

Sunmore School 1996



F.S.M.

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DUNMORE SCHOOL

Hilary Giles

Dunmore School and school house still stand behind the stone wall which bounds their rocky, sloping site to the north of the Tarbert - Kilberry road about halfway between Kilnaish Cemetery and the Ardpatrik turn. (Map reference NR 766 609).

The stone-built school, with its steeply pitched slate roof, has fairly large windows in both long walls of its single room. They are set high up and were glazed with "obscured" glass, which diminished the amount of daylight they admitted. Inspectors, on more than one occasion, recommended its removal, for no other source of light was provided. Below the window cills the room was lined with tongue and groove woodwork; the floor was wooden, and a coal-burning stove stood in one corner. There was no water supply on the site. This became an increasing drawback as the years - and successive Education Acts - passed.

A small porch protrudes from the east gable wall. Above it a square stone is inscribed:

"In memoriam
E.H.C.
1855"

This commemorates Eliza Hope Campbell of Dunmore House. She was the daughter of William Baillie, Lord Polkenner, and Lady Helen Polkenner (nee Colquhoun), and was born in 1784. She lived at Dunmore for 45 years, and had seven children - Hellen (so spelt in the record of her mother's death), Margaret, James, Mary, William, Isobella and Catherine. James, Mary and Catherine predeceased their mother, who died a widow on 5th October 1855. The cause of death was recorded as "Old age, and the general decay of the system". We can assume that it was her four surviving children who built the school in her memory. It was a fairly usual form of memorial among the wealthy in those days, and it reflected the nation's growing interest in the provision of education for all.

The school buildings and site remained part of the Dunmore estate; but the Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge was entrusted to provide staff, equipment and education.

[The SSPCK had been formed in 1709 for the purpose of setting up schools in the Highlands and Islands. It appears to have been Calvinistic and anti-Gaelic, as described in John Lorne Campbell's Introduction (1963) to F. Rea's "A School in South Uist" (1929). This school, at Garrynamonie, was in its early days not unlike Dunmore School. The Introduction lists several books in English provided by the Society. All are of a religious nature and sound unattractive as school "readers". Possibly the Society provided the same for Dunmore.]

Probably therefore Dunmore School opened in 1855. It closed in 1964. (Dunoon Education Office however could not confirm this date). It is interesting to map the changes in the provision of education in those 109 years.

An Act of Parliament of 1696 had led to the establishment of Parochial Schools in every Parish. Overseen by the local land-owners of each parish, they were funded by a parish "stent", or tax. Dunmore was at that time in the huge parish of Kilcalmonell, which was bisected by West Loch Tarbert. The two parochial schools were on the south side of the loch, so the children of Dunmore, on the north shore, were, in practice, unable to reach them. The SSPCK were happy to fill the gap once the Dunmore School building was in place.

In 1860 all counties of Scotland were required to report on the provision of education within their boundaries. The Duke of Argyll chaired the Argyll Commission on Education, which reported in 1869. Based upon the counties' reports the Elementary Education (Scotland) Act was passed in 1872. The Board Schools were set up, partly publicly funded and directed; for the first time education became compulsory in Scotland. On the local level it was administered by elected School Boards, who were to supervise the schools and appoint qualified teachers.

Dunmore Society School now became Dunmore Board School, controlled by the South Knapdale School Board. The Scotch (sic) Education Committee held jurisdiction over the Board by means of annual inspection by Government School Inspectors. For the first time Dunmore School received some money from without the parish. The value of the annual government grant was determined by the Inspectors' report. The Board (which again consisted of local land-owners) raised the rest of the required funding through a parish rate. Too little raised (in the Inspectors' view) was matched by a smaller

grant from the Government at the next inspection. Dunmore School received grants ranging from about £35 p.a. to £48 p.a. There were at this time from 20 to 30 pupils and one teacher. The Government Inspectors reported on all aspects of the school - the upkeep of the building, the provision of "offices" (problematic with no water supply), equipment, teaching proficiency, examination results and attendance. The better the report, the larger the grant awarded. Any failure to implement the Inspectors' recommendations resulted in a grant reduction.

The 1909-1914 Minute Book of the South Knapdale School Board is preserved in the County Archive Office. From it we find that the Board had six members and a chairman. The members came from each settlement which had a school - Dunmore, Kilberry, Achahoish with Ellary, Ormsary, Achnamara and Inverneil. There was also a "side school" at Kilmory Knap, which was open only when school-age children (5 - 14 years of age) were living there and the Board decided that it was cheaper to employ a teacher than to board the pupils or convey them to Achnamara. The Board's first use of transport was from Ellary to Achahoish in 1912, when they decided to convey the children in both directions daily "in a machine". At first they had considered providing only the journey to school. Of the South Knapdale Board Schools, only Achahoish remains open in 1995. When the chair was held by Capt. Campbell of Kilberry, the meetings were held at Kilberry Castle. Dunmore's first Board member was from Dunmore House, later members from Ardpatrik or Carse. The only female member during these years was Miss Lithgow from Ormsary, whose name appears in 1914.

The Minute Book gives us an insight into the running of Dunmore School. Only trained teachers were appointed, and they lived in the schoolhouse. They may have been trained at the Normal School in Glasgow (a forerunner of the teacher training colleges). The Board determined their salaries; and they had to apply to the Board for pay rises. Discussion on this point was frequently deferred, especially if the triennial election of Board members was due. Teachers were required to give two months' notice of leaving; advertisements for new teachers were put in the Scotsman and the Oban Times.

In 1909 Katerina Blair was the teacher at Dunmore. Her salary was £60 p.a., with £12 p.a. extra for teaching the

"continuation classes" (night school), three nights a week, sixteen weeks a year, providing she cleaned the classroom after the class. Ordinary school cleaning was at this time done by Miss Christine Carswell of Ardpatrik, who also taught Needlework. She resigned in April 1910, after 37 years service. The Board granted her a £5 p.a. retiring allowance. The Government grant for 1909 was £45 13s 9d after deductions (one of which was for the Teachers' Annuity Premium).

By December 1910 there were 40 children on the roll, aged 5 to 14, coming from Carse, Dunmore, Ardpatrik and Achaglachgach. Miss Blair taught them the usual three R's, R.I., Singing and Drawing. The Inspectors found the singing below standard "as there was no piano". They requested that P.T., Cookery and Laundry Work should be added for the Secondary age pupils, who were found to be "promising". They found too few desks, and none fit for the youngest children.

In 1911 Mr Birkmyre of Carse was appointed to the Board. The school was in poor repair; noting that "the school was built 56 years ago", they discussed repairs and repainting - for the first time. The Inspectors had noted that cloak-room accommodation was essential, but the Board disagreed "as few of the pupils are in possession of cloaks". At their next visit the Inspectors found "a heap of cloaks" on the muddy porch floor. The dispute continued.

The Board decided when the holidays were to be taken; all their schools opened and closed on the same days; but Miss Blair was once allowed a slight variation so that she could attend a Teacher Training Course run by the Provincial Board in Glasgow. Dunmore also had an extra day off to celebrate the wedding of the heir to Dunmore. Although some pupils walked two miles or more to school and home again, with bare feet, attendance was generally good. The part-time "Compulsory Officer" made sure of that! At some time between 1909 and 1914 a Mr Allen from Ardpatrik held the post and was paid £3 p.a.

