

# A History and Survey of Isle Ewe

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## **A Brief History of Isle Ewe**

From amassing a great amount of archaeological evidence we know that there were people living on this small island in roundhouses during the Bronze Age. How old these are cannot be given with any accuracy but they could date from any time between 2000BC and 800AD or perhaps maybe later.

Also records from the Mackenzies, the lairds of the area, tell us that in 1752 there were two tenants. Whether they lived on the island or just used the land is not known. However, since that date to the present day names of households can be traced and there are still families living on the island. Therefore, Isle Ewe has much historical importance over the years.

There are two theories to the origin of its name. One is that it could be derived from the Old Irish 'eo' for 'yew tree' and the other is that it is from the Gaelic 'eubh' or 'echo' from a place-name on the mainland. A Marine Chart of 1794 mapped by Joseph Huddart spells the island as 'yew' but also spells the loch as 'Loch Yew' so this could be phonetic spelling rather than a reference to yew trees. There do not appear to have been any yew trees on the island.

## ***The island***

Isle Ewe is a small island, only 764 acres, but this is larger than the other islands in the area. To view it at its best and clearest is to stop at the designated viewpoint on the Poolewe to Aultbea road and look over the sealoch. From there you can see the mass of the island placed nearly centrally between the two main coastlines. The highest part of Isle Ewe is its northern peninsula, rising to 236 feet at *Creag Streap* ('climbing cliff'). A prominent rock, *Sgeir a' Bhuich* ('rock of the roe-buck') lies just offshore, with a larger rocky island, *Sgeir an Araig*, situated further out in the loch to the north-west of the island. A peaty hilly area called *Sitheanan Dubha* ('the black fairy hillocks') occupies most of the island's northern peninsula. This reaches a height of 223 feet and is dominated by coarse grass, heather and sphagnum moss.

There is a named area near the centre of the island called *Torr Loisgte*. To the north east is a bay called *Camas Angus* ('Angus' bay') and *Camas Beithe* ('birch-tree bay') is on the west. These provide anchorage for boats. The hummock of *Cnoc na Gaoithe* ('windy knoll') might have provided shelter and the eastern side is more sheltered from the prevailing north west winds. A jetty on the south side, built in Dr. John Mackenzie's time, mid 1800s, and enlarged during the Second World War, once provided boat access to the mainland. The arable land begins a short distance further south beyond *Druim nam Freumh* ('ridge of roots'), where a small area of woodland stands.

The island's geology is mostly of Torridonian sandstone. There is acidic soil to the north and more fertile soil in the south where there is New Red Sandstone from the Triassic/Jurassic periods.

## ***What do we know of the island's earliest history?***

Isle Ewe, written as 'Ellan Ew' or 'Ellan Eu', was among the 251 Western Isles described in 1549 by Donald Monro. He described it, incorrectly, as being in Loch Broom and that it was



half a mile long (rather than its two miles). But he also described it as full of woods and belonging to the Mackenzies. The woods have disappeared but evidence of former trees can be found in the peat. But did Isle Ewe belong to the Gairloch Mackenzies or to the Mackenzies who became the Earls of Seaforth? This will be explored later.

*'Upon the shore of Lochebrune lyes Ellan Ew, haffe myle in length, full of woods, guid for thieves to wait upon uther mens gaire. It pertains to M'Enzie.'*

or :

*'Upon the schoir of Loch Briene lyes Ellan Eu, half mile lang, full of woods to await upon leill mens geire and guid for theves to the same effect, pertaining to M<sup>c</sup>kenzie.'*

A little later George Buchanan (maybe using Monro as his source) wrote in his *Rerum Scoticarum Historia (History of Scotland)* of 1579 that the island was :

*'almost all covered with woods, and good for nothing but to harbour thieves, who rob passengers.'*

In 1638 a list of the inhabited places within the Gairloch area was drawn up and the Isle of Ewe was mentioned as 'Ellenow.'

Blaue's map of Ross-shire, dated 1662 and engraved by Pont, shows the island as Yl Ew.

Island Ewe was mapped by Roy as one of his Military Maps, a task he undertook between 1747 and 1755. The east end of the island was shown as cultivated with two separate settlements, some way apart. One part was labelled, *Canustaick*, a name no longer used.

Although Monro and Buchanan do not state that the island was inhabited, as has already been stated, people from the Bronze Age had made their homes there and there are round houses in the area of *Acarseid Mhor* at the western end of the island and elsewhere which have been discovered. More maybe now buried under the weight of heather and bracken.

### ***Isle Ewe from Gairloch Estate Rent Books and other records***

*The island is given to the seventh laird*

Although the island lies in the Gairloch area it may not be safe to conjecture that it belonged to Hector Roy Mackenzie, the first Gairloch laird, along with all the other lands dating from 1494.

It is possible that one of the first times the name of the island is to be found written in a legal document is in the 'disposition' by Kenneth (Mackenzie), 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Seaforth, in 1669. Kenneth *Mor* (Great) Mackenzie who died in 1679 was the son of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Seaforth and the grandson of Kenneth, Lord Kintail. This document was written in favour of Alexander Mackenzie of Gairloch and stated that Alexander would have half of the lands of 'Isle of Eiw', (amongst other places). The question is when did the Earls of Seaforth first own the island?

Alexander Mackenzie was the seventh laird of Gairloch and he succeeded to the Gairloch estate in 1669. He bought the second half of the water of Ewe (but was this the river or the loch?) and Mellon Charles in 1671. An earlier document, written in 1603, mentioned 'the half watter of eoyvie' which could have included the island. Alexander married three times and had six children and the Mackenzies of Inverewe were descended from John, Alexander's third son by his second wife, Janet. John was born in 1685 at the Tigh Dige (Flowerdale) in Gairloch.

At that period of time Inverewe was called Lochend. John purchased the lands of Lochend. Some sources say he was a tacksman, as Lochend belonged to the Coul Mackenzies,

from Contin, but tacksmen could be cousins or other relations as well as employees. John married Annabella, the nineteenth child of George Mackenzie, 2<sup>nd</sup> of Gruinard and he was the tutor to his nephew, Alexander, who became the 9<sup>th</sup> laird and 2<sup>nd</sup> baronet of Gairloch. John's son, Alexander, who was born at Lochend became the second owner.

Thus it appears that the 'lands of Gairloch' were not always owned by the descendants of Hector Roy Mackenzie, the first laird of Gairloch but by members of the wider family. At one time the Earls of Seaforth owned part of the estate in the Mellon Charles area which included Isle Ewe, and the lands around Inverewe were owned by the Coul Mackenzies.

### *The first tenants*

The possible first records of the names of tenants of the island can be found in a document, dated 1707, *Rentall of the Lands of Garloch*.

Kenneth Mackenzie in Island Ew

Mr Charles M<sup>c</sup>Kenzie of Letterewe for Mollin & the half of Island Ew

Both men paid rent in merks (equivalent to 13/4), shillings and pence and Kenneth paid 131 merks, one shilling and eight pence, whilst Charles paid 280 merks (but, of course this seems to have been for Mellan as well).

In the next rental record, *Rental of the lands of Gerloch in 1752 Island Ewe, a Quarter Land*, there were two tenants, a father and son, with both renting four pecks of land. (A peck seems to have no precise definition and is just a large amount). Both men are called 'Lochend'. This is why there was a reference to Lochend previously. By 1766 the main tenant is named as Alexander Mackenzie of Lochend. Could this be John's grandson? In 1752 Alexander and his son were paying peat money and money for the land ('vicarage' – a seemingly old Scottish term for hay and other garden vegetation but not corn) and the father had a share of the wedders (castrated rams), kids, cheese and butter. His son paid 'tantum' which appears to be a nominal sum. The money designated was both in marks and sterling.

The information from the *Judicial Rental of the Barrony of Gerloch 12 Decem 1766* states for *Island Ewe, Quarter Lands of Island Ewe, Alexander Mackenzie of Lochend* :

*'of Island Ewe possessed by Alexander Mackenzie of Lochend pay yearly fifteen pounds seventeen shillings & nine pence in full of Monday Rent Crown Rent Peat Money and Viccarage Together Also with four Wedders one Kidd two Stones cheese and one Stone Butter Depones that the Deceast Sr. Alexander Mackenzie of Gerloch had in his Natural Possessions at the Time of his Decease, which happend in the moneth of June last the Particular Lands Grassings & Fishings after insert and Did pay the yearly Rent Customs & Casualties underwritten..'*

The deceased Sir Alexander Mackenzie was the 9<sup>th</sup> laird of Gairloch and he died in June 1765 or 1766 so does this mean that Isle Ewe belonged to him and that he leased it to Alexander of Lochend?

The Coul Mackenzies sold Lochend to Osgood Mackenzie in 1863 and the old Lochend House stood where the walled garden of the present Inverewe House is now. A reference to the Mackenzies of Lochend can be found in the archives of the Gairloch Heritage Museum. In a notebook attributed to Osgood MacKenzie of Inverewe Garden fame there are references to Kernsary and Inverewe.

*'... For reasons, which I need not enter into here, the Lochend family with all their subordinates, were turned out of Inverewe by the Laird of Coul, about the year 1783, to make room for a colony of Crofter families*

*from Kintail. – This was not accomplished without much trouble, the Military having at last to be employed, before the object which the Laird of Coul had in view was accomplished...'*

If the Lochend family were turned out of Inverewe it is possible that they had to give up the tenancy of Isle Ewe as well.

It appears that the early ownership and tenancy of the island is not as straightforward as may have been hoped.

