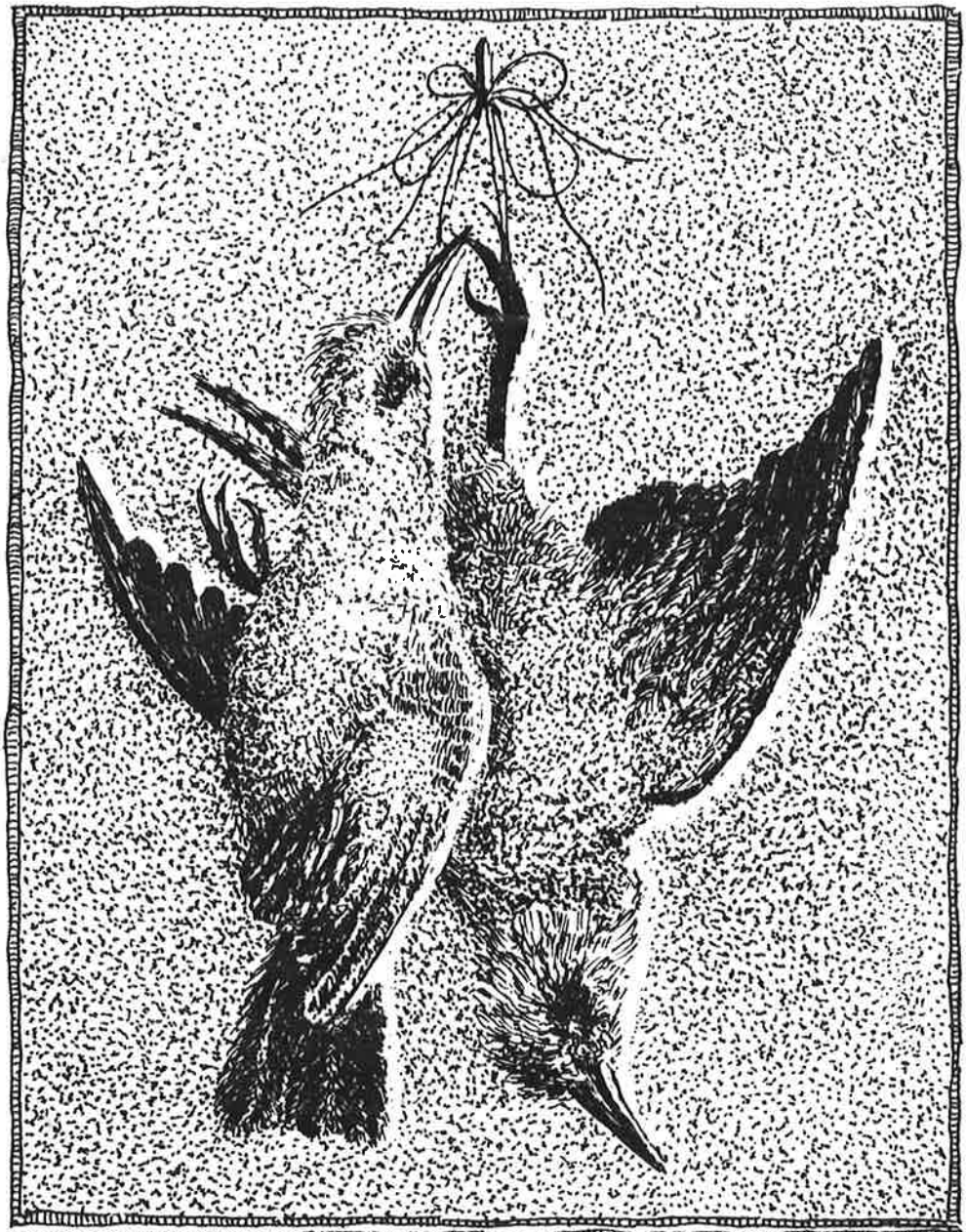

The KIST·41

THE KIST

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

President: Mrs Anne M. Kahane, MA, FSAScot.

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(This issue compiled by F.S.Mackenna)
Editor: Mrs A.O.M.Clark, MA.Glas., BA.Cantab., FSAScot.

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Hon. Secretary for Membership and Publications
Mr E.S.Clark, MA, FSAScot. Northlea, Tarbert. (Tel. 820793)

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The Society's year runs from 1st September to 31st August Subscriptions (including 2 issues of Kist) £3 (£4.50 for a couple). Cheques payable to N.H.A.S.M.A.

The Society was greatly shocked by the sudden death of its President, Dr McNab, at the end of September 1990, but as the succession has to be maintained the responsible office has been felicitously accepted by Mrs Kahane, whom we welcome most heartily. Another change announced at the AGM was in the office of Editor of Kist, now in the highly appropriate hands of Mrs Clark. F.S.M.

Dr D.L.McNab

Our Society has suffered a grievous blow in the sudden loss of our President after only a year in office. Lamont McNab was among those who met in October 1954 to discuss the possibility of forming an Archaeological Society, and he remained an enthusiastic member for the next 36 years. He had much to do with the earliest moves to preserve the Auchindrain buildings, now a renowned Museum of Farming - a connection renewed when he became one of our representatives on its Board of Trustees. Others have justly praised his professional career as a doctor of medicine, his service as an Elder and Lay Reader of the Church of Scotland, his work with the Red Cross, the Mid-Argyll Drama Festival, and many other activities; we shall remember him best as a tall figure striding up to some hill-fort with his children at his side, or as one who could be relied upon to step into the breach at a winter meeting and take the chair when others were stormbound. It is too late now to thank him as he should have been thanked for all he did on our behalf; Instead we can only offer our deepest sympathy to Helen and John in their loss of such a father. M.C.

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LIMEKILNS in MID-ARGYLL

Anne M. Kahane

The burning of lime-bearing rock to obtain lime in usable form for building (i.e. the binding agent in mortar) has been done since at least Roman times, and for agricultural purposes, according to Alexander Fenton, practised, at least in eastern Scotland, since the early 1600s "where lime and coal to burn it were readily available". Burning originally seems to have been done by the bonfire system, that is lumps of lime-bearing rock mixed or covered with fuel burnt more or less completely in clumps in the fields. This was followed by the more efficient burning in a purpose-built structure or kiln. Where coal was not

readily or so plentifully available, as in our area, peat was used as fuel, sometimes mixed with coal, as indicated in the 1797 document referred to below.