By 1911 the school roll was rising. The Board discussed appointing a second teacher, but did not do so. Miss Blair coped with over 40 children aged 5 to 14. On two different occasions the Board allowed a child to leave aged $13\frac{3}{4}$, on condition that the child attended the continuation classes. These children were "needed at home".

In 1913 much-needed repairs were done and more teaching

equipment bought. Wall maps, blackboards, pictures, new slates and slate pencils, exercise books, writing copies, drawing and sewing materials, clay for the Kindergarten and "Manual Work Requisites" (garden tools) were bought for Dunmore. The Board standardised equipment and books throughout their schools.

The same meeting defined the work of the cleaner:
Daily: Floors swept, furniture dusted, fire lit, ashes removed, coal brought in.

Weekly: Grate blackleaded, brasswork polished, towel washed (a clean one to be provided every week), "offices" to be cleaned and sprayed with disinfectant.

Monthly: Floors scrubbed, disinfectant sprayed all over.

Quarterly: Maps, windows and pictures to be cleaned.

The School Boards lasted until 1918, when the Education Act (Scotland) abolished them and established the County Education Authorities. These had full control over the schools within their areas and provided full funding (via the rates).

The Local Government (Scotland) Act of 1929 abolished the County Education Authorities and replaced them with the County Education Committees.

In 1919 Miss Isa Bews was the teacher at Dunmore; she had been appointed by the Board, and was still teaching there in 1925. The following information about teachers at Dunmore is taken from an undated list, author unknown, which is in the County Archive Office:

Mrs A. R. McCallum (b.18.7.99) left 25.8.1931

Janet Henderson. 25.8.31 to 30.10.1931

Lillias Anderson. 3.11.31 to ?

Catherine McKinnon. 1933

She was a temporary teacher from the permanent education staff of the County; she did not want to stay at Dunmore.

Mary Jackson.

Each name is followed by a **I** symbol; perhaps an indication of being a trained teacher.

Then came the declining years of the school. Dunmore never again reached the roll of over 40 pupils of the years before the Great War. The numbers dropped year by year from 1920 when there were 24 on the roll; in 1930 there were 20, in 1933 only 15. This decline is in line with the general fall in rural population during the inter-war years.

In 1933 the two remaining pupils at Kilberry School were transferred, with their teacher Catherine McKinnon, to Dunmore.

The lack of a water supply was uppermost in the minds of the Education Committee. A new site, three miles from Lerg-nahension, was surveyed. It was on the south side of the road, with a water supply 600 yards away. The matter dragged on until 1939, when the outbreak of war killed it off.

In 1947 Miss Kerr was the teacher; she had no wish to stay at Dunmore; the school's future was discussed. In March 1948 the local member of the Education Committee, S/Ldr McBain, met the parents of Dunmore pupils. The meeting decided to appoint a new teacher, repair the buildings and 'bus' the senior pupils to Tarbert. Dunmore, beheaded, survived. In 1952 S/Ldr McBain asked for a new building. Alternatives were: repair - again - Dunmore and appoint a second teacher, or 'bus' all the children to Tarbert. The Education Committee decided to re-open Kilberry School! But in December of the same year electricity was installed in the school and the schoolhouse, and Dunmore survived again; and again, in 1958, when lack of water made the supply of school dinners impossible, and sandwiches and a hot drink were served instead. These were prepared by Mrs Bell, who also cleaned the schoolroom. The number on roll continued very low - six are shown on a photograph taken about this time, a contrast to an earlier photograph showing two long rows, boys standing behind the seated girls, only one of whom is wearing shoes and socks.

The early years of the 1960's provided few pupils; the Forestry Commission did not build any houses in the area, as had been expected in 1959. No more repair work was undertaken, although by now water was brought to the site in two iron pipes from a collecting tank higher up the hill behind the school.

Finally, having provided education for a fairly wide area of scattered population for 106 years, under five different Education Acts, Dunmore School closed in the summer of 1964. The last teacher, Mrs McArthur, went with the last Dunmore pupils to the re-opened Kilberry School.

In 1967 the School buildings and site reverted to the Countess of Cottenham, a Mr Ross and others, who were the Feudal Superiors of the Dunmore Estate. They were immediately sold to Mr W. Bell for his own private use, and

have now (1994) been resold.

Mr Ian Bell, who is a second-generation ex-pupil of Dunmore School (his mother went to school there, walking the two miles to and from Achaglachgach from the age of four and a few months), has given me the following information:

Mr McArthur was the teacher at Dunmore from about 1880 to 1908.

The school may have been used as a polling station. It certainly was used, in turn with other schools, as the meeting place of the South Knapdale School Board, when they decided that visiting the schools was a good way of inspecting them as a body.

It was also used by a Mr Coulson from Ardpatrik for his Annual Ball. A description of one of these lively events appeared in the Argyll Herald of 26th February, 1876.

Many thanks to the following:

Mr Murdo MacDonald, Archivist for Argyll and Bute.

Miss Jean Aitken, last teacher of Kilberry School, for supplying the closure date.

Mr Ian Bell, for his interest and information, and for showing me two photographs (undated) of pupils at Dunmore.

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PLUS ÇA CHANGE...

Murdo MacDonald

The following petition dates from April 1893.

To the members of Mid Argyle District Committee of the County Council

Gentlemen

We the undersigned inhabitants of Danna and other residents in the Parish of North Knapdale beg most respectfully to approach you and solicit your favourable consideration of our most humble petition, which briefly stated is thus:

- 1) The road - one mile and a half in length which extends from the Isthmus connecting Danna with the said parish is, owing to various causes, in a sad state of repair.
- 2) The traffic through Danna is very considerable as all the surplus produce is conveyed by carts.

- 3) Notwithstanding our best united efforts on account of pressure of work and other calls we are not in a position to maintain the road in a condition as would best facilitate our local industries and develop our resources.
- 4) We are taxed and pay the levitable road assessment rate and would naturally expect to participate in all the advantages accruing from a good and well kept thoroughfare.
- 5) As your Council have at their disposal a grant specially designated for the benefit of Districts situated in circumstances like ours we confidently hope you will graciously extend to us substantial assistance and put our road in perfect order, and thus enable us to compete with our neighbours in the successful prosecution of our labour.

We earnestly crave the prayers of our petition and trust its terms will be granted as its favourable consideration will convey on us a permanent and beneficial privilege.

We are, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient servants

<u>NAME</u>	<u>DESIGNATION</u>
Duncan Smith	Mid Danna
Alexander Smith	Mid Danna
Donald MacNeill	Danna na cloiche
Archibald MacNeill	Danna na cloiche
Ronald MacNicol	Danna na cloiche
Archibald MacNicol	Danna na cloiche
Archibald MacNicol	New Danna
Archibald Graham	New Danna
John MacCormick	Portnagallon
Archibald MacGilp	New Ulva
Alexander Smith	Ulva
Alexander Graham	Ulva
Duncan MacMillan	Coshendrochaid
Angus MacGilp	Coshendrochaid
James Campbell	Coshendrochaid
Donald MacMillan	Farnoch
M & A MacNicol	Farnoch
John Fisher	Turbiskle
Duncan Campbell	Barnashalg
Archibald MacGugan	Barrahormaid

In the previous month (March 1893) the Secretary for Scotland had announced a Special Grant of £1000 for making roads, bridlepaths and footpaths in poor and necessitous districts in Argyll with special reference to facilitating access to schools. (He had previously allowed Special Grants to the Isle of Lewis and other impoverished parts of Ross & Cromarty).

