

HAWKMOTH IN MID ARGYLL



ROSE ROOT AT
LARGIEBAAN



SAXIFRAGA OPPOSITIFOLIA



THE

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EDITORIAL

Natural history is something of a theme this issue, with moths and wildflowers taking the stage. In July I missed the magnificent sight of a humpback whale breaching off Portavadie in Loch Fyne. Our talk in November will be by Dr. Conor Ryan, sightings and strandings officer for the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust, and this, along other humpback sightings off the Scottish coast this year, will no doubt be mentioned. Over the years we have reported on the work of the Trust on many occasions, and they now have a splendid website - check out the amazing footage of a common dolphin swimming with a harbour porpoise at Otter Ferry.

All 89 previous issues of Kist have been digitally scanned. This represents a significant archive for the Society, which, in time, will become available to members online via our website (currently under development). It is heartening to see that the Society is moving into the Digital Age.

A Novice Botanist at Largiebaan, 2015

Angus Martin

Introduction

The following accounts have been condensed from a forthcoming book, *A Third Summer in Kintyre*. Largiebaan, owing to its geology and remoteness, is a fascinating botanical hunting ground, and I remain fit enough to reach parts of the coast that many botany enthusiasts, more knowledgeable than I, would hesitate to venture into.

8 April: Purple saxifrage

The breeze was strong on the cliff top, but I soon found an inviting spot, sheltered by a rock with little clumps of Purple saxifrage (*Saxifraga oppositifolia*) flowering from cracks and ledges. I didn't realise I was sharing their space until I was preparing to leave, otherwise I would have savoured their nearness. I reflected on how these modest harbingers of spring endure for year upon year through storm and flood and snow, rooted on rock in one of the most exposed coasts in all Kintyre; but, as I later read, in Lusby and Wright's *Scottish Wild Plants* (p 98), the species is 'one of the hardiest arctic-flowering plants' and 'vies for the accolade of being the most northerly reaching, having been recorded from the north coast of Greenland ...' M. H. Cunningham and A. G. Kenneth, in *The Flora of Kintyre*, remark (p 22) on 'a beautiful pink variant ... in the Largybaan area ...' The flowers round about me were indeed pink and beautiful.

Two other later saxifrages are found at Largiebaan, Mossy (below) and Yellow (*Saxifraga azoides*), which I'd see in



Yellow Saxifrage
Largiebaan - 15 Aug 2015

abundance in August, along with blue-tinted Wood vetch (*Vicia silvatica*).

3 June: Mossy saxifrage

Monday 1st June, with its gales and torrential rain, resembled a day in winter; Tuesday saw improvement, and the weather forecast for Wednesday was encouraging. With my developing interest in botany, I was keen to return to Largiebaan to see what changes a month had brought. A friend, George McSporran, and I set off on our bicycles at 1 pm. and reached the cliffs at around 5.

I overshot the spot I'd decided would be most sheltered from the wind, so we turned back to find it, and dropped below the cliff top to examine the botany en route. The most exciting discovery was a delicate white flower growing in grassy spaces among the rocks. It was Mossy saxifrage (*Saxifraga hypnoides*), a relative rarity in Kintyre, which Cunningham and Kenneth (p 22) recorded at Largiebaan and Johnston's Point on the Leaside. Agnes Stewart, my botanical mentor in Campbeltown, considers it the rarest of the Largiebaan saxifrages.



Mossy Saxifrage

5 June: Mountain Avens



Mountain Avens

A couple of days later, I set off again by bike for the Atlantic coast, this time alone. My sole motivation was a Mountain Avens colony Agnes had told me about. I reckoned I should be looking for *Dryas octopetala* in the long scree between Rubha Dùn Bhàin and Innean Gaothach. I hadn't gone far when I noticed white flowers on a rock face, and inside a minute *D. octopetala* was inches from my

face. I scrambled north and was soon surrounded by the flowers, which were thickest on the upper slopes of the scree, where the stones were less concentrated or had grassed over. I guessed there must be several hundred flowers in sight, making *D. octopetala* the most abundant species there (followed, probably, by Birdsfoot-trefoil, *Lotus corniculatus*). *The Flora of Kintyre* (p 21) refers to two colonies near Largiebaan: 'One south of Rubha Dùn Bhàin covers an appreciable area, with the *Dryas* locally dominant.' That, clearly, was the colony I had encountered.

In *The Englishman's Flora* (p 166), Geoffrey Grigson complains that 'No plant so much needs an apt English name'. The Latin *Dryas octopetala* is more vivid: *dryas* summons up the mythical dryad, which is the wood-nymph of the oaks, from the resemblance of the Mountain Avens leaf to that of the oak, and *octopetala* is 'eight-petalled'.

D. octopetala is an ancient member of the flora of the British Isles, remains dating back about 20,000 years having been uncovered in southern England, where, in colder times, it grew in tundra-like vegetation along with other arctic-alpine species. Its distribution is now related to particular rock types, including limestone, which accounts for its presence at Largiebaan.

A remarkable facility, for warming the flowers and attracting pollinating insects into them, is explained by Philip Lusby and Jenny Wright in *Scottish Wild Plants* (p 41): 'The constant glow of the flowers on a sunny day is not an illusion, but an adaptation known as sun-tracking whereby the dish-shaped flowers constantly turn to face the sun throughout the day.' Might 'Gilded sun-tracker' be proposed as a replacement name for 'Mountain Avens'? From Grigson's shade I hear a muffled oath.

