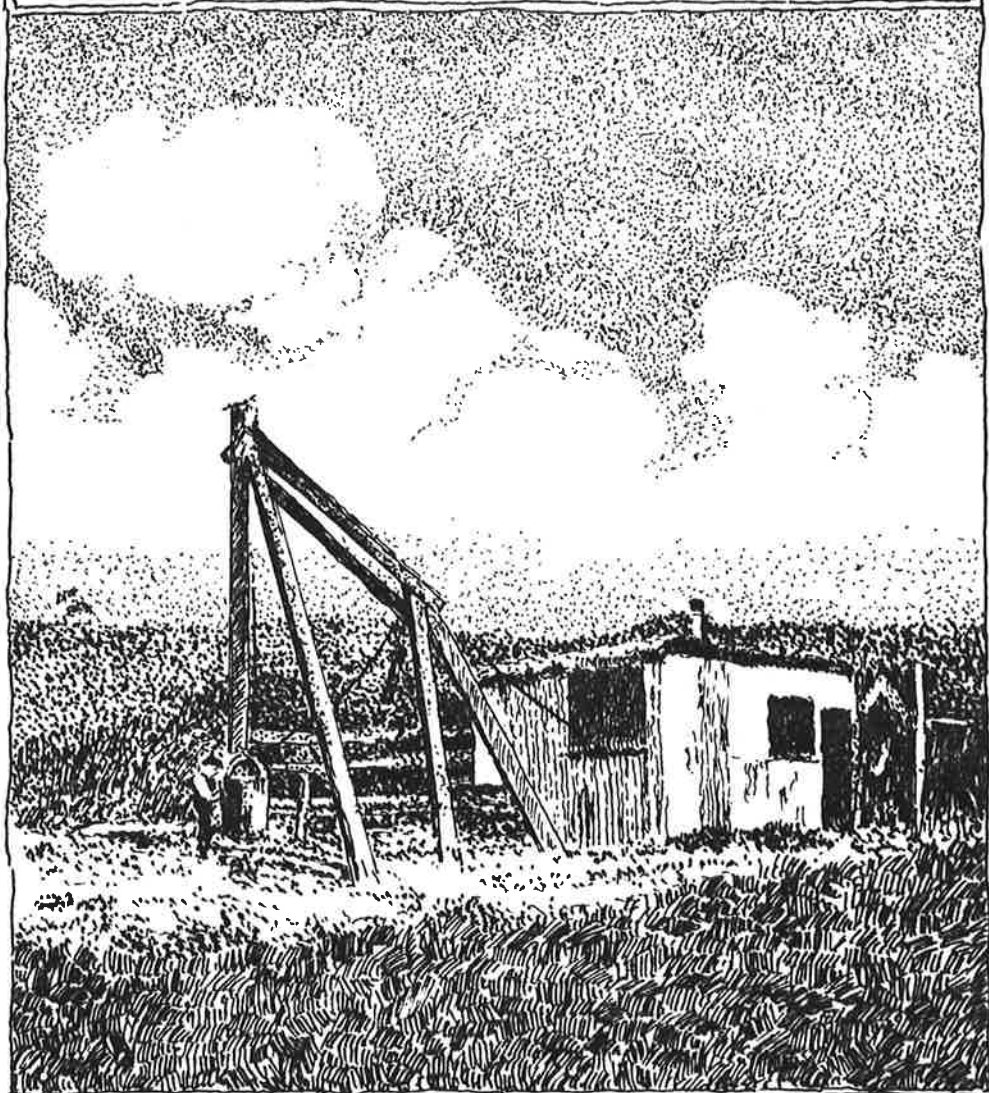


Copper Mine
Castleton: 1911



The KIST. 34

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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CONTENTS

<u>Robert 1 and Tarbert Castle</u>	1
Miss Campbell of Kilberry, FSA. FSAScot	
<u>Is the site of Tarbert's 'Peel' now identified?</u>	
C.F.Fergusson, FSAScot & F.S.Mackenna, FSA, FSAScot	9
<u>A Blacksmith's Beam Drill-press.</u>	
Alan Campbell of Glenfeochan, MA. MSc.	11
<u>What is a Good Kipper?</u>	
Mr Forsyth Hamilton	13
<u>An Enigma (Inscribed boulder)</u>	14
<u>Phalacrocorax aristolelis</u>	
Mr E.A.T.Wright (with Commentary by C.F.Fergusson)	15
<u>Mining Enterprises in Mid-Argyll</u>	
Mr A.G.Rankine, MA	17
<u>The Aftermath of the Rebellion against James V11</u>	
Compiled by the Editor	23
<u>Reviews:</u>	
"Kipper House Tales" and " <u>Lore of Highland Trees</u> "	28

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Hon. Secretary for Membership and Publications

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(Tel.793)

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ROBERT 1 AND TARBERT CASTLE

Marion Campbell

Among our oldest government records are the Exchequer Rolls, some fragments from the thirteenth century and a fuller series for the last years of King Robert I (Bruce). The Rolls were drawn up at audits attended by all who had responsibility for collecting and spending Crown revenues, each official attending in person and producing vouchers for all his transactions. The calculations at the audit were probably made on an abacus, with the results set down in roman figures; arabic numerals were known, but were not in everyday use. One need only try writing 'viii' and 'xiii', or 'li' and 'ii' quickly to see how easily errors could arise between 8 and 13, 51 and 2; overall the accounts are impressively accurate.

The mark, worth $\frac{2}{3}$ of £1, was used as a unit of account but not as a coin; the currency was the silver penny, of which 315 were coined from the 15-oz 1lb. in Robert I's time (a marginal devaluation from the standard set by David I, 1124-53). The physical movement of large amounts of coin was simplified, for ease and safety, by allowing transfers from one sheriff to another without the need to convey money into the Treasury and out again.

Besides the mark, some other terms may be unfamiliar. The boll was a measure holding 6 bushels, 140 lbs of meal, 12 Scots gallons of ale, or about 218 litres. four bolls made a chalders, four firloths a boll. Kintyre used a different pound-weight from the rest of Scotland. Odd terms are used for cheese; both codrus and caslam appear below, and probably refer to different shapes and sizes (denoting different methods of manufacture?). 'Liverance' or 'liberation' was the issue of rations in kind. Dates were usually given by reference to the nearest saint's day, but for the sake of brevity I have converted them to calendar dates (in brackets); some dates are in modern usage in the text. I have also omitted most of the notes of vouchers presented, which took the form of royal precepts, mutual contracts, indentures, schedules, and letters of receipt.

Gilbert McAy, who supplied £13.6.8d of provisions, was the King's guide through Kintyre in 1307, receiving the King's brooch (now in the keeping of the MacNeals of Lossit, his descendants) and later the lands of Ugadale for his

loyalty. Donald 'blokker', a well-paid employee, may have been a 'trader or broker', according to the definition in the new Concise Scots Dictionary. It is necessary to multiply all amounts by at least 600 to reach an approximate modern equivalent.

