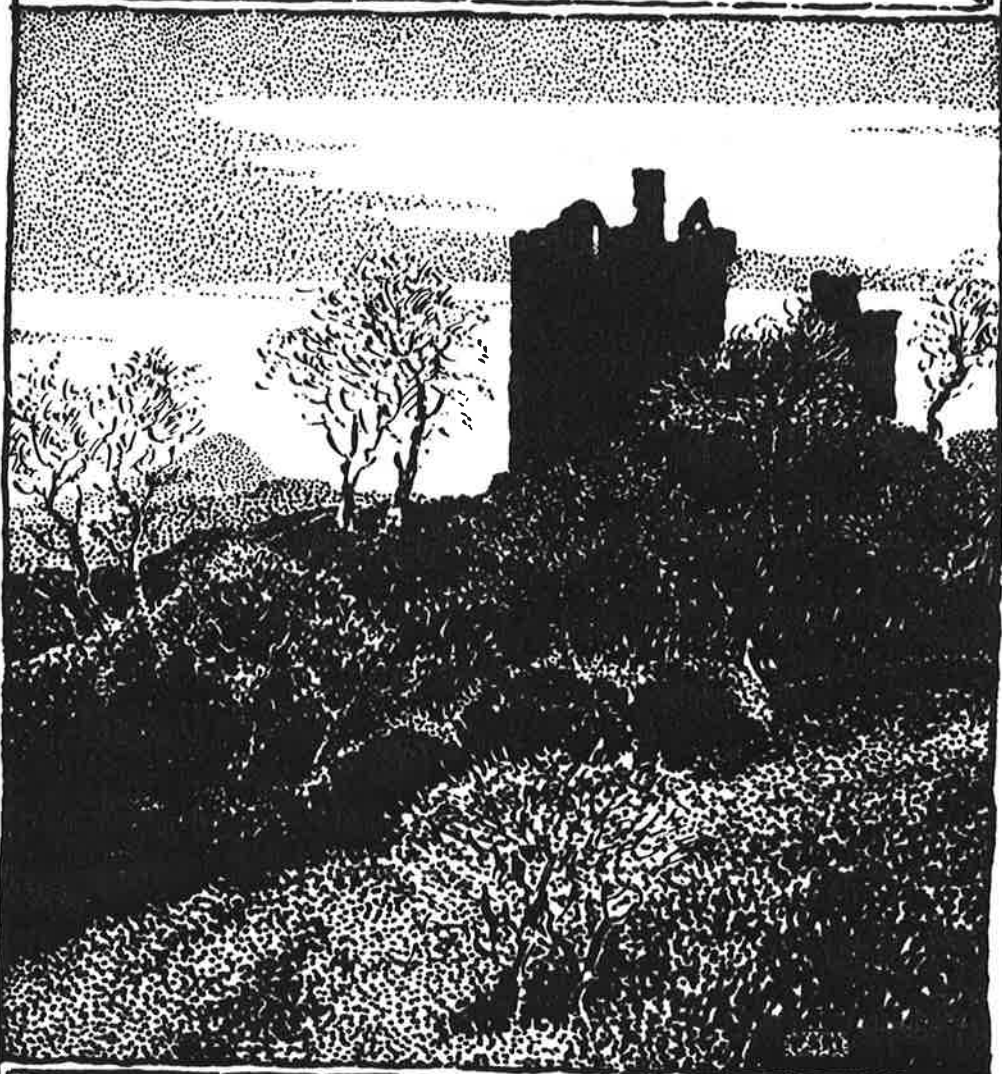


Winter
Dusk.

Carnasserie.



The

KIST: 21

T H E K I S T

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

President: Miss Campbell of Kilberry, FSA. FSAScot.
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NUMBER TWENTY-ONE: Spring 1981
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DOIDE, LOCH SWEEN.

A Slab Quarry, "Golden Sovereigns", and Fairy Music

Dilys M. Hooton and Agatha T. Lewis

South of the gate that gives access down to Castle Sween the road to Kilmory Knap continues along the hillside without much variation for the next two miles. If the road itself is rather dull here the views from it be-

come more and more spectacular. Looking back, Castle Sween on its rocky knoll on the shore occupies the foreground, and Loch Sween stretching back into the hills of North Knapdale provides a scene that in storm or calm, sun or rain, summer green or the rich golden browns of winter is never twice the same. Westward the road overlooks the narrowest part of the Loch and the low land beyond, which here is the Island of Danna, though it is joined to the mainland by a causeway. The little fields copses and rough ground make a lovely pattern of colour as a foreground for the mountains of Jura across the Sound which



now begin to show west of Danna. Below the farm of Danna na Cloiche the land ends in a series of reefs much loved by seals. Here, well off shore at the entrance to Loch Sween, lie the MacCormaig Isles, all to be seen most splendidly from the road before it rises up a long hill to cross a ridge and turn down to Kilmory Knap.

West of the last half mile of the road before the foot of the incline there is a good strip of fertile land and here are a number of ruined cottages in two groups; this is Doide. In former times there must have been a good many people living here, now only one of the old houses is still in use. At the seaward side of the area is a smooth hump of rock which falls away to the lochside as

a splintered cliff and when the fern and bracken have died in winter from among the many massive fallen slabs it is clear to see that this place was used as a quarry for flat stones for door steps and lintels. Archaeologists and geologists are now certain that this site provided the stone for many of the Crosses and grave-slabs carved in Mid-Argyll centuries ago.

The green strip ends in a sandy bay. Good crops must have been grown at Doide a century ago, and John McTaggart, the Weaver of Knap, told us how the boats came from Northern Ireland to buy potatoes here. We first met John in the late 1920's. He said he was 88 then and he lived another 4 years. He told us much about the district and impressed upon us children then how every place had its name and its story. We remember much of what he told us and often wish we had had the chance to learn more from him.

The Doide beach is shallow, of white but rather muddy sand and it is completely sheltered from waves of any size by a tidal island to the south and by the strong tides in the mouth of Loch Sween. There are a lot of stones about and John McTaggart said some of them had come from Antrim as ballast in the boats that were to take back potatoes. They were beached, for loading a low tide. It was here too that the coals for Knap were brought ashore. There is a good cart road down the steep hill to the beach, green now but clearly to be seen and well contoured for heavy loads to be brought up in small carts. The "puffer" bringing the coal was also beached for unloading, and the coal shared round the community.

John the Weaver's story was that on one occasion the Irishmen had brought a bag of newly minted and shining farthings with them, and the bargaining was done with these "golden sovereigns". No doubt the trick was soon discovered and we do not know if the Irishmen all got away before it was. Be that as it may, the story ended with the remark that "If you look about after a storm you may find coins in the sand still". Old John said he and his friends looked for them and picked up quite a few when they were boys; that would be well over a hundred years ago now. He called this bay Traigh n'Airgead (the Bay of the Money) but it is Doide Bay on the Ordnance map. Incidentally he said he had been at school at the old School House at Kilmory Knap with 70 other children from

