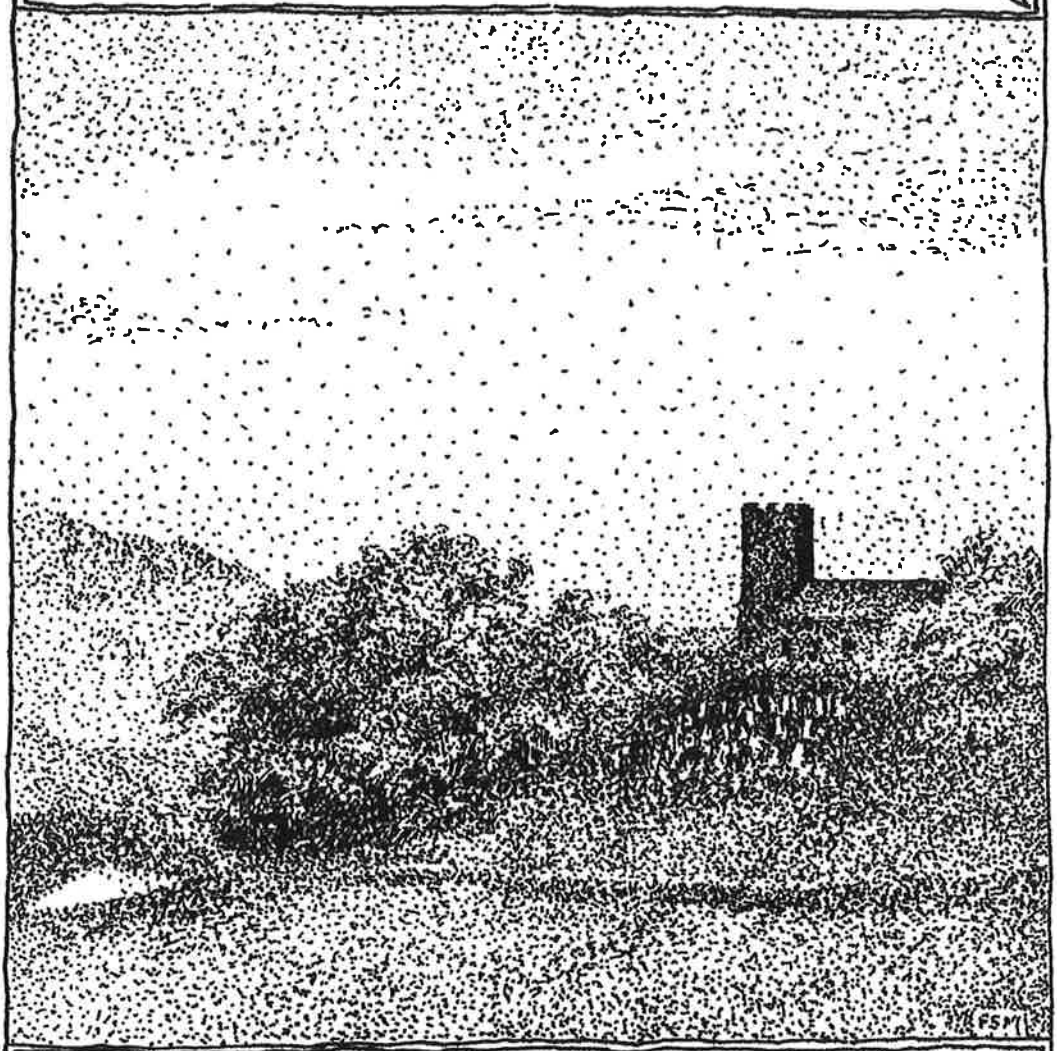
Glebe Cairn : Kilmartin.



The KIST 55

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Full list of officebearers on back cover.

Resignation of Mrs Anne M. Kahane as President

It was with very great regret that the Society accepted Anne Kahane's resignation. She had been President for eight years, and during that time had been a pillar of strength in general and the main support of the Committee. She took on the duties of Secretary when a replacement for Fiona MacDonald could not be found and fulfilled these for over five years. In addition she arranged our summer outings, with limited help from the Committee, communicating with landowners where necessary, prospecting the route, and often clearing pathways through vegetation, as well as on many occasions giving a talk on site. Her wide range of contacts in the academic world, particularly in archaeology, and in the many subjects denoted in our title as 'Natural History', were invaluable. She told us of the activities of various organisations; she contacted lecturers for our winter meetings, and often provided hospitality as well.

Anne, we appreciate all you did for us. We shall miss you. But at least you did agree to stay on Committee!

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SHEEP, GOATS, FOXES AND WOLVES IN NORTH KNAPDALE

Leslie Rymer

There is a common assumption that sheep were virtually absent from the Highlands before the mid-18th century. This is not strictly true. Although the number of sheep kept upon any one farm was not considerable, they were important in providing milk, meat, and enough wool to clothe the local population. In 14th-century Knapdale they may have been even more important, for in 1369 the district was expected to meet the Royal Taxation out of the proceeds of its wool production. The 13th-century chapel at Kilmory Knap houses a magnificent collection of mediaeval and earlier gravestones some of which depict sheep-shearing scissors / clothworkers' cropping-shears (see over). These suggest that sheep played an important role in the economy. The price of a sheep at Castle Sween in 1615 was one pound Scots.

It is likely that goats were once more important than sheep. If so, this is of great ecological significance; it is a factor that has not received due consideration from ecological historians. A writer in the 1760s refers to the

Mediaeval Gravestones in Chapel at Kilmory Knap
Crown Copyright: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland

"large and numerous flocks of goats [which] were ... everywhere kept", and another in 1795 said "Goats abounded in this country [Argyll] some time ago". Goats are often more numerous than sheep in lists of animals given in compensation claims for raids. Towards the end of the 17th century over 100,000 goat and kid skins were sent to London from Scotland in a single year.

I can see two reasons why these flocks of goats would have been disposed of, although I can find no real evidence for either. One is the increased value of woodland during the 18th century (for tan bark and charcoal). Goats do not facilitate the regeneration of timber; large numbers of goats might have been responsible for the treeless landscape of the Highlands. Another reason for the disappearance of the goat would have been the introduction of sheep; the flockmasters did not want other animals competing with their beasts for pasture, even though it was thought that forty goats were equivalent to eight sheep because "after the sheep have eat the pasture bare the herbs, as thyme etc. that are left are of little or no value except for the brouzing of goats".

Before commercial sheep farming reached Argyll in the 1760s the sheep native to the parish were the true highland sheep. These were small, the mature animals having a carcass weight of only 20-25 lb, and sometimes as low as 16 lb. The fleece, although it contained a proportion of hairy fibres and weighed no more than one or two pounds, was mostly composed of fine soft wool which, in 1793, was selling at 2 shillings a stone more than the fleece of the imported breeds. Black and grey sheep were favoured because it saved the trouble of dyeing the wool. During the summer and harvest they were folded in the hills but they were allowed to come down during the winter. Because the sheep were kept for milk the lambs were weaned about the end of June by tying a small stick across their mouths to prevent them suckling. The ewes then continued to be milked twice a day until sometime in September. It is said that the ewes only lambed every second year.

It seems that tenants were reluctant to keep any more sheep than were required for their own domestic use. Perhaps the reason for this was the high numbers of lambs lost in severe winters, because of disease, and, most importantly, by predation.

