Old Houses at Mealdarroch

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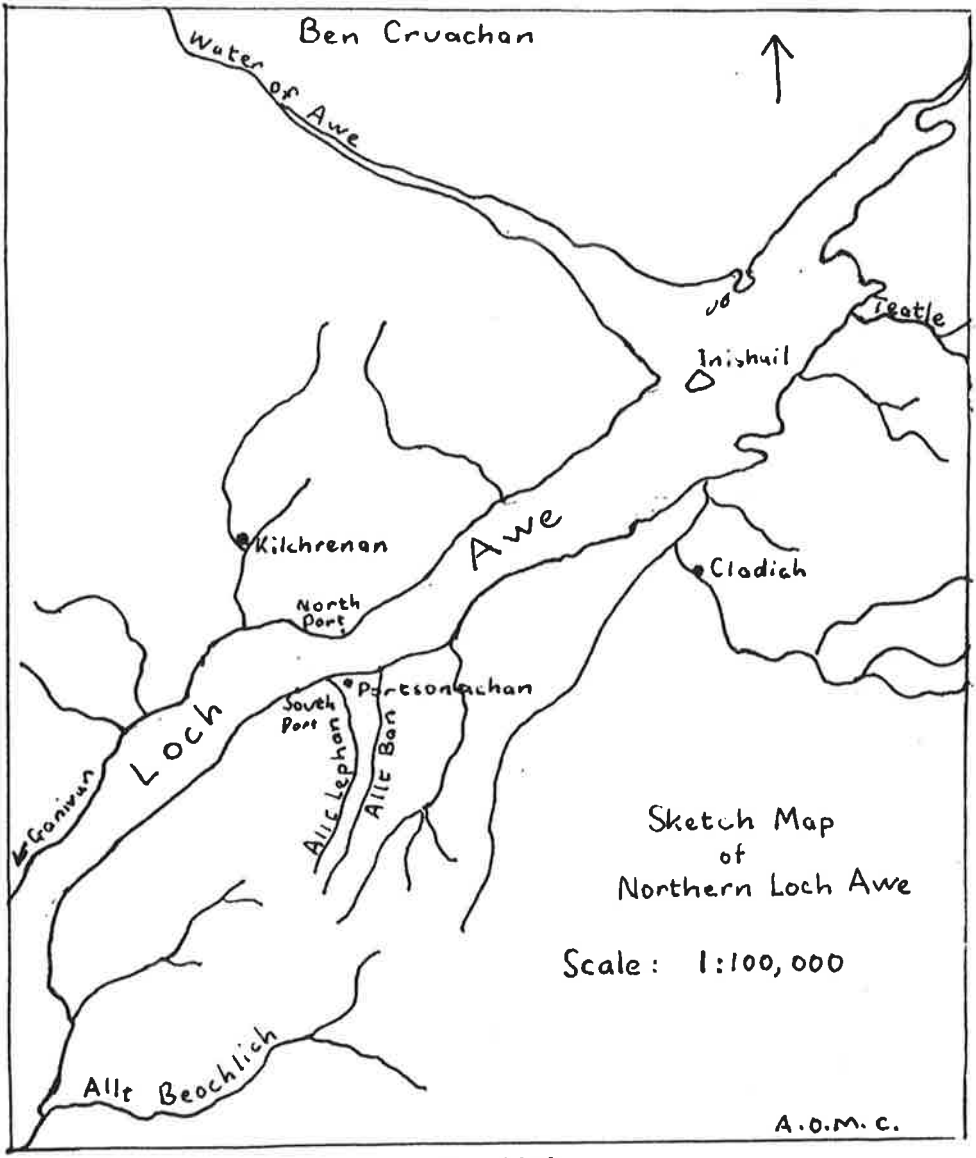
NOTE on the COVER.

In Kist 36 an editorial note to Allt Beithe - The Desertion of a Settlement, by John Smith, mentioned that the "Old Houses" at Mealdarroch were to be recorded by our Society. In 1988 a beginning was made on clearing the site, but for various reasons work was discontinued, and in the following two years only the cutting of a path through the bracken was done. In the spring and early summer of 1991 some members of the Society along with helpers from Tarbert cleared bracken and undergrowth from most of the site to reveal the remains of the houses. It is intended next year to take the interior of some of these down to their original floor level, and to produce a detailed report of the site. This is all the more necessary as any documentation the settlement had in its lifetime has vanished, except an appearance as "Beldarick" on Roy's map of c.1750, and the 1841 census report for "Beldarroch" recording five households and thirty-five persons ranging in age from 0 to 80. It does not appear in the 1851 census record. In the Ordnance Survey Name Book for Kilcalmonell Parish of 1863 it appears as "Mealdarroch (ruins)".

The cover drawing was made after the 1991 clearance and shows a view from the highest point of the settlement, looking over Loch Fyne some 300ft. below. On the left is one of the two (probably older) individual houses above the "street" of continuous houses and (?) byres shown running downhill and ending in the high gable which can be seen from the shore below and from the loch. On the right hand side, outwith the picture, there are two buildings, one at the top of the settlement, the other at the bottom, and roughly midway between them is a well into which, within the editor's memory, a clear spring used to run. There is a large D-shaped enclosure below the settlement to the west and what looks like a corn-drying kiln, though the O.S. map calls it a limekiln. Excavation should resolve this.

There are many traditions in Tarbert about the "Old Houses" among the older generation, some of whom have grandparents or great-grandparents who either were born there or lived there. The connection is so strong that the name of "Old Tarbert" is sometimes applied to the place. We should be glad of any information readers may have.

Map reference NR879682.



In 1439: the Allt Ban was the Altbano.
the Allt Lephan was the Altynlespenny.
the Teatle was the Tetill.
the Allt Beochlich was the Boyclich.
the Ganivan was the Tawain.

PORTSONACHAN FERRY. c.1314-1953.

Mary McGrigor.

The ferry across Loch Awe from Taycreggan on the north shore to Portsonachan on the south - a distance of under 400 yards - reputedly dates from the early 15th century.

According to tradition Sir Neil Campbell of Lochawe (ob. c.1315) ordered a large muster of his galleys on Loch Awe. Suddenly a storm arose, and Sir Neil, to his great alarm, saw that the galley which carried his son Duncan was about to founder. He appealed to MacPhedran, commander of his fleet, who, with great dexterity, steered his own galley towards the sinking vessel and managed to bring it to safety. Sir Neil in gratitude granted him the land of Portsonachan on the south side of Loch Awe, with the rights of the ferry both there and on the north shore at Tigh a Chreggan.

The MacPhedran family papers state that Moricus MacPhedran was confirmed in possession of the following by Duncan Cambel of Lochawe on 10th December 1439:
"The one mark land of Sonachan near the port extending between the river which is called Altbano and the river which is called Altynlespenny ... along with the duty of ferrying between the river which is called Tetill and the river which is called Boyclich on the east side and the river which is called Tawain and the water of Awe on the western side." His rent was to amount to 10/- silver, 2 bolls of grain, 1lb. of cheese and a sheep.