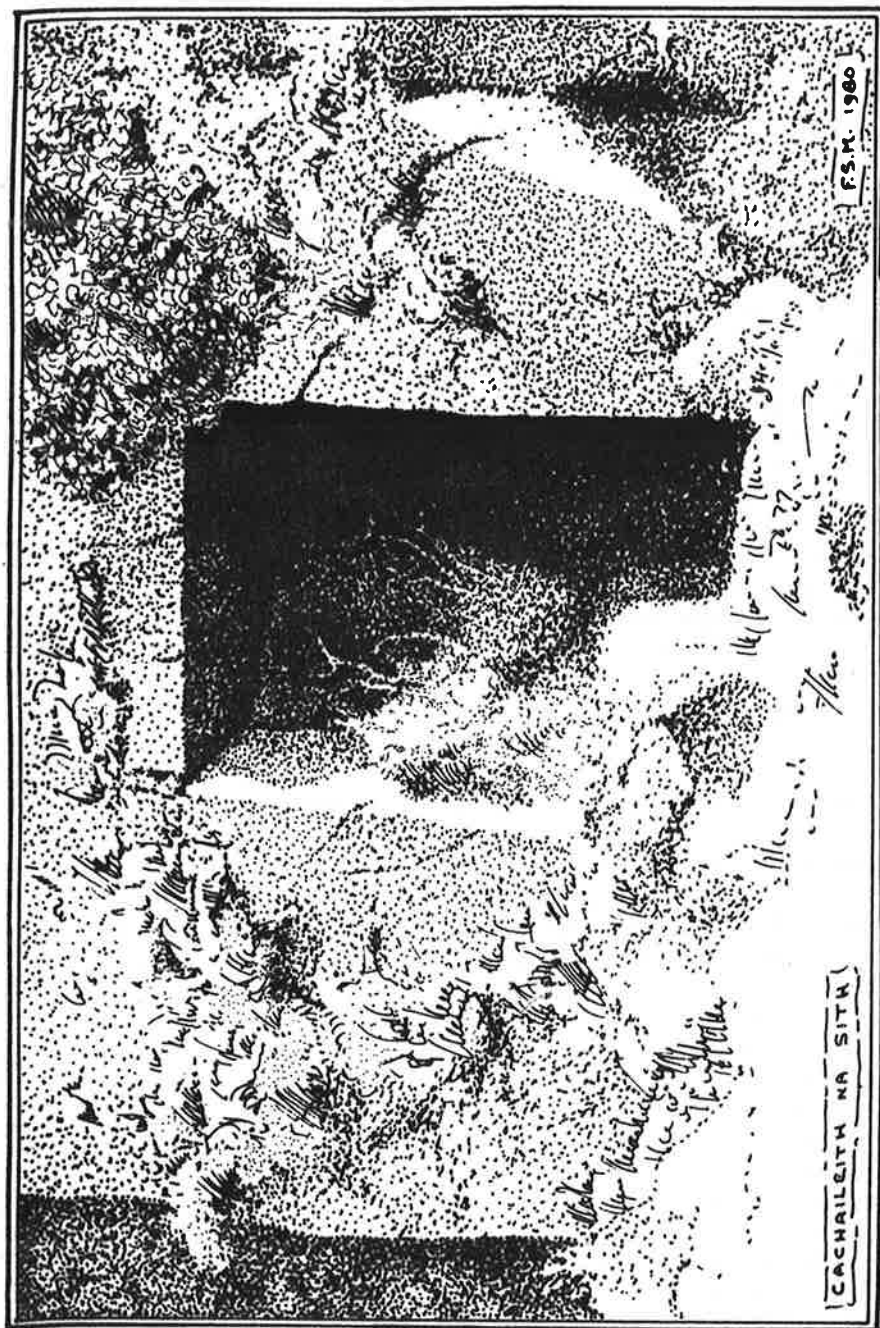
the district. That must have been about 1850 or so, and now most of the houses all those children lived in are just heaps of stones in the grass.

In the 1950's John McTaggart's nephew Dougal, who spent a good deal of time at Knap after he retired, told our parents another tale about Doide. This concerns the small steep rock-face at the east roadside just at the start of the hill going on to Kilmory Knap. There is an old milestone there on the left - just an upright slab of stone about 2 feet high - 18 miles to Lochgilphead; the numbers were still painted on it in the 1920's but never renewed since. Almost above this the rock formation looks like a doorway; there is a flat lintel and a recess below with the appearance of door-jambs on either side. All is rather overgrown now with grass and scrub, but it is possible to imagine it cleared and then quite impressive. This door is called Cachailleith na Sith and is a way into the hill for the Good People who may dwell there. A tradition exists that They are sometimes heard singing. Dougal admitted that he had once heard Them and that he had known others who had. He thought that it rarely happened. "You have to be right and the time has to be right" he said. The occurrence had evidently made a great impression on him.

D.M.H.

A.T.L.

When my Mother told me about this tale I felt quite queer about it as my mind at once returned to a strange winter dusk early in 1941 when I was living at Kilmory Knap with two tiny children, evacuated from the south. It was a Sunday and I had had a lift 4 miles along the road to Craig Mhadaidh Farm to get my baby's milk, which came on week-days by post van. The light was fading, I remember, as I walked home past Doide and heard an odd sound like a short cadence of notes every now and then. I kept stopping to hear it better, then there was silence and as soon as I moved on again and my footsteps were sounding once more on the road I'd hear it again perhaps, or perhaps not. I could not make it out; it seemed in the air, without direction, a far sound yet coming from nowhere. I think I must have heard it twenty or thirty times while I walked that piece of road and I am sure that after I passed that rock and went on up the hill I heard



CACHAILEITH NA SITH

FSM. 1980

it no more. It puzzled me at the time but I had no one to ask about it and I forgot it. It was ten or twelve years later that I heard about the door in the hill and the singing, and instantly I thought about that evening again.

There may be an explanation. I have tried to find one but have failed to do so. Of one thing I am certain, that what I heard was the same sound that gave rise to the legend, if I may call it that. It is a lasting regret that I never had a chance to tell Dougal what I had heard or to ask him about it myself. I have been back in the district a good many years now, but that hillside has remained silent and the door locks very firmly shut; bolted and barred against the noise of internal combustion engines, I shouldn't wonder.

D.M.H

...oooOooo...

USELESS INFORMATION: AN OCCASIONAL SERIES

1. Nadders and Ewts

Here we have two examples of the vagaries of the English language. We all know what is meant by an adder, but the correct reference to the creature should be a nadder, the n having become transferred to the article a at some period. In Gaelic it is nathair (very close in sound to nadder); in Anglo-Saxon it was nædre (again almost unchanged); in German natter. France steers clear of all trouble by declaring it to be une vipère.

Precisely the opposite circumstance has given us a newt when it should be an ewt. The Anglo-Saxon word was efeta, but in this instance we get no support from other modern languages. It is perhaps worth remarking that seventy years ago, in the writer's personal knowledge, and probably still the case, the Kentish name for 'a newt' was effet, which is remarkably close to the Anglo-Saxon.

Being in those days entirely devoid of any zoological sense, it was a matter for recurrent vexation that the effets painstakingly installed in a well-made dam had always vanished by next morning - strange behaviour on the part of what were very obviously creatures intended to lead an exclusively aquatic life!

A PROFESSIONAL VISIT TO MID-ARGYLL IN 1773

Marion Campbell

The following extract, from the Day Book of John Blain, Commissary of the Isles, was brought to my notice by Mr Murdo MacDonald, the Archivist. It was written in April and May 1773. He lived in Rothesay and held just about every public office conceivable - Sheriff Clerk, Town Clerk, Clerk of the Peace, Clerk of Supply, etc.
.....

Tuesday April 27

Having received two Charters from Mr McMillan one by Archd. Campbell of Knockbuy on an heritable bond of £5000 and the other by Colin Campbell of Kilberry on an herit. bond for £2000, (1) in order that I might go and take Sasine on them for Mr McMillan, (2) I procured a Horse from John Mackinlay in Barmore and Set out this day for Argyll taking young James Mackenzie along with me by way of Servant. Proceeded by the foot of Glendaruel, and at Ballachandrain was askt to Write a Contract of Marriage between Baillie Peter Campbell of Kilmichael of Glasserie and Catharine MacConachy Widow of Daniel Telfair but as I couldnot stay I promised to come back that way; Arrived at Lochgair this night. It was agreeable weather all day.

