

## Bunessan Mill, Isle of Mull

**Ruth Andrews**

Photos by Keith and Ruth Andrews

Our recent rather damp fortnight in Arran and Mull was not very noteworthy in terms of mill remains, and this site was completely unexpected. We read a notice on a gate announcing *The Ross of Mull Historical Centre* and went exploring (actually we were looking for toilets!). The notice promised a wildlife garden and information and archive material, but what we also found was the derelict remains Bunessan Mill (and the toilets in a small museum).



As originally built in the 18th century for the landowner, the Duke of Argyll, it was a single storey building with an 11ft diameter waterwheel. The building was enlarged in the 1830s to provide a second storey and a drying kiln set at 90° to the rear of the main building. The wheel was increased to 14ft in diameter and a lade or channel cut to give a 20ft head of water from a natural pool half a mile upstream. Crofters bringing their grain to be milled were expected to help the miller by operating the sluice gates.

Two sets of stones were used, the first to de-husk the oats before they were dried in the peat-fired kiln, and the second to mill the grain. There are currently 3 millstones on site.

The mill ceased operating in 1914 when Calum McPherson, the last miller, went off to be a piper in the Scots Guards. The waterwheel was removed for scrap in the second world war.



As you can see the upright shaft, great spur wheel, and wallower have been repositioned to form a decorative feature, and 2 millstones (with no visible dressing so they must be the shelling stones) are propped up inside the mill. We did not see the third stone which was said to be French quartz. The vegetation was too overgrown to let us see into the wheelpit.

Information from Ross of Mull Historical Centre, [romhc.org.uk](http://romhc.org.uk)