In Argyll the lion's share of the Grant went to the Mull and Ardnamurchan Districts. Mid Argyll was allocated £50, and out of various proposals this Danna scheme was selected. The existing road in Danna was described as "practically impassable in Winter" and also as being difficult for the children attending Ulva school at times of rough wet weather.

The cost of the scheme was estimated at £70 which was made up of the £50 Special Grant and £20 contributed by the proprietor and local residents. The work was completed in 1894.

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THE ROOKY WOOD

Marion Campbell

The rooks deserted the big wood shortly before my father died. My mother took it very hard, as an ill omen, and indeed she and I were exiled for some years thereafter. When we returned, we found several huge beeches fallen, dead of sheer old age. Nobody bothered to count tree-rings; but "ane litill woode" is on record around the castle by 1610. So the rooks were right to move; some seven years later their scouts came prospecting the seaward fringe of trees. They were well-established by 1939, and today their treetop nests almost encircle the old house.

Unlike some, this rookery is occupied all year round. The numbers fall after harvest, but a sunny autumn day sees plenty of activity - birds flying in pairs or trios, birds balancing on absurdly small twigs and bowing to partners, old established couples prudently refurbishing the tattered nest. They are ceremonious creatures at any time, and once I was privileged to see what must have been a major event.

I was out on the headland, one chilly January day, when

the old dog lifted her head and looked north. Following her line I picked up a thin dark band in the sky, wavering as it advanced. Not geese - the sound was strange and the line moved too slowly on too wide a front. The rooks of the wood began to caw and then to take off by ones and twos, spiralling up until the whole colony was airborne and rising to meet the approaching mass.

An immense flock poured over us, briefly darkening the whole sky, chorusing together in short yelping cries above the whistle of wings. It resembled nothing so much as one of those demonstrations that bring cities to a standstill, with leaders crying slogans half-drowned by the shuffle of feet. Out they went, over the sea; I watched them all the way to Gigha, and saw a detachment break off towards Kintyre. Some of our residents flapped wearily home before nightfall, but the rookery was not fully staffed for several days.

I never saw another such convocation, though I did once hear the high-pitched summons and see some birds take off in response. Many questions remain. How far had the vanguard flown, to gather such an army? How did they all find enough food? Anyone who has helped organise a conference knows the difficulties, and rooks - as far as I can tell - have no circulars or faxes. This was an instant call-out, a Hosting by word of beak without so much as a Fiery Cross.

For most of the year they fly out to grain-stubbles or seawrack, or to pastureland where they feast upon grubs, especially leatherjackets, or most skilfully and delicately on the wireworms that ravage young cornshoots. Once, around 1944 when we were all Digging for Victory and grain was precious, the farm manager demanded that the keeper use all his rationed stock of cartridges on "thae craws that's eating aa the aits". The oatfield was indeed black with birds wading along the newly braided drills, but a spell of watching proved that they were tweaking at each shoot with their ploughshare beaks, raising the plant an inch or so, and picking off a small maggot. We let them carry on, ran the roller over the field to firm the plants down, and went on to a bumper crop. I have been well-disposed towards Corvus frugilegus, the food-gatherer, ever since, not least when he and his friends dance in the sky at dusk.

They are not our only corvids. The old castle is afflicted of jackdaws in every lum, flighting in hordes among the

rooks and competing with them for building-sticks, and at least one pair of hoodies resides in an old pine in the upper wood. Magpies are rare, jays have not been recorded in these immediate woods, choughs were driven out early this century (to my parents' fury); but one kinsman does come to strike terror in the colony.

Some years ago a group of Bright Young Things, unable to secure nest-sites in the main residential area, set up house in the flat crown of a monkeypuzzle, which was none the better for the intrusion. A raven from the sea-cliff came regularly for eggs and nestlings from these undefended clutches; though he would never have risked his pinions among the tangled branches of beech or sycamore. He could do nothing about the chimney-pots either, but he gave the jackdaws hysterics all the same.

Last December there came a sudden ringing croak, and a pair of ravens swung down among the outermost trees. They were not in full display - nobody was falling upside-down or clanging like a dinner-gong - but they were certainly showing off. One swooped so low into a clearing that his great wedge-tail was only some thirty feet from the ground, his back gleaming ink-blue in the low sunlight. The hoodies came flashing over the castle like Spitfires; most of the rooks were in panic, though some braver ones got behind the hoodies; the jackdaws shrieked Murder-murder-polis! from their rooftop. The intruders banked and climbed and sailed off, markedly not shouting back until they were over the fields, but they showed their enjoyment by a return visit next day.

I shall be interested to see if rook's egg is on the raven's menu this year. It will not stop the farmers sniping at all "craws", but the leatherjackets will enjoy a busy season if the rooks are few.

[For readers unfamiliar with Mid Argyll, the castle of the above is Kilberry Castle. Ed.]

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REPRINTS of KIST

As a result of the generosity and expertise of one of our members, reprints of Kist are available, in limited numbers, price £1 each, postage extra. Requests for specific issues, or specific subjects if the Kist number is not known, should be addressed to the Publications Secretary.

