

# Inchberry

- a settlement, a farm, a steading and a family



*Figure 1: Inchberry Mill Pond, Steading and Farm. Unknown date, perhaps 1900. Courtesy of Hilary Clare*

**Roland Spencer-Jones**  
**January 2023**

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# Inchberry – a settlement, a farm, a steading and a family

## Introduction

This report details the results of a sympathetic investigation into Inchberry initiated by the discovery that the walls of a gallery at the back of the farm steading contain a fine collection of graffiti dating back to WWII, if not WWI. The author was invited to review this graffiti in early 2021, and then subsequently widened his interest to include the previous settlements that had been on this land, the development of Inchberry Farm, the construction of an impressive steading, and the remarkable family that farmed here from 1860 to 1935.



Figure 2: Inchberry Steadings, 2021 © Alasdair Cameron

On 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021, the author received the following email from Iain Shepherd, Director of Lovat Highland Estates:

*“Not sure if this is of the slightest bit interest to anyone in NOSAS (North of Scotland Archaeological Society) but there are a number of drawings amidst the graffiti on the walls in Inchberry steading at Lentrán which appear to have WW1 and WW2 references. I checked with (my predecessor) and he could shed no light on why these are there. The steading has been open to the elements and birds until very recently, but we have now shored up the windows as we are letting it to Glen Wyvis Distillery for storage. They will be securing the premises in the next 5 to 6 weeks and access may be difficult thereafter. If you think anyone would like to view these before then please let me know”.*

Lovat Highland Estates manage the steading, as it was formerly part of the extensive Lovat estate. Iain took the author on a site visit three days later when he was shown the graffiti covering the walls of a long low 1<sup>st</sup> floor room at the back of the steading complex.

Also present at that visit were two NOSAS colleagues – Anne MacInnes and Alasdair Cameron – who have subsequently contributed considerably to both recording and understanding the steading. The graffiti covering the walls was photographed, and a measured survey of the whole steading was completed by Anne MacInnes over the next two weeks. The crofting and agricultural background of Alasdair Cameron provided the experience and knowledge required to make sense of the various parts of the steading, as well as the machinery within it.

Another NOSAS colleague, Malcolm Bangor-Jones, provided a digital photocopy of a long newspaper article in the North British Agriculturalist of November 20<sup>th</sup> 1878, which described in some detail features of the farm, the steading, and their history. The new, expensive and, for its time, innovative steading was started by the Master of Lovat laying the first stone in April 1878. The article suggests that seven months later it was completed.

The maps of the Lovat Estate were scanned and digitised in April 2018 by NOSAS and are available to [view online](#) at the National Library of Scotland. These provided a valuable source of information about the development of the buildings at Inchberry from the first map of 1757 to the last estate map of 1859, supplemented by the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey maps, of 1868-72 and 1903 respectively.

The author approached the owner of the original farmhouse next to the steading, Mr Andrew Kent, and was kindly shown round his home. Interestingly, some years previously, someone had spontaneously knocked on his door to say that his family used to farm at Inchberry. Mr Kent had kept the email correspondence following this unexpected visit, which allowed the author to contact the visitor, Bill Wright, and then subsequently his sister, Hilary Clare. Bill and Hilary are the great-grandchildren of the man, James Reid, who so extensively developed the farm after he acquired the lease in 1860. Hilary, a professional genealogist, was able to provide photographs and much of the background information about the Reid family.

This Report aims to bring together this varied information about Inchberry Steading, thus providing a detailed account of a farm and the people who changed it.



## Inchberry – Geography, Landscape and Pre-history

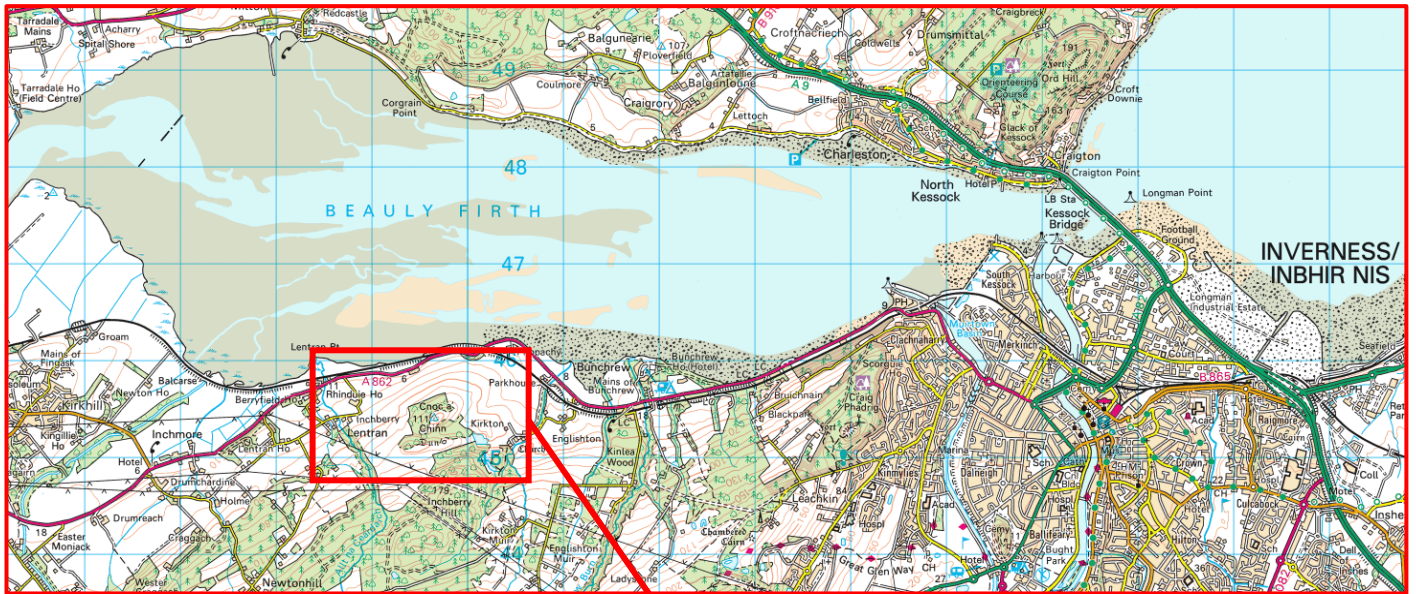
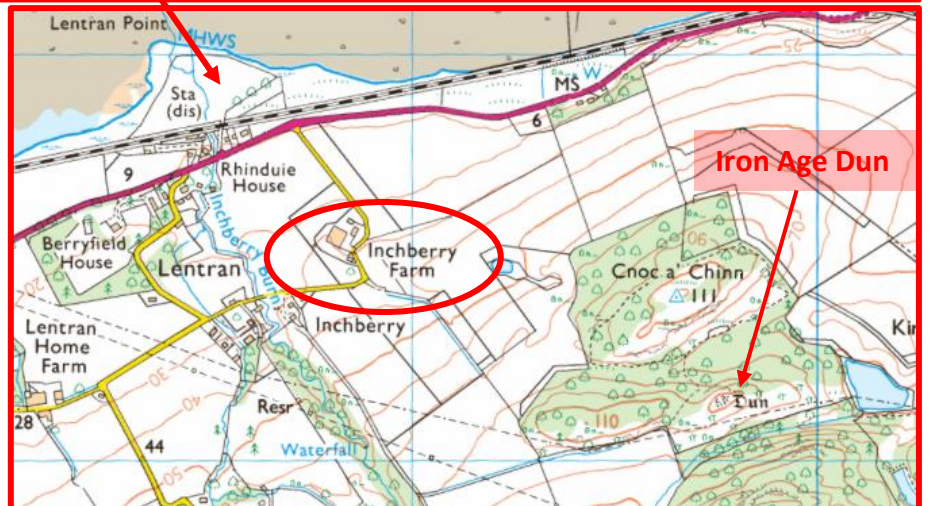


Figure 3: Inchberry on the south side of the Beaully Firth  
© Ordnance Survey



Inchberry lies about 8kms west of the centre of Inverness on north-facing, gently sloping farmland between higher ground to the south and the Beaully Firth to the north. It is one of a number of settlements and farms along the southern shore of the Firth.

