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The Archaeology of Finlaggan, Islay

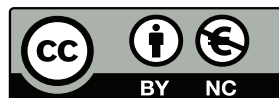
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Chapter 5

SITES AND MONUMENTS

Introduction

The inventory work by RCAHMS in Argyll in the latter part of the 20th century, especially the volume that includes Islay (RCAHMS 1984), provides a basis for categorising prehistoric sites and monuments in the Finlaggan study area and assigning them to periods. The RCAHMS remit at that time meant that it took little or no interest in the rich array of post-medieval and modern houses, shielings, etc, and only noticed the engine-house at Mulreesh in a brief note on old Islay lead mines (RCAHMS 1984: 322–23).

Most of the homes, settlements and other structures identified in the study area appear to be of medieval or more recent date. They include huts, houses, enclosures and kilns. There was little guidance available before commencing our fieldwork on how to identify and classify them. While many of the huts and houses were clearly for human inhabitation there was no doubt they also included animal houses and stores, including byres and barns. It seemed reasonably clear that most are no earlier than the 18th century, but Colin Sinclair's 1953 essay on Highland houses, in which he distinguished an Argyll type that he labelled 'Dalriadic', did not prove to be an adequate guide. Our own work, first published in 2000 (Caldwell et al 2000: 62–65), suggested a typology of house forms including types A, B, C1, C2 and D. We present this here again in a modified form eliminating type B, which no longer appears to be distinctive, and doing away with the division between C1 and C2 houses. Also excluded here, but dealt with in detail below, are the main medieval structures on Eilean Mór and Eilean na Comhairle.

Type A houses

Type A houses are of turf and/or drystone construction, often with opposed entrances in their long sides. They are oval or barrel-shaped in plan, or rectangular with rounded corners (eg Illus 5.1, str H; Illus 5.48). Our excavations on Eilean Mór have demonstrated that these can date to the medieval period and the 16th century. The difference between huts and type A houses is one of size, not easy to define since it is difficult to take definitive measurements from their slumped remains. Generally, the houses have a length of 8m or more, whereas the huts are rarely more than about 6m long. Many type A houses with turf walls probably had a framework of wattles, and since their walls were not load-bearing, may have relied on crucks planted in the ground for supporting the roof couples. Such houses are often now called creel houses.

Apart from medieval and 16th-century type A houses on Eilean Mór, including structures B, K, H.1, 12.2 and 12.3, one was partially excavated at Rudh' a' Chròcuin on the loch-side (trench 20).

Type C houses

Type C houses are drystone or clay-bonded rectangular houses. In Islay, where their walls survive to a sufficient height, it can be seen that they had gable ends. They are the houses that are found in settlements like Sean-ghairt, occupied in the 18th and early 19th century. Some form the core of larger complexes that have had other dwellings, barns or byres added, forming longer rectangular houses (eg Illus 5.4).

Type D houses

Type D houses are lime-mortared, rectangular houses with fireplaces in the gable walls (eg Illus 4.4, 4.12). In the study area none of these houses are likely to be any earlier in date than the 19th century, unless they are substantial modifications of earlier type C structures.

Enclosures

The enclosures are small, of various shapes and normally defined by earth banks. They may have served a variety of uses as stack-yards, gardens or animal pens.

Kilns

The kilns in the study area are all ruined, the remains of small circular structures built of stone, about 4 to 6m in overall diameter. They are often built into the side of a bank, and probably had corbelled roofs of turf. They might have been used for either drying grain or burning lime for use as a fertiliser. In most cases there is not enough surface evidence to indicate which, and as yet none have been excavated.

Corn-drying kilns did not have to be heated to a particularly high temperature, but there was a need to keep the fire well clear of the grain to avoid any risk of combustion. Kilns of this type, therefore, should be expected to have had flues for conducting hot air from an external hearth. Kilns for burning lime had to be fired to much higher temperatures and this may have been achieved by layering crushed



Illustration 5.2
House A at Druim a' Chùirn

limestone and peat in the kiln chamber. The burnt lime and ash could then be raked out through an opening at the kiln base.

On the basis of observations made by RCAHMS (1995: 19–20) on similar small circular kilns on the Mar Lodge Estate in Grampian, a useful working hypothesis may be that those kilns set into a bank are likely to be for corn-drying, whereas others which are free-standing are more likely to have been used for burning lime. On that basis, most of the 12 kilns identified through field survey were corn-driers.

Inventory

Note: for nos 1 to 21 see Chapter 4.

22. SETTLEMENT, DRUIM A' CHÙIRN, SEAN-GHAIRT (NGR NR 373 666)

This ruined settlement is situated about one third of a mile (0.5km) to the north of Ballimartin farm-steading and about the same distance south-west of the bottom end of Loch Finlaggan (Illus 5.1). The name Druim a' Chùirn, Gaelic for 'ridge of the cairn', is taken from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map. There is now no trace of a cairn, the existence of which may also be reflected in the name of a ruined house, Carn mhic-fhearguis ('Ferguson's cairn'), nearby at NGR NR 373 674 on the farm of Ballachlaven. Druim a' Chùirn appears to be the place called Shennyart (Sean-ghairt), represented by a house symbol, on Stephen McDougall's mid-18th-century map of Islay. The houses are grouped on a series of terraces between a rocky slope to the west and a drystone dyke to the east forming the boundary of a field of improved ground, formerly cultivated but now under grass. The dyke may date to c 1833/34 because the Islay Estate rental for that year records that the farmer of Ballimartin and half Sean-ghairt was then paying interest on a loan for stone dykes. It has obviously truncated some of the remains of the settlement, and ploughing may have removed traces of other houses. The remains of at least 11 houses have been recognised, including one type D (house A) and one type A (house H). All or most of the rest are type C.

The only structure with upstanding walls is house A (Illus 5.2), a small rectangular cottage, 8.37 by 5.3m overall, occupied into the

20th century (information from Mathew MacMillan, the farmer of Ballimartin). Its walls are a mixture of local quarried material and field stones – limestone and dolerite, with some quartzite and dolostone – held in lime mortar. It has a cement floor, and fragments of corrugated iron in the debris inside are presumably remains of its last roof. In the north-east corner there is a crudely constructed pen made from stones collapsed from the adjacent gable.

The south gable is near complete and appears to incorporate an earlier, narrower one, about 3m wide. Foundations against the north gable may also belong to this earlier structure. To the north and south of structure A are yet more grass-covered foundations, those to the south perhaps being the ruins of a small yard or garden belonging to the earlier house.

Immediately to the north of A and oriented at right angles to it are the grass-covered foundations of house B with an overall size of 16.3 by 6.8m. It had two rooms, one with opposed entrances. Tenuous wall lines to the east are probably remains of an earlier structure. Structure C, about 15 by 7m, lying to the west of B and on the same alignment, also appears to overlie an earlier structure. C consisted of two rooms, a main one and a smaller one, the end of which is cut into the rocky slope.

To the south-east of house A are the remains of houses D and E, both on lower ground. D is partially buried by slope-wash, but at least part of it appears to have been a relatively narrow structure, 3.7m wide with walls including large field stones. E is represented by the foundations of a small squarish structure, but was probably originally a longer house, 17 by 6m. To the south of it are earth dykes forming small yards and a boundary to the settlement. A track from Ballimartin runs past the foundations of structure F, possibly a three-roomed structure, placed just inside the boundary dyke and below the rocky slope.

House G consists of the foundations of a small two-roomed house, 9 by 4.7m, with attached yard, lying on a gentle slope to the north of house B. To the north-west of it is a well, now represented by a concrete structure with a large cast-iron boiler beside it for cattle to drink from. Structure H, beside the well, is represented by low earth banks, forming a sub-rectangular shape, 14 by 8m. It had opposed entrances. House I, only 5m wide, has been truncated by a recent track.

On a higher piece of ground to the north of the houses is a small enclosure which perhaps served as a stack-yard. It is attached to an earth, or earth and stone, dyke which curves round the west of the houses and continues northwards, forming part of the head dyke on the west side of Loch Finlaggan.

The drystone dyke marks the line of the old road around the west side of Loch Finlaggan. On a piece of higher ground in the field to the east of it are traces of at least one small stone-walled house (J), 3.6 by 3.7m, with a nearby garden. On another low, rocky knoll to the south-west is a sub-circular enclosure, about 22 by 25m, defined by a low turf-covered rubble bank. This is clearly not a garden since the interior is rocky with no depth of soil.

It is evident that there is more than one phase of occupation represented in the remains at Druim a' Chùirn. In typological terms the earliest house appears to be structure H. It would have been followed by the small narrow houses represented by G, I, probably D and the earlier version of house A. Structures B, C, E and probably F belong to a third phase, with last of all the remodelled structure A. This latter building, house E and the small

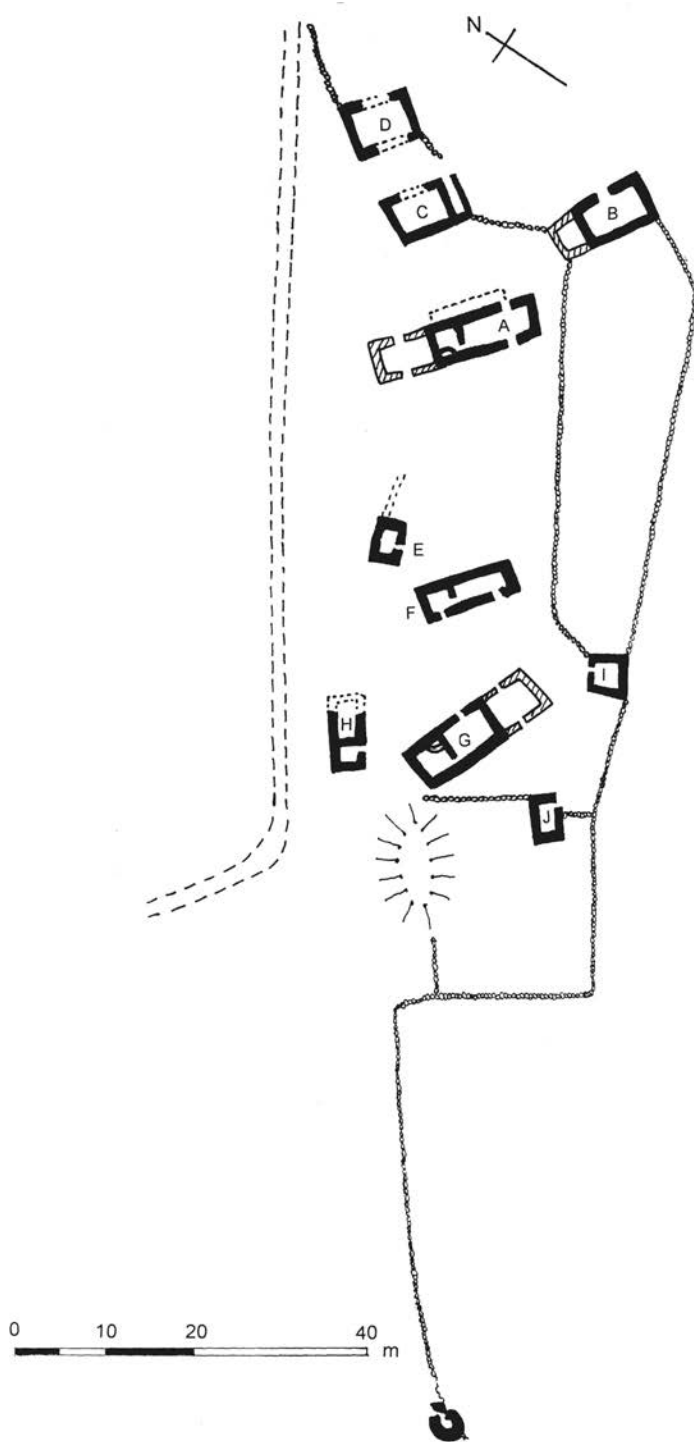


Illustration 5.3

Map of settlement remains at North Sean-ghairt, after a survey by Edinburgh University Archaeology Society, 1994

enclosure to the south of it backed by the drystone wall are the only structures shown on the plan of Ballmartin Farm made in the 1830s.

The enclosure in the field the other side of the drystone dyke may be the earliest structure of all. It is possibly of prehistoric origin, perhaps a palisaded enclosure or fort.



Illustration 5.4
North Sean-ghairt, house A

23. SETTLEMENT, (NORTH) SEAN-GHAIRT (NGR NR 382 677) The substantial remains of this ruined settlement lie on a broad terrace at a height of over 20m above Loch Finlaggan and about 150m to the east of it. The ruins, with a further group to the south, are known collectively as Sean-ghairt, but for ease of reference here the two clusters are distinguished as North and South Sean-ghairt. At North Sean-ghairt 10 houses have been identified, all of type C (Illus 5.3, 5.4).

The houses and yards of the settlement are all built of local stone, including field stones and quarried material, mainly quartzite with lesser proportions of dolerite and limestone. The upstanding walls are of random rubble construction, sometimes with large, roughly rectangular blocks positioned as doorjambs and quoins. In general, the material used is sub-angular, quarried and split into roughly shaped rectangular blocks. Traces of clay mortar survive, especially in buildings A, B, C and I. In the west gable of house A a broken quern stone has been detected. There are no traces of roofing associated with any building. Presumably it was all of turf and thatch.

