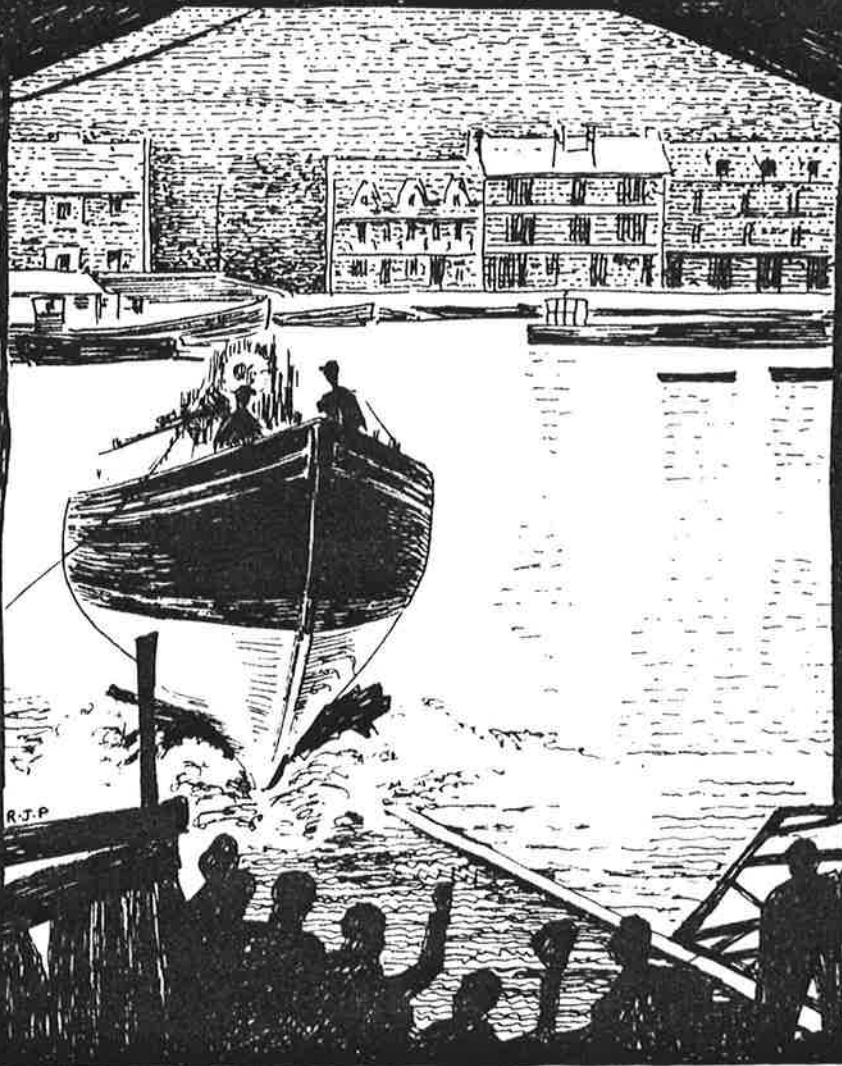


Dickies' Yard 1935



The KIST · 46

T H E K I S T

The Magazine of
The Natural History & Antiquarian Society
of Mid-Argyll
President: Mrs Anne M. Kahane, MA, FSAScot.

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THE FAINT FOOTPRINTS: Pt.1

Marion Campbell

For all our boasted Scottish interest in ancestors, we are oddly neglectful of one group who deserve an apology.

The Greeks, looking back to the past, dreamed of a Golden Age; Hobbes (Leviathan, 1651) depicted the State of Nature as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short"; Rousseau's Noble Savage strode gaily through primeval forest; others, into this century, saw Early Man endlessly at war. Marxist theory has the Primitive Horde leading to Primitive Community, to Tribe under Priest-Chief, to City exploiting stored surpluses in Commerce, then Class Warfare and Capitalism. Geologists from Hutton (1795) onward drew up immense timescales to challenge that of Ussher (he was an Anglican Archbishop of Armagh, whose chronology, based on Old Testament lives and reigns, was published in 1650 and added to the 1701 printing of the Bible). From 1836, Scandinavian scholars built a filing system for finds, sorting them into Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages by materials and assigning relative (and unverifiable) dates.

Nineteenth-century Europe believed fervently in Progress, mental and moral evolution to match the biological; hence, "primitives" discovered at the Ends of the Earth - Tasmanians, Fuegians, Bushmen - had been driven there by their betters for resisting their manifest destiny of "honest toil" (i.e. slavery), and so earned extinction. They were not People like Us.

A stream of new images followed the finding, late last century, of Old Stone Age - Palaeolithic - cave-paintings in France and Spain, showing extinct animals such as mammoth and woolly rhinoceros as well as surviving species, and datable to the 'Great Ice Age' before 10,000 BC. As the New Stone Age - Neolithic - was then thought to begin around 2000 BC, how was the gap to be filled?

French archaeologues (itself a newly-minted term) soon found rock-shelters containing "debased" Palaeolithic tools and other, new, forms, with food-refuse and a few paint-daubed pebbles. These poor fragments must mark another doomed race who had lost even their art. Plato's dictum that "there are two causes of deterioration in art ... wealth and poverty" was forgotten. The wretched beach-

combers were labelled Middle Stone Age - Mesolithic. A rush of Irish and Scottish finds followed: caves at Oban, shell-middens on Oronsay, flintwork from upland Berwickshire. Some tools matched those from France, others had Baltic affinities. Near Inchnadamph reindeer and cave-bear bones in one cave, and human remains in its neighbour stirred hopes of cave-paintings - hopes damped when re-examination showed the animal bones to be far older than the human ones, which are probably Bronze Age or later.

Improving geological surveys firmed up the timescale and showed the 'Great Ice Age' to cover many fluctuations of warmer and colder phases over many thousands of years. In the last great maximum around 20,000 years ago a solid white dome lay from the Flannan Isles, 1000m thick in places, over Ben Nevis and Cairn Gorm, to meet the Scandinavian Ice Sheet off Aberdeen. For every 100m the earth's crust sank by 30m, bending like a plank with a fat lady on it, so that the edges tipped up. So much atmospheric moisture was locked up as ice that the sea fell below today's 50-fathom line. When thawing began around 12,000 BC meltwaters refilled the sea, bending its floor downward at first, later topping it up to flood high above present tidemarks, while the land slowly rose in movements not yet finished. By 10,000 BC the last great glacier began melting to uncover Loch Lomond, although isolated peaks - the Merrick, the Paps of Jura - kept their own icecaps a little longer.

Recent work in Alaska shows how soon vegetation reclaims bare ground with algae, mosses, scrub birch, hazel, pine, to oak and elm, and how quickly animals follow it. Human-kind, always the omnivorous, opportunistic predator, is never far behind. Homo Sapiens like ourselves had known Scotland in warmer times but fled the last deep freeze, moving southward into Wales and central England or eastward over the hummocky plain that lay from Humberside to Jutland and from Dungeness to the Seine until 6000 BC, when the Dover chalk was breached, and for some thousands of years longer in the shape of wetlands and gravel islets, passable with local fenmen as guides.

The first to move up were probably fishermen, in wicker-and-leather curaghs large enough to carry a family and its dogs but small enough for two or three men to handle. Curaghs are more likely than dug-outs, both because few large trees had yet grown, and because solid hulls are less man-

ageable in a seaway. Up the coast, then, to plankton-rich cold seas, full of fish, where warm clothing was essential. We may forget the cartoonists' knotted hearthrugs, and think instead of sewn-fur outfits like the Eskimos' (who prefer to be called Inuit). The technology involved - curing skins and sinews, tailoring, sewing with bone needles - had been perfected long before.