Interestingly, the archaeological record shows few pre-historic remains in this area, apart from Cnoc a Chinn, a dun about 1km to the SE. Although duns are often ascribed to the Iron Age, this particular dun is quite denuded and has not been excavated to provide a date. However, it does suggest that there were pre-historic settlements in the area, the remains of which have probably been ploughed out or otherwise removed by subsequent agricultural activity.

## Inchberry – History, including from maps

Barron in 1968<sup>1</sup> gives the Gaelic form of the name as **Innis a' Bharaidh**, adding “tradition stated that it was used as a shinty ground”! Simon Taylor in his survey<sup>2</sup> of the place names of the area concurs. He writes that the name perhaps could be “Haugh or water-meadow of the shinty ground”.

Taylor cites historical references to the name over the last 500 years, with various spellings – 1496 (Inchbary), 1512 (Inchebarry), 1672 (Inchvarie), 1677 (Inshberie). On the Roy map of 1747-55 it is spelt Inchuary.

Although Inchberry is now thought of as close to Lentrán, they were historically separate, with Lentrán being part of the Drumchardine Estate. Perhaps the Inchberry Burn was the boundary.

It is not clear to which estate Inchberry belonged in the early modern period. Certainly by 1745 both it and Lentrán were part of the Lovat Estate, the property of Simon Fraser, 11<sup>th</sup> Lord Lovat, of Castle Dounie, just outside Beaulieu. As such it was surveyed in 1757 by Peter May, employed by the Commissioners of the Forfeited Estates, who were managing the estates forfeited after Culloden. Lord Lovat joined the Jacobite cause and therefore lost his land.



Figure 4: 1757 Map of Inchberry, part of the parish of Kirkhill, surveyed by Peter May © Lovat Highland Estates

It can be seen from this 1757 map<sup>3</sup> that there are two groups of buildings below, ie east of, the Inchberry Burn which here forms the boundary between Inchberry and “the Barony of Lentrán”. On the left of Figure 2 is a group of houses called “Cothouses of Inchberie” which would have been lived in by cottars or mealers. To their right (east), and just left of centre in that Figure, is a group of sixteen buildings on ground later to become Inchberry Farm. This scatter of houses and the surrounding ploughed land suggests that this settlement might have represented a “fermtoun<sup>4</sup>” with surrounding runrig. Figure 3 shows that forty years later the number of buildings at this site had reduced considerably, subsequent maps showing that many of these 1797 buildings were steadings or outhouses. The reduction of buildings shown in these two maps suggests the consolidation of the scattered fermtoun into one substantial farm.

The sequence of maps that follow show the development of the farmhouse and steading buildings over the next century.

<sup>1</sup> Barron, Hugh, 1968 “Notes on the Aird”, *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* 45, (1967-8), p212

<sup>2</sup> Taylor, Simon, 2002. Place-name Survey of the Parishes of Kilmorack, Kiltarlity & Convinth, and Kirkhill, Inverness-shire, Dept of Medieval History, University of St Andrews

<sup>3</sup> Available on National Library of Scotland website: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/188106136>

<sup>4</sup> See, for example: <http://mccowan.org/subsiste.htm>



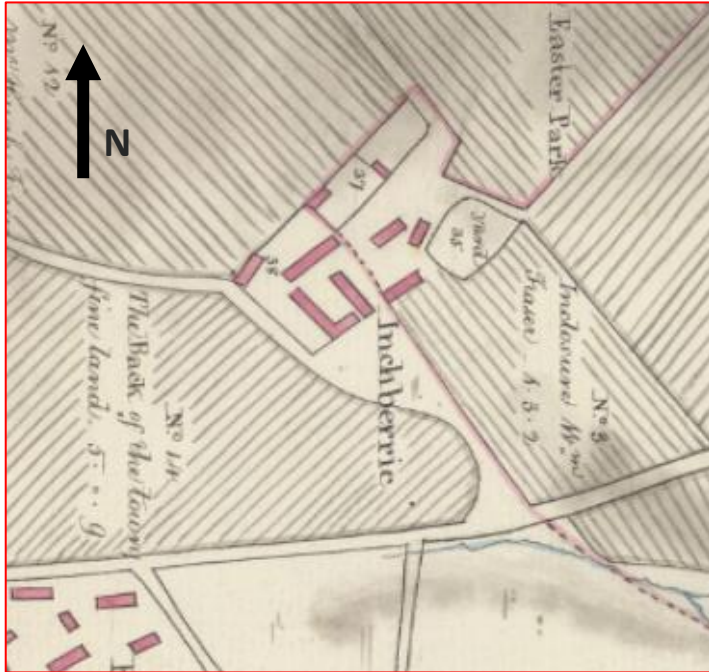


Figure 5: 1797-1800 map of Inchberry, surveyor George Brown © Lovat Highland Estates

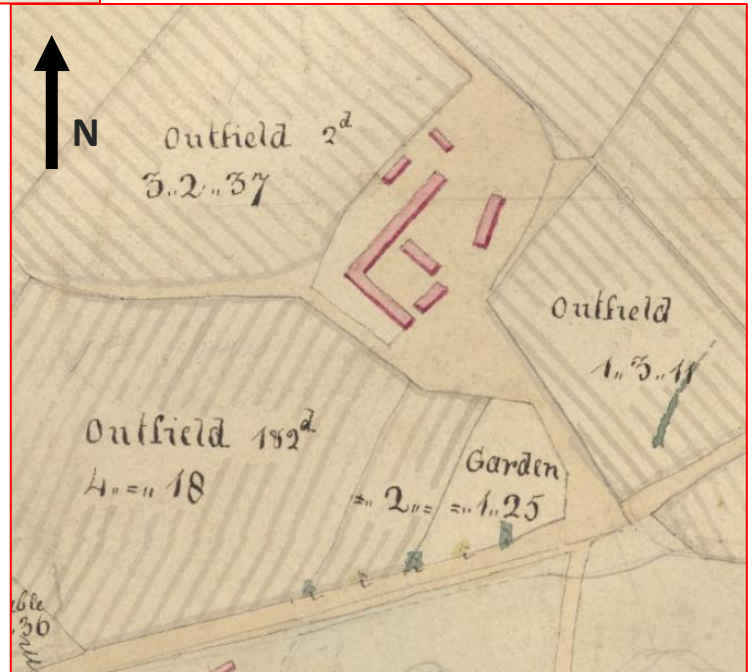


Figure 6: 1824 map of Inchberry, surveyor PJ Robertson © Lovat Highland Estates

Note: the lengthening of one of the northern steading buildings since 1797-1800. The farmhouse is now the eastern building.