Associated with the buildings (A–J) are two yards lying adjacent to the old road up the west side of Loch Finlaggan. They are both enclosed by drystone dykes, and the larger of the two may have been kept in repair long after the abandonment of the settlement for use as a stack-yard or for animals. There are the foundations of two small buildings, I and J, attached to these yards, but both entered from outside them. There are also the remains of a more substantial house (B) at the end of the larger enclosure. The house itself is 9.5 by 5.5m and is entered from outside the yard. A smaller extension has been added at one end.

The main surviving house at North Sean-ghairt is structure A, still with walls and gables largely upstanding. It consists of an original unit with opposed entrances to which a larger extension has been added at the downslope end, giving the structure a total length of 19m. The addition is divided into two rooms, a larger one with opposed entrances with a smaller one entered off it. A low platform along the exterior of its north wall might represent the remains of an earlier structure. There is a small secondary pen or shooting butt constructed in an internal corner.

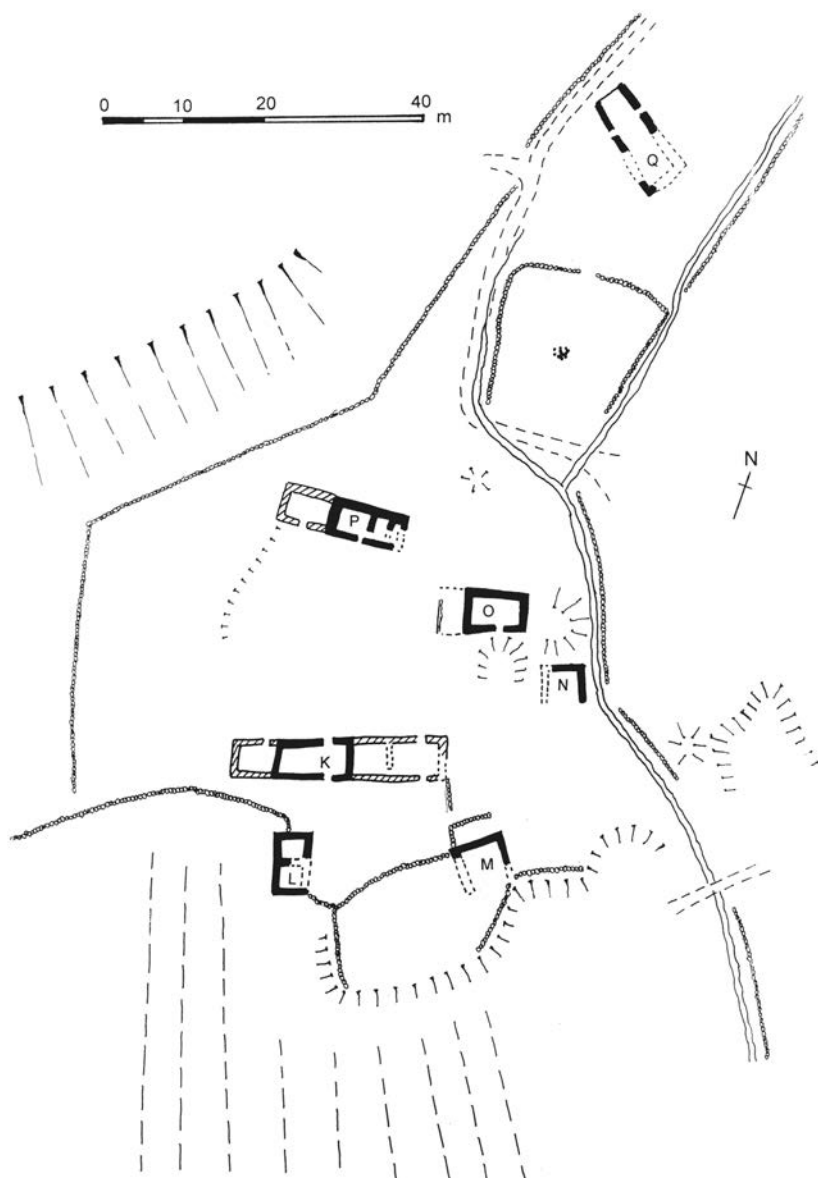


Illustration 5.5

Map of settlement remains at South Sean-ghairt, after a survey by Edinburgh University Archaeology Society, 1994



Illustration 5.6
South Sean-ghairt, house K

The other main house in the cluster is G, with a total length of about 16.5m, not so well preserved as A. It also is composed of three rooms, though here the two-roomed structure is the original element, with a smaller building with opposed entrances joined on at the downslope end. The ruins of G also contain a small pen.

The other buildings at North Sean-ghairt are represented by foundations, some of them covered by turf. C and D are two adjacent cottages, while F is a two-roomed house, perhaps all of one build. H and E are notably narrower than the other houses, 4m as against about 5m or 6m. They also differ in being aligned with the contours and not across them.

24. SETTLEMENT, (SOUTH) SEAN-GHAIRT (NGR NR 380 674)

This ruined settlement lies some 200m to the south-west of North Sean-ghairt on the same broad terrace overlooking Loch Finlaggan (Illus 5.5, 5.6). The walling of structures here is generally similar to North Sean-ghairt, but there is a higher proportion of field stones, mostly quartzites, limestones, dolostone and dolerite, with clay mortar evident in house K. It and structure O have several poorly dressed stones.

South Sean-ghairt consists of the remains of two yards and seven type C houses, mostly built broad side to the slope. One of the yards has a circular patch of small stones in it, which might possibly be the remains of a stack stance. The other yard contains the remains of house M. A small burn flows down beside the houses, and the remains of a small house (N), cut into the slope beside it, might be a clack-mill.

The largest structure is K, with a total length of about 27.5m, and it is the only one with walls surviving to any significant height. One of its gables is still about 1.3m high. The core of K is a house with opposed entrances, with at the west end a smaller addition, and at the east end an extension similar to house A at North Sean-ghairt. It has a larger room with opposed entrances and a smaller room entered off it. The east gable of this structure has a blocked doorway with traces of lime mortar in its stonework. To the south of structure K is a smaller two-roomed house (L).

Smaller in size is structure P, also divided into four rooms, though here the original building has three rooms *en suite*, with a smaller addition at one end. Building O has two rooms, the smaller, presumably a byre, with a drain running through it. It is lined with stone slabs with no trace of any capstones. Building Q has its west gable wall cut out of a rock outcrop.

25. KILN, SEAN-GHAIRT (NGR NR 381 676)

Midway between the north and south clusters of houses there is an outcrop of rock with a small circular kiln cut into it (Illus 5.7). There are traces of a sill stone, and a lintel collapsed in situ. It was probably for corn-drying.

26. HUTS, SEAN-GHAIRT (NGR NR 378 678)

The slumped turf remains of two shieling huts are positioned on a terrace at a height of about 150m below the summit of Cnoc an Tighe and between the head dyke and the dyke defining the boundary with Ballachlaven. One is about 5m in diameter, the other 5.5 by 8.5m, partially overlying a smaller, earlier hut (Illus 5.8).

SITES AND MONUMENTS



Illustration 5.7
Kiln (no. 25) at Sean-ghairt

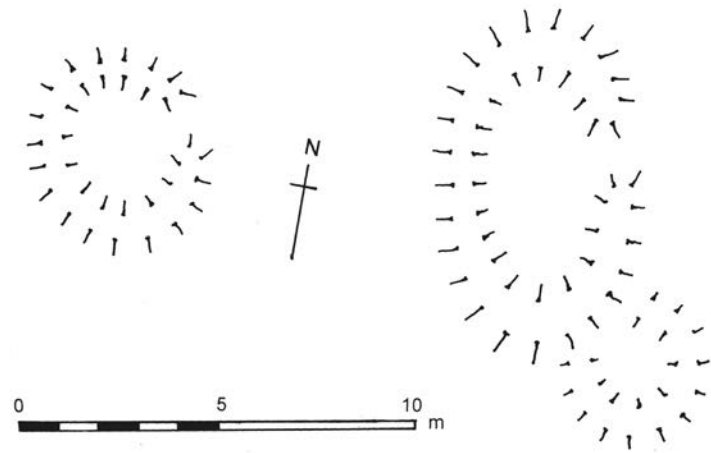


Illustration 5.8
Plan of shieling huts (no. 26), Sean-ghairt

27. HUTS, SEAN-GHAIRT (NGR NR 380 680)

A group of four circular or oval turf shieling huts arranged in a line on a sheltered terrace of Cnoc an Tighe above the Sean-ghairt head dyke, at a height of about 150m above sea level. The one furthest to the west partially overlies an earlier hut. The easternmost one is mounded high on the debris of its predecessors (Illus 5.9, 5.10).

28. HARBOUR, SEAN-GHAIRT (NGR NR 385 678)

To the north-east of North Sean-ghairt are the remains of a jetty, of boulders, alongside a small, sheltered bay, bounded by another shorter jetty at a distance of about 8.5m. The area between has been cleared of stones, perhaps those in a heap a few metres to the south-west.

29. KILN, SEAN-GHAIRT (NGR NR 384 680)

A small circular kiln overgrown with grass, perhaps complete, collapsed in situ. It is about 4.35m in diameter and is sited in a field of rigs (see no. 16 above). There are no signs of a flue.

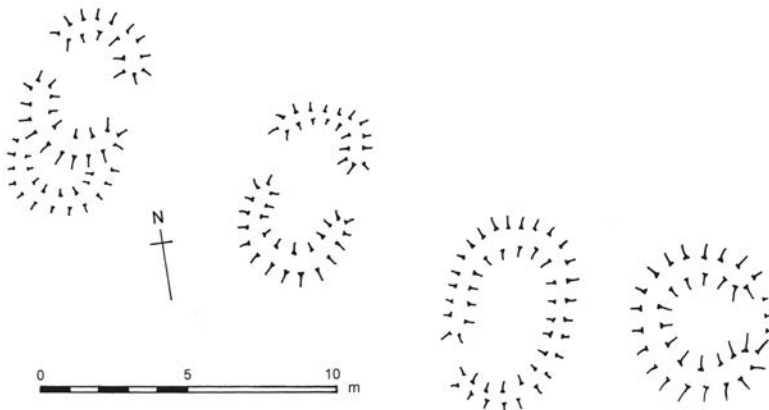


Illustration 5.9
Plan of shieling huts (no. 27), Sean-ghairt

30. KILN, SEAN-GHAIRT (NGR NR 386 680)

The circular stone-foundations of a kiln by the shore of the loch near the boundary dyke with Portanellan. It is 3.8m in overall diameter with an opening for a flue or rake-hole facing east. Its lintel is collapsed in place.

31. HOUSE, AIRIGH IAIN MHARTUIN, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 381 687)

On a level area at the apex where two small tributaries of the Allt a' Ghoirtein join, below the brow of Cnoc na Cubhaig (Gaelic, 'hill of the cuckoo'), but now in a clearing in a conifer plantation (Illus 5.11, 5.12). It is a long type C house, about 23.8 by 6.3m overall, divided into three chambers. The middle, probably the dwelling, has opposed entrances. One end chamber has been subdivided by a secondary wall, and the other has had a little pen or shooting butt built in its corner after the house fell into ruin. It is of drystone construction, using local, mostly quarried, stone. Much of the walling stands almost to full height but there is no evidence for windows. The house was abandoned prior to 1878. The blocking



Illustration 5.10
Group of four shieling huts (no. 27) above Sean-ghairt

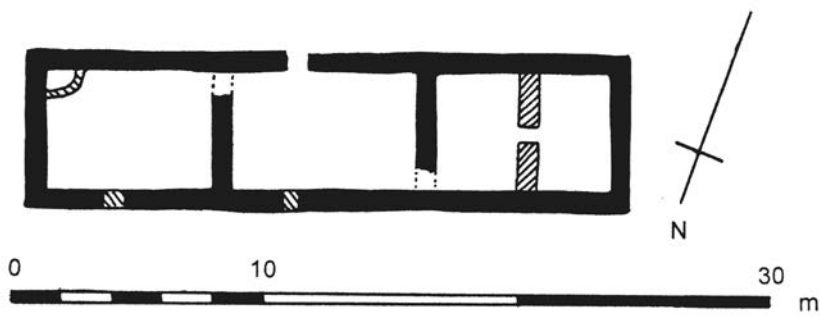


Illustration 5.11
Plan of house at Airigh Iain Mhartuin, Portanellan (no. 31)

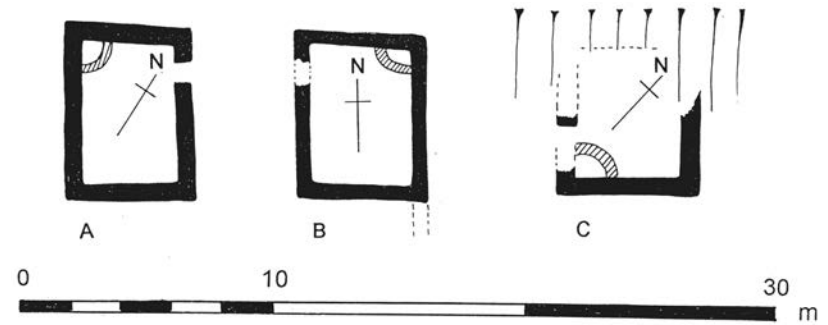


Illustration 5.13
Plans of houses at: (A) Airigh nan Caisteal (no. 34); (B) An Leacann (no. 32); (C) Cachlaidh Chreagach (no. 36)



Illustration 5.12
Airigh Iain Mhartuin, Portanellan (no. 31)



Illustration 5.14
House at An Leacann, Portanellan (no. 32)

of all but one of the external entrances may have been done after it was roofless so it could be used as a sheepfold. The name is Gaelic for the shieling of John or Ian Martin, and the house no doubt replaces earlier shieling huts. The confluence of two streams like this is a typical location for shieling huts in Islay, for example on the Allt na Tri-dail (Avenvogie) at NGR NR 372 560 and on a tributary of the Abhainn Gleann Logain at NGR NR 421 628.

