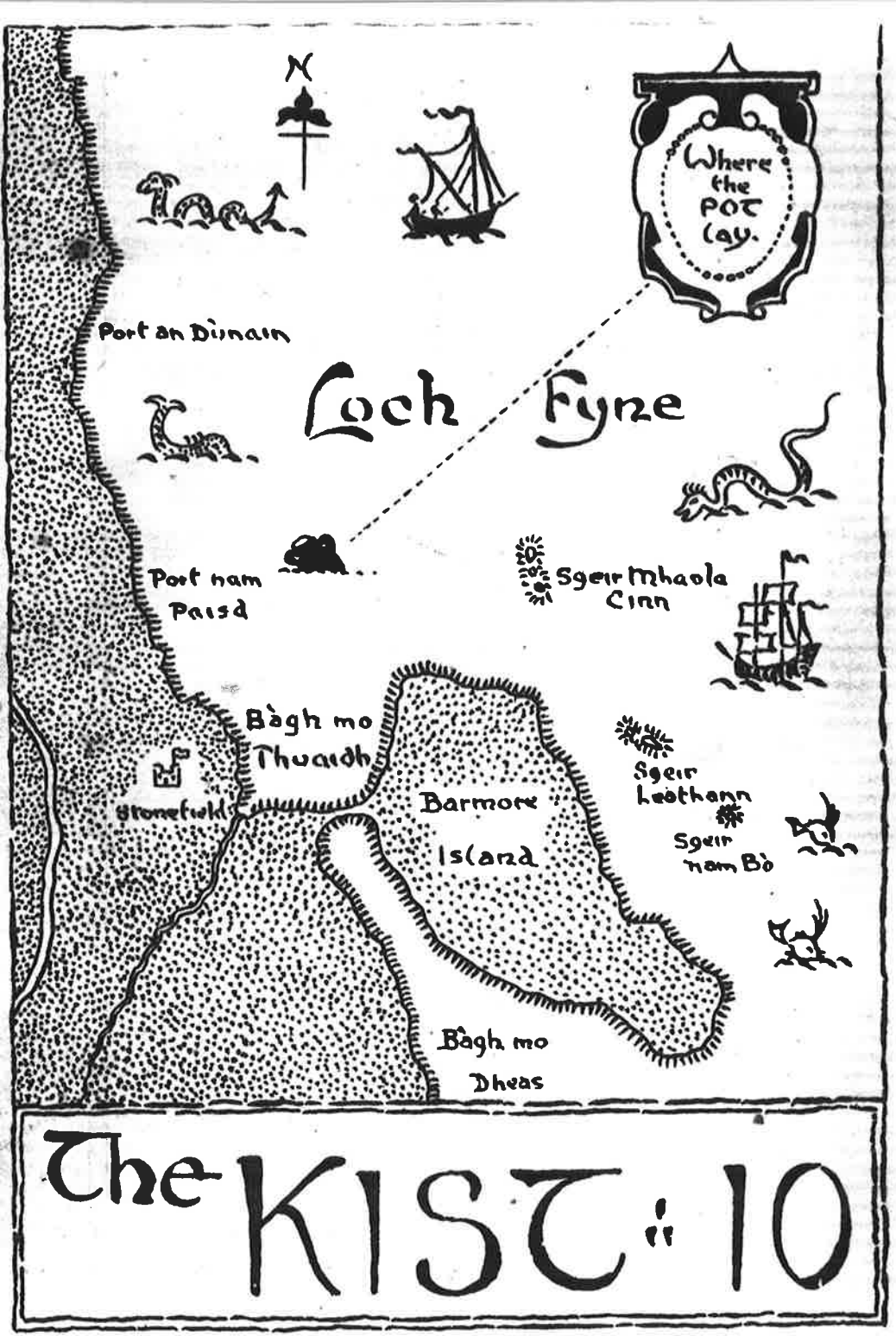
N
Where the POT lay.
Port an Dùnain
Loch Fyne
Port nam Paisd
Sgeir Mhaola Cinn
Bàgh mo Thuaidh
Stonefield
Barmore Island
Sgeir Leothann
Sgeir nam Bò
Bàgh mo Dheas

# The KIST : 10

# THE KIST

The Magazine of
The Natural History & Antiquarian Society
of Mid-Argyll

President:Miss Campbell of Kilberry, FSA. FSAScot.

.....

NUMBER TEN: Autumn 1975

Editor:F.S.Mackenna, MA. FSA. FSAScot.

CONTENTS

A Mediaeval Jug from Loch Fyne.
F. Severne Mackenna, ..... I

An Enlistment in Tarbert.
Col. P.F.Fane Gladwin, OBE ..... 8

Bygone Natural History (quotations) ..... 10

The Campbells of Keills Ferry.
George Campbell ..... 11

When the Years Were Young, Pt.3
Miss Mary Sandeman ..... 18

Beauty in Old Bottles.
J.R.Carmichael ..... 20

Extracts from 'Old Kilberry's' Diaries, Pt.4
By courtesy of Miss Campbell of Kilberry . 22

Book Review ..... 27

...oOo...

Hon. Secretary: Air Vice Marshal Gordon Young,CBE
Middle Hill, Ardrishaig.

Assistant Hon. Sec. (Membership and Kist)
Mrs A.M.Kahane, MA. FSAScot.
Kilchoan Lodge, Poltalloch, by Lochgilphead.

Price: 30p. (by post 38p). Free to Members.

