



The history and survey of several settlement sites in Argyll.

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Abstract

Typical West Highland abandoned settlements were partially surveyed as part of North Clyde Archaeological Society [NCAS] fieldwork projects, and their history as far as is known is given.

Introduction

This report is one of several dealing with abandoned settlements, they are part of a series of such settlements in the area of interest of NCAS, which the Society hope to investigate further by excavation and establish the true nature and date of such places in this part of Argyll. Several other comparable sites along the eastern shore of Loch Long have been surveyed courtesy of MOD (PI 1) upon whose land the sites are located.

The sites

The settlements given in this report are: Creagan, Craggan, Creagan Sithe and Preas Seilich, the latter lies within a *secure* MOD area and has not been visited. The sites are all given on OS maps and are on Explorer 364, Loch Lomond North, 1: 25,000 series (PI 1).

CREAGAN

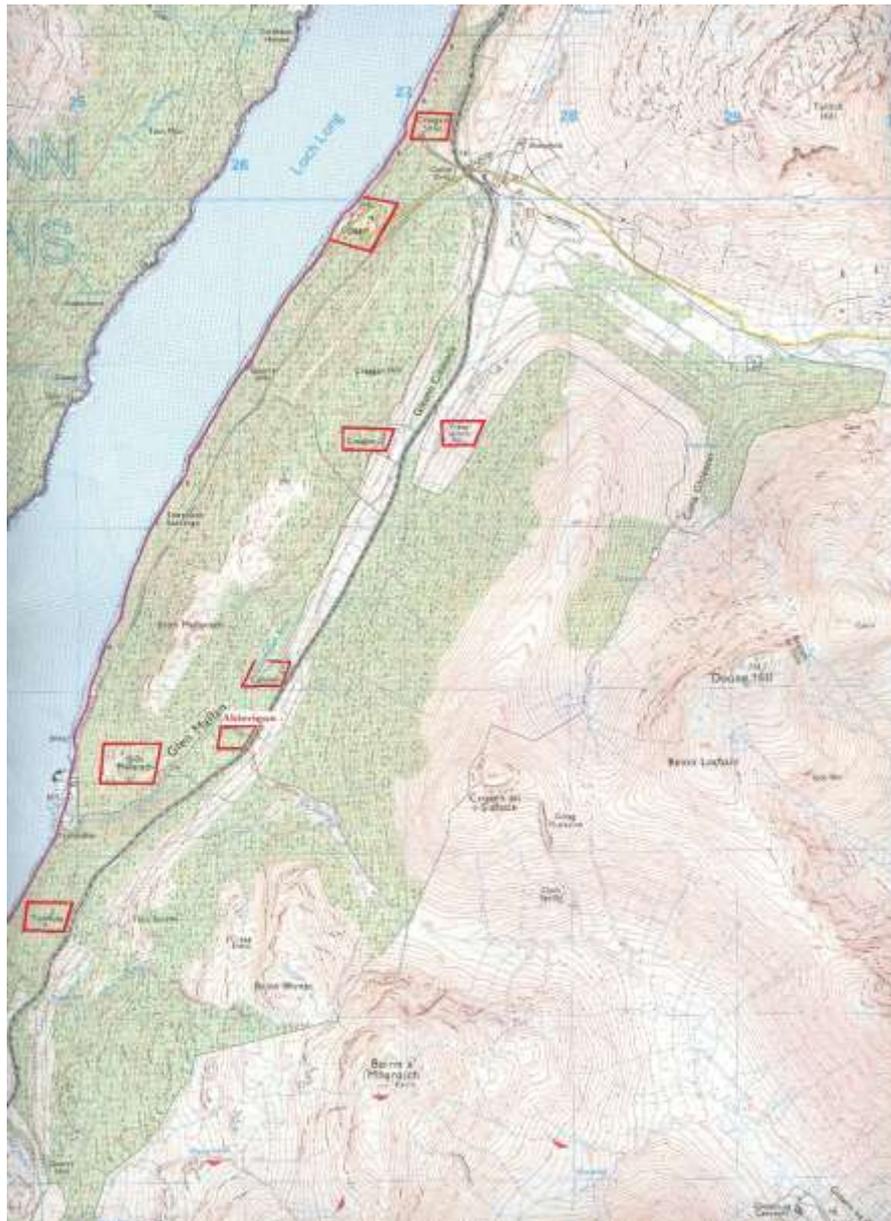
The *former* settlement site of Creagan lies on the SE flank of Craggan Hill in Glean Cùlanach, at NS 2690 9850 and at 170m OD. It lies in the line of a double electricity pylon route. Evidence of any buildings apart from a small septic tank beside the spring course has been effectively removed in recent years, two timber MOD huts have been built on the site which lies on the Three Lochs Pathway. Fragments of stone and turf dykes survive in places as do parts of an iron fence which is about the only point of interest on this location.

The site is given on 1st Ed OS map surveyed in 1860 and published in 1864 as two long buildings and an enclosure. The original track to the site appears to be the present forestry road.

The metal fence has enclosed a field to the SW of the former settlement and is given on OS maps. Perhaps of little interest in other contexts, this fence seems a peculiarity in this location for several reasons; The expense of its formation must have been considerable in terms of its material content, transport to the site and construction. The fence is made with four lengths of

flat bar, solid rod (at top) and a lower wire, all passing through slots and holes in the vertical posts; which are slightly larger flat bar set into the ground, presumably in leaded holes in stone. The flat bars were joined by overlapping ends and secured by clips to the uprights, while the upper rods were joined by jointing tubes at their terminals. A corner post shows how elaborate the fence once was. The original fence was over 900m in length to enclose the hill field which appears only to have been a stock enclosure, and one for sheep as such a fence would not for long survive the attrition of cattle pressure upon it.

Such fences are often seen as ornamental boundaries on estate lands and mansion driveways, but to see such a fence in this context seems peculiar.



Pl 1. Showing site locations.

CRAGGAN

The site of Craggan is located adjacent the unclassified road to Glen Douglas where it leads up from the A814 loch side road, NS 2665 9986 and at 30m OD. Like Creagan (above), this site, and a shepherd's cottage in the woodlands above were systematically demolished and removed around 1975. All that remains are some walls of the farm steading and which include a sheep dipping trough.

THE STORY OF GORTAN AND CREAGAN / CRAGGAN

INTRODUCTION

This narrative begins with particular focus on the early lairds of the lands of Gortan, which was formed as a relatively small estate by way of provision for the illegitimate son of a major landowner, Colquhoun of Luss. It subsequently changed hands, seemingly as part of the settlement of a deadly clan blood feud between the chiefs of Colquhoun and MacFarlane. Later, financial difficulties experienced by the then owners, the MacFarlanes of Gortan, a cadet house of the MacFarlane chiefs, forced a change of ownership. This led to new lairds, the Oswalds, who were wealthy Glasgow businessmen. One of them, James Oswald, is commemorated to this day by having two Glasgow streets named after him, and even attained the ultimate tribute of having a statue to him erected by friends, initially situated at the city's Sandyford Place, but later moved to George Square. Oswald even had a Clyde steamer named after him (These accolades stemmed from James Oswald's support for the great Reform Act of 1832, and his subsequent election as MP for Glasgow). The estate then reverted to the original landowners, the Colquhouns of Luss, who had remained feudal superiors throughout, and the land was finally sold to the Ministry of Defence in the early 1960's, and the Crown has retained ownership up until the present time.

Gortan may be looked upon as a typical upland estate located in the South West Highlands. Its economy would have centred on traditional mixed farming. As such, those actually working the land must have found it tough: much of the terrain was rough and steep, and only really suitable for grazing. The little amount of land suitable for arable farming occurred near the settlement of Gortan itself (the name of which means a small enclosure or garden) but the shaded location was such that it would have seen little sunshine, save in high summer. The estate extended to Glen Douglas and the adjacent Glen Mallan (the upper part of which is named on Ordnance Survey maps as Glen Culanach, although long obsolete locally as a name). Here, there was some flatter ground, but the soil was thin, poor and at an altitude of around 600 ft and above.

The actual settlement of Gortan itself is shown on Timothy Pont's manuscript map of the 1590's as not far above the shores of Loch Long, at a site a little above the present Glen Douglas road end. The last farmhouse to stand on, or close to this site, was demolished at the end of 1975, and the site cleared.

Another settlement that existed on the lands of Gortan was Craggan. This would seem to have come into being at a later date than Gortan. The earliest reference to Craggan so far found is a depiction on Charles Ross's Dunbarton County map of 1777. There, it is shown on a site which seems to correspond to that on which stood a relatively modern shepherd's cottage until the 1970's- most likely the latter was demolished around the same time as the farmhouse

mentioned above. The site lies a little south of the watershed between Glen Douglas and Glen Mallan /Glen Culanach, next to an old track running from Glen Douglas to Stronmallanach.(This latter lay on the hillside above the present RNAD Glenmallan Jetty). Ross's map shows two buildings at the Craggan site: one appears to be a laird's house of the smaller sort at Craggan, with a lesser building close by.

An interesting aspect of the whole story lies in the fact that the Craggan name eventually superseded that of Gortan. This might seem surprising, given that Gortan was the original name of both estate and principal settlement. It is suggested that this change probably came about in the wake of the building of a new farmhouse at the Gortan site around the early 1850's. In practice, the lower site came to be known locally as Craggan Farmhouse, or Low Craggan, while the upper one, a shepherd's cottage, was called High Craggan. Both formed part of the whole farm.

It may also be worth mentioning that the Craggan name was also applied to a small dwelling situated on a hillside terrace, perhaps a hundred or so feet above the farmhouse. Known as Craggan Cottage, this was a relatively modern building that was probably built around the same time as the farmhouse. Like the latter, it too was demolished, most likely around the same time.

The Gortan name did however continue for some time. It was latterly applied to a cottage just across the road from the farmhouse. It served as the home of a roadman until it was abandoned around the turn of the twentieth century. Just possibly this house stood on the site of an earlier building of that name, but only archaeological investigation could reveal whether or not that might have been the case.

One factor that may have played a part in the change of name is the physical extent of the farm itself. In the absence of detailed plans, the original boundaries of Gortan estate are hard to determine with exactitude, but probably effectively comprised Craggan Hill. The latter extends southwards where it adjoins Strone Mallanach Hill, which once formed part of Stronmallanach Farm. The latter seems to have ceased to function as such around the 1850's, with the land subsequently being incorporated as an extension of Craggan Farm. This was certainly the case by 1885, as a diary kept by young James Dunlop, a nephew of the then farmer, Robert McLean, seems to suggest. He describes walking along the road with his uncle from Craggan to Strone, where they retrieved and mounted horses. They crossed the shoulder of the hill, and returned to Craggan by way of Glen Mallan, descending via a steep descent to Craggan Farm. This he describes as "going round most of the farm".

At some stage, the extent of the farm also came to encompass the west side of the hill opposite Craggan Hill, namely Cruach an t-Sithean (the Fairy Hill). This would originally have been farmed by the settlements on the east side of Glen Mallan but the last of these, shown on O.S. Maps as Preas Seilich, was abandoned at some time between the Census of 1841 and 1851. All the land in question was owned by the same landowners, namely the Colquhouns of Luss.