This is verified by a statement and memorial in the Sonachan Papers, dated 1833:
"The twenty shilling land of Portsonachan with the right of ferrying upon all Lochow belonged at a very remote period to a sept of the name of MacPhedran, as is established by two charters in their favour from the Earls of Argyll in 1501 and 1590. The last of this race who possessed the farm and ferry was Donald McGillemore McPhedran who, having no male issue, executed on the 4th March 1627 a disposition by way of Bond of Taille of the said lands and office in favour of his neighbour and friend Duncan Campbell , then of Sonachan .... Duncan Campbell, upon MacPhedran's death, proceeded to enter accordingly into possession of the subjects thus disposed to him, but the

Earl of Argyll, conceiving that they should have fallen to him as superior, sent a party to take possession of this little property by force, when (according to local tradition) Campbell of Sonachan and two of his sons were slain in attempting to maintain possession of their right." Cairns above Portsonachan Hotel may mark their graves.

The approaches to the ferry on the north shore were passable from early times, but until the mid-18th century men could move faster than horses across the bogs of the Lecken Muir to the south of Loch Awe. The legend in Records of Argyll tells how a man called MacKellar, foster brother of Dunstaffnage, outran horsemen from Inveraray to Portsonachan Ferry, c.1645.

A few years later, in 1654, the Marquess of Argyll gave a feu of the land and ferrying rights of Portsonachan to Campbell of Dunstaffnage, with the servitude of ferrying free of charge the family of Argyll, his servants etc., foreigners and lame and blind paupers.

In the 18th century trade in cattle increased , and one of the chief crossing places on Loch Awe for droving traffic was at Taycreggan. Rob Roy MacGregor, known to have crossed to Kilchrennan for a funeral (which ended in a free fight), probably ferried his beasts by this route.

In 1745 a messenger bearing news of Prince Charles Edward's landing in Scotland crossed Portsonachan Ferry en route for Inveraray. The Ferry was much used during the Rebellion for transport of government soldiers.

By 1740 work had begun on the military road between Inveraray and Tyndrum. The Commissioners of Supply, hoping that soldiers might be drafted to improve access to Portsonachan Ferry, appointed a committee under Captain Dugald Campbell of Stonefield, to enquire into the expediency of removing the ferry from Portsonachan to a site nearer Cladich and making up the roads on both sides of Loch Awe, but this plan failed, and eventually, in 1763, the Campbells of Stonefield and Airds were deputed to mark out a proper line for the road from Cladich to Portsonachan. Work began under the auspices of Campbell of Sonachan, but progress seems to have been slow. Doctor Johnson and James Boswell, who crossed the Ferry in 1753, having refused to dry themselves in Portsonachan Inn (then above the road), struggled through flooded fords to Cladich. Four bridges were built along this stretch of road during

the 1770s.

In 1773 Donald Campbell of Dunstaffnage petitioned the Commissioners of Supply to repair the Portsonachan Quay and asked that his ferry be put on the same footing as ferries at Bonawe and Connel and that the old payment in corn and other articles should be abolished. This was agreed and the Committee resolved upon the following freights:

Saddle horse and rider	4d.
Pedlar and horse	4d.
Single foot passenger	2d.
4-wheeled chaise and 2 horse	3/6d.
All and above that number to pay	4d.

Further it was stipulated that the inhabitants of Kilchrenan, being small tenants, cottars and labourers, should pay only half fare, and that the freight of black cattle and sheep should continue.

In 1775 the Argyllshire Road Act gave responsibility for the upkeep of roads and ferries to a Committee of Road Trustees, funded by public money. The County was divided into seven regions, and an Annual General Meeting was held at Inveraray.

In 1798 Neill Campbell of Dunstaffnage petitioned the General Meeting of the Road Trustees for permission to increase fares on Portsonachan Ferry, but this was refused and charges remained unaltered for over a century, until 1813.

In 1800 Robert Campbell of Sonachan took out a charter sale of the Ferry (on the same terms as Dunstaffnage) from the 5th Duke of Argyll and in 1813, by purchasing the superiorities and feu duties, he held the Ferry directly from the Crown for an annual fee of one penny Scots.

In 1814 the Commissioners of the District of Lorn did allow an increase in ferry fares in response to Sonachan's appeal, and in 1819, again at his instigation, a committee was appointed to examine Portsonachan Quay and others in the district said to be in need of repair.

In 1826 a mail ferry between Portsonachan and Kilchrenan began, and in 1833 the Kilchrenan Penny Post included Portsonachan within its orbit; but despite this additional trade the Ferry was fast losing business.

In 1832 Robert Campbell of Sonachan wrote a strong protest against the findings of the Road Trustees' A.G.M. to the effect that the Portsonachan farm, ferry and change-

house notoriously in the district of Argyll - not as averred in Lorn - paid road rent and all district burdens in that district; also that the value of ferries had been greatly over-rated; Portsonachan Ferry was then in his own hands - every lessee in the last twenty years had gone bankrupt because road traffic had fallen by half since the introduction of steamers on the West Coast; the average rent for the Ferry, when let, had amounted to £25 10s; two boats were kept and two ferrymen employed with additional assistance in bad weather.

In 1840 Mr Campbell of Inverawe, as convener of the committee on Portsonachan Ferry, reported that no final arrangement could be made for having a boat on the north side (as publicly requested) unless the district agreed to make a place for keeping it.

In 1841 Portsonachan Pier was repaired and in 1846 the Road Trustees agreed that more than 2/- should be allowed for conveying a whole load of household furniture on a ferry, and that passengers not wishing to travel with animals should be conveyed in a small boat. Further regulations specified that the large boats employed as ferries should have moveable rails of wood or rope three feet in height from the gunwhale, and not less than two rails; also that at all ferries there should always be kept a small boat for passengers, not less than 16 feet overall, of 5 feet beam, and that the stern sheets should extend to the after thwart .... They recommended that the planking of such boats should be of fir wood and that boats should be kept clean.

The terrors of travel on a Highland ferry are described by Lord Cockburn, a circuit judge, who crossed Shean Ferry in September 1848. He and his companions went with the carriage "a culpably foolish proceeding" and he related how the heavily laden carriage swung as the rowers, two to each of the two oars, struggled against a head wind. He condemned Highland ferries as disgraceful. "Passengers, cattle and carriages are just lifted and thrown into clumsy,crazy boats and jerked by bad rowers with unsafe oars, half naked and very hairy Celts, who, however,expecting whisky, are at least civil, hearty and strong".

During the 1840s a young man from Mull called MacIntyre became the Portsonachan ferryman. During his Time an incident occurred on the Ferry which caused much local spec-

ulation. Mr Duncan MacGregor, schoolmaster of Kilchrenan and Inspector and Collector of the Poor Rates, was as such in charge of parish funds, but his honesty was questionable and his books were due to be audited .... According to his own word he left home at four in the morning to cross to Portsonachan with the post bags, so that he could collect assessments on the south shore and be back for an evening meeting. Boarding the boat in darkness he sat as directed in the prow, his bag of books on his knee. On approaching the shore, he stood up to see where they were heading and fell headlong into Loch Awe. The boatmen hauled him out, dripping wet, but his books with their questionable accounts were lost for ever in the depths.