The wolf did not become extinct in Scotland until 1743.

The main ecological significance of this is that the wolf was the only natural predator on deer, and since its disappearance man has been one of the main limiting factors of deer populations. This has had many biological consequences. However wolves would also have taken sheep. By an act of James II of Scotland every baron and tenant was to search out and destroy the young of wolves and to hunt the wolf four times a year, or whenever found in the barony.

More important, at least in later times, was the fox. It still occurs in North Knapdale but under constant pressure from man, who shoots it. Before commercial sheep farming this was not the case; it was said that in many places a farmer thought himself well off if the fox had not destroyed one half of his lambs before Christmas, and that the prevalence of the fox prevented the inhabitants from "keeping an extensive flock of sheep". This may well be the explanation for the large number of goats kept. Because the goat is stronger than the sheep, and is able to pass the night in areas too precipitous and inaccessible for sheep, it may have been more secure from the ravages of the fox.

The fox was not widely hunted until 1764, when commercial sheep farming became important. Before then it led a much more carefree existence because the calf is outside its prey size-range, and sheep (perhaps because of the fox) were considered of only secondary importance. After 1764 the fox "was greatly destroyed" and "his depredations in many districts [were] no longer formidable". With the fox gone the sheep were safe and there was no need to keep large numbers of goats to graze the hill pastures.

In the second half of the eighteenth century storemasters from the lowlands moved into Argyll taking their own sheep (Linton or blackfaced) with them. The minister of North Knapdale felt that there could not be "a more capital mistake". The wool of the Linton was coarse, loose and shaggy, being much inferior to the fleece of the native sheep. Also, the Lintons were very susceptible to a disease called braxy (splenic apoplexy) which had previously been unknown in the Highlands; and although the Highland sheep did not reach the size or weight of the Lintons, 19 Highland sheep could be fed on the pasture required by 8 of the Lintons. Nevertheless local people soon realised that they could make more money from sheep than from black cattle. In 1787 Duncan Campbell advised Mrs McVean of the Knap estate that she ought to lay "the whole of the hill grounds under a sheep

stock of a proper kind [i.e, Linton] ... and keep only a few milk cattle upon the low grounds" as this would enable her "to make a better return from the farm, a mixed stock pasturing in common upon any farm being always considered prejudicial and unprofitable". Not only was a new breed of sheep being introduced, but with it a new system of farming. Many of the local people began buying Lintons.

In 1793 there were 1400 sheep in the parish.

By 1844 there were 3600 sheep, all of them blackface , and by 1866 there were 7825. In 1905,however,it was said that the tenants on the Ross Estate were chiefly occupied in the raising of Highland cattle. Only one farm was carrying sheep - Arinafad Beg with a stock of about 250 head. This Estate covers the most fertile areas of the parish, and is best suited for arable farming and cattle raising. It would therefore seem that the division of the parish into a sheep rearing and a cattle rearing region began in the late eighteenth century and has continued to the present day.

One might expect the change to sheep farming to lead, both directly (through the grazing activities of the sheep) and indirectly (through the social economic consequences of the change) to significant changes in the vegetation. There is no documentary evidence relevant to this subject in any of the Estate records.

Before the Forestry Commission planted 2000 acres of hill pasture in the northern half of the Tayvallich peninsula more of the farms carried sheep. Arichonan and Kilmahumaig are still remembered as "great sheep farms", and the former, according to local hearsay, was involved in a clearance episode, a young girl being sent to prison for throwing boiling water over the police who were sent to keep peace during the evictions.

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THE CLAN MACKELLAR Part 3
Lt Col Patrick Mackellar 1717 - 1778

Duncan Beaton

Returning to the Maam family, Records of Argyll simply says that the Mackellars sold out to the duke of Argyll and emigrated. By 1741 John Mackellar of Maam had a house in the old town of Inveraray which 27 years later was the feu of his son Patrick the military engineer. This house was almost certainly the house for which John Mackellar "tacksman in Maam and now servant to the Duke" paid a disposition of 45 pounds in 1738, "a house in the Burgh of Inveraray lately built ... the cost to be 75 pounds".

Further evidence of Lt Col Mackellar's connection with Maam is forthcoming from the Journals of the Hon. William Hervey from 1755 to 1814. This youngest son of Lord Hervey had served with Patrick Mackellar in North America, and on a visit to Inveraray in 1767 made an excursion to Maam, the birthplace of his acquaintance, in the company of Robert Campbell of Asknish.

Patrick Mackellar was one of the young men of Inveraray who at that time had found favour in the patronage of the 2nd Duke of Argyll, and had been created a burgess of Inveraray at a fairly young age on 10th October 1732. He entered the ordnance service as a clerk at Woolwich in 1735, and in 1739 was sent to the military station at Menorca after being promoted to the office of the clerk of the works. Menorca was then an important British naval base. Other promotions followed, and by the time he appeared back in Inveraray on leave in October 1750 he had the rank of engineer extraordinary. He carried with him a letter of recommendation from Provost George Drummond of Edinburgh, addressed to Lord Milton the former Lord Justice Clerk who was by then the confidant of the 3rd Duke of Argyll at Inveraray. This letter summarised Mackellar's career to date and introduced him as "a Gentleman of Established reputation & caracter ... Thoroughly attached ...To the Duke and to his family". It was almost immediately successful; in 1751 Mackellar was promoted engineer in ordinary. Apart from a short period on special duties at Sheerness in England in 1752 he spent his time at Menorca, where he worked on the defences of Fort Mahon and St. Philip's Castle. His

talents for architecture and military engineering were especially useful in these projects.

In 1754 Mackellar was called home to join the expeditionary force to North America, and served in the ill-fated campaign under Braddock, making roads and bridges in advance of the army on the march from Alexandria in Virginia across the Alleghany mountains, through a wild and little known country to Fort Du Quesne, at the junction of the Ohio and Monongahela rivers. On 11th July 1754 the British force was attacked by the French army and their Indian allies. Mackellar was one of those severely wounded in this fray.

In the spring of 1756 Mackellar was appointed Chief engineer of the frontier forts. Among the forts badly in need of replacement were those at Ontario and Oswego. During the rebuilding of the former the French attacked and battered the walls with their cannon. The garrison abandoned the fort and crossed to the equally derelict Oswego. Their position was hopeless and they quickly capitulated. Mackellar was made a prisoner of war and was taken first to Quebec, then on to Montreal. When the prisoners were exchanged in 1757 Mackellar was able to pass on important information on the places he had seen, information which was to help him during his later campaigns.

On his return home he was employed in Scotland, repairing military installations. Promotions followed; on 14th May 1757 he was commissioned captain in the army in addition to his ordnance rank of engineer, and on 4th January 1758 was promoted major and sub-director.

He was second engineer in the expedition which left Halifax Nova Scotia on 28th May 1758. They arrived at Cape Breton Island on 2nd June and six days later they landed despite fierce opposition. By the 12th they were laying siege to the fortress of Louisburg and on the 27th the garrison of more than 6,500 surrendered. The island of Cape Breton fell to the British for the loss of 523 killed and wounded and Mackellar, who had assumed the position of Chief engineer, could take the credit for the proportionally small numbers of casualties.