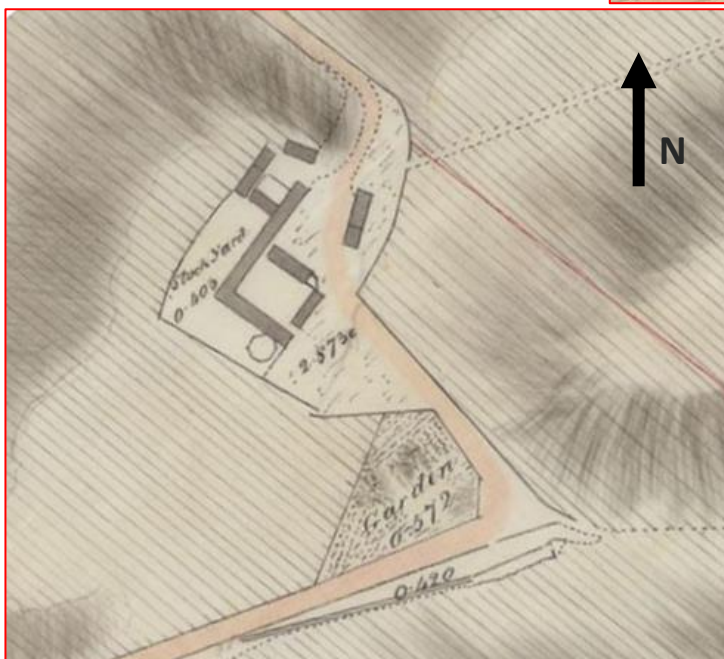


Figure 7: 1859 map of Inchberry, surveyor David Gordon © Lovat Highland Estates

Note: the further development of the steading buildings to the north since 1824. There is now a circular feature at the S of the complex, probably a horse mill.



Figure 8: 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey map of Inchberry. Surveyed 1868-72. © Ordnance Survey

Note: that there is little further development of the steading buildings since 1859. The probable horse mill feature at the S of the complex has gone, replaced by a circular feature at the NW corner. As there is now a pond and sluice to the S of the steading, this feature probably represents a water wheel.

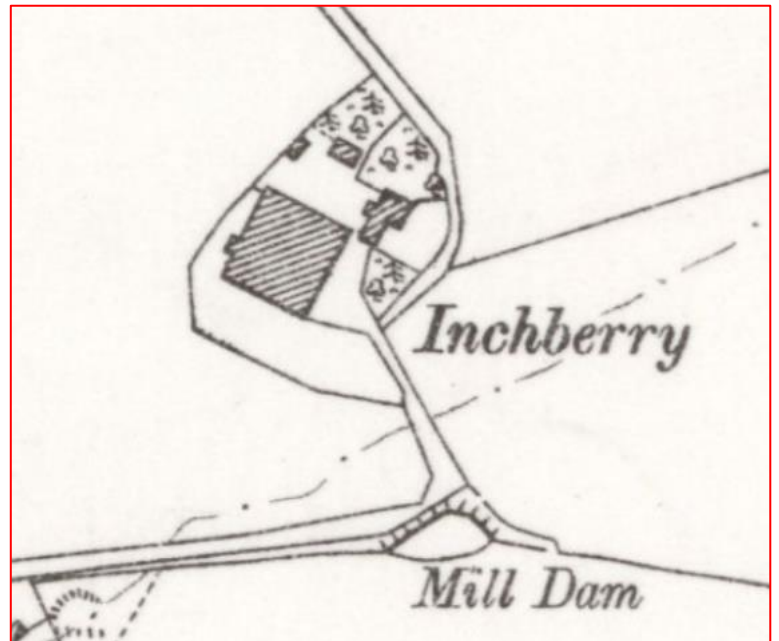


Figure 9: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey map of Inchberry. Surveyed 1903. © Ordnance Survey

Note: the farmhouse at the NE corner of the complex of buildings has been extended. The pattern of previous steading buildings in existence since 1797-1800 has been replaced by an almost square steading building.



Figure 10: The mill pond in 2021, from the south. Inchberry steading is off photo to the right. © NOSAS



# The History of the Steading Development at Inchberry

The development of the steading complex between the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> edition OS maps shows considerable re-development of the site, replacing the previous arrangement of buildings with one large almost square structure. The farmhouse is now a different shape with extensions on both the NW and SE sides. The pond noticed in 1868-72 is now named a mill dam. The driver for this development is hinted at in the stone plaque inscription on the front of the developed steading building:

FOUNDATION STONE  
LAID  
11<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1878  
THE HON SIMON JOSEPH  
MASTER OF LOVAT  
JAMES REID, TENANT

The Master of Lovat, and the name Simon, are the titles traditionally given to the eldest son of the Lovat Frasers. At this time the Master was 6½ years old, and it is reputed that this was his first public engagement. He became 14<sup>th</sup> Lord Lovat in 1887 on the death of his father. If therefore the landowner, the Lovat Frasers, were involved in the ceremony marking the laying of the foundation stone in 1878, who was the tenant, James Reid?

An article in the North British Agriculturist of 20<sup>th</sup> November 1878 provides some background, and a description of the farm before, and then after James Reid became tenant. The scanned pages of the newspaper are reproduced below, with the relevant article boxed in red. A complete transcript of the article is reproduced below them.

