



[Mol a' Ghò - The Pebble Beach]

The resident population of Calbost which peaked at 200 people in 1901 earned their living from the land and the sea as crofter fishermen. In the absence of a sheltered harbour they hauled their boats up on the pebbly beach known as 'A Ghò'. When the writer was at Primary School in the 1920's, both herring and white fishing based from 'Mol a Ghò' was still quite busy, although greatly diminished from its peak at the end of the 18th century.

Robert Weir, the Calbost Tacksman, conducted a salting and drying white fishery business from the beach 'a Ghò' where he had a salting house in the neck of land leading to the peninsula known as 'Eilean a Ghò'. A wooden fishing shed stands on that site at present.

Kelping was also conducted at 'a Ghò' pebbly beach, and we believe that the ruins of kelping kilns may still be seen in the peninsula known as 'Eilean a Ghò'.

The Congested District Board, which existed from 1896 to 1912, gave financial assistance for the installation of a winch for hauling the boats up on the beach. John Macleod (Iain Aonghais Alastair), croft No.1, installed the winch. By the 1920s the winch was more or less out of action because of wear and tear on the bearings particularly, and from then on people were inclined to use smaller inshore rowing boats. It was not until 1958 that another winch was installed by the writer.

Grave of Cailleach a Ghò

Some 50 - 100 yards above the 'Ceann Garbh', which is the area of larger boulders at the north end of 'a Ghò' pebbly beach, there is an eminence halfway up the hill, where the grave of 'Cailleach a Ghò' may be seen. It is marked by an ordinary stone at each end of the grave.

'Cailleach a Ghò' was an old lady from Harris. She and her son were evicted from Harris and they were making their way to Stornoway in a small boat when they hit a submerged reef at 'Stac an Fhir Mhaoil' at the southern edge of Calbost Bay, and their boat capsized.

Calbost people out cutting peats on 'Rubha na Creaga Mor' heard their cries for help and they hurried along to 'Mol a Ghò', launched a boat and hurried to the rescue, but it was too late for the mother. The son was saved and he subsequently lived in Stornoway.

[ends]

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