

# BUILDING TRADITIONS IN LOCHBROOM AND GAIRLOCH PARISHES

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## LANDSCAPE AND BUILDINGS

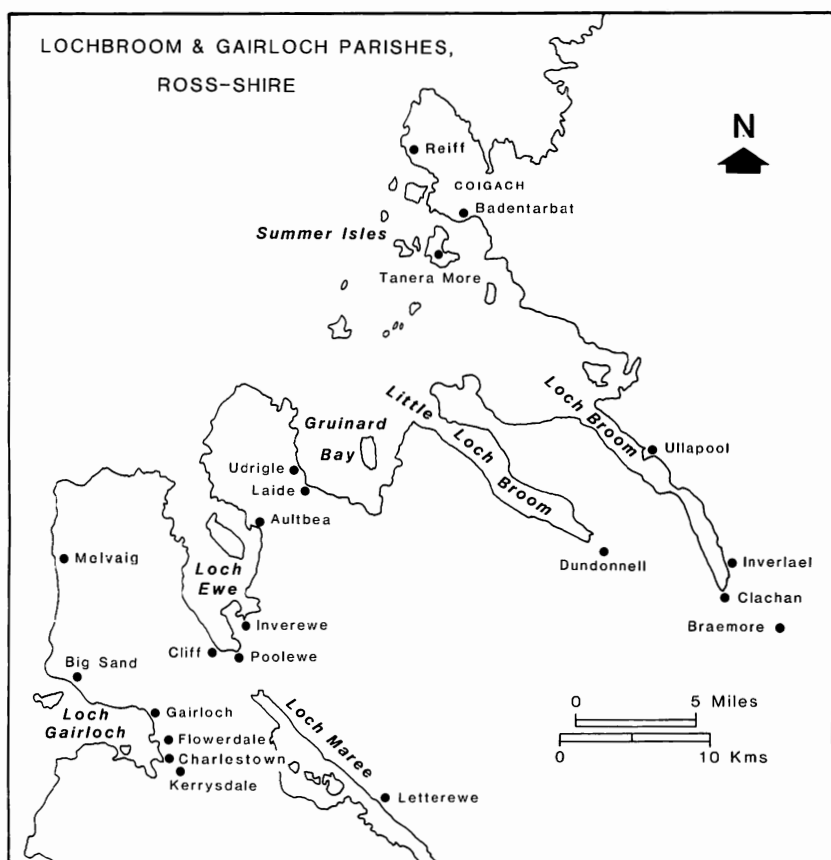
Similar to other west coast parishes, Lochbroom and Gairloch both embrace substantial geographical areas, sprawling the length of a serrated coastline indented with deep bays and over mountainous terrain carved by steep valleys and lochs. Townships developed and grew to fringe the coastline where there are pockets of fertile soil [Fig. 8.1]. 'Laird's houses', mostly built by various members of the Mackenzie family (see Bangor-Jones, this volume), occupy green tongues of land on favoured sites by the shore or in sheltered valleys, and there are a few 'improved' farms where there is land enough for spaciouly enclosed fields. The other side of the agricultural coin is the crofting township squeezed between shore and the higher ground, the latter once entirely devoted to communal grazing. Besides its obvious value for subsistence and commercial fishing, the sea was the main artery of communication until this century, boats plying across the sea lochs or along the coast.

Traditionally the parish churches were near the coast, people travelling by boat to kirk for worship or to the burial ground with their dead.

Ullapool differs from other villages and townships in the area as it was a deliberately 'planned' town, though there was already a small settlement on the site chosen by the British Fisheries Society in 1788 for their fishing village (see J. Munro, this volume).

## ECCLESIASTICAL BUILDINGS

Burial grounds frequently mark original medieval chapel sites. At Laide, on the south shore of Gruinard Bay, there is a simple roofless rubble chapel in the centre of the small graveyard [Fig. 8.2], whilst at Gairloch the earlier parish Church of Scotland was on the seaward side of its 18th century successor, fragments of the former church standing in the walled burial ground near the beach. In the two parishes, only Lochbroom parish church still occupies the original site, at Clachan at the head of Loch Broom. For in both parishes, these ecclesiastical centres proved inconveniently far from expanding settlements and both parishes have later 'Parliamentary' churches at Poolewe and Ullapool where independent *quoad sacra* parishes, each served by their own minister, were 'erected' in 1838 and 1833 respectively.



*Fig. 8.1* Location map for buildings discussed. Most settlement in Gairloch and Lochbroom parishes is limited to relatively small patches of cultivable ground along the coast.