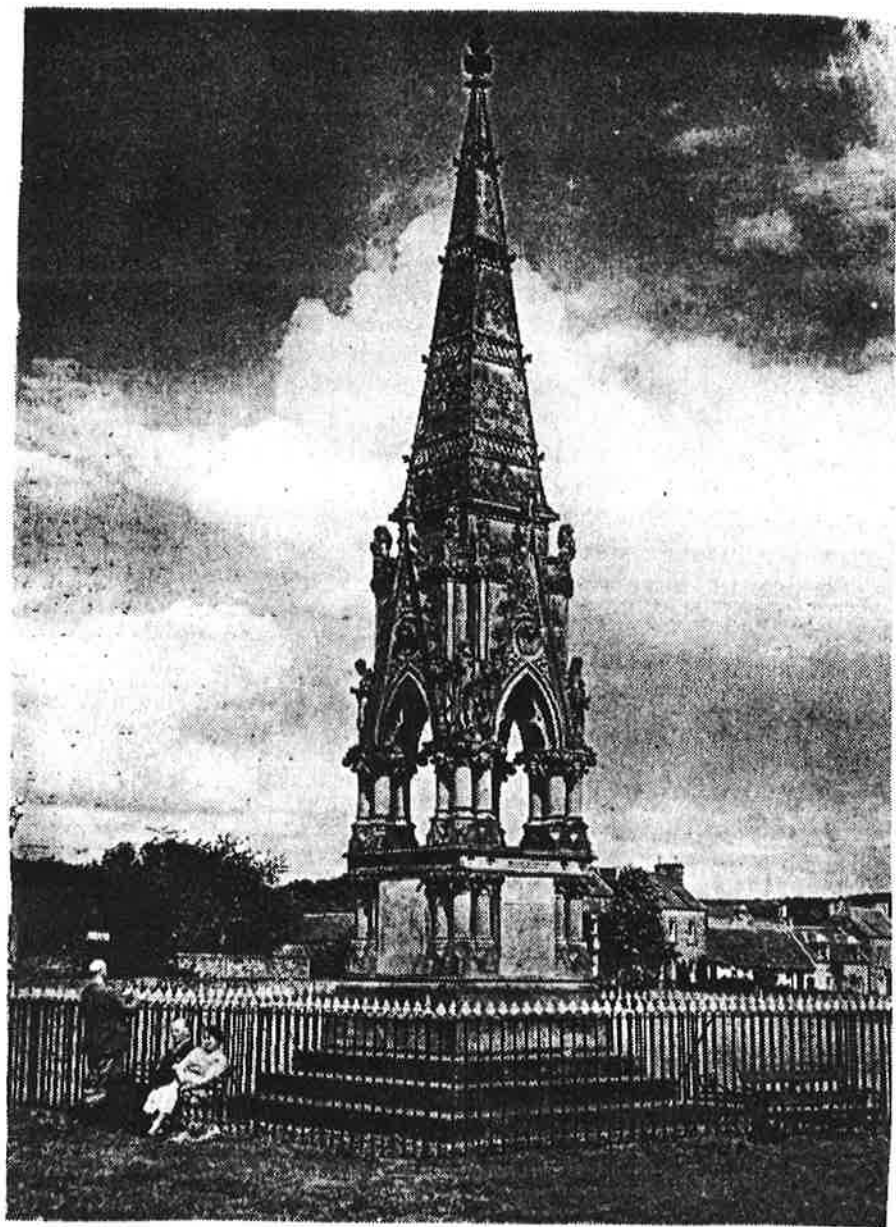
Dr John Leyden

[John Leyden was born in 1775 in the small village of Denholm some four miles from Hawick in the Scottish Borders. (Denholm is also the birthplace of Sir James A.H. Murray, the first editor of the Oxford English Dictionary). He studied at Edinburgh and St Andrews Universities, qualified as a physician and was for some time assistant surgeon at Madras, India; but it is as poet and orientalist that he is best known. He collaborated with Sir Walter Scott in the collecting and publishing of Border ballads for the early volumes of Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, and wrote ballads and poems of his own, as well as translations. In 1803 he sailed for India, initially to Madras, and eventually settled in Calcutta, where he was in 1809 Commissioner for the Court of Requests and in 1810 Assay Master of the Mint. During this time he travelled widely in the East, acquiring 34 languages - and translating the Gospels into five of them. He became an expert in the Indo-Persian, Indo-Chinese and Deccan languages on which he published a well-known treatise. In 1811 he travelled with Lord Minto to Java as interpreter, and died in Batavia of fever eleven days before his 36th birthday. There is a rather splendid monument to him on the village green at Denholm. The north and south panels carry formal inscriptions, the east panel a quotation from one of his own poems, the west a six-line verse written in his memory by Sir Walter Scott. The Tour was not published until 1903, and was probably never prepared by him for publication. It is in the form of diary letters sent to friends].

On our way to Dunstaffnage we visited the remarkable boiling well, where the appearance of violent boiling is produced by the emission of air, but we did not see it in perfection. [Where is this? Does it still exist? Ed.] At Dunstaffnage the echo - which is produced by a person speaking from the castle, who hears nothing himself and is heard by a person stationed at the chapel - is very singular.

....

July 29. On our return to Loch Gilpin from Lochgair House



LEYDEN'S MONUMENT, DENHOLM

Photograph reproduced by courtesy of the Hawick Archaeological Society from their Transactions of 1938.

[Leyden was born in the low thatched cottage on the right].

we met Commissary Campbell of Ross, who invited us to visit his seat at Taynish. As this gave us an opportunity of seeing Southr Knapdale and Castle Swein, we accepted it with pleasure, and received from him a letter of introduction to Mrs Campbell. Retracing our steps along the [Crinan] canal, we entered a district which at first promised to be extremely rocky, mountainous and wild, but which much to our surprise we found well sheltered with wood, romantic and highly cultivated. Ridges of potatoes appeared on the steepest eminences, and green streaks of corn emerged on the summits of the hills amid clusters of white rocks. Almost every spot of arable land appeared cultivated, even where no plough could possibly be employed. On enquiry we found that the spade was used in tillage where the country is very rocky and irregular.

Passing along the side of Loch Salenughellaghelly*, a beautiful romantic arm of the sea, we reached Taynish. Taynish stands on a promontory between two lakes, the southern of which is termed Loch Swein, on the farthest bank of which are situated the ruins of Castle Swein, at four miles' distance. The house is of the uninteresting antique, having never been of great strength, and having lost all its ancient appendages by the present possessor preferring convenience to barbarous grandeur.

August 6. At Taynish we found Mrs Campbell and her sister, Miss Lamont, ladies whose fascinating manners, good humour, and intelligent minds prevented us entirely from perceiving the lapse of time. Upon recollection, I therefore consider the period which elapsed between July 29 and August 6 as being annihilated; for certainly time passes at Taynish as imperceptibly as the magician of Skerr found it in the Celtic Hath-innis or the green isle of the blessed.

At Taynish we had an opportunity of hearing various species of Highland music performed with grace and execution on the harpsichord.

* This extraordinary place-name has been elucidated for the Editor by Miss Marion Campbell as Salen a'Ghall-choille, sandy bay of the foreign(ers'?) wood, pronounced much as Leyden wrote it, Sălănă ghăllă hélyie. Gallchoille is the present name of a farm overlooking Caol Scotnish.

Beyond the promontory of Tainish the islands of Ulva and Dana extend in a right line. Both are very fertile in corn. The rocks are schistus and limestone. Beyond those lie various small rocky islands, used for grazing sheep and black cattle. ... Jura grazes vast herds of black cattle, but produces very little corn.

The rocks which we saw in the vicinity of Craignish were chiefly schistus, freestone, whinstone, granite quartz and some steatite. Mr Campbell told me he had caused a search to be made for coal and minerals, but had only discovered what the miners termed a nest of lead, in its reguline form.

Mr Campbell showed me various copies of bonds of manrent and friendship, and of blood-acquittal, about the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, chiefly between the Campbells of Craignish and the MacRaws and MacGraws, and the clan MacOharmaig or Shaw. They were tedious and formal, but conveyed a very clear idea of the barbarity of the times.