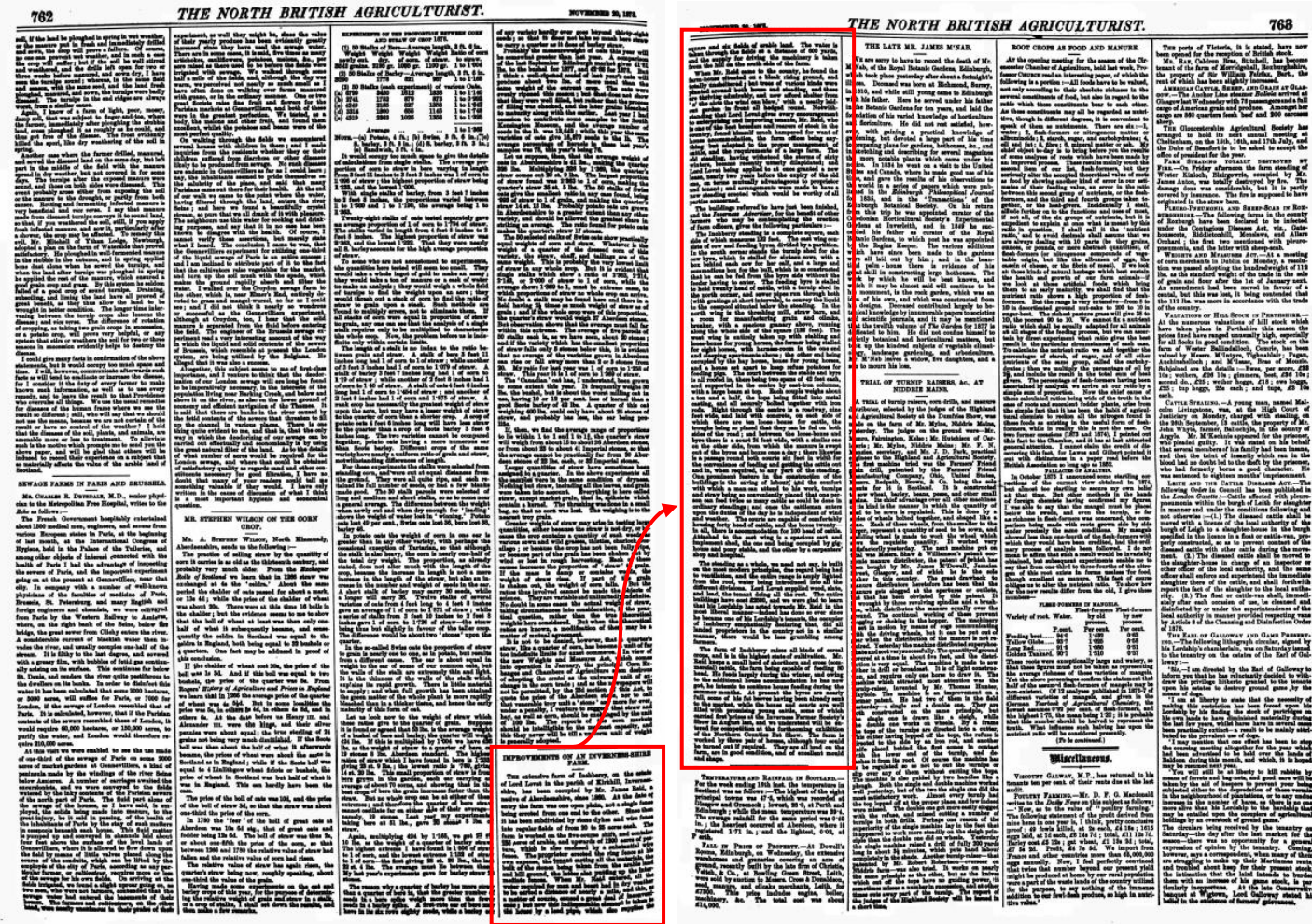


Figure 11: Scanned images of pages 762-3 of the 20<sup>th</sup> November 1878 edition of the North British Agriculturist ©The British Library



## ***“Improvements on an Inverness-shire Farm***

*The extensive farm of Inchberry on the estate of Lord Lovat in the parish of Kirkhill, Inverness-shire has been occupied by Mr. James Reid, a native of Aberdeenshire, since 1860. At the date of entry, the farm was one open plain, not a single fence being erected from one end to the other. Since then, it has been subdivided by stone dykes and wire fences into regular fields of from 20 to 25 acres each. The farm is worked on the five-course shift, and contains 230 acres of arable, and upwards of 1200 acres of pasture, which is also enclosed by a substantial wire fence. The proprietor erected the ring fence at his own expense, the tenant carting all the materials, the bulk of the stones being taken from the arable land and hill ground, the latter also putting up the intermediate fences. When Mr. Reid entered, all the water required for man and beast had, in dry weather, to be carted a distance of nearly a mile and this, as a matter of course, created a great deal of inconvenience. But now this indispensable element is taken to the house by a lead pipe, which supplies the square and six fields of arable land. The water is taken through the fields at a distance of 600 yards, and the supply for driving the machinery is taken from the hill on the south side of the farm.*

*When Mr Reid came to the county, he found the farm-house situated on a bleak rising ground, and initially unsheltered; but trees of various kinds were planted around both house and steading and these are thriving admirably, and now afford shelter from “a’ the airts the wind can blow”, with a neatly laid out garden in front all hedged round. Notwithstanding that Lord Lovat gives every encouragement to enterprising and improving tenants, Mr Reid, who is one of the best breeders and rearers of stock in the country, found himself much hampered for want of house accommodation, the farm offices being anything but adapted to the proper management of cattle, and the requirements of a large farm. The old steading, having withstood the storms of sixty winters, became recently utterly dilapidated, and Lord Lovat being applied to at once granted a new lease, nearly two years before the expiry of the old one, on terms mutually advantageous to proprietor and tenant; and arrangements were made to have a new steading erected which would be worthy of all parties concerned.*

*The buildings referred to have just been finished and the Inverness Advertiser, for the benefit of other farmers who may be contemplating the erection of farm offices, gives the following particulars:--*

*The Inchberry steading is a complete square, each side of which measures 132 feet. The east wing consists of cow and feeding byres, divided by a partition. In the south corner stands the turnip shed for the cow byre, which is stalled for sixteen cows, with a box behind for her calf, and a large and commodious box for the bull, which is constructed that he can be fed from the byre side without the feeder having to enter. The feeding byre is stalled to hold twenty head of cattle, with a turnip shed in the north corner, and sewer pipes run through both (with gratings at short intervals), to convey the liquid to the cesspool situated below the steading. In the north wing is the threshing mill, straw barn, and a room for manufacturing grain and oilcake, breaker, with a spacious granary above, running along the whole side of the square (132ft). The west wing is entirely taken up with stabling and loose-boxes for young horses, the former being stalled for eight horses, with harness room in the one end and sleeping apartments above; the other end being occupied by the hay house, boxes for young horses, and a house set apart to keep refuse potatoes for feeding pigs. The court between the stable and byre is all roofed in, there being two spans of 42 feet each, and supported in the centre by cast-iron columns, with a large beam at top. Each couple weighs about a ton and a half, the tops being fitted into metal casting, and all securely bolted together with iron rods. Right through the centre is a roadway, nine feet wide, and laid with concrete, on each side which there are ten loose-boxes for cattle, the troughs being so placed that they can be fed on both sides of the road; and between the loose-boxes and byre there is a court 24 feet wide, with a similar one on the other side, from which the manure is swept out of the byres and boxes once a day; there likewise is a passage round both courts six feet in width for the convenience of feeding and getting the cattle out and in, when required, to any part of the steading. One prominent feature in the construction of the buildings is the saving of labour, and the comfort with which a man attends to his work, turnips and straw being so conveniently placed that one person can feed twice as many cattle as could be done in ordinary steadings; and once the cattleman enters upon the duties of the day he is independent of wind and weather. The courts are capable of comfortably housing forty head of cattle, and the boxes twenty – in all, there is accommodation for 100 head of cattle. Attached to the east wing is a spacious cart and implement shed, the one end being occupied by gig-house and pony stable, and the other by a carpenters’ shop and hospital.*

*The steading as a whole, we need not say, is built on the most modern principles, due regard being had to ventilation, and the entire ranges is amply lighted from the roof, water being introduced into all the different divisions. Lord Lovat supplied wood, slate, and lead, the tenant doing all the rest. The entire buildings have cost £2500, and we were glad to learn that his Lordship has acted towards Mr Reid in the most liberal manner – indeed has done so ever since became one of his Lordship’s tenants, the occupier of Inchberry emphatically declaring that, did all landed proprietors in the country act in a similar manner, there would be less grumbling among farmers.*