The subsequent Disruption of 1843 tore the established church apart, the newly founded Free Church of Scotland building independent places of worship locally as throughout Scotland.

Lochbroom parish church at Clachan is remarkable in that it is almost unaltered since it was built in 1817 (bellcote 1878). The austere, rectangular stone church is of two storeys, the clear sash windows revealing galleried construction. 'The purposeful simplicity of the interior is impressive' with pulpit against the end wall, a rectangular gallery and the central floor space occupied by two long parallel communion tables enclosed by a double box pew. 'Here is no preaching house, for the sacramental character of the building is unmistakable' (Hay 1957; see also R. W. Munro, this volume) [Figs. 8.3-8.5].

The little Gairloch parish church is earlier, built in 1792 but re-cast internally and given a large gable window in 1909, the alterations by A.



Fig. 8.2 The old medieval chapel at Laide, on the southern shore of Gruinard Bay. 1989.

Maitland and Sons of Tain effectively removing much of its original character [Fig. 8.6].

The large size and scattered population of both parishes made them candidates for the provision of 'Parliamentary churches' under the 1823 *Act for building additional Places of Worship in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*. This made available the sum of £50,000 with which to construct church and manse at forty different sites, the buildings to cost no more than £1,500 together. Thomas Telford, with the assistance of James Smith and John Mitchell, drew up plans for church [Fig. 8.7] and manse, the latter of optional single and two storey designs.

The church in Argyll Street, Ullapool (1829, no longer in ecclesiastical use and now home to the Ullapool Museum), and that at Poolewe (1828), are both relatively unaltered examples of Parliamentary churches (and there were two others in Wester Ross — Plockton in Lochalsh and Shildaig, Applecross — both 1827: see R. W. Munro, this volume) [Figs. 8.8-8.10]. These T-plan buildings have simple south elevations lit by two central shallow-arched windows with similarly shaped outer doorways closed by double-leaf doors, panelled at Poolewe. Both buildings have original lattice-pane glazing in the windows lighting the gables and rear wing besides the frontage, the cast-iron window frames brought from an Aberdeen foundry by sea: both have characteristic apex bellcotes decorated with stumpy pinnacles. No manse was provided at Ullapool, for the British Fisheries Society shouldered that responsibility (now Ornsay House in West Shore Street). The manse at Poolewe (The Old Manse) was of the single storey,

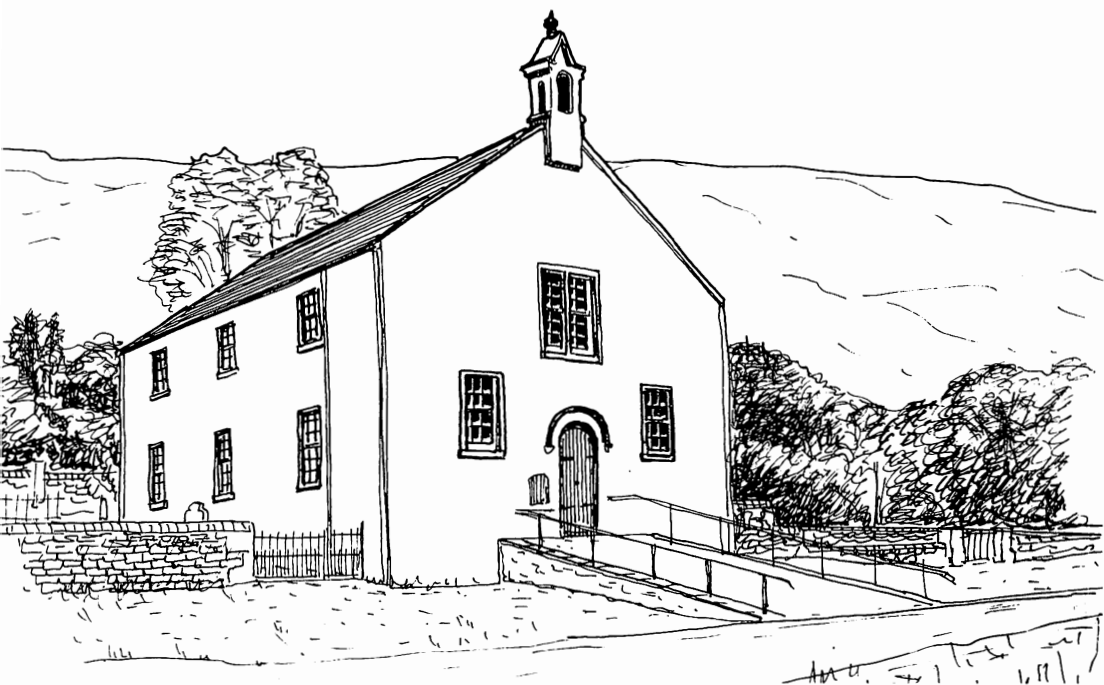


Fig. 8.3 Lochbroom Parish Church, Clachan, 1817. The church was renovated in 1835 and the bellcote added in 1878. Drawing by John Hume.