On 13th May 1759 Brigadier-General Wolfe, who had been present at Louisburg and was now supreme commander of the British land forces in North America, sailed for the St. Lawrence with Mackellar as his chief engineer. On 26th June the expedition arrived at Orleans Island opposite

Quebec, where a battery was set up to bombard the town. The lower town was quickly reduced to rubble but the upper part withstood and a siege was set up. From the observations made while he was a prisoner Mackellar knew of the pitfalls of an outright attack, but a plan was devised; and on 13th September Wolfe and his army fell on the town from above. During the descent from the Heights of Abraham (the land crossed had once belonged to a Scots-born farmer named Abraham Martin) Wolfe was mortally wounded, but the British were victorious and took Quebec.

Wolfe was succeeded by Brigadier General James Murray and Mackellar remained as his chief engineer. During the autumn of 1759 the town's fortifications were strengthened. In the following April 10,000 French advanced on them. The British, with Murray in command and Mackellar in charge of the artillery, met this force at Sillery, but were defeated and withdrew to Quebec. Now it was the turn of the British to be besieged and Mackellar, who had been badly wounded twice in the recent campaign, had to recuperate. When he recovered he set about the defences of the town, which was successfully held until the British navy could get up the St. Lawrence.

During the rest of 1760 the conquest of Canada was completed. After the taking of Montreal Mackellar went to Halifax where a large arsenal had been installed, and he was given the appointment of chief engineer there on 24th November. His role while at Halifax was mainly one of instruction and surveying the environs of the depot.

A year later he was appointed chief engineer with the expedition to the Caribbean island of Martinique, in the French Windward Islands. Under General Monckton the force left Barbados on 24th December 1761. After disembarking a siege was commenced on Fort Royal on 16th January and the fort was stormed on 4th February by Mackellar and his brigade specially trained for that role at Halifax. This was quickly followed by the surrender of Martinique and the other French Windward Islands.

By this time Mackellar had been promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel (on 3rd January 1762) and four months later he joined the forces of the earl of Albemarle off Cuba as they prepared for an assault on Havana. The force landed on 7th June and set up a siege on the fort of El Moro, one of the main defences of the harbour. Mackellar and his

team were once again to the fore in the carrying out of this siege and on 30th July the walls were finally breached by one of the ingenious mines dug by the engineers. The El Moro fortifications were reduced to rubble and the whole island capitulated. Mackellar's reputation was greatly enhanced by the Cuban campaign. Although he was again wounded he quickly recovered. His journal of the expedition and his part in the siege was published by the London Gazette in September 1762. His prize money for the taking of El Moro amounted to 564 pounds 14 shillings and 6 pence sterling.

Menorca had fallen into the hands of the French, and when peace was restored in 1763 Mackellar returned to the island to oversee the transfer of the munitions and fortifications back to Great Britain. This was completed on 4th June; on 30th September he was appointed chief engineer of the island base. He set about improving the works he had built a decade before, as well as the town of Mahon itself and its harbour. This included a barracks to house a full-sized garrison and render the fortress island impregnable.

Lt Col Patrick Mackellar now also found time to spend at home in Scotland. His family had left Maam and his brother Neil was living in the neighbouring parish of Glassary. Between 11th April 1774 and 6th November 1776 he was mentioned in ten sasines, five of them with his brother Neil. In the first one, dated 11th April, he was mentioned in connection with the lands of Stronalbanich in Glassary, near the present village of Minard. The liferent was in the possession of an ensign Colin Campbell. The detail of another, a discharge dated 20th February 1775, is interesting in that Lt Col Mackellar was mentioned as the singular successor to Captain Duncan Campbell of Kirnan, son of the Rev. Alexander Campbell of Glenaray Parish who died in 1734, and uncle to the wife of his brother Neil Mackellar of Dail. The properties were one merkland of Carran and the half merkland of Kinlochlean, both in Glassary.

However most of Patrick Mackellar's energies seem to have been directed to events in Menorca and his Scottish affairs were looked after by his brother. In 1768 a son John was born to him on the island, a young man whose career in the Royal Navy took him to the upper echelons of society. A brother Neil followed; their mother was a former Miss Elizabeth Basaline of Menorca. Neil joined the army where he also attained high rank.

On 29th August 1777 Patrick Mackellar was promoted to the rank of director of engineers and full colonel, but on 22nd October 1778 he died while still on active service on the island.

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LOCAL DEFENCES

Marion Campbell

It was abundantly clear in 1995 that survivors of the 1939-45 War were Old Fossils. "Were you an evacuee?" we were asked in awed tones; if we replied that no, we'd been in uniform ; actually, there was a general dropping of jaws. People hardly believe that we 'accepted' rationing, or the blackout or direction of labour; but then (they quickly add) there wouldn't be much of that here, surely? You must have lived pretty comfortably in your typically idle Highland way?

It's our own fault. We have not tried to tell them, we have not cared to remind ourselves. Just occasionally we can jolt our hearers by speaking of - say - two escapes, each of three men, who traversed Occupied and Vichy France speaking only Gaelic and passing as whatever foreign workers most mystified Authority; one group reached Malta to be threatened with courtmartial for desertion, the other was hailed by BBC Radio in a breach of censorship which cost their fellow-POWs full dear (a Herr Professor visited the camp to find Gaelic-speakers "for linguistic research" which led them to the saltmines). The listeners stare and smile, briefly shaken, hardly stirred. Tell of a POW Camp close to home, of Nazis in Knapdale hills, and disbelief breaks out.

This camp was at Cairnbaan, in huts erected for unemployed men to train as foresters (later it reverted to the Forestry Commission before replacement by postwar houses).

Here were some hardline Nazis who had caused unrest in other camps, most of whose inmates were only too pleased to be out of action.

I doubt if you will find anything of this in newspapers. I have not searched, but I cannot recall reading any accounts. This story is best treated as unsupported memory, perhaps a good illustration of the pitfalls of oral tradition.

In summer 1944, with a heatwave to start the hay-harvest,

a dozen hardliners literally slid out of Cairnbaan. Rumour said they went down the sewer; more probably it was a storm-drain or the culvert that takes the Cairndubh Burn under the canalside road. They climbed the southern bank of the canal and headed into the hill beyond Craig Glas; and from somewhere they acquired a set of oilskins and seaboots. In that sweltering disguise one of them trudged into town just as shops were opening, and in broken English told a sorry tale of a small ship on passage, a scalded cook, a hungry crew. The Canal saw a steady trickle of Free-This-and-That craft bound for Tobermory to train for special services, so the tale was likely enough. The hearers reacted predictably, making up stacks of sandwiches (we all had men at sea and overseas) and the grateful 'seaman' went back to rejoin his 'boat'.

Before the general alarm was raised the escapers were beyond Brenfield and crossing the Ormsary road into trackless country. Now it was all straightforward; as on a Hitlerjügend outing they would proceed in a brisk and orderly manner, if without the usual singing, through South Knapdale, down Kintyre, and near Southend they would somehow find a boat and row across to neutral Ireland. Keine Probleme - no garrisons, no barriers, glorious weather - nothing but some days of short rations to trouble them.

