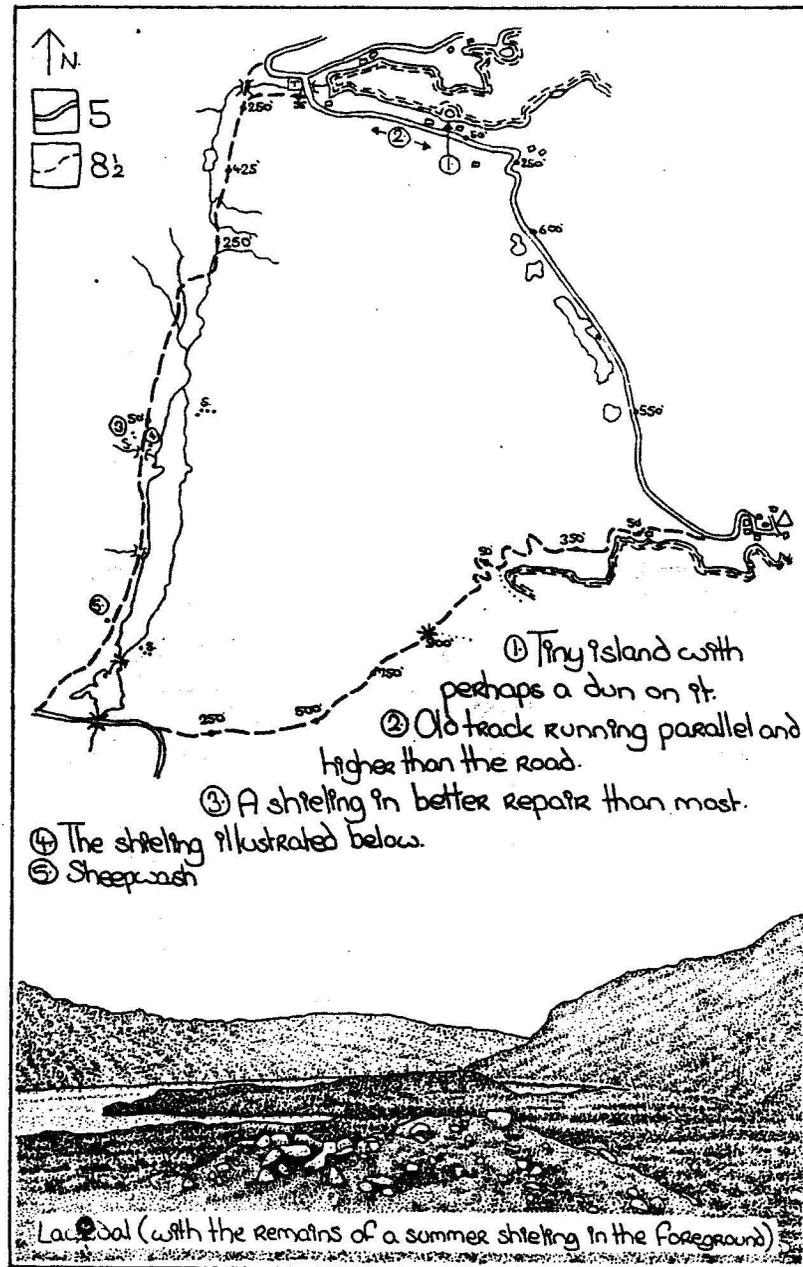


# LACASDAL

13½ miles

This walk is the longest in this book, yet it is straight-forward and easy to follow, being entirely on either metalled road or good paths. First, it follows the new road, that reached Reintgeadal in 1991 (until then, Reintgeadal had been the only roadless inhabited village in the islands for some time). The second section of the walk is along an ancient drovers road, here passing through Lacasdal (Salmon Dale). It was once the major route up the island and there is another two mile long remnant of it just north of Marvig, passing around the west of Clett Ard, whilst the A859 goes around the east. In Lacasdal are to be found many ruined shielings, each surrounded by grassy land, making these clusters of dwellings noticeable when they'd otherwise be hard to pick out from a distance. They were inhabited during the summers, mostly by the teenagers and young adults. The cows and goats could be taken there to graze, away from the crops in the lazybeds around the villages, and crowdie\* and butter could be made from the milk. Here also, peats could be cut and stacked to dry. Now all that remains of most of the shielings is a roofless tumbled ring of stones and earth, with a gap for the doorway and maybe a foot or two of wall still standing, though these buildings were common in the hills and some were still used within living memory. The last section of this walk is along the Tailbeart Path, which is described in better detail elsewhere in this book. Allow a whole day to complete this walk.

\* Crowdie is similar to cottage cheese, but without the cream.



- Leave the hostel and follow the road out of Reingeadal, the road climbs steadily from sea-level to 600 feet, beyond Loch Mor, before it swoops and swerves back down to sea level again, but most of the height is gained in the first 1/2 miles. The road, curving around the sides of Mullä, slowly reveals a wonderful scene, Beinn a' Chaolais and the green hill that shelters Malinginis, and Loch Tröllamaeic and Tröllamul, and Toddun. As the road nears the slopes of Toddun it is joined by a stream and the two together squeeze through a gap between the looming flanks of Mullä on the right, and one of Toddun's buttresses. The electricity wires run by the road now, having climbed by a more direct route out of Reingeadal. In the past their course across the hills was used as a path, which still exists in places, running from pole to pole, it made for an easier navigation of the land in the mist and gloom (except when the mist was so thick that neither the next pole nor the overhead wires could be seen).
- The valley between Toddun and Toscaran is a good place to see the deer, who chose the lower sheltered slopes of Toddun in stormy weather. I have also seen Golden Eagle at close quarters near the road more than once. Saying that this place is sheltered sometimes I should also point out that it can be quite a wind tunnel and it can be quite an experience to find yourself struggling along into the teeth of a storm there.
- As Toddun is left behind the road passes its highest point and descends to Eilean-anabach, Loch Shicphair being revealed ahead. There are ruined houses all around on both sides of the road in Eilean-anabach (Unape Island) as well as what could be the ruin of a dun on a tiny tidal island (①), there is most certainly the remains of a causeway connecting the island to land, but this could also be linked to the fact that there used to be a

- small harbour adjacent to it. Still, nothing is indicated on the map (though old things don't appear on maps for that matter). On the other side a few metres away up the slope and running parallel to the road, you will see the old track that joined Eilean-anabach to Marvig and the drawers road.
- After a few more minutes of walking, you will reach the turning for the Lacasdal path (just before the road passes over a bridge and meets the Marvig road). This path continues parallel to the stream before coming to a junction at which you should turn left towards Lacasdal.
- The path climbs to a high point of about 425 feet. As it drops down again, heading into the valley, it passes a few ruined buildings before descending towards the loch.
- A group of shielings (at ③ and ④) is passed by the track, including one in better condition than most, by the stream that flows out of Dibidal. The bridge crossing the stream, and the one a little further on, appears to be built on top of a paved ford.
- On the right, just before the end of the loch, the track (now good enough to take vehicles) passes a sheepwash, dating back to 1935. There is a group of shielings on the far side of the loch, by the Landavat River, which flows down into Loch Lacasdal from Tröllamul, and which is accessible via a footbridge which crosses the loch at its narrowest point. Note that the ground on either side is liable to be boggy, if not a temporary extension to the loch.
- The track continues southwest, winding around the feet of Torasclett before climbing to meet the Cadais Scalpaigh road. Turn left, and after 3 miles you will arrive at the beginning of the trail back to Reingeadal (only 5km, it says on the sign). See page 4.