Fig. 8.4 The interior of Lochbroom Parish Church has simple galleries around three sides. Unusual and rare is the double row of parallel box pews and communion tables running down the centre from the demi-octagonal pulpit. Drawing by John Hume.

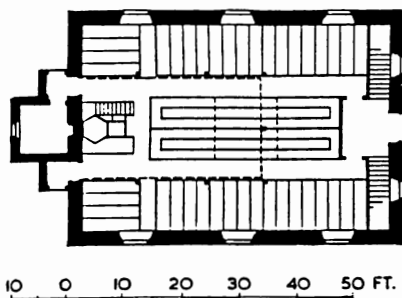
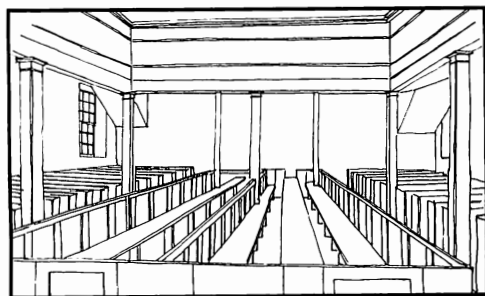


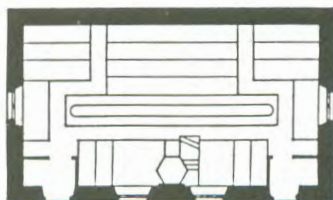
Fig. 8.5 Ground plan of Lochbroom Parish Church, showing the layout of box pews, communion tables, pulpit, precentor's desk and stairs to the galleries. From George Hay, *Architecture of Scottish Post-Reformation Churches, 1560-1843* (1957, 131-2). 'The purposeful simplicity of the interior is impressive . . . Here is no mere preaching house, for the sacramental character of the building is unmistakable'.





Fig. 8.6 Gairloch Church of Scotland, built 1792, with alterations in 1909. 1989.

Fig. 8.7 Iona ca. 1830 — a typical Parliamentary Kirk. The same design was used for all, though some had a north aisle which produced the classic Scottish T-plan. On the ground plan, note the long communion table and (on the long wall, between the doors) the pulpit and precentor's desk flanked by the elders' pew and the manse pew. The elevation shows the distinctive bird-cage belfrey capped with a pyramidal finial. The windows had cast-iron mullions and transoms, and small lozenge-shaped panes. From Hay 1957. *ibid.*



10 0 20 30 40 50 FT.

shallow U-plan model, but subsequent heightening to two storeys masks the original design [Fig. 8.11].

The congregations of all these 'Auld Kirk' churches were decimated by the break-away movement of the Disruption in 1843, the majority following the minister if he, too, 'came out' in support of the Free Church. Services were initially held in the open air — as illustrated by a fine collection of



*Fig. 8.8* Telford 'Parliamentary Church', Poolewe, Gairloch Parish, 1828. 1989.

*Fig. 8.9* Telford 'Parliamentary Church', Ullapool, Lochbroom Parish, 1829. 1992.







*Fig. 8.10* Telford 'Parliamentary Church', Plockton, Lochalsh Parish, 1827. 1972.

*Fig. 8.11* The Telford Manse, Poolewe, 1968. In May of that year the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland approved sale of this manse. The original roof-line is clearly visible across the main section of the house.





*Fig. 8.12* Gairloch Free Church, 1878, overlooks Gairloch Bay. 1989.

*Fig. 8.13* Aultbea Free Church, 1871-75. 1989.







*Fig. 8.14* Church of Scotland, Mill Street, Ullapool, 1844. Formerly the Free Church of Scotland. 1992.

*Fig. 8.15* The Free Church of Scotland Manse, Ullapool, ca. 1844, serves nowadays as the Church of Scotland Manse for both Ullapool and Clachan. 1992.



photographs in the Gairloch Museum — but when funds permitted, new places of worship were constructed. The pinnaced Gothic Free Church at Gairloch enjoys a fine open site by the shore overlooking Gairloch Bay (architects, Matthews & Laurie, 1878), while its somewhat stark Gothic counterpart at Aultbea (1871-5) has an equally dominant position [Figs. 8.12, 8.13]. The former Free Church and Free Church manse at Ullapool both now serve the Church of Scotland. The church in Mill Street was erected in 1844, probably to a design by William Henderson; it has a plain south elevation lit by five long round-headed windows and various later alterations. The manse is of about the same date, a wide gabled three-window fronted house with recessed centre entrance bay [Figs. 8.14, 8.15].

