Special Auchindrain Edition

THE

KIST 83

EDITORIAL

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NHASMA has always been associated with Auchindrain (Location: Beside the A83, between Furnace and Inveraray). Our first President Marion Campbell of Kilberry played a key role in preserving it. Recently the site's history has been exhaustively researched and Bob Clark, Auchindrain's Development Manager and our guest editor, introduces what I am sure readers will discover to be a fascinating edition.

Introduction

Achadh an Droighinn/Auchindrain, just south of Inveraray in Argyll, is an example of settlement type known as a joint tenancy township. There were once more than 4,000 such townships: until the late 18th century, they were where most people in Scotland lived. The townships were a key social environment in which Gaelic language and culture developed: these helped to give township communities continuity and meaning, and to transmit a way of life from past generations.

Within a century, 1760-1860, a thousand years of tradition were swept away by agricultural improvement. The townships were what the Highland Clearances were clearing. They were what came before crofting and modern farming. Auchindrain was the last township to survive, to 1963. It is the only one to be preserved in anything like its complete and original form. Auchindrain evolved to survive, but retains the character and feel of a joint tenancy township to an extent immeasurably greater than anywhere else: elsewhere, just the walls remain.

One of the prime movers in the preservation of Auchindrain in 1964 was Miss Marion Campbell of Kilberry. Miss Campbell's forceful personality, antiquarian reputation and powerful arguments carried the day for a place she knew to be special, but there was neither the time nor the need for those involved to undertake much research into the site's history.

In a different age this deficiency had to be addressed, and from a start late in 2010 a team of specialists has been preparing a 650-page, 180,000-word Conservation Management Plan for the site. This has involved going back to first base and primary sources, and re-evaluating all previous stories and conclusions. This extended issue of Kist contains five articles drawn from this new research, and celebrates the long-established link between Auchindrain and NHASMA.

Bob Clark

AUCHINDRAIN

PIERS DIXON,
OPERATIONS MANAGER, SURVEY AND RECORDING; RCAHMS

The baile of Auchindrain is situated in the saddle of a bealach (pass) between the Leacann Water and the Douglas Water at about 75m OD in a geographically marginal location. Indeed, the very place-name Auchindrain (Achadh an Droighinn) is indicative of its marginality. The prefix Achadh means a field and has been interpreted as denoting a secondary settlement(i). High ridges to the north and south limit cultivable ground to a narrow strip barely 500m across at the march dyke with the neighbouring toun of Braleckan, and narrowing to as little as 250m at the watershed. Land suitable for cultivation is therefore limited and is mainly to be found on the south-facing slope, where the fields used for hay and forage crops up until the 1960s are to be found. In comparison, Braleckan, which marches with it on the west, is better placed lower down beside the river, where the valley is broader, with up to 1100m of cultivable ground from north to south. This geographically marginal location suggests that the Auchindrain settlement is a secondary one, perhaps growing up as an outfield improvement which was colonised from the primary settlement at Braleckan. The march between the two touns, which was marked by an earthen dyke along a minor tributary of the Leacann Water, was straightened and rebuilt as a stone dyke in the 19th century. Certainly the documentation for Auchindrain is no earlier than the 16th century, and the present lack of any archaeological features datable to the medieval period would support the thesis that it was a secondary settlement.

Evidence for prehistoric settlement is limited to Neolithic burial cairns further up the bealach, while later prehistoric settlement is

not recorded, and continuity of land-use cannot be presumed. However, the presence of Neolithic burials indicates that this is an old established settlement location, as is Achnagoul over the watershed in the Douglas Water, where there is another group of Neolithic burial cairns indicating another focus of settlement in early prehistory.

Harvest on the McCallum field at the south-west edge of Auchindrain, 1880s

What is the archaeological and historical context of Auchindrain? It should not been seen as the sole survivor township; it was not, although it is the most complete surviving example of its type. It is actually one of a widespread group of townships that adapted to the vicissitudes of the 19th century Improvements only to fail in the prolonged slump in the agricultural economy of the early 20th century. It finally failed, first as a multiple-tenancy farm in 1937 and then as a single tenancy farm in 1963, because it was no longer economically viable; many other farms failed for similar reasons in

the 20th century. Its gradual adaption of the multiple-tenancy arrangements in the 19th century to improved farming has been neglected by historians, but represents a strand of traditional rural life that survived beyond the Improvements. In this sense Auchindrain is a worthy representative of traditional rural life in Highland Scotland.