Wednesday April 28

Went from Lochgair to Minnart this morning in order to get Knockbuy (3) to sign the Charter on his herit. bond and thereafter to take the Sasine but found he was from home. Whereupon I resolved to proceed to Knapdale and take the Infekt. on Kilberry's Charter (4) which was al-

-
- (1) I suspect both bonds were to raise money for repairing Kilberry Castle. See (7).
 - (2) Probably MacMillan of Dunmore, who had earlier lent money secured by wadsets on outlying parts of Kilberry estate, cleared before this date. He no longer lived at Dunmore.
 - (3) Archibald Campbell of Knockbuy (1692-1790); his wife had been a sister of Kilberry's mother, and his grandson united the estates.
 - (4) Colin Campbell, styled Lord Berners (b.ca.1725, d.1797)

ready signed hoping that should I come back up the Country I would find Knockbuy at home. Accordingly after taking Brakefast at Minnart I set out for Knapdale. Went by the way of Lochgilphead and Whitehouse of Inverneil; and came in the evening to the house of Mr Danl. Hyndman Minr. of South Knapdale (5) at Achachoish near the head of Lochculisport. I accepted of an invitation to stay that night at Mr Hyndman's. Very fine weather all day.

Thursday April 29

Engaged three men to go along with me to the taking of the Infert. on Kilberry's lands - My own Servant made a fourth. The morning proving very thick and rainy, could not set out till nine o'clock when we proceeded. Gave the Men a refreshment at Ormsary. (6) Saw the house of Kilberry a little below us from the road but did not call. (7) Kilberry's grounds hereabouts are the best I have seen in Argyllshire. Drank tea in the evening at Captain Duncan MacNeills Dunmore, and having soon yrafter finished the solemnity of the Sasine on Kilberry's Estate I dismissed the men I had brought with me from Achachoish after paying them thirteen shillings in part for their trouble. They demanded 2/6 more - which I could not then pay them as change could not be procured for a Note. Came to Barmore at night where I hoped to have found Stonefield at home - but missed him as he was down at his farm of Kilhamag - Was very civilly entertained by Mr Campbell younger of Airds. Had moderate rain all day.

-
- (5) The Revd. Daniel Hyndman, b. Rothesay 1742, ordained to South Knapdale 1771, died there 1805.
 - (6) The Changehouse (Inn) at Shengart, Ormsary, belonged to Knockbuy's part of Ormsary estate (bought from a widowed sister-in-law.
 - (7) Kilberry Castle was accidentally burnt down in April 1772; in June 1773 Colin of Kilberry writes that he now lives in "a little epitome of a house", which I had assumed to mean a farmhouse - but Blain's reference suggests that part of the castle itself had been patched up for occupation.

Friday April 30

Set out from Barmore after Brakefast. Came through Slieguil (8) which is indeed a very bad road. Had heavy rain and a strong Westerly wind. Got very wet. Came to Lochgilphead where I dined. Left with Dugal Blair the Innkeeper 2/6 for the Achachoish men mentd. above. Arrived at Lochgair in the evening where I was informed that Knockbuy was now at Duntroon which made me think of returning home as sundry circumstances contributed to make that necessary. Left the Charter by Knockbuy with Ask-nish (9) inclosed in a letter so as it might be signed on Knockbuy's return home.

Saturday May 1st

An indifferent day there having been many severe Showers of Snow and hail, however I set out from Lochgair. fferried over in an interval between two Squalls. Came to Ballachandrain

-
- (8) For further references to this notorious piece of road see Kist 17, 18 and 21 (the present issue).
(9) MacIver Campbell of Asknish, Knockbuy's nearest neighbour. (Asknish House is at Lochgair)

....oooOooo....

EXTRACTS from the MINUTE BOOK of the COMMISSIONERS of
SUPPLY of ARGYLLSHIRE, concerning FOXES and EAGLES

By courtesy of Mr Murdo MacDonald, Archivist

1 May 1760 The Meeting appoint the Heritors in the several Divisions of this Shire to meet in the Ordinary Places upon the third Tuesday of October next and consider of the most proper methods for destroying the Foxes and Eagles, And to transmitt their opinion thereanent to the next General Meeting.

1 May 1762 It appearing that the Smaller Heritors are refractory in payment of the Fox Hunters wages, a paragraph is appointed to be insert in the Circular Intimations bearing that Delinquenceys of this nature will be prosecuted at the publick Expence of the Shire.

2 May 1768 It being Represented to the Committee That Eagles and other Birds of Prey are very Destructive to the Lambs in some parts of the Shire, And that it would be for the general utility of the Country, And particularly of those who have sheep stocks that some method should be fallen upon for destroying them, Which being considered by the Committee They appoint the Fox hunters within their Several Districts now that the Foxes are greatly diminished to bestow some part of their time in killing of Eagles and other Birds of Prey, And that they transmitt Certificates of their diligence to the next General Meeting.

EXTRACT from the MINUTES of the COMMISSIONERS of SUPPLY
dated 1 May, 1762 re. Kilmichael Tryst

The following advertisement was ordered to be published in the Edinburgh and Glasgow newspapers:

The Justices of the Peace and Commissioners of Supply of Argyllshire having observed it advertised in the last "Glasgow Journal" that the Farmers and Grasiers in the West of Scotland instead of going to Kilmichael of Glassary as formerly, to purchase black cattle are to hold a Tryst on Dumbarton Moor on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th days of June next and to continue the said Tryst yearly they do hereby notify that they have good reason to believe the said advertisement was insert at the desire of some individuals with a view to promote their own private interest allenarly.

In order therefore to prevent so invidious a design from taking effect the Meeting has resolved that the Whitsunday Market for black cattle shall be held at Kilmichael of Glassary yearly and that in this current year it shall be held on the 1st June next and that none may be intimidated by the foresaid advertisement from bringing their cattle to the Market, the Meeting have directed that such cattle as may happen to remain unsold after the usual time of holding the Market is over shall be purchased upon the Risk of the Shire by persons to be employed for that purpose and for the more convenient driving of cattle it is intended to settle proper stages upon the road from Kilmichael to the Low Country where grass will be provided for cattle at reasonable rates.

The said Committee did further report that in their opinion

the proper stages for providing grass for cattle in their way to the Low Country were those following, viz:
The first Stage from Kilmichael at Arivickintyre about seven computed miles from Kilmichael and the property of Colin Campbell of Ederline, Esquire the second Stage to the Moor of Barvrachy about seven miles distant from the former the property of His Grace the Duke of Argyll the next to Cairndow or Glen Kinglas about eight miles distant the property of Captain James Campbell Esquire of Ardkinglas the fourth Stage to Invervallichan about seven miles distant the property of Lt. Colonel Campbell of Strachur the fifth to the Muirs of Tombuy and Finard about seven miles distant the property of Mr. Arbuthnot the sixth Stage to the Muir of Monichra and Cameron about seven miles distant the property of Mr Donaldson of Murrach and Mr. Charles [?] And then across the Water of Leven.

...ooOoo...

ORNITHOLOGICAL NOTE: HERRING GULLS' RANGE

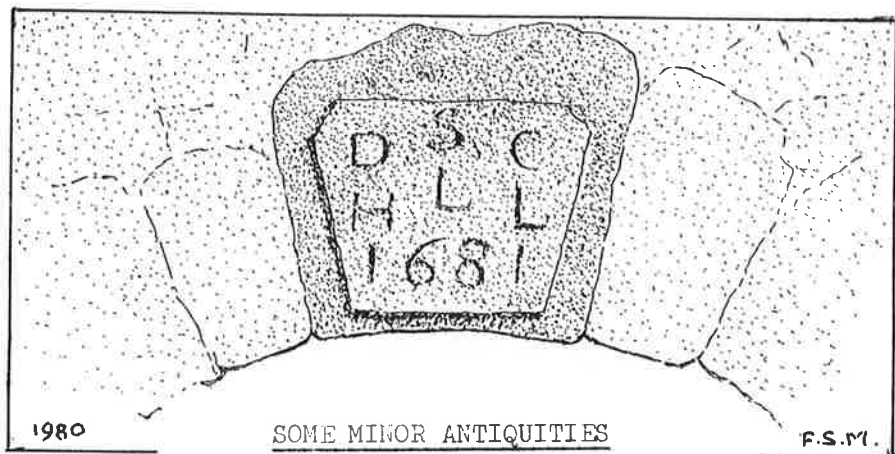
We have been sent the following interesting note from Ford by Major Basil MacNay, a keen ornithologist. For those unfamiliar with the district, the distance from the ringing point, 'as the gull flies', is about 49 miles.