Mention has already been made of the settlement at the head of Glen Mallan, where the Craggan name was first applied. It would appear that hereabouts was a habitation with the somewhat similar name of Cragganbreck. Somewhat frustratingly, no settlement with that particular name is shown on any map or plan so far sourced. It does seem almost certain, however, that it more or less coincides with the Craggan site shown on Ross's map. The

present writer has gone to some trouble to confirm that Cragganbreck did indeed form part of the lands of Gortan and has succeeded in doing so. But why bother about a seemingly trivial detail like this?

There is in fact good reason to do so, something that stems from the recent revelation that a well-known collector of folk-tales was born at Cragganbreck, in 1802. John Dewar was his name, and he is best known for the 1963 publication in book form of some of his material, translated from the original Gaelic into English, and known as the “Dewar Manuscripts”. The son of a farm worker, or farm manager, in the employ of the then laird, Alexander Oswald, Dewar spent most of his working life as a sawyer. One of a large family, he somehow managed to educate himself, such that he became fluent in both written Gaelic and English.

It is thanks to the labours of Andrew Wiseman and particularly through the efforts of Ronald Black, both Edinburgh University-based researchers, that his birthplace has been brought to notice. Dewar himself, in a letter sent in 1860 notes: “ *I remember, upwards of fifty years ago, when I was a boy, my father lived in the furthest north house in the valley called Glen na Callanach...*”

After picking up a work-related injury, Dewar was seconded late in life by the Duke of Argyll to go round the West Highlands, collecting folk tales. He built up a very large collection, beautifully written out in copperplate Gaelic manuscripts. Only a small fraction of these were translated into English and incorporated into the 1963 book just mentioned. The manuscripts are stored at Inveraray Estate archives, and Ronald Black is currently translating many of them into English, the hope being that they can be published and brought to the attention of a wider public. He is not alone in regarding Dewar as a major literary figure. His stories have been described as unique in a number of respects, including Dewar's masterful turn of phrase, and his propensity for incorporating so many real people, places and historical events into his tales.

In seeking to find out more about the Dewar family, who lived at Cragganbreck at a time when the Oswalds were the lairds, the present writer consulted a collection of Oswald Papers, held at the Mitchell Library in Glasgow (T-MJ 550/554/586). Unfortunately, there was no mention of the Dewar family, but the exercise did shed fascinating light on the MacFarlane lairds and their problems, in the run up to their replacement by the Oswalds. The papers did also prove beyond doubt that Craggan did indeed form part of the Gortan estate at that time- anyone interested in this particular aspect of the story is referred to *appendix 1* for further details.

NOTE: the spelling which is given on O.S. maps for this site is Creagan

GORTAN/ CRAGGAN TIMELINE

1522 John Colquhoun of Luss grants a charter of the lands of Gortan and those of Tullichintaul to Partick Colquhoun and his heirs-male, extending to 6 merks worth of land of old extent ...paying yearly 2 pence Scots in name of blech-ferme. (Colquhoun Charters, no. 67).

(NOTE- Patrick was a natural., i.e. illegitimate, son of Sir John's. The motivation was evidently to provide a reliable source of income for Patrick and his heirs. Tullichintaul was a settlement at the west end of Glen Douglas, and the lands would have partly bordered those of Gortan).

1569 Sasine upon precept by Sir John Colquhoun of Luss to Vmphry(Humphrey) Colquhoun, as son and heir of the deceased Patrick Colquhoun of the lands of Tullichintawl and Gortane...earldom of Lennox, shire of Dunbarton. (Cartulary of Colquhoun).

1587 Precept of clare constat by Sir Vmphry Colquhoun of Luss in favour of Robert Colquhoun of Ballernickmoir, as heir of the deceased Vmphry Colquhoun of Tullichintaul, his father, in the lands of Gortan. (Cart of Colquhoun)

(NOTE- Ballernickmoir was located on the slopes of the Gareloch. The terms of this charter would seem to imply that only the lands of Gortan were being conveyed to Robert).

1590's Gortan is depicted on Timothy Pont's manuscript map of the Lennox as located not far from the present Glen Douglas road end.

1622 Charter by John MacFarlane of Arroquhar, with consent of Walter, his son and heir-apparent, in favour of Andrew McCoull MacFarlane, lawful son of Andrew McCoull MacFarlane in Blairvoyak, of the lands of Gortan, lordship and barony of Luss, parish of Rosneath, shire of Dumbarton, to be holden of the said John MacFarlane in fee and heritage forever. (Cart of Colquhoun)

(NOTE: there has evidently been a sea change from the charter of 1587 above. So how did possession shift from the Colquhouns to the MacFarlanes? Neither Colquhoun nor MacFarlane records seem to spell out exactly how and when this major transition came about. However, several sources, e.g. James MacFarlane's "History of Clan MacFarlane (1922), suggest that this was one of several moves made to help heal the deadly and destructive blood feud that had existed for some years between the two clans. The situation had been exacerbated by the frequent plundering of Colquhoun lands by the MacFarlanes and others. This is not the place to go into great detail: suffice it to state that, according to the author just quoted, Colquhoun of Luss had resolved his differences with some of the MacFarlanes by 1603, and the rest, including MacFarlane of Arrochar, the clan chief, by 1610. There is indeed little evidence of serious trouble between the two clans after those dates. It would seem that as part of the deal, Colquhoun of Luss granted a feu of Gortan, and separately, a feu of Tullichintaul, to the MacFarlane clan chief. The feu holder was then free to make an assignation of such a possession to a third party, if he so chose, and that is seemingly the case with the 1622 charter above. As will be revealed in other charters quoted below, Colquhoun of Luss still remained as feudal superior.)

1664 Sasine of certain lands in Glen Douglas, with Andrew MacFarlane of Gortan acting as baillie. (Abstract of Argyll Sasines)

(NOTE: There is a big difference between being described as "of" a place and being merely referred to as "in" a place, in the parlance of land records. Someone who is "of" a property implies having a charter to the place in question, as opposed to being merely a tenant, or occupier).

1664 Reference to Andrew MacFarlane of Gortan. (Index to Glasgow Commissariat)

Records).

1666 Sasine of 40/- lands of Gortan to Duncan MacFarlane, lawful son of the late Andrew MacFarlane of Gortan, on a charter by Sir John Colquhoun of Luss. (Abs. Argyll Sasines)

1699 Duncan MacFarlane of Gortan is witness to the sasine of £40 land of Arrochar-McGilchrist. (Abs. Argyll Sasines).

(NOTE: Arrochar_McGilchrist is the term often applied to the traditional lands of the MacFarlane chiefs).

1699 Sasine of 1 merk land of Culkippen, parish of Luss, given to Duncan MacFarlane of Gortan on a disposition by John Leitch of Culkippen. (Abs. Argyll Sasines)

(NOTE: Culkippen is a smallish property in Glen Luss. By the purchase of Culkippen, it would seem that the affairs of Duncan were prospering).

1713 Precept of clare constat by Sir Humphrey Colquhoun of Luss in favour of Malcolm MacFarland (MacFarlane), as heir to his father, the deceased John MacFarland (MacFarlane) of Gortan, in the lands of Gortan, extending to the 40/- land of old extent, barony of Luss, parish of Row... holden of the granter in feu-farm and heritage for the yearly payment of 13/4d of silver feu-duty and £8 for the teind, and 4 merks of dry moultre, etc, for performance of service therein mentioned, and of £8 of composition for the first year of each heir, and £16 of composition for the entry of each singular successor, both by and attour the feu teinds and others owing for the time. (Colquhoun Muniments, bundle 35)

1733 Reference to Agnes Buchanan, spouse of Malcolm McFarlane of Gortan.

1733 The Glasgow-based firm of Peter Murdoch and Sons advances a loan of £300 and another one of £10 to Malcolm McFarlane of Gortan. These were to be redeemed by 1774 at the latest- in the event, this did not happen. Interest was of course chargeable.

(Oswald Papers/Lands of Gortan, Mitchell Library T-MJ-550, 554, 586)

1735 Decreet of adjudication by the Lords of Council in Session at the instance of John Murdoch, merchant in Glasgow, only surviving partner of Peter Murdoch and Sons, and by the said company against the said Malcolm McFarlane, adjudging and declaring to belong to the said pursuers, inter alia, the lands of Gortan. (Cartulary of Colquhoun)

1736 Letters of Horning thereon against the superiors of said lands (Gortan) for infesting the said pursuers (Murdoch and Sons) in said lands. (Cartulary of Colquhoun)

N.B. For further details on some of turns and twists taken by the story of the Murdochs and their dispute with the McFarlanes of Gortan, please see appendix 1, entitled "Oswald Papers

and Lands of Gortan”. Suffice it to state here that John McFarlane, seemingly the heir of Malcolm McFarlane of Gortan, appears to have been unable or unwilling to meet the terms of the loans advanced by the Murdochs. The exact date of Malcolm's death has not yet been ascertained. There is a record of a daughter being born to his spouse, Agnes Buchanan, as late as 1735. Possibly he died around this time.

1762-1765 Births of children born to John and Elizabeth McFarlane, viz Mary (b.1762 and Christian (b.1765) (Row Old Parish Registers, 1760-1854 (ROPR's)

1768 Walter and Kathrin McFarlane, Gortan, have a d. Mary. (ROPR's)

1776 Donald Whyte and Janet McKellar, Gortan, have a s. Donald. “

1782 Dugald McLean and Mary McFarlane, Gortan, have a d. Mary. “

1783 Patrick and Christian McLean, Gortan, have a d. Agnes. (Arrochar OPR's)

1787-1794 Andrew and Kathrin McFarlane, Gortan, have a d. Kathrin (1787), another d, Kathrin (1789), a s. Donald (1789), a d. Janet (1792) and a s. Duncan (1794). (ROPR's)

1795 Duncan and Isobel McFarlane, Gortan, have a s. Malcolm. “

1799 Following a complicated series of legal processes, the lands of Gortan are resigned to the immediate feudal superior, Sir James Colquhoun of Luss. Note that this was done through an agent acting on behalf of Ann, Elizabeth and Margaret McFarlane, daughters of the deceased Malcolm McFarlane of Gortan and his spouse, Agnes Buchanan. The agent was in fact a nephew of Agnes Buchanan.

1799 A charter of the lands of Gortan is granted by Sir James Colquhoun in favour of Alexander Oswald of Shieldhall, a wealthy Glasgow businessman.

1801 Alexander Dewar and Mary McFarlane, Cragganbreck, have a s. Peter. The couple were natives of Arrochar parish, where they were married in 1798. Their first child, Alexander, was born at Firkin, Arrochar parish, in 1799. They seem to have moved to Cragganbreck, Row parish, around the same time as Alexander Oswald became the new laird. At some stage, Alexander Dewar seems to have become a farm manager, possibly while in the employ of the Oswalds.
(ROPR's)

1802 Alexander Dewar and Mary McFarlane, Cragganbreck, have a s. John. This is the son who would go on to achieve celebrity as a noted collector of West Highland folk-tales -see introduction.
(ROPR's)

1803-1811 Alexander Dewar and Mary McFarlane, Cragganbreck, go on to have further

children:

Malcolm (1803), Donald (1805), Christine (1806), Duncan (1808), Margaret Oswald (1811). Note the middle name of Margaret- this would seem to have come about as a mark of respect, or even affection, for the Oswalds. (ROPR's)

1813 Death of Alexander Oswald of Shieldhall. His heir as laird of Gortan is his son, James Oswald. Given all the business and other dealings pursued by the Oswalds, it must be doubted that they had much time to spend at their Gortan estate. This constraint would have applied particularly to James, who became MP for Glasgow in the wake of the keystone Reform Act of 1832, of which he was a passionate supporter.- see introduction.