They faced two unforeseen snags. One was the local Home Guard - no comic 'Dad's Army' but a bunch of shepherds, gamekeepers and poachers, led by an ex-Lovat Scout Sergeant, who between them knew every ridge and hollow from Inverneill to Ardpatrick. Without missing a day's work they sealed the bounds of their territory and made nightly sweeps through the hills, from dusk until the dew was off the hay. In daytime the hill was patrolled by a Lysander, that canny little workhorse, puttering slowly over the high ground. The beat of its engine meant that escapers must flatten themselves in whatever cover they could find, bracken, bog, or deep heather. By night things were little better; the patrols knew every gully where a sheep could hide (and moving sheep signalled strangers). Moreover the grain of the country runs north-east to south-west, so going south-eastwards involves endless crossings of narrow clefts and sharp little ridges. Nor were these the only troubles; a second, secret army was active in the field.

On the fifth day, as I remember, a small boy was awaiting

the School Bus outside his house when five dishevelled figures came out of the wood above the road. "Kamerad, Kamerad!" they said, taking down their raised hands to slap the backs of their necks. The boy dealt firmly with them; "Bide you there till I get my Daddy", and he went indoors. His instructions were perfectly intelligible; the five meekly ranged themselves along the roadside dyke until Daddy could resume his khaki blouse and rifle, and come out to accept their surrender.

Standing Orders were precise; no food or drink must be offered to The Enemy, but naturally cups of tea filled the void till the police arrived (summoned by the Bus-driver, for there was no phone). By then it was clear that the escape had been abandoned neither because of the Home Guard nor because of the Lysander, but because of the unsleeping hordes of clegs, sheep ticks and midges on the hill.

The remainder of the group had trudged on, only to fall prey to other native defenders. Tarbert had many men away in the forces; those who remained had set up nightly patrols along the road across the isthmus. By day the road was covered by a patrol of boys on bicycles, equipped with whistles, and pedalling back and forth continually. One shining dawn found a forlorn figure grubbing potatoes from a roadside field, long before the crop was edible. Whistles were joyfully blown, reinforcements tumbled out of the Drill Hall, the digger's companions were duly gathered up.

The bush-telegraph fairly hummed. We were assured by some that the escapers were Italian desperadoes, "anything could have happened". (Argylls on leave found this hard to reconcile with what they recalled of the Western Desert). We all hoped for 'a piece in the paper' to tell us what had really happened, but if there ever was one, I missed it. We were left to shake our heads and reflect on the efficacy of of our defences - local knowledge, bikes and whistles, and above all our highly trained secret weapons, never properly appreciated before or since. Often as we cursed - and curse - them, we cannot quite forget that Midge, Tick and Cleg all earned themselves corporate campaign medals that summer.

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SIR JOHN ORDE OF KILMORY

Petulant Genius or Evil Eccentric?

Michael Davis

A cloud of malice surrounds the personality of Sir John Powlett-Orde, 19th century laird of Kilmory ... if local traditions are to be believed. Between the 1820s when the youthful baronet married the young heiress of Kilmory Estate and his death in the 1870s, Sir John enjoyed enormous power and prestige in Lochgilphead and locality. He sat on practically every committee or board of embryonic local government, and directly or indirectly, was a major employer. But despite his position of authority, local memories tell of a long tradition of resentment which sometimes erupted into virtual war between the laird and the fishing community.

According to stories passed down, the climax came when Sir John took his whip to a boy as his carriage passed through Lochgilphead, and his carriage was subsequently stoned. As a result, or how the tale goes, Sir John vowed he would never enter Lochgilphead, and built a road across Loch Gilp.

The stories surrounding Sir John are not entirely true, nor are they entirely false. The truth, so far as can be judged, is stranger by far.

Whatever his reputation, Sir John was a man with an enquiring mind and an inclination not to be bound by tradition. This shines through his interests in architecture, in laying out the grounds of Kilmory, and in farming. From 1828, he began the rebuilding of Kilmory Castle, the main phase of which went on until 1837. He designed his stately home as a "castle" and certainly it has battlements and a great octagonal tower. But the practice of building rampantly castellated houses was just going out of fashion. The romantic paraphernalia of "portcullises which will not lower down and drawbridges which will not draw up" was beginning to seem ridiculous. "On one side" declared a critic of the castle style, "all the show of strong defence, and round the corner a conservatory. Who would hammer against nailed portals when he could kick his way through the greenhouse?".

Kilmory certainly has a number of false portcullises, but Sir John was sufficiently avant-garde to have guided his architect to a new solution: his "castle" was built in the

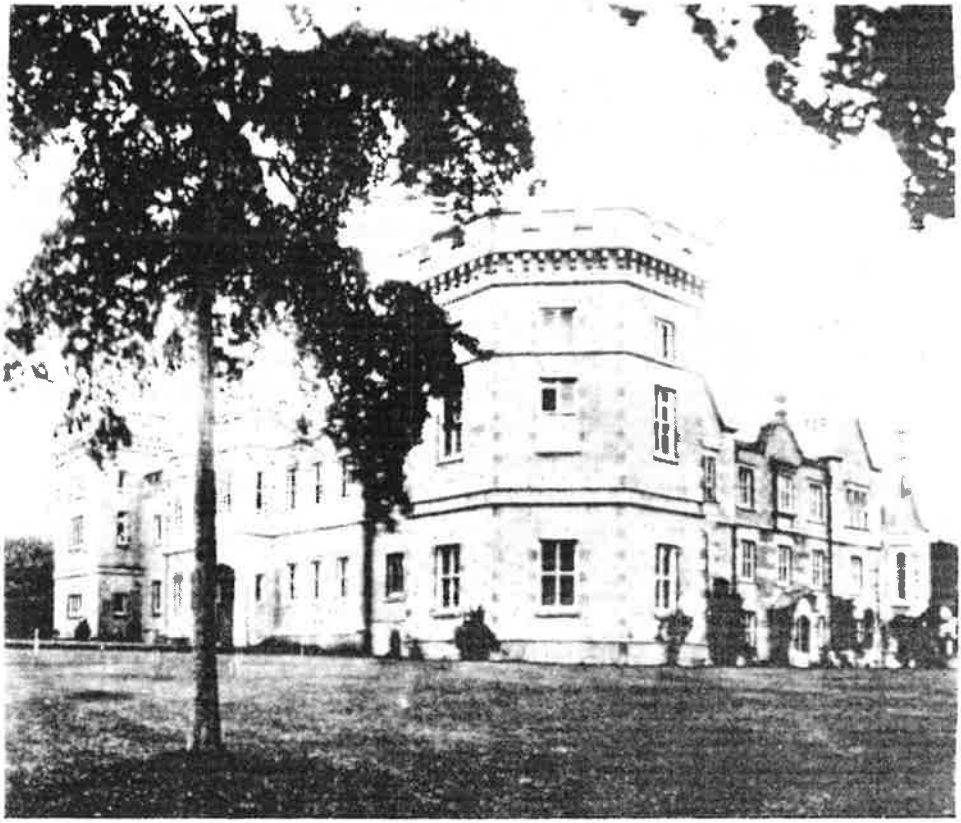
style of a Tudor mansion of the period just when castles turned to houses. Thus there was no incongruity in the incorporation of large windows in the domestic ranges.

Inside, Sir John incorporated a timber staircase by Italian craftsmen - very possibly he ordered it when visiting Rome - and magnificent plasterwork gothic columns and vaulting disguised as stone. He led the way by being the first to commission a tiled floor from Herbert Minton, helping to start Minton on his path to fame.