ACCOUNT of John de Lany, Constable of Tarbart, made at Clacmanan the Monday next after the feast of S. Margaret the virgin (30 July) 1326, before the lord Bishop of Sodor and lord Robert of Pebles, Clerk of the Liverance in the lord King's Household, Auditors deputed by our lord the King, of all his receipts and outlays from 18 April in the year of grace 1325 to the present day of accounting:-

He takes burden for (credits himself with) -	
From Dugallus Cambel, as bailie of Atholl;	£13. 7.8d
From the same, after (rendering his audit);	66.13.4
From Umfred de Kirpatrick, by his audit;	77. 0.0
From the Chamberlain;	18. 0.0
From lord Benedict, Rector of church of Arran;	3. 6.8
From the Abbot of Paisley per W. de Bonkill;	10. 0.0
(recte, £343.12.0d)	Total 354.10.0

By 3,564 lbs meal and cheese from John McDonyle, bailie of Ile (Islay), reckoning 7d per lb;	£124. 7.4d
By 96 lbs cheese from bailies of Kintyre, of the lb of that place, @ 12d per lb.;	4.16.0
By 4 chalders meal from Adam son of Alan, @ 20d per boll;	5.16.8
By 3 ch. 13½ b. meal from the same before his 1325 audit, @ 2/- per boll;	6. 3.0
By 4 ch. meal from Patrick son of Colin @ 2/-	6. 8.0
By 3 ch. meal from the Bp. of Sodor @ 2/-	4.16.0
From Gilbert McAy, receipted but receipt lost	13. 6.8
	165. 3.8
(including error above)	Total 518.13.8

Expenditure:-

Settlement with Robert cimentarius (mason) for work on the walls of the castle of the Tarbart;	£282.15.0
To the same, by the King's grace, because in the King's absence he made the walls wider than agreed in the contract;	5. 6.8

Purchase of 1 ch. meal & 1 ch. barley issued to said Robert by contract in 1st quarter of year;	3. 4. 0
To John the mason, work on walls of castle;	28. 7. 8
To the same, part-settlement for construction of a new Peel at Tarbart west;	4. 0. 0
To Adam the mason for building the castle;	9. 10. 0
To burning 760 ch. lime between Whitsunday 1325 and St John's Nativity (24th June) @ 10 marks p. chaldre; witnessed by Robert and Adam, masons;	50. 0. 0
To 2 men carrying lime from kiln to castle by sea and land, 29 weeks 3 days, 28 April - (11 Nov.) /25, @ 4/- per 3 weeks, and to 5 men as above @ 3/4d;	13. 15. 2
To 7 men as above, (11 Nov. - 24 June), 32 weeks @ 1 1/4d per week;	13. 16. 0
To William Scot, making a <u>fosse</u> (ditch or drain) below the castle, by contract in King's presence;	7. 3. 11
To the same for mill-pond & lade by contract (&c);	3. 9. 8
To the same, for a kiln made anew, by contract;	1. 2. 0
And in settlement with same, part-payment of 20 mks (£13.3.4d) agreed by the King, for a new road from one Tarbart to the other:-	8. 0. 0
To 1/2 ch. meal bought and issued at King's precept to said W. Scot for making the said road;	0. 16. 0
Total	£430. 10. 5

To settlement with ld. Maurice the chaplain for his half-year's salary, by receipt;	2. 0. 0
Wages of James del More, remaining at Tarbart by King's precept, 18 April - 1 Aug., @ 5d per day;	2. 4. 2
To settlement with Nigel (Neil) the smith, salary for year to (1 Aug.) 1326, by his receipt;	12. 0. 0
To sett. with Nigel <u>plummer</u> , @ 8d p. day for 13 1/2 days to (29 June) and thence to 1 Aug. 1326;	3. 9. 0
To wages of John carpenter, (11 Nov. - 24 June), 32 weeks @ 3d per day;	2. 16. 0
To his rations, 1 b. meal & 1 <u>codrus</u> cheese per month, @ 2/- p. boll and 7d p. <u>codrum</u> ;	1. 0. 8
To service of Dofnald <u>blokker</u> (? trader, broker) 27 weeks to (24 June), @ 15d per week;	1. 3. 9
To service of Hugh Dulp, making a mill anew by contract, and by a <u>codri</u> cheese for his trouble;	3. 0. 0
To service of 2 'roofers' for 40 days in building within the castle in period of account;	0. 1. 2
	0. 13. 4

To sett. with Gilmor McKathil for 20 <u>caslams</u>	
of cheese and meal; by King's precept;	0.11. 8
In sett. with John the midwife's son, by	
receipts from Adam Roger and himself;	0.13. 4
In sett. with Copin Wlf, merchant, for bread bought;	1. 6. 8
By liverance to James del More of provisions for	
the King's work, for which he will account, and	
Adam More took delivery for him;	2. 1. 0
To 12 <u>codri</u> cheese issued to John, Clerk of the	
kitchen, by receipts for which he will account;	0.12. 0
Total of these outlays;	£34. 0.11

To making a house anew in the island,	
with roofing for it, and to the chapel;	£ 0.10. 4
To making a house for the <u>pistrius</u> (= <u>pistor</u> ,	
baker; or <u>pistrinus</u> , grinding-mill)	0. 3. 0
Repairing and roofing houses against the	
coming of the King, a.d.1325;	0. 4. 6
and for 11 stones cheese	0. 5. 6
and in making a furnace at Schepnissse	0. 1. 8
Making a house for the goldsmith;	0. 2. 6
Making a <u>fabrilis</u> (= ? <u>fabrica</u> , workshop) for	
Nigel <u>plummer</u> ;	0. 2. 4
Materials and labour for roofing the	
mill-house and making (good) its walls;	0. 5. 8
and by 2 <u>codri</u> cheese	0. 1. 2
For a porch (<u>porche</u>) for the kiln made anew;	0. 0.11
For a ditch around the brewhouse & repairs to it;	0. 0. 7
In wages of 2 carpenters raising the hall	
in the castle over 3 days;	0. 3. 0
In wages of mowers cutting roofing for the	
hall, and carriage and portage thereof;	1. 2. 9
In wages carrying and carting clay and sand	
for <u>parietibus</u> (walls, ?partitions) of the hall,	
and of divers workmen about the same, and of	
plasterers and thatchers, and of 2 masons	
underpinning the posts of the hall with stone	0.15. 8½
and lime; and by 2 <u>codri</u> cheese;	0. 1. 1
To making the wall (partition?) of the new kitchen;	0. 0. 6
To putting in a (lead) sink in the brewhouse, with	
portage of stone and clay, and making a <u>runderis</u>	
(? drain; ?brewing-vat) in the middle of the brewhouse	5. 0
(recte £ 4.6.2½) Total of these outlays	£5.11.2½

To 1 lb. wax bought for the chapel;	0. 0. 10
To 5 horses of carriage (- pack-horses) bought for carrying lime, for which the accounter will answer;	1. 17. 0
To 100 great planks bought and sent to Cardros for repairing the park;	0. 3. 4
To wages of workmen labouring about the mill-pond before the contract was made;	0. 8. 0
To 16 chalders charcoal bought for Patrick the smith;	1. 1. 4
To working of 78 stones iron by Patrick;	0. 19. 6
In wages and work of Nigel (Neil) the smith, before contract, uncertified;	0. 3. 0
To planking of 2 boats to carry lime and sand;	0. 1. 6
Planking of said boats & carpenters' wages;	0. 5. 0
To 3 lbs pitch bought for boats;	0. 0. 6
To 28 ells canvas bought for sacks for lime;	0. 7. 2
To men coming round the Mull with a ship, formerly Donald McGilhon's, by a <u>codri</u> cheese;	0. 2. 8
To the watching of said ship at Westertarbart for 15 days;	0. 5. 0
To watching of a ship sent by Arthur Cambel	0. 0. 10
To wages of 6 men going with the same ship to the King in Arran;	0. 2. 0
To portage of bread from Tarbart to Schipnissie	0. 1. 10
To carriage of victuals from Westertarbart;;	0. 0. 4
To bran for the watchdogs at Westertarbart for 3 weeks;	0. 0. 4
In driving cattle to Schipnissie, twice;	0. 0. 8
To care of 40 of the Queen's sheep before the King's arrival;	0. 1. 0
and by $\frac{1}{2}$ boll meal;	0. 1. 0
For custody of <u>pultrie</u> (poultry) for 15 days;	0. 1. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$
To custody of the King's cattle and pigs by two herdsman and two boys (pagetes), by 7 bolls meal;	0. 14. 6
By wages of a messenger going to Islay for horses;	0. 0. 6
and in the passage of 4 horses from Islay;	0. 10. 0
For keep of 16 men of John son of Duncan staying at Tarbart by command, by 6 <u>codri</u> cheese;	0. 3. 6
To 8 men of John and Nigel, sons of Gilhon, for 1 month, by 28 <u>codri</u> ;	0. 16. 4
To 2 men of Iwar McAulay and 1 man of Iwar McGilcom (as above), by 3 <u>codri</u> cheese;	0. 1. 9

In charcoal and wages of smiths trying to cast a mina of lead (minam plumbi fundendum);
 To literio ('litter', rushes for floors) for the rooms of the ld. Bishop of St Andrews and ld. James, lord of Douglas, with cutting and portage of birch-branches to repair the hall and rooms;

0. 1..0

0. 2. 2½

To the King's alms, by 7 codri cheese issued to ld. Robert the almoner;

0. 4. 1

(recte, £8.0.9) Total of these outlays £9. 7. 3

(recte, £476.18.3½) Total of all outlays £479.9.9½

So he owes £39.3.10½ (recte, £31.17.4½), of which he is allowed £21.11.0 for his wages for a year and 66 days, ending at (24 June), reckoning 12d per day by arrangement. And he seeks allowance for 100 stones cheese issued to ld. Robert de Peblis, Clerk of the Liverage, for which he has no receipt to show, £3.0.0. And for 18 stones cheese sent by John son of Maurice to Cardros to the ld. King, £2.0.0. And 80 lb. meal and cheese for wages of servants at sundry times crossing to Islay to bring back victuals within the time of account, £4.13.4d. And he seeks allowance of 3/4d for custody and guarding of a prisoner. And he is allowed for 1 boll meal and 1 stone cheese, given to the sarratoribus (? carters, from sarracus a waggon) for their care, from the ld. King, 2/6d.