1814 Yearly rental of James Oswald's Gortan estate is £100 (c. f. Sir James Colquhoun's rental in the same parish (Row), which amounts to £3,406). (Rental of the Parish of Row, 1814)

1818-1820 Alexander Dewar and Mary McFarlane, Gortan, have d. Mary (b.1818) and a s. James (b. 1820) (ROPR's)

(NOTE: Could there be significance in the fact that the birthplace of these two children is given as Gortan, rather than Cragganbreck? Although these births may have just been engrossed under the more general name of the estate, old parish registers tend to be faithful to specific places of birth. However, if the family had indeed moved to Gortan, could this have coincided with promotion of Alexander? The 1872 Death Certificate of John Dewar, the folklorist, gives his father's occupation as that of "farm manager".

1828 Memorandum of agreement between James Oswald and Sir James Colquhoun of Luss, in which Oswald sells to Sir James the lands of Gortan and Craggan, barony of Luss, parish of Row, for £2,990, payable on 15 May, 1829. (Oswald Papers/ Lands of Gortan)

(NOTE: The Colquhouns of Luss were already feudal superiors of these lands)

1841 The Census of that year shows that Gortan is inhabited by John Campbell (50), a fisherman, along with his wife and four children. Craggan is inhabited by Duncan McLellan (40), an agricultural labourer, and Isabella Collins (20), a female servant.

(NOTE: ages of adults in the 1841 Census are rounded down to the nearest 5 years. That Census also lists all agricultural workers as "agricultural labourers"- the possibility is that McLellan was actually a shepherd. It is unclear here whether "Craggan" refers to a dwelling in proximity to Gortan, or to the other settlement at the head of Glen Mallan.

1851 The Census of that year shows that there are 2 households at Gortan: one is headed by Duncan Campbell (52), a road surfaceman, along with wife Margaret (49), and children John, Duncan, Dugald, James, Archibald and Janet. The other household is comprised of Jane Cameron(70), a widow, along with daughter Mary (32), and Jane Paterson, a grand-daughter. Craggan is headed by Donald McLellan (56), an unmarried farmer, along with John Clarke (27), Archibald McDiarmid (25), Flora McMillan (28), Isabella Currie (21), and Janet Paul(50), all of whom are described as servants.

(NOTE: It seems reasonable to suppose that the male servants at Craggan were actually agricultural workers. Given that Craggan is listed in the Census as a farm, rather than a shepherd's cottage, one might wonder if the location is now at the site above Loch Long (i.e.

close to Gortan, as opposed to the site at Glen Mallan/Culanach. As suggested in the introduction, the Craggan name seems to have come in the wake of the building of the new farm close to the old Gortan site. As also mentioned there, the farmhouse there was stated to be 121 years old when demolished in 1975. If this date is accurate, it might cast some doubt on the suggestion just made, although due allowance has always to be made for minor discrepancies.

1861 The Census of that year lists 3 buildings under Craggan.

Craggan Farm House is a big household indeed, comprising:

Head of household, Robert McLean (31) Born in Luss parish, he is described as a farmer, employing 2 men. His wife, Jean (32) is given as born in Kilmarnock parish (which is between Balloch and Drymen). Other family members include Jane (71), Robert's widowed mother, and Janet Graham (84), Robert's aunt, as well as 3 children. There are also Andrew McEwing (51), a retired seaman, described as a boarder; Archibald Brown (20), a ploughman; Maria Campbell (18), a dairymaid, as well as Catherine Rennie (50) and John Douglas (15) both of whom are described as lodgers, but also referred to as vagrants.

Craggan Cottage No.1 is headed by Dugald McFarlane (36), a shepherd, along with wife Sarah (34), and their 6 children.

Craggan Cottage No.2 is headed by Duncan Campbell (62), a road labourer, along with wife Margaret (59) and son Archibald (15), described as a scholar.

(NOTE: There can be little doubt here that Craggan farmhouse must have been capacious indeed to hold all the people listed here, effectively supporting the idea of the new farmhouse now being in place. Notice that this census makes no mention of Gortan, though the name re-appears in later one. Is it possible that Gortan is represented here as one of the cottages under the Craggan name? Duncan Campbell and his family were listed in the previous census as residing at Gortan, which might suggest that interpretation is indeed correct.

1871 Census. Robert McLean's Craggan Farm has an even more impressive household than in 1861. As well as himself and his wife, Jeanie, there are now their children John (14), Katherine (13), Malcolm (10), Jessie (9), Robert (7), James (5) and Elizabeth (3). Other people in the household include Andrew McEwan (61), a boarder, described as an annuitant; Isabella Barrie (27), a servant; Isabella Rankin (70), described as a vagrant, and Isaac Rankin (44), described as a chimney sweep.

At Gortan is Duncan Campbell (71), a road surfaceman, wife Margaret (69), Colin (13), a grandson, and Jessie (5), a grand-daughter.

At a shepherd's cottage, almost certainly located at or near the original Craggan site, i.e. at Glen Mallan/Culanach, head of household is Peter McFarlane (20), a shepherd, along with Sarah (41), his widowed mother; John (18), a brother; Violet (16), a sister; Malcolm (15), a brother; Mary (13), a sister; Jean (11), a sister; Margaret (9), a sister; Anne (7), another sister; and finally, Dugald (3), a brother- a lot of responsibility for a 20 year old to shoulder!

(NOTE: This latter household will henceforth be identified as High Craggan, the designation that, locally at least, was being used by the next century. Observe also that Duncan Campbell and his family are listed under Gortan, as in the census of 1851.

1881 Census Robert McLean (51) is still the farmer at Craggan, employing 2 men, along

with wife Jean (52), and children Jeanie (19), Robert (17), James (14), Elizabeth (12). Also forming part of the household are Jane Walls (26), a sailor's wife, and her daughter, Harriet (3). Present as visitors are William Laycock (49), described as a yarn merchant, and Elizabeth Brodie (65), described as a widow and travelling hawker.

Another household, unspecified by name, but possibly the dwelling house previously headed by Duncan Campbell, is headed by Donald Campbell (60), an agricultural labourer, his wife, Margaret (58), and their son, John (15), described as a shepherd.

Another unspecified household, but almost certainly High Craggan, sees a change from the time of the previous census. Head of household is now Sarah McFarlane (56), along with her children Malcolm (25), described as a shepherd; John (28), described as blind; Ann (16); Dugald (12). Also present, and described as boarders, are Irish-born Peter Causley (29), and Charlie Dearie (24), both iron fence erectors.

(NOTE: 1. The presence of the iron fence contractors almost certainly gives a useful clue as to when some of the iron fence remains that are still to be found, were actually being erected.)

NOTE: 2. James Dunlop, the young diarist mentioned in the Introduction, gives us some useful information that is relevant here. He states that in December 1886, his Uncle Bob gave up his tenancy of Craggan. James was the son of the minister of the United Presbyterian Church at Gartocharn and was a frequent visitor to Craggan between 1884 and 1886, when he was in his mid-teens. His diary provides a fascinating glimpse into the way of life and workings of the farm at that time. A Valuation Roll from 1886 shows that the tenancy, at least by that date, was a shared one between Robert McLean and John Gow McLean. However, John Gow does not seem to have played any prominent role in the running of the farm, judging from available information.

Interestingly, the same Valuation Roll also reveals that the farm now includes the rental of some land in Luss parish. There is little doubt that this relates to an extension comprising the west side of the hill facing Craggan Hill on the opposite side of Glen Mallan/ Glen Culanach, namely Cruach an t-Sithean (the Fairy Hill). The Roll is the earliest one of its kind to be consulted; this extension may well have come into being at an earlier date. Note also that this arrangement was still in place by the middle of the 20th century.

1891 The Census of that year reveals that the new farmer at Craggan is Duncan Mitchell (43), an unmarried man, along with Anne Kennedy (52), a housekeeper and Ann Kennedy (25), a domestic servant, and possibly Anne senior's daughter. The household also includes John McWhannell (28), a single shepherd, and John Newsome (51), a lodger, who is described as an overseer of works.

Gortan is still listed as a habitation. Possibly, this is not the roadside house long occupied by a roadman and his family, but refers rather to Craggan Cottage, situated on a terrace a little higher up the hill. It is difficult to be sure, but at the latter there was a subsidiary building which might have served as an annex- see the following entry. The household is headed by William Grieve (46), a shepherd, wife Euphemia (41) and no less than 8 of their children. In addition, there are no less than 5 lodgers!

At "Craggan", which perhaps equates to High Craggan, the household there is headed by John Gillespie (37), described as a slater, along with his wife and 6 children. There is a boarder, who is an engine loco driver.

(NOTE: The Census coincided with a period of intensive activity coinciding with the construction of the West Highland Railway. There were about 5,000 people employed at some 70 camps between Helensburgh and Fort William. Accommodation was at a premium,

and this explains the somewhat unexpected number of boarders and lodgers at the time of the Census. John Gillespie and other family members, who hailed from the Paisley area, were employed as sub-contractors in the construction of bridges and viaducts for the railway).

1891 Duncan Mitchell is known to have died in 1891. The tenancy subsequently passed to David and Alexander McPhun.

1894 With the opening that year of the West Highland Railway, linking Glasgow and Fort William, a petition is raised by a handful of local residents by way of lobbying for a halt to be provided at Glen Douglas. The petition includes signatories from 3 households at Craggan: there is David McPhun, the farmer at Craggan; William Grieve, (doubtless the same man as in the 1891 Census), and Alexander McHardy, probably the occupier of the cottage at High Craggan. There are 8 other names, the whole having been drawn up in beautiful copperplate handwriting by David McPhun, and addressed to railway giants, the North British Railway-*Fig 1.*

(NOTE: Believe it or not, the petition was successful, and not only were sidings provided as requested (for loading and unloading of livestock), but an island platform, along with signalman's house and signal box were swiftly provided. To-day, such an outcome seems hardly credible. David McPhun was actually based at Garelochhead, where he ran a number of services, including a post office, general store and butcher's shop. Not much is known about the role played by his brother Alexander, but he might have played a role in the day-to-day running of the farm.

