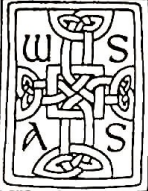


Information regarding Dunardry, the Crinan Canal and Loch a'Bharain

Compiled by Patrick Thompson, Seannachie.

Loch a'Bharain (Lake of the Baron, Dunardry) WoS Archaeology Service Report, January 1998

West of Scotland Archaeology Service						Site Report	
Location:		WoSAS Site No.: <input type="text"/>		Sub.: <input type="text"/>			
1:10000 Map: <input type="text" value="NR 89 SW"/>		RCAHMS Site No.: <input type="text" value="45"/>		Sub.: <input type="text"/>			
Name: <input type="text" value="Loch A' Bharain"/>							
Alternative name: <input type="text"/>							
Council Area: <input type="text" value="Argyll & Bute"/>				Elevation: <input type="text" value="c.30"/> m			
EASTING		NORTHING		CONFIDENCE LEVEL		BUFFER RADIUS	
NGR 1: <input type="text" value="8252"/>		<input type="text" value="9116"/>		1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="text" value="50"/> m	
NGR 2: <input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="text"/> m	
NGR 3: <input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="text"/> m	
NGR 4: <input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="text"/> m	
Key to Confidence Levels: 1= Confident to within 10m 2= Confident to within 100m 3= Confident to within 1km							
NGR Comments: (Add NGRs, etc. for extra components if necessary.) <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; min-height: 20px;">Confident on.</div>							
Site Condition:							
Land Use/Vegetation: <input type="text" value="Mature forestry, underwater"/>							
Condition: Intact: <input type="checkbox"/> Disturbed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Destroyed: <input type="checkbox"/> Not Known: <input type="checkbox"/>							
Comment: <input type="text" value="The main building is underwater and probably robbed of stone"/>							
Nature of the Evidence: (Tick appropriate box(es) and comment on source(s) where necessary)							
Finds: <input type="checkbox"/>							
APs: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> seen in the past							
Remote Sensing: <input type="checkbox"/>							
Field Remains: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
Excavation: <input type="checkbox"/>							
Documentary: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Place name + SMR info.							
Environmental: <input type="checkbox"/>							
Scientific Dates: <input type="checkbox"/>							
Interpretation and Dating:							
Site Type: (Include all components) <input type="text" value="Building footings, enclosures, boat moorings and ford."/>							
Period(s):							
Modern		<input type="checkbox"/> Def. <input type="checkbox"/> Poss.		<div style="border: 1px solid black; min-height: 100px; width: 100%;"> Period Comment(s): </div>			
Medieval/Post Medieval		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Def. <input type="checkbox"/> Poss.					
Early Medieval		<input type="checkbox"/> Def. <input type="checkbox"/> Poss.					
Roman		<input type="checkbox"/> Def. <input type="checkbox"/> Poss.					
Iron Age		<input type="checkbox"/> Def. <input type="checkbox"/> Poss.					
Bronze Age		<input type="checkbox"/> Def. <input type="checkbox"/> Poss.					
Neolithic		<input type="checkbox"/> Def. <input type="checkbox"/> Poss.					
Mesolithic		<input type="checkbox"/> Def. <input type="checkbox"/> Poss.					
Slide/Archive/Bibliographic References: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 50px; width: 100%;"></div>							
Curatorial File Ref.: <input type="text" value="4/2"/> Details: <input type="text" value="Loch A' Bharain"/>							

Details of the remains of the castellated ruins of the MacTavish Chiefs' keep.

Loch a'Bharain is a natural loch that has been slightly altered to feed the summit section of the canal with water. It is also one of the start points to the [Dalriada Heritage Trail](#).¹ View Videos at this link.

West of Scotland Archaeology Service

Description:

