

# The Crinan Canal · 1871



The  
KIST · 54

# T H E K I S T

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of Mid Argyll

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### Hon. Secretary for Membership and Publications

Mr E.S.Clark, MA, FSAScot., Northlea, Tarbert, Argyll,  
PA29 6TT Tel. 01880 820 793

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F.S. MACKENNA, 1902-1997

To have known a Polymath is a blessing, to compose his obituary is daunting. Our Society has lost an invaluable member, a Fellow of both the Scottish and London Societies of Antiquaries, and the Editor who, from Kist 4 to Kist 41, brought this journal to its continuing high standard. He also allowed us to publish his four collections of drawings: Wayside Sketches, Pen Sketches, Unfamiliar Sites, and Favourite Views in Mid Argyll. His own firm instructions precluded any memorial ceremony, but cannot erase his memory.

Born of an old Galloway family, he grew up in Pre-Partition Ireland, where he read Arts and Medicine at Trinity College Dublin. He practised as a rheumatologist in Droitwich, filling his leisure hours with music, water-colour painting and china-collecting; his paintings were widely exhibited, his choice of piano pieces sent lesser mortals' fingers into gridlock, and he published definitive volumes on Chelsea, Plymouth/Bristol and Worcester porcelain (all with his own hand-coloured illustrations).

For holidays he preferred single-handed sailing. This brought him, on retirement, to Tarbert, good anchorage for the boat and himself. In forty years at Dun Alasdair he made a remarkable rhododendron garden (he was still enlarging it this spring). A minor mishap off the Gantocks in fog drew his attention to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution; he became a volunteer on relief passages, a fund-raising lecturer, eventually an Honorary Life Governor.

No new interest supplanted any earlier one, nor did anything dim his humour, his kindness or his courage. A road accident in 1996, enough to finish younger men, slightly impaired his zest for life (but not for gardening). He endured a brief final illness, and left us four days after his 95th birthday. We shall not see his like again.

M.C.

## DUNDERAVE CASTLE IN THE 1900s

Michael Davis

Dunderave Castle, on Loch Fyne in Argyll, is one of the most perfect architectural creations in Scotland. A view of what constitutes perfection is, of course, subjective, but the appeal of this Scottish castle is direct and strong. In scenic terms alone, it is of the very highest quality, but in its encapsulation of many strands of history, tradition, romance, revivalism and even sentiment - all woven together in Lorimer's superlative restoration of 1911-12 - it gives palpable substance to something almost indefinable; Dunderave's appeal to the head and to the heart is not simply to clannish or nationalistic sensibility, but to the beautiful in nature and art, and to Lorimer's belief that by revitalising the ancient Scottish tradition - by, as Christopher Hussey put it, giving new work "the refreshing quality of things made by men's hands, lovingly, with an old song in their hearts" - one could empower the Arts & Crafts ideal and give it substance for the future.



Dunderave in ruins (RCAHMS)

The origin of the castle itself, proudly dated 1596, lay in the desire of the Chief of MacNaughton to cut a dash in the world. This was no crude provincial stronghold, but the flamboyant residence of a Scots renaissance laird who had his eye on developments in the Scottish kingdom. His castle was strikingly up-to-date, very convenient to contemporary requirements, and expensive; in short, everything a courtier would wish.

By early this century, the MacNaughtons were long gone, and Dunderave was a romantic ruin, its great hall a rendezvous for picnic parties. Its inclusion in the estate pur-

chased by Sir Andrew Noble, for whom Lorimer built nearby Ardkinglas House, led to its restoration for Miss Lily Noble.

Dunderave thus became one of a number of West Coast castles restored in the early part of this century in a manner which placed romance before convenience. All these restorations were controlled by concerns for the spirit of the past which find their basis in an Arts & Crafts derived outlook. The influence of the Arts & Crafts movement, with its rejection of modern standardization and its concern for "texture, scale and silhouette, in the relation of part to part, the pitch of the roof, the subtle battering of walls, the pleasant irregularity which enlivens work done by hand and eye without mechanical guides", runs through Lorimer's restoration of Dunderave.

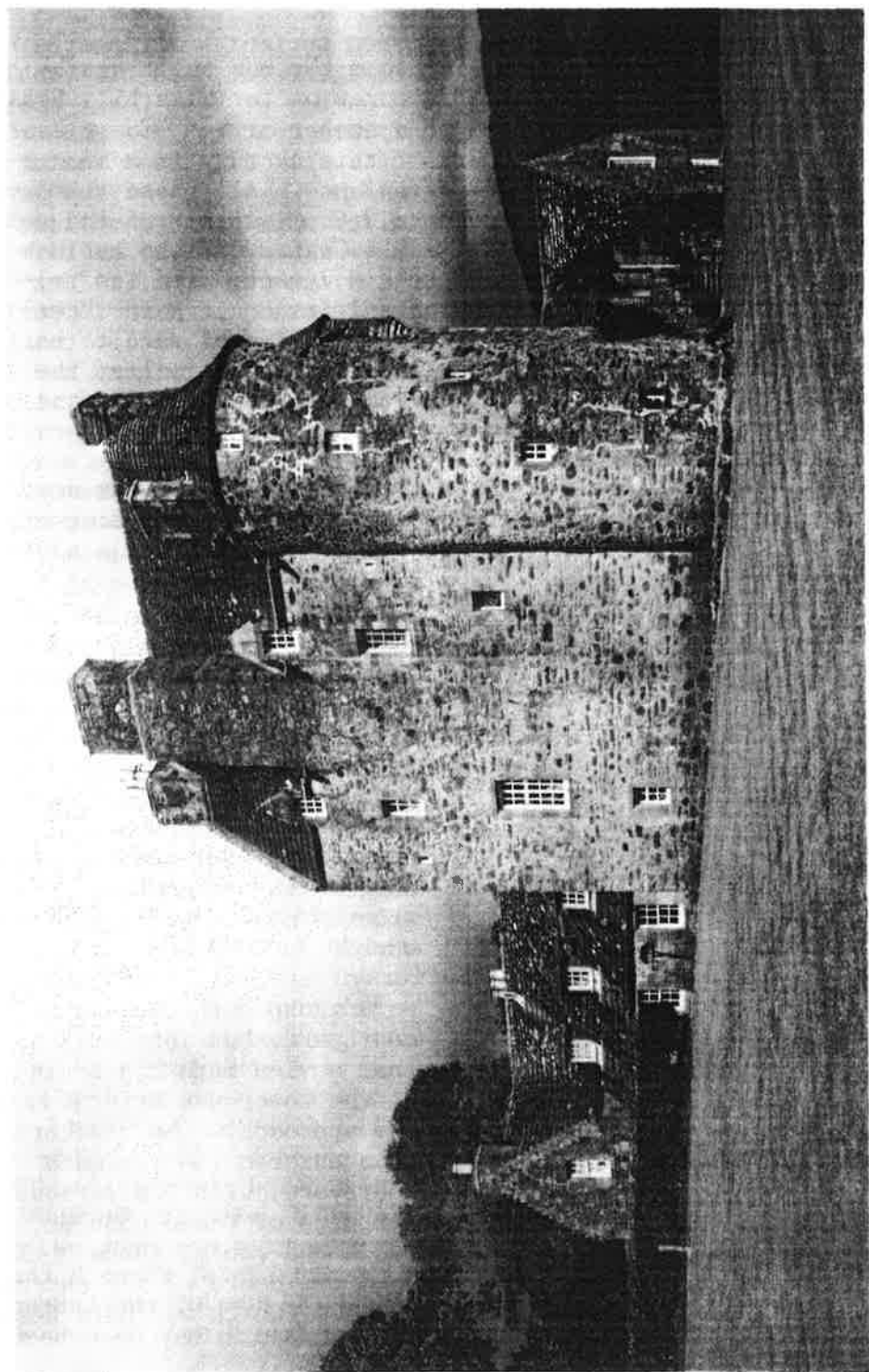
The greatest care was taken with the siting of the new wings, kept so low as not to detract from the character of the old castle which was interfered with as little as possible.