32. HOUSE, AN LEACANN, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 383 690)
On a level piece of ground, now within a conifer plantation, above the Allt a' Ghoirtein, probably part of the holding of Goirtean Chailean (see nos 17 and 33). A small ruined rectangular house of type C, about 5.3 by 6.8m, its walls largely upstanding, except that one gable has been collapsed to provide material for a small pen or butt (Illus 5.13 B, 5.14). The walls are of drystone construction using locally quarried quartzites and Port Askaig tillite. It has had a small attached garden.

33. SETTLEMENT, GOIRTEAN CHAILEAN, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 384 688)

These ruined and overgrown type C houses are now covered with the conifers of a forestry plantation. They lie on a level platform immediately at the bottom of a steep slope crowned with a mature ash tree. The ruins of four houses are traceable,

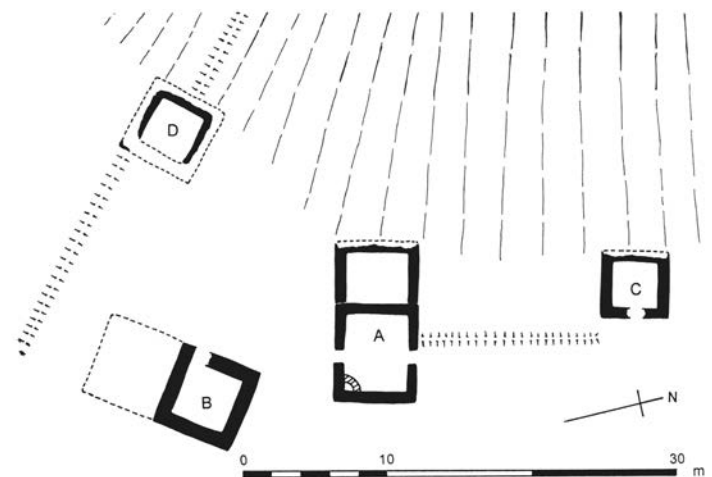


Illustration 5.15
Map of settlement remains at Goirtean Chailean, Portanellan (no. 33)

all of drystone construction, mostly quarried blocks of quartzite, but also including large blocks of dolerite for quoins (Illus 5.15). The most substantial house, labelled A, has opposed entrances in its long sides, and an added chamber at one end.

SITES AND MONUMENTS

House B also appears to have had two chambers. Houses D and C were simple, almost square structures, house D set on the line of a turf boundary dyke, perhaps forming a head dyke for the associated field system (no. 17). See also the house no. 32. Goirtean Chailean is Gaelic for ‘Colin’s garden’ and was already abandoned by 1878.

34. HOUSE, AIRIGH NAN CAISTEAL, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 377 700)

The name is Gaelic for the shieling of the castles, and the name has also been applied to a nearby loch and a small glen with a burn. The type C house, now hemmed in by trees, was built on open moorland at a height of about 170m above sea level. It is a small rectangular drystone structure, built of field stones, mostly quartzite (Illus 5.13 A). It measures 7.0 by 5.0m overall and is now largely ruinous and overgrown. A mound at one end may be the remains of earlier turf huts. Unlike other shieling grounds in the survey area, Airigh nan Caisteal is some distance beyond the head dyke. That, and the name which may relate it to the castle at Finlaggan, suggests that its use may go back to medieval times.

35. SETTLEMENT, AIRIGH NAN CLACH, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 386 708)

In a bend of the Allt a’ Chromain are the ruins of a small type C drystone rectangular house, about 5 by 7m overall. Its walls, mostly of quarried blocks of quartzite, have been largely rebuilt to form an oval enclosure, perhaps for lambing or else as a shooting butt. Nearby are the foundations of another ruined house, about 6 by 5m, and a shieling mound. Round about them, on a level shoulder of ground, is an area of green grass now infested with bracken and dotted with small clearance cairns – obvious signs that the ground here has been cultivated. Neither house appears on the Ordnance Survey map of 1878, and the more complete one only on later editions. It is possible that this is the settlement of Lechacruath recorded in the 1861 census.

The Allt a’ Chromain formed the march between Portanellan and Balulive. Airigh nan Clach (Gaelic, ‘shieling of the stones’) is defined in the Ordnance Survey Name Book as a tract of heathy pasture, 480 acres in extent, bounded on the north by the Allt Loch nan Eun, on the west by Carn a’ Choinnleir and Carn Meadhonach, and extending on the east to within a short distance of Crò Earraich, and on the south to a short distance south of the Allt a’ Chromain. It is now sandwiched between two large conifer plantations. Most of Airigh nan Clach fell within the boundaries of Balulive, and there is a shieling mound on the Balulive part at NGR NR 389 713, with the ruins of a small rectangular house nearby. There is also a burnt mound on a tributary of the Allt a’ Chròth Earraich (Gaelic, meaning ‘burn of the spring pen/enclosure’) at NGR NR 389 711.

36. HOUSE, CACHLAIDH CHREAGACH, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 389 700)

The overgrown ruins of a small rectangular type C house on a slope above a tributary of the Finlaggan River (Illus 5.13 C). It is of drystone construction, mostly quarried quartzite blocks. It is now in a clearing in a conifer plantation and contains a small pen. The name is Gaelic for ‘rocky gate’.

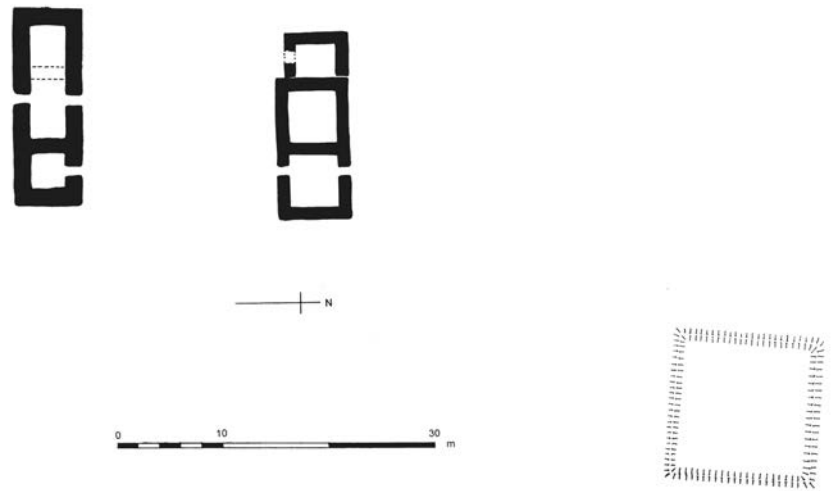


Illustration 5.16
Map of settlement at Cùl a’ Bhaile, Portanellan (no. 37)

37. SETTLEMENT, CÙL A’ BHAILE, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 396 690)

There are the grass-covered foundations of two type C houses on either side of the track from Mulreesh to Cachlaidh Chreagach, and a few metres to the north-east a level enclosure, 14m square overall, defined by an earth bank (Illus 5.16). The house to the south, about 18.3 by 6.3m, appears to have been divided into three chambers. The middle one has opposed entrances and a garden to the south. The house to the north is shorter and broader, about 13.5 by 7m, and has two chambers, one with opposed entrances. At one end is a narrower third chamber, probably an addition. The name Cùl a’ Bhaile does not appear on any maps but was given to us by a previous tenant of Finlaggan Farm. It is Gaelic for ‘the back of the township’ and must be the Backton of the 1861 census.



Illustration 5.17
House A at Rudh’ a’ Chròcuin, Portanellan (no. 38), its walls crowned by heather



Illustration 5.18
The 'AI stone' (no. 39)



Illustration 5.19
The 'AI stone' (no. 39): inscription

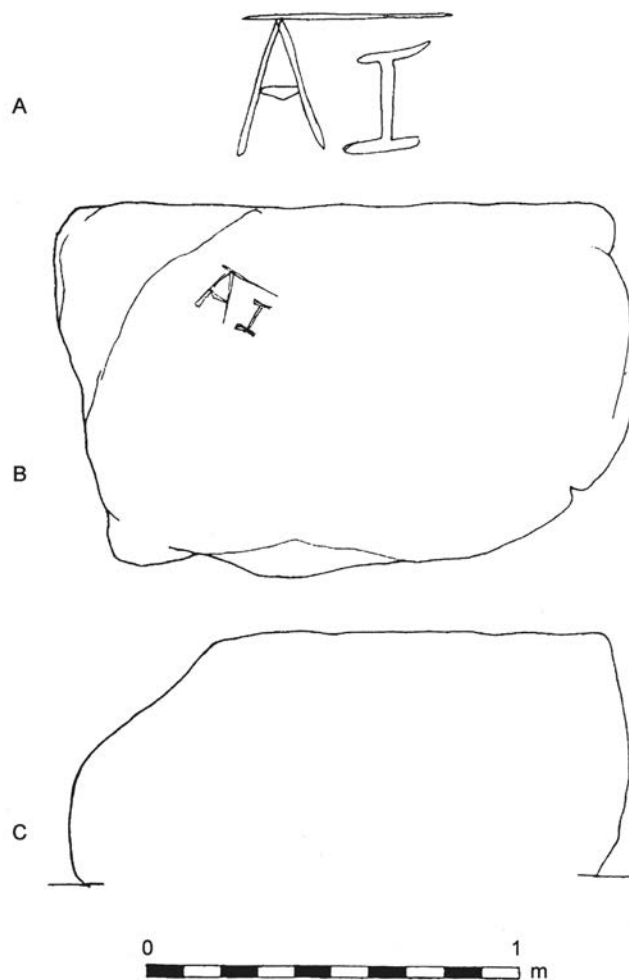


Illustration 5.20
The 'AI stone' (no. 39): (A) detail of inscription; (B) top view; (C) elevation

38. SETTLEMENT, RUDH' A' CHRÒCUIN, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 386 681)

The ruins of two type A turf-walled houses on a terrace adjacent to the remains of a small jetty of boulders on the west shore of Loch Finlaggan. One house (A) is long and rectangular, 14 by 5m, positioned end on to the loch (Illus 5.17). Gaps in its walls may represent the positions of two sets of opposed entrances, but they also coincide with tracks worn by humans and animals. The other house (B) is shorter, with rounded corners, and side-on to the loch. It measures 7.5 by 5.5m overall and appears to have an entrance in the side facing the water, and, less probably, another in its west end. It is possible that these houses relate to use of the nearby field system (no. 16), identified as Laichtcarlane.

In 1994 limited excavation was initiated on the smaller of the houses by the Time Team, and completed by us as trench 20. See Chapter 7 below.

39. INSCRIBED STONE, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 3874 6813)

A large rectangular boulder, a glacial erratic of meta-igneous rock, 1.45 by 0.96m, 0.65m high, sitting on the west loch shore opposite Eilean Mór. Neatly incised on its top surface is 'AI' (Illus 5.18–20). Both letters are Lombardic capitals and are obviously medieval in form. The A has a top- and a cross-bar. The I is smaller than the A, suggesting it should be read as a 'one' rather than a letter. The inscription was only discovered in 1996.

40. JETTY AND INSCRIBED (?) STONE, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 3875 6819)

A small group of large stones opposite Eilean Mór, normally partially submerged in the water of the loch. They can reasonably be interpreted as 'the remains of a pier' reported in 1772 by the travel writer Pennant (1774: 259). He described how one of its stones was cut with 'A.II. or, *Æneas* the second, one of the lords of the isles, in whose reign it was founded'. This was Angus Òg, the supporter of Robert Bruce.