"You may be interested in the following short comment. In July 1979 a Herring Gull perched on our roof to inspect the contents of the bird table. It stayed long enough for us to observe blue and white rings on the right leg and red ones on the left.

The Department of Zoology, Glasgow, confirmed the ringing as part of a large-scale study of the movement of these birds in Scotland and the North of England.

The bird in question was ringed and measured at the Bishopbriggs refuse tip on 31 January 1979 and returned there again on 3 April. Subsequently it visited Ford on 30 July and 24 August 1979.

Another Herring Gull called here on 3 March 1980, but flew off before we were able to identify the ring(s) it carried."



F.S.Mackenna

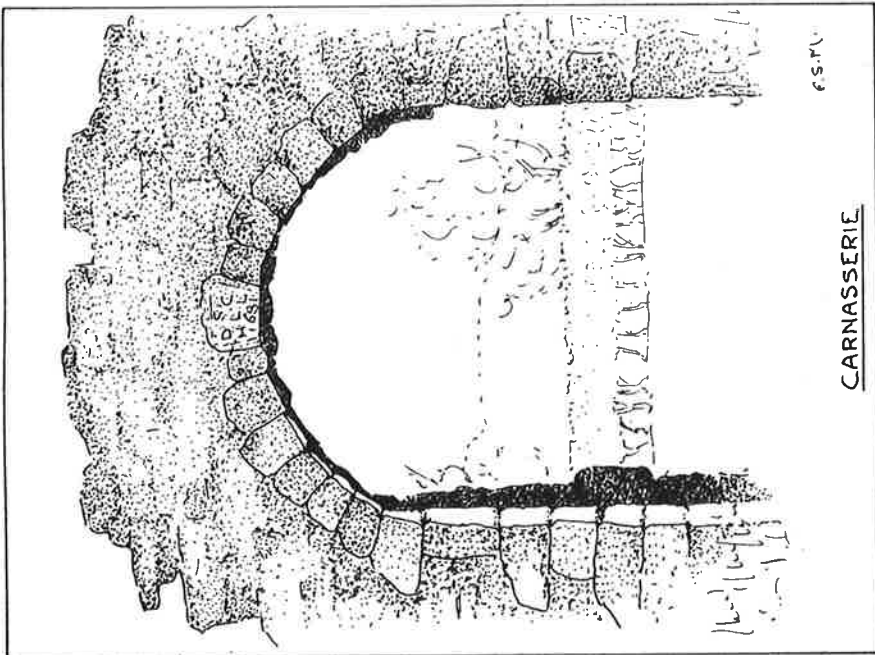
1. A Garden Arch and a Sundial

These antiquities, one at Carnasserie Castle and the other at Asknish, Loch Gair, are linked by the circumstance that each carries the same carved initials. The archway forms part of the boundary-wall of a 17th century pleasure garden at Carnasserie, and its keystone, on the north face, has the initials S.D.C., L.H.L., 1681, and no other carving.

The sundial, shown in the accompanying drawing, stands in the middle of a field between Asknish House and Loch Gair. It is a highly distinctive-looking obelisk 8'9" high, mounted on three circular steps. The four faces of the column are divided into five panels on each. The present north-facing side has two of the panels inscribed, one bearing the same initials as the Carnasserie arch, the other with the date 20(?) June 1695. The remaining eighteen panels on the column are carved in intaglio with a variety of geometrical shapes and with hearts of various sizes. Some of the hemispheres are particularly deeply sunk. The only other carving occurs on the canted corners of the capital above the column.

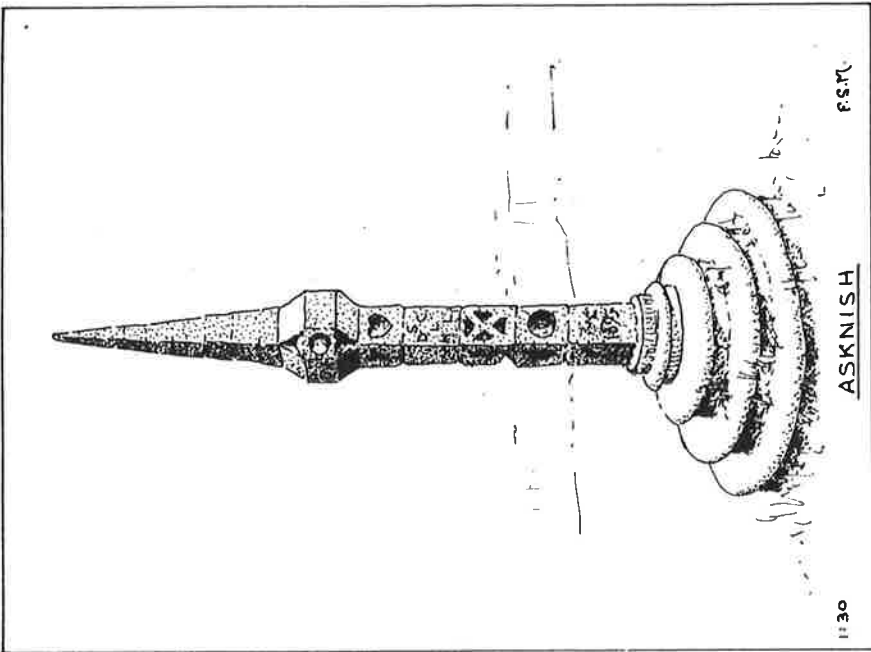
It is by no means certain that the structure is now in its original position; if it be so it presumably marks a spot in the garden of the original house.

The initials are those of Sir Duncan Campbell of Ach-



FSM

CARNASSERIE



FSM

ASKNISH

FSM

nabreck and his wife, the Lady Henrietta Lindsay.

Sir Duncan's descendants were dispossessed after 1745 and the Lochgair estate was purchased by MacIver Campbell of Asknish (the property now known as Arduaine, at the mouth of Loch Melfort). He it was who built the present house and called it Asknish. This would occasion the demolition of the older house to which the sundial pertained.

Traces of metal gnomons remain in many of the sinkings and on the faces of the capital; where none originally existed some part of the carved design acted as a stone gnomon by casting a clear-cut shadow.

There is a sundial at Lochgoilhead which is practically a duplicate of the Asknish one, and on it, the surface being less affected by lichen, many diverging lines such as one would expect, can be seen on the faces of the capital, originating from the site of the gnomon.

The Lochgoilhead dial, bearing the initials of Sir Colin Campbell of Ardkinglas and his wife Dame Helen Maxwell, and with a shield charged with the Campbell gyrony of eight, is dated 1626 to all appearances. Many authorities, with whom the writer agrees, doubt the authenticity of this date. With the exception of this and one other example traditionally supposed to have been erected in 1630, all dated specimens of obelisk dials lie between 1692 and 1714, which seems to give much support to the sceptics, apart altogether from questions of style.

Apparently the Asknish dial remained unrecorded until the Campbell and Sandeman Survey was published (vide post).

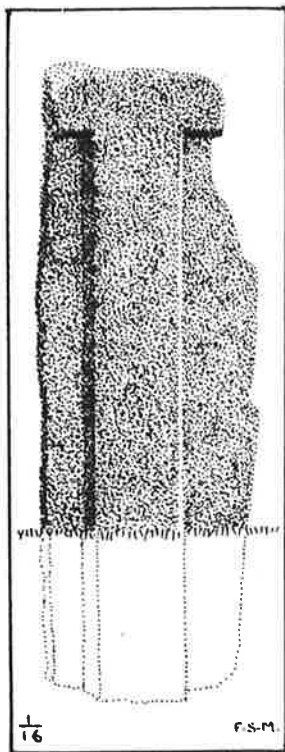
There can be no doubt that these elaborate obelisk dials, in common with those belonging to the multitude of complicated variants - on walls, on corbels, horizontal, lectern-shaped, and so forth - were actually for use and not merely ornament, and despite the fact that instruction in 'dialling' was part of contemporary education (even Robert Burns was so taught) it seems to us a marvel that any sort of answer could be elicited from such a heterogeneous assemblage of shapes - but so it must have been.