In 1850 the Sonachan Estate was bought by the Malcolms of Poltalloch. They built the present hotel, and in 1873 installed Mr Thomas Cameron as tenant. He took over the ferry boat, valued, with two oars and chains, at £42 11s. A schedule of 1891 lists the then current fares:

Full-sized 4-wheel carriages	5/-
Carts carrying load above 3cwt.	2/-
A single horse	9d.
An entire horse	1/-
Bulls each	8d.
Cattle per head	4d.
Sheep per score	6d.
A single passenger	4d.

Following the First World War, the increase in road traffic reduced the need for a ferry on Loch Awe. The service deteriorated, and in 1921 Mrs Thorpe of Ardbrecknish complained to the County Council as follows: "There is only one small rowing boat available, and the ferryman is more often absent than present when required ... The District Nurse, who lives at Kilchrenan, has often whistled for an hour or more when summoned to a case on this side of the loch and has even then been compelled to give up coming. Doctor MacNicol ... has suffered very serious delay many times. My manager, who had to keep an appointment at Kilchrenan recently, blew a whistle for over an hour ... and when he complained to Miss Cameron [Portsonachan Hotel] who has the contract he could obtain no redress".

In 1946 Portsonachan Hotel, with the ferrying rights, was bought by Colonel James Young. In that year the fer-

ryman, Charles Livingston, was tragically drowned. In 1953 Colonel Young informed the County Clerk of his wish to discontinue the service. This was allowed, and accordingly,after five and a half centuries,the Ferry which had plied across Loch Awe finally ceased to exist.

My most grateful thanks are due to Mrs A.A.Rose and to Mr Murdo Macdonald, Archivist for Argyll and Bute, for their great help with this article.

Additional note: A local census of 1802 gives Alexander McCorquodale as ferryman and Alexander and Hugh McCorquodale as innkeepers at Portsonachan.

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A NOTE ON THE SPIRALS AT TEMPLE WOOD.

A. Duncan-Jones.

One of the upright stones at Temple Wood Circle bears two spirals. They are incised on adjacent faces of the stone, and their tails join at the angle between the faces. The explanatory text erected at the site makes the suggestion that they may have been connected with sun-worship.

With great respect I venture to question this. If I were a sun-worshipper, I do not think I should represent the sun by a spiral turning in the contrary direction to the sun's course. These two spirals turn in opposite directions, one sun-wise, the other widdershins. They are not formed by single strands , but are triple (or in some parts double). In fact they form a maze.

Mazes (of which spirals are a simple form) are widespread features of burial places in prehistoric times. It appears to be recognised that the basic function of a maze, whether as a physical structure or as a piece of magic, is to keep out intruders. As a secondary feature it also represents the journey of the human spirit beyond death. There is a recollection of both these aspects in Virgil's Aeneid, which incorporates traces of many ancient traditions known to him but not familiar to us. In the sixth book Aeneas visits the underworld. His journey thither begins at the temple of Apollo at Cumae, where he

must consult the Sibyl, who is to conduct him into the abode of the dead. At the entrance he pauses to study the decoration on the gates; it shows the Cretan legend, and includes a representation of the Labyrinth. (1).

Turning to these islands, at a Bronze Age burial site at Bryn Celli Ddu, in Anglesey, the two characters of a maze, structural and magical, are found no less than three times. A standing stone outside is marked with a spiral; and a recumbent stone inside the area bears a tangled design like a maze; thirdly, and most strikingly, the site itself was originally enclosed by a double wall, and admission to the interior was only achieved by making a complete circuit between the two walls. That is to say, the burial site could only be reached by following a spiral course.

Such considerations as these lead me to suggest that the Temple Wood spirals were not a part of sun-worship, but were a magical protection. They were intended to keep at bay any unfriendly spirits who might seek to disturb the important personage buried within the circle; and perhaps also to mark the route that his spirit was to follow. I dare say there was also a ritual dance round the perimeter to make the whole thing safer.

Some may also think that the exclusive purpose of a maze may be linked with the 'tangled threid' that used to be marked - and perhaps still is - on doorsteps in Scotland and northern England to ward off unwanted intruders, human or ghostly.

Whether these considerations have any connexion with cup-and-ring carvings, or with the interlace patterns on mediaeval gravestones, are questions that I leave to bolder and more learned minds to speculate upon.

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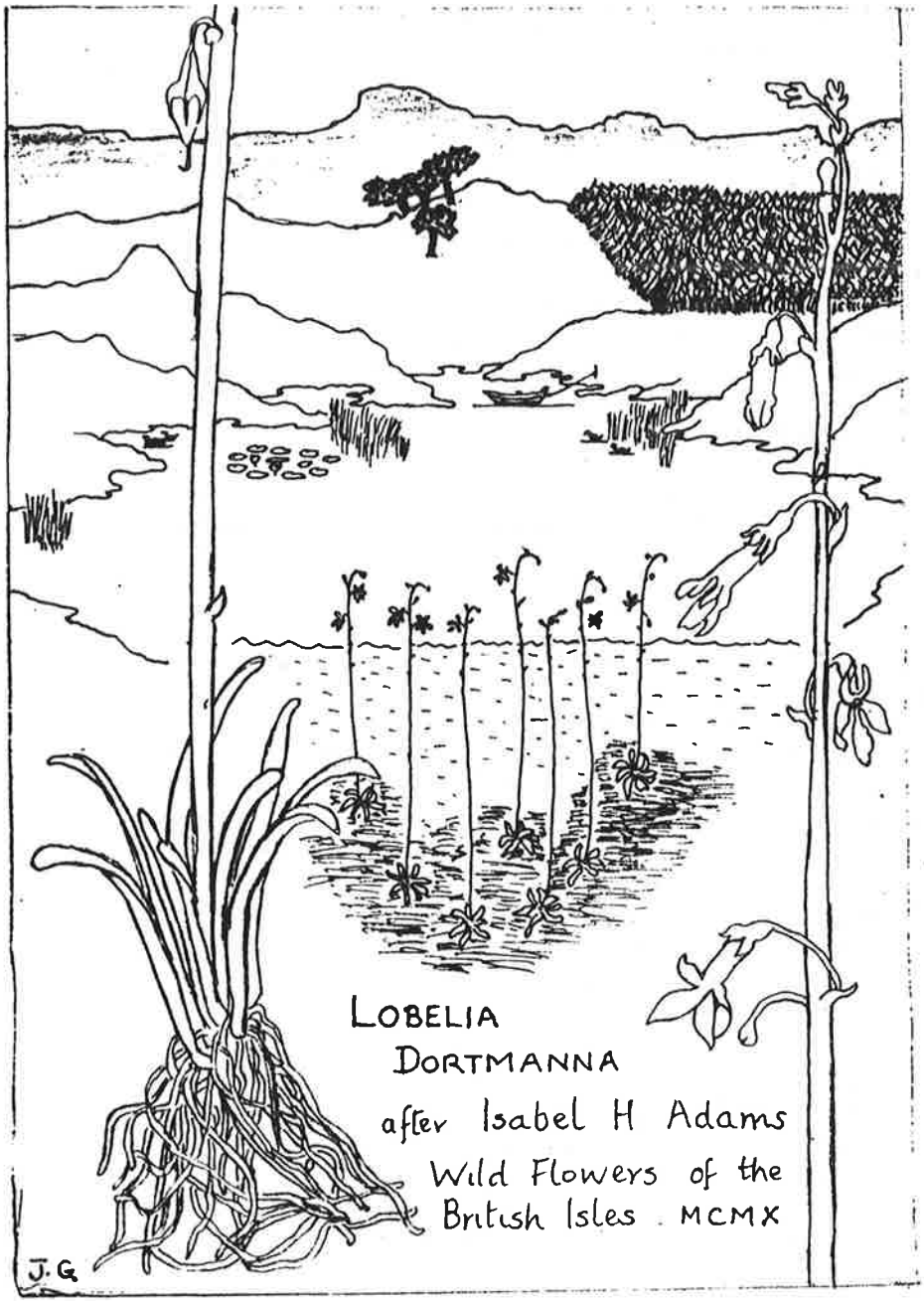
(1) Aen.VI.27. hic labor ille domus et inextricabilis error. A rough translation might be "Here that massive abode of endless wandering".