Stone slabs were used for the roofs. The turret roofs were given a subtle bell-cast, contrasting with the almost clumsy heaviness of the great slabs as they seemingly strove to mould themselves to the turret contours, creating an effect both contemporary (and very "Lorimer") yet also suggestive of the hand-wrought character of the old work.

For contrast, the wings were grouped to suggest a courtyard, but left open so that a view into the L-plan of the tower was offered from the approach. The visitor then entered the intimate courtyard, with its various textures of stone cobbles, walls and roofs, through the dark enclosure of the entrance pend (which may have been

The pend (Hussey)



Dunderave Castle today.

(Lord Weir)

suggested by Gylen Castle on Kerrera).

Inside the castle one enters rooms with exquisite ceilings playing on not merely the style but also the sweet irregularities of 17th century plasterwork, and with new beamed ceilings "roughly finished with the adze to lose any regularity the saw might have left". Here was not only the dramatic creation of atmosphere conducive to a dream of the past, but also of that very quality of age which

made old buildings so desirable. Wandering from room to room one can scarcely fail to be moved by the sensitivity and sheer joy of this most careful of revivals so that one is reminded of Lorimer's own love for old craftsmanship: "the old unconscious lads, struck a keynote - set a tune. Their tune, the only tune that existed for them and on this tune they played in room after room the most delicious variations". At Dunderave, Lorimer transcended preservation, offering the future to the past and the past to the future with brilliant heart-tugging impact. In architectural terms Lorimer left Dunderave immeasurably more significant than he

found it.

Undeniably, a strong thread of nostalgic sentiment ran through Lorimer's vision: his upbringing with its central event of the restoration of Kellie by his father (Kellie was discovered in sumptuous and almost



Ceiling detail (RCAHMS)



Ceiling detail (RCAHMS)

French dereliction on a family walk when he was thirteen) imbued him with a deeply ingrained love of traditional craftsmanship, and coloured his art. His appreciation of the forms and textures of old Scottish work, and his sympathetic contact with craftsmen stems from this period of his youth, and the vine ceiling at Kellie was to be reinterpreted a number of times in his adult work, notably at Ardkinglas, but also at Dunderave.

Of all the qualities of Dunderave, its relationship with its landscape setting (on a narrow site between the road and the loch) is the most special and atmospheric. Yet this very quality of timelessness and (calculated) hoary charm is the most fragile of all attributes. All this was put at risk in the late 1980s when a new owner commissioned Miller Hughes Associates from Chichester to draw up development proposals which included 10 Swiss-type chalets (with access and parking) close to the castle, and a swimming pool block between the castle and the road.

Thanks to a major campaign from the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland and powerful objections from a host of organisations (including the Natural History and Antiquarian Society of Mid Argyll) and individuals, the most damaging proposals were refused permission. The then owner sold-on, leaving an obvious legacy of little more than a new garage larger than a house, new ensuite bathrooms with repro fittings, and about a million spent in an attempt to water-proof the walls and recondition and decorate the interior.

That so special an element of Scotland's heritage was so alarmingly put at risk is surely another demonstration of why "watchdog" organisations are so necessary.

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### A HOUSE AND A SHIP OF THE SAME NAME

Krishna Goel

The Victorian age was a boom time for country house building in Scotland as elsewhere in the United Kingdom. In the early nineteenth century large symmetrical houses became popular not only with lowland laird and highland tacksman but also with merchant and master craftsman. Eredine House is an early and well preserved example of



the simplest Country House.

Over the past two centuries it has been in the possession of the Malcolms, the Scotts, the Swires, the Hayhursts and now the Goels. The Archives of the Malcolm family and records of the Parish of Kilchrenan and Dalavich indicate that the mansion house of Eredine was built at the beginning of the nineteenth century; it is thought to have been designed by James Gillespie Graham, though with additions at the side and rear.

Scotts of Greenock have been well known shipbuilders and engineers since 1711 when John Scott the first began building herring busses at Greenock to serve a local market for fishing vessels. Shortly before the First World War Scotts began to build submarines and much shipbuilding work was undertaken for the Royal Navy. The firm was also credited with building the first steam frigate constructed on the Clyde for the British Navy, named HMS Greenock and launched in 1849. This vessel was the largest iron warship of her day. In 1968 the Scotts Shipbuilding and Engineering Company merged with Lithgows to form Scott Lithgow Ltd, but this combine ceased trading in 1993, bringing to an end 282 years of Scotts' shipbuilding in the Greenock area.

In 1947 Eredine House was sold to Mr John Swire Scott, a merchant in London with business interests in the Far East. It became the family's country home away from the hustle and bustle of city life. The connection between the Swire and Scott families has led to the name "Eredine" being used for no less than three of the Company's ships. Eredine I, a bulk carrier designed to carry ore cargoes, was in service from 1968-1974, and Eredine II, also a bulk carrier strengthened for heavy cargoes, was in service from 1975-1981. The current Eredine III, an oil tanker, is the giant of the Swire fleet; she can carry up to two million barrels of crude oil. One of the Company houses in Hong Kong built in 1901 was named "Eredine", and the block of flats which now stands on the same site retains this title.

The Swires sold Eredine House and gardens to Mr Hayhurst in 1984 and in 1993 it came into the possession of the Goels, who propose to use it for charitable work - "Eredine" probably derives from the Gaelic "eiridinn" which means looking after, attending to, or caring for the sick. The East Wing of Eredine House and the gardens are now on a long lease to Eredine Christian Trust to provide a place

for a few days respite from everyday life to those in need of solitude, personal care and spiritual uplift. It is intended that there will be at least one self-catering unit for wheelchair-bound people, and it is hoped that visitors, such as families whose children suffer from physical and emotional disorders, bereaved families, hospice workers and others may enjoy the tranquillity of Eredine House, free from the hectic activity and increasing urbanisation of this modern age.

Dr Krishna Goel is Consultant Paediatrician at Yorkhill Hospital, Glasgow.

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THE CLAN MACKELLAR - Part 2  
Some Post-1700 Families and Personalities

Duncan Beaton

In the early eighteenth century the surname Mackellar was widespread in the county of Argyll. Although there were families still to be found in places such as Ardara the leading members of the name were now settled in Glen-shira, under the patronage of the Clan Campbell.