Other groups came overland as the climate warmed. Reindeer may already have had specialised hunter/herdsmen, guarding and culling, ready to move with them by day or night like the Lapps (who prefer to be called Sami). Reindeer became scarce in Scotland before 7000 BC, either for lack of reindeer-moss or because they were steered eastward to Europe. The idea that they survived into historic times is now rejected. Some red deer may well have been tamed enough to handle, even to milk; later legends tell of "dun cattle" herded by mythical demi-goddesses. Roe deer, horses and pigs, and aurochs, the wild cattle whose bulls stood as tall as Clydesdales, grazed in woods and open ground, and there were bears and wolves, beavers, badgers, small mammals - but not sheep, goats, brown hares or rabbits, all brought later by humans.

Humans themselves were the rarest animal. Some experts think there were no more than 70 here at any one time (surely below survival-level?); others suggest 7000, guessing from known sites (though these reflect the distribution of searchers). The size of a typical group is debated; 20-40 is surely too big and would soon exhaust supplies. Around a dozen may be nearer the mark, say four adults, three or four teenagers, three or four children. Some parties might forage over a walking-range from a snug den through half a year, while others kept on the move, using tents of hides over hazel-branches, overnight huts of fern or a lean-to against a cliff. Nobody knows what they looked like in build or colouring, nor how much language the groups shared, coming as they did from distant origins. Nobody has yet found a burial-place - the earliest are long washed away - although in Brittany there are Mesolithic cists wreathed in antlers.

Possibly diverse groups met to exploit some annual bonanza, a salmon-run, seal-hunt, bird-migration, when extra hands were needed, and at such gatherings there might be gift-exchanges or barterings, feasting, ceremonies, dancing

and sign-language to help out with strange talk. A large cooking-site has just been found near Moffat, during emergency excavations before a new motorway service-station, cooking-pits surrounded by Mesolithic tools; perhaps such meeting-places will be found elsewhere.

Our own improving skills reveal Mesolithic sites in Arran, Jura, Rhum, Colonsay - usually coastal or on old shorelines, very few uphill or inland. It should be worthwhile to search the shores of hill-lochs, rock-shelters in sunny corries, places with the Gaelic uamh, cave, in their names; and along forestry ditches where these have cut through the peat; most peat has grown since the hunters passed; its acids bleach flint as white as bone and destroy bone itself, but may preserve wood and nutshells.

The hunters had Scotland to themselves for around five thousand years before they were joined by farming pioneers, roughly another five thousand years before the present day. Great changes of climate took place, from cold to hot, wet to dry and back again; new hunting skills were invented, animals and plants flourished or died out. Different as the bands may have been, they shared the ability to use everything in their environment, every part of a deer carcass from hide to gut, every leaf or shell. Some textbooks, perhaps beguiled by tropical races displaying their lifestyles for TV, speak of "these simple people" loping merrily from berrybush to oysterbed, the Noble Savage reborn. It would be a good quiz question to ask such authors for the names of any six native plants, root, stem, leaf, bud, flower or fruit, available in quantities to feed six people daily in December, February and April. (Write on one side of the paper only, and don't say "potatoes".)

We mislead ourselves if we call such people primitive; they were two million years removed from the first upright-walking Palaeolithic figures (themselves 30 million years removed from the dinosaurs who figure as their prey in cartoons). As late as 1941, Lacaille wrote that "these folk could offer little resistance to Neolithic invaders with a full culture"; probably "these folk" saved the lives of many immigrant farmers, as Native Americans saved New World emigrants. We had better give up such negative thinking, and consider instead the little bowed tent by the shore, the creel of whelks and the smoked haddies; and try to imagine the wealth of talk, the learned discussions and the

wonderful stories, around the driftwood fire. It is just possible, and we had better admit it, that there is still a bowed tent or two, and a driftwood fire, in much the same place. One should step with pride along such an ancient line of footprints.

(to be continued)

J B Sissons, The Evolution of Scotland's Scenery (Oliver & Boyd, 1967) has been my pilot through complex geological events. Since 1967, new carbon-14 readings have made the timescale even longer.

...oooOooo...

In connection with the preceding, Miss Campbell adds the following suggestion.

ANOTHER KIND of OUTING ?

While dredging the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (PSAS) for Mesolithic sites, I found a paper I had carelessly missed in PSAS 119 of 1989. This described work by the Lanark and District Archaeological Society. An area of 300 acres on Corse Law, astride a public road, had been ploughed for forestry. Some small cairns etc. were known and recorded already. With Forestry Commission permission, the Society mapped the new ditches, divided them into 20m lengths, and set out to walk each length with a labelled bag for finds. The walking was done by individuals as time allowed, the bags were sorted at 'Base HQ' and the density of finds marked on the map, as were the areas searched. The finds, which ranged from recent pottery and clay pipes to early prehistoric material, included over 2000 worked-stone tools.

Already Forestry workers have made remarkable finds in our area, from cupmarked rocks to arrowheads, many spotted from a plough-cabin. On the other hand the dearth of archaeological sites in some parts, especially on the high ground, notoriously reflects a dearth of searchers. It seems to me that sharp eyes and supple backs among our members might contribute something notable, particularly along the line of a high drove-road or hill-track.

The Brainport Bay Solar Alignment

Adopt-a-Monument Scheme

Anne M Kahane

The Council for Scottish Archaeology (of which and of its predecessor the Scottish Region of the Council for British Archaeology our Society has been a member for over twenty years) has recently been encouraging local antiquarian, archaeological and historical societies to take an interest in and some responsibility for a monument of appropriate character in its own area; this scheme goes under the general description of "Adopt-a-Monument". Concurrently Col. Peter Fane Gladwin, at Minard, had been finding increasingly burdensome the self-imposed task of looking after the physical state of the Solar Alignment at Brainport Bay, and of providing direction markers and information for visitors to it. He had personally cleared, unravelled, interpreted and published this remarkable alignment on the midsummer sunrise [see Kists 16 and 19, and his monograph published by the Society]. This site, together with the other neighbouring alignments on the midwinter sunset at Oak Bank and also the quern quarry nearby, were scheduled by Historic Scotland in September 1992.

It therefore seemed appropriate for our Society to take over the care of the monument from Col. Fane Gladwin, and assume the responsibility for providing way-markers and information for visitors. We approached CSA with these ideas, which were welcomed, and in November 1992 Ms Jill Harden, the Director of CSA, came to Mid Argyll, was shown over the sites by Col. Fane Gladwin, and subsequently had a discussion with other persons concerned. This meeting was attended by Col. Gayre of Gayre and Nigg together with his son and daughter-in-law (on whose land the scheduled monuments are situated), Mr John Rees, Forest Manager for the Loch Awe District (in which the road access lies), Col. Fane Gladwin, and two of the three representatives of our Society namely Mr Iain Morton and myself. General agreement was reached on the programme for future work on the site, including, ideally, improvement of the road access, provision of more information signs and leaflets, and clearance of under- and overgrowth.

A start was made on March 6th 1993 when a working party

of thirteen people cleared out a huge patch of regenerated rhododendron from the back platform. Since then notices have been renovated and additional ones set up, and some of the bracken has been cut back. It must be emphasised that as the sites are now scheduled no one may do any work there without Scheduled Monument Consent from Historic Scotland - a consent the Society currently holds for a limited amount of work.

Progress reports will be made from time to time; if any readers have queries, will they please get in touch with me. Members and their friends wishing to visit the site will find the best way is by the footpath along the top of the shore southwards from Minard village - not far, and a very pleasant walk.

...oooOooo...

