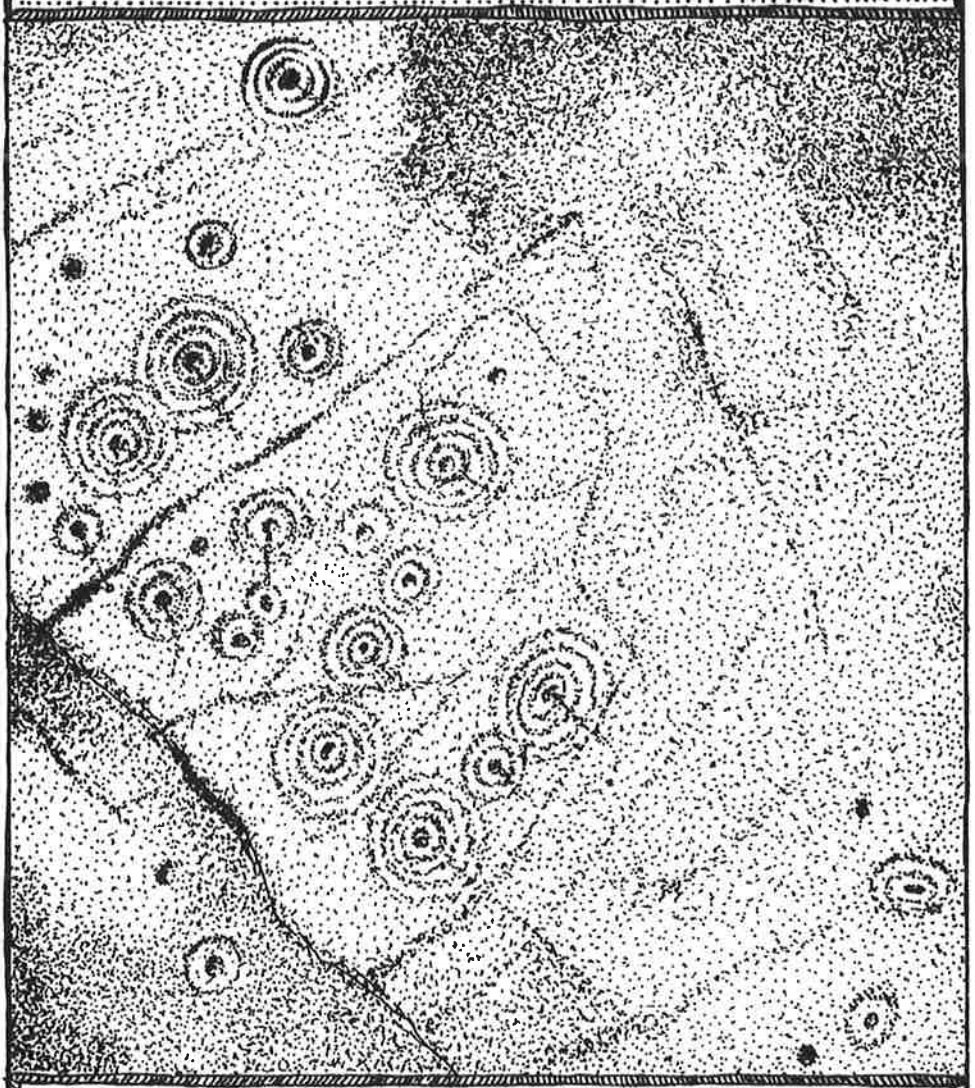
Cairnbaan, Mid-Argyll



The KIST 39

THE KIST

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The Natural History & Antiquarian Society
of Mid-Argyll

PRESIDENT: Dr Lamont McNab, JP, MB, FSAScot.

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CONTENTS

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Miss Campbell of Kilberry - Resignation as President

It was announced at the Annual General Meeting of our Society that the President had decided to stand down, an event which greatly surprised the members. We had all so long taken justifiable pride in having a President of such outstanding international repute that we had come to see her tenure of office as permanent, selfishly blinding ourselves to the realities involved in the journey 'over the hill' between Kilberry and Lochgilphead and back again on nights of winter lectures. Summer 'outings' likewise often denoted arduous feats of stamina in addition, as frequently was the case, to giving the accompanying talk. All these considerations, on top of a host of other activities, private and public, had become more than the Committee and our members had any right to expect. The decision was reached with great reluctance and only after prolonged consideration but it was very obvious that commonsense demanded this easing of duty. We were indeed fortunate in persuading Dr Lamont McNab to succeed as President, and his suitability for filling the vacated chair is never questioned.

Miss Campbell had been President since the Society was formed in 1955, with only a year's unavoidable interruption, and during that time we have steadily increased not only in numbers but also in status, so that we are now widely recognised as the focal point of knowledge regarding our highly important area with its multiplicity of ancient remains. For her internationally acclaimed contributions to archaeological studies, crowned by the Mid-Argyll Field Survey which she and Miss Sandeman carried out she received the distinction of Honorary Life Fellowship of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1989. Those who have had the good fortune of many times hearing Miss Campbell lecturing, in the field or from the rostrum have enduring memories of the lightness of touch which she brought to the most ponderous subject - an attribute not by any means obvious in many lecturers, who only too often fail to bring their subject to life. We have indeed been most highly favoured over the past thirty-five years and we will never forget the occasions while looking forward to many years' continuance ahead.

GU MA FADA BÈO SIBH IS CÈO AS UR TAIGH

THOUGHTS on the ORIGINS & DEVELOPMENT of CUP & RING CARVINGS in ARGYLL

P.F.Fane Gladwin

INTRODUCTION: Over the years many differing theories have been put forward to explain both the significance and locations of the thousands of Cup and Ring carvings which have been uncovered in the Western Highlands and in particular within the area of the former Celtic Kingdom of Dalriada. Recently a German author, writing on the subject in relation to Western Europe as a whole, stated that anyone looking for a common meaning to fit all cup and ring carvings would be wasting their time! Whilst this may indeed be true for Western Europe, or even for the whole of the British Isles, it is hoped in this paper to indicate a common origin and purpose behind the many such carvings in Argyll and show how their great importance to the peoples of the Bronze and Iron Ages ensured their survival into the Christian Era in a modified form.

In so doing we must take note of the nature of Celtic Religion with its vision of an 'After Life' and also of any changes in funerary customs which may have occurred during the long period over which the carvings were made.

Celtic Religion: The Sun God and attitudes towards the Dead.

There is total agreement amongst both ancient and modern authors that the Sun God, in various forms, was the principal Deity of the Celtic peoples, who appreciated it as the universal giver of life and fertility. Like all other Sun-worshipping cultures, the Celts sought to represent their God in a variety of circular forms. The principal Solar Symbol in many parts of Europe was the spoked wheel, ranging from the full-sized wheels of carts and chariots to the small model wheels often deposited with the Dead or as votive offerings in other contexts.

However there is no doubt that in parts of Northern Europe the Celtic peoples also took as a Sun Symbol a flat or slightly domed disc surrounded by a ring. This type of Sun Disc was frequently the only decoration present on their shields and horse trappings, and is portrayed in Roman sculptures - most notably in Scotland on a large 'distance slab' from the Antonine Wall (Fig.1A).