7 June: Rose-root

On a sunny, breezy day, I cycled to Largiebaan with botany again foremost in my thoughts. I descended the north flank of the glen, and, having gained the shore, began making my way towards the caves. It was then I noticed an unfamiliar plant, growing from a damp, shady overhang. When my wife Judy examined my photographs, she identified Rose-root (*Sedum rosea*), a member of the stonecrop family which grows on sea cliffs and mountain rocks. Grigson described it as 'rather a dull plant' with 'mean yellow' flowers, but said that if the stock is cut, it gives out a lovely fragrance, 'like the damask Rose', as John Gerard observed nearly four centuries ago. On Largiebaan shore, I wasn't aware of that tip, but even if I had been, I wouldn't have taken a knife to the plant, which was the only one I saw there.

The photographs were forwarded to Agnes Stewart by Judy, who confirmed the identification and described *Sedum rosea* as 'another of the Largiebaan specialities', which she herself had seen once 'up Largiebaan Burn'. *The Flora of Kintyre* (p 22) describes its distribution as 'from near Ballygroggan to east of Signal Station', in other words Atlantic coast.

10 June: Yellow Oxytropis

The day was one of the warmest yet of that summer, and for the first time I was looking for somewhere to sit that would catch rather than shield me from the wind, and chose a grassy spur. I was facing north to the Aignish and contemplating what route to take to reach the foot of the cliff and the *Oxytropis campestris* I hoped to find.

I followed a sheep and goat track which led to the boulder field under the cliffs. The Aignish has shed thousands of tons of rock over millennia, but the track took me to a spot beneath the bared

face of a big fall which could only have happened a winter or two ago. The fresh-faced slabs were all around me, contrasting with earlier debris which had weathered and welcomed colonies of flowers and lichens. On and beneath the cliffs, the predominant colour was yellow – Kidney vetch, Birdsfoot-trefoil and Tormentil – but I noticed, on arrival, clumps of light-coloured flowers resembling clover ... but growing on the cliff. A couple of these clumps were low enough to be accessible, and on my backside I slid down the scree of small stones at the very base of the cliff to examine and photograph them.

I had found Largiebaan's Yellow oxytropis (*Oxytropis campestris*). Somehow it didn't much resemble the photographs I'd examined in a book the previous evening. The 'yellow' in *oxytropis* probably deceived me, but when I later consulted *The Flora of Kintyre* (p 19), I read that at Largiebaan 'flower colour ranges from parchment, parchment tinted palest mauve, parchment tinted palest violet, to – exceptionally – pale purple'. I had seen 'parchment'.



Oxytropis campestris

There are two *Oxytropis* species in Britain, *campestris* and *halleri*, both rare alpiners and both regarded as climatic relicts. In the whole of Britain, *O. campestris* occurs only in Angus, Perthshire and Kintyre. *Scottish Wild Plants* (p 74) remarks, without specifying location, that the flower 'descends to near sea-level in Kintyre, where it grows on the face of an exposed limestone sea-cliff together with other alpiners such as mountain Avens (*Dryas octopetala*) and hoary whitlowgrass (*Draba incana*)'.

I had seen a flower – not an especially beautiful one, in my estimation – which probably only a few dozen folk in Kintyre have

knowingly seen, and I consider myself privileged. (Three days later, Judy and I saw small clumps of *O. campestris* on the walls of a distinctive cleft in the cliff which extends right to the top, opposite the Kintyre Way swing-gate.)

I returned twice that summer to the sloping, sliding foot of the Aignish. Like all special places, wherever in the world, it has to be experienced to be appreciated, and preferably on a fine day. Words must fail in their description, but here goes.

The Aignish is a towering cliff at the north end of a great amphitheatre – of grassy slopes, scree and boulders – which resounds to the rhythmic crash of Atlantic swells and plaintive bird cries, and, on a warm day, gathers heat and shimmers in haze. In the south-west, across a sea sparkling in the sun as though the shards of a thousand broken mirrors were scattered on it, Rathlin Island and the north coast of Ireland lie, otherworldly behind a diaphanous blue screen. It's kind of poetic, but you're not there: not even a rock the size of your brain has bounced into life.

The Galloping Brae and Jock Fyne's Gate.

Duncan Beaton

Items regarding the merging of local traditions around the village of Furnace, the killing of the last wolf in Mid-Argyll and the 'Stone of the Foxes' (Clach a' bhatain) in recent issues of 'Kist' have had me searching out other old notes. The old high road out of the village of Furnace, north to Inveraray, was not in existence when General Roy's Military Survey was completed in 1759, but was in use less than a century later when John Thomson & Co of Edinburgh produced their map in 1824. In this latter map it is shown joining what is now the main A83 at Auchindrain. Today it is now more familiar as part of the Leacain Millennium Footpath.

The part, from the bridge over the River Leacain and up behind Bridge Terrace, was called 'The Galloping Brae'. Old folks in Bridge Terrace in the 1950s and 1960s, who were around before the advent of the motor car, said the byname came from the coaches and carts racing down the last stretch from Inveraray, the horses at full gallop.

