a tree-alphabet :

The KIST 33

THE KIST

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The Natural History & Antiquarian Society
of Mid-Argyll

President: Miss Campbell of Kilberry, FSA. FSAScot.

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Hon. Secretary for Membership and Publications

Mr E.S.Clark, MA. FSAScot. Northlea, Tarbert, Argyll
(Tel. 793)

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NOTE ON THE COVER

Marion Campbell

The Gaelic alphabet consists of seventeen letters and an aspirate ('h' in transliteration). Each is named after a tree or shrub; it would be possible to make up a message by stringing leaves together, although I know of no record of such a practice. The plant-names used are in some cases obsolete. They originate in Irish Gaelic, and are also used in old Welsh texts (exhaustively discussed by Robert Graves in The White Goddess). The list is as follows: -

A = Ailm = Elm (Ulmus montana)
B = Beith = Birch (Betula alba)
C = Coll = Hazel (Corylus avellana)
D = Dair (Darach) = Oak (Quercus robur)
E = Eadha = Aspen (Populus tremula)
F = Fearn = Alder (Alnus glutinosa)
G = Gort = Ivy (Hedera helix)
I = Iogh (Iudhar) = Yew (Taxus baccata) or Juniper (Aiteann - Juniperus communis)
L = Luis (Caorann) = Rowan (Sorbus aucuparia)
M = Muin (Fionnan) = Vine, for which Dris = Bramble (Rubus spp.) might be substituted
N = Nuin (an Uinnsean) = Ash (Fraxinus excelsior)
O = Onn (or Or = 'Gold') = Whin (Ulex europaeus) or Broom (Bealaidh - Sarothamnus scoparius)
P = Beith-bhog (lit. 'Soft B') = Dwarf Birch (B. nana)
R = Ruis (Droman) = Elder (Sambucus niger)
S = Suil (Seileach) = Willow (Salix sp.)
T = Teine (lit. 'Fire') = Whin or Broom (cf. O above)
U = Ur = Yew (cf. I above) or Heather (Fraoch, Erica sp.) might be substituted.
' (H) = Uath (Sgitheach) = Hawthorn (Crataegus oxycanthus)

Modern Gaelic names are given in brackets. The sprays have been drawn after figures in Bentham & Hooker.

Graves, citing O'Flatherty (17th century) gives Peth, Peith or Pethboc = "Guelder-rose or dwarf-elder", and P as "a substitute for the original letter Ng" of the Ogam alphabet. Ogam itself acquired a symbol for P, added with the diphthongs; but this leads into complications too wide to be explored here.

Editorial Note: This issue, with its distinctive cover by the President, will be further acclaimed by readers for another of Miss Sandeman's charming Jura memories. Also we welcome a new contributor, Lady McGrigor, with a paper on two 'lost' villages in the Dalmally area.

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MORE IN THE NET

Mary Sandeman

When the violets joined the primroses on the banks of the little burns, Father would take me fishing. At first he did the casting of the worm into the white water at the head of the pool, and told me when to strike - I would have done it far too soon - and I would give it such a yank that it flew over my head on to the bank behind. Once the hook was out Father would point out that had the fish been any bigger I would very likely have lost it, or, horror of horrors, broken the rod. It was a six-foot American split cane in two sections, which in his hands cast a beautiful line. It belonged to my grandmother, but I dont think she had used it very much. My own rod which I got on my seventh birthday, was just two stiff bits of wood with the line attached - no reel or anything like that. But when Father took me it was the split cane we used, and I learned to thread the line through the rings and fit the reel.

Many happy days we had climbing up the beds of the burns - each one so different from the others.

The Manse Burn, with its silvery rocks and gravel beds, near the graveyard, under the high banks of whins, so very gold against the hard blue spring sky, gave me my first fish. What utter delight and triumph I showed as I looked into Father's smiling blue eyes. No need for words - we were at one at that moment.

The Murder Burn, with its grand waterfall whose sound came sighing on the wind over the great peat bog where the curlews bubbled their joy of living.

Daimh-sgeir, with its high banks; each handhold as you climbed up to get to the next pool greeting you with primroses, violets or wood sorrel. From the pools the sky was just a narrow ribbon of blue where the larks sang.

The Mill Burn, that ran into the sea at the Smiddy, was

where I usually fished on my own. Here the trouble was that above the mill lade and below the dam, there were an awful lot of brambles, and above the dam the stream ran through a tunnel of hazels. Sometimes the dog came too. I dont think he approved of my being alone. Once when teetering on a slippery stone I dropped my tin of worms into the water and away theu sailed. The dog gave me a firm 'stay still' look, swam out and brought it back. He was a very experienced fishing spectator as he always went with his master on serious fishings. I felt rather proud that he deigned to help me for I knew he'd done the same for his master - so I felt I had arrived. Well, not just the same: it was like this. Father was fishing the river in blustery weather, with the dog minding his own business. Father got into a big fish at the Grey Hen pool, about a quarter mile from the sea (grey hens flighted over it at dusk). There was heavy water and the fish made for the sea, under a sheep-gate slung across the river and under a foot-bridge. Somewhere his cap went and the fishing bag and his scarf, but the fish was duly landed on the shingle at the sea. But where were his cap, scarf and bag, and where was the dog who always managed to be there at the kill? Here he came, bag, cap, scarf and all - a very difficult retrieval through obstacles for a spaniel. After that a tin of worms was puppy stuff - but then in his eyes it was only for a puppy.

When the heat began to shimmer off the heather, just showing colour in the buds, there were the hill lochs. A long rough walk for short legs. At first I just watched and played about, but when I could cast more or less I would fish for a while, praying with all my heart "Please God, just one fish, just one wee fish." The prayer was usually answered. After that, perfectly contented, I would build dams and make water run where water had not been. The bog-bean nodded in the shallows and perhaps an eagle might sweep overhead. Father was extremely good at fishing and it was lovely to watch him, the movement, like a ballet dancer's, rippling up through legs, body and arms, the line flashing in a figure-of-eight above his head and shooting out straight and true, the flies landing gently just as real flies would.

There was nothing beautiful about my efforts. I spent more time undoing the flies from the heather or my hair

than fishing. When a kind wind did carry the line out, the flies landed with a distinct splash. Even so, when I did get a fish the dog always arrived to give his approval. How he knew I have no idea. When his master got one he wiould hear the reel running but my whales seldom if ever took out line. Sometimes I would net a fish for Father if I was near enough at the time. The winds sang and the clouds sailed by; I could be cold and often hungry, for one couldn't eat while the rise lasted, but I was never bored.

Loch Moil where we would watch a red-throated diver with her two chicks. Loch na Cloich with its erratic boulder and rowan tree. And the Market Loch, 500 odd feet up and a tough walk, especially as until we were above the Murder Burn waterfall the bracken was well above my head. The fish were bigger and more diffucult to catch, but there were nice little streams with little deltas. Sandpipers flitting like very vociferous ghosts along the shore. Grouse churring in the warm heather, dragonflies drying their wings on a grass stem, a mallard family, a teal's nest tucked below the heather, so warm looking, so neatly covered with down.

Once when we had got several good fish Father put them in a little dam to keep them fresh. When it was time to go home the fish had gone. Thinking that he might have mistaken the place he called the dog to come and help look, but cocking his ears he ran up the bank into deep heather and got well cursed for a fool. Back he came with a fish and off for another until he had them all. Obviously he had thought that fish in water could swim away and had moved them to safety, well hidden in the heather. They were in perfect condition. If you have a wise dog obedience can be much over-rated.