# A MEDIAEVAL JUG FROM LOCH FYNE

F.S.Mackenna

Although the earliest pottery of Britain had, to a large degree, derived its inspiration from Continental sources, many insular characteristics can be distinguished.

The oldest examples come from a period around 2500-1900 B.C., classed as Neolithic, marking a change from a hunting economy to an agricultural one with its more sedentary way of life. Pottery kilns appeared about 450 B.C. and with the coming of the Romans much more sophisticated techniques were introduced. But the end of the Roman era, with its resultant instability and unrest, held up further development of the potter's art and indeed caused a great regression.

The poorer citizens were content with vessels of wood, and very few examples of pottery survive from this period, and such as we know are scarcely more advanced in quality than those of the Iron Age.

It was only with the advent of William of Normandy that English potting recommenced its development, keeping pace with the more settled way of life then being enjoyed. But many centuries were to pass before recognised centres of potting were established, such as those of Staffordshire.

Mediaeval pottery was adapted to local needs, with pot-works of very slight importance scattered over the country. Communications were wretched and frequently impracticable; indeed well towards the end of the I8th century it was often easier in winter and more expeditious, to make a sea journey even from London to the South coast than to attempt the much shorter land route.

Documentation pertaining to early potting is extremely rare, and until about the middle of the I6th century it is impossible to identify either the individual potters or their pot-works.

These mediaeval pieces were formed of local clays which fired to a colour ranging from buff to dark red, and, rarely, to a greyish-black.

These variations were due in part to the presence of minute quantities of iron oxide. The resultant wares were of varying hardness and durability but were always porous. The oldest specimens of pottery known to us have no glaze, but the process of glazing seems to have been within the knowledge of the Saxons. However the practice of glazing came in after the Conquest, probably from France, where lead-glazing was known before the 13th century; the device of decorating with impressed stamps came likewise from France. Yet despite this our native pottery is quite distinct from contemporary French wares, both in shape and in proportions.

The colour of the glaze varies between yellow and brown, but a good green came from the addition of a copper derivative; manganese also was used to produce a purple effect.

Practically all the specimens of mediaeval pottery preserved to us are receptacles for food and liquids, although, in quite another context, the floor and wall tiles of this period are well represented. When we reach the 16th century the specimens and their variety increase dramatically, but for the purpose of this present note we need not embark on their consideration.

Coming to the monumental vessel shown in the illustrations, we have a piece which Mr Stevenson, Keeper of the National Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh, considers to date from around 1300 A.D. It was brought to light in November 1974 by one of the Tarbert fishing boats, dredging for 'queenies'(small scallops) in Loch Fyne; the exact location is therefore uncertain as they had been towing for about 45 minutes, but it is within the area just north of Bagh mo Thuaidh, off Stonefield. The find-area shown on the sketch-map forming our cover is approximately correct. The depth varies between 15 and 20 fathoms, and the bottom is 'hard'. A diagonal portion of the side of the jug is free from the thickly-clustered marine growths which cover the remainder of the exterior, showing clearly the angle at which the piece has lain on the bottom. This feature is repeated in the interior.


Fig.I General view of the Mediaeval Pot

(Photograph by courtesy of the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh)

The growths are of two main types - a small limpet-like shell up to 2.5 cms across, of translucent, nacreous character in many instances, and convoluted tube-shells, some white and calcareous and some nacreous, the latter predominating and often rising free of the surface in a vertical direction. These incrustations are continued inside the exposed part of the neck, but they are increasingly rare farther down the interior.

The general shape of the piece is clearly seen in the illustration and we may pass on to a more detailed description. It has, of course, been thrown on the wheel, and the entire surface, both external and internal, shows the characteristic horizontal ridging of such pieces. The base has a feature of extreme interest which will be referred to shortly but apart from that it shows what is termed 'sagging', that is to say it is slightly convex and in consequence does not stand steadily, although the degree of bulging is not sufficient to endanger its stability. This 'sagging' is quite a characteristic of potting at this period and is indeed almost diagnostic. Quite frequently it was offset by the potter drawing down the moist clay with his fingers before firing, to make three 'feet', each consisting of three or four finger-smudges which sufficed to offset the base's convexity. The present example lacks this refinement and might for that reason be thought slightly the earlier for the want of it.

Apart from the loss in antiquity of part of the rim and neck between two of the three handles, the vessel is absolutely undamaged, which may be considered miraculous when one remembers the mode of its recovery.

The three handles are stoutly functional and are of typical 'strap' formation with a central groove on the outer surface formed by the potter's thumb being drawn down the unfired clay. The attachment of the handles is again typical; at the upper end they are widened by the thumb as they were being pressed on to the neck, the necessary counter-pressure being provided ( and clearly now to be felt) by the supporting tips of two fingers.

Fig.2 The three die-impressed patterns.

(Photograph by courtesy of the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh)

The lower ends are rather more elaborately treated, again by the use of the thumb, for they are spread out into two leaf-shaped terminals. Here again one can feel very distinctly in the interior the impress of the supporting fingers of the potter's other hand (presumably his left) where very considerable compensatory pressure was required in order to afford a secure adhesion of the handle without pushing in the wall of the vessel.