About a mile up the hill, below the former farmhouse of South Craleckan, there was a farm gate. It is now barely recognisable as such, but in 1981 when the accompanying photograph was taken, the gateposts survived. Beside it on the right-hand side (when heading for Auchindrain) was the ruin of a cottage: even then the planted spruce trees were beginning to show. The gate was



Jock Fyne's Gate

known as 'Jock Fyne's Gate' and apparently he was the occupant of the cottage from time to time.

Who, then, was Jock Fyne? In his short story 'Boboon's Children', included in the 'Lost Pibroch' collection of short stories, the Inveraray novelist Neil Munro (1863-1930) uses the character of John Fine MacDonald – Old Boboon, 'the father and head of the noblest of wandering tribes', a tinker who left his child to be brought up by a family in Inveraray. Munro wove his tales around facts and traditions he had heard during his youth, making fiction with little regard for the dates but a keen sense of the characters brought to life in his tales. Indeed, from stories passed down in Furnace there was some substance in a tinker origin for Jock Fyne, perhaps a Johnstone, or Johnson, themselves a branch of the Glencoe MacDonalds.

These stories, and the people of Furnace who told them, have

now passed from living memory. But as the Sitka forest is felled the sites described, Clach a' bhatain and its school, and the foundations of John Fyne's cottage, will come back into view.

A New Hawkmoth Record for Argyll – Bedstraw Hawkmoth

David Jardine

Over the years the Kist has contained a few notes about Hawkmoths in Mid-Argyll. The first of these was about an Elephant Hawkmoth at Minard in 1972, the first record for Argyll. Kist 11 (1976) and Kist 13 (1977) record another in Minard and one at Kilberry, noting its establishment as a breeding species and tracking its spread in Argyll. This spring, a veritable 'herd of elephants' was caught, when 24 were found in a moth-trap at Kilmartin on 10 July 2015, demonstrating how successful this species has become.

Other copies of the Kist (No 4 – 1972) record a Narrow-bordered Bee Hawkmoth at Kilberry and the migrant Hummingbird Hawkmoth on Jura in 1983 (Kist 25). Perhaps surprisingly the only reference to the most widespread member of this group in Argyll, the Poplar Hawkmoth, is within an article about moths found in Kilmartin (Kist 87).

Until 2015, there were records of nine different Hawkmoths in Argyll (see table), although questions have been raised over the validity of the single record of a Broad-bordered Bee Hawkmoth on Islay.

On the evening of 22 August 2015 a Robinson moth-trap (using a 125W mercury vapour bulb) was set in a garden in Kilmartin, close to a Fuschia bush, and in view of forecast rain, under the cover of an 'open roof' (no walls). During the previous week there had been warm weather in the south of England and on 22

August there was a southerly wind, with a belt of heavy rain moving north through the country, which arrived at Kilmartin in the early morning of 23 August. The moth-trap was switched off at 0400hrs and made secure before emptying the following morning. The trap contained over 200 moths of around 40 species, but amongst these was one which was much larger than the others with a wing-length of almost 40mm. It was quickly identified as a Bedstraw Hawkmoth (*Hyles gallii*).

Bedstraw Hawkmoth is a continental species which is recorded in small numbers each year as a migrant in Britain; although Waring & Townsend (2003 – Field Guide to the Moths of Britain and Ireland) note a population became established in East Anglia from 1987. Its foodplants are recorded as Bedstraws, Rosebay Willowherb (which grows in profusion on the hill to the south of Kilmartin), madders and fuschias. Elsewhere in Scotland, there are many records from the Northern Isles, two from the Outer Hebrides and one from Rum. There are single records from Wester Ross and West Sutherland, with the remaining mainland records being scattered east of a line between Stranraer and Tongue.



Bedstraw Hawkmoth. Kilmartin. (NR8398). 22 August

The moth was released mid-afternoon on 23 August, when the temperature was 25 degrees Celsius. After a very short period of wing exercise it took to the air rising to a height of 20-30m and

flew off strongly despite a strong easterly wind. This is the first record for Argyll, but unlike the Elephant Hawkmoth its prospect of becoming an established breeder seems slim.

Occurrence of Hawkmoth species in the Argyll Vice-Counties – number of ten km squares with records (data from www.eastscotland-butterflies.org.uk/mothflighttimes.html)

	VC98 Main Argyll	VC101 Kintyre	VC 102 South Ebudes	VC 103 Mid Ebudes
Poplar Hawkmoth	Many	Many	Many	Many
Convolvulus Hawkmoth	One	One	Two	Six
Death's Head Hawkmoth			One	One
Narrow—bordered Bee Hawkmoth	Several	Five	Four	Several
Broad-bordered Bee Hawkmoth			One*	
Hummingbird Hawkmoth	Two	One	Six	Seven
Bedstraw Hawkmoth	(One)			
Elephant Hawkmoth	Many	Many	Many	Many
Small Elephant Hawkmoth	One		One	
Silver Striped Hawkmoth		One		

*This record may be in error

From Russia to Lochgilphead: the Keirs in the 19th Century

Fiona Campbell Byatt, F.S.A. Scot.

Harriet Keir and her husband Alexander Campbell arrived in Argyll in 1841 and spent their lives raising their large family and farming the land around Lochgilphead. This story is based on her own letters and memoirs and on those written by her daughter Julia.



