

Morlaggan Time Line

- 1501** Duncan MacConochie, supported by Robert Colquhoun, prepared to defend his right to 'Morlagang' and 'Cullochquhoun' (Coille Chorrán?) in court
- 1514** Dugal McCoull renounces his right to 'Morlagang' and 'Cullochpirrie'/'Cullochquhere' (Coille Chorrán?), and these return to John McFarlane
- 1583-1596** 'Murlagan' marked on Pont's map
- 1586** Murlagan (20/-) given as liferent to Susanna Buchquhenan on marriage to John McFarlane
- 1500s** Drove routes in use
- 1616** 20/- land of Murlagan given as liferent to Margaret Sempill on marriage to Walter McFarlane
- 1659** Parish of Arrochar disjoined from Luss
- 1659** 20/- land of Murlagan given as liferent to Anna Campbell on marriage to John McFarlane
- 1706** Robert McFarlane at Murlagan
- 1708** Robert McFarlane of Murlagan paid rental of 1 wadder and 1 boll of seed corn
- 1736ish** Lands of Arrochar briefly owned by Duke of Montrose, but later returned to McFarlanes
- 1745** 'Murelagan' marked on Edgar's map
- 1750** 'Murlichan' marked on Roy's map
- 1755-1791** Population of Arrochar fell due to amalgamation of farms after the introduction of sheep
- 1771-1810** 'Marlacan' marked on Langland's map
- 1773** 'Muirlagan' marked on Kitchen's map
- 1777** Road marked on Ross's map along Loch Long
- 1782** Andrew Munro born at Murlagan

1784 McFarlane lands sold to Ferguson of Raith included Muirlagan

1787 Duke of Argyll's road down Loch Long turnpiked

1791-1831 Population of Arrochar increased due to division of land

1795 Nancy Agnes McFarlane born at Murlagan

1814 At least 4 tenants at Murlagan.

1815 Tynalarach and Murlagan pasture for 600 sheep

1818 Wood's map marks 'Morelaggan Toll' beside road

1821 Sale of lands to Luss Estates

1836 Murlagan valued at £165 16s 4 9/14d

1838 Feu duties paid by Paterson at Murelaggan

1850 MacIntyre had an illicit still at Morlaggan

1860 1st edition OS map marks 5 roofed buildings and a head dyke at 'High Morlaggan'. OS name book says a shepherd lived at High Morlaggan

1862 'Murligan' marked on Black's map

1875 Joseph Noel Paton visits Upper Morelaggan

1876 Painting of 'Upper Morelaggan' by Waller Paton

1881 2 buildings occupied at High Morelaggan

1890-1900 Railway built

1890 Charles Carlton from Craggan charged with assault and robbery of Thomas Sloan from Morlaggan

1896 3 roofed buildings on 2nd edition OS map

1907 2 roofed buildings on 3rd edition OS map

1916 Last mention of High Morelaggan (in Helensburgh Directory)

High Morlaggan



The history of a ruined settlement near Arrochar

For more information about the work of the High Morlaggan Project, visit <http://highmorlaggan.co.uk/>

Morlaggan Rural Settlement Group
(morlagganruralsettlementgroup@gmail.com)

Morlaggan (or Murlagan), maybe from 'mor' (great) and 'lagan' (a little hollow), or from 'murbhlag' (a sea inlet)

Morlaggan is a ruined settlement above the north-east shore of Loch Long.



Its intriguing remains have been depicted in old postcards of the area, but all that remains today are bits of walls that

have all but disappeared under the bracken.

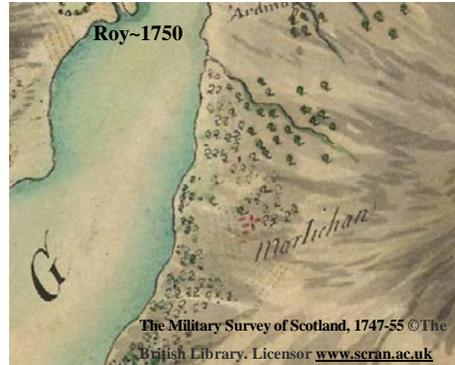
We wanted to know when people first lived at High Morlaggan? Who lived there? What did they do? When did they abandon it and why did they go?

'Murlagan' is marked on Timothy Pont's map - one of the earliest maps of Scotland made in about 1592. This and other maps suggest that 'Morelaggan' as we know it today didn't exist until the early 1800s, and that all the mentions of Morelaggan (Murlagan, Morlichan etc....) before then refer to the settlement we now know as 'High (or Upper) Morlaggan'. The current 'Morelaggan' only started to develop after the construction of the road.



It is clear that families have been living at Morlaggan for over 400 years (see timeline). We have documentary evidence detailing legal disputes over its ownership between the Colquhouns and the McFarlanes during the 16th century. Perhaps these disputes occurred because Morlaggan is on the edge of Arrochar Parish, and so first in line if the Colquhouns wanted to 'expand' into what was traditionally McFarlane territory?

'Morlichan' is marked on Roy's beautifully detailed map drawn around 1750. This shows not only buildings at Morlichan, but also signs of cultivation.



Major changes happened in the late 1700s, when the Duke of Argyll built a road along the shore of Loch Long.

Information from Ordnance Survey maps and censuses suggests that up to four families lived at High Morlaggan in the 1800s, at least one of whom operated an illicit whisky still! The ruins that are still just about visible today probably date from around that period, and include the remains of field systems, as well as houses.

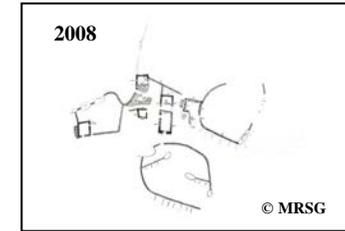
In 1875, the well-known pre-Raphaelite artist, Joseph Noel Paton, visited Morlaggan, whilst holidaying at Ardmay. He wrote "Walked down loch with M. and found ourselves at Upper Morelaggan - a tiny clachan hid amongst mighty fallen rocks halfway up hill. Had noted the blue smoke rising from it early one morning when crossing loch to bathe end of July. People so courteous and kind—gave us drink of wondrous milk warm from the cow. Most primeval spot I have ever seen."



'Upper Morelaggan', by Waller Hugh Paton, 1876

His brother - another artist, Waller Hugh Paton - must have been sufficiently impressed, as the following year he painted a picture entitled 'Upper Morelaggan'.

The last record of anyone living at Morlaggan was in 1916, but with the help of the 'Scotland's Rural Past' team, the ruins have been surveyed, so even if the stones disappear further into the bracken, the people who lived here won't be forgotten.



Plan of High Morlaggan, showing remains of at least 4 buildings, kale yards, and fields

Archaeological excavation is another way of finding physical evidence of occupation at Morlaggan. With the help of professional archaeologists and Kilmartin House Museum, local volunteers unearthed around 8,000 sherds of pottery during two community excavations in 2009 and 2011! This together with other finds will shed further light on the lives of the past inhabitants of Morlaggan.



Photo: George Haggarty

Punch bowl reconstructed from fragments of pottery found at Morlaggan in 2011.