

Coarse Stone Tools

(summarized from Ann Clarke)

Sand

28 pieces

Limited range, no bevelled pebbles (interesting especially in view of bone tools), one axe. Contrasts with Kinloch

Facially pecked cobbles the most common, sometimes with dished areas. – only light wear.

Four plain hammerstones

Found throughout deposits – no concentrations – uniform across contexts

A quantity of fractured rock – not poss to quantify as not all collected. Most collected from the topsoil, but much also collected from “Sandy soil with heat cracked stone” - and this is the main layer in which it was observed when digging. Quite a bit from the two shell middens as well.

Survey Sites

Individual types scatted across survey sites. Includes four bevelled pebbles which might indicate Mesolithic activity but not from meso dated sites.

Pottery

(summarized from Ann MacSween)

Sand

Small fragments of coarse pottery from sorting:

Topsoil	A shell Midden	B Shell midden	Slopewash	Palaeochannel	Sandysoil
31 mainly fragmentary	5 crumbs	8 mainly fragmentary	8 mainly fragments	-	1 fragment

Mainly from high up in the contexts – spits 1 – 4, a very few from lower spits. None diagnostic

Also three pieces glazed pottery all from turf and topsoil

Survey sites

The site with the most pottery is the sand dune site at Meallabhan (SFS 96 as below). Some of this, in particular V9 and V10 may be medieval in date (Julie Franklin, pers com), cf, for example, the form of a vessel of the Scottish White Gritty ware, 13-14th century, from Kirkwall (MacAskill 1982b, reproduced in McCarthy and Brooks 1988 Fig 114, no 525, p 210).

Context 9611; S1095

3 crumbs, probable pottery, from different vessels. The fabric is fine sandy clay

V1 One body sherd (fresh) and one fragment (slightly abraded). The fabric is sandy clay which has fired hard and is grey with brown surfaces. Sooting/residue on the exterior and interior surfaces.
Th 6mm; Wt 14g

V2 One body sherd from below the neck of the vessel. The fabric is fine clay with organics (incompletely burnt out) which has fired soft and is light grey with a buff exterior surface. The exterior surface is smoothed.
Th 6mm; Wt 6g

V3 One body sherd, slightly abraded. The fabric is fine sandy clay with occasional rock fragments which has fired hard and is red. The exterior surface is sooted.
Th 6mm; Wt 6g

V4 One body sherd, slightly abraded. The fabric is fine sandy clay which has fired soft and is grey with a red interior margin. The exterior surface is sooted and there is light sooting in the interior.
Wt 7g; Th 7mm

V5 One body sherd and two rim sherds (flat rim). Abraded. One sherd is from the neck of the vessel (33mm from the lip of the vessel to the point of inflection). The fabric is coarse sandy clay which has fired hard and is grey with buff margins. The exterior surface is sooted.
Th 7mm; Wt 16g

V6 Three body sherds (abraded). The fabric is coarse sandy clay which has fired hard and is grey with a brown interior margin. The exterior surface is sooted.

Th 5mm; Wt 12g

V7 Plain rim from a necked vessel (22mm from the lip of the vessel to the point of inflection). The fabric is coarse sandy clay which has fired hard and is grey with red margins.

Th 9mm; Wt 16g

V8 Body sherd, slightly abraded. The fabric is fine sandy clay with occasional voids and occasional rock fragments which has fired soft and is grey with a red exterior margin.

Th 6mm; Wt 6g

V9 Forty body sherds and fragments plus two rim sherds from a necked vessel with a flattened lip. Slightly abraded/abraded. 23mm below the lip of the vessel, above the point of inflection, is a pinched up cordon. The fabric is sandy clay with some voids (organics) which has fired hard and is grey with a buff exterior margin. Some of the body sherds have been combed on the exterior surface. Both surfaces are sooted.

Dia at neck 100mm; Th 7mm; Wt 176g

V10 Two rim sherds and two body sherds from a necked vessel with a slightly everted lip. Abraded. 18mm below the lip of the vessel is a pinched up cordon. The fabric is sandy clay which has fired hard and is grey with a buff exterior margin. There is light sooting on the exterior surface.