It can be seen from the variety of Sun Discs shown in Fig.1, some in bronze and some carved in stone, that to the Sun Worshipper almost any type of disc or ring-form appeared as an important religious symbol in much the same way that in later times the Cross would appear as a symbol of Christianity. It is suggested that the idea of a ring or rings surrounding a central circular cup may have had its origin as a result of observing the halo which sometimes surrounds the sun as it rises on misty mornings in the more northern and western regions of Europe.

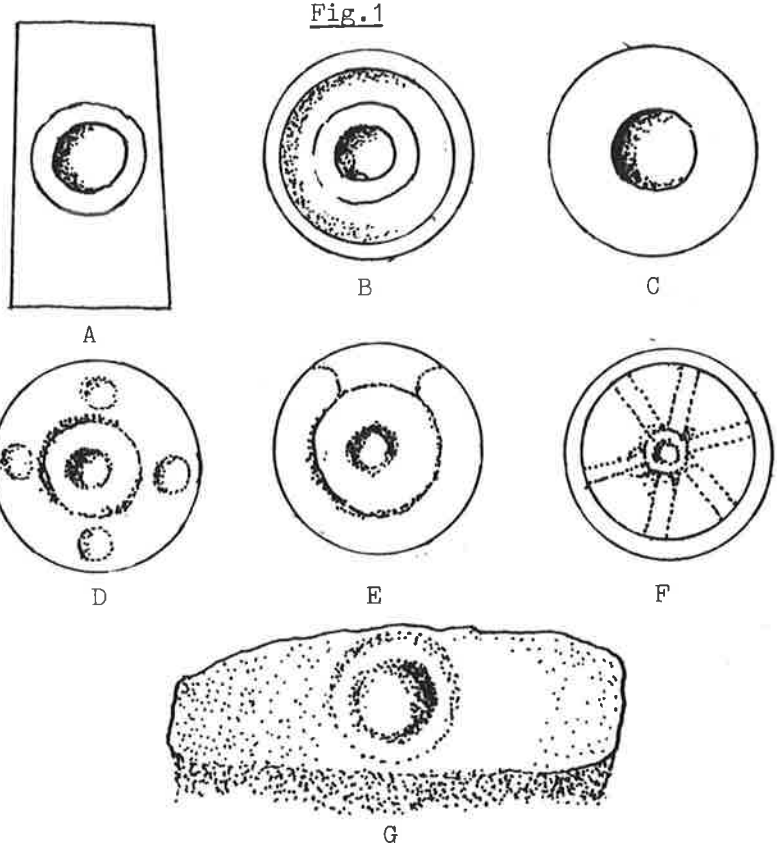
We know from Roman writers that the Celts believed strongly in an After-life in an Underworld to which the Sun God descended each night. They believed that the Spirit of the Deceased could return at times provided that it had a suitable exit which "broke the skin of the Earth".

It is recorded that caves, outcrops of rock and earth-fast boulders fulfilled this condition of penetrating the 'skin'. It therefore seems reasonable to suppose that in carving a small hollow through the surface of the rock they could be providing a symbolic 'Spirit exit' for a particular person whom they wished to commemorate, and whilst no doubt adequate on its own, it would have more potency if it formed the centre of a Solar Disc. Was this perhaps the idea behind the Cup and Ring carvings? It will be seen from Appendix 1 that there is some linguistic evidence that this may have been the case.

Variety and Location. Two questions remain which we must attempt to answer. Firstly why are so many of the carvings grouped together in large numbers, usually on flat-topped outcrops, often well up a hillside but at the same time reasonably close to areas of settlement? And secondly, how do we account for the wide variety of sizes and styles which often occur among the carvings themselves? It is suggested that the answer to the first may be found in the burial customs existing before and after approximately 1500 B.C.

It is hard to define exactly when such customs underwent major changes in pre-history, since they often took a long period to become fully effective, and even then perhaps only in certain regions. However it would seem that the Neolithic practice of dis-articulated burials in large Tribal graves had died out by approximately 1000 BC and had been replaced by that of single burials and/or

Fig.1



Types of Sun-discs in Celtic Art

A Depiction of Celtic Shield, Distance Slab.
B Shield Boss, London. Late 2nd c. BC
C Carving: Glasvaar, Argyll.
D Disc from Horse Trappings, S.Europe.
E Shield Boss, River Witham 2nd c. BC(?)
F Wheel Disc - Sun Symbol
G Top of Early Christian head-stone, Peebles.

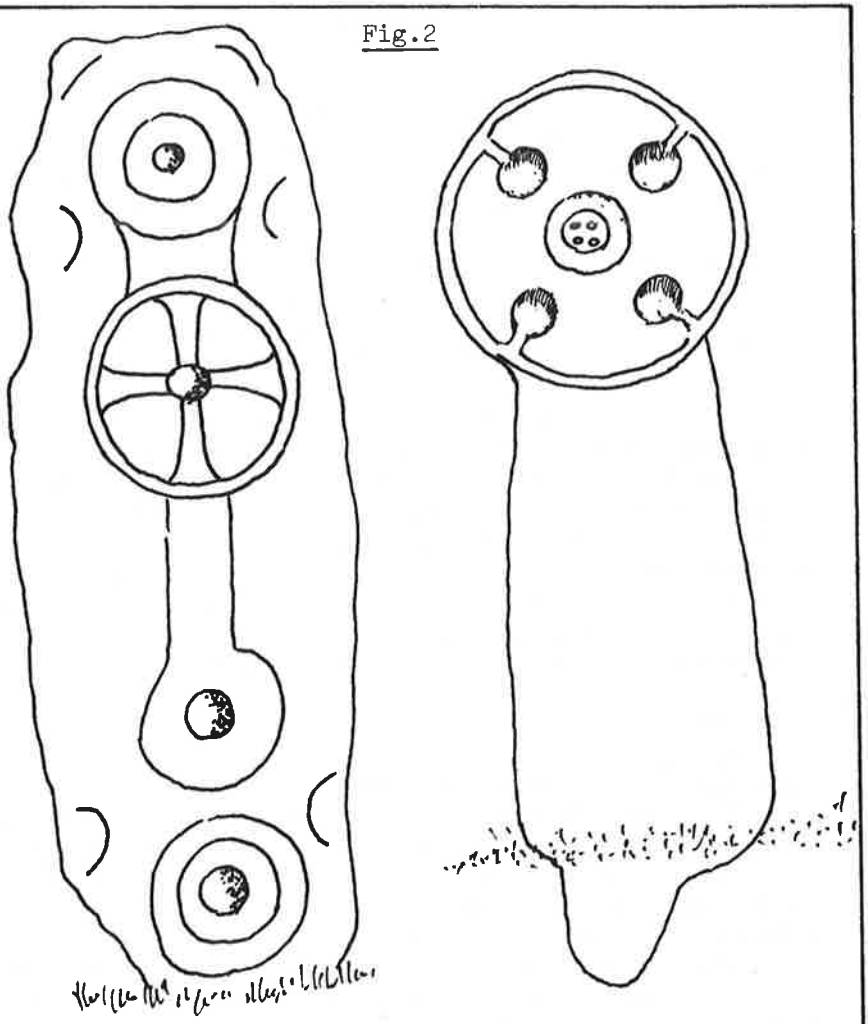
cremations. In the southern half of Britain many traces have been found of so-called Mortuary Structures or Enclosures where certain bodies had been placed for a time in order that the process of excarnation should take place before final burial. It is thought that no such mortuary structures have so far been discovered in the West Highlands, although dis-articulated burials certainly took place. Could it therefore be that as a local alternative certain flat-topped outcrops close to existing communities could have been used for this purpose? As years passed and the burial customs changed, it would seem natural for the people to wish to honour their ancestors by continuing to carve Solar Discs and symbolic Spirit Exits on the same outcrops on which their bodies had previously been laid. Can we perhaps in this way explain both the very large numbers of carvings and their locations?