...oooOooo...


LOBELIA
DORTMANNA
after Isabel H Adams
Wild Flowers of the
British Isles . MCMX
J. G.

LOBELIA DORTMANNA.

Water Lobelia.

Joanna Gordon.

Anthropomorphically speaking, the Water Lobelia, Linnaeus' Lobelia dortmanna, is a very shy plant. A few small, pale mauve flowers hang from each thin stalk,which rises less than a foot from the surface of shallow water, usually in a remote loch. The roots are said to prefer a gravelly bed, but in all plants seen by the writer rosettes of leaves, about three inches in diameter, nestle on a peaty layer some distance away from dry land. The observer may need to lie flat, with a friend to anchor the feet. Like a shy human being, seeking obscurity from a sense of being different and special, L.dortmanna has survived in occupation of a very inconspicuous ecological niche, due largely to some unusual characteristics. During two important stages in the history of botany it has, however, attracted notice. These, in reverse historical order,are the current phase of improvements upon the Linnaean classification of plants, and the preceding upsurge of interest in botany in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Linnaeus (1707-1778) classified plants by referring only to similarities of sexual reproductive structure. The simplicity and clarity of his system weighed decisively in its favour until scientific interest in the evolutionary stages by which plants grew into their present forms widened the attention of botanists to include consideration of plant communities, of the individual plants varying within their species, and of the biochemistry of plant material. Linnaeus distinguished lobelias from campanulas classifying the lobelias as Tribe 19 of the order of Syngenesious Plants, those in which the stamens and the anthers grow together. This distinction is open to question in view of the possibility that lobelias are merely campanulas with differently shaped, vertically irregular flowers, differentiation having taken place at a comparatively late stage. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica [1989.13.788], the question can, and no doubt eventually will be settled in the course of further study by

plant chemists of material from the relevant species. In the meantime, it is pleasant to observe harebells (campanula rotundifolia) growing beside a loch in which there are water lobelias and to wonder whether they are, so to speak, siblings, or merely cousins.

Passing to consideration of the plant as a whole, the wide variations of form among species of lobelia fill out more than one spectrum. There are, for instance, giants in Kenya and miniatures in New Zealand. The presence of lobelias on all the world's land-masses, and the lack of any species common to both sides of the African Rift Valley, further suggest a notable degree of inherent adaptability. It is rare for one genus to include both terrestrial and aquatic forms. L.dortmanna is at the aquatic end of the spectrum of habitat peculiar to the genus. In flower, it is only semi-submerged, and its stalk, though thin, does not collapse like that of a water-lily when taken from the water. To the amateur it does look like a land plant which has taken refuge in shallow water. So, lobelias are either separate from, and even more variable than, campanulas, or a major variation, itself highly variable, within the campanula family. The semi-submerged water lobelia exemplifies, shyly, this crisis of identity.

A third principal development of post-Linnaean botany is the study of plant communities, a major concern also of plant-geographers in plotting genera and species on their way to occupation of each ecological niche. The make-up of these communities relates in part to the limits of tolerance of environmental conditions, including the proximity of other plants. Water Lobelia proves shy again. It simply does not grow among other plants; the habitat required by its nearest associates, the rushes and the water-lilies, is readily degraded, and disappears wherever many humans settle, or visit frequently. Hence it was a great deal more commonly seen among those plants before the time of Linnaeus than it is now. Among the characteristics noted by early observers was its occurrence "where no other herb did grow".(1) This is an instance of an observation not understood at the time now obviously relating to the

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(1) Parkinson, J. Theatrum Botanicum. 1640, p.1250, after Clusius: vide infra p. 14.

scientific evaluation of tolerances, and it links the modern interest in L.dortmanna with that of the 'herbarists' and 'botanographers' of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

On account of its small size, pale flower colour and semi-submerged growthin habitats inhospitable to man and lying for the most part beyond the frontiers of the Roman Empire, the Water Lobelia was not recorded by plant collectors in Classical times, or referred to in subsequent studies before the sixteenth century. Then, as G.Wahlenburg remarked in 1812 "the insatiable curiosity of botanists caused the making of catalogues of plants". (1). Before 1609, when noticed in Sweden and Lapland by O.Rudbeck (primarily a physician) and by an apothecary named Dortmann in the Netherlands, the Water Lobelia was thought to be a gladiolus, from the shape of the flowers. It did not immediately attract much attention, because these collectors were medical herbalists, and "for [its] vertues, there is none knowne that the neighbouring people make any use of it in medecine, or in any ways than is beforesaide, for the Duckes to feed on". (2). The Rudbecks, father and son, are of interest in the little-remembered tradition of Swedish botany of which Linnaeus was the heir and systematizer, after the great fire of 1702 destroyed most of Upsala, leaving only a fragment of their Flora Lapponica. (3). Their work was known to John Ray (1627-1705), who is still renowned for his botanical insight, and who, as befits a Cambridge scholar, always acknowledged his sources. The first edition of his Catalogue of English Plants, in 1670, omits the Water Gladiole, but he found it himself in Ullswater in time for inclusion in the second edition, in 1677, with references to Rudbeck and to Parkinson's full description of the plant. Parkinson,Court Herbalist to Charles I, does not give detailed references, but opens his work with a claim to have used the books and notes of his predecessor Matthias de l'Obel (1538-1616), botanist to King James VI

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(1) Flora Lapponica p. x.
(2) Parkinson, loc. cit.
(3) Rudbeck, O.and F. Flora Campi Elysii, 1702.

and I. In using the name 'gladiolus lacustris' Parkinson followed Clusius (C.de l'Ecluse, 1538-1609). His text, right down to the "Duckes" is largely a translation of Clusius' Curae Posteriores (Paris 1611, p. 74),and the illustration is identical. Although the genus was finally named by Linnaeus in honour of de l'Obel, I have not been able to find a reference to dortmanna or any other lobelia in the work of that author, and I believe that he may never have seen such a plant, though probably familiar with Clusius' description. Dortmann, the apothecary of Gronigen, may have been in touch with de l'Obel, who was at the court of William the Silent between his student days at Montpellier and arrival in England in 1584, but it was to Clusius that Dortmann sent his discovery. The description, with the duck detail, reads very like a quotation from a covering letter. In calling the plant 'pond gladiolus' all these authorities failed to advert to the shape of its leaves, which are by no means the 'little swords' of the classical name recorded by Pliny. I think this is evidence for the view that de l'Obel never saw a Lobelia. In common with several contemporary botanists de l'Obel endeavoured to classify plants on the basis of direct personal observation, his own chosen criteria being, precisely,leaf shapes. The very unusual leaves of Water Lobelia, each consisting of two tubes without other divisions, were noticed by all early observers, Bauhinus going so far as to class it with Leucojum, Snowflake Flowers, of the Amaryllidaceae, because its leaves resembled Leucojum pods, an absurdity noted by Parkinson as such. Bauhinus' main classification depended on flower colour, our shy plant being classed as 'sub-caerulea', pale sky-colour, which suits it rather well. But even Ray, whose classifications are superior to all these, as well as to the later Linnaeus, in not using one sole criterion, but distinguishing four main classes of plants, the monocotyledons and three kinds of dicotyledons, still referred to L.dortmanna as the Water Gladiole.