We left Craignish and proceeded to Prospect Hill, where we were obliged to remain this evening from the impossibility of procuring horses. In the evening I called on Mr Gow, an agriculturist of great merit, placed here by Mr Malcolm to superintend an experimental farm, which I traversed in company with him, and had an excellent opportunity of observing the process of cultivating mossy land. This extensive flat consists of about 5000 acres, of which 3000 belong to Mr Malcolm, who has laid out 500 in an experimental farm which has succeeded to admiration. Within three years this whole champaign was an impassable morass, floated with water, covered with sedge, heath and marshmallow, the surface entirely deformed and irregular from casting of peats from time immemorial. The moss is from four to twelve feet deep, immediately under which is a thin stratum of sand, beneath is gravel full of water. The main trenches are from nine to eleven feet deep, and after sinking of the moss require from two to four feet of additional depth. From these trenches gravel is procured for the formation of the traversing roads. In the main trench the water runs half a ton a minute. After draining the trenches, the irregular surface of the moss, covered with heath and marshmallow, is delved and levelled at the expense of £2. 13s. 4d. per acre. The covered trenches by which the main springs communicate with

the principal trench are arched with the black bottom peat dried, which is insoluble in water. The first crop succeeds best in potatoes, by which the soil is greatly ameliorated, but even hardly produces its seed. Adjacent to the moss rises a knoll of excellent limestone, where Mr Gow intends to erect a kiln. From the difficulty of conveyance he chiefly uses shell-sand as yet, which answers extremely well. On about 200 acres of this moss there are at present luxuriant crops of corn, turnips and potatoes; and the natives, who first regarded Mr Gow as a madman, begin to view his progress with astonishment, but without abating one jot or tittle of their attachment to their most useless and most injurious usages.

Having procured horses in the evening, we set out by Kilmartine to view the remains of Carnassary Castle, founded by Bishop Carswell. On our way we observed a Druidical circle consisting of thirteen stones, none of them very large, in a state of great perfection. Advancing, we saw by the roadside a very large tumulus or cromlech of small stones, many of which had been removed from one side and exposed the interior central vault, which I entered and found vaulted with large stones and terminated by a tall rough standing stone, like that which is frequently seen standing alone in fields. The vaulted chamber or pit in the centre of the tumulus is about the size of a large grave. [Leyden and his friends apparently visited Temple Wood stone circles, of which only one was then visible, and the neolithic chambered cairn at Nether Largie South. Both sites are now displayed and in the care of Historic Scotland. Ed.]

The common people still repeat proverbial distichs in Gaelic concerning Carswell, one of which appeared to be satirical, and was translated, "Was not Carswell a strong man who required five quarters of cloth to his hose, though he paid his labouring masons with a plack per day".

The agriculture of Lower Lorn is susceptible of very great improvement; much waste land might be cultivated at little expense, and very good cornland is barely scratched with the light trivial Scottish plough. In many places the distillation of Whiskey presents an irresistible temptation to the poorer classes, as the boll of barley, which costs thirty shillings, produces by this process, when the whiskey is smuggled, between five and six guineas.

From a letter dated Oban, August 11, 1800.

Here am I in great spirits, listening to the sound of a bagpipe and the dunning of some very alert Highlanders dancing the Highland Fling with great glee. Though I have acquired a few Gaelic words and phrases, I am really in considerable danger of mistaking the house where I write for the Tower of Babel, for such a jargon of sounds as that produced by a riotous company bawling Gaelic songs and chattering something very like Billingsgate, blending with English oaths and the humstrum of a Highland bagpipe, seldom assails any ears but those of the damned.

About eight in the evening we set out in a chaise for Bunawe, or Tayniel, in order to visit Glenorchy. The mist began to creep down from the hills, and we were soon enclosed in a thick haze. Our driver, in order to elevate his spirits before setting out on the dreary road, had applied to whiskey, the universal medicine of the Highlanders, and not being extremely accurate in his calculation, had raised them considerably above par, and therefore amused himself by dismounting every gate which we encountered and hurling them over the braes or into Loch Etive.

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THE PROPHET of KILMALIEU

Rae MacGregor

"Go back, go back, little Duncanson, and one day your sons and grandsons will be Provosts of Inveraray".

Sometime about the year 1560 these reassuring words were spoken by Niven MacVicar, Parson of Kilmalieu, to Duncanson, the glovemaker of Inveraray, as he passed on his way to Glasgow in the hope of improving the fortune of his family. Duncanson turned back, and in the course of time the prophecy was fulfilled: in the old graveyard of Kilmalieu which lies in the shadow of Dunquaich stands a monument to this family with the motto MENTE MANUQUE (by mind and hand) carved on the front beneath the representation of a gloved hand, and on the back the date A.D. 1706.

The Parson himself is buried here. His story is a remarkable one. Born near Inveraray, he was educated for the

church, and became the first reformed minister of the town. It is said that he preached for some time under a rock in what is now known as the "new" part of Kilmalieu until a church was built for him in the old part of the graveyard. This rock is still known as the "Parson's Pulpit". Gifted with the two sights, his prophecies are still talked of to the present day by the folks of Inveraray.

His gift of prophecy was said to have been imparted to him by a strange set of circumstances. His mother, a dairy-
maid to the Earl of Argyll, had two sons one of whom was a stout healthy lad whom she favoured; but the other, a puny boy, received scant attention from her. The story has it that the Earl's dairy was often visited by a witch in the shape of a calf which came each night to the byre to steal milk from the cows. Although many had tried to seize this apparition, it had proved too wily and was able to slip through a hole small enough to admit the passage of a weasel. The belief was that whoever managed to lay hands on the animal would receive the power to impart the gift of prophecy to the first person he or she touched. One night the calf was unable to escape before the delighted dairywoman managed to lay her hand on it, and she immediately hastened to the bed where her sons lay asleep, eager to impart the gift to the favoured son. In her haste she neglected to carry a light and as she neared the bed she stumbled and grasping at something to steady herself she touched the less favoured child, thus bestowing on him the gift which was to make his name esteemed and venerated in Inveraray and far beyond.

Among many other prophecies he forecast that Inveraray would never be a town worthy of a name till the church bell would ring from Creag nan Caorach (The Rock of the Sheep, better known today as The Craigs). This has come to pass, it is said, by the stones from the Craigs being used to build the church steeple. This steeple was sadly and unwisely demolished in 1941 when it was deemed unsafe, and Inveraray lost its focal point.

Perhaps the best known prophecy is the one known as "La Garadh Crom" - the Day of the Crooked Dyke. That Dyke then was not even built. The 5th Duke of Argyll, one of the great improvers of his day, enclosed his immediate lands within a dyke, most of which still stands today. It runs from Stronshira at the head of Loch Shira along the hillside of Glen Shira as far as Kilblaan, and crossing the glen it

climbs over the ridge which separates Glen Shira from Glen Aray. Near Stronmagachan it turns south till it reaches Auchnagoul and Bridge of Douglas before crossing the moor to enter the sea at French Farland. The Parson prophesied that an enemy would come secretly to that place, to the peril of all those who lived within its confines, and a bloody battle would be fought at a place called Ath-nan-lann (the Ford of the Sword), which is below the Dhu Loch Bridge built in 1785 by Robert Mylne. So great would be the slaughter that the river would run red, the ravens would drink their fill of men's blood and people would cross dry shod on the bodies of the dead. A man with one hand would hold three Kings' horses, the inhabitants would be defeated and an old lame white horse would carry all that was left of Clan Campbell over Carndroma (which is near Tyndrum). After that day it would be possible to travel forty miles in Argyllshire without hearing a cock crow or seeing a chimney smoke. In his book "Records of Argyll" Lord Archibald Campbell states that when the hill above the Dhu Loch known as "The Strone" would be planted with trees, and when they had grown to the height of a man, the Day of the Crooked Dyke would have arrived. The Strone has been planted and a few more years will see the trees at the required height.