It would seem that the best way of explaining the variety found in these carvings is to recall the great propensity of Man to elaborate simple themes. We have only to consider in a Christian context how the simple Cross of the Catacombs became elaborated in the course of centuries. 'Crusader', 'Maltese', 'Heraldic', 'Gothic', 'Orthodox', 'Elongated', 'Decorated' etc. Can we say that the elaborations of Cup and Ring carvings are any more fanciful?

The Last Phase - the Christianising of Cup and Ring Carvings. At this stage I can do no better than quote two statements from the late Professor George Coffey in his Guide to Celtic Antiquities of the Christian Period. "At the end of the Pagan period, the circle with a cupped centre was commonly used as a Sun symbol and generally as a beneficent one. The tendency of the Cross not to obliterate but to absorb this, is quite in accordance with the principles of the early Church which often allowed Pagan customs to continue and gave them harmless meanings, converting them to Christian uses." "On the incised LEAC crosses at Dalkey and other places we appear to have this idea." (Fig.2).

To these we may add the peculiar 'Disc Crosses' of Ireland and the Isle of Man, on which the short arms of the cross project from behind what is, in fact, a most obvious portrayal of a very large Cup and Ring carving! Coming closer to home, in addition to the perforated Disc

Fig.2



A Incised 'leac' cross, Dalkey, Ireland.
(4 cups, 2 complete solar discs)

B Disc cross, Kirkinner, Wigtownshire.
(4 cup/perforations, 2 small rings)

Cross in Fig.3 we may take note of the similar Kilmory Cross which stood in the grounds of St Margaret's Church, Lochgilphead.

Later, as Christianity finally replaced Paganism, we had in Ireland and in Scotland, the finely carved High Crosses, of which the best local example is at Kildalton in Islay, where the surviving Solar Disc has at last taken its lesser place as a mere ring behind the arms of the cross. Can we now claim that the Solar Disc had at last been eliminated from Christian Art, or can we perhaps find one further echo in the great golden halo behind the heads of Christ in the famous mosaics of Ravenna and Byzantium?

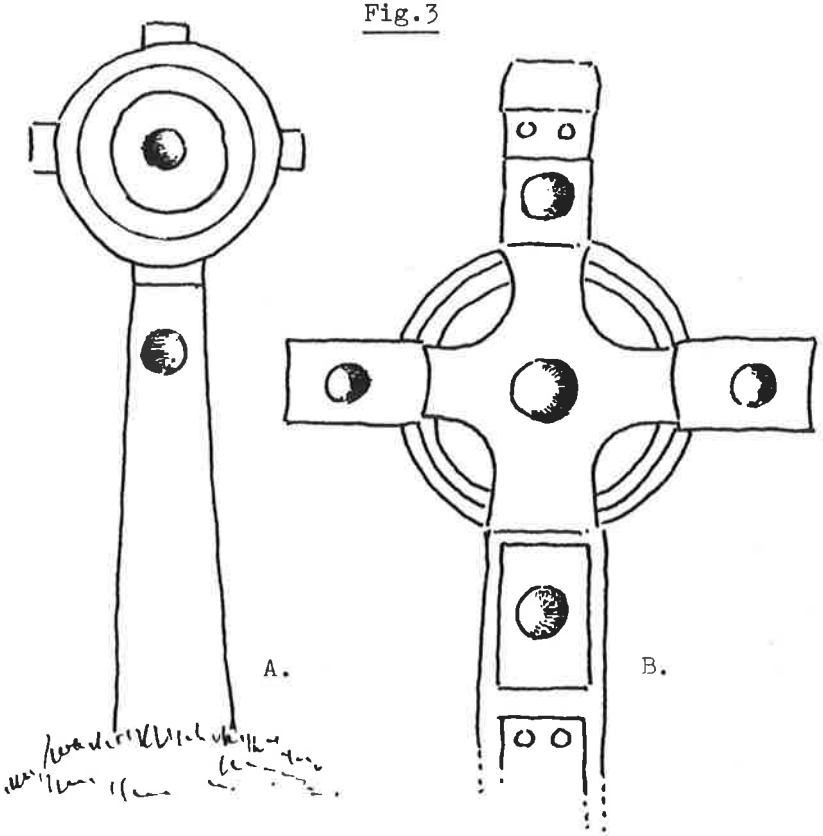
Conclusions: I have tried to provide a background to the study of Cup and Ring carvings which can be based less on guess-work and more on their undeniable association with Celtic ideas of Death and Religion, an association which is demonstrated to the full by their widespread continuance into the early Christian era. Clearly both in Ireland and in Scotland the earliest Christian missionaries found that there was such a deep association between the People and these Symbols, they felt obliged to 'Christianise' them in the struggle to wean their converts from Paganism. In considering the reasons for the location of these carvings, we are on less firm ground, since it is improbable that any material evidence is ever likely now to be found that they had been sites on which the Dead had been exposed. It may however, finally, be of interest to note that the very process of exposing bodies, postulated in this paper, has been carried out on hillsides in Tibet up to modern times!

APPENDIX 1

In addition to three English/Gaelic Dictionaries - (MacLennan, Macalpine and Mackenzie) I would like to acknowledge help received from Rev. Dr Roderick MacLeod.

Because the Gaelic language is of such great antiquity the alternative meanings of some words tend to reinforce certain points made in this paper. The first of these is TOLL meaning as a noun 'A small hollow, hole or perforation', but as a verb 'to hollow out', 'to perforate', and also 'to exhale' or 'emit vapours'. Might not this tend to reinforce the view that the small hollows could

Fig.3



A. Disc Cross Ballymore Eustace, Ireland.
(Complete Solar Disc with central cup;
one large cup on shaft.)

B. Wheel Cross (High Cross): St John's Cross,
Iona.
(cups transformed into bosses)

have served as 'spirit exits'?

The second significant word is the noun COPAN. The first meaning is 'a cup', but it is interesting to note that it also can mean a projecting 'boss on a shield'. This alternative may help to explain how it was that as Christianity progressed, both in Ireland and in Western Scotland, the cup-marks on the earliest crosses disappeared and were replaced by the projecting bosses, these being no doubt much more to the liking of the Christians.

