



Archaeology for Communities
in the Highlands

Black Isle Heritage Memories: Remembering Your Community



Susan Kruse and Cait McCullagh

Preface

Local people are an under-rated resource for research into the historic environment – the archaeology and historic buildings that fill today’s landscape with resonances of the past.

Discover how the Black Isle Heritage Memories Project has collected people’s stories, observations, knowledge and insights into their local area in order to enhance and add to the record of their historic environment.

We hope that reading about how easily and effectively peoples’ accumulated recollections and knowledge can be recorded and used to document a changing landscape will inspire you to do the same where you live.

Our project has ensured that local communities’ awareness of their place - day in, day out, through every season, across the decades and generations - is valued alongside scholarly research and archaeological investigation. We are sure that you will agree the project shows the vital contribution that local people can make to understanding the interaction of people and place over time.

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Allangrange House



The site of Tore Castle

The Black Isle Heritage Memories Project

The people who know their community best are those who live there. This should be obvious, but is all too often forgotten by archaeologists when attempting to create a picture of settlement use and activity in a landscape.

While there have been many examples of asking people to contribute memories about customs, peoples and practices in the past, there have been very few asking people about the physical remains of their communities. Sites and buildings can disappear, or be altered, or be replaced by newer structures. Sometimes buildings or even landscapes can be deliberately designed to look older. Sometimes even large walls or buildings can disappear in a very short time.

ARCH (Archaeology for Communities in the Highlands) rolled out a pilot project in

2009/2010 to determine how best to record and make available memories of sites, features and buildings in three communities on the western end of the Black Isle in Easter Ross. It is an area which has been inhabited for at least 9,000 years, and has seen numerous changes in living memory as the growth of nearby Inverness creates many building pressures. Thanks to funding from Awards for All and the European Community Highland LEADER 2007-2013 Programme, facilitated group sessions were held in Culbokie, Tore, and Avoch, with additional recording sessions for some key individuals. There was an enthusiastic response in all three communities, attracting a mixture of older members of the community and people who had moved there in more recent times.

From the beginning, attention was focussed on how best to make the results of the



'the attitude of all attending – positive, friendly, humorous, feeling of community was much appreciated.'

project available to as many people as possible. The Highland Council's Historic Environment Record (HER) is a database of all known sites, monuments, and historic buildings, and is available for reference at the council headquarters in Inverness or online at <http://her.highland.gov.uk>. The HER in turn links to the Scottish equivalent CANMORE held by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS; www.rcahms.gov.uk). Each site or monument has a unique number in the HER and in CANMORE, allowing additional information to be added when it becomes available. Both the HER and CANMORE (via PASTMAP) allow the information to be overlaid on a map or to be viewed as a list.

During the facilitated 'Remembering Your Community' sessions, some people volunteered to be scribes, and wrote down the memories in a structured format, listing location, condition of the remains, local names, HER number, etc. to allow later entry into the HER. The project also had additional sessions to provide basic introductions to using the internet for those who wished it, as well as a session on exploring the HER. The aim was to enable people to add information to the HER record themselves once the project had finished. In addition, results were posted on the ARCH website (www.archhighland.org.uk), which also has a forum, inviting information and contributions. A small display of results was also put together, which toured the local communities. As a final strand in the project, some members of the groups went to visit schools to talk to the children a bit

more about physical remains in their communities.

The project involved a mixture of 'high tech' and 'low tech' equipment and approaches. At the facilitated sessions, the Ordnance Survey 1st edition maps, surveyed at a scale of 25" to a mile in 1871 were used, along with old photographs, to prompt memories and provide locations. Alongside this, the funding allowed us to purchase digital recording equipment, and – equally important – the services of a transcriber, so that key individuals could have their wide knowledge recorded. All tapes and transcriptions have been offered to Am Baile, Highland Council's online learning and resource archive (www.ambaile.org.uk). The project also provided training in how to use the digital equipment as part of an oral history project. The recording equipment is now available for loan to other heritage projects, with preference being given to those on the Black Isle. The maps will remain in each community, at a suitable location such as a community centre or heritage group.

During the facilitated 'low tech' sessions, participants were asked to recall sites, buildings or landscape features which were no longer there, or which had been altered, or which were new. Numbered dots were placed on the map at these locations, and recorded on a sheet by the scribes. At least two scribes were working at the same time, in the hope that they would capture and record all the information in the fast flowing conversation. Everyone – and especially the scribes – was encouraged to ask for clarification or details.

Kilcoy Cairn



The project created a real buzz of interest, with all three groups wanting more sessions at the end, and going away to investigate how this might be possible. The social aspect of the sessions was also important, mixing long time residents and incomers, and providing an opportunity for informal reminiscence over maps and cups of tea.

The final report of the project provided a permanent document of the entirety of the contribution that the communities have made to increasing knowledge of the historic environment for their area. It was submitted to the HER as a digital file and can then be appended to every individual record created by the project. In this way not only the individual results but the work of the whole project can be accessed and appreciated by all who use the HER.

And the results of the sessions? Over 173 records of sites, buildings and features in the HER were updated with new information. Over 124 new records were generated, and will soon have an entry in the HER. Three people were recorded, and their transcripts and digital recordings

deposited with Am Baile. The final report has been submitted to the HER as a digital file.

Information about the project and its findings have been posted onto the ARCH website and an online forum created. Over 160 children in the three primary schools within the communities of Avoch, Culbokie and Tore have learned about their communities' archaeological and built heritage. Each of the communities wants to continue to meet to share their knowledge and to discover together more about the physical remains of the past in their area. Other groups on the Black Isle and further afield have asked for a similar project. Many lessons were learned in this pilot, and are discussed further in Chapter 3. Above all, over 100 people have been spurred to remember their communities, and hopefully will continue to contribute and preserve their heritage memories.

The Village and Parish of Avoch

Little is known about the origins of the settlement of Avoch. The modern village was developed in the 18th century, combining the three settlements of Seatown, Kirktown and Milntown. Many of the listed buildings, which include ordinary houses, ships' chandlers and warehouses, were built in the 19th century period of improvement. The planned fishertown, to the east, and most of the buildings along the High Street, date to this period.