## LAIRD'S HOUSES

Flowerdale by Gairloch (1738), and Udrigle near Laide (1745), are both important 'Laird's houses' in a Highland as well as a local context. Flowerdale stands in a sheltered valley, the site of a former moated house, the 'An Tigh Dige' of Osgood Mackenzie [Figs. 8.16-8.18]. The large two-storey crowstepped and M-gabled house is similar to the ruinous Eddercalda or Calda House on the shore of Loch Assynt, Sutherland (ca.1727) [Fig. 8.19] — the first symmetrical mansion of its kind in the North-West Highlands. Here the double pile, M-gabled house was probably influenced in design by the military barrack blocks at Bernera, Glenelg (1717-23).

Flowerdale was built by Alexander Mackenzie of Gairloch and his wife Janet Mackenzie of Scatwell in 1738, the date incised on the east gable skewputts, and it still belongs to the same family. The principal entrance is in the raised ground floor, approached by a flight of steps. The keystoned doorway is dignified with moulded, lugged jambs and flanked by segmental-headed windows. A central crowstepped gablet, flanked by swept dormers, rises above the wallhead and the chimney stacks are enriched with string courses and moulded copes. In 1904 the mansion was doubled in size by extending it westwards to a reasonably sympathetic design by A. Maitland and Sons, Tain.

A slightly less prosperous Mackenzie of Gruinard, though equally fastidious regarding his home, built Udrigle House in 1745, on the shores of Gruinard Bay [Figs. 8.20, 8.21]. Externally the small gaunt crowstepped two-storey, three-window house appears unpretentious. The stark rubble frontage has off-set centre first floor windows to light the half-landings of the staircase while the main entrance is at the rear, sheltered by a gabled porch dated 1756. This unusual design is also found in the larger Applecross House, where the staircase is also set against the south wall, and is peculiar to this area of the west coast. At Udrigle the staircase is adorned with fine silhouette balusters: it leads to two panelled first floor rooms. The panelling in both rooms is raised and fielded with rare (in the Highlands) ogee detailing, the door frames are moulded and lugged, while the chimney-piece has a marriage stone inscribed '17 W MK I MK 45' together with a





Fig. 8.16 Flowerdale before 1904, from a painting by Finlay MacKinnon published in Osgood Mackenzie's *A Hundred Years in the Highlands*. 1921.





*Fig. 8.17* Flowerdale, Gairloch. 1738 house at right, 1904 addition to left. 1989.

*Fig. 8.18* Flowerdale, Gairloch. Crowstepped M-gable, 1738. 1989.





*Fig. 8.19* Calda or Eddercalda House stands close to Ardvreck Castle (far left) at the upper end of Loch Assynt. It was a MacKenzie house, superceding the MacLeod castle. Both are long ruinous. 1992.

heart. The survival of these fine internal fittings is remarkable. The Mackenzies of Gruinard and Udrigle were a large and complex family in the mid 18th century; the name William re-occurs and must account for the W on the datestone.

Dundonnell House [Fig. 8.22] is another small Mackenzie mansion, the Mackenzie of that name settling in the glen ca.1700. It was probably soon after they arrived that the graceful small two-arched hump-back masonry bridge spanning the Dundonnell River was constructed, while it may be their old home that is incorporated at the rear of the present mansion. The plain but dignified house, dated 1767, is approached through a tree-lined lane; the regular five-window front was heightened, probably in 1816, to accommodate dormers. Dundonnell stands in a wooded valley, whose sylvan beauty and sheltered fields were largely the work of Kenneth Mackenzie (1801-32). Mackenzie built and stocked the walled garden, planted his policies with 'millions of firs and hard-wood trees' and improved his land with great energy and taste during his short life, putting so much into the estate that it was sold after his untimely death to clear his debts.

Inverlael Farmhouse, near the head of Loch Broom, is also a plain two-storey, five-window house [Fig. 8.23]. This was probably the former spinning school and 'manufactory' established by the Trustees of the Annexed Estates ca.1750 in an attempt to introduce skills, industry and **education to the Highlands** (two other such schools were established, one in Lochcarron and one at Invermoriston on Loch Ness). At Poolewe, Sròndubh





Fig. 8.20 Udrigle, 1745. South front: note off-set centre windows lighting half landings. 1955.

*Fig. 8.21* Udrigle, rear elevation (north): gabled porch dated 1756 shelters main entrance. 1989.