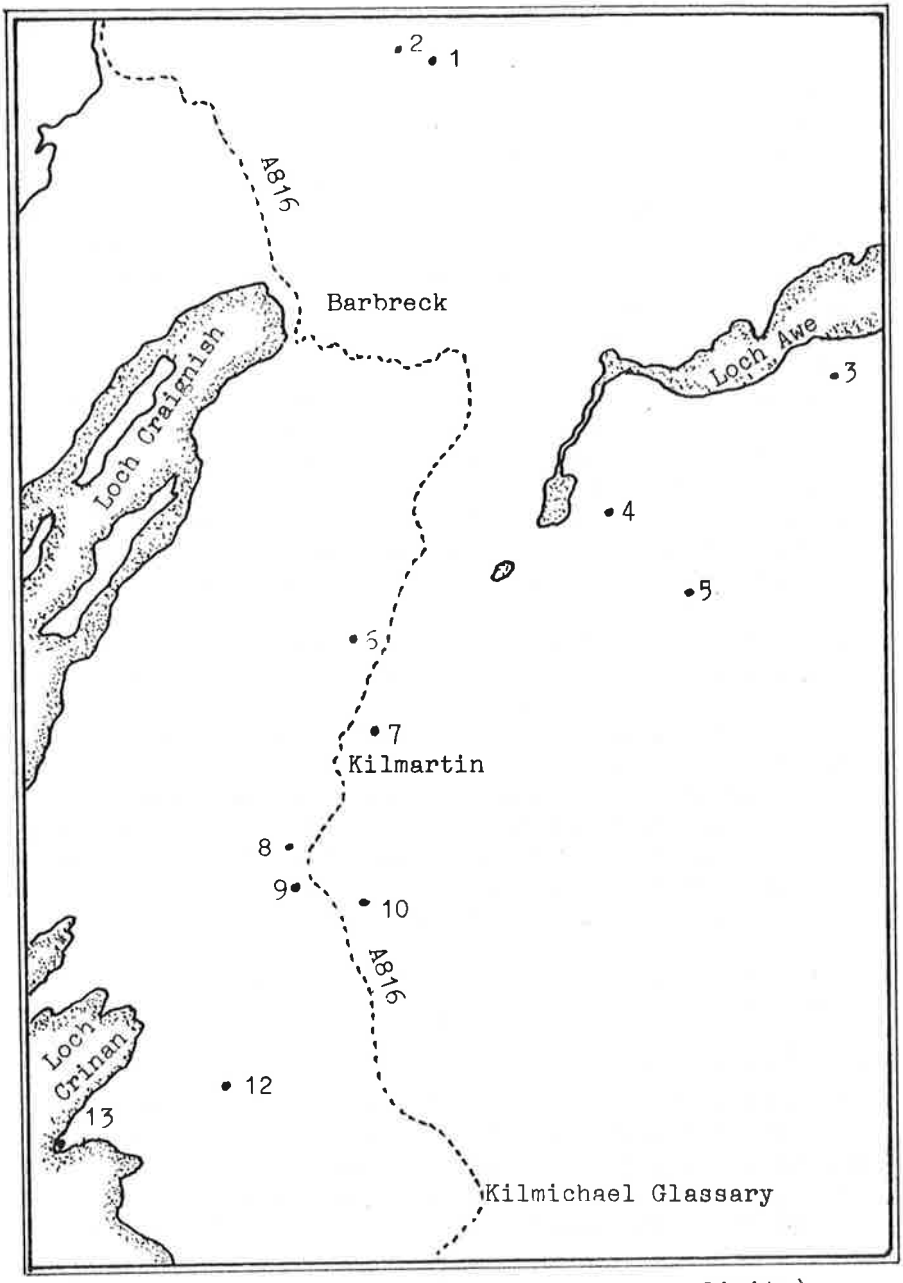
References in documents to lime burning in what might be termed greater Mid Argyll, include a 'lime maker' called Duncan MacBrayne living in Inveraray in 1725, well before work started on the replacement of the castle in mid century and the construction of the New Town thereafter. In Inveraray and the Dukes of Argyll Lindsay and Cosh refer to William Douglas being contracted to supply stone and lime for the building from St. Catherines, and that he had invested 20 guineas in building a drawkiln near the Fisherfield and 4 guineas in a lime kiln at Carlundon. From the Poltalloch papers there is a record of an agreement in 1771 between Alexander Campbell of Raslie and Neil Campbell of Duntroon allowing Neil to quarry limestone on Island Macaskin for building works at Crinan and elsewhere. Later records include a 1798 mention of the limestone on Island Macaskin being used for the canal and on Crinan Moss; in 1799 coal for burning lime for the buildings going up at (Old) Poltalloch; and a proposal for burning lime at Culachnuic in 1801. Among the records held by Murdo MacDonald, the A and B District Archivist, is a proposal for burning lime "for Neil Malcolm Esq of Poltalloch for the improvements on Duntroon Estate" dated March 6th 1797. The proposal is by a Mr John Murray who was then burning lime for Commissary Campbell on Danna. After setting out the conditions and remuneration (which included the interesting provision "...when there is no lime wanted, to work at any mason work that is required about the farm") he goes on that he is of the opinion that the lime burnt with a mixture of peats and coals of one third coals and the other two thirds peats could be done for 7d per boll or under.

Although the phrase in the last document "improvements on the Duntroon Estate" is ambiguous, during the 19th century lime was apparently used more and more for agricultural improvement as well as for building purposes. It was presumably for such amelioration, to both pasture and arable land, that the many limekilns in Mid Argyll were built. Their construction required a deep, open-topped, brick-lined circular furnace, tapering at the bottom to a shaft

or hole from which the resulting lime could be raked at ground level. To facilitate access and loading from the top they were not free standing, but built against a steep slope. There is always a track for carts leading to the loading platform on top and an arched recess at ground level giving access to the aperture from which the lime was extracted. The details of this recess varied from kiln to kiln, being single, double, or even triple-arched, as at Carlonan on the Inveraray estate, and that at Turnault and Kilmartin, having flat lintels, but always giving shelter from rain so that the lime could be kept dry. In most cases there is only one outlet, on the front (downhill) side, but at Kilmory there are three arched outlets, on the W, N and S sides of the projecting structure. (On Holy Island off the Northumberland coast, where there is a battery of six furnaces - now in the care of the National Trust - they all have two or three-arched outlets). Overall measurements vary a bit, but the top loading platform can be 4.2m wide at the back, narrowing to 3.5m from the hillside, and being from 2.2 to 4.4m above present ground level at the front. The open tops of the furnaces are now mostly much deformed by weathering, but seem to be approximately 2m in diameter. Loading was done in alternate layers of fuel and rock, and once lit it could take from two to three weeks to burn through. The resulting quicklime could then be slaked with water - there is often a burn near at hand. The difference in the price of the raw and the treated lime is illustrated by the prices quoted in a Contract of c1802 between Neil Malcolm of Poltalloch and Donald MacLachlan, namely "the rate of seven pence for the slocked and fourteen pence for the unslocked bolls of lime".

I suppose that the convenience of commercially produced agricultural lime in brown paper bags gradually won over the trouble of making on the spot, and that most of the kilns went out of use early this century; but Mr MacNicol at Turnault Farm tells me that he remembers lime being made in that kiln during the 1939-45 war, when he was a wee boy, and that the children played in the tiny watercourse that came down the slope nearby, and which was used for slaking.

The distribution of the kilns is very directly related to the outcropping of the heavily metamorphosed limestone in our area. As the originally horizontal beds of the



(Kilns 11,14,15 & 16 lie beyond the map's limits)

sedimentary rocks are now lying at nearly 90°, the formerly thin layers extending over a wider area now show as much narrower bands on the surface separated by bands of epidiorites and horneblende-schists or quartzites and phyllites, running roughly NE-SW in the characteristic trend of our rock outcrops and hence topography.

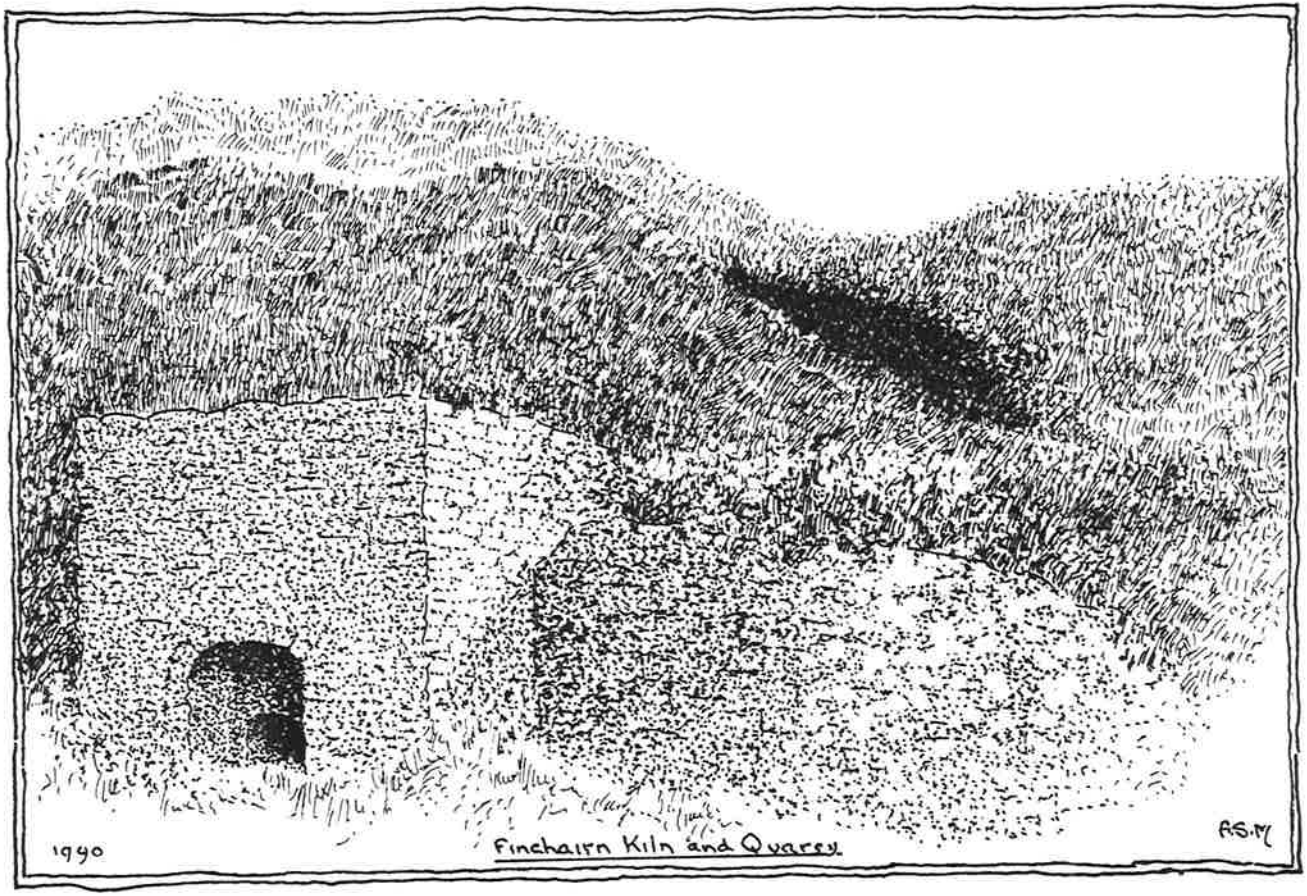
The following list of the kilns I have seen so far in Mid Argyll can only be a beginning - there must be others. I would be glad of any information about or clues to finding them, and in the meantime give my thanks to all those who have joined in the search.