Many of the 15 participants who met weekly at the Pavilion Hall, were able to recall childhood memories from the 1940s and early 1950s of the interiors of the many shops and stores that populated Avoch High Street. A lively core group formed by the daughters of former village shopkeepers, Hermione Protheroe, Joan McLemen and Catriona Gillies, recollected that the buildings were commonly divided into family dwelling on one side and shop front and back store to the other. One of these, what had been numbers 4 – 5 High Street, now just number 5, was recalled by Jennifer McIntosh, who had been told that it had been built originally for the captain of a sailing ship. The group remembered looking up to rafters that had been constructed out of tree trunks. Some recalled hearing how the rafters had been formed from ships' masts. Additionally, the local name for these buildings, 'Elim Houses', so called because they housed the family of the minister of the Congregational Church, added even more 'flesh' to the bones of this historic building.

This is just one example of how the memories of the group allowed building biographies to be created. The local

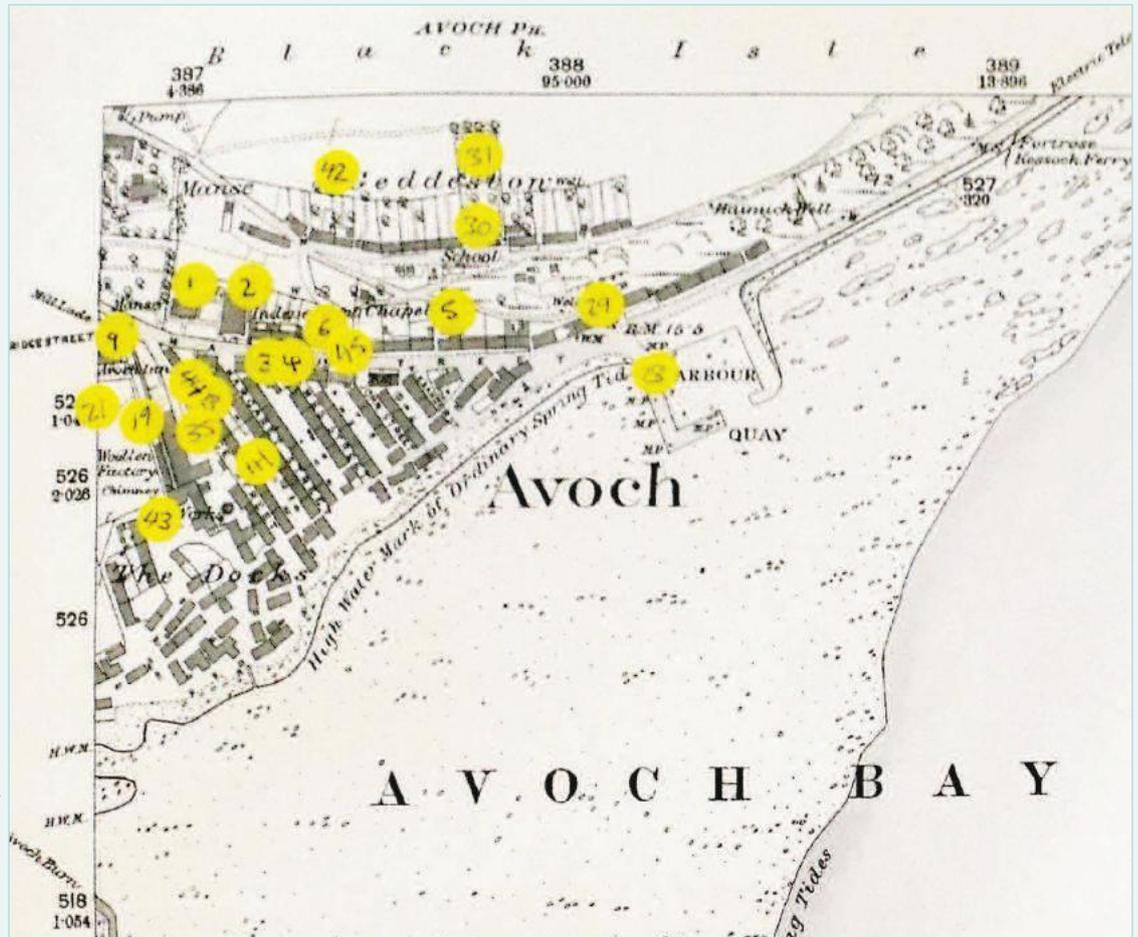
knowledge regarding the origins, re-use and architecture of the buildings enhance the description given in the Historic Environment Record (HER) and the Historic Building register. Here, the very plain description of a 'Terrace of uniform design above street level' is definitely enhanced by the group's personal memories. Catriona Gillies' sharing of a family photograph of the laundry that had been situated close to the location of the Avoch Hotel in Bridge Street will be a valuable addition to the HER, one of the 33 new sites and features that the group generated for the HER.

Other memories of buildings and structures in use during the World War II, when many of the locally born participants were children, allowed insights into how much has changed in a relatively short period. Perhaps Don Patience's recollections of Avoch's 'first flushing lavatory', a simple seat housed in a shed on the Henrietta Bridge, above a drop into the 'flushing' action of the Avoch Burn, caused the most hilarity. In particular, they provided a record of the location of the military camp of this time, now no longer visible and, prior to this project, not noted on the HER. The camp was sited at the location of the modern Bowling Green, just metres from where the group met. The group's vivid recalling of the layout of ephemeral tents and Nissan huts would certainly merit further recording in order that this site might be added to the record of the Black Isle's rich World War II heritage.

The group also included members who had more recently chosen to live in Avoch. Bringing their enthusiasm to learn more about the archaeology and the historic buildings in the area, they asked helpful, clarifying questions: 'Is that the house that everyone calls the Mill Cottage?'; 'What are 'geen-gages'? and 'How many curling ponds has Avoch had?'. It was one such question, posed by Tom McCourt, that led to one of the most intriguing recoveries made by the group.

'Does anyone know anything about this old road or pathway?', Tom asked. He explained that he had been walking in an area to the north east of the village, above the modern





road to Fortrose and had discovered a just visible double embanked routeway that appeared to originate in an area containing what looked like the footings of a building and continued towards the shore. Immediately we rushed to the historic map of the area. Sure enough, on the map an enclosed wooded area, with what appears to be five small roofed buildings, or, more likely, one long rectangular structure with five internal cells, is depicted. The site is labelled 'Orchard', and from there a routeway is depicted, running south towards the shore and then SSW in a dog-leg turn towards the village.

