

*ROY
WENTWORTH'S
RESEARCH ON THE
GAELIC PLACE NAMES
OF PORT HENDERSON:
PART 1 (MAP SHEET NG7574)*

ROY WENTWORTH

Roy Graham Wentworth (1946-2003) was born in Tooting in London and came to Scotland first in 1963, on holiday in Gairloch, Wester Ross. In succeeding years he returned, making closer contact with the local people and the Gaelic language of the area, and becoming especially friendly with a local crofter, 'An Peigi (Iain Mackenzie): This friendship helped to deepen both his involvement in Gairloch life and his competence in spoken Gaelic. In 1966 he enrolled for a degree in Forestry at the University of Aberdeen, but in 1969 changed direction to work for the Honours degree on MA in Celtic Studies at Aberdeen.

When he left the university with his Honours degree in 1973 he settled in Gairloch. When 'An Peigi died in 1983 Roy became the crofter, and as curator of the local museum was able to continue his study of the Gaelic of Gairloch, its oral literature and songs and especially its placenames and place-lore; for many years he contributed placename and other traditional material to the archives of the School of Scottish Studies in the University of Edinburgh. His place in the Gairloch community was confirmed by his marriage in 1985 to Magaidh a native of the area, and by the birth of their son and daughter. He devoted himself to the serious study of Gaelic metrics and of linguistic theory and practical phonetics, collecting from the dwindling number of Gairloch Gaelic speakers the last remnants of the dialect.

With thanks to Magaidh Wentworth for allowing Roy's work on Port Henderson to be included in the results of this project.