Total of these allowances and petitions; £31.10.2d

And so he owes, clear: £7. 8.7½

(On his own figures the final debt should have been £7.13.8 more than a third of his own allowance; on the revised figures in brackets through this paper, the debit balance is no more than 7/2½).

There are a few more references to 'le Tarbart' in the next year or two. In 1328 the Chamberlain paid out 7/8d for 'a cocket for the burg of Tarbart'; this was the all-important seal fixed to bills of lading, to show that duty had been paid on goods, and it is proof that Robert I established Tarbart as a royal burgh. There are other references to 'the King's great ship' fitting out there. Finally, William Scot re-appears, to be paid £2 in 1329 and £5 in 1330 'on completion of the park of the Tarbart'.

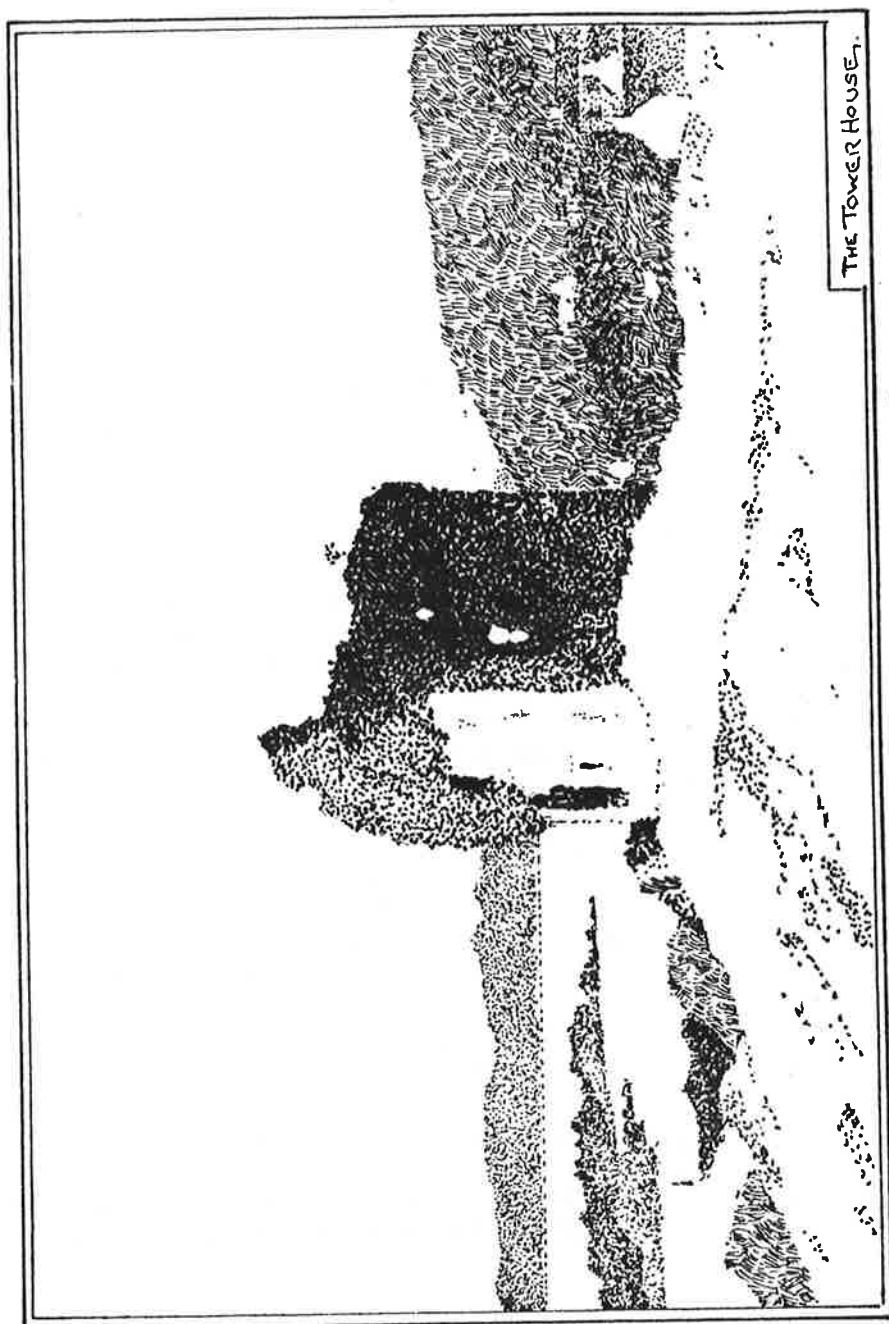
We are left with a set of problems, many of which can only be solved by an expert excavation of the castle. Clearly, there was already a stone keep, probably of the time of Alexander II or III; within or beside it, the stone bases for the timber hall should be traceable. But where were the mill and its pond and lade, and for that matter Scot's 'park'? (This was, presumably, a large banked enclosure where deer could be kept, at least in winter, if royal parks elsewhere are any guide. Where was the Peel-tower 'at Westertarbart'? (This one may already have been located by the Editor and Mr Colin Fergusson). And are the two small ruins on Eilean dhà Ghallagain, in the West Loch, 'the house on the island, and the chapel'?

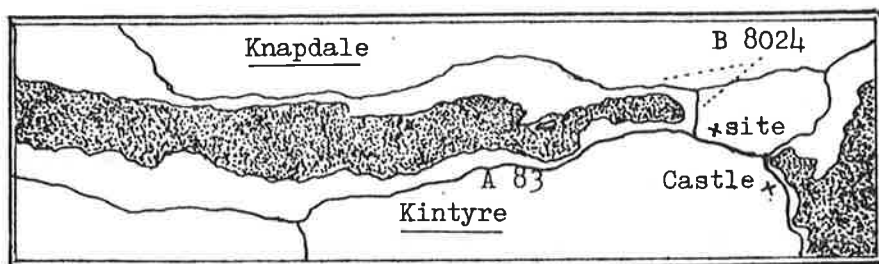
There are other questions unanswered. Where was all the lime burnt, to be brought 'by sea and land'; and why was there a furnace (not a kiln), and 'a house for the goldsmith', at Skipness?

An excellent plan of the visible remains at the castle, with a detailed discussion of the buildings, including James IV's tower-house, is in the Kintyre volume of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments - - - Argyll I, no. 316, where the whole curtain-wall and the two half-round towers at the seaward end are securely attributed to the early 14th century. The mill may well have stood below the walls on the eastern side with the later tower-house overlooking the pond and lade.

At least we know the names of some of the men who worked on the site, after making their contracts in the King's presence, shook their heads over amateurs' notions of what decent-like wall should stand along the ridge, and quietly went their own way and 'made the wall wider than had been agreed'. I for one would not be surprised to learn (if such things could be discovered) that their descendants are with us yet.

Editorial Note: Possibly not all readers will realise that Miss Campbell herself translated the Exchequer Rolls from their original Latin; this accounts for the many explanations and variorum readings which are given here.





IS THE SITE OF TARBERT'S 'PEEL' NOW IDENTIFIED?