Ray became aware of the Flora of the Americas, by his colourful French contemporary Charles Plumier, in 1695. Plumier was a Franciscan of the Order of Friars Minor, Botanist at the time to the King of France. In a later work, Plumier listed fifty distinguished botanists, with the suggestion that a family of plants should be named

after each. De l'Obel is in this list, but Plumier wished to give the name 'Lobelia' to a plant, native of both Indies, since denominated Scaevola (tropical strand plants of the Goodenaceae) (1). Concurrently there arrived from North America the plant we now call Lobelia cardinalis. A.Bachmann (Latinised as Rivinus),another of Ray's correspondents, based his classification on flower colour and so naturally took notice of the scarlet newcomer. Resemblance of form to Clusius' 'gladiolus palustris' was observed perhaps by Linnaeus himself. The whole genus including eventually the giants and the miniatures, narrowly escaped being called 'Cardinal Flowers'. Linnaeus, however, asserted the impropriety of calling plants after monks, as 'monkshood' (caput monachum), Popes, as 'poppy' or, in this instance, Princes of the Church of Rome. In his Flora Lapponica he remarks that names of this kind are more suitable for use by Tulipomaniacs and Hyacinthophiles than by botanists. "We therefore retain the name Lobelia, the weighty name of Dortmann being imposed thereafter".

Thus, by the time the English botanist Lightfoot saw the plant when on tour in Scotland with Pennant, it had been renamed Lobelia dortmanna. (2). The first Scottish botanist to mention it was, I think, Patrick Blair of Dundee, an undistinguished later critic of Ray,around 1720, who may claim a place in botanical history for having suggested to Linnaeus that L.dortmanna was a campanula. He may have been more correct than he could then have known.

L.dortmanna has a characteristically unassuming Gaelic name, Fluran Lochan, Little Flower of the Lochs.

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(1) Pulteney, R. Historical and biographical sketches of the progress of botany in England from its origins to the introduction of the Linnaean system. London 1770, Vol.I p.107.
(2) Lightfoot, J. Flora Scotica, 1777, p.505

RECORDING in OLD GRAVEYARDS.

Allan Begg.

Early in 1988 I visited the old graveyard in Kilmartin to pass an hour until the bus from Oban arrived. What I found there was an education for me. I subsequently returned with a notebook. The thought had occurred to me that it would be an interesting project to list the names of people who once had inhabited the now ruined farmsteads, crofts and other dwellings in the district, then search out those ruins and photograph them; I would then have names and pictures to match. Little did I think what I had challenged myself to do; so far in all I have visited 56 ruins and former house sites in Kilmartin parish and 41 in Glassary, and have photographs of 49 in Kilmartin and 35 in Glassary. There are a number I have not yet been able to find as they are in forest or too far away, such as Carron, Creag-an-Iubhar, Derinloch on Loch Glashan and Dalinernoch in Glassary, and Lagandarroch, Arichuan, Clachaig and Glenliever in Kilmartin. When one relies on public transport the route has to be carefully worked out beforehand, and the approximate mileage taken and timed so as to be back in time for the bus. To date my walking mileage, according to the log I keep, is 306 miles.

To return to Kilmartin graveyard: there are too many stones to list here, but some interested me especially. On the left as you enter the gate, after the MacLauchlane memorial on the wall, dated 1686, are MacLauchlans or MacLachlans of Achayerran, Achnabreck, Braglenmore, Craigenterive and Craigenterivebeg, Lochgair and Rhudle. Further down is the railed enclosure of the Campbells of Ormaig, dated 1764; the Campbells of Kilmartin Estate; the old burial place of Niel Cambel and his wife Christiane C. (believed to be Carswell of the Carswells of Carnasserie), dated 1627. (Niel Cambel was Rector at Kilmartin from 1574 to 1627). There is a small railed enclosure with a plaque saying "The burial place of Campbell of Duntroon", and all round this part of the graveyard are Campbells of Duntroon, also of Strachur and Dunchragaig. The Deors of Achanellan or Achaneilean have stones dated 1716, 1777,1793 and 1801; one very old stone is inscribed "Here

Lyes the Corps of Duncan Deor Son to M K Deor at Achinellan Died May 16 1693". Two flat stones bear identical inscriptions: "John Campbell Mary Mc Deor Arkinlas". Were they husband and wife, and was this the Arkinlas near Cairndow, or was there an Arkinlas in Kilmartin Parish?

Then I came upon the gravestone of Donald Lindsay, Cooper, son of John Lindsay, late miller in Achavan, died 1808 aged 27; alongside is another for John Lindsay, died 1800 and sons James and Peter. A cooper working at a mill at Achavan would be making the barrels necessary for despatching oatmeal - when the army of Charles Edward Stuart was on the move his supplies column, we are told, carried barrels of oatmeal. I had not heard of a mill at Achavan, but when I had the privilege of looking at a map of the Kilmartin Estate probably drawn up at the time of the sale in 1825, there was Achavan mill, also eight buildings on the opposite side of the burn now enshrouded in forest, and two on the same side; in the early part of this century one of these was still occupied. I had a letter recently enquiring about the writer's great great great grandmother, Margaret Lindsay, born at Achavan in 1782.

I sometimes wonder how people get to know my name and address; letters have come from the U.S.A. and Canada as well as from Britain, and I have had many telephone calls from people who are over here and staying in the Kilmartin district with the intention of finding the graves of their forbears. Some of them have the idea that everyone who died in the 18th and 19th centuries had a gravestone, and seem surprised to be told that only the more affluent could afford them, and of those some could afford only a simple slab with no inscription, or at best two or three initials.

While I was listing names in Kilmartin graveyard many people came to speak to me, and inquire what I was doing and what organisation I was working for. They seemed surprised when I informed them it was for my own interest, that I was not an expert but that I intended that what I had collated would be made available to the Archivist of Argyll and Bute District Council who receives a lot of enquiries on this subject, and also to the office of the Registrar who is frequently asked for records of deaths or of gravestones pre-1855. One American couple asked me about

the stones with "Experiment" inscribed on them. When I explained that Experiment is the name of a farm where in the early 19th century experiments in new methods of agriculture were carried out by Neil Malcolm of Poltalloch, they looked at each other and began to laugh; one said "We thought, because of the number of gravestones, that it was where experiments had been carried out on people". Well, there is no answer to that.