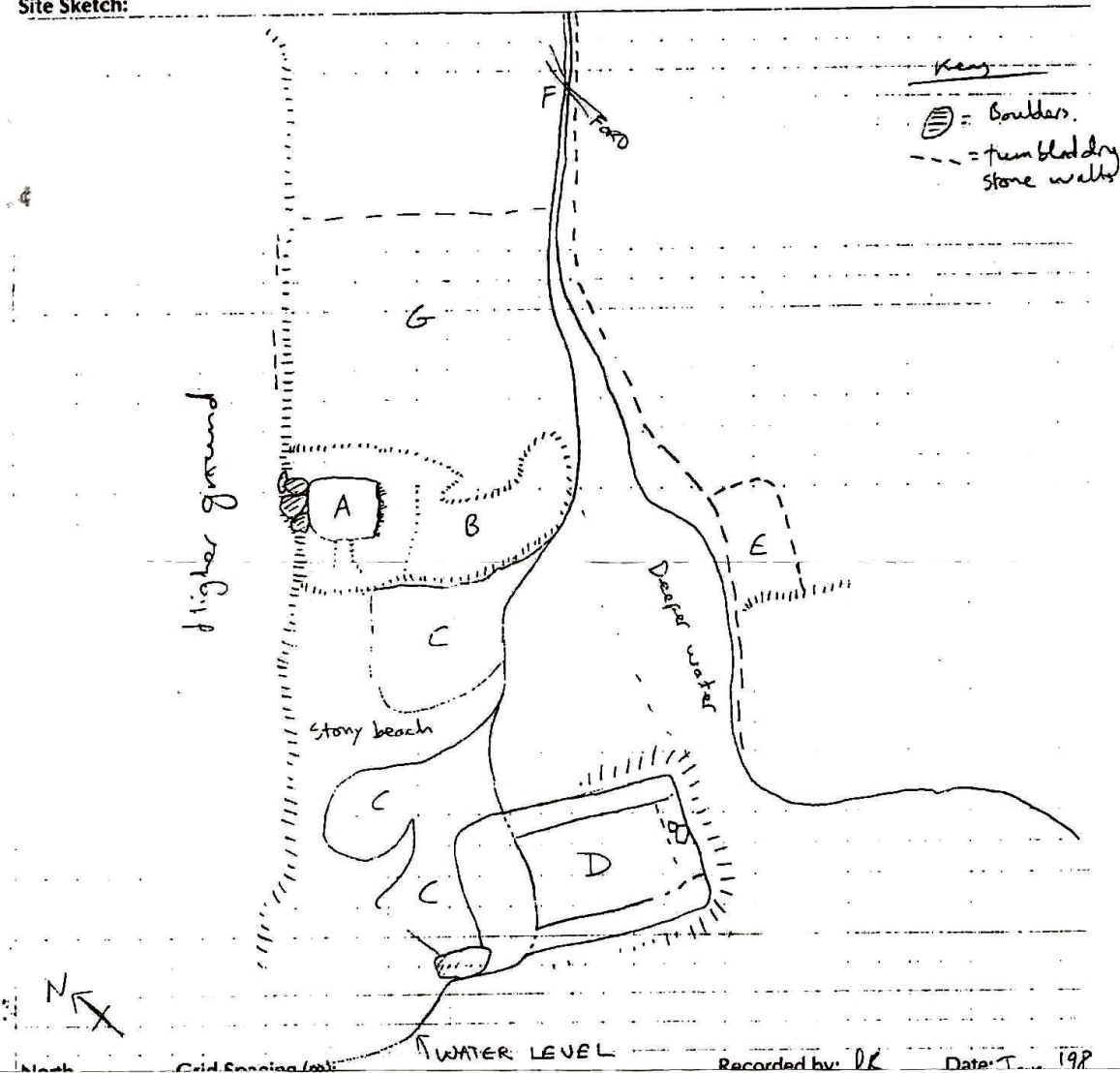
- A = Square hollow 2.5m across x 0.3m deep with possible indications of ^{boulder} walling round about - where measurable round 1m wide. Building footing?
- B = large spread heap of tumbled stones - superstructure possibly?
- C = Boat noosts - areas of silt & mud flat completely cleared of stones
- D = Building footing c. 5m by 9m but mostly underwater so not accurately measured - well footings c. 0.9m wide
- E = Possible small enclosure measuring c. 5 x 4m by 0.3m high (walling).
- F = well formed ford.
- G = Possible in field/yard - cleared of stone - bounded by poss. traces of wall.
- A, B & G affected by conifers - The rest are clear of trees. All are inside scheduled area of the loch.

(Use additional sheet if necessary.)

Recorded by: PR

Date: Jan '98 Form completed by:

Site Sketch:



Recorded by: PR Date: Jan '98

¹ http://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC5951A_loch-a-bharain

The Crinan Canal Its Bursting and its affects on Clan MacTavish

The Canal was the brainstorm of the Duke of Argyll, who organized his kinsmen and heritors in Argyll and incorporated them under the name of "The Company of Proprietors of the Crinan Canal". Each proprietor or shareholder, was required to raise a sum of 120,00 pounds among themselves, in two thousand four hundred shares of 50 pounds each, plus the addition of 30,000 pounds if the afore mentioned was insufficient for the venture.