C.F.Fergusson and F.S.Mackenna

Readers of Miss Campbell's paper on the Tarbert Castle accounts, which precedes this note, will recall that one of the entries records the "construction of a new Peel at Tarbart west" by John the Mason. The wording 'new peel' implies that it was a replacement for an earlier structure. Incidentally although a peel was originally of timber, stone was eventually used - a modification which has an important bearing on the present discussion.

Dugald Mitchell, writing in 1886, stated that there had been two forts between the Castle and the West Loch but that "all trace of them has long since disappeared." It is impossible to say where the second fort idea came from, since the Exchequer Rolls quoted by Miss Campbell are believed to contain the only extant contemporary reference to any Tarbert Castle outpost. Nor, as will appear, was there any need for more than one outpost in securing the protection of the area under investigation.

Mitchell's gloomy pronouncement has been passively accepted, but now, as a direct result of a tentative hint from Miss Campbell some years ago to one of the present writers, it seems reasonably possible that the site of the peel has been located.

For those who are unfamiliar with local geography it may help to recall that the elongated Kintyre peninsula is attached to the rest of Scotland by a mile-wide stretch of land lying between Tarbert on Loch Fyne to the east and the West Loch towards the Atlantic. This narrow strip might almost be termed a pass, since it lies between hilly areas and is relatively low-lying. The Kintyre side is the more rocky and the steeper; and on the other side the ground slopes down and in former centuries reached a very

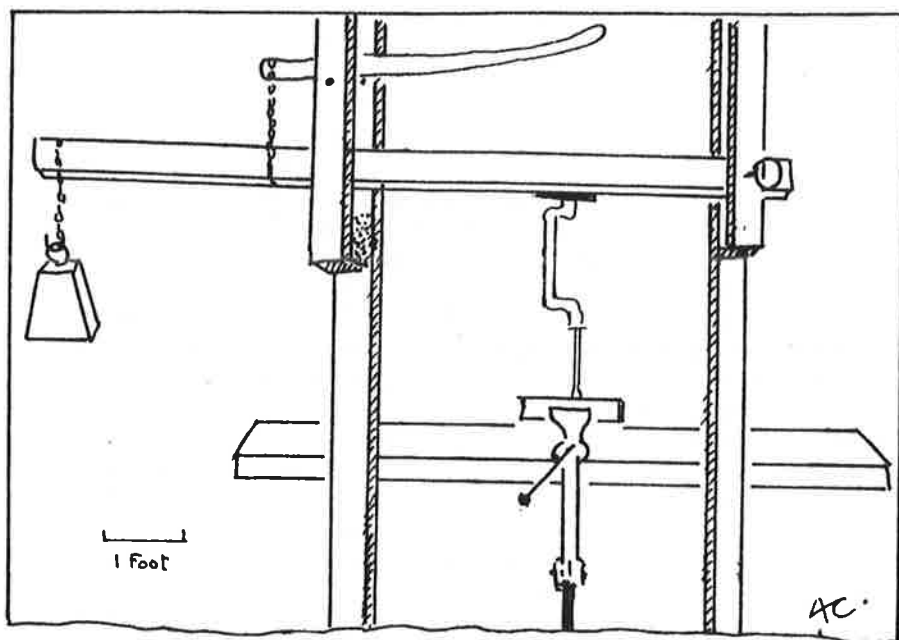
boggy area, now drained. The A83 Tarbert to Campbeltown road runs along the Kintyre side of the isthmus, and before reaching the head-waters of the West Loch a branch (B8024) goes off to the right. These roads form two sides of a field, and this enclosure is the area we are interested in.

Plainly to be seen from both roads is a rocky outcrop considerably masked by scrub growth, and to this we turned our attention. Traces of walling are evident on several parts of this rocky area, but a complete clearance would be needed before their extent could be decided. These remains were suggestive enough, though indeed not in any sense a discovery since they are clear to all beholders, but it was only when we stood on the summit of the rock that the full significance of the site became evident, for then not only was there a clear view of the head-waters of the West Loch but turning to the opposite direction an uninterrupted line to the tower-house of the Castle presented itself - the two essential requirements for any effective defence strategy, namely that of visual contact between each point. We next considered the possibilities offered by other parts of the area, and concluded that none stood up to the requirements. On the Kintyre side, across the main road, the ground, being higher and stony was certainly suitable for fort building in many parts but only at unacceptable heights for defence purposes if both Castle and West Loch were to remain simultaneously in view.

In the other direction not only is the ground lower but also even now and certainly more so in the 14th century, it becomes very boggy and again loses sight of the Castle. So we came to the conclusion that our outcrop is indeed the only location which meets every requirement. Excavation alone can settle the matter.

...oooOooo...

After reading through the foregoing note, Miss Campbell suggested a subject for future investigation, again arising from an entry in the Exchequer Rolls. Here however is a matter of much greater difficulty! "The next mystery to be investigated must be the location of the 'house on the island' mentioned in King Robert's accounts."



A BLACKSMITH'S BEAM DRILL-PRESS

Alan Campbell

The blacksmith's traditional method of making holes in wrought iron or mild steel bar is to heat the part to a bright cherry red, lay it over the small punching hole at the hanging end of the anvil and drive out a small plug of metal with a hand-held punch struck by a heavy hammer. Occasionally it is impractical or undesirable to heat the metal, when resort must be made to drilling; this requires considerable and sustained downward pressure on the drill.

In 1969, Mrs. Macalister of Glenbarr kindly donated to Auchindrain Museum the remaining contents of the blacksmith's shop and house at Glenbarr. The drill-press illustrated here was removed from the Glenbarr smithy and re-erected at Auchindrain.

It is elegant in its simplicity and the principle could well be of use to do-it-yourself enthusiasts. It is made from rough timber and consists of two uprights, about 5 feet apart, the lower ends being set in the earth floor and the upper ends fixed to the roof timbers; they are spiked to the front of the bench, of which they form the front legs. About 6 feet from the floor a spacing piece $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick is nailed to each upright; to the front

face of these spacing pieces are nailed the lower ends of two shorter uprights. A 3 foot length of 5x2 inch timber is pivoted between the right-hand uprights and passes freely between the left-hand uprights, resting on top of the spacing-piece when not in use; at the extreme left-hand end of this cross-beam is a short length of chain with a hook on which a heavy weight is hung. The operating lever, made from a broken pony-trap shaft, rests on a pin between the left-hand uprights and is connected to the cross-beam by chain and fencing wire.

The drill-brace is forged from $\frac{7}{8}$ inch round bar; its upper end is pointed, the lower end has a tapered square recess ($\frac{9}{16}$ inch across the mouth) to grip the square-ended shank of a drill-bit forged from tool-steel or, more often from an old, worn-out file. In use, the pointed upper end of the drill-brace fits into one of eighteen shallow conical holes in a steel plate $2\frac{1}{4} \times 7 \times \frac{5}{16}$ ins. thick on the underside of the cross-beam, immediately above the jaws of the leg-vice; the most suitable hole would be selected to keep the drill perpendicular to the work-piece.

With this ingenious system of levers, a 56 pound weight hanging from the end of the cross-beam exerts a force of about 250 pounds at the drill point, while a downwards pull of about 14 pounds on the operating handle is sufficient to raise the cross-beam. The main disadvantage of this type of drill, apart from the effort needed to turn the brace, is the relatively short travel of the drill (about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch), which restricts the depth of hole which can be bored; it is also important that the drills are of the correct length to reach from the brace to the level of the jaws of the vice, since in this example there is no provision for altering the height of the cross-beam. A further disadvantage of drills of this type is that since the upper end of the brace describes an arc as it descends, deep holes cannot be drilled with accuracy.

The cross-beam is studded with hundreds of small nails, with the remains of thin card here and there, but the pieces are too small to know if these were work-notes or perhaps a collection of cigarette cards.

It is not possible to date this beam-drill with any accuracy. Drills of this type were in use certainly as early as the 17th century, and instructions for making them were still being published in 1890.

"WHAT IS A GOOD KIPPER?"

By permission from Kipper House Tales by
Forsyth Hamilton

A hundred years at kippers - in that time we must know something about them. What is a good kipper?

