

A boat naust at Alisary, Loch Ailort, Moidart, NGR NM 73987 79626

On the south-western shore of Loch Ailort at Alisary, Moidart, is a boat naust in a small sheltered bay.

Not easily visible from the nearby main road and infrequently visited, the boat naust is far more obvious when the summer vegetation is not present. It lies aligned almost north to south, with the bow end to the south. It lies in a shallow, grass-covered gully, with ten metres of boggy machair separating the entrance of the noost from the stony foreshore. The gully is flanked on both sides by three-metre high ridges of bedrock, forming a very protected spot off an already-sheltered bay.

Immediately inland are very old cultivation rigs, and the ruins of the Alisary village, shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey maps (1873) as roofless, are about four hundred metres to the east.

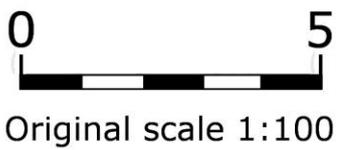
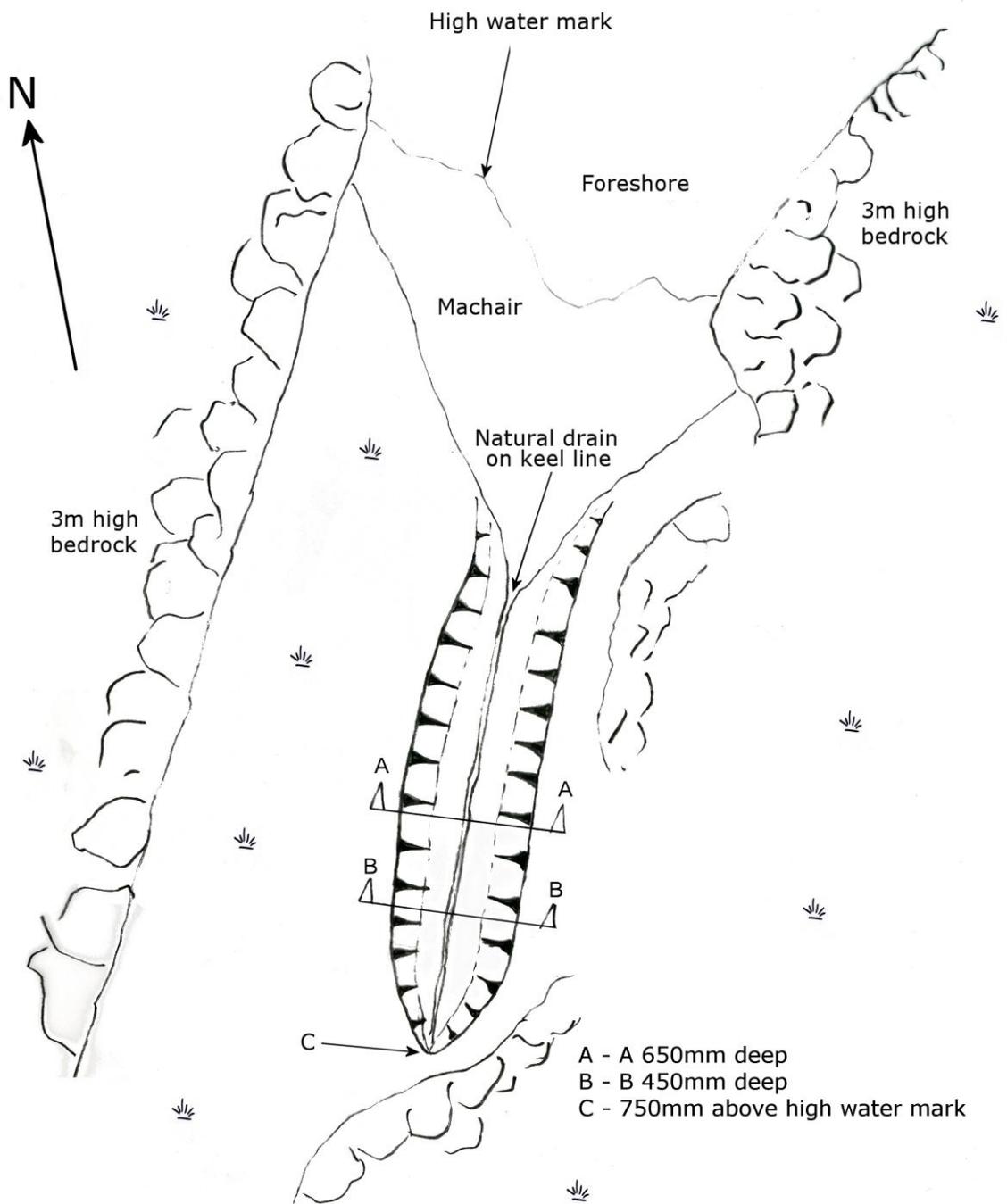
The site was surveyed and recorded in detail using a plane table and alidade, with survey poles at one-metre intervals along both sides. The depth of the naust was measured by dropping a vertical line from a line stretched between two poles at the two deepest points – 650mm. and 450mm. respectively. The existing part of the feature is nine metres long from the stem to the machair, although it is likely to have been a metre or so longer before any erosion, and it could have accommodated a boat of considerable width – the visible width is 2.5m. wide but this would probably have contained only the lower chines of a boat. The stem of the keel would have been some 750 mm. above high tide level and the stern at sea level.

This area was under Norse rule until the middle of the thirteenth century and their influence still pervades the area today – local place names are common evidence of this - and they undoubtedly influenced the culture in other ways. Other nausts exist on the opposite shore of Loch Ailort, and although this one is likely to be of mid-nineteenth use, local naust design and usage was certainly influenced by long-inherited practice. Without further evidence we cannot confirm the date of this naust.

There was no vehicular road alongside the shore of Loch Ailort until 1967 – before this, travel and trade up and down to the loch side settlements was by sea: there is a recent domestic maritime tradition but this is nowadays replaced by tourist boating.

Ken & Jean Bowker

April 26th 2010



Boat noost, Alisary, Loch Ailort
 NGR NM 73987 79626
 Surveyed and drawn by Ken and Jean Bowker
 27th April 2010. Original drawing scale 1:100



Naust from southeast



Naust from southwest