Could anyone remember an orchard, or indeed the road that progressed from Avoch towards this enigmatic site? There were a lot of puzzled looks, then suddenly the memories came flooding back. The session was given over to reconstructing a childhood landscape that involved rambles up towards the Newton Farm Steadings to pick the greengage plums; the 'geengages', that were so numerous at some (just about remembered) ruins in the area. Then, an illuminating shaft into the vault of the collective memory came from Alexander Leitch, former schoolteacher, who reassembled the then more visible relic

roadway, by recalling how the children ran along it, all the way back to the village, chased by an irate farmer, laughing the whole route long!

'What did you call the road?,' asked another new member of the village. 'The coos gate!,' many voices chimed. Those familiar with the Scots language will recognise this term, used to denote 'the cows road', a common name for old droving routes in the southern part of the country. Avoch is still noted as a place where natives speak a dialect that derives much from Lallans Scots.

Although the features are denoted on the 19th century mapping, they had not been added to the HER. By bringing together the interest of those more recently moved to the area and a cherished tradition for maintaining local language and place names, the group has recorded a curious site that may give a valuable insight into pre-improvement Avoch. Persistently an orchard, from at least the 19th century through to the mid 20th century, the site may yet be revealed to have connections to a now lost settlement. The proximity of the site to a burn known locally as the Spital, suggests that there may have been a medieval monastic hospital in the area. It is certainly an area which merits further research.

The Village of Culbokie and the Findon Mills

Twenty-one people gathered into the Findon Community Hall to share memories of the historic environment of the village and associated settlements, ancient, historic and modern.

One member of the group had brought a copy of W. J. Watson's *Place Names of Ross and Cromarty*, published in 1904. Watson believed that the latter part of the place name, 'bhòcaidh', derived from the word for 'hobgoblin' or 'bogie'. Derick Gordon, born in the village in the 1930s, was inspired by this to share that - although previously unaware of Watson's belief - he did recall a site that was known to him and other children in the village as 'The Nook', a wooded area, also referred to as the 'haunted nook of the goblins'. Although, not an archaeological or built heritage site, the possible connection to the village place name, signifies the wooded area as somewhere of potential interest.

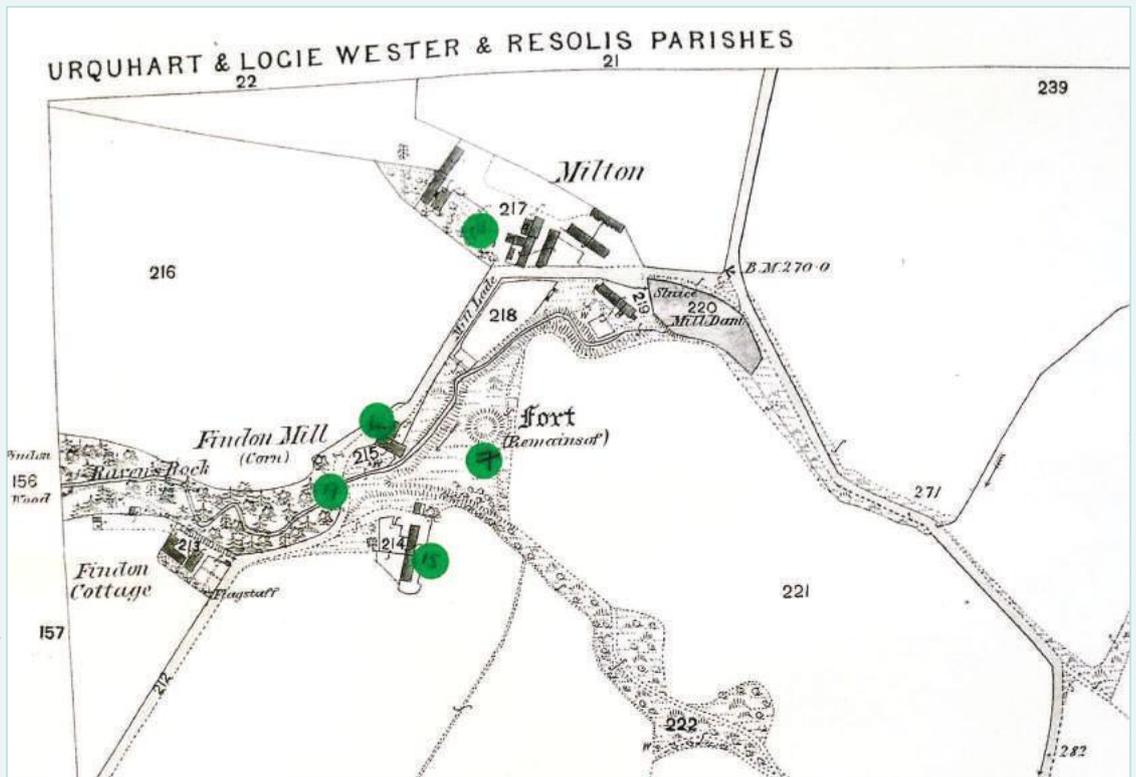
Spurred by the possible place names, another member of the group, Allan Mackenzie, who had moved to this part of the Black Isle in recent decades, went walking in the area and found a walled, mounded promontory in the woods close to the Loch, which had not been



recorded on the HER. The group was intrigued, and thought that a walkover of the area might provide evidence of some archaeological lumps and bumps of potential interest.

There were a number of people in the group whose collective memories of Culbokie spanned the decades of the 20th Century. With their knowledge, the group was able to 're-populate' what had obviously once been a bustling, retail centre within the village. Before the construction of the modern A9 road, many people had relied on the numerous shops in the village for all their household needs. Of the 51 new Historic Environment Records generated by the Culbokie group, eight related to retail businesses active from the 1800s until the





1960s, in a village that now has a single small store. One of these, remembered by Derick Gordon and Madge Munro, was 'Dingwall's Shop'. Both recalled the shop's slogan, playing on the fact that the proprietor shared his surname with the county market town, across the Cromarty Firth:

Why go to Dingwall when Dingwall's in Culbokie!