APPENDIX 2

A Relevant Bibliography

Rites of the Gods. Aubrey Burl (Dent)
The Gods of the Celts. Miranda Green. (Sutton, Gloucester)
The Druids. Stuart Piggott (Thames & Hudson)
The Celtic Gauls - Gods, Rites & Sanctuaries.
J.L.Brunnaux (B.A.Seaby)
Celtic Britain. Loring. (Routledge & Kegan Paul)
Reading the Celtic Landscapes. Muir. (Guild Pub. London)
Rome and the Barbarians. Barry Cunliffe. (Bodley Head)
Pre-Christian Ireland. Peter Harbison (Guild Pub. London)
The Archaeology of Ireland. Peter Harbison (Bodley Head)
The Celtic Mysteries - the Ancient Religion.
John Sharkey (Thames & Hudson)
Archaeology and Language. Colin Renfrew (Jonathan Cape)
The Pre-Historic Rock Art of Argyll. Morris. Dolphin Press

...oooOooo...

[EDITORIAL NOTE: Our cover is designed to amplify the foregoing text, especially for those who may not be familiar with the forms taken by 'cup and ring' carvings and the role they can have played in the design of some early crosses. This is especially to be noticed in the case of Fig.3A, which derives most obviously from a carving of the type which appears several times in the group on the cover, located at Cairnbaan (NR838910) near Lochgilphead in an area particularly rich in such carvings.]

'BARKING'

Ronnie Johnson

Since the arrival of man-made fibres and their introduction into the manufacture of fishing nets in the middle fifties, resulting by the sixties in completely artificial nets, the old process known as 'barking' has disappeared. All natural fibres posed the problem of rot, and nets had to be turned over and dried at every opportunity. Cotton will generate heat and will rot if left in a wet heap, just as hay will. During spells of good fishing, with herring being caught nightly, the scales and slime on the nets hastened the rotting process unless they were given regular dips in 'bark', usually a Saturday job, after the last catch of the week had been sold. The skipper of the 'skiff' informed the owner of the 'barking-house' that he wished to bark and wanted him to have his boiler lit and the necessary amount of cutch melted and ready. The quantity depended on the age and size of the nets. It came from Borneo and was made from the bark and leaves of certain trees.

The nets were taken to the barking-house by lorry (or, in Tarbert, from the Barking-house Quay by hand-barrow) and hauled into great tubs measuring some 8x6x5ft, which lined the walls. As they went into the tubs the back and sole ropes [i.e. ropes at top and bottom of the net. Ed.] were hauled together and plaited through the net to create spaces through which the 'bark' could seep. The later larger nets almost filled the tubs. When the tub-filling was done the skipper tested the temperature of the 'bark soup' in the boiler with his hand, and if he thought it right the crew formed a chain and passed the 'soup' to the tubs until the nets were completely covered or 'floated'. Next they were covered over with a tarpaulin to retain the heat as long as possible. A good sign of the barking was how long it took the crew to get the stain out of their hands.

First thing on the following Monday someone would knock out the bung from the bark tubs to allow the liquid to drain away at least an hour before the nets were taken back to the boat. There was always a much harder feel to the cotton after a dip in the bark.

The Tarbert barking-house was latterly run by Andrew

Leitch the sailmaker on its old site above the Barking-House Quay.

[Editorial Note: Formerly a much-remarked feature all round fishing harbours were the croichs (from the Gaelic meaning 'gallows') which were tall poles connected near their tops by one or two horizontals. They were used for hanging the old-style nets on, serving the dual purpose of allowing inspection and repairs and at the same time effecting some degree of drying. In Tarbert croichs were to be seen well into the sixties, though no longer used; but all trace of them has now gone.]

The community was saddened by the sudden death of Ronnie Johnson in October 1989.

SOME COLLECTIVE NOUNS of BIRDS

A herd of swans.

A gaggle of geese (swimming).

A skein of geese (flying).

A sord or suit of mallards.

A paddling of wild ducks (on shore or swimming).

A team of wild ducks (flying).

A spring of teal.

A wisp or walk of snipe.

A desert of lapwings.

A fling of ox-birds.

A flight, rush or dopping of dun-birds.

A wing or congregation of plovers.

A herd of curlews.

A hill of ruffs.

A trip of dotterel or ducks in small numbers.

A sedge of herons.

A covert of coots.

A dopping of sheldrakes.

A company of widgeon.

A bunch of widgeon or dun-birds in small numbers.

[Ox-birds are sanderlings, dun-birds a species of duck]

The Highlands and Lowlands Defined in 1787

By means of Act 37, G.III., cap.102, sec.6 in 1787, the boundary between Highland and Lowland Scotland was demarcated as follows:-

"A certain line or boundary beginning at the east point of Loch-Crinan, and proceeding from thence to Loch-Gilpin; from thence along the great road on the west side of Lochfine, to Inveraray and to the head of Lochfine; from thence along the high road to Arrochar, in county of Dunbarton, and from thence to Tarbet; from Tarbet in a supposed straight line eastward on the north side of the mountain called Ben-Lomond, to the village of Callendar of Monteith, in the county of Perth; from thence north-eastward to Crieff; from thence northward along the road by Amulree, and Inver to Dunkeld; from thence along the foot and south side of the Grampian Hills to Fettercairn, in the county of Kincardine; and from thence northward along the road to Cutties Hillock, Kincardine O'Neil, Clatt, Huntly and Keith to Fochabers; and from thence westward by Elgin and Forres, to the boat on the River Findhorn, and from thence down the said river to the sea at Findhorn, and any place in or part of the county of Elgin, which lies southward of the said line from Fochabers to the sea at Findhorn."

This enactment had been brought about in the main by the notorious problems connected with the collection of duty from those engaged in the distillation of spirits. This duty was evaded to a very considerable extent, due partly to loopholes in the law and partly to the problems of collection. It was with the expectation of a lessening of these difficulties that the country was divided into Highland and Lowland areas in 1787 and at the same time levying the duty on each still's capacity rather than by the gallon of its output. The change was unavailing as the distillers found means of outwitting the Excise, but these are matters which lie beyond our normal range of interest.

CARNASSERIE CASTLE

Marion Campbell

The castle (NM838009) dates from the second half of the 16th century, possibly incorporating a little earlier work. The eastern tower shows impressively from the road below, while the southern face, on closer inspection, is much less forbidding. From the grassy level (the former garden) one sees that the south windows of the middle floor have been altered, probably in the 17th century, and that an upper-

floor window has had a decorative frame and may have been a projecting oriel. The string-course of masonry across this front continues all round the building, combining with a lower line to give a particularly spirited decoration on the west wall.

The entrance is on the north side, in the angle of the staircase tower. Over the doorway is an armorial panel of the Arms of Argyll parted per pale with the Royal Arms of Scotland, above a motto Dia le ua nduibne (God be with Argyll). The blank space above may have been intended to hold a religious motif, perhaps omitted because the building work was in progress when Carswell decided to adhere to the Reformed Church.