The old church at Kilchrenan on Lochaweside was the last resting place of the early Mackellars, who were buried in the chancel to the north side of the altar. Other local families buried there were the MacCorquodales of Phantillands, whose unmarried female members were buried under the "Maiden's Stone" by the east door of the present church.

The church was rebuilt after the Reformation and a wall was erected which enclosed the former nave and left the chancel and the Mackellars' graves on the outside.

There is a tradition that Caillein Mor, ancestor of the Clan Campbell chiefs, who was killed in battle at the nearby Red Ford (Ath Dearg) was brought to the church of Kilchrenan and also buried by the altar. This tradition was upheld into the nineteenth century when the 8th duke of Argyll had a red granite slab erected on the spot in memory of his ancestor. An elaborate incised stone of real antiquity was found at the eastern end of the church and proclaimed as Caillein Mor's tombstone. It was placed in

the outer wall above the red granite slab. It is now known that this early stone actually commemorates a Duncan Mackellar, probably one of the family from Braevallich on the opposite shore of Loch Awe, or even the last of the holders of the lands of Ardare, who was alive in the middle of the sixteenth century (later Mackellars there being described as "in" Ardare, as opposed to being "of" Ardare). In a letter which appeared in the Oban Times of 17 July 1911, entitled "The Mackellars of Lochaweside", the correspondent explained that Cailein Mor was actually buried on the south side of the altar "or thereabout". His grave was covered by a plain slab, which was usual for the late thirteenth century. When the church was being rebuilt this slab was removed to be broken up, until it was purchased for five shillings by the local schoolmaster, himself a Campbell, for later use as his own marker. The Mackellar stone, which was erroneously chosen as that belonging to Cailein Mor but is now known to be of a later period, actually has an inscription which identifies its owner. It is very difficult to read, but "HIC JACIT DUNCANUS MAKKELLAR....." is the first part. The Oban Times correspondent is clear in his belief that it commemorates one of a Mackellar family which lived at Braevallich, only a few miles from Ardare.

### COWAL FAMILIES

There was a David Mackellar, born in Glendaruel at the end of the seventeenth century. Again the Oban Times (14 Nov. 1911) fills in the details that are known. He was blind in his later years and had a reputation as a poet of the Gaelic Language. His sacred poem "Laoidh Mhic Ealair" which ran to 132 lines, was praised for its fine poetry, and earned him the name Daibhaidh nan Laoidh. "In the old days" continued the Oban Times article "many highlanders learned it off by heart". There was a tradition in Glendaruel that after this hymn was composed the poet's sight was restored.

Another of the name to appear in Cowal at about the same time was Archibald Mackellar who was the tenant farmer at Lephinchapel, on Lochfyneside opposite Minard, and lived from c. 1715 to 1789 (Cowal tombstone notes). As with the aforementioned Braevallich families some of the later Cowal Mackellars are known to have come from the environs of Inveraray, although it has been shown that there was a much

earlier settlement of families in the district, especially around the parish of Lochgoilhead.

### GLENSHIRA FAMILIES

The Glenshira families already mentioned in Part 1 were much in evidence as the eighteenth century progressed. In the Old Parochial Registers for Inveraray and Glenaray Parishes eight Mackellar families can be found living at Maam between 1700 and 1734, and there were probably more since the Registers are not complete for this period. As well as John Mackellar, elder of Maam, who appeared on the assises up until 1709 there was a John Mackellar, also "of" Maam, on record between 1729 and 1740, and a John Mackellar "in" Maam in 1742. These John Mackellars may be identified as father and son, and were married to Catherine MacCallum and Isobell Campbell respectively. Catherine was of the MacCallum or Malcolm family who were vicars or ministers of Kilchrenan Parish over three generations and related to the Campbells of Auchinbreck; Catherine's mother was Finguell Campbell, daughter of a Donald Campbell who was descended from Donald Campbell of Kilmory, and her father was Neil Malcolm who was minister of Kilchrenan and Dalavich Parish for the periods 1633-55 and 1671-74. The second John was effectively the last of the family to have Maam. He had a son Neil, baptised on the 5th of October 1730 at Maam, but there was another son, Patrick, who was born about 1717 or 1718; he became a noted military engineer. [It is hoped to include an account of his life in a later Kist]. Another son, John, also appeared on record later. By 1737 John Mackellar was a tacksman of the 2nd duke of Argyll, holding the four merklands of Maam and the croft of Dalvarnock, part of neighbouring Kilblaan. The same source (Argyll Archives) shows that he was also the holder of a tack, along with three MacArthurs, of the three merklands of Balliemeanoch that same year, and by the late 1740s he held tacks of parts of Kencreggan in Glenaray.

Of the other families living on the farm of Maam at the beginning of the eighteenth century (Archibald in 1707, Dugald in the same year, Angus in 1707 and Donald in 1708) only Donald's family is traceable with any certainty in the next generation. He was married to Margaret MacCallum and their son Duncan, baptised at Maam on 31st March 1708, probably married a Janet Mackellar. They in turn had a son

Donald baptised at Maam on 1st October 1732. Dugald, whose wife was Mary MacVicar and who had a son Patrick baptised at Maam on 29th September 1700, may have been the Dugald Ban Mackellar in Maam who was fined 12 pounds Scots for feuding with a neighbouring family of MacKenzies on 13th September 1692.

The two other families noted from the Old Parish Registers in Maam during the early part of the Eighteenth century were both Duncan Mackellars having their offspring in the 1720s and 1730s, but it is difficult to ascertain to which families these Duncans belonged, since their own baptisms are not recorded.

### KILBLAAN FAMILIES

In the neighbouring farm of Kilblaan at the same time there were five families mentioned in the parish registers although none was apparently "of" Kilblaan after the 1690s. Alexander Mackellar and his wife Catherine Mackellar were "in" Kilblaan in 1725, Donald and his wife Ann Munro in 1747, along with Archibald and his wife Catherine MacNicoll, Malcolm and his wife Ann MacNicoll in the same year, and another Malcolm with his wife Christian Mackellar in 1748. In addition Mary Mackellar and her husband Nicol MacNicoll had a son John there in 1745 and Christian Mackellar and her husband Archibald Munro also started their family in Kilblaan before moving to Auchindrain. It is interesting that in every case the spouse's surname is one associated with Glenshira, where in 1755 Dr Webster recorded a population in excess of 250, although later statistical accounts mention this as being artificially high due to the political upheavals of the time.

### STUCKSCARDEN FAMILIES

Although Archibald, Donald and John Mackellar were recorded in Stuckscarden in the 1691 Hearth Tax, the first appearing there in the eighteenth century was a Malcolm who had three daughters by Anna Macintyre during the first decade. In the next generation Alexander Mackellar and his wife Christian Mackellar had a daughter born in 1728, and Duncan Mackellar and his wife Margaret Mackellar had a daughter Mary born in 1733. As both couples were Mackellars by birth any two of the four could have been offspring of Malcolm and Anna, or for that matter any of the three Mac-

kellar residents there in 1691. Alexander, who became a burgess of Inveraray on 22nd May 1725 as "tacksman of Stuckscarden", was one of the residents of the burgh issued with a summons of removal in 1746. (Inveraray Papers).