The interest of those who have come to live in the area was as evident in Culbokie as in the other two areas where 'Remembering your Community' sessions were held. Roger and Pamela Piercy had done much to research the archival record of their house, Findon Mills, and its situation. They brought both their knowledge and copies of their findings to each of the sessions, very much enriching the group's understanding of the development of the Milton area to the east of the village.

Well recorded on the 19th century OS map, the Findon Corn Mills are also represented on the HER. Curiously, the associated mill workers' cottages at Milton, though also depicted on the historic map and familiar to the group, were not mentioned in the record. Maureen Rose, whose family have a long association with Culbokie, was able at this point to share her knowledge that these had been lived in as late as in the mid-twentieth century, by members of her family and that they had been destroyed since then.

Maureen's sharing of this detail inspired the Piercy's to reveal another most useful piece of information from their archive. Recognising that the parapets on a small road bridge crossing the Findon Burn were being pushed apart by the increasingly larger, heavy vehicles using the roadway, the couple decided to record the destruction photographically. Their photographs capture the final pulling down of the bridge and its replacement with a concrete culvert.

Many people know that a railway linked Muir of Ord to Fortrose, but it is less well known that another railway was intended to run along the north side of the Black Isle to Cromarty. Members of the group shared their memories of cuttings and initial trackwork, including bridges, which still remain today – this could be another project altogether! There is clearly interest to continue to flesh out knowledge of the village buildings, as well as some of the outlying hamlets, combined with walks in the landscape.



Tore and the parish of Killearnan

To reach the Killearnan Community Hall at Tore, many of the 21 participants were obliged to cross the village curling pond. That is to say, they drove around the roundabout, from one of the other three main roads that now divide the dispersed settlement, and they recalled that the curling pond remains are now buried under this roundabout. The Killearnan Curling Pond was just one of the 58 features that were remembered by community members during the project. Of these, 25 are previously unrecorded entries, now submitted to the Historic Environment Record.

Ronnie MacKenzie recalled relic routes – old roads and paths – from Tore to Redcastle. This in turn reminded many of another significant communication route that has left its mark on the landscape. The Black Isle Railway, opened in 1894, ran from Muir of Ord to Fortrose. It ceased to carry passengers in 1951, but continued as a freight line until the 1960s. A great number of those present recalled the stations at both Allangrange and Redcastle which had served this area. Both sites had previously been recorded on the HER. Yet, even so, the importance of local knowledge and observations in recording changes to this historic environment became evident when Alistair MacKay, a local photographer, produced his images of the Redcastle Station Post Office, part of the original station complex, immediately prior to its demolition. Ronnie recalled when he and his family travelled there to collect coal and other essentials during the 1930s to 1950s. And, it turned out that Alasdair Cameron, grandson of the former station master of the time, was also among our number.

Along with fellow group members, Sandra Bain and Graham Clark, both of whom have

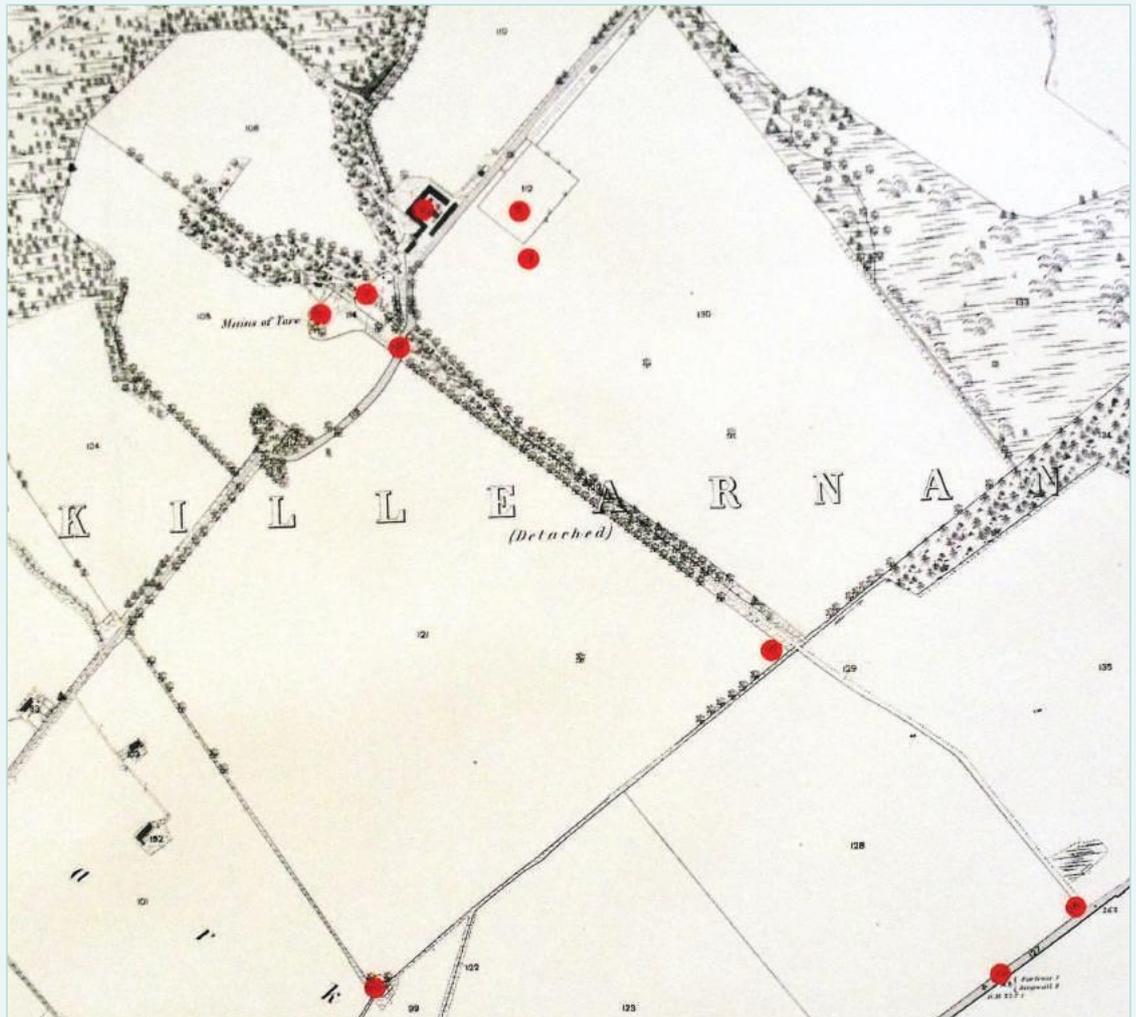


published books on aspects of the area's history, Alasdair brought a local historian's fervour for his area. Like a number of the participants in the 'Remembering your Community' sessions, Alasdair has that very specific knowledge that comes from working the land. He is a farmer who has observed the lumps, bumps and crop marks in his fields, recognising new features, as the changes of season bring about variations in light, vegetation and moisture.

