



St Brendan's Chapel  
Skipness

The

KIST 58

T H E K I S T  
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Full list of office-bearers on back cover.

## A FURTHER SELECTION OF PRE-1855 GRAVESTONES

Six earlier issues of Kist contain lists of readings of old gravestones. In 1855 it became obligatory to register all deaths, so that gravestones, along with (sporadic) Parish records, were no longer the only readily available source for research. Not all these lists are from graveyards in Mid Argyll, but they are in our immediate neighbourhood. The following list, made by the late Dr Mackenna, was among papers passed on by him to the present editor.

St Brendan's chapel is of late 13th or early 14th century date, built down by the shore to replace the earlier 12th century chapel whose walls were incorporated into the extension of Skipness Castle from a hall house with separate chapel into a castle of enceinte. The burial ground, which is still in use, contains marker stones, late mediaeval grave slabs (three under protective covers) and many 18th and early 19th century stones, a number with the symbols of mortality, some with the symbols of the deceased's trade. Map ref. NR910575

### St Brendan's Chapel

### (Kilbrannan Chapel, Skipness)

Erected by RONALD McALESTER to the memory of JOHN McALESTER his brother who was drowned of TARBERT on the [?6th] day of October 1838 aged 22 years. Also MALCOM McALESTER who departed this life on the 12th Feb 1826 aged 1 year.

This is the burial place of JOHN HILL tenant in SKIPNESS and MARY [?HEMAN] his spouse 1732

Erected to the memory of ROBERT MACALISTER late farmer in ORAGAIG who died the 1st Octr 1813 aged 76 years. Also his spouse CHRISTY TAYLOR who died the 4th June 1819 aged 73 years

This stone is erected in memory of SAMUL McALESTERS family leat Tennent in LAGGAN by HECTOR McALISTER his son and the place intended for his heirs 1809.

Erected by ARCHIBALD HILL hammersman in memory of his spouse MARY TAYLOR who departed this life 25th June 1772 aged 32 years.

Here lies ELIZH CROOKSHANK spouse to DUGALD WIER, skipper at GREENOCK who died the 24th of Feb 1716 aged 24 years.

Erected by MARION THOMSON to the memory of DUGALD HYNDMAN her son who departed this life on the 10th of April 1829 aged 28 years. Also her husband WILLIAM HYNDMAN late tenant at COLPHIN who was drowned on the 18th Sept 1833 aged 64 years.

Sacred to the memory of JAMES HYNDMAN late farmer at CULEN-  
TRACH who departed this life on the 7th day of March 1838 aged  
71 years and his spouse CHRISTINA THOMSON who departed this  
life the 10th day of Octr 1859 aged 87 years. It is designed  
to commemorate the death of their son ALEXANDER HYNDMAN who  
was drowned near CAPE WRATH on the 1st Jany 1833 aged 33 years  
Appropriated by PETER HYNDMAN.

Erected by ARCHIBALD McCALLUM farmer in STRONE in memory of  
his spouse CHRISTY McCALLUM who departed this life the 27th  
Janyr 1814 aged 42 years. Also his son DONALD McALLUM who  
died the 2nd day of May 1815 aged 21 years. He died himself  
the 6th of November 181[?] aged 55 years. In memory of the  
father By his son DUNCAN McALLUM.

Erected to the memory of JAMES WILSON late farmer at CULIN-  
DRICH who died on the 3rd of July 1861 aged 86 years and his  
spouse ELIZABETH THOMSON who departed this life on the 22nd  
day of Febr 1833 aged 50 years.

In memory of WILLIAM COOK tacksman at CLONAIG who died 26th  
March 1765 aged 32 years. Erected by his spouse MARY TAYLOR.  
Also ARCHIBALD COOK son of the above who died in 1792 aged 25  
years.

WILLIAM COOK late joiner at SKIPNESS who departed this life  
on the 24th of March 1854 aged 65 years.

In memory of their father ARCHIBALD COOK shoemaker who died  
at GREENOCK Nov 1 1833 aged 41 years. Also their mother ISAB-  
ELLA McLEAN who died at GREENOCK Sep 13 1848 aged 55 years and  
their four brothers ARCHD WILLM ARCHD and JOHN who died in  
infancy.

Erected by DUNCAN COOK and CATHARINE DUNCAN his spouse in  
memory of their loving children EUPHAN COOK their daughter who  
departed this life Decr 30th 1812 aged 14 years. Also WALTER  
COOK aged 25 years and ALEXANDER COOK aged 18 years who both  
departed their lives upon the 20th Octr 1821 at SKIPNESS POINT

This is the burial place of MALCOM McMILLAN and MARY McFAR-  
LAN in CLONAIG. 1777.

ARCHIBALD JOHNSTON sailer AGNES McMILEN his spows. [No dates  
but 1721, initials and symbols are on the back].

Erected by MARRION McDOUGALD in memory of her loving father  
DUNCAN McDOUGALD in CLONAIG who died May 1757 aged 75 years.

Here lies the Corpes of DONALD McQUILKAN son to DUNCAN  
McQUILKAN tennent in SPARRONSIGE who died 16st day of May 1787  
in the 27 year of his age.