Miss Campbell of Kilberry has most kindly supplied an amusing anecdote about the Lady Henrietta Lindsay of the

Carnasserie arch and the Asknish sundial.

At the time of the Monmouth Rising (1685) she was travelling in her coach with a kinswoman by marriage, Jean Campbell, younger daughter of Patrick Campbell of Torblaren, minister of Glenaray; also in her charge was a highly compromising treasonable letter to or from her husband. They were intercepted by Government troopers, which threw Lady Henrietta into the vapours. Jean Campbell, made of sterner stuff, promptly ate the letter and saved the situation.

Lady Henrietta had a sister, Sophia, who is remembered for the daring way in which she effected the Earl of Argyll's escape from the Tower.



2. STONE AT CAIBEAL a'BHRIDE, LOCH GAIR

An interesting carved fragment stands in the burial ground known locally as Caibeal a'Bhrìde (Bride's Chapel), situated on the north shore of Loch Gair (NR 935908).

Several points indicate a considerable antiquity, although the remaining stones, with the exception of the one here discussed, are very few and of no outstanding interest.

The plot is enclosed by a wall, roughly circular in outline, with a bank and ditch outside it. This latter feature is not easily detected on the ground, but its existence was reported some years ago by an observer on a nearby hill, who thus had an 'aerial view'. This, combined with the circular form, gives strong indication of antiquity for the site. Other circular graveyards which come to mind locally are the one at Cladh a'Bhìle (NR 734756) and another at Lochhead (NR 777781). At the centre

there is a small rectangular walled enclosure of which part

of the east wall alone, from its structure, may represent the remains of an early chapel.

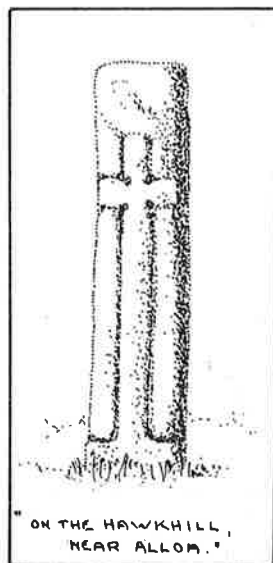
Close to the NW corner of this rectangle stands the stone represented in the drawing. At first sight it seems to suggest a cross-carved slab which has been broken across the arms, but a little reflection tends to rule out such an interpretation. The carving is in alto relievo, raised some $2\frac{1}{2}$ " above the background.

Investigation of the portion below ground level confirmed suspicions that it is indeed the remains of a cross-slab, but that, as placed at present, it is upside-down, having been originally a long-shafted cross standing on a 'ground line'. The head having been broken off (the buried end is obviously incomplete on inspection) the remainder was re-erected with the 'ground line' representing, after a fashion, a mutilated cross head. An example of a 'ground line' on a stone which may reasonably be supposed to resemble the original appearance of the one being discussed is well seen in the drawing of a cross "on the Hawkhill, near Alloa" taken from an illustration in the volume of PSAS for 1860-62, page 88. This seems fully to support a contention that the present stone is an upside-down fragment. Another example of a 'ground line' occurs on the cross at Kilmory Oib (NR 781902), shown well on Pl. XLVI of White's Knapdale.

The now-upper portion is not itself complete, for there is evidence of fracture at its end. The stone has suffered both mutilation and damage; the left side has obviously been cut down to its present shape, and on the right, though here the background is much wider than on the opposite side, there has been loss by breakage. The cross-shaft itself and the remainder of the 'ground line', from their much greater thickness, have escaped damage.

The main measurements of the stone are:-
Total height 54"; width of shaft 7"; depth of relief $2\frac{1}{2}$ ".

The surface of the stone over the whole frontal area



is very free from weather damage, and this enables one to state with certainty that it never bore carved decoration.

Before coming to a final opinion other possibilities had naturally presented themselves for consideration. Were we dealing with a cut-down recumbent slab? The outside dimensions might favour this interpretation but the extreme relief of the carving argued effectively against the idea. Was it the still-right-way-up remains of a cross-slab broken across the arms? A fracture at what is the strongest part of any such slab would be an unlikely occurrence; there is in addition the fact of the shaft continuing right to the (present) broken-off bottom. Could it be anything but the wreck of a cross-carved slab? The only logical conclusion seems to be that it is now upside-down, with a 'ground line' showing.

Diligent but unavailing search has been made for the missing head, and we are left with the not-unreasonable possibility that the "carved stone" formerly reported as being above the adjacent well may have been the head. Unhappily the well cannot now be located, owing to Forestry road-making and planting activities though its approximate position is remembered locally, but there is always a chance that the "carved stone" may yet disclose itself. With the cross-slab presumably always in the vicinity even if not now in its old position, it is reasonable to suggest that the broken-off head could have been placed over the well as evidence of greater sanctity.

The Loch Gair site seems to have been noticed first by Miss Campbell of Kilberry and Miss Sandeman in their Survey (PSAS. 1961-2, pp 68 & 83), a pioneering work of highest importance and of monumental scope.

....oooOooo....

ROYAL ROUTE

A.J.Campbell

Many a time in my childhood have I heard from my grandfather how he had watched Queen Victoria sail through the Crinan Canal. Four years old, and perched on his mother's shoulders, what he saw in 1847 was etched in his memory. Eighty years later, and for the last time, he recalled for me the picture of that August day

A big flat boat was approaching. It was the Sunbeam, the canal track-boat, but it was not the same Sunbeam. Instead of her dull grey hull, he saw a brilliant splendour of cloth of red and gold and silver. The ripples of her steady progress served only to emphasise the richness of the colours by transforming their reflections into an ever-changing mosaic. From her stumpy masts flags hung listlessly in the warm air, and bunting in colourful profusion added to the brilliance. By the forward cabin there sat in an elaborate chair a little lady whose sunshade protected her from the sun: a sunshade which further served, by the merest inclination of its betasselled silk, to acknowledge the cheers of the people lining the banks. Never had he seen so many people! And that little lady, his mother whispered to him, was the Queen. The Queen! He wondered, where was her crown, where were her brilliant robes? His eyes leaped forward from the Sunbeam and sought the horses which were its motive power. Three big black horses there were, powerful and majestic, with red coats and silver trappings for the occasion. And each rider - with scarlet surcoat, silver riding cap, and, jauntily in the hand, a riding crop! What more could any boy desire than to be one of those heroes on horseback? That could never be; these, too, were unreal. But stay! Surely that figure on the third horse was Johnnie MacTavish? Yes, it was! The little boy could see the bandage on the finger of Johnnie's left hand where his knife had slipped the previous night when he was shaping a hazel crook. It was real, then, after all.

When I was older I was to read Queen Victoria's own version of her journey through the Crinan Canal:

"The light on the hills was beautiful as we steamed down Loch Fyne [from Inveraray]. At five we reached Lochgilp and all landed at Lochgilphead,* a small village where there were numbers of people, and, amongst others, Sir John P.Orde, who lent his carriage and was extremely civil. We and our people drove through the little vil-
.....

