

DUN MHUIRICH, NORTH KNAPDALE

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES PROJECT

EXCAVATION DATA STRUCTURE REPORT



July 2012
Roderick Regan

Kilmartin House Museum
Argyll, PA31 8RQ
Tel: 01546 510 278
museum@kilmartin.org
Scottish Charity SC022744

Summary

The excavation and survey of Dun Mhuirich has revealed a complex, well preserved site. The site likely originates in the Iron Age or possibly the early historic period although little beyond the structural evidence was uncovered for this period. The excavation did however produce occupation evidence from the 13th to the 17th centuries, suggesting either continuous occupation or periodic use of the site between these dates. The longevity of occupation is reflected within the structural development of the site, with perhaps major reconstruction and modifications over time to the buildings and walls of the dun. The archaeological deposits within and around the structures are also well preserved, which will not only allow the understanding and interpretation of the structural sequence but, because bone survives well, will also allow the examination of diet, animal husbandry and the surrounding environment and how this may have developed from the medieval to the late medieval period. The presence of pottery within an enclosed site with several associated structures suggests a habitation of some status that was likely associated with one of the notable families present in Knapdale from the medieval period, postulated here to be the MacNeils of Tainish. Potentially rich in artefacts and ecofacts, any future work at the site will afford a unique opportunity to understand their development and use in medieval Argyll and its cultural resonance with other sites in western Scotland, the Hebrides and Northern Ireland.

Acknowledgements

Kilmartin House Museum and the Connected Communities Project would like to thank the owners of the Tayvallich Estate for allowing the excavation on their land and to Alex Brockie of the estate management team for help in organizing the dig. Thanks must also go to the staff of Historic Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage for help in gaining the necessary permissions to excavate on a scheduled site which also lay within an SSSI. Thanks also go to all those who participated in the dig, including Mary Ann and Andy Buinton who as usual were also on hand when it came to backfilling. Again thanks to Sheila Clark who has ploughed through my text, graciously pointing out the many errors.

Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 The Project Circumstances	1
2. Site Background	2
2.1 Location and Topography	2
3. Site Survey	4
4. Excavation Results	6
5. Artefacts	22
6. Discussion	24
7. References	28
Appendix 1: Context Descriptions	29
Appendix 2: Context List	45
Appendix 3: Finds List	47
Appendix 4: Graphic List	48
Appendix 5: Sample List	49
Appendix 6: Photographic List	49
Appendix 7: Previous Archaeological Work	58
Appendix 8: DES Entry	67
Appendix 9: Post Excavation Costs	69

1. Introduction

1.1 The Project Circumstances

This Data Structure Report has been prepared by Kilmartin House Museum with respect to the archaeological investigation at the scheduled site of Dun Mhuirich in North Knapdale, Argyll. The excavation is part of Connected Communities: Community Archaeology in Argyll and Ulster Project. This is a collaborative initiative led by the University of Ulster, in partnership with Kilmartin House Museum, Historic Scotland, Queen's University, Glasgow University and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, that seeks to explore the cultural connections from Ulster, the Hebrides and Argyll in the Medieval and late Medieval period. The aims of the overall project and the specific aims of this phase of excavation work are outlined in the Project Design (Regan 2012). Archaeologists from Kilmartin House Museum, Queens University Belfast and Ulster University led a team of students and local volunteers during the work that took place between and 4th and 17th June 2012. The site Code used was DMH 12. Permission to carry out a survey and excavation of the site was kindly granted by the owners and the work was funded by the Connected Communities Project with support from the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent was granted for the work by Historic Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage permitted the project to go ahead as the site lay within an area of Site of Special Scientific Interest.



Fig. 1: Argyll

2. Site Background

2.1 Location and Topography

The site lies within North Knapdale Parish, Argyll and is situated on the western shore of Linne Mhuirich (centred NR 7228 8441, Figures 2 & 3). This is an inlet of Loch Sween that separates this promontory of Keills from that of Taynish to the east. The B8025 road that runs between Tayvallich and Keills passes the site some 100m to the west.

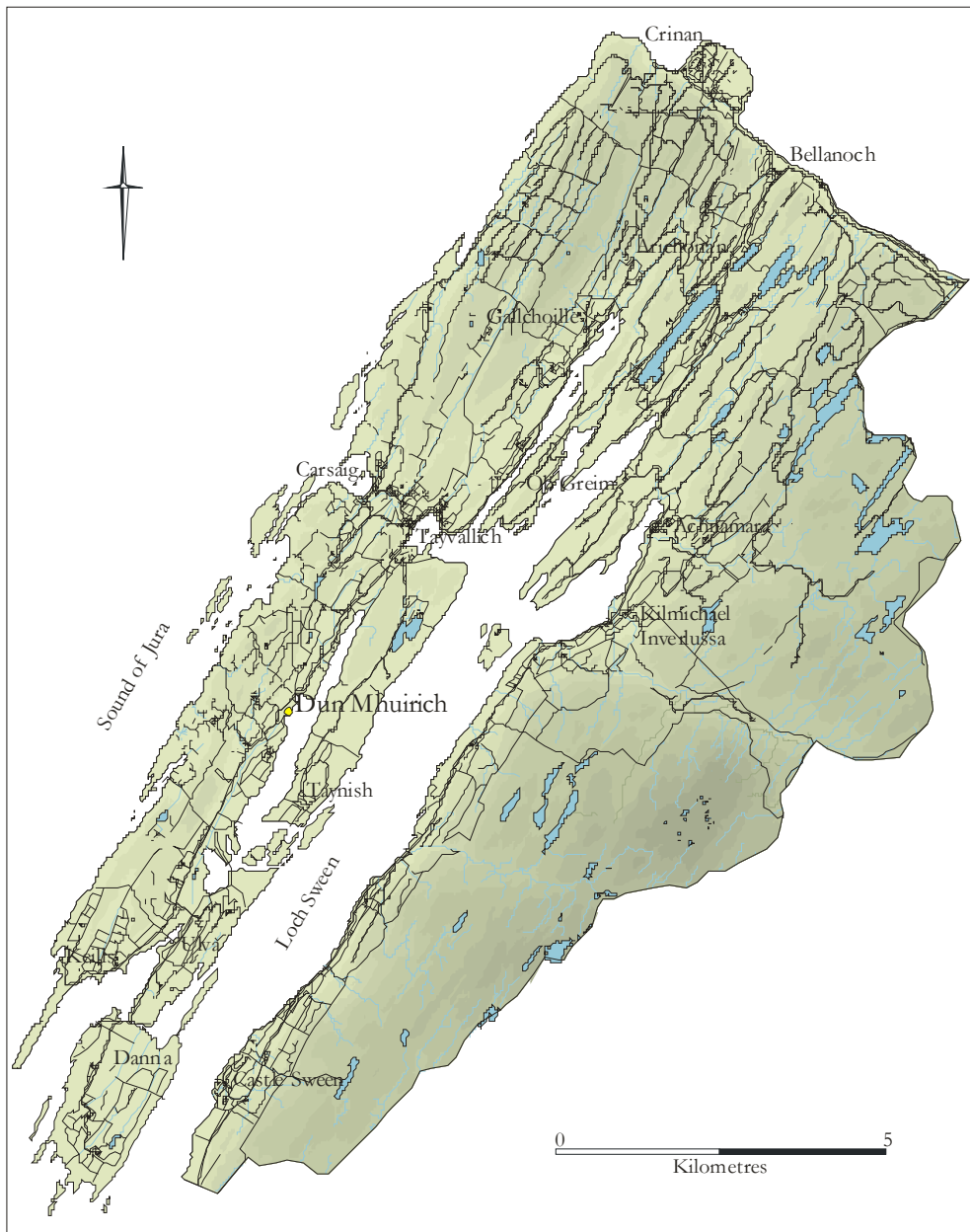


Figure 2: North Knapdale



Figure 3: Dun Mhuirich

The site is located on an undulating terrace that gradually slopes up from sea level at the north culminating in steep, near vertical sides at its southern end. The underlying geology consists of limestone bedrock with glacial till between the undulating bedrock outcrops. The vegetation cover principally consists of bracken and blackthorn scrub, with a few more mature trees growing within the site. The site was described by Christieson in 1904 (Christieson 1904) and more comprehensively surveyed by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, this work published in their Inventory of Argyll in Volume 6 (RCHAMS 1988). Both these descriptions are reproduced below in Appendix 7. The site was scheduled in 1955.



Figure 4: Trench Location

3. Site Survey

A topographic survey was undertaken on the site prior to the excavation and while the description of the site by the RCHAMS for the most part still holds several other features perhaps deserve mention. Lying between the foreshore wall and the base of the steep escarpment on which the upper enclosure sits is a heaped pile of stone, which likely derives from the upper enclosure wall. The heaped nature of the stones suggests this was unlikely the result of natural degradation and may have derived from the robbing of the upper walls, the stone intended to be carted or shipped off. The mass of stone in this area might also mask earlier structures, and what might be wall alignments can be discerned amongst the rubble. This area needs to be more thoroughly investigated, possibly when the undergrowth has died back. Below the upper enclosure and built into/from the rubble are two areas of rudimentary revetting, at the W of the upper enclosure entrance and below the W side. It is likely

both these were built to give easier access to the upper enclosure and are likely of late date. Also of recent date are a small cairn built over the N wall of the upper enclosure and a small twinning pen built against and natural outcrop within the lower enclosure, this having been roofed with a corrugated iron sheet.

4. Excavation Results

As proposed in the Project Design, eight trenches were excavated. (Trenches 1-8, Figure 4) and vegetation was cleared over some features to clarify their nature. Full context descriptions appear in Appendix 1 below and a full list of these appears in Appendix 2.

4.1 Trench 1.

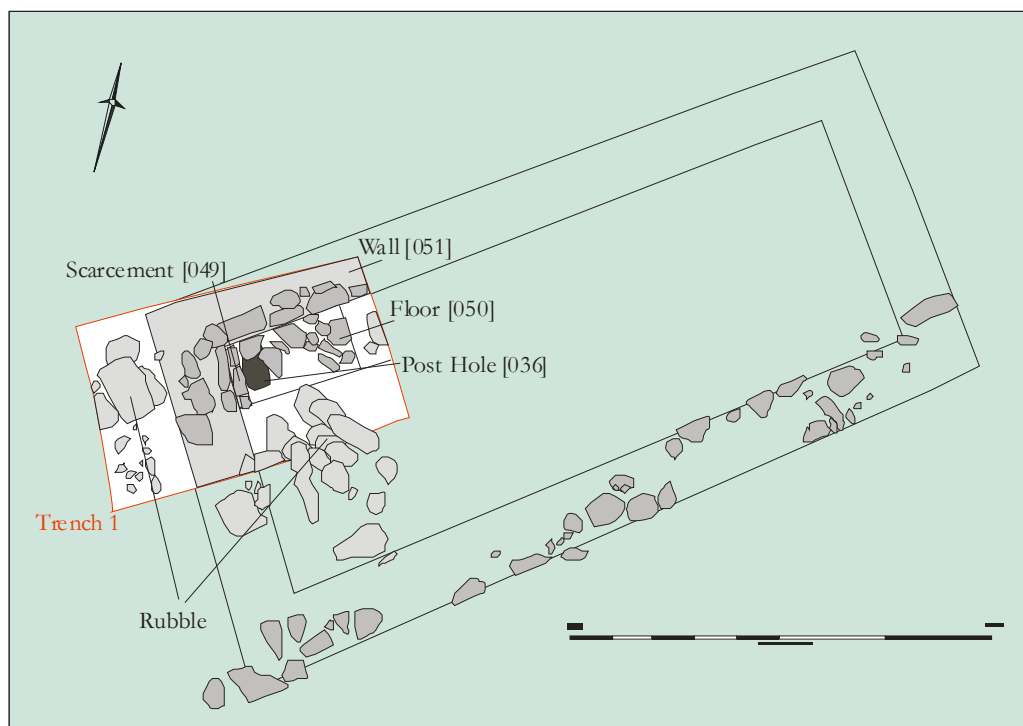


Figure 5: Trench 1, Structure 3

This trench was placed over the possible SW corner of a possible building as identified by the Royal Commission during their survey of the site (RCHAMS 2008). The trench revealed the badly robbed remains of what was originally a well constructed rectangular building, Structure 3. The building was oriented SW/NE and measured 9.0m by 5.0m externally although the NE end remained ill defined where the building appears to have been extensively robbed with several large stones, perhaps too heavy to move very far, left within the internal space of the building. The SE end of the building had better preserved walls standing up to 1.10m in height, these perhaps protected from robbing by the partial collapse of the S gable. The walls of the structure, [051], were well-built with particular care given to producing near vertical inner facing by a use of split stones with close pinning, the whole bonded by a grey brown clay.

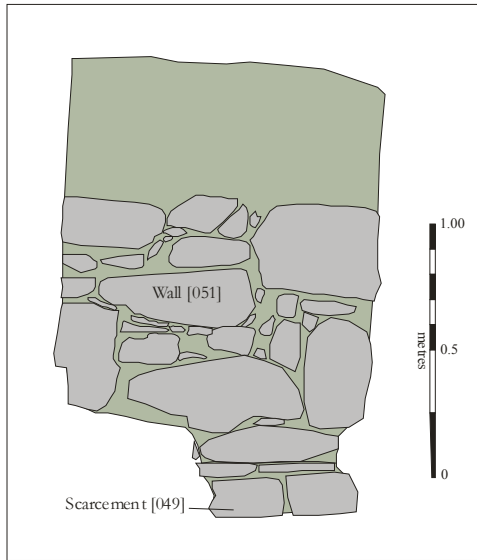


Figure 6: Structure 1 N facing gable wall



Structure 1 E facing wall

The lowest deposit reached was what would appear to be a partially cobbled floor set in grey clay [050]. Contemporary with this floor would appear to be a post [036] in the corner of the building, this at the W side of a projecting ledge or scarcement [049] running along the foot of the inner face of the SE wall. It is possible this ledge was constructed to support a suspended wooden floor, although little trace of any such floor has survived. A layer of trample [040], had formed over surface [050] and this was sealed by a layer of uneven rubble [035] overlain by a loose but generally even deposit of clay and schist fragments [034], these interpreted respectively as a make up and surface deposit. Thereafter this surface is sealed by a series of collapsed wall material and possibly the remnants of later robbing recorded as deposits [024], [016] and [011]. The only finds associated with the building was shell, and this was recovered from the collapse/rubble deposits.



