

CAISTEAL TIORAM - a case of serious neglect



Anta Estates, a company registered in the offshore tax haven of St Kitts, bought the castle in 1997. The following year they used a vague risk assessment, which said little more than that the castle being a large old ruin could pose risks to visitors, to persuade Highland Council to issue a Dangerous Buildings Notice.

As a result the castle was closed off by an unsightly barricade, four fences were erected to deter the public from visiting the seaward side of the castle, and at least eight warning signs erected. Because the whole of Eilean Tioram has Scheduled Monument status, the fences and signs were not allowed to have posts penetrating the ground; they were therefore erected on drums of iron filled with concrete. There were at least 29 of these drums.

Following 17 years without maintenance, these drums have deteriorated seriously, to the extent that several of them have now completely collapsed, with their contents becoming part of the soil of the island or dispersed into the beach. Fences have in places fallen down and become embedded in the soil. The following set of photographs documents the current state of these intrusions to one of Scotland's finest Scheduled Monuments.

In September 2014 we took a close look at the castle, showing how – contrary to the owners' claims – there has been very little change to the castle's structure over the past 20 or more years. In contrast, the following pictures show how badly the owners' 'safety features' have deteriorated since 1998. They are not only unsightly and seriously detrimental to the value of the castle to the community and to tourism, but are also causing damage to the Scheduled Monument site.

Denis Mollison, Caisteal Tioram Trust, April 2016



Location of interventions at Caisteal Tioram since 1998

For details see next page.

Interventions at Caisteal Tioram since 1998

The locations of A–I are shown on the aerial photo map on the page opposite. Photos of all except J and L appear on the following pages.

- A entrance: barricade with locked inset door and ‘Danger’ notice affixed; the drum in front once held a notice
- B wire fence supported by 7 posts mounted in drums (B1-7); B7 is broken with its contents mixed with the soil
- C the two openings in the sea wall:
breach/window with only partially functioning scaffolding;
postern with tatty mesh barricade
- D fence with 6 (possibly 7?) drums supporting posts; drums in poor condition, ranging from D1-2 still holding together to only traces of D5-6
- E isolated empty drum, probably originally held a notice (but could be one displaced from one of the fence lines)
- F fence with 5 (or 6?) drums: F3 intact, and perhaps F1; of others only traces. end fencing now over-grown by turf
- G drum outside bathhouse - presumably once held a notice
- H fence with 5 drums: all collapsing or integrated with soil; fence largely submerged in turf
- I isolated drum that formerly held a notice
- J - not seen or photographed in April 2016 - drum for notice at edge of island nearest mainland
- K drum for notice, decaying into beach on mainland side of crossing
- L two ‘Danger’ notices near car park



Entrance barricade, drum A and fence B





Openings in sea wall (C) above, fence D below





This page:

- drum E and fence D
- looking south to fence F with fence H in the middle distance
- drum G with fence F in the middle distance

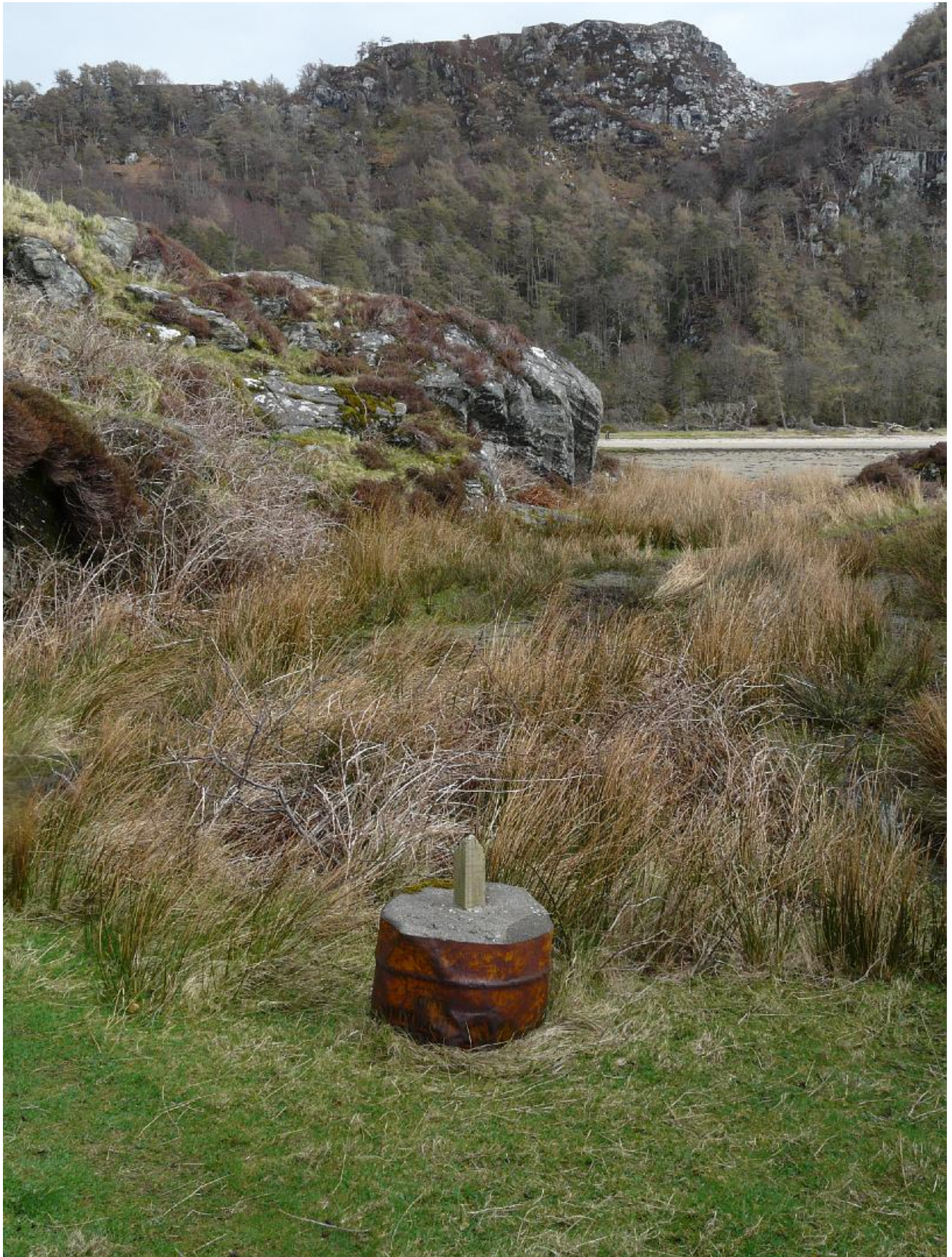
Next page:

- looking north to fences H and F
- fence-post drum H2: note how much of fence is buried under turf





Two drums (H5 and H4) decaying into the soil



Drum I - looking towards mainland



Drum K - on Dorlin beach