1. TURNAULT. NM 842 085

This kiln is built against a steeply rising hill at the edge of the extensive grassy terrace of the upper Barbreck River, about a kilometer N of Turnault Farm. A narrow strip of lime-bearing rock is exposed over about half a kilometer southwards to the kiln, ending in a small quarry immediately above it. The loading platform measures c 4.5m wide and projects c 3.4m out from the hillside. At the front (S) the kiln is c 2.2m high. The drawhole recess is 1.1m wide at the front and 1.47m high, topped by a flat lintel rather than an arch. The drawhole itself is now broken. The open top of the furnace seems to have been c 2m in diameter. A small stream runs close by on the E side. The farmer, Mr MacNicol, just remembers lime being burnt towards the end of the 1939-45 war, and that as children they played in the water diverted from the stream for slaking the lime. The kiln was then fired by coal which came into Loch Craignish by 'puffer'.

2. KILBRIDE, Turnault. NM 836 082

This kiln is on the N-facing slope of a small ridge a short distance S of Kilbride House. The top platform is rectangular rather than square, to accommodate two furnaces, but with two large trees growing out of a lot of rubbish the form of the furnace is obscured. Instead of arched recesses on the long front face of the kiln there are two vertical slits, each c 30-40cm wide running back into the furnace area. Some careful clearance would be necessary before further measurements and study could be made. The 1974 edition of the 1:10,000 map marks 'Lime Kiln (disused)' without identifying the exact position.


1990
Finchairn Kiln and Quarry
R.S.M

3 FINCHAIRN. NM 898 037

A small kiln facing NW over the southern end of Loch Awe with its own quarry immediately above it to the E. The double-arched drawhole recess is close to the old track connecting Finchairn and Kilneuair. The loading platform is extended to the S by made-up ground which is supported by a substantial dry-stone wall. There is a tiny stream close to the S of this. The track to the quarry and loading platform is from the N.

4 GOCUMGO. NM 868 019

This kiln lies between the Kilmichael Glen road and the Stroneskar burn, just W of the supposed site of fatally named Gocumgo where Alastair MacColla's luck changed. The loading platform is to the N of, and directly accessible from, the road. Cart access to the arched drawhole recess is down a sloping track from the W to a level area at the front which has a semi-circular extension built out towards the burn.

5 GLASVAAR. NM 884 015

This kiln lies to the W of the track which runs N from Glasvaar Farm buildings.

6 UPPER LARGIE. NM 836 003

Situated on almost level ground at the N end of the narrow wood between Upper Largie Farmhouse and Carnasserie this very low kiln has a large loading platform measuring c 4.5m across the front and projecting c 6.5m from the approach track, which is on made-up ground held up by a curving wall c 1m high, coming in from the W. Although the furnace is very broken the SE corner of the drawhole recess is still complete, measuring 1.1m in height to the level of the loading platform. It is not clear how this recess was bridged; the furnace must have been quite shallow.

7 KILMARTIN. NR 844 994

Situated on the E side of a nameless burn which drains the small glen just E of Kilmartin, this tall kiln is built against quite a long exposure of lime-bearing rock. The track running up the W side of the burn crosses just N of the kiln and cuts back sharply to climb up to the loading platform, which is c 4.3m wide against the hillside and decreases to c 3.5m across the W-facing front. The platform projects outwards for c 5.45m. The height at the

front varies from 3.4m at the S to 4.4m at the NW corner owing to the tumbled character of the ground. The draw-hole recess is c 1.5m deep, 1.5m high and c 1.9m across the front, with a flat lintel.

8 NETHER LARGIE. NR 828 981

Situated W of Nether Largie Farmhouse this kiln is built against the steep western edge of the valley. The approach track to the roughly square loading platform climbs the slope from the N of the kiln and continues as a footpath to Slockavullin. There is a plain arch to the draw-hole, which faces E.

9 RI CRUIN. NR 825 971

All visible remains of this kiln, which apparently was built in the SW quadrant of the cairn, were removed when the cairn was restored. Considering the flatness of the ground this was presumably a fairly low structure, similar to that at Upper Largie (no.6) with an approach to the loading platform from made-up ground.

10 BALUACHRAIG. NR 834 969

The setting for this kiln, which appears on the old 6" maps, between the edge of the wood and the steep slope to the S is only just recognisable, the structure having been removed and the place now used as a stance for a caravan and the dumping of topsoil. Bands of lime-bearing rock outcrop intermittently all along this stretch of hillside.

11 MINARD. NM 968 958

This large kiln on the Knockbuie estate is built against the steep hillside just W of Braigh Varr, and immediately below a small outcrop of lime-bearing rock in which a bore hole for blasting is still visible. The structure is about 6m high and nearly 10m wide across the top (loading) platform, where the furnace opening is c 2m in diameter and the neat brick lining is still in good condition. At the front there is a narrow curved stone drip ledge over the 2.2m wide outer arch, enclosing a space 2.3m deep inside which there is a shorter and narrower brick arch over the fire place which has now-rusty grate bars. Col. Fane Gladwin says that the lime not needed on the estate was loaded on puffers and exported. The commercial venture was particularly active from about 1900 till 1907. He was

told by Mr Sam Turner that in 1904 a horse (which presumably had drawn a cart up to the loading platform) fell into the (unlit!) furnace and could not be got out from the top, so, watched by most of the local inhabitants, including the boy Sam, part of the front of the kiln, including the grate bars were removed in order to release it. It says a lot for the value of the horse, as well as for the stability of the structure, that this was undertaken successfully. This is the only kiln I have come across so far which has a watchman's shelter attached to it. This is stone-built, roughly 3.6m square, projecting E-wards (downhill, towards the approach track from the lochside) from the southern part of the facade. There is a chimney in the SW corner, with a window on the E wall and the door on the N side, close to the kiln arch.

12 MEALL COTTAGE/FASGADH. NR 818 956

The exact position of this kiln, referred to in early Poltalloch records, is not quite certain, but the whole hill (meall means 'lump, applied to a round hill') is an isolated outcrop of lime-bearibg rock, and there is a quarry in the SE corner.