It was at Alasdair's prompting that the group should combine their collective knowledge of the site of Tore Castle. The possible locations of the castle ignited a discussion that excited everyone for almost the whole two hours allotted for one of our sessions! The castle is indicated on General Roy's mid 18th century map of the area and alluded to in local addresses, such as Castle Gate. Alasdair offered his observations drawn from countless walkovers of the mounded area to the WSW of the Mains of Tore, as well as aerial photographs he himself had taken in pursuit of his quest for the castle site. Now deposited with the Highland Council's HER, as part of the project archive, these images are of value to future researchers as they can be compared with both historic and future mapping, acting as a benchmark in time and space against which changes to landscape and features can be measured.

Looking at Alasdair's images, many others in the group started to recall specific features noticed over the years. Like the gradual assembling of jigsaw pieces, individual recollections of sets of stone pillars or gate posts at similar distances from the site, when plotted onto our map sheet, could all be seen to be located at the ends of old roads, radiating out like spokes from a central point.



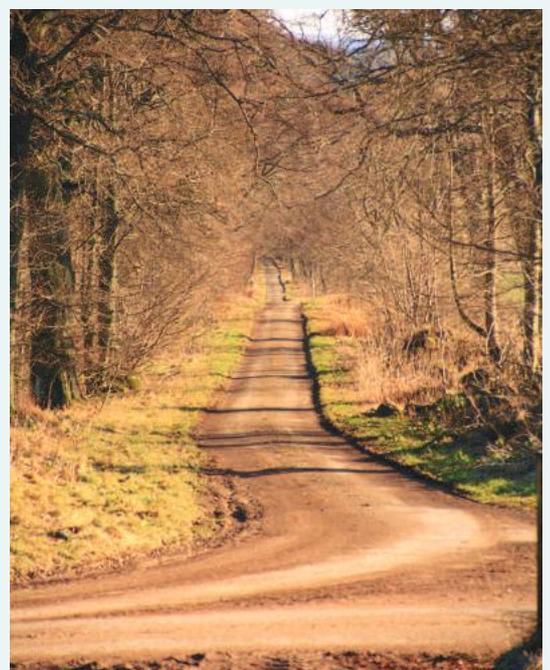


In addition, a bridge, spanning a small burn, appeared to have been partially constructed from dressed stone, some of which showed signs of tracery. Alasdair was not the only member of the group to recall that local tradition holds that these are the sills, lintels and arches of the disappeared castle's windows.

It is true the Tore community's proposed reconstruction of a possible castle landscape from the fragmentary, finely tooled stonework surrounding a central mounded feature cannot be considered a definitive identification of the historic site. However, by adding these previously unrecorded pillars, gateposts and the bridge to the Historic Environment Record, they are promoting further, very necessary research.

Next steps should certainly include a landscape survey of the area and photographic recording of each of the features mentioned. Individuals' observations, made during recreational walks (and flights!) have now been brought together into one invaluable record. Future researchers, including archaeologists asked to advise in advance of potential development,

will be able to refer to the community's knowledge in order to make a more accurate evaluation of the risk of damage to the remains of an historic building and associated features. By remembering Tore Castle and other aspects of their built heritage, the community at Tore have taken an active role in managing the future of that past.



Recalling the historic environments of Avoch, agriculture and forestry

Audio recordings of oral histories often focus on communities' and individual's social histories – for example, 'What songs did you sing when you churned the butter?' The Black Isle Heritage Memories Project has been innovative by suggesting that recording individual interviews can also be a way of collecting local knowledge and recollections about physical heritage – for example, 'Where was the dairy and in which part was the butter churned?'

For our three extended interviews, we gathered memories of Avoch, of agricultural features, and of areas now covered by forestry. These extended interviews have been submitted to the Am Baile website.

Hermione Protheroe, of Avoch, was one of the 14 children of a shopkeeper and his wife, brought up on Avoch High Street. Her recollections of the interiors of the many shop buildings in Avoch and the varied uses of the buildings and the rooms within these often highlighted the interweaving of social and architectural history in the 1930s and 1940s.

"I was brought up in 9 High Street and my father had 8, the shop, which was a shoemakers' shop and, of course, upstairs actually was the best room and in those days it had lino on the floor."

Her recollections of playing in the village streets again brought poignant and useful memories of the physical environment:

"...the backs of the streets then had drains... Open drains and we used to jump over these but of course that's all taken up by the people who bought the cottages and have built and extended and that."

Being of school age at a time when Avoch had two primary schools, Hermione was able to share her recollections of the interior of Avoch Public School, now demolished.

"As you go up the brae there was a wee school which was made of wood, and, it had a partition and there was a singing room, and there were two fires and then you crossed over, and there was a bigger school and just

up some steps from the big school there was where the domestic science and where the teachers had their staff room."

"...the Public School is no longer there. There's a sort of Spanish-style house was built there on the right hand side but where the little school was, there's another bungalow built there... at the top where the, the teachers' staffroom was and where the domestic science, that again was made into sort of cottages... probably the stone is still there, just behind the cemetery..."

By elaborating on her memories of buildings, places and features, Hermione has created a vivid record of changes in the village of Avoch.

Farmer **Alasdair Cameron** took an inventive approach to preparing for the interviews. Alasdair used a catalogue prepared by Jackson Stops and Staff, for a proposed sale of the estate of Rosehaugh in 1943, to comment on the condition of the farms, cottages and crofts of the estate at the time and then compared these with his own observations of changes over the last twenty years.

"I've been very interested in the estate of Rosehaugh ...This catalogue was given to me by someone who knew I was interested in it...It was priced at two shillings in 1943 and I find it a fascinating document."