175000

10 Metres

LONG
5° 46' W

75000

Geodh' nan Calman

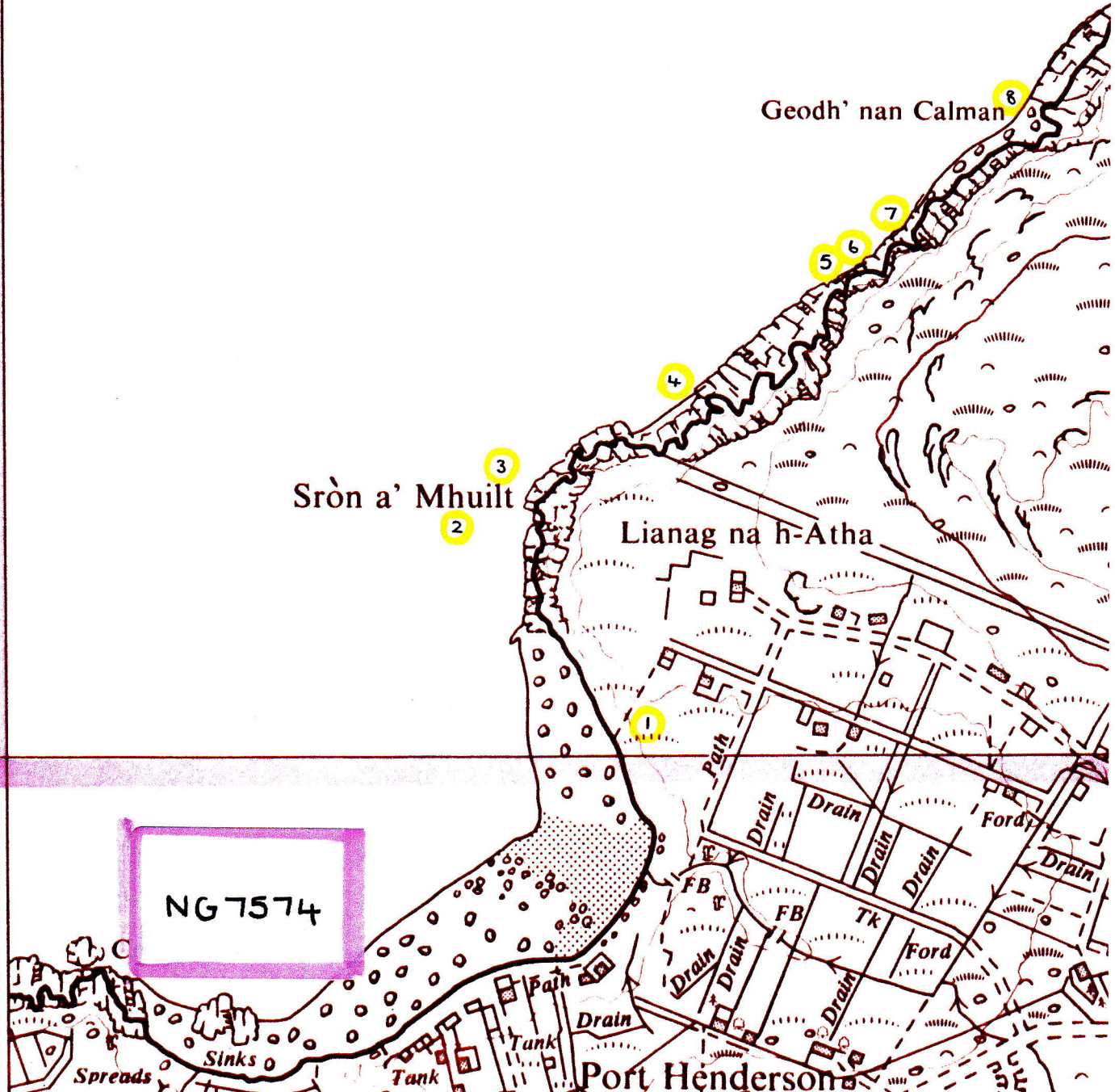
Sròn a' Mhuilt

Lianag na h-Atha

LAT
57° 42'
74

NG 7574

Port Henderson



Inf: Mr. Koderiek Mackenzie, Sea Crest, Port Henderson
 Mr. Donald Mackenzie, 14 Port Henderson
 Mr. John Mackenzie, 19 Port Henderson

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Sheet Ng 77SE, Section 7574.

1. Ng 75577403

[L' [ia] nak nə ' ha · həN]

< LÉANAG NA H-ÀTHANN >

(= "small meadow of the kiln").

The OS 6-inch maps have "Lianag na h-Atha"; the name appears on the maps ca 200 m north of the grid reference given above.

Léanag na h-Àthann is an area which, my informants told me, is below (i.e. to the south or south-west of) the house oncroft no. 13 Port Henderson; I think that the location of this name is however indefinite, as some of my informants were rather vague about its position.

I was told by Mr. Donald Mackenzie that cod nets used to be laid to dry on Léanag na h-Àthann.

Lèanag na h-Athann

Leabhar-ainmeannan 39 (6-òir)

clàr-amaid : " Lianag na h-Atha " [gun sràc air
À]

ed. 88 (clàr. 1)

1 " Lianag na h-Atha "

2 " Lianag na h-Atha " [=1]

3 " Mr. Kenneth McKenzie, South Erradale "

4 " Sheet 56 Trace 2 "

5 " A small portion of land — the site of an old
Kiln — situated in the north east of Port
Henderson. Meaning, " Green of the Kiln " "

" John McKeith
Sapper R.E "

2/4/86 Inf: Mr. Roderick Mackenzie, Sea Crest, Port Henderson.
Mr. John Mackenzie, 19 Port Henderson.
Mr. Donald Mackenzie, 24 South Erradale.

NG 11DE 1574/L

Sheet NG 77SE, Section 7574

2. Ng 75457420

[na muilt']

< NA MUILT >

(= "the wedders")

Informant's explanation of name: this name means "the wedders."

This name is not on the OS 6-inch maps, which however have "Sròn a' Mhuilt."

Na Muilt are three rocks, uncovered at low tide. They are about 2 m. high x 3 m. wide, and ea. 20-30 m. out from the shore of Sròn nam Muilt.

Mr. Roderick Mackenzie, Sea Crest, told me the following: a man named Cailean once said he had three wedders to sell; when the buyer came for them, Cailean showed him the three skerries. He was afterwards known as Cailean nam Muilt.

Watson, PNR C p 222, under entry "Sròn nam Muilt," has " Na Muilt, the wedders, are three skerries that appear at ebb off the coast".

Mr. Ian Fraser of the School of Scottish Studies recorded this name on 20/11/74 from Mr. and Mrs. John Mackenzie, Hazel Cottage, Leacnasaidhe, as: "Sgeirean nam Muilt".