* Ardrishaig disputes this, despite Her Majesty's clear statement. Possibly Ardrishaig was the site of the disembarkation on the return journey. (Editor's note)

lage to the Crinan Canal, where we entered a most magnificently decorated barge, drawn by three horses, ridden by postilions in scarlet. We glided along very smoothly but the eleven locks we had to go through were tedious, and instead of the passage lasting one hour and a half, it lasted upwards of two hours and a half"

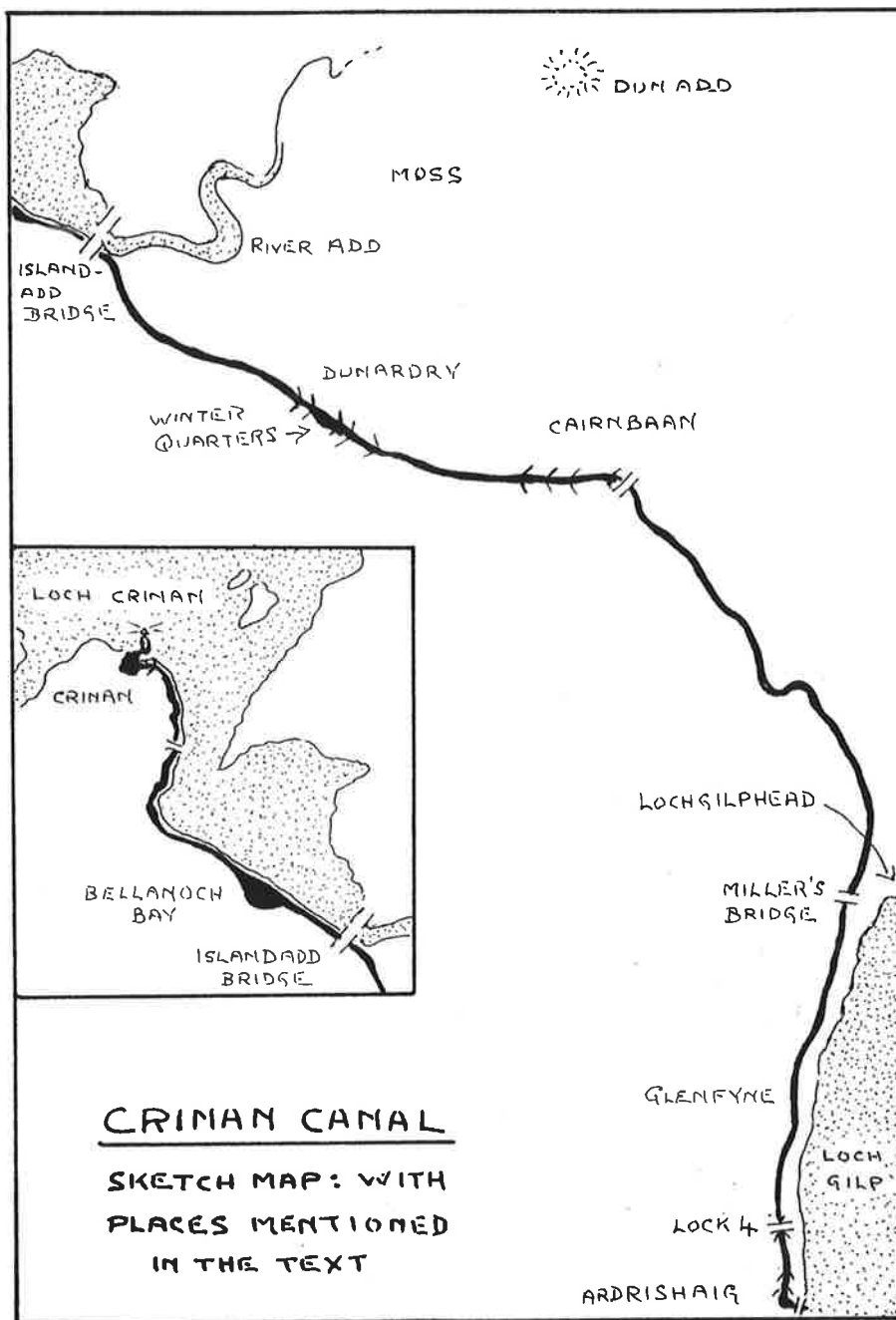
On the return journey a month later, things went a little better, despite heavy rain.

".... we entered the canal boat at ten. We proceeded more quickly than the last time; the people kept running along as before, and there was a piper at each lock. It rained almost the whole time. We reached Lochgilphead at twelve"

Even by the time the Queen's Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands had appeared in print in 1868, the canal track-boats Sunbeam and Maid of Perth, and their attendant horses and postillions, had yielded place to speedier steam transport. In 1866 the Linnet was introduced as the canal steamer, and for sixty-three years this little craft faithfully carried out her pleasant summer duty as a link in that chain which, after Queen Victoria's tour in 1847, had become known as the Royal Route.

Two generations later, I was spending my early years by the banks of the same canal, and the tall, thin red funnel of the Linnet is one of my earliest memories. Among ships the Linnet must have been unique. In retrospect she seems to have been a cross between a Venetian gondola and a Mississippi river-steamer. This exotic creation would reach Ardrishaig about midday on the southward run from Crinan, and tie up at the landing-stage known to all as "Linnet Quay". Into a little indentation in the bank would come nosing the low curved prow. On this fixed point the little ship's entire length of eighty-six feet would pivot, with barely a foot to spare between her stern and the opposite bank.

At the height of the season apparently endless crowds could stream aboard the Linnet without taxing her capacity, which must have had some official maximum. Yet never once do I recall any person being left behind. While the



last passenger was being hustled aboard, the engineer returned to his inner world of engines and boilers, and soon we boys were watching the tall red funnel disappearing into the wooded reach beyond Glenfyne.

Some of the more energetic boys made a practice of pacing the Linnet for a few hundred yards along the eastern bank of the canal, which, as tow-path, was kept free from obstructions. This practice led to a financial profit, small in proportion to its potential, for the generosity of the Linnet's passengers outstripped their dexterity, and most of their coins fell short and found final refuge in the muddy bottom of the canal. At intervals this racing was repeated by relays of local youths, wherever an appropriate stretch of canal lent itself to the practice. The first reach normally traversed by the Linnet, from the fourth lock at Ardrishaig to Cairnbaan was one such. Some three miles long, it was uninterrupted by locks, and only the narrows at Miller's Bridge called for reduced speed.

At Cairnbaan, however, the locks reappeared in quick succession, and the Linnet made slow progress toward the summit level of the canal. To relieve the tedium of this elevating process, many of the passengers chose to walk the banks, where they might be entertained by Highland dancing or bagpipe music, buy locally made tweeds or even enjoy the warmth of milk milked "while you wait".

At Dunardry, the Linnet passed its own winter quarters as it began its descent towards Crinan, and, in so doing, reached more open country. Eastwards there now stretched the low-lying Moss through which wound lazily the River Add, on its way to join the sea at Islandadd Bridge. Rising from the flats of the Moss could be seen the historic hill-fort of Dunadd, once the capital of the ancient kingdom of Dalriada and crowning place of its warrior kings.

Now only the eastern embankment separated the Linnet from the salt waters of Loch Crinan, and it seemed as though the sight of the sea spurred the little vessel to greater speed. Through Bellanoch Bay she hurried, giving her passengers a vision, all too brief, of whitewashed walls, thatched roofs, bright flowers and an overwhelming sense of peace. Round rocky bends the Linnet now steamed, her wash causing the reeds and yellow flags to curtsey to

her passing. One final bend - and then Crinan.

Here the Linnet's passengers transferred to the waiting Chevalier, and the next stage of the journey began. The dark keep of Duntroon echoed the paddles' steady beat as course was set for the Dorus Mor. Coirebhreacain's whirlpool might thunder in their ears. They entered the Sound of Luing for an exciting brief call at Blackmill Bay, and continued with Fladda lighthouse placid in the summer sea; they passed the Holy Isles, the Bens of Mull beyond; they entered the Sound of Kerrera, leading to the bustle of Oban Bay.