Bringing his own insights as a farmer and as someone who was born and brought up on the Black Isle, with family spread across both the western and eastern parts of the peninsula, Alasdair animated the flatly presented details of the catalogue.

"There's a mention of Upper Eathie. It's significant, it's got a Maid's Room, so you've got to look after your servants, a thrashing barn and granary over, a four-bay cart shed, engine shed, turning house, wooden coal shed and a wooden garage. The four-bay cart shed gives an indication of the size of a farm as well as the number of stalls in the stable. There's mention that there's a small byre for three and a second byre for four, so that's the cows' accommodation in a four-stall stable



Hermione Protheroe



Alasdair Cameron



Mhairi Beaton

and obviously that matches up nicely with the four-bay cart shed... I'm looking at the photograph of the Mains of Eathie again. It doesn't look terribly much different from that today, although at the back of it there's quite a few large buildings which are used for specialist contract pig rearing and I think it's the biggest number of pigs I've ever seen as youngsters there."

When asked what the details in the estate catalogue could tell us about the Mains in the 1940s, Alasdair was able to offer further insights:

"... they're 176 acres and it's mentioned that they had a feeding byre for 20. Now that's something that's quite significant because they would be fattening animals. ...that would be a fattening byre where the animals were kept in stalls and fed as much as they could eat, purely for beef production. It's not mentioned in any of the other farms so it's thought to be significant."

By paying attention to the size and types of buildings and what this indicates about the nature and extent of agricultural practice on the Rosehaugh Estate in the 1940s, and by illuminating this through his own more recent recollections, Alasdair has reconstructed the agricultural economy of a very large area of the Black Isle in the latter part of the 20th century. This is a valuable addition to the HER, gathering the sort of information that archaeologists and historians might only guess at. Above all, it encourages us to look more closely at surviving buildings.

Mhairi Beaton, of North Kessock, entered the Forestry Commission as a young woman in 1941-42. She worked as a forester, planting rather than felling trees. Her recollections of the dimensions of and methods of digging drains and firetracks and of tree planting

distances provide a vital record for all those trying to interpret woodland and forestry today. This is important now when so much forestry land is being given over to heritage interpretation.

Both the Forestry Commission and the many communities that live close to the Black Isle's numerous woodlands have recognised that much of the archaeology and built heritage has been destroyed by earlier plantations. However, features have also been preserved within the forests, no longer subjected to constant ploughing or development. Mhairi's memories of forestry track construction help us to interpret the differences between the ancient and historic route ways and tracks and the modern forestry routes, by providing memories of track widths and locations:

CM: And the firetracks, what distance, what width were the firetracks?

MB: Oh I would say about six feet. And the length, well, depended on where they were. And, oh there was a lot of firetracks on Ord Hill.

Oral history collection and recording is a vital tool for those who want to capture knowledge about our rapidly changing environment. Hermione, Alasdair and Mhairi have demonstrated how necessary it is to ensure that local knowledge and memories are included in any record of the heritage. The details that they have shared have provided a more accurate picture of the past, augmenting information provided by public records, statistical data, photos, maps and other historical material. In many cases they serve as the only source of information. They can teach us what has changed and what has stayed the same over time. And they preserve for future generations what is remembered about the past today.

A Heritage Memory Project in your Community

Overall the ARCH Black Isle Heritage Memories project clearly was a great success, and many lessons were learnt. The atmosphere at the sessions was dynamic, with people obviously relishing both the opportunities to remember their community and the social stimulation. Having a facilitator from outwith the community worked well, and meant that everyone got a chance to contribute.

The format with scribes and informers allowed people born in the community and people who had moved to the area to collaborate in new ways. It worked well having two people writing down people's memories to catch the fast-flowing reminiscence. The scribes and other more recent members of the community acted as prompters for those who had memories to share.

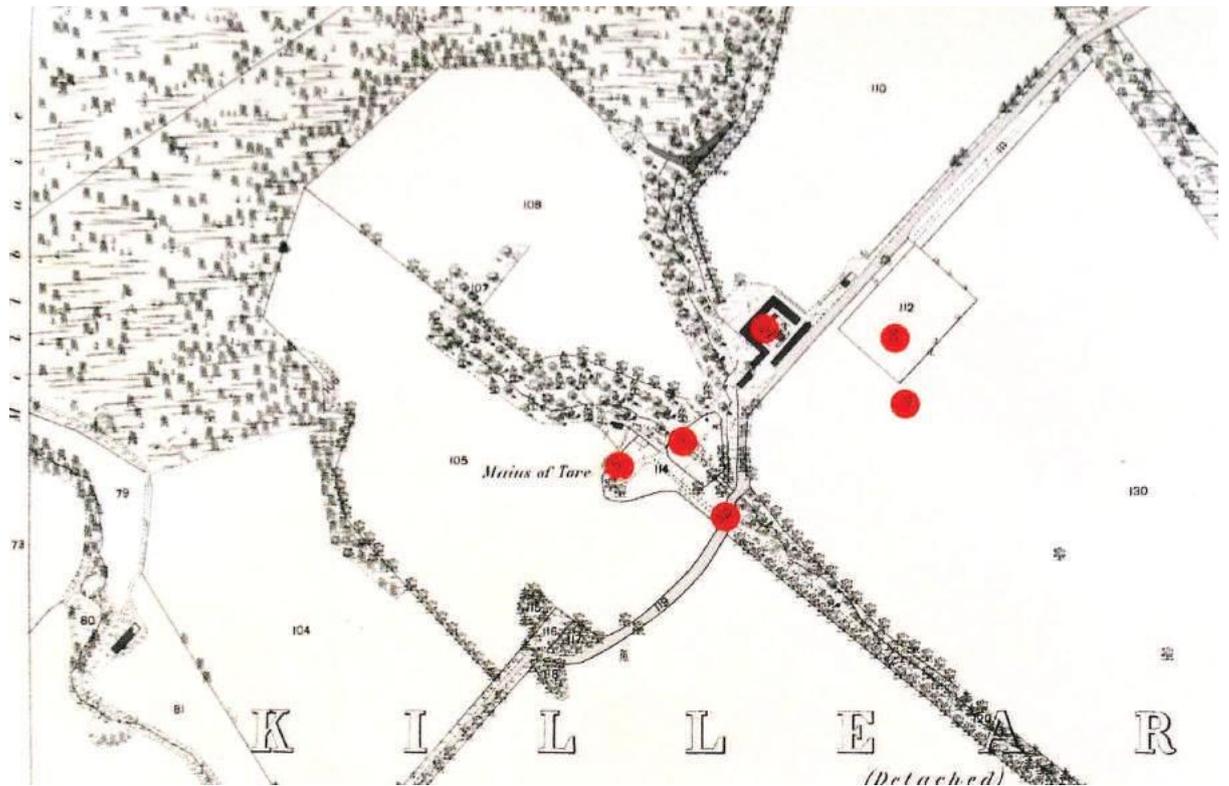
We ran four sessions in each location. In retrospect, this was probably too few - as the evaluation comments made clear - although we suspect that no matter how many sessions were allocated, people would always want more. Ideally we would probably increase the number of sessions to six, to allow word of mouth recruitment, as well as some processing of the data so that questions at later sessions could be targeted at filling in gaps. Optional extra sessions could also be used to have walking tours or fieldtrips.