Position of Trench 1 below enclosure wall

4.2 Trench 2.

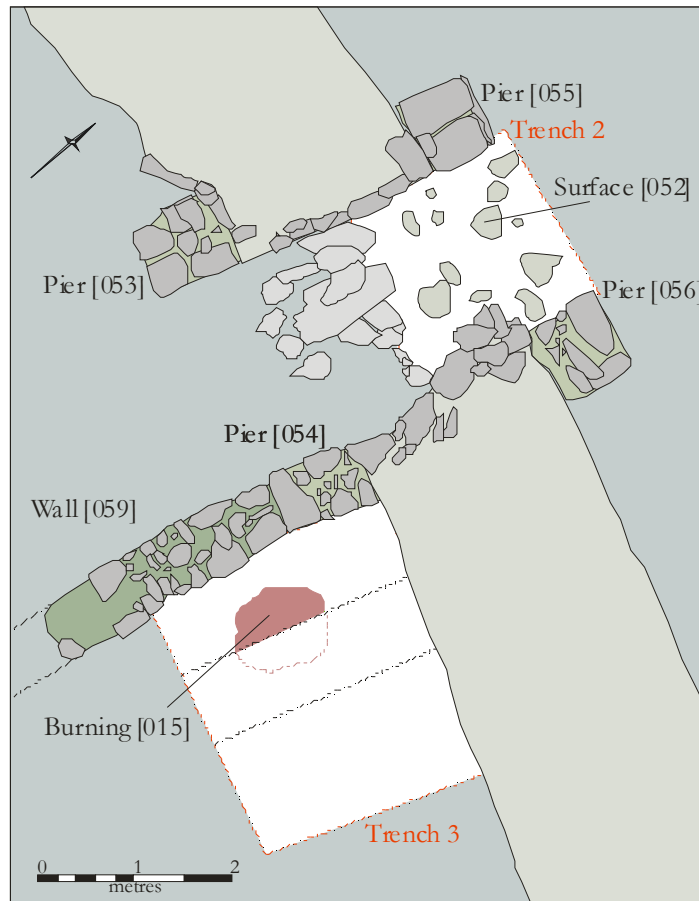


Figure 7: Trenches 2 and 3

The intention of this trench was to establish the nature of the modified entrance and examine the ill defined E side of the entranceway. Removal of the blocking rubble [003], which was up to 1.10m in depth from the N half of the entranceway revealed what was likely the last utilised entrance surface [052].

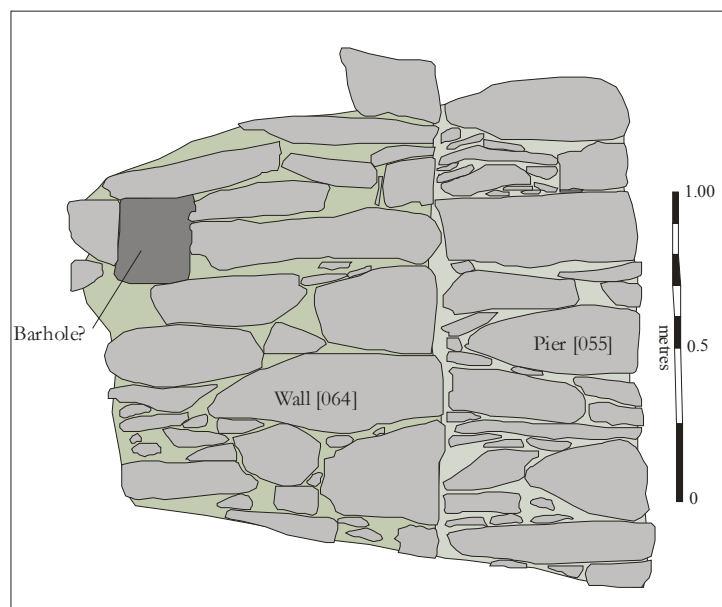


Figure 8: W side of lower enclosure entrance

This consisted of flattish schist slabs, set within a light grey brown clay, with moderate inclusions or traces of a light brown mortar. Mixed within the rubble sealing this possible surface were animal bone and mollusc shells, suggesting some middening within the entrance passage. The entranceway measured 1.80m in width and was originally 2.20m in length, with what may be a possible bar-hole in its W side. Later two abutting piers were added to the N side of the entranceway, [055] and [056], these matched by a second pair on the S side, [053] and [054]. These additions effectively extended the entrance passage to 3.90m from its original length. The nature of these later additions is difficult to gauge although it is possible that they supported some form of platform over the entrance. Lying on top of the filling rubble was a rough line of stones that may be the remains of the secondary blocking postulated by the RCHAMS although this was very insubstantial and obviously of a much later date. No trace, as yet, was revealed of any steps leading up to the entrance as described by Christieson in his description of the site in the early 20th century (Christieson 1904).

4.3 Trench 3.

This trench was placed in order to establish the nature of the cross wall and its relationship to the inner dun wall. The earliest deposit reached was a dump deposit of rubble mixed with midden material [037]. This appeared to run under the inner face of the lower enclosure wall and suggesting the enclosure wall or a modification of it was later. Apart from animal bone and a possible slag fragment no readily datable artefacts were recovered from this deposit.

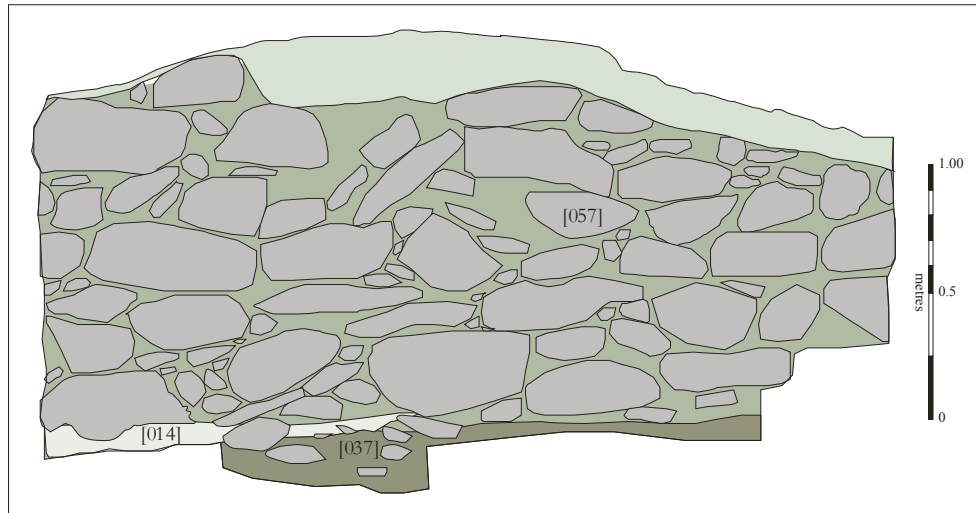


Figure 9: Trench 3 S facing section of enclosure wall

The midden dump and the foot of the enclosure wall were overlain by a peaty clay deposit [015] that is likely the remains of a surface deposit that also had distinct signs of burning (reddening) on its upper extent, possibly suggesting the presence of a fire installation. This surface was sealed by a deposit of sandy mortar [014] that ran under the SE stone pier of an entrance modification [054] and partially under the N end of the enclosure wall.

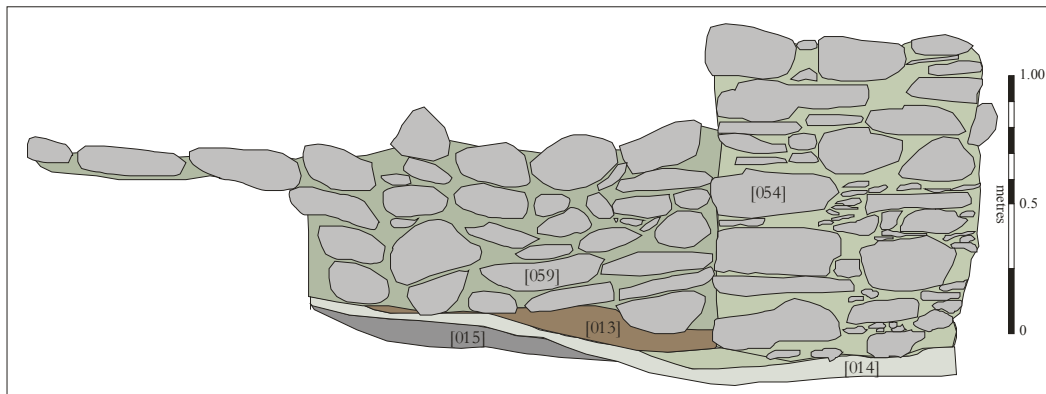


Figure 10: Trench 3 E facing section

This suggested that the construction of the stone pier may also have involved the partial rebuilding of the enclosure wall as further suggested by the fact that the stone work of the pier ties into the inner face of the enclosure wall. This construction phase was sealed by layer [013] which may represent an occupation deposit or surface as it contained animal bone along with several iron objects including a knife. A coin dating to the reign of Charles I was also recovered from this deposit. This was a two penny piece or 'Turner' which was the only Scottish coin minted during the civil war and dates between 1642-50. Above this was constructed wall [059] which effectively divided the internal area of the N side of the lower enclosure E and W of the entranceway. After this the wall [059] and pier [054] begin to degrade leading to an accumulation of collapsed stone [004] along their E sides. Mixed amongst the lower collapse was what appeared to be occupation or midden material, with bone, shell and several metal artefacts recovered from amongst the collapsed stones, including a knife and sickle blade.

4.4 Trench 4.

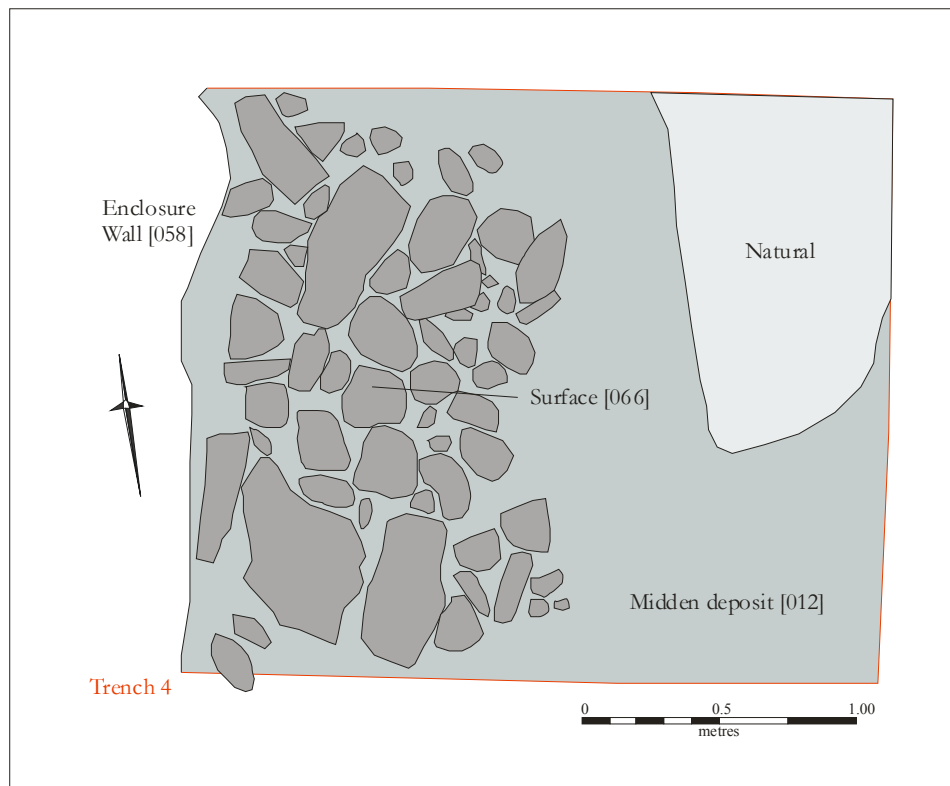


Figure 11: Trench 4

A natural limestone outcrop was revealed within the E part of the trench, which was sealed by an accumulation of midden material [012]. Only the upper extent of this was removed, the rest remaining unexcavated. This was overlain by stone surface [066] within the W part of the trench that ran along the internal wall face. Lying over this was an accumulation of midden like trample [010], containing charcoal shell, bone and several iron objects.

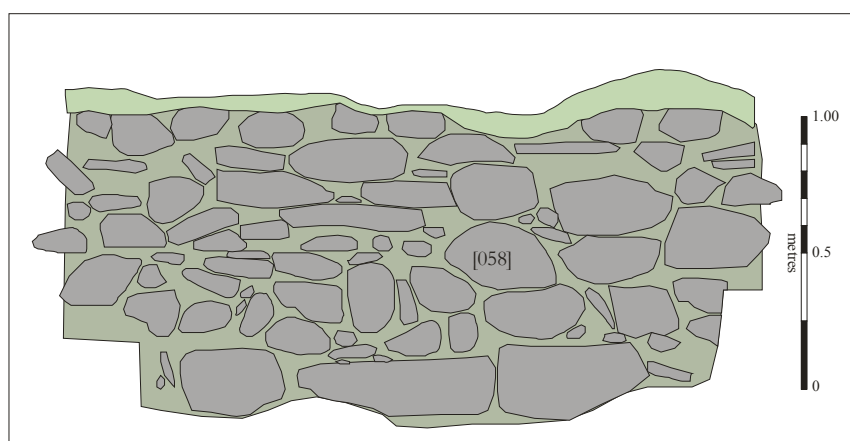


Figure 12: E facing section of enclosure wall [058]

Thereafter there is a build up of relatively homogenous soil recorded as [005] this likely representing worked/turned soil, which may indicate some arable use of the internal space of the

dun. The use of this space as a garden or small field is further indicated by the absence of collapse from the inner wall face, any such collapse perhaps cleared to the E or heaved over the side of the enclosure wall.