*The farm of Inchberry raises all kinds of cereal crops and is in the highest state of cultivation. Mr Reid keeps a small herd of shorthorn and cross (commercial) cattle, the farm being capable of feeding 80 head. He feeds largely during the winter, and owing to the additional house accommodation he has now got, he intends to continue house feeding during the summer months. At present the byres are nearly full, some of his fat beeves having been already sent to the market, while the boxes and courts are well filled with promising young cattle, some of which carried first prizes at the Inverness Farmer Society’s Show in August last, and we understand will be entered for competition at the forthcoming exhibition of the Northern Counties Fat Show. The farm is worked by three pair of horses, although four could be turned out if required. They are all bred on the farm, are in good condition, and of excellent mould and shape. “*

## A Description of the Steading itself



*Figure 12: The front of the steading, facing SE © Alasdair Cameron*



*Figure 13: The SW aspect  
© Alasdair Cameron*

*Figure 14: The S corner,  
With the stables on the right,  
and north wing on the left  
© Alasdair Cameron*



*Figure 15: The rear NW aspect  
Note the doorways into the lower floor of the north wing.  
The upper windows, now boarded, represent the upper floor  
of N wing, with windows in the sloping roof.  
© Anne MacInnes*



# INCHBERRY STEADINGS

NH 58814 45550

Surveyed: Anne MacInnes 16th March 2021

Drawing: Anne MacInnes, Roland Spencer-Jones

Scale 1:200

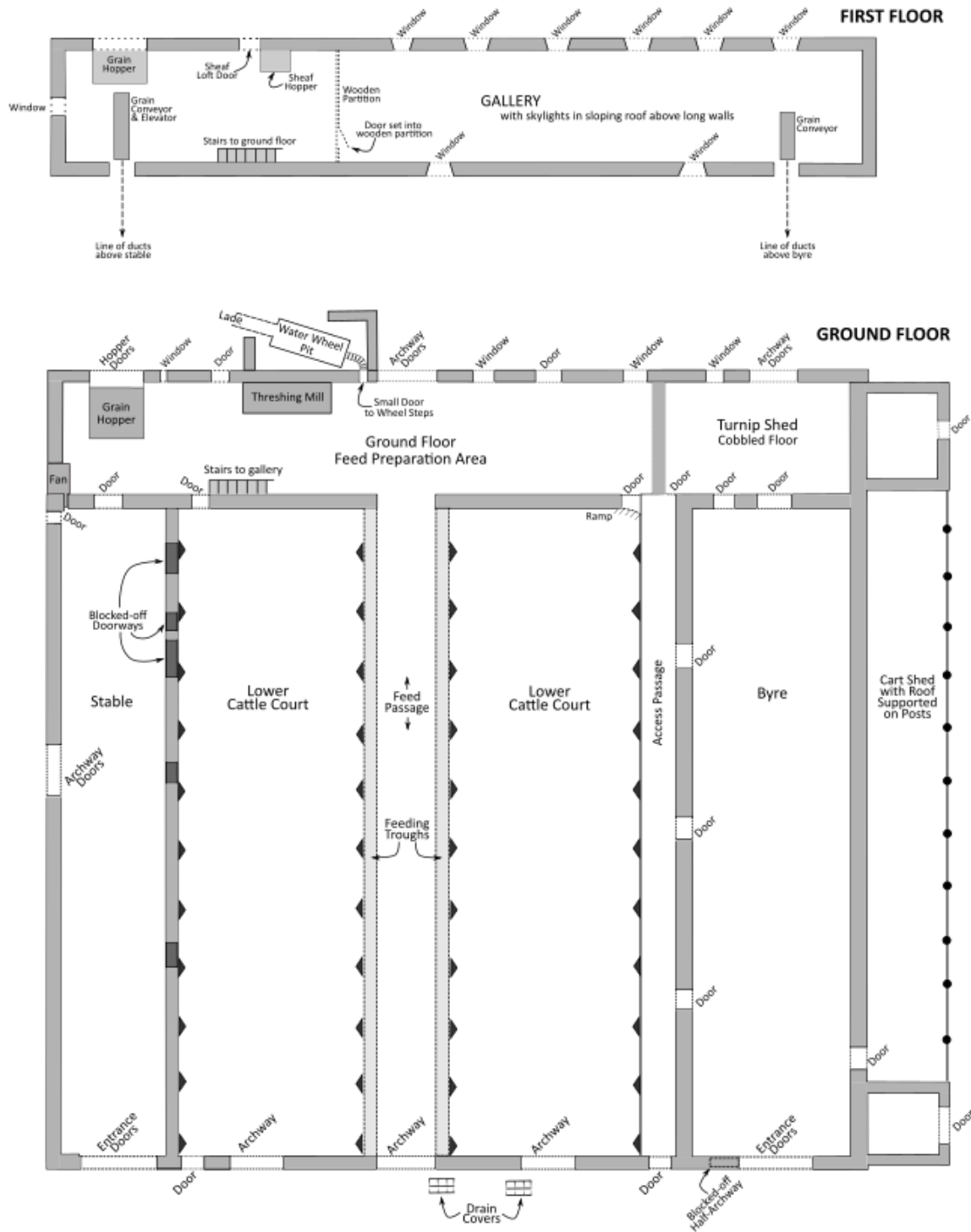
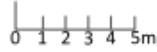


Figure 16: Plan of Inchberry Steading. Surveyed Anne MacInnes. Drawing - Anne MacInnes & R Spencer-Jones

As described in the newspaper article, the steading complex is just over 40m square, orientated with the front façade to the south-east. Although the sides of the square face SE, SW, NW and NE, for convenience the components of the building described in this report follow the convention of the article, ie north, west, south and east, with the front facing “south”.

At the rear (north) is a long two-storey wing. At the eastern end of the ground floor is a cobbled 10m x 5.5m room described in 1878 as the turnip shed. This opens to the outside through an arched doorway, as seen at the left of figure 15.

The rest of the ground floor is a long low room which, from west to east, contains a grain hopper, a door to the outside, stairs to the first floor, a threshing mill, a door to the wheel pit, access to the southern cattle courts and further doors to the outside.

Towards the western end there is still a substantial threshing mill, on which is a brass plate with the words: **Marshall's Patent - Gainsborough - 1887.** [Marshall's](#) was a well-known manufacturer of threshing mills in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. So, dated 1887, this is unlikely to be the exact mill working when the steading opened in 1878.



*Figure 17:  
Looking east from the threshing mill.  
Behind the end wall is the “turnip shed”*



*Figure 18: The threshing machine supported on brick plinths*



*Figure 19: The threshing machine, looking east*

To the east of the threshing machine (and not shown in figures 18 & 19) is a small door in the north wall that leads to the base of the wheel pit, presumably for access for maintenance. The alignment of the pit, and therefore the now-disappeared water-wheel within it, is at an angle to the back wall of the steading. It is probable that the wheel was aligned parallel to the previous pre-1878 building, and it proved too difficult or too expensive to realign this wheel and pit to the current building. Water to the wheel comes from the mill pond to the south, along a lade to the west of the building and then through an underground conduit to the wheel pit.