There was a day when we were half way down from this loch and a rest and a pipe seemed called for, but the tobacco pouch was not to be found. It had last been seen at the loch side after lunch. Father went through the pantomime of looking for it in his pockets and then without much hope said "way fetch". In half an hour the dog was back with the pouch quite dry in his soft mouth.

At the end of the day and years later, there is more in the net than fish.

....oooOooo....

"B A R A V A L L A"

Marion Campbell

(Reprinted and abridged, by permission, from The Highland Breeders' Journal, July 1986.)

Throughout the 63 volumes of the Highland Cattle Herd Book the name 'Baravalla' crops up time and again. There will be few breeders, if any, whose Highlanders do not have breeding that goes back to this famous cow. Miss Campbell of Kilberry has gifted her grandfather's and father's Fold Books to the Society containing the most absorbing details of the Kilberry Highland Fold from 1877 until 1928. Miss Campbell has contributed the following article which explains the origin of the 'Baravalla' bloodline:-

I am often asked why my grandfather gave the name Baravalla to one of his Highland cows, at the beginning of the Kilberry Fold. Baravalla is a small farm near Tarbert and on the north side of the West Loch; the land never belonged to the Kilberry family. In the 1870s it was farmed by a Dr Campbell, then retired from general practice in the district.

My grandfather, John Campbell of Kilberry, first mentions the place in his diary in 1877 -

16 October. "Carruthers went with Aichaloch to Baravalla to look at Dr Campbell's Highland cows but they could not agree about the price."

John Carruthers was the manager at Kilberry; 'Aichaloch' was Archie Galbraith, a noted local drover-dealer who rented one of my grandfather's hill-farms near Baravalla.

13 November. "This is the day of the first Tarbert market, i.e. the first of the new ones, and there were a few good cattle there. Dr Campbell sold his Highland cows by auction and I bought three of them. Black cow and calf £14, red cow to calve next month £13.5/-, red cow and calf £12.10/-"

The old doctor died next April:-

7 May, 1878. "Went to Baravalla to see some heifers which belonged to the late Dr Campbell. His son and McCalman were trying to sell them but I did not buy them. When I got there I found two other people already on the ground, and it looked very much like an auction without an auct-

ioneer. They were very wild. I offered £10.15/- each for eight of them. Carruthers and Aichaloch were with me."

At Kilmichael Glassary Market in May 1879:- "A lot of Cattle in the Market but many of the inferior sort were not sold. I bought 18 three year-old Highland stots from Donald Gillies for £13 each and three of the Jura heifers from James Campbell for £16 each. I also bought one of the Baravalla heifers which calved last night from Dan Sinclair for £11. 10/-."

Some of these cattle can be identified from the farm m.s. Herd Book, now in the Society's care. The black cow bought in 1877 was entered to the Society's Herd Book as The Doctor 97. She was re-sold the same year. One of the 'red' cows was Riabach ("brindled" in the farm book) the dau of Geepoch Riabach 93 (1881) by Ardifuir 15. The calf dropped at Kilmichael Mart was Buidhe 97, "from a brindled cow owned by the late Dr Campbell." All these events took place before the Society, let alone the Herd Book, existed.

In 1885 Geepoch Riabach had a heifer calf to Kilchamaig Buidhe 325; she was entered as Baravalla 932. She produced her first calf in 1889, and had thirteen in all by 1901 - five heifers, seven bulls and the twelfth stillborn. The grand old cow lived on until November 1908 and died aged 23. Her head was mounted and is preserved at Kilberry.

Baravalla had four heifers which survived and bred, and it is from these four that the world-wide stock of "The Baravallas" derived. Baravalla's bull calves made less of a mark in the history of the breed than their sisters, but some of them left progeny which can be traced in the early volumes of the Herd Book. Her owner, "Old Kilberry", who played a large part in setting up our Society, would have been happy to know that his 1885 heifer established her name throughout the world of Highland cattle.

At the back of the Kilberry Fold Book there is a newspaper cutting from the Glasgow Herald of 13th October, 1928 describing the dispersal of the Kilberry Fold after the death of Colonel Campbell of Kilberry. This extract merely serves to show how little things have changed over the years.

"Something of the old spirit was manifest at the preliminaries introducing yesterday's sale of pedigree High-

land cattle at Oban. In pre-war years breeders and their patrons dined, sang songs, had pipers piping on the eve of the bull sales. This time the dining event was set down for the night of the autumn sale and it proved a great success. English and other buyers were guests at the tables, and the aftermath was fit to drive dour, dull care to the outer fringe of threatening things .... On yesterday's selling card the main thing was the dispersal of the Kilberry herd. The late Lieut. Colonel Campbell of Kilberry, a man greatly beloved all over the West Highlands, was an enthusiast on behalf of the Highland cause, and his trustees had no option but to sell the cattle in which the gallant Colonel took such a pride ....Kilberry's best lot on the whole were descendants of the old Highland Society cow "Baravalla" HB No.932."

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REVIEW: Inveraray Notes. Donald Mackechnie, OBE. MA.

This publication has been awaited with mounting expectation and it will not be found wanting. Its format and contents are in every way worthy of such a distinguished authority. Twenty-four of Inveraray's most interesting locations are featured, both by illustration and text - the latter giving the history of each item and its associated people, all presented in the easy and occasionally whimsical style which ensues from a lifetime spent on the subject. Two examples of lightness of touch, from many, may be given. In dealing with the Rev John MacAulay, who was described by a contemporary as "obstinate, opinionative, dogmatic, domineering, everybody else wrong, he alone right", our author goes on "No wonder he collided with Dr Johnson in the Argyll Arms Hotel in October 1773". Again, instancing a case of gross immorality in the 1600s, he adds "the same light-hearted pair were again in trouble ..." This is a publication which will be read with enjoyment and cherished for future reference. It might have benefitted some readers to have been reminded that the earliest sums quoted were Scots, one-twelfth the value of Sterling.

F.S.M.

Obtainable from the Author, Bridge of Douglas, Inveraray £1.50 (post 20p. extra)