Sir John, apparently, had an obsession with gateways. Originally , Kilmory Castle did not have the usual front door. Instead, a tunnel-like road ran through the middle of the castle. Sir John himself referred to this novel feature as useful in a damp and stormy climate, but the real reason was undoubtedly the romantic drama experienced by visitors whose coach would thunder through what appeared to be the front door, gates being flung aside, and hence plunge into the centre of the mansion. According to some reports the gates operated automatically as the coach triggered a lever. The driver was obliged literally to drive at the doorways, which were geared to open just before they were reached! Out in the grounds, more simple gateways had hinges fitted into rustic stonework, while metal garden gates had systems of chains and pulleys so that one only had to push lightly against one leaf of the gate for both to glide open. At the Highland Show he won prizes for gates he had designed, including one intended to withstand assault by an enraged bull.

In farming Sir John's tastes were equally advanced - or bizarre. Kilmory's home pastures did not contain ordinary farm animals, but herds of Zebu, Guzorat humped cattle, and a white bull of the ancient Scots type. "I tried two or three pairs of alpacas and llamas", Sir John noted, "but the former died, and the latter met with accidents and I gave them up". Sir John had also crossed Zebu with native breeds, but "the crosses are so wild that it is difficult to do anything with them". At prestigious agricultural shows Sir John frequently won prizes for exotic ducks, hens and other fowl, though it is possible that the judges did not have much to compare them with!

Next to the stable block is a strange circular enclosure. Is it a ring for breaking in horses, or for experiments involving silage? Nobody knows and the mystery remains.



Kilmory House, Lochgilphead

Even in the layout of the grounds Sir John's ideas were novel. During his time as laird he redesigned the roads layout of his estate. He was clearly aware of the principle of "desire lines" as modern planners describe those corner-cutting routes that people take, because many of the new road junctions take account of these. Sometimes these junctions even revolve around circular features, so that the pioneering laird came close to inventing the roundabout!

For the planning of the gardens Sir John is said to have made use of the botanist Sir William Hooker during the 1830s. But even if Sir John was ahead of most in building up a collection of rare rhododendron plants, his new garden layout was even more revolutionary. The formal walled garden

close to the Castle lawns gradually blended into a wilderness garden in which natural(?) outcrops were enhanced with huge massy boulders to form a wild and romantic landscape. Other constructions continued this naturalistic tone, with tables and chairs for picnic parties formed from rough slabs of rock. This was all vastly ahead of its time. Sir John's own sarcophagus, set next to that of Eliza, his wife, who died half a century before her husband, is itself set atop a rocky mound; really a rockery on the grand scale in a rugged garden of death, entered from the main garden.

Sir John's supposed relations with others have long been a source of scandal. Allegedly, he once summoned poor Eliza, his wife, to his carriage. "Where do we drive to today, Sir John?"she obediently asked. "Rome, Ma'am" he answered. After only three years of marriage, Eliza was dead, having borne three children, visited Rome, and seen the builders move in to reconstruct completely the house her father had built only a decade before!

While the Malcolms of Poltalloch chose the famously gruff and plain-spoken Tory architect William Burn to design their palace near Kilmartin, Sir John chose J. Gordon Davis of London, although anyone has yet to find work in London (or anywhere) which he designed before being engaged by Sir John. Why did Sir John choose a complete unknown? Perhaps he simply needed the technical know-how to interpret his own ideas - without argument!

Sir John's first "trouble" in Lochgilphead dated from October 1832 when there was mayhem in the streets and a number of individuals allegedly assaulted the baronet. The cause of the riot was almost certainly connected with the passage of the Reform Bill. On another occasion, trees at Kilmory were vandalised.

Constantly, Sir John personally inspected the highway which skirted his estate, reporting minor infringements of highway regulations to the local police. One can imagine that the police must soon have viewed Sir John's diligence as a very mixed blessing. He was particularly keen that nets should not be dried within twenty feet of the centre of the road. In 1857 he began to complain that the police had not followed up his complaints. He had the roadmen issued with numbered pegs so that he would not have to enquire their names in order to check up on them!

Such petulance was as nothing to the incident when, in

April 1871, at the age of seventy, he was tried for assault. As tradition asserts, he took his whip to a child. The child was three-and-a- half years old and playing in the sand in the gutter. Whether intended or not, the whip actually fastened around the child's neck and dragged him for six yards. All these facts were accepted; but the baronet was acquitted on the grounds that he thought the child, who miraculously was uninjured, was attempting to frighten his horses. The acquittal caused raised eyebrows, and questions were asked in Parliament. When the Lord Advocate defended the judgement, even the Argyleshire Herald printed an attack soaked in irony. However, newspaper reports make clear that the incident did not take place in Lochgilphead but near Ardrishaig, at "Vale", wherever that is; and although it makes a good story, the Clock Lodge and the road across Loch Gilp were built long before Sir John's trial for assault, and were not a consequence of it as tradition asserts.

In fact the road across Loch Gilp probably had no malevolent motive, though it may have also pleased Sir John by inconveniencing the local fishing fleet. The idea of thundering across the surface of the waters of Loch Gilp, spray flying, on an often semi-submerged road would probably have appealed to Sir John, as would careering through the internal space of the Clock Lodge as a prelude to plunging into the Castle itself; but another reason might have been the attraction of such a road as a means of encouraging Queen Victoria to leave the Royal Barge and visit Kilmory on her famous journey through the Canal.

While a grandee such as Neil Malcolm of Poltalloch was content to greet the Queen on arrival on both her outward and return journeys, Sir John took a far more prominent role, riding alongside the barge for the whole route. Alas for Sir John, the queen did not leave the barge to enjoy the thrill of Sir John's new road, even if its direct route would have saved the delay of travelling through Lochgilphead. If Her Majesty and her Consort did not drop into Kilmory for a quick cuppa with Sir John, Victoria's "near miss" was none-the-less commemorated by a (now vanished) stone in the grounds and by the naming of a bedroom after her. By and by many believed that Victoria had visited after all and the theory was only quashed in the Thirties by a dogmatic editorial in the Argyllshire Advertiser.

Sir John Powlett Orde's strange livestock collections

and his war with the fishermen over the foreshore of Loch Gilp had a farcical sequel in 1938, fifty years after his death. In that year the Argyllshire Advertiser reported "a slight sensation around the shores of Loch Gilp". A sea monster had been sighted in the Loch and it was seen to come ashore near Ardloch Cottages. A "daring man" eventually attacked it with a knife, but it turned that the "twice deceased amphibian" was a stuffed sea lion, originally shot by Sir John, which had been thrown out from Kilmory. In the end, like the distant vision of the floating sea lion, one remains uncertain whether Sir John himself was a dangerous monster, or a genius with a sad tendency to unhappy petulance and to unwitting farce.

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CORN MARIGOLD: a footnote

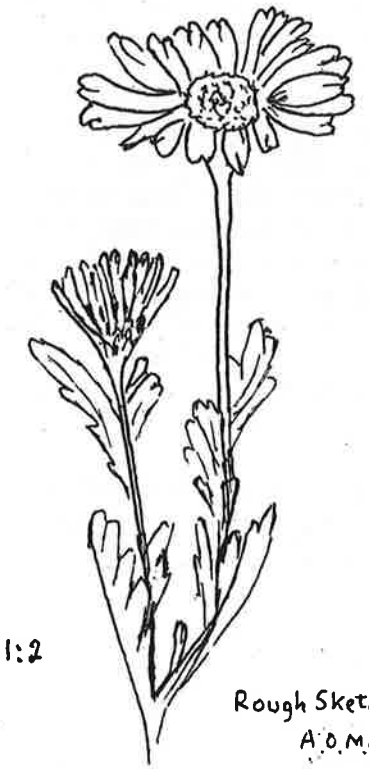
A.R. Duncan-Jones

In Kist 38 Miss Joanna Gordon wrote a full and scholarly account of the beautiful corn marigold (chrysanthemum segetum). She speculated whether it was a monastic introduction, reaching Scotland through Melrose, or alternatively arrived here with the 'improvements' of the 18th century.