On the ground floor, a set of wooden stairs leads to the long 40m x 5.5m gallery above it. The plaster surface of the walls of this gallery are written on with graffiti, as described in more detail in the next section.

At the western end of the gallery the doors of a grain hopper are set into the north wall, allowing grain to be emptied from the exterior to a grain pit on the ground floor. 13m from the west end wall the upper floor is divided by a substantial wooden partition with an integral door, leading to the remaining eastern part of the gallery. This gallery is lit by windows on the northern wall and by skylights in the roof. In 1878 this gallery was described as a grain store. It has probably had many different uses since then. The last estate use of this space was to conduct grain from the exterior to long grain conveyors that stretched the length of the western stables and eastern byre, ie those compartments were used as grain stores.





*Figure 20: The top of the granary hopper on the right. Note, the grain conveyor on the left distributing grain to the byre*



*Figure 21: The grain conveyor to the byre, and the west end of the gallery*

South of the north wing stretch three compartments of the steading that run to the front southern façade. The smaller of the three was the stables, with accommodation above it. In the centre are two large cattle courts, well described in the newspaper article. To the east is the byre that could hold up to 20 stalled cattle. The remains of the stalls can still be seen on the east wall. Filling the centre of the steading are two large cattle courts, each 34m x 10m, with a raised feeding passageway between them.



*Figure 22: The stables, looking S*



*Figure 23: The cattle byre, looking S © Alasdair Cameron*



*Figure 24: The western cattle court, looking S  
Note the raised passageway on the left to allow access along the length of the court.*



*Figure 25: The roof of the cattle court.  
Note, in the 1878 newspaper article each couple was estimated to weigh "a ton and a half".*



The large interior space of the two cattle courts with passageway access between was roofed with large beams fitting onto central iron posts, each couple thought to weigh “a ton and a half” according to the 1878 newspaper article. The roof tiles are designed with spaces between them to allow ventilation.

The building shows some evidence of modification over the century and a half since it was constructed, although the majority of the building remains unmodified. Its various functions can still be worked out.

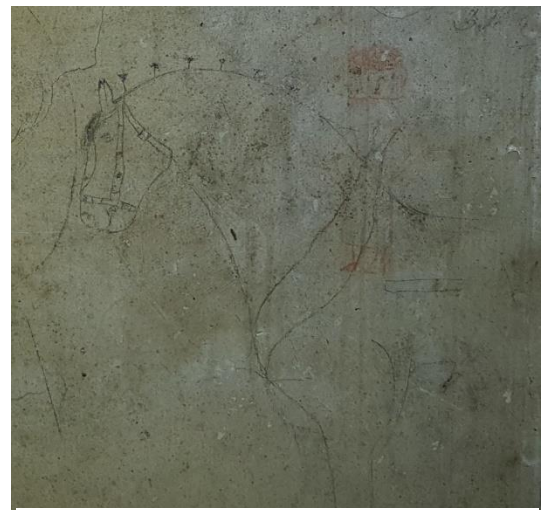
## The Gallery Graffiti

It was the graffiti in the gallery that first started the author’s interest in the building. Almost the whole of the upright plastered walls of the gallery contain graffiti of various sorts. Some of the plaster has fallen away, but the plaster that remains contains:

- Pictures
- Writing, comments, signatures, etc
- Tallies, ie used for counting and recording.
- Examples of these will be shown below.



*Figure 26: Possibly a picture of the WWI German Kaiser (not Kasier!) on the east gable wall  
© Lovat Highland Estates*



*Figure 27: One of the many pictures of horses around the gallery.*

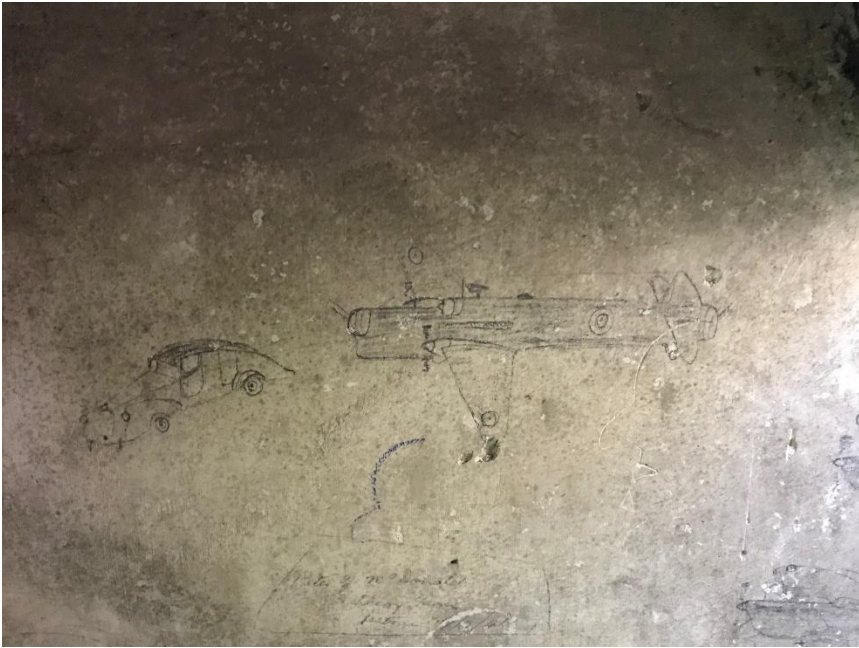
Many of the drawn pictures are of WWII aeroplanes. Did the steading accommodate, or was it used by, members of [RAF Maintenance Unit No79](#) who were based at nearby Lentrann House? This Unit was one of several RAF Units scattered around the Beaulie Firth. It was formed in July 1941 and disbanded in September 1945. Perhaps the large gallery would have made good sleeping and living accommodation....

How did the Women’s Land Army (see figs 33 & 34) also find themselves at the steading? Again, was it living accommodation? Or were they just working at the farm, using the gallery?

The pictures fall into several categories. There are numerous plane and military themes. Life on the farm is represented by horse and other animal pictures. There are many simple buildings, although none that quite look like Inchberry Farm. Some are just doodles.

A sample of the graffiti from the walls follows on the next two pages. Photographs of *all* the graffiti on the four walls of the gallery can be found in [this One Drive folder](#).