But from Osgood's information it seems that the following crofter families who were Isle Ewe tenants also came from Kintail which is an area of the north-west Highlands in the Loch Carron area opposite the Island of Skye rather than from the Gairloch area. Mackenzies also had ownership in the Kintail area.

### *Osgood Hanbury Mackenzie and Isle Ewe*

In his book '*A Hundred Years in the Highlands*' Osgood wrote that he leased the island from his brother. This would have been after 1856 and before 1862. The extra lands he acquired were for the purposes of shooting. Osgood had a reputation for shooting all that he could see.

### *The next tenants*

We have names of tenants and their rental payments but it is not known who they were or where they came from but, as previously mentioned, they might have been from Kintail.

1785 : Miles MacRae and John Mackenzie paid £18 2s 4d for Island Ew. On another list they paid £13 each and were joined by Kenneth Mackenzie and Alexander MacRae.

1788 : Miles Macrae and Kenneth Mackenzie paid £26 annually.

1789 : Miles MacRae and Kenneth Mackenzie paid £9 15s each and Alexander Mackenzie paid £6 10s.

1790 : the word 'others' was added against Kenneth Mackenzie's name. MacRaes and Mackenzies continued to be tenants and paid up to £30 a year each which included kelp from the shore. On another list Miles MacRae and Kenneth Mackenzie paid £11 5s each whilst Alexander MacRae paid £7 10s. (There were eight pecks of land rented).

1795 : against this date the word 'farm' was written.

1800 : the 'tack' for the island showed three Mackenzies paying an annual rent of £100.

1810 : this rental increased to £200 when John Mackenzie, John Macgrigor and Roderick Maclean were the tenants.

1822 : six tenants were listed, two were John McKenzie (with their bynames added to differentiate them). Both paid £40 annually. D. and M. Matheson paid £20 as did Finlay McRae whilst John M'Gregor paid £10.

(On the 1841 census there were MacRaes but not a Finlay and there was one John McKenzie. There were no Mathesons or MacGregors).

### *Information from the Baptismal Records in the OPR (Old Parish Records) from 1802 to 1832*

What is not known from these records is when families came to the island or left it but they do provide interesting information about the inhabitants. 58 children were registered within this period of time. Of these there were 29 boys, two unnamed and the rest girls. 24 couples were registered and in most cases the maiden names of the wives are given making it easier to work out who the households may have been.

There were nine McKenzies and four McRaes. There were four McGrigor/McGregors. There were two McPhersons , one McLean, one Gunn, one McIver, one Matheson and one Grant.

The final entry seems to have been for June 7<sup>th</sup> 1832 when Annabell, specified as 'a bastard', was registered to Ewen McKenzie of Contin and Anne McKenzie of Isle of Ewe.

#### *More information from Gairloch Estate Records*

Also from Gairloch Estate records showing information in connection with Isle Ewe the following names were written as paying rent. Colin Mackenzie paid an annual rent of £130 from 1831 to 1837 whilst Roderick Mackenzie paid the same amount from 1837 to 1840 and then with differing amounts to 1853 (see later). Therefore, it appears that there was a larger farm on the island from at least 1795 and that this required more rent.

### ***Houses, buildings and households before 1845 and the making of the crofts on the Gairloch Estate***

#### *The 2<sup>nd</sup> Statistical Account*

From the 2<sup>nd</sup> Statistical Account (1834–1845) the following was written about the island

*'Near the mouth of it, (Lochewe) is a fertile and well cultivated island, called Isle Ewe. Much attention and expense were bestowed upon the improvement of this island, by the present proprietor, Sir Francis Alexander M'Kenzie of Gairloch, Bart., before he came into the full possession of the Gairloch estate.'*

This indicates that the island had been well worked.

There is evidence from the island today that there were well-organised lazybeds.

#### *The 1841 census*

There were eight households, 34 people, recorded on the 1841 census so these houses and any of their outbuildings would have been present on the island when Dr. John Mackenzie took over in 1848. Occupations of most of the people are unknown but there were three agricultural labourers, one woollen hand loom weaver and two female servants (one of whom was ten years old). There were ten children under the age of 16 (not counting the servant).

The households were Murdo Macrae (see OPR) and his two sons, Donald Macrae and his wife, John MacKenzie (see OPR) and his servant, Kenneth MacDonald, his wife and mother, Kenneth MacDonald, his mother and three others, Donald MacIver, his wife, three children and a servant, Roderick MacIver, his wife and maybe seven children and Donald MacKenzie, (see OPR) his wife and two children.

There seems to have been movement to and from the island by residents. For example Roderick Mackenzie (see OPR) who paid rent up to 1840 had left the island by 1841.

There are footings for groups of these earlier houses still to be seen.

### **Dr. John Mackenzie and Isle Ewe**

We know nothing else about the lairds of Gairloch and Isle Ewe until Sir Francis Mackenzie, who became the 12<sup>th</sup> laird, was given Isle Ewe from his father, Sir Hector, as part of his £500 a year allowance. When he succeeded as laird, in 1826, he let the island to tenants, one of whom was Rory Oag (Og/Mackenzie?) of Kinlochewe. Rory had been the largest arable and pastoral tenant on the estate but he just laughed at Sir Francis's ideas on scientific farming. Rory made little improvements to the island but he never lived there. He complained that sheep and cattle were easily drowned in the bogs. He paid £100 in rent for the farm but said he was losing money by this. Therefore, Dr. John asked if Rory would give up the farm to him and this was agreed, from 1848.

*'There seems always a fascination about living on an island. And sure enough that nailed us to the Isle of Ewe. Not for its beauty for, except to a farmer's eye, that was ill to discover. Yet we soon came to love the little island dearly.'*

Dr. John Mackenzie was the brother of Sir Francis and became the Gairloch Estate factor in 1843 when Sir Francis died on June 2<sup>nd</sup> as Kenneth Smith Mackenzie, his heir, was a minor and, therefore, unable to manage the estate. Sir Kenneth, the 13<sup>th</sup> laird and the 6<sup>th</sup> Baronet, took over the estate in 1856 when he reached the age of 24 years.

When Dame Mary Hanbury or Mackenzie, the second wife of Sir Francis, was petitioning to grant leases in 1844 it was recorded that some of the agricultural farms, which included Isle Ewe, would be improved if leases of nineteen years were granted. This later happened but it is not known how long Dr. John's lease would run.

### *Dr. John's family and household on the island*

Dr. John's household is recorded on the 1851 census. He is shown as a farmer of 15,000 acres, employing 50 persons. (The island isn't as large as this and certainly there were never 50 people living on it who were adult workers). He was 47 years old and his wife, Mary Jane, was 46. In their household were two female house servants and Thomas Anderson, a 16-year old clerk.

### *Improvements to Isle Ewe*

Dr. John planned and built cottages for his ploughman and shepherd and for eight fishermen from Portknockie (a fishing village on the Banffshire coast). The fisherman brought cod, ling and tusk (a fish which looked like a cross between a cod and a ling) to the island. In the spring tides there were oysters, clams and spoutfish (a type of shellfish like a clam). Also skate were caught.

Before Dr. John took over the island there was said to be no water but after he had been tenant there for a few months he had drained the fields and had a constant running burn and watering place in front of the house and, therefore, was never short of water. He put up a threshing and meal mill and there was a good mill dam (made by cutting peats for everyone's

fires). (From later papers a kiln was also mentioned which might have been the kiln within the mill).

Gairloch Estate Records list the amounts of money expended on drainage works in 1849 and Isle Ewe is included in this record. £1152. 14s. 0½d was the total.

There were no trees when Dr. John arrived but after a few years these had started to grow. However, way back in the past there was a birch and oak forest because wood was found buried in the peat. The bark of the silver birch was intact and able to be cut like butter with the peatknife. He once found a 'faggot of branches' tied round by a birch branch which made him realise that others had lived on the island before him.

*'So there had been islanders there before me, with all their hopes and plans and fears and loves.'*

Dr. John also made roads on the island which were used a lot by the carts but the one to the mill dam which was four hundred yards long was particularly well-made and sheltered by a high dyke on its west side.

The farmhouse had a kitchen, a parlour (with just a double door between this and the kitchen), two bed closets, two attic bedrooms, a WC and plenty of 'keeping-places'. (They only kept one maid but two house servants were recorded on the 1851 census).

Next door was the griever's house (his wife was the dairymaid but no griever was recorded on any of the censuses) and the two helpers had a large room of their own which opened off the cow-house, and in this there were all the conveniences for manufacturing milk. Dr. John farmed Ayrshire cows and kept them under 'slates' (under cover).

Dr. John also built a pier (see earlier) and maintained a large boat so he could ship and land carriages, carts, horses and sheep. Although today there are no signs of the stones used for building a boathouse there is the site where this was probably erected and from oral sources a boathouse was once beside the eastern jetty.

Although today the farm with its houses and buildings are quite ruinous enough can be seen to make out where alterations and additions have been made over the years.

### *Not everyone thought well of Dr. John*

When the first Crofting Commission (Napier) conducted its enquiries in 1883 a critic, A. W. Mackenzie (Alexander), reported at the Inverness hearings that fourteen families had been evicted by Dr. John but later he said that Dr. John had to import labourers to the island to work on the farm. Dr. John was seventy-nine and too old to give evidence.

According to Alexander Mackenzie :

*'The factor himself then had the fine farm of Isle of Ewe – the finest on the estate – in his own hands and from which, as I have already said, fourteen families were formerly evicted. Some of the best heifers were taken there to graze while others were sent to the Island of Longa, with the result that they not only 'ate their own heads off', but in some cases brought their owners further into debt.'*

Although Mackenzie had lived in Gairloch (he was born there) it was not for any length of time and he had travelled far and wide. Therefore, some of his evidence was from hearsay.