Two sets of door-checks show that the entrance had both a wooden door and an iron yett (a door-sized grille). The main stair, just inside, has a cubby-hole below it from which open firing-loops for hand-guns. To the left a corridor leads past the kitchen to storerooms.

The vast kitchen fireplace has an oven on one side and a water-spout on the other, connected to an arched opening in the outside west wall through which water could be poured to fill barrels by the hearth. Beside the kitchen window is a sluice for dish-water to be poured away.

One storeroom now holds a collection of carved stones found during restoration. All the ground-floor rooms were vaulted to support the stone floor of the Hall above. The east cellar contains a rock-cut cistern, formerly spring-fed, to supply the castle in time of siege. A steep stair leads to the private room above; the large window has slots for fitting glazed panels, and there is a mason's mark nearby. The room has a fine fireplace; two sets of peg-holes in the walls suggest a wooden wainscot with tapestry hangings above. Stone corbels carried a wooden ceiling. There are two upper floors; like the private room itself, each has a garderobe (lavatory).

The Great Hall extended the full length of the kitchen and storerooms, with a fireplace in the north wall and two little rooms fitted around the kitchen chimney at the far end, both of them two-storey, divided by wooden floors. The north upper room was entered from the main stair, and the south one by a window-sized opening from the room above the Hall. There were two rooms above the Hall itself, traceable by their fireplaces.

The spiral stair between the private room and the Hall

rises to the wallhead, whence there are fine views up and down the valley. One can usually point out, to the south, Kilmartin and the Glebe Cairn; to the west, when the light is right, the pair of standing-stones on the brae-face, though the cairn above them does not show at all; to the north, above Carnasserie Farm buildings, the hilltop cairn Càrn bàn (probably Neolithic), with a smallish fort, Dùn Mhic Choish, on the plateau between the Oban and the Loch Awe roads. Local information claims that a cist was found and covered over again without disturbance, in the area now crossed by motor-cycle tracks.

A flagged walk formerly led round the roof, which was itself covered with large flagstone slates. From the stairhead one can see that the rocky mound north of the castle has been walled to enclose a space about 23m x 17m with a cross-wall near the southern end. Other ruins to the west are presumably stables and barns.

The castle was built (or rebuilt) by John Carswell who was granted the lands "and castle" in 1559 by the Earl of Argyll. The building may have taken place after 1565 when Bishop Carswell should have had access to the combined revenues of the bishoprics of Argyll and of the Isles. The armorial panel above the door is the Bishop's scholarly compliment to his patron, who married a natural daughter of James V in 1561.

In 1685 the castle was manned by kinsmen of Sir Duncan Campbell of Achnabreck* in support of Argyll's Rising (an abortive outbreak intended to support Monmouth's Rising in England). It was held for several weeks against forces led by other kinsmen, and eventually surrendered on terms which were not honoured - Dugald MacTavish of Dunardry was hanged, old Alexander Campbell of Strondour "barbarously murdered". The building was burned and never re-occupied.

*[see Kist 21 re. Sir Duncan and his wife. Ed.]

[EDITORIAL NOTE: Some years ago a clump of handsome yellow flowers was seen beside the road below the castle, with a few others nearer Kilmartin. Enquiries resulted in the name Elecampane emerging (Inula helenium), with the added information that it was often found "where the monks had been". This idea might seem to gain support from the fact that Miss Campbell had seen it doing well

on Eileach an Naoimh (the Island of Holiness).

When well grown it is a striking sight, up to six feet tall, with large tooth-edged leaves, but our forefathers were probably less interested in its appearance than in its medicinal and household properties. In the former category it provided a tonic, a diuretic, a diaphoretic and an expectorant, while the candied stalks were regarded as a sweetmeat and, with the addition of whortleberries, the plant furnished a blue dye.

Botanical books seem to imply that it is often to be regarded as having escaped from gardens and although geographically widespread is uncommon. Our interest in its location below Carnasserie lies in the fact that a celebrated family of physicians called MacLachlan, first mentioned in 1470, lived for generations at nearby Craigentairbh, where they would undoubtedly have a Physic Garden, Could our plants be survivors from this?]

... Inula helenium ...

[The following lighthearted note by Miss Campbell of Kilberry was found in her copy of the RCAHMS volume on IONA when she loaned it to the Editor and is here reproduced by kind permission.]

"IDOLATROUS IMAGES"

It was under the Act Anent Images that gravestones were ejected from within churches (and sometimes the bones under them ejected also), and standing-crosses defaced, &c &c; but this was supposed to be done by the heritors and other owners of the monuments - whom failing, by the Sheriff and Bailies of a town or Heritors of a rural parish; whom failing again, by the State (with what?).

As, in such places as Argyll, the Heritors were probably Sheriff-Depute &c; and as they and their followers (who would be expected to roll up their sleeves and do the work) were all aware that their grandmothers were buried under this stone, and the Old Laird under yon one (and a fell man was he - and what'll we say if the old Auntie yokes on to us?), the chance of a satisfactory doun-dinging and awa-takin' were minimal. Probably there might be a burst of zeal now and again, after a good sermon or during the visit of a shipload of English Puritans, or such-like; and then, a cross might have been put up by thon old donnert fool MacFungus, him and his clan, they're all awa' wi' it these days and Deil mend the lot of them.

But there would scarcely be the wealth of carved stones today if the Synod had obeyed its instructions. Far more probable is the quiet melting-away of stones and of whole churches, in the manner of the late beloved Flora Fletcher: "Hech, Mem, now and again one dwindles."* Good hearthstones and drain covers are always needed - and that is where many of the Kilberry collection were re-discovered.

*[This is a reference to the explanation habitually given to the late Mrs Campbell of Kilberry concerning a diminishing dinner-service by a much-regarded member of the domestic staff at Kilberry Castle.]

BIRD NOTES: 1989

Colin F. Fergusson

During August and September each year one hears and reads about breeding results in the bird world for that year; here are some for our present year, 1989.

Where the small birds common to our gardens are concerned there would appear to be little to worry us. Both House Sparrow (Passer domesticus) and Hedge Sparrow (Prunella modularis) are prolific at the bird table with their constant chattering; Blackbird (Turdus merula), Chaffinch (Fringilla coelebs), Song Thrush (Turdus philomelos) and Robin (Erithacus rubecula) are to be encountered at almost every turn of the road. The Pied Wagtail (Motacilla alba) would appear to be making the most progress so far as numbers go. With two and sometimes three broods being raised by this and other common species during the summer this is not surprising. But from the egg to the fledging stage there are casualties due to various causes which keep numbers in each species fairly level.

The most common of the summer visitors is the Willow Warbler (Phylloscopus trochilus), while the Whitethroat (Sylvia communis) is much on the increase. The 'chat' family, Whinchat (Saxicola rubetra) and the Stonechat (S. torquata) are a pleasant lot to meet on the hill. One always knows when one is near their nest by their short bobbing flight from rock to rock and their constant 'tic-tic' call, much like the sound of two stones being struck together. Wheatears (Oenanthe oenanthe) are often seen in the company of the 'chats' and are a common breeding species in our area.