13 CRINAN FERRY. NR 800 938

Situated against a gentle slope and field dyke NE of the track up to Wintertown above Crinan Ferry this kiln is very tumbled down and overgrown with bracken. It is about 5m wide and projects 3.75m from the hillside at the back. The loading platform could easily be reached across higher ground to the N, though this now has the remains of a drystone dyke on it. The space in front of the drawhole is recognisable, but it is impossible to say whether it was arched or flat lintelled. The furnace may always have been rather low (cf. Upper Largie, no 6) as the surviving height at the front is only 1.15m, but it could well have been about 2m originally.

14 KILMORY CASTLE. NR 868 869

This kiln is now in a dense plantation a short way N of Kilmory Castle. It faces roughly NE, and is built against a steep bank from which it projects far enough to have arched drawhole recesses on the NW, NE and SE sides. Unfortunately the furnace hole is too full of earth and branches to be able to see the detail of the design. The cart approach would have been easy over level ground from the SW.

15 KILMICHAEL INVERLUSSA. NR 773 857

Placed at the SW end of an outcrop of lime-bearing rock this kiln lies about 400m S of the church of Kilmichael Inverlussa, just E of a field track which continues towards Ashfield, and may in fact be the earlier line of the public road. The approach to the loading platform is from the S; the arched drawhole recess is to the N.

16 DANNA. NR 693 797

Situated next to the house behind the jetty at the NW corner of Danna, this is a double kiln with a rectangular loading platform (now fenced off for safety) containing two round furnace shafts, and two corresponding arched drawhole recesses at ground level at the back of the quay. The approach track to the loading platform is along the rocky ridge from the S. Most of the NW third of the Danna peninsula is composed of lime-bearing rock. With convenient proximity to the sea for delivery of coal for burning and the export of prepared lime this was probably much more of a commercial undertaking than the lime burning for local use which most of the other kilns seem likely to represent.

'BILL BLOGGS + HIS MARK'

Many people are familiar, either actually or as a joke, with this formula adopted by anyone unable to write, when faced with the need to sign something, but it is doubtful if the implications of the 'mark' are at all widely realised. One of the earliest authentic examples of the use is by Edgar, in a Charter to Crowland Abbey in A.D. 966 where we find "Ego Edgarus ..... istud chirographium cum signo Sanctae Crucis confirmavi." The sign of the Cross on a deed was apparently used as a pledge rendering a contract binding, even in cases where the signatory could write his own name. In a later charter William 1 and fourteen of his nobles, when actually signing, each drew a cross in the middle of his name. Eventually the addition of a cross by a would-be signatory to the clerk's rendering of the name came to be regarded as a legal signing. Sometimes the clerk would use the phrase "with my hand led at the pen", and probably in some instances the 'leading' had to extend even to the production of the cross. So 'Bill Bloggs' is in the line of an ancient and sanctified tradition.

MAINLY for NEWER MEMBERS

In 1964 a publishing event occurred which was of the highest possible importance to archaeologists throughout Britain, and especially to the Scottish element in that category of learned persons, and beyond all assessment to those connected with our particular area. This was the appearance of Vol.XCV of the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, for it contained as its main contribution a paper by Miss Campbell of Kilberry and Miss Sandeman, Mid Argyll: an Archaeological Survey, which ran to 125 pages. In the intervening 26 years this monumental work has assumed ever-increasing importance, not only by reason of its content as such, but from the melancholy fact that many of the sites recorded have been destroyed by the wave of forestry which is engulfing the country or have been rendered impossible to visit. All this emphasises the importance of such a highly detailed archaeological field-survey to anyone interested in that branch of learning. For those of our readers who may not readily have access to this volume of the Proceedings it may be of use to give some account of the aims pursued by the two authors and also to indicate something of the scope of the paper, and what it involved in the way of physical endurance when locating and recording the sites, in addition to the weary hours of concentration required to assemble and correlate the enormous mass of field notes. Right from the beginning Miss Sandeman has been utterly resolute in maintaining a low profile, and it is perhaps only someone who is persona grata with the two ladies who can fully appreciate her true part in the end result.

Some idea of the genesis and development of the Survey comes from reading the Introduction in the Proceedings paper. We are told that it all began in 1954, with the needs and aims of our newly-formed Natural History and Antiquarian Society of Mid Argyll in view. A priority was to establish the boundaries of the projected area of investigation; they were finalised as the junction of Kintyre and Knapdale to the south, and in the north by a line from the coast south of Loch Melfort and across to the southern end of Loch Awe, then from Braevallich on that loch round the head of Glen Aray and Glen Shira to Loch Fyne just west of Dunderave Castle, using the physical watersheds as lines of demarcation. Compiling a list of

sites was in itself a mammoth task, involving Ordnance maps, the List of Scheduled and Guardianship Monuments, the Argyll C.C. 1915 list of Ancient Monuments, published accounts, place names, local reports and air photographs. Sites were then visited, but necessarily in no particular geographical order, only as opportunity served. The National Grid reference was worked out in each case and the relevant details and measurements noted. A point which is of use to non-Gaelic readers is the translation of all place-names. Every one of the 700-plus entries follows a settled scheme of presentation; first the list number; name of site; grid reference; published references; description; remarks. An example of the thoroughness which prevails under 'Description' is seen in connection with Dun Chonnallaich; "Conspicuous crag rising steeply from marsh on S: landslides on S face have probably carried away walling and perhaps an access route. Access now on N, or NE where about 20ft. below the top foot-holds are cut in the rock. Several outer-works on N, main citadel has walls standing up to 6ft.,especially on E, of markedly good construction, thick and thin courses. Difficult to plan; PSAS gives two internal structures of 24ft and 20ft dia., citadel seems oval to us. Just W. of citadel a ring of small inward-pointing stones, 3ft. dia., over a rubble-filled hollow 1ft 6ins deep, with two large ?cover-slabs nearby, suggests a storage pit. A collection of round pebbles found here suggests sling-stones. A rotary quern, found in fallen wall on N. has been placed by the marker cairn on summit. Site visible from L.Awe to L. Sween. Outlook includes L.Awe and Colonsay (through the Gulf)."

It would be impossible to suggest any form of local antiquity which has been overlooked. In actual performance some 700 entries were noted, and the authors made it clear that even such a large number was incomplete, a claim which has been borne out in the intervening years as reports of additional 'finds' come in.

We take great pride from the fact that this monument to scholarship and sheer physical stamina was the achievement of our most distinguished Society members, and indeed our same Society must be envied by all similarly orientated groups for being able to boast two such illustrious personages in our membership.

VISITING by SEA 180 YEARS AGO

Journals from past days are a source of interest, even when only a small proportion of their contents deals with locations and events which fall within our area, and so it is with the one begun by Mrs Fremantle at the end of the 18th century. She was Betsey, second-eldest of the five daughters of a Richard Wynne, who lived all his life on the Continent. One of her sisters was the Harriet Hamilton whose portrait by Raeburn is now in the National Portrait Gallery and remarkable for the sitter's impossibly elongated appearance. Another sister, Eugenia, married Lord Robert Campbell, brother of the Duke of Argyll, who lived at Skipness.

In 1811 Betsey went on a series of visits to relatives and friends in Scotland, and it is with this expedition that we in our area are particularly interested.

"I was quite enchanted with the Drive from Paisley to Greenock, the road being by the side of the river Clyde the whole way, the view of Dumbarton Castle and of Ben Lomond in the distance is magnificent, the evening lovely and on our arrival at Park'd Inn, we determined to embark for Skipniss after supper if the wind is fair. We walked a little about Greenock, and along the quay, there are now few vessels here, but I was much struck and pleased with the appearance of the place .... We went aboard the Caledonia, one of the Campbelltown packets which has been waiting for us since Thursday, it was a beautiful moonlight night and we sailed at twelve o'clock, with a nice little breeze. I regretted its being night as I could see but little of the coast, I just perceived Bute, and ere we got to the Mouth of the Clyde, it began to be daylight, the wind freshened and we got on very rapidly between the islands of Arran and Bute towards the coast of Cantire. At a little after four we reached Skipniss point and Robert's barge [her brother-in-law] came off for us - it was just beginning to blow very hard, the motion of the vessel had made most of the women passengers dreadfully ill, and I was very chilly and cold, having been on deck all night, we were therefore not a little pleased when we got into the boat, which we found some difficulty in doing, the sea being very high upon this

shore, but we landed safe and sound."