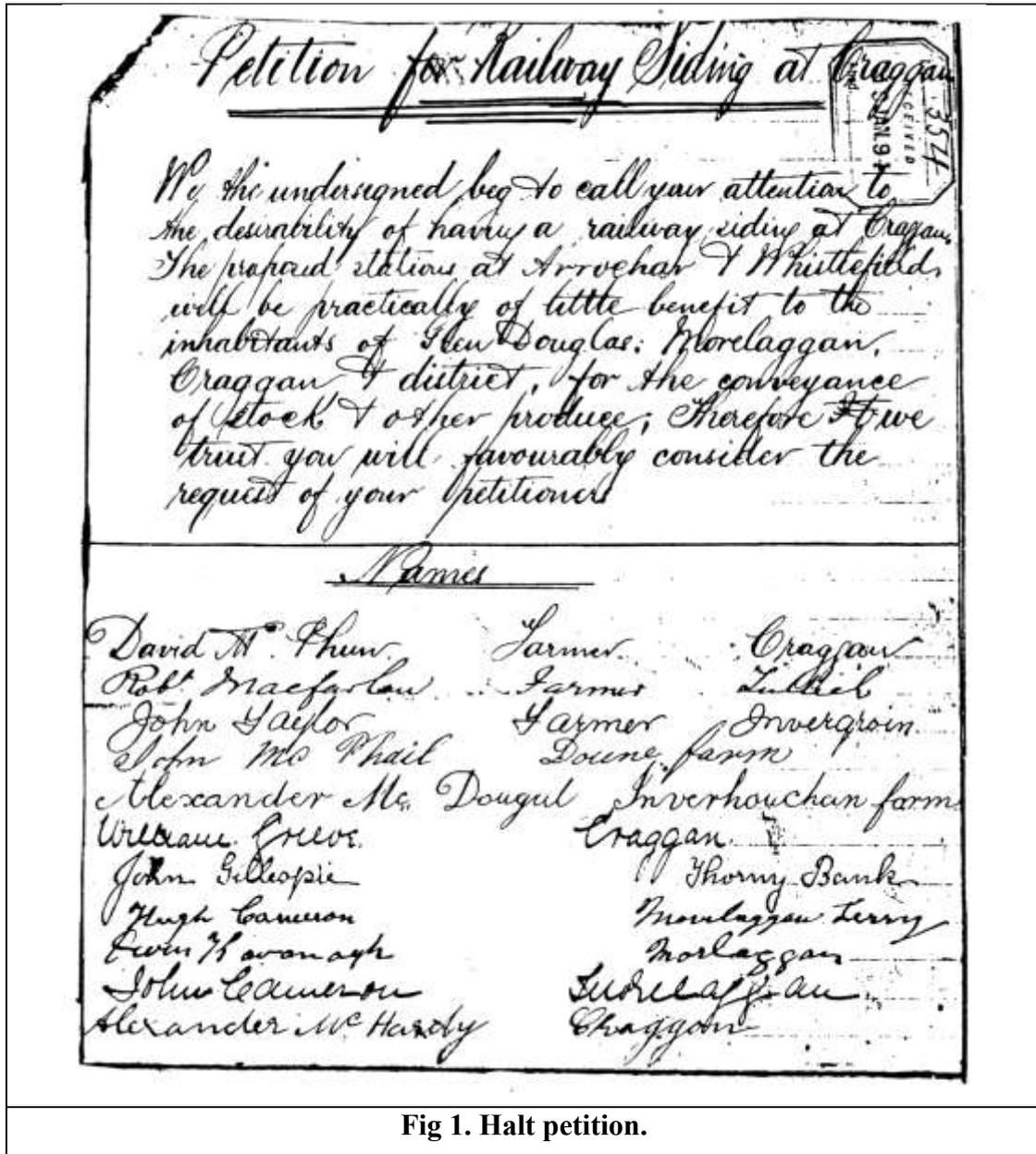


Fig 1. Halt petition.

1901 The Census of that year reveals that Craggan Farm is now being run by William Dykes (28), an unmarried man born in Cumnock, along with sister Isabella. Also forming part of the household are Hugh Gillies, an unmarried shepherd, and Nellie Barclay, a servant.

Craggan Cottage has Catherine Cameron (76), a widow, described as an annuitant, as head of household, along with James Tolland (58), a lodger.

At High Craggan are Donald Gillies (39), a shepherd, along with wife Christina (37) and daughters Jessie and Annie.

CRAGGAN IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The advent of the 20th century may be an opportune time to take the account forward on a more free-flowing manner. This becomes easier than before, in part because information now

becomes increasingly available from a wide range of documentation, including Local Directories, Local Newspapers, Valuation Rolls, Electoral Registers, and so on. However, it is also possible to start drawing upon local knowledge and local contacts, and here it may be worth noting that the present writer lived at Craggan Cottage from birth in 1944 until 1951, and from 1951 to 1956 at Railway Cottage in Glen Douglas, which was situated next to Glen Douglas railway summit at 564 feet.

The following narrative is presented under the headings of the relevant habitations that came under the Farm at the start of the century, namely Craggan Farm itself; the shepherd's cottage at the head of Glen Mallan, by then known as High Craggan; and finally, Craggan Cottage, on the hillside above the farm itself.

(NOTE: There were in fact several other dwellings that lay within the bounds of the farm, but these are not covered here because they were some distance to the south, by Loch Long roadside, and have little bearing on this account).

CRAGGAN FARMHOUSE (= LOW CRAGGAN). (PI's 2 & 3).

The McPhuns seem to have given up their tenancy around the turn of the century, and as the 1901 Census shows, the farmer was by then William Dykes. He continued to run the farm until around 1925, when he was succeeded by Graham Cooper, who resided in the farmhouse with his wife Mary. Around this time, they engaged the services of Dugald Black, a Lismore man, who as a single shepherd, resided in a bothy attached to the farm. This was the situation until around 1935, when Dugald married Agnes Archibald. The Coopers decided to move their home to Helensburgh at this point, allowing the Blacks to set up home in the farmhouse. This arrangement continued for many years. The Coopers did come to stay with the Blacks for a fortnight or so each summer- perhaps this related to the terms of tenancy, and here it should be noted that all the farmers at Craggan were tenant farmers, the Colquhouns of Luss being the actual owners.

A routine was established, whereby Graham Cooper would call at the farm each Monday in his van, no doubt to keep in touch with the workings of the farm, but also to deliver weekly essentials- he also visited High Craggan on these occasions, again delivering groceries and other supplies. In 1950, while still continuing to manage the farm, he and his wife opened Cairndhu Hotel on Helensburgh seafront, a large former mansion-house, which had been used by the military authorities as an administrative base during the Second World War. It was in fact the Coopers who converted the building to hotel use- a major undertaking in its own right.

Meanwhile, the Blacks at the farmhouse were now raising their two children, Colin and Lorna. In due course, when they were old enough, Mrs Black resumed her career as a teacher, mostly working at Garelochhead Primary, but sometimes at other schools as well. The farm was a busy place: it was essentially run as a sheep farm, but several cows were kept as well- their milk was always rich and creamy. However, it was the management of sheep that formed the mainstay of the farm. There were periodic gatherings for dipping, clipping and other operations, including the castration of male lambs. In the absence of power tools and specialist contractors, tasks like clipping and dipping were labour intensive exercises, with assistance coming not only from the shepherd at High Craggan, but with help from other nearby farms as well. On these occasions, a policeman would sometimes also be present, giving the odd helping hand, and enjoying a glass of milk. Despite the ever present sheepdogs, the small field adjacent to the farm literally swarmed with rabbits -this of course was in the days before myxomatosis.

When Dugald Black retired in 1957, he was awarded a long-service silver medal by Sir Ivar Colquhoun, to mark 30 years of service with the same employer on the estate- in fact his service was even longer than that. He and wife Agnes retired to Garelochhead, and the married shepherd at High Craggan, Duncan McNiven, now moved to the farmhouse with his wife and family (see also under High Craggan). This move doubtless assisted continuity: Douglas Cooper continued as tenant farmer, while Luss Estates remained as landowners.

A major change took place in the early 1960's, when the land was taken over on behalf of the Crown. As far back as 1955, surveyors had been at work in Glen Douglas. Nobody knew exactly what was intended, though there was talk of a “hush-hush “ development. As it later transpired, the matter was being driven forward on behalf of the Admiralty. From 1962 onwards, work on the ground began on a large scale, centred on Glen Douglas and at the foot of Glen Mallan, with John Howard of London as the main contractors. The outcome was what would subsequently become known as RNAD Glen Douglas.

Initially, work on the farm continued as before, but in time, farming became untenable, and Duncan McNiven then took up employment on the railway as a signalman at Glen Douglas Halt. However, he and wife Maria continued to live at the farm, where they still kept a few animals. Duncan retired in 1972, when they moved to a house at Luss. Three years later, the farmhouse and outbuildings were demolished by George Hood of Helensburgh, and the site cleared. It was the end of an era.

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| <p>Pl 2. Low Craggan</p> | <p>Pl 3. Sheep shearing.</p> |

HIGH CRAGGAN. Pl's 4 & 5.

As mentioned earlier, Craggan is depicted on a map of 1777 as not far from where upper Glen Mallan merges into Glen Douglas. Curiously, it does not seem to feature much in old parish registers, although these mention only births, baptisms and marriages, and serve in no way as a substitute for full census returns. The first mention is of a birth in 1802, when Alexander Dewar and spouse Mary McFarlane are recorded with the birth there. However, as discussed in the introduction, the place of birth is given as Cragganbreck, rather than Craggan. Nevertheless, as already shown, there seems little doubt that the two are more or less synonymous. The Dewars had another six children registered as born here, although two later births took place at Gortan. It is not clear why the move took place, but possibly it coincided with the promotion of Alexander, as he is referred to elsewhere as a farm manager. A modern, mortar-built cottage, probably replaced any pre-existing habitation around the same time as the new farmhouse was built in the early 1850's.

Neither the Craggan nor Cragganbreck names feature thereafter in the old parish registers,

which end in 1854. As shown in the timeline, Craggan does however feature in the various census returns from 1841 onwards, when the dwelling is shown as generally occupied by a succession of married shepherds and their families. The Gillies family who were there at the time of the 1901 census seem to have remained in residence until about the start of the First World War, when they were replaced by Neil and Annie Sinclair and their family. The Sinclair's moved to Craggan Cottage around 1920. The next family to live at High Craggan were the Carmichaels, to be replaced in turn by Donald McDougall and his family. Charlie and Christina Lawrie were the next couple to set up home, living there from 1931 until about 1942. They in turn were succeeded by Alex and Henrietta Brocklie, who moved a short time later to the neighbouring farm of Tullich. Mrs Brocklie is remembered as being a feisty individual, who would happily accompany her husband on his rounds of the hill.

In 1943, Duncan and Maria McNiven moved to High Craggan with their two young children, Margaret and Jessie. The family is well remembered by the present writer, who lived not far off, at Glen Douglas railway cottage, from 1951 until 1956. Duncan, who hailed from the Oban area, had an outgoing personality, and was a real family man who enjoyed the company of children. He loved to sing the old Scots songs, and always had stories to tell. The present writer would sometimes be enlisted to help out after clipping time, when small boys were favoured in the packing of fleeces into giant hessian bags. These were suspended from rafters in a shed, and fleeces would be tossed into the top of the bag when the task was to trample them down underfoot. Mrs McNiven was one of the hardest-working people it is possible to imagine. She would seemingly spend hours cleaning and polishing the "range", the name used for the cast-iron fireplace and associated hobs and oven. The house was kept spotless, and daughters Margaret and Jessie were always very well dressed- Margaret now lives in Helensburgh and was kind enough to supply several of the photographs which appear among the illustrations.

As related under Craggan farmhouse, the McNivens moved there in 1957, and the next people to occupy High Craggan were Billy and Mary Scott and their children. Billy was the eldest son of Robert and Helen Scott, who together worked a shift system in the railway signal box at Glen Douglas Halt. The family lived there into the 1960's before moving elsewhere. The cottage was probably demolished around the same time as the farmhouse, in 1975. Today there is a hut on the site used by the military, and a forestry road runs close by.



Pl 4. McNiven Family. 1956.



Pl 5. Glen Douglas summit. 1953.