There is a slight bulge in the neck between the shoulder and rim, and the latter is turned inwards. This, if it continued right round, would make a very awkward pourer, and for that and other reasons it is obvious that the missing portion carried a slight lip (again made with the potter's thumb) just sufficient to overcome the inward turning of the rim to allow of pouring. Supporting evidence for the existence of this lost lip lies in two interesting features. One is on the shoulder below the damaged portion, where there are three faint impressions of an eight-petalled rosette and no-where else. They have been made with a die of some sort, pressed on to the unfired clay by way of ornament, and here again one can feel on the inside the depressions made by the potter's supporting fingers. These rosettes can be clearly seen in the second illustration; their random-seeming positioning being rather surprising. They are 4 cms in diameter. As to their bearing on the presence originally of a lip, one must recollect that the decoration on a jug, even a modern one, when it is of a slight nature, tends to occur on the front of the piece, below the spout.

The second piece of evidence for there having been a lip originally is found on the base, where there is a circular area 7.5 cms across free from glaze and of slightly greyer colour; it has also a raised edge for the greater part of its circumference. This had puzzled one, but Mr Stevenson immediately realised its significance and importance. It is in fact where the rim of a smaller jug has been in contact with the base of our specimen during firing and has stuck to it. This ex-

plains the rough rim the mark bears, as well as a difference in colour, for the attached piece would interfere with the firing of the glaze. But the most important point lies in the fact that the smaller jug clearly had a lip of the type postulated for our specimen.

The potting is extremely good, with uniformly thin walls and great symmetry. It is difficult to assess the actual thickness of the walls, but in the neck, at the old fracture, it is approximately .5 cm, increasing towards the rim, where it is .75 cm. This is quite a remarkable achievement in such a large vessel. Its height is 38.25 cms, the extreme diameter 29.75 cms, the average diameter of the base 20 cms, and of the opening 8.25 cms.

Naturally the glaze has been considerably affected by its long contact with sea water, but where the surface has been protected it shows a brownish-grey, slightly greenish tone, with considerable speckling of darker points. Where it has been completely eroded the underlying body shows as a lightish red-buff. There are a number of minor imperfections where the clay has held some gritty particles, but it is a remarkably well thrown and successful piece.

Three-handled vessels are comparatively rare. One of very similar type is shown in P.S.A.S. 1917-18, p.69. It was found in Glasgow and is 39.5 cms high and has a diameter of 24 cms, making it comparable with the present specimen.

Speculation as to its place of origin is vain, but Mr Stevenson concurs in regarding it as being an immigrant from south of the Border. More than that cannot be said; nor can any explanation of its presence in Loch Fyne be proffered.

Most cordial thanks are due to Mr Stevenson for so willingly giving his expert opinion, and to the National Museum for the courtesy of the photographs.

...ooOoo...

## AN ENLISTMENT IN TARBERT or
## THE SAD TALE OF THE KING'S SHILLING.

P.F.Fane Gladwin

In the year I794, under the pressure of the French Revolutionary Wars, it became imperative to increase the strength of the Army. To do this the War Office of the day entered into the field of bribery by offering promotion without purchase, on stated terms, to those officers who could enlist a given number of recruits.

This led to pressure and arguments as to who had or had not been legally enlisted, and an amusing example of this is to be found in a letter from a Mr John Campbell, a solicitor of Inveraray, dated May Ist. I794.(*)

The alleged recruit in this case was a certain John Thomson of Tarbert, who denied that he had been legally enlisted, and appealed against Lieut. John Campbell, who was said to have enlisted him at Tarbert.

Mr Campbell in Inveraray, who had apparently been present, was asked for his account of what had happened, and his opinion on its legality. He replied as follows:- "Inveraray, Ist May, I794.

> Lieut. Campbell and I were dining together at the house of DUNCAN LEITCH, Vintner, in Tarbert about eight days ago, when we talked of JOHN THOMSON having been in touch with several people about his going into the Army as a Soldier or Non-Commissioned Officer, and of his being a very fit man for that Department, as he was both poor and idle and did not contribute much to the peace or prosperity of the place in which he resided. Soon after dinner Lieut. Campbell was several times called outside, and I understood that Thomson and he were together. Indeed he himself informed me that he had been with Thomson. But the latter's demands were very high - no less than £50 and a Halbert. [N.B. Halberts were only carried by Sergeants.] Mr Campbell stated

that he had frequently given a Shilling into Thomson's hand in the King's name. I told him I thought that that piece of ceremony was generally considered to be a legal Enlistment and Mr Campbell replied that he could get him to recieve a Shilling as often as he wished. Soon afterwards Mr Campbell and Thomson came together into my room, sat down and took a glass of wine, and Mr Campbell began a display of Rhetoric common on such occasions. Thomson still insisted he must have £50 and a Halbert. Mr Campbell, after much persuasion and coaxing, took him by the hand and several times repeated his offer, which was - to give him immediate pay as a Sergeant, to recommend him as such, and to give him five Guineas as Bounty, "and here" says he "is a Shilling for you in the King's name."

Thomson took the Shilling and held it for some minutes in his hand, not seeming to realise any danger from it, and repeating his former demands. Then soon after, he laid the Shilling on the table where it lay all night and next morning. Mr Campbell had been called out at the time the Shilling was laid upon the table, and Thomson waited his return for some time. But as he seemed impatient I suggested to him to go out and call again on Mr Campbell later.

These are the facts in so far as I know or remember them, and you may judge whether they amount to a legal Enlistment or not. They may, in my humble opinion, easily point out to you the side to which you should lean."