Picture 1

Harriet's father, James Keir, was a doctor and in 1803 found himself in St Petersburg, founded by Peter the Great in 1715. He found work with Count Woramsow in the newly built city. Scotland and St Petersburg had always had a lively trade in timber and furs and as a result many Scottish people had settled there and some had married into Russian families. James was no exception and in 1807 he married Marie Bourtzoff, a girl of good family who had been educated at a select school with others from the Tsar's circle and various royal connections. James and Marie lived in a part of the town called the English quarter, but after the birth of their little girl Elizabeth or Misha, Marie fell ill and then died.

In 1810 James brought his little girl back to his mother's house in Edinburgh and left her in her care. His mother, Elizabeth Rae, had married a Dr William Keir, and after two children had been born to them in London, her husband had caught an illness from one of his patients and died. The young widow came home to Edinburgh with her two boys. A girl, Williamina Isabella, was born posthumously after her return. Elizabeth was living at home but there was very little money and as a result she took to writing poetry and had a book published called *Interesting Memoirs by a*

Lady. The book was published in London and Edinburgh in 1785 and was dedicated to Queen Charlotte, a quite remarkable achievement.

Her older son, James Keir, then became a doctor and through the good offices of a relation found himself employed in Russia. His mother wrote to him in 1803 and again after he had married.

'From the time war was announced with Russia, I abandoned all hope of hearing from my children. Judge my dear, dear, James with what delight I yesterday received three of your letters, informing me of your health and assuring me of your happiness. May Almighty God continue to you and your Beloved every blessing. I am perfectly charmed with Mary's letters. The good sense and unaffected tenderness they breathe were cordial to my heart and drew a tear from your brother who warmly precipitates in all the good you enjoy. I am surprised at the ease and correctness with which our dear girl writes the English and from the strict observance of the idiom should be tempted to suspect you had assisted her. But be assured I am not disposed to detract from any of her perfections. I fear there is little chance now of being able to send her a small token of my remembrance. Should any opportunity arise I shall not fail to send the ring and a suit of table linen.'

Sadly, after a short marriage and the birth of Elizabeth or Misha, his wife Marie died and he brought his little daughter back to his mother's house in Edinburgh where he then hoped to find work, but having not succeeded he was obliged to return to Russia

During the two years Dr James Keir had been away, 1811 to 1813, Napoleon had stormed through Russia and ended up overlooking Moscow. The city was mainly built of wood and a courageous decision was taken to evacuate and set the houses on fire.

Napoleon was left with no option but to retreat in the terrible winter weather, losing troops and guns as he went. This was the ruined city James returned to, having decided to move from St Petersburg where he had buried his beloved wife and to find work with Count Nikolai Sheremetev.

The Count was a friend of the Tsar and he had contracted marriage with a beautiful serf girl, the daughter of a blacksmith on the family estate. Praskovia had a wonderful singing voice and had first come to prominence singing opera at the Court. In those days she could well have become the mistress of Count Sheremetev, but he fell in love with her and flouting all conventions they were married. In a portrait she is shown wearing the diamond ring given to her on the occasion by the Tsar.

Tsar Alexander was intent on reform, especially of the practice of serfdom, which kept families of workers tied to the estate where they were born. It was a cruel and repressive form of slavery with harsh penalties for those who tried to escape. A son was born to the Count and Praskovia but soon after she died, leaving a quite remarkable will, which her husband sorrowfully carried out.

She asked him to found a hospice and orphanage in her name but laid down many conditions and requests. The children were to wear pretty clothes; they were to have birthday parties and sleep in beds with coloured blankets. All this was unheard of at the time, but the Count and later his son carried it out and Dr James Keir was appointed Medical Superintendent. James Keir also became known to the Tsar and was among his medical advisers.

Throughout this time his daughter Misha was in Edinburgh, in the care of his mother and his unmarried sister. However, tragic news came in 1718 that she had died after an attack of measles.

Elizabeth, Misha's grandmother, wrote that Williamina had never left her side 'night or day'. Misha was buried in St. John's churchyard, at the west end of Princes Street.

After returning to Russia, James Keir had re-married. Julie Pretre was the daughter of a Swiss gentleman and his English wife and became the mother of the Harriet of this story, born in December 1823, and a little later her sister Joanna.

From Edinburgh, Elizabeth wrote, '*My heart sends to you, your Julia and your dear infants its warmest affectionate prayers and blessings.*' Sadly, it seems likely that she never met her new daughter-in-law or grand-daughters in person as she died in 1827.

Sir James Keir worked in Moscow until he retired in 1838 and then brought his family back to live in Edinburgh. At the age of fifteen Harriet must have spoken both Russian and French and perhaps had a governess who may be the same lady mentioned in the memoirs. They settled in Edinburgh and the girls must have continued their education. Although their grandmother was no longer present, James Keir's unmarried sister was still living in Edinburgh, and there was also an aunt, married to a Mr Ayton. Therefore, although his second wife Julie was said to be an invalid, there were other members of his family to help look after Harriet and Joanna. Barely a year later Harriet and Alexander Campbell had met, and Harriet's aunt, Mrs Ayton, would play a key role in advancing their courtship.