To put it in perspective, other townships survived into the 20th century in Argyll and in the central Highlands of Perthshire too. The support of the Breadalbane estate for their small tenants helped preserve some townships into the 20th century in Tayside, such as Camsernay. Camserney Longhouse was once part of a township settlement, but it and the peat house are the sole survivors of the traditional buildings there from the 19th-century township. A rash of clustered townships along the north bank of the Tay also survived into the 20th century, and present parallels that should be studied. Alternatively the allocation of crofts, as at Moirlanich, provided another environment in which a small tenant might construct a farmhouse with traditional methods, many examples of which may be seen in the crofting townships along the west coast of Scotland. Other examples of townships surviving the 19th century in mid-Argyll have been suggested(ii), for example, Drymfern and Tulloch in Glenaora near Inveraray. On the islands, Keils on Jura, for example, is a clustered-township of similar type, whose buildings have the same cruck-framed architecture of early 19th century date to Auchindrain, but without the modernisation at the turn of the 20th century. The farm was a single tenancy when recorded by RCAHMS the 1960s and the buildings once used as outbuildings are now neglected and falling down.(iii) Letterfearn on the south shore of Loch Duich was a popular tourist spot for boat trippers who wished to see a clustered township with traditional thatched buildings in the 19th century, but the township buildings have since been modernised.

Closer to home, Achnagoul, a few miles from Auchindrain, is a village of Lowland analogues with rows of houses and yards around a space or green, which was also in multiple tenancy in the late-19th century. Reduced to a single tenant, 'Snoojer' McVicar, in the mid-20th century, its houses have since been sold by the estate and modernised, and the farmland is worked from elsewhere, just as it is at Auchindrain. By comparison, in Lowland parts of Scotland RCAHMS has recorded about a hundred villages in its Historic Land-use Assessment(iv) that display medieval origins in the street layout of the yards and houses, such as Duncanstone in Aberdeenshire,(v) but few are still farming communities, or preserve traditional buildings.

Shetland is notable for having a number of clustered townships that were still occupied in the 20th century. Architecturally they are very different, and the Crofting Act provided an environment that took the townships on a different trajectory, the vast majority of small tenants in Shetland becoming crofters under the Act. Although South Voe Crofting Museum is now viewed as a croft, it was in fact part of a small clustered township in the late 19th century with unenclosed fields. These were turned into crofts and the land divided accordingly between the crofters. However, the farming economy of Southvoe bears little comparison with Auchindrain, with no transhumance, and fishing as an alternative source of income.

Auchindrain is a uniquely well-preserved example of an early 19th century multiple-tenancy township with relict features that originate in the 18th century if not before, including the very layout of the buildings, the platform kiln, kailyards, head-dykes, drove ways, outfield rig, and, at some distance, the shieling-huts on the Douglas Water.

Auchindrain is one of a little-researched group of touns that underwent a degree of improvement with the enclosure of the fields and the modernisation of the farmsteads and yet retained its multiple-tenancy structure until the early 20th century. Managed by the Auchindrain Trust as a folk museum since the last tenant left in 1963, its buildings are Listed Category A (see above).

It typifies in layout and size the clustered toun common to the south and east fringes of the Highlands.

The farmsteads retain to an unusual extent the distinctive character of early 19th century buildings of Argyll and Perthshire, with thatched, cruck-framed byre-dwellings and barns, despite being reroofed with corrugated iron in the early 20th century, and stackyards.

ACHDN.M: Bell a'Phuill's House

The quality and variety of the cruck-framed cottages and outbuildings, are a particularly outstanding group and rare group of the houses of the rural poor. Bell Pols's house, with its load-bearing mortared stone walls, differs architecturally from the rest and is reputed to be a rare example of a 19th century poor house.

There is a variety of architectural details in the houses, including different styles of byre-stall, box-beds, full and scarf-jointed crucks, including end-crucks, piended roofs and gable-ends in the same building, and studded partition walls.

It and the nearby Achnagoul were visited by Queen Victoria and the Duke of Argyll in 1875 as examples of primitive multiple-tenancy farms.

SUMMARY

Auchindrain is a township of pre-Improvement origin overlaid by some Improvement characteristics rather than a pre-improvement survivor. The completeness of the township is a key part of its importance, as is the sheer range and quantity of vernacular structures, but there is also the unusual possibility of seeing and interpreting it in the wider setting of its field-systems and shielings.

Site plan of east township at Auchindrain (RCAHMS 1992, 458-9; SC727345)

I. *Nicolaison, W F H, 1976, Scottish place names: their study and significance, Batsford, 127, 141; Fraser, I A, 1986, Norse and Celtic place-names around the Dornoch Firth, in Baldwin, J R, (ed.), Firthlands of Ross and Sutherland, 27*

II. *Bob Clark pers comm*

III. *Mark Holden, T G, 1998, The Archaeology of Scottish Thatch, Technical Advice Note 13, Conservation Research and Education Division, Historic Scotland, Edinburgh*

IV. *www.hla.rcahms.gov.uk*

V. *RCAHMS, 2007, In the Shadow of Bennachie: a field archaeology of Donside, Aberdeenshire, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Edinburgh*

The People of Auchindrain

Jill Bowis

One aspect of the recent research work at Auchindrain has been to learn about the people of the township. This has been an intimate journey into just a few family histories, where lives and records have brought an immense new understanding of the dynamic and survival of the township. The work has shown just how powerful genealogical records can be in supporting other research on the buildings and the unique survival of the joint tenancy into the second half of the 20th century.