First you must have a good fresh herring caught from Loch Fyne or Kilbrennan Sound, split, cleaned, washed and salted with rock salt and some dark brown sugar, being immersed in this lovely solution for one hour. They are taken from this pickle and hung on tenterhooks for two hours to dry in a well-ventilated kiln with a good vent on the roof to let the smoke out.

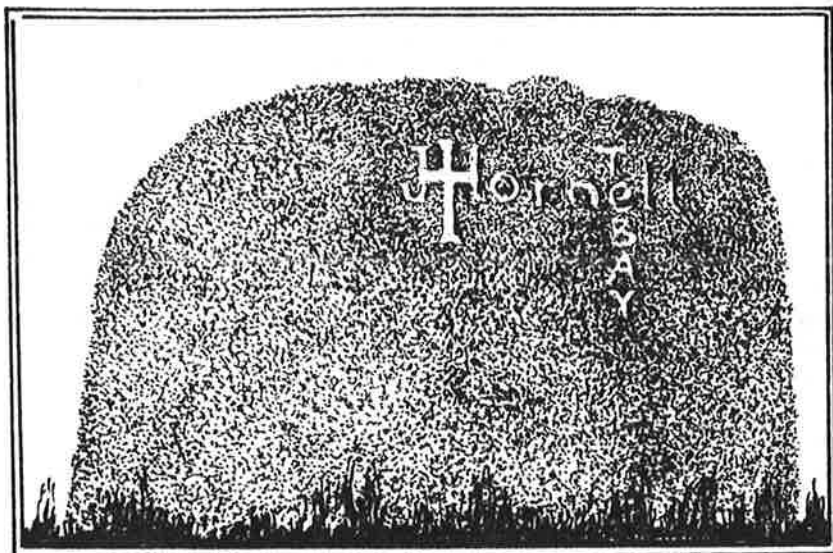
Lay a fire with side logs of oak as they will be the mainstay of the fire - use clean wood to light the fire and some oak chips or oak sawdust to contain the heat from the small kindling wood. These fish are so full of fat the first heat will melt them on the hooks.

These fish have all the goodness in the world, vitamins A to Z; they will do your heart good, never mind your body. If we ate more of these great fish we would have the heart rate down by 75%.

The kippers in the kiln are like rolls in the baker's oven - the ones nearest the fire are ready first, and after the first four hours take on a colour of pure gold; this is the acid coming out of the oak logs going into the skin of the herring. They are not only good to look at but a delight to eat. After a pair of good kippers you are ready for anything; the goodness will stay with you all day. A great deal of time must be given to making a good kipper and the main problem is the firing of them.

We are talking about making good smoked kippers - not brown FK-dyed herring. The E.C.C. does not allow this dye to be used but I am afraid it is still largely used and to make kippers on any large scale commercially, everybody reverts to the red dye. They are taken from the kilns soaking wet so they are getting sold wet for weight. A good kipper is dry and only its own fat is damp. They call these dyed kippers 'Jack the Rippers'.

Herring being made into kippers should be fresh that morning, not lying overnight in ice or anything else as the fat in the herring goes to a dull colour and this greatly affects the flavour.



AN ENIGMA

This remarkable stone was brought to the President's notice by Mr H.D.McGregor, who found it during felling operations on Forestry ground near Lochgair. It is sited at NR918888, above the A83 where there are several bends at Mid Kames. It is a plano-convex portion of a boulder, set on edge, and measuring 25" in height and 38" in width. The carving, as shown, is on the flat surface. The initials of the personal name ingeniously use an ancient cross with expanded ends, and the name, again ingeniously, combines with a vertical place-name. This modern carving is notably inferior to that of the cross. It is odd that anyone who had the wits to incorporate the original carving with his initials, and to combine his surname and the place-name, should have mixed upper and lower case letters in such a way. As for the identity of this modern Goth, it seems a possibility, in view of the English place-name, that he may have been one of the imported workers at the Furnace (whose ore came from Cumberland). The cross itself is a puzzle, for we know of no adjacent religious foundation for which it could have served as a termon cross connected with sanctuary. Certainly the boulder is by no means readily portable, and it must be presumed that it is in its original position.

PHALACROCORAX ARISTOTELIS

Eddie Wright

We seldom have an opportunity to inspect the Shag at close quarters. It is usually a timid bird, easily alarmed, and if we come upon it standing on rocks or diving just off-shore, its up and away - skimming the water until lost as a speck in the distance as water and bird merge. So a recent encounter came as something of a surprise and may be of interest to others.

We were working in the lower garden here at Arduaine (NM795103) towards the middle of October. Having just seated myself on the tractor, ready to move off, I noticed my brother trying to attract my attention - obviously he had something to show me. So I alighted and walked over. Imagine my surprise as I reached him when from behind a large clump of Royal Fern there waddled a Shag. I say waddled because of the size of its webbed feet and it could do little else. One realised immediately the reason for the speed of these birds under water, something it was later to demonstrate to us.

Showing no concern whatsoever it came up to us - even allowing me to bend down and stroke its head and back; there was no need to worry about frightening our visitor. The tractor engine was still running, but it did not deter the Shag from marching up and giving the machine a close inspection. Having satisfied itself it waddled off towards our Round Pond; this is situated under trees and supports no water-plants or fish. Like all the ponds at Arduaine, it is spring-fed and crystal clear. The sides are about 18 inches high, but this did not stop the bird from plunging in, swimming round both on the surface and below it, demonstrating as previously mentioned, the speed with which these birds can move. Needless to say it soon lost interest on finding nothing to catch and started looking for a way out. Kneeling down I called to it, never expecting it to respond; however it did, and I lifted it from the water and placed it on the path.

It set off again towards the tractor - but diverted to inspect a drainage ditch, promptly falling in. Since the sides were steep I lifted it out, carrying it down to the Big Pond and launching it, so to speak. Once again it demonstrated its speed and agility under water, in and out

of the weeds, its head twisting and turning in all directions. But again it found nothing to catch and finally left the water to sit preening itself on the bank. At this point our attention was distracted by a heavy squall of rain and we had to leave, but not before it was necessary to drive past on the tractor within a couple of yards of the bird. Again it took no notice, but on my return an hour later it had gone. From our path above the shore I could see a solitary Shag several hundred yards out; maybe it was our recent visitor swimming happily in its natural element, unaware of our surprise and interest - or that its visit was worth mentioning to the Editor of Kist.

Comment by Colin F. Fergusson.

This description of a shag away from its marine habitat is interesting. They are generally confined to bare rocky islands and cliffs along the coast, spending their lives on the sea and finding their food close inshore. Sometimes they are known as Green Cormorants because of the sheen on their black plumage.

On land the birds have a very ungainly walk; the feet set well back on the body give them an upright stance, and they waddle with a side-to-side rolling effect.

Several reports of shags being seen in rather strange places have been recorded from time to time. Gales can drive them inland on to reservoirs and fresh-water lochs, but they either return to the coast or linger on to die. These 'wrecks', as the storm-tossed birds are generally called, frequently occur in autumn and in some quite unusual places. One is reported to have landed in a back-yard in Balham, London (see Birds of the World). Another was found wandering in the busy Glasgow central area some years ago. Over water the birds, rising into the air, take a long time before they attain to any great height. With heavy motor traffic on the street and many pedestrians, this bird was unable to take off and was eventually rescued from its precarious situation by an obliging observer and released later over the Firth of Clyde.

Nearer home a similar occurrence was seen in Tarbert. With the tide filling the harbour this shag hopped from the water on to street level. There it was seen to attempt to cross the busy main street. The fact that there was a fish merchant's shop and a fish restaurant on the opposite side is hardly the reason for its efforts. It

was watched for some ten minutes making to cross but traffic flowing both ways prevented it from getting any farther than the middle of the street. Eventually it gave up and waddled back to the water. This episode took place in fine weather and in the spring.

Hunger is sometimes thought to account for this strange departure from the birds' natural behaviour, and at a time of severe gales this a possibility, but some birds, including probably shags, have a built-in navigation mechanism which can be disturbed by bad weather, injury or some other reason and could lead to occurrences such as those described by Mr Wright and other observers.