The stone in question had dropped from sight since Pennant's day. Indeed, when the AI inscription (see above, no. 39) was

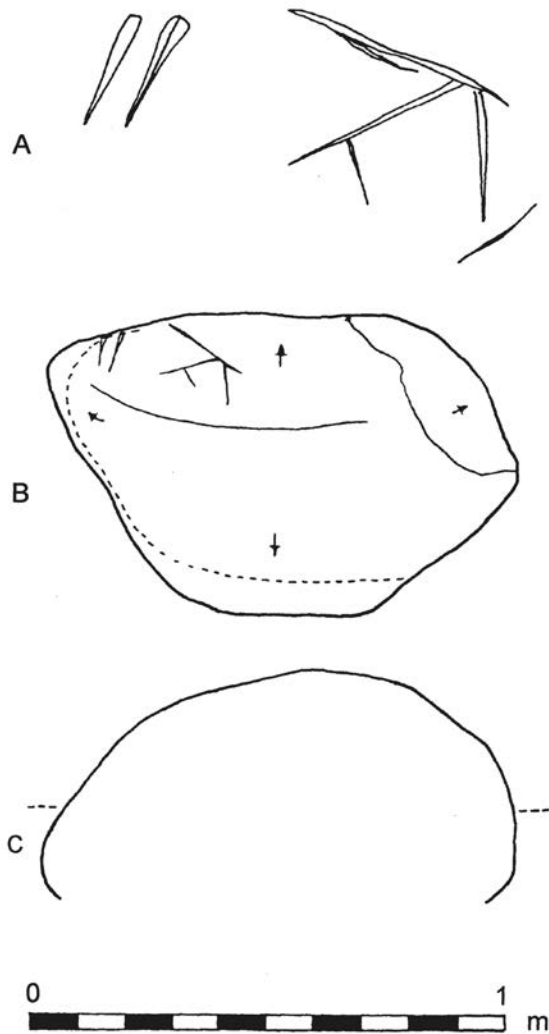


Illustration 5.21
The 'All stone' (no. 40): (A) 'inscription'; (B) top view; (C) elevation (broken lines mark water level in the loch at the time of discovery)



Illustration 5.22
The 'All stone' (no. 40)

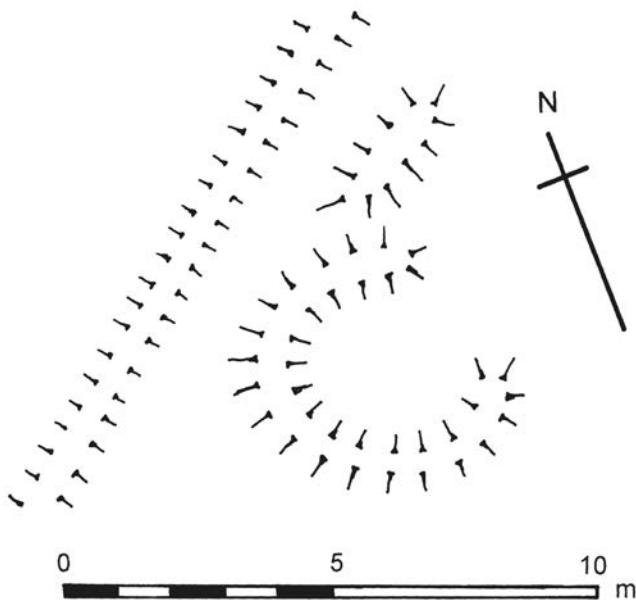


Illustration 5.23
Plan of hut no. 43

discovered in 1996 there seemed a real possibility that that was the stone seen by Pennant, and it had been turned into AII through some error. In the summer of 1997, however, when the water level in the loch was very low, the AII stone was rediscovered. It is a quartzite boulder, 1.02 by 0.67m, with a height of at least 0.48m, which is often totally submerged in the water. The portion rising above the loch sediments is sub-oval in shape, but this may be giving a misleading impression of the size and outline of what could be a much larger stone.

The carving of the 'inscription' is different in character from the AI on stone no. 39. It consists of large, bold incisions. If the intention really was that they should be read as an inscription it says 'IIA' rather than 'AII' (Illus 5.21, 5.22).

41. EILEAN MÓR, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 388 681)

An island settlement with the ruins of a post-medieval township succeeding important medieval and earlier remains. See Chapters 8–12 for a detailed description and account of its excavation.

FINLAGGAN



Illustration 5.24
Circular turf hut (no. 43) by the shore of Loch Finlaggan

42. EILEAN NA COMHAIRLE, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 387 680)
An island, largely artificial, with a sequence of structures extending from prehistoric times to the medieval period. See Chapter 13 for a detailed description and account of its excavation.

43. HUT, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 388 683)
The collapsed turf remains of a small circular hut, about 5m in diameter, squeezed between the old road, bounded by a turf dyke, and the shore of the loch (Illus 5.23, 5.24).

44. SETTLEMENT, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 389 683)

Several structures, including huts and at least one house, are concentrated in a small area at the north end of Loch Finlaggan, bounded by the Finlaggan River, another unnamed stream and the old road up the west side of the loch. It is not clear to what extent any of these structures are contemporary with each other or represent a coherent, permanent settlement. The ground is now rough pasture, some of it very boggy. The thin peaty soil, however, shows signs of having been cultivated in the past in short rigs (Illus 4.5, 5.25).

(A) A substantial turf-covered mound near the loch shore adjacent to the old road from Sean-ghairt (Illus 5.26 A). It is about 10m in diameter and represents the accumulated ruins of a series of small huts. The collapsed walls of the most recent – either two small oval structures or one two-roomed house – are visible on top.

(B) A series of overlapping huts, not all contemporary, rather than a multi-roomed long house (Illus 5.26 B). They stand on a small heather-covered knoll adjacent to the old road near the loch shore. There are two oval huts and two rectangular ones. The most substantial is the rectangular hut at the west end of the group, about 6.5 by 5.5m, with opposed entrances in its longer sides (see account of trench 13 in Chapter 7).

(C) A few metres to the east of A, the collapsed turf remains of a type A rectangular house, about 9.5 by 6m, with its entrance, untypically, in one of its short sides (Illus 5.26 C).

(D) A small D-shaped enclosure defined by a spreading stone and earth bank, enclosing an area about 6.5 by 10m. It was identified in 1878 by the Ordnance Survey as a burial ground and is so



Illustration 5.25
Photograph taken from a drone of the settlement (no. 44) at the head of Loch Finlaggan between the old road and the Finlaggan River. Note the enclosure (D) and the mill (G) (Alan Miller)

SITES AND MONUMENTS

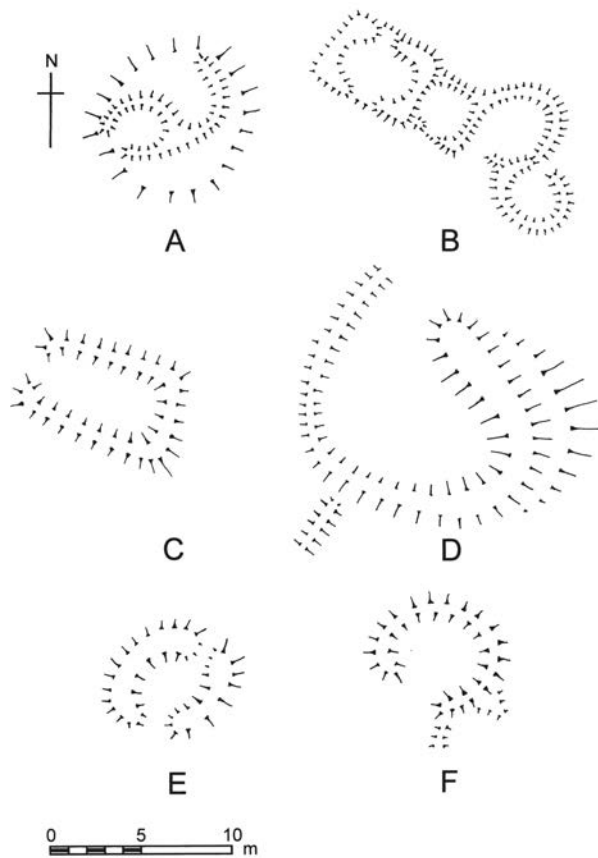


Illustration 5.26
Plans of structures A-F in settlement no. 44

listed by RCAHMS (1984: no. 379). It lies near the edge of the loch on the line of a later earth dyke (Illus 5.26 D).

(E) A linear arrangement of up to eight small circular huts between the old road and a field dyke about 40m to the east. Illus 5.26 E shows a relatively well-defined hut in this group.

(F) The collapsed turf remains of a circular hut with an overall diameter of about 6.5m, partially overlying an earlier circular hut (Illus 5.26 F).

(G) The remains of a mill on the Finlaggan River. These are slight but have been confirmed by the results from a resistivity survey by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford for the Time Team in 1994. The site is a small level platform on the west side of the burn, where it is confined by steep banks and flows quite swiftly towards the loch (Illus 5.27). There are no obvious signs of a building but there are the remains of a stone dam and traces of a leat behind it, now totally silted up. It can be seen in section in the bank of the burn. This supposed mill showed up in the geophysical survey as an area of high resistance, with the leat represented by a linear spread of low resistance adjacent to it (Illus 5.28). It was probably similar to the 'Norse mills' documented in Lewis (MacLeod 2009).

45. HOUSE (?), PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 390 684)

Three sides of this possible rectangular house are traceable in the magnetic susceptibility survey of the flat area to the south-west of the mound at Cnoc Seannda, carried out by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford in 1994 (Illus 5.28). It appears to be about 20 by 12m



Illustration 5.27
Mill (?) on the Finlaggan River (no. 44G)

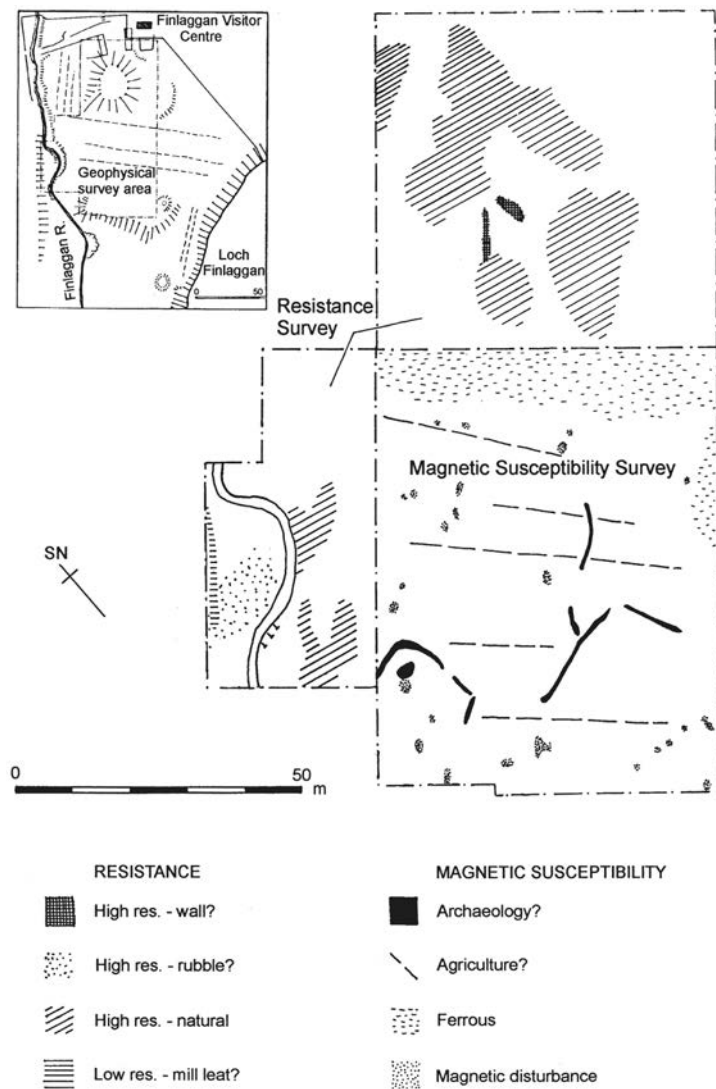


Illustration 5.28
Geophysical surveys around Cnoc Seannda undertaken in 1994 by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford (John Gater)



Illustration 5.29
Cnoc Seannnda mound from west

with a central hearth. The ferrous disturbance nearby is manifestly due to strands of wire from an old fence.

46. SETTLEMENT, CNOC SEANNDA, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 391 684)
The mound at Cnoc Seannda (next to the Finlaggan Visitor Centre) is a prominent local landmark. It appears as a regular hemispherical mount with a base diameter of about 50m and a height of over 6m above the adjacent ground (Illus 5.29, 5.30). Its name means 'oldish knoll' in Gaelic. Excavations on the mound undertaken in 1994 and 1995 (trenches 21 and 22) are described in Chapter 7.

Terraced into the north side of the mound and between it and the old road are the foundations of two type C long houses (A and B), oriented south-west/north-east and parallel to each other. Both appear to have been subdivided into three chambers. House A was about 18m in overall length with a width of 5.25m. House B was almost 20m long and 5.25m wide. The north end walls of

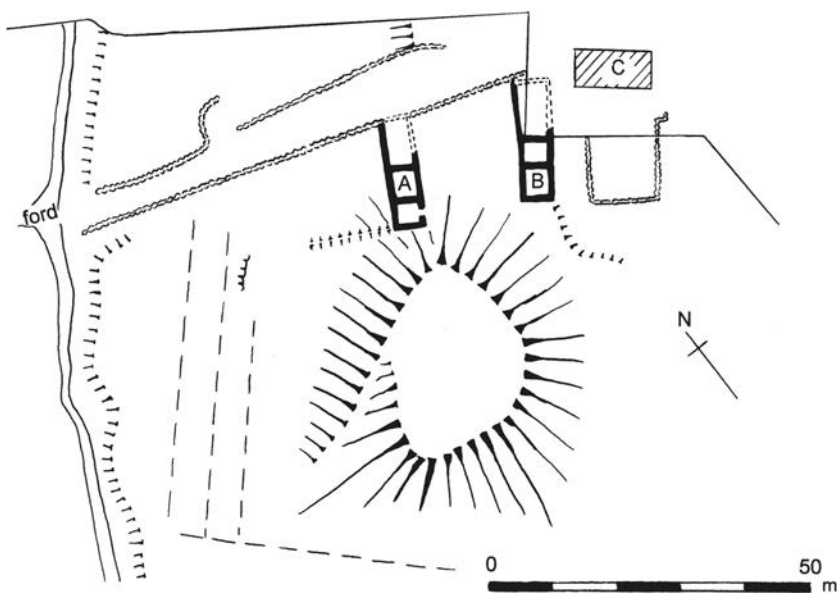


Illustration 5.30
Map of settlement remains at Cnoc Seannda (no. 46)

both houses bounded the old road, here a dirt track bordered by stone dykes, leading to a ford across the Finlaggan Burn and then southwards down the loch-side.