In genealogical terms the project has been a one place study, the aim being to learn as much as possible about each individual who lived or worked in the discreet geographical unit of the township. The starting point was data from the censuses, ten-yearly population surveys taken from 1801 in which an enumerator systematically recorded the occupants of each household. The first census that gives names is 1841, and all the detail has been

extracted from this and the following 7 censuses to 1911, the last released.

The censuses do not only inform us of the people who were living here, but also give details about the township's buildings. Enumerators were methodical, starting at one end of the township and going to each house in turn: this shows how many houses were being used at that date, and if there any are uninhabited. Buildings not being used as accommodation were not included. If several distinct households shared the same building this was made clear. From 1861 an important detail is available: a record of the number of rooms with windows. From this it is possible to plot the growth and development of the houses, and to compare this with the buildings themselves, some still mostly untouched since the 1800's. Having identified the households and the order in which they were recorded, and related this information to the map and archaeological evidence, it is then possible to allocate each family to an existing building or the remains of a building: it is such an exciting process, to bring the people back to their homes.

Auchindrain was a small township, with a maximum population of 74 in 1851, but it was one small community in the large and busy parish of Inveraray, and this has its disadvantages for the researcher. Inveraray is very fortunate to have more written records than many Argyll parishes, starting way back in the 1600s, but there may only be one or two records from Auchindrain to find in any one year. The script is a challenge and some records are minimal, but they have brought to light interesting features like the way the name of the place has varied. For example, a record of the baptism of Archibald Campbell in 1775 gives us a rare instance of the English version of the name - Thornfield, and the 1841 census gives support to the Gaelic pronunciation of Achadh an

Droighinn: the enumerator records the name of the place as Achandryan.

There are many personal stories. One of the township's notable characters has always been "Bell Poll" (or "Bell Foll", if you use the Gaelic phoneme). The story previously told in museum interpretation about Isabella McCallum was one of poverty, toil and trouble, but the records and research have given us quite a different perspective and allowed us to peel back the layers of her life. She was born in 1822 in Kilmorich Parish at the head of Loch Fyne, the daughter of Peter McCallum and Mary McKellar. The family was at Auchindrain by 1841, but it is not yet clear if they arrived around the same time as the younger Ivor (later Edward) and John who became tenants in the late 1820s or 1830s, or a bit later. Bella's death certificate says Peter was a Sherriff's Officer, and the family may not have moved to Auchindrain until his retirement. Certainly, in 1841 Bella was living in the east township and working as a domestic servant for her cousin Duncan Munro, one of the younger joint tenants, and Mary and Peter (recorded as an agricultural labourer) had a house in the west township. Peter died before 1851, when she is recorded as living with her mother and a young 3 year old cousin, Mary McPhail. Mary McCallum died in 1857, and in 1861 Bella was living on her own and back working as a domestic servant. In 1871 she is 48, with no work and described as a cottar, and still living alone in the same place: it is the same in 1881, but now described as being a "former" domestic servant. In 1891 things are definitely looking up as she is now an annuitant: that is, living off independent means; did she, perhaps, benefit from the estate of one of her cousins? She died on 26th April 1915, aged 93, having lived long enough into the 20th century for stories about her to survive. Alistair MacKellar of Furnace tells how his Mother remembered her as a kindly and hospitable old lady; Willie Weir, recounting what he heard from

Eddie MacCallum in the 1950s, gives a different picture: "she was as black as tar from the smoke... she'd put a spell on you". As a single woman without an economic role in the community, it is possible that she was someone who learned the lore of the herbs and the old ways, she might well have been a useful babysitter, nurse, and ear to listen to everyone's woes, and helping out with household chores. As such she is likely to have been a powerful character, which may have led to some of the folklore about her. One of the highlights of her later life was to have been on the Duke's lists for free tea and coal.

One mystery recently resolved has been Isabella McCallum's byename "Bell Poll" (or "Bell Foll"). Byenames are a feature of Gaelic society where many people share the same first name and/or surname (1850-1900, Auchindrain had at least ten Isabellas including two Isabella McCallums), and this one came down through history as meaning "muddy Bella", which was always understood as referring to her as a person. Now the true story has emerged. By 1861, Bella was living in the small house by the burn, which now bears her name. Today, it is surrounded by grassland and trees, with a bridge nearby taking a footpath over the burn. However, as we learned from Willie Weir who worked at Auchindrain in the 1950s and 1960s, in the past the bridge was a ford where the cattle crossed the burn on their way up to "The Heather", the outrun grazing land south of the township. And so, with the help of the Gaelic scholars at Sabhal Mor Ostaig, all became clear: the ford must have been wet and muddy for much of the year, and this Isabella McCallum became Bell a'Phuill, Bella who lives by the muddy place. When Gaelic ceased to be the first language at Auchindrain the byename crossed over phonetically into English, but its full meaning was forgotten.

Being able to collect such detailed information across the decades is building up a strong picture of the demography of the

population. It is notable that the community seems to have been a strong and healthy one, with a significant proportion of working men throughout the middle of the 1800s. Maybe this active workforce helped to keep the tenancy viable, the land productive and the vulnerable of the community fed and housed, while other communities were less able to pay their rent or feed their families.