Ian Fraser has a story about na Muilt in Tochar no. 28 p. 258, as follows: "Off the mouth of Gairloch in Wester Ross at Port Henderson is Sròn nam Muilt 'point of the wedders'. The two sea-rocks lying off the point are known

Na Muilt (2)

NG775E/7574/2

as Na Muilt 'the wedders'. A man from Port Henderson was reputed to have paid a visit to a neighbouring township, where the men were engaged in sheep-shearing. One man, trying to catch a particularly troublesome wedder in the fank addressed the Port Henderson man saying 'Cuiridh mi geall nach eil muilt agaibh ann Poirteigil cho sleamhairn ris na tha againne' ('I bet you haven't any wedders in Port Henderson as slippery as we've got'.) 'Hach', came the reply, 'tha dithis againn aig bonn na leas, agus dh'fhairtich duine beireachd orra riamh.' ('Ach, I have a pair at the bottom of the garden, and no man was ever able to catch them'.) "

This story can perhaps be taken as an example of how much the life of Port Henderson people was tied up with the sea, compared to people in some of the neighbouring villages, for instance Opinan and South Erradale; even the "wedders" in Port Henderson are out in the sea.

5/4/86 Inf: Mr. Frederick Mackenzie, Sea Crest, Fort Henderson.
Mr. Donald Mackenzie, 24 South Erradale.
Mr. John Mackenzie, 19 Port Henderson.

NG 77SE / 7574 / 3

Sheet NG 77SE, Section 7574.

3. NG 755742

[strɔ·N' ə 'mʌlt]

< SRÒIN NAM MULT >

(= "the point of na Muilt")

The OS 6-inch maps have "Sròn a' Mhuilt".

Sròin nam Muilt is a point of land at the north end of am Baile Sheuas of Port Henderson; it is rocky below, at the sea, and smoother with short grass above. It is named after na Muilt (see previous entry), the three rocks that are just offshore from it.

I have heard this name also in the form:

[strɔ·N' ə 'mʌlt], < Sròin na Muilt >, with nominative plural for genitive plural; but I have never heard the form * "Sròn a' Mhuilt", which appears on the map.

Watson, PNR p. 222 has "Sròn nam Muilt, nose or point of the wedders".

Mr. Ian Fraser of the School of Scottish Studies recorded this name on 20/11/74 from Mr. and Mrs. John Mackenzie, Hazel Cottage, Leacrasaide, as: "Sròn nam Muilt".

Sròn nam Muilt

NG 775E/7574/3

Leabhar - ainmeannan 39 (6-òir)

Clàr - annais : " Sròn a' Mhuilt " [=1]

bd. 88 (clàr. 2)

1 " Sròn a' Mhuilt "

2 " Sròn a' Mhuilt " [=1]

3 " Mr. Kenneth McKenzie, South Erradale "

4 " Sheet 56 Trace 2 "

5 " A rocky point on the sea coast at the east side of Port Henderson. Meaning, ' Point of the Wether. ' "

" John McKeith
Sapper R.E. "

Sheet NG 77SE, Section 7574

4. NG 75657433, or thereabout.

[sker a 'N^hra-Lik'i]

<SGEIR AN TRÀLAIGIDH >

(= "the skerry of the trawling")

This name is not on the OS 6-inch maps.

Sgeir an Tràlaigidh is a skerry at the shore; I was told by Mr. R. Mackenzie that it is just north-east of Sroir nam Muilt, and south-west of Sgeir a' Leum.

I have not had this skerry pointed out to me, and so am not sure of its exact position, but I think it is within 50 m. of the grid ref. given above.

Sheet NG 775E, Section 7574

5. NG 7573-7441, or thereabout

[sker a 'L'e:m]

< SGEIR A' LEUM >

(= "the skerry of the leap")

This name is not on the OS 6-inch maps.

Sgeir a' Leum is a skerry on the shore; I was told by Mr. R. Mackenzie that it is north-east of Sgeir an Tra-laigidh and south-west of a' Sgannan and Geodha nan Calman. There is at the grid ref. given above a skerry or rock that is broken away from the main rock of the shore by about 1.5 m, to form a vertical fissure ca. 3 m. deep, and this may be Sgeir a' Leum. However, I have not had this skerry pointed out to me, and so I am not sure of its exact position; but I think it is within 50 m. of the grid ref. given above.