Such were the links in the chain of the Royal Route with which I was most familiar, using them in summer from and to Oban High School. The full itinerary was Glasgow, Ardrishaig, Crinan, Oban, Corpach, and by the Caledonian Canal to Inverness. But now there is no start from the Broomielaw at the magic hour of 7-11 a.m. No more does the Linnet make her leisurely way through the Crinan Canal. After sixty-three years of service and pleasure to thousands of travellers, she was withdrawn in 1929, and, two years later, sank in a storm in the Gareloch.

The Royal Route is no more. O tempora! O mores!

.....ooooOoooo.....

EXTRACTS FROM 'OLD KILBERRY'S' DIARIES

Second Series. Pt.5

IN FOREIGN HOTELS

1895. 18th September [on way to Aix les Bains]

.... too late to catch the train for Aix les Bains.

.... Put up in a miserable pot house near the P.L. and M. Station [Paris] called Hotel de Chemin de Fer. It is to be avoided. Bad and dear.

8th October [at Lausanne]

Lunch at Hotel d'Angleterre, Annecy. Luncheon 17fr (about £1.3.9) including 1½ bottles of Maçon wine, coffee and liqueurs. [party of 3]

1900. 17th August

Got to Dijon at 7.30 pm and put up at Hotel du Jura and du Parc. Not very good but not dear. There is a much

better hotel (de la Cloche) but we did not know of it. Our hotel was pretty bad; smelly, food bad and sheets very wet.

1903. 30th July [at Aix les Bains]

Arrived Aix 6.35 and went to Hotel Britannique. The omnibus was full and they sent us up in a deluge of rain in a small hooded fiacre (Devil's wheelbarrow I called it).

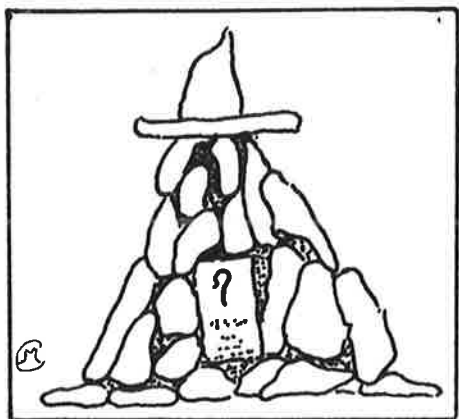
25th August

My umbrella (a very good one) missing. Taken out of my room yesterday evening. Several others have been lost in this hotel Molly at Cercle in the evening with Lady Greville. I did not go out - no umbrella.

26th August [leaving Aix]

Great business tipping all the servants at the Hotel Some of them are very useless and did very little for us. The Valet de Chambre and the Chambermaid who was with him at the same job are the only good servants that we had to do with and they were very attentive all the time the head waiter, 2 table waiters, the waiter who brought up our early breakfast and the boy who sometimes took his place, the concierge (an unmannerly and slovenly boor), the lift boy (who was never to be seen), coachman who only took us to the station, the Interpreter who looks after luggage and who is very attentive (though a bit of a fool). Except him and the first two all the servants are ignorant and inattentive. This hotel is now very badly managed and the attendance is disgraceful. Cooking very indifferent. Richard the Proprietor is a sulky rascal and inclined to be cheeky He used to give bouquets to all the ladies when they went away but this year I have not seen him give one. There was a Mr Isenberg (a Jew I fancy) who grumbled at everything and made himself a nuisance. He wanted to be friendly with us but he was too much of a bounder. Growled all day long. If he ever gets to heaven and his halo does not fit properly he will growl for hundreds of years. His wife and daughter came a few days ago but he did not introduce them to anyone and did not take much notice of them.

TO BE CONTINUED



ANOTHER KIND OF CAIRN

Marion Campbell

The Editor has asked for a note on 'Death Cairns'. I mentioned these briefly in ARGYLL: The Enduring Heartland, p.12:-

"There is yet another kind of cairn. You will find it in a fold of hill-ground where a shepherd lost his way in snow, or at a steep corner where a cart overturn-

ed. These are not graves - the dead sleep in the churchyards - but we lay a stone on them to appease that which here parted suddenly from its clay".

(Readers of The Dark Twin may be kind enough to recall that Drost built a cairn over the deathplace of Talorc).

The cart-accident took place at the top of Torintuirk Hill on West Loch Tarbert; the victim was James Gilchrist from Kilberry, and 'Old Kilberry' had to cope with the episode. This cairn has now, I think, disappeared into road-metal.

The shepherd was named Duncan Campbell, and his cairn stands on the north-east shoulder of Stuchd an Dughail, the ridge west of Loch Arail on the summit of the Inverneill-Kilberry road. The site, now in Forestry ground, is at approximately NR807813.

In December 1881 Duncan walked from Achahoish to Achabrad to kill a pig for the lead-miners there. He set out again in light snow-showers which increased to a sudden blizzard, in which it is to be presumed that he blundered off the track (the older road ran to westward of the loch). His family concluded that he had sheltered with the miners, and no alarm was raised until the weather improved, when his body was found by searchers in a shallow gully well off the track.

Duncan's grave is in the former parish burial-ground near Lothead House, with those of other members of his family. His friends erected a cairn at the place where he died, with a tablet bearing his name. Perhaps unconsciously they thus carried out an ancient protective rit-

ual, while stones would be added by any who passed that way; a usual custom among hillfolk. The deeper purpose was to avert the harm that might come from accidentally touching the death-place.

Harm? Just traceable in legend is the belief that a human being comprises three parts - spirit, flesh and what might best be called 'life-force', existent in the blood. At death, especially violent death, the 'life-force' might escape without a ritual to quieten it or compel it to accompany its former body to the grave. This force would lurk, grudging and resentful, to seek reincarnation in another body, preferably a human one. Incapable of reasoned action it remained malign; incarnate, it might be insanely violent. Young women were especially vulnerable to its attentions, but it required physical contact to achieve its aim. The cairn both baffled it and gave means of pacifying it with a murmured good wish and a commemorative stone or two.

The same danger may account for the continuing care taken to prevent a confined body touching earth before it is laid in its grave - hence 'coffin-rest' stones along trackways. Similarly, only women past childbearing might prepare a corpse for burial, and water used to wash it or a death-room was poured over an earthfast rock which was considered capable of literally 'earthing' any remanent force that might have been collected.

Campbell's Cairn is a steep triangular pile of stones about 3 ft high, topped by an upright stone and looking like nothing so much as a 'Witch's Hat'. Low on its eastern side is a slate bearing a neat outline of a shepherd's crook and these words:

FOUND HERETHE
BODDY OF
DUN CAMPBELL
LATE SHEPHERD
AUCHOISH
8th DEC 1881

.....

Editor's Note: Miss Campbell's books, quoted above, are:-

The Dark Twin: Turnstone Press, 1973

Argyll: The Enduring Heartland: Turnstone Press, 1977

EARLY ROADS - A POSTSCRIPT

F.S.Mackenna

In Kist 17, p.6, there is mention of a new coast road to Tarbert, to supersede the overland Sliabhgaoil section. The New Statistical Account (1840) gives more details.

"Before the opening of this road, the district of Kintyre was quite insulated from the rest of Argyleshire. The only path by which any communication between the two places could be maintained, was almost quite impassable. It ran along hills and dales, which were intersected by water courses without any bridges. In summer these waters were fordable, but in winter the attempt to cross them was both difficult and dangerous.