TWO OLD VILLAGES OF LORN

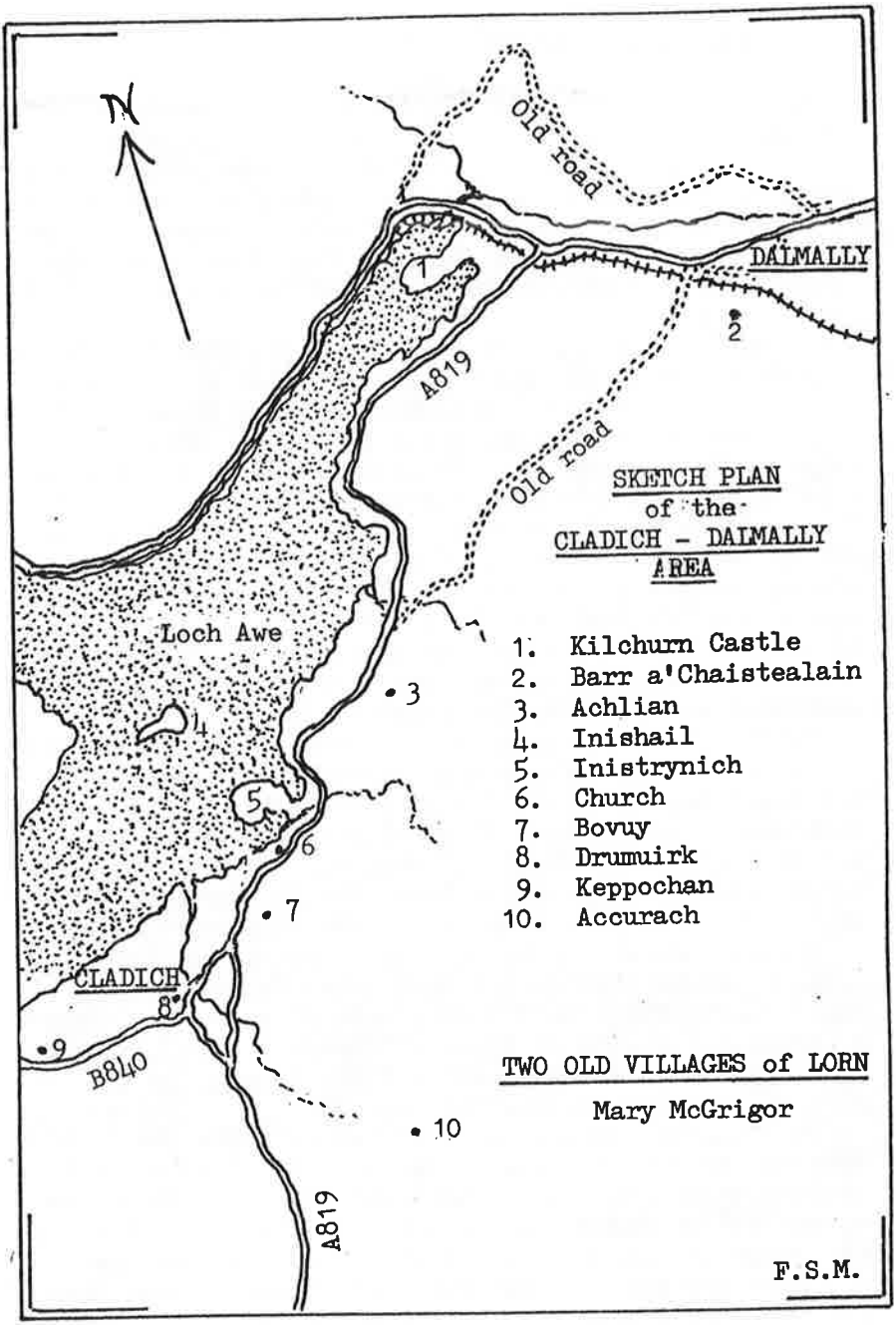
Mary McGrigor

1. CLADICH (NN096220)

Cladich - the name means 'stony shore' - lies on the east side of the upper reaches of Loch Awe. A chambered cairn proves its origins to be ancient. This cairn (NN100222) is on a knoll at the height of about 50 metres and about 100 metres from the A819 where it joins the lochside road (B840). Following the minor road you first reach a farm steading and then a white house, formerly an inn, standing beside the bridge which crosses the Cladich Burn, as shown in the accompanying drawing. Immediately beyond the bridge, on the left side of the road, is the old smiddy. Beyond it is the old school, closed in 1969, which itself had replaced a still older one, and on the other side of the road a former roadman's cottage. Behind the old smiddy can be found traces of a mill, to which the former inhabitants of the surrounding townships brought their corn to be ground. Most of the village houses are in ruins, for it is now well over a century since Cladich was renowned for the cloth produced by its weavers.

The lands of Cladich may have belonged to MacArthurs from the 11th century, and the MacArthurs of Inistrynich eventually held land on both sides of Loch Awe, their estates on the south side being known as Tirecladich, and on the north side as Tirevadich. At the beginning of the 15th century, when harassed by neighbouring MacDougalls, they were forced to seek the protection of the already powerful chief of Clan Campbell and to accept his superiority. Clan Campbell documents indicate the presence of the MacArthurs around the eastern end of Loch Awe from 1494 to 1776. Their land included the Island of Inishail, about half a mile from Cladich in the middle of Loch Awe, on which, in addition to an Early Christian cross-decorated slab are gravestones dating from the 14th and 15th centuries, many of which show traces of beautiful carving. Of four schools of carving known to have been established in Scotland at that time, one is believed to have been based at Inistrynich, which was then an island and adjacent to Inishail.

In 1625 MacArthur of Tiravadich was named Captain and Marty (overseer) of Inistrynich and Officer of Over Lochow



SKETCH PLAN
of the
CLADICH - DALMALLY
AREA

1. Kilchurn Castle
2. Barr a'Chaistealain
3. Achlian
4. Inishail
5. Inistrynich
6. Church
7. Bovuy
8. Drumuirk
9. Keppochan
10. Accurach

TWO OLD VILLAGES of LORN

Mary McGrigor

F.S.M.

to the 7th Earl of Argyle. His descendants held this hereditary position until the late 18th century.

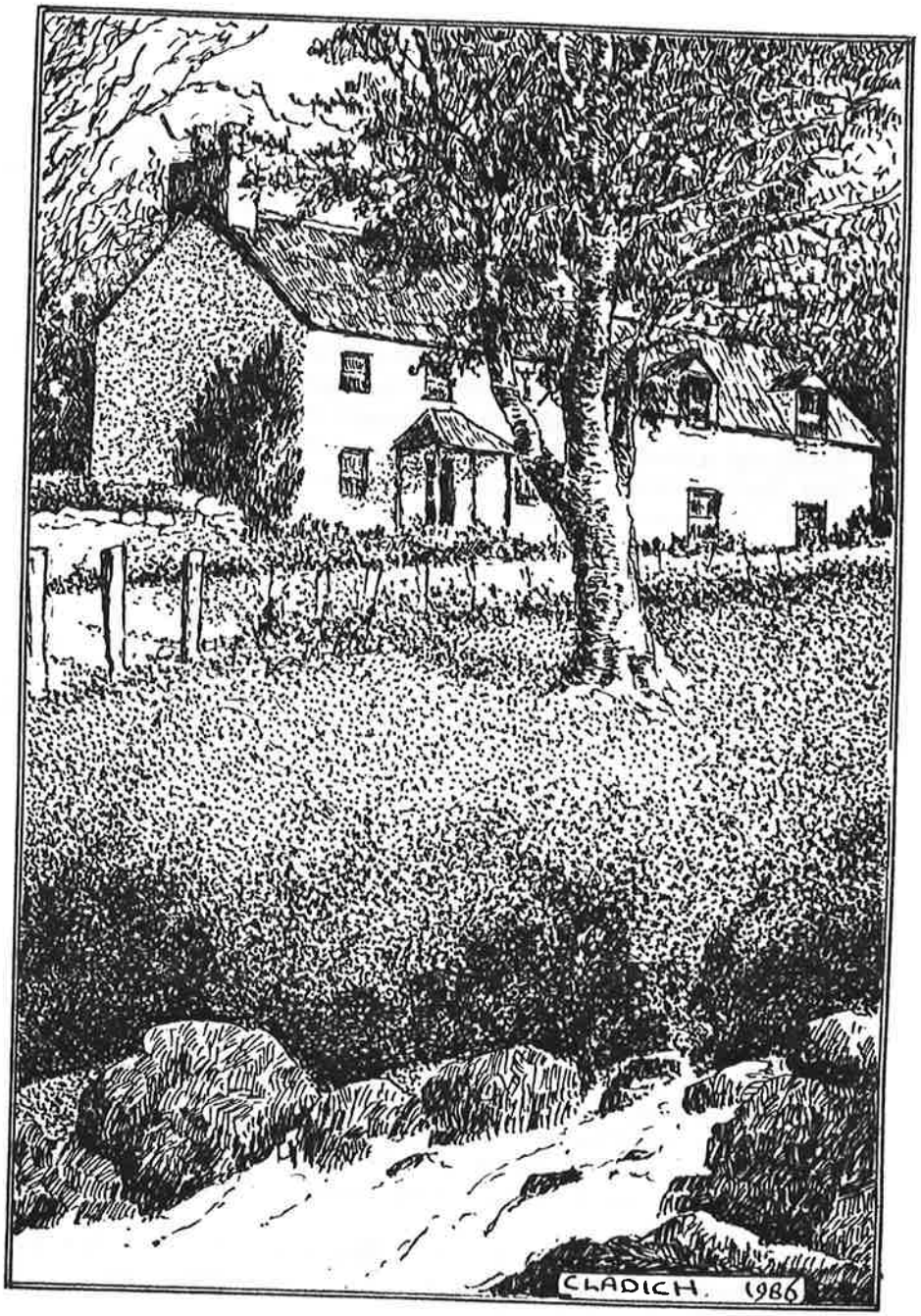
As well as Cladich the MacArthur lands south of Loch Awe included the present-day places of Bovuy, Keppochan and Accurach, the latter being at the head of Glen Aray. Names of the Cladich houses now ruined are found in documents relating to exchanges of lands. Drumuirk, then a laird's house, is across the road from Cladich smiddy. Barrendryan is south of the Keppochan burn, some half-mile farther west.

