

Written surveys of Tiree : summary details

- 1737 Report on Tiree, Mull and Morvern by Duncan Forbes of Culloden (1685-1747), 1737 (NRAS 6 PV65/1– missing, but a transcript has been published on Keith Dash’s Tiree Genealogy website: <http://www.keithdash.net/History/Billy/AppendixC.pdf>).
Mainly relating to the setting of tacks and collecting the rents.
- 1748 Description of the Island of Tiree, by Lachlan McLean, 1748 (NRAS 6 PV65/11).
- 1748/9 State of the farms at Tiree, 1748-9 (NRAS 6 PV65/10). Seven pages.
Two descriptive tables, one showing a List of Farms to be let in tack and the other showing a List of Farms already set in tack. With information on the recent history of each farm, including the tenants, improvements (made or proposed), rents (historic, current and proposed), extent (historic mail lands and modern equivalents) ... see Ronnie’s notes ...
- 1762 Valuation of Tiree, 1762 (bundle 1809).
- c1764 Observations on Tiree by Dr John Walker (1731-1803), c1764 (NRAS 6 PV65/33). Twenty-three pages.
Comprehensive account, given under the following headings: Situation (various spellings of Tiree - Tirey, Tireiy, Teree), Extent, Hills, Harbour, Tides, Springs, Sea, Soil, Rieve [The Reef], Climate, Crops, Inhabitants, Longevity (an old woman of 103 years and several men in their nineties), Diseases, Antiquities, Agriculture, Inclosures, Cattle, Grain, Change of Seed, Hay, Manures, Turnips, Price of Commodities, Price of Labour, Exports and Imports, Manufacture (the origin of the rental term ‘towel money’ from a linen cloth called ‘towelling’ produced here over 150 years ago), Fishery, Hemp, Natural Productions: Marble, Copper, Porphyry (Egyptian Porphyry, very different and much more beautiful than any other examples he has seen in Britain).
- 1768/9 Written survey of the Island of Tiree, by James Turnbull, 1768/9 (Plan Volume 18).
Accompanies Turnbull’s plan of the same date. Contains a detailed description of the island, with an analysis of the land use on each township, together with comments on the people, their farming practices, culture and traditions. Drafts or copies of parts of the written survey, including references to Turnbull’s survey of Coll, are described in NRAS 6 PV65/46-48.
- 1769 Observations by Major Campbell & Mr John Burrell with regard to the Island if Tirry, [made] at the Abbey of Holyroodhouse, 7 December 1769 (NRAS 6 PV65/50). Six pages.

Apparently relating to the forthcoming re-setting of the island and focusing mainly upon enclosure, sub-division, amalgamation and the need for new houses and steadings. Includes detailed comments on the farms of Therehousgar etc., Balliewiline, Balepheterish, Kenovy, Heylipol, Crossapolland Mill, Balephuill and Balemertane, Scarnish, and Gott.

1771 Remarks on the island of Tiree, attributed to Alexander Campbell, Chairman of Kintyre, 1771 (NRAS 6 PV65/54). Twenty-four pages.

Detailed descriptions with suggestions for improvements, given under the following headings: The island over-peopled; the propriety of establishing a fishing village in Tirii; plan of executing the design of building a village in Tirii; method of tillage and cultivation; runrig abusive; too many horses and servants employd in plowing and other works of a farm; Tirii a fit country for wheel carriage; division of large runrig farms into smaller ones proper; the small tenants occupy too little land, remedy proposed, by setting the third of the island to gentlemen farmers from Mull and Morvern and the other two thirds to small tenants; common pastures prejudicial, they should be divided on the adjacent farms; sand blowing of the Reeff and encroachment on it should be prevented; Tirii over-stocked with sheep which causes sand blowing; cutting bent encourages sand blowing; flax and hemp little cultivated in Tirii should be encouraged; pulling barley from the roots hurtfull; milns of Tirii on a bad footing, a new miln necessary, a wind miln might be of use; greddan a most barbarous custom; ministers glebe too large; distilling should be discouraged in the most effectual manner; a method of collecting rents on Tirii without much arrears; fresh water lochs easily drained; roads and landing places should be more attended to in Tirii; Factors should be restricted from demanding services as a duty ?prestabel to them by the tenants.

1771 Letter from Joseph Wight to the 5th Duke, Cowsland, 2 January 1771, containing detailed observations on Tiree (bundle 942). Four pages.

A scathing account of the island and its management, criticising the Duke's 'doers' for allowing so much of the island to remain in commontie [common grazing] and his tenants for laziness and poor husbandry 'the summer is spent in idleness, except a few peats for their winter fire, the winter in threshing their fifth ... and drinking whiskie.' 'The women ... are kept running to and from [The Reef] ... 'the prettiest plain my eyes ever beheld' ... milking these few cattle twice a day and won't bring as much back both times, as is worth once going ...'

1776 List of inhabitants in the island of Tiree ... 1776 (NRAS 6 PV65/58). Ninety pages.

- List of the names and ages of every person on Tiree, arranged by township and household, distinguishing between tenants, sub-tenants ('or maillers') and cotters. Also, includes comments on stock and the character of each householder: Total population is 1997 persons.
- 1782 Description of farms in Tiree, 1782 (NRAS 6 PV65/61). One page.
Descriptive table showing the number of tenants in each township, the rents (current, new, schemed and accepted), the extent of each township and land uses therein (arable, meadow, pasture, etc.). The old extent of each township is also given, in mail lands.
- 1788 Observations on Tiree by the Minister McColl, written at Ardincaple, 4 July 1788 (NRAS 6 PV65/62). Thirty-seven pages.
Detailed observations and suggestions for improvements, given under the following headings: Inclosures, Milns, Horses Carts and Roads, Pease, Grass Seeds, Turnips, etc., Sheep, Fishing, Manufactures and Harbours, Improvements of Lands, Potatoes, Bridge, Draining Lakes, Distilling etc., Schools.
- 1790 Report of Mr Raspe to the Argyll Marble Company at Edinburgh, regarding the intended establishments on Icolmkill and Tiree, 1790 (NRAS 6 PV65/64).
German polymath, Rudolph Erich Raspe (1736-94), author of *Baron Munchausen*, undertook a mineralogical survey of the Duke of Argyll's estates in 1789, visiting quarries, mines, and minerals in Glen Aray, St Catherine's, Morvern, Mull, Iona and Tiree. In addition to the Report described above, he produced three reports in the form of letters, which include a plan and detailed description of the Marble Quarries on Tiree, commenting on how the stone should be worked, and a description of the island's clay, referring to its use in the making of 'cruggans' (bundles 172 and 615).
- 1792 List of inhabitants of Tiree, October 1792 (NRAS 6 PV65/66). Forty-seven pages.
List of the names and ages of every person on Tiree, arranged by township and household. A summary table summarises the population and ages of each township. Total population is 2464. Also notes that total in 1779 (this is the date of the Duke of Argyll's census) was 1881, an increase of 583.
- 1808 Description of Tiree from a book published in 1808 (NRAS 6 PV65/87).
Seven hand-written pages, mainly on natural history and antiquities.
- 1809-10 James Malcolm, land agent's 'Miscellaneous Scotch Journey' to report on the 6th Duke's estates, 1809-10 (bundle 1549 – missing).