Unfortunately History does not relate the outcome of this disputed Enlistment, nor whether John Thomson remained merely a "poor and idle" non-contributor to the peace and prosperity of Tarbert!

.....oOo.....

(*) Kintarbert Papers - Macmaster Campbell.

## BYGONE NATURAL HISTORY

"The crow is unusual in the country [Scotland], and consequently the tree in which it builds is the King's property". This is a misunderstanding of a Law of I424 -"that ruks bigande in kirke yards, orchards, or treis does gret skaithe apone cornis, ordanyt that thai that sic treis pertenys to, suffer on na wyse that thai birds fle away. And whar it beis tayntit that thai bige and the birds be flowin, and the nests be fundyn in the treis at Beltane, the treis sal be forfaltit to the King."

Aeneas Sylvinus Piccolomini (Pope Pius II)
I405-I464

Writing of crows on Lammerkin Muir:-

".....those must have been very stupid creatures indeed that had wings and yet stayed there."

Revd. T Thomas. I725

A traveller in Buchan, addressing some crows:-

"Ye idiots, fat did the Lord gie ye wings for, an it wer'na to flee frae a kintry like this?"

"There were many ravens in the town [Berwick] which it was forbidden to shoot, upon pain of a crown's payment, for they were considered to drive away the bad air."

Lupold von Wedel. I584-85

## "LOUPERS"

"This season there came into the loch [Loch Fyne] a kind of fish not usually seen there, at least not in such shoals. They are named loupers by the inhabitants. They spring high out of the water; they chase, affright, and devour every other fish in the loch. This fish appears to me to be of the whale tribe. They will be from 6 to 8 feet long, nearly the shape of a salmon, black on the back and white on the belly, having two pectoral fins, and a horizontal tail."

James Robertson's Tour. I768

## THE CAMPBELLS of KEILLS FERRY

A conversation recorded in 1975 between the Editor and George Campbell at Crinan

.....

You mentioned the Keills Ferry. Were there two boats?

Two boats running every day, one from the Jura side and one from the Keills and they would pass one another on their way across. When trade was busy the two boats were fully occupied; when trade was slack one of the boats was lying idle more or less, the one carrying on, one would do the work herself, but that's when they went away smuggling then.

What size of boats were they?

Oh the one was 60 ton, the other I just could'nt say now what the size, but one was 60. I think the other was slightly bigger. The rig, I dont know what rig they'd have, it could be a fore-and-aft schooner, I hardly think so, it might but I'd have fancied it must have been a bit of squaresail about them at the time, I'd say so, the oldfashioned style of sail.

Keills would be the nearest crossing to Jura I suppose?

I'd say that would be the quickest. Although Keills does'nt look mighty nice but the strong tide gives Keills its shelter. You can lie in Keills loch itself in a gale of wind and there's not a bit of sea will get at you except for twenty minutes at slack water; slack water each high or low tide, twenty minutes you'll roll rail to rail, after that you're in heaven. Oh aye, its a good place for a boat.

Which part of Jura did the boats land at? Was it the north end?

Small Isles, I think, mostly. I dont think there was much in the north end then.

I thought they would have gone straight across.

No, I dont think so, no I would'nt think so: you see they'd have the tide to consider. It would'nt just be so handy as the other way. There's no danger of getting carted into the Gulf. If you were leaving here and losing the wind after you'd left the Dorus you were 'ta ta Bella' and you'd go so fast they'd never see you. I think that would be the reason too. And there'd be more people in the south. They might at times go if they were required, to the north. They'd only seven miles or something to walk the beasts; that would be nothing to them walking in those days, no, no.

Did they ever swim the beasts across?

Not from Jura, no. I dont think so. They'd swim them across at Crinan ferry, from the slip on this side to the slip on the other - these were ford slips, for fording cattle; four feet of water in the centre at low water.

They'd be busiest when the beasts were coming over to the Trysts I suppose?

They were busiest at the market time, very busy indeed then, and there were a lot of people going back and forward from Jura - hundreds of people in Jura at that period, living, compared with two or three dozen that's in it now. They carried these beasts over for the market and they would carry them back again or anything they had bought coming in again, they'd take it in with them. They were kept going on the whole but when it was slack of course they went away and did their smuggling, down to the French side, sometimes round Cape Wrath, Pentland Firth and down the east coast, across to the Dutch side and did their work there. I dont think they were past raiding the Dutchmen if they got hold of them handy.

And what were they smuggling?

Oh everything under the sun; glass, most of the churches were rigged with glass from these old boats, from the one boat really, the biggest one did the work, tobacco, tea, silks and stuff of that sort.

Have you the names of the boats?

One was the Dove, the other I just could'nt say, I think I've a notion it might have been Margaret, but I'm not too sure, but one I believe was the Dove.

And your forebears had to do with that?

They were in that, they had that pair; and on one of the trips back up they came round Land's End and the Coastguard met them down between the Mull and the Isle of Man, but they juked them and they came on and got on so far but they bothered them again at the Mull. However they got in close to the shore, they got the first of the flood and the Coastguard cutter was farther out and he'd have to wait for an hour or more to get the run of the tide where he was. So they got up along the shore and they made the MacCormaigs and there again they cut inside the MacCormaigs and they gained a bit there, so they'd lost sight of them by nightfall, thought they were alright and went into Loch na Cille proper itself and dropped their anchor off yon pier - I take it it'd be the same pier that's there yet, because their own house, Keills old house, is almost straight up from it and that was to get the general lie - 5½ fathoms of water she was lying in; its the only spot with 5½ fathoms of water in that loch. Where they discharged was round in Keill beg; there's two wee piers in there. So when daylight came in the morning the Coastguard cutter was right across the loch; they were jammed, they could'nt get out. They were armed but they would'nt use that on their own countrymen; but if they were caught on the French side they would use it fast enough. She was heavier armed than the cutter.