In 1685 the 9th Earl of Argyle was executed for supporting Monmouth and his forfeited estates were taken over by men of the Duke of Gordon and the Marquis of Atholl. These 'Athollmen' took all they could find, and later, in the reign of William and Mary, compensation was claimed and a list headed "Depredations of Argyle 1685-88" proves that the people in Cladich and the surrounding townships, nearly all of them MacArthurs, lost many cattle and household possessions, even down to the glass in the windows. The son of the 9th Earl, who later became 1st Duke, managed to escape from Inveraray into Glenshira. He was only sixteen at the time and all but died of exposure, but was sheltered and saved by MacArthur of Inistrynich.

In 1744 Duncan MacArthur of Inistrynich resigned the lands of Drumuirk, Keppochan, Barrendryan and Bovuy to his superior, Archibald 3rd Duke of Argyle. These places then became the property first of the Campbells of Inverawe and then of the Campbells of Monzie. Some thirty years later (circa 1776) Patrick MacArthur, son and heir of Duncan, sold the rest of the land to the Campbells of Monzie.

Travelling, except by boat, was then exceptionally hazardous, and for this reason the Parish Church stood on the island of Inishail until 1736, when it was moved, stone by stone, to a site on the south shore of the loch about a mile to the north-east of Cladich village, on the left side of the A819 heading for Dalmally.

In 1744 the Commissioners of Supply (forerunners of the County Council) ordered a bridge to be built over the Water of Cladich. The plain single-arch bridge - which has since been enlarged - was slowly constructed. The Commissioners' Minute Book for 1745 reports "the bridge .... now near finished". But two years later no less than 30 men and horses were still required to finish the work.


CLADICH. 1986

Finally, in June 1750, a certain Mr Douglas completed it.

From the Minutes of Glenorchy Kirk Session (28th Dec. 1767) we learn that Alexander MacNicoll, then innkeeper at Cladich, lost all his cattle in a fire which destroyed his barn. The sum of £12.11.0½ sterling was collected which, together with £4.11.2 from the boxes of the Parish, was given to him.

Doctor Johnson and Boswell sought shelter at the Inn in 1773, and in 1803 William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy, following the Military Road from Inveraray (begun in 1757), arrived at Cladich. Dorothy described the Inn, a low thatched building, and their great indignation when the landlady asked for three shillings for feeding themselves and their horse. An aunt of the poet Coleridge came here about the same time and attended a service in the church. She describes the people arriving by boat, they were speaking Gaelic and were all very hardy, the children glowing with health despite, as she thought, the squalor of the black houses in which most of them lived.

The Militia List of 1803-4 shows that 29 'fencible men' then lived in Cladich and the surrounding townships. Significantly amongst them there were no less than 6 weavers and 2 tailors. Ruins of the tailor's house, now marked by holly trees, are on the right of the B840 about half a mile south of Cladich.

Weaving increased as Victorians took to the kilt, and the 'Cladich Garter', distinctive in red and white, was a prized possession, particularly among pipers. Children before going to school, carded wool for their parents to spin. Returning they searched for the lichens and plants which were required for dyeing the wool. Blue, from iris roots, and white were easy, but red had to be done in Glasgow. The wool, when spun, was sent to Bridge of Douglas (near Inveraray) to be woven. On return it was made into hose which had red, white and blue spots, sometimes across and sometimes lengthwise. Eventually the weavers converted the old grain mill so that with water power working the looms, wool could be woven at home.

The author wishes to thank Mrs Ila Crawford, Mrs Rae MacGregor and Mr Fred Stewart for their great help with this part of her paper.

2. BARR a'CHAISTEALAIN (NN162270)

This site stands 230 metres south-east above Dalmally Station. The name means 'ridge of the small castle'. It has long been deserted. Traditionally it was an Ossianic site, and the incomplete outline of a prehistoric dun can be traced, though hard to locate amongst later ruins and young trees. To make things worse many stones were taken away when the railway was being built about 1880.

But once it was a busy township, for the MacNabs, armourers to the Campbells of Glenorchy, were famed for their skill in forging weapons.

The first MacNab to come here was Duncan, second son of Finlay 2nd of MacNab, who arrived about 1440 to supervise the building and to make the ironwork of the castle of Kilchurn on nearby Loch Awe. Colin Campbell of Glenorchy had left on a crusade to fight the Saracens in Spain, leaving his wife in charge of affairs at the castle. MacNab was renowned as a craftsman, having travelled in Italy to learn the secret skills of the Farraras, the famous family of swordsmiths. Sir Colin Campbell, the founder of the House of Breadalbane, returned about 1453, and made MacNab his armourer and gave him a tack (lease) of Barr a'Chaistealain.

Duncan's descendants remained there as hereditary armourers and jewellers to the Campbells of Glenorchy. The Black Book of Taymouth, chronicle of the Breadalbane family, indicates their importance to the point where, in 1632, Patrick MacNab, son of the smith, was granted the tack on the death of his father despite several misdeeds.

Times then were relatively peaceful but thirteen years later, in 1645, the country was burned when the Marquis of Montrose led his army into Glenorchy. He stopped at Barr a'Chaistealain, forcing the MacNabs to sharpen the swords of his men before they went on in three contingents to close in on Inveraray.

Improved roads in the following century brought more peaceful visitors to Argyll. Amongst them was a Frenchman, a geologist called St.Fond, who visited the MacNabs at Barr a'Chaistealain in 1784. His guide was the Dalmally schoolmaster, one Patrick Fraser, who told him that Alexander MacNab, then head of the family, was once locksmith, blacksmith, armourer and edge-tool maker, which

made him very much esteemed. He was also famed as a singer of the Gaelic poems of Ossian, having in his possession a valuable manuscript of some of them. But Alexander was absent and his brother instead showed to St.Fond the weapons, made to the traditional designs for which his family were famous. He produced his great-grandfather's buckler and then a poniard, its hilt of a very hard wood which was probably heather, and beautifully shaped to give a stronger grip to the hand. He then took him into his own house, which St.Fond very carefully describes. It was built several feet into the ground for warmth and was very dry. There were two rooms and a closet. One room contained oatmeal, and barley, and peats most neatly stacked and some dairy dishes. The rest were stored in the closet. The other room was filled by a massive chimney, shaped like an inverted hopper, which reached from the roof to about four feet above the floor, making it necessary to stoop to get inside it. Within the chimney itself were wooden seats upon which the family sat. They were grouped round a peat fire which burned on a stone about ten inches above the ground. Light came from two small windows, cut in the chimney itself, but when these were shut, a lamp in the shape of a shovel filled with small pieces of burning pine, was hung on a long hook within the angle of the chimney. The room was smoky but very warm.

