
3 The Archaeology of Arisaig: Early Investigations

This beautiful but remote part of the west coast of Scotland has received little attention from archaeologists and antiquarians in the past. In part this must reflect an absence of major sites that might attract the attention of distant researchers: there are no visually impressive sites in Arisaig and prehistory is either largely invisible or absent. However, the few discoveries that have been made did attract attention from contemporary investigators. A crannog revealed by the draining of Loch nan Eala was subsequently visited by Reginald Mapleton in 1868 and Odo Blundell in 1911. Mapleton was the Episcopalian minister to the Malcolm family of Paltalloch and is

best known for his investigations of archaeological sites in Kilmartin, Argyll. Blundell was one of the pioneers in crannog research in Scotland; he carried out limited excavations in south-west Scotland and the Highlands. Later, the discovery of flint and quartz tools prompted AD Lacaille to investigate the site in person. Despite these and other records, our knowledge of the archaeology of Arisaig is insubstantial and readily summarized in **Illus 2**. Known sites are concentrated in the vicinity of the present village, there is only one site pre-dating the Bronze Age and the medieval period is represented solely by the late medieval church at Kilmory.

Illus 2 (opposite) Detailed map showing location of pollen sites and known medieval and prehistoric sites (from Ordnance Survey maps © Crown copyright)