Wt 12g

V11 32 body sherds and a rim sherd, probably all from the same (flat-rimmed) vessel. One sherd has a pinched up cordon. Abraded. The fabric is sandy clay with c10% of inclusions which has fired hard and is grey with a buff/red exterior margin. There are patches of residue in the interior.

Th 7mm; Wt 102g

Other Survey sites with pottery:

Site	Context	Pottery
SFS 08 Loch a Sguirr, Raasay	Tr1 Sp1	1 sherd
	Tr9 spit 7	2 fragments
	Tr9 Sp 8	3 sherds, 2 crumbs
SFS 30 An Corran	Surface	Rim
	Site E	2 sherds, one with incised decoration <i>Unstan ware?</i>
SFS 58 Rubha Chuaig	Topsoil	4 sherds <i>Pot from this site representing 2 vessels</i>
	Tr1 Sp1	1 sherd
	Tr1 Sp2	1 sherd
	Tr1 Sp4	1 sherd
SFS 66 Ard Clais Salacher 2	Topsoil	7 sherds, <i>one modern, one Iron Age?</i>
	Tr1 Sp4	1 sherd
SFS 90 Meallabhan		c. 90 sherds and fragments
SFS 99 Clachan Church	Tr1 Sp4	1 sherd, 1 fragment
SFS 106 Toscaig 3	Topsoil	1 fragment
SFS 117 Dun Hasan	Topsoil	1 sherd

Glazed pottery:

Site	Pottery
SFS 19; Toscaig 1; Tr 1; spit 1	4 sherds
SFS 22; Crowlin 3, Tr 1; c3003	5 sherds glazed pottery, 1 fragment
Tr 1; spit 1	glazed pottery (4 small pieces)
Site 76; Camusteel 1; Tr 1; spit 1	19 sherds/fragments
Site 77; Camusteel 2; Tr 1; spit 1	6 sherds
Site 100; Fraser's Croft, Tr 1; spit 2	1 sherd; 1 handle
SFS 104; Fearnmore, surface	1 fragment; 2 sherds
Tr 1; spit 1	3 fragments
Tr 2; spit 1	1 sherd
Tr 3; spit 1	2 fragments
Tr 4; spit 1	3 sherds
Tr 6; spit 1	5 sherds, 3 fragments, 1 pipe stem

Metal

(summarized from Andrew Heald and Fraser Hunter)

Discussion

The material suggests short-term, transitory occupation: there are no tools apart from knives, a couple of portable vessels, a number of personal ornaments (mainly buttons) which are probably casual losses, and an absence of large fittings or mounts. The main iron find is nails, most of which are undiagnostic hand-forged types which were prevalent from the Iron Age until the post-Medieval, and were much more common from the Medieval period onwards. There is only one intact example (along with four tacks and three boat nails), but it seems that there were few large nails. About a third of the nails were bent from removal; few were clenched, suggesting that the nails were largely from dismantled wooden items rather than from burnt or discarded objects. Few had wood traces, although this may be because of soil conditions. Their size would be consistent with small-scale joinery for furniture, cladding and so on, with little evidence for major structural work.

There is limited evidence of metalworking. A total of 681.7g of vitrified material was examined, with only four sites produced evidence of ironworking; where it could be characterised this was blacksmithing. The quantities from **Ashaig**, **Crowlin 3** and **Meallabhan** were minimal, indicating ironworking somewhere in the vicinity. **Coire Sgamhadail** produced the remnants of hearth or furnace lining, perhaps associated with ironworking. Only **Sand** produced significant slag remains, including a hearth bottom. The small quantities and distribution here suggest a single short-lived episode, while melted copper alloy droplets in the same squares suggest this may have involved limited bronzeworking as well.

The unused rivet from **Coire Sgamhadail 3-6** also points to craft activity on the site, perhaps non-ferrous sheet metalworking although the stud from the same site might suggest production or repair of ornamental leatherwork. Again the quantity implies a small-scale activity, and repair rather than production.

Dating

There are no certain pre-Medieval finds, although the pin from **Meallabhan** is Hiberno-Norse and the vessel fragment from there may be a similar date; the stepped-tang knives from SFS 57 **Rubha a Ghair** and SFS 68 **Allt na Criche** are Early Historic or Medieval, and the buckle from **Sand 3** is late Medieval. The datable finds are primarily post-Medieval.