The family rose as he entered. A young girl offered milk in a coggie, and then, on a sign from her father, she drank from it herself before handing it round as was the custom. Oatcakes and butter came next and then a small glass of whisky before the MacNabs, in the old Highland way, walked with their guest back to the Inn (then on the site of the present Dalmally Market) where he was staying.

People in the Highlands were then self-sufficient, but as sheep replaced cattle on the hills, many were forced to leave home. A prophecy foretold that when a great elm which stood by the smithy of Barr a'Chaistealain fell, the MacNabs would soon leave. The tree came down on a night of great storm and Donald MacNab, a very old man, died before morning. He was not the last of his line, but, in 1823, Malcolm, one of his descendants and last of the great race of swordsmiths, died at the age of ninety. From that time onwards the township on the hill, once a place of so

much importance and activity, fell gradually into ruins.

The author gratefully acknowledges the great help of Mrs Ila Crawford.

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EDITORIAL NOTE: Lady McGrigor mentions the visit of Johnson and Boswell to Cladich Inn; the occasion perhaps merits a quotation from Boswell's Journal. "We crossed, I think, Loch Awe, a pretty wide lake, in a ferry-boat; and on the side of it, just on the shore, found a hut for our inn. We were much wet. I changed my clothes in part, and was at pains to get myself well dried. Mr Johnson resolutely kept on all his clothes, wet as they were, letting them steam before the smoky turf fire. I thought him in the wrong. ....We got at night to Inverараy ...."

In fairness to the Wordsworths and their landlady one should perhaps extend Lady McGrigor's reference to their sojourn at Cladich by quoting from Dorothy's Journal "... we asked the woman what we should pay her, and were not a little surprised when she answered "Three shillings". Our horse had had a sixpenny feed of miserable corn, not worth threepence; the rest of the charge was for skimmed milk, oat-bread, porridge, and blue milk cheese; we told her it was too much; and giving her half-a-crown, departed. I was sorry she had made this unreasonable demand .... but on thinking more about it, I satisfied myself that it was no scheme to impose upon us, for she was contented with the half-crown, and would, I daresay, have been so with two shillings, if we had offered it her at first. Not being accustomed to fix a price upon porridge and milk, to such as we, at least, when we asked her she did not know what to say; but seeing that we were travelling for pleasure, no doubt she concluded we were rich, and that what was a small gain to her could be no great loss to us."

M. Faujas de St.Fond made his tour in 1784 amd the first edition came out in Paris in 1794, with a German and an English translation in 1799. He was "examining the state of the Arts, Sciences, Natural History and Manners in Great Britain. Containing Mineralogical descriptions of .... Inverараy, and other Parts of Argyllshire; and of the Cave of Fingal".

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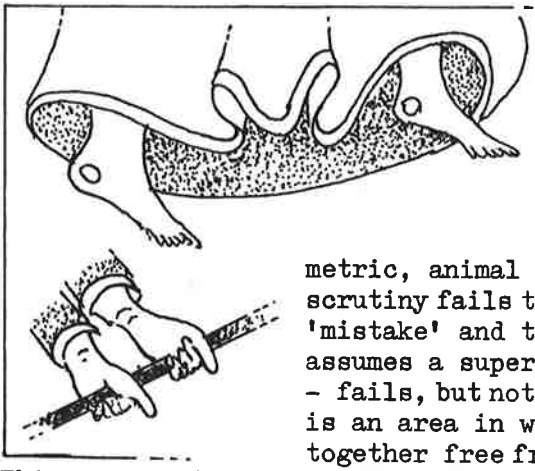
A MEDITATION on the BOOK of KELLS

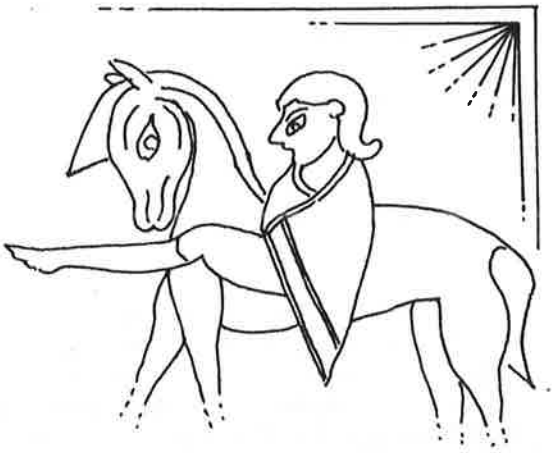
F.S.Mackenna

There can be few people with any pretence of artistic culture who do not know of the Book of Kells, the supreme example of late 8th or early 9th century illumination, preserved in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin since 1661. It is universally regarded as the most important work of its kind, and the issue in 1974 of a book of superb reproductions with text by Dr Françoise Henry has made possible the study of its technical perfection in a way which was never attained from gazing at the original during the ten years spent as a student at Trinity. This intimate contact has allowed the close study of oddities which have been known for many years, one of which in particular has a bearing on a contribution to Kist 32 (page 13) by the President.



Anyone looking at the reproductions must be struck by their intricacy of detail and invention and by the perfection of the working out of every part of the designs, whether they be formed as geometric, animal or human. The closest scrutiny fails to uncover the slightest 'mistake' and the whole achievement assumes a superhuman quality of detail - fails, but not entirely so, for there is an area in which things are not altogether free from an unexpected turn. This is with the hands and feet of one or two humans. Surprising enough in work of such perfection, to find an extra finger or toe, or one too few, but quite extraordinary to discover individuals with two right hands or feet, or two left. These aberrations occur on quite large figures, and cannot be put down to minuteness of size causing a mistake, and several are in such prominent positions that they must surely have been intentional. If so this brings them within the mood of the many whimsical light-hearted representations of animal forms so freely scattered over many

pages, in particular those of text - cats, kittens, mice, poultry all betokening an unexpected blitheness of spirit on the part of some of the artists, to whom two matching hands or feet, or a left arm with a right hand in their designs would be lightsome.



Another odd point concerning humans is the apparent hint that some degree of class-consciousness obtained, for there is a definite tendency to depict the main characters - angels and suchlike - with light or golden hair, usually in abundance, while people making up the 'crowd scenes' often have dark short hair. It will be recalled that in early literature, such as the Sagas, the hero is frequently described as possessing long fair hair.

Another oddity, well exemplified in the Book of Kells, is the frequent failure of artists at that time to depict a man on horseback correctly - a point made by our President in her note on the Kilmahumaig stone in Kist 32. Almost without exception and most often seen in Pictish carvings, the rider is shown so well down in the saddle as to resemble a 'northman' in a kayak; a most extraordinary lapse of observation. It is impossible to suggest any rationalisation of the convention.

On the subject of horses, one can mention the failure of artists, even into the 19th century, to depict motion. Repeatedly racers are shown in an utterly impossible posture, ventre à terre, all hooves off the ground, forelegs at full stretch ahead and hindlegs equally extended to the rear. Another failure occurs in the decoration on 18th century porcelain where birds are concerned. Those shown standing, even if they be 'fantasie Vögel', are convincing, but we have never seen one in flight which could pass muster. Such failure of observation is remarkable but possibly understandable, but how a rider on his mount could be so grossly mis-drawn is indeed a puzzle.

TARBERT. Described by Thomas Pennant in 1772

....with difficulty get through a strait of about a hundred yards wide, with sunk rocks on both sides, into the safe and pretty harbour of the Eastern Loch Tarbat, of capacity sufficient for a number of ships and of a fine depth of water. The scenery was picturesque; rocky little islands lie across one part, so as to form a double port; at the bottom extends a small village; on the Cantyre side is a square tower, with vestiges of other ruins, built by the family of Argyle, to secure their Northern dominions from the inroads of the inhabitants of the peninsula; on the Northern side of the entrance of the harbour the rocks are of a most grotesque form; vast fragments piled on each other; the faces contorted and undulated in such figures as if created by fusion of matter after some intense heat, yet did not appear to me a lava, or under any suspicion of having been the recrement of a vulcano.