A week later, having crossed to Bute on a visit to her sister Harriet Hamilton, who lived in Kames Castle, she returned to Skipness.

"We waited all day and were looking out for the Caledonia. This vessel had been appointed to call for us this morning, but only made her appearance in Ettric Bay this evening and it was nine o'clock ere we got on board. It was blowing a strong Breeze, which increased to a Storm by the time we approached Skipniss point and as it would have been impossible to land in the Bay, we were obliged to get into one of the herring boats, which we luckily met, and after much difficulty and alarm, it put us on shore on the rocks near Cullandroch. [probably at a small shingly rock-bound inlet called Port a'chruidh about a mile north of Skipness] Our difficulties now increased as it was pitch dark and no one could find their way to the Cottages .... at last after scrambling among the rocks and slipping and falling, we found a Cottage, and call'd up a man and his wife, who soon made up their fire jumped out of bed and dress'd before us with no mauvaise hont or ceremony, gave us some milk .... we arrived at Skipniss at two in the morning."

Later, again from Bute, Betsey set out for Inveraray.

"We hired one of the Rothsay packets to take us to Inveraray, and order'd it round to Ettric Bay where we embarked this morning at nine o'clock .... it was blowing rather hard when we embarked but the moment we entered Loch Fine the breeze slackened and before evening it fell a perfect calm .... At daylight we were in the finest part of Loch Fine and the sun rising behind the high mountains which closed the horizon, threw a variety of light and shade over the country around us, and nothing could be more beautiful than this coup d'oeil was. We went on shore for milk and butter, bought fresh herrings for our breakfast, and as we approached Inveraray, we began our toilette which refreshed us much after the fatigue of having sat up all night. At one o'clock we anchored just opposite Inveraray Castle."

...oooOooo...

TWO LOCH AWE SITES

Mary McGrigor

INISHAIL: THE PILGRIMS' ISLAND

Geologists maintain that before the last Ice Age the island of Inishail (the Holy or Kneeling Island) was the highest point of a ridge of land which terminated the north eastern end of Loch Awe. Erosion from melting ice left only a group of islands standing above the water.

Inishail rises about 650m S.W. of neighbouring Fraoch Eilean (the Heather Isle). Saint Columba, who, according to his biographer Adamnan, lived in Scotland from A.D. 563-597, knew Inishail.

The island is believed to have been the site of a religious settlement from about the 9th century. A cross-decorated slab of great antiquity, apparently dating from that period, stands within the ruins of the former parish church which, with its graveyard is at the western end of the island.

Traditionally the first religious settlers were nuns, remarkable for the sanctity of their lives and the purity of their manners.(1) The legend that they planted daffodils which still flower each year is unproven, but the hallowed and peaceful atmosphere of the island does seem imbued with the presence of these gentle women.

Following the death of Somerled in 1164 the district of Lorn was inherited by Dougall, his eldest son, ancestor of the MacDougall lords of Lorn. By the middle of the 13th century, MacNachtans, as vassals of the MacDougalls, held both Inishail and Fraoch Eilean. In 1257 Ath, son of MacNachtan granted the tiends of "the church of St. Findoca of Inchealt" to the Augustinian canons of Inchaffray Abbey. (2) The monks may have belonged to the Cistercian Order - a brotherhood devoted to agriculture - but Lord Archibald Campbell maintained that this theory rested on their wearing habits woven from undyed local wool. Evidence of their occupation remains in the outlines of fish ponds traceable amongst deep moss.

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(1) First Statistical Account, 1771-79. p.110

(2) Charters of the Abbots of Inchaffray. Scot.Hist. Soc. 1908. p.42

The monks were attached to a monastery, destroyed during the Reformation, reputedly sited on the south shore of Loch Awe, probably on the island of Inistrynich. They apparently kept a hostelry, both for travellers crossing the loch and for the many pilgrims, ferried from places on the shore. Again according to Lord Archibald Campbell the word Inishail is a corruption of the Gaelic Innis-sleuchdadh (the Kneeling Island), for here pilgrims did penance (1)

The discovery by members of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, of several pieces of white sandstone, one of them a filleted roll moulding of 13th century appearance, by the doorway of the ruins, point to a stone-built church of that time. But other parts of the ruin, including the doorway itself, suggest that a later church replaced it in late mediaeval times. By 1400, according to Fordun, the chapel of St. Findoc was the church of the parish of Inishail.(2)

Burials must have taken place on Inishail from before recorded time. Islands were revered by people who believed that evil spirits could not cross water and also because wolves and other predators likely to dig up graves could be kept at bay.

At least six of the stones which lie horizontally within the ruined church and the graveyard - listed by the Royal Commissioners - date from the 14th and 15th centuries. The carving on them is known to be the work of masons of the Loch Awe School of sculpture, based probably at Inistrynich. Some depict men in armour, possibly Crusaders, while others show foliaceous designs of beauty and ingenuity. Chiefs of the MacNaughtons, MacArthurs and Campbells are buried there. A parallel-sided slab, probably an altar frontal, is attributed to the Campbells of Inverawe. On it a central cross is flanked by six figures. One holds a chalice and another a cup to catch blood dripping from the wounds, while beside them are men wearing plate armour of the 16th century. Today, in this age of high technology, one marvels at the skill of these early artisans who, with the crude tools of their time, left

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(1) Lord Archibald Campbell Records of Argyll p.75
(2) Fordun Scotichronicon Lib.11, cap.6

monuments of such intrinsic craftsmanship.

During the early 14th century, following King Robert the Bruce's defeat of the MacDougalls of Lorn, the island of Inishail passed into the hands of MacArthurs, descended from Sir Arthur Campbell, a cousin of Sir Neil, Bruce's great supporter in Argyll. But in 1426 MacArthur of Loch Awe, involved in a quarrel over ownership of land, was beheaded by James 1 of Scotland at the parliament in Inverness. His descendants, remaining on Inishail, were vassals of the Earls of Argyll.

In 1529 Archibald Earl of Argyll granted Duncan MacKaus the lands of Barindryane (20 shilling land) on condition that he and his heirs should maintain the chapel and hold mass there every week for the souls of King James V and his predecessors and successors and likewise of the Earl of Argyll's parents etc.(1) Mary Queen of Scots then confirmed the charter when visiting inveraray in 1556.

Duncan MacKaus must have died soon afterwards. A tombstone, very worn, with the initials D.M.A. in the top right hand corner, also bears a Latin inscription which translates as "Here lies Sir Duncan Maccaus, vicar of Inishail, who died in the year .... (the rest is indecipherable). Below is a niche crowned by dragons' heads containing a chalice and paten; the lower half of the stone shows a strip of three-strand plait flanked by plant scrolls with large leaves. The date is between 1545 and 1558.(2)

Very shortly after his death the island was brutally invaded. A charter of 1567 in the Archives of Inveraray Castle, records a pardon granted to the Campbells of Inveraawe for the "drowning of Clan Arthur". The location of this happening is given as somewhere on Loch Awe and the chance discovery by our son some years ago of a mediaeval sword blade lying under water buried in the sand off the south-west tip of the island, suggests that the MacArthurs perhaps trying to reach their boats, were driven to their deaths in the loch

It may be no more than coincidence that this feud between neighbours occurred at the time of the Reformation of 1559, but the fact that shortly afterwards, circa 1604, Archibald, 7th Earl of Argyll, as superior, appointed Sir

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(1) O.P.S. p.130
(2) Scottish National Memorials 21, fig.26

Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy as Forester of Inishail for the sum of 1,000 marks, may indicate disagreement between MacArthurs and Campbells. Sir Duncan (Black Duncan of the Cowl), while holding this office, introduced rabbits to the island, apparently the first in Argyll.

The monastery on the south shore of Loch Awe was destroyed during the Reformation and the Religious House on Inishail suppressed; the temporalities being granted to Hay, Abbot of Inchaffray, who had embraced the cause of the reformers.(1)

In 1667 Archibald 9th Earl of Argyll, his estates recently restored, was granted the patronage of Inishail by Charles 11 (2) The chapel of St. Findoc was then still the Parish Church, but in 1736, as roads improved and the congregation grew, it was moved - traditionally stone by stone - to a site near the road just west of Inistrynich.