Dr. John's practices seemed to have been disliked by many of the crofters in the estate and this is born out in the Macdonald letters which were written by members of this family to other members who had emigrated to Australia.



*So who was Dr. John?*

Dr. John gave up medicine in 1832 to become a tenant farmer. Before moving to Isle Ewe he farmed at Strathpeffer. He wanted to help tenants by educating them and helping them to improve their farming methods. He wrote *Improvements to Highland Crofts* in 1842 and *Croft Cultivation – by an Old Crofter* in 1885 in which he set out his ideas. He developed crofting on the Gairloch Estate instead of large-scale sheep farming which would have resulted in evictions. His salary for the year 1847 – 1848 was £300 a year.

However, not everyone felt that Dr. John's methods were detrimental to the crofters' way of life. D. G. F. MacDonald of Dingwall wrote the following in a long letter praising Dr. John's methods in *The Inverness Advertiser* under the heading '*Improvements in the West Highlands*' :

*'The Isle Ewe, the 'wonderful island' will immortalise its improver. I pulled up a turnip the other day, without picking or choosing, that weighs 5½ lbs in the bulb.'*

Another of Dr. John's champions was George Poulett Scrope (1797 – 1876) who was an MP, a geologist and a political economist. He visited Gairloch and later wrote about Dr. John's work in helping the crofters rather than clearing the estates as other Highland lairds were doing.

*'In this beneficent and patriotic work the lead has been taken by Dr Mackenzie, of Eileanach, the manager of the Gairloch estate, as uncle and guardian of its heir Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.'*

Dr. John was also instrumental in getting Campbell Smith to map the whole estate in order to delineate where the crofts should be fixed.

### ***Isle Ewe on the maps***

Although Isle Ewe was not mapped in 1844 and 1845 a later estate map of 1848 shows part of Isle Ewe with its existing main farmhouse. However, the only other noteworthy part of this map is the 'burying ground', known as the graveyard with its wall still visible today. According to Dixon a sea captain was buried on Isle Ewe.

There are stones which could be headstones now lying horizontally on the ground except for one which is standing but whether this was once a headstone is just conjecture.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Ordnance Survey map (surveyed between 1843 – 1882) shows the burial ground, a fank, the main house and buildings next to this, the mill dam and sluice, a well and a building near the pier in the south-east corner. The roads at the bottom end of the island were also shown.

### ***Census returns 1841 onwards and from other information***

It is recorded that a Roderick M'Kenzie (see OPR) rented land on Isle Ewe in 1847 and 1848 at £80 per year but his name is not shown in the census returns (see above).

Apart from one family (see later) and Dr. John himself, the five sets of tenants on the 1851 census were either local or from places such as Fodderty, Contin or Dingwall.

The 1861 census showed more change in the households. Although Dr. John had left the island in 1856 it is not known when these households actually came to the island although it is possible that they all arrived in 1856. There were seven of these plus a new farmer living in Dr. John's house, Colin Munro from Knockbain who employed nine labourers. He farmed 2015

acres. He was recorded as paying rent between 1856 to 1864. In 1862 he paid £200. There was more variety in jobs. In addition to the agricultural labourers there were two ploughman, a dairymaid and a shepherd.

As the mill had been built there was also a miller, Kenneth McKenzie from Lochcarron. More is known about Kenneth because one of his sons, James Noble, became a noted minister. James was born on Isle Ewe on January 8<sup>th</sup> 1865. He recorded that his father Kenneth was also the general manager of Isle Ewe so the family would have lived in the grieve's house which had three rooms with windows. Kenneth had been born around 1810 to 1812 and married his wife, Catherine, nee Macrae, in 1850. Kenneth's widow and the children left Isle Ewe in May 1870.

#### *William Reid, farmer*

According to the 1871 census there were ten households. This included the farm and by this time the farmer was William Reid from Urray who employed eight labourers and had 1000 acres, of which 100 were arable. The records show him as paying rent between £150 and £180 annually from 1865 to 1893. The farmhouse was recorded as having ten rooms with windows and the other houses had from two to four rooms with windows. A cartwright was one of the tenants but there was no longer a miller so maybe milling had ceased. For the first time five fishermen were recorded but they seemed to be local to the area rather than being from Portknockie (see below).

A letter from William Reid from Isle Ewe written in February 1893 makes interesting reading :

*'Sir, I am very much oblided (sic) by your favour that you agree to take the whole stock of Isle Ewe which is nothing more than what I did when I came in and what the first form of leace (sic) sent to me by Mr Binning (the factor) sent to me to be signed which was never formally done (1865) Rather than have it now brought to arbitration which would be very disagreeable to me. The said document clearly says that the said William Reid is entitled with all other things that he gets all beastials (sic) valued for him at his outgo by Arbitration mutually chosen*

*I am yours very sincerly (sic)*

*William Reid*

It would be supposed that this letter was to the factor of the Gairloch Estate but from a response written to this and to a previous letter it seems that the laird, Kenneth Mackenzie, received this letter.

Another letter from Mr. Reid showed again his dissatisfaction with the way he perceived he was being treated by the estate.

The laird replied promptly to both the letters.

*'Dear Mr Reid I have your letters of the 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> inst. That you are unable at present to take a personal charge of the farm is a great misfortune for which I am very sorry; but I was unable to take personal charge of it myself, & if a suitable tenant should not turn up ready to enter at the first term, I cannot then return you of the place. I am putting an advertisement with the ? and Invergordon Times of Wednesday and the ? of Friday, instructing that Isle Ewe is to be let at Whitsunday 1894, or with entry next Whitsunday if desired. I cannot however say that I expect to receive application from offerers whom I would care to accept, since any solvent & unobjectionable tenant wanting a place at the first term is likely to have ? himself long ago. Mr Moss(?) has abandoned any notion he had of taking Isle Ewe. So if you do not hear from me within the next fortnight that I*

*can return you at Whitsunday, I am afraid you must make up your mind to hold on for another year. I am yours Faithfully Kenneth S Mackenzie.'*

#### *1881/1891/1901/1911 census information*

Eight households made up the 1881 census and for the first time a schoolhouse was recorded with John Macaskill who was born in Lochinver, being the teacher with his sister, Ann, employed as the sewing mistress. However by 1891 the school appears to have ceased functioning. There were nine households on the 1891 census and six cottars' houses and the farmhouse on the 1901 census. Donald Macrae, from Scoraig in Lochbroom, was the farmer (see below) on the 1901 census and the farmhouse was shown to have seven rooms with windows. There were still fishermen living on the island as well as farm servants and two shepherds.

The final census to which there is access, 1911, showed that there were eight households living on the island. Donald MacRae, his wife and seven children were in the largest house but on this occasion it was only recorded as having five rooms with windows. There were five houses with three windowed rooms and two with only two windowed rooms. A ploughman, Donald MacIver, and his wife lived in one of the houses but the population seemed to be growing older as there were seven old age pensioners with five of these having 'private means'. Three fishermen were also recorded.

#### ***Schooling on Isle Ewe***

Although a school was recorded on the island on the 1881 census it appears that there could have been a school at an earlier date. According to Dixon in his book *Gairloch and Guide to Loch Maree* John Mackenzie, the piper, poet and author, was :

*'...educated primarily at home, afterwards at a small school on Isle Ewe...'*

As John Mackenzie was born on July 17<sup>th</sup> 1806 it could be surmised that he was at school on Isle Ewe about 1816 to 1820. However, nothing else is known about this school.

On October 21<sup>st</sup> 1889 a Reverend Professor Thomas Smith and his daughter were guests for a fortnight in the 'hospitable' Free Church Manse in Aultbea. With the Reverend and Mrs Dingwall they were taken over to Isle Ewe where they visited the school. Reverend Smith wrote :

*'We were greatly pleased with the order of the School and the general aspect of the scholars.'*

He went on to say that the pupils were well taught and that their writing on slates was particularly good. Their spelling was correct and their grammar unexceptional. Needlework taught by Miss MacLennan was good and the teacher was a Mr. MacLennan.

According to the 39<sup>th</sup> *Annual Report of the Association for the Religious Improvement of the Remote Highlands and Islands in Connect with the Free Church of Scotland* the pupils went over to the mainland to Bualnaluib School for this inspection. In addition to the comments made by the Reverend Smith it was reported that seven pupils read Gaelic fairly well and one failed in Arithmetic.

The two children from Isle Ewe attended Laide school and are mentioned in the Laide school log-book of 1892. Therefore, they would have had to be taken by boat and then maybe

walk. It would have been a long day for them. Education in Laide school stopped at 1911. By 1924 children were again taught on the island and between that year and 1976 when the school finally closed there were six women teachers.

After World War 1 the children were taught in a room in one of the houses, probably the main farm house. The school closed in 1942 but later by 1963 a new classroom was built which had electricity and a gas heater. Isle Ewe was a Side School and was attached to Bualnaluib to which it was joined for examination purposes.

### ***After Dr. John left***

In the Museum archives are account books for the Farm of Isle Ewe for 1864. For those pertaining to dairy produce there are records showing that Mary, the old dairymaid, sells produce and this seems to go to merchants in Poolewe and to the Dowager Lady Mackenzie in Poolewe. A Mary MacKay from Lochbroom was recorded on the 1861 as the 40-year old dairymaid living in the farmhouse. Men's labour is shown with Duncan McLean, Alexander M'Kenzie, Alexander M'Rae, Alexander Doney and Roderick MacIver being paid for nine days. In the meal account book the recipients, nine names, are given certain amounts such as ½ boll, 1 boll, 1 pound or 2 stone. Another account book showed that oats were milled and the meal that was sold went to the innkeeper in Aultbea.