Also born during this period was a Robert Mackellar (about 1719). He was at Stuckscarden with second wife Ann Turner in the 5th duke's private estate census of 1779. He was the son of Malcolm previously mentioned, as may be ascertained from an update of a 1737 tack of Stuckscarden. This tack was originally granted to Alexander and Malcolm Mackellar, but in 1748 was changed to Alexander and Robert, son of Malcolm, on the death of his father. Although Robert was the last Mackellar to live at Stuckscarden, as far as the old line was concerned, there were later families living there when Robert's descendants were living in Inveraray and preparing to emigrate to Australia. By that time Stuckscarden was a shepherd's cottage occupied by tenants of the dukes of Argyll, and the present house probably dates from the early nineteenth century.

#### KENCREGGAN FAMILIES

The earliest Mackellar outpost in Glenaray was the farm of Kencreggan, divided into Upper and Lower Kencreggan. After the tack of Stuckscarden granted to Gilfillan Mackellar "in" Kendcreggan and his brother in 1671 the next Mackellar mentioned there was a Patrick "of Kendchregan", along with his son Malcolm in a sasine of 1703. Patrick Mackellar younger of Kendcregan and his wife Mary Munro are followed by Malcolm Mackellar of Kendcreggan in sasines between 1712 and 1724. Malcolm's wife was Ann Clerk, a daughter of the laird of Braleckan. A Duncan Mackellar in Kendcreggan had a daughter Mary born in 1711 (Old Parish Register).

In 1737 a Seumas Mackellar had the tack of Upper Kenchregan. Malcolm Mackellar of Kenchraggan had by May 1747 set the property to Angus Fisher, merchant in Inveraray, and at Whitsun 1749 he subset the 20 shillinglands to John Mackellar in Maam and his son Neil for a period of three years. This must have been a repeat tack, as John Mackellar and Duncan Munro had held the tack the previous year.

According to Records of Argyll by Lord Archibald Campbell the Mackellar family at Kinachreggan (ceann-a-chreagain the little rocky headland) exchanged their feu for a place called Creag-a-chait (cat's rock) "in Knapdale or Craignish"

but which may actually have been the place of that name near Auchindrain. On 8th May 1753 John Mackellar in Craigenancat married Mary, daughter of Duncan Mackellar then in Maam. Mr Edward MacCallum, the last tenant in Auchindrain said that the last tenant in Craigenancat left the area to live on Lochaweside, taking with him several cartloads of lime which had been extracted from the limestone seam above his house. Nothing much remains at Craigenancat today; the outline of a few buildings among the larch plantation and a large sycamore of great age, obviously planted by an occupant. It would fit nicely with the tale in Records if the Mary Mackellar who married John was the daughter born to Duncan in Kendcregan in 1711. Unfortunately it is now difficult to establish the truth. Craigenancat in the parish of Glenarary was never a farm in its own right, but a part of Auchindrain. Therefore the rentals for Auchindrain would include the tenant at Craigenancat and in the 1752 Rental of the lands belonging to Dugald Clerk of Braleckan, which included Auchindrain, a John McKeller (sic) paid for half of a quarter of the tack of silver rent, his amount being 25 pounds 5 shillings and 5 pence Scots (Saltoun MSS, NLS, Edinburgh).

Whether or not this Duncan and John Mackellar in Craigenancat were of the family formerly in Kencregan the outcome for Malcolm, husband of Ann Clerk, was that he also appears to have moved to Lochaweside. On the island of Innis Searamhach on the loch there is an ancient ruined chapel and burial ground. A Malcolm Mackellar was interred there after he died on 7th February 1776 at the age of 75. His tombstone was erected by a Peter Mackellar, possibly his son.

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#### A NOTE ON THE COVER

This is taken from a sketch in Dr. Blatherwick's Kilmahonaig Journal (see Kist 53 and overleaf); it is apparently not signed, but is probably by the Dr.'s wife, or possibly by himself.

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## THE KILMAHONAIG JOURNAL

### A Family Holiday in Argyll, 1871. Part 2

Michael Murray

[Taken, by kind permission, from the original in the possession of Mr John Jeff]

July 15 IT RAINED!

July 16 Sunday. Lady Utility and The Editor drove to Poltalloch Church in an open Landau driven by the small black oddity who resides at Crinan Inn, and whose occupation appears to be that of tending horses and fishing drowning drunkards out of the canal. He fished one out last night. "He was nigh gone" says Blackie "I went down with a rope, tied it round him as he clung on to the sides of the lock, and they pulled him up. He's none the worse this morn". Blackie says over 200 have been drowned in the canal since they first made it - perhaps 199 were "fou". The mysterious widow was at church. Bless her!

July 17 Piscator fly fishing in Canal - caught some trout - Very wet. The party climb the hill - get wet through - Rain. Rain.

July 19 Colin MacKinnon Esqre, J. MacLachlan Esqre, J. Grierson Esqre, these gentlemen called at Kilmahumaig. They lunched.

Duntroon Castle - "Stern Duntroon" of the Poet, the abode of the Revd. Mapleton - was visited by Lady Utility, The Editor, Miss B. & Mr Cyril. We were rowed across the Bay by Hugh Clark and Fredk Phillips. It was not perfectly calm, therefore was Lady Utility frightened - she clung to the gunwale, to the Editor, and to any available structure - The Mapletons were away, rowed back to the Ferry Quay & walked home.

July 20 Preparations were made for the Reception of Mr Robert Craig, who did not come.

July 21 Arrivals: Edward Barfield Esqre from Constantinople, an old friend. Twelve years since we had met. He went out with the gun and shot one wee rabbit. He went out with the rod and caught one wee eel.

July 22 The killing of the above mentioned eel appears to have been more interesting than was at first noticed. In



the first place numerous circumstances impeded his start. The Rod, The Line, The Hook, The Cast, The Reel, The Worms, and The Float had severally to be inspected. Difficulties occurred with each. Ultimately the Sportsman did effect a start. He had a salmon rod with line and hook in one hand in the other an umbrella and a canister full of worms. Hessian boots - a great coat and chimney pot hat completed his costume. He started in an admirable state of delight, musing that "he was passionately fond of fishing". A little mystery attended the killing of the celebrated eel of 3 ounces weight, for it was mooted abroad in Bellanoch that the slimy animal had so completely gorged the bait, that the gentleman from Turkey was forced to consult an old wife in the village as to the correct mode to get the hook out of the depths. The point after discussion was settled by cutting the Eel's head off, and then dissecting the abdomen. The killing of this eel occupied six hours.

July 23 Rain.

July 24 Departures: Mr Edward Barfield for London. Miss Dyne's heart ditto.

July 25 Prepared for a Tea Picnic in the Ride. Preparations completed at 6pm. Everything in good order - Cake cut - eggs boiled, toast made, tea & coffee ready - when horror at 6.15 down came the rain! Such Rain! what use umbrellas? Cloaks? Waterproofs? It rained straight through everything - Cake and Bread & Butter were converted into poultices, sugar and salt disappeared magically, everybody was wet to the skin and in a state of disgust. Home!

N.B. Wilson very ill.