Building of the Canal was under the authority of Parliament and passed under the "*An Act for making and maintaining a navigable Canal 'from Loch Gilp to Loch Crinan, in the shire of Argyll'*". Its expanse was from Ardreshaig at Loch Gilp across the isthmus of Argyllshire at Knapdale, to Loch Crinan, below Duntroon Castle. As it ran through Dunardry, Lachlan MacTavish of Dunardry was made a shareholder, and one of the proprietors, and was obligated to come up with funds for its building. Lachlan, it appears, mortgaged Dunardry, or created bonds (of payment), to raise the funds, which put him into debt.

The canal was not profitable, and all the shareholders lost money on the venture. It affected MacTavish in two ways. The canal split Dunardry lands nearly in two, and Lachlan was unable to collect rents from his crofters and renters as they could not reach the places of their livelihoods as there was, at the time, only one bridge across the canal. The other affect was that Lachlan was 'mortgaged to the hilt' over the venture. And due to owing so much to so many, he eventually sold the property at auction to Major-General John Campbell of Barbeck, Succoth, Argyll, on the 2nd of January, 1786. At this time he had been appointed Governor of Taxes for Widows and Orphans and resided with his family at Saint James Court, Edinburgh.

In 1805 the banks of the Crinan Canal burst for the first time, laying much of the land near Cairnbaan to waste, and causing workers for the Crinan Company to gather any loose stone in the area for filling the breach. Abandoned stone crofter houses as well as the old keep at Dunardry were scavenged of stone for this purpose.

Again in 1859 the reservoirs regulating water for filling and draining the canal locks burst. When the first broke it set up a chain reaction, bursting all three in sequence, including Loch a'Bharain, losing a deluge. Both instances caused much damage to the entire area along the canal. Once more the Canal Company sought out local stone to repair the reservoirs, and the remaining stones in the area, including those of the ancient Dunardry Keep at Loch a'Bharain, save the massive footing stones, were taken for this effort. Thus the ancient ancestral home of the Chiefs of Clan MacTavish was robbed of its stones to rebuild the canal, leaving only remnants of what it once was.

In both instances the amount of money granted by Parliament for repairs or repayment of injuries suffered by land owners or crofters, was insufficient. The later bursting is described by William Keddie of the Philosophical Society of Glasgow as having a force so tremendous to cut chasms into the banks down to the slate bedrock, "resembling the cutting of a railroad". The currents of the flood ran from Cairnbaan, and to Dunardry, in opposite directions, and the locks, tow-path and road were laid to ruin, and the canal itself was filled with mud. The waters carried all sort of debris with it and reached Loch Gilp to the east. The other path of water filled much of the Great Moss with sand and mud. The force of the water felled nearly everything in its path. At Lochgiplhead, after running on level ground for sometime, the flood water reached a stone bridge and took it out entirely, rolling the smashed structure's stones for yards. The force of the water was so great that it moved stones estimated to weigh 18 to 22 tons.