From 5<sup>th</sup> April 1865 there are records of wool being sold at the Glasgow Wool Sales from Isle Ewe Farm. The sheep were Cheviots.

In *Black's Picturesque Tourist of Scotland* which was published in 1889, the Isle of Ewe was described as being :

*'in a state of high cultivation; the fields large and well fenced, having been all reclaimed from moorland. There is an extensive dairy on the island.'*

### ***A report from Andre Maitland***

A long and detailed report was made on the farm buildings by Andrew Maitland, an architect from Tain, who had been employed by the estate for other work, in 1871 dated February 28<sup>th</sup>. The steading showed signs of wear and there were several recommendations for renewal, replacement and painting. It seems that the grieve's house could have been attached to this as the 'north wing' as also might have been the stable and the dairy. The 'south wing' contained the carpenter's shop and the smithy. The 'west wing' housed the byre. The farmhouse seemed in slightly better condition although many recommendations were made. This house had dormer windows and the slating above these leaked. This house also had an east and west wing. If the repairs of the 'dilapidations' to the steading and farmhouse were 'properly executed' then a 19-year lease could be given to a tenant. The cost of this would be £156.16.6 for the steading and £15.11.0 for the farmhouse. The fishermen's houses were also checked :

*'These houses are in much about the same state as they were in when inspected in June 1865 – requiring few repairs with the exception of the thatching which is of a temporary description – and for most part in a worn out state.'*

The fences also merited checking and were found to be in a better state than when last inspected. Some had been made higher except the old dyke next to the sea which was still in a dilapidated condition. However, the turf dykes were very low and needed repair.

It appears that the repairs etc. were carried out because in estate records there is a note of 'Home wood used for repairs at Isle Ewe 1872'. The value of the wood was £60.13.4 and it came from Flowerdale. There is also a 'Statement Cost of Repairs and Improvements of the Farm Buildings at Isle Ewe' dated 1872. This details all costs such as boat hire from Gairloch to Isle Ewe for transporting the wood and the carpenters and the cost of transporting ironmongery furnishings and payment to the railway company for 'carriage of Bag slate nails'. Some purchases came from out of the area, such as the ironmongery from Glasgow and Dingwall, skylights from Inverness and glass from Glasgow.

In 1895 other improvements and repairs were carried out. The farm and its buildings were repaired and from J. Anderson of Stornoway a ton of Portland cement was purchased in order to make a concrete floor in the straw barn. Maybe this was another building. Local men carried out the work. For the first time wire fences are mentioned.

#### *The 2<sup>nd</sup> OS map*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> OS map (surveyed between 1892 and 1905) shows that the burial ground was disused. Reputedly this graveyard was last used to bury the captain of a schooner who was murdered by his crew (see earlier) and it is said that there was a hollow in one of the grave stones which was used as a baptismal font (also see earlier). The other features remained plus twelve set out rectangular areas which would have been the crofts. However, no buildings are shown on these to indicate any dwellings.

#### *Lease re the farm : 1893 - William Reid*

In 1893 the farm was occupied by William Reid (see earlier). The acreage was supposedly 978 of which 100 were cultivated but as twice this amount had been formerly ploughed it was stated that this could be again brought into rotation. There were between 400 and 500 Cheviot ewes, about 15 cows and 15 stirks (a yearling bullock or heifer), pigs and horses. The farm was supposedly understocked. It was stated that seaweed from the shores of the island had always sold profitably.

The lease, for a nineteen year period would be agreed upon from Whitsunday 1895. The tenant would have to live on the farm and keep it stocked with his own '*bona-fide* bestial'. (The terms of the lease were general to all farms on the estate). The rent was fixed at £100 for the first five years of the lease and £120 thereafter.

From the information there was a threshing mill, boats, iron gates, carpenter and smithy tools, implements of husbandry and dairy utensils and fences. There was a house and steading and ploughman's and shepherd's cottages.

There were five or six cottars who might have an acre of land allocated to them.

#### *1901/1911 – Donald Macrae*

Donald Macrae was the tenant who rented the island's farm from Sir Kenneth Smith Mackenzie from 1895 onwards. At that time there was said to be 998 acres of land of which 100 were cultivated (although in the past double that was under cultivation). On the island were 400/500 cheviot and blackfaced ewes, 35 goats, about 20 cows and 20 stirks and some pigs and horses. (It was again mentioned that this was rather understocked). As in the 1894 information there had always been a profitable sale of seaware from the island's shores.

The lease would be agreed upon from Whitsunday 1901 and the first term's payment would be from Whitsunday 1902. (Again the terms of the lease were general to all farms on the estate). The rent was fixed at £100 for each of the first five years of the lease and thereafter £120 per year.

From the information there was a threshing mill, boats, iron gates, carpenter and smithy tools, implements of husbandry and dairy utensils and fences. There was a house and steading and ploughman's and shepherd's cottages and there were five or six cottars who might have an acre of land allocated to them. This section had not changed from the previous lease.

It is known that the MacRae's had 80 cows and that the land was very fertile.

#### *Tenants between Dr. John's time and around the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War*

Before the later twelve crofts were made (see below) the dwellings were to be found around the farmhouse area and the jetty area. What was termed 'the Square' was where the farm manager (at one time Dr. John) and the grieve lived. There was a large stack yard near these houses. Later William MacLennan ('Baldy') and John MacLennan ('An More' or 'Iain at the Bridge') lived there. They were allocated crofts 11 and 12 later. There were originally four farm worker's cottages. 1a was occupied by Donald MacIver, a ploughman who was allocated croft 7. 2a was occupied by Sandy MacKenzie, a keeper who later lived in croft 6. 3a was occupied first by Annie Gunn but then it became empty and 4a was occupied by Willie Grant who later went to croft 2.

There were also four fishermen's cottages. 'An Ruadh' (John Macrae) lived in number 1 who later went to croft 9. In number 2 was 'Dol Ali Bhan' (Donald MacKenzie) who later occupied croft 8. Kenny Grant was in number 3 and he transferred to croft 4 and John MacIver who was called The 'Brochoch' was in number 4 and he later occupied croft 1.

There were stalls provided for 30 cows and the farm equipment mentioned the mill, a mower, a reaper and turnip choppers. There was also a dairy, a granary and a drying kiln, a blacksmith and a joinery workshop. Water was piped in to the animals but the water for the houses was collected by bucket.

#### *1<sup>st</sup> World War*

In *The Heroes of Gairloch Parish World War 1* by Ann Roots and William MacRobbie four men are mentioned who served in the war.

#### ***Change of the island's ownership***



Sometime after 1900, which was after the death of William Reid, the island was leased to a family called Grants from the then owner MacDonald Buchanan of Scatwell. It is not known when Macdonald Buchanan bought the island but evidently the Gairloch Estate had sold Isle Ewe, maybe when other parts of the estate were sold.

### *The Twelve Crofts*

At the end of the First World War the farm was split up into twelve crofts, apparently under a scheme to create crofts for returning servicemen. Most of the crofts were taken up by the former residents and farmworkers at the time. It was then that William Grant (see below) moved to Isle Ewe.

The twelve crofts were farmed by :

No 1 – Iain MacIver ('*Brococh*' which means 'the young man').

No 2 – Willie Grant (brother of Kennie Sandy's mother)

No 3 – Willie MacLennan (brother of *Coinnich I'n Uilleam*)

No 4 – Kennie Grant (brother of Hector, Mellon Udrigle)

No 5 – John MacLennan ('*Iain Mòr*' Mellon Charles, Iain at the bridge). This croft had 32 acres.

No 6 – Alexander (Sandy) MacKenzie (father of 'Kennie Sandy'). Sandy MacKenzie was born in 1881 and arrived on Isle Ewe in 1884.

No 7 – Donald MacIver ('the *Gillaidh*', brother of 'Toby'). He was a cattleman or a ploughman. (He has already been mentioned on the 1911 census)

No 8 – Donald MacKenzie '*Dohal Alli Bhàn*'.

No 9 – John Macrae '*I'n Ruadh*' (uncle of *Dohal an Fhùdair*).

No 10 – Donald Macrae (*Dohal an Fhùdair* or 'Donald Powder'). This croft had 40 acres.

No 11 – John MacLennan '*Seonaidh Dubh*'.

No 12 – William MacLennan 'Baldie' (father of Jessie and Rhoda). He was 'Black Jock' from Badfearn and an absentee tenant.

There were other dwellings.

Near number two there were two houses on the land *Tigh na Bodoch* (the father of *Dol Ali Bhan*, number 8?) It was said that he was turned out of his house and land when the farm was made.

Another house was on the land *Tigh Dunachaidh* (Duncan), believed to be where a relative of the Macraes lived and who was reputed to have fought for Prince Charles at Culloden.

Yet another house was on *Taigh Mhic Catain* near *Creagan Dubh* but the occupant is unknown.

### *After 1918*

By the end of the first World War most of the younger men who had been away due to the war etc. chose not to return and the older residents moved away.

In 1919 it was said that the herrings were so plentiful that they could be collected from the seaweed by buckets. During these years coal was brought to the island by puffers.

### **Isle Ewe today**

The island is now part of the Inverasdale Estate owned by Mark Williams. Only two families live on the island but there are four habitable houses. (In 1961 there were ten people living on the island, six were men and four were women).

The modern houses are grouped in an area opposite Aultbea pier and there is a slipway where small boats can be beached. The western, hillier end of the island is where the round houses can be found plus some second world war gun emplacements. The stone dykes at the eastern end are still fairly well maintained and the roads that Dr. John put in place can still be followed.