Alexander Campbell was born in 1816 near the Clyde and had lost his father when he was nine. He was placed by his guardians in the household of a schoolmaster in Glasgow and continued his education, going to Germany when he was sixteen and then was destined to join the army. He joined the Dragoon Guards in 1835 but he and Harriet must have got to know each other before

1839. It seems the course of their love did not run smoothly. After Alexander proposed, Harriet wrote that her father thought her too young to know her own mind and that he needed her at home. But the lovers were resolute and became engaged and by June 1841 they were married.

Alexander's guardians had bought the estate of Auchendarroch, near Lochgilphead, when he was twenty-one and he decided to give up his career in the army and become a farmer. His ambition was to become a Highland laird and in Harriet he must have seen the makings of a stalwart wife.

It is worth quoting what Harriet wrote herself in later years about their early romance and the wedding arrangements. *'I saw him first, riding...'*, she writes. Some days later, her Aunt Ayton must have received a letter from the prospective suitor, because she referred this to Harriet:

'That fine young fellow you told me about, I hear that Neil Malcolm has a great regard for him and says old Balliemore would give his ears if he could get him to think of Susan. I do not err in introducing this young man to you. Here is the letter, judge for yourself and speak to your Father'.

Harriet continues: *'I was only a child nearly 18 and Alexander was 26. My Father said he had nothing to give me. I was too young, too inexperienced.'*

Her father was not willing to part with his young daughter. *'She was not a Poor man's wife, too delicate and a little spoilt with foreign life and luxuries which are cheap in Russia and it [the marriage] would only end in sorrow.'* Moreover, politics were never far from the surface, and Sir James noted that the Keirs were *'an old Highland family'*, adding that *'the Campbell's, you will remember, were not Jacobites as we were!'*

However, her Aunt continued to play an important role in the courtship.

'Aunt Ayton arranged we should meet. He came and proposed. He said he was an orphan and unsure of his background, brought up by guardians and at boarding school, in Germany and now in the Army. He had an estate in Argyll where he wished to live but my Father was against. He asked if that made any difference? I said 'NO'. Then we were to be married in St Paul's, York Place.'

Harriet was nothing if not determined. Yet, the question of her wedding clothes still remained to be solved.

'I was such a child,' she writes in her Memoirs. '... never been taken shopping. Aunt Ayton and Miss Elphinstone (my governess) bought all my clothes though I rebelled when they took me to Blackwoods and began settling about my dresses, that was too much. I had been secretly boiling at being treated as a child but I endured it, but when it came to my wedding dress, approved of by other people's taste, I made a stand and refused to have anything, unless I was allowed to choose what suited my own ideas. This gave great offence. We had a scene but I would not put on what others said was pretty and lovely and the right thing. I would wear what suited myself or go off in my old clothes!'

The ladies had reached an impasse, one that the bridegroom initially made even worse, with a suggestion that was equally distasteful to aunt and governess, and possibly to Harriet herself.

'The Laird (Alexander) came. 'My dear, tulle and satin! I can't take you to the Highlands in that. Choose a good stout material that will stand hard brushing.' There was an outcry – a public disgrace – what would people think? You forget what

is due to the family! Aunt Ayton said white for the wedding, could change after the Wedding Lunch. But the Laird said, 'No, we must start immediately. Who needs to eat between a good breakfast and dinner? Just wear the dress you are going to be married in, my Dear.' So there was a great scene until I was tired out. There was a hubbub. I would disgrace the Family, draw Public Attention, it would be in all the Papers, it was the custom of the County...'

However, like most domestic discords, a solution was eventually decided.

'Finally a fine grey silk was chosen at £1.1s a yard, a hat with a gauze veil, light and airy. So we were married, my sister a bridesmaid. Alexander told me he had meant to get his darling Harriet a diamond ring and a watch but because of cholera in the village at his home, he had given the money in my name to alleviate the poor. I did wish he had told me that sooner as my Mother had given me a pretty little watch with a dark blue enamel face with pearls but because of the promise of another, I had given it to my sister. Campbell of Monzie was Groomsman; he gave me a set of garnets, necklace and brooch. He said he hoped I would be a good Highland Laird's wife. Miss Elphinstone was a good friend to me; she spoke highly of the Laird, a fine Christian and a good man'

The marriage took place at St Paul's, Edinburgh, on 24 June 1841, when she was *'scarcely 17'*. St Paul's was a fashionable Episcopalian church at the end of Queen's Street. According to her new husband's wishes, the couple left immediately after the service and would have driven out of Edinburgh, heading west. Here is Harriet's own description:

'Well, we set off in a fine coach with postilions and a beautiful pair of grey horses. We drove and drove until I was nearly dead with want of sleep before saying goodbye and with want of food until we reached a pretty little nest of a place on Loch Katrine. In the next few days we drove and drove until we reached Auchendarroch, at 7 o'clock. A lovely home and place indeed. My heart was so full of happiness, though I was so tired, so hungry.'