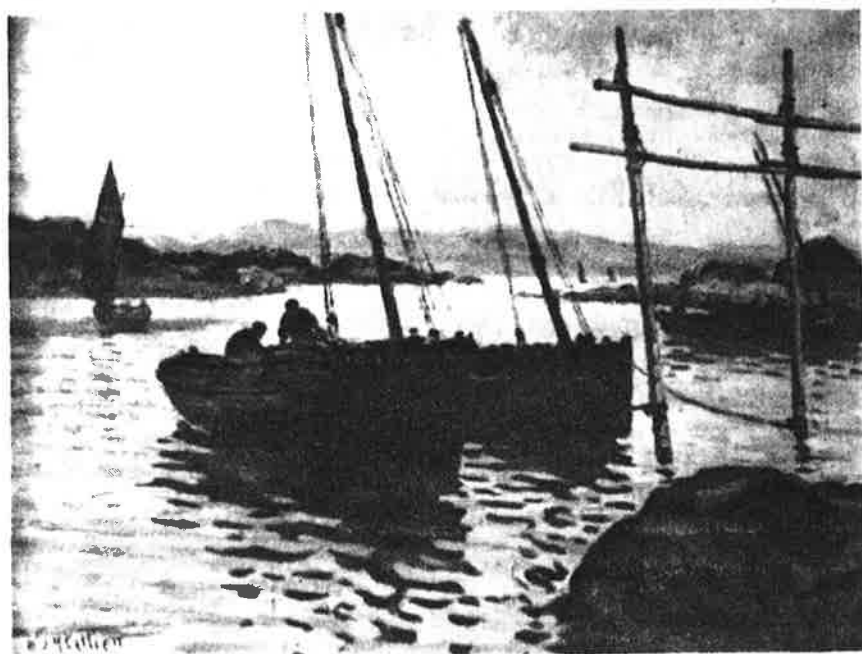
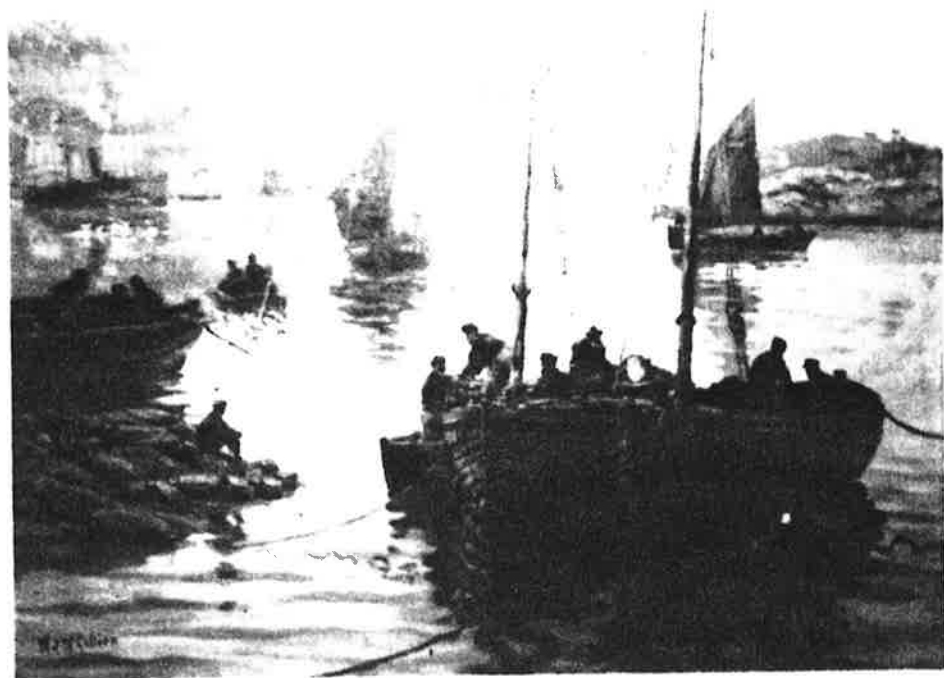
WILLIAM JOHN McCALLIEN (1866-1947)

Mary Smith

W J McCallien, known locally in Tarbert as "Willie Jones", was brought up in the house once situated at the corner of Harbour St opposite the Tarbert Hotel. When the burn was in spate and the tide unusually high it used to be regularly flooded. A modern building of shops and flats now occupies the site.

"Willie Jones" studied at the Glasgow School of Art and gained his D.A., returning to paint the scenes around him for the rest of his life. He exhibited two or three times at the Royal Glasgow Institute, the works accepted being dated to the beginning of the century. He was very prolific at this time, the vast majority of the work seen locally today being dated 1890 -1908.

His work was developed by sketching in pen and ink or watercolour on the spot, working up the oils in his studio which was at "Glenorchy" opposite the East Pier, and only recently demolished. A very large part of his output is either still in the Tarbert area, or owned by people elsewhere with Tarbert origins. He often sold his paintings two at a time, a pair of McCallien paintings constituting a good wedding gift to a couple for their new home. Many paintings depict the herring industry - fishermen at work,



skiffs in the harbour, skiffs sailing out to the fishing, skiffs fishing in Loch Fyne with the "screw " often in attendance, albeit in the distance. Quite a few works have been executed from the old small quay in front of Castlehill Cottage. He also painted scenes of, and around, West Loch Tarbert, where the special quality of light is still appreciated by more modern artists.

Like most artists he probably made little money from his paintings, and from accounts of people who remember him he led a somewhat hand-to-mouth existence; some, young when he was an old man, thought him a tramp as he wandered around in a dirty old coat with a parcel of painting materials under his arm. However a different picture comes from his grandson, Mr Colin McCallien from Warrington in Cheshire, who writes as follows:

"He was a joiner to trade who, from time to time, helped to repair boats, and who also sailed with the herring boats. He made his own picture frames, and also made a scale model of a fishing boat which he could use to get the perspective correct in his paintings. In view of this I have always assumed that his paintings would be accurate representations of fishing craft as well as interesting social commentaries on life at the turn of the century.

His hobbies included growing different varieties of fuchsias. He was a keen birdwatcher, who coloured the pictures in his black and white bird book kept for reference purposes , at a time when birdwatching was not generally popular. Along with his father and his son he had collected every Scottish bird's egg except the eggs of skuas....

These three all shared the same gun licence. His daughter-in-law (my mother) related how worried she used to be when they went hunting with a muzzle-loading shotgun complete with powder-horn and ramrod, fearing that one of them might return with a hand missing; they were not above poaching, and used to hide game birds in a bucket covered with fish from the sea.

[Despite childhood holidays in Tarbert] I never saw him paint, but believe he sometimes set his easel up on one of the many quays. Apparently once or twice he stepped back too far to admire his work and fell in backwards; Fortunately it seems he did this when the tide was in."

W J McCallien would undoubtedly have become better known outside Tarbert, having had works accepted by the RGI; but about 1915 something happened which reduced his talent to a mere shadow. It is known that he sustained a bad head injury in a bicycle accident, and it appears that this was what caused his artistic output to falter so badly.

Studying some of his best pictures, I find it incredibly sad that such a wonderful talent was cut off in mid flourish. There is such a wealth of observation, such colour, never becoming garish, such a play of light and shadow. He is an artist who is much under-valued.

My thanks are due to Mrs Ohna McCaffer for her help with this article, and also of course to Mr Colin McCallien.

The Editor is grateful to Mrs Laing, of Rosemount, Tarbert, and to Dr Mackenna, of Dun Alasdair, Tarbert, for their permission to print photographs of paintings in their possession.

...oooOooo...

With reference to Kist 45, p.12, Mr Allan Begg adds this note:

In her interesting article on the Portinnisherrich Ferry Lady McGrigor refers to a letter of 4th May 1870 from Mr Martin, factor to the Malcolms of Poltalloch, requesting closure of the Ferry. It is almost certain that some "eagle eye" will note my reference (Kist 45 p.16) to the death of William Martin, Factor, Poltalloch, in 1866. A William Martin, Factor, did indeed die in 1866, but there was another William Martin, Factor, whose gravestone is in Poltalloch churchyard, and who died in 1890 aged 53. The Valuation Roll of 1872 shows William Martin as tenant of "Ri-Cruin", the Factor's residence until the estate office moved to Poltalloch House after the death of Sir Ian Malcolm. I have a little pamphlet dated April 1905 which was sent out to the Parishioners of Kilmartin by Rev. John Dewar on his retirement after serving in Kilmartin from 1874. Among many things he says - and I quote - "Who that ever knew them will forget the late Mr Martin, the large-hearted factor on the Poltalloch Estate, and Mrs Martin always ready to support every good work".