The twelve later croft outlines are still in place and there are ruins of the older croft and fishermen's houses. The farmstead with all its buildings, although ruinous, is still in place and the mill stream still flows from the former peat bog area to its millpond and then to the millwheel beside the mill.

### **Isle Ewe in World War 2**

During World War 11 there were four barrage balloons installed on the island. There were also round bases for gun emplacements although none was installed but their bases can still be seen. During the war these were surrounded with corrugated iron.

Shells from the war and other items can be found in the waters in the loch and this structure can be seen on the Inverasdale side of the island.

### **Information from other sources**

From *Wester Ross Journey 111 Mainly in Gairloch and Loch Ewe* which was written in May 1947 by H. A. Rendel Govan in collaboration with Miss Grace Drysdale and J. G. Stewart and produced by Ross and Cromarty County Council the following is of interest :

*'As arranged, we stopped for coffee, and hereby heard of Mr. William Grant and met his sister. Mr. Grant and his two sons live on Isle Ewe, that fertile island out from Aultbea, and they seem to know how to make a good thing of West Highland Agriculture.*

*The island has had a chequered career. At one time it was run as a club farm, supporting ten or a dozen families. Then the club was broken up, and eight or ten separate crofts were formed. But the young people wouldn't stay – it was too isolated – and the old folks died off. Not, however, Mr. Grant and his family. They stayed and now have the pick of the island. They have a tractor. They rear and sell calves; grow excellent vegetables, gooseberries, blackcurrants, and Worcester berries for sale to the hotels around. They fish salmon for the Powries, and clam and lobsters for the London market....'*

The William Grant referred to was the present tenant's grandfather with the two sons being his father, Donald, and his uncle, Ian. The sister mentioned was probably Kate (MacKenzie) who used to live on Isle Ewe.

William Grant had a very prolific garden at that time and this is where the fruit and vegetable came from. The present tenant's mother lives in the house now and there are still one or two bushes left but are past their best.

There is a direct telephone link to the island although British Telecom had agreed to its installation before it was realised that the connection would cost them about £30,000. There is no mains electricity although the houses today have generators and there is no mains water. Water is taken from the wells. There is no jetty but a sloping piece of beach where small boats can be pulled up. Larger fishing boats are anchored further out to sea.

The island of Isle Ewe centred on NG 85046 88444 lies within Loch Ewe. It lies on a NW to SE axis and in this direction measures just over two miles in length. As can be seen from an aerial photo its topography varies and can be divided into NW and SE sections.



The NW is higher, rockier, with rough uncultivated grazing, and the SE has gentler contours with arable pasture.

This can partly be explained by cultivation, but the geology of the island also contributes to what is seen today.

The topography is a function of geology and millennia of erosion.

The Torridonian sandstones in the NW were deposited 1000 million years ago. Two major alluvial fans brought coarse, pebbly red sandstones from a source well to the NW and left deposits across the Gairloch area. Originally these deposits were 7kms thick.

To the SE of the island the rock consists of New Red Sandstone which is about 250 million years old. These bright red deposits derive from fluvial sediments laid down on the flood plains of meandering rivers, flowing through dry eventually desert areas. Evaporation will have ensured the retention of salts and minerals. This may well be partly to explain why the soils in the SE of the island are so much more fertile.

Glacial drift is present predominantly in the S. half of the island explaining the pebbly nature of some of the soil.

The SE of the island is also more sheltered from the prevailing NW winds.

These natural elements help to explain the landuse of the island.



Looking at the NLS website the earliest reference to the loch and island comes in 1583 when Nicolay refers to Loch Ew. In 1654 Gordon refers to Loch Ew and Blaeu's map of same date shows the island.

Blaeu's map of 1654



Moll in 1718 refers to Inner Ew but no island, and Roy's military map of 1747-55 shows the island

Roy's military map



The map clearly shows cultivation lines, and two settlements. The southern one named Canustaich has been superseded by later development, but the footings of the northern settlement were found during the survey ( see list of sites)

Dorret in 1761 names Island Ewe

In 1794 a marine chart by Joseph Huddart names Yew island. It is thought that this is due to a mis-spelling of the pronunciation rather than an abundance of yew trees of which there is no evidence. This map also shows an anchorage on the sheltered E side of the island. There are several marked around the loch along with fathom depths. A possible ferry route is marked between Naist (Naast) and Tainnifilan (Aultbea) showing the loch was well used.

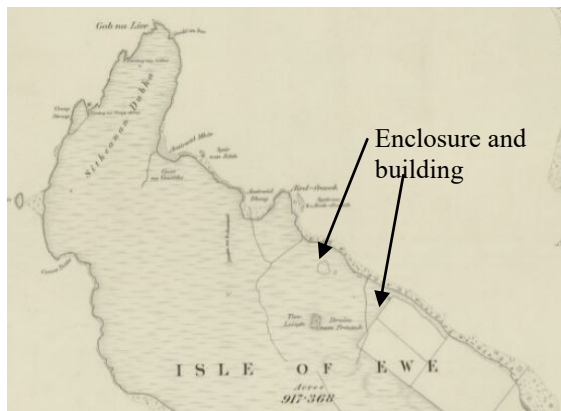
The next maps were the Ordnance survey 1st and 2nd editions.

Marine chart 1794 Joseph Huddart



1st edition OS map 1875

North part of island



South part of island



The 1st edition OS map shows little evidence of cultivation in the northern part of the island, but the enclosure and building shown were found in the survey.

The southern part of the island clearly shows the farm with fields laid out which are in the separate detailed survey and an enclosure to the NW, also listed in survey of sites.

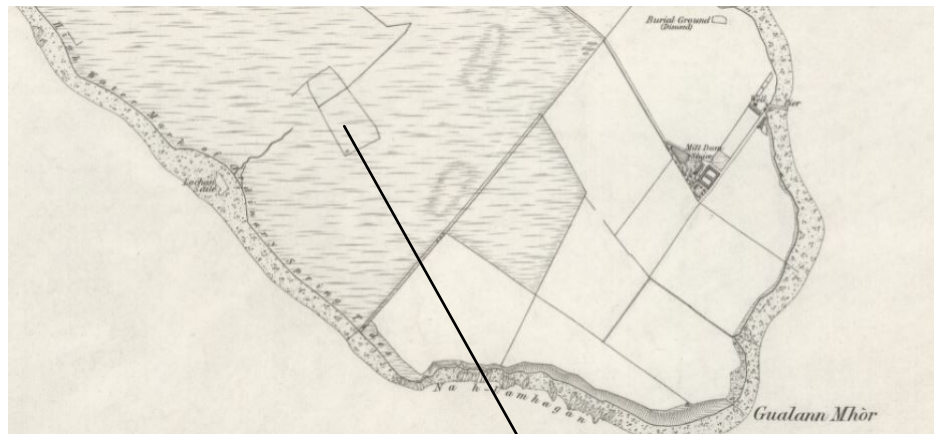
The second OS shows little change.



North part of  
Island



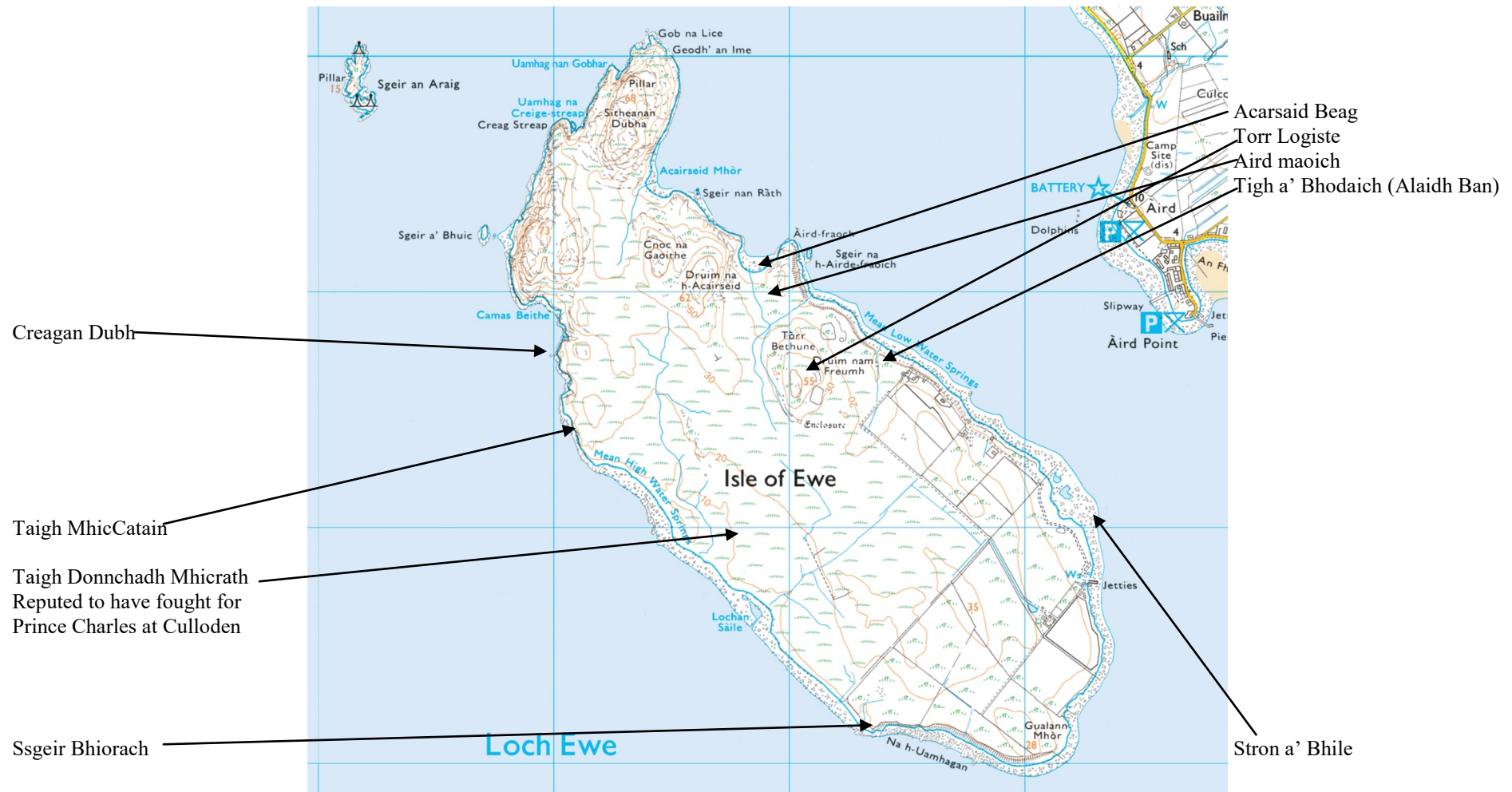
South part  
of island



Today's aerial photo shows the enclosure marked on earlier OS maps quite clearly.