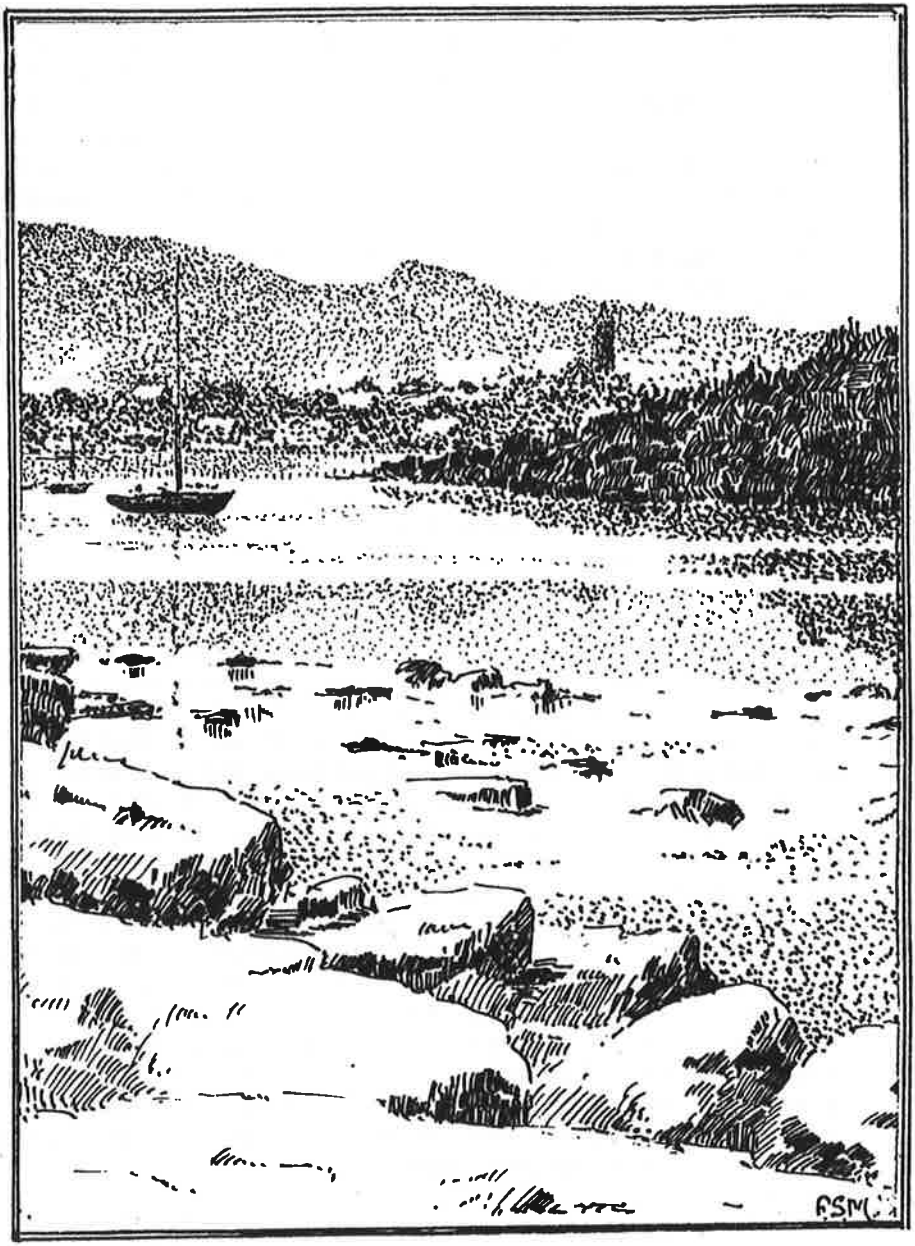
Land at the village; where great quantity of whisky is distilled. Visit the narrow neck of land which joins Cantyre to South Knapdale; it is scarcely a mile wide, is partly morassy, partly intersected by strata of rocks, that are dipping continuations from the adjacent mountains of each district. There have been plans for cutting a canal ....it is supposed to be practicable but at vast expense.

Ascend a small hill, and from the top have a view of the Western Loch-Tarbat, that winds along for about twelve miles, and is one continued harbour; for it has eight fathom water not very remote from this extremity; and opens to the sea on the West coast, at Aird Patric .... The time of the tides vary greatly at the terminations of each of these harbours; at this the flood had advanced in the East loch full three quarters; in the other only one hour ....

In the afternoon attempt to turn out, but am driven back by an adverse gale. Get out early in the morning ....

Described by Lord Cockburn in 1843

We reached East Tarbert about three, took a car across the mile to West Tarbert, got on board the Islay steamer there, sailed down Loch Tarbert, and were landed in about an hour at this house [Ardpatrick] presently inhabited by the Campbells of Kilberry, to whom we are consigned



Tarbert from Knapdale

on a visit of three days ....

But Tarbert! East Tarbert! How is it that I had never even heard of that curious little bay? I can't recollect that I ever saw it mentioned in any tour. I was never more surprised than in sailing into that quiet sort of a natural wet dock, apparently not containing above 10 or 20 acres. There it lay, calm and silvery, deeply set all round, except at the narrow entrance, in ridgy hills of hard rock; a curve of about 20 or 30 small houses drawn round the upper end, all comfortable looking, and, except three houses and seven hovels, all bright with fresh whitewash; a great number of herring-boats floating at anchor, with their brown tanned sails hanging to dry; the ruins of an old castle standing on a rocky knoll at the left side of the entrance, and the whole scene of peaceful and secluded industry crowned by a respectable church, which looks down on it from a little eminence behind the rim of habitation - a striking and beautiful spot like a scene from a theatre

During these days [at Ardpatrick] we drove and boated, and ate oatcakes, and drank whisky, and slept, and were very kindly treated ... Our host's property of Kilberry extends from the sea opposite Islay on the west, to Loch Tarbert on the east, about 7 or 10 miles or so in all ...

On Friday ... we came away in his carriage to East Tarbert thus seeing the loch by land as we had formerly done by water. ....We got another visit to the village. I went up to the castle, which must anciently have been a very large stronghold. There were about 200 boats in the bay, with their tanned hanging sails. And I observed, which I had not noticed before, that the bay. small though it be, has three islands, one of them cased in masonry, about 30 feet square, and flat on the top, and used for hanging nets upon over rude screens. It is really a delightful nook. But the Sheriff tells me that it is a profligate place. Nonsense! I don't believe it. The brawls, which are his only facts, must proceed from the stranger fishers who nestle in it. I won't believe anything bad of the natives of that little Virgilian port.

Described by W.A.Smith in 1867

Facing the beach there is a line of white-washed modern-looking houses, but beyond - inside this cleansed epider-

mis - the whole town is composed of miserable hovels, apparently thatched about the commencement of the century, but for many a year in the habit of growing much heavier green crops than I saw anywhere in the cultivated grounds of the neighbourhood. The rain has painted the fronts of these huts a dirty green, with colour drawn from the reeds and grass above, giving them a most filthy appearance. One would think that neither cleanliness nor any other good thing could proceed from such holes, yet the people don't look so dirty as you would expect, and they seem healthy.

(From The Ring-net Fishermen by Angus Martin)

As Smith was living in Tarbert at that time it is reasonable to think that his report lies nearer the truth than that of Lord Cockburn passing through it on two occasions twenty-four years previously.
In the late 1820s the villagers are said to have had the choice of twenty public-houses, which might be thought to support the Sheriff's contention, in correcting Lord Cockburn, that it was "a profligate place".