Sand

2 droplets of casting waste of leaded bronze (copper alloy), both from centre of site one from topsoil one from sandy soil with heat cracked stone.

Iron

Knife tip?	A6B.NE.1	Topsoil
Nails, 4 fragments	A2B.3, A6B.SW.2, B1B.SW.4, B4B.1	Sandy soil Sandy soil B midden Topsoil
Flake	B24B.SW.6	B midden
Lump	B5B.NE.3	Topsoil
Fragment	B21B.NE.1	Topsoil

Slag: 494g, primarily unclassified ironworking (125g) and a plano-convex smithing hearth base (343g), plus a small quantity of hammerscale and slag spheres. The distribution focuses strongly on the squares around the junction of trenches A and B, with limited scatter beyond. This indicates a limited episode of blacksmithing; the presence of two melted copper alloy fragments in the same area suggests bronzeworking also occurred.

Survey Sites

SFS 2 Crowlin 1

Non-ferrous

Tp 1 spit 6 **Irregular sub-square lead sheet**, one edge broken. The slightly undulating surface suggests it may have been a patch shaped to fit an underlying object. Undiagnostic, though lead is uncommon before the medieval period.

Iron

Tp 1 spit 3 **Nail**: a single shank fragment.

SFS 6 Ashaig

Slag: 15.9 g unclassified ironworking

SFS 17 Church Cave, Raasay

Copper Alloy

TP 2 spit 3 **Unused rivet?** Strip of sheet rolled into a tight cylinder, probably for use as a rivet. Alloy: gunmetal. The alloy implies a date no earlier than the Roman Iron Age; the object cannot be closely dated. If this is an unused rivet it adds to the evidence for expedient craftwork (repair rather than manufacture) noted already in the finds from Coire Sgamhadail 3-6.

SFS 19 Toscaig 1

Iron

Tp 1 spit 4 (midden) **Nails**: two fragments.

SFS 22 Crowlin 3

Non-ferrous

Tp1 spit 2 **Lead shotgun pellet**. Small broken sphere.

Tp1 spit 3 **Lead pistol ball** consistent with a smooth-bored and muzzle-loading weapon of the post-medieval period. The surface damage is a mixture of impact deformation and post-depositional damage and corrosion. (Stuart Campbell)

Iron

Tp 1 spit 3 **Circular button**, flat, with separate loop. Details obscured by corrosion. Post-Medieval.

Tp 1 spit 3 **Boat nails**: three nails with roves, and a separate rove.

Tp1 spit 2 & 3, Tp 2 spit 2 **Tacks**: three small tacks.

Nails: 44 fragments.

2 Fragments, undiagnostic, **7 Flakes**

Slag

9g unclassified ironworking slag; 0.1g slag spheres.

SFS 23 Crowlin 4

Copper alloy

Tp 1 spit 1 **Clasp**. Copper alloy keyhole-shaped clasp. Waisted strip, expanding at one end into an oval with a trefoil-shaped hole to engage with a stud on another fitting. The waisted portion is clamped round an iron bar. Post-Medieval. Alloy: brass

SFS 41 Toscaig 9

Iron

Tp 1, spit 1 **Plain annular ring**. Circular cross section. Welded? (no evidence of butt join). Surface sheet of tin, soldered to iron (XRF detects trace lead). No wear to indicate function, but tinning of iron is a rarity before the Medieval period.

Tp 2, spits 1 and 2 **Mount**. 34 small fragments from a flat ?rectangular sheet mount (one corner survives), the edges turned over and flattened to form a raised border 5 mm wide. Surviving corner has a rivet hole punched from the front (border) side. Rivets survive in two sheet fragments; one joined two sheets together. Few fragments join, but the overall length of surviving border is 120 mm. Relatively good condition suggests a post-Medieval date.

Tp 1 spit 1 **Sheet**. 3 fragments of an unidentified flat sheet object with part of one straight edge.

Tp 1 spit 2 **Tack**.

Tp 1 spits 1 & 3 **Nails**: five fragments

Tp 1 spit 2, **Fragment**, unidentified, no original edges.