*Fig. 8.22* Dundonnell, 1767. Later attic storey. The house stands amidst trees planted in the early 19th century. 1962.



*Fig. 8.23* Inverlael Farmhouse near the head of Loch Broom was probably the 'spinning school' and 'manufactory' established ca. 1750. 1989.



*Fig. 8.24* Sròndubh House, Poolewe — mid 18th century. 1989.

*Fig. 8.25* Kerrysdale, ca. 1800. House at left and cruck-framed barn set back at right. 1989.



dates from the mid 18th century in its present form but is said to incorporate an earlier dwelling [Fig. 8.24]. The long, low house has a regular frontage with single windows flanking the centre doorway but a five-window arrangement in the first floor.

## SMALL HOUSES AND COTTAGES

The better farmhouse of ca. 1800 is merely a simpler version of the more prestigious symmetrical 'laird's house'. At Kerrysdale, near Gairloch (ca. 1800) [Fig. 8.25] and Cliff, Poolewe (ca. 1760), there are plain two-storey houses with regular three-window fronts. These are similar to some of the earlier dwellings in Ullapool, indeed throughout the Highlands as elsewhere in Scotland. The design is so simple that it can be expanded or contracted in size according to the resources of the owner. The early 19th century Old Bank House, Argyll Street, Ullapool, graced with a small wooden portico, is a good example [Fig. 8.26], though there are plainer versions elsewhere in the town, lining the streets laid out in grid pattern. Many of the simple original features of traditional 19th century Ullapool housing have largely been masked, particularly in Shore Street, by modern shop facias, widened windows and contemporary glazing [Fig. 8.27].

The later 19th century one and a half-storey house, with gabled dormers breaking the wallhead, appears throughout the area and has established its own tradition on the west coast as in other parts of Scotland. These are more substantial dwellings than cottages and, unlike the smaller cottage, provide accommodation satisfying late 20th century standards. Again, unsuitable replacement of the well-proportioned 2- and 4-pane sash and case windows detracts from their seemly appearance [Figs. 8.28, 8.29].

The plain single-storey cottage, with a door in the centre of the main front flanked by small windows, abounds in crofts and settlements throughout Wester Ross (and elsewhere), besides the streets of Ullapool. Most were thatched when first built though later examples may have been originally roofed with slate. Around Applecross, Gairloch and Loch Broom, thatching seems to have been mainly with rushes or straw. A little further south in Wester Ross, around Lochalsh, there appears to have been a greater use of heather [Figs. 8.30-8.33]. Some of these rubble cottages replaced earlier dwellings of cruder construction, of wicker frame clad with turf (creel houses) or walled with layered turf sometimes alternated with stones. There is continuous change in building materials and housing fashions, and the ubiquitous bungalow with concrete tiled roof has in turn replaced many a stone-built cottage. Alternatively, the cottage itself has been altered out of all recognition by such features as enlargement of windows, flat-roofed extensions and box dormers, generally to provide bathrooms, modern kitchens and (more) upstairs accommodation.

The small, unaltered thatched cottage at 27 Big Sand, on the north shore of Loch Gairloch, is therefore a rarity. Lived in until June 1981, it survives in its original form. The walls are of rubble with roughly-squared corner





*Fig. 8.26* The Old Bank House, Ullapool, early 19th century. Its symmetrical frontage and slender columned portico emphasise its importance. Probably Ullapool's first bank. 1992.

*Fig. 8.27* Shore Street, Ullapool, 1992. The original 19th century architecture has undergone considerable modification. Arcaded ground floor openings and enlarged shop windows were inserted mainly in the 1970s and 1980s.





*Fig. 8.28* West end of West Shore Street, Ullapool, 1992. A mixture of one and a half-storey houses, mainly modernised, together with single storey houses, most with later added dormers and modern windows.

*Fig. 8.29* Strathkanaird, Coigach; late 19th-century 1½ storey house with modern glazing, 1989.







*Fig. 8.30* 'A Highland Clachan' beside Loch Duich — a remarkable cluster of hipped heather-thatched houses and out-buildings. Beyond stands an improved house with gable-end chimnies. George Washington Wilson, late 19th century.

*Fig. 8.31* Heather-thatched house near Dornie, Lochalsh. Internal chimney from the main room; the hipped end has been adapted to accommodate a modified gable chimney. 1962.







*Fig. 8.32* Traditional thatched cottage with framework of thatched 'lum' (chimney) at left gable. 1989. This cottage, at 27 Big Sand, Gairloch, has now been re-thatched.