July 26 Arrivals: A lively kitten as companion to Miss Beryl. The little creature was charmingly dressed in fur & had very taking manners.

N.B. Invalid still in bed. Editor walked to the Snipe Pond. Killed 2 snipe.

July 27 Revd. Mr Mapleton & Mrs Mapleton from Duntroon called. A crab picnic took place in the hay field. Fire was lighted by the large Rock. We ate much and the midges ate much of us. Cyril inflicted a wound in his finger.

July 28 Very fine. The ladies bathed; Wilson very ill.

July 29 Miss M Dyne & Miss Lily behaved badly; Wilson very ill.

July 30 The party for church was frightened out of their wits by a - ROARING BULL - an ill looking brute who glared

and lowed, & looked vicious t'other side of hedge. Mem: to take dog next time. The handsome young doctor from Poltalloch called and consulted with the Editor concerning Wilson. The Dr dined.

July 31 Departure: The Editor for Glasgow, leaving the invalid in charge of the handsome young Doctor. The younger Mapletons called. Miss Dyne bathed.

Aug 1 Miss Dyne sketched Mrs McCallum which is to be reproduced for the Kilmahumaig Journal.

Aug 2 Arrivals: The Editor from Glasgow; F.F. Blatherwick from Loretto; Cecil Naftel from Guernsey.

The handsome Dr. called with his dog. This animal took the most violent fancy to Miss Dyne. What does it mean?

Aug 6 Miss B. and Miss Ida went to Bellanoch Church and there met with an adventure. On entering the Kirk Miss B. was slightly disconcerted at finding herself the "Observed of all Observers". So much so that presently uprose an old man, who walked to another old man and talked mysteriously to him, pointing all the time of the Confab. to Miss B. Then came to them another Elder, and then the old man advanced to the reading desk and whispered to the minister. The minister stood up, and looking straight at Miss B. said "He was sorry there was some among them who did not understand Gaelic, as he was unable to preach or pray in English but that they would sing a Psalm in English". After this harangue the Psalm was given out, but unfortunately it was then found that there were no English books. So Miss B. was forced to screw up her courage and addressing the Precentor, begged him to sing in Gaelic - they did so - and after the service the officiating minister shook hands with Miss B. reiterating his regrets and hoping she wd. come again when "Mr Ferguson" was there - who could preach and pray in English.

Aug 7 Tea in Hayfield. To Loch Keilaber with Mr Hugh Clark. All started but Lily and Margaret jumped out and ran home. The crab dish is a compound worthy of notice.

Aug 8 Departure: Miss Margaret Dyne for London: Great regret and lamentation from all. The dogs howled. Cecil Naftel threw himself backwards from McKechnie's boat into the water: all would have ~~been well~~ had not his cranium unfortunately come in contact with the side of the vessel. He was ill. His nose bled. He became swollen. He became stupid. He took a pill. He became better.

Aug 9 He became well. Mr Naftel has shown unusual capabilities for tailoring. In the most artistic way, old unmentionables are converted into really useful knickerbockers. The Editor sketched Duntroon. Rowed across by FFB & CN. Thomas Watson expected but didn't come. It will rain when he does. Just see if it don't. Confound him.

Aug 10 Deceptions: The pair of chicken which were bought some 10 days ago; & which have been fed & brought up with the utmost care & patience - which have comforted us with the anticipation of gastronomic enjoyment. Which have conjured up visions of succulent ham and peas. Whose tiny and absurd crows have been put down to juvenile incapacity, were eaten today & found to be AGED COCKS. Has honesty left the globe?? This Argyllshire poultry man is a villain. No Tom; Wilson better & left per Linnet. Very wet. Mapleton Jnr. dined and in the evening set rabbit snares.

Aug 11 Grey & misty. CN. & FFB. rowed to Duntroon for boat from Mapletons.

Aug 12 Very hot. Lazy day. Editor got a grouse.

Aug 13 Church party rowed to Duntroon - walking thence to church through the woods. Rowed back again.

In the evening the Editor performed a surgical operation - removing the splinter of a tooth from the mouth of Miss Jeanie Clark. She bore the operation well.

Aug 14 Our hearth was gladdened by the sight of some Row [Rhu] friends; Mrs Hamilton, James Dennistoun Esqre, The Misses Hamilton from Arinadale, Row, Miss Colina Hamilton, Dunard, Miss Lawrie, Edinburgh.

It was a pleasant but rather a shabby visit. They would not stop long, would not eat and drink sensibly. A party from Kilmahumaig walked with them to the quay where the boat took them aboard the Yacht. After inspecting the famous Schooner Columbine 91 Tons the Kilmahumaig portion of the party returned bringing James D. to tea. CNN. & FFB. at Duntroon practising for the forthcoming Cricket Match - Poltalloch v. Ardrishaig.

Sambo the Black Porter: Sambo is the black porter at the quay - a veritable negro, stalwart and strong - middle-aged and much given to fine dress and to falling in love promiscuously - He has a wife (or two) in the States and many children, but this hitch does not stand in his way with his several inamoratas - it is his skin - On Sunday he is quite an exquisite - a light tweed suit, a white hat & gloves, a

cane & a rose in his buttonhole. Is it a wonder we are interested in him? and that his sad story is chronicled here? Three weeks ago we heard that he had at last met with a kind response - and that Miss Jessie of Oban had promised him her hand and heart. Now, Miss Jessie is a celebrity having been servant to the notorious Dr. Pritchard, and having given weighty evidence at his horrible trial. Some say she helped to poison poor Mrs P., but whether she did or did not she was to marry our Hero, Sambo. We were sure the news was true for our sable friend became more of a swell than ever - He had a new suit, a new swagger, and a new smile about his thick lips. Moreover he took a house - the wee house in the old Kirk yard\*, and furnished the two rooms with loving care. We have watched all these proceedings with much interest, and waited patiently to see the Bride brought home, when Lo! today we hear that it is all "off" - that the cruel Jessie has jilted him - That she cannot stand the black skin - so Sambo is disconsolate and has put on his old suit again, and pulls the ropes harder than ever - as if to pull the faithless Jessie out of his heart. Give him our pity.

Aug 15 Cecil Naftel & FFB. went out to sea in McKechnie's skiff. They stopped out until 2 am. They were very odoriferous having dozed on Naphtha bags. Sarah who came as help nurse left. Hugh Clark ill - Dr. says lung congested. Beautiful day.

Aug 16 This is Duncan Clark's birthday. We send him a cake and our blessing. FFB. & CN. shot a heron. Editor sketched the hill side. FFB. & CN. attempted to catch eels, but couldn't. FFB. lost a good one. Rabbit shooting.

Aug 18 Arrival: Thomas Blatherwick from Netley hospital, Southampton. Also Plato his dog. They looked rough and ready. Rabbit shooting in the evening.

Aug 19 Thomas B. & C.B. went out on the moor with guns. Sport indifferent - tired - home - ate well.

Aug 21 Shooting to Dounie. Showed T.B. a roughish walk - killed 2 old Black Cock, Hare etc. and while at lunch brought down a Curlew.

\* This must be Trear. (see article in KIST 51) Trear was known to be occupied 1908-1943/44 by Euphemia Willan (née McCrae) "Granny Willan" and the last occupants were Hugh and Mae Graham. M.M.