SFS 57 Rubha a Ghair

Iron

Knife tip fragment with remains of organic scabbard (?leather). Convex curving back with concave upturned tip. Blade concave from resharpening. Early Historic or Medieval.

SFS 58 Rubha Chuaig

Iron

Nails: two shank fragments, one slightly bent from removal.

Tp7 spit 3 **Undiagnostic fragment**

SFS 68 Allt na Chriche

Copper alloy

Tp 2 spit 1 **Buckle or brooch pin**, broken at both ends and bent, rectangular in section and tapering along its length, with four V-shaped notches on one edge at the articulating end; this has solder on the reverse from fastening the return of the pin round a bar. Burnishing and filemarks on both faces. Medieval or post-Medieval, although it cannot be assigned to a more specific typological class. Alloy: leaded gunmetal (trace silver) (Stuart Campbell)

Tp 2 spit 3 **Circular link**. Circular-sectioned fine rod bent into a circle, the ends slightly overlapping. Alloy: brass. It appears to have been tinned or silvered (this could not be confirmed analytically given the small areas involved), which points to a post-Iron Age date, but it is otherwise undiagnostic and can only be dated as Early Historic - post-medieval.

Iron

Tp 1 spit 2 **Knife** fragment (2 pieces) with remains of wooden handle. Small knife with stepped tang; the blade tip and tang end are lost. The edge shape is unclear but the rapid taper suggests it is heavily resharpened.

SFS 69 Sand 3

Strap buckle made by winding and hammering together a strip of sheet metal. The two ends have been joined at the pivot bar by 'key holing' one end into an aperture in the other and it is at this point that the buckle has broken. The pivot bar has iron staining from the pin. Similar decoration of three pairs of twin V-shaped indentations at 90° intervals is known in Scotland on both brooches and buckles; this example dates from the late medieval period. Alloy: brass (Stuart Campbell)

SFS 76 Camusteel 1

Iron

Tp 1 spit 1 **Rim and body fragment of a cast iron vessel** with everted rim, originally c.210mm in diameter. Broken just above the shoulder. Post-Medieval.

SFS 77 Camusteel 2

Copper Alloy

Tp 1 spit 1 **Eyelets**, two small lentoid-sectioned discs flanking organic remains; probably eyelets around a perforation in cloth or leather. Post-medieval or modern. Alloy: brass.

Iron

Tp 1 spit 1 **Staple?** Thin bar, the ends bent back to touch its underside.

Tp 1 spit 1 **Nails:** two small fragments

Coire Sgamhadail – which?? (bag: 103 S1057)

Slag: 130.9g vitrified hearth/furnace lining with slag

SFS 90 Coire Sgamhadail 3-6

Copper Alloy

Tp 2 **Pin tip?** Flat bar fragment, broken at one end, tapering to a point. Probably the tip of a Medieval or post-Medieval buckle or brooch pin. Alloy: leaded gunmetal.

Tp 2 **Stud**, hollow dome fastened by rolled sheet rivet. The gap between the stud and the flattened end of the rivet is very small (c. 1 mm), implying it ornamented a thin organic medium such as leather. The type is not chronologically diagnostic, although the zinc levels indicate a post-Iron Age date. Stud alloy: high-zinc gunmetal (trace lead).

Tp 2 **Unused rivet** - rolled sheet rod. Its composition (predominantly copper) is typical for rivets owing to its softness. Alloy: copper (minor zinc and lead).

Iron

Tp 2 **Collar** – thin bar rolled into a small circle, the ends slightly overlapped.

Tp 2 **Knife?** Heavily concreted and highly fragmented iron object. Firm identification impossible without conservation, but where the section is exposed it appears to be fragments of a small knife

Other

Tp 2 **Fired clay**, sub-rectangular object with uneven surfaces, presumably an accidentally-fired piece of clay.

SFS 96 Meallabhan

Copper alloy

Surface **Stick pin**, circular cross-section, lacking only the point of the tip. The sides of the head bear four zones of decoration, each with a ring-and-dot motif at the top and six or seven transverse incised lines below. The lowest lines are joined to form a circumferential border defining the decorated head. The depth of the dots suggests they were once inlaid, but no trace of this now survives. The top of the head is rounded and plain. The pin tapers evenly to the point, and is slightly bent at its midpoint. Alloy: leaded gunmetal.