A third house (C), at right angles to B, has been rebuilt to serve as the Finlaggan Visitor Centre. It is shown as a roofed building at a sharp bend in the old road on the Ordnance Survey map of 1878 (there are no indications of houses A and B, presumably by then reduced to their foundations). The Finlaggan Visitor Centre was a derelict cottage until extensively restored and remodelled in the 1980s for use by the Finlaggan Trust. It had lime-mortared walls and a slate roof.

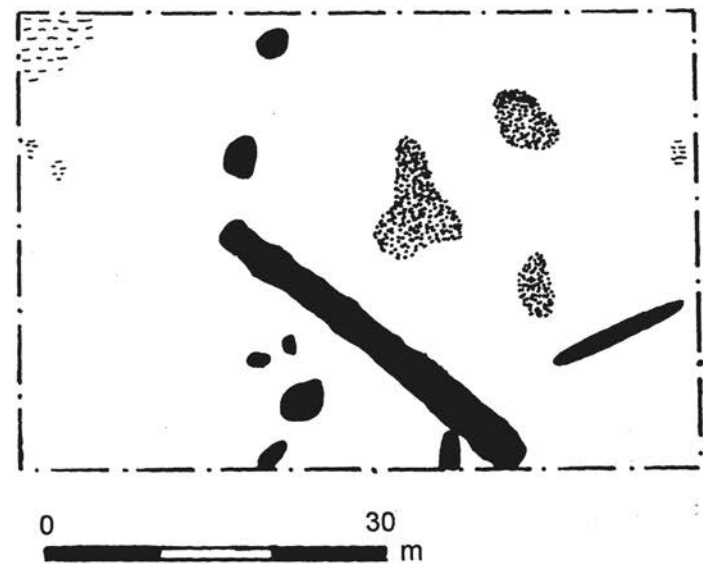
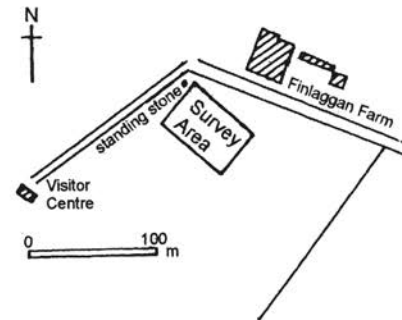


Illustration 5.31

Geophysical survey adjacent to standing stone at Finlaggan farmhouse, undertaken in 1994 by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford (John Gater)

SITES AND MONUMENTS

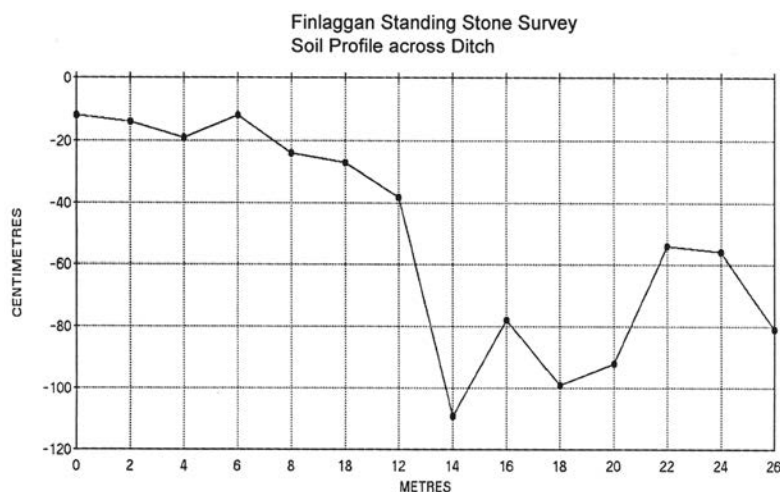


Illustration 5.32

Soil profile, made using an augur, across supposed ditch running NNW-SSE (see Illus 5.31)

47. STANDING STONES, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 392 685, NR 395 685)

The first stone, close to the Finlaggan farm-steading, is still upright, 2m in height and 1.4 by 0.7m at the base, aligned with its long axis north-west and south-east (RCAHMS 1984: no. 97). It has a plump outline and is of a rock type not found in the Finlaggan locality, best described as a metabasite (Illus 3.1). It exhibits signs of a planar fabric but still retains a massive almost knobbly appearance. It is this fabric that has allowed the stone to exhibit two large faces and correspondingly two thinner edge faces. It is probably a glacial erratic. It is presumably one of the 'two stones set up at the east side of Loch-Finlagan . . . six feet high' reported by Martin Martin in the late 17th century (Martin 1703: 243).

In 1994 Geophysical Surveys of Bradford undertook geophysical work around this stone. The survey area covered a rectangular area 40 by 60 sq m to the south and east of the stone (Illus 5.31). Magnetic susceptibility was measured and revealed strong anomalies, tentatively identified as either archaeological or geological. It was thought possible that a prominent linear feature running NNW-SSE might be a Palaeogene dyke. In order to throw more light on this a survey with an augur was undertaken across it, suggesting that this anomaly is in fact a ditch, presumably artificial (Illus 5.32).

The second standing stone reported by Martin Martin may have been one of the two large recumbent boulders lying on a slope at the corner of a field a few metres to the east of the Finlaggan farm-steading (Illus 5.33). These boulders have been scheduled as an ancient monument, apparently being considered to be a broken monolith. They are, however, of two different rock types, one metabasite, the other Port Askaig tillite. The former is 1.85 by 1.09 by 0.6m, the latter 2.0 by 1.0 by 0.6m.

48. SETTLEMENT, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 395 683)

Adjacent to the Finlaggan Road and leat for the Mulreesh mill-pond are the vestigial traces of a settlement of two or more type C houses and a kiln. The houses are represented by grass-covered foundations, but there are several large blocks and boulders strewn



Illustration 5.33

Two large recumbent boulders near Finlaggan farmhouse, supposed to have been standing (no. 47)

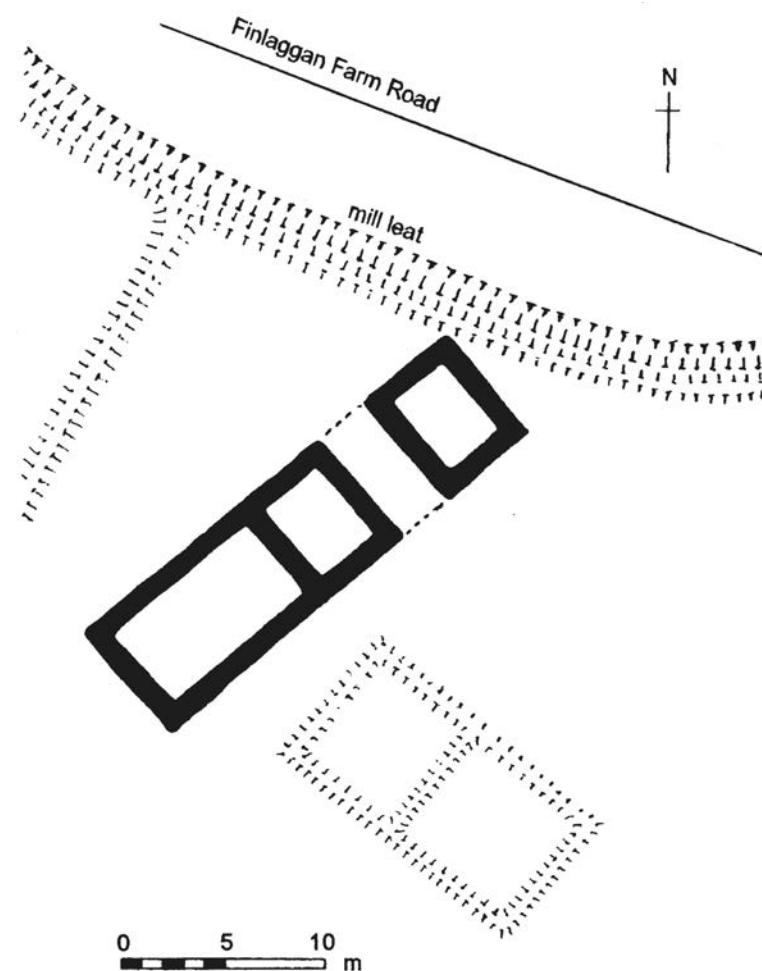


Illustration 5.34

Plan of settlement no. 48, Portanellan

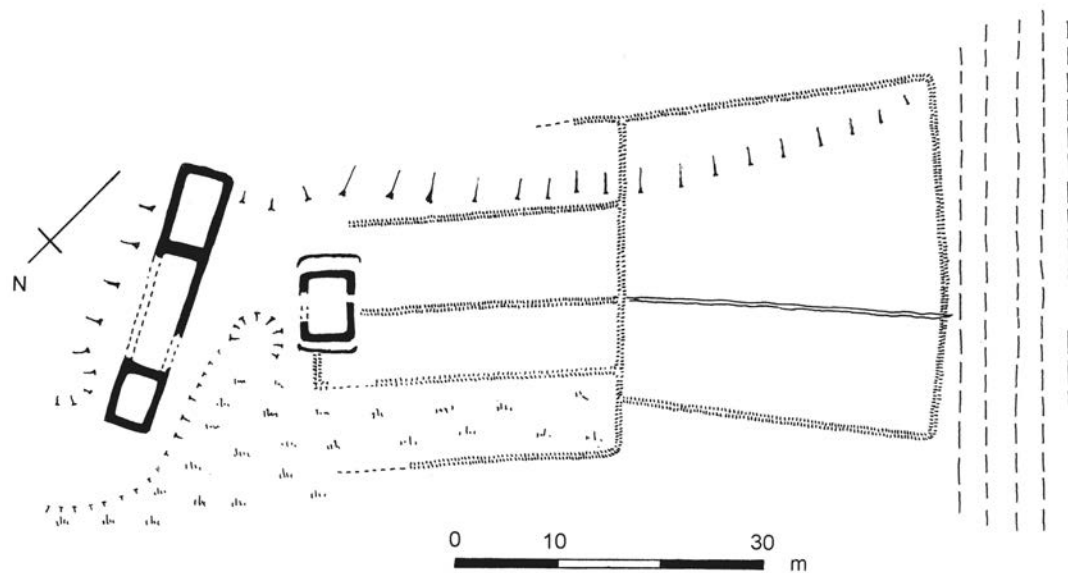


Illustration 5.35
Plan of settlement no. 48a, Portanellan

about that presumably once formed their walls (Illus 5.34). One house of two chambers is 15.6 by 8.7m. At right angles to it is a range, possibly all one house of four rooms, with an overall length of 23.3m and width of 6.4m. The kiln is several metres away, at NGR NR 3967 6828, constructed in the side of a small hillock. There are traces of a flue running southwards. The kiln itself is totally denuded of stonework, and the hole formed by its 2.2m diameter chamber has been backfilled with mine tailings. It was probably for corn-drying.

48A. SETTLEMENT, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 400 681)

Two type C houses and a garden on the west side of the Mulreesh road just to the south of the turn-off for Finlaggan. The houses are reduced to grass-covered foundations of turf and stone (Illus 5.35). One, with three chambers, is 26.4 by 5.4m overall; the

other is about 7 by 5m, with opposed entrances and the end wall of an earlier structure adjacent to one of its end walls. Between the two is a circular cut in the edge of a low bank, possibly the remains of a kiln.

49. HUTS, CUING-SGEIR, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 391 680)
A low occupation mound, about 9.5 by 8.5m, by the loch's edge. At least two small oval huts, side by side, can be traced on its top.

50. BURNT MOUND (?), CUING-SGEIR, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 390 680)

The spreading grass-covered remains of a circular structure, possibly a burnt mound, about 9m in diameter overall, situated on the edge of the loch. There is a hollow in the centre running down towards the water (Illus 5.36).