*Fig. 8.33* Re-thatched cottage at 11 Melvaig, Gairloch, retaining chimney vents associated with former 'hinging lums'. 1990.



stones, and the off-centre door is flanked by a diminutive light at left and enlarged window at right. There is a masonry chimney stack at the east gable but the west still has its 'thatched lum', a small round vent through which the smoke seeped out, usually entrapped above the hearth by a canopy, or 'hinging lum', leading directly to the chimney and forming part of it. A small byre with corrugated-iron roof has been added continuously with the west gable. The dating of such a traditional dwelling presents difficulties but it is almost certainly of 19th century date, constructed when Big Sand was lotted as crofts or soon after. 27 Big Sand, together with a similar cottage at 11 Melvaig, further north, have both recently been re-thatched [Figs. 8.32, 8.33].

## **AGRICULTURAL CHANGES: BARNs & STEADINGS**

Long, low rubble byres and barns, with corrugated-iron roofs replacing the original thatch, are still found throughout the crofting settlements — even where crofting has ceased these buildings form useful stores, so their life is prolonged. It is on the larger estates, however, that the 19th century agricultural changes have left the greatest mark, evident today in the landscape and buildings sited in the sheltered straths.

The improvements undertaken at Dundonnell in the 1820s and 1830s have already been mentioned. Besides his massive tree planting programme, Kenneth Mackenzie 'built a fine square of offices . . . [and] hundreds of yards of stone dykes'. Such improvements are also obvious in Strath More, the valley of the River Broom between Clachan and Braemore. Here the principal changes were effected by Sir John Fowler of Braemore (1817-88), a civil engineer. It was he who was responsible for the later 19th century improved farmhouses and steadings, together with many of the neat dry stone dykes that enclose the fields in this sheltered valley and much of the tree planting on the upper slopes. Sir John was Engineer-in-Chief to the Forth railway bridge; his memorial in Lochbroom Parish church at Clachan records that he had 'three light bridges' constructed over the River Broom. One of these is the fine pedestrian suspension bridge spanning the Corrie-shalloch Gorge and another the graceful and rare wrought-iron lenticular truss bridge with circular masonry piers near Auchindrean. The wooden deck was suspended from the convex truss by lattice girders and linked to the stone piers [Fig. 8.34].

### **Barns**

The wet climate of Gairloch gave rise to a need for ventilated barns in which to store, and even to dry, hay and unthreshed corn. These 18th and 19th century barns are cruck-framed, the heavy timber cruck trusses or 'highland couples' forming a kind of 'A-frame' to carry the weight of the heavy heather-thatched roof as the louvred or wattle-panelled walls providing the ventilation are virtually non load-bearing. Heather thatch had





Fig. 8.34 Auchindrean Bridge, designed ca. 1870 by Sir John Fowler of Braemore: rare lenticular (fish eye) truss bridge with masonry end piers. 1989.

Fig. 8.35 Kerrysdale: interior of cruck-framed barn. Cruck blades have been sawn off above tie-beams to accommodate shallower pitch of replacement corrugated-iron roof. 1981.







*Fig. 8.36* Heather-thatched barn at Mains Farm, Applecross. ca. 1976.



*Fig. 8.37* Wattled ventilation panel in east wall of heather-thatched barn. Mains Farm, Applecross, ca. 1976.

a long life; even so the surviving barns of this type now have corrugated-iron or other roofing, the cruck blades usually truncated to accommodate a different pitch. Where available timber was not long enough to provide the height necessary for both the bulk of stored material and the up-stretched arm of the flailer, couples were jointed or 'scarfed' at the curved elbow at wallhead height, the two pieces of timber tenoned and fixed with wooden pegs or 'treenails'. In the parish of Gairloch, where there was a reasonable supply of local timber of quality and sufficient length, few examples of scarfing have been identified: the practice was usual, however, in other southward parishes where these barns are a feature of local vernacular building. The barns are always provided with opposing winnowing doors, usually placed in the centre of the building with the threshing floor between. There is a cruck-framed barn to the rear of Kerrysdale with five of the six pairs of cruck trusses surviving [Fig. 8.35]. At Letterewe, on the north shores of Loch Maree, two such barns are incorporated in the steading range, one now converted as a cottage.

The distribution pattern of ventilated cruck-framed barns spreads throughout Applecross, Lochcarron, Lochalsh, Kintail and Glenelg as well as Gairloch, which is on the northerly edge of the group. They are always associated with more prosperous holdings, the better farm or laird's estate, rather than at the subsistence level of crofting agriculture [Figs. 8.36, 8.37]. The corn and hay stored within was vital over-wintering feed for cattle intended for the southern fairs whence they were escorted in the summer by the drovers.