At the time of writing the ridges of houses and telephone lines - these latter getting fewer each year - are lined with large numbers of Swallows (Hirundo rustica), using these recognised gathering points in preparation for their departure to warmer climes. They give the impression that they too have had a good breeding success. During walks in the surrounding countryside the small feathered visitors have been plentiful, helped no doubt by the excellent weather when the main part of the nesting period was at its height.

It seems that the larger birds are not doing so well. West Loch Tarbert now has twenty-eight Mute Swans (Cygnus olor) resident, and they are a pleasant sight in this

lovely loch. Not so good is the fact that there is only one cygnet in the herd, though at first there were seven, all in one family. Why only one breeding pair amongst the fourteen and why the high death-rate in what appeared to be a healthy brood? Twenty years ago this same area regularly supported eighty birds, though even then breeding results were poor. If the decline continues it seems doubtful if any will be left to grace the West Loch in another twenty years.

One species of bird which is obviously doing well is the Hoodie Crow (Corvus corone cornix). Everywhere it is on the increase; able to adapt to any dining-table from well-filled litter-bins to wrack on the seashore, this is a scavenger of the highest efficiency. In the past he was kept under strict control on account of game-birds on the moors, but now he has full range. Because of their prevalence everywhere and the lack of suitable nesting sites, one sees little stunted trees on the hills, some no bigger than a rose bush, supporting a cosy wool-lined nest with four or five eggs or young.

Huge flocks of Rooks (Corvus frugilegus) are a common sight throughout the country. Much activity occurs at their communal nesting sites when repairs to the previous year's nests are underway before the new breeding starts. A continual squabbling ceases only when darkness puts a stop to their labours - and a welcome relief to households which happen to lie nearby.

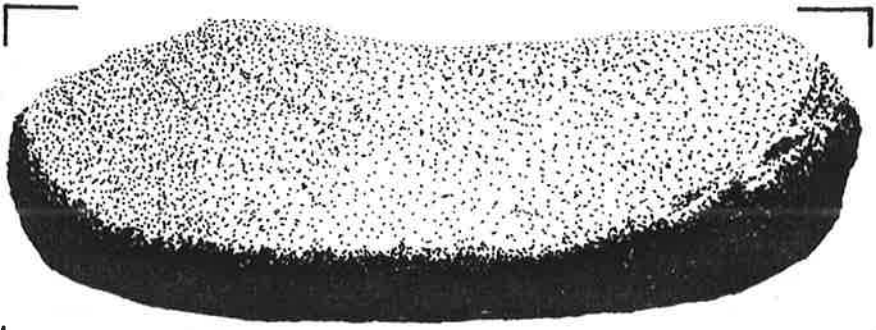
Ravens (Corvus corax) are more at home amid the higher hills and mountains and not so often seen. Though not common it is nevertheless widespread throughout Scotland. It is an early nester and the mating-flight is fascinating as they tumble together, seemingly making close attacks on each other. They are often sitting on eggs during February and March when snow is lying on the ground.

There is always some concern for the numbers of raptors country-wide. Golden Eagles (Aquila chrysaëtos) are especially in danger. Dead birds are frequently reported, shot or poisoned. When this killing occurs during the breeding season, not only one or sometimes both of the adults are a severe loss, but the chicks can die in the nest from starvation and exposure. Whether or not eagles take live lambs in the lambing season is hotly debated. Certainly on some game-bird estates and farms there is still great persecution not only of eagles but also of

other birds of prey. It is thought that there are between two hundred-and-fifty and three hundred pairs of Golden Eagles in Scotland. Each pair requires from fifteen to twenty square miles of territory to maintain itself over the whole year. Their habitat is often in very remote areas, where sheep-farming and game preservation are the main 'industries'. Death from natural causes amongst sheep during winter and spring provides eagles with some of their food, as they take carrion wherever it may be found; if a carcase is deliberately poisoned, a pair of these magnificent birds is lost for ever.

From some losses to some gains - through the work of the Nature Conservancy Council White-tailed Eagles, alias Sea Eagles (Haliaetus albicilla) have been re-introduced after an absence of seventy-four years. In 1975 the first young birds of this species were brought by plane from Norway to Rhum, and each year since then a few more have been brought to this new rearing area. Up to date some eighty birds have been reared in this way on Rhum. As each matured it was released and they have now spread north and south along the west coast of Scotland and have been reported even in Mid-Argyll. There would seem to be little ground for concern regarding food-competition between White-tailed Eagles and Golden Eagles as the formers' food is mainly fish and sea-birds such as Puffins (Fratercula arctica) and Eiders (Somateria mollissima).

Another exciting project being undertaken by the NCC and RSPB is the releasing of Red Kites (Milvus milvus) in Scotland and England. The young birds are obtained from established sites in Sweden. A small population of Kites survives in remote areas of Wales. As a species they are rare birds of prey and hazards such as poison baits - eight were killed in this way in Wales in the current year - show how vulnerable small isolated communities of such birds can be. The re-introduction of these bright chestnut-coloured birds must, we hope, be as successful as that of the Osprey (Pandion haliaetus) in Scotland. Since its appearance, on its own accord, in the 1950's at Loch Garten, the species is now wide-spread round the country, several sites being used by breeding birds. Happily one of these is in Argyll and in 1988 it was reported that the pair reared three young - the first fledglings raised in Argyll since the re-colonisation of Scotland occurred.



Length 20" (51cm) FSM

SADDLE QUERNS: A NOTE

F.S.Mackenna

The saddle quern shown here came from Pitcur Castle in Angus. It is thought to have been removed from a field where it was causing obstruction to cultivation, and it remained unidentified until seen by the writer and given to him by the owner. Alienation from its 'home' area, usually to be strongly deprecated, was judged allowable in view of the total absence of detail regarding any previous location and the very real danger of it being broken up or used for building material. The immediate area of the ruined castle of Pitcur is notable as the location of at least three 'earth houses' (see Kist 4), but any connection of these with the quern is purely speculative.

What we know as 'saddle querns' were not so named until well into the 19th century, and in Scotland the ancient term 'corncrusher' survived until the end of the century. Querns, both saddle and rotary, were everyday household objects, their number legion, but on being supplanted in type and by mechanical community mills they were utterly disregarded except for their potential as useful stones.

The shapely rotary form with its surface available for decoration, is more attractive than the saddle but this can hardly be thought to account for the relative neglect of saddle querns in the literature.

The distinction between the two types of quern, saddle and rotary, has proved of very considerable value in determining the relative dates of prehistoric structures,

particularly of brochs. Where a saddle quern occurs as part of the floor of a site which yields numerous rotary querns in the superimposed debris, it is obvious that the saddle version had been superseded. Equally significant are the relative numbers of the two types found on an excavation. Four local sites investigated in 1904-5 show this clearly. At Duntroon all 36 of the querns found were of saddle type, while at nearby Dunadd only 3 out of 50 were not rotary. Such definite distinctions occurring during excavation go a long way towards establishing a secure basis for chronological conclusions.