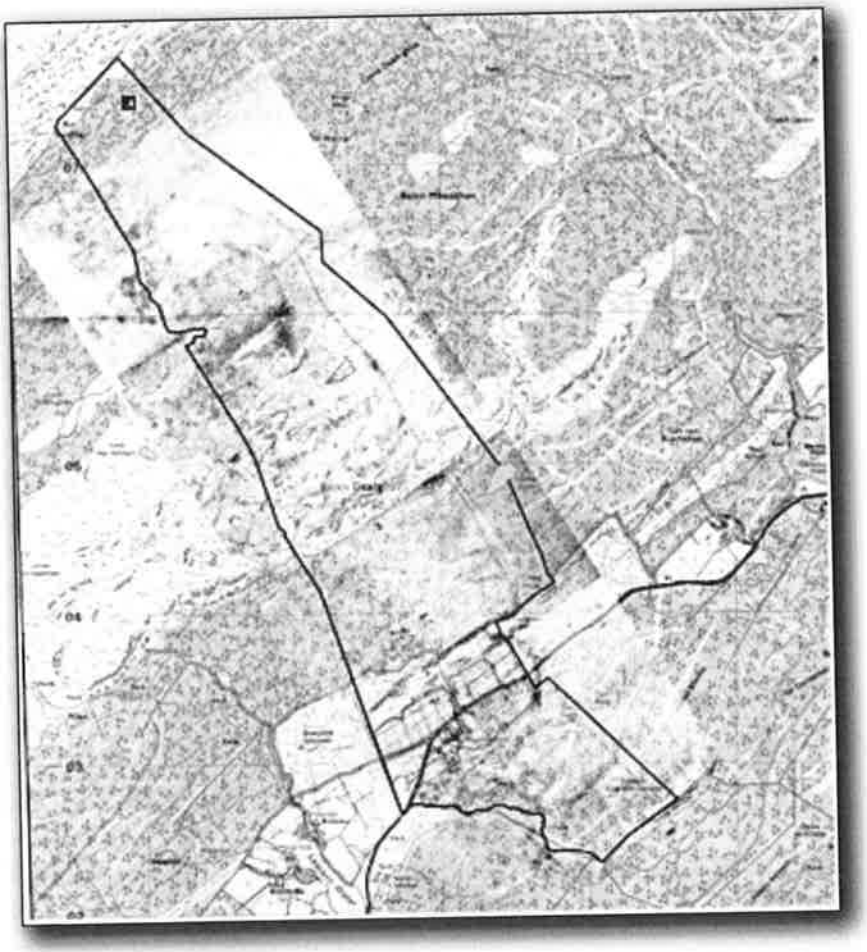
The Population Project at Auchindrain is still very much ongoing, although not full time and with much left to learn about the township's community and survival. We welcome all contributions and contacts - each one is deeply valued. If you want to explore more of the families please take a look at the People website:

Auchindrain Hay Harvest, 1940s

www.highlandlife.org.uk/achindrain.

Auchindrain and Agricultural Improvement

Bob Clark



Extent of Auchindrain...Langlands 1789 plan overlaid on OS Explorer 360

The picture presented at Auchindrain for many years has been that the township somehow survived agricultural improvement largely unchanged, only to be discovered and preserved in the 1960s. Recent research has provided a very different, more credible and and actually more interesting story. Whilst Auchindrain retains the feel and character of a pre-improvement joint tenancy township to an extent immeasurably greater than anywhere else, at the same time it is also clear that it did undergo agricultural improvement.

The story of rural change in Mid Argyll starts around 1750, with efforts by the 4th Duke of Argyll to diversify his sources of income into industry rather than being dependent solely upon agricultural rents. Efforts to improve farming followed, and in 1789 the noted land surveyor and improver George Langlands was engaged to survey the "farms" on the Duke's Inveraray estate. The resulting plans, bound into a large volume(i) from which some pages have unfortunately been excised, include one for Auchindrain ("Langlands 1789").
Langlands' proposals for Auchindrain, which were not implemented for reasons we now probably understand, were for the erection of 12 houses and the creation of 24 fields. These, however, overlie a land survey that provides a picture of the township's layout at the time.

After Langlands, the next large-scale map of the township is the First Edition Ordnance Survey, surveyed in 1871-72 ("OS 1871"). There are both big differences and marked similarities between the two, and studying these has been the key to understanding how agricultural improvement affected Auchindrain. OS 1871 recognisably shows the 2011 township layout, buildings and landscape features: some buildings have been lost, others are

ruined and there was one addition in the 1950s, but the picture is familiar.

The arable landscape seen by George Langlands in 1789 would have been worked runrig: a mass of small strips of land – the rigs – snaking this way and that with the geography. An RAF photographic reconnaissance image of Auchindrain from 1946, unfortunately not suitable for reproduction at small size, shows an area the south of the township that was once cultivated runrig but which by 1871 was pasture. Around a quarter of this field survives within the museum boundary, but the remainder long ago became plantation forestry.
North, east and west of the township, the kenspeckle infield that would have been seen by Langlands has been replaced by an improved landscape of small but regularly-shaped fields bisected by straight drainage channels. At the same time, the random-scatter arrangement of buildings is recognisably similar to what it was in 1789 – there are just more of them.