4.5 Trench 5.

This trench examined the nature of Structure 1 and the deposit accumulations between it and the inner face of the upper enclosure wall.

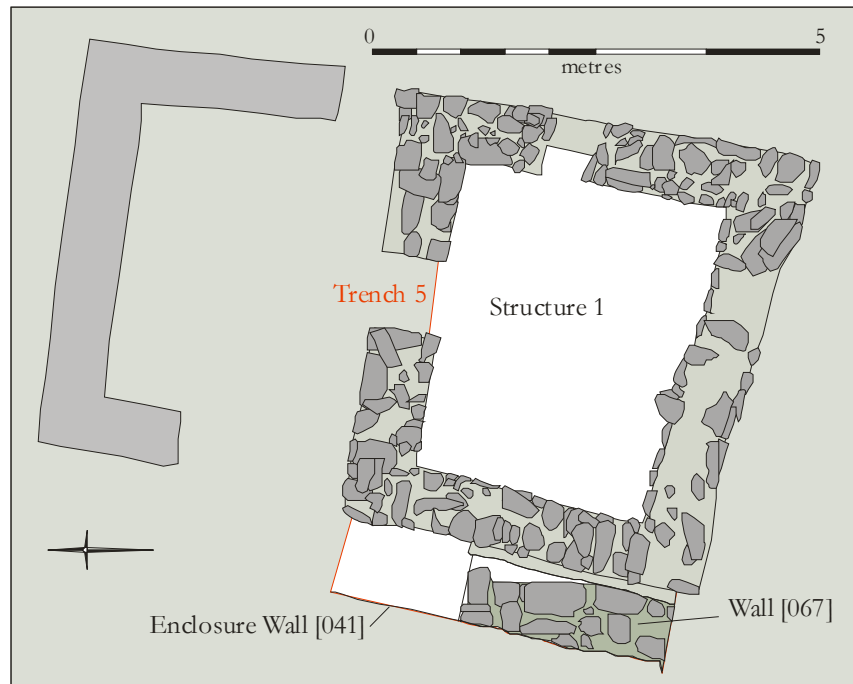


Figure 13: Trench 5

4.5.1 Structure 1

This structure measured 8.20m by 5.0m externally with an entrance on the E side. The walls of the N half of the building stood up to 1.52m high while the remaining walls at the S stood just above current ground level. As only the S half of this 'building' was excavated no relationship as yet has been firmly established between the S excavated 'room' and the structural remains at the N. The differences in the heights of the surviving walls, with those at the N substantially higher than those at the S, might just be chance survival, but the rougher build of the walls at the N might suggest these are two separate buildings, or the walls at the N are a later addition to an earlier structure?



Figure 14: Southern room of Structure 1

Southern Room

This part of the building consisted on a single ‘room’ and was slightly trapezoidal in shape, measuring 2.60m-2.90m N/S and 3.4m E/W internally. A door, 0.70m wide, lay along the N side while a niche or cupboard lay within the E wall, this measuring 0.50m by 0.40m. There is the possibility a second, now blocked, niche existing in the opposite W wall. The walls [002] were mainly constructed in epidiorite rubble and stood up to a height of 1.30m (although this was as little as 0.46m high on the NE) and up to in 0.80m in width. Little bonding material was in evidence in the walls although patches of lime mortar were seen adhering to the face of the niche, which might indicate secondary work or repair.



Structure 1 with threshold at right of picture



Structure 1 Niche with traces of mortar on inner face

Internal sequence

This lowest deposit reached was a mixture of midden material and large stones [046], the latter perhaps laid as a rough make up prior to construction of Structure 1. This was sealed by a relatively even deposit of mixed silt clay and redeposited burnt peat ash [043], likely a floor accumulation. A threshold stone marked the entrance into the building and this displayed distinct signs of burning as did the floor deposits lying immediately to the S, although there was no apparent trace of any such burning on the entrance walls. It is possible that what became the threshold stone was originally a central hearth within an open building, this later divided by the later addition of cross walls which also appear to abut rather than tie into the walls at the E and W.



Threshold stone and possible early hearth

The threshold stone and its associated floor and were sealed by a trampled midden deposit [032] that appeared to be concentrated around the doorway. This deposit contained numerous animal bones along with a few iron objects and green glazed pottery dating to 15th/16th century. This in turn was sealed by a very humic deposit that may represent another midden/surface [021] deposit, again most of the recovered artefacts were situated around the entranceway. Contemporary with this surface was a deposit of charcoal and burnt peat [031] that indicates a fire/hearth position on the W side of the room. No formal floors are seen thereafter and it may be this building may have no longer been directly occupied, with a build up of a series of trampled rubble and humic accumulations [022]/[023] and [006]-[009] that possibly suggest animal penning? These are then sealed by an extensive accumulation of wall collapse [001].

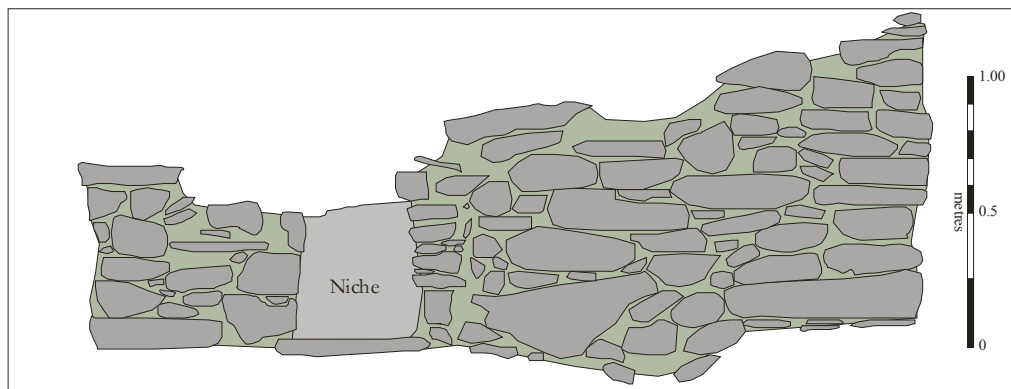


Figure 15: Structure 1, section of W facing wall with niche



Structure 1 from W

4.5.2 External Sequence

The earliest feature uncovered was what would appear to be the remains of the original line of the dun wall [067], although the limited nature of the trench on this side of Structure 1 makes it difficult to be sure. This wall roughly aligns with the inner face of the wall seen to the S, described by the RCHAMS as a 'sudden intake' (RCHAMS 1988) and it may be that this actually represents the earliest wall of the dun albeit modified at later periods. This early stretch of wall was sealed by a very dark organic midden dump [042], containing bone, shell and pot, the latter dating to the 13th century. This deposit likely corresponds to similar deposit [046] encountered within Structure 1. Above this midden dump were two mixed deposits [044] and [048] that may be related to the construction of both Structure 1 and the inner face of the upper enclosure wall [041]. The footings of both these structures were at the same level and suggested they were constructed around the same time, whereas the original dun wall was rebuilt and 'widened' to incorporate Structure 1. The upper extent of deposit [044] recorded as [033] shows that it had been trampled, while [044] itself and contained some midden material. This was sealed by a deep deposit of very humic blocky material indicative of a dried peat accumulation [029]. Given that this deposit also sloped down to the N from the SW external corner of Structure 1 it is likely this was a peat store at the rear of the building. The peat deposit is in turn sealed by collapsed rubble [028], this either deriving from the enclosure wall or Structure 1.



Early wall alignment [067]



N facing section of deposits between Structure 1 and enclosure wall

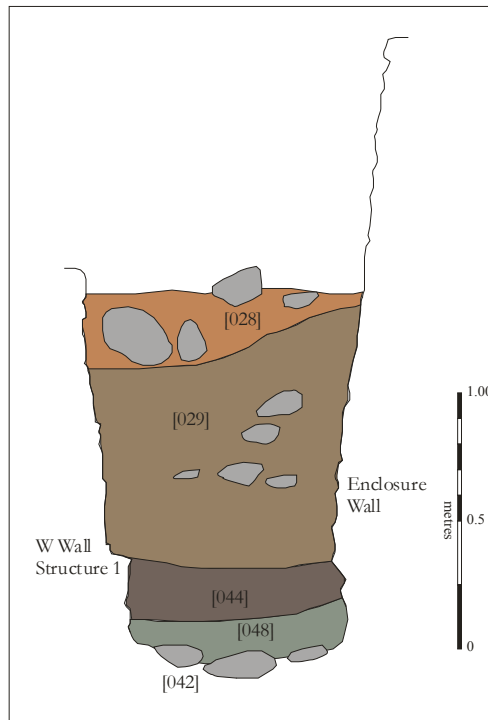


Figure 16: N facing section of between wall deposits

4.6 Trench 6.

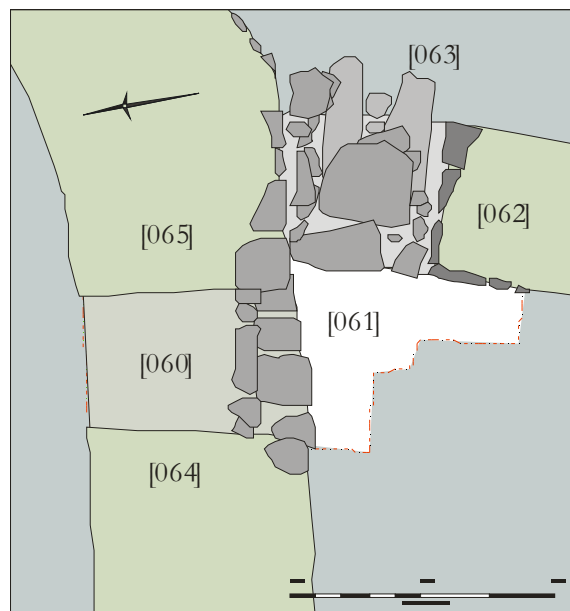


Figure 17: Trench 6

Given the amount of rubble present within the entrance and hornwork the trench was more limited in size than originally planned. Rubble however was removed from within the entrance passage and from over the NE wall of the 'hornwork' [062] and over the putative garderobe chute [063]. Removal of rubble [047] within the entrance revealed this was 1.03m wide and 1.70m long with passage walls standing at 1.0m high at the W and 0.80m on the E. Between the passage walls there is what appeared to be a revetted surface of flattish stone slabs and clay [060].



Upper enclosure entrance looking N

This lay over what may be the line of the original enclosure wall. Removal of rubble [045] from the S of the entrance revealed the inner face of the hornwork which abutted the enclosure wall [065].



NE end of hornwork wall with reused threshold stone

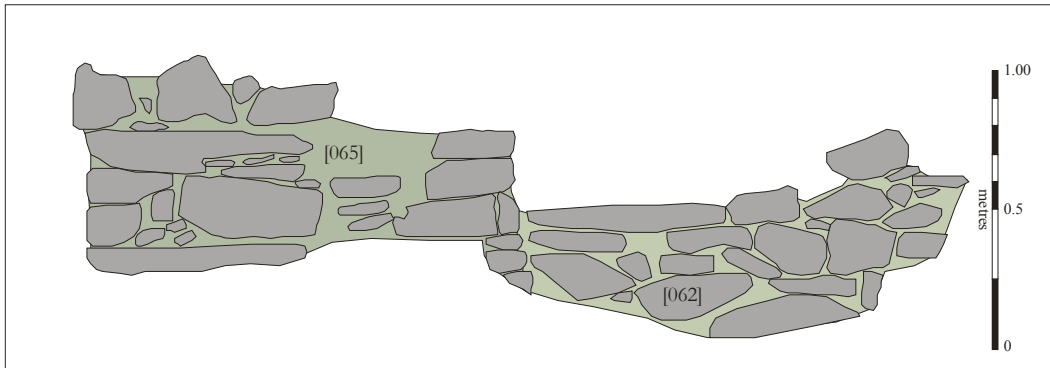


Figure 18: W facing section of upper enclosure entrance and hornwork

Rubble was also removed from over two projecting ‘chute’ stones. These appear to have been inserted by cutting through the original hornwork wall and as yet their function remains unclear, but the suggestion that they are a drain or wardrobe chute appears attractive. Any gap or channel above these stones may then have been blocked by the later reestablishment of the ‘hornwork’ wall, this utilising a threshold stone in its build. Both the rubble within the entranceway and that to the S contained animal bone, shell and pot, suggesting the dumping of midden material within this part of the site.

4.7 Trench 7.

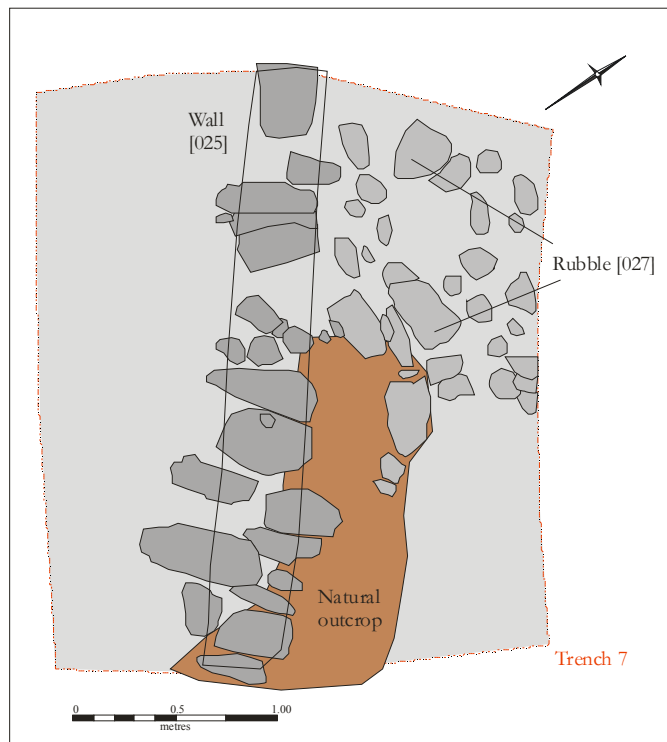


Figure 19: Trench 7

The Trench investigated whether a possible wall or outwork represented a building and established the presence of the very badly disturbed N wall [025] of a possible rectangular structure constructed over a natural limestone outcrop, Structure 4. The overall dimensions of this structure could not be gained as extensive blackthorn growth prevented access to the S and W. The remaining wall suggests an insubstantial structure, the rubble of which had collected to the N and E of the natural ridge on which it was constructed. The accumulated rubble deposits were recorded as [030] and [027]. Above this was a layer of homogenous soil [026], and as with a similar deposit in Trench 3, was indicative of this area being utilised in arable cultivation. Lying over this was the most recent collapse of the structure, this evidently caused by tree root disturbance from the mature sycamore growing at the E side of the structure.