The MacArthurs' ownership of Inishail at that time is proved by the sale of their estate of Tirevadich (like others in a district linked by water, on both sides of Loch Awe). Told that the island was omitted, the MacArthur concerned said sadly "Then let the tail go with the head". (3)

The estate was then bought by the Campbells of Monzie, relations of the Campbells of Inverawe, who seem to have coveted Inishail.

In the year 1803 Dorothy Wordsworth and her brother William, then touring the Highlands, described Inishail as "a flat green island like a sheep pasture, without trees and of a considerable size." A local man told them it was a rabbit warren, and added that a boatman who lived on the island in a hut would ferry them across if summoned. Hopefully they lit a fire on a hill somewhere near Cladich but the boatman failing to see the smoke the plan had to be abandoned.(4)

The island was farmed until well into the 19th century. The Duke of Argyll showed me the drawing of a mill there,

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(1) First Statistical Account p.336
(2) Argyll Inventory.
(3) Lord A.Campbell Records of Argyll p.77
(4) D.Wordsworth A Tour in Scotland in 1803. p.135

the wheel of which must have been turned by water released from an old fish pond. Members of the last family, called Sinclair, known to have kept cows on the island in 1820, are buried to the right of the iron gate as you enter into the churchyard.

In 1911 the 9th Duke of Argyll attempted unsuccessfully to introduce deer to the now-deserted island. He also planted some of it with trees. Since then it has been increasingly visited by people who, crossing the loch like pilgrims of old, are drawn by the indefinable attraction of this sacred and beautiful isle.

A 17th CENTURY MILL

The farm of Ardchonnel was at one time the perquisite of the Captain of the Earl of Argyll's castle of Innischonnel, which stands on its island close to the south shore of Loch Awe. The first mention of a water mill there appears in a Sasine of Argyll dated 28th August 1666. It records that the "new mill of Ardchonnel (lately built by Colin McLachlan, Captain of Innischonnel) on the east side of the loch, between Balloch burn (1) on the south, and the lands of CoulquhereLlan (2) (inclusive) on the north, given by Mr Archd. McCorquodale in Croachan as baillie to John McVicar fier of Brenchathie as attorney for said Colin McLachlan, and to Lachlan McLachlan (Colin's only lawful son) for himself, on a feu charter by Argyll to them in liferent a fee, signed at Inveraray 1 June 1666"(3).

The ruins of the mill, overhung by a rowan tree, can be seen as you travel westwards on the lochside road, the B840. They stand at the foot of the field known as the Barramhuilin (the Mill Slope) above the road just after it emerges from the now-well-grown trees of Ardchonnel

. . . . . .

(1) Abhainn a'bhealach (burn of the pass) or Braevallich burn.
(2) Now part of Balliemeanoch (middle farm).
(3) Argyll Sasines. Gen. Register 11, H.Campbell, Glasgow Univ. Library vol 1V, 3rd ser. P.421 1297 28/8/1666

Forest (Map ref. 985126 Loch Awe sheet). The wheel itself is gone but two large mill stones still lie in the grass. A map of 1806 shows another building, probably the miller's house, on a site closer to the road, where foundations remain.

The mill stands beside a trickle of a burn - at first glance one wonders how the wheel was turned - but evidence remains of an aqueduct, taken from Ardchonnel burn, almost half a mile away, which once fed the mill pond, now reduced to a bog. The water contained in the pond would gush out with enormous force when two round plugs were pulled from the retaining dam just above the mill.

Ownership of a mill was of great value to a landlord for whom dues paid in meal were an important source of revenue. All persons living within the 'sucken' of a mill (in this case the Balloch Burn to Coulquherellan) were legally compelled to take their grain to be ground there. The miller, entitled to a quota, thereby paid his own rent. Hand mills or querns, used for grinding meal at home, were either removed or destroyed. At a court held in 1641 on the nearby lands of the Campbells of Glenorchy, it was ordained that "all quarnes be brokine, and ilk tenant and cotter to goe with their grindable cornes to the milnes whereto they are thirled, under the pain of ten pounds."(1) The landlord's interests were then further protected by the purchase of corn from outside being prohibited except in times of emergency. The tenants' resentment against these rules is understandable, especially as clauses contained in most leases forced them not only to maintain and repair the mills, but to transport enormously heavy new mill stones when necessary.

The stones for Ardchonnel were made on the farm of Ardary, some eight miles to the west. The land is now forested but the ruins of the farm house are in a clearing above a single ash, which stands by the side of the road, three miles west of Braevallich, and approximately 1,000 yards before the cattle grid on the march of the Forestry Commission land (map ref. 98516, sheet 52). Mill stones made there were pushed across the ice when the narrows of Loch Awe were frozen in exceptionally hard winters.

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(1) In Famed Breadalbane W.A.Gillies p.257

The commercial value of a mill is proved by the rentals of the Argyll Estates. By 1749, when the castle was no longer garrisoned, the MacLachlans appear to have become tenants of Ardchonnel Farm. The house they built in 1706 (destroyed in the early 19th century) was adjacent to the farm house of today. The annual rent for the whole farm - agreed in Inveraray Sept. 12th 1749 - was £187.4.0, of which £160 was paid in silver with the rest in kind. But the rent for the "Miln of Ardchonnel" alone amounted to £85.14.8 - £13.6.8. in silver and the rest mostly in meal. The MacLachlans then bought the farm, the Valuation Roll of 1751 proving their ownership.

The mill was then a busy place, with grain being brought in by boat to the natural harbour below it, or else pulled on slipes or carried in panniers by sturdy ponies. But during the 19th century, when much arable ground was turned over to sheep and many people left the district, its use gradually declined.

The 1841 Census names the miller as Archibald Turner, a young man of thirty who occupied the mill house with his mother, wife, three children and a girl of ten, described as maid servant. But ten years later, in 1851, the fact that Turner, then with a fourth child and an indigent brother (receiving 2/6 weekly in poor relief) was termed 'mason' rather than 'miller', indicates that he had been forced to find other employment. By 1865, when the annual rent of the mill, amounting to £8 and paid to Malcolm of Poltalloch, Turner, now a widower and cared for by a daughter, was still in occupation. He is mentioned again in 1876 but died the next year. He was buried beside his wife on the island just off Portinnisherrich.

In 1886 the mill, let to a tenant, was valued at £12, but shortly after this it must have been closed, no further reference appearing.

Thanks are due to Mrs Ila Crawford, Mrs Sarah Macdonald, Alistair Campbell, Yr. of Airds, and Lieut.Col.J.W.Burnet for their great help with this paper.

...oooOooo...

BUT YESTERDAY

Marion Campbell

[Taken with permission from Miss Campbell's book Argyll: The Enduring Heartland.]