MINING ENTERPRISES in MID ARGYLL Sandy Rankine

Prehistoric man doubtless ranged the hills of Mid Argyll in search of that elusive lode rich in copper ore, with a view to making not only axe-heads but perhaps personal fortune in terms of the day. That this quest continued up to recent times can be deduced from the existence of derelict mine workings in the hills and by the roadsides. Prehistoric mining exploits in the area are, of course, speculative and may always remain so, but what of those of more recent times?

The earliest evidence is to be found in the records of payments made by the Constable of Tarbert in 1326 for coal and materials supplied to the lead mines. Could these have been in the Inverneil area?

In 1683 a German chemist, at that time resident in Edinburgh, speaks of "copper ore found in Cantyre in a hill the colour of gold". By the mid-18th century more specific information becomes available, mainly due to an increase in mining activity in response to increasing industrialisation.

From the 3rd Duke of Argyll's instructions to his Chamberlain in 1747, we know that lead mines were being worked in Glen Shira at this time. David Williamson came from Leadhills in 1748 to advise on these mines and from the fact that air pipes and candles were taken, we can deduce that these were not just surface diggings.

If we can rely on the memory of the Kilmartin villagers of 1839, it seems that the copper mine on the road to Old

Poltalloch was being worked about the time of the Glen Shira mines. A letter written in 1839 by a 'mining captain' called Petherick tells how he visited "Mr Malcolm's mine at Kilmartin", but said that the workings were old and that villagers dated it back to before the '45.

Sir Archibald Campbell, owner of Inverneil Estate in 1790, had intentions of developing its mineral resources and in September of that year had two groups of miners independently assessing the value of old workings. We also find him making efforts to contact former mine workers on the estate - such men as Neil McLarty of Tarbert and Matthew Freeman, who was by then a mine manager in Islay. Freeman's written reply, dated 25th October of that year, gives a comprehensive account of the earlier mining activities on the estate. In 1749 Freeman had come from England to work in the lead mines at Tyndrum and Morven, where he met miners who had worked at Inverneil with the Clifton Company prior to 1749. For how long before this date is not known, but on the evidence of the limited periods worked by later companies, it could not have been very long. From 1745-56 a Bristol Company took over the Inverneil mines and raised a documented 9 tons of copper and 19 tons 10 cwts of lead. They were followed by a Derbyshire company who worked for a further 2 years and raised about the same amount of ore according to Freeman.

This period of activity seems to have culminated with the work carried out by a Mr Lissington who arrived in 1762. Since he had only a few hands working for him, he raised very little ore but apparently devoted much of his time to further prospecting. Not only were the old workings re-examined, but trials were carried out at Strondoir, Silvercraigs, Dunardry and Barbreck. He found little to encourage him, according to Freeman, who worked for him as well as for the Bristol Company during his nine years at Inverneil. From Freeman's letter we read "The first people" (Clifton Company) "got a considerable quantity of copper at Inverneil. To this day the side of the big burn opposite Achabraad is called Copper Craigs. There is a shaft sunk near the above and in driving from the side of the burn to meet the shaft there is a sump some fathoms." After an icy venture into a flooded adit, I found that this description tallies with a shaft and old workings about a mile up-stream from the crossing of the Ach-

ahoish road over the Inverneil Burn. The Bristol Company opened up the mines close to the Achahoish road, but beyond this it is difficult to say which company operated where, as subsequent operations re-opened older workings. Perhaps the combination of Matthew Freeman's letter and possible unsatisfactory reports from the prospecting miners proved too discouraging, and Sir Archibald does not seem to have pursued any development of mineral resources.

A map published in 1801 by Geo. Langlands of Campbeltown shows an old copper mine at Craigmure about 2 miles from Auchindrain on the footpath to Loch Awe. However nothing is known of this mine until 1838, when ore from it was sampled by the British and Foreign Copper Company, who thought the yield could prove profitable. In 1839 the Duke of Argyll employed Mr Petherick (visitor to the Kilmartin mine), to drive an adit and mine for copper. Due to a combination of geological problems and poorer than anticipated quality of ore, the project met with little success and was abandoned in 1842.

Messrs McDougal and McColl, the tenants in 1857 of Coillebraid Farm, Inveraray, found a yellowish mineral when draining some farmland. It was confirmed that they had discovered nickel ore of a quality that could be profitably worked. The Coillebraid mine began output in 1852 under the management of a Mr Phillips and some Cornish miners, but they were replaced a year later by a Mr Caine and some Cumberland miners. In the later years of the mine a local man by the name of Neill McGougan was foreman. The mine produced ore from 1852 till about 1872, but the most active years were in the mid 80's when over a thousand pounds per year were being spent on development. From 1852 to 1865 the total raised was 584 tons 18 cwt of nickel ore.

The abandoned Craigmure mine was re-examined and it was found that Petherick, the Cornish mining expert, had not recognised the existence of nickel ore, but had abandoned it on the spoil-heap. The spoil was sold for £700 and eventually the Craigmure Mining Company took over the concern. They extracted about 320 tons of ore but soon abandoned the enterprise, breaking, it seems, the terms of their agreement with the Duke. Perhaps the relative success of the Inveraray mines brought about a re-appraisal of the viability of mining in other parts of Mid Argyll.

Certainly, in the 1860's, mining companies came and went in quick succession.

On the 3rd January, 1862, a Mr Wm Smith who resided at Silvercraig Lodge (where Tigh-an-Rudha now stands) leased from John Graham Campbell, Shirvan, the mining rights of Castleton, Strondoir and Stronachullin. Immediately afterwards the Castleton rights were sub-let to the Castleton & Silvercraig Mining Company who started operations forthwith. Traces of their mine can still be seen in the field behind Lingerton Lodge, to the north of the later walled shaft. By June of the same year the Strondoir-Stronachullin portion of the estate had been sub-let to the South Argyle Mining Company which was floated with a capital of 25,000 £2 shares.

The interesting part of this Company's prospectus is the plan showing the other mining companies in the area at that time. It shows, rather confusedly, the Argyle Mining Company operating on the Inverneil estate as well as the Mount Erins Mining Company working to the south of Strondoir. The latter mined zinc ore from the adit which can still be seen up the Artilligan Burn about 2 miles from the Tarbert road. (Unfortunately the plan referred to would not reproduce well. Ed.) These last two companies may have folded fairly quickly; it is uncertain but it appears that the South Argyle Mining Company may have transferred their operations to Inverneil where they appear on the Valuation Roll from 1863 to 1866, after which they vanish. As no new mining sites can be found other than those previously operated, it appears that this Company reopened and possibly extended the older workings. The fate of the Castleton & Silvercraig Company is more certain as they went into liquidation in May 1865.

How much ore was extracted by these two companies is nowhere recorded, but it is doubtful if production was of any significance. Certainly the estate owners made no fortunes from them and indeed Mr Smith, the original lessee of the mining rights was in severe financial difficulty by 1873. However, in 1867 we find yet another company, nothing daunted, being floated to mine ore on the Shirvan Estate. This was the Shirvan Copper Mining Company with a capital of 20,000 shares at £5. To date, this seems to have been the most professional of the companies, for they employed in 1865 the services of a Mr Patrick Doran.

an eminent geologist, to carry out a survey. He identified and examined eighteen separate mineral-bearing lodes, ranging from the Artilligan zinc lode in the east to the most westerly at Lochhead.

Great enthusiasm was shown about some of the lodes. For example, one of them which runs just to the east of Loch Arail on the Achahoish road, Mr Doran described as "The Great Champion Lode". He writes of it "I have every reason to believe if sinkings are made to a proper depth that this lode will be found to be the richest in copper of any ever opened in Scotland or any part of G.Britain" After his four-month-long survey Mr Doran concludes his report "From all considerations I feel warranted in expressing my opinion that this property is an excellent field for mining enterprise and worthy of having capital invested in it for its development." It seems, nevertheless that the Company were not so convinced of the worthiness of investment, for although they did work a mine on the banks of the Stronachullin Burn, this seems to have been the only development. This period of operation extended from 1867 to 1871 when they appear on the County Valuation Roll assessed at £50 per annum. Again nothing is known of the quantity of ore raised or indeed whether the enterprise was a success or a failure.