Three strands help develop understanding. The first is the general situation in agriculture at the time, details of which can be found in the Old and New Statistical Accounts. There was broad consensus that in areas such as Argyll changes to traditional farming and tenancy arrangements would improve the incomes and the lives of the people, and over time this became an unstoppable process that embraced everywhere and everyone. Despite this, the township remained a joint tenancy – very much an exception to the general trend that saw this old model replaced by crofts and single-tenant farms. It is difficult to imagine this being permitted if the community had been unwilling to change voluntarily.

Secondly, there a fascinating account in Queen Victoria's Diary of her brief visit to the "primitive villages" of Auchindrain and

Achnagoul on 25th September 1875.(ii) This incorporates an extended explanation of runrig provided by her host, the 8th Duke of Argyll. In this, the Duke notes that:

> *... about 1847...the families were persuaded with much difficulty to give up this old semi-barbarous system and to divide the arable land into fixed divisions one being assigned to each tenant, so that he could cultivate on an improved system.*

This appears to date the enclosure of the arable land to create the small fields seen on OS 1871 to the 1840s, and suggests that at least to an extent the change was by agreement, rather than imposed.

Finally, there is much to be learned from the detail of the outcomes of the reorganisation. The Argyll Estate archives include a series of marked-up copies of the 1871 OS, produced in the late 1880s or early 1890s, to record tenants' landholdings.(iii) At Auchindrain, the annotations make it possible to see how the arable land was at that time allocated.

Field allocations, around 1890 (redrawn from original)

The land on the steep but reasonably well-drained and sunny brae-face below the Creag Mhor ridge north of Auchindrain is clearly divided into seven fields. On the more level but less flat, and much wetter, valley floor it looks at first as though there is a division into eight, but mid 20th century information(iv) is that the field at map top right marked "in 5" was in reality not workable. The marked-up map dates to a period when the township had five tenants but had recently had six: the fields formerly used by Sinclair are "now 5" (which is taken as indicating that the five tenants shared this land), as are the apportionments available for a seventh tenant. Fourteen small fields allocated in pairs indicates seven tenants, and the only time that Auchindrain is known to have had seven tenants was in the 1840s. As an aside, it is interesting to note that back in 1789 Langlands had proposed building 12 new houses and had marked out 24 fields – 12 on the brae-face, and 12 on the valley floor: it looks very much as though ultimately some aspects of his scheme were implemented, but for a smaller number of tenants and without affecting the buildings.

The small area marked on the map as "McG" is the croft held as a sub-tenancy (in other words, from the township not the Duke) by Neil McGugan: this had been created by enclosing the east end of the area of arable to the south, the rest of which was set to pasture sometime between 1789 and 1871.

The conclusion from all of this is that Auchindrain abandoned runrig, enclosed and started to improve its arable land in the 1840s. And the resulting small fields certainly are, at least to an extent, "improved": they contain no visible trace of rigs, and are of a size sufficient to enable them to be worked efficiently with horses and post-improvement implements.

Extract frm Langlands 1789, highlighting the line of the burn through the township

The fields are bisected by natural watercourses that have clearly been straightened, widened and deepened to form drainage channels. The improved drainage is apparent both on the brae-face and on the valley floor. Interpreting Langlands is not always easy, but the heavy lines marked on the 1789 extract indicate the location and extent of the Allt a'Mhuilinn, the burn running through the township, as they were in 1789: two branches, one draining the field known as The Muileann (the line of which remains in the landscape), the other flowing out of the land east of the settlement.

Extract from OS 1871, highlighting the line of the burn (bottom left) and the new drainage ditches

Moving to the second extract, from the OS 1871, this shows things very much as they now remain. The heavy lines mark first the meandering course of the original burn and then the straight lines of a system of new drains that extended east beyond Auchindrain into Killian. Whilst one township alone might have worked to upgrade its own land, a major new drain running from one holding into the next does look like a planned improvement project.

The conclusion is that by the late 1840s the Auchindrain inbye land had been enclosed and at least to an extent improved. The New Statistical Account for Inveraray, written in the early 1840s, notes:

> *It is only a few years since, that such encouragement has been given to the tenant to drain or fence his lands. Now the proprietor encourages the tenants, by opening drains which they close, building dikes the stones of which they collect...*

I *Plans of Farms, etc, Inveraray Estate, 1789: Argyll Estate Archives, Inveraray Castle*

II *More Leaves from a Life in the Highlands: Queen Victoria, 1884*

III *A copy of the relevant map is held at Auchindrain for research and reference purposes*

IV *Information from Eddie MacCallum, son of the last tenant of Auchindrain*

The Last Century or so of Farming at Auchindrain

Gavin Sprott

The Auchindrain fank, 2011

The last century or so of farming at Auchindrain may be considered to have begun sometime between the late 1840s and the 1870s, with the building of a fank (marked as "sheepfold" on the map) at the edge of the outrun north of the township. The fank shows two stages of construction: a main body, and an add-on for a dipping troch: dipping sheep became common from the 1870s, so a fank built without a dipper is from an earlier time, but at Auchindrain this is unlikely to have been before the arable land

was enclosed, most likely in the 1840s. This watershed marked an advance into a new regime dominated by sheep husbandry.

