

Transcript of 2819

Ardgay 31 Aug
1876

Alex Ross "Greasich" Relonie, examined previously by Mr McTavish at Bonar.

I have today walked along the shore from the Pier downwards. I see a wonderful change on the island since I used to fish at Bonar 16 years ago, it is not only shorter but considerably narrower and the hollow (channel) between the mainland and the island is a very great deal broader now, at low tides then it would be almost dry. It was open at both ends since I remember which is over forty years; I left the Bonar fishings in 1860 and about that time the weir was to be begun in consequence of the water breaking or threatening to break out to the Ross-shire side into the bay of Ardgay. I never walked over the ground since 1860 until today. I see there is a very strong body of water now flowing from the main channel at the end of the weir into Ardgay bay which was not the case there in my day. The only break off from the main channel to the Ross-shire side then was a run lower down than this last I speak of, & which went in the direction of the Kincardine Church & Schoolhouse, and I well remember coming round by Kincardine up that channel into the main channel as the tide began to flow, with the Hogarth boat from Newton point to Invershin, this boat would carry 20 tons weight.

I remember John McPherson putting up a sort of embankment on the Skibo side from the shore to the black island on that side opposite the Bonar Shot, at that time there was a channel of water running down close to the shore on the Skibo side; a few years before I left Bonar fishings I remember of Mr Dempster's men working night and day (as there was a talk they were to be interdicted) lengthening, heightening and extending farther out this said embankment into the water, and we fishermen often remarked among ourselves at the time it would ultimately be the means of throwing more of the water to the Ross-shire side.

Ardgay 1 Sept
1876

Finlay Calder Tulloch previously examined by Mr MacTavish at Bonar.

I have this day again walked down from the Pier to the end of the weir, the stream of water which runs from the end of the weir into the bay of Ardgay was not in existence when I used to fish at Bonar, there was no stream breaking off from the Main Channel to the Ross-shire side at that time except a small stream a good distance farther down say about where the beacon stands on the Ross-shire side and it ran in the direction of Kincardine Church, the sand & gravel beach was quite unbroken then, and the island was much longer at the South end than what it is now and fully fifty yards nearer the Pier at the north end than now. I have known the boys from Kincardine School to walk dry shod all the way to the island or bech thereabout.

William Henry residing at Pitcalnie Nigg, I am 73 years of age Mr Williamson late Factor for Balnagown sent me to Ardgay about 28 or 29 years ago to superintend the building of the Icehouse at Ardgay and keep the fishing accounts under Alexander Urquhart the manager, I was there for 18 months. During my stay there the Duke of Sutherland's people from Invershin came down the first day of the fishing in order to fish the Balnagown Carron foot shot (west of Bonar Bridge). I was that day in Tain for money to pay the workmen. Mr Williamson happened to be at Ardgay and on hearing of this he ordered the Invershin Boat to be taken up to Ardgay, which was done while the crew were at the other side for refreshments and carried up to Ardgay. I saw it in the late Mr William Ross's stackyard on my return. Mr Williamson also ordered the fishing bothy to be pulled down before the Invershin people might attempt to shelter there.

I visited the whole place today. I was never there since I left 27 years ago and to me from the Bridge both above and below, the aspect of the place is so thoroughly changed unless I knew it was the place I would scarcely know it.

I see the north end of the island is considerably farther off from the Pier. I wd. say fully fifty yards – the island itself is worn away on both sides, and the channel between the mainland and the island is I consider six times as broad as it was then, the island at the south end is very much shorter, and what I saw green and one long unbroken sand and gravely beach is now cut up and broken, and partly under water. There was never a drop of water then breaking out from the Main Channel at ebb tide at the place where it now does nor where it has been breaking out since. I left into the bay of Ardgay, and had it not been for the means used to protect (and there is yet a great deal more to be done, before matters are restored to what they were in my day) the beach all the water I think wd. be to the Ross-shire side before now there was not a single break off in any part to the Ross-shire side except a good bit lower down near about where the beacon for guiding ships stands, this was a very shallow stream at ebb tide and it went south in the direction of Kincardine Church.