It is possible to recognise two main types of saddle quern - those which have the grinding surface extending right to the edge of the stone and those where a narrow raised rim surrounds it, producing in effect a shallow trough-like working surface. A few examples are known in which the raised border is very greatly broadened at one end, presumably to act as a seat for the operator. Every gradation is met with between the recessed surface and the plane, and some authorities feel that the bordered type is the earlier. Saddle querns first appear in the Neolithic period, continuing through to the Iron Age, when it seems that the rotary type came into use, a highly important development in social life, likened by some to the discovery of iron itself. It is thought that the present specimen is of Iron Age date. The writer has not established the type of rock from which it is formed.

There are a number of random scratches on the grinding surface, caused no doubt by agricultural implements as it lay on or just under the ground. On the underside the surface has been dressed to a smooth convex shape and stability in use would easily be attained by inserting one or more small slabs as wedges, a contrivance which would allow of variation of the angle at which the grinding surface was set. Such an arrangement was found *in situ* at Jarlshof in Shetland in 1934. The dimensions are:- overall length 20"(51cms), extreme width 11"(28cms) and greatest thickness 5"(12·75cms).

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GAELIC PROVERB: AN CAR A BHIOS 'SAN T-SEAN MHAIDE IS DUILICH A THOIRT AS.

THE TWIST THAT IS IN AN OLD STICK IS NOT EASILY MADE STRAIGHT.

RIGHTS OF WAY and TRESPASS

[The following brief statement was wrung from a legal contact more as a matter of general interest than as a possible warning. Our area, as we all know, has a veritable network of well-marked paths affording access to innumerable sites of archaeological interest.]

"What is a Right of Way?" "How valid is the notice 'Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted'?" An immense amount of uncertainty surrounds these points so far as the general public is concerned.

A 'Public Right of Way' across private property by a more or less defined route is a right of passage open to the general public, leading between two public places. The establishment of such a right is based on the use of this way made by the public over the required period of twenty years without let or hindrance by the proprietor. It is needful in this connection to define 'public place', the answer being 'a place to which the public resort for some definite and intelligible purpose'. The greater right always includes the lesser - that is to say a carriageway covers a right for other users such as riders and pedestrians. It is to be noted, however, that an established drove road does not imply a right for vehicles to traverse it. Where a motor road has been constructed on the line of an old drove road or footpath, the road is indeed itself private but it may be used by drovers or pedestrians. In these cases the notice Private Road can be very misleading. In some instances pedal cyclists have been regarded as pedestrians and not debarred.

The public cannot demand that a proprietor keep a right of way (including bridges) in repair - that is for the public to see to. A proprietor cannot close a right of way unless he provides an alternative route of equal convenience which satisfies the local authority. Gates may be erected on a right of way but they must not be locked. Where they occur it is the duty of the public to ensure their closure after passage. Any other form of obstruction can legally be removed by the public. The networks of drove and other public rights of way such as coffin roads across our country form an ancient means of commun-

ication which is of immense importance to every member of our outdoor-orientated population, and it is vitally important that the legal position, both of proprietor and user, be well understood and adhered to. In this regard it is usually the ill-informed, thoughtless or actually antagonistic 'out-to-make-trouble' member of the public who is to blame when misunderstandings occur.

What about Trespass? The usual notice unfortunately has very little real significance, and no prosecution can follow, for it is not regarded as a crime to walk on another's land. At once let it be stressed that the public have no right to pass at their pleasure over private property; nor on the other hand has a proprietor any duties towards a trespasser, unlike his duty towards the user of a right of way, who is secure in the knowledge that he is safe from interference or other hazards such as the perils connected with the shooting of game. The presence of such potential dangers as bulls on hill land traversed by a right of way is a different matter, as the landowner cannot be expected to erect fences over miles of moor and hill land, though he may be liable for damage caused to the public during their legitimate use of a right of way. On the other hand, when the potential danger has been deliberately introduced as a deterrent he may be 'had up' for interfering with free use of the way by the public.

From the point of view of the landowner there are remedies against exploitation. A trespasser can be stopped and asked to leave, but no physical force may be employed. Name and address should be requested and given. If the trespass becomes habitual he can seek an interdict against the individual(s). Should the nuisance continue he can raise an action of declarator that his property includes no public right of way. A continuance of the nuisance can lead to a fine or imprisonment.

It should be pointed out here in what is merely the briefest outline of the matter, that the trespass alluded to is that implied by the simple process of crossing another person's land; things are very different when it comes to such matters as picnic fires, invasion of premises etc all of which are adequately provided for in law, but these diversions do not usually figure amongst those of a Society such as yours.

A.G.KENNETH of STRONACHULLIN: THREE TRIBUTES

The death of Mr Kenneth in July 1989 brought feelings of personal loss to countless people. Many of us were more or less aware of the darkening tragedy which cruelly had struck his daily life as one after another his passionate interests became impossible to sustain, but this in no way lessened the sense of utter loss when the end came. The three following tributes may serve in some degree as stones added to a cairn of remembrance by the wayside as in the old days.

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From Miss Campbell of Kilberry.

Argyll is the poorer by the passing of Archibald Graham Kenneth of Stronachullin. All who knew him will miss him while memory endures, each in our own way - in the higher reaches of piping musicology or botany, or in chance meetings as he fished the Add or tramped the high shoulders of Sliabh Ghaoil. Every encounter was illuminated both by his wide wisdom and by the magic of a smile like sunrise. Most knowledgeable in all he touched, he was never above his company and always ready to share his skills, as many a young Piper can testify; for when wounds sustained with the 51st Highland Division in 1940 progressively deprived him of the practice of his art, he turned to the devoted and enthusiastic coaching of junior Pipers. He turned, too, to field botany, and became the assured expert on the flora of Knapdale and Kintyre, until the answer to every botanical conundrum was simply to 'ask Archie'.

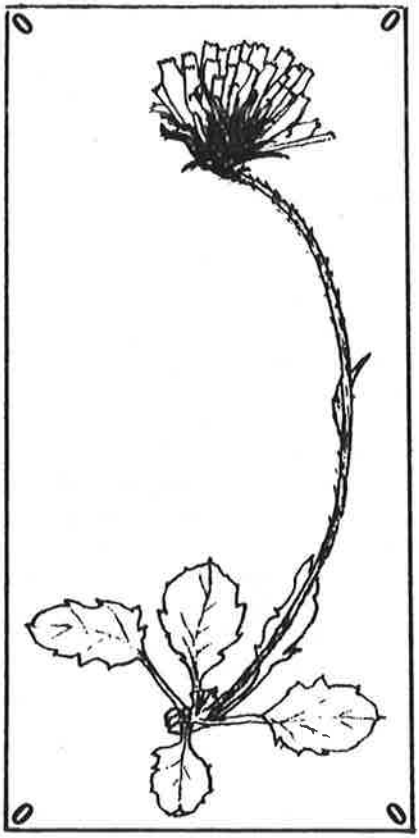
He was happy in all he did, happy in his family life and happiest of all, perhaps, quartering a moor in search of some tiny plant, common or rare - a true countryman and a lover of Scotland. In thinking of this shy and gentle man, one poet's phrase comes constantly to mind, and with it we take our leave of him for a little while:-

Tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new.