4.8 Trench 8.

A naust is positioned immediately below the steep near-vertical eastern rock face of the Dun promontory on the foreshore of Linne Mhuirich. This is roughly rectangular in shape running eastwards from the base of the cliff to below the low-water-mark in the sheltered loch. The feature is delimited by a rubble mound on its northern side faced with a large boulder wall at its eastern terminal [072]. This area consists of a contained mound of rubble, probably originally constructed with a levelled top to create a 'hard' surface. Internally the naust has a length of c.4.80m and a c.3.70m width. At its southern side the basal remains of a roughly built wall run from the upper foreshore area to a double-kerbed terminal below the low water mark. This feature would originally have provided a degree of shelter for the naust and would also have marked its seaward entrance. The rear of the naust is marked by the basal remains of a low cross wall. A small hollowed out area survives behind this against the cliff face and might possibly have been used for storage originally. Further level areas are visible topographically around this area and may have served a similar function.



Naust from NE

A small test trench (Trench 8) measuring 2.5m by 1m was excavated in the northwest corner of the naust.

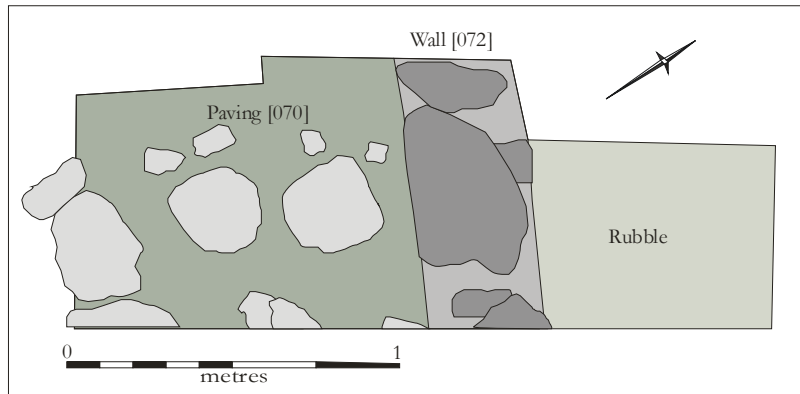


Figure 20: Trench 8

This revealed very shallow and limited stratigraphy with no artefactual evidence recovered. It is clear that the build up in this area consists of collapsed rubble and sediment that is continually mixed by marine action. Once the initial collapse and overburden [068] was removed a thin deposit of brown organic soil was exposed [069], ranging in thickness of 0.02-0.05m in thickness. This in turn directly overlay the subsoil [071] consisting of a sandy/ gravely marine type sediment. A small area of rough paving [070] overlay this subsoil and comprising a number of stones laid flat to create a level surface in the interior of the naust. This paving abutted the line of the rear wall.



Naust paving [070]

The excavations and survey at this feature have confirmed that it would have functioned as a naust. Unfortunately no dating evidence was recovered but it was likely constructed during the medieval period to facilitate a medium sized wooden vessel that would have been used by the Dun occupants. Its direct landscape association with the settlement site above and the associated works along the

foreshore can be used to support this argument. Limited underwater survey also took place off this feature. While no cultural material was recovered the bathymetry does clearly show that this would have been one of the few favourable locations where shallow draught vessels could be brought ashore safely. The naust would then have been used to shelter the boat during prolonged stays or for over-wintering when repairs to the vessel could be carried out. The naust is also a further indication of the status of the site's occupants as vessels of this size were owned by the upper echelons of society.

5. The Artefacts

A full list of recovered artefacts appears in Appendix 3 below.

Pottery

Seventeen ceramic shards of pottery were recovered from the site. The bulk of the small assemblage derived from midden deposit [042], all of these white gritty wares and dated to the 12th/13th century (George Haggarty *pers. comm.*). Two other white gritty ware fragments were recovered from the redeposited or trampled material that made up floor [043]. A single shard of glazed pottery came from a midden/rubble dump [045] near the upper enclosure entrance and dated to the 14th/15th century. Associated with the use of Structure 1 were three shards of pottery from deposit [032]; these dated to the 15th/16th century. Two other ceramic fragments were recovered from the site, one from [042] may be a mould fragment, while a possible crucible fragment was recovered from occupation deposit [010], both indicating metal working on the site.

Tobacco Pipe

Three fragments of pipe stems were recovered. Two of these were associated with the use of Structure 1, while the third came from what is interpreted as an agricultural soil, deposit [026] in Trench 7.

Iron

72 iron objects or fragments of iron were recovered from the excavation. All were corroded and majority of the recognisable objects appear to be nails, many of these with an attached diamond shaped fitting. Other fittings such as hinges were also present along with several tools including a near complete knife blade, a sickle and a possible chisel. One possible decorative piece or fitting was recovered from the lower enclosure entrance rubble, which may represent a trefoil or claw?

Cu alloy

Two copper alloy objects were recovered one being a two penny piece or 'Turner' from the Reign of Charles I dated 1642-50, the only Scottish coin produced during the civil war period. The other copper fragment was a thin sheet which may be the degraded remains of another coin or jetton.

Slag

One fragment of possible smithy base was recovered from deposit [005] which also returned a fragment of fly ash. A small vitrified fragment of as yet unidentified material was also recovered.

Glass

All the 8 glass fragments were found within deposits associated with Structure 1. These appear to have come from several vessels, some of these particularly fine, and one of these appears to be from the base of a wine or claret glass.

Bone

874 pieces of bone were recovered. The majority of the bones came from the midden or occupation deposits with 30.6% coming from deposit [042]/[046] that lay below Structure 1, while 30.7% came from deposits [032] and [021] these associated with the use of Structure 1. On the whole the bone was very well preserved, displaying signs of butchery and animal predation, with some burnt bone indicating cooking. A small carved bone handle was found within context while a second worked bone may have been utilised as a large point or pin beater.

Shell

In total 160 mollusc shells were recovered and, like the bone, the majority came from occupation or midden deposits, indicating the consumption of shellfish on the site, hardly surprising given the proximity of the sea. Within the assemblage oyster predominates, followed by mussel, periwinkle, limpet, cockle and clam.

Stone

The possible utilised stone are mainly pebbles or smooth stones brought onto site and possibly utilised in a variety of ways, as hones, slick-stones or smoothers.

Flint

Two flint fragments were recovered. Both were worked but not to any skilled degree suggesting perhaps a late usage.

Building Materials

Lime mortar samples were recovered from several contexts, [001], [006], [013], [021], [032], [045] and [047].

6. Discussion

The results of the limited excavation has produced some intriguing results. In particular it has shown that the site is well preserved, deeply stratified and multiphased. The structures within the upper enclosure, while robbed/collapsed, were better preserved than was at first thought. Extensive lengths of the upper and lower enclosure walls, while also suffering from later degradation, are particularly well preserved, standing over 2m in height in parts of the upper enclosure.

The good structural preservation was reflected in the discrete and well stratified deposits within and surrounding these structures, despite later disturbance caused by past and ongoing root disturbance. The preservation of organic material, particularly bone, would appear to be a benefit of the site's position on a limestone outcrop, this giving the soils low acidic levels which is relatively rare in mainland Argyll. This and the presence of midden/occupation deposits has the potential to give valuable insights into animal husbandry, butchery practices, diet and insights into the surrounding environment, which can be lacking in other Iron Age/medieval sites.

Of similar importance is the long use of the site as a place of occupation, this most apparent within the trenches in the upper enclosure. The Iron Age or early historic horizons, if present, have yet to reveal themselves and this discussion necessarily concentrates on the later occupation evidence revealed during the excavation. What appears to be an early wall alignment was seen in Trench 5 lying below a medieval midden and this, as yet undated, feature may be part of the original dun wall which appears to align with an 'intake' in the inner face of the enclosure wall at the S.

Sealing this wall and extending below Structure 1 was an extensive deposit of midden material and rubble. The pottery recovered from this deposit were all white gritty wares indicating occupation of the upper enclosure in the 12th/13th century. As this deposit directly underlies Structure 1 and over the earlier wall, it may be that this deposit represents a re-deposition or levelling deposit spread across the area prior to the construction of Structure 1. It is also unclear which upstanding buildings, if any, are associated with what is obviously an occupation derived deposit. It is possible Structure 2 (the largest internal structure) was occupied prior to the construction of Structure 1 but this as yet is unproven.

Built over the medieval midden deposit was Structure 1 and it appears likely that the internal face of the enclosure wall was modified or rebuilt at the same time. When Structure 1 was originally built is still open to question, while structural modifications at the S end of the building suggest some degree of longevity for its use, this indicated by the possible later addition of a cross wall, which appears to utilise what may have originally been a hearthstone as a threshold. Several occupation deposits are associated with this building, and pottery recovered from a mixed midden floor deposit indicates occupation dating to the 15th/16th century. The presence of tobacco pipe stem fragments and glass from the same deposit likely indicates a mixing or turning of floor deposits within the building. The N half of Structure 1 (if it is indeed the same building) also appears to be of a different construction and its better preserved walls might indicate different structural morphology.

Several structural modifications were also observed within the limited excavation of the upper enclosure entrance and part of the hornwork. This was indicated by insertion of what appears to be a drain or chute (possibly a garderobe), by punching a hole through the original hornwork wall, while this is later blocked by the reestablishment of the internal face of the hornwork. A single shard of 14th/15th century pottery was recovered from a rubble/demolition deposit within the entrance, and while this may be redeposited it indicates occupation of the site in this period.

The Trenches within the lower enclosure also indicated several periods of occupation. Within Trench 4 an as yet undated midden deposit runs under a rough stone surface that appears to respect the inner enclosure wall. Lying over the surface was another occupation build up which again remains undated although the recovery of several iron nails similar to those recovered from the occupation deposits within Structure 1 probably dates this to the same period.

Within Trench 3 an as yet undated midden and rubble deposit appears to run under the inner wall face of the enclosure wall and perhaps suggests wall modification or even construction after the midden had formed. Thereafter there is a build up of at least two occupation deposits, these separated by the addition of a stone pier at the SE side of the entranceway. It is highly probable that the three other stone piers were added to the entranceway at the same time effectively lengthening the entrance passage. These may have been added to reinforce any perceived structural weakness around the entrance, but it is also possible they gave support to some over entrance platform. Recovered from the later occupation layer was a two pence piece or Turner dating to the reign of Charles I (1642-1650).

At some point the areas to the E and W of the lower enclosure are divided by the addition of a cross-wall. The purpose of the wall may have been to keep animals out of the W area as here there appears to be an accumulation of worked soil (absent from the E area), suggesting arable exploitation. A similar soil deposit was seen within Trench 7 and it may be that this also was utilised as a small field or plot. Such use was indicated by several iron implements recovered from Trench 3, including a sickle.

The presence of two other structures was verified during the excavation. Lying within a lower enclosed terrace to the S was a very ruined building, Structure 4. Much of the rest of this building is inaccessible due to blackthorn growth and it remains to be seen if more substantial remains lie within the undergrowth. No associated occupation deposits were revealed and the date and function of this building and remains unclear. There was also a lack of dating evidence associated with Structure 3 which lay out-with the lower enclosure wall to the NE of the lower entrance. While only a small part of this was uncovered (the SW corner) its construction suggests a building of some substance, this perhaps indicated by the presence of a scarcement, which may have supported a suspended wooden floor.

The relatively poor preservation of Structures 3 and 4 and their 'less apparent' nature strongly suggests other structures could still be found within and around the site, particularly on the lower terraces and along the shore side on the E.

The site would appear to have a long and/or perhaps an intermittent occupational history reflected in what would appear to be complex structural sequence. The artefacts, the pottery in particular, has indicated several periods of occupation, or perhaps continued occupation in the medieval period after the 12th century. The presence of the pottery within what are no doubt domestic deposits likely indicates the site's use in the 13th century by a group or family of some status, given its rarity outside of monastic and lordly residences in Argyll. No building within the site has as yet has been firmly dated to this period of occupation but the presence of such structures can perhaps be presumed. The presence of what appears to be garderobe outside the upper enclosure entrance, a feature usually associated with castle structures, also perhaps indicates a site of some import. As yet undated, the clay bonding of the walls of Structure 3, their well constructed nature and the presence of a scarcement that may have supported suspended floor, also point to a higher status building.

Perhaps later, although also well built, were Structures 1 and 2 and their construction likely points to intended permanency of occupation rather than transient use. The presence of 15th/16th pottery

mixed within floor deposits likely indicates their early period of occupation while tobacco pipe fragments might indicate use until the 17th century.

