

Please Help Preserve our ancestral castle at Ellan Vhow (Island I Vow)



Figure 1 - Ellan Vhow castle overgrown with ivy and threatened by destructive root growth of embedded saplings and mature trees.

*There are three “Scheduled Ancient Monuments” amongst the islands of Loch Lomond. These are protected by the Scottish Government as nationally important historic sites and are under the care of Historic Scotland. Two of the three, **Inveruglas Isle and Island I Vow (Ellan Vhow)**, are home to the ruined remains of **Macfarlane strongholds**.*

Ellan Vhow castle was built in 1577 by **Andrew MacFarlane**. When the **Macfarlane castle** at Inveruglas was destroyed by Cromwell, the **chief of the Macfarlanes** took up residence at Ellan Vhow and it became the seat of the **Clan Macfarlane**. The grounds included several outbuildings which probably housed guards and retainers of the chief. New evidence suggests one of these buildings may have been a chapel. This important **Macfarlane** site is now totally over-grown with ivy and is under immediate threat from the damaging effects of tree roots that penetrate the walls. The intact cellar (or “dungeon” as it is commonly known) will be structurally compromised in the near future if action is not taken. Likewise the weight and damaging root penetration of the ivy will continue to weaken the very castle walls.

This past summer, an independent project was started to begin preservation of Ellan Vhow by a U.S. high-school

student under the supervision of local archaeologist Fiona Baker of Firat Archaeological Services.

Ms. Baker had done archaeological surveys including Ellan Vhow in 1997 and 2007. The team this summer updated those archaeological surveys with new finds including evidence of a conical castle tower and the likely location of a chapel. The team was awarded a Scheduled Monument Consent from Historic Scotland to do initial preservation works in August and is now seeking permission and funding for additional preservation works ... to clear the way for thorough archaeological survey and further preservation.

Work is planned **this winter** (by licensed professionals under archaeological supervision) to do the next phase of preservation work ... trimming the damaging ivy and coppicing the trees threatening the structure. In addition to helping preserve the structure, this work will clear the way for a thorough, formal archaeological survey and will give visitors a view of the castle not seen for a century or more. **The Ellan Vhow Preservation Fund** has been formed to support this effort and is accepting donations online now.

Any and all donations are very welcome at

EllanVhow.org



Figure 2 - The eastern orientation and remnants of a possible altar suggest this building may have been a chapel.



Figure 3 – A finished stone, part of a castle window, was discovered this summer. A vertical groove, designed to receive leaded glass, is clearly visible. Note also the socket for an iron bar to support the leaded glass.



Figure 4 – Several tapered slates were found, suggesting that Ellan Vhow castle had one or more conical towers.