The deserted settlement of Achachrom has stones for MacVicars 1829, MacColls 1839, Campbells 1854, MacLeods 1871, MacFadyens 1893 and in Glassary churchyard Leitches and MacFadyens; I have also a list of 28 people who lived and died there from 1855 to 1895. When I was a boy some of the Achachrom houses were still occupied. They were thatched, as were some at Baluachcrach which still had occupants in 1931. I have in my possession a photograph of one of these taken about 1908 in which my wife's grandmother is sitting at the end of the building. Her husband Donald MacLellan was a coachman, who appears on a photograph (frequently reproduced) of mailcoach and horses in the old Pass of Melfort.

Among the stones belonging to the Gow family is one for James Gow died 1837 at Poltalloch aged 33. Was he the overseer James Gow on the Poltalloch Estate when many projects of improvement were carried out, notably the reclamation of large areas of the Moine Mhor? His stone does not say; but many occupations are recorded - blacksmiths, builders, carpenters, a churchwarden, contractors,a cooper, farmers, farmworkers, a forester, gardeners, innkeepers, merchants, millers, ministers, a ship-owner,a surgeon, tacksmen and wrights. Some memorials can supply a family history; often they make sad reading. One such stone comes to mind. It is for the Campbell family of Killinochonoch; in 1854 Catherine died aged 4 and James aged 2 also in 1854; in 1857 Alex, an infant, in 1863 Barbara aged 7 months and another Alex aged $3\frac{1}{2}$, in 1875 Christina aged 29, the eldest of the family, and last of all Mary in 1914.

The Reverend John Dewar, on his retirement from the parish of Kilmartin sent out a little pamphlet to all the parishioners in April 1905; he had been inducted in 1874. In it he states:

"The hand of death has removed many. Our Interment Register, which only dates from 1876, shows that there were 580 interments in the old Parish Burying Ground and upwards

of 90 in the new Burying Ground. The old Burying Ground has been kept under careful management and a register of burials kept."

If there were 580 interments in 31 years one can't begin to imagine how many there have been since it was first used.

From Kilmartin I moved on to Glassary. If you climb to the top of one of the higher hills above Kilmichael Glen and look all around, as far as the eye can see,from here away towards Loch Awe and Loch Fyne, is a great sea of green forest covering huge tracts of land which were once the farmlands of Achnabreac, Achlec, High Barnakill, Craiglass, Creagans, Dalnernoch,Druim, Dunamuck Mill, Fearnoch, Feorlin, Glenmoine (Kilmartin Parish), Knockalva, Lag, Monunernich, Upper Roudle and Socach, whose past tenants lie in Glassary churchyard. Tenants of places such as Carron, Creag-an-Iubhair, Derinloch, Duppin, Tunns and Uilean surely are there too, but their names are not on their stones. As at Kilmartin many occupations are represented - a beadle (Dugal MacFadyen, Beadle of Glassary Church for 33 years, died at Kilmichael in 1912 aged 85), a carding-miller, cattle dealers, a cooper, a dyer, farmers feuars, fleshers, a gardener, an innkeeper, a mariner, a mason, merchants,millers, a minister,a schoolmaster, shipsmasters, a shoemaker, a smith and tacksmen.

The oldest inscribed stone that I found in Glassary reads as follows: "Her Lyes Donald MacGilchrist, Tenant of Achnabreck Died 1672 and Phinguel Stuart his Wife Died 1688".

Since the day I visited the old ruined village of Lag on the hills above the Add I have had a fondness for this place, and anyone visiting it would see why; its location is beautiful. On my first tour round Glassary churchyard I had hoped to find one or two stones of Lag people, but found none. However, walking across the grass on another occasion I noticed a flat stone partly covered with rotting grass and turf; on being uncovered it read: "Here Lies the Remains of John McArthur Died at Lag May 7 1819". In the hills above Lag on the old road from Kilmichael Glen to Lochgair, which has almost vanished now, is the ruin of what was said to have been a school; it would be a central point for children from the old farms. Now, in Glassary graveyard is a stone to Ian Guild (or Gauld) late school-

master, died 1804". I wonder, could he have taught at the old school? I have a photograph of what remains of the school; it is now in forest and will disappear in a year or two.

There are so many gravestones of interest in Glassary, but I cannot list any more in the space allotted to me here except this one. In reply to a letter from Bill Campbell of London, Ontario, I sent a list of Campbell gravestones in Kilmartin. In his letter thanking me he said some of his forbears were Munros who had lived at Glasvaar in the beginning of the 19th century whom he had not been able to trace, despite having a genealogist search Glassary graveyard. I found this one: "Here Lies the Remains of Nancy Munro Lawful Daughter of John Munro Cattle Dealer Glasvaar Who Departed This Life upon the 29 January 1809 aged 27. Born 1782. Erected by her Brother Archibald" and alongside, a flat stone inscribed"Archibald Munro, 56, Merchant, Greenock 1820". Bill Campbell confirmed that Nancy was a sister of Donald and Duncan Munro, the two brothers he had been trying to trace for his family tree, and Archibald would be an older brother.

I met an old man in 1942 who lived in Duchernan in Glassary when I was 17. I was driving the local grocer's van at the time. We were talking about the lands of the farms round about; he pointed to the glebe of the church and said "They called that bit John Damsone's land in the old days". I asked him who John Damsone was, and he replied "Oh, I've no idea, I didnae know him". End of story, and young Begg drove away up to Kirnan saying to himself "John Damsone, "John Plum" and so on. That was the end of it, until last year, when I was reading the Statistical Account of the Parish of Glassary by the Rev. Dugal Campbell in 1844. In 1691 the Presbytery of Inveraray were engaged in debate about a glebe for the Minister Mr Daniel Campbell. In a Presbytery minute of that year occurs the following:

"And in regard the Parish by reason of the late troubles and vastations, is not put in capacity to buy a sufficient glebe, and have therefore stented themselves in fourtie pounds each land to be paid yearly into the small books to the said Mr Daniel Campbell, in lieu of his glebe, aye and until they be able to buy the same, the which money so payable out of the Parish, the said Mr Daniel is to pay to Achnabreck yearly for the acre of old called John Dam-

sone's Acre, adjoining to his yard and house, betwixt the east end of the church and the water, the which acre the foresaid heritors have obliged themselves to buy within four years of the date of their putt to be a glebe to their minister ...."

Who was John Damsone? Could he be buried in Glassary kirkyard? I would like to think that he is.

...oooOooo...

Editorial note; This is a shortened version of a longer article by Mr Begg, which contained many more transcriptions and references than appear here. Mr Begg has now completed his recording of the graveyards of Kilmartin, Glassary and Kilmory. For each he has made a plan, numbered the stones, and drawn up an alphabetical register of names, cross-referenced to the stones on which they occur. This information has not yet been handed over to the Archivist; should any reader wish to contact Mr Begg, he can be reached via the Editor.

It should be noted that the Early Christian and mediaeval stones in these graveyards are not included in Mr Begg's records.

...oooOooo...

CORRECTIONS TO KIST 42.

The Ferry Site at Brainport (p.4 line 23):
For "Eredine" read "Ederline".

Aspects of Marine Biology in Mid Argyll (p.23 line 23):
For "1/10,000" read "1/100". (This error was due to a telephonic misunderstanding between author and editor).