Harriet describes Auchendarroch as a *'fine house'*. There are records of a substantial house at Oakfield, its earlier name, when it was owned by the MacNeils. The 1865 Ordnance Survey map shows the outline of a building that is recognisably the one seen in some photos. An early bridge, probably made of iron, had been built across the Canal in 1817 (later to be replaced by the swing bridge in 1871). When Harriet drove across the bridge and up to the house, she was amazed to find a *'world of people'* employed there. Some of the names she mentions are still familiar to us today: *'Archie Sinclair was standing at the door in case a message was wanted'*; then there were *'James Miller, a game-keeper, Niven the gardener, Donald Dewar, John MacCallum, MacDougal at the Lodge...'*. However, despite the numbers of people, nothing appeared to have been prepared, *'no real work was done'*, and *'there was nothing, not even a cup of tea'*. After the long journey, Harriet was tired but, she writes, *'I was wrapped up in my fur cloak and taken to the lovely garden and told to sit there till food and a bed were arranged. I must sit in that fur on a hot July evening and of course I did!'*. Inside, there must have been mayhem, for then she adds: *'Then came a confusion in the house ... and the Laird was troubled.'* Harriet must have been a girl of strong character to have managed to

accept such an arrival, but the next day she got up early and was ready to exert her authority.



Photo 2

'The first thing to be done was to send away the half of the useless people. The housekeeper that very moment. I gave my orders and in the house a clearance was made and we started with a good cook, a kitchen girl, my maid, one housemaid, one laundress, one butler and a boy, and a groom and a boy. But out of doors I could not attempt to interfere as I knew nothing of country matters and I was not strong and had enough to do to keep myself and the house and my husband cheery and comfortable. And so started our married life.'

I am grateful to my daughter Lucy for her help with references and her husband Giorgio for the photographs and drawings, to my sister Gillian Mackie-Campbell for the loan of the early photographs of Harriet, and to Diarmid Campbell for his help with the original document of Harriet's *Memoirs*, first transcribed by Alan Campbell.



CAPTIONS

Photo 1: Harriet Campbell soon after marriage

Photo 2: Auchendarroch (Archibald) and Mrs Campbell

Drawing: Auchendarroch, Lochgilphead, Argyllshire (demolished c.1967)

NHASMA 2015 - Ireland

John Dymont

- N Irish Coast
- Limavady
- Londonderry
- Rathlin Island
- Inishowen Peninsula
- Newgrange Burial Tombs
- Titanic Exhibition

Twelve hardy travellers assembled at 9.00 am in the P&O ferry car park at Troon. The catamaran ferry vessel not being of the RO-RO type the vehicle entry point also serves as the exit. Thus boarding drivers follow an intricate route around the inside of the vessel to end up ready to exit. The journey to our residential destination, Portstewart, proved less straightforward than expected due to road works and inadequately signed diversions. Our accommodation was excellent - very roomy bordering on the palatial by comparison with some experienced in former trips. The week's programme was an interesting mix of history, geology, natural history and archaeology, not to mention a good measure of gastronomy.

N Irish Coast

Our first port of call was Dunluce Castle. This ruin stands perched on a spectacular cliff top position. Its origins date back to the 13th century when the 2nd Earl of Ulster, built the first castle at Dunluce. It is first documented in the hands of the McQuillan



family in 1513. The McQuillans were the Lords of Route from the late 13th century until they were displaced by the MacDonalds after losing two major battles against them during the mid and late 16th century. Later Dunluce Castle became the home of the chief of the Clan MacDonnell of Antrim and the Clan MacDonald of Dunnyveg from Scotland.

Our next stop, the Giant's Causeway, is now a World Heritage Site. To cope with the volume of visitors - probably numbering in

the thousands on a peak day, the



National Trust operates the site by providing sole access through a large modern (opened in 2012) visitor centre. Internally its architecture seemed reminiscent of an airport terminal, albeit with basaltic

overtones. Video displays relay

information about the geologic history of the site over the last 60 million years. Intriguingly it seems that some creationist material originally on display has since been removed. Visitors wishing to see all of the extensive geologic site will need to walk several kilometres; 24-seater buses plying to and fro, free to NT members, were very overcrowded and on busy days use should be restricted to those with disability. Excellent portable audio guides with on screen information were provided free. In retrospect this reviewer came away with the impression that the hexagonal basalt at Fingal's Cave in Staffa is no less impressive and probably more atmospheric and awesome.

The rope bridge onto Carrick-a-rede Island, a volcanic plug - also managed by the National Trust - provided a frisson of excitement.

Suspended almost 30m above sea level, the Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge was first erected by salmon fishermen 350 years ago.

Reassuringly the supporting ropes are backed up by steel hawsers. A fierce wet squall while actually crossing the bridge added to the tension! Access is pedestrian only, a walk of 0.6 miles.



NHASMA members crossing the bridge

Limavady

Roe Valley Country Park, in Limavady was the destination for the following day. It has been reported that as many as 61 different bird species have been sighted at this site. Of the two options the 'forest riverside' walk was selected. Some fields at the riverside had in earlier times been used as 'bleaching' fields, where raw linen fibres were laid out to bleach in the sun before processing into cloth. The fields were overseen by stone inspection towers to deter thieving, which could be a capital offence in those days. A ruined 'beetling' shed stood in one of the fields. 'Beetling' consisted of hammering the fibres in order to produce a sheen on the final product.

Londonderry

A day in Londonderry provided the basis for a visitor's impressions of the city today. A guided bus tour through the different areas meandered around the city walls, the Peace Bridge, the Bogside (viz. bloody Sunday area), the Guildhall and the 'Hands across the Divide' statue. The gable end of buildings displayed pictures of victims, wartime drawings and the 'End of the War' painting. The overall impression was that far too much was being made of 'recent' history, i.e. the troubles, and far too little resource was devoted to origins and history over the longer term.