List of additional Gaelic place names from map compiled by local historian Willie McRobbie



The use of Taigh indicates houses which were found during the survey, see list.  
For notes on Torr Loisgte see history of Isle Ewe.

The history of the island has been outlined, and the maps show how it was depicted. Certainly from roundhouses to modern bungalows Isle Ewe has been inhabited for a long time. Our knowledge of the people date from a document titled Rental lands of Gerloch 1752, the OPR records, census records and local knowledge. The survey which has listed the sites found, ties in with what is shown on maps.

However what we did not include on the survey list was the largest building with surrounding development known as 'the Square' because it needed a detailed survey and explanation of its own.

For detailed history see historical account.

Records show that there was a larger farm on Isle Ewe from around 1795.

On the death of his brother Francis in 1843 Dr John , his brother, took over as estate factor until his nephew would reach his majority.

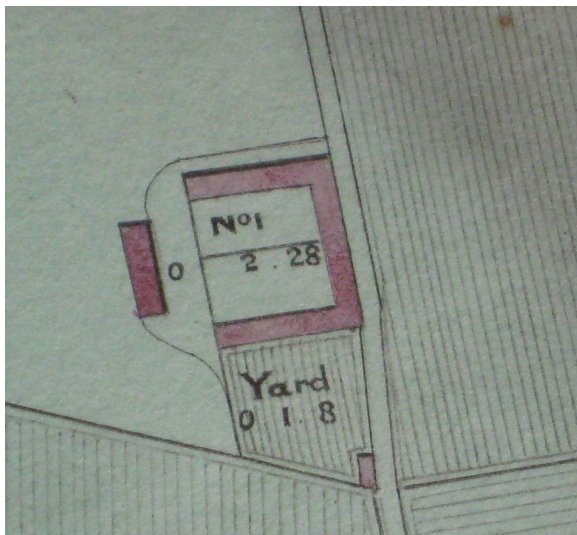
The Gairloch lairds had been trying to improve the crofting methods on the estate rather than turn it into a sheep farm and were in the process of establishing crofting townships.

They employed Campbell Smith to draw up estate maps in 1844/5, however Isle Ewe was not surveyed until 1848 at the time when Dr John decided to establish his 'model farm' to try out his proposed improved farming methods. Dr John left the island in 1856. The island was also used for grouse shooting by guests from Inverewe.

In 1893 the farm was let to Mr W. Reid, followed by Mr D. Macrae in 1901. At the end of the first world war it was divided up into 12 crofts to let to returning servicemen.

These boundaries still remain and were based on the field boundaries set out on the estate map.

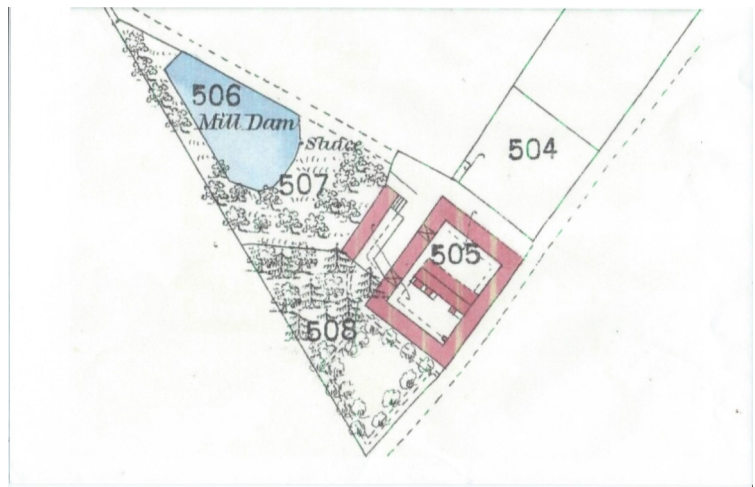
'the Square' is unlike any other building in the area measuring 47 x 37.5m the nearest comparison being Drumchork farm just across the loch on the mainland. However it is not as large or complex.



'the Square' as depicted on the 1848 estate map

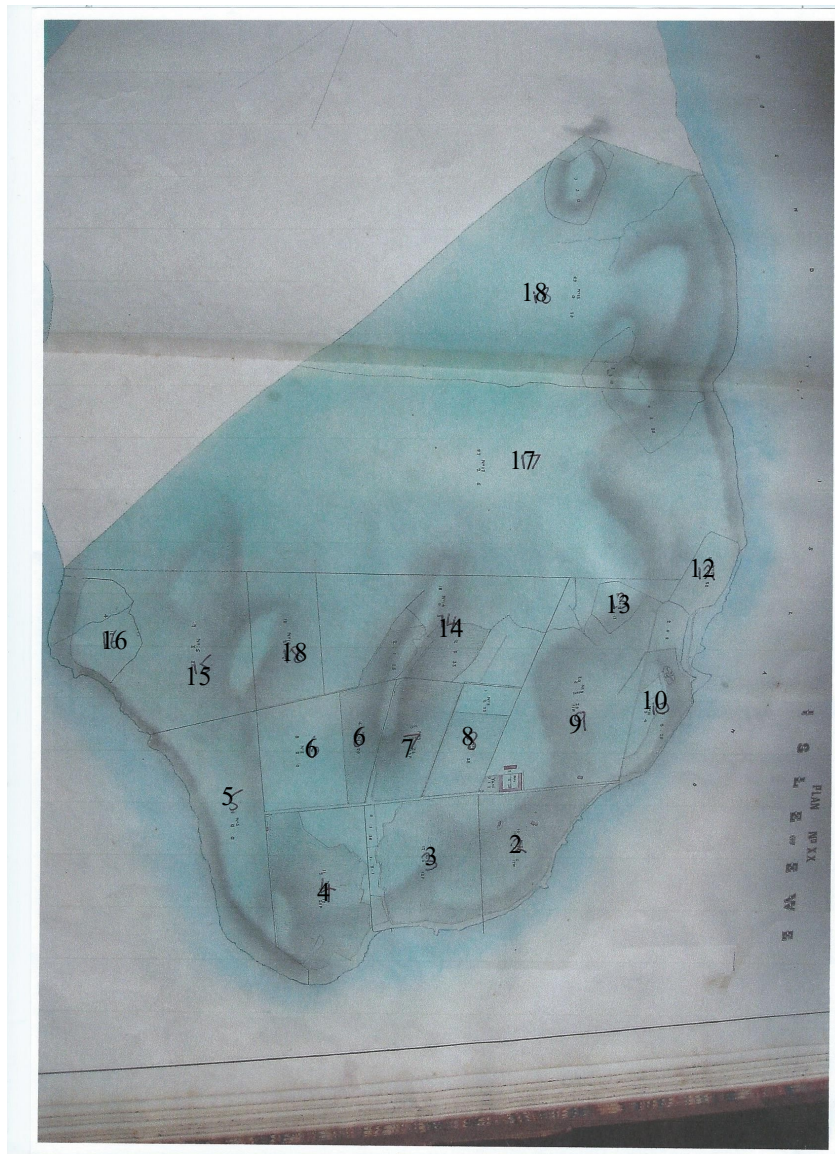
'the Square' as shown on the 25" OS map of 1875.

There are also the additions of the farm workers cottages and fishermen's cottages as will be shown on the survey. As can be seen, the layout of the square changed, and has since changed again.





The estate map of Isle Ewe shows the proposed layout of the fields and on this are the measurements attributed to each field. These were shown on all Gairloch estate maps and are in acres, rods, and poles. A rod being 1/4 acre, equalling 40 poles



Some of the fields are numbered, and 'the Square' is shown.

Examples of field measurements are field 9: 20 acres 2 rods and 29 poles with 2 acres 3 rods and 11 poles P. The P after a measurement indicated ground suitable for pasture rather than arable.



A close up of part of estate map showing acreages.

The later croft boundaries established after the first world war follow similar lines.

### Croft Boundaries established 1916-18



These still remain today, with the ground being mainly used for grazing. The two families living on the island have diversified into creel fishing and boat building. Other employment includes being part of the coastguard team and marine engineering. There are three generations of one of the original families living on the island. This family moved to the island, taking over the tenancy of croft 2 sometime prior to 1918 (where they were living as proved by Banns of marriage). They began taking over the crofts in 1935, taking on Nos. 10, 11, and 12, in addition to No 2. The remainder of the tenants had left the island by the end of WW2, with the exception of John MacIver, 'The Brococh' who remained for a few more years. Most of the people left between 1936-38 due to the war and young people moving away.