What was the upshot of all that?

Well they put out a rowing boat and they sent her in and she came right up alongside of them and spoke to them and came aboard. Of course nothing they could do, and them practically home. They had'nt been home yet, mind you, from their trip, but the boat was lying in home water. The Coast-

guard sunk her where she lay, cargo and all, never attempted to take anything out of her, not even as evidence, just sunk her where she was.

And is she there to this day?

She's lying there to this day, but she'll not be much use now, I dont think!

And when about would that be?

1759 was Quebec; its a little before Quebec, maybe one year, not much more than eighteen months before Quebec anyway.

And how does Quebec come into it?

Well they had to go and stand their trial; they were taken to Inveraray and they got three months for their misbehaviour for smuggling - and the loss of the boat. The governor of the jail was a full cousin, my great-great-grandfather's full cousin, that's who it would be then; they were out in the street every day having the time of their life, shooting parties and other things, fishing, all sorts of things. It was no punishment for them. They were well treated. Three months up and of course they were allowed to go home and home they made for; so they took the hills for it, the shortest way for them, you know. They took the hills and got into Keills in the gloaming and here's the Press Gang waiting on them, just inside yon gate, met them two or three yards inside the gate.

So they never got home even then?

They got home but they took the Press Gang with them, and their women joined them and went away to Quebec with them, to the Army anyway, and it was Canada they landed in. The three women, there were three brothers you see, but there was one of them was'nt brought to Inveraray, just the two, skipper and mate, were taken to Inveraray, being in charge.

And how did they get on in Quebec?

Oh they had an awful passage going across, I know that, they had a terrible passage, long over-

due, adrift; eventually they got in, they'd an awful battering; it must have been wintry weather. They got a terrible hammering altogether, and when they got there they had to fall in line with the troops of course and the women were in the kitchens, field kitchens such as they had at the time, and they did the cooking and general nursemaids to wounded soldiers, for the surgery was absolutely nothing worth talking about and there were no hospitals or any dressings or anything like that; they'd to find their own bandages and make them. So they had to do all that kind of caper themselves. I think that's the reason they got over. But the women went as camp-followers at that time. We look on camp-followers as a different thing altogether, but those camp-followers were fairly respectable, the majority, and they really took a good part of the camp work.

And did they stay on in Canada?

They stayed on in Canada for a time. They were at the taking of Quebec; they were up over the top of the Heights of Abraham and they were down on to the plains. Wolfe was killed just as they were leaving the Quebec hills I think and Sir Archibald Campbell was with him, from Inverneil, and there was one of the brothers was with him, you see they were acquainted, they'd come from Dingwall area originally and I think Inverneil was from that quarter too, but they were acquainted more or less. As I said, the women were helping in the kitchen and during one of the engagements they were getting heavily pressed and they seemed to get through into the field-kitchens, such field-kitchens as were in it at the time - I'm giving the name of field-kitchens but dear knows what name they had! But apparently they got through and the women were as busy as the men at repelling the boarders and were'nt frightened to throw the boiling water at them. Everything went! So the two brothers stayed out and my great-great-grandfather's children, such as he had, there was some of them there must

have been lumps of men, they were born out there of course and they stayed there and they'd 300 acres or something granted them apiece and they got them in a bunch together; it made it very handy for working, one helping the other. The fellow that came over to this side, he had a family and his son, the wee fellow that was left in Keills, he had a family and that's where I come in - he was my great-grandfather. They all went to Canada except their father in Keills. There was so many of them that's how they could do their smuggling, they could make up a crew very near with their own relations.

When they came back the ferry was finished as regards the ferry, the people were cleared out of the district, they were cleared out of Jura I suppose the time they were cleared out of the mainland here, and there was nothing left for them, so they started a service from Lochgilphead to Greenock, a weekly service, sail. Started it themselves and they ran once a week. It was up to Lochgilphead in beside the doctor's house, swinging round below Mrs Black's; its all covered in now with muck. I've seen the rings myself on the wee pier. Well after that, they worked at that for a while and eventually got fed up with that; I think something else must have come in in opposition, I dont know about that, but I know Hutchison came in after him with a daily service. Steam was coming and steam would be on with Hutchison. That's what would beat them, the steam. So he went away and bought a schooner and he was trading to the Baltic - my grandfather was in then, the old man was dead - and they came back with timber, fish and herring out, timber back, and they had a while at that. On one occasion they got an awful battering the night of the Tay Bridge disaster and lost their bearings for long enough, could see nothing, hove-to all night. At midnight there was a peculiar sound in the rigging and they wondered what it was, all round the mast-head; they looked up and there

was a light went round and round and round, round the two masts. It went away eventually just after midnight and they took the course it took leaving. It could be no balloon, for that could'nt go head into wind. They got into harbour anyhow, I think it was Grangemouth they got into, with the timber, and they asked if there was any balloon out that night, anybody that had lost their passage, but no. As they went on on their road back round the west coast everywhere they called in they made enquiries; the same answer, nobody out that night. Come to the finish they did'nt know what to say about the matter. But the youngest brother died in Jamaica that same night at midnight, where he was a missionary. However if there was anything from that or not I dont know, I could'nt say.

