

<b>TITLE</b> ST. COLUMBA'S CHURCH, SKEABOST ISLAND		<b>DISTRICT</b> SKYE & LOCHALSH
<b>MAP REF.</b> 25NG/418485	<b>PARISH</b> SNIZORT	<b>PHOTOGRAPHER</b> NOV. 1974

**NOTES**

Skeabost Island is occupied by a churchyard containing the ruins of two churches, one of comparatively late date, and the other a Teampull, smaller and much earlier.

Both Muir and MacGibbon and Ross, however, describe a "group of five or six chapels, the shell of two pretty entire, the others nearly reduced to the ground." The latter continues "fragments of an enclosing wall or rampart can be traced", and infers that it was probably a Celtic monastic establishment. The Old Statistical Account of Scotland (1795) supports this, saying it was formerly "a habitation" of monks and priests" and was in all probability the "metropolitan church of the whole island of Skye."

The Teampull is dedicated to St. Columba. In 1501, "SÈHIR NICOL BÈRCHALL" was "chappellane of the parsonage of Sanct Colmez Kirk in Snæsford in Trotternish, in the lordship of the Islis, togidder with the annexis and vicariis thairof, that is to say Kilmolowok and Kilmory in Waternes." (J.D. Simpson).

The vicarage of Snizort and Raasay was received in 1526 by Sir Donald Moris. In 1561 the parsonage of Snizort pertained to the Bishop of the Isles.

The Teampull is in a fairly good state of preservation, the South wall being somewhat broken down. It is orientated almost due E-W and measures 15ft. 10 ins. in length and 9ft. 4 ins. in breadth internally, the wall of stone and lime being 2ft. 8 ins. thick. The North wall which is complete, stands 7 ft. high; the gables are about 11 ft. Both gables are intaken 5 ins. at the wall-head, indicating an early medieval not an old Celtic structure. The door is at the N.W. corner of the building.

The church which stands almost E-W and measures externally about 79 ft. in length and 26ft. 9 ins. in breadth, is now represented by grass-grown mounds. It has been encroached upon by walled private burial grounds, and the only piece of building visible is on the N side near the E end. It would seem to have had a chancel.

This site is associated with a Pictish Symbol Stone (Clach Ard) and is in all probability not to be assigned to St. Columba whose genuine foundations always bore the name Columkille (J.D. Simpson).

A field investigator C.F. Wardale visited the site on 11.4.61 and reports that "deterioration of the fabric has taken place the RCAHM Report, and the SW corner is in a very unstable condition, and the whole of the churchyard is in a neglected state.

Scheduled.

Owing to the river being in flood it was impossible to land on the island.

**REFERENCES**

OSAM 1929 pp 141-2 No. 215

The Historical St. Columba