The Lliabh Gaoil [sic.] road, which was so useful before the introduction of steam, and conferred such a boon on the country generally, and on Kintyre particularly, was obtained through the instrumentality of Sheriff Campbell, one of the ancestors of the present family of Stonefield. The line was surveyed by an English engineer. It is said that he attempted to travel over the ground; but the rocks were so precipitous, the ferns so gigantic, the Englishman so unwieldy, and so unaccustomed to travel such rough grounds, that, after much tumbling and scrambling, he was obliged to betake himself to his boat, and finish his survey by rowing along the shore. On arriving at Barmore House, the residence of Sheriff Campbell, he remarked to the Sheriff, that it was quite a hopeless thing to attempt opening a road along the projected line, that it was an undertaking fit for the Empress Catherine of Russia, and not fit for private individuals. The Sheriff ordered his clerk or treasurer to pay the English surveyor for his trouble, and, with that determination and resolution which so much characterised that gentleman, the Sheriff set about the mighty task of opening the Lliabh Gaoil road, and persevered till it was finished. It is one of the best lined roads in the county; and, whether for the purpose of pleasure or of utility, it is one of the most interesting roads imaginable. Since the introduction of steam, it is now much less frequented than formerly; but

still, it is extremely serviceable, as forming the only inland channel of communication between the peninsula of Kintyre and the other parts of Argyleshire."

Sympathy goes to the unfortunate Sasunnach, for added to bracken and rocks, he would certainly be attacked by the 18th century ancestors of our midges.

Other road matters from that period may be of interest, from the Minutes of the Commissioners of Supply in 1767 (by courtesy of the Archivist, Mr Murdo MacDonald).

KILCALMANELL. Stonefield's Report was approved and the Meeting appoint the Collector of Supply to make payment to him out of the publick funds of the Sum of Thirty five pounds six shillings and a penny Sterling in which he's superexpended on the Roads in his District and it is Recommended to Stonefield to Contract with a proper person for building a Bridge on the Burn of Ashens the Expence whereof conform to an Estimate produced being Twenty four pounds Sterling is appointed to be paid out of the publick Funds how soon the said Bridge shall be finished.

KILBERRY. The Meeting have Observed on Loup's Report for the Parish of Kilberry That he does not condescend on what Roads the people under his Charge wrought on last Season and it is appointed to be Intimated to him that the Expence of Advertising the people is not to be sustained in time coming. The Meeting appoint the Sum of One pound Seventeen Shillings and Eleven pence Sterling of Road Money in Loup's hands to be applied on the most necessary Roads in that District.

In consequence of an Application made to the Meeting by Colin Campbell of Kilberry the inhabitants of all the Farms from Clochbreck to Kilmaluaig in Kilberry Parish both those Farms included are appointed to perform the Statute Work this Season on the Line of Road leading from Kilberry Northward under Kilberry's Inspection as Surveyor and Loup, Captain Duncan MacNeill and Kentarbert to strike the Line of said Road through Kilberry's Grounds.

The Minutes of the Commissioners of Supply are a mine of most interesting information, and Mr MacDonald is actively engaged in making an exact copy of the whole series.

KILBERRY FAMILY NOTES

Rosa Campbell. 1842-1918

[This all-too-short account of her childhood was written by the eldest sister of "Old Kilberry" of the Diary, great-aunt of our President, by whose courtesy it is reproduced.]

One of the first things I remember is seeing my father and uncles firing at some pictures stuck up against the wall of the garden at the house at Tiretigan, where we lived while the house at Kilberry was being built; the pictures were family portraits but I believe daubs of no value as paintings. I remember hearing the words "There goes old Colin's eye, now for the other" etc. [Evidence of this unholy activity remains to this day on a portrait at Kilberry Castle.]

That must have been before 1847, as my sister Mary was the first of us born at Kilberry, in Februry. 1847. I was born at Ardpatrik in Sep. 1842. My brother John [the Diarist] was also born there in Janry. 1844, and Anne [became Mrs Lloyd, Minard] at Tiretigan in June 1845.

Another of my early recollections which I think must have been earlier than the other, was of being dressed for a journey, my Mother crying as she put on a shepherd's plaid coat with black velvet facings & cuffs & a black velvet bonnet with pink bows in the "cap". In those days the steamer left Tarbert at 9 & to catch it we started about 4am. in a cart, with blankets arranged as a "tilt", sacks filled with straw & moss, blankets inside very warm & snug.

In my young days there was no plantation between the house & the sea, but the whole was hayfield up to the sunk fence, & in spring a mass of narcissus & daffodils, also bluebells. [These spring bulbs are still flourishing.]

My uncle William [Retd. officer, East India Marine] lived a great deal with us & was a queer tempered & eccentric person tho' a great favourite for [we] used to tease him & generally got paid out. On one occasion when he went to stay at Craig, he took me & Johnnie & Anne with him. (We always liked going there as Neil Buchanan & his wife [gamekeeper-grieve at Craig] made much of us & we enjoyed the beautiful scones & oatcakes she used to give us) & in some way or other they two [i.e. John and Anne]

offended him, so he put them into what we used to call "the dog's hole" of the dog cart & fastened them in & so we drove home to Kilberry, they shouting and crying from the inside & I crying beside him & begging for them to be let out without avail, but he got a good "hearing" from my Mother when we got home & I do not remember that Johnnie & Anne were any the worse. On another occasion he locked my brother William [William MacBean Rankine of Dudgehope. 1848-79] up in a large closet in his bedroom & went out for a walk with the key in his pocket; for this too he got fallen upon by my Mother.

We had a favourite old Gander, who used to walk all over the house after one of the maids, an old laundry maid called Elizabeth, & once this gander followed her upstairs & into Uncle William's room where he was in bed. Much annoyed he got up, opened the window, caught up the gander & threw it out. It alighted on the ground none the worse, tho' the window was as high as the present No.5 [Third storey from ground level]

An old lady, Miss Lily MacKellar, who was my grandmother's aunt, also lived a great deal with us. A tiny little old woman, who wore a tight white cap & a poke bonnet of black silk when she [went] out. She used to do a lot of mending & knitting for us all. Uncle William used to tease her a great deal, & one way was by addressing envelopes to all sorts of people & leaving them for her to see. She would peer at them & say "Why, Billy, what are you writing to so & so about?", receiving strange answers in reply.

Conclusion of Manuscript

REVIEW:

'Herself'. The Life & Photographs of M.E.M. Donaldson
Presented by John Telfer Dunbar. Wm Blackwood & Sons
Edinburgh 1979. £3.95

Many Kist readers, in common with a large part of the public, will know of Miss Donaldson's writings, with Wanderings in the Western Highlands and Islands and Further Wanderings, Mainly in Argyll being probably the most familiar, since they include many of the places and antiquities in our area. No one who reads these volumes can fail to be deeply impressed by the courage and sheer end-

urance of their author in penetrating with undaunted spirit to even the most inaccessible sites to record them in words and photographs; the latter, indeed, for those times and conditions, are outstanding as records of people and a way of life long since vanished.

Mr Telfer Dunbar has placed us all very much in his debt for this book on Miss Donaldson and her photographs. We get a new understanding of what must undoubtedly have been sometimes a rather alarming personage. Miss Campbell of Kilberry recalls seeing, as a child, what she felt assured must be a witch descending on Kilberry Castle on a bicycle, with a voluminous black cloak flying behind her. This apparition/sent our future President scuttling off to the nursery for safety and refusing to abandon her refuge until the visitor finally departed. In one of her books Miss Donaldson gives her account of this visit, which includes this delightful passage:- "My letter of introduction at once secured me the kindest welcome from Mrs Campbell, and, especially in view of the hospitality she at once offered me, honour and honesty alike compelled me to own to the hostility I invariably shewed, on paper, to the Campbell Clan - of the past Assuring me that my prejudices did not matter, the lady of the castle took me to see everything of interest my memory carries the impress of a hospitality that could not have been outdone in old days by Clan Donald, whose hospitality was proverbial."

Mr Telfer Dunbar's book contains not only a very full biography of this redoubtable lady (one might almost write 'Amazon'), but also of her highly professional photographs, the majority showing the country people she knew and counted as genuine friends, at their daily work on the crofts and around the home. Many of the locations, for example near Toigal on the Morar River, are readily identifiable although the houses have gone. It is indeed a welcome addition to our reference shelves and its acquisition cannot be urged too strongly.

A small point: the last illustration seems to recall Castle Tioram rather than Mingary.

F.S.M.