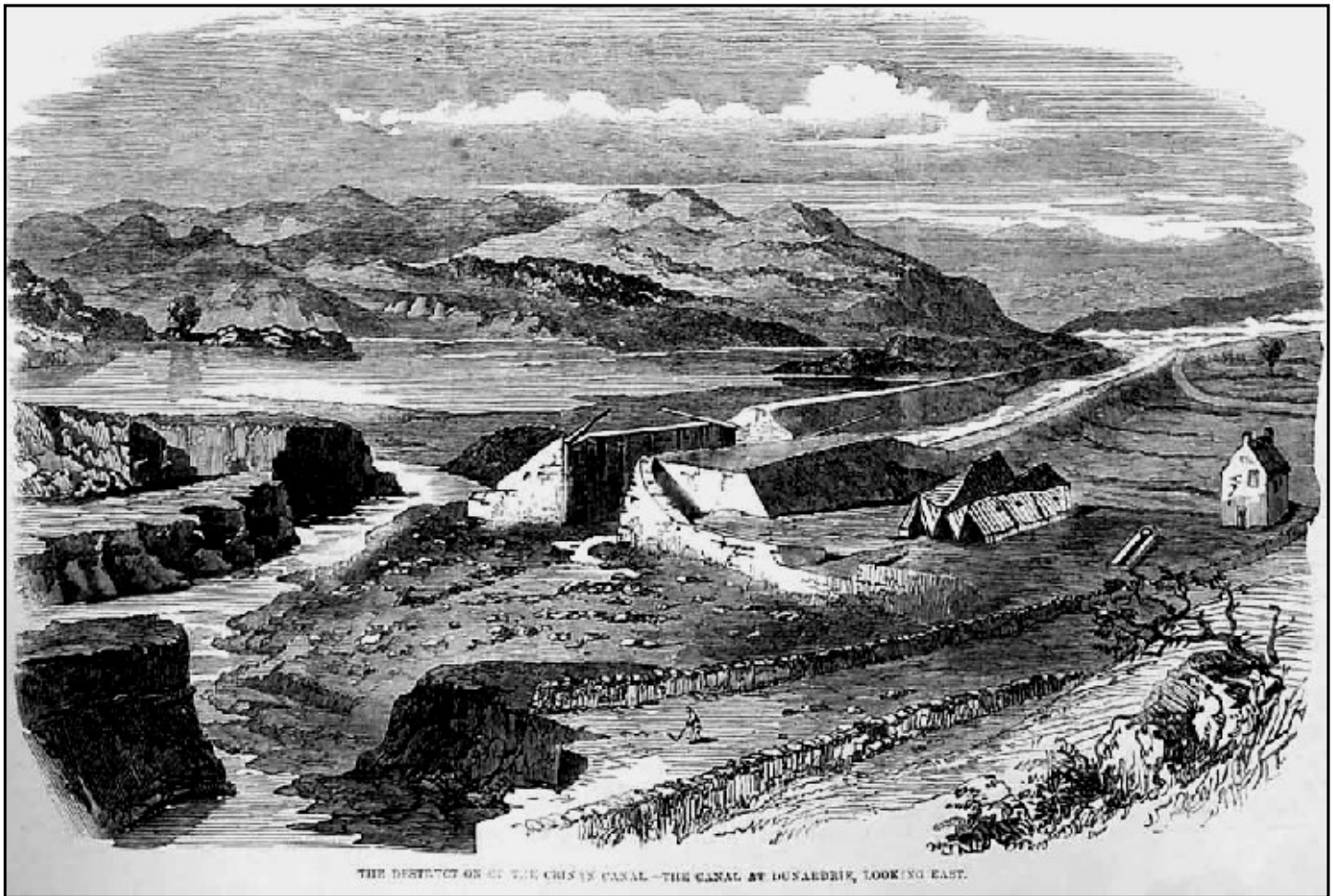
Sources:

1. *Historical Account of the Navigable Rivers, Canals, and Railways of Great Britain*, Cary, London, 1901, pp 169-171.
2. *Littell's Living Age*, Vol XXIII, Littell, Son and Company Boston, 1863, p 182.
3. *Proceeding of the Philosophical Society of Glasgow*, Vol. IV, 1855, pp 267-270.

Gleaned from *The Illustrated London News, Supplement, March 5, 1859*

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CRINAN CANAL.

The Number of this Journal for February 12 contained an account of the injury done to the Crinan Canal by the bursting of the reservoirs – and avalanche of water, rocks, and earth rolling down the mountain side, furrowing a deep watercourse in its way, and instantly obliterating the canal under a mountain of thousands of tons of rocks and stones. In the accompanying sketch is shown the devastating effects produced by the rush of waters at Dunardrie, looking east. At this point the water, besides breaking through the lock gates, forced a lateral opening into the adjacent reservoir, sweeping back again (increased by its contents) into the canal, which here expands into the form of a basin, and then passed on through two great rents on each side of the next lock. On the right of the Sketch is the highroad, broken away ; the two boat-sheds, where the track-boats lie on their slips, thrown down ; and the great fall of rocks in the distance stretching across the glen. On the left is the towpath, cut asunder, and the muddy bed of the empty reservoir.



The caption of the above Sketch reads:

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CRINAN CANAL – THE CANAL AT DUNARDRIE LOOKING EAST.