The site is difficult to put into an architectural or archaeological context as few comparable sites have been excavated or dated. While perhaps not a castle in the strictest sense, by the 15th century at the latest, the site likely represents a type of house enclosure or enclosed residence as outlined by Caldwell as being present across the Lordship of the Isles in the medieval period (Caldwell 2005). The most closely comparable site excavated in the region is perhaps MacEwans Castle, a site, as the name suggests, associated with the family of the MacEwans of Otter. Similarly this was a dun site with later internal structures, the recovered finds suggesting its use between the 13th and 18th century (Marshall 1982). The excavated site of Ugdale Point in Kintyre also contains a later structure, the finds here suggested occupation in the 15th-16th century (Fairhurst 1956). As indicated in the RCHAMS inventories for Argyll 27 other dun sites within Lorn, Mid Argyll and Kintyre contain later buildings and its possible many of these date to the medieval or late medieval periods. Many of these sites also have a personal or family name association which may also be a reflection of their relatively late occupation.

The status of such enclosed and defended sites has most recently been outlined by Heather James in her unpublished PHD thesis, which associates such sites as being used by local middle ranking families (James 2009). The defensive nature of such sites was obviously important and a similar function might have been provided by island sites in the medieval and late medieval period such as the site on Loch Glashan (Fairhurst 1969). Several of these sites have associated traditions of being used as places of refuge by local families, such as Eilean na Crice within an northern arm of Loch Sween (Coal Scotnish) which is associated with either the Campbells or MacIlvernocks of Oib. Similarly the buildings on Loch an Daimh in Craignish peninsula are associated with the MacIver Campbells of Asknish, with other island and crannog sites perhaps providing a similar function. Dun Mhuirich appears to fit this picture and may have been occupied by one of the cadet branches or client families of the major familial groups, the site used as their place of residence and/or places of temporary refuge.

The question then remains as to who occupied Dun Mhuirich? If the name is taken at face value then the site is likely associated with the MacMhuirich family, hereditary bards of the Lords of the Isles. If the presence of 12th-16th century pottery within a well defended site does indeed indicate occupation of higher status then the site is likely linked to one of the prominent families present in Knapdale from the 12th century. Historical records from this period are of course limited although from later sources and family histories we can perhaps conclude who were the dominant families with territorial claims in the area, although who actually exercised control on the ground locally is more opaque. Even so while it can be demonstrated that the MacMhuirichs had associations with Kintyre there are as yet no known extant historical records linking them with Knapdale and it is possible the name may be the retention of a pre-document ownership. From the 12th century the proximity and control of the major stronghold of Castle Sween would have exerted a powerful influence over who resided nearby. The history of the castle somewhat reflects the familial and dynastic struggles that affected much of Argyll in the medieval period. The MacSweens who constructed the castle in the 12th century had been replaced as the Lords of Knapdale by the Stewart Earls of Mentieth by the late 13th century using local Campbell magnates as keepers or constables of the castle. Control of the castle would appear to have remained with the Mentieth family until Robert Stewart, as king Robert II granted the keepership to Alexander MacDonald, Lord of the Isles, who held the castle until the Lordships forfeiture in 1475. Thereafter the castle was granted to successive Earls of Argyll. Under the Earl's of Argyll the keepership of Castle Sween was held by the Campbells of Auchinbreck, who undertook the hereditary roll as their military commanders.

Closely associated with Castle Sween in the period of the Lordship were the MacNeils (of Taynish and Gigha) and it is postulated here that it is this family who have an association with the site as it is unclear where the Taynish branch of the family resided prior to the construction of Taynish House in the late 17th century. The earliest origins of MacNeils of Taynish are somewhat obscure as no traditional pedigree survives, but as Sellar argues they are likely to have descended from the same family branch as the MacNeils of Barra (Sellar 1971). The family claimed the same line of descent as other prominent Cowal and Knapdale families such as the MacSweens, Lamonts and Gilchrists, their descent coming from Neil (from who they take their name) son Muirchaidh who was a grandson of Suibhne (Sween, the builder of Castle Sween). It has not gone without notice that the name Muirchaidh (who was thought to be active in the earlier half of the 13th century (d. 1267) is not so dissimilar to 'Mhuirich' and it possible the later name associated with the site is a later corruption. Whether this or the their claimed lineage for the MacNeils is true or not, it is likely that the MacNeils did have a foothold in the Knapdale by the early 15th century when in 1447 Torquil MacNeil became constable of Castle Sween, along with receiving the lands of Taynish and Gigha, from Alexander MacDonald, Lord of the Isles. In the medieval Gaelic world a constablership of a castle was given to a local lord, often the head of a lineage, by an overlord and accepted as an act of fealty by him. Torquil's gravestone bearing the inscription '*here lies Torquil, son of Malcolm, son of Neil ...*' can still be seen in nearby Keills chapel. Thereafter his sons assumed the hereditary role of constables of the castle. Neil MacNeil (of Gigha) was named as constable of Castle Sween in a charter of 1455, and his brother Hector (of Taynish) named as constable in a witness list of 1472. Tradition has it that Hector's daughter Erca married Alexander MacMillan (from another Knapdale family) who assumed the role of constable. As such for much of the 15th century the MacNeils were close adherents to the Lords of the Isles. After the forfeiture of the Lord of the Isles Colin, Earl of Argyll was given custody of the castle in 1481. The MacNeils of Taynish, under another Neil, seeing perhaps which way the political wind was blowing became vassals of the Earl of Argyll much to the displeasure of those still loyal to the MacDonald cause.

By the 17th century the family is certainly well established in Knapdale holding lands from Taynish and Barra-hormaid to Scotnish as well as holding lands in Gallachaille and Arichonan. The family remained closely allied to the Campbells, as Hector McNeil was the Justice of the Peace for Argyll in 1629 and is mentioned in a sasine of 1631 '*Sasine of the 12 merk lands of Knap in Knapdale (viz., the 2 merk land of Kilmoir, 2 merk land of Fernach, 4 merk land of Ballimore, and 4 merk land of Stronfyll) given by Hector M'Neill of Taynish, as baillie, to John Campbell, now of Knap, son and heir of deceased Archibald roy Campbell of Knap, on a charter of Lord Lorne, signed at Inveraray, 21 July 1631. Witnesses to sasine: Alexander Campbell, Apparent of Phanans, Dugald Campbell of Laggan, Hugh M'Neill in Fernoch of Ross-Knapdale and Niall M'Neill in Kendlochkyllisport.*' (Registered 15 June, 1632: folio 295). The family were also leading members of the church with Hector MacNeil becoming an elder of the Presbytery and in 1640 attended the Provincial Assembly of Argyll. In 1643 Hector's daughter Mary was married to Niall Campbell (later laird of Dunttrron). As covenanting allies of the Campbells, the MacNeil lands in Knapdale were seen as legitimate targets by the royalist and MacDonald partisan Alistair MacColla who raided the area in 1647, burning nearby Castle Sween in the process. Attributed to MacColla is the saying that he would not leave '*a bull to bellow, a Campbell to hollow or a MacNeil to lead in all of Knapdale*' which aptly underlines the particularly vicious nature of this inter clan conflict. A coin recovered from the site (1642-50) dates to this civil war period and is entirely possible that during this time the site was occupied, either by MacColla's men or locals seeking refuge in what was likely a still an easily defensible site. It may be then that the site is connected to the fortunes of this Knapdale family and if this possible connection can be more firmly established then it may be the coin is evidence of the last use of the site as a defensive structure or place of refuge before the MacNeils move to the nearby Taynish peninsula and the site it is turned over to agricultural use.

7. References

Caldwell, D. 2005 Domestic Architecture in the Lordship of the Isles, in R. Oram & G. Stell. *Lordship and Architecture in Medieval and Renaissance Scotland*. Edinburgh.

Christison, D. 1904a 'The forts of Kilmartin, Kilmichael Glassery, and North Knapdale, Argyll'. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 38.

Fairhurst, A 1939 'The Galleried Dun at Kildonan Bay, Kintyre'. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 83, 185-228

Fairhurst, H 1956 'The Stack Fort on Ugadale Point, Kintyre', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 88, 15-21.

Fairhurst, H. 1969 'A Medieval Island-Settlement in Loch Glashan, Argyll'. *Glasgow Archaeological Journal* 1, 46-67.

James, H. F. 2009 'Medieval rural settlement: A study of Mid-Argyll Scotland', Unpublished PHD thesis.

Marshall, D N 1983 'Excavations at MacEwen's Castle, Argyll', *Glasgow Archaeological Journal*, 10, 131-142.

RCAHMS 1988. 'The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. Argyll: an Inventory of the Monuments: Volume 6: Mid-Argyll and Cowal, Prehistoric and Early Historic Monuments. No. 311 p 189-190. Edinburgh.

Sellar, W. D. H. 1971 'Family Origins in Cowal and Knapdale'. *Scottish Studies* Volume 15.

Appendix 1: Context Descriptions

[001] Layer. Upper rubble collapse within Structure 1, consists of medium to large epidiorite blocks within a dark brown humic silt; some fragments of mortar were also in the collapse.



Rubble [001]

[002] Walls. The walls of Structure 1 were mainly constructed in epidiorite rubble and stood up to a height of 1.30m (although this was as little as 0.46m high on the NE) and up to in 0.80m in width.

[003] Layer. Rubble collapsed within entrance of lower enclosure. Mainly epidiorite and quartz blocks, collapsed or pushed into entranceway. There is some indication of attempts at rough coursing across upper rubble. Between the collapsed material was a dark grey brown clayey silt with bone and shell fragments.



Rubble [003] in lower enclosure entrance

[004] Layer. Rubble collapse E of entrance pier and later wall. Consists of large to medium epidiorite blocks (maximum 0.83m x 0.50m x 0.20m). The upper blocks have voids between, suggesting sudden collapse. The lower blocks sit within a dark brown humic matrix with bone, shell and occasional iron object.



Rubble collapse [004]

[005] Layer. Dark grey brown humic silt (blocky) including occasional angular schist fragments and occasional charcoal fragments, badly disturbed by bracken.

[006] Layer. Dark grey brown humic loam, includes occasional bone.

[007] Layer. Lower stone collapse or spread, possibly a rough floor.

[008] Layer. Lower stone collapse or spread, possibly a rough floor.



Possible surface [006]-[009]

[009] Layer. Stone collapse within a greyish brown loam.

[010] Layer. Dark grey brown humic loam, includes moderate charcoal, occasional iron objects and bone with moderate angular schist fragments

[011] Layer. Mixed stone collapse and dark brown clay loam

[012] Layer. Dark grey brown silty humic sand, includes frequent charcoal and occasional bone.

[013] Layer. Mid brown silty clay, includes occasional fragments of lime mortar, bone, charcoal and shell.



Surface [013]

[014] Layer. Light grey brown sandy mortar.

[015] Layer. Mid brown silty loam with patches of fire reddened material (peat ash), includes moderate charcoal and occasional bone.



Surface [015] and area of burning

[016] Layer. Lower wall collapse with traces of yellow gravel and clay with occasional shell.

[017] Layer. Possible wall line of Structure 3.

[018] Cut? Possible line of construction cut for S gable of Structure 3.

[019] Fill. Dark brown clay loam, possible fill of construction cut.

[020] Layer. Small to medium stones within a mid brown humic matrix, possible pre cut surface.

[021] Layer. Grey brown silty humic clay, with moderate bone and occasional glass and iron object.



Surface [021]

[022] Layer. Stone collapse or rough flooring.



Possible surface [022]/[023]

[023] Layer. Stones lying flat, possible a rough floor surface.

[024] Layer. Stone collapse within a dark grey brown clay matrix with occasional schist fragments and mollusc shell.



Rubble [024] over S wall of Structure 1

[025] Wall. Badly disturbed collapsed wall remnants at NE of possible building. Highest part stands up to three courses high of coarsely laid rubble (0.30m high) up to 0.45-0.50m wide (largest block 0.70m x 0.27m x 0.12m).



N wall of Structure 4 [025] over limestone outcrop with rubble [027] to N

[026] Layer. Dark red brown silty loam, includes frequent roots, occasional schist fragments and occasional charcoal fleck.

[027] Layer. Rubble collapse from wall [025] situated along the N side of a natural limestone outcrop. Consists of a mixture of mainly epidiorite and limestone blocks.

[028] Layer. Rubble collapse within a dark brown humic loam.

[029] Layer. Mid brown to light red brown humic loam, slopes down from S to N. Peat

[030] Layer. Dark grey brown silty loam with frequent rubble, lower collapse of [025].

[031] Layer. Dark grey charcoal rich loam, possible fuel deposit.

[032] Layer. Mid grey brown silty loam with moderate charcoal and bone with occasional pot and iron object.

[033] Layer. Reddish to silver sandy loam.

[034] Layer. Loose greyish brown silt mixed with frequent crushed angular schist slabs and occasional charcoal.



W facing section through [034] over [035] in Structure 3

[035] Layer. Uneven layer of angular stones.

[036] Post Hole Cut. Sub rectangular cut measuring 0.60m by 0.30m and 0.30m deep with near vertical sides and concave base.



Post hole [036] Structure 3

[037] Layer. Dark grey humic silt, includes frequent small schist fragments and occasional medium stone blocks, frequent charcoal fragments and occasional bone, dumped in amongst/over larger blocks which were left in situ.



Sondage through [037] in Trench 3

[038] Fill. Soft dark brown humic silt with occasional charcoal.

[039] Layer/Fill. Red brown humic clay (possibly burnt peat) with occasional glass.

[040] Layer. Dark grey brown clayey silt with frequent charcoal flecks.

[041] Wall. Inner face of upper enclosure seen in Trench 5 it stands 2.10m high in up to 17 courses .



Inner face of upper enclosure [041]

[042] Layer. Dark grey humic loam with moderate schist and stone fragments, includes moderate bone, shell and pot.

[043] Layer. Mottled mid brown reddish silt with frequent charcoal, occasional bone and shell.

[044] Layer. Mid grey silty clay and schist fragments

[045] Layer. Rubble collapse and blue grey clay matrix, includes occasional bone, shell and pot.

[046] Layer. Mixed rubble and midden material, dark grey silt with frequent charcoal fragments and occasional bone and shell.

[047] Layer. Moderately compact collapsed wall material within a light blue grey clay matrix, includes occasional bone and shell.