Has your family belonged to the Keills area as far back as you can go?

Yes, I think so: Keills, Killinochonoch, and there's some farm up in Kilmichael Glassary, up that glen, Kilmichael Glen, and there's one of them in a grave, I think he's a Peter, in Kilmartin, a fiddler, I think its him. I see gravestones up there. They called him the Dowser, the Dancer - he was about teaching music; he was village schoolmaster, a penny and a peat they brought him, the children, in the morning and he gave them their lessons. Some of them might be buried in Keills, I dont know, there might be some of them there, but these folk are buried all over from Dingwall down; at Kilmory Loch Fyne, nobody at Inverneil, but Kilmory.

Did they ever bring salt from Carrickfergus?

I dont think our folks did, no, but there were schooners running from Carrickfergus; they used to come through the canal here; after that time though, oh a hundred years after that - more! You could buy a block of salt, I'd say 4 feet long, 3 feet 6 inches, for eight pence.

.....oOo.....

## WHEN THE YEARS WERE YOUNG

Mary Sandeman

### SEA FISHING - WINTER

In summer I had to go to bed in daylight and sit disconsolate on my bed watching the boats, like water-boatmen, slowly circling the perch while a blackbird sang his evening song in the ash tree across the road. Boats I knew with people I knew catching fish I could have caught... but in winter when the calm spell came after the November gales and the nights having drawn in most obligingly so that dark fell long before bedtime, I came into my own.

As soon as the midday meal was over Mother put me into all the warm clothes she could find and tucked my old coat into my knitted leggings - I must have looked like a haggis on legs. Father collected the long bamboo rods and the lines, and we were off.

Down at the jetty other boats were getting ready; two, three or maybe four men in each from the croft on the hill or the houses by the shore, all with a kind word for me and a helping hand - "Wait now while I hold the boat in for you, that's the lassie, its a great help you'll be one of these days".

The 'bush' would be put across the gunnels and I'd be lifted on to it facing aft; my short legs could'nt reach the stern thwart but dangled under an old macintosh tied round my waist by the sleeves. When the boat rolled in the swells you had to hold on or you slid down to one side and were told sharply to trim the boat.

The 'bush' was a plank just wider than the boat with two cross pieces below so placed that they came just inside the gunnels, with a lighter plank fixed to them; the butts of the rods pushed between the two planks were quite firmly held, their points well out over the stern. Their lines, with white or yellow flies, were the same length as the rods. We rowed out into deeper water before putting out

the hand lines; these were wound on wooden frames with sausage-shaped weights well short of the gut which had either flies or red rubber eels. When enough line was out it was passed twice round the bush and the frame left in the bottom of the boat.

All the way up the big bay other boats were coming out, for each village had its own boat-place on the shore.

At first I only worked the lines, one in each hand, until you felt the tug of the fish taking. then haul in steadily hand over hand until the silvery fish broke surface; then you had to lean over and lift it in with one clean movement, not hitting it on the gunnel - this is when they got away - out with the hook, bang on the head and into the bucket, overboard with the fly and sinker and see that the line is running free, then check the other line, it too may have a fish.

The rods would soon let you know if they had a fish, thrumming in the bush under your bottom, their points bending. Sometimes all the rods and lines would take at once; then it was my job to get the lines and keep them short until Father had got back to the oars, for if the boat lost way they would sink to the bottom and be caught in the weed.

Soon I could manage the rods as well; slip the butt out of the bush, stick it into your tummy and hang on for dear life getting the point up as soon as you could to the vertical and swing the fish into your chest. It did'nt always work out quite like that - the fish swung round and round and would'nt come to hand - then nearly in tears of exasperation I'd hear an amused voice say "Get the rod up and down and it will come in of itself, dont reach for it." Soon I could bring them in slap to the chest - well nearly always.

Round and round the good grounds the boats circled, snatches of conversation and wafts of tobacco smoke: "How are you doing? Ach they're awful small" Small indeed! I'd take a furtive glance at my monsters every bit of six inches or more. My hands were frozen with the wet lines and my feet had long

since lost all feeling - but my heart was very warm.

Bored? Heavens no, there was need of constant vigilance - the rods might have caught floating weed or even the lines and it would be great shame not to have noticed that. I had hardly seen the sun turn the west to fire before the first star twinkled or the moon rose above the dark hills of Arran. The cold increased and it was time to take the lines in and then the rods and stow them and sink thankfully onto the stern thwart and get your feet on the floor boards.

All the boats had turned for home, quiet voices and the creak of oars pulled steadily towards the village, now a necklace of soft lamplight beneath the steadfast hills. Just enough light to make the boats fast. Strong men moving slowly, each knowing what each was doing. Home to tea and the firelight and admiring womenfolk, certain of fish, your very own fish, tossed in oatmeal and fried for breakfast.

.....oOo.....

## BEAUTY IN OLD BOTTLES

J.R.Carmichael

The bottles which are the subject of this note are 'old' in that they date around the Victorian period, some a little before, some slightly later.

There are several distinct types of old glass bottle; the pointed 'torpedo', the conventional shape, the mineral bottle with a marble in the neck, and the small ink and medicine etc. bottles.