He foretold that Kintyre would become an island, and this, they say, has come to pass with the cutting of the Crinan Canal.

He predicted that a tree would grow in the hole of an old millstone which lay on the slopes of Dunquaich and dire consequences would befall anyone who cut it. In the early part of this century a family called MacVicar lived in the little round cottage at the foot of Dunquaich. A son of the family, while on holiday, decided to replenish the family woodpile before returning to Glasgow. Taking his axe he set off on his mission, and to the horror of his parents he arrived back at the cottage carrying on his shoulder the millstone tree. Three days after his return to the city he was taken ill and died within the week. His body was taken home by steamer on a day of great storm and the vessel had difficulty in reaching Ardrishaig. Once there the coffin was transferred to a horse-drawn coach for the journey to Inveraray, a journey not without mishap. On Minard brae a wheel snapped, causing a great delay in the cortège reaching Inveraray and the final journey to Kilmalieu.

The millstone can be seen today in the garden of Inveraray Castle. A few years ago a descendant of the MacVicar family called at the Castle and asked permission to have her picture taken beside it. This was readily granted and the lady was snapped standing with her right hand on the stone. Three days after her return to her home in Troon she was involved in an accident resulting in a broken right arm !!

The Parson foretold the execution of the Great Marquess of Argyll; and when asked how he himself would die he replied "I shall be drowned". To prevent this the Marquess sent him to live in Stirling. When fire broke out in his lodgings, he ran out, and fell headfirst from an outside staircase into a hogshead which was used to catch water from the roof. When his servant returned he found him drowned.

His body was taken home to Inveraray; his tombstone stands in the old graveyard of Kilmalieu near the Parson's Rock from which he once preached.

...oooOooo...

THE BROCAIRE LEGEND

The search for Ida Alastair Campbell

John A Berrecloth

The Cairn Terrier is one of the most popular of dogs, and a familiar sight in town or country. He is a cheeky, mischievous bundle of activity, full of fire and spirit yet loyal and loving. Small terriers of his ilk have been known in the Highlands and Islands for centuries, but the Cairn was the last of all the Scottish varieties to gain his name and official recognition by the Kennel Club. It was due largely to the efforts of one lady who, almost single-handedly, campaigned from the Argyllshire village of Ardrishaig in the first decade of this century. Mrs J Alastair Campbell was the first Honorary Secretary of the Cairn Terrier Club - the Breed Society registered with the Kennel Club, with the object of "promoting, advancing and protecting the interests of the old Working Terrier of the Highlands, now known as the Cairn Terrier". She died in 1946, fifty years ago, and, as the present Hon Secretary, I decided to put together some biographical notes to mark the anniversary.



Mrs. Alastair Campbell and her winning Cairn Terrier Gesto. Photo/1912/J. Russell & Sons, Old Bond Street.

Details have been difficult to come by, as few today have more than a hazy memory of her, and then only as an elderly lady; but I have recently spoken with 94-year-old Mr Alfie Wemyss from Ardersier, who remembers her well, and has a number of amusing anecdotes to tell. I have also visited her former home at Tigh-an-Rudha, Ardrishaig and Eskadale House, Ardersier, where she lived for many years. I have consulted the Scottish indexes of Births, Marriages and Deaths; Census returns, military records

county and Kennel Club archives, press cuttings, and Burke's Peerage. A picture of her is slowly emerging.

Her achievements as a breeder, exhibitor and judge are well documented in the Club's history and in the Kennel Club Stud book where all the significant wins of her dogs are recorded, together with the date and her address. I wanted more personal, homely details, but at this distance in time they proved hard to find. It soon became clear that I was not going to write a life-history, but more an account of the search for any scraps of information I could garner.

On the first page of the 1946 Cairn Terrier Club Year Book Col Whitehead, the then Hon Secretary wrote an Obituary: "It falls to be recorded that on 12th June 1946, at Inverness, Mrs Alastair Campbell passed away. She was our first Secretary; owned the first Champion Dog - Gesto - and the well-known prefix "Brocaire". At Inverness the first Classification for Cairns was given in 1909, and there she

showed and won with her first Cairns. A few weeks before passing away she showed her last at our first post-war show in Edinburgh on 29th May 1946.

May the earth lie lightly on you, Old Friend".

In the weekly Our Dogs he wrote "those who met her at the show on May 29 saw a marked change in their old friend, but I know she was pleased to see that our show had gone on in spite of all the difficulties, and that she was able to be there with four dogs". (It was the Club's first show after the long gap during the Second World War).

Writing in Dog World, 28 June 1946, A Bruce says "I went to see her on Easter Sunday, she seemed very unwell, but on my casting doubts as to whether she could go to the Cairn Club show, she replied with her usual pluck that she would be well enough by then. She did go, as we know. A few days after her return she was found unconscious and removed to the hospital where she passed quietly away".

The National Library of Scotland were unable to find an Obituary in any Scottish or national daily newspaper. Inverness Library searched the files of the Highland newspapers, without success. They did, however, find a notice in the Deaths column of The Inverness Courier, 14 June 1946:

"Campbell - At the Royal Northern Infirmary, Inverness, on 12th June 1946, Ida Alastair Campbell of Brocaire Kennels, Ardersier, widow of Colonel J Alastair Campbell, Seaforth Highlanders, second daughter of the late Sir David and Lady Monro of Allan."

In these few terse lines were several important facts leading to new, separate lines of enquiry through her husband and her parents. Her husband, as a Colonel, would have commanded at least a Battalion of the Seaforths and would be recorded in the regiment's history. I wrote to the current Regimental Historian, Col A A Fairrie, and asked if he could tell me anything about Col J Alastair Campbell.

New Register House, Edinburgh, supplied Ida Campbell's Death Certificate; it gave her age as 75; widow of John Alistair Campbell, Army Colonel; her father David Monro, Chief Constable, mother Louisa Jane maiden name Pelly. The informant was S Richards, niece.

A search for her Birth Certificate was fruitless, so she had not been born in Scotland. A search for the Marriage of John Campbell/Ida Monro also failed. The 1891 Census found her, aged 20 and single, with her parents, brother

and sister in Edinburgh. The Census entry showed her place of birth as Palamcottai, Madras, India, where her father had been an Army Captain. He was now, in 1891, HM Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland.

Ida Campbell's public involvement with Cairn Terriers had begun sometime before 1909 under her married name and from her address in Ardrishaig. Obviously she was married between 1891 and 1909, but when? When did she move to Ardersier? Was the move north connected to a career move by her husband to Fort George, the Seaforth Headquarters? The reply from Col Fairrie enclosed a photocopy of a page from the Regimental History Book, and a biographical note on Lt Col J A Campbell, with a photograph of him in full dress uniform, an imposing figure. The note below states that he was commissioned in 1876, and lists the campaigns in which he fought, from the Afghan and Egyptian Wars to the Sudan and Khartoum, where he was twice Mentioned in Despatches and awarded the Khedive's Medal with two clasps. He was appointed to command on 6 June 1899, retired in 1903 and died at Ardrishaig on 16 June 1914. So the move to Ardersier had not been a military posting. I now knew that Ida Campbell had been a widow for thirty-two years, but did not know how long she had been married, or if there were any children, or where she and her husband were buried.