CRAGGAN COTTAGE

Craggan cottage was a relatively modern building, with mortared walls and corrugated iron

roof, and was likely built around the same time as the farmhouse. It was located on a small terrace on the steep hillside above the farm, which lay perhaps a hundred or so feet below. Almost certainly the house was intended as accommodation for married shepherds who worked the side of Craggan Hill overlooking Loch Long. Possibly it lay on the site of an earlier building.

There seem to have been times when there was no married shepherd, and that was certainly the case at the time of the 1901 census, when head of household was Mrs Catherine Cameron, a widow. By the early 1940's, it was occupied for a year or two by Charles McDonald, a married shepherd. After his departure, the next occupants were Archibald and Margaret McIntyre, who took up residence after their marriage in 1943. Archibald, who before his marriage had been a lodger at the farmhouse, was not employed on the farm, but rather was employed on the railway as a surface worker. The present writer lived at the cottage from birth, for six years. The house enjoyed a spectacular view across Loch Long and was a magical place for a young child. An inheritance that came with the house was Tibby, the cat. Tibby was a great hunter and would catch even relatively large prey such as rabbits, and even stoats. A not uncommon sight was that of a school of porpoises making their way up one side of the loch, later to be seen heading back down the other side. For adults, the cottage was not quite so enthralling- it had no running water, and was damp- whenever a fire was lit, steam rose in clouds from fabrics.

In the mornings, Dugald Black, the shepherd at the farmhouse, would often be seen taking to the hill with his two dogs. He had an ear-piercing whistle, and had various commands for the sheepdogs, like "Come in ahint!". He used to shout little rhymes up the hill to tease the present writer, but it was all good-natured fun: he had a genuine affection for children. Dugald was a larger than life character- if he felt a shade off colour, or if the weather was very cold, he would on occasion set off in the morning with a hot-water bottle strapped to his chest. When the water cooled, however, it was not emptied out, but rather was consumed- as well as water, it contained something a bit stronger!

After the McIntyre family moved to a railway cottage beside Glen Douglas summit in 1951, Craggan Cottage was never again occupied on a permanent basis. It was rented out as a holiday cottage by a Captain Watt, who lived in Helensburgh. The house was probably demolished around 1970.

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| <p>Pl 6. Craggan Cottage. 1944.</p> | <p>Pl 7. View east to Craggan Cottage site. c1970.</p> |

CREAGAN SITHE. Fig's 3 & 4.

Creagan Sithe is located on the north side of an unnamed spring on the steep slopes overlooking the A 814 road and Loch Long below, at NN 2714 0040 and 60m OD. The site consists of two buildings, some stone walling and, discovered on this survey, a bowl cut into a nearby rock.

The 1st Ed OS map surveyed in 1860 and published in 1864 (Fig 4) shows one unroofed building (B2) and a roofed one (B1). A track is shown leading northwards and down to the shore road. However, another roofed building is shown beside the road at NN 2705 0048 in a clearing which present day fishermen appear to use as a camp site, there is no trace of the former building here (Pl 12). Creagan Sithe is omitted from Thomson's map of 1832, but it is assumed here that is a mistake by Thomson.

Both B1 and B2 are 10m long in total, B1 is 5.4m wide and B2 is 5m in total breadth, the walls are 0.6m thick and are drystone random rubble construction but using flat stones for the most part. The only place for an entrance on B2 is the lower end of the long north wall, while gaps suggest entrances into a double chambered building as shown on plan for B1, one end of which may have been a winnowing barn as indicated by the suggested opposing entrances? On the east end of B2 there is a narrow extension which has been added, the space within is only 1.4m wide. The highest part of the buildings is the west corner of B1 which is 2m high (Pl 8).

The poorly preserved buildings have been constructed on a very limited terrace between a cliff edge and the ravine of the spring, with the ground dropping steeply below B2. Above the site a stone dyke runs uphill beside the ravine and parts of the ravine edge have been faced by stone walling.

Circa 10m below the buildings a turf and stone bank runs across the hill face leading south and away from the spring course. However, about 10m below that at NN 27107 00380, 24m from the NW corner of B2, there is a block of schist, an erratic, measuring c2m x 1.5m x 1m high, it was originally seen covered in a thick layer of moss and grass. This was cleared to reveal a neatly shaped bowl, cut slightly off centre into the upper surface of the boulder; it measures 0.2m wide at the upper diameter and is 0.15m deep. The internal edges and base are rough.

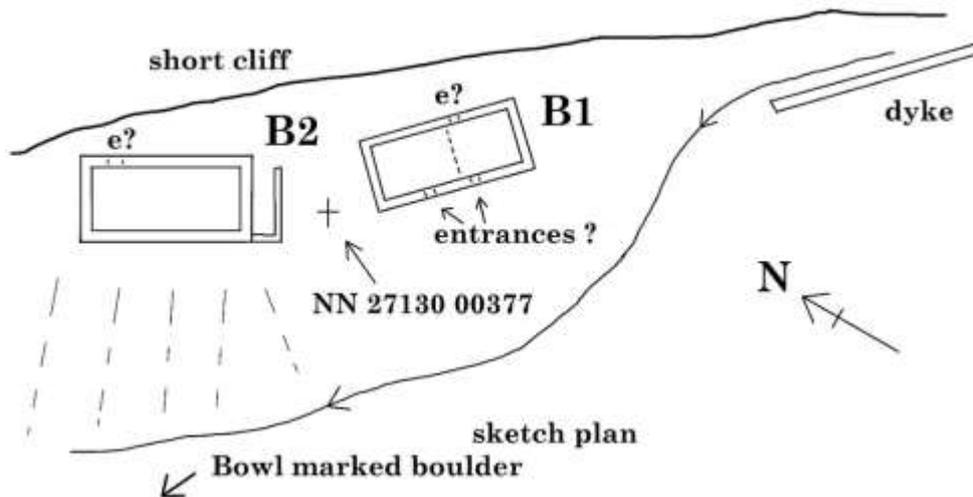
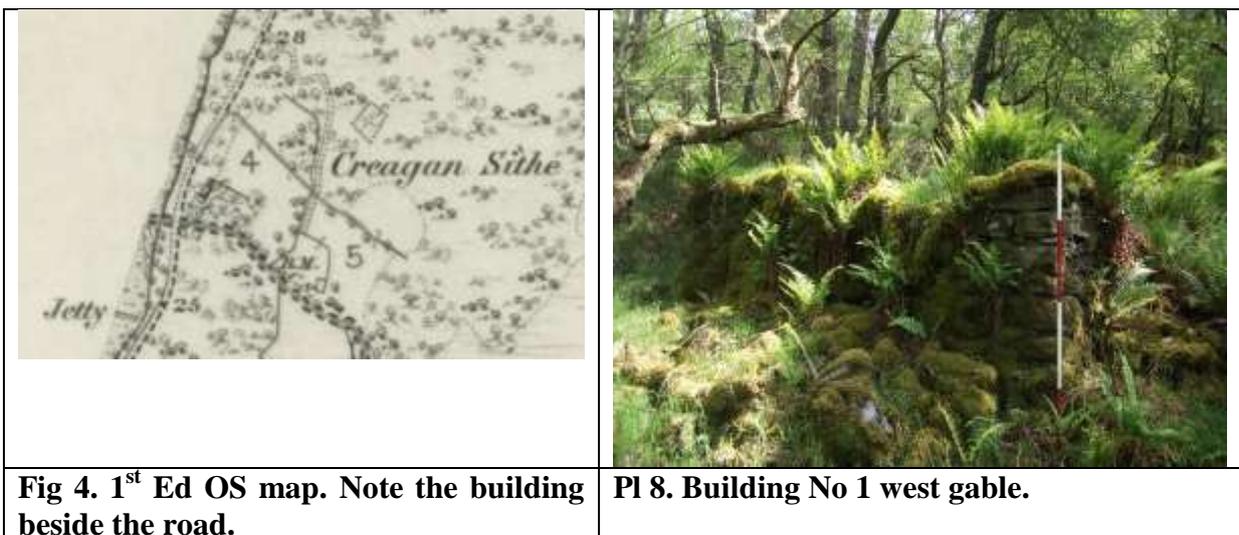


Fig 3. Creagan Sithe.

The discovery of this feature brings the tally of such bowls to three in the general area. A well-known example lies beside the Glen Douglas road at circa NS 315 983 and debate as to its purpose has considered it to be a bowl quern for grinding grain or for some other purpose such as a christening font. The second example is at Sròn Mallanach settlement, located at c NS 25280 96622. The example given here may now indicate that such features are more common in the abandoned settlements in the area than was hitherto known.

The Creagan Sithe bowl (Pl's 9 -11) appears too small to be used effectively as a pot or bowl quern and the sides are not smoothed by usage such as grinding, although, in some places bowl querns were known as 'knocking stanes' because of the action of pulverising the grain with a wooden pole or a hammer stone in the depression. Such action may therefore cause the internal sides of the bowl to be roughened, rather than smoothed? It does not seem plausible for a ritual function such as a christening bowl to be applied to such localised examples as here and Sròn Mallanach, some historical reference would of course be helpful but in the meantime their purpose can only be speculative.





Pl 9. The rock with moss growth.



Pl 10. Showing the bowl cut in the upper face of the rock.



Pl 11. The bowl cut into the rock.



Pl 12. Creagan Sithe roadside site.



Pl 13. Preas Seilich, viewed from Public footpath.



Pl 14. Tullich corn kiln.

History

CREAGAN SITHE

INTRODUCTION AND PREAMBLE

The name, Creagan Sithe, after which the settlement is named, translates from Gaelic to English as “Rocky Place of the Fairies”. In fact, the “sithe”, or fairy element crops up in several other place-names in the vicinity. An insignificant-sized stream, the “Alt Bealach nam Sithe” (the Stream of the Pass of the Fairies”, passes close to the site, as it drops downhill to the shores of Loch Long, and it may well be that the settlement derives its name from this feature

In fact, this tiny stream has literally made its mark in a number of ways and is the worthy subject of a digression. It crops up in old records as forming part of a boundary, essentially that marking the meeting place of two lordships: that of Luss to the south, and that of Arrochar to the north. There is an inferred charter relating to those among the Colquhoun of Luss papers, thought to date from c. 1225. It is “inferred” in the sense that, although the original can no longer be located, its prior existence can be demonstrated through the survival of a charter of confirmation by Maldowen, Earl of Lennox. This document refers to the original charter as being granted by Alwyn, his predecessor. As Alwyn died c.1225, the charter has to date from then, or earlier.

This charter of confirmation refers to “Old Bealach Naschamche, as the latter descends into Loch Long...” (spelling as in the Latin used in the document). It does seem curious that a small stream should help define such an important boundary, but when the setting is examined in the field, the true nature of the stream can be seen- although small, it occupies a deep fissure or ravine over much of its short length. Even to-day, several modern foot bridges have been installed to help ease access from one side to the other.

A fascinating aspect of this feature is the way in which it helps demonstrate the antiquity and pedigree of some of our modern boundaries. In Mediaeval times, it would appear that Alt Bealach nam Sithe also marked part of the boundaries of the parishes of Rosneath and Luss. The lands of Gortan, a little way to the south of the site of Creagan Sithe, once lay in Rosneath parish, while to the north were the lands of Luss parish. The parishes of Arrochar and Row (Rhu) did not then exist, only being created in the middle of the 17th century, mainly at the expense of Rosneath and Luss. The upshot was that only a narrow corridor of Luss parish now extended to the shores of Loch Long (see attached map). The southern edge of the corridor appears to coincide with Alt Bealach nam Sithe (note that on the map, which is as shown in Irving's “Book of Dumbartonshire” (1879), Creagan Sithe is located within the said corridor).