Are there any hints of an answer?

In the first Statistical Account, composed in th 1790s, there are indications that it was at that time regarded as fairly long established. It is called "gool" (an alternative pronunciation of "gold"), and there are references to "gool courts", which imposed fines on tenants who let it grow in their fields. Thus the account for Torthorwald, Dumfriesshire, states: "The late Sir William Grierson of Lag was so attentive to have his lands clear of weeds, that he held gool courts as long as he lived, for the purpose of fining the farmers, on whose growing crop three heads or upwards of that weed were found". Sir William Grierson, second baronet, was involved in the 1715 rebellion, but I do not know when he died.

The account for Cargill, Perthshire, is fuller. "An old custom takes place in the parish, called gool-riding,which seems worthy of observation. The lands of Cargill were formerly so very much over-run by a weed with a yellow flower



"Gool"
Chrysanthemum Segetum

that grows among the corns, especially in wet seasons, called gool, and which had the most pernicious effects, not only upon the corns while growing, but also in preventing their winning after being cut down, that it was found absolutely necessary to adopt some effectual method of extirpating it altogether. Accordingly, after allowing a reasonable time for procuring clean seed from other quarters, an act of the baron court was passed, enforcing an old Act of Parliament to the same effect, imposing a fine of 3s.4d or a wedder sheep on the tenants, for every stock of gool that should be found growing among their corns on a particular day, and certain persons, styled gool-riders, were appointed to ride through the fields, search for gool, and carry the law into execution when they discovered it. Though the fine of a wedder sheep, originally imposed for every stock of gool found growing in the barony, is now commuted and reduced to 1d. Sterling, the practice of gool-riding is still kept up, and the fine rigidly exacted. The effects of this baronial regulation have been salutary beyond what could well have been expected. Five stocks of gool were formerly said to grow for every stock of corn through all the lands of the barony, and 20 threaves of barley did not then produce one boll. Now the grounds are so cleared from this noxious weed, that the corns are in high request for seed; and after the most diligent search, the gool-riders can hardly discover as many growing stocks of gool, the fine for which will afford them a dinner and a drink".

I do not know the date of the "old Act of Parliament"

referred to: but in England, according to Mabey Flora Britannica, there was as early as the 12th century "an ordinance against 'Guilde Weed', which was the earliest enactment requiring the destruction of a weed". Perhaps, with all appropriate apologies to Miss Gordon, it may be permissible to refer to the Scots saying (quoted in Flora Britannica): "The Gule, the Gordon, and the Hoodie Craw are the three warst things that Moray ever saw". But I fear that this gives us no clue as to which of the three arrived in Scotland first.

Despite the long-standing warfare there has been for the last two seasons an abundant crop of gool alongside Nether Largie South Cairn - a delight to botanists, if not to the farmer. It is also still visible where Miss Gordon noted it in 1988 alongside the Badden Burn in the proximity of the new houses.

(Note: My quotations from the Statistical Account are drawn from M.Steven, Parish Life in Eighteenth Century Scotland).

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KILMARTIN HOUSE

D.J. Adams McGilp

On the 2nd of May 1997 Kilmartin House Centre for Archaeology and Landscape Interpretation finally opened to the public after several years of determined effort and a remarkable degree of personal commitment from the founders and their supporters.

Visitors to Kilmartin House should allow between one and three hours to appreciate the experience fully. A 15-minute audio-visual presentation is designed to stimulate the imagination rather than burden the audience with historical theory. The museum houses actual artefacts from some of the sites in Kilmartin Glen, returned home after a century, in a professionally designed, informal environment. Extensive use is made of first-class replicas and reconstructions, and there is a wealth of clear, well-written information panels.

The bookshop stocks an impressive range of titles, together with many unusual gift ideas - some specially

commissioned. Fine lunches, teas, coffees and home-baking are available in the cafe, as well as a rare selection of traditional wines and ales.

Over 10,000 people have come to visit the museum already (November 1997) and more to enjoy the wholesome food served in the barn and green oak conservatory. This has been an encouraging start, though Kilmartin House must continue to attract more visitors if the Centre is to become self-financing. Naturally the announcement of an Heritage Lottery Fund award of £823,000 was greeted with joy: Phase II of the project can now go ahead, converting the remainder of Kilmartin House into a library, study centre, offices and accommodation for researchers and volunteers.

In late October 1997 Kilmartin House hosted Scotland's first Eco-museum Seminar organised by the Centre for Environmental Interpretation and the Scottish Museums Council. This event was a resounding success, all the delegates agreeing that the venue was excellent. Kilmartin House has delighted its supporters by receiving a number of awards confirming it as a centre of excellence: in 1995 the project won a Glenfiddich Living Scotland Award, and a year later an Environmental Initiative Award even before the centre was open; this year the centre was awarded a Nature's Prize in the 'understanding the natural heritage' category, the Kintore Conservation Award in recognition of environmental controls to protect artefacts on display in the museum, highly commended for exceptional achievement in the Gulbenkian Awards for Museums and Galleries, and won the Argyll and Bute Design and Planning Award.

Educationally, museum and outdoor visits continue to combine guided interpretation of prehistoric sites with object handling sessions - encouraging children to look at and discuss objects to develop their skills in observing, interpreting and recording. The Practically Mesolithic series of experimental archaeology projects designed to explore the skills of Scotland's first settlers facilitates learning in the environment. This programme involves research into fishing and marine resources, currachs (skin boats, replicas of which are on display), tides, and other pursuits of hunter-gather people, with the opportunity for children, community groups and museum visitors to watch and participate in experiments which contribute to the knowledge of a poorly researched prehistoric period.

Another inspirational way to learn about archaeology and the environment is the Simulated Dig. Various artefacts are buried in a box containing features representing a hearth site, and children select appropriate tools, excavate and sort their finds into categories and record their evidence. Explanations are offered for the position or condition of the finds. An interpretation pack and teacher's guide complement the simulated dig, which is completely portable for use in schools throughout the area. Further, Kilmartin House On-Line Environmental Education Service (KiHOLES) aims to provide environmental education via computer networks at local and national level.

The Great Auks, the children's environmental group launched in January 1996 now regularly attracts 20-30 children from the Kilmartin area to outdoor meetings which absorb the wealth of natural and historic features in the Glen, complemented by indoor activities which are all designed to encourage learning. Education services are set to expand with Phase II developments and the ever-increasing opportunities in information technology.

The museum remains open during the winter months, and a programme of events is planned during a traditionally quiet period.

A membership scheme will be introduced in 1998. Annual subscribers will be entitled to additional benefits during their visits to Kilmartin House. In the meantime NHASMA members who wish to be included on the mailing list (newsletters etc.) should contact D J Adams McGilp at Kilmartin House, Kilmartin PA31 8RQ, or telephone 01546 510278.