Aerial photograph  
Showing croft boundaries  
still visible.





The field/croft boundaries which can still be seen are constructed mainly of stone which was probably field clearance. Some of the walls are quite substantial while others particularly on the exposed western side of the island are broken down and in places clearly rebuilt. Evidence of past farming activity can be seen in rusting machinery. Some of the roads that were built are still visible although some have been broken up by drainage ditches and landuse by the army during the war.



Wall running alongside road at farm boundary on W side of island

This road/track leads from 'the Square' to the W side of the island. The gate is made with angle iron salvaged from wartime constructions.





As previously mentioned the two world wars affected Isle Ewe.

World war 1 depleted the population as many young men did not return to the island after the war.

During World war 2 there was a substantial influx of personnel with structures built on the island.

These were in association with the fuel depot at Aultbea and 'The Boom' at Mellon Charles, a base with an anti-submarine barrage. There was also a base at Cove.

Large numbers of military personnel were stationed in the area and you needed a pass to get into the village. Barriers were erected at Laide and Gairloch.

To get on to the island, the jetty at the S. end was extended and altered. This was originally constructed by Dr John.



To the N. a slipway was constructed to allow rapid deployment of machinery and personnel by landing craft.( see site 11 on list)



Around the coastline there are other possible landing sites showing alterations but it is impossible to say if these were created earlier by fishermen or the army. These are mainly in the S. end. (see list)

A total of 15 concrete platforms were found ( see list) some used as bases for Nissan huts and others for gun emplacements. There were never any guns actually sited on the island. There were barrage balloons. All the platforms were visible to each other.

Some examples of the concrete bases.



Some were more obvious than others and we were grateful to Willie Grant for showing us their location.



This photo shows three concrete platforms in a row with the field boundary and road running parallel to it.



The army constructed a water tank for the islanders and another for themselves which is now disused.

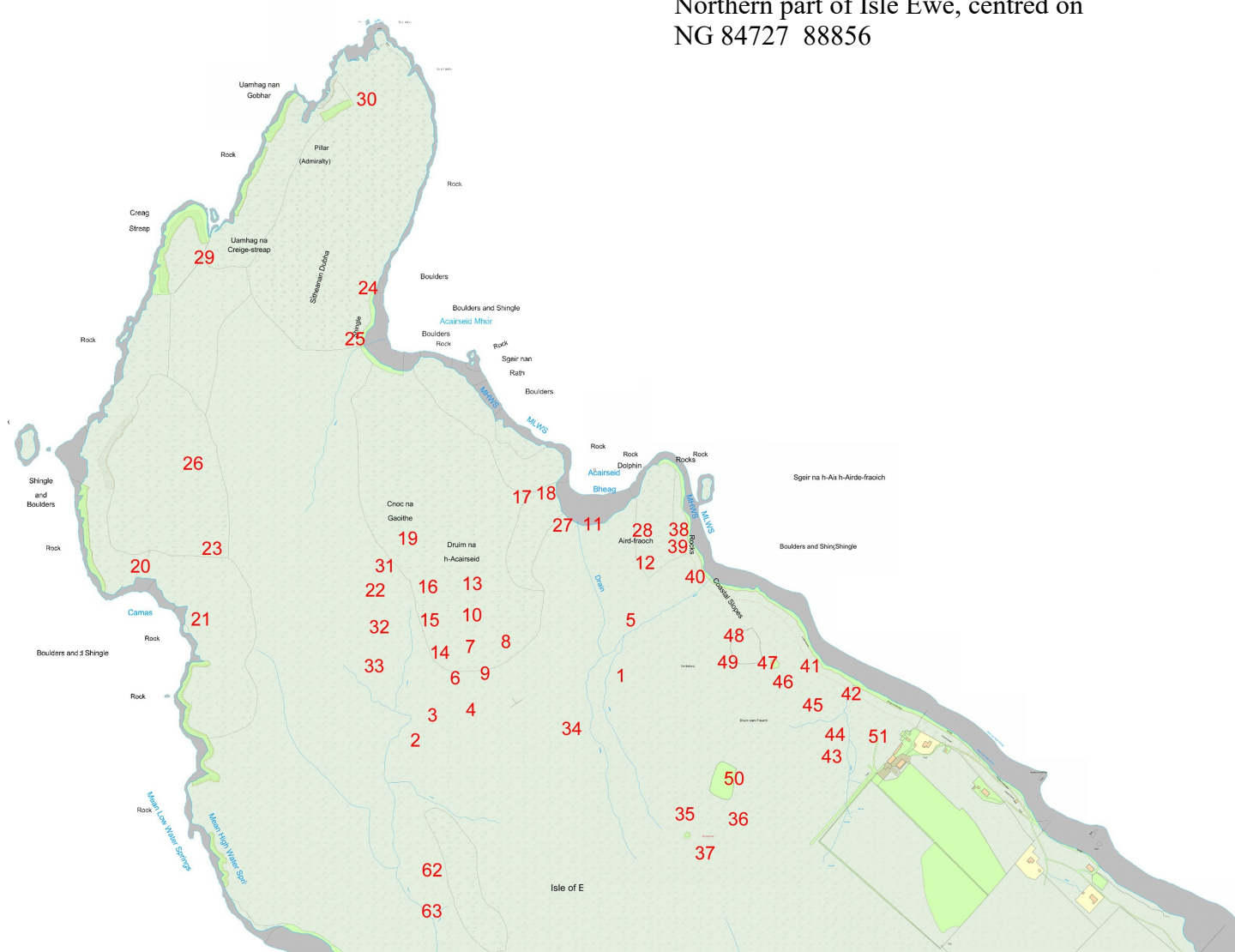


Other platforms supported a water tower, generator, and pump for a covered well. Details on site list.



Map showing location of Isle Ewe sites, North part of island.

Northern part of Isle Ewe, centred on  
NG 84727 88856



Map showing location of Isle Ewe sites, South part of island.



## List of Isle Ewe Sites

1. NG 84954 88677 elev 39m Possible shooting butt



2. NG 84654 88631 elev 34m Turf dyke



3. NG 84681 88697 elev 38m Stone dyke





4. NG 84697 88707 elev 37m Right angle in stone dyke



5. Wall running around the base of the NE side of Druim nam Freumh



6. NG 84694 88763 elev 39m Stone clearance piles





7. NG 84727 88856 elev 33m stone dyke that continues down to meet feature 5 and continues down to slipway on shore.



8. NG 84758 88889 elev 28m Footings of building measuring approximately 3 x 2m that is abutting the wall. It has a small bothan at the E end that is possibly a later lambing pen.





9. Rigs adjacent to wall feature 7



10. NG 84667 88872 elev 46m footings of ruin measuring 4 x 2m



11. Slipway at end of wall 7. probably used during WW2 to land equipment and troops.





12. Mounds of stone and turf adjacent to rigs at 9. function and origin unknown



13. NG 84661 88947 elev 50m Footings of ruin measuring 7 x 3m. Two compartment probable house/byre with byre drain. It has improved ground adjacent to it.



14. NG 84640 88820 elev 43m Footings of ruin measuring 6 x 4m. This ruin has two compartments, an outshot, and an enclosure to the NW.



Cont on next page.



Feature 14 cont.



15. NG 84606 88911 elev 47m Footings of ruin measuring 4 x 3m with very large stones and an outshot on the SW side measuring 2 x 2m.



16. NG 84613 89007 elev 62m Improved ground, no wall.





17. NG 84646 89034 elev 58m Two WW2 concrete platforms measuring 4 x 8m.



18. NG 84684 89065 elev 53m A WW2 concrete platform measuring 4 x 8m



19. NG 84479 88973 elev 44m One of the remaining two posts here that were the gates for a horse park situated in the north of the island.



20. NG 839893 Shieling grounds on higher ground opposite Sgeir a' Bhuic



21. Shieling grounds just S. of 21.



22. Improved ground to the E. of shieling grounds





23. NG 84112 89020 elev 42m Shieling ground



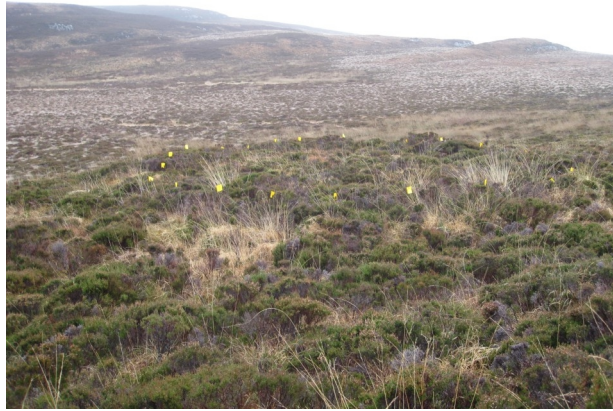
24. NG 846898 Stone quarry at base of cliff where the stone for the Free church in Aultbea was cut and loaded on to boats for transportation.



25. Enclosures on slopes above Acairseid Mhor



26. NG 84143 89119 elev 43m Roundhouse with a diameter of 11m and a SE facing entrance. It is situated at the foot of a rocky outcrop with remains of a ditch between roundhouse and rock.



27. NG 84672 88976 elev 36m Two small bothans situated on the slope on the N. side of Acairseid Bheag.



28. NG 84901 89053 elev 8m Large mound of stones, ? Clearance or natural



29. NG 844899 Remains of old fence running to the cliff edge, NW point of island. This fence was placed here post WW2 to keep stock from the cliff edge.