Rathlin Island

Rathlin Island is 2½ miles off of the coast of Northern Ireland at its nearest point. However the crossing from Ballycastle to Church Bay is about 6 miles taking 45 minutes by car ferry or 25 minutes on the passenger ferry. On landing the option of a 4 mile minibus ride to the RSPB Bird Sanctuary at the west end of the island was accepted by all. The new visitor centre at the sanctuary had been opened only a few days previously. It is built on the existing infrastructure of the West End Lighthouse. It provides an excellent viewpoint for the incredible masses of seabirds crowded on the sea stacks, cliffs and rocks below. Guillemots, razorbills puffins and great skuas in particular were noted.

Inishowen Peninsula

The Inishowen peninsula is a wild sparsely populated area lying between Lough Foyle on the East and Lough Swilly on the West. Taking the ferry across Lough Foyle to Greencastle, we headed north to Malin Head, the most northerly point on the Irish mainland. Here, on a hazy overcast day we found a group of deserted buildings, including a towering wartime observation post, built in 1805, also called Banba's Crown, after a mythical goddess. Moving on to Fort Dunree brought disappointment when visitor reception facilities were found to be closed.

Grianan of Aileach is probably the best known monument in Inishowen. Situated on a hill top 800 feet above sea level the stone fort was probably built on top of an existing earthen structure. The view from Aileach was breathtaking. The glistening waters of Lough Foyle and Lough Swilly are clear as is the form of the





entire peninsula. This monument has been a focal point for human activity for thousands of years. The spectacular view from the summit makes it an ideal spot from which to overlook the lands and waters below.

It is a multi-period site. It is believed that the tumulus or ancient burial site dates from the Neolithic Period. The cashel (fort) dates from an early historic period, 600 A.D. The site is situated on private land and is readily accessible to the public.

Newgrange

Newgrange is one of the best known ancient monuments in the whole of Ireland. The site is situated about 1 km north of a bend in the river Boyne near the town of Drogheda, and is believed to date back at least 5,000 years. As with many prehistoric sites its purpose and method of construction have been and are likely to remain the subject of speculation. It is a World Heritage Site.



Recent makeover and refurbishment have been subject to controversy. Visits to it are confined to guided tours bussed in from a remote visitor centre. Newgrange is best known for the illumination of its passage and chamber by the winter solstice sun. Above the entrance to the passage at Newgrange there is an opening called a roof-box. This baffling orifice held a great surprise

for those who unearthed it. Its purpose is to allow sunlight to

penetrate the chamber on the shortest days of the year, around December 21st, the winter solstice. At dawn, from December 19th to 23rd, a narrow beam of light penetrates the roof-box and reaches the floor of the chamber, gradually extending to the rear of the chamber. As the sun rises higher, the beam widens within the chamber so that the whole room becomes dramatically illuminated. This event lasts for 17 minutes, beginning around 9am.

Titanic Exhibition

Four of the group travelled by train and bus to the Titanic Exhibition in Belfast. An authentic display of the conditions of this era was shown on 6 floors of the museum. A thrilling gondola ride showed stages in the building of the ship and in particular the method of riveting the plates together. Displays included the design of the ship, the engines, the different classes of cabins and living accommodation. It gave an excellent impression of the sheer size and magnificence of the vessel and was a very worthwhile visit.

The Plains of Ireland

Rebecca Pine

The plains of Ireland flow with milk and honey –
so said Donatus in eight-sixty-three.

I wonder then why some folk think it funny
that we should go there for our island spree?

Donatus called it 'Scotia'! Just as well
since 'Scottish' islands are our usual choice;
but for the record thus the needle fell

and we, like Fido, heard His Master's Voice.

The ferry there was full of kilted men
from Glasgow, for the Rugby Pro 12 Cup.

We parted on the causeway; then again
the road we travelled down was mostly up.

The bally road to Ballymena beat
the bally Sat-Nav, and at length we found
Port Stewart Strand was bally sand! But meet
we did, and set our feet on firmer ground.

On Sunday morn at crack of dawn was rain.
By decent hour the shower had turned to sun,
and so in Fingal's footsteps went our train;
the latest venture truly had begun.

The weather dashed across us from Dunluce
to Causeway, Rope-bridge; wind and water too!
The sun shone briefly, but with least excuse
the wind blew sideways, chilled the marrow through.

The Giant's Causeway – linked with Fingal's Cave
by basalt veins beneath Atlantic Sea –
is now, alas, some North Atlantic rave:
a vast cash cow, milked by our own N.T.

At 'Sizzling Sausage' where we dined that night
our Mary's sat together at the edge.

One named herself as 'frogspawn' (if I'm right!)
which gives us now two Mary's – 'Meat' and 'Veg'!

June 1st was 'free' – each to our own delights.

June 2nd and we headed down the west
to visit Londonderry, see the sights
by bus – the Guildhall, City Walls and best
of all, the signs of Peace. We dined on shore
at 'Harry's Shack', where all the fish was good.
(Alas of Lobster Moisie drew short straw –
but I had half of Mary Veg's pud!)

On Rathlin Island seabirds by the stack!
No sign though of the hairy dangling thing
that made our Brucey 'try again', turn back
to Scotland as our once and saviour King.