RUSTIC DIET in GALLOWAY - 1700

The following excerpts from Sir Andrew Agnew's Hereditary Sheriffs of Galloway (1893) are not calculated to attract present-day emulation.

"Their food consisted of brose, pottage, greens boiled in water with salt, and oatmeal flummery .... They ate little meat except the off-falls of their flocks ...a braxy ham as a treat, especially if washed down with a mug of bragwort, a rural luxury".... "After the bees are smuiked out in hin harvest time, the guidwife takes the kaims out of a skip and lets the hinny drop out. This done she steeps the kaimes in water, and this quickened with barm composes bragwort; a sweet and pleasant drink, but apt to break the bottles." The description of the ham is not so appetising - "When the herd finds any of his flock died of the braxy, if they can be shaken thrice by the neck without falling to pieces, he bears them in on the braxy shelty. The hams are cut out, and hung up in the smuity brace until quite dry."
Follow this routine if so minded but excuse the Editor!

Of TERMON CROSSES and GIRTHS

F.S.Mackenna

From time to time in our pages or on the occasion of an 'outing' to a mediaeval Christian site, we find mention of termon crosses and matters concerning the right of sanctuary (in a Girth) provided by some early Christian properties. Perhaps not all of us have much idea of what these terms imply, and a few explanations may be appreciated.

A termon cross marked the boundary of church property; most usually there were four such points, either on rock surfaces or free standing, one at each corner. In our own locality we have the Barrnakill site, projecting above the expanse of Crinan Moss, with its early religious remains (see Kist 29). It has one incised cross at the S.W. corner and we have heard of, but not verified, the existence of a second, to the N.W., which strongly suggests that two more remain to be located to complete the quadrangle. Incidentally it may be helpful to give directions for finding the known cross, as it was lost to general knowledge for some years. Taking the track north from the Canal towards the ruined settlement of High Barrnakill, and only a few hundred yards after starting, a small burn runs below the road. Turn aside to the left along its south bank, through coppice, and very shortly a rock sheet appears, opposite some indeterminate ruins. The cross is on this rock surface.

From the middle ages onwards one of the most valued aspects of the parish church was the protection which fugitives, rightly or wrongly accused of misdemeanour, could expect if they succeeded in outdistancing pursuit and reaching the protecting site. The privelege of sanctuary was granted or recognised by the Crown in each instance in respect of ancient established custom.

The duration of this immunity from vengeance varied according to the nature of the offence, but in every case it was assured until the competency of the claim for refuge had been decided. Apart from other considerations this provided a 'cooling-off' period and that in itself was useful. In the earliest times the official line was that "those who flee for protection to the church shall be defended by the same unless they be pillagers of fields by night or public and notorious highway-robbers or mani-

fest violators of churches .... or those who have been excommunicated .... In which cases they are still to be defended until [it has been] formally pronounced that they should not be ....".

By Canon Law the benefit of sanctuary was extended even to churches which had not yet been consecrated but in which "the divine mysteries are celebrated".

Apart from what has been said above, it does not appear that originally any time limit was set for the duration of sanctuary in Scotland, but in England it was usually forty days. There is evidence to suggest that in our country the period was often very much longer. Not only the actual church but often also the surrounding ground used for sepulture could constitute a site of immunity, and in a number of instances a much greater area was delineated by termon crosses; perhaps the most celebrated was that at Applecross, in Wester Ross, dating from the Celtic period, which extended to six miles round the church. It was particularly sanctified because St.Maelrubha was buried there.

Lesser sites nearer Mid-Argyll were Eileach an Naomh, one of the Garvellach islands, Eilean mòr Mhic o'Charmaig and possibly Sanda off Kintyre. In the south of Scotland one of the most celebrated sanctuaries was near Galashiels at Stow, which had its own recognised access road, the Girthgate.

Originally there were a number of ways in which the claimant of sanctuary could safely end his stay, depending on the offence he was credited with. Thieves and reifers could penitently confess their sin "before God", restore their 'takings' and pay a fine and swear on the Book never to repeat the offence. If the fine could not be paid they went through the rest of the prescribed formula and were banished until they were "reconciled to the King". Again it was open to an offender to declare that he sought refuge through fear for his life owing to impetuous revenge and he could be given safe conduct to the court to have his case heard. But he got no further protection from the Church at this stage. A person accused in the 1370s of murder or manslaughter was required to come forth for trial. In the case of the latter being proved he could reclaim the Church's protection, but proved murder entailed the appropriate civil penalties.

A century later (1469) anyone who committed slaughter and fled to a sanctuary could expect the Sheriff to present himself to the competent Church officials to acquaint them of the reputed status of their 'guest', "for the quhilk the lawe grantis not, nor leavis not sik personnes to joyis the immunitie of the Kirk". On that the Church was required to allow within fifteen days an assize for the purpose of determining whether the crime, if committed, had been manslaughter or murder. If the former the culprit was restored to "the freedom and immunitie of halie Kirk and Girth"; if the latter, then he was to be punished according to law. But before the accused was handed over to the Sheriff in the first instance, that official was required to furnish the Church with adequate security.

This 1469 enactment proved flawed as the Church officials sometimes refused to co-operate on the ground that they, being 'spiritual men' were outwith the requirements of the law, so in 1535 it was ordained that "all Maisters of Girthes within the Realme make sufficient responsal men Baillies or Maisters .... under them, dwelland at the saidis Girthes or near thereby" who not being ecclesiastics could be proceeded against if they failed to hand over an accused person and rigorously punished for contempt. The whole issue continued a matter of dispute for a long period.

There was a practical side to the question of prolonged enjoyment of sanctuary by persons accused, rightly or not, of ill-doing. This concerned the supply of food in cases where the Girth could be completely invested by the aggrieved party and all attempts at delivering supplies frustrated. Many ingenious ways of getting over this obstacle were employed; in Holyrood the monks lowered baskets from above, as if from heaven, but the fugitive was further harassed by being prodded through the railings to prevent sleep.

The whole system of sanctuary seems to have been fundamentally controversial and open to misunderstanding. In almost every instance it tended to foster ill-will towards the Church. Perhaps its main advantage lay in the 'cooling-off period' it provided.

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AN ARDRISHAIG MYSTERY

Colin F. Fergusson

In Kist 32, under the title 'By the Way', mention was made of two wooden crosses beside main roads in our area. Following this article the author has been approached by several members as to the significance of the white-painted cross on the wall beside the road at Seacliff, Ardrishaig.

As a youth, walking from Lochgilphead to Ardrishaig, the cross was always recognised as a spot where a man had met his death in tragic circumstances, but of when he died and by what means, we had only a vague knowledge.

However, with the interest of members alerted and the author himself keen to learn more regarding the circumstances of the affair, some research work was undertaken, with the able assistance of the local Registrar and the files of the Oban Times.

On the night of Thursday 12th June 1908, Dr Duncan Shaw Morrison, aged 43, was walking from Lochgilphead to his home in Ardrishaig. He was a native of Ardrishaig and had a medical practice in the village for the past six years, having graduated M.A. at Glasgow University and later M.B., C.M. at Edinburgh. He spent a few years in the city as a locum before returning to his native village.

