Main building - Curing house - internal SW wall detail
30. Main building - Curing house - internal SW wall detail
31. Courtyard external SE wall - detail of slit window
32. Garden to NW of main building (in trees) from NNW
33. Pier from inside arched entrance
34. Pier from inside arched entrance

Archaeological sites in the North part of the Island (JWM, DF, MR and BW) - see numbering on map

2. Tanera More, the burial ground – previously recorded, Canmore ID: 4442
No information was found but a few photographs were taken.

The burial ground viewed from the north



3. Cultivation Remains – previously recorded, Canmore ID: 132832 No information was found but photographs were taken.

Cultivation remains on the right, burial ground on the left middle distance, viewed from the NE



4. Acairseid Driseach Cleared Beach – NH 98515 08504 (previously unrecorded) In a small SW facing bay and on a NE-SW axis this cleared beach is 15m in length and its upper limit is 9.70m below the High Water Mark. It has a width of 4.6m at its upper limit but narrows to 3.6m lower down. Recorded at just below mid tide

The three cleared beaches 4, 5 and 6 with 4 closest to the camera viewed from the west



5. Acairseid Driseach Cleared Beach – NH 98529 08488 (previously unrecorded) In a SW facing bay and on a NE-SW axis this cleared beach is 13m in length and its upper limit is 9.40m below the High Water Mark. It has a width of 9.7m at its upper limit but narrows to 5.5m lower down. Recorded at just below mid tide

6. Acairseid Driseach Cleared Beach – NH 98530 08487 (previously unrecorded) In a SW facing bay and on a NE-SW axis this cleared beach is 9.8m in length and its upper limit is 9.3m below the High Water Mark. It has a width of 5.7m at its upper limit but narrows to 4.2m lower down. Recorded at just below mid tide

7. Acairseid Driseach Cleared Beach – NH 98407 08082 (previously unrecorded) In a NW facing bay and on a SE-NW main axis this cleared beach has 3 "legs" divided by uncleared beach and bedrock. The central leg is 24m in length and the other 2 are 16m and 17.5m. All three have a width of 4m and converge for the last 10m to the sea where the combined width is 8.7m. Recorded at just below mid tide

Cleared beach 7 viewed from SW



8. Caolas Eilean na Saile Structure – NH 98115 08125 (previously recorded – Canmore ID: 132825)

This structure is on the exposed west coast of the Island and just 20m from the rocky shoreline which is to the west. It is a substantial sub rectangular structure on a NNW-SSE axis with internal dimensions 8m x 4m and abuts a crag to the S. The walls are roughly constructed of angular unhewn stones and are generally 1.5m in height. They are 1m thick at the base, tapering to 0.5m at the top, straight faced internally but roughly battered externally. There is an entrance in the SE quadrant of 1m width



Left, Structure 8 at Caolas Eilean na Saile viewed from NE and below, viewed from West



Archaeological sites in the South part of the Island – many sites in this part of the island were recorded in 1998. Two unrecorded sites associated with fishing were located:

Garadheancal boat naust at GR NB 9953 0706 (*marked on the map above*) previously unrecorded, photographs were taken but no notes were found



The boat naust viewed from the NNW

Garadheancal wreck at GR NB 9949 0709 – previously unrecorded. It lies in the intertidal region about 50m to the NW of the naust above. No notes were found but a photograph was taken



Right – photo taken at mid-tide from NW

Photographs of An Lochanach and adjacent sites



Above left – the loch viewed from the NW

Above right – previously unrecorded farmstead at NB 9978 0697 viewed from S

Below left – the loch viewed from SW, note farmstead above at NB 9978 0697 on left edge of photo

Below right – township Canmore ID; 89484 at NB 9977 0680 viewed from SW



Cultivation Remains in SW part of Island

Several areas of rig and furrow were noted on our return journey to the fishing station

Mol an Sgadin, Canmore ID; 132830 centred on GR NB9858 9066 seen in the south part of the map below. This was noted as occupying an area marked as "sheillings" on the 1784 plan.

Mol Mor, Canmore ID; 132831 centred on GR NB 9845 0711, also noted as being marked on 1784 plan