In very recent times, that same streamlet helps mark the boundary between Luss Estates to the north and Defence Estates to the south. Indeed, very close to where the stream enters Loch Long, there is a sign put up on behalf of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, effectively demonstrating the southern boundary of their jurisdiction at that point.

Another instance of the “Sithe” name cropping up in place-names of the locality comes in the form of the distinctively-shaped hill called “Cruach an-t- Sithean” (the Fairy Hill), which extends from Glen Mallan to Glen Douglas. Its northernmost slopes reach almost as far as the western edge of the latter before the steep drop to Loch Long. The summit of the hill takes the form of a striking cone-like feature. In Gaelic culture, the “wee folk”, or fairies, were often associated with hillocks of a particular form, and it is tempting to speculate that this

feature may have given rise to the name of the whole hill.

It is also tempting to suppose the “Bealach” part of Alt Bealach nam Sithe corresponds to the cusp above the stream, the point at which the almost plateau-like bed of Glen Douglas is poised at the edge of the steep drop to Loch Long, a point close to Glen Douglas railway bridge- and corresponding to what in geomorphological terms is referred to as a “knick point”.

TIMELINE FOR CREAGAN SITHE 1781

A headstone in Luss churchyard records that John Turner, farmer, Crag McShet, died 26 December 1781, aged 66, wife Margaret McFarlane died 15 September 1789, aged 70, erected by son Archibald.

(Note: it may be significant that the adjacent headstone is to another Turner, Patrick, tenant at Tombouie, died 5 April 1785, aged 74. Tombouie lies about three miles to the south. Turner, or McInturner was a common name in and around the Luss area).

1841 The Census of that year reveals that present at CROITMASHIE are: -

John McKellar. Head of household, aged 30, herring fisher. Not born in Luss parish
Mary McKellar aged 20 “ “ “ “

(Note: the 1841 Census supplies limited information, and ages are rounded up to the nearest 5 years).

1847 Hugh Cameron, Croftmashee, Glen Douglas, and Catherine McDonald, Gorbals, Glasgow, submitted their names with the intention of marriage. (Luss Old Parish Registers)

1851 The Census of that year reveals that present at Croit ma Shee are:

John Campbell. Head of household Unmarried, aged 44, woollen weaver, born Lochgoilhead

Colin “ Brother “ “ 55, herring fisher

Catherine “ Sister “ “ 50, housekeeper “

Robert Nicklson(sic) Head. Married, aged 44, woollen weaver born Calinder ?

Margaret “ Wife “ 42, “ Lochgoilhead

Joseph “ Son “ 13 at home “ Arrochar

Margaret “ Dau. “ 11 “ “ “ “

Catherine “ “ “ 9 “ “ “ “

1861 The Census of that year reveals the continuing existence of two households at Craigmashiel, thus: -

John Campbell Head of household Unmarried, aged 58, fisherman born Lochgoilhead p.

Catherine “ Sister “ “ 68 “ “

Robert Nicolson Head of household Married, aged 58, woollen weaver, born Ireland

Margaret “ Wife “ “ 54 “ Lochgoilhead

1871 Census of that year gives the following for Craigmash (stated to be now in Arrochar parish)

| | | |
|---------------|-------------------|---|
| John Campbell | Head of household | Unmarried, aged 66, labourer, born Lochgoilhead |
| parish Cath. | “ Sister | “ “ 70 “ “ |

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|--|
| Robert Nicolson | Head of household | Married, aged 72, weaver, born Ireland |
| Margaret | “ Wife | “ “ 66 “ Glen Orchy |
| “ “ | Daughter | Unmarried “ 27 “ Arrochar |

1881 Census of that year yields the following returns for Craig ma Shie: -

| | | |
|----------------|-------------------|--|
| John Campbell | Head of household | Unmarried, aged 76, fisherman, Gaelic speaker, |
| b.Lochgoilhead | | |
| Cath. | “ Sister | “ “ 84 “ “ “ |

| | | |
|---------------|-------------------|--|
| Robert Aitken | Head of household | Married, aged 38 slater, born Douglas, Lanarkshire |
| Jeanette | “ Wife | “ “ 40 “ Arrochar |
| Francis | “ Son | Unmarried “ 15 “ |
| Margaret | “ Dau. | “ “ 13 scholar Glasgow |
| Elizabeth | “ “ | “ “ 9 “ “ |
| George | “ Son | “ “ 7 “ Arrochar |
| Mary | “ Dau. | “ “ 5 “ “ |
| Isabella | “ “ | “ “ 2 “ “ |
| Jane | “ “ | “ “ 1 “ “ |

1891 Census- NO MENTION

DISCUSSION

Apart from the entry for 1847, the Old Parish Registers for Luss are silent on the settlement under discussion. On the face of it at least, the only evidence for an 18th century presence on the site comes from the 1781 headstone inscription at Luss churchyard. There is no mention in the Hearth Tax returns of 1694 for Luss parish, which for that particular parish, are very comprehensive. Neither is there any mention in sources like Estate records, the Argyll Sasines, and Glasgow Commissariat records. It may be that Creagan Sithe only came into existence in the 18th century.

As to possible reasons for such a relatively late foundation, the location of the site itself may well go far to provide an explanation. While the settlement lies on a terrace, albeit a sloping one, the terrain above, below, and on either side is steep and difficult to negotiate. As far as farming is concerned, potential arable ground is quite limited in extent, while for the keeping of livestock, the steep ground all around, not to mention the ravine-like nature of the nearby burn would surely have represented a real challenge. Any access track, from whatever direction, would have necessitated the traverse of some pretty steep ground. Even accessing the road along Loch Long-side, built in 1777, necessitates a steep, and indeed almost precipitous, descent. In other words, the location was not very enticing.

It may be that farming here would always have been a struggle, the difficulties perhaps being exacerbated by the switch from subsistence farming to one based on commercial stock-rearing, which took hold around here from mid-18th century onwards. Given this scenario, it

may be that alternative means of seeking a livelihood would have become necessary, and indeed, this would seem to be borne out by the livelihoods of the occupants noted in the various Census returns.

What emerges from these documents is surely evidence of a small but tenacious, resilient and adaptable community, determined to take advantage of whatever opportunities presented themselves. The surprise is perhaps that the residents were able to keep going as long as they actually did. An all too familiar picture emerges in the later decades, of an ageing population, for whom life at a place like this must have become increasingly difficult. The single biggest surprise may be the arrival of a young family prior to 1881, allied to the unexpected fact that the breadwinner was a slater. However, this was a time when the communities of Arrochar and Tarbet were expanding, and no doubt, modernising, so for those prepared to walk some distance to their place of employment, the services of the suitably skilled may well have been in demand.

PREAS SEILICH

The site, which can be viewed from the Three Lochs Path (Pl 13), now lies within the secure area of the MOD establishment in Glen Douglas. It was therefore not visited. The site is given on 1st Ed OS maps surveyed in 1860 and published in 1864 as one unroofed building and four enclosures (Canmore). Thomson gives the site on his 1832 map as “Presstellach”.

STORY OF PREAS SEILICH (= PRESTELLOCH). Pl 13.

INTRODUCTION

Preas Seilich, commonly rendered in documentary sources as Prestelloch, or variants, is an abandoned settlement located on the north-western flanks of the hill marked on maps as Cruach an t-sithean (Fairy Hill). It lies close to the northern extremity of Glen Mallan, which is named on O.S. Maps as Glen Culanach, though that name has long been locally extinct. The name Preas Seilich translates from the Gaelic simply as “*willow-clump*” (or bush). Today, the most dominant feature of the site, which now lies within the secure compound of RNAD Glen Douglas, takes the form of a substantial stone-built sheep fank, which would have used at gatherings for clipping, dipping and other operations. It is possible that traces of former habitations survive on the site, but it may be that any stonework has been incorporated into the fank, which likely post-dates the settlement- only archaeological examination could determine whether this is so, or otherwise.

The lands of Preas Seilich have long formed part of Luss Parish, but this was not always the case. Writing in 1793, the Rev. John Stuart, author of the account for Luss parish in the Old Statistical Account of Scotland, notes various changes that had been made to the boundaries of Luss parish through the course of the 17th century. All but one of these changes resulted in a reduction in size of the parish, which once stretched on the west side of Loch Lomond from one end to the other, and also included some lands on the east side of the loch. The exception was the addition of the lands of Caldonach, Prestelloch and Conglens, which had previously

formed part of the lands of Inchcallioch parish.

This discourse might come over as relatively arcane, but one interesting aspect of these additions to the parish of Luss is that they correspond to the core territory of lands once held by the McAuslane “Barons”. Here, it should be noted that the term “Baron” in Gaelic parlance is much less prestigious than its Anglo-Norman counterpart but equates rather to the owner of a relatively small estate. Despite this, there are a number of stories, long current in the area, relating to their power and prestige. For example, local historian Joseph Irving, in his magisterial “Book of Dumbartonshire” (1879), quotes the legend about how Luss got its name from the fleur-de-luce plants strewn on the grave of Baroness McAuslan, whose husband had distinguished himself at the siege of Tournay.

Just possibly, there may be significance in the fact that the core territory that they held, including the lands of Prestelloch, had once formed part of Inchcallioch parish. This parish centred on several of the islands on Loch Lomond, and lands lying on the east side of the loch. These once formed the homelands of the Clan Buchanan, of whom the McAuslanes are a sept. Note too that the name of Inchcallioch parish changed to that of Buchanan, which is actually a place-name, as well as the clan name.

Be it as it may, anyone interested in learning more about the McAuslane barons and the lands they once held in the district is referred to a companion study to this essay, namely the one entitled

“Culanach”, which goes into more detail. Suffice it to add that virtually all surviving charters show that they held their lands from the Colquhouns of Luss, and that they had lost possession by the latter part of the 17th century. Thereafter, the lands were held directly by the Colquhouns of Luss.

TIMELINE FOR PREAS SEILICH

1664 Sasine of the £8 land of Prestelloch, Caldenoch, Innerquhonlanes and Craigfad granted to Alexander McCauslane, eldest son of the late John McCauslane on a precept of clare constat by Sir John Colquhoun of Luss...one of the witnesses was Duncan McFarlane, son of Robert McFarlane in Prestelloch (Argyll Sasines)

(Note: Innerquhonlanes is the scribe's rendering of “at the confluence of Conglens”-see mention of this place-name above. The settlement of Conglens took its name from the Conaglen, a side-glen of Glen Douglas. Craigfad lay about a mile south of Conglens, on the same side of the Douglas Water).

1678 Reference to a John McCauslane in Prestelloch. (Argyll Sasines)

1694 Hearth Tax shows that John McCauslan in Prestilach and his son have 2 hearths (Hearth Tax).

1700 John McAuslan and.....have a child named ...?.. (entry difficult to read)
(Luss Old Parish Registers 1698-1854- all succeeding births/notices to marry come from the same source, unless otherwise indicated).

1731 Donald Walker and Mary McInturner have a son, Adam.
(Note: in the Old Parish Registers, it is the maiden name of spouses that is given.)

1737 Adam Walker and Elizabeth McInturner have a son, John.

1740 “ “ “ “ “ “ Robert.