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NOTES ON THE KILMAHONAIG JOURNAL 1871

(See Kists 53 and 54)

The Journal incorporates a list compiled by the Rev. Reginald W Mapleton, resident at that time in Duntroon, of "birds known to have been seen or taken in the neighbourhood of the Crinan Canal, Argyleshire, more especially the West end; many of the birds listed are common while others are only occasional visitors".

Mr John Halliday of Scottish Natural Heritage has studied the list and says that of the 119 birds mentioned only ten

- ring ousel, lesser whitethroat, yellow wagtail, nightjar, little stint, purple sandpiper, corncrake, Brent goose, roseate tern and black tern - are not seen in the area nowadays. A further nine appear only rarely, and one, the little auk, is very rare indeed. Although this loss of species is to be regretted, it is not so heavy as might have been expected over 126 years and under present-day conditions.

The full list of 119 birds is available from the Editor.

The later careers of two of the young Blatherwicks have come to our attention. In Glasgow Girls: Women in Art and Design 1880-1920 published by Canongate there is an account of Lily Blatherwick RSW which mentions that she, as far as is known, had no other training than from her father, Dr Charles Blatherwick, "a talented amateur artist". There is a reproduction of one of her oil paintings and a delightful pen and ink sketch by her husband of her painting at Haddington, seated at her easel and wearing an enormous broad-brimmed hat. She died in 1934.

Mr J Marshall, a member of our Society, has discovered in the Loretto Register that Frederick Francis Blatherwick was a member of the 1st XV and Cricket XI, left in July 1871, became a tea-planter in Ceylon (as it was then) and died in 1893.

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ACRES, CASTLETON

Murdo MacDonald

In the Aird (or Castleton) district, just over two miles S.E. of Lochgilphead, recent tree-harvesting in the Forestry Commission's plantations has revealed the walls of the small farm of Acres, or Acres of Castleton as it is described in 1799.

Of the buildings which remain the best preserved retains a gable of the most beautifully constructed rubble-work that is a delight to the eye. The same gable contains a fireplace, the only one that is apparent. There appear to be no signs of couples for supporting the roofs. The farm well seems to have been destroyed, with all marks of cultivation

though field dykes and an irregular enclosure are visible. One single apartment house retains a crumbling wooden lintel in its tiny window.

Acres was part of the Shirvan estate. The Statute Labour List, 1834/35, lists nine males at Acres bearing the surnames of Blair, Campbell, Turner, Currie, Dewar and MacTavish. Peter MacCallum, labourer, is listed as the occupier in the Valuation Roll of 1903/04. In the following year his house was "vacant", and it is shown thus for the next fifteen years or so until it was no longer rated, presumably derelict.

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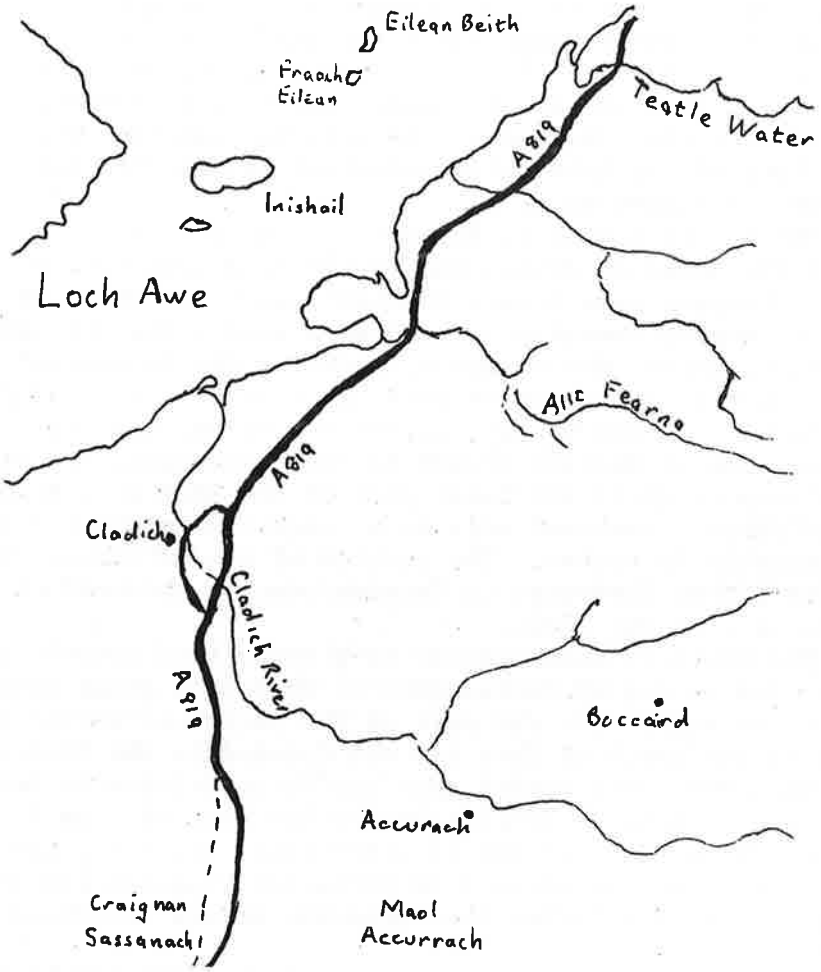
BOCCAIRD - GHOST VILLAGE OF GLENARAY

Mary McGrigor

Boccaird remains a monument to the people who lived there some 200 years ago. The ruined village, which lies about a mile northeast of the farm of Accurach in Upper Glenaray, must be almost unique in Argyll in that its eleven houses, its school and its church, survive in recognisable form. Normally in such cases the stones have been used for other purposes, particularly for making dykes, but here the buildings although roofless still retain part of, and in some instances, most of their walls. Looking today at the skeleton of this former township one wonders why the people left. One obvious answer is the change from cattle to sheep farming which happened c.1802, but that still leaves much to be explained. The real solution seems to lie in the change of ownership of the land which occurred about 1775.

The upper part of Glenaray was held by the MacArthurs of Tirrevadich as vassals of the Campbells of Argyll from very early times. Niall, 10th Duke of Argyll, claimed that like the Campbells they descended from the O'Duibhnes, a family of Celtic origin on Loch Awe. The fact that 'Teirewadiche', first mentioned in transactions in 1375,was afterwards held by MacArthurs, is proven by records from 1513-1599.

In 1625 MacArthur of Tirrevadich was the 'Captain and Myrty (Overseer) of Innistrynich and officer of Over Lochow' for the 7th Earl of Argyll, and his descendant Johnne held the same position for the 9th Earl in 1680, when he rendered



Sketch Map of the Boccaird Area

his accounts.

Five years afterwards disaster struck when Argyll was executed for supporting Monmouth's rebellion against the Catholic James VII and II. His forfeited estates were occupied by the 'Atholmen' who destroyed or stole all they could find. The loss at Boccaird, where the cattle of the MacArthur laird ran with those of his tenants, was claimed to be £2,223-6s-8d, which, although in the old Scots money, was a very large sum in those days.

The ground carried a large stock of cattle, as is shown by the accounts of the Argyll Estates in 1705, in the time

of the 1st Duke, when the feu duty for the two merklands of Boccaird amounted to forty stones of cheese and one mairt (bullock). The Valuation Roll of Argyll in 1751 rates Boccaird at £6-10s-6d. It also shows that the whole of Tirivadich was then wadsetted (wadset was a form of mortgage), an indication that the MacArthurs were in financial straits. The fact of one half being wadsetted to John Lindsay portends its future sale.