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BOOK REVIEWS.

MacTavish of Dunardry. E.F. Bradford.

It very seldom happens that one reads a book to its end without some feeling of disappointment regarding one or several aspects of its writing or production, but in the case of the present volume this reviewer can think of no way in which it could be improved. It is a meticulously presented piece of research, with a multitude of old letters copiously supported by contemporary information, which immensely increases their impact. The author's task of deciphering them, with their idiosyncratic orthography, was formidable in the extreme. The scattered illustrations are in every case apposite and interesting. Dunardry, as all local readers will know, is sited midway along the Crinan Canal -incidentally there is much 'new' information about the impact of this massive undertaking on the local communities - but it must not be thought that the text is in any way parochial, for it is wide-ranging and of importance to every Scot who is interested in the history of his country in the period c.1670 - c.1850. The list of contents alone gives some indication of the ground covered - The Clan: Daily Life: The Professions: The Clergy: Commerce and Administration: Soldiers and Sailors: The Colonials: The Emigrants - surely sufficient to arouse keen interest in people here and overseas who are anxious to unearth information about their ancestors. The fact that all these headings are supported and amplified by a large number of letters brings the period acutely alive, and the pages of Genealogy cannot fail to be of immense value to all family researchers. The author is to be unreservedly congratulated on a brilliant production which deserves the widest publicity.

F.S.M.

£12.00 from the author, Orchard House, Castleton, Whitby, N.Yorkshire. YO212HA. Post free in U.K., £2 p.&p. overseas.

WILD PLANTS of GLASGOW. J.H.Dickson.
Aberdeen University Press. £12.95.

Dr Dickson gave a splendidly illustrated talk to our

Society last winter about the flora of Glasgow, and now his book on the subject has been published. It has delighted me. I would not have thought it possible to write a book about the wild plants of a big city and to do it with such interest and humour. The subtitle Conservation in the City and Countryside implies a reason for this botanical survey. The author begins by giving an account of earlier botanists and their work, and explains why he had concluded a modern Flora was needed: the changing social and industrial conditions of life in and around Glasgow in this century have affected the distribution of wild plants considerably. There are good maps and diagrams showing the geography of the city, and how the area was surveyed. The plant distribution diagrams are remarkably revealing.

The second part of the book concerns the ecology of the many widely differing sites within the Glasgow area. Attention is drawn to particular plants, and to areas which may need care and protection now and in the future. There are excellent photographs of many wild plants in their urban or industrial settings, and beautiful paintings of flowers, all carefully described. Familiar English names are used, and there is nothing too technical for the non-botanically minded. A bibliography, suggestions for further action, and a good index complete the book.

Dr Dickson's great knowledge and enthusiasm have resulted in something of a social history as well as a plant survey. It is a model of what can be done to show the interdependence of wild life and human activities, indicating the species which survive city life and recolonise industrial wasteland. Incidentally, who would have thought there were so many golf links in Glasgow? or so rare an orchid?

I spent my growing years just outside the GLasgow area, in the Lanarkshire of coalmines and iron and steel works. I remember the fun of running up and down partly recolonised bings, and the excitement of finding the little lemon flowers of mouse-ear hawkweed in the shale and coal dust of that bleak setting - a plant that did not grow elsewhere in the clay soils of Wishaw.

I hope Dr Dickson's book will inspire Glaswegians to notice what else flourishes in Glasgow besides the people.

D.M.H.

THE STORY of CROFTING in SCOTLAND. Douglas Willis.
John Donald Publishers. £8.50. (168 pp.)

This book is useful in that it gathers together a great deal of information on the development of crofting agriculture. The chapters on the social background of the Highlands and Islands which led to the establishment of crofting are well-informed and well-balanced . Naturally some blame is cast on the landowners, but the reasons for their actions are fairly stated. The problems which arose, mainly in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, are well covered; the difficulties which led to the "crofters' wars" the findings of the Napier Commission and the various Crofting Acts which followed are all well documented. The chapter on the present organisation of crofting is useful, but those on the crofting way of life are inevitably superficial, and the final chapter on the future of crofting is so speculative that the book may soon become obsolete.

The book is marred by some over-writing (the author is a journalist) and by the inclusion of a certain amount of unnecessary material: while the buildings of Skara Brae and Jarlshof may have some similarities to early croft houses, it is difficult to see the relevance of several pages on brochs, and superfluous to point out that the good state of repair of a number of these testifies to the durability of the stones of which they were built. There is some needless repetition, justifiable perhaps in a series of articles, but irritating in a book. The meaning of terms such as transhumance and cas-chrom is explained only on the second or third occasion of their use, which could be confusing to some of the general readership to whom the book is obviously addressed.

The illustrations consist of about fifty black-and - white photographs; it might have been better to show a quern in use, rather than two stones leaning against a wall. Diagrams showing the method of construction of different types of croft-house, a click mill and a cas-chrom would have made the book more meaningful to the general reader. The index leaves much to be desired.

Alan Campbell.

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IRISH SHEILINGS in the 1930's.

J. Alan Stewart.

[It is thought that the following extracts, by permission, from a paper published in the Journal of the Glens of Antrim Historical Society, 1978,will be of interest to readers in view of the reference in Kist 40 p.3, to the remains of similar huts between Skipness and Tarbert].

For several summers between 1932 and 1936 my friend John Luke and I spent a few weeks camping and exploring in the wilder parts of the west of Ireland....One summer we went to Achill....for the next day or so we explored the neighbourhood of Achill Head. Having seen signs of activity further up on the higher slopes of Creaghaun we turned our attention in that direction and were surprised to find on its south-eastern side, quite near the summit at a height approaching two thousand feet, a sizable herd of cattle, tended by a small group of boys from about sixteen or so years of age. They told us they had been up there almost continuously since May, it then being mid-July....[They] slept in small shelters which were roughly rectangular with a curved end to the west and open to the east. They were about three or four feet in height and the walls were of sod and stones. They must have been about six feet in width and eight from back to front. The roof was supported by rough wood which I think must have been whin, of which there was plenty further down the hillside; they were roughly thatched with grass and rushes - though I am not at all sure about this. The floors were covered with what I think was dead heather. I do not remember seeing anything like blankets, and I think that the boys slept in their clothes. There were three huts in use, though there was at least one other which could have been made serviceable quite easily.

The boys kept a few hens which supplied them with eggs, and they had one milk cow which they milked morn and night. About twice a week other boys, usually two, came up from the village with such fare as wheaten bread, potatoes, jam, butter and bacon. They cooked on a fire of peats and some dry whin, using iron saucepans, and for breakfast a cast-iron frying pan. There was a little stream of running

water, about a foot wide, and not more than thirty yards away from the nearest hut, at which we often saw the boys washing.

They were very friendly and invited us to stay with them which we did gladly. We had not more than a mile or so to go down to....fetch our groundsheets etc., and by covering the floor of our hut with grass....we found the accommodation quite comfortable....The floors sloped downwards from back to front. Sometimes visitors [who brought up the supplies] would stay overnight so that there were six or seven to do the herding instead of four. As far as I could see, the cattle showed little tendency to stray, although there were some horses which roamed over several miles of hillside.