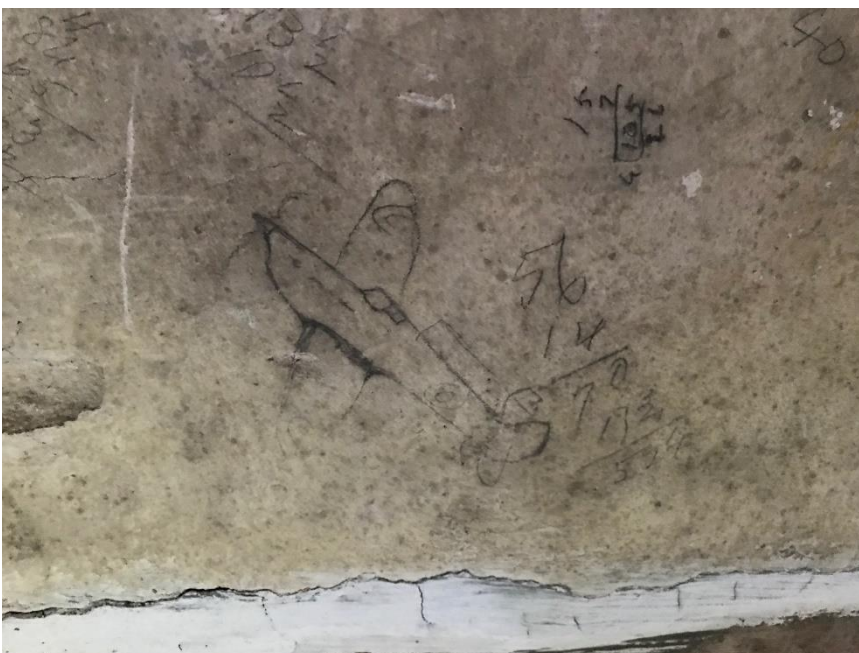




**Figure 28: A car and a Wellington bomber, at the western end of the north wall. Many of the pictures drawn were of planes. © Lovat Highland Estates**



**Figure 29: A car, a plane, a tractor and an unknown object, on the north wall. © Lovat Highland Estates**



**Figure 30: A spitfire .... and some sums, on the north wall. © Lovat Highland Estates**







## The Reid Family

*It is instructive to consider who the man was that so energised and modified the farm at Inchberry. Where did he come from and what skills did he bring with him? The information and the photos that follow come from James Reid's grand-daughter, Hilary Clare, who is a professional genealogist, and has had an interest in the family's genealogy and history for many years.*

**James Reid** was the third and youngest (surviving) son of Robert Reid of the farm of Upper Balfour, Tullynessle & Forbes, Aberdeenshire, being born 26 January 1831. Robert died on 30 December 1860 after a long illness. Before that, James' eldest brother had gone to farm at Clatt with £200 given from his father. It was therefore the second son, William, who farmed Upper Balfour, taking over legal ownership from his father in 1859, a year before the latter's death.



*Figure 35: Said to be James and Isobel at the time of their wedding Courtesy Hilary Clare*

James took up the lease of the farm at Inchberry in 1860. His mother sent him from the family home with his sister Helen, the family bible, and a letter dated 14 October 1860. His brother William gave him £300.

James married Isobel Thomson Walker (died 7 April 1916) on 19 November 1863 at Fyrish, Alness, the location of his wife's family farm. Evidently James had done well enough in three years at Inchberry to make marriage possible. His sister Helen married two days later (sic) on 21 November 1863, at Inchberry, to George Green of Colliehill (originally from Kennethmont).

James Reid was a hard-working, innovative, and successful farmer, willing to try new ideas and with the energy to carry them out. However in the summer of 1882 he caught scarlet fever, allegedly from swimming in the Beaully Firth in hot weather, and died at Inchberry on 16<sup>th</sup> July. He was only 51 at the time of his death. His eldest child was not yet eighteen, the youngest only five. Life was a struggle for his widow, Isobella, but she managed to hang on and to educate her eldest and youngest sons well. Jim's epilepsy seems to have prevented him from doing anything except farm Inchberry and it was his illness and death in 1901 which brought his younger brother, William, home from a promising career in the ministry to run the farm for his mother and sisters.



*Figure 36: Isobel Reid (nee Walker) in mourning, with her children (except Robert). The man to her left is likely to be her brother, Mr William Walker, with his two children between them. Courtesy Hilary Clare*

**James and Isobel's six children** were born in due order in the following thirteen years:

- (1) **Anna Bella**, born 17 Dec. 1864, died Inverness 10 Sept 1942, unmarried.
- (2) **Elizabeth Helen or Ellen**, always known as **Leila**, born 19 July 1866. She became a nurse but contracted tuberculosis and died on 13 December 1898.
- (3) **Robert John**, born 22 Dec. 1868. He became a civil engineer, went out to Brazil, married a Portuguese widow and had six children. He died in 1937.
- (4) **James Alexander (Jim)**, born 18 June 1871, epileptic from childhood, contracted tuberculosis (perhaps from Leila) and died 17 May 1901.
- (5) **William Walker**, born 30 April 1873, died 25 February 1946, see below.
- (6) **Maria Margaret (Marie)**, born 18 September 1876, died 17 June 1954.

She married John Duncan on 15 July 1914. He was born at Skene on 6 April 1873, died 12<sup>th</sup> Jan 1947.

Although John Duncan was a bank accountant, he and Marie took over the Inchberry farm. They achieved mixed results, although in the circumstances of the 1920s and 1930s this may not have been altogether surprising. Eventually, however, the farm had to be given up.

They had one son, **John Roy Bentinck Duncan**, born 2 January 1916, and died 8 March 1973. He married twice, firstly to Dorothy (divorced), and then to Jacqueline, by whom he had three daughters.

**William Walker Reid**, the youngest of the Inchberry sons, was apparently academically brilliant. Attendance at Raining's School, Inverness was followed by a year (1889-90) at Aberdeen Grammar School where, aged 16, he entered the Classical III. He went on to Aberdeen University and took his M.A. in 1894. With a haul of academic prizes, he went off to the Near East and spent months in Athens, the Holy Land and Egypt. On his return he proceeded to Edinburgh University, taking his B.D. in 1898 and later studying at Oxford for a term, probably 1899.

Ordination to the ministry followed, and he became assistant at St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh – the prelude, it might have been confidently expected, to a high-flying career. But at this point family tragedy struck. Leila died on 13 December 1898, and Jim on 17 May 1901. Robert was by this time in Brazil, so there was no one else left to farm Inchberry, and Will had to give up his assistantship and go home, perhaps even before Jim's death. It may be asked why, when his sister Marie apparently took over in 1909, aged 33, she couldn't have done it nine years earlier, but perhaps she was simply considered too young. At all events, Will was committed to Inchberry, with the support of his mother and two remaining sisters. He seems to have been able to do some supply work, and one little book survives marked 'Inchberry Sunday School, January 15 - 1901', which suggests he was able to do some work with children.

In 1909 Marie was able to take over the farm and he was able at last to return to the ministry. He became *locum tenens* of the North Parish Church in Dunfermline before, in 1910, being appointed to Mannofield Parish Church, Aberdeen. The following year he became a member of Aberdeen School Board, which was how he met his future wife. He married Mary Scott of Stonehaven in Mannofield on 12 October 1912. She was born on 2 April 1886 and died in Dumbarton on 28 November 1937, after years of ill-health.

William became Minister of the Old Parish Church of Dumbarton from 1915 to 1945 and died in Aberdeen on 25 February 1946. He and Mary had three children:

1. **Robert Scott**, born 3 March 1914
2. **(William) Alan Walker**, born 16 February 1917
3. **Marie Helen Isobel**, born 10 August 1919. Marie Helen Isobel, MB, ChB, 1942 (University of Glasgow). She became a General Practitioner in Aberdeen and later in Stamford. She married 30 April 1947 the **Rev. Edgar Francis Wright** (born 9 May 1914, died 13 February 1987), died 13 November 2009, and had two children:
  - a. **Hilary Mary**, born 1 January 1948, married 1985 John Clare (born 1946) and has a daughter.
  - b. **William Francis (Bill)**, born 4 August 1950, married 1971 Ruth Mary Douglas and has four children.