Just north of the church at Poolewe there is a 'bank-barn' built against the hillside, its two-storey elevation overlooking Loch Ewe. This mid 19th century rectangular building exploits the slope with access to byres accommodated in the ground floor of the east two-storey elevation while the upper barn is directly accessible from the west [Figs. 8.38, 8.39]. In front of and slightly to the left of the west doorway is a horse walk, a raised round platform formerly housing gearing to motivate thrashing machinery accommodated in the barn, the 'horse power' provided by horse or horses harnessed to sweeps and treading the circular track. This plain building of simple, composite design incorporates economy of space, for many agricultural functions are contained under one roof. This building is the only known example of its kind in the immediate area though a group of similar agricultural buildings has been identified further south in the Lochaber District, between Mallaig and Glencoe, and there are two or three known examples in Galloway.

Finally, possibly the earliest *dated* barn in the Highlands, perhaps in Scotland, is to be found at Flowerdale [Fig. 8.40]. It was erected by Alexander and Janet Mackenzie in 1730, the year of their marriage and eight years before they built their fine new house. The Mackenzies of Gairloch were also of Canon in Easter Ross and this barn is of east coast pattern, more suited to a dryer climate than the dampness of the west. It is possible that the slit vents in the ground floor, the usual provision in an east coast store, provided insufficient draught to ventilate the interior and that





*Fig. 8.38* Bank barn, Poolewe — two storey front elevation. 1989.

*Fig. 8.39* Bank barn, Poolewe — rear elevation, showing direct access from slope to upper floor and a horse-gang to the left of the (west) doorway. 1989.







*Fig. 8.40* Flowerdale Barn, Gairloch, 1730. 1989.



*Fig. 8.41* Flowerdale Barn:  
Mackenzie coat-of-arms. 1989.



the large round-headed openings, probably originally slatted with wattling, were slapped at either end later. There is a central winnowing passage with a well-carved Mackenzie coat of arms commemorating Alexander and Janet Mackenzie of Gairloch, set in a panel above the door [Fig. 8.41]. Like Flowerdale house, this barn reflects the prosperity of a substantial Highland landowning family in the early 18th century, a period of both domestic and agricultural change and improvement possible in the more settled times immediately preceding the '45 rebellion.

## **BUILDINGS ASSOCIATED WITH THE FISHING INDUSTRY**

While the ventilated barn features one aspect of the vernacular building in the parish of Gairloch, storehouses of a different type were required by the fishing industry. In Ullapool both the 'Captain's Cabin' and the building shared by Caledonian MacBrayne with the Tourist Information Centre, were stores both for fishing gear and for salt which was still subject to customs duty in 1788 when Ullapool was established [Figs. 8.42, 8.43]. Though early settlers in Ullapool were largely responsible for the construction of their own houses, buildings of a public nature such as these warehouses, church and pier, were the responsibility of the British Fisheries Society (see J. Munro, this volume). The warehouse, ca.1790, now known as 'The Captain's Cabin' is sited on the corner of Quay and Shore Streets, an imposing rectangular building of three-storey height, with regular fenestration and a forestair leading to a centre first floor entrance. The Caledonian-MacBrayne and Tourist Information Centre building is similar but was truncated ca. 1980 in the interests of road widening and ferry parking.

Fishing boats of many nations frequent Ullapool but few early buildings directly involved with the industry are evident today. Not so on Tanera Mor, the largest of the Summer Isles. Though roofless, the sizable two-storey rubble range fronted by a walled yard stands close by the shore [Fig. 8.44]. Besides storage and yard, the building incorporated a substantial house for the manager and other living accommodation. This herring fishing station was established in 1785 by a 'Mr. Roderick Morrison from Stornoway'. The crescent-shaped quay enclosing the little harbour was repaired in 1938 by Dr. (later Sir) Frank Fraser-Darling, the pioneer ecologist, when he farmed Tanera Mor, a project he recorded in his book *Island Farm*. Two hundred years after the development of Tanera Mor as a fishing station, salmon cages in the bay and modern bungalows for manager and staff reveal one aspect of on-going activity and change within the fishing industry.

The salmon fishing station at Badentarbat, near Achiltibuie on the Coigach peninsula is the centre for a seasonal commercial bag-net fishery for wild salmon. Illness prevented other than two men unsuccessfully working a sweep net in 1992 and 1993, but a new tenant re-set the bag-nets in 1994. Though most of the surviving buildings date from the 1850s onwards [Figs. 8.45-8.47], there may well have been a fishing station here from the early 1800s. The house was built ca. 1860-70, originally single storey with an



*Fig. 8.42* Fishery storehouse, Ullapool, commissioned by the British Fisheries Society ca. 1790. Now known as 'The Captain's Cabin'. 1992.