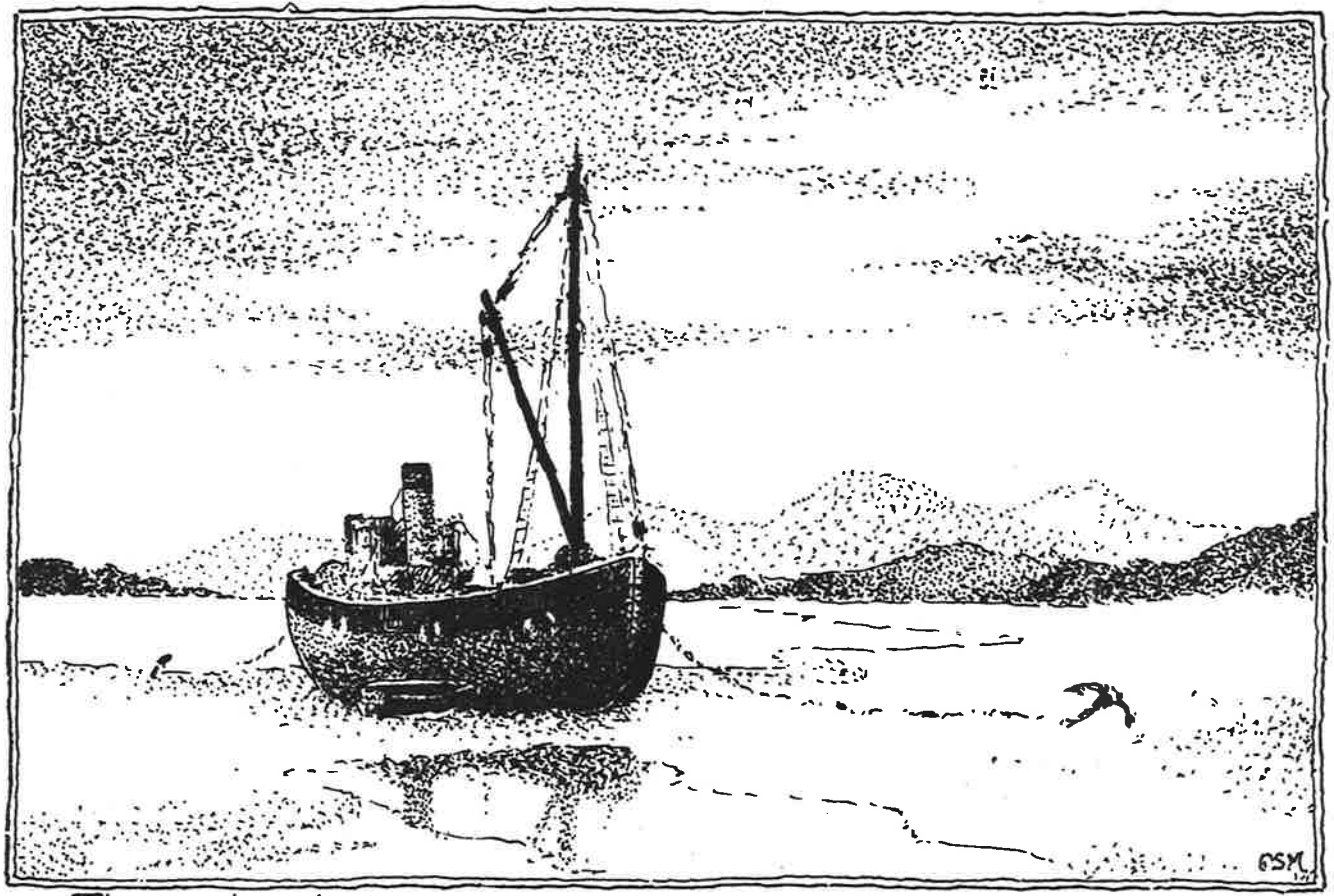
Yesterday was summer.
Waking early on a blue May morning, to a sound as thrilling as trumpets, a sound that stretches on, and on, and on; tumble out of bed and into clothes and run, run to the gate above the headland and there she is, a little smug black ship close inshore, wearing a white plume of steam at her red funnel. The coalboat has come.

She was a flat-bottomed coaster, designed to waddle ashore on sandy beaches; a puffer. Our shoreline is guarded by reefs, so she anchors offshore and waits. With her coming, everything is reoriented; the school closes, for the children cant be there - they are needed today. Whatever the farmers had planned is forgotten; from both ends of the bay the carts rumble down the grassy tracks, the men standing up in them despite the lurching, for no carter wants his mates to see him sitting on a shaft. The old ships' boats are launched down the sand and poled out, taking the men who have drawn the early stint of shovelling in the hold. John-Joiner is ready to tally the loads in the weigh-house (better known to us as the Wheeze), steel spectacles are perched on his nose, carpenter's pencil poised above the note book. The coal-ree gates stand open, barely a cartload left inside from last year's cargo.

The boys have left their boots at home and race bare-foot over the machair. It is a law of the Medes and Persians that we 'get our bare feet' from the day the boat comes, though boots must still be carried round the neck and laced on at the school gate. The boys are supposed to be collecting driftwood for the noonday fires, but they will attend to that presently, when they begin to feel ravenous.

By mid-morning, mothers and daughters are staggering down bearing huge pots of soup, iron kettles, and baskets of crockery. Long before that, the deck-cargo is ashore - fencing wire, timber, drain-tiles - and the hatches are off.

The boats lie alongside to be filled gunwale-high with coal, then scull back to the beach where the carts back



: The Coalboat :

down, one on each side. This is where the beachcombing boys are needed, to glean along the tide-line; finders keepers. Some horses are frightened of the waves, others are well used to being taken to wash their huge hairy feet in salt water. They plowter up the white sand, halt while John peers at his steelyard-scales, trundle into the ree and coup their load. Then out by the other gate, round the rocks and back for more. Neighbours' carts unload beside our own; they have a share of the cargo, and will take a load home tonight, but the rest can be fetched piecemeal; the main thing is to discharge the ship while the weather holds.

By dinnertime every one is uniformly black and exhausted, down to small girls in pinafores. The horses drink at the ford and crop the grass; some have brought nose-bags, and munch their oats with a superior air. Then the donkey-engine rattles impatiently and we're off again. Late at night, long after bed time, there may be the chance of a ride up home in a cart.

That was how summer started. Then came hay-harvest, with the Machine clattering; and corn-harvest, teams of women twisting sheaf-bands and stooking; and the gate set wide open when the last load was carried. Ask why, and the answer might be "Just so anyone wanting a wee puckle o' corn knows to go in"; but there are no starving Naomis here. Our gates are iron; and cold iron bars out ... others.

'The Machine' - there was only one. The lawn-mower did not count, it was pulled by an elderly pony in leather boots, not by glossy Clydesdales with feet as big as soup -plates. The reaper was a sort of a Machine, but it did not chatter so engagingly, and its whirling arms were sinister. It was not to be confused with the other.

Winter came gently, yesterday, with bramble-gathering and nut-gathering and Hallowe'en; and after the turn of the year the Ploughing Match, when by early-morning lantern light the horses were groomed to perfection, manes and tails plaited (red-white-and-blue ribbons for the first pair, green-and-gold for the second), and their rivals came jingling into the yard out of the frosty dark. I have seen twenty pairs straining together up the slope, and the gulls behind them wheeling over chocolate furrows.

Bha là eile ann - that was a different day

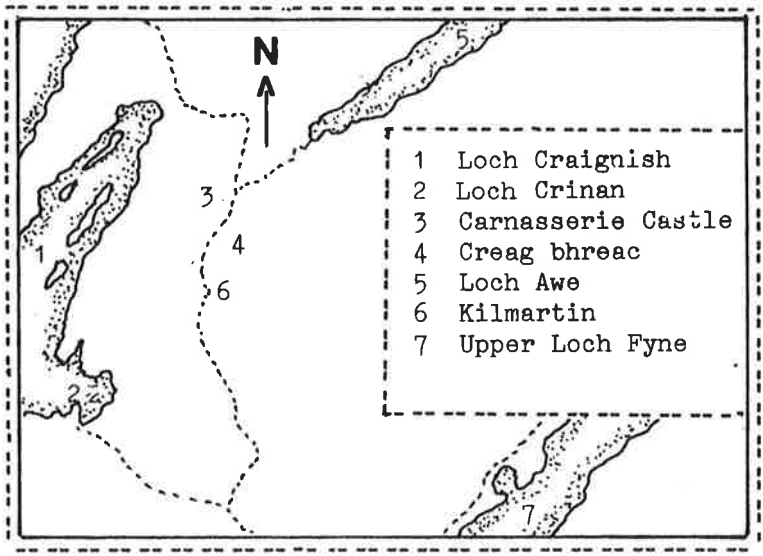
CARNASSERIE CASTLE - A Footnote

A.R.Duncan-Jones

Miss Campbell's interesting account (Kist 39) did not have space to mention a small detail that may be worth noting.

The easternmost storeroom of the Castle (called Wine Cellar on the portable plan) has three loopholes, two looking south and one east. The south ones no doubt were gun-loops, but the other was primarily for observation. It is canted upwards through the thickness of the wall at about 30 degrees, and is aligned precisely to give a view of the summit of Creag bhreac, the conical hill on the other side of the valley, some 200 feet above the level of the Castle. A look-out man stationed on the summit, huddled in his plaid, would have a direct view both NE to the foot of Loch Awe and SSW to Loch Crinan, and could signal a warning to the Castle of any body of men approaching.