THE RESETTLEMENT of a COLONY

Edmond S. Clark

When a swarm of bees takes up residence in a chimney or roof-space of a building a poison spray is usually the only answer, and this was the advice I gave to the new owner of a three-storey guest-house who called on me in early May. However he was clearly very reluctant to kill the bees, and I agreed at least to "come and have a look".

Binoculars showed large numbers of bees flying in and out from a corner of an extension at the rear of the main roof. Rashly, I asked if there was any means of access. "Oh yes" he said, fetching two ladders which he proceeded to lash together with a piece of rope, explaining that the iron clips had broken off when the ladder "fell off a roof". A close inspection confirmed my worst fears, but so enthusiastically did he begin to pull back the lead flashings, saying the wood below was rotten anyway and needed to be replaced, and so little was he put out when stung on his right eyelid (luckily I was able to pull the sting out at the first attempt) that I agreed to bring my gear and see what I could do, at 10am next morning (Sunday).

Next day late-rising guests were astonished to see us climbing past their windows this time encumbered with a smoker, veil and travelling-box (me) and a bag of tools and a spare veil (himself). I puffed smoke into what seemed to be the main entrance while he peeled back the lead and sawed through the wood below to reveal not a swarm but an established colony. I broke out a quantity of old comb, then combs with sealed honey which were placed in a basin and passed down to the lady of the house, and finally combs of brood and bees which I endeavoured to fix upright in the travelling-box and cover with the lid. Large numbers of bees had retreated further into the roof-space out of reach, and I suspected the queen was with them.

The wood and lead were temporarily replaced, the hazardous descent successfully completed and I loaded everything into my car and drove to where I had a spare hive ready to receive the "swarm". I did my best to fix the broken combs in the main body of the hive and shook the remaining bees on to a cloth in front of the hive, watching to see if the queen walked in with them. No luck, though I might easily

have missed her. I had just time to change into more appropriate garb and reach the Kirk only a few minutes after the bell had stopped - just as usual.

A quick inspection later that day confirmed that I had not got the queen and many of the flying bees had gone back to their old home to join her. We agreed to have another go at 9am next morning.

After some thought I had added a long-handled soup ladle - not a standard piece of bee equipment - to my gear. A further section of the roof was removed, and lying at full stretch I fished in with the ladle and spooned out bees from the cluster where they had already begun to build new comb. Then down the ladders and back to the hive, watching carefully as the bees walked in. Again no queen.

We agreed to have one last try at 9am next day. This time at my wife's suggestion I came equipped with a secret weapon - a cylinder vacuum cleaner with a new bag, and an extension flex. Again I ladled as many bees as possible from a now diminished cluster into my box, and then switched on the vacuum. It succeeded beyond all expectations and we cleared all the remaining bees and an old wasps' byke at the furthest end of the roof-space.

This time as I threw the bees down in front of the hive I saw the queen with the rest of the "ladled" bees walk calmly into the new hive, where she is now laying happily and her workers going busily about their various duties. The bees in the vacuum however were very much the worse for wear, though some survived their experience. Perhaps it was the wrong make of cleaner. Next time they'll fly with Hoover.

...ooo0ooo...

BOOK NOTES

OBAN - PAST AND PRESENT. Charles Hunter
Published by Charles Hunter, Oban. £4.95

A very successful combination of a history of Oban with a guide for visitors (and locals!). Original sources are used throughout, and the result is a fascinating study. There are good archive photographs, and the centre map with historic sites added to the modern street plan is most useful. There is a full list of references. Highly recommended, as is the same author's Oban Prehistory (£1.95) published in 1992, which includes brief accounts of excavations in 1991 and 1992.

BELDARROCH: FIELD SURVEY

On August 22 and 23 1992 a survey of the remains of the settlement was carried out by nine members of the Association of Certificated Field Archaeologists (Glasgow University). A copy of the full survey has been placed in the Society's library. It is too long to appear here in full, but a summary follows; a composite version of ACFA'S plans is on pages 14 and 15.

The buildings stand along a "street", all except two being on its western side. The well is on the opposite side of the "street" from the main row of houses. There is an enclosure downhill to the south from the houses, and a kiln beyond it.

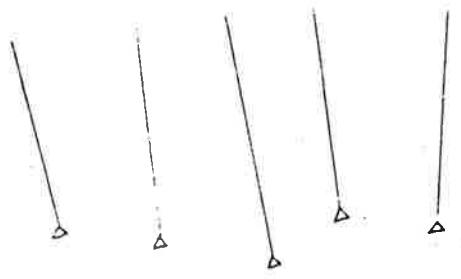
All the houses are in a ruinous state; in general the height of the walls is just over 1m, but the N gable of structure (1) stands to 3m (10ft). The thickness of the walls is generally 0.7m, occasionally 0.6m. Entrances are 0.9m wide. All the structures are filled to a greater or lesser extent with rubble; this means that practically no internal features can be distinguished.

Notes on individual buildings (as numbered on the plan)

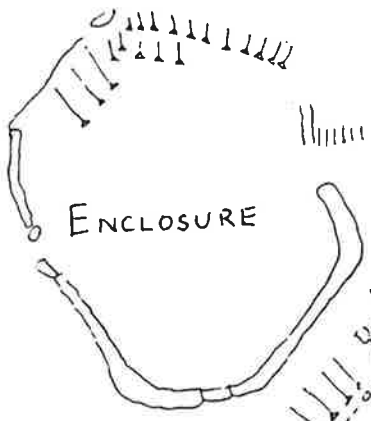
- (1) Large blocks of stone employed in the construction of the corners. Very large boulders or bedrock form the foundations of the walls.
- (2) Apparently built before (1) which abuts on to it. A possible drain in the W wall.
- (3) Apparently built before (2) which abuts on to it. Its W wall overlaps (4), and its E wall turns in to meet the E wall of (4). In the S gable a drain 0.3m high by 0.25m wide connecting with (4).
- (4) Apparently built before (3). Remains of window-opening in E wall. Other side of the drain in S gable of (3) can be seen. Small drain in E wall.
- (5) Apparently built before (4) which abuts on to it. W wall very ruinous. S wall shows signs of reconstruction. E wall, 1.3m high, overhangs and is in danger of collapse. Entrance leads out on to a well-defined area of paving, extending about 3m into the "street" and edged on the S by a small line of supporting walling 0.5m high. Window with one jamb surviving 0.6m high. Drain in E wall.
- (6) E wall utilises a number of large boulders in its lower



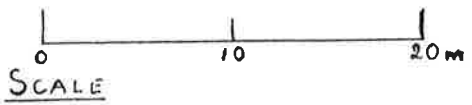
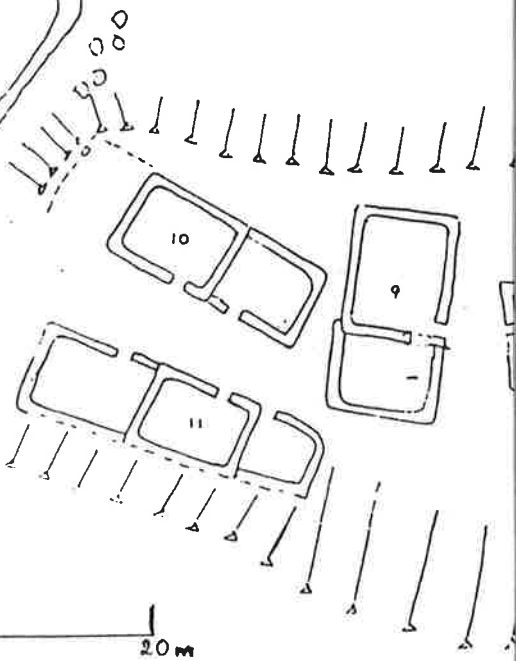
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1992 ACFA