**William's own account** of the farm and steading at Inchberry is revealed in a paper found in the 2<sup>nd</sup> volume of his journal (30 Oct.1933 to 21 Jan.1934)

*"...my earliest recollection is of the day 18th Sept 1876 when Marie was born. But do I remember a day three years & four months after my own birth (on 30 April 1873)? Or is it that I heard afterwards of things that happened that day? Then I see myself going down the road leading from the farmhouse at Inchberry on my way to school. I could have been only five, for the new steading was begun to be built in April 1878 and I remember the day the foundation stone was laid by the Master of Lovat, the Lord Lovat who died in 1933 and whose life by his brother-in-law Lindley has just been published (1935). Simon Joseph, the*

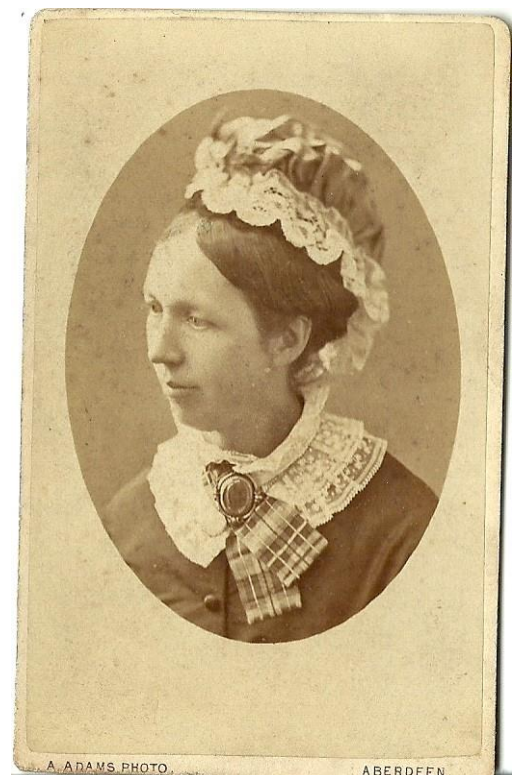


**Figure 37: Inchberry Farmhouse, from the S, about 1900**  
Courtesy Hilary Clare

*Master of Lovat<sup>5</sup> was seven years of age at the time he thus began his public life. Jim & Robert and me, two years younger and of less account, played together running away from the [?exalted] company to see the mill-dam with its attractive risks. We needed to be searched for when the great moment of laying the foundation stone arrived. I remember it was a Friday and a salmon had been sent along from Beaufort Castle to be cooked for the lunch afterwards in the dining-room as the Lovats are Roman Catholics.*

*My father died in 1882, a couple of months after I reached the age of nine. He and Lord Lovat were both Liberals in politics & there was complete understanding between them - so much so that a steading was built out of all proportion to the size of the farm. The landlord paid for the material – 100 tons of slates for example - & the tenant paid for carting in the enormous quantity of stones required & paying for the labour with [?little] short of £2000. This, on a lease of 19 years without any provision for compensation in the event of the tenant's having to leave the farm!*

*My mother often told me afterwards, when she was left alone to shoulder the responsibility of running the farm, that she always protested against the outlay of money on such a white elephant of a building, as she called it. Indeed, she had a presentiment that something would happen. She was brought up on a farm, had splendid knowledge of the practical business of farming life, especially the care and cure of cattle & horses, and yet she never liked the job, and her heart was never much in Inchberry. She would have left it at any time without a tear. Her funeral took place two years after Anna and she had gone to live in Inverness 38 years – two leases – to a day, from the date of the foundation stone being laid. She had to carry on all that time with the building which she regarded as so unsuitable and in a farm whose bad points and poverty were ever present to her mind, while the man who had it built and knew exactly the uses he was to put it to and the capacity of the farm to produce crops making it worthwhile, died after a few days of illness within five years of his conceiving and planning its execution."*



**Figure 38: Isobel Reid as a young woman, possibly around the time of her marriage.**  
Courtesy Hilary Clare

<sup>5</sup> Simon Joseph Fraser, 14<sup>th</sup> Lord Lovat. Born 25 November 1871, died 1933.  
*Inchberry Farm & Steading*

## An Inchberry Timeline

- 1803 – reputedly, the present house (Inchberry Farmhouse) was built<sup>6</sup>
- 1841 – Census: James Fraser, farmer
- 1860 – “Midsummer”, maybe October, James Reid takes up the 19-year lease at Inchberry<sup>7</sup>. Presumably James Fraser’s 19-year lease was expired. It is not known why he did not renew.
- 1863 – November 19<sup>th</sup> – James marries Isobel Walker of Fyrish, who now lives at Inchberry as Mrs Reid
- 1878 – April 11<sup>th</sup> – first stone laid by Simon Fraser, Master of Lovat, aged 7 years, to build the new steading
- 1882 – July 16<sup>th</sup> – James Reid died. His wife Isabella assumed the lease.
- 1900-01 – William Reid assumes the tenancy of the farm, following the death of his sister Leila 1898, and brother Jim in 1901
- 1909 – Marie Reid, aged 33, unmarried, takes over the tenancy.
- 1914 – Marie marries John Duncan, who then assumes the tenancy.
- 1916 – Isobel & Annie left Inchberry to live in Inverness
- 1935 – Whitsun - John & Marie Duncan leave Inchberry Farm
- 1930’s – J Stewart was said to have had the tenancy of Inchberry during and after WWII. It is not known when he started at Inchberry, but he could have followed the Duncans.
- ?1950’s – Jean Macgillivray took the lease after J Stewart, but lived at Phopachy House, farming Phopachy, Inchberry and Kirkton.
- Unknown date – Inchberry Farmhouse, not needed by Jean Macgillivray, was let separately to a Fraser family of retired sisters and brother
- Unknown date – the house was tenanted by Walter Clarke, who converted it into a flat and house, and used it for B&B.
- 1970’s – ownership of the farm and land passed from Simon Fraser, 15<sup>th</sup> Lord Lovat, to his youngest son, Andrew.
- 1994 – March 16<sup>th</sup> – Andrew Fraser died on safari in Africa
- 1996 – Executors/widow of Andrew Fraser sold the **house**, probably to Don Fraser
- 1997 - Executors/widow of Andrew Fraser sold the **land and steading** to Kim Fraser, 15<sup>th</sup> Lord Lovat’s fourth child and second son. Kim, who died in 2020, habited Kirkton House, the farm and steading being legally held by Kirkton Farms Ltd.
- Early 2000’s, probably – Don Fraser sold house to Mr Andrew Kent, surgeon at Raigmore Hospital.
- 2021 – building work starts to renovate the steading complex in preparation for its conversion to a whisky store leased by Glen Wyvis Distillery in Dingwall

*Figure 39: The grave marker for James Reid in Wardlaw Mausoleum burial ground in Kirkhill.*



<sup>6</sup> Kirkhill Volume 2, Kilmorack Heritage Association, 2008, p235

<sup>7</sup> Hilary Clare, Genealogist, granddaughter of James Reid, contributed the Reid family history  
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