The eleven houses at Boccaird in those days would have been the homes of people who worked part time for the laird while keeping some beasts of their own. Probably, as in other farming townships, there were also a few craftsmen such as a smith, a stonemason, even one of the shoemakers who supplied local people with their boots. All the people would have spoken Gaelic, although some may have had a smattering of English thanks to their attendance at school.

Glenaray until the later part of the 18th century was a wild place, traversed only by a rough road which was often impassable in winter. The section of the military road which linked Inveraray to Tyndrum reached the head of the glen only in the 1760s.

The heritors were ordered to provide both schools and teachers by Act of Parliament; it therefore seems likely that the school for the part of the parish of Inishail which lay to the south of Loch Awe was founded by the MacArthurs at Boccaird. The school near the Three Bridges in Lower Glenaray was built in 1781 by the 5th Duke of Argyll only after the opening of the military road, while the one at Cladich, some two miles from Boccaird, replaced "an earlier school" in 1861, after the MacArthur estate had changed hands.

The Parish Church of Inishail stood on the island of its name until 1736. This would have meant a long walk and a journey by boat for the people of Glenaray, hence the reason for a church at Boccaird. The fact that the little township contained both a school and a church suggests that it was the nucleus of the lands of the MacArthurs on the south side of Loch Awe.

Patrick MacArthur sold the last of his land in 1775. The greater part of his property was bought by the Campbells of Monzie; but this did not include Boccaird. The circumstance of its being wadsetted to John Lindsay in 1751 would seem to explain why Patrick Lindsay, styled "of Boccaird", and

presumably John's son, was seized on 2nd April 1787 of the teinds of Boccaird. Patrick Lindsay passed it on to his son Robert "writer of Inveraray" who died about 1802. Robert Lindsay resigned his feudal tenure to the 5th Duke of Argyll but his wife retained the liferent.

Presumably her daughter lived with her, for Lord Archibald Campbell in his Records of Argyll tells how Miss Lindsay of Boccaird went to help her neighbours, the Campbells of Achlian, when they were harvesting their hay. The Campbells of Achlian were at that time living temporarily with the Campbells of Rockhill on Loch Awe while Achlian house was repaired. While there Miss Lindsay, with Mrs Campbell, saw the ghostly bloodhounds of the MacDougalls come down the chimney, and cried out "Sin coin Mhicdhugaill is bi'dh feuil 'g a reubadh!" (These are MacDougall's dogs and flesh will be torn!). Campbell of Achlian, ignoring her warning, was ruined by the malevolence of Campbell of Rockhill, who was descended from the MacDougalls. Happily, however,his son was restored to his farm eventually by Colonel Campbell of Monzie.

John Campbell of Airds bought the tack of both Boccaird and Accurach in 1802. The two were then joined into one big farm and turned over to sheep. The Military Roll of 1803 shows only "one herd" in Boccaird. John Turner became the tacksman in 1812 but in 1817 he handed over his lease to Patrick Smith of Brackley in Glenorchy, with the consent of the Duke of Argyll's trustees. The delivery of sheep then amounted to 1,591, but it was specifically mentioned that "there is also kept on the farm of Boccaird 6 milch cows mostly for the use of the shepherds". More significantly,a shepherd, in addition to keeping a cow, was allowed to grow a patch of potatoes, then a staple food of the Highlands. The potato blight devastated crops during the 1840s, but Boccaird escaped the disease. The shepherds there were poor people, depending on their crop for existence, yet they shared what they had with their neighbours, and thereby saved them from starvation. Mr Lachie Campbell, who has now farmed Accurach and Boccaird since 1923, believes that it was because of its isolation and its height that Boccaird escaped the scourge.

This ruined village stands as a reminder, not only of an old way of life, but of the kindness and self-sacrifice of people in a bygone age.

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NOTE ON THE COVER

This is the last cover drawing made by Dr Mackenna for Kist. It is taken from the road approaching Kilmartin from the south and shows Kilmartin Church and graveyard, with the Glebe cairn, half hidden, below. This Bronze Age cairn is now 3m high and 30m wide - it was over 4m high and 33m wide before excavation in 1864. It conceals two concentric stone circles and two cists, but the north and east sides were not excavated. Among the finds were a jet necklace and two food vessels, one of which has been returned to Kilmartin from the British Museum and is on display in the Kilmartin House museum, where a cut-away model of the cairn can be seen. The food vessel is the original of the Kilmartin House logo.

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SUMMER EXPEDITIONS 1997

May 19th. Taynish Nature Reserve

The weather was damp and overcast, so the hoped-for dragonflies and butterflies were not in evidence, but a group of members and visitors enjoyed a day of bird-spotting, mainly by song, with the help of John Halliday; also a visit to native woodland, and to charcoal-burning platforms, some of which may originally have been Iron Age huts.

June 18th. Old Poltalloch

After a very wet day the evening turned pleasant. From the last practically possible parking place a walk along a forest road, passing the entrance to an old copper mine, led to the remains of Old Poltalloch, the "palace" built by the Malcolm family but apparently never completed, and never lived in by the family. (After 40years in Jamaica they returned and chose a different site). The massive standing remains are now fenced off as dangerous, so close inspection was impossible. An avenue of ancient hornbeams leads past the "palace" to Ormaig. The well-laid-out stable block is almost complete, though largely roofless. It has elegant Venetian style windows on either side of the entrance arch; the tablet above the arch is rather let down by the crowding of the lettering at the right hand end! Our visit to the

stable block was made even more interesting by the welcome arrival of Mr Gordon Gray-Stephens who is making a special study of it and added much information.

July 19th. Cairnbaan

On a warm sunny day we made our way up a pleasant path to the cup-and-ring marks site now in the care of Historic Scotland and well displayed with information panels. (The open views from the site are magnificent). The cups and rings are abundant, clear and complex. Then down and across the Canal to the cairn which gives the place its name - Cairn Baan, the White Cairn; was it once covered with white quartz pebbles? It is still quite large, though heavily robbed; the cover-slab of the central cist has a linear design at one end, and a cupmark. A slab with multiple lozenge design was found in the cist, and is now in the Royal Musum of Scotland. The stronger members of the party proceeded up hill to Cairnglas, a deserted settlement and a well-preserved sheep fank.

August 16th. Loch Caolisport

A warm sunny day. First to St. Columba's cave and chapel at Cove, near Ellary. The 13th century chapel is ruinous, but with its walls upstanding, and somewhat vegetation-infested. The cave has shown evidence of occupation from prehistoric times, but appears now as an Early Christian site. There is a built altar on the higher level, and carved or pecked crosses on the cave wall above. We were thrilled by spotting, in a favourable light, a very faint and seldom seen cross on the same wall. Then back to Clachbreck with its spread of Bronze Age stone cists, ten visible and more reported. Several are under a shelter.

September 13th. Skipness

The large, impressive remains of the Castle, now well-displayed and explained by Historic Scotland, were the highlight of the expedition, but a walk along above the shore on a day of sunshine and shower was most enjoyable, and well-conserved St. Brendan's chapel most interesting with many architectural features surviving. The gravestones in the surrounding enclosure repaid study, especially those recording occupations.

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