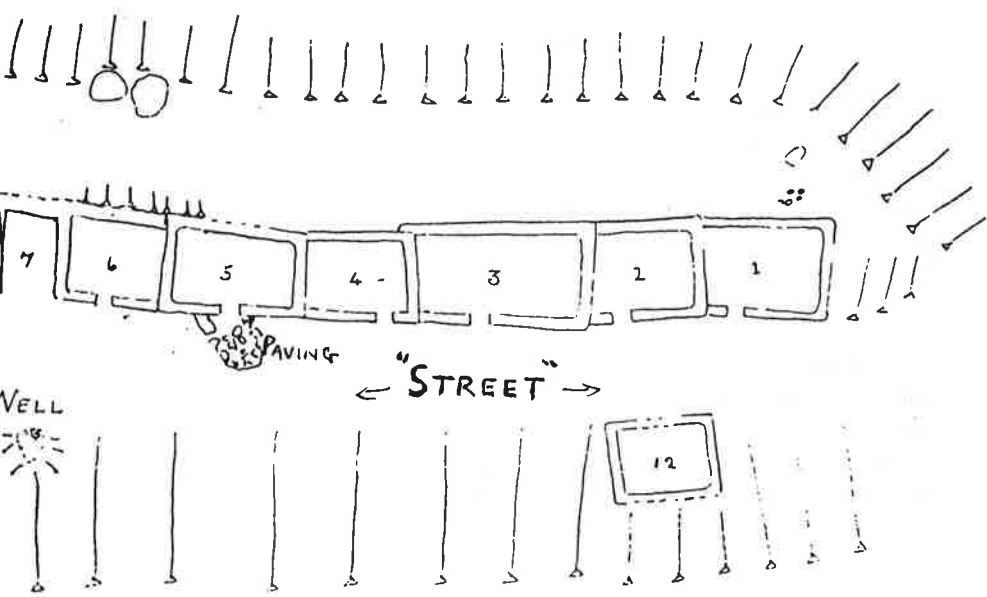
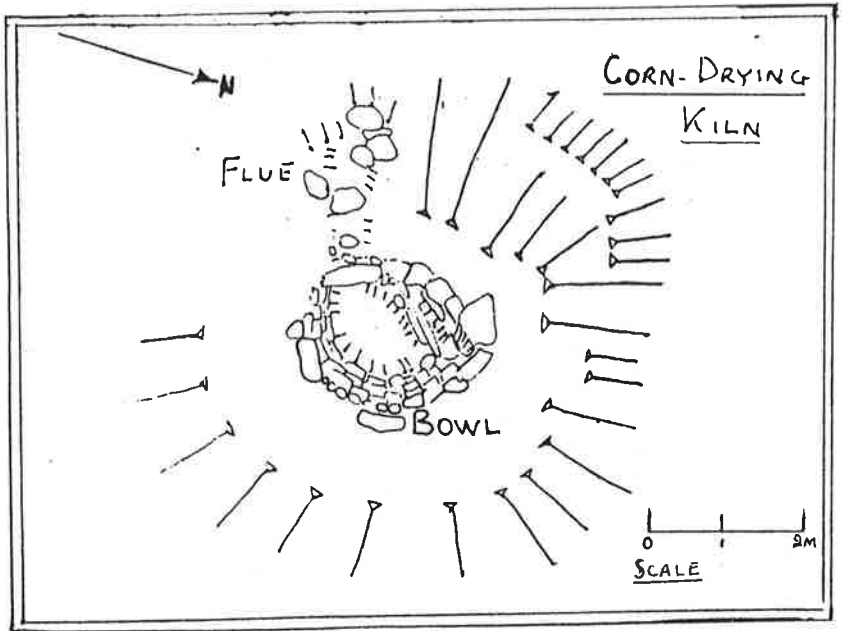
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BELDARROCH



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- courses. Small drain in E wall.
- (7) A yard between (6) and (8) with a 3m long wall on W.
 - (8) Built after (7), as its N wall overlies S wall of (7). Possible entrance in S wall.
 - (9) At right angles to alignment of other structures. Two compartments, entrance on N in W compartment and probable doorway in internal walling between the compartments. S wall is not continuous, suggesting a 2-phase structure with W compartment the earlier.
 - (10) Two compartments of approximately equal size, each with entrance on E. In N gable an aumbry 0.3m high by 0.2m wide and 0.2m deep. A 2-phase structure, N part being the later and less well built. S of this is a stackyard 3m wide with a wall defining its edge above a steep slope.
 - (11) Three compartments, central one built first. Stone 1.2m high by 1m wide incorporated in wall. S compartment butt-jointed on to central one, and small enclosure added on N, with stone 1m high as gatepost. Back walls may be only revetments. Entrances on W. Drain in N corner.
 - (12) Full of rubble. Possible entrance to "street".

Well

Close to rock face; once fed by a spring. Approximately 0.5m in diameter. A number of flat stones placed round its edge.

Enclosure

Irregular, roughly D-shaped, approximately 20m by 15m. Walls mostly of boulders, some quite large, piled on top of one another. Some very large earthfast boulders included. 2 large boulders flank opening on SE. On W side of the interior the top of the walling is virtually level with the ground.

Kiln

A mound has been constructed on the hillslope, its top being level with the hill on S and E sides. To W and N the mound is built up proud of the hill, about 1.5m high at its maximum on NW side. The top of the mound is roughly circular, about 4m in diameter, with some jutting-out around the flue on the W side. Into this mound a bowl-shaped kiln has been dug, sub-circular, measuring about 1.8m NE to SW and 1.9m W to E. This bowl is stone-

lined with one large quartz boulder built in on the S. The floor appears to be stone-lined also. At the time of surveying a fairly large stone lay flat at a depth of about 1.2m; it is not clear if this is the bottom of the kiln or a fallen stone lying on silted mud. Probing suggested there was further stonework below the mud. It is not uncommon for such kilns to be as much as 2m deep. The flue lies in the SW; a lintel stone lies at the opening inside the bowl, and a stone-lined and stone-roofed passage runs for 2.2m to emerge at the outer edge of the mound. Some earth has been cleared at this point, and traces of burnt earth and charcoal were noted at the mouth of the flue. Some stones are visible in the earth S of the flue; a rowan tree has rooted above the flue mouth and its roots have penetrated into the passage tumbling some of the stonework.

The Survey Team's Conclusions

From the construction of the buildings in the "street" it appears that (5) was the original house. Then to the N (4) was added to it and to the S (6) with its yard (7). At a later date (3) was added overlapping the W wall of (4) to achieve a wider building. Presumably (3) was a house, with (2) and (1) being added later to meet the needs of a growing population. (8) represents a third phase, since it overlies part of the yard belonging to (6).

(9), (10) and (11) all show two phases, but it is impossible to relate these to each other and to structures (1) to (8). It is possible that (9) and (10) were houses but it seems unlikely that (11) could have been a house due to the extreme dampness of its location.

Similarly it is impossible to relate (12) to any of the other structures, and again extreme dampness means it is unlikely to have been a house.

The well or spring appears to be rather small to supply the settlement's requirements fully. There may be another well or spring still to be uncovered.

The purpose of the enclosure can only be guessed at. The height and steepness of the walling on the outside of the W side seems to suggest that it was intended to keep animals out rather than in. The proximity to the corn kiln may suggest that it was a corn field, although it is

not a very large area. Taking into account the fact that the inhabitants were thought to come from Ayrshire, it is possible that the area was used for the growing of kale or potatoes.