1757 John Campbell of Lanemark, parish of Cumnock, obtains a lease of a large number of farms in the district, including Prestelloch. The previous tenant is described as Dugald McFarlane of Auchrossan, drover in Innergreune.

(Colquhoun of Luss papers, Mitchell Library, Glasgow)

(Note: Campbell of Lanemark is better known as Campbell of Lagwine, a place in the same parish. Auchrossan is in Cowal. Innergreune is a rendering of Invergroin, in Glen Douglas. This is a highly significant period in the story of Preas Seilich -see under Discussion).

1767 Donald Campbell and Euphemia McGown have a daughter, Mary.

1769 “ “ “ “ “ son, Duncan.

1769 Robert Walker and Margaret Luke have a son, Patrick.

1769 Patrick McKellar, son of Patrick McKellar, Prestelloch, and Agnes McPhun give notice of intention to marry.

1771 Donald Campbell and Euphemia McGown have a son, John.

1771 Robert Walker and Margaret Luke have a daughter, Janet.

1774 “ “ “ “ “ “ , Janet.

(Note: sadly, the earlier Janet must have died)

1774 Duncan McCallum of Lochgoilhead parish, and Isobel Walker, daughter of George Walker, Prestelloch, give notice of intention to marry.

1774 George Walker and Agnes McFarlane have a daughter, Ann.

1774 Duncan Luke and Mary Walker have a son, Malcolm.

1776 Donald Campbell and Euphemia McGown have a daughter, Agnes.

1776 An inventory of farms on Luss Estates gives us a fascinating glimpse of Prestelloch at this time. The farm then comprised: -

Croft- 8 acres; Good Pasture: 33.45 acres; Oakwood- 0.38 acres; Sheep Pasture- 297.26 acres.

A map was drawn up that same year by Charles Ross of Greenlaw, who was engaged by Sir James Colquhoun to provide detailed plans of farms on his estate. It is not by chance that the map and inventory coincided- this whole exercise was meant as a prelude to progression of modern farming methods. (See appendix for map, and also see Discussion following this

Timeline).

1781 John Dempster and Phenuel (?) McDonald have a daughter, Barbara.

1782 “ “ “ “ “ “ Mary.

1783 John McFarlane and Mary McDonald have a daughter, Barbara.

1785 “ “ “ “ “ son, John.

1790 George McLellan and Janet McAuslan have a daughter, Christian.

1792 “ “ “ “ “ son, Duncan.

1794 “ “ “ “ “ Donald.

1797 “ “ “ “ “ George.

1798 “ “ “ “ “ Archibald.

1799 Precept of warning by Alexander Oswald of Shieldhall against tenants in Gortan, it runs: _

“Charge George McLellan, senior, residing in Preistelloch and George McLellan, junior, residing in Drumfad, to flit and remove themselves, their sub-tenants and cottars and dependants, and their families, servants, cattle, goods and gear furth of the lands of Gortan, extending to the 40/- land of old extent, with houses, biggins, etc, comprehending the lands commonly called Craggan and others, barony of Luss, parish of Row, against Whitsun next, 1799”

(Note: this quite threatening notice to quit comes from Alexander Oswald, who had shortly before received a charter for the lands of Gortan, on the opposite side of Glen Culanach from Preis Seilich, previously owned by the McFarlanes of Gortan. The Oswalds were a wealthy family of Glasgow businessmen, whose interests included property, businesses, country estates, and politics. Evidently, George McLellan, senior, was at this time farmer at Preistelloch, and the warning makes it apparent that both he and George, junior, based at Drumfad (which is in Glen Fruin) had been running livestock on the lands of Gortan, presumably on a lease or other arrangement. Interestingly, only cattle are mentioned, this at a time when large-scale sheep farming was very much to the fore in the district. It would seem to be a classic case of a new broom sweeping clean).

1831 Headstone at Luss churchyard marks the burial place of George McLellan, farmer, Prestelloch, that of his wife, Janet McAuslan, along with six of their children. This stone carries information about the family which can be tied into a number of the births recorded in the Old Parish Registers. George had been pre-deceased by wife Janet, who had passed away in 1825, aged 67. George himself had died in 1831, aged 82. Of their children, several only have their ages recorded on the headstone: Christian had died aged 30, which means she died c. 1820; George had died aged 27, meaning he died c. 1824; Archibald had died aged 26, meaning his death was c. 1824; Robert had died aged 24, but his birth does not seem to have been noted in the OPR's. Two of the children do have their ages given on the headstone: Duncan's age is given as 1852, meaning he would have been c. 60 at the time of his death,

and likewise Donald, who reached 59 years, must have passed away aged c. 59.

This computation was motivated by the thought that with so many family members being carried off while still young, they had perhaps been visited by one terrible episode of disease or misfortune. However, the exercise does seem to point instead to deaths over a period. This was of course a time when people often failed to enjoy long lives -living conditions generally must have been tough for many, and proper medical care would have been hard to come by.

There is however one mystery. Son George mentioned in the timeline was only born in 1797, yet the 1799 precept of warning above refers to George junior in Drumfad, the most obvious interpretation being that he was the son of George, senior, farmer at Prestelloch. Perhaps, though, that was not the case, although he was presumably a relation. Other possible scenarios may spring to mind, but they must necessarily be of a speculative nature.

1832 Alexander McFarlane, servant, Prestelloch, and Mary McFarlane of Greenock, give notice of intention to marry. (LOPR's)

1834 John McFarlane, shepherd, Prestelloch, and Christina McDonald have a daughter Isabella.

1838 Duncan McPhail and Janet McFarlane have a daughter Isabella.

1840 “ “ “ “ “ “ Barbara.

1841 Census of that year lists:-

| | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------|-----------|-----------------|
| Duncan McPhail, | Head of household | (25) | Married. | Shepherd. |
| Janet | “ | (25) | Wife. | |
| Isabella | “ | (3) | Daughter. | |
| Barbara | “ | (15mths) | “ | |
| Catherine McCallaum | | (15) | | Female servant. |

1842 Duncan McPhail and Janet McFarlane have a daughter Elizabeth.

1851 The Census of that year makes no reference to Prestelloch, nor is there mention in succeeding ones. The clear inference is that the settlement was abandoned between 1842 and 1851.

1953 The present writer recalls visiting the site of a covered-over well in the field close to the sheep fank, in the company of Duncan McNiven, the local shepherd, and an analytical chemist. The purpose of the visit was to take a water sample and determine if it might be suitable for a new water supply that was being planned for a nearby railway cottage. In the event, the sample taken was deemed unsuitable, and another source of water was chosen, but the point here is that the well must surely have used as a water supply when Prestelloch was inhabited.

DISCUSSION

The Timeline throws up a number of interesting points. The arrival of John Campbell in 1757, when he received a tack (lease) of Prestelloch (along with many other farms in the

district) is highly significant, in that he was one of the first people to introduce commercial sheep farming to the South West Highlands. This resulted the introduction of the blackface or Linton breed of sheep, as opposed to the small, fine-fleeced sheep, that was kept under the old, subsistence type of farming. As one shepherd was reckoned sufficient for a flock of 600 sheep under the commercial regime, such a change usually heralded amalgamation of pre-existing farms, and the consequent displacement of population.

However, the 1757 event also throws up the information that, prior to that date, Prestelloch had been under the management of one Dougal McFarlane of Auchcrossan, described as a “drover in Innergreune”. Scrutiny of the records shows that not only had McFarlane had a tack, or lease of Prestelloch, he had also possessed the adjacent farm of Culanach as well (which in 1757 also passed into the possession of Campbell of Lanemark). Bearing in mind that McFarlane also had a lease of Innergreune, it shows clearly that by 1757, he had control of a number of farms in the area, implying that a significant move away from traditional subsistence farming had already gained a foothold in the district. It would appear that an initial move to commercial cattle raising was frequently the first such step, only to be replaced in turn by intensive sheep farming. Note too that McFarlane is referred to as “of Auchcrossan”, implying that he held a charter, and might thus be deemed a laird in his own right. That in turn suggests that, as a drover, he was a man of some means.

At this point, it may be worth quoting a passage from a work by author James Stewart, in his study “The Settlements of Western Perthshire” (1990). He writes: “*In 1735. the shieling grounds (around Balquhidder) were let to drovers from Inveruglas, on the west bank of Loch Lomond, Ardkinglas on Loch Fyne, and Glen Fyne.... the inference to be drawn is that by 1735, the economy had changed from small scale subsistence pastoralism to commercial cattle trading....*”

Those cattle drovers with the necessary means liked to have control over the main routes they used in moving animals overland. Not only did it mean they could ensure trouble free passage for their animals and manage available grazings, but it also provided an insurance and buffer against hard times. By analogy, it so happens that in McFarlane's case, the farm of Innergreune lay by the String Road, an ancient thoroughfare linking Arrochar and Glen Douglas to Glen Luss, Loch Lomondside and beyond. Likewise, Prestelloch and Culanach lay along another traditional droving route from the north through to Glen Fruin, Balloch and beyond. There was thus a logic to his possession of these holdings. However, as Stewart implies, such land use tended to disrupt the traditional form of farming in the Highlands, where transhumance was practised. That is, a system whereby livestock was herded to high level grazings in the summer, both to make use of high level grazings, and to allow crops on low ground to grow without disturbance from livestock.

But through what sort of process did the commercial farming of cattle as practised by McFarlane give way to that of Campbell of Lanemark and his flocks of blackface sheep? The answer in a nutshell is simply one of market forces and economics. In his classic work, “The Drove Roads of Scotland” (1952), author A.R.B. Haldane states: -

“*In 1795, Sir John Sinclair, the compiler of the Old Statistical Account of Scotland, produced detailed figures to show that under cattle, the rent of the land was about 2 ½ pence per acre, while under sheep it would be 2/- an acre*”. Haldane also mentions a Highland chieftain quoted as saying in 1788 that: - “*When I was young, the only question asked concerning a man's rank was how many men lived on his estate, then it came to be how many black cattle it could keep; but now they only ask how many sheep the lands will carry*”.

While the introduction of commercial sheep farming has often been associated with loss of employment in the Highlands, and consequent displacement of the indigenous population, who had previously relied mainly on mixed, subsistence style farming, the phase of cattle rearing that often preceded it seems to have attracted less critical comment. It may be instructive to look briefly at one or two accounts which do address the issue and go on to analyse and compare the move to sheep which followed. Robert McGeachy's book "Argyll: 1730-1850" (2005) provides a commentary, based on scrutiny of that county, based on information supplied in the Old Statistical Account of Scotland (OSA), produced in the 1790's. He states: -

"This provides the first overall assessment of the impact of large scale pastoral farming, initially black cattle farming, and then, more dramatically, sheep farming had on the social and agrarian structure of the Highlands by this period.... the main centres of cattle farming were in the southern part of the county, surrounding Loch Fyne, in Cowal, and some areas in northern Argyll, such as Morvern. The development of cattle farming caused significant depopulation...and the evictions that accompanied tenurial reorganisation". He goes on to quote one of the contributors to the OSA thus: "It reduces the number of tenants....but adds to that of the cottagers, as they are often kept upon some of the farms..."

As far as the switch to sheep production is concerned, McGeachy points out that this was the more disruptive of the two. Once again drawing on commentaries in the OSA, he quotes from the entry on Lochgoilhead parish thus: - "The great decrease in the population of the country is owing to the introduction of sheep. Since the farms have been chiefly stocked with sheep, one man often rents as much as 10, 12 or 14 tenants formerly possessed".