The probability is that the switch in animal husbandry was part of an improvement deal reached between the 8th Duke and his tenants, to re-stock with the newly-improved Linton or Blackface breed, kept as wedders to produce wool and mutton, or ewes, to produce lambs, wool and eventually mutton for the developing urban market. There was probably a similar shift in emphasis with cattle. In the old way, beasts for the cattle trade were not necessarily an end in themselves but the product of having the cows in calf to get their milk(i) - part of the character of pre-improvement farming was that animals were kept for their produce rather than eating them direct. In the bigger picture this is a more economical way of producing food, but in the mid-19th century that was not as commercially rewarding.

From about 1880 the shrinkage towards the lone tenancy of Eddie MacCallum started. Within twenty-five years, the tenancies of Sinclair, Stewart and McKenzie, and the "croft" sub-tenancy of McGugan all went. The Great War lifted farming out of the doldrums but the abolition of the Corn Production Act in 1921 destabilised farming again and ushered in a renewed and crushing depression. Indeed, it was so bad and the value of land dropped so much that many estates broke up, and the movement towards a significant owner-occupation in farms began. Those estates that remained were just happy to survive.

It was in this period, in 1925, that Duncan and Alastair Munro left. The surviving documentation reveals a very labour-intensive level of husbandry, and persistent habits of commonty, for the whole stock of sheep and the Highland bull were valued and that value split into third shares.(ii) There was a waygoing valuation of crops,

(iii) but in the way that Auchindrain worked a good portion of these would have been used as fodder. The corn was cut with a reaper: for such a small area a binder was obviously not worth the expense or bother. Conversely, the considerable work of gathering and binding every sheaf by hand was the penalty of a small-scale holding. This would continue to the end of Auchindrain as a farm.

ACHDN.A, Eddie's House, around 1907: Jock, Eddie & Neil McCallum

Further, it is the Duke who is described as taking over stock from the Munros as outgoing tenants,(iv) and the cheque – £614.14s.3d for sheep and bull – comes from the estate.(v) With farming in such a state, that could have been an impossible sum for the two remaining tenants, Edward McCallum and Duncan "Stoner" Munro. Even 30 years later the rent was only £26 15s.(vi) To keep the enterprise afloat, the estate may have become a sleeping partner. In 1937, old Stoner Munro died, and within a few months his son "Cally Stoner" (Malcolm Archibald Munro) had agreed

with Eddie MacCallum that Auchindrain "could not provide a living for two families",(vii) and taken his young family off to a tenancy elsewhere.

Bella and friend, feeding the hens outside Stoner's House, early 1930s

Willie Weir(viii) came to work at Auchindrain in 1956, just before he was 15. He already knew many of the aspects of the work – he brought his own four dogs - and what he did not know Eddie MacCallum would teach him in the next seven years. He looks back on this time with pleasure, for this was when he courted and married his wife Ann and when they started a family. But his memory confirms a life of continuous work. There was always something demanding to be done. Even if there was sometimes the luxury of a leisurely pace, and interludes of fun, that was the character of the old-style farming. There were virtually no holidays or days off.

Willie Weir and son David, outside the New House, summer 1964

The work was only partly relieved by technology. Certainly, a reaper was an

advance on taking the crop down with the scythe. The Dux plough used by Eddie MacCallum was as efficient as a horse plough would get. The hay turner and rake would make harvest

Eddie MacCallum with horses Rona and Polly on the potato spinner; late 1950s

easier, especially in a wet climate. The potato digger would also speed that harvest, and the turnip chopper would be much quicker than heaving away with a hand splitter. But the sheep were still clipped by hand, on turf stools in the enclosure by Bell a'Phuill's House. There was a herd of around 30 cross shorthorns destined for the Lowland meat market and several hand-milked dairy cows. The peats were only given up after the year Willie started. That alone was a very time-consuming job. The cattle no longer had to

be droved to Lochgilphead or Inverary, but went down the road in a lorry.
There were also throw-backs to really old skills and methods. Feeding the grain crop direct to the beasts as winter fodder has an old provenance in that district.(ix) There was an intermediate stage in the harvesting process unknown in the Lowlands, of hutting the sheaves, that is taking about 9 stooks (each of 6 sheaves) and combining them into a miniature ruck about 7'-8' high. One might guess that if they had to be cut green, they would continue to "win" or ripen better this way. Although the sheep were dipped, a form of smearing was continued by running a streak of a mixture "that smelt like creosote" (traditionally a mixture of nicotine juice and thin tar) down their backs when they were clipped to keep the ticks at bay. The skill of working with turf as a building material had continued in maintaining some of the dykes – 2 covers every 3 years, lifted from the adjacent ground. Produce - milk and potatoes - was sold locally, at the road-end, Furnace and Inverary.