About the same time, possibly around 1862, copper was being mined on the upper reaches of Abhainn Strathain on the south side of Meall mòr, again on the site of a possible earlier mining. The name of the company may have been the South Knapdale Mining Company, but this I must confess is, in the main, guesswork.

A further attack of mining fever hit the area when, in 1907, ore from the abandoned works on the Stronachullin estate was sent off to Glasgow for analysis by the Tharsus Copper Company. Much to the amazement of all, gold was discovered, some of the samples yielding as much as 4oz to the ton, which is rich indeed.

As to the development of this find, we read in the Argyllshire Herald in September of that year "We understand that while several companies were prepared on the strength of reports by their mining engineers to take the matter up, Mr Darlington Simpson, a wealthy London gentleman, has definitely decided to sink a shaft and thoroughly test the value of the same". Whether much ore was mined and sent

off for smelting to Swansea, other than the several tons mentioned in an optimistic report in the Campbeltown Courier in June 1907, is not known. We do find, however, a snippet in the Argyllshire Herald in November 1910 claiming "The Stronachullin gold mine has apparently not yet been entirely abandoned and there is no saying what it might develop some day". This comment was attributed to a Mr J.S.Taylor, so it seems the "wealthy London gentleman" had lost interest in the project; presumably the returns were not sufficient. Nevertheless the same Mr Taylor appears a few months later as Managing Director of yet another company. This was the Shirvan Mining Company Ltd. whose object was to mine the ore on the Shirvan and Stronachullin estates of Mr Graham Campbell. The company started operations by having the local contractor, James Carmichael, sink a 90 foot shaft on the Shirvan estate with a view to proving the quality of the copper lode. The remains of the shaft and its safety wall can still be seen in the field behind Lingerton Lodge. (The site as it was in 1911 is shown on our cover, taken from an old photograph. Ed.) The funds of the Company did not admit development of Stronachullin at the outset, but it was hoped that by demonstrating the value of the Castleton ore body, further sale of shares could produce more capital. In the event the project was no more successful than previous attempts and seems to have been abandoned about 1912.

Although many parts of the mining story of Mid Argyll are still missing and may always remain lost, I think it would be fair to say that no great quantity of ore was ever raised or fortunes made. Rather it would seem that over the years speculators have been searching for crocks of gold, copper and lead at the foot of the rainbow. But Rainbows appear frequently in Mid Argyll, so who knows ...!

...oooOooo...

An Example of Word Manioulation

S	A	T	O	R	We have been told that this highly
A	R	E	P	O	ingenious arrangement of Latin words
T	E	N	E	T	was found on the wall of a Roman bath.
O	P	E	R	A	The skilful structure is not immed-
R	O	T	A	S	ately obvious, but once realised it
					is difficult to think that it could
					be surpassed or even equalled.

The Aftermath of the Rebellion against James V11

Compiled by the Editor

The years 1685 and 1686 are notable, even in the troubled history of Scotland, for the indiscriminate plundering of the Campbells and their followers which was carried out after the failure of the rising against James V11. To this day, three hundred years later, the 'Athol men' are referred to in terms of execration and terror, for the avenging troops of the Duke of Gordon, the Marquis of Athol, Lord Strathnaver and others showed neither mercy nor discrimination in their retribution. The situation was fully exploited by lawless elements who seized the opportunity for enrichment presented by what they regarded as an open ended invitation to help themselves to anything they coveted. Wherever these avenging forces, official or otherwise, came they left desolation, sparing neither young nor old in their pillaging. In addition to carrying off gear and beasts they systematically burnt houses and destroyed what they could not make off with, and the people were left to starve and even die. Nor was this vendetta confined to those who had risen against the King, but very many instances occurred of families being robbed who had actually been in arms on James' side. In the frenzy of looting and destruction the victims' affiliations were little regarded.

It came to our notice that the Dunoon Library possesses a slim book, published in 1816, giving details of the claims made by the victims of this 17th century orgy of pillage, and we were kindly afforded an opportunity for studying its pages. It has the usual elaborate and expansive title page, running to eighteen lines plus the printer's colophon, which may be condensed to An Account of the Depredations committed on the Clan Campbell and their followers during the years 1685 and 1686. It covers a large territory but for our purposes it has been necessary to choose a small selection from our own area.

These claims have two lines of interest for us. They record the identity of the people who occupied and worked the land, and they give us a detailed insight into their possessions both domestic and outdoor.

Sums of money are in Scots, which was one-twelfth the value of Sterling.

Account of Goods and Gear robbed and taken away in June and July 1685, be Lochaber men &c from Duncan Smith, late Baillie of Inverairey.

<u>Imprimis</u> , Taken out of Achingoul (qrof the sd Duncan Smith was tacksman) be Lochaber men, ten coues, valued to	lib	s	d
	133	6	8
<u>Item</u> , be them out of that toun, 30 sheep and goats, estimat to	40	0	0
<u>Item</u> , taken out of the sds lands, be the pairtie that went with Atholl to Carnaserie, qrof Torloisk had the command, 6 great coues 80 lib, and 12 sheep 16 lib; <u>inde</u> ,	96	0	0
<u>Item</u> , taken from his house door at Inverairey, be the armie, 3 milk coues, estimat to	60	0	0
<u>Item</u> , be them, ane new plaid, 4 pair blankets, with pots, pans, plates, peuter stoups, household plenishing, and wearing cloathes, to the value of	100	0	0
<u>Item</u> , taken out of Auchingoul, ane mare and tuo followers, estimat to	100	0	0
<u>Item</u> , 6 three year old coues	48	0	0
And this attour the loss of his cropt and corn both in Achingoul and Inverairey, which was all eaten, consumed, and trod under foot be the armie, as also tuo dalle shops which were wholly burnt and destroyed be them; estimat, in all, to	200	0	0
Totalis	777	6	8

Beside encrease profit, cost, skaith, and damadge

Followes the ACCOMPT of Losses susteined be Neil Campbell of Duntroon, and his Tennents within the paroch of Kilmartine and division of Argyle, plundered and transported to the Isle of Mull, be Donald McCharles VcAllan McLeane, and his tue brethren, Ardgour's near kinsmen, in the month of July 1685, eighteen days after the rebellion and disorders in the Countrie were crushed and were silenced, and Atholls army dismist and proclamation for all persones therein to retyre to yr own habitations, as followes:

	lib	s	d
Imprimis: Taken from Dugall M'avis, Neil Mccallum, Duncan M'avis, and tuo poorwidowes in Ardephour, 40 great coues at 16 lib per peice; <u>vide</u> , in haill,	640	0	0
<u>Item</u> , 8 tuo year olds at 10 lib. per peice, and 8 stirks at 5 lib. per peice; <u>vide</u> ,	120	0	0
<u>Item</u> , 4 bulls at 10 lib. per peice is	40	0	0
<u>Item</u> , 2 pleugh horses at 50 mks a peice	66	13	6
<u>Item</u> , 4 mares and ane year old at 30 lib a peice	120	0	0
<u>Item</u> , taken from Neill M'avis in Ardephour 5 coues and 1 stot, worth	90	13	4
<u>Item</u> , 3 stirks at 5 lib a-peice	15	0	0
All the persones above written being loyall and peaceable.			
<u>Item</u> , taken from Donald M'ilbreid, Dougall M'enturner yr, 16 great coues,	256	0	0
<u>Item</u> , 1 bull and 1 stott	20	0	0
<u>Item</u> , stirks at 5 lib. a peice	25	0	0
<u>Item</u> , a pleugh horse	40	0	0
Summa	1433	6	8
<hr/>			
Item, Taken out of Ardephour castell, from Donald M'entyre, Jon M'oldoiach, Jon M'Coell, be Andrew M'lean, son to the Bishop of Argyle and transported to Mull in the moneth foresaid, 4 mares, 2 followers, 1 pleugh horse and a foal, worth	150	0	0
<u>Item</u> , taken then be Allan M'Lean son to Innerscardaill, from the sd Donald M'entyre, ane mare and one year old, worth	33	6	8
<u>Item</u> , taken out of Coulknock, fra Neil Campbell and Duncan M'Lean, be Archibald M'Lean, Ardours uncle, 3 mares, tuo foals, worth	153	6	8
<u>Item</u> , taken be him from John M'phadjean yr. 2 mares and 1 foal, worth	133	6	8
<u>Item</u> , taken out of Auchachreon and Bennan, be Jon M'Lean, brother to Torloisk, belonging to Duntroon and his tennants yr, 14 peice of horses and mares and 3 followers, worth	373	6	8
<u>Item</u> , taken out of Glencharn, and oysrs of Duntroons lands, be Jon Oig M'ewen V'clane, Ewing Mac-charles V'eachin, John Mair M'Leans in Tippermowrie, belonging to Duntroon, 21 horses			