Also walking along the road from Lochgilphead to Ardrishaig later that night were William MacGregor and Thomas Fox. Both were wood-cutters and were employed in the district by MacGregor's father. They made up on Dr Morrison and a fight ensued on the roadway at Seacliff. As the fighting progressed, Mr Archibald Carswell from Lochgilphead and Mr A. Crawford, tailor, Ardrishaig, came on the scene and with difficulty restrained MacGregor and Fox from making any further attack on Dr Morrison, who was now lying prostrate on the ground. Mr Carswell made a citizen's arrest by escorting both MacGregor and Fox to the Ardrishaig police constable. Later they were taken to Lochgilphead Police Station, where they were held for the remainder of the night.

The following day, Friday 13th, MacGregor and Fox were taken to Dunoon, where they appeared before Sheriff Edward, Depute Fiscal. As Dr Morrison died from the injuries he had sustained, both MacGregor and Fox were charged with his murder and detained in custody. Mr A.J.M.Bennett

solicitor, Dunoon, appeared for the accused.

On Monday 16th June Dr Morrison was buried in Kilmartin Church graveyard.

A day or two later the Crown Authorities ordered the release of Thomas Fox as he had turned King's evidence. He was cited to be a witness for the prosecution and the case was set down for trial at the Circuit Court to be held at Inveraray on 24th August 1908.

The prosecution was conducted by Mr F.B.Morrison, K.C. Advocate Depute, assisted by Mr Dunbar. Mr Constable appeared for the accused, William MacGregor, who pled not guilty.

Evidence on how he came on the fight was given by Mr Carswell. MacGregor, he said, was both punching and kicking Dr Morrison, whose head and face showed fearful injuries.

Thomas Fox, Croftfoot, West Kilbride, stated that he had taken no part in the assault and that MacGregor had completely lost his temper.

Professor Glaister, Glasgow, in his report on the extensive injuries to the head, face and body stated that they seemed to be consistent with being struck by the wheels of a car or horse-drawn carriage. As death was caused by loss of blood, shock and the facial and head wounds it was strange that there was no trace of blood on the accused's boots.

In his defence William MacGregor said that when they were approaching the house known as Seacliff, he and Thomas Fox were confronted by Dr Morrison, standing near the middle of the road, gesticulating wildly with his arms and shouting at them in a loud voice. Fearing that Morrison was going to attack them, they tried to calm him and in a scuffle Morrison fell and struck his head on the wall at the side of the road.

It was pointed out to the court by Mr Constable, defending, that Dr Morrison had three convictions for disorderly conduct and had a drink problem. On behalf of William MacGregor he now tendered a plea of culpable homicide.

About noon on the second day of the trial the jury retired and on their return to the court they announced that they found the accused guilty of culpable homicide on his own confession.

Lord Johnston in his summing up told MacGregor that he

was fortunate not to be facing the criminal charge of murder and sentenced him to seven years imprisonment. This sentence was served by MacGregor in Peterhead Prison.

From my earliest recollection of the site at Seacliff the white-painted cross on the wall has never been allowed to fade. Regular touch-up has kept it in pristine condition. But by whom or when, no one seems to know.

The evidence in court to convict or deny the charge has been produced and the sentence served. Seventy-nine years have now passed since that tragic night - more than a lifetime; but someone, somewhere, finds it in their heart to commemorate a fateful night at this place by the roadside.

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PREPARATIONS FOR A ROYAL VISIT IN 1617

Adapted from The Gallovidian Annual, 1934 (E.M.Fayrer)

Fourteen years after he had left for England, James VI and I announced his intention of returning as a visitor in May 1617. This threw the capital and much of the country into a state of feverish and wide-ranging preparation, details of which make interesting reading now.

By October of the previous year it was proclaimed that "beasts be fed in every place, that there might be abundance of flesh when the King came." The Privy Council got busy with enactments. One of these ordered the citizens of Edinburgh to prepare ample, clean lodgings for the royal attendants. The streets, which at that time doubled as the city sewers were to be "purified". Another Act, dating from March 1616, was reimposed nine months later, banishing "strong and idle vagabonds" whose importunities might lead to "the great discredit and disgrace of the country. Holyrood required much attention and alteration, one of the main items being the potentially controversial one of the provision of a Chapel Royal for the Anglican king. In the event this innovation seems to have caused little serious protest.

Two months before 'D-day', the town's dignitaries met "to consult ....upone....the ordour to be observed for intertenement of his Majestie." A little later the question of the King's landing at Leith was discussed and it was settled "to caus apperell ane boit with hir furniter".

This item appears in the accounts as the "Bairge that was ordayned for his Majestie's transportatioun at Leyth" - the amount was 8291i. 18s. 11d. (Scots). A month before the arrival it was "thocht fit and expedient that ane number of the gravest, most antient burgess and of best rank within this burgh sall be warnit to attend his Majestie's entrie within the samine ....". They were to be clad in black velvet. Absentees were to be liable to a fine of "ane hundreth pundis". The Provost and Bailies were, on the other hand, to discard their normal black dress for scarlet, to conform with orders issued by the king in 1610 that these dignitaries were to wear "gowns of red scarlett cloath with furrings agreeable to the same upon Sundais and all uther solemne dayis." The Provost was to be marked out by "a great gold chayne". There was no need for a new mace, for one had recently come into use, but the Macer's uniform required attention, so it came about that he appeared in "ane gown of claith, with ane stand of claith of figurat satine".

Another matter to be settled was the manner of complying with the King's declaration "that it is his will and plesour that ane harrand (harangue) and speiche be made to him at his entrie within the burgh." This honour fell to John Hay, the Town Clerk, who thereafter and in consequence, styled himself Sir John Hay of Landes, Knight. His character was not of the best - "altogether corrupt, full of wickedness and villany". Later the King announced that it was his "will and plesour that the speiche made be Mr Johnne Hay be prentit."

With the visit drawing rapidly nearer, the Treasurer was instructed to build "ane banquating hous in the Counsal hous yaird for intertening of his Majestie and his nobles....". This wooden erection, hung with tapestry, cost 3331i. 6s. 8d. to erect and 521i. 3s. 4d. to remove. Two banquets were held in it - the first on June 26th for the King, and on the following day for "sundry Knights and Gentlemen of good note." These functions cost a total of 6,3331i. 17s. 5d., the greatest single item being for wine and ale, but the cost of venison, quail ("27 dissonne qwallies - 1131i. 8s.") and other "wyld meits" came not far behind, with fish, flesher's meat and sweetmeats lagging well in the rear. In the matter of the last-named delicacies we find Jonet Currie charging 441i. 13s. 4d.

for "milk, straberries, eggis and flours."

But we anticipate. Almost at the last moment it came to the authorities' remembrance that it was the custom for each town on a Royal Progress to present the Monarch with a gift of money discreetly conveyed in a costly container. Not to be outdone in this, or in any other respect, it was decided that an offering of "ten thousand markis in double angellis of gold" in "ane gilt baissin of the grittest quantatie can be had" would cover the requirement. At the West Port, on May 16th, this offering was received "with ane mild and gracious countenance".

The municipal keys were another problem, for none seem to have been available for the obligatory presentation despite the fact that this function had been carried out with panache on previous occasions. So a new pair of keys had to be made, at a cost of 24li. Their presentation was made the excuse for delivering yet another "harrand", this time by the Provost.

The King endured an unending succession of entertainments where-ever he travelled, and we read of huntings, (when he was outwith the towns). feasts, banquets, recitations, music, sermons - presumably all administered with full approval of the recipient. This plethora of light entertainment had one drawback, since it came between the Royal Pedant and his expressed wish to hold a Philosophical Disputation in Edinburgh College. However, when he was in Stirling later in the summer he did contrive to take part in one; the subjects were 'Ought Sheriffs and other inferior Magistrates to be hereditary?'; 'The Nature of Local Motion'; and 'The Origin of Fountains or Springs'. The occasion was a great success and 'The Wisest Fool in Christendom' returned to England well satisfied.

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