At the Oban Times and the Argyllshire Advertiser the staff were very helpful in searching archives for possible obituaries, and in putting me in touch with local ministers and the then Chief Executive for Argyll and Bute, Mr Gossip, who is also the Session Clerk for the Church of Scotland Kirk at Lochgilphead; he checked their cemetery records without success, and directed me to the District Archivist, Mr Murdo MacDonald, who consulted the Register of Sasines, looked up Tighe an Rudha, a house he knew quite well, and found that Col James Alastair Campbell had bought it in October 1903. I said that the Campbell I was tracing was called John, according to his wife's Death Certificate. A check with the local Register Office produced the Death Certificate for James Alistair Campbell, June 16th 1914, age 57. There was no doubt - we had been looking all along in the Registry indexes for John instead of James. Murdo thought the Episcopal Church records might help, and referred me to the Episcopal Minister in Lochgilphead, Rev Roy Flatt. He quickly found the record of Col Campbell's burial at Christchurch, Lochgilphead, on 19th June 1914, but was unable to

say if Mrs Campbell was buried beside him many years later.

Ida Campbell is remembered as the lady who founded the Cairn Terrier Breed; but her opinions and convictions were by no means universally shared with other dog fanciers of the day. In 1909 she wrote: "The first native dog I had was a Mackinnon Skye brought to me from the island by my late father Sir David Monro of Allan and given to me as a true specimen of Skye terrier". By that date she had already bred "quite a considerable kennel of them", but it was from about 1907 that she began seriously to fight for official recognition. In an undated circular letter she asked all who had an interest in this "Old Breed Skye" to supply her with details so that she could satisfy the Kennel Club secretary "that they were a distinctive type, and then show secretaries would make classes for them".

She insisted that her dogs were the indigenous Skye terriers, much to the annoyance of exhibitors of the dogs that had been recognised as Skye Terriers for the previous thirty years. She entered her dogs at Scottish shows as, variously, Short-haired Skyes, Sporting Skye Terriers, or Prick-eared Skye Terriers. In her circular she claimed "I have never come back from a show without some reward for these dogs", although at some shows they had been entered in Brace or Variety classes. In 1907 she registered Calla Mhor and Cuilleán Bhan at the Kennel Club as Prick-eared Skye Terriers, to be followed over the next two years by Roy Mhor, Doran Bhan, Speraig Ordha, Nonian Macleod, Macleod of Macleod and Sporgan Macleod. These registrations were joined by others from the Countess of Aberdeen, the Hon Mary Hawke, Lady Monro and Miss Nussey.

While these dogs were being registered and shown a vigorous correspondence was taking place in the columns of the dog press, the Kennel Gazette and the Daily Telegraph between, mostly, Ida Campbell and Sir Claud Alexander, Secretary of the Skye and Clydesdale Terrier Club, with contributions from Capt A R MacDonald, Waternish, James Porrit, Secretary of the Skye Terrier Club of England, and Robert Leighton. Claim and counter-claim flew thick and fast, each quoting old breeders of the "original type"; pejorative expressions such as "freak" "pet" "mongrel" and "whitewash brush", and demands for apologies added spice to the tirades. There were lighter touches - Sir Claud deplored the advent of so many ladies into Skye circles "where they caused a revolution

in the way the dogs were turned out and led to increased coats, and thus mere men, such as Mr Pratt and I found ourselves entirely out of it. Matrimony solved the difficulty in my case, though Mr Pratt...retired from the show ring. Perhaps he was a wise man".

Robert Leighton in 1909 made a sincere attempt to clarify the situation. He dismissed as ridiculous the claim that the long-haired Skye was the result of crossing the Cairn (sic) with a Maltese, a Poodle or any other long-haired breed producing a "mere pet, destitute of terrier character and incapable of performing the work of a sporting earth dog". He pointed out that the Skye had been the first of all the terriers of Scotland to receive technical recognition, and it was too late now to question its genuineness. Equally, he recognised in Ida Campbell's "Short-haired Skyes" that he had judged that year at Cruft's "typical and unspoiled representatives of the early terriers of the West of Scotland". He had known them forty years previously as a breed distinct from the long-haired, longer-bodied Skye. Supported by Sir Paynton Pigott, a pioneer of the Scottish Terrier, and the noted terrier judge W L McCandlish, he was of the opinion that this "Short-haired Skye Terrier" was in fact the ancestor of the Scottish terrier - a collateral relative" as he put it. This balanced view failed to impress Ida Campbell, who, along with the Hon Mary Hawke, provoked further confrontation by continuing to show her dogs in Skye Terrier classes. The situation came to a head at Cruft's in 1910, where two classes were offered for Cairn or Short-haired Skyes; Mrs Campbell and Miss Hawke ignored them and entered their dogs in the regular Skye Terrier classes. Miss Clifton, judging to the Skye and Clydesdale Terrier Club Standard, found not one point in these dogs that matched the Standard for Skyes, so marked them "Wrong Class". This was the last straw. The Skye Clubs sent a deputation to the Kennel Club Committee. After discussion and examination of photographs the Committee decided: "That the breed (hitherto described as Short-haired Skye Terriers) shall only be registered as Cairn Terriers in the register for British, Colonial and Foreign Dogs" Ida Campbell had lost the fight for her preferred name, but had gained recognition for the breed under a name that had been in unofficial use for many years.

Cairns were granted their own Register in 1912. Their

popularity soared through the 1920's and 1930's. The Cairn Terrier Club was formed in 1910, with Ida Campbell elected Honorary Secretary, a post she held until 1919 when she moved to Ardersier where she lived for the rest of her life. She continued to breed and show the finest type of Cairn, and her "Brocaire" dogs achieved world-wide fame.

My search for more details of her life was carried forward by re-checking the Marriage indexes for Ida Monro/James Campbell. They were married in 1903 at Tain, Ross-shire, where Ida's father had succeeded to the family home, Allan House, near Fearn. I visited Ardrishaig in May 1996, found the Colonel's grave, and confirmed with Mr Flatt that Ida Campbell was not buried there. I also visited Tighe an Rudha, where the owner, Mrs Mackay, kindly showed me a little tombstone in the wooded grounds. The inscription



reads "His Lordship Moghan, much loved Sky Terrier of Ida & Jock, killed February 21st 1907, aged five years". The tragedy behind this epitaph is unrecorded, but there can be little doubt that Moghan was one of Ida Campbell's "Short-haired Skyes", and would nowadays be called a Cairn. The legend also solves an earlier mystery - why James was recorded as John on his wife's Death Certificate; her niece, who recorded the death, would have known him as "Uncle Jock".

(Photograph; J Berrecloth, 1996)

My search for Ida Campbell's burial place switched to Ross-shire, without success; but at last I found the entry at Aberdeen Crematorium "ashes to Sheila Richards for burial". The Moray, Ross and Caithness Diocese of the Episcopal Church found details of the interment in the family grave at Easter Kilmuir. I visited the spot; it is a tranquil place on the shores of the Cromarty Firth. There are two

monuments listing family ancestors, but no mention of Ida. perhaps it is enough to have a little dog as your memorial. After all, what is a Cairn?