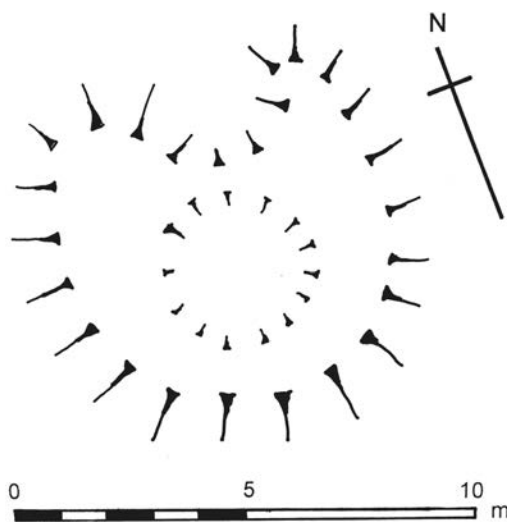


Illustration 5.36
Plan of structure no. 50, Portanellan

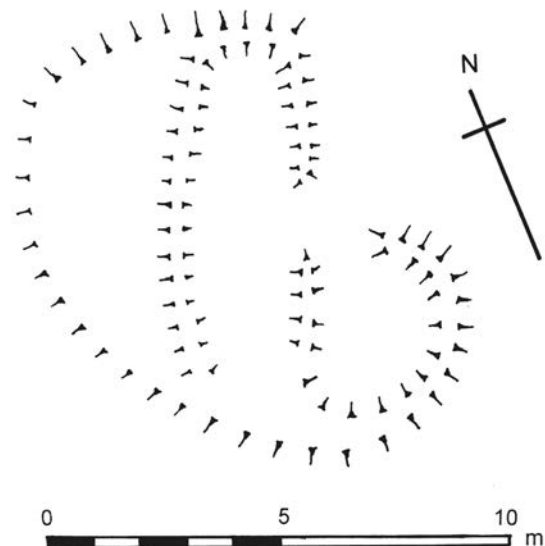


Illustration 5.37
Plan of settlement mound no. 51, Portanellan

SITES AND MONUMENTS

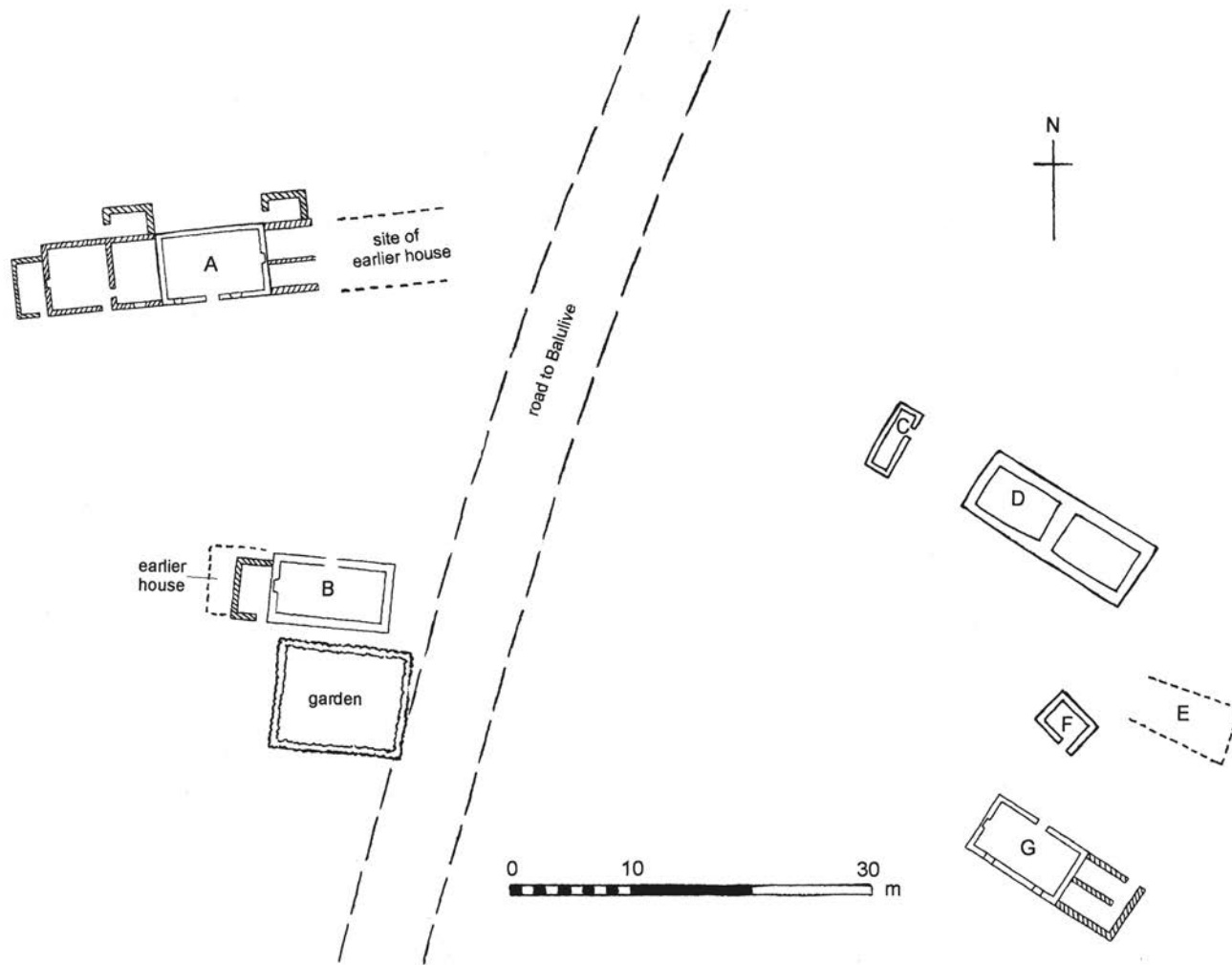


Illustration 5.38
Map of settlement at North Mulreesh (no. 53)

51. HOUSE, CUING-SGEIR, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 392 680)
A low mound, about 10m in diameter within an area of rigs (see no. 18), representing the collapsed remains of more than one superimposed house. On top can be traced the outlines of a type A barrel-shaped house, about 8.5 by 3.5m. A curving stretch of turf bank on the east side of it probably represents the remains of an earlier house (Illus 5.37).

52. HOUSE, CUING-SGEIR, PORTANELLAN (NGR NR 390 679)
The turf-covered boulder foundations of a rectangular type C house on a low headland, about 10 by 5.3m overall, end on to the loch.

53. SETTLEMENT, (NORTH) MULREESH (NGR NR 402 688)
This group of houses is here described as North Mulreesh to distinguish it from another cluster further south. The adjectives north and south do not appear on maps or in documentary sources. For other houses at Mulreesh see the description of the Mulreesh lead mine (no. 5) in Chapter 4.

There are the remains of seven houses at North Mulreesh, of which at least four are substantial type D houses, three with walls largely upstanding. The group is cut by the road to Balulive Farm, houses A and B to the west of it, and houses C–G to the east (Illus 5.38).



Illustration 5.39
North Mulreesh (no. 53), house A



Illustration 5.40
North Mulreesh (no. 53), remains of iron stove in house A

House A is of locally quarried stone set in lime mortar in rough courses, with limited use of bricks around the window openings. The walls of the main part of the house are largely upstanding (Illus 5.39). The core is a small rectangular unit, about 9 by 6m overall with walls about 0.7m thick, with traces of external lime-based render. There are two windows, one on either side of the doorway positioned in the middle of the long south wall. There are the remains of a cast-iron chimneypiece in the east gable (Illus 5.40). An animal house, divided into two stalls, has been added to the east. The use of cement-based mortar and render in it indicates relatively recent construction. It has an outshot against its north wall.

A second cottage of similar size has been added to the west gable. It has a stone partition wall dividing the interior into two rooms, the larger one to the west with a fireplace in its gable wall. It also has an outshot at the back and another outhouse at its west end.

House B is a single cottage, 10 by 5.7m, and of similar construction to house A. No traces of windows survive, but there is a fireplace in the west gable and a scarcement in the wall above at ceiling height. An outhouse has been added to the west, and there is a small garden to the south, contained within a drystone wall.

Across the road, house G is the only other substantial house with its walls partially upstanding (Illus 5.41). The RAF aerial photography survey of 1947 shows that this house was still roofed at that time, with corrugated iron. Its walls are of quarried blocks of stone set in lime mortar. In overall size it is 8.9 by 5.4m, with a fireplace in its west gable wall. The entrance is in the middle of the north wall and there are two windows to the south. An animal house, divided into two stalls, has been added to the east end.

House F is a small outhouse a few metres to the north, with lime-mortared walls of quarried material and field stones. It probably belongs with house G. To the north-east of it stretch the grassed-over foundations of an earlier house (E). House D is also reduced to grass-covered foundations but can be distinguished as a long house, about 15.4 by 5.9m, divided into two chambers. Its walls were lime mortared. To the west of it are the foundations of house C, a small rectangular outhouse.



Illustration 5.41
North Mulreesh (no. 53), house G

Houses A, B, D and G seem to be represented on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map of 1897. Houses D and G appear on the 1st edition map of 1878, but there, instead of house A, is a longer structure extending east to the edge of the road to Balulive. Tenuous traces of it can be detected to the east of house A. House B may also be represented on this map, or perhaps an earlier house on the same site, the west end of which can still be traced adjacent to the outhouse. The four houses on the 1st edition map can be matched by four on the early 19th-century plans by Gemmill, which show North Mulreesh as a tightly grouped settlement of nine houses and outbuildings, with a road running through them and arable fields all around. One of the other houses represented by Gemmill may be house C. House E may already have been flattened by the early 19th century.

54. SETTLEMENT, (SOUTH) MULREESH (NGR NR 402 685)

There are the grass-covered foundations of five type C houses (H, I, J, K, L), all of which, apart from house K, appear to be represented on Gemmill's plans of the early 19th century (Illus 5.42, 5.43); only part of house J was not abandoned by 1878. They are situated at the bottom of a steep slope. House I has all but been removed or buried by the banks of the ditch draining water from an adit further up the slope. The ditch has also removed the track that ascended the hill obliquely, running between houses H and J to join with the old road from Portanellan to Persabus.

The ruins of house H may represent two phases, a smaller rectangular house overlying an earlier longer house. On higher ground nearby to the east are the remains of a small circular kiln. House J is also multi-phase, subdivided into four main rooms. The room second to the west, with a smaller subdivision in it, has walls of small quarried stones, and represents a rebuilding or later house which superseded an earlier one with walls including large blocks and boulders. A large stone at the base of the east end of building J has within it a sectioned shot-hole (3cm in diameter). House L is a simple rectangular ruin. House K may also have two phases, a smaller house perhaps replacing a longer one. There is now no trace of another ruined house shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map beside the old road to the south of house J. All trace of it may have been removed by the digging of a ditch draining from an adit of the lead mine.

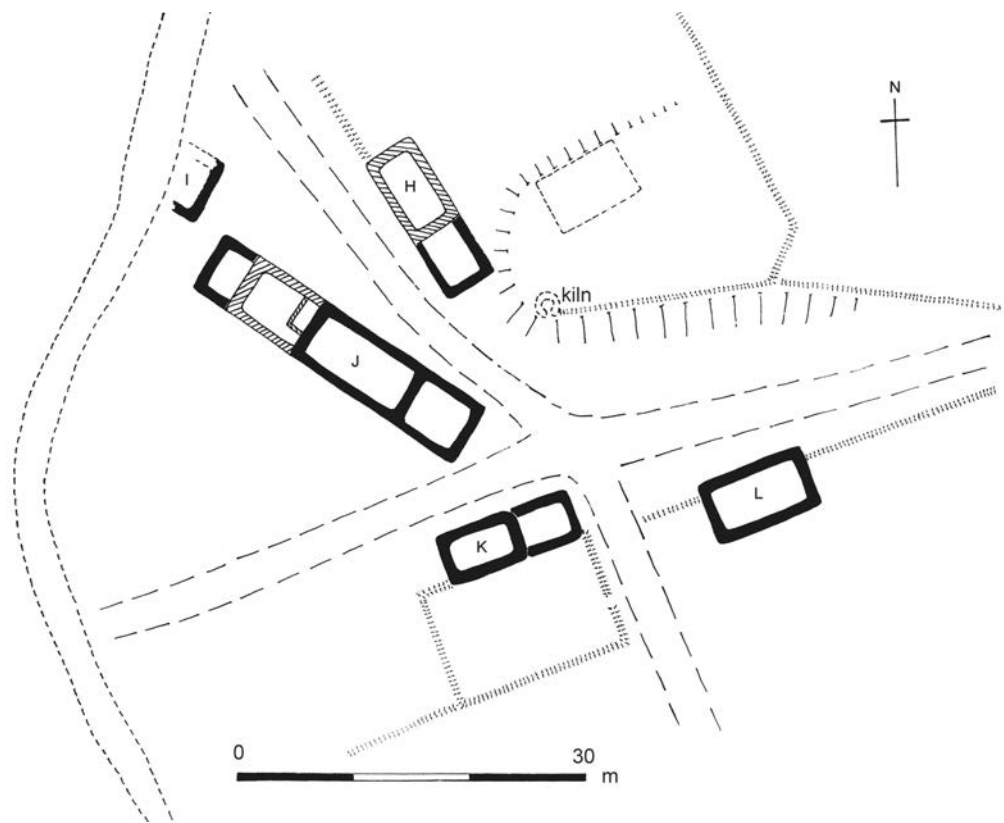


Illustration 5.42
Map of settlement at South Mulreesh (no. 54)



Illustration 5.43
South Mulreesh (no. 54), looking east. The figure is standing between houses H and J

FINLAGGAN

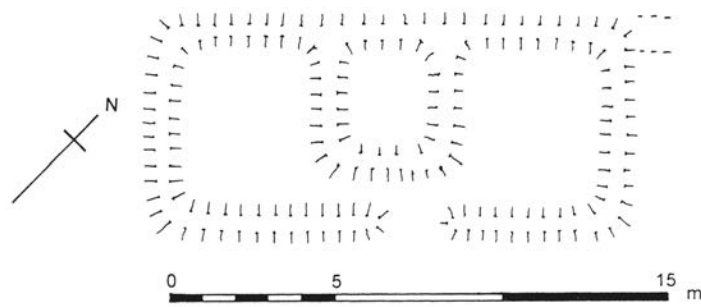


Illustration 5.44
House no. 55 at Mulreesh

55. HOUSE, MULREESH (NGR NR 405 686)

The turf-covered stone foundations of a type C rectangular house beside the old road from Mulreesh to Persabus, just to the west of the ford on the Allt an Tairbh and the settlement of Laoigan (Illus 5.44). The house is almost 15 by 7m, with an entrance in the middle of one long side giving on to a small lobby in front of a mid-chamber. The house is not shown on the early 19th-century farm map or later Ordnance Survey maps.