Aug 22 Miss Edith B's Birthday - She receives presents - a desk from the Editor in hopes of literary power coming to her, to the advancement of this Journal. Purse with (wouldn't you like to know?) in it, from Lady Utility; Wrist studs (very pretty) from Uncle Tom; Gloves, Ribbons etc. etc. from Sisters.

Aug 23 Departure: Tom Blatherwick for Ardlamont (shooting quarters of Alan Gilmour Esq.)

Arrivals: Tom Watson & Hall Watson from Inchalloch, Row. Rain! Rain! RAIN!! RAIN!!! RAIN!!!! Without ceasing - No compromise - No gleam or promise of amendment - We are damp. We are sulky. The Artist attempts a new picture. Tom W. smokes and keeps his temper. Cecil commences Map of Kilmahumaig - Hall and the younger animals climb up into Loft (where live the mysterious wild cats) to play and kick up a row. These cats are a nuisance - three child cats with Papa & Mama all as wild as hawks. Papa & Mama make daily raids on our Rabbits with Terrible Success! They kill on average 3 or 4 rabbits a day - they must be put down.

A charade was acted this evening in the Theatre Royal - Drawing Room.

Aug 25 Departures: Tom Watson & Hall Watson. Tears! and Rain! Rain!! Rain!!!

Aug 26 CN & FB shot rabbits. Editor sketched Corn Fields. Mr Clark commenced cutting the corn this day. Mistress Kate Vohr [Kate Mhor, Big Kate] weighing 16 stone does more work than any man in the field.

Aug 28 Editor goes to Ardlamont for some shooting and sketching. FB & CN shooting. Rest of party visited Duntroon.

Aug 31 A mysterious stranger called. "Mr Webb from London". He had met the Editor at dinner and was in duty bound to walk from Ardrishaig to pay a complimentary Visit. Editor arrived ere Mr W. departed.

Sept 1 Killed some Partridges.

Sept 2 Cricket Match at Lochgilphead. Snared a cat and Let It Go - "Snared a cat and let it go"! This is the information conveyed to the Editor by the party sent out for the express purpose of snaring vermin. And yet there are some who would say that our temper is to be kept under control with such a set of Pesky Idiots. We prefer to let it blaze and if those who interfere get burnt why it serves 'em right.

Sept 3 Sunday; Adam Morrison called.

Sept 4 Editor started for Ardlamont for sketch. Reginald Mapleton came to shoot with FB.

Sept 5 Arrivals: Mrs Morrison and Family. Lady Utility unwell, kept to her room. Fun downstairs - A Charade in the Theatre Royal Drawing Room and a Reel.

Sept 6 Arrival: John Grant Esqr from Edinburgh.

Sept 7 JG CN & FB went to sea in McKechnie's skiff. Mapleton came in evening and taught the party the correct mode to snare Rabbits. Mr Mapleton hailing from "Stern Duntroon" is a great authority on all questions affecting natural history - he is domestic gamekeeper at home - twelve dozen snares belong unto him and these and his gun have caused sudden death to many a rabbit - 1670 Rabbits have been slain by him.

Sept 8 Out early at snares - Got two Rabbits.

Sept 9 Cricket Match. FB played. Wet. Editor went to Barnagad to shoot.

Sept 10 CN FB & JG walked to Barnagad. Met Mr Morrison and Editor - Saunter along shore - Boys bathe - Dine at Barnagad. Mrs M. very kind.

Sept 13 FB's birthday. He receives presents - He eats Dux for dinner. Mr & Mrs Morrison call.

Sept 14 Departure: Cecil Nafton for London. This young man had endeared himself to all the inhabitants of Kilmahumaig by his affability, good nature and general cheerfulness. His bright eyes, His merry laugh, and Cockney whistle will be long remembered. He had a fine head and a healthy appetite - He was never dull, nor did he permit dullness in others. May we meet again.

Sept 15 DEPARTURES: The Editor, Lady Utility and Suite.

N.B. The Editor begs to tender many apologies for thus abruptly closing this Journal.

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There are other items in Dr Blatherwick's Journal, such as a Game List, and a list of birds seen compiled by Rev. Mr Mapleton at Duntroon, which it is hoped to include in a later Kist. Ed.

Copies of Dr Mackenna's Wayside Sketches and Favourite Views in Mid Argyll are still available price £1 + 3lp p.& p.

## BOOK REVIEWS

Scots Baronial: Mansions & Castle Restorations in the West of Scotland.

Michael C. Davis

ISBN 0 9528888 0 7. &19.95

The A4 glossy format threatens to mislead; this is no coffee table book, but a serious essay on the architectural style known as "Scots Baronial" in the West of Scotland, broadly chronological in layout, although the author does find scope to explore the role of individual architects, and even to consider modern castle restoration. This might seem of interest mainly to students of architecture and Davis' writing, articulate and stylish though it is, reinforces this as it takes for granted a knowledge of architectural terminology, but readers with an interest in local history should not be deterred. Once one has come to terms with the architect-speak and an occasional floridity normally associated with wine commentators, there is abundance of information about the country houses which form such a distinctive feature of the West of Scotland landscape.

It offers a view of how a peculiarly Scottish style of architecture evolved. Davis concludes that there was no organised, conscious "Scots Baronial Movement", but rather a number of individual approaches to the problem of producing a prestigious building at once functional and yet airing the fashion for romanticism and "Scottishness". Through the common expedient of plundering the past for suitable architectural fodder, and via the accumulating experience of the architects so liberally commissioned, a distinctive style emerged. Demonstrating this with dozens of examples Davis shows that, in spite of its uniqueness, each building has its own associations with buildings of an earlier age and with its contemporaries of the same or competing "Schools". The reader can acquire a real understanding of how an individual building both draws on and contributes to the wider architectural heritage. Copious numbers of photographs and drawings involve even the most casual reader, and on their own form an interesting and comprehensive pictorial archive, well-integrated with the text.

I.D.M.

Michael Davis is Local Studies Librarian for Argyll & Bute.

## Local Studies

Issue 1

Argyll & Bute Library Service (Local Collection).

Available from public and mobile libraries £1.95  
(or from Local Studies Librarian, Highland Avenue, Sandbank,  
Dunoon, PA23 8PB, + 45p post and packing).

This first issue came out in April 1996; the second is due in September 1997. Issue 1 contains a wealth of material of such variety that there is certain to be something for everyone who has any interest in the history of Argyll and Bute. As its editor, Michael Davis, says in his Annual Report "one of the delights and problems of Argyll and Bute is its huge and diverse geographical area.... from the Hebridean fringe of Europe down to the very edge of Lowland Scotland"; and obviously every smallest locality has its own story to tell.

The topics covered include a detailed illustrated account of garden design in Argyll and Bute, indicating the work of different architects and garden designers, in particular of Thomas H. Mawson. The article on Neil Munro was most interesting; this reviewer, along doubtless with many others, had no idea that he played such a significant role in the literary world of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For those unfamiliar with the mansion of Durach more historical detail about the estate would have been welcome. Other items cover the history of Kilmory Castle, the discovery of a house by William Leiper on Loch Goil, and a spine-chilling ghost story concerning Duncan Campbell of Inverawe.