The 'torpedo' is properly known as the Hamilton bottle, after its inventor - incidentally it was an excellent thing for the mineral water manufacturers, for once it was opened it could'nt be put down before it was empty. Perhaps that's why Schweppes used the Hamilton for over a century.

The 'conventional' type came in many varieties and sizes, and in colours ranging from clear to dark green, amber to dark brown, and the nowadays

eagerly sought-after cobalt blue. These bottles, especially the tinted ones, were very imperfect, being off the round, with differences in the thickness of the glass and an occasional bulge here and there. The bottoms, nearly always off the round, are concave and have shapes and/or letters on them.

The Codd glove-stoppered mineral water bottle, patented in 1872 by Hiram Codd, worked on the principle that the expanding gases of the lemonade held the small glass ball tightly in place until it was pushed down to open the bottle. It was prevented from going right to the bottom or returning to the closed position by moulded indentations in the neck. (Beer drinkers of the 1870's were contemptuous of the 'T.T.' contents of Codd's invention and coined the phrase 'Coddswallop'.)

The smaller bottles would need a whole article to themselves, so I must stick to bare details. Ink bottles come in various shapes and sizes, one variety has two U-shaped troughs in its shoulders to hold the pen. All of them have rough sheared lips to grip the cork. Small bottles were also used to contain poisons (ribbed so that they could be distinguished in the dark), smelling salts and medicines, to mention but a few. In virtually all the categories the glass itself is very imperfect, and instead of being clear like modern glass they are either turquoise or light green, with a lot of bubbles, some round, some oval (the latter known as 'teardrops'). It also has a pitted, uneven surface, the holes looking like pores in orange skin. In older bottles the bottom can be up to an inch thick; if you got poor measure of drink you got good measure of glass! Sometimes, also, pieces of silica-sand, the main raw material, can be found embedded in the glass, looking like white quartz and due to insufficient heat during blowing.

As you can see, old glass bottles are just as interesting for their very imperfections and colours as for their antiquity.

.....o0o.....

## EXTRACTS FROM 'OLD KILBERRY'S' DIARIES

### IV. Doctors and Ministers

I875. I3th July.

The Revd. Mr Gillies, Free Church Minister here was buried....the hour appointed was I p.m. .... but we had to wait more than two hours before anything was done as no minister was present & they expected one from Killean & one from Clachan. At last they proceeded without one. A young pudding headed probationer named Shaw officiated in English in the house & made a great fool of himself. Two shoemakers (Archie Bell & McLellan, both elders) officiated in Gaelic in the church....

I876. Ist Oct.

We all went to Free Church service in the School House. Great yarn about the Bulgarian atrocities and the parson made a great fool of himself.

I88I. 29th June.

Dr McMillan had a fall out of a hired trap when coming here today and hurt his back a good deal. I galvanised him & he returned to Tarbert.

I904. I2th July.

The Dr came about 9 p.m. & was talkative and dictatorial. Not quite like his usual manner.

### V. Domestic and Estate

I874. 24th Jan.

....on our return to Kilberry we gave up our guns to Neil at his house. Walter Campbell Achnandarrach gave his gun to Neil and said to him that it was loaded & that he had better use an extractor as the cartridges were rather inclined to stick. As it afterwards turned out Neil understood him to say that there was a difficulty about taking the gun asunder for the purpose of cleaning....One of the joiners who lodged with him....asked if it were loaded & Neil said "Oh no, the gentlemen always take out the cartridges" ....the gun.... went off & the contents of the barrel were lodged in the body of Neil's wife Betsy who was my nurse

long ago....the poor woman died about half past eight.

1874. 22nd Aug.
About 4 o'clock Geekie came along on the grey mare [to Gostianfondanach] going to Clachan to telegraph for a policeman as there was a great row at Kilberry between Henderson the Clerk of Works and the joiners who were drunk. I got on the horse (in my kilt) and rode home where I soon settled the business and made a peace (although I am afraid rather a hollow one).... At night the men put up the Billiard Table arrived from London.

1875. 14th Jany.
In the evening gave a dance to servants, tenants, cotters etc. in the house.... Last night our cook (whom I dismissed yesterday on account of her having been drunk & incapable on the 12th and on account of habitual drunkenness) was so very drunk that I had to go to see her. I found her lying on her bed dressed & she swore that she would not leave the house except by force. I therefore sent off at 10.30 p.m. for a policeman and also for Dr Campbell as I did not wish to move her in her then state without medical advice. The Dr. & policeman arrived about 6 a.m. today and after a great deal of trouble they managed to get her away with them about 10 a.m. She was very unwilling to go but was induced to do so by the threats of the policeman and the persuasions of the Dr.

1875. 31st July.
In the evening James McMillan, footman, told me that he had no time to clean the Billiard room so I told him that he had better go to some place where he can have his own way. To this he assented with apparent alacrity.

1877. 19th March.
Mr McGeoch came this morning & withdrew his offer for Tiretigan saying that he had heard from old George Hamilton that no sheep would live on the low ground but that they would all die of staggers

or sturdy. This is a regular lie and I see that the old ruffian wants to drive away all intending offerers in order to try to secure the farm for his own family. It is a very great nuisance to me.

I877. IIth Sept.
In the morning our cook Grace McInnes went mad. Sent for Dr Hunter.

I877. I2th Sept.
Dr Hunter arrived & found the cook very mad. This morning she began to be violent at times. She smashed a looking glass, burnt her blind (thereby setting the chimney on fire) and armed herself with a large stone.