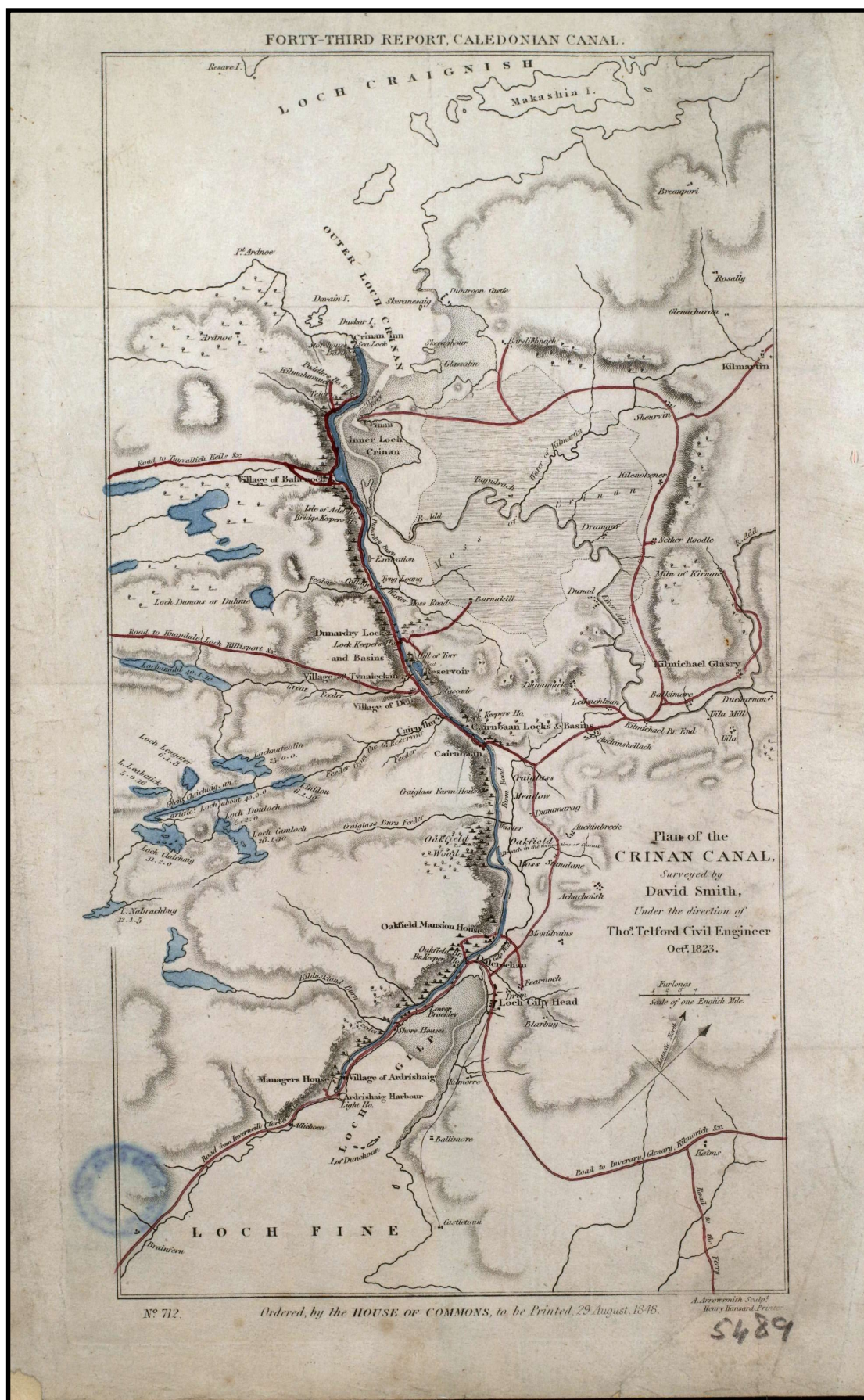
Compare the Photographs following with the Sketch.



**Dunardry, Loch a'Bharain (pronounced Lock a-Varan) on the Crinan Canal.
The Loch is on the left. Boat house on the right. Steamer Linnet at the lock.**



**Aerial view of the Crinan Canal at Dunardry, Lock # 9, THE CANAL SUMMIT,
and Loch a'Bharain (at left).**



MAP-PLAN OF THE CRINAN CANAL

Loch a'Bharain, (center of map) a natural Loch that was modified, is noted on the Crinan Canal map as a "Reservoir" near the "Hill of Torr".

A "torr" is a high hill. See: Arrows for Magnetic North & True North.