The varying sizes of type are innovative, and the bold print is welcome. (The print in the Leiper article is too small, but that must be due to its being a reduced reprint). The magazine is printed on high gloss good quality paper. It is to be hoped that the high standard set by Issue 1 will be maintained in Issue 2.

E. Crawford

A Dictionary of Scottish History, G.Donaldson & R.S.Morpeth  
John Donald Publishers Ltd. £9.95

This, being a professed dictionary, is a work of reference rather than a rattling good read; but as John Donald's decision to reprint for a fourth time a book first compiled in 1977 shows, it deserves its place on the bookshelf of



any house where there is an interest in Scottish history.

The preface makes explicit that the book is intended for the layman, not the professional historian or even the serious amateur who will turn to more substantial works. Its aim is to bring together in a single, slim volume at a modest price the essential facts about events, institutions, people and places most likely to be sought by the layman. In this it succeeds, for it is not only affordable but skilfully negotiates the tightrope between being concise on the one hand and comprehensive on the other. Pithy and easy to use, it still retains an air of scholarship which gives one confidence in the information given. More knowledgeable readers might have more success, but this reviewer could find only one mistake, and that was typographical!

Inevitably there will be some complaint (anticipated by the authors) over omissions. The book leans towards the traditional view of history - war, politics and religion - at the expense of social and economic phenomena, particularly of the 20th century; there is no mention of North Sea oil, the Gorbals or the decline of heavy industry. Sport, which has touched the lives of millions this century is scarcely referred to - no Eric Liddell, Harry Vardon, Jim Clark or even Rangers and Celtic. This is however harsh. It does not detract from the value of a book which will meet the majority's needs. It does suggest that the work is in need of revision, for in twenty years much has happened, and what was not history in 1977 is now; and also views on what constitutes history have changed.

I.D.M.

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#### N.H.A.S.M.A. on COLL

Our party of 21 spent from 10 to 14 June on the island of Coll. We travelled together in four cars only (one was very large!) but went about the island in separate groups, as parking for four cars together was usually impracticable. As a result of some gentle bullying by the Editor a number of accounts of the trip arrived for Kist. What follows is a compilation and conflation of these, adapted to suit limited space and avoid repetition.

We assembled on Oban pier in hot afternoon sunshine, the huge "Lord of the Isles" towering over us as we waited to embark. (Fun began for Creena on the pier when she was asked to "reverse backwards"). After a perfect crossing we

arrived at Arinagour and headed for the Hebridean Centre at Ballyhough where we were to stay. (All waxed ecstatic about the comfortable accommodation and especially about the food!). The Centre, in gaps in its normal function as the H.Q. of Project Trust which trains school leavers for voluntary service abroad, accepts study groups for short periods; it contains a library of books and archive material concerning Coll. On our arrival in brilliant evening sunshine most of us walked the few hundred yards to Hogh Bay - a magnificent beach with wonderful breakers.

### Coll Recollections

So many memories - particularly the scents of sea and shore, moorland, flowers and peatsmoke; and the colours - blues and greens and purples of the sea, and the white and gold, picked out with pinks and blues and purples, pale to dark, of the flowers on the machair and in the fields. The walk to the shore from Arileod, set about with bog myrtle and mint, where we found marsh water avens, and saw dunlin, oystercatchers, vast numbers of wheatears, and rabbits of every size and every colour from inky black to pale cream, and heard constantly the singing of larks. Coming back to the Centre after a walk and smelling the peat smoke from the newly-lit fire in the Common Room, the same peatsmoke which on a windy evening set off the very efficient and very loud fire alarms. The problem was sorted out and there was no repeat performance, but Hector was restrained from piling more driftwood on the fire. Being hardy souls from Mid Argyll we made nothing of the dampish weather, ploughing through wet grass to see the souterrain, and wandering about in heavy rain at Sorisdale where we saw nousts, - winter berths for boats, just boat-shaped hollows with stone-built sides into which boats were comfortably and safely settled down. There too we saw the sad cottage of John McInnes which had been the last traditional thatched cottage on the island till accidentally bombarded in rock-blasting some years ago. Then to the churchyard at Killunaig, with its early chapel now below ground level due to soil build-up around it, and many early markers, as well as memorials to sailors drowned off Coll during the Second World War, one a Greek. In the new graveyard a stone with an all-Gaelic inscription to a family of MacDougalls, and one enigmatically inscribed "FACE" - to a well-loved "incomer" whose nickname this was.

Thrilled to see butterfly orchids near the Centre among all the other varieties; and even if the "frogbit" turns out not to be frogbit it was exciting to see an uncommon plant in the roadside ditch. A nesting swan and families of geese on the loch beside the Centre. Visit to Arinagour very productive of gifts and mindings; the notice at the post office stating: MONEY ORDERS, SAVINGS BANK, PARCEL POST, TELEGRAPH, INSURANCE AND ANNUITY BUSINESS. Climbing Ben Hogh in a gale which blew me off my feet. And the sound of the corncrake - heard only once!

### Geology

Coll is an island of contrast, between the rocky, hilly NE and the low-lying fertile fields in the SW, so fertile that in the past Coll was the "granary of the West", its barley shipped to the Campbeltown distilleries; between low rounded hills barely covered by short heather and other thin vegetation, and the rich flower and grass land at the back of many beaches, stretching, in the SW at least, from one side of the island to the other. The country rocks are immensely old - some 2,700 million to 1,800 million years old - Lewisian gneiss, both the variety metamorphosed from sedimentary rocks (paragneisses) and that from volcanic material (orthogneisses) among which is Ben Hogh granite-gneiss, notable for its pink-red orthoclase feldspar. The cultivable ground is composed of blown sand, raised beaches with shell sand and alluvium acquired during the most recent geological periods. The foundation rocks are divided from the much later formations of the Tertiary period on Ardnamurchan and Mull by the southern end of a fault line associated with the Moine Thrust, a line we crossed going and coming somewhere off the Mull coast north of Calgary Bay. It passes south through the Sound of Iona and is then lost, but the underlying rocks of Iona are similar to those of Coll and again older than those of its neighbour Mull. The Tertiary Period volcanoes and their lava flows dominate the landscape of Mull and the Treshnish Islands, as we saw so clearly on our return sail, and have intruded dolerite dykes into the E coast of Coll.

The last formative influence on the topography of Coll was the frequent passage of the mainland and Mull ice sheets during the last  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million years until the Devensian phase about 18,000 years ago. The scouring and smoothing of the gneiss is very obvious, as is the glacial erratic perched

on ridiculously small boulders on the NW shoulder of Ben Hogh, which we could see from the Centre, and which many of our party reached and inspected at close quarters.

### Bird-watching

The sail out on the car-passenger ferry via the Sound of Mull showed us a good selection of seabirds. Guillemot and the more colourful Black Guillemot gave a fine display of how not to be run down, or rather sailed over, by a ship at speed. Diving to pick up sand-eels from the water were several flights of Arctic Tern; popularly known as Sea Swallow, mainly by their forked tails, they appear to be making a good recovery from the decline in their numbers several years ago owing to the over-fishing of their main diet, the sand-eel, and the predation of their eggs and young by mink at nesting time. Perched on rocks drying out their wing-feathers were Cormorant and Shag.