There were also latter-day nods to modernity. Seed was not saved from the crop, but came from Sinclair and McGill in Greenock. A lorry-load of timothy (top-class hay) was got each year from the Carse of Stirling for fodder. And an astonishing leap into modernity, in 1961 Eddie McCallum got a Ferguson TEF20 tractor. By then, it was far from the latest thing, but still a very sound and effective machine, and with it came a mounted plough. But as they discovered, when it came to working any of the existing machinery, it was no more than an iron horse.

This was the age of the post-war agricultural new dawn. The spirit of the war-time deal with the agricultural community included no going back to the bad old days of depression and government inaction. There was a kind of semi-nationalisation of farming via Agriculture Acts (1947-8) and intervention payments. The farmers

still ran the means of production, but the government called the shots.

ACHDN.Z, the New House, 1954

Could Auchindrain have continued? The estate must have thought so, and provided the New House, part of that optimistic and more generous attitude of post-war years. But realistic investment was required, particularly in plant for housing cattle and generating winter feed, if nothing else to cut corners in the unremitting labour required. A stock of 500 ewes and stirks might have provided a living then, but as the influx of artificial textiles destroyed the value of wool, there was nothing the Wool

Marketing Board could do to stem this tide. Auchindrain might have survived as a "unit" for another 20 years, to be amalgamated with its neighbours. But considering that in the early 1960s the much bigger outruns of Braleckan and Brenchoille, and Killean and Achnagoul all went under plantation, there was no prospect that Auchindrain could have been an exception. In 1963 Eddie MacCallum the Elder elected for a well-earned retirement, and Eddie the Younger pursued a different livelihood. They were sensible decisions, but it was *the end o ane auld sang.*

I. *Smith, John, General View of the Agriculture of the County of Argyle, 1813, p241*

II. *Auchindrain Archive, A5, 15/5/1925*

III. *Auchindrain Archive, A10*

IV. *Auchindrain Archive, A45*

V. *Auchindrain Archive, A8*

VI. *Auchindrain Archive, A57*

VII. *Oral History Recording at Auchindrain: Flora & Morag Munro 2011*

VIII. *I am grateful to Willie and Ann Weir for their account of their time at Auchindrain, which provided the answers to many questions*

IX. *Smith, John, General View of the Agriculture of the County of Argyle, 1813, p86*

Achadh an Droighinn

Professor Hugh Cheape
University of the Highlands & Islands, Sabhal Mor Ostaig

'Auchindrain' is a farming township site with original buildings preserved in situ within a landscape many of whose elements still reflect changing patterns of settlement over a very long time period. The place-name Achadh an Droighinn has been rendered into English as Auchindrain to 'simplify' the spelling and consequently to lose touch with what we presume was an original name, describing the 'Thorn Field' or 'Bramble Field'. It appears that the 'English' spelling has been used consistently for a long time and that there would be no real advantage in adopting a Gaelic orthography and spelling which may in fact seldom if ever have been used in written form in the past.

A Sense of Time and Place

Auchindrain township enshrined a Highland community set in a landscape identified almost exclusively by Gaelic place names. Toponymy (i.e. the study of place names) tells us that Auchindrain was in the heart of the historical Gaidhealtachd and experienced less acculturation or adulteration such as characterises the areas of culture contact with the Norse to the west and north. Argyll is distinguished in linguistic terms as probably the first 'homeland' of Gaelic in approximately the 5th century and as the source of much of the literary material in the 'Book of the Dean of Lismore', assembled under the patronage of the Campbells of Argyll. The district was the home of the 'author' of the first printed book in Scottish Gaelic, Bishop John Carswell, whose translation and editing of Knox's 'Book of Common Order' was published in 1567. This text adopts the literary 'dialect' of Ireland and tells us

that educated Highlanders in Argyll had a knowledge of Ireland and Irish literature. Argyll was the first area in Scotland in which the Welsh scholar, Edward Lhuyd (1660-1709), collected words and terminology towards his comparative study into the 'celtic' languages of the British Isles.(i)(ii) He visited Inverary, met a number of ministers who were the best Gaelic scholars of the day and listed many words from the Argyllshire dialect.

In the 17th century, the role of the church towards Gaelic was promoted by the Synod of Argyll, in trying to obtain sufficient number of qualified Gaelic-speaking ministers, and in seeing through a Gaelic translation of the Shorter Catechism (1653) and Gaelic metrical version of the first fifty Psalms (1659).(iii) Before the 1939-45 War, there were well over 20,000 Gaelic speakers in Argyllshire and census figures demonstrate that until recently, Scottish Gaelic was still a lingua franca. The report of the Home Board of the Church of Scotland to the General Assembly in 1944 shows that Gaelic was used in public worship over most areas of the Highlands and Islands into the 20th century, demonstrating too that the kirk played a vital role in the sustaining of the language. The report stated that in the Presbytery of Inverary, Gaelic was still considered necessary for the parishes of Kilmartin, Glenaray and Inveraray in which Auchindrain is included.(iv) The Gaelic language therefore is visible but not necessarily audible and may be claimed to have a heightened significance in Mid Argyll.