56. SETTLEMENT, ROBOLLS (NGR NR 396 668)

The ruins of a settlement with evidence for as many as seven houses, adjacent to the grounds of the Ballygrant Inn, formerly known as Robolls House. The three (A, B, F) of which there are any

significant remains are type D structures (Illus 5.45). The best-preserved ruin, house A, is on low boggy ground beside a small stream and the old road which terraces Robolls Hill in the direction of Finlaggan. The other houses are on higher rocky ground, mostly unsuitable for agriculture. House A is shown as complete on the 1878 Ordnance Survey map. House B is depicted as a ruin and none of the other buildings are represented.

House A is reduced to one or two courses of stonework and heaps of rubble. It was constructed of quarried stone held in lime mortar and measures 14.25 by 5.5m overall. It was possibly a pair of semi-detached cottages. House B, of similar construction, and also reduced to its bottom courses, is built with one gable end cut into the adjacent higher ground. It has opposed entrances in its long sides, one blocked up. The adjacent house C is now only represented by a cut in the rock, as is house E on higher ground to the south. The remains of house D with its attached garden are vestigial. House F, a structure with at least two rooms, is partially represented by the trenches dug to rob out its foundations. It was constructed of quarried blocks of stone, mostly limestone, in a lime mortar. There are the tenuous traces of another house to the east, on the other side of a track running through the site.

Robolls House is an unpretentious mid-19th-century house of two stories (Illus 5.46). The main block is of three bays with an extension at the back forming a T-shape overall, much altered and extended through conversion to use as an inn. There is a separate stable, much altered, with space for horses and a carriage, and accommodation for a stable-boy.

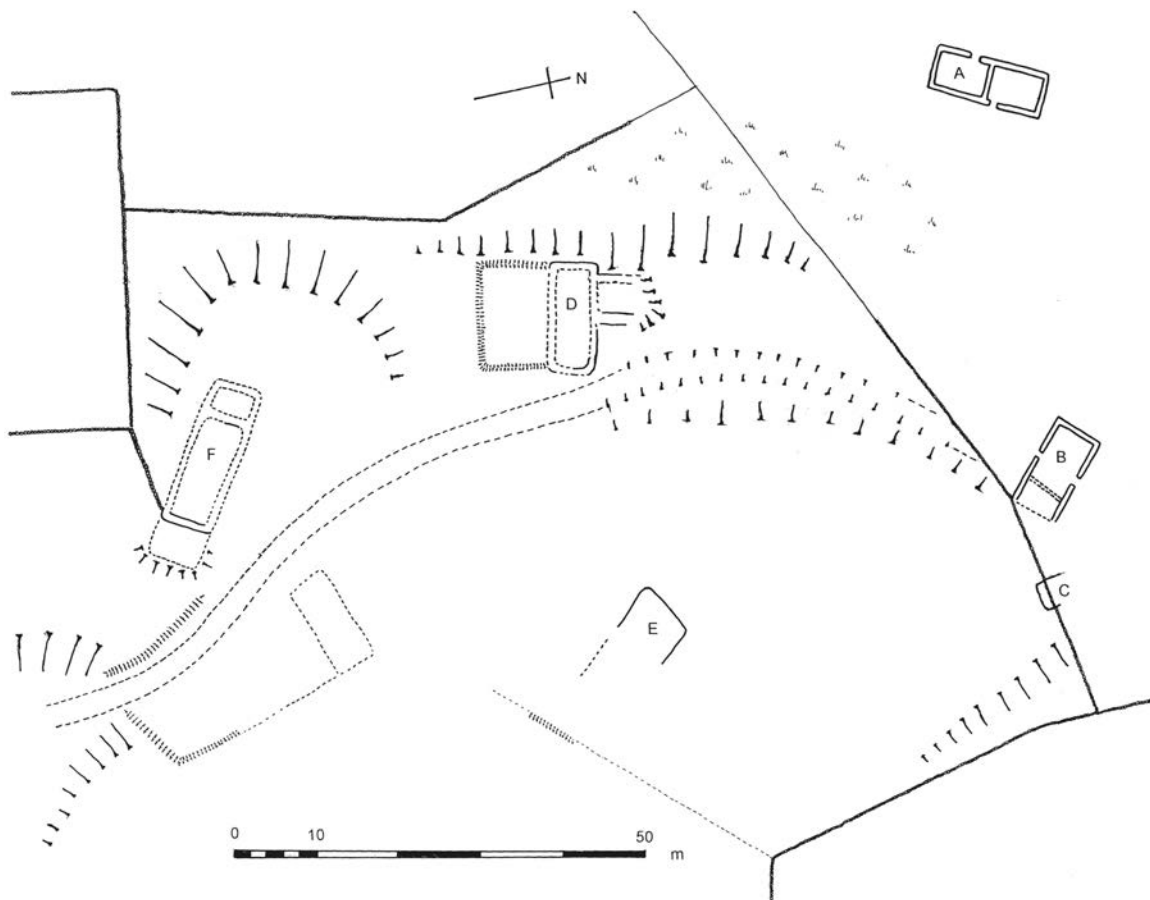


Illustration 5.45
Map of settlement at Robolls (no. 56)

SITES AND MONUMENTS



Illustration 5.46
Robolls House (the Ballygrant Inn)

57. HOUSE, AN TÀMHANACHD, ROBOLLS (NGR NR 390 678)
The slumped turf remains of a type A oval house, about 11 by 8m overall, near the edge of the loch (Illus 5.47).

58. HOUSE, AN TÀMHANACHD, ROBOLLS (NGR NR 389 675)
The slumped turf walls of a type A house, about 12m long, sited just below a bank beside a level area of rigs. Its width, at least 4.5m, is obscured by soil creep from the adjacent bank.

59. KILN, AN TÀMHANACHD, ROBOLLS (NGR NR 390 673)
The ruins of a small circular kiln, cut in the side of a slope, with an overall diameter of about 4m and an internal diameter of about 2.2m. The lintel for its flue or rake-hole is still in place, facing WNW.

60. HOUSE, AN TÀMHANACHD, ROBOLLS (NGR NR 392 673)
The turf-covered stone foundations of a type C rectangular house, 9 by 9.25m overall. It is positioned on the head dyke.

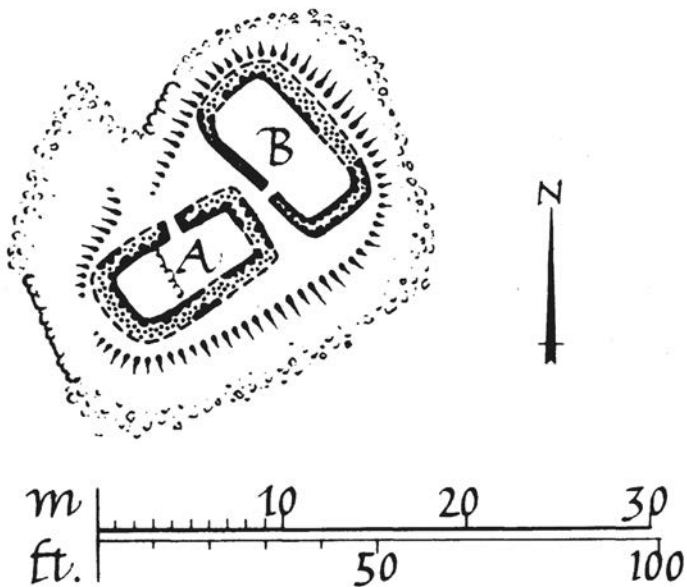


Illustration 5.48
Plan of island settlement no. 61 on Eilean Mhuireill (© Crown Copyright: HES)

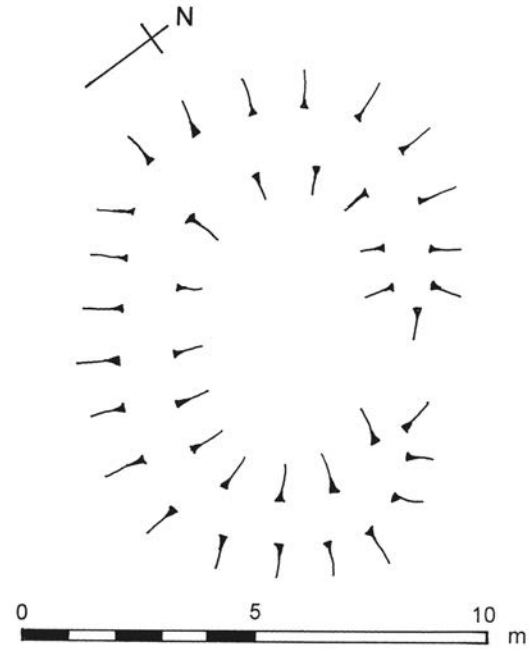


Illustration 5.47
House no. 57 at An Tàmhanachd, Robolls

61. ISLAND DWELLING, EILEAN MHUIREILL, ROBOLLS (NGR NR 386 673)

This is a small, probably artificial, island near the south-east shore of Loch Finlaggan, within sight of Eilean Mór and Eilean na Comhairle (Illus 5.48, 5.49). It measures about 23 by 19m. There are traces of a stone revetment around its edge, and at the north-west a boat inlet, on the side away from the nearer loch-side. The water between the island and the shore is too deep for a causeway. The foundations of two rectangular drystone buildings with rounded corners, placed at right angles to each other, take up most of the summit area. Structure A is almost 10 by 5m overall, and probably had opposed entrances in its long sides. A supposed kerb running across its interior may be the remains of an earlier, underlying, structure. House B is about 10 by 6m overall (RCAHMS 1984: no. 305; Holley 2000: 209–10).



Illustration 5.49
Eilean Mhuireill (no. 61)



Illustration 5.50

Bronze figure of Christ from a medieval crucifix (SF 25128–29), found on the loch bottom near Eilean Mhuireill (© National Museums Scotland)

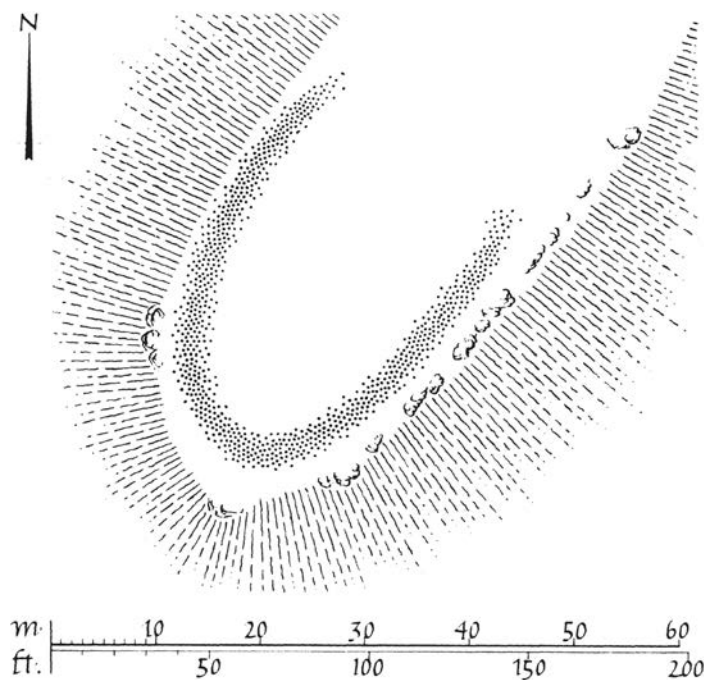


Illustration 5.51

Fort of Dùn Cheapasaidh Mór (no. 69). Survey drawing by RCAHMS in 1976 (© Crown Copyright: HES)

A bronze image of the crucified Christ (Illus 5.50), recovered from near the island, is dealt with in Chapter C4 of the Catalogue.

62. ENCLOSURE, AN TÀMHANACHD, ROBOLLS (NGR NR 388 672)
On a small grassy knoll, a small sub-circular enclosure defined by a low grassy bank, 11.5 by 10m overall.

63. HOUSE, ROBOLLS (NGR NR 389 663)
A 'hut circle' situated on a platform below the crest of a rise, with adjacent system of rigs, probably of much later date. They are about 4.5m wide and run from north-east to south-west. The hut circle is overall 12.9 by 11.9m, with walls from 1.2 to 1.5m thick. These consist of a low bank in which are embedded orthostatic slabs and boulders forming an inner and an outer ring. They are mostly dolerite and limestone with a few phyllites and quartzites, and are typically about 0.5m in length. The entrance faces ESE.

64. HUT, ROBOLLS (NGR NR 388 669)
The collapsed turf remains of an oval hut, about 6.25 by 5.4m. It is sited on a shoulder overlooking the loch.

