

## NOSTAR AND TOSCARAM

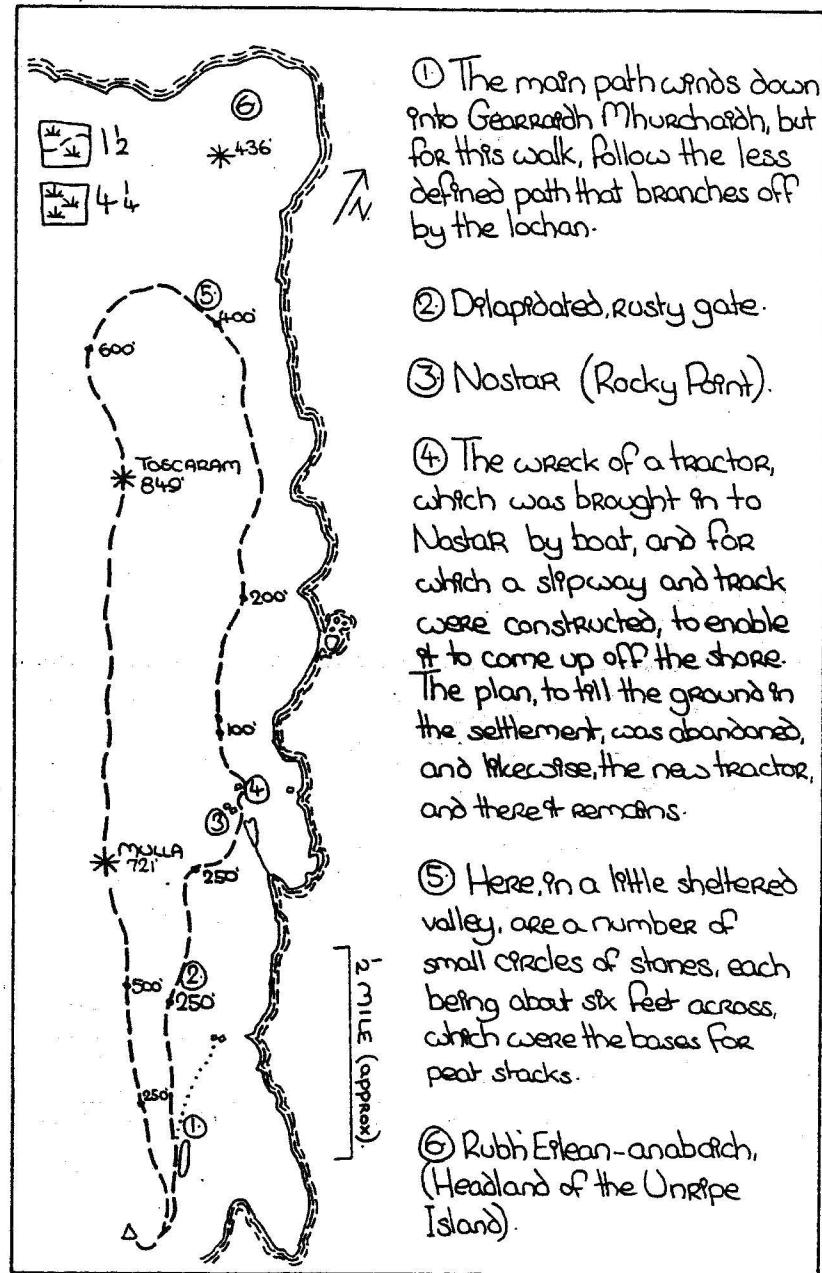
5  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles

There used to be a path that connected Reinigeadal with Eilean-anabach; passing by the settlements of Gearraadh Mhurchardh and Nostar, though nowadays what remains of the path is fragmented and un-used. Before the modern road was built to Reinigeadal, people travelling overland to Marraig chose either to walk along a path that climbed up onto Mulla and then ran between Toscaram and Toddun, or, if the weather was rough and the wind coming from the south west, along the path between Toscaram and Loch Shiophoirt, thus gaining some protection from the brunt of the weather, below the steeply sloping hillsides.

Whilst on the first half of this walk, keep an eye out for otters, this coast provides a good habitat for them. You probably also won't be able to complete this section without attracting the attention of a seal or two.

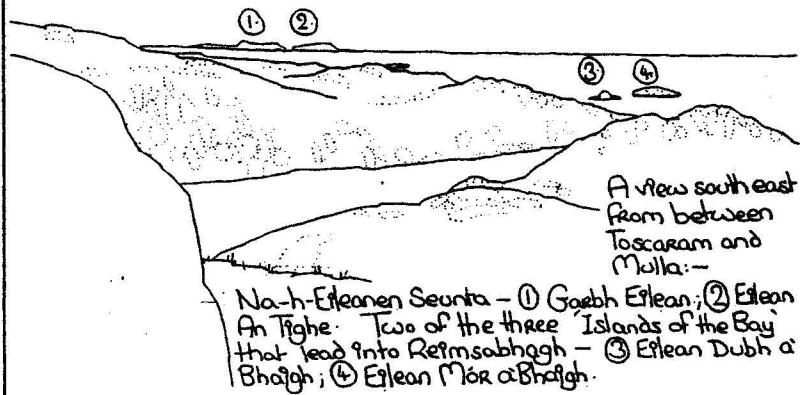


24.



25.

- Leaving the hostel, make your way onto the hillside behind the building, via the gate onto open land, between the hostel and the warden's house, and then turning left to follow the fence up the slope.
- Walking northwest, you will shortly encounter the lochan that provides water for the hostel, and by its western side, a rough footpath, which you should only follow for the length of the lochan, until you reach a junction.
- Here, you should leave the main path, which continues along directly towards Gearraidh Mhurchadh, in favour of the fainter path, that steadily rises away from the junction, to a higher gate through the fence that crosses both paths a little further on. This higher path provides an easier route to Nastain, as Gearraidh Mhurchadh is sheltered to the north by a steep buttress of hillside.
- Above Gearraidh Mhurchadh you will come to a rusty gate, a sure sign that you are still on the path. Soon afterwards you will arrive above Nastain. If you have more luck than I did, you may find the lost course the path must take to go down



- into the settlement, otherwise it's a case of finding the best route down, looking out for a rotting wooden gate that breaches the drystone wall that encloses the settlement.
- Amongst the ruins of Nastain, witness yet another village born out of the injustice of the clearances. The very last man to live here remained stubbornly on alone for some time, frequently visiting Refrigedal for the company of friends and relatives, but in time he became too frail to maintain his home and a storm came along and lifted the roof right off his house, and he was forced then to leave, and he lived the last of his days with relatives in Refrigedal.
  - Carrying on from Nastair, it is advisable to stay by the dry stone wall on the edge of the settlement, thus avoiding a lot of leaping from lazybed to lazybed. After about 1/3 mile, the wall is left behind, then commence in a generally northwestern direction (by this point there isn't alot of strong evidence for a path). The steep slopes of Toscaran gradually ease you closer to the loch until the natural routes to follow are reduced to one, which involves a short climb up to a shallow valley, and leaving the loch behind (5). It is not a long walk from here to Rubh Eilean-an-abach, a fine vantage point (6), or to the Refrigedal road for an alternative return route.
  - Swinging round and continuing to climb, make your way up onto Toscaran. This hill has many little peaks along its length and it merges un-noticably into Mull. Be a little wary of the steep slopes down to Loch Shiaphort, but generally the walk along the tops is a straight-forward freestyle weave amongst the undulations.
  - Once you are above Refrigedal, choose the eastern side of the valley to return along, a fine way to end the walk.