THE NAMING OF THINGS

The terminology used in everyday life, for processes inside and outside the house, for objects, whether tools, furnishings, buildings, clothing, food and so on, for the care of animals and for personal wellbeing, has generally been poorly recorded and defined, particularly as Gaelic has so recently been falling out of use on the Mainland. For one generation after the middle of the

20th century, it was second nature, and for the next, it had disappeared.(v) Dictionaries as a ready source of information on Gaelic terminology have tended to be stronger on the intellectual and metaphysical than the physical, reflecting perhaps the scholarly and detached world of the lexicographer.

Some work has been done coincidentally to collect local dialect terms and 'technical' terminology – the language of 'material culture'. A study of wool-working and housekeeping, for example, made by an Argyllshire woman at the turn of the 20th century, was published as a Mod Prize Essay and reflected renewed standards of literacy. The essay, which was given the first prize, was 'For the best Collection of Technical Terms in Gaelic for Calanas – all wool work from the sheep to the cloth, including native dyes, housewifery and dairy terms'.(vi) A further Mod prize essay was published in 1933 and preserves a detailed account of wool-working by Roderick Campbell of Minard. Evidently this describes the succession of processes – 'smearing' (as the precursor of dipping), clipping at the fank, washing the wool, dying, combing and carding, spinning, weaving and waulking – as was the practice in Argyll.(vii) Other printed sources are available but have not yet been considered by scholars of the language; Rev Charles M Robertson (1885-1927), from Strathtay and latterly minister in Islay, was the author of important papers on Scottish Gaelic dialects and made an extensive collection of Gaelic 'technical terms' which was also awarded a Mod prize. He distinguishes some of the terminology as belonging to Argyll.(viii)

Gaelic is just below the surface in Auchindrain and is worth raising to a more audible and visible level. One or two instances emerge, such as the byname 'Stoner' in the township community translates the Gaelic Clachair. The first building surveys of the RCAHMS in the 1960s recorded 'The Room' for the parlour space or best room

in the house (for example, recorded in Building W in 1967), almost certainly reflecting the universal use of An Rùm in Gaelic. The name Taigh Mhic Coiseam was applied to a small dwelling and reminds us of a name traditionally associated with Macintyres of Craignish.(ix) Taigh Mhic Coiseam may also have an association with evictions of the 1780s. Such instances are good evidence for the prevalence of Gaelic and for the use of Gaelic to take the story of Auchindrain further back, to gain insights into the texture of daily life, the description of incidents and episodes, to taste the fickleness of the weather and to understand the naming of things.

CO-DHÙNADH (CONCLUSION) - A FINAL WORD

Auchindrain is a vivid reminder of what must have been a self-sufficient but a sometimes troubled culture, and of a life lived close to nature with, just below the 'surface', a 'vocabulary' through which people transacted their lives. The current process of assessing and 'defining' Auchindrain is a dynamic one which serves, as the sociological discourse claims, to 'confer meaning on the landscape'; it thus becomes a 'symbolic environment', defined from a particular angle and through a filter of beliefs and values. Such a construct should be recognised rather than avoided since the same sort of 'cultural expression' is evident in Gaelic language and literature, with different sets of values but equally a part-reflection of a contemporary society.

For the purposes of a conservation strategy, Auchindrain forms an historic environment of great rarity and (today perhaps) of unique value. As a preserved historic settlement in its more or less original form, it has an immense advantage over almost every other open-air museum in Britain, Ireland, Europe and North America in so far as that its buildings have not been moved or reconstructed (with one or two exceptions of forensic rebuilding). As a nucleated

farming township of joint- or multiple-tenancy tenurial status, it transcends the boundaries of Inverary parish and Argyll to be a uniquely surviving example of what existed as a social and economic norm throughout Scotland. It offers therefore unique opportunities to explore a 'traditional' way of life of a pre- as well as post-improvement landscape, and challengingly through Gaelic as well as Scots language and literature.

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V. *see, for example, Holmer, Nils M, The Gaelic of Kintyre. Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies 1962*

VI. *Grant, K W, Gaelic Technical Terms connected with Calanas, etc., The Celtic Monthly Volume 9 (1901), 174*

VII. *Caimbeul, Ruairidh, An Clo Mor, An Gaidheal 28 (1933), 186-187*

VIII. *Robertson, Charles M, Gaelic Technical Terms, An Deò ghrèine Volume I (1906), and An Deò ghrèine Volume II (1906-1907), 84-86 et seq.*

IX. *Mactavish, Duncan C, The Commons of Argyll. Name Lists of 1685 and 1692. Lochgilphead 1935, 36*

The end of a long day's haymaking ... John Luke, Willie Weir and Doodles the cat, outside the New House, summer 1964

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