Erected by CATHRINE TAYLOR in CLONAIG in memory of her

loving husband JOHN McARTHUR who departed this life 12th Decr 1813 aged 47 years.

This is the burial place of ARCHIBALD McILMICHEL in COLFIN and KATHREN McCUAIG his spous. July 1734.

1814 Erected by DUNCAN CARMICHAEL and MARY McMURCHY his spouse in memory of their son NEIL CARMICHAEL who departed this life in CARRADALE BAY upon the 23rd Sept 1808 aged 18 years.

Erected by FLORY CARMICHAEL in memory of her loving husband MALCOM CURRIE tennent in CROSSAIG who died Agust 1735 aged 55 years and the place intended for the family.

This is erected by DONALD HAYMAND taylor in COLPHEN and CATHRINE TAYLOR his spouse. [tailor's insignia on back].

Sacred to the memory of DONALD REID late tenant SOUTH CAOL-PHIN died 10th October 1847 aged 57. His spouse CATHERINE McMILLAN died 24th October 1847 aged 51 and their three children who died in infancy.

Here lies the body of MARY RIED spouse to ANGUS McMILLAN workman at COUR who died Feb 1793 aged 29.

Erected by their family to the memory of JOHN TAYLOR late tenant at CLONAIG who died the 21st March 1823 aged 73 years. Also of his spouse BARBRA MACCALLUM who died the 20th Sep 1823 aged 65 years.

Appropriated by MALCOM BROWN in memory of his father ANGUS BROWN who dwelt at SKIPNESS and died the 21st Feb 1816 aged 48 years. The appropriator was drowned off GREENOCK the 10th March 1824 aged 25 years.

Here lie the Bodies JOHN TAYLOR late Farmer in ORAGAIG who Departed this life the 9th Jany 1791 aged 70.

This is the burial place of DUNCAN TAYLOR tennant in CLONAIG and his wife RACHEL TAYLOR Jany the 22, 1769.

Erected by JOHN THOMSON in memory of his son DUNCAN THOMSON late tenant at CLONAIG who died 8th Decr 1766 aged 27 years.

Erected by DUGALD MACTAVISH smith at SKIPNESS and CATHERINE CAMPBELL his spouse in memory of his father EDWARD McTAVISH late smith at SKIPNESS who was a charitable and respected man who died July 1801 aged 71 years; also of FLORA CURRIE his mother who died Nov 1823 aged 84 also of their children ARCHD BETTY and ANN This stone marks the family burying place.

Erected by WILLIAM MACCALLUM tenant at CLONAIG and SARAH MACKINNON his spouse in memory of their son WILLM who died the 10th Feb 1824 aged 22 years.

Here lies an honest christian WILLIAM FERREOR gardener in

SKIPNESS and the place appointed for his wife ANNA ... and her son... who died September 1731.

Erected by DONALD McKINVIN tennant in ORAGAIG in memory of his loving spouse FLORA TAYLOR who departed this life October 18th 1812 aged 41 years.

Here lies the corps of ANGUS McKINNIN who lived in SRON died Nov 3d 1739 aged 66 [on reverse a four-horse team].

1824 Erected by DUNCAN McDUGALD and his spouse CHRISTA McARTHUR in memory of their son ALEXANDER McDUGALD who died December 1821 aged 9 years.

To the memory of MARY McLELLAN wife of DONALD McVICAR Inn-keeper SKIPNESS who died 29th April 1833 aged 59 years.

Erected by ROBERT LUSK in memory of his father WILLIAM LUSK and mother ANN TAYLOR who both died August 15th his father aged 50 years his mother [?36] And the place intended for the family.

1816 Erected by WALTER TENNANT mason SKIPNESS and ANN CURRIE his spouse in memory of their lafull daughter ANN TENNANT who died Febr 10th 1809 aged 28 years Also their daughter NELLY TENNANT who died 7th March 1814 aged 21 years.

Erected by ALEXR THOMSON tailor at SKIPNESS in memory of his wife ANN MURRAY who died 8th June 1832 aged 44 years.

Erected by JANET MACNAB in memory of her husband HUGH MACPHERSON late tenant at COUR who departed this life the 20th April 1827 aged 72 years.

Erected by GILBERT MACPHAIL ship carpenter in memory of his father ALEXANDER MACPHAIL late ship carpenter in SKIPNESS who died the 19th day of July 1809 aged 69 years This place is also designed for the family.

Sacred to the memory of MARGARET McPHAIL wife of RICHARD CALESS who died 9th March 1845 aged 23 years and their daughter MARTHA died in infancy.

Erected by DONALD McTAVISH in AUCHMENNACH in memory of his loving spouse MARY McTAVISH who departed this life January 16th 1812 aged 47 years.

Erected by COLIN GRAHAM late tacksman of ESCART in memory of his son WALTER who died 16th May 1828 aged 36 years Also of his wife JEAN McDONALD who died 14th March 1837 aged 76 years.

Erected by ALEXANDER GLEN tenant in NORTH COLPEIN in memory of his daughter ANN who died 30th Octr 1843 aged 9 years and 3 months.

Erected by THOMAS GLEN mason in memory of his daughter JANET GLEN who died the 7th March 1820 aged 4 months and his son



L