[048] Layer. Dark brown clay silt with occasional charcoal, shell schist and mortar fragments (mortar light grey clayey with small angular stone inclusions).

[049] Scarcement. Level stone ledge between 0.15-0.17m wide and standing 0.18m high.



Scarcement [049] at foot of wall [051] of Structure 3

[050] Layer. Possible floor consisting of flattish schist slabs lying in a dark grey silty clay. Not excavated.

[051] Wall. SW corner of Structure 3, consisting of large schist blocks (largest 0.88m x 0.60m x 0.25) with angular pinning. The wall is well built with attention to achieving a vertical face with tight pinning and split stones. The wall is bonded with a mid grey brown clay (browner at the upper extent of the wall). The wall stands 1.10m high at the S end.

[052] Surface. What may have been the latest surface within the entrance consisted of flattish stones within a mid brown clay matrix with some fragments of light brown mortar. Not excavated.



Possible surface [052] in lower entrance

[053] Pier SE. Rectangular stone abutment measuring 1.10m by 0.60m and standing 1.20m high in seven rough courses (largest stone 0.63m x 0.30m x 0.18m).



Pier [053]

[054] Pier SW. Not fully revealed but the top of this rectangular stone built feature measured 0.84m long and 0.70m wide.



Pier [054]

[055] Pier NW. Rectangular stone abutment measuring 0.80m-0.82m by 0.90m and standing 1.67m high in nine rough courses (largest stone 0.66m x 0.32m x 0.22m)



Pier [055] to the N of the original entrance wall

[056] Pier NE. Rectangular stone abutment measuring 0.80m by 0.83m and standing 0.46m high in two rough courses.



Pier [056]

[057] Wall. Lower enclosure wall E stands 1.60m high in 6 rough courses and is in 2.20m in width.

[058] Wall. Lower enclosure wall W stands 1.60m high in 8 courses and is 2.25m in width.

[059] Wall. N/S aligned at least 3.0m long and 0.70m wide and stands 0.66m high in six rough courses.

[060] Surface. Surface in upper enclosure entranceway lying below walling collapse. Possibly revetted by a line of stones on its S side, this possible surface consists of flat stone slabs in a compact blue grey brown clay silt matrix. Not excavated.



Surface [060] in upper enclosure entrance

[061] Layer. Lying beyond the entranceway at the S this mid brown silt deposit lay below the rubble collapse. Not excavated.

[062] Wall. The northern end of the hornwork wall that springs from the SE side of the upper enclosure entranceway. This may be re-blocking of a drainage chute, the wall as revealed standing 0.73m high and 1.16m wide. A reused threshold stone was included in the build.



Wall [062] reused threshold stone

[063] Chute. Possible chute inserted into/above original hornwork wall and later blocked? by [062]. The chute consists of two large projecting parallel schist blocks extending 0.40m E beyond the original wall line.



Possible garderobe chute [063]

[064] Wall. Forming W side of entranceway is 1.00m high and 1.70m wide.



W side of upper enclosure entrance

[065] Wall. Forming E side of entranceway is 8.86m high and 1.70m wide.



E side of upper enclosure entrance

[066] Surface. Rough cobbled/slab surface running along E face of lower enclosure wall, consists of angular and water rounded stones (maximum size 0.65m x 0.32m x 0.10m)



Surface [066]

[067] Wall. Alignment of original dun wall? Unexcavated



Wall [067] lying below all of Structure 1

[068] Layer. Tumbled mainly epidiorite rubble from original naust construction.

[069] Layer. Brown organic loam ranging in thickness of 0.02-0.05m in thickness.

[070] Surface. Several epidiorite schist blocks lain flat to create a rough surface within the naust.

[071] Layer. Sand and gravel marine type sediment.

[072] Wall. Naust wall consisting of roughly lain epidiorite blocks standing 0.65m high.

Appendix 2: Context List

Context	Type	Location	Structure	Description
001	Layer	Trench 5	Structure 1	upper rubble
002	Wall	Trench 5	Structure 1	walls structure 1
003	Layer	Trench 2		rubble in entrance
004	Layer	Trench 3		rubble collapse
005	Layer	Trench 4		topsoil
006	Layer	Trench 5	Structure 1	peaty layer
007	Layer	Trench 5	Structure 1	lower rubble
008	Layer	Trench 5	Structure 1	lower rubble
009	Layer	Trench 5	Structure 1	lower rubble
010	Layer	Trench 4		surface deposit
011	Layer	Trench 1	Structure 3	mixed stone collapse
012	Layer	Trench 4		midden deposit
013	Layer	Trench 3		surface
014	Layer	Trench 3		construction deposit
015	Layer	Trench 3		burnt surface
016	Layer	Trench 1	Structure 3	lower collapse
017	Layer	Trench 1	Structure 3	NW corner?
018	Cut	Trench 1	Structure 3	construction cut
019	Fill	Trench 1	Structure 3	fill of construction cut
020	Layer	Trench 1	Structure 3	surface?
021	Layer	Trench 5	Structure 1	surface?
022	Layer	Trench 5	Structure 1	rough floor?
023	Layer	Trench 5	Structure 1	rough floor?
024	Layer	Trench 1	Structure 3	wall collapse
025	Wall	Trench 7	Structure 4	wall
026	Layer	Trench 7	Structure 4	worked soil
027	Layer	Trench 7	Structure 4	rubble collapse
028	Layer	Trench 5	Structure 1	rubble collapse external
029	Layer	Trench 5	Structure 1	peat store
030	Layer	Trench 7	Structure 4	rubble collapse and midden
031	Layer	Trench 5	Structure 1	fuel deposit
032	Layer	Trench 5	Structure 1	midden
033	Layer	Trench 5	Structure 1	base of peat
034	Layer	Trench 1	Structure 3	surface
035	Layer	Trench 1	Structure 3	make up
036	Cut	Trench 1	Structure 3	post hole cut
037	Layer	Trench 3		midden dump
038	Fill	Trench 1	Structure 3	post hole fill
039	Layer	Trench 5	Structure 1	burnt peat
040	Layer	Trench 1	Structure 3	trample?
041	Wall	Trench 5	Structure 1	inner face of upper enclosure
042	Layer	Trench 5	Structure 1	midden
043	Layer	Trench 5	Structure 1	surface
044	Layer	Trench 5		construction layer
045	Layer	Trench 6		rubble collapse

046	Layer	Trench 5	Structure 1	upper trampled midden
047	Layer	Trench 6		rubble collapse
048	Layer	Trench 5		construction layer
049	Scarcement	Trench 1	Structure 3	stone ledge
050	Layer	Trench 1	Structure 3	surface
051	Wall	Trench 1	Structure 3	SW corner of building
052	Surface	Trench 2		entrance surface
053	wall			stone pier
054	Wall	Trench 3		stone pier
055	Wall	Trench 2		stone pier
056	Wall	Trench 2		stone pier
057	Wall			eastern wall lower enclosure
058	Wall			western wall lower enclosure
059	Wall	Trench 3		late wall
060	Surface	Trench 6		surface
061	Layer	Trench 6		dump?
062	Wall	Trench 6		hornwork wall
063	Chute	Trench 6		possible drainage chute
064	Wall	Trench 6		W side of upper entrance
065	Wall	Trench 6		E side of upper entrance
066	Surface	Trench 4		rough cobbled surface
067	Wall	Trench 5		Dun wall?
068	Layer	Trench 8		naust rubble
069	Layer	Trench 8		turf
070	Surface	Trench 8		naust surface
071	Layer	Trench 8		marine silt
072	Wall	Trench 8		naust wall

Appendix 3: Finds List

Context	Type	Number	Description
001	BM	1	mortar
003	ST	1	smoothed stone
003	FE	1	claw fitting or decoration
003	BN	23	
003	SH	13	periwinkle, oyster, mussel, cockle
004	FE	1	sickle blade
004	FE	3	nail
004	BN	24	
004	SH	7	oyster, mussel
005	SL	2	1 fly ash, 1 waste
006	BM	3	mortar
006	BN	1	small worked handle
006	BN	18	
010	CU	1	Thin fragment, possible coin/jetton?
010	ST	2	smoothed stones
010	FE	20	nails and unidentified fittings
010	SL?	1	vitrified material
010	BN	18	
010	PT	1	crucible
012	FE	2	2 nails
012	BN	20	
013	CU	1	Charles I two penny piece
013	BM	2	mortar
013	FE	14	knife blade, nails and hinges
013	BN	84	
013	SH	14	oyster, mussel
015	FL	1	small worked piece
015	ST	3	2 pebbles, 1 naturally perforated schist
015	FE	9	unidentifiable fittings
015	BN	18	
016	SH	1	periwinkle
021	GL	4	3 thin clear, 1 vessel
021	GL	2	green glass
021	BM	2	mortar
021	TP	1	stem fragment
021	FE	12	nails, hinge and bar
021	BN	128	
021	SH	6	oyster, mussel
024	SH	40	periwinkle, mussel
026	TP	1	stem fragment
026	FE	2	1 nail, 1 hinge?
027	FL	1	large light grey worked piece
032	GL	1	clear vessel
032	BM	2	mortar
032	TP	1	stem fragment

032	ST	1	hone?
037	FE	1	possible slag?
037	BN	81	
039	GL	1	base drinking vessel
032	SH	5	periwinkle, oyster, mussel
042	ST	1	smooth pebbles
042	ST	1	smooth pebbles
042	ST	1	smooth stone with slicking
042	FE	4	3 nails, 1 possible blade fragment
042	BN	170	
042	SH	38	periwinkle, limpet, oyster
042	PT	10	9 white gritty wares, 1 possible crucible
032	FE	3	1 hinge, 1 nail, 1 chisel?
032	BN	141	
043	PT	2	decorated glazed gritty whiteware
032	PT	3	green glazed reduced
045	BM	2	mortar
045	BN	78	
045	SH	11	limpet, oyster, mussel, cockle
045	PT	1	orange glazed
046	BN	98	
046	SH	4	periwinkle, oyster
047	BM	3	mortar
047	BN	20	
047	SH	21	limpet, oyster, mussel, cockle, clam

Appendix 4: Graphics List

Graphic No.	Scale	plan/section	Trench	Description
1	1:50	plan	1-3	lower enclosure
2	1:50	plan	5-6	upper enclosure
3	1:20	section	1	wall structure 3
4	1:10	section	3	lower entrance
5	1:20	section	4	enclosure wall
6	1:20	section	4	surface
7	1:20	section	4	section
8	1:20	section	3	enclosure wall
9	1:20	section	3	pier and wall
10	1:20	plan	7	structure 4
11	1:20	plan	5	floor structure 1
12	1:20	section	5	section rear structure 1
13	1:20	section	6	entrance and hornwork
14	1:20	section	5	E wall structure 1

Appendix 5: Sample List

Sample No.	Context	Trench	Reason
1	010	4	occupation dump
2	013	3	charcoal content
3	030	7	charcoal content
4	015	3	burnt material
5	037	3	midden dump
6	034	1	floor
7	038	1	post hole
8	031	5	floor/midden
9	043	5	floor
10	046	5	midden dump
11	042	5	midden dump

Appendix 6: Photo List

No.	Trench	Structure	Context	Notes	Direction From
1				Dun from N	N
2				Dun from S	S
3				Dun from S	S
4				Lower enclosure entrance	N
5				Lower enclosure	S
6				Upper enclosure wall	NW
7				Upper enclosure wall	SW
8				Upper enclosure wall	S
9				Upper enclosure wall	S
10				Upper enclosure interior	S
11				Looking S	N
12				Upper enclosure wall	SE
13				Upper enclosure hornwork	NE
14				Upper enclosure wall	S
15		4		Structure 4	E
16				Looking NE	S
17				Boat landing	S
18				Shore wall	NE
19				Shore wall	E
20				Boat noost	NW
21				Boat noost	NW
22				Boat noost	W
23				Boat noost	NW
24				Mooring ring	E
25				Dun from N	N
26				Dun from N	N
27				Lower enclosure wall	N
28				Upper enclosure entrance	N
29				Upper enclosure entrance	SW
30				Field wall below Dun	W

31			Fish trap	S
32			Fish trap	S
33			Boat landing	N
34			Lower enclosure entrance walls	W
35			Lower enclosure entrance W side	E
36			Lower enclosure inner wall	E
37			Lower enclosure inner W edge	SE
38			Lower enclosure inner wall	SE
39			Lower enclosure entrance W side	N
40			Modern cairn	S
41			Lower enclosure entrance W side	SE
42			Lower enclosure NW side	NW
43	1, 2		Passage between Structure 1 and 2	S
44	1, 2		Passage between Structure 1 and 2	S
45			Possible boat landing	W
46			revetment	W
47			tree roots in enclosure wall	N
48			tree roots in enclosure wall	N
49			Upper enclosure interior	N
50	1		Structure 1	S
51	1		Structure 1 S end	E
52	1		Structure 1 SE end	NE
53	1		Structure 1 SW end	E
54	2		Structure 2 NW end	SW
55	2		Structure 2 steps	W
56	2		Structure 2 SW end	W
57			Trees on lower enclosure wall	NE
58	2		Tree inside structure 2	SW
59			Tree on W side	N
60	1		Trench 1 pre ex	SW
61	2		Trench 2 pre ex	N
62	3		Trench 3 pre ex	SE
63	3		Trench 3 wall junction	S
64	3		Trench 3	W
65	4		Trench 4 pre ex	E
66	5		Trench 5 pre ex	S
67	6		Trench 6 pre ex	SW
68	6		Trench 6 pre ex	SW
69	7		Trench 7 pre ex	E
70	8		Trench 8	N
71			Dyke below dun	E
72			Upper enclosure hornwork	W
73			Upper enclosure inner wall	E
74			Upper enclosure N end	S
75			Upper enclosure S end	N
76			Upper enclosure S wall	SW
77			Upper enclosure SW wall	SW
78			Upper enclosure W side	N