Across the border next, to Donegal,
to put the Gods of Weather to the test;
to venture up to Mallin Head, and all
we saw was weather to the north and west.

Thence Dunrea Head, where choughs and seabirds sport
around the layered cliffs. And further down
at Grianan Ailigh's circular Hill Fort
we marvelled at the outlook from the crown.

Fast forward and fast journey south this day
to Newgrange Tomb and temple by the Boyne.
(another border crossing on the way)
and maybe spend a little Euro coin!

An Irish Orkney? Maybe! – Gallic? Norse?
Something to contrast or perhaps compare.
We only can surmise the ancient source
of skill, prescience, wit, to build it there.

Tomorrow is another day, another place.
Another Country rings its welcome bell
as home to Scotland footsteps we retrace –
All thanks to Moisie! Ireland – Hail! Farewell!

Birds in Northern Ireland

Valerie Barker

We had good siting of Choughs but many common birds were in low numbers. In all we saw 60 species, the most abundant being crows and starlings! The sea bird population on Rathlin Island was fantastic and well looked after by the RSPB.

Angus Martin Book Review

Ed Tyler, Editor

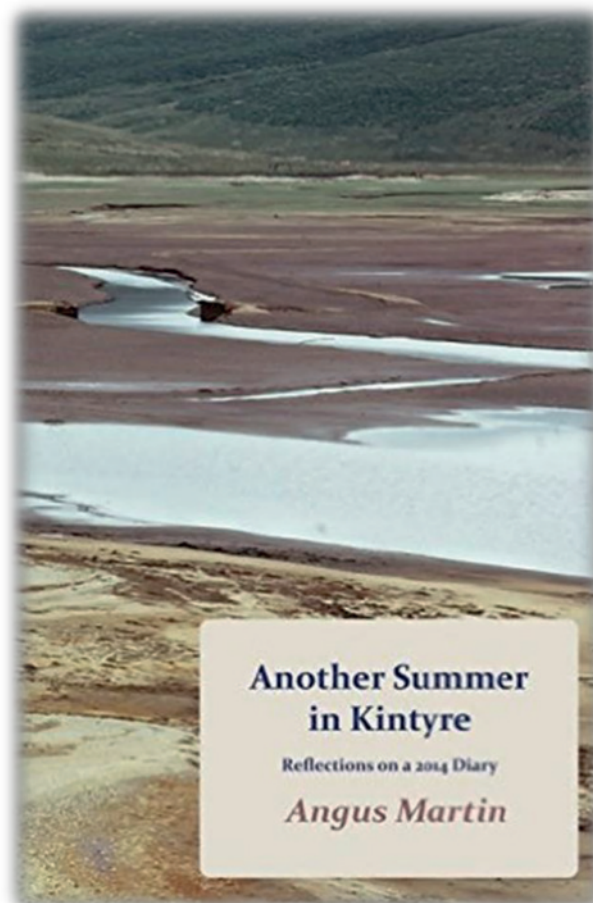
Angus Martin will be known to many readers of Kist as an historian of Kintyre, having published many books including a number on fishing. His latest offerings are an absorbing, idiosyncratic excursion into travel writing. Travel for Angus, in his own inimitable way, means cycling and walking through South Kintyre, with the occasional foray into more northern areas such as Ballachroy and Barr Glen.

'Another Summer in Kintyre' is actually his second book on the same theme, the first being 'A Summer in Kintyre'. Whilst the narrative begins in April 2014 and ends in September, sequential time proves largely irrelevant, as he is always dipping into his own personal past, the past of friends and acquaintances he meets and the deeper past of the folk who fascinate him: travelling tinsmiths, convicts, artists, musicians, cave dwellers and many others besides. The landscape he is moving through constantly

evokes both personal memories and recollections of the folk who lived in and worked from the ruined buildings he encounters. Sometimes there is not even a ruin; a surviving place name will be enough to bring the former inhabitants of an obscure glen back to life.

Angus is fully engaged with his small part of the world: which is not small at all. His encounters with flowers, butterflies, and otters are set down in detail, but it is his encounters with his fellow human beings, who inhabit his world, or once inhabited it, that make this work truly memorable.

When I read the book my own memory of Angus comes to mind: he is cycling through his home town of Campbeltown amongst the traffic, cap firmly on, heading out on one of his day-long excursions.



Editor's note and corrections

In the previous issue of Kist, number 89, I featured a report on the archaeological excavations at Upper Largie Quarry in Kilmartin Glen. As a result of this one of the report's authors, Dr. Alison Sheridan, contacted me to say that she had had an article published in a Prehistoric Society Research Papers volume. She invites Kist readers to read the article, which is freely available on-line on her academia.edu website, using the following url:

https://www.academia.edu/12179141/Contextualising_Kilmartin_building_a_narrative_for_developments_in_western_Scotland_and_beyond_from_the_Early_Neolithic_to_the_Late_Bronze_Age

Please note that on page2 of the Kist 89 report the word 'principle' is incorrect: it should be 'principal'. Also, the picture captions for the article were unintelligible. The captions should read as follows:

p.7: Pot 1 Upper Largie beaker (as found)

p.8 top: Pot 2 as found

p.8 bottom: Pot 3 beaker as found

p.9 top: Pot 3 beaker reconstructed

p.9 bottom: footed food vessel

p.11: complete food vessel from 1993 cist burial

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