This is a Hiberno-Norse stick pin of 'undifferentiated' type (O' Rahilly 1998, Class 7, 27-8), where the head is a continuous part of the shaft; the decoration is of her type A. There are close parallels from Garrylochdrach, North Uist (Beveridge & Callander 1932, 41; NMS GT 489) and from Norse levels at Jarlshof, Shetland, the latter being near identical (Curle 1936, 263-4, fig 11.6; NMS HSA 853). Examples from Dublin date from c. 1100 – 1225 AD (ibid., 28, 33).

Surface **Vessel fragment with iron handle rivet**. Two fragmentary sheets of copper alloy held by a broken rivet. One sheet has two stab-marks, perhaps from an earlier patch (held by paper-clip rivets) removed when this second sheet was added. The rivet is domed and sub-square with a rectangular shank. As it is not clenched against the sheet it must originally have held the handle attachment, now lost. The edges of the sheet are curled and ragged, suggesting the fragment ripped out of the vessel in use. Alloy: gunmetal (primarily Cu with low levels Zn, Sn, Pb).

This comes from a copper alloy vessel, probably a small bowl or dish with iron suspension handles. The alloy composition (with its zinc content) indicates a Roman or later date, and such vessels are known from the Early Historic and Medieval periods (e.g. Hunter 1994, 57-62).

Iron

Surface **Thin strip or bar**, one original straight edge surviving; punched hole. Condition implies post-Medieval date.

Surface **Bar/knife fragment**, heavy corrosion obscuring details.

Surface **Button**, circular with separate loop. Details obscured by corrosion. Post-Medieval.

Surface **Nails**: 4, of which one is intact and two are among the largest from the SFS project.

Surface **Fragment**. Disintegrated object, perhaps a nail

Surface **Flake**, undiagnostic.

Slag

32g unclassified ironworking slag

SFS 114 Fergus's shelter

Iron

Tp 1 spit 1 **Rove**, rectangular with tip of clenched nail surviving.

Tp 1 spit 1 **Bar**, tapering, rectangular-sectioned; perhaps a tang.

Tp 1 spit 1 **Nails**: five modern nails and a possible horseshoe nail

Glass

(summarized from Andrew Heald and Fraser Hunter)

Sand

Turquoise glass bead, globular, slightly flattened at one end. The surface shows that the bead was formed by winding a glass rod around a core. Its iridescent surface suggests a potash glass and a late medieval – early post-Medieval date (?15th-18th century). B24A.SE.3. B midden

Post-medieval vessel glass, olive green: 2 sherds from topsoil (A5B.1); 4 from sandy soil (1 - A6B.1; 3 - A6B.SE.2)

Vessel glass, 1 sherd post-Medieval olive-green. Tp 1

Modern clear glass: 2 sherds from topsoil (B1 & B25B)

SFS 20 Toscaig 2

Tp 2 spit 2: neck of an olive-green bottle - **Post-Medieval**

SFS22 Crowlin 3

Post-Medieval: 7 sherds

SFS 41 Toscaig 9

Tp 1 spit 1 **Post-medieval**, 1 sherd clear iridescent glass

SFS 66 Ard Clais Salacher 2

Tp 1 spit 1 **Post-Medieval**, two sherds of olive-green glass

SFS 76 Camusteel 1

Tp 1 spit 1 **Modern**, 9 clear glass sherds, some decorated. Late 19th-20th century.

SFS 77 Camusteel 2

Tp 1 spit 1 **Modern**, 15 clear glass sherds (including base), some decorated. Late 19th-20th century.

SFS 99 Clachan Church

Tp1 spit 1 **Post-Medieval**, 2 sherds olive-green glass (1 a rim) and a clear modern sherd.

SFS 104 Fearnmore 1

Tp 3 spit 1 **Post-Medieval**, olive-green sherd

Tp 6 spit 1 **Modern** clear sherds (2)

SFS 114 Fergus's shelter

Tp 1 spit 2 **Post-Medieval**, olive-green sherd.