John and I used our own food of course, though they gave us fresh milk. In the evenings we sat and talked with the boys. ....I am sure they had no interest in the folk stories of the west, such as we heard in several places from older people....we found them to be hospitable and glad of company.

I did not realise at the time that this was a survival of the age-long custom of transhumance.

...oooOooo...

MIDGES AGAIN.

An extract from Burt's Letters from the North of Scotland. Letter XXVI. Captain Burt was an officer of engineers who was sent into Scotland about 1730 as a contractor for the building of roads etc.

I have but one thing more to take Notice of in relation to the Spot of which I have been so long speaking, and that is, I have been sometimes vexed with a little Plague (if I may use the Expression), but do not you think I am too grave upon the Subject; there are great Swarms of little Flies which the Natives call 'Malhoulakins': 'Houlak', they tell me, signifies in the Country Language, a Fly, and 'Houlakin' is the Diminutive of that Name. These are so very small, that , separately,they are but just perceptible and that is all; and being of a blackish Colour, when a Number of them settle upon the Skin, they make it look as if it

was dirty; there they soon bore with their little Augers into the Pores, and change the Face from black to red.

They are only troublesome (I should say intolerable) in Summer, when there is a profound Calm; for the least Breath of Wind immediately disperses them; and the only Refuge from them is the House, into which I never knew them to enter. Sometimes, when I have been talking to any one, I have (though with the utmost Self-denial) endured their Stings to watch his Face, and see how long they would suffer him to be quiet; but in three or four Seconds, he has slapped his Hand upon his Face, and in great Wrath cursed the little Vermin; but I have found the same Torment in some other Parts of the Highlands where Woods were at no great Distance.

...oooOooo...

WHELKS.

Denis Rixson.

This article is a peg from which to hang a favourite quotation on the subject of shellfish. These are a commodity which has retained its value throughout Highland history since Mesolithic times, when the earliest settlers in Scotland in small wandering groups established settlements at coastal sites such as Lussa Bay on Jura and Kinloch on Rhum. At certain places in the Hebrides, as on Oronsay, they ate such enormous quantities of shellfish that the waste shells still form large mounds. [See Kist 37, Recent Excavations of Oronsay Shell-middens, by Paul Mellars].

They continue to be an important resource, as fresh shellfish are exported daily to Continental markets after landing at West Coast ports. King prawns (nephrops norvegicus) and velvet crabs now enjoy a high market value, whereas even a few years ago they were thrown back by fishermen as worthless Lobsters fetch an astronomical price, and the sight of bags of whelks lying on the shore is common on the West Coast. Shellfish have not always enjoyed a market value, mainly because they perish easily, and the transport difficulties of earlier days meant they could not reach their market in time. John Knox, who in 1786 visited the area for the British Fish-

eries Society commented on this. "Shell fish, such as lobsters, oysters, crabs, clams, mussels, cockles, bring no price, and consequently incite no attention, though it is well known that some of these fish might be pickled and exported".

Whether or not they could be exploited commercially they have always been an immensely important food resource for Highlanders, especially poor ones. Thomas Pennant, after his visit to Skye in 1772, wrote that the poor "prowl like other animals along the shore to pick up limpets and other shell fish, the casual repast of hundreds during part of the year". Nowadays the sacks of little black whelks collected at low tide represent a useful source of extra income to the local people in an area where it is always difficult to make a living. A hundred years ago they were not just useful, they were essential. The following evidence comes from the Napier Commission of 1883. The question was asked;
"Do **men** gather whelks, as well as women and children?"
"Yes - but is very hard work for the men."
"Is it not harder for the women and children?"
"They don't complain of it so much."
What an admission!

...oooOooo...

SUMMER EXPEDITIONS 1991.

These interest-packed outings were all well-attended. One cannot record them fully here; the following brief reports are compiled mainly from notes made by Lorne McEchern.

20th April. Finchairn. Led by Mrs Kahane.
After inspecting the large robbed cairn, still 4ft high and almost 80ft across, unexcavated, with one cist and the probable remains of another at its edges, we walked along the farm track to search for three groups of cup-and-ring carvings known to be there, and trace a deserted settlement; then back along the old track, past a double-arched limekiln and its quarry (see Kist 41 p.7) to Kilneuair Church, until late mediaeval times the main church of the district, now a ruin.
11th May. Ford & Torran. Led by Mrs Carmichael and Mrs Kahane.
We saw a ruined cairn and a cist with large capstone still partly in place at Ford, then at Torran a mysterious rectangular structure, well-built, natural rock for its short back wall, and no roof, which no-one could identify. (Can any reader help?)

From there a pleasant walk took us to Dun Toiseach, with its ruined walls once 14ft thick, then to the burial cairn at Inverliever with its central cist, then along the old road above Loch Awe past the Angel's Well, clear and surrounded by fresh green cress, then down to the standing stone at Torran, almost 11ft tall, and Christianised by pecked crosses on two faces.

16th June. Bute. Led by Miss Dorothy Marshall.

A coach met us at Rhubodach. Miss Marshall (than whom no-one knows more about Bute) took us to East St. Colmac's Farm to see on a standing stone a carved cross with unusual decoration, then to Ettrick Bay for a survey of sites visible from there, then, with commentary all the way, by Port Bannatyne, Rothesay and Kerrycroy, to the massive standing stones at Kingarth. Lunch was taken at Kilchattan Bay, where we saw a huge limekiln (in a back garden). A distant view of Dunagoil Fort had to suffice, on our way to St. Blane's Church, an ancient Celtic monastic site in a beautiful setting; the 12th century chapel stands among much that is far older - including the sinister "Devil's Cauldron". We also saw the deserted settlement close by. A visit to Bute Museum ended the tour.

20th July. Kilmichael Glen. A botanical expedition led by Mrs Hooton and Miss Lewis.

The sheer delight of walking and slowly driving along this beautiful glen with its varied habitats foiled the best intentions of counting species and taking notes. (Lorne was unfortunately not with us!). We must have been shown a hundred species of plants, from rough ground, roadside ditches, green field, uncut hay meadow, marsh, small woodland, moor, lochside and loch (water lobelia here), hillside and burn. A search for early Grass of Parnassus was eventually successful; and those who returned by Ford crossroads saw a stand of elecampane,

14th August. Achnabreck. Led by Mrs Kahane.

A short outing on an evening damp, cloudy but surprisingly midge-free took us to the rock sheets at Achnabreck, the most extensive area of rock carvings in Scotland, displaying not only cups and rings but also other patterns such as spirals and grooved outlines. From there we walked down to Achnabreck deserted settlement, where in addition to the houses there appears to be a quite well-preserved horse-gang.

14th September. Easdale Island. Led by Mr and Mrs Clark.

On a perfect sunny afternoon most of the party had a picnic lunch on the island before making a tour by the quiet paths (no motor traffic), beginning at The Square, a wide grassy

space bordered by small, low white houses, once those of the slate-quarry workers, then to the harbour, built of slate, then past the great water-filled quarries (one, open to the sea, had large jellyfish gliding about in it) and small industrial buildings, up to the highest point of the island where an indicator identifies the main features of the magnificent panoramic view of sea, islands and mountains. Wild flowers grew everywhere even on slate dumps; tiny gardens with walls of slate were full of colour. A visit to the excellent museum completed the tour.

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