The kiln has been recorded on the Ordnance Survey map as a lime-kiln but, taking into account the size of the kiln and the position of the flue and burnt remains, it is considered by the team that it is more probable that it was a corn-drying kiln.

The leader of the ACFA team was John MacDonald, and the members of the team were Veronica Baker, Sue Bryson, Cathy Gibson, Francis Hood, Anne Johnstone, Anne McNicol, Gerry Hearn, Donald McKay and Scott Wood.

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It is hoped that the next issue of Kist will contain the story of Beldarroch as far as it can be told from documentation (sparse), tradition and the site itself. The Editor would welcome information from readers.

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A TOUR of SOME OLD SETTLEMENTS and RUINED BUILDINGS
in the PARISHES of KILMARTIN and GLASSARY Part 2

Allan Begg

We will go back along the Oban road to Baluachcrach, where there were thatched houses when I was at school. Now little trace of them remains, but I have a photograph of one in which my wife's grandparents lived about 1908. Only a little of a wall and gable are left. The photograph shows the old well with steps going down into it, and a few hens walking around.

We go on now back towards Bridgend and into Rhudal Glen, and pass the old mill of Rhudal. Up on the hill near Kilbride are the ruins of Baroil. The ruin of St Bride's chapel is above Kilbride farm, and within the chapel on the wall is a memorial plaque for James Campbell of Rhudal who died in 1770 and his wife Ann MacLachlan who died in 1784. Across

from Kilbride are the ruins of Upper Rhudal. I found a flat stone in Glassary churchyard, almost covered over, erected by Catherine MacIntyre for her husband Donald MacIntyre, who died at Upper Roudle in 1831. (Rhudal is spelt in many different ways in old records). Now we take the road from Kilbride out to the ruins of Achayerran, once the home of the MacLachlans whose gravestones in Kilmartin date to 1789. In 1841 three families were living here and in 1871 only two. In a letter to his brother in America written in 1854 George Campbell of Ardifuar tells him "Colin Achayerran's wife was seized with cholera but recovered". This outbreak of cholera in 1854 killed a number of people in Kilmartin and Glassary parishes. From Achayerran we go up to Carnach where there are ruins of three places, and from here across to the hills above Barmolloch, where a ruined farmstead lies which could be Ardary, but I am not certain. Into the hill from Achayerran lies the ruin of Cnoc-an-Eilt; there is not much left of it.

Now we return to Kilbride and in a little glen opposite Upper Rhudal are other two old houses. From here we go out past Loch-na-Corra, the scene of a tragedy in 1901 when five local boys were drowned; all lived within a mile of one another, three from Annaskeoch, one from Baroil, and the other from Rhudal. There is another ruined farmstead about half a mile from here. An old fellow from Glassary once spoke of it as being Nether Carron and owned long ago by Campbell of Kirnan, but I can't say whether or not this is so. There are two ruined houses in another glen not far from this old farmstead. The old well can still be seen at the farm ruins as is the case at other old places.

We will descend into Kilmichael Glen and start along at the old farm of Succoth, or Socach as written in old records; it was owned in the 18th century by Colin Campbell of Ederline. From the little knowledge I have of Gaelic I think "Socach" will be correct. The old bridge across the river is gone but you can cross if there is not too much flow of water. I visited it last year and I like the place. The original farmhouse stands, and also other buildings; outside one of them is an old quern. I have records of folk who died there dating from 1819 to 1872. Now we go along past Barmolloch to the end of Loch Leithan and see on the hill another old farm or croft. This one is possibly Cean-Loch Leithan; an American told me ancestors of his named

Munn once lived there. Up hill and a bit along are the ruins of Fernoch - I think it should be Fearnach. It has a fine view down the glen, and there are several buildings. A stone in Glassary records the death of John MacKellar, the tacksman in 1783, and there is a stone in Kilmartin for Mac Callums of Fearnoch in 1839 and 1840; another stone in Kilmartin is for Donald MacVean, tenant, who died in 1868. We are now going up from Kirnan and Leckuary to the interesting old village of Lag; this is a beautiful situation and second in my list of favourites. In the 18th century there were Barrs, Smiths, Campbells, Grays and MacGilps living here, Mary Currie was born at Lag in 1769 and died at Carrick in 1855; a gravestone in Glassary records the death of John MacArthur at Lag in 1819 - it is the only stone with "Lag" inscribed on it. If we take the road through the forest which was Torbhlaran hill, and follow it to where it ends here is a little ruin which is reputed to have been Lag school, not of course in this century. It is said to have been a private school in the days before education became compulsory. The story goes that every pupil had to bring one or two peats for the school fire. This old school was at the roadside and in a central position to serve the farms around it such as Achlee, Tunns, Dalnernach, Creagans, and Monunernich all now in forest, and Barrachuile, Knockalva, Leckuary, Kirnan, Fearnoch, Socach, Ceann-Loch Leithan and Leacan-na-Muilt. There is a gravestone in Glassary for Ian Guild, late schoolmaster in ?Glassrie - the place-name is not entirely clear - died 1804. One wonders if he could have taught at this school.

So it is down into Kilmichael Glen and past Torbhlaran to Uilean, a very old settlement; it appears on Timothy Pont's 16th century map. It lies across the River Add directly opposite the village of Kilmichael. In 1803 it housed people called Moor, a farmer Robert MacPherson and another tenant John Curry; in 1798 the tacksman was Duncan Sinclair, and Donald Kerr, a shepherd born at Carron in 1788, died at Uilean in 1855; Peter Mitchell, 68, died here in 1860, Catherine Mitchell, 38, in 1864, John Morrison, 55, in 1874 and Archibald MacVean, 70, farmer, in 1888. One of the houses was occupied by John Holmes and his family when I was at school.

We now come back to the road in Kilmichael Glen, and down past Kilmichael and on to the road to Lochgilphead. We pass

the site of Leac-na-Loine or Leac-na-Luadh which is just a heap of stones now but, it is said, once was a place where weavers worked. It lies below the road near Achinashellach and is marked on an old estate map of Dunamuck, Achnashellach and Achnabreck drawn in 1830 for Neil Malcolm of Poltalloch. At Cairnbaan we go on to the forest road and a long walk out to the ruin of the farm of Craigmural. I was aware of the existence of this old place, which was in forest until a few years ago when the plantation was clear-felled. I had some difficulty in locating it but eventually succeeded. It is not beside the forest road but in from it, and although clear-felled in front it is still within the forest area. I would not advise anyone to go in here alone. I did, but it was rather foolhardy; I am more careful now where I trek to. In the 18th century this place was owned by Duncan Campbell of Duchernan who also had Uilean. There is the ruin of the farmhouse and steading and another house. I am told there may be other ruins, but they will be in the forest. I have records of MacLachlans here in 1856; a son Duncan, 15, died here in that year; Malcolm MacAlpine, 10, died in 1857 and Mary MacLachlan, 29, in 1860. A well-known man in this district was born at Craigmural in 1866. He was Dugald MacDougall whose father Duncan was the tenant. In his youth Dugald was one of the last of the cattle-drovers. Later in life he farmed at Barmolloch at the far end of Kilmichael Glen, and latterly at Craigenterivebeg where he farmed with his two sons Alex and Duncan. I remember this fine old gentleman so well. Many times he called to visit my grandfather and grandmother at Carnasserie, and many interesting conversations there were. He died in 1957 at the age of 91.