Coll itself was a bird-watcher's delight; while many of the birds are also to be seen in Mid Argyll, the sheer numbers of various species all having the same habitat were quite impressive. . Whether walking by island roads, or among the sand dunes and machair, or along farm tracks, the familiar tic-tic-ing calls of the wheatear and the stonechat, the ascending song of the lark and its spectacular parachute-like fall back to its nest, and the drumming of the snipe were a constant musical accompaniment. Offshore the gull species were the most conspicuous. Flocks of Common Gulls flying low over the water in numbers between forty and sixty were a frequent sight as they travelled, mainly northwards.

Near the Centre a Mute Swan sat contentedly on her nest by the side of the lochan, her mate swimming about quietly (except when the geese which shared the lochan drew too near). When she did leave her nest late on the last day of our stay hopes were high that we might see a flotilla of cygnets accompany her, but no such luck; she returned to the nest shortly afterwards to continue her incubation of the eggs. Several greylag geese frequented the sand dunes near the Centre; not being familiar with humans they would take wing if approached too close; it was nice to see one goose with three well-grown goslings, obviously bred on Coll.

A visit to the Nature Reserve at Totronald failed to let us hear or see the corncrake; but we were impressed by the methods used by the farmers, not only at the Reserve but in various parts of the island, to encourage the bird to

increase its numbers: around the edges of fields flag irises, nettles and cow parsley grew vigorously - the last-named at least deliberately sown; with mowing starting in the centre of the field, should there be birds with young there the brood would scatter to this tall growth for safety. Thankfully several of us did hear the corncrake, but no sighting of it - the high vegetation was making sure the bird would be heard but not seen.

### Botanising

The view west from the RSPB carpark across the hay meadows was gold with buttercups among the growing grasses, and the bands of cow parsley along the fences smelt delicious in the damp morning. Southwestwards a sandy path led across grazed ground towards the sea - a grassy hillside to the south. Soon we found patches of Bloody Cranesbill flowering among the grass, along with daisies, buttercups, veronicas, birds-foot trefoil etc. - a real floral carpet. I found a number of dark red orchids growing in damp ground where a trickle of water oozed out of the hillside. Across the road from the Reserve's Visitor Centre are two standing stones, called "The Tellers of Tales"; here the ground was thick with Early Spotted Orchids and other little heathy flowers - milkwort, lousewort, sedges and beyond them a good number of Scented Orchids; also shining oddly low among the grasses big red heads of a clover just beginning to grow up - was it Zig-zag Clover?

A walk south from the Hebridean Centre led to sandhills and the shore. A steep bank where a stream went through the dunes was covered with flowers - more cranesbill and quantities of Lesser Meadow Rue not yet in flower, also Storksbill and Ladies' fingers. Everywhere among the dunes were buttercups, daisies, hawkweeds, veronicas and sandsedge, great patches of birdsfoot trefoil and lady's bedstraw (one of the few sources of red dye in the Highlands and Islands).

Climbing Ben Hogh by way of a detour to the south to avoid a most ferocious wind we came up a very flowery bank near the top, where the little pale blue field speedwell predominated. Coming down on the windy side of the hill there were hardly any flowers until the lochan between the hill and the Centre, which was ringed with bogbean.

On the bank above the road to the Centre a number of Lesser Butterfly Orchids were in bloom; they have a lovely scent; in the ditch below, at the roadside, was Lesser Spear-

wort and among it many little 3-petalled white flowers on short straight stalks standing out of the water. I knew I had never seen this before; a correct identification by an expert is now awaited - was it Floating Water Plantain, or Lesser Water Plantain in a more dwarf form than I have seen at Keills? There is so much to be seen - another time!

A thought in retrospect - Are there so many flowers on Coll because the rabbits and the sheep keep the grass so short?

[Editorial note: our ornithologist and our botanist supplied the Latin names of all the species they mentioned, but space was insufficient to include them].

### Fauna

Apart from large numbers of cattle and sheep these were not much in evidence. The principal inhabitants of Coll are the rabbits, outnumbering the humans by many thousands, in evidence everywhere but especially on the dune systems near the Reserve Centre, their burrows on the big ridge towards the shore making it necessary to walk with caution. Reaching the top of this I saw a line of rabbits along the skyline, like a frieze on a nursery wall. They went for cover, but not in any hurry, obviously having nothing to fear. They looked plump and succulent, suitable to end up like Peter Rabbit's father - in a pie. Some burrows looked abandoned, but a close look revealed many tiny clawmarks in the loose sand at the entrance, indicating the nesting site of one of the innumerable wheatears. The nest was too far in to be seen in most cases, but other members of our party were more fortunate. Two other creatures to mention - the two cats, one wearing a red collar and the other a blue, which attached themselves to our party at Breachacha and escorted us through the Bird Reserve. A dark suspicion arose in our minds; "Birdwatchers find birds". Perhaps we do them an injustice; they may just like company.

### Tailpiece: "Highlights I Re-Coll"

The two oldest ladies in our party appearing on the summit of Ben Hogh in the face of a very strong headwind, apparently with very little difficulty. Another member of the party kneeling perilously close to a cowpat to sniff an orchid; some trouble deciding whether it was the scented or the other one, I should imagine. People dancing around the lounge in "The Peat Fire Flame" to open windows and doors when the smoke alarm went off. And who was it who asked

the owner of (New) Old Breachacha Castle what electrical firm he worked for? And who were the four who became hopelessly lost in the dune country behind Crossapol Bay and were rescued by a kind dea ex machina in a four-wheel-drive (at 60mph across a beach and deeply rutted tracks)? And how quickly that swan sprachled back on to her nest when Colin appeared!

The Hebridean Centre - one can only say Five Star treatment at hostel prices! It was a most enjoyable four-day break and I am sure all of us agree. Our thanks to Anne and her committee for arranging it.

With acknowledgments to Sheena Carmichael, Ginny Crawford, Colin Fergusson, Dilys Hooton, Anne Kahane, Agatha Lewis, Mary MacDougall, and Hector Walker.

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### A GLIMPSE OF COLL IN EARLIER DAYS

Lorne MacEchern

My visit to Coll, full of interest, was enhanced by a personal family connection. My great-uncle, the Rev. Dugald MacEchern, Bard to the Gaelic Society of Inverness, was Parish Minister of the island between the end of the last century and 1908. By 1907 he had raised enough money, with the enthusiastic support of friends from, literally, all over the world by holding a mammoth Sale of Work (lasting three days) in Inverness, where his father was minister, to build a new church at Arinagour.

In the Hebridean Centre I found a copy of diary notes written in 1899 by my great-aunt when she was staying with her brother in the Manse. They give a vivid idea of the life then: the variety of the home made entertainments; the dismay when, day after day, during a stormy period, the steamer loaded with loaves sailed to Coll but could not land the bread and other goods so badly needed; nor could it take aboard the pigs, cheese, cloth, sheep etc. which were assembled on the pier each day, but had sadly to be trundled home again to await better weather.

Having now seen the island I can understand why great-uncle Dugald so loved Coll.