Most people love maps - and the large scale Ordnance Survey maps at 25 inches to one mile, with their depiction of roofed and unroofed buildings and extra details, provided a wealth of talking points. We used the 1st edition Ordnance Survey maps surveyed in 1871, with the 2nd edition from the early 1900s in Avoch, and 18th century estate maps for Tore and Culbokie. The earlier mapping was very useful and should be used whenever possible to complement the 1st and 2nd editions, alongside a modern map to show topography and for orientation. In addition, it would have been useful to have the HER maps to depict the known sites and listed buildings.

As the sessions progressed, people began to bring along old photographs, which led to further discussion. A portable scanner and computer would have allowed many of these important pictures to be incorporated into the record and displays.

Ideally in future projects we would try to limit the geographical area at the beginning. This is harder in a rural area than a village. The wider the area, the more maps are needed and the more time for discussion and processing the information. However, since one rarely knows exactly who will attend each session, some flexibility is needed.

'This has brought together people who wouldn't normally meet and opened up dialogue and connections.'



Although we had a budget to allow for transport to the local community for those who needed it, no one requested this, perhaps due to informal carpooling and the worst winter for many a year. Future sessions might benefit by holding some in a community venue, and some in local care homes.

The social aspects of the project were important, providing opportunities for like-minded people to meet, share and learn. The heritage aspects of the project were also important, and from the start there was detailed planning on where the results would go. The Historic Environment Record (HER) is the obvious main archive, and in local authorities such as Highland, the public can access and contribute to the HER online. Running additional sessions on using computers and the HER was a good way to introduce people to this important record, and to increase their confidence in using and contributing to it. We also submitted our recordings and findings to

the Am Baile website, placed them on the ARCH website, had a small display which toured locally, and produced this booklet. Taken together this ensured that the information gleaned from the project, and the lessons learned, were spread as widely as possible. ARCH also offers a website forum, to allow people to discuss heritage issues, and already some of our participants have joined this. It is hoped that, as more people with mobility difficulties become familiar with using the internet, these online resources will allow both information gathering and an online community to develop.

Analysing the results is undeniably time consuming. The hope was that most of the sites could be linked to the HER entry easily by people during or after the session. However, this proved not to be possible during the sessions because of the lack of internet access at the community venues. As a result, the substantial post-session processing required added to the time and

‘the encouragement it gave to everybody to contribute their memories and value them’

expense of the project, as well as lessening its immediate impact. Where venues can be found with internet access, it should be possible to shorten post processing time, as well as having the benefit of making available additional map and photographic prompts. However, for this type of project we felt that it was more important to use local venues within the community, rather than have the sessions in distant computer learning centres.

Making audio recordings of people is labour intensive, especially for those transcribing (the estimate is that one hour of recording requires five to nine hours of transcription). By targeting certain people, and asking them to think about the topic ahead of time, we made best use of our limited resources. We also ran training sessions on how to record individuals, so that members of the community might then borrow the equipment and make their own recordings. This course was so popular we had a waiting list for future sessions, and hope to run it again.

We left the maps with groups in the community (local heritage, hall or community council). By having a structure, with recording sheets, and maps available, the hope was that the community could continue running sessions after the project finished. However, all groups found having a facilitator from outwith the community a positive feature. If the groups wished to continue to provide one, it would mean additional fundraising.

Conclusions

A project such as this one does not need to be expensive. The ‘low tech’ solution of using maps, dots and photographs, with structured scribing of results was incredibly effective, requiring only hire of a venue and initial purchase of maps. It yielded a great deal of information which is easily incorporated into the HER. However, time must be factored in to ensure that results from the project are entered into the HER or other archives; otherwise the information is simply lost.

The results of the project are both historical and social. The community benefits through understanding more of its heritage and by preserving it for the future. People benefit by having a social occasion, where their memories are valued, and their knowledge appreciated. A project like this breaks down generational barriers, as well as those between long term residents and people more recently moved into the area. At its most basic, it provides great fun and excitement, while preserving important memories of the past.



At the Toll Farm
(courtesy of Catriona Gillies)



Killlearnan Post Office



The Temple, Croftcrunie



Suggestions for a successful project

PREPARATION

- Do as much preliminary outreach work as possible linking to lunch groups, heritage societies, care in home individuals, care homes, etc. before the sessions.
- Identify your area of study.
- Order maps, and source photographs. Ideally have both the 1st and 2nd edition Ordnance survey maps at 25 inches to one mile, and if possible digital or paper versions of the HER maps as close to this scale as possible. Paper copies of the first edition are available from the National Library of Scotland, while Highland Council archives have the 2nd edition and selected 1st edition map sheets. If budget permits, laminate the maps. If you are successful in booking a venue with internet access, these maps can also be projected onto a screen (from the National Library of Scotland website www.nls.uk for the OS maps and Highland Council <http://her.highland.gov.uk> for the HER maps). Websites such as Am Baile, SCRAN and the RCAHMS may have local photographs, as might the Highland Photographic Archive in Inverness.
- Prepare permission forms. There are good templates from the Oral History Society website www.oralhistory.org.uk.
- Prepare your recording forms, and purchase dots for the maps.
- Source recording equipment if you are going to record some key individuals. Local museums, archives or some organisations may have equipment to loan. If you need to buy your own, check out the Oral History Society website www.oralhistory.org.uk for advice.
- Identify places to store results which will allow the maximum number of people to have access to the project results after the project has finished. In our case, this involved discussing with HER staff and Am Baile the best way to pass on information. Additionally you might want to create a local display and/or booklet (e.g. memories about houses along a street). However, each type of output will also require time to process and create, so this must be built in at the start.
- Identify and book local venues. If you can find one with internet access, this will allow flexibility in map purchase, and perhaps some data entry during sessions. Consider holding some sessions in care homes.
- If you are going to make digital recordings of some individuals, find transcribers. This is a skilled task, and may require fundraising to pay for their services.
- If your community does not have good public transport, see if there are ways that you can help people get to your venues, e.g. carpooling or raising some money for taxis.
- Publicise your sessions using posters and a press release to the local paper. In your publicity make it clear that the sessions are for people who are simply interested in the area, as well as people who have lived there for years.