At some time about the first World War a drifter went aground on this skerry, and since then it has been called: [sker a 'driftar], < Sgeir an Drioftar >.

11/4/86

Inf: Mr. Roderick Mackenzie, Sea Crest, Port Henderson.

NG775E/7574/6

Sheet NG 775E, Section 7574.

6. NG 7574 7441, or thereabout.

[a skaNan]

< A' SGANNÁN >

(= "the lump")

Informant's explanation of the name: this means a sort of "crap" (lump).

This name is not on the OS 6-inch maps.

A' Sgannán is a rock on the shore; it is between Sgeir a' Leum and Geodha nan Calman. I have not had this rock pointed out to me, and so am not sure of its position. At the grid reference given above are two roughly cube-shaped blocks of detached rock, about 2-3 m. in size; one of these is at the mouth of a narrow "cove" or fissure in the rocks (this fissure is not Geodha nan Calman, but is ca. 50 m. south of it); the other is ca. 20 m. south of this. I think one of these rocks may be a' Sgannán; but if not, I think it likely to be within 100 m of the grid reference given.

Sheet NG 77SE, Section 7574.

7. NG 75787444

[g' ^ε [ou] nɔ 'k^h [aLa] man]

< GEODHA NAN CALMAN >

(= "the narrow cove of the doves").

Informant's explanation of name. I was told by Mr John Mackenzie that this name means "the pigeons cove".

The OS 6-inch maps have no name for this feature ; the name "Geodh' nan Calman" appears on the maps, but displaced ca. 100 m to the north, and mistakenly referring to the bay which is in fact called Carnas na Ba Riabhach (see next entry).

Geodha nan Calman is a fissure or "cove" in the rocks of the shore ; it is north-east of a' Sgannan and south-west of Carnas na Ba Riabhach. The rock fissure is about 40 m long, and ends in a cave ; it is ca 15 m deep, and ca. 10 m wide at the top, narrowing to perhaps only 3 m wide at its bottom. (There is, about 30 m. south of this "geodha", another very similar feature ; see previous entry for a mention of it)

I was told that formerly pigeons were quite numerous here, and used to rest in the cave at the head of the fissure ; and that boys used to go into the cave to take pigeons eggs. The pigeons are now far fewer in numbers, though there are still a small number there (I was told "one or two"). On the day I visited Geodha nan Calman (3/13/76) a pigeon flew out of the cave while I was there.

I have also heard this name with the first word pronounced :

[g' ^e o'], and this, with the pronunciation [g' ^e [ou]]

given above at the head of the entry, may represent an unstressed form of

* [g' ^e o' u] or * [g' [eɔ] ' u], < geodha >.

Mr Ian Fraser of the School of Scottish Studies recorded this name on 20/11/74 from Mr. and Mrs. John Mackenzie, Hazel Cottage, Levensaide, as : "geodha nan Calaman".

Geodha nan Calmán

NG775E/7574/7

Leabhar - ainmeannan 39 (6-òir)

clàr-amais : " Geodh' nan Calman " [=1]

td. 88 (clàr. 3)

1 " Geodh' nan Calman "

2 " Geodh' nan Calman " [=1]

3 " Mr. Kenneth McKenzie, South Erradale "

4 " Sheet 56 Trace 2 "

5 " A small creek on the coast a quarter of a mile northeast of Sròn a' Mhuilt. Meaning, 'Creek of the Pigeons' "

" John McKeith
Sapper R.E. "

Sheet NG 77SE, Section 7574.

8. Ng 7589-7453

[,k^haməs nə bə 'r[ɔʔ] 'uɕ]

< CAMAS NA BA RIABHAICH > (<bà> reduced to <ba> in position of lesser stress). (= "the bay of the brindled cow")

This name does not appear on the OS 6-inch maps, which however have the name "Geodh' nan Calman" mistakenly referring to this bay.

Camas na Ba Riabhach is a small bay; it is ca. 100 m. north-east of Geodha nan Calman, and is south-west of na Leacan. In size it is about 50 m. deep and ca. 50 m. across. On its south side are vertical rocks ca. 10 m. high.

I have also heard this name with the form:

[... 'r[ɔʔ] yuɕ], with [y] developing in place of hiatus at the syllable boundary (see Place-name entry for Sheet NG 76NW, Section 7269, no. 4, an Camas Riabhach).