*Fig. 8.43* A similar fishery storehouse, now occupied by Caledonian-MacBrayne and the local Tourist Information Centre. 1992.







Fig. 8.44 Fishing Station 1785, Tanera Mòr, Summer Isles. The old burial ground lies outside the dyke, above and a little left of the fish-farm manager's house. 1988.

attic pole store reached by an outside stair and a net store at one end. This building had a slated roof from the beginning. The present net store is said to incorporate an earlier icehouse, though the primary function was as a salt house, *tigh salainn*, earthed up on both sides. The salt was used for pickling the salmon (and herring). The present large vaulted icehouse (also converted for other uses) dates from the 1870s with its pitched roof added towards the end of the century. This semi-subterranean stone store was packed with ice collected from a man-made pond during cold weather, thrown in through a rear chute, and kept there until packed around the fish for transport to the urban markets, a pattern common to all late 18th/early 19th century salmon fishing stations. When the railway network was developed during the second half of the 19th century, the fish were taken by sea to Ullapool, onward by road to Garve and thence to Inverness and the south by rail. The ice pond at Badentarbat is identified by a shallow marshy lochan behind the fishing station, and by the remains of a sluice (W. Muir 1993).

Elsewhere, on the side of the road leading from Charleston to Flowerdale House, Gairloch, there is another small vaulted stone icehouse built into the slope for insulation against heat. This would have been associated with salmon fishing in Loch Gairloch.

## CONCLUSION

The buildings discussed above are mainly of a traditional nature, their accommodation and design meeting the ecclesiastical, domestic, farming and fishing needs of the inhabitants of Lochbroom and Gairloch parishes over nearly three centuries. They were initiated, adapted or altered to accommodate changing work patterns, lifestyles and available construction materials throughout the period. Some of these building traditions are purely local, for example the M-gable, double-pile Flowerdale House and the cruck-framed barns. Other buildings, such as Lochbroom parish church at Clachan, have their counterparts elsewhere in the Highlands — austere edifices designed to accommodate presbyterian worship at the turn of the 1800s, at a time when many small ruinous churches were being superseded by larger buildings to accommodate larger congregations drawn from an expanding population. Where conscious ecclesiastical architecture is evident, this too is both regional and national; the regional style represented by the Telford 'Parliamentary' churches scattered in far distant Highland and Island settlements while the Gothic was common to much mid/late 19th century church design throughout Scotland.

The late 18th and 19th century fishing stations, both for herring and salmon, were built to exploit local stocks commercially. They were the centres where the industry became industrialised, the marine harvests packed, cured and exported to expanding urban markets at home, in Europe and salted herrings even to the West Indies sugar plantations! Herring stations similar to those on Loch Broom were developed in various coastal locations in the Highlands and Islands, either as private ventures or through

*Fig. 8.45* Badentarbat Bay with salmon cobbles, 1870s' ice house, Badentarbat Pier and Tanera Mòr. 1972.







*Fig. 8.46* The salmon-fisher's house, Badentarbat. In front is the bothy, and anchors for fixing the bag-nets in the sea. 1972.

*Fig. 8.47* The net store formerly a salt store and ice house. To the left, nets are hoisted on the poles to dry. Further left is the marshy lochan once used as a source for ice. 1972.



the offices of the British Fisheries Society, though the fluctuations of the herring shoals dashed the high hopes of many of these undertakings. And commercial salmon stations similar to that at Badentarbat are common on the east coast of Scotland, particularly at the mouths of the rivers to which the fish return annually for spawning.

The greatest change, or series of changes, is in the cottages. Creel houses no longer exist, though the method of construction and use of materials survive in the cruck-framed barns. And abandoned, roofless, rubble cottages with a centre door flanked by very small windows are an-all-too-common sight. The associated small patches of land on which the former owners lived by subsistence farming have gone back to moorland or rushes, or have been incorporated into larger units. On the Coigach peninsula the last thatched cottage, at Reiff [Fig. 14.43], was abandoned in the early 1980s. It is thanks to grant-aid funding that two surviving examples have been restored near to Gairloch, and local traditional interior fittings and furnishings such as canopy chimneys and box beds can now be seen only in the Gairloch Museum.

The various national changes in ecclesiastical organisation and worship, the links with the many branches of the Mackenzie family both in Easter and Wester Ross, local settlement patterns and the development of both agriculture and fishing are reflected and still evident in the buildings of Lochbroom and Gairloch parishes.

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