SESSIONS

- Have large tables for maps to be laid out. Bring sandbags or weights if your maps are rolled up.
- Provide a portable hearing loop, if possible, if there is none in the venue.



St. John's Chapel, Allangrange



Mill building, Findon



The site of Tore Castle



Allangrange House

- Have plenty of coffee, tea and biscuits and generous breaks to allow people to sit down and chat.
- Ask for volunteers for scribes, but arrange with some people ahead of time in case people are shy about volunteering. Try to have at least two people recording at the same time, and if possible, build in 5 minutes at the end of the session to allow for them to compare results and clarify.
- Sessions will inevitably take their own directions, but it is useful to focus on four main points:
 - What buildings, sites or features in the landscape recorded on the maps no longer survive;
 - What buildings, sites or features in the landscape recorded on the maps have been altered;
 - What buildings, sites or features in the landscape have appeared after the maps were made;
 - Do people know of any traditions of buildings, sites or features which are not on the maps and for which there is no surviving evidence on the ground?
- At a minimum each entry on the recording sheets needs to take note of the map number on your dots and the person supplying the information.
- Ensure that the same numbered dot is on each of the maps you have if you use more than one set.
- Try if possible to get the HER number on the recording form as people talk. This will save a lot of time afterwards!
- Having spoken to the HER Officer in advance, you will have a clearer idea of what information they would like entered directly to the record. If you have internet access, and suitable information, try doing this.
- If possible have a portable scanner and computer in the room, so that old photographs can be scanned. Build in time to do this.
- Depending on fitness of participants and locality, at least one session might lend itself to an outdoor fieldtrip. This may be best built onto the project as an optional extra.

PROCESSING THE RESULTS

- Build in enough time to do this! You will need to decipher handwriting on sheets, match to the HER number, and format the information in the way the HER would like it.
- If possible, see if participants can help with this. Run a session on using the HER, and then follow up with a processing session.

RECORDING KEY INFORMANTS

- If you have not had training in oral history recording techniques see the Oral History Society website www.oralhistory.org.uk.
- Find a quiet room without an echo, and if more than one person is in the room, ensure that only one person talks at a time, and identifies him or herself. Come prepared with questions which are structured, but open ended.
- Again, build in enough time for transcribing.

PREPARE A REPORT OF YOUR RESULTS WHICH SHOULD INCLUDE:

- a brief introduction to the project and to the area, detailing the timescale of human use and habitation reflected in the archaeological sites and features and the historic buildings recorded.
- a description of the method of recording.
- a list of all the records generated (a gazetteer), with the name of each of the places, remains or buildings and their locations (a national grid reference helps) followed by a short paragraph giving the information recorded.
- a table of sites including again the name, the location and then the HER number, if there is one and a short description of the physical remains and the name of the person contributing the information.
- a list of any photographs submitted to the project with captions explaining which record they relate to and who contributed them, together with copyright notices if appropriate.
- a short conclusion detailing how many records were generated and summarising the contribution this makes to understanding the community's heritage.
- acknowledgment of funders, contributors, facilitators and transcribers.

PUBLICISING YOUR RESULTS

- Make sure the community knows where to find the results. Do a press release to the local press. Place information in the local library, museum or with the local heritage group. Perhaps create a small display which can tour these venues. Approach the local school to see if they would be interested in having a talk about what was found, perhaps by some of the participants if they are interested.
- Ensure that your report is also available, at least to the HER and ideally in printed form to the local library, museum and heritage societies.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PROJECT?

- As the project progresses, try to show how people within the group or setting could carry this on later. The 'low tech' use of maps and photographs requires little outlay, especially if the maps are already there, with only venue hire and possibly a facilitator needed. The more that members of the group have been involved in processing the data, the more chance that this less glamorous element will be undertaken.
- Creating links between local heritage and other community groups or likeminded people might provide another way to ensure that meetings continue.
- Signposting during the sessions to other activities will allow progression to other similar courses, groups, events or activities.



Avoch Communal Laundry
(courtesy of Catriona Gillies)



Killernan Post Office

References and Contacts

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The Highland Council Historic Environment Record (HER): <http://her.highland.gov.uk/>
Watson, W. J. (1996) *Place-Names of Ross and Cromarty*. Evanton.

CONTACTS

Am Baile www.ambaile.org.uk

Highland Council Archaeology Unit

Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX

www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/conservation/archaeology/

Tel: 01463 702250; Email: archaeology@highland.gov.uk

(contact the Archaeology Unit for questions concerning the HER)

Highland Photographic Archive

Inverness Service Point, Church Street, Inverness, IV1 1DY

Tel: 01463 703912

Highland Council Historic Environment Record (HER) <http://her.highland.org.uk>

National Library of Scotland

57 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh, EH1 1EW

www.nls.uk

Tel: 0131 623 3700; Email: enquiries@nls.uk.

The Oral History Society www.oralhistory.org.uk/

Scottish Regional Contact:

Arthur McIvor

Director, Scottish Oral History Centre

University of Strathclyde, McCance Building, 16 Richmond Street, Glasgow, G1 1XQ

Tel: 0141 548 2212/2236; Email: a.mcivor@strath.ac.uk

Royal Commission of Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS)

John Sinclair House, 16 Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh, EH8 9NX

www.rcahms.gov.uk

Tel: 0131 662 1456; Email: info@rcahms.gov.uk

SCRAN www.scran.ac.uk



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