79				Upper enclosure S wall	SW
80				Upper enclosure N wall	N
81				Lower enclosure NE side	W
82				Upper enclosure S wall	SW
83				Upper enclosure SW wall	S
84				Upper enclosure W wall	NW
85				Upper enclosure S wall	W
86				Upper enclosure W wall	NW
87				Lower enclosure wall w side	N
88				Upper enclosure interior	SW
89				View N from entrance	S
90				Collapse of upper enclosure wall	N
91				Boat landing	N
92				Upper enclosure wall NE side	N
93				Upper enclosure wall NE side	E
94				Upper enclosure wall	SW
95				Upper enclosure wall N side	E
96				Upper enclosure wall S side	E
97	5	1	001	Rubble Structure 1	E
98	5	1	001	Rubble Structure 1	W
99	5	1	001	Rubble Structure 1	N
100	5	1	001	Rubble Structure 1	N
101	5	1	001	Rubble Structure 1	S
102	5	1	001	Rubble Structure 1	S
103	5	1	001	Rubble Structure 1	S
104	3		004	Collapse	N
105	3		004	Collapse	N
106	3		004	Collapse	E
107	3		004	Collapse	E
108	3		004	Collapse	E
109	3		004	Collapse	Above N
110	3		004	Collapse	E
111	3		004	Collapse	E
112	3		004	Collapse	Above N
113	3		004	Collapse	Above W
114	3		004	Collapse	Above W
115	2		003	Rubble entrance	N
116	2		003	Rubble entrance	Above S
117	2		003	Rubble entrance	Above S
118	2		003	Rubble entrance	E
119	2		003	Rubble entrance	E
120	2		003	Rubble entrance	E
121	2		003	Rubble entrance	E
122	2		003	Rubble entrance	Above E
123	2		003	Rubble entrance	Above E
124	2		003	Rubble entrance	N
125	2		003	Rubble entrance	N
126	2		003	Rubble entrance	E

127	2		003	Rubble entrance	N
128	2		003	Rubble entrance	N
129	2		003	Rubble entrance	E
130	2		003	Rubble entrance	N
131	2		003	Rubble entrance	W
132	2		003	Rubble entrance	E
133	2		003	Rubble entrance	E
134	5	1		Structure 1	W
135	5	1		Structure 1	E
136	5	1		Structure 1	E
137	5	1		Structure 1	W
138	5	1		Structure 1	SW
139	5	1		Structure 1	S
140	5	1		Structure 1	E
141				Boat Landing	SW
142				Shore wall	S
143				Shore wall	NE
144				Shore wall	NE
145				Boat noost	NW
146				Boat noost	SW
147				Shore wall	S
148	3		004	Lower rubble	E
149	3		004	Lower rubble	NE
150	3		004	Lower rubble	N
151	3		004	Lower rubble	N
152	3		004	Lower rubble	W
153	3		004	Lower rubble	W
154	3		004	Lower rubble	E
155	3		004	Lower rubble	W
156	3		004	Lower rubble	N
157	3		004	Lower rubble	E
158	3		004	Lower rubble	E
159	3		004	Lower rubble	S
160	3		004	Lower rubble	N
161	3		004	Lower rubble	S
162	3		004	Lower rubble	S
163	3		004	Lower rubble	W
164	3		004	Lower rubble	W
165	3		004	Lower rubble	W
166	2		052	Entrance	N
167	2		052	Entrance	N
168	2		052	Entrance	E
169	2		052	Entrance	Above NW
170	2		052	Entrance	Above NW
171	2		052	Entrance	S
172	2		052	Entrance	S
173	2		052	Entrance	N
174	2		052	Entrance	N

175	2		052	Entrance	NE
176	2		052	Entrance	NE
177	2		052	Entrance	NE
178	1		011	Trench 1	S
179	1		011	Trench 1	
180	1		011	Trench 1	
181	1		011	Trench 1	
182	1		011	Trench 1	
183	1		011	Trench 1	
184	7	4		Trench 6 pre ex	
185	7	4		Trench 6 pre ex	
186	7	4		Trench 6 pre ex	
187	7	4		Trench 6 pre ex	
188	7	4		Trench 6 pre ex	
189	7	4		Trench 6 pre ex	
190	7	4		Trench 6 pre ex	
191	1	1	011	Rubble	S
192	1	1	011	Rubble	N
193	1	1	011	Rubble	N
194	4		066	Surface	E
195	4		066	Surface	S
196	4		066	Surface	S
197	4		066	Surface	W
198	4		066	Surface	W
199	4		066	Surface	S
200	4		066	Surface	E
201	4		066	Surface	E
202	3		013	Surface	E
203	3		013	Surface	E
204	3		013	Surface	E
205	3		013	Surface	N
206	3		013	Surface	N
207	3		013	Surface	W
208	3		013	Surface	S
209		3		South end	SW
210		3		South end	SW
211		3		South end	SW
212	5	1	021	Rubble	N
213	5	1	021	Rubble	N
214	5	1	021	Rubble	N
215	5	1	021	Rubble	NE
216	5	1	021	Rubble	NE
217	5	1		Structure 1	W
218	5	1		Structure 1	W
219	5	1		Structure 1	NW
220	5	1		Structure 1	N
221	5	1		Structure 1	E
222	5	1		Structure 1	E

223	5	1		Structure 1	N
224	5	1		Structure 1	N
225	5	1		Structure 1	N
226	5	1	021	Rubble	N
227	5	1	021	Rubble	N
228	5	1	021	Rubble	S
229	5	1		W wall	E
230	5	1		S wall	N
231	5	1		E wall	W
232	5	1		N wall	S
233	5	1		N wall	S
234	7	4	027	Rubble	W
235	7	4	027	Rubble	E
236	7	4	025, 027	Wall and rubble	N
237	7	4	025, 027	Wall and rubble	N
238	7	4	025	Wall	W
239	7	4	025	Wall	E
240	7	4	025	Wall	E
241	3		015	Trench 3	E
242	3		015	Trench 3	E
243	3		015	Trench 3	E
244	3		015	Trench 3	S
245	7		027	Rubble	E
246	7		027	Rubble	N
247	4		066	Trench 4	E
248	2		052	Surface	N
249	2		055	Entrance W side	E
250	2		055	Entrance W side	E
251	5	1		Structure 1	N
252	5	1		Structure 1	N
253	5	1		Structure 1	N
254	5	1		Structure 1	E
255	5	1		Structure 1	W
256	5	1	039	Burnt peat	NE
257	3		015	Burnt surface	S
258	3		015	Burnt surface	E
259	3		054	Pier	E
260	3		054	Pier	E
261	3		059	Wall	E
262	3		054	Pier	E
263	3		057	Enclosure wall	S
264	3		057	Enclosure wall	S
265	3		015	Burnt surface	Above W
266	3		054, 014	Abuttment and sand	E
267	3		054	Junction	E
268	1		034, 035	Rubble and surface	N
269	1		034, 035	Rubble and surface	E
270	3		037	Midden	above

271	1	3	036	Post hole	N
272	1	3	049, 050	Scarcement and surface	N
273	1	3	049, 036	Scarcement and posthole	N
274	1	3	049, 036	Scarcement and posthole	Above S
275	1	3	050	Surface	E
276	1	3	034, 035	Rubble and surface	W
277	1	3	051, 049	Wall and scarcement	N
278	1	3	051, 049	Wall and scarcement	N
279	1	3	050	Surface	Above W
280	5	1	043	Surface	E
281	5	1	043	Surface	N
282	5	1	043	Surface	
283	5	1	043	Surface	
284	3		037	Midden and rubble	S
285	3		037	Midden and rubble	S
286	3		037	Midden and rubble	S
287	3		057	Enclosure wall	S
288	3		057	Enclosure wall	S
289	3			Sondage	E
290	3			Sondage	E
291	4			Enclosure wall	E
292	4		066	Surface and natural	S
293	1	3	051, 049	Wall and scarcement	N
294	1	3		W Wall	E
295	1	3		W wall	E
296	1	3		Structure 3	S
297	1	3		Structure 3	S
298	1	3		Structure 3	N
299	1	3		Structure 3	N
300	2			Entrance	N
301	2			Entrance	N
302	2		055	Entrance NW pier	N
303	2		056	Entrance NE pier	Above S
304	2		054	Entrance SE pier	Above N
305	2		053	Entrance SW pier	Above N
306	2		054	SE pier	S
307	2		054	SE pier	S
308	2		053	Entrance SW pier	Above N
309	4		066	Surface	Above W
310	5	1		External face W wall	NW
311	5	1		External face W wall	NW
312	5			External deposits	N
313	5			External face W wall	Above W
314	5			Upper enclosure wall	SE
315	5			Upper enclosure wall	NE
316	5			Upper enclosure wall	NE
317	5		067	Wall	Above N
318	5			Between wall deposits	N

319	5			Between wall deposits	N
320	5	1		External face W wall	NW
321	5			Upper enclosure wall	NE
322	5			Upper enclosure wall	SE
323	5		067	Wall	Above N
324	5		067	Wall	Above N
325	5	1		Structure 1	W
326	5	1		Structure 1	W
327	5	1		Structure 1	W
328	5	1		Structure 1	E
329	5	1		Structure 1	N
330	5	1		Structure 1	N
331	5	1		Structure 1	S
332	5	1		Structure 1	S
333	5	1		Structure 1 door	S
334	5	1		Structure 1 door	S
335	5	1		Structure 1 N wall	S
336	5	1		Structure 1 N wall	S
337	5	1		Structure 1 threshold	S
338	5	1		Structure 1 E wall	W
339	5	1		Structure 1 niche	W
340	5	1		Structure 1 niche	W
341	5	1		Structure 1 niche	W
342	5	1		Structure 1 N wall	S
343	5	1		Structure 1 N wall	S
344	5	1		Structure 1 N wall	S
345	5	1		Structure 1 W wall	E
346	5	1		Structure 1 W wall	E
347	5	1		Structure 1 S wall	N
348	5	1		Structure 1 S wall	N
349	5	1		Structure 1 niche	Above E
350	5	1		Structure 1 surface	W
351	5	1		Structure 1	NW
352	5	1		Structure 1	NW
353	5	1		Structure 1	NW
354	5	1		Structure 1	W
355	5	1		Structure 1	SE
356	5	1		Wall	Above N
357	5	1		Wall	Above N
358	5	1		Wall	Above N
359	5	1		Wall	Above N
360	5	1		Structure 1 niche	W
361	5	1		Structure 1 niche	W
362	5	1		Structure 1 niche	W
363	5	1		Structure 1 niche	NW
364	5	1		Structure 1 threshold	S
365	5	1		Structure 1 threshold	S
366	6		064, 065	Upper enclosure entrance	N

367	6		064, 065	Upper enclosure entrance	N
368	6		064, 065	Upper enclosure entrance	N
369	6		064, 065	Upper enclosure entrance	S
370	6		064, 065	Upper enclosure entrance	S
371	6		062	Hornwork wall	N
372	6			Entrance wall	Above E
373	6		064	Entrance W side	E
374	6		064	Entrance W side	E
375	6		065	Entrance E side	W
376	6		065	Entrance E side	W
377	6		062	Hornwork wall	W
378	6		062	Hornwork wall	W
379	6		062	Hornwork wall	W
380	6		063	Threshold stone	Above W
381	6		063	Projecting stones	Above W
382	6		063	Projecting stones	Above W
383	6		063	Projecting stones	E
384	6		063	Projecting stones	E
385	6		063	Projecting stones	NE
386				Tree upper enclosure	W

Appendix 7: Archaeological Descriptions

Dun Mhuirich, Loch Sween.—On the Linne Mhuirich, a narrow inlet 2½ miles long which runs parallel with Loch Sween on its west side. The fort is on a bay on the west side of and about half-way along the Linne, and is 2 miles S.S.W. of Tayvallich Church. By some mistake Miss Maclagan calls it Dun Tayvaellach, confounding it with Dun a' Bheallich, close to the church (op. cit., pp. 43, 44). The fort stands on an isolated rocky ridge rising abruptly from the flat and marshy strip of plain that runs along the coast at the foot of Dun Mor (367), half a mile to the east. Retired and deserted as the neighbourhood now is, yet it seems to have been well peopled formerly, as on the slopes of Dun Mor, or near them, six hamlets or farms, Barr Breac, Barr Beith, Druim-nan-gall, North Ard Beg, Barr Thormaid, and Kilmory, are marked on the O.M., all within half a mile of the fort. As approached from the north, the fort on its rocky site comes suddenly into view at a turn of the road, presenting the remarkable aspect seen in fig. 33. The ascent is easy enough from the bay by the hollow shown in the sketch. But the east side rises sheer from the sea, and the west side and south end are so precipitous as to be practically inaccessible.



Fig. 33. Dun Mhuirich, Loch Sween, from the north.

Not less remarkable in appearance than the north end is the south end, which seems bound together by bands of rock, smoothed and polished by glacial action (fig. 34). Seen from the ridge of confused disrupted rocks to the north (fig. 35), a curved outer avail, well built and 4 to 5 feet high in places, running down to the sea cliff on the east, enclosing a terrace on the west, and having an entrance in the middle of its north face (sketch plan, fig. 36), with steps leading up to it, is a prominent object. It is 9 feet thick at the entrance, narrows to 6 feet at the west side, and is a mere supplement to the natural defence of rock at the south end, where it runs out at the sea cliff; Towering above, and approached by climbing up a rocky spur, is the inner wall, more ruinous and without any visible entrance. This wall completely encloses the interior, and is 7 feet thick at the curved ends, but only 3 at the nearly straight sides. At the ends it is 5 feet high in places on the inside, and on the west side it is a foot higher. It is very well built of dry masonry. Miss Maclagan speaks of a third wall, but I could see no sign of it. Neither is there any place where another wall could easily be placed. I found the level interior, measured by tape, to be 54 by 38 feet, although Miss Maclagan, in pursuit of her circular theory, calls it 60 feet in diameter.



Fig. 34. Dun Mhuirich, from the south.



Fig. 35. Fortified terrace and upper fort, Dun Mhuirich, from the north.