Twenty years ago this alignment was clearly observable at all times of the year. With the growth of an intervening tree you can now see it only when the leaves are off. Perhaps someone should trim the tree.



MEANINGFUL COINCIDENCES

John Graham

The following experiences, encountered while researching my family history may be of interest to Kist readers.

It all really began in 1980 when my Company sent me off to the oil rigs. With the luxury of a fair bit of leisure between shifts I thought I could at last get down to a long-felt desire to investigate my family history. The impetus arose from a wish to check the validity of a family idea that we were in some way related to the celebrated Dr David Livingstone. Eventually I established that he had indeed been a cousin of my great-great-grandmother.

Having done this I turned my attention to the trunk of my family tree, directing my efforts towards establishing a reason for the pockets of Grahams scattered through the Western Highlands and Islands, particularly in Islay. So far I have traced back five generations to around 1770.

Then came the first instance of coincidental acquaintance. Some, I suppose, would put it down to luck!

With several thousand men working the thirty-odd rigs at that particular time, I happened to land on the same rig, in the same cabin, in the same job as a chap who hailed originally from Peterhead but was now married and living in Islay. As time went by and my research blossomed, I discovered that Arthur was married to Catherine Bonnar from Bowmore whose family were connections of my own. Well - coincidence, luck, destiny or call it what you will, but similar situations occurred on numerous occasions throughout my research.

But to return to the rig incident which shocked me to the core - I had been in the cinema on the floating platform which was the accommodation in that field, and I was sitting in the hall, staring at the blank screen and mulling over the events of the day prior to the film starting. For a fleeting second I visualised the platform upside-down and the cinema full of men trying to escape. Even after the film, when I learned of the capsize of the Alexander Keilland, it still never dawned on me about my vision in the cinema. It was only on hearing in the radio report that there were "still about fifty men thought to be trapped in the cinema" that I became dumbfounded - meaningful coincidence? The affair did not even end there, for almost

three years after the disaster, when travelling by train to take up duty on a new rig, I read in the Glasgow Herald that the Alexander Keilland, which had been lying in a deep Norwegian fjord was to be blown up and sunk for ever after the remains of any crew members who had died in the accident were removed. As if to emphasise the coincidence, I had packed an old copy of the Scots Magazine in my luggage to read whilst offshore, and in this particular issue, as I found eventually, was a letter from Elizabeth Sutherland asking for stories from people who had experiences of E.S.P. second sight, etc. This had appeared on the very day of the Keilland tragedy. In my view it completed a definite trilogy of closely-connected events.

Almost every avenue I have followed in my family researches has proved fruitful; take Knapdale for instance. The place is just mystical! I happened upon the caravan park at Castle Sween in 1987. For decades I had camped the length and breadth of the country but my only prior knowledge of this area was by way of a letter which I had sent to the Achnamara post-mistress years earlier, regarding a William Graham whom my brother had encountered when he spent a month in Achnamara House as a schoolboy. I never got a reply, but one of the first people I met at Castle Sween was Rhona MacDonald from Achnamara, who by chance mentioned her mother who had been this post-mistress. She could tell me that William Graham was her now-deceased grandfather! Then I visited Kilmory Knap - more Grahams. Unfortunately though they were all in the churchyard, but nevertheless they accorded me some information; was it from 'the other side'? From then on it was to-ing and fro-ing between contacts from my home-town, East Kilbride, and Knapdale, where I investigated Grahams from Inverneil, Keills, Achnamara and Kilberry. I managed to enlist the help of Mrs Isobel Souden in the Lochgilphead Registrar's Office, Mrs Taylor and Mrs Gloria Siggins at Carradale (who provided me with some Grahams who had emigrated from Kintyre to Jamaica.)

At this point, with everything apparently going wonderfully, I realised that I had tended to become deflected from my efforts to establish a link between the Achnamara Grahams and my great-great-grandfather Samuel Graham of Aoradh at Gruinard in Islay, though I still believe there is a possibility of such a connection. If this does event-

ually emerge it will add to the coincidence theme.

In connection with the Islay family and Samuel Graham, his daughter-in-law Duglas White was reputed to have composed the beautiful Gaelic song Sìne bhan before that plagiarist Johnstone credited himself with the work. The name Duglas requires explanation as it appears to be an error. It was in fact a contraction of Duglasina. She lived from 1806 to 1881 and was the daughter of William White and Margaret Currie. She died at Carnduncan, Islay. Douglas Bonnar, mentioned earlier in this paper, told me he had been named after his grandmother!

That was a couple of years ago until my fun was rudely interrupted by vocational matters. Its terrible how working for a living interferes with ones social and leisure time!

On my return to Castle Sween this year the old enthusiasm took over after the purchase of a Kist and once again I was plunged into the past at the mention of Grahams in the Pre-1855 Knapdale records. During a recent conversation on this very subject I heard out of the corner of my ear something about a Clyde puffer that used to ply between Islay and Achnamara. Now isn't that a coincidence!

The COVER: An ANAGLYPH

The present cover, like that of Kist 40 does not at once explain itself. It is one of a pair of pictures, shown here half-size. It is constructed of thick cardboard, on which the birds are in low relief. They are realistically coloured on a background representing wood. Nothing is known regarding their nationality or date, but by analogy the latter would lie somewhere in the second half of last century. The construction is that known as an Anaglyph, from the Greek ANA GLUPHEIN, to make an embossed pattern. At that time and even more recently, a popular decoration was known as Anaglypta. It consisted of patterns embossed on thin card to give the impression of moulded plaster-work on walls or carving on doors etc.

Childish fingers found agreeable occupation in squashing the designs, but 'THEY' strongly disapproved of this particular activity!

REVIEWS.

REVIEW of SCOTTISH CULTURE. 6 Edited by Professor A.Fenton. John Donald Publishers £10

It is far from easy to decide what readership has been in view in compiling a collection of papers ranging (many at inordinate length) through biography, the De Wet portraits of Scottish kings, ethnological surveys of the Hebrides, Irish versions of Scots proverbs, the decline of Perthshire shielings, the building of an R.C. chapel in Wick, and Bettie Burk's brogues. This reviewer is left with a feeling that the distinguished Editor has made little use of his all-powerful red pencil. Two specific points of complaint occur right at the end where we are faced with a vulgarism not to be tolerated in any serious context - ADVERTS in ¼-inch type; and are informed on the back cover that the "front cover .... shows artist's impression of the Inverurie Horse"; in such a publication one expects facts not impressions. F.S.M.

A SCOTTISH NATURE DIARY. Douglas Willis John Donald Publishers. £13.95

This book is a delight; pleasant to handle, well bound and well printed on good paper. The colour photographs are excellent, whether they be of a lone tree in a frosty winter sunset, a pair of Clydesdale horses ploughing, a cormorant with wings heraldically spread, a blue-tit on a berried branch, purple saxifrage on a rock face, or a patch of primroses in spring sunshine. The text is based on a weekly diary contributed by the author to the Ross-shire Journal over the past few years, "a calendar of the kind of things that may be looked for and enjoyed month by month in our Scottish countryside." He has the gift of presenting pictures to the inward eye and sounds to the inward ear; oyster-catchers on a winter shore grouped "in one-legged uniformity, each long red bill deeply buried in the warmth of the pied plumage"; starlings "in an excited twittering cloud like a gigantic bee-swarm"; collared doves causing "reports of unseasonable cuckoos"; migrating geese, swans and ducks coming down "in yelping skeins"; North Ronaldsay sheep on the shore "with glaikit looks, trails of

salty tangle dripping from their mouths"; the colour and variety of Scottish wild flowers - and how nice to be reminded that our own name for the mimulus or monkey-flower is "mappie mou".

Practical matters are not neglected. There is advice on choosing binoculars, on feeding garden birds, on bird tables and nesting boxes. An appendix lists addresses of countryside organisations, Forestry Commission regional offices, bird observatories, suppliers of garden bird feeding and nesting equipment, and a location map of Scottish nature reserves, identifying the special features of each. The index is clear and comprehensive.

A.C.

VALE!

MCMXC

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