30. NG 84326 89848 elev 72m Trig point. Marked Hydrographic Dept. Admiralty, London SW1.  
Triangulation Station HMS Cook 1951



31. NG 84437 88952 elev 47m A possible roundhouse



32. NG 84413 88872 elev 40m Query shooting butts/wall in middle of improved area



33. NG 84457 88871 elev 38m Start of turf dyke



34. NG 84876 88621 elev 27m The turf dyke running SW then curving to NW



35. NG 85198 88796 elev 19m Roundhouse with diameter of 11m and entrance in the SE





36. NG 85131 88495 elev 30m Roundhouse with diameter of 12m and a SE facing entrance



37. Turf dyke to the S of roundhouse 1 and 2



38. NG 84983 89062 elev 22m Improved grazing ground



39. NG 84974 890162 elev 24m Improved grazing ground



40. NG 85040 89001 to NG 85045 88930 elev 15 to 9m Turf and stone dyke running at edge of shore





41. A D shaped enclosure in three sections. N section NG 85227 88887 elev 16m, Middle section NG 85233 88872 elev 19m, S section NG 85292 88789 elev 13m. At its S. end the wall runs E. down to the shore and S. along the top of the raised beach towards a house on the shore.



42. NG 85351 88748 elev 16m Two ruined fishing bothies/houses on the shore. These were known as Tigh na Bodach and were lived in by two families of Macraes and Mackenzies who eventually moved to the farm worker cottages by 'The Square'





43. NG 85340 88730 elev 18m Small enclosure with improved ground and stone clearance beside it.



44. NG 85294 88728 elev 16m lynchett wall



45. NG 85247 88797 elev 16m Two ruins tucked in below rockface sheltered from the prevailing wind. They measure 4 x 6 and 5 x 3m probable house and byre





46. NG 85223 88791 elev 19m Enclosure which has a shell midden beside its N wall.



47. NG 85198 88799 elev 20m Large adjacent enclosure, GPS taken at corner nearest to 46





48. NG 85095 88809 elev 26m Ruined structure with outer stone wall and stones piled in the middle. Measures 4 x 3m



49 . NG 85050 88800 elev 36m small enclosure



50. NG 85124 88559 elev 26m Large enclosure probably originally associated with adjacent roundhouses then altered at later date.





51. NG 85481 88665 elev 19m clearance cairns associated with rigs on slope above.

52. NG 86157 87974 elev 11m Burial Ground. For history see Historical account



Stone reputed to be baptismal font



The burial ground has been eroded by rabbits.



53. Stonewall that runs at the edge of the farm at S. end of the island



54. NG 85230 87766 elev 30m the stone wall is submerged in heather at this point.

55. NG 85205 87805 elev 28m Enclosure walls



56. NG 85214 87745 elev 29m footings of building submerged in heather



57. NG 85196 87733 elev 25m Two mounds of stones, possible stone clearance



58. NG 85193 87696 elev 22m Ruined building inside enclosure. Measuring 4 x 6m



59. NG 84616 87874 elev 7m Wall beside burn



60. NG 84621 87882 elev 7m Footings of building beside burn





61. NG 84529 88015 elev 7m Ruined building and walls for shelter. This was known as being a house. The walls of the house are 0.7m thick. The house is close to the shore and measures approx 6 x 4m. Known as 'Taigh Mhic Caitan'



62. NG 84536 88442 elev 21m Roundhouse with a diameter of 7.5m and a SE facing entrance. It also has a ditch around the outside of the E half probably to deflect water coming down the slope.



63. NG 84423 88377 elev 21m wall/enclosure





64. NG 84938 87636 elev 3m Wall that runs from inland ending on the shore.



65. NG 85219 87253 elev 5m Short wall running from the shore inland.



66. NG 85448 87166 elev 12m Small pen on shore side of the farm boundary wall





67. NG 85512 87153 elev 12m Small pen on landward side of farm boundary wall



68. NG 86118 87038 elev 9m Boundary wall continuing down on to shore with lynchett at right angles, a circular pen, and adjacent fish trap



69. NG 86134 87044 elev 6m Field clearance with terrace and wall leading down to cairn.





70. NG 86141 87066 elev 7m Area of boulders with three pens constructed within it and a wall that runs along parallel to the shore from this. Possibly created by fishermen or by the military stationed on the island in WW2.



71. NG 86173 87116 elev 3m Two adjacent slipways with stone clearance beside them from the fields above.





72. NG 86157 87169 elev 2m Wall and slipway on shore



73. NG 86155 87189 elev 4m Wall running down slope ,continuing along the shore, with another wall running parallel above it and continuing E.



74. NG 86231 87289 elev 1m Opening in wall with stone jetty beyond and an adjacent pen filled with wire rope.





75. NG 86272 87335 elev 4m Metal posts and railings running on to the shore



76. wall beside pheasant shelter belt running down on to shore



77. NG 86313 87498 elev 9m Platform of stones on shore, possibly an old jetty.



78. NG 86286 87554 elev 1m Slipway



79. NG 86281 87571 elev 7m Two small ruined buildings beside the shore with another stone platform beyond them. A possible jetty.



80. NG 86123 87558 elev 20m Stackyards in field opposite 'square'



81. NG 86273 87889 elev 4m Slipway and wall on shore. Result of shingle recovery for construction use.



'The Square' is the ruin of John Mackenzies's model farm. He was caretaker laird of the Gairloch estate after the early death of his brother Sir Francis until his nephew reached the age of majority. He implemented his brother's plan of the Gairloch crofting townships and established his model farm on Isle Ewe. More history in the historical account. The square measures 47 x 37.5 m and a detailed survey is included.

Beyond the square to the NE is a walled enclosure, and down on the shore a jetty with ruined boat-house and concrete extension built by the military during WW2.

There are two rows of cottages built for farm workers and fishermen.



82. NG 85842 87183 elev 20m Footings of three compartment building beside wall measuring approx 6 x 2.5m.



83. NG 85853 87176 elev 22m Nissan hut base from WW2 measuring 5x3m. Remnants of strengthened glass was found lying here.



There is a large borrow pit beside 82 and 83

84. NG 85922 87119 elev 28m Nissan hut base measuring 5x3m



85. NG 85944 87105 elev 33m Nissan hut base measuring 5x3m





A photograph showing features 83,84,85.



On the W. Side of this wall are the remains of a track



86. NG 86000 87065 elev 35m Gun emplacement site with hardcore base. There is a borrow pit beside this site.



87. NG 85510 87442 elev 40m Gun emplacement site



88. NG 85456 87467 elev 33m Nissan hut base 5x3m



89. NG 85463 87494 elev 37m elev Nissan hut base 5x3m



90. NG 85493 87508 elev 36m Concrete base with two separate areas which had a water tank and generator on it.



91. NG 85503 87528 elev 39m Nissan hut base, 5x3m



92. NG 85507 87548 elev 39m Nissan hut base.



Note that all four sites with Nissan hut bases are visible to each other. No guns were ever placed on the island.

93. NG 86065 87633 elev 18m Water tank beside the track opposite mill pond built by the army in WW2. It used to have a ridged slate roof, with a wee door in the S.gable for drawing water.



94. NG 85964 87741 elev 26m Square water tank built by army as a favour to the islanders. This was the well which supplied the water tank (site 93). They were both built by the army in WW2.



95. NG 85579 88216 elev 21m covered well and pump for water. The well was also built by the army in WW2 to supply Nissan huts at sites 96,97,and 98. It is now used to supply one of the houses.





96. NG 85589 88226 elev 29m Nissan hut base



Photo of three bases in a row

97. NG 85604 88246 elev 34m Nissan hut base



98. NG 85626 88271 elev 41m Nissan hut base



99. NG 86270 87785 elev 7m A well



100. NG 85746 88464 water tank, water comes from original well used for water supply



101. NG 85746 88465 Track that leads from shore slipway up to houses



102. NG 85756 88437 elev 15m Boat shaped footings used to be covered by hull, used as a shed.





103. NG 85742 88400 Modern house used by family



104. NG 85870 88319 Modern house used by family



105. NG 85987 88293 elev 8m Walls and circular pens down by the shore. Two parallel walls, the inner being of large boulders and the outer smaller boulders, probably more recent. Possible anti erosion barriers. There is a track at the tideline which was used to carry shingle for making tracks. There is a slipway now disused. No knowledge about the pens in recent history.



106.NG 86058 88176 elev 10m Ruined barn/byre measuring 6x4m. It has one doorway and a byre drain, with two stackyards adjacent to the building. A wall leads from the SE corner down on to the shore where there are two large pools which are natural but were deepened to allow for swimming. There is a fish trap further along the coastline.



107. NG 86053 88183 Adjacent footings to 106 with rounded ends which was once a hull covered shed known as the 'lookout'





108. NG 85564 88223 elev25m Ruined barn with adjacent footings measuring 3x2m and 9x5m



109. NG 85473 88609 Byre/barn marked on early OS maps still in use. Phased building.



110. NG 85479 88640 elev 14m Sheep fank and dipper marked on early OS maps which has 3 pens and a dipper.



111. NG 85567 88610 elev 13m Old school used in living memory that has since been destroyed in a gale. This school was used between 1963 and 1976.



112. NG 85527 88634 House built in 1925, with modern extension built in 1953, still lived in by oldest resident of the island.





113.NG 85503 88643 elev 22m. Original byre as shown on early OS maps measuring 6x3m



114. NG 85650 88536 Modern house used by current family.