I88I. 30th Dec.
In the afternoon Jardine killed a woodcock & at the same time shot John Walker the keeper and a boy, son of Thompson the grieve pretty sharply but they turned out to be more frightened than hurt. John Walker was shot very close to one eye.

I882. I4th Feb.
It is very curious how the system of sending Valentines seems to have died out. A few years ago the post bag used to be filled almost to bursting point with them & this year there were only about half a dozen for the children & servants. Christmas cards have quite cut out Valentines as they nowadays come in shoals and it is not very long since they were invented.

I883. 4th April.
There was a row in the house last night and a discovery of a rather loose state of affairs which resulted in the dismissal of the Head Housemaid and the Footman.

I886. 2nd April.
My good old friend Colin McIsaac [Bachals] the shoemaker died. He was a great friend of mine ever since I can remember & was my tutor & companion in fishing & in many other amusements. He is a great loss to the neighbourhood.

I888. 9th Feb.
[Mrs Campbell had undergone an operation in Glasgow] Moved her to the Central Station Hotel from the Home where she has been very comfortable and very well looked after. She was there from 28th January till 8th Feby. in a most comfortable private room with a very nice nurse to herself and the best of food (also champagne when ordered by the Dr.) Other nurses always at hand if required day & night. The total sum charged for all this without any extras whatever was £6.I2.6

I89I. I7th Jan.
On 22nd Decr. I sent 6 fine turkeys to Wotherspoon, Game Salesman, Glasgow, to be sold....the total £I.5.3½. Not a great return for six very fine birds.

I89I. 6th March.
During the night Toby the old fox terrier who has been here for I7 years died in Neil's house. A little after midnight Maggie, who had gone upstairs to bed, came down to tell me that she had just heard Toby barking at the back door. He had a very peculiar bark....I told her she must be mistaken as he could not be out of Neil's house at that hour. She persisted and we went to the door and saw nothing. In the morning we heard that he was dead. Very curious.

I894. 5th Dec.
For the last two days I have been taking apple trees out of the garden & planting them alongside of the hedge below the road to the Laundry. Have planted I2 of them there [still, I975, bearing fruit. Ed.]

I895. I4th June.
Angus with the help of Miss Cottingham began Photography with a Kodak which he has just bought.

I896. 4th Feb.
Began planting a piece of ground above the road to the north of the top gate. I am putting in about 20,000 plants of Scots fir, Mountain Pine, Spruce, Fir, Larch, Ash, Oak, Beech, Alder, Maple, Chest-

nut, Birch, Mahonia and Holly (about 100). I hope that it will grow & that it will be of some use to those who come after me. The hollies may perhaps make those who follow me independent of outward help for Christmas decorations. There used to be plenty of hollies about Craig when I was a boy but they disappeared & died years ago & we generally have to depend on Stonefield for giving us some for Christmas.

1898. 19th July.
Found that a big waggonette belonging to Mitchell, Tarbert had brought to Kilberry a load of tourists who went to the shore & picnic'd & the horses were put up in my stables. They departed soon after I returned & I did not have a chance of seeing the driver but I wrote a pretty stiff letter to Mitchell requesting that such impertinence might not be repeated.

1899. 19th April.
Neil McMillan died about 2 a.m. quite unexpectedly ....I think he was about 82 years of age & he had been here about 45 years....his son Angus is a shoemaker in Tarbert. It is almost impossible to imagine a truer or more devoted servant than he was to me and to the whole family. Most thoroughly devoted to all of our family & treasuring the name of my Father with deepest reverence almost amounting to worship. I was a very small boy when he came and many a happy day we spent together on land and on sea. Everybody who came to stay here admired & liked him.

1900. 20th Decr.
I had a great many turkeys this year & yesterday I sent off to Glasgow 20 of them....@ 7½ per lb., weighed with their feathers.

(TO BE RESUMED)

## REVIEW

Hebridean Islands: Colonsay, Gigha, Jura
John Mercer. Blackie, Glasgow & London. £4.75

This proved to be one of the few books which it is difficult to lay down before the last page is reached. There is nothing but praise for its rational planning and the thoroughness with which every aspect of the subject is treated. It might be supposed that long stretches of arid writing must result, but even such potentially heavy subjects as Agricultural Tenure and Wages are presented in a way which holds the attention. Mr Mercer, whose work in the archaeological field is increasingly recognised for its importance, has done an enormous amount of research for this book, yet it is no mere compilation of other peoples' ideas and reactions; on every page one finds the author's reasoned and logical interpretations fearlessly set forth. In controversial matters such as Megalithic Astronomy he will find many supporters for his cautious reluctance to accept without reservation the more sensational points. Although the outlook for some of the islands, particularly Jura, may seem sombre, Mr Mercer's ideas for combined regeneration and conservation are convincingly presented and one must hope that commonsense may yet prevail before all is lost. The delight in reading this penetrating study owes not a little to the many flashes of sly humour it contains; a typical example comes after a quotation of some rather inflammatory remarks by J. McPhee on the natives of Colonsay...he ends with the dead-pan sentence "Mr McPhee is now back in the United States". The author has been well served by his publishers both as to type-face and illustrations, and there are no more than the usual quota of misprints in text and index. It is most heartily recommended to Kist readers, who almost certainly will find themselves referring back to its pages from time to time in connection with their particular interests. It has indeed 'something for everyone' and few will read it without feeling that their knowledge and understanding have been greatly enlarged. F.S.M.