We return now to Cairnbaan roadend, where we have to deviate and go along the road beside the canal to Dunardry, where we take the road to the right near Barnakill and go along the edge of the old woodlands in the direction of Dunadd, a nice walk this one. We pass the rock with two hands carved on it. I have not found out what this carving meant or what its purpose was but it must have had some significance. [The carving has been claimed as prehistoric but a relatively recent origin (18th or 19th century) is suggested by comparison of the carvings on the Bridge of Fyne, and by the position on the E of the track. See vol. 7 of the Argyll Inventories of RCAHMS. Ed.]. At the end

of this walk we arrive at High Barnakill, a village of six ruined houses and remains of other buildings; beside it is the old well. I find that in 1751 it was part of the estate of Duncan MacLachlan of Dunadd. The vista from here takes in the great expanse of the Moine Mor, or Crinan Moss if you prefer it, and from here can be seen the great ditches dug by workers of Poltalloch Estate early in the last century under the supervision of James Gow the estate overseer of the time, whose gravestone is in Kilmartin. Much reclamation of land and new methods of farming were carried out by Neil Malcolm. In Glassary there is a gravestone for James MacFarlane, Tacksman, Barnakill, died 1806. There are other records of deaths here from 1855 to 1881. Mrs Margaret Mac Dougall, whose late husband worked on the Crinan Canal, has some excellent recollections of High Barnakill. She remembers two houses occupied here in 1918, one by the MacLellan family, and one by Hugh MacVicar and his sister; he was probably the last man to leave the ill-fated slate-quarry island of Belnahua.

We come back to Cairnbaan and along to the ruined village of Ach nabreck. This old village is very interesting, but I have not been able to find out a lot about it. There is in Glassary graveyard a stone which says "Heir lyes Donald Mac Gilchrist of Auch nabreck died 13th July 1672 and his wife Phinguel Stuart died 1688". This is the oldest inscribed gravestone I have come across in the three graveyards I have listed. Near Ach nabreck was Dun-na-marag. I have searched all around the area to find traces of it but so far unsuccessfully; however I have not given up. There is a record of the birth of Mary Rowan here in 1855. Beside the burn at Ach nabreck the remains of Stanalane can be seen. In 1862 Archie MacArthur died here aged 9, Donald MacArthur in 1863 aged 34 and Margaret Leitch aged in 1877. Few people seem to have heard of Stanalane but it is marked on an old map.

Moving along the hillside we now arrive at High Monydrain where we find a number of ruins. This seems to have been quite a community. A stone at Kilmory records the death of Neil MacCamie, tenant in 1797, and there was a farmer here in 1803 named John MacTavish. Across the hill from here, behind a ridge is the ruin of Druim, on Pont's late 16th century map marked Drym and on Langlands' of 1801 Drim. A stone in Glassary has Archibald MacVicar, Tenant, Druim, died 1824; in Kilmory is one for Sarah Turner died 1824,

and one for John MacKellar died 1826, both of Druim.
In the hill beside the Dippen burn is the ruin of Dippen
or Duppen, which is in forest. A friend and I were taken
to the site by an official of the Forestry Commission. A
gravestone in Kilmory records Alexander Campbell, Tacksman,
Dippen, died 1826 and Elizabeth his wife, died 1849.

There are quite a number of ruined settlements in Glas-
sary parish which I have not yet been able to visit, but
hope to do so. I have records of names of their former in-
habitants. One I have visited is Ardnaheir, which is on
the hill near Achnaba. An old gravestone in Kilmory is for
John MacCamie, Tenant, Ardnaheir, died 1797; another for
Lachlan Sinclair aged 2, died 1857, Mary McEwan died 1825
and Duncan MacEwan died 1879. Other stones there record
the deaths of Alex Crawford, Tenant, Ardnaheir, in 1860
aged 60, Margaret MacTavish his wife in 1869 aged 60, sons
Alex (28) in 1865, Hugh (29) in 1873, and John (45) in 1883.
Three children who died here within a year were Jean Mac
Ewan (3) in 1857, John Sinclair (2) also in 1857 and John
Morrison (5) in 1858.

(to be concluded)

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CORRECTIONS to KIST 45

Three errors crept into Mr Begg's previous article. On
p.16 line 12: the miller's name was Colin Lindsay. On p.17
line 39: old John Brown was born at Barnakill, though his
forebears had been in the Ardifuar crofting area for a long
time. On p.13 line 43: 1895 is a misprint for 1885.

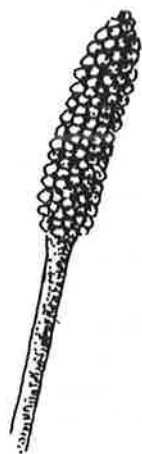
...oooOooo...

LYSICHITON AMERICANUM, alias 'SKUNK CABBAGE'

F.S. Mackenna

[In spring 1993 much amazement was expressed by many
of those passing the eastern end of West Loch Tarbert be-
tween the golf course and the Kilberry road, at the mag-
nificent proliferation of "yellow arum lilies" growing in
the marshy border of the loch. Ed.]

LYSICHITON
AMERICANUM



3ft

2ft

1ft



FSTC

When visitors are going round our Tarbert garden it is quite safe to expect a reaction to three of the items contained in it, apart from the hundreds of rhododendrons. These are Gunnera manicata, with its gigantic 'rhubarb' structure; Heracleum mantegazzianum, the colossal ten-foot high cow-parsley; and Lysichiton americanum, an enormous 'arum-like' affair of truly memorable appearance. Of the three this has perhaps the oddest life history, renewed each spring and as surely hidden almost beyond detection each autumn. First of all, as to location - it is absolutely positive in its requirements, failing which it makes scarcely any impact. Its site must be permanently and unvaryingly a 'bottomless' swamp. The other two plants mentioned at the beginning require very wet boggy sites, but even they would be hard put to it to thrive to their full extent where Lysichiton prospers. The earliest thing to be noticed in spring is the appearance above the morass of brilliant yellow arum-like spikes each with a protruding green spadix; these develop rapidly and are soon joined by emerging leaves, after which the latter assume control of progress by developing into enormous paddle-shaped structures which by July reach a length of five or even six feet and a width of two or more, shiny and smooth in appearance and remarkably thin in texture, apart from the immensely thick and strong stem and midrib which support the great surface until in early autumn decay sets in and collapse soon follows. In the meantime the spathe has continued to develop, though after fertilisation it is rapidly cast off to allow the development of the terminal mass of fleshy seeds. These too make good progress and in a remarkably short time the whole thing disintegrates and only the thick bare superfluous stem remains at the base of the towering mass of leaves. It is indeed an odd cycle of events from the early spring appearance of the flowers to the decay and collapse of the leaves in autumn - most of all in the prodigality of the growth sequence and its utter obliteration.

There is a second variety, named Lysichiton kamptschatkense in which the flowers are white, but being smaller in all its parts it lacks the impact of the other.

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DICKIES' BOATYARD, TARBERT

Duncan MacDougall

Archie Dickie came from Fairlie about 1865 and started building boats at Tarbert. He built his first shed, measuring about 30ft by 20ft, and at first built small boats. As time went by and his family were growing up he was able to handle bigger boats, and by 1928, when he died, he had extended the yard to build all kinds of sailing and motor boats up to 100ft in length. At that time there were about thirty men employed in the yard. Peter Dickie managed the yard until 1923; he then went to Bangor in Wales and took over the yard there, taking one of the Tarbert boatbuilders, Angus Murray, with him, and made him foreman. Tom Dickie then took on the manager's job at Tarbert.

When the Tarbert yard was busy its work force was as follows:

Tom Dickie, manager. Archie Dickie, slip foreman.

Bob Dickie, engineer. Jim Dickie, blacksmith.

Stewart Hamilton, foreman boatbuilder and carpenter.

8 to 10 boatbuilders and 4 apprentice boatbuilders.

2 joiners, 3 blacksmiths, 2 painters, one sawyer.

2 slip labourers, 1 timekeeper, 1 office girl.

French polishers and upholsterers were employed as required.

W.B. Leitch was responsible for sailmaking and rigging, and the installation and overhauling of engines was undertaken by Harry Mellish's engine workshop.