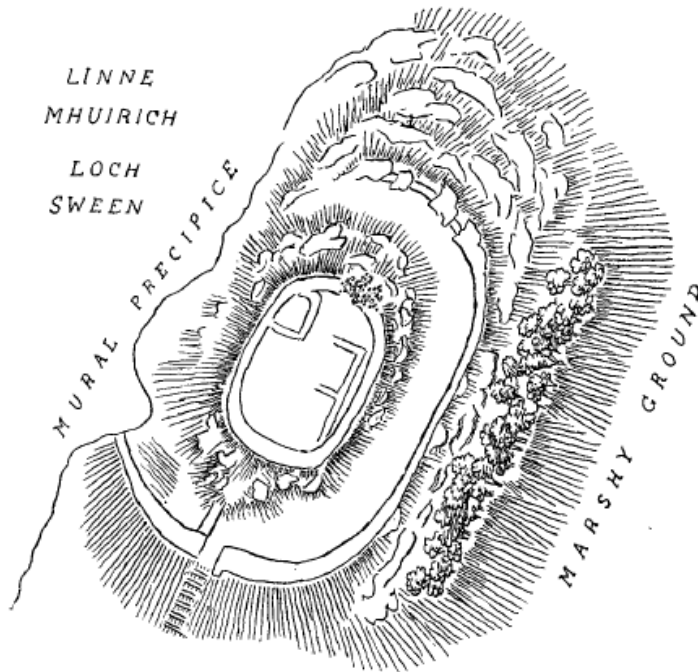


Fig. 36. Plan of Dun Mhuirich, Linne Mhuirich, Loch Sween.



Dun from the north

She also states that "the chief peculiarity of the fort is the still existing partition walls which have divided the central part into apartments. These seem all to have converged towards the centre, according to the usual division of round buildings." But her drawing does not show any such convergence, and as far as I could make out amid the dense growth of nettles and other weeds, the main foundation, about 2 feet high, is that of an ordinary rectangular building about 40 feet long, divided into at least two apartments and running parallel with the west wall of the fort, but separated by a narrow passage. From the fact of this building being rectangular and independent of the fort wall, it is probably a secondary structure, as the wall running from the entrance of the outer wall inwards may also be. In the S.E. corner of the area are remains of a building of a different type, and probably older, the north and west walls being straight, while those on the south and east are formed by the curved wall of the fort.

(Christieson 1904)



South wall of upper enclosure

Dun Mhurich

Canmore ID 39122

Site Number NR78SW 3

NGR NR 7228 8441

(NR72288441) Fort (DunMhurich) (NAT) OS 6" map, Argyllshire, 2nd ed., (1924)

A dun generally as described. The entrance to the dun, on the S, is 1.1m wide; no check or bar hole are visible, secondary modifications having concealed original features. The entrance to the outwork on the NE has been similarly modified and measures 1.8m in width. Three outworks exist to the S of the dun, but only remain as turf-covered footings and spread core. (Visited by OS (DWR) 21 May 1973)

A sub-circular dun occupies the summit of a rocky knoll overlooking Loch Sween. It measures 16.0m N-S by 13.0m within a wall standing to a maximum height of 1.5m and varying in thickness from 1.8m to 2.8m. Both faces are visible on all sides except the E where only tumbled core remains. On the SW is a slight irregularity in the curve of the wall faces, probably resulting from a collapse and subsequent rebuilding. The 1.1m wide entrance in the S with no check or bar hole visible, is protected by a hornwork 2.1m wide. The remains of a staircase, 1.5m wide can be seen built against the inner face on the NE. Within the dun are the ruins of two secondary rectangular buildings. The dun is protected on all sides except the E by a sub-rectangular outwork. On this E side a near vertical rock face provides sufficient natural defence. The outwork is best preserved on the N and NW where it has an average wall thickness of 2.4m and a maximum height of 1.4m. Both inner and outer faces can be traced along the W side to the SW corner where the wall takes a near right angled turn and joins a large outcrop of rock.



SW corner of outwork of upper enclosure entrance

The 2.1m wide entrance in the N with no check or bar hole visible has been strengthened on the outside by buttresses, one of which survives to a height of 1.4m, the other being reduced to its foundations. A ruined secondary wall blocks this entrance and another wall at right angles to it connects with large rock outcrop within the outwork to form a later enclosure. At about 12.0m to the E of the entrance the main out-work wall has collapsed and its stone used to build a modern field wall. Only two short sections of outer facing can be seen on the E, the wall on this side having been

of an enclosing rather than defensive nature. There is an additional wall, standing up to eight courses high, outside the main outwork on the SE but its purpose is uncertain. To the S of the outwork can be seen traces of outer wall facing, enclosing a level area 14.0m square and probably representing an annexe rather than a further defence; there is no entrance apparent. There is a broad scatter of grass-covered stones within this annexe but their purpose is obscure. To the N of the dun are several small field plots but it is not possible to determine whether they are contemporaneous with the dun or the secondary work. Surveyed at 1:10 000. (Visited by OS (TRG) 11 February 1977)

This interesting complex of structures is situated on the NW shore of the Linne Mhurich, about 420m E of Drimngall farmhouse (Campbell and Sandeman 1964). The main elements comprise a dun (I on RCAHMS 1988 plan), situated on the rocky boss that crowns the summit of an elongated coastal ridge, series of outer wall (II on plan) drawn round the shoulders and lower flanks of the ridge, and a number of rectangular stone-built houses constructed within the dun; probably associated with the houses is a series of wharves and jetties situated on the shore immediately below the ridge. The position occupied by the dun is one of considerable natural strength, the flanks of the ridge presenting steep or near-vertical rock-faces, which at the time of visit were thickly overgrown with blackthorn. From the summit knoll itself the fall of ground is as much as 25m to seaward and at least 10m on the landward side, where, before the provision of modern drainage, marshy flats would have provided further natural defence. An irregular sub-oval on plan, the dun measures 15.5m by 12m within a drystone wall about 2.8m in maximum thickness. The wall is best preserved on the SW, where it stands, on average, 1.25m above the level of the interior and at least 2.3m above the debris that has accumulated against its outer face. It appears, however, that in this sector the dun wall has been rebuilt at least once.

On the last occasion it seems possible that it was incorporated in the southernmost of the rectangular buildings in the interior, for the inner wall-face here exhibits an otherwise inexplicably sudden intake of about 0.4m, which is accompanied by a comparable inward curving of the line of the outer face, while a little way to the S the inner face of the wall makes a right-angles turn. The quality of construction in this sector of the wall lends support to such an interpretation, for above the level of 1m from the ground the outer face is much less regularly coursed and more heavily battered than in the lower portion of the wall, while, on one side, the poorer work appears to be defined by a straight-joint. Moreover, the inner face at this point, as well as being poorly coursed, gives the appearance of having been built up into the form of a rudimentary gable 1.8m high. Finally, it may be observed that the wall-head hereabouts is more heavily grass-grown than is usual for an upstanding drystone structure of prehistoric date, and in places it is covered with a considerable depth of peaty soil, as if turf had been deliberately laid upon it. The dun entrance, which is situated on the S, measures 1.05m in average width and does not appear to have been checked for a door. Approach to the entrance has been restricted, possibly in a secondary phase, by a hornwork, also of drystone construction, which springs from the dun wall just to the E of the outer door-jamb and is carried along in front of the entrance on the crest of a rock outcrop, so as to form a passage about 2m in average width and 5m long. The passage is reduced in width by a sharp inturn of the hornwork at its outer end, and the entrance mouth itself has been further constricted by what appears to be secondary blocking. Immediately S of its junction with a dun wall the outer face of the hornwork displays a curious feature; two slabs (a on plan) situated at ground level and about 0.6m apart, project at right angles for some 0.5m beyond the line of the face. The purpose of this feature is uncertain and it cannot be paralleled in any other prehistoric fortified site, but it bears a superficial resemblance to the base of an external garderobe chute, such as was provided in various medieval structures.



Dun entrance looking S

The main outer wall (II on plan) lies, for the most part, at a depth of between 1m and 3.5m below the level of the summit and between 5m and 15m distant from the wall of the dun; its purpose, apart from providing additional protection, was evidently to bring an extensive area of relatively level ground within the defences. Following a markedly rectilinear course, it sprang from the dun wall on the E and probably terminated against the base of the summit boss on the S, varying in thickness from about 1.5m to almost 3m. On the SW, in order to protect a series of lower shelves and terraces, it bifurcates, each branch in turn dividing as it approaches the cliff edge on the SE. There is a particularly well-preserved entrance on the N, 1.75m wide, the original passage having been lengthened to 2.7m by the addition of external buttresses; there is no door-check, and the blocking appears to be of recent origin, probably contemporary with the length of walling that abuts the inner wall-face nearby.



Lower enclosure entrance buttress or pier

It is possible that there was another entrance on the S, at the head of the path that obliquely ascends the precipitous SE flank of the ridge from the sea-shore. At various points in the circuit of wall II, but especially in the well-preserved stretch of outer facing to the S of the dun, there is evidence of the use of sand-and-lime mortar, but whether this represents primary construction or secondary repair cannot be determined. Two further lengths of drystone walling may be seen on the NW and NE respectively: now only a narrow band of stony debris, the former runs from the steep rock face on the shoulder of the ridge to butt against outwork II, blocking the upper end of a natural break in the crest line on that side; the latter, evidently of more substantial construction, ascends in an irregular arc from the shoreline some 50m NE of the dun towards the shelf lying immediately outside wall II. Like the modern boundary-wall that overlies it, it has incorporated rock outcrops in its course and may originally have abutted wall II, thus cutting off approach to the outer defences of the dun along the shore. In the interior of the dun there are ruined foundations of a number of rectangular buildings of drystone construction, the two that are best preserved being separated from each other by a narrow passage about 1.5m wide. The smaller, measuring about 8m by 4.7m over walls 0.6m in average thickness, lies wholly within the dun; the larger however, measuring about 11m by 5.3m, appears to overlie, or possibly reuse, the inner line of the dun wall on the E, and it is probable, as mentioned earlier, that it was the construction of a third, but even smaller, building to the S of the first that necessitated the reconstruction of the dun wall in that sector. Outside the N gable of the largest building there are the lowest of two treads of a flight of stone steps, but whether these gave access to a reused wall-head, or simply led over the tumbled wall-debris of the abandoned dun, cannot be determined.



Passage between Structures 1 and 2

The much more severely ruined foundations of a fourth rectangular stone building lie immediately to the NE of the N entrance of the outwork, while the outline of another may just be discerned within the angle of the outer wall on the SW.



Structure 4

For a distance of about 60m the shoreline below the defensive work has been revetted with boulders to form a rudimentary wharf, from which three roughly built jetties project; at its S end there is a small boulder-faced recess resembling a boat-noost. It seems probable that these coastal works were broadly contemporary with the rectangular buildings within the dun.
(Visited May 1982 RCAHMS 1988)



Shore Wall



Jetty



Boat Naust

Appendix 8: DES Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Argyll and Bute
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Connected Communities: Community Archaeology in Argyll and Ulster Project. Dun Mhuirich
PROJECT CODE:	DMH 12
PARISH:	North Knapdale
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Roddy Regan
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Kilmartin House Museum
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Survey and Excavation
NMRS NO(S):	NR78SW 3
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Dun and settlement
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	Medieval and post medieval pottery assemblage.
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NR 7228 8441
START DATE (this season)	June 2012
END DATE (this season)	June 2012
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	Survey by RCHAMS. The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. Argyll: an Inventory of the Monuments: Volume 6: Mid-Argyll and Cowal, Prehistoric and Early Historic Monuments. No. 311, p 189-190. Edinburgh.
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	The excavation and survey of Dun Mhuirich has revealed a complex well preserved site. The site likely originates in the Iron Age or possibly the early historic period although little beyond the structural evidence was uncovered for this period. The excavation did however produce occupation evidence from the 13 th to the 17 th centuries suggesting either continuous occupation or periodic use of the site between these dates. The longevity of occupation is reflected within the structural development of the site, with perhaps major reconstruction and modifications over time to the buildings and walls of the dun. The archaeological deposits within and around the structures are also well preserved, which will not only allow the understanding and interpretation of the structural sequence, but because bone survives well, will also allow the examination of diet, animal husbandry and the surrounding environment and how this may have developed from the medieval to the late medieval period. The presence of pottery within an enclosed site with several associated structures suggest a habitation of some status that was likely associated with one of the notable families present in Knapdale from the medieval period, postulated here to be the MacNeils. Potentially rich in artefacts and ecofacts any future work at the site will afford a unique opportunity to understand their development and use in medieval Argyll and its cultural resonance with other sites in western Scotland, the Hebrides and Northern Ireland.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	Further excavation
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Connected Communities Project

ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Kilmartin House Museum, Kilmartin, Argyll, PA31 8RQ
EMAIL ADDRESS:	museum@kilmartin.org
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	The archive will be deposited with Kilmartin House Museum and copies of the report lodged with WoSAS SMR, the NMRS, the Forestry Commission and OASIS database

Appendix 9: Dun Mhuirich Post Excavation Project Design and Costs

All post excavation costs will be met by the Connected Communities Project. These figures are based on the present excavation findings and will be subject to amendment following any further excavation work, when these and final publication costs will be addressed correspondingly. It is estimated the work will be completed within six months after the submission of the DSR.

i) Finds processing & cataloguing (KHM)	£500
ii) Pot Analysis (George Haggerty/Derek Hall)	£360
iii) Metal work Analysis (Dawn McLaren)	£400
iv) Faunal Analysis (AOC)	£750
v) Glass Analysis (Robin Murdoch)	£200
vi) Clay pipe Analysis (QU)	£100
vii) Charcoal identification £50 (CFA) per sample	£100
viii) Enviro Assessment (CFA)	£300
ix) C14 dates per sample x 2	£480
x) Illustration, Pottery, Worked bone, Worked stones.	£750
xi) Research and final draft	£750
xii) Management and Administration	£900
Sub Total	£5,590
VAT	£1,118
<u>Total</u>	<u>£6,708</u>