[Readers will recall that Kist 2 and 22 were honoured to carry articles by A.G.K. on Knapdale plants and Kist 37 had his review of a book on Piping.]

KENNETH'S HAWKWEED

This drawing of the small Hawkweed which is to be named in honour of the late Mr Kenneth was specially drawn for Kist by Miss Joanna Gordon, who has most kindly supplied the textual details which form the basis of this note.



The drawing was done from the specimens of this plant which were collected by Mr D.J.Tennant in 1986 and deposited in the Herbarium of Cambridge University Botany Department. A difficulty has occurred in connection with this note in Kist, to be published in Spring 1990, as apparently protocol requires that the name of any new plant be not published until it has appeared officially in Watsonia, and this will not occur until after the present issue of Kist appears. However Miss Gordon has kindly interceded on our behalf and it will be in order provided the actual Latin name remains un-quoted.

Miss Gordon remarks in a letter "It is not a showy plant!" The drawing shows it 'life-size'.

The technical description of this unassuming plant is:- Leaves medium green, slightly glossy, uniformly hairy on upper surface. Petioles dense, long-hairy. Ligules deepish golden-yellow with few or no hairs on the backs but several very short ones on the apex. Involucral bracts with some obvious very short glandular hairs. Styles discoloured.

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From F.S.Mackenna

Very soon after coming to Tarbert in July 1957, the ongoing task of transforming my grounds into a specialised rhododendron garden commenced, and one of my earliest contacts in connection with this project was Mr Kenneth of Stronachullin. At this distance of time I no longer recall how the introduction was effected, but however it took place I immediately began to experience Archie Kenneth's unbounded kindness and generosity. I see from my Catalogue that by the following February - say six months or less after first meeting him, I had thirty-seven important rhododendrons from Stronachullin, the number steadily increasing until now there are fifty-seven different species from that source as well as a number of Archie's special hybrids. Nor are they by any means run-of-the-mill types, for a large proportion are highly desirable and actually excessively rare - "never seen this before", "not in the Edinburgh collection" and similar comments from visiting experts are frequent. Gardeners are notoriously generous but even amongst that fraternity Archie was remarkable. Not only were the actual benefactions noteworthy, there was the personality of the donor - the supreme kindness and unbounded goodwill, the genuineness of interest - all combined to produce a unique impact which can never fade from memory. The multitude of friends who are left behind have each their own special reasons for their affection, but in my case there is the added happy circumstance of having these beautiful and rare plants and their progeny as tangible evidence of a very special and lamented friend.

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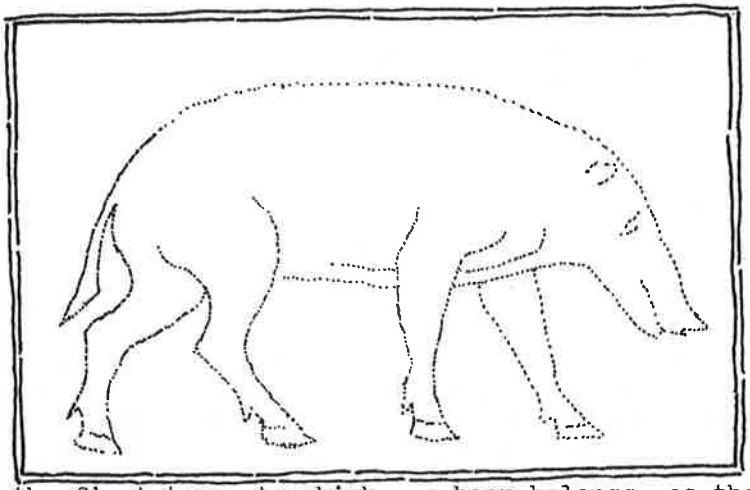
Ancestors Sought; BLUE. Mr Don Blue, 11a Fairlight St. Mosman Park 6012, Western Australia, seeks help in tracing ancestors. Information please direct to enquirer. Gt-grandfather John (son of ?John, dead by 1861) born Kilberry Parish 1847-8. Moved to Glasgow and apprenticed ironfounder. 1861 Census gives John Blue (14) in Glasgow with Janet McCallum (?mother, reverted to maiden name as widow) also b. Kilberry Parish. To S. Australia in 1864.

The DUNADD BOAR: An ARTISTIC EVALUATION

F S Mackenna

The boar carved on rock near the summit of Dunadd has received a great deal of expert attention since its first publication in 1905 (PSAS XXXIX) but relatively little consideration has been given to its purely artistic content and significance, particularly in relation to other petroglyphs with which it invites comparison.

Incised representations of animals are much more numerous in north-eastern Scotland, where we find the Burghhead bulls, another boar near Inverness and curious elephant-like creatures. Yet another class comprises interlaced work and religious subjects. Many authorities re-



gard the first type, to which our boar belongs, as the oldest and in many respects the least derivative. The trained artist's eye is immediately drawn to the extreme simplicity of the representation. Not a single line or even a portion of one can be eliminated without destroying the impact and clarity of the message. There is no suggestion of mindless imitation of earlier work and no doubt that it stemmed from a prolonged period of training. Not otherwise could such superb avoidance of all unessentials be attained. The carver knew exactly how to achieve the effect he desired, and his medium precluded any indecision or fumbling. It has been suggested that the present-day absence of a tusk is due to a difficulty in representation which overtook the artist

Such an idea is utter nonsense. Showing a tusk would cause no trouble to such an accomplished draughtsman.

Coming now to particularities we turn to the way in which the limb shapes, in relation to their position against the body, are attained. In many of the examples cited, such as the bulls and the Inverness boar, we have the striking convention of avoiding the abrupt ending of a line; this was secured by making a terminating line curve round, which gives a distinctive and delightful effect of lively movement. Our Dunadd boar lacks this embellishment but is not thereby rendered in any way ineffective as regards its message. The curve-ended lines can only have been the result of long years of training, just also as must be the duplication of line seen in parts of the Dunadd carving - which greatly add to the effect of weight and purposeful strength it was intended to convey. They skilfully emphasise the distinction between the limbs and the rest of the body.

It is widely realised in the practice of art that an over-emphasis on conventionalism is attained at the expense of naturalism, but this accusation cannot be made against our Dunadd artist. His boar shows a familiar animal in a characteristic attitude. Only prolonged and perceptive study could produce this sureness of purpose and technique, amounting to sheer virtuosity. In most instances the animals are combined with representations of inanimate objects - circles, lines, 'spectacle ornament', mirrors, combs etc. It is fashionable to refer to these adjuncts as 'symbols', but doubts arise regarding such a classification, for it seems very probable that they were merely conventionalised pictures of familiar every-day objects devoid of any occult connotation.

Surely when next we see our Dunadd boar or any other carvings in his convention we should give a moment's thought to appreciating the sheer brilliance and artistry which the carver must have possessed and to the long period of training and acute observation which made this, our legacy from him, possible. You are looking at a masterpiece, the work of a consummate artist.

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