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WHY "HELL'S GLEN"? (NN 181 073)

Angus McLean

Black's Guide to Scotland (1867) gives some idea of the Glen when describing the journey by four-horse coach from Lochgoilhead to St Catherines: "the road is so steep and hilly that a good pedestrian may outstrip the vehicle with little exertion". At about the same time the Ordnance Survey made this comment on the name: "It is unaccountable how it crept in except (as quoted by the authorities) it be attributed to the eccentricities of a farmer who many years ago resided at Ardno and who owing to his strange manner became very unpopular in the neighbourhood". The "authorities" referred to were the local persons consulted by the OS as to the meaning and derivation of local place-names. Ardno farm included the hill ground on the north of Hell's Glen.

Prof MacKinnon has provided a more interesting explanation. The Latin word offerendum designated the Mass; in Gaelic it underwent a change to aifronn/aifrinn. "Incheaffrin" appears in Latin as Insula Missarum (Island of Masses). In times of persecution Mass was celebrated in secret and lonely places; perhaps for this reason the lonely glen that opens up from the head of Loch Goil was Gleann Aifrinn, Glen of the Mass [or, possibly, of the chapel, as aifronn can bear that meaning]. The Latin word infernum appears in Gaelic as ifrinn, Hell. In sound aifrinn and ifrinn are not unlike, so Gleann Aifrinn and Gleann Ifrinn could be confused. It is, of course, possible that the names were wittingly, not unwittingly, confused; this was a glen through which passed drovers with their cattle and troops with their horses. The Glen is a lovely, peaceful place in summer, but can make travelling in winter very difficult and even impossible, particularly in snow. "Hell" would come readily to the lips of weary travellers whether Gaelic or English-speaking.

["Hell's Glen" is given as "Gleann Iarruin" in Dwelly's

Gaelic/English Dictionary (probably for Iaruinn, of Iron), quoting W J Watson, who collected "original Gaelic forms taken from the mouths of the people". Apparently he consulted different "authorities" from those consulted by the OS some forty years earlier. Ed.]

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BOOK REVIEWS

When the Years Were Young

NHASMA Publications

Mary Sandeman

£5.95, by post £6.95

(from K West, Branhholme, Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8QZ)

During the 70's and early 80's there appeared in Kist a series of articles by Mary Sandeman recalling her childhood in Jura in the 1920's. They have now been put together in book form, illustrated with drawings by Margaret Sandeman DA, and with photographs; the cover, in colour, is a reproduction of a watercolour by Mary herself. The result is pure delight - the recollected experiences of a very observant, intelligent and happy child living in a community based mainly on farming and fishing. She had a small share in most of what went on: for example helping in the stackyard to build the oblong haystacks and the round cornstacks - and she knows the proper way to do both, and tells us; as she knows the proper way to do an enormous household wash on a good West Highland day before washing machines, and the proper way to springclean a room in the right order before electric vacuum cleaners. She has the gift of word magic; so we almost see as she did skies summer blue or winter stormy, cloud shadows on the hills, watered silk sea, the dark hills of Arran at sunset and the first star - and the small things like gold threads of hay blown in the sunshine against a blue sky; we almost hear as she did the wind singing in the grasses, owls calling at twilight, the big Clydesdales clip-clopping down the road, the sounds from the smithy. We can picture, or if we are fortunate remember, the whitewashed thatched cottages where she was welcomed in: the pipeclay patterns on the scrubbed stone floor - Greek Key, Breaking Wave, Fern, Tree - the furniture, the fireside, the curtains, the plates and cups, the ornaments. And then there are the people: Mary and Katie and the Old Lady in the cottages, Bella and Charlotte who

helped in the house, Mr McAllister who came in his boat from Oban every summer "anything made of tin he would have, or make to your requirements", Willie the ploughman, Hugh the orra man and many more.

This book is not just something to read for the delicious quiet humour of the telling. It is an experience, of some things that have gone for ever, but of others we still have if we open our eyes and unstop our ears.

A.O.M.C.

The Lord of the Isles Voyage.

Wallace Clark

Wallace Clark Publications, Upperlands, Co Derry. £9.50

The representations of galleys on grave-slabs and cross-shafts are inevitably foreshortened to fit the available space. The Hebridean Galley, the Nyvaig and the Birlinn were not dissimilar, except in size, but were distinct from the much larger Viking longships, being designed and used for different purposes. After much careful research, Wallace Clark organised the building of Aileach, a replica birlinn 40 ft long with a single square sail and eight pairs of oars. In this very readable book he discusses the importance of such vessels in the history of the West Highlands and Ireland up to the 17th century and the vital role they played during the Lordship of the Isles. He describes the building of the boat in the west of Ireland and her voyages from there to Stornoway and in the following year to the Faroes and back. During the voyage many of the old strongholds of the Lords of the Isles were visited and their importance as bases for sea-borne operations assessed. The book is more than an enjoyable 'sailor's yarn'; it contains much information on the construction and rigging of such ships, interesting observations on their potentials and limitations, as transport and as fighting units, and their handling at sea under all weather conditions. There is also much relevant historical information; the colour photographs are superb. Minor criticisms: more detailed maps would have been useful, and in places proof-reading might have been more careful. I strongly recommend this book to any one with an interest in the early history of the West Highlands, and to any one who enjoys a well told account of a most unusual voyage.

Alan Campbell

This is a well-researched book that can be read with real enjoyment. With the islands and destinations conveniently grouped in alphabetical order you can read through as normally or pick an island chapter to browse on at leisure. You are soon struck with the amount of detailed knowledge. Some of these ferries were, we are reminded, very small, indeed only twelve to fourteen feet long and propelled by oars; others were sizeable - but very much pre-Ro-ro! The early history of their setting-up, and the way they developed later to large ships as circumstances demanded cover fascinating chapters. Nowadays, after several tragic ferry accidents, safety on ships is much on everyone's mind; but supervision came only gradually to the smaller Argyll ferries, many ferrymasters feeling this was another restriction imposed on them. They were sympathetically handled, and even coaxed to accept the safety rulings for their own good as well as that of their passengers and communities, by the "Man from the Board of Trade", namely our author - Marine Surveyor on the West Coast for twenty years. Some of the numerous friends he made have loaned him the many clear and interesting photographs used as illustrations.

It was a great pleasure to me to meet in these pages several people I knew - "Jock Pat" MacAllister from Tarbert who skippered the Cuan Sound ferry for many years and kept "Cuan time" which was usually ahead of GMT or BST by five minutes; Ian MacKechnie of the Jura and Tayinloan ferries; John MacCallum of Tiree and Archie MacVicar of Ardrishaig, mate and chief engineer respectively of the MacBraynes' cruise ship King George V. Now there was a lovely ship! She will long be remembered, ferrying passengers from Oban to Staffa and Iona in the summer months; but during the rough winter weather as she lay safely tucked up in dry dock, the regular ferries carried on their trade, as they do today to serve the island communities of Argyll. It is their story Walter Weyndling tells.

Colin Fergusson