Another author who comments on cattle farming is Eric Richards, in his book "The Highland Clearances" (2002). Here, he states "This mode of production, though dislocative, employed large sections of the local population", though he does comment on mass evictions on some of the islands. He goes on to say "Cattle production...produced turmoil but was mostly able to exist in parallel with the subsistence sector of the economy and was even able to increase employment and income opportunities".

As with McGeachy, he acknowledges that sheep production was different, and much less capable of assimilation: "With sheep, the wintering problem required townships to forgo much or all of their low ground, and literally displace the human population. Eventually, the sheep diminished the arable capabilities of the people at a time of rapid population increase. Inevitably, it bred insecurity, competition and dislocation".

Yet another authority who develops the theme of sheep farming and its effects on traditional mixed farming is J. M. Bumsted, in his book "The Peoples's Clearance" (1982). He comments thus: -

"At first glance, sheep farming does not seem incompatible with people living in the glens and straths.part of the problem was that large numbers of sheep were anathema to cattle grazing, the chief source of income for small possessors. Sheep grazed the grass shorter than cattle could manage and required winter forage. Even more critically, the economics of sheep farming was hostile to the small farmer. Profit came from economies of scale. One shepherd could look after 600 sheep.... the capital costs of acquiring a sufficiently large stock of sheep cost around £375 for 600 animals at the close of the 18th century, which was well beyond the means of most highlanders.....although many lairds ran their own flock of sheep, most preferred to let some of their land to outsiders, usually men of capital and experience from the south"

Bearing in mind these various perspectives, let us now look at clues in the timeline to try to

grasp to what extent they seem to be borne out by the situation at Preas Seilich, or otherwise.

It is not known when Dugald McFarlane the drover first took on a lease of the farm, but certainly going by the relative paucity of entries in the OPR's (which of course only cover births/baptisms and pledges of marriage), it might suggest that the settlement never carried much of a population prior to 1757. It has of course to be borne in mind that the OPR's primarily covered those who were members of the Established Church. However, most of the rural population at that time would have qualified, as such. What though of the arrival of John Campbell of Lanemark, who presumably moved his flocks of blackface sheep onto the farm soon after? Campbell, who is described in one account as "...a rough diamond, uncouth in manner and conversation" (Farmers' Magazine, 1811), and in another as "*A most singular but honest character*", is unlikely to have lived at Preas Seilich, as he had leases of many other farms as well, but obviously he would have needed at least one shepherd, and possibly also a farm manager. There is a gap of a decade in OPR entries after 1757, but that is nothing unusual, when set in the pattern of entries prior to that date. It is not known when Campbell relinquished his lease.

It perhaps comes as something of a surprise, then to see quite a number of entries in the decade after 1767, when it would appear that there were likely up to three families, and perhaps more, living at the farm around the same time. Providentially, there are two sources of information produced in 1776 which give some guidance as to land use at that particular time. One is an inventory of the farm, which provides a breakdown in terms of acreages for various forms of land use- see timeline for details. The other is a map- see appendix- which shows clearly the boundaries of the farm. Both of these were drawn up by Charles Ross of Greenlaw, who was employed by Sir James Colquhoun to measure and quantify all farms on his estates, an exercise intended to advise and inform the estate as a prelude to agricultural improvement. Of course, Preas Seilich and quite a few other farms on the estate had already witnessed significant change from the old style subsistence regime. Taking both sources together, what can we learn about the farm at that time?

Given that the farm was by that time centred firmly on sheep farming, it comes as no surprise to find that much of the land, not far short of 300 acres, is given over to sheep grazing. Apart from another 33 acres comprising "Good Pasture", the other significant element is the 8 acres listed under "Croft". No definition is given as to exactly what the term means, but it is suggested here that it may coincide with the 3 patches of ground that shown as under cultivation. The largest of these seems to have 2 buildings, with a semi-circle of trees around them, probably for shelter (the 0.38 acres of oakwood?) The "Good Pasture" may have been used for cattle, although that is uncertain.

By comparison, of the 97 farms that feature in the inventory, 29 are like Preas Seilich in that they have sheep pasture, while 85 have "Croft Land". If the latter was actually being farmed by smallholders, this could certainly help explain the apparent presence of at least several families on the farm at the time. Author Eric Richards notes: "*At the start, in the southern Highlands, the expansion of sheep farming was relatively slow, with quite small flock sizes; moreover, landlords were hesitant about the social costs of the change...*"

At this point, it may be worth quoting from John Stuart's contribution to the Old Statistical Account to gain an insight into the workings of farms around this time. Stuart was a man of considerable talent and aptitudes, and his account of Luss parish must rank among the best in the whole compilation. He informs us that: "*Most of the high grounds are stocked with blackface sheep, with a total of 7,500 animals. One shepherd is employed for a flock of 600 sheep. Cows are mostly kept for the convenience of families. The principal crops grown are oats, bear (barley), and potatoes, with smaller amounts of peas and flax. There are 10 large*

farms on the low ground, where the focus is on grain and cattle. There are 54 smaller farms, and 12 large sheep farms. The tenants on the small farms, as well as the cottagers, depend often more on day labour, or some other employment, than upon the produce of any land they possess.”.

On the matter of parish population, Stuart informs us that a survey of 1755 gave the population as 978, while in 1793 it was 917. He goes on to tell us that: *“Following the introduction of south country sheep about 35 years before, there was a union of farms, which must have diminished the population a little”.* He adds that any such loss has however been more than compensated by the additional hands employed in the slate quarries and other works. If Stuart's account is anything to go by, it might suggest that if there were indeed “crofters” at Preas Seilich, they would most likely have provided support for the sheep farmer, as well as growing food for themselves.

As implied in McGeachy's analysis quoted above, it was the tenant class of people who most likely lost out in the whole process. It is known that some locals did succeed in making the switch, but it is suggested here, from close study of several of them, that they tended to be people who were relatively well placed in the social hierarchy, and who would have possessed some capital. There were, as always, also individuals blessed with the necessary qualities to succeed, whatever the odds.

By the 1790's, as shown in the timeline, George McLellan is the farmer at Preas Seilich. The 1799 Precept of Warning issued to him seems to imply that he was supported by subtenants and cottars, although these terms could merely be part of the standard wording of such documents at the time. The precept also implies he was running cattle, as opposed to sheep, on the lands of Craggan at the time. It is certainly the case that, right up until the present time, upland sheep farms in the area have customarily kept a herd of cattle as well.

Into the 19th century, and there is something of a gap in OPR entries until the 1830's, by which time there is only a married shepherd in residence, judging by available information, and the 1841 Census confirms that such is indeed the case. There is no mention of anyone living at the site by the 1851 and subsequent census returns, pointing to when the place was abandoned. If the equivalent study of Gortan/Craggan is consulted, it is mentioned there that Craggan Farm expanded to incorporate the west side of the Fairy Hill at some stage around the middle of the 19th century, and it may be that this happened upon the abandonment of Preis Seilich.

It is always sad to note the abandonment of a former homestead, but at least there are no traditions or accounts of forcible evictions at Preis Seilich, nor indeed in relation to other settlements in the area. The Colquhouns of Luss have never had the charge of “Highland Clearances” levelled against them, and it would seem that the same applies to some adjoining estates as well. No one can deny that displacement of population in upland settlements like Preas Seilich did take place, but no documentary accounts or traditions of forcible eviction have come to light. If the 85 farms listed as having “Croft Land” at the time of the inventory of 1776 were indeed working a true croft system with smallholders, that would have absorbed quite a few families at the time.

Ian McPhail, in his “Short History of Dumbartonshire” (1962), notes *“...More sheep meant fewer people, a few shepherds taking the place of several farmers. In Glen Finlas...Glen Luss, Glen Fruin, Glen Douglas and other glens, have seen ...depopulation, although it was not achieved by the kind of wholesale evictions that happened elsewhere”.* Several other writers have taken up the theme and have suggested that on the southern fringes of the Highlands, it was always easier for displaced people to obtain employment in the growing urban centres in

the Central Belt than their counterparts further north and west. They also refer to the fact that change came relatively early when there was less public opprobrium than later.

The Town of Maligs (later Helensburgh) was founded in 1776 by Sir James Colquhoun, the main purpose being to provide a base for cottage industries like weaving and bonnet making. This may possibly have been motivated by a desire to provide alternative employment for those displaced from the land. A cotton works was started at Luss in 1793, which again may have been partly influenced by the same desire.

TULLICH corn kiln. PI 14.

This site is on Luss Estates and not on MOD land and is given here for completeness sake. The kiln will eventually be included in NCAS proposed survey of Glen Douglas.

Corn Kiln.

Lying at NN 27725 00340 and 170m OD there is an isolated (?) corn kiln. The feature is on the lower west flank of Tullich Hill in Glen Douglas and lies adjacent and out with a turf bank which forms enclosures in the area and are given on OS maps. The clearly defined kiln is completely covered in vegetation and measures 7m in overall diameter with a bowl of 3m diameter and 1m deep as seen. A gap in the upper circuit of the bank indicates the flue position on the west side where the ground drops to 3m below the upper level of the kiln, on the opposite side the kiln ‘tails’ into the ground level. A fenced sheep dipping area lies on the other side of the turf bank and is given as such on the OS maps.

The kiln must have been located to take advantage of the prevailing winds to give draft to the flue, but it seems isolated from any settlement, the nearest known of which was the *original* Tullich Farm, now subsumed into the secure MOD premises, but which was removed as part of the MOD building there.

General Discussion

The buildings on the settlement sites under discussion can be described as ‘pre-improvement’ and probably date on structural evidence from the 18th to the early 19th centuries. Many parts of rural Scotland were speedily de populated from c1750 owing to the formation of larger farms requiring less operatives and ridding the owners of the burden (to them) of cottars and non-rent paying people on the land. In other words, Lowland and Highland Clearances.

Partially as a result of that but co-incidentally also by voluntary emigration to the Colonies, and to industrial areas in Scotland, especially where cotton mills and the emerging heavy industries of coal and iron, and large scale manufacturing trades were all leading to a requirement for more and more labour.

The introduction of large sheep farms and loss of local populations, while an emotive story regarding the people, had a benign effect on archaeological sites. It is often said that grouse and sheep are the best protectors of archaeological landscapes. This changed dramatically in the 20th century when large scale commercial forestry made its appearance, often blanket covering the same landscapes where evidence of people lay for millennia. How much of this heritage that is irretrievably lost has not been quantified, but sites do survive the sitka spruce plantations because of the fact that those trees are not deep rooted and have no penetrating tap

roots as have the broad leaf trees. However, the main threat to archaeology is when the trees are clear felled for harvesting and the ground is prepared for second and subsequent crops, this is when the ground gets really chewed up by modern machinery unless sites are identified and protected.

While the surveys have produced a better level of data for understanding the sites in their landscape context, and the historical research which has been compiled greatly humanises the various settlements in terms of their stories, at least in their latter days of occupation, further archaeological enquiry involving excavation may possibly reveal the earlier history of these sites.

It is evidence of lifestyles in rural Scotland which is lacking for the early 18th century and before. Although some places have early historical references to the sites of the same names being occupied, it is never certain, because of the ephemeral nature of the buildings then, if the present buildings and even sites were the actual locations given in the records.

Evidence in the form of artefacts and features may help considerably in determining the earliest occupations of these sites.

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