65. KILN, KEPOLLSMORE (NGR NR 387 667)
The turf-covered ruins of a small circular kiln, probably for drying grain. It is set in the side of a bank, its flue facing west. Its walls are of quarried limestone blocks.

66. HOUSE, KEPOLLSMORE (NGR NR 382 666)
A small square building about 3m across internally is built into the back of a small limestone knoll with its back wall formed by the rock face. Only its foundations survive. This perhaps represents, along with other nearby walls, one end of a long house about 18m long. The hillock is traversed by a mine rake trending north-south.



Illustration 5.52

Recumbent standing stone (no. 70) at south end of Loch Finlaggan

SITES AND MONUMENTS

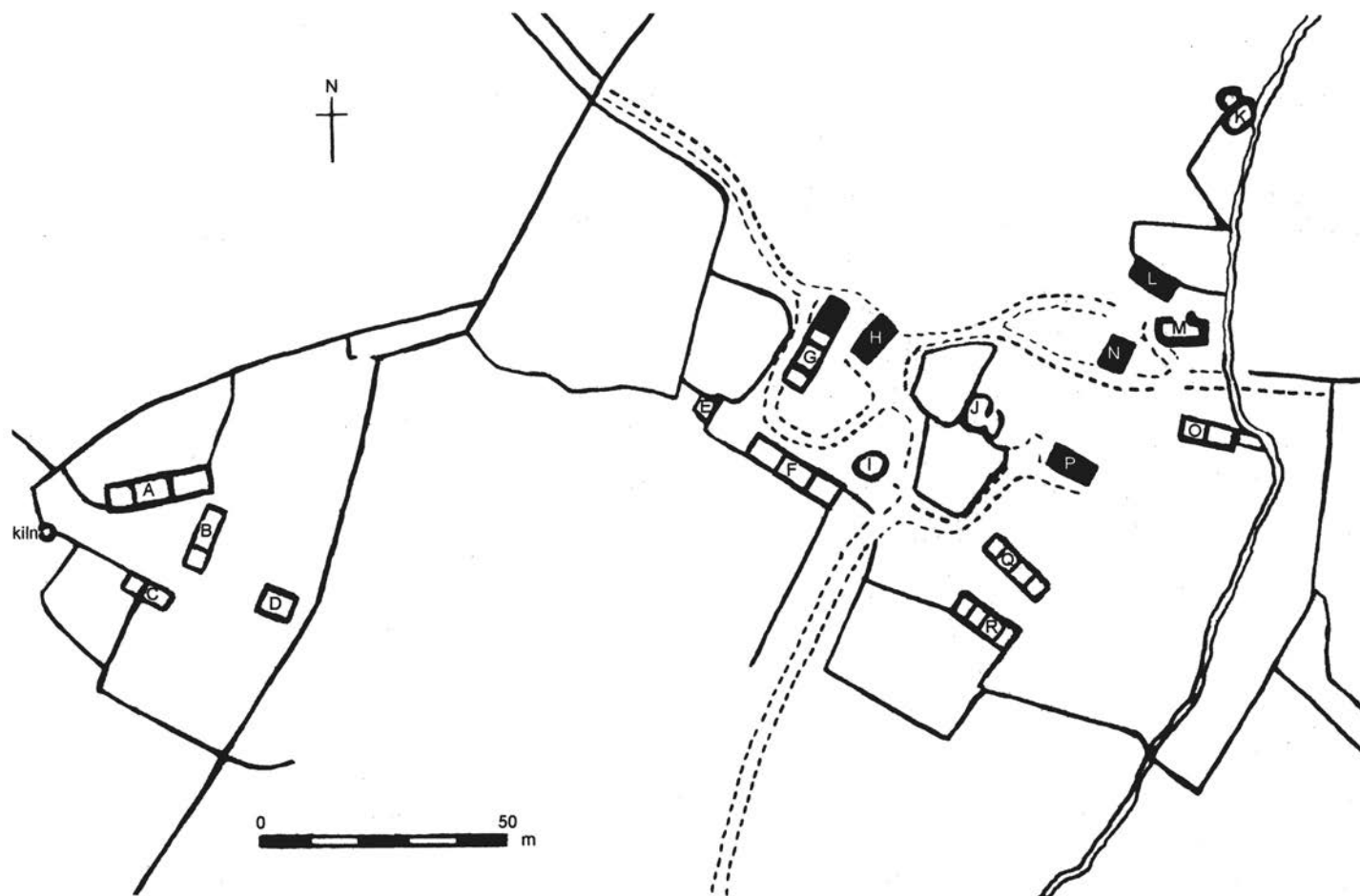


Illustration 5.53

Map of settlement at (East and West) Kepollsmore in 1878, based on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map.
Houses shown solid had roofs on them; the rest were unroofed

67. KILN, KEPOLLSMORE (NGR NR 384 666)

The ruins of a small kiln, diameter 5.9m, set in the side of a bank, its opening facing north-west.

68. KILN, KEPOLLSMORE (NGR NR 381 662)

The well-preserved remains of a small circular kiln, diameter 4.5m. Its walls are of quarried blocks of limestone and boulders, and there are traces of a flue extending southwards. It probably served for drying grain.

69. FORT, DÙN CHEAPASAI DH MÓR, KEPOLLSMORE (NGR NR 386 665)

The site is a flat-topped oval summit on the south-west flank of Robolls Hill (Illus 5.51). The ground falls away steeply on all sides except the north-east. There are tenuous remains of a stone rampart, with no sign of any facing blocks in situ, set back from the summit edge (RCAHMS 1984: no. 146). The probable continuation of this defence across the north-east is obscured by the remains of a later turf-walled structure. The internal area of the fort is about 48 by 44m.

70. STANDING STONE, KEPOLLSMORE (NGR NR 379 666)

The stone (RCAHMS 1984: no. 105) apparently toppled sometime in the earlier part of the 20th century. When erect, it would

have been in sight of the standing stone (no. 47) adjacent to Finlaggan Farm at the other end of the loch. It is 2.4m in length, 1.5m in breadth and 0.5m in average thickness. It originally stood about 1.8m in height. The rock is a metabasite of similar type to the Finlaggan Farm stone (Illus 5.52).

71. SETTLEMENT, (WEST) KEPOLLSMORE (NGR NR 381 661)

The joint tenancy farm or township of Kepollsmore was typically divided into two clusters, labelled by us as east and west. The west cluster is shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1878 as totally abandoned. It consisted of four buildings, possibly all of type C, and yards on a rising piece of ground (Illus 5.53, 5.54). The walls are now all grass covered with no traces of mortar and may largely be of boulders. The largest house (A) is divided into three rooms and has an overall size of 22 by 6.2m. House B, with three rooms, is 14.8 by 5.5m. House D is unicameral, 7.8 by 6m, and is tucked in between a rock face and the edge of the escarpment. House C has two rooms and an overall size of 12.3 by 5.9m. The enclosure beside it is identified as a sheepfold on the Ordnance Survey map. The kiln lies a few metres to the west of house A, at the end of a rock face. It is small and circular, 4.1m in diameter overall, with its entrance facing north-west. The stones forming the walls of the chamber are cracked and reddened by fire, suggesting it was used for burning lime.

72. SETTLEMENT, (EAST) KEPOLLSMORE (NGR NR 383 681)

The east cluster is separated from West Kepollsmore by about 70m. Most of the houses and yards of the larger east cluster, shown as partially occupied on the Ordnance Survey map of 1878, have now been swept away by the present-day working farm of Kepollsmore (erroneously marked as Kepolls on the OS 1:25000 map). The Kepollsmore farmhouse appears to be an improved and extended development from house P, and portions of other pre-1878 buildings, particularly G, H, N and O, may be incorporated in other structures still in use (Illus 5.53). The 1878 map indicates that four buildings – H, P, N and L – were then roofed, and part of G. Rentals of Islay Estate in the Mitchell Library, Glasgow, list the number of tenants at Kepollsmore at this period dropping from five to four. These buildings can be identified as their houses.

Most of the east cluster is strung out to the west of a small burn that flows southwards to join the Ballygrant Burn. House P (the present farmhouse) and Q and R are on an oval flat-topped summit. Along with structures G, H, F, L, N and O, these appear to have been substantial houses. Building F may have been even bigger than indicated, extending to join up with E. It is possible that structure O, at a bend in the burn, could have contained a small mill. It is not clear whether all the structures labelled as I, J, K and M were ruined houses or small enclosures.

73. BURIAL GROUND, KEPOLLSMORE (NGR NR 381 658)

This alleged burial ground is marked on Ordnance Survey maps, but there is no trace of it on the ground.

74. BURNT MOUND, KEPOLLSMORE (NGR NR 385 668)

This is situated beside a burn on a level piece of ground below the crest of a hill overlooking Loch Finlaggan. It appears as a low circular mound with a diameter of about 9m. There is a hollow in the centre running down towards the burn. Where the turf surface has been trampled away by animals it can be seen to be composed of fragments of shattered, fire-reddened stones.

75. SETTLEMENT, KEPOLLS, KEPOLLSMORE (NGR NR 373 653)

Remains of houses that might represent a settlement of Kepolls(beg) of earlier date than the present Kepolls farm-stead at NGR NR 377 655, 300m to the east. About 100m behind a restored occupied 19th-century cottage, the grass-covered foundations of a small house are mostly obscured by dense gorse. The remains of another house and yard, just 50m to the north-east of the occupied house, are presently lost to the gorse.

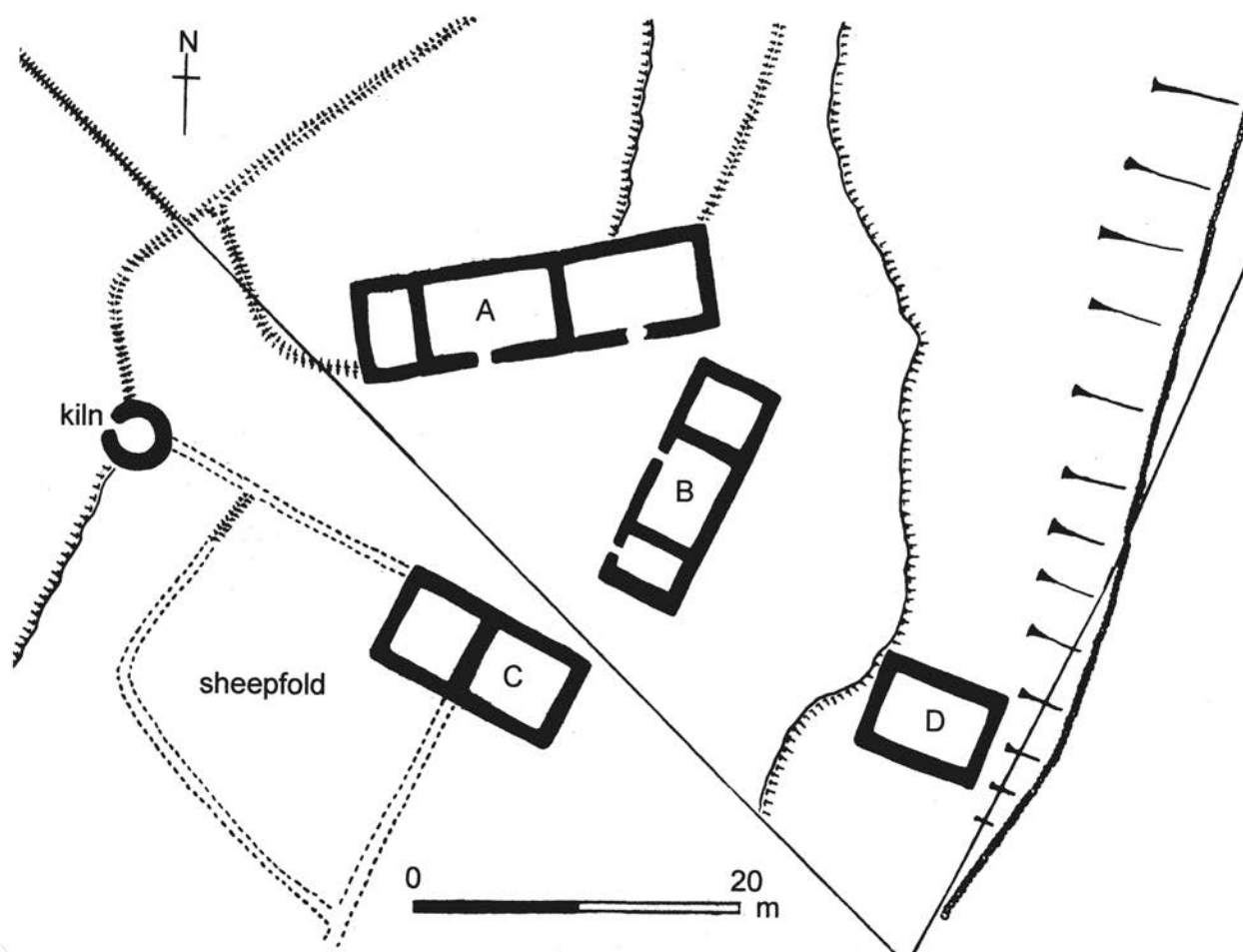


Illustration 5.54
Map of settlement remains of West Kepollsmore (no. 71)