There was a sawmill and a smithy, and a steam engine installed in a position to drive all their machinery. About 1936 mains electricity was taken to Tarbert, and all the machines were then fitted with electric motors.

Boats built before 1923 included many kinds of motor launches and dinghies - some names are Morna, Veronica, Lady Ann, Lady Sophia, Witch, May Flower, Quest 1,2 and 3 and Rose Mary. The first big boat to be slipped at Dickies' was Snapshoot, a steam yacht for Mr Scarlett, laird of Gigha. During the 1914-1918 war many boats were built - naval pinnaces, lifeboats, whalers, rowing gigs etc.

Dickie and Sons carried on the yard till 1947. From 1948 there were several owners - Millar & Co, Aitchison & Co., Kay Bros., Cochran Duncan, Byron & Co. - but eventually the

yard went into liquidation. The machinery and other gear was sold by auction, and the buildings and slip bought by Barrs Construction of Ayr.

Some Boats Built from 1923 to 1948

- 1923) Onora: 65ft motor boat.
Macaria: 30ft yawl, mussel stern, gaff-rigged; for Mr Paisley of Paisleys, Jamaica St , Glasgow.
Cona: 25ft cabin cruiser; for Mr Fraser, stockbroker.
- 1924) Minadhu: 85ft motor boat.
- 1925) Lutha: 35ft motor sailer; for Mr Fraser.
Mouse: 40ft ketch-rigged yacht; for Mr Pollock, of Ronachan.
Mewahara: 45ft motor boat.
- 1926) Janetta I: 75ft motor boat; for Mr Hetherington, of the firm making Creamola Custard.
Cristal: 25ft sailing ship.
- 1927) Moonshine: 45ft ketch-rigged yacht; for Mr Kenneth, of Oakfield.
Dauntless: 50ft counter-stern gaff-rigged ketch.
- 1928) Janetta II: 90ft motor boat; for Mr Hetherington.
Oberlin: 20ft yawl; for schoolmaster at Tighnabruaich.
- 1929) Janetta III: 100ft motor boat; for Mr Hetherington.
- 1930) Cordelia: 65ft motor boat; for Mr Anderson, of Fyffes Bananas.
- 1931) Oranie: 45ft motor boat; for Mr Smillie. This boat was commandeered at the beginning of the 1939-1945 war and was never heard of again.
- 1932) Skerry Mhore: 45ft yawl, Mylne design; for Mr Clapham.
Ardcuan: 25ft sailing yacht; for Dr Dickie.
- 1933) Amanda: 35ft motor sailer; for Mr Paisley.
Dainhill: 35ft motor boat.
Laughing Water: 25ft sloop; for Mr Richmond.
Mary Fortune: 36ft motor sailer for ocean sailing; for Mr Job.
- 1934) Cruinnaig I: 25ft sailing boat; for Mr Morton, of BMK Carpets.
? : 20ft motor launch, half-decked.
? : 20ft Conway Class sailing yacht; for Mr Kenneth of Stronachullin.
- 1935) Cruinnaig II: 35ft Bermuda-rigged sailing yacht; for Mr Morton.
Shuna: 25ft sloop; for the Island of Shuna.

- ? : 18ft motor launch; for Mr Kenneth.
- 1936) Fionnaghal: 48ft fishing boat; for Mr MacDougall of Lorn Villa.
- ? : 20ft Conway Class sailing boat; for Mr Morton.
- ? : 20ft Conway Class sailing boat; for Mr Campbell of Succoth.
- Faith: 60ft motor boat; for Mr William, ship-owner, of Blyth.
- ? : 20ft cabin cruiser; for Meallmore.
- 1937) Tunnag: 40ft motor sailer; for Mr Ross.
- Cruinnaig III: 60ft counter-stern Bermuda-rigged ketch; for Mr Morton.
- Gitana: 30ft sloop; for Mr Tate, Provost of Girvan.
- ? : 20ft motor boat; for Mr Blake, Maryville.
- 1938) Islander: 45ft ketch, counter-stern, G L Watson design.
- Pallock: 50ft motor boat; for Mr Holt; lost at Dunkirk.
- 1939) Tagal: 30ft cabin cruiser; for Mr Richmond.
- Durtulla: 60ft motor boat; for Mr Black; for running cruises on Loch Etive; had an observation saloon.
- From 1940 to 1945 boats were built for the Navy.
- 6 Fairmile ML's 112ft long, Scott engines.
- 8 Fairmile MGB's and MTB's 115ft long, Packard engines.
- 2 40ft MFV's.

- 1946) ? : 56ft fishing boat for Tarbert.
- ? : 56ft fishing boat for Campbeltown.

Other boats built from 1923 to 1939 included 3 car ferries about 20 ft long with a revolving table, for transporting cars across the narrow lochs up the west coast, and also, for the Navy, a 30ft tender, 5 20ft pinnaces, and 3 16ft clinker-built rowing gigs.

[At this interval of time neither Mr MacDougall nor the Editor can be certain of the spelling of some of the boat names. Corrections welcomed!]

The yard did not only build boats; they also laid them up for the winter. Some years there were up to 40 boats ranging from 20ft to 40ft, and all shapes, laid up, along with all the yacht dinghies, and several motor launches. The boats were taken on to the slip at high water and the carriage on the rails lowered down to the bottom of the slip; the boat was floated on to the carriage, pulled up by the winch and then side-slipped to its berth for the winter. Most boats were under cover, but some were in the open. The

yacht gear had also to be stowed; most of the larger boats had one or two hands who were employed by the boat-owners for about six weeks after the boat was taken out of the water, to see all the gear put into the store. All the sails, ropes etc. had to be properly dried, and all the loose fittings had to be taken into the store. The store was a loft above the building they called the 'hospital' [from its original use]; there was a passage up the centre the full length of the building, with cubicles on either side. Each boat had its own cubicle for storage, which was locked and the key kept in the office.

For about twenty years, from 1900 to 1920 or so, Dickies' had a slip at the Dubh Chaol Linne. There was a stone building about 70ft by 30ft with a slated roof; it had a workshop below, and a loft for storing the yacht gear similar to that of the 'hospital'. The boats themselves were kept outside and covered with sarking board, the yacht's chain stretched across the top to keep the wind from lifting the boards. This slip never paid, as there was too much time lost taking gear of all kinds between the two slips. It was abandoned about 1915 but there were still boats lying there even up to 1925. The last three were the Dakota, the Bonet-ta and the Cam-mara.

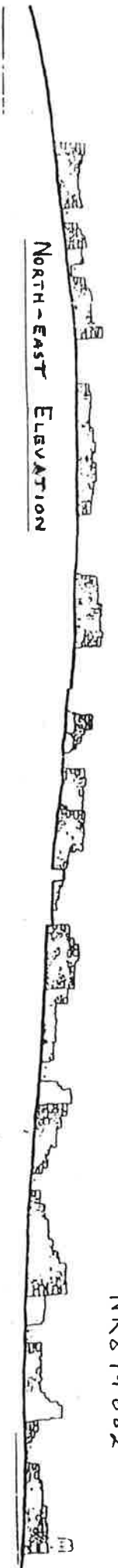
There were three other boatbuilders in Tarbert, on a smaller scale. Dugald Henderson had a shed in the bay in front of Islay House; over the years he built many boats, mostly 36ft to 38ft clinker sailing skiffs for the Tarbert fleet. On the other side of the harbour Fyffes had a shed at the Battery, and MacTavishes the shed in front of Spring-side. These two builders built mostly carvel boats and a few clinker skiffs for Tarbert and other fishing ports.

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NOTE on the COVER

Robert Pine's drawing is taken from a photograph, kindly lent by Mr Charles Gray, of Dunoran, Tarbert, of the launch of Cruinnaig II from Dickies' yard in 1935.

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NR279682

Meall Darrloch
1992
ACFA



KILN



ENCLOSURE

BELDARROCH