and mares, with 6 foals worth	666	13	4
<u>Item</u> , taken from Lucas M'endeoir in Tilleger be Torloisk and his men, 4 pleugh horses worth	160	0	0
<u>Item</u> , from him, 6 coues, worth	100	0	0
<u>Item</u> , from Dougall M'phadjean in Coulknock, and Duncan Campbell in Bennan, 2 horses, worth	53	6	8
<u>Item</u> , taken from Alexr M'avis, in Netherondell, be Jon M'gillivra of Pennigael, 24 coues, worth	400	0	0
Summa	2223	6	8
Total of both	3656	13	4

For which particulars above written Duntroon obtaint decret fra the Commissioners of Justiciarie for the shyres of Argyle and Tarbert for the tyme, against the said plunderers, in July 1686.

List of Goods robbed and taken away from Colin Campbell of Glennan, in the moneth of June and July 1685, be the persones underwriten.

Imprimis, There were robbed and taken away out of the lands of Craigmure,* in Glastrie paroch, be the tutor of M'ronalds men, the number of 24 coues, 15 peice of horses, and 24 sheep, property pertaining to the sd Colin Campbell; reckoning the coues at 24 mk the peice, the horses at 40 mk the peice, and the sheep at 33s. 4d. the peice; <u>inde</u>	684	0	0
<u>Item</u> , 30 goats, at 30s. the peice, is	45	0	0
The sda goods were driven be them towards Minard			
<u>Item</u> , Taken away, in the moneths above mentioned, from the sd. Colin Campbell, be the companie commanded be Broloss and Torloisk, the number of 15 peice of horses, estimat at 50 mk the peice, <u>inde</u> ,	500	0	0
The sds goods were dryven towards Mull.			

List of the Goods taken from Neil M'Neill in Castleswyne, in Knapdale paroch, ane honest man, who was actualie in his Majesties service, be Neil M'ilvernoch in Fernoch, in Knap, Duncan M'kay yr, and Duncan M'ilvernoch, brother to the sd Neil, upon the - day of July 1685.

* Possibly Craigmurail. Ed.

Imprimis, Elleven great coues, at 16 lib. per peice, 2 tuo year olds, at 8 lib. a peice, and fyve year old stott, 12 lib., another young coue at 10 lib., tuo bulls at 10 lib. the peice; inde in haile

224	0	0
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Of the qlks goods the foresaids tuo bulls are yet in the custodie and possession of the fore-named persones.

Item, taken away from the sd Neill, the tyme foresd, be Jon M'alister of Kenlochkeilsport, and his tennents, the number of 4 coues, at 16 lib. per peice; vide

64	0	0
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Item, taken be Duncan Campbell of Lergnahunseon, about the tyme foresd, and his tennents, 3 coues at 16 lib. the peice, grof ore was killed by them at the sd tyme; inde

48	0	0
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Summa,

336	0	0
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Item, robbed and taken away in July 1685, from Eupham M'callum, Mary M'arthur, Barbara M'vretnie and Katharin M'Cavis, all widows in Kilberrie paroch, be Donald M'Neil of Galdhelzie, and those under his command, as follows

From the sd Eupham M'challum, 4 great coues and 2 horses, the coues valued to 64 lib. and the horses at 24 lib. inde

88	0	0
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Item, from the sd Mary M'arthur, 3 great coues, at 16 lib. per peice; inde,

48	0	0
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Item, fra the sd Barbara M'vretnie, 3 coues at the sd pryce; inde

48	0	0
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Item, from the sd Katharin M'avis, 6 great coues, worth

80	0	0
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Item, tuo 2 year olds, at 8 lib. per peice

16	0	0
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Item, ane bull stirk, worth

4	0	0
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Item, a horse, worth

20	0	0
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Attous cost, skaith, damage, encrease, and profit

List of Goods and Gear robbed and plundered from Ewir Campbell of Askenish,* cropt and year 1685.

Imprimis, Taken away in June, or beginning of

* Now Arduaine. Ed.

July, 1685, out of the sds lands of Askenish, be the Laird of Coll and his company, ane stoned horse and a pleugh horse, estimat to	80	0	0
<u>Item</u> , taken out of the sds lands at that tyme, be Hew and Jon M'cleanes, attendants to and under the command of the Laird of Lochbuy, ane ryding horse, ane pleugh horse, a tuo year old horse, 1 tuo year old mare, and tuo coues, estimat to	106	0	0
Where upon yr is a decreit past be Kelburne, and oyr Commissioners of Justiciarie in Argyle, anno 1683.			
<u>Item</u> , taken away then out of Askenish, be - M'levich, servant to Torloisk, ane mare worth	16	0	0
<u>Item</u> , taken then, be the sds persones and their accomplices, out of the house of Askenish, the furniture, household plenishing, and oyr necessars, qch (beside the spoileing, breaking, and rendering altogether useless, of tables, chaires, barrells, and oyr vessells, and other things most necessar for a house, qch they had not convenience to carry away) amount in value to	133	6	8
<u>Item</u> , taken out of the lands of Kilbryde, be Alexr M'Donald in Glencoa, and the tutor of Appynes brother, the full and whole sounes of the sds lands, being 48 coues with yr followers, 3 pleugh horses, and 2 mares with yr followers, qch were totally robbed away in full bulk, with Barbrecks hership; extending, in all, to	86	8	0
<u>Totalis</u>	<u>1203</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>

REVIEWS

Kipper House Tales: Forsyth Hamilton. £3.99 (by post £4.50)
from Kipper House, Brenfield, Ardrishaig

This book, sub-titled 'A Reminiscence of West Coast Life' is a work of almost total recall. Forsyth has a rare gift of transferring his own way of speech to a sheet of paper and off again, directly to the reader's ear. There is no elaboration, no pompous re-phrasing, no interference with oral tradition. Many so-called 'professional' writers will envy him. The many photographs are a treasurehouse in themselves, and deserve close study with

a hand-glass. Here are old boats that, like the men who sailed them, last a long time after they are 'done'. Here is an informative list of boats and owners, rigs, tonnage, masters and crews. And there are forgotten heroes, like George Bruce and his friends who nursed two yellow-fever victims in a makeshift hut on Ardrishaig pier when even the old poor-house in Lochgilphead would not admit them. Those who have long known Ardrishaig will find a wealth of memories aroused, while newcomers may well discover that there is far more to the wee place than they suppose. We certainly wouldn't wish Forsyth another fall off a roof, but we must all hope he enjoyed writing as much as we enjoy reading his book, and that he will give us another soon.

M.C.

THE LORE OF HIGHLAND TREES. Hugh Fife. Famedram £2.50

This is a much fuller exposition than the author's earlier booklet on the subject, and it deals extremely clearly and absorbingly with the dendrology, practical value and folk lore of the seventeen species regarded as native to the Highlands. Readers could be misled in the matter of the Gaelic names, for in many instances the genitive form is given; and any regional variations in Gaelic are usually found to occur in pronunciation rather than in spelling. Some place-name interpretations may not be fully accepted - take Aspen for example. "...it has also been called eagh, as in Eagach in Glencoe". The accepted and obvious translation of Aonach eagach is 'notched hill', owing nothing to any hypothetical aspen growing in some cleft. The publishers cannot be commended for their part in the production, judging from the copy we are quoting from, in which several pages are marred by defective printing. Despite these shortcomings, some of them relatively trivial this is a publication which will be found most useful and informative and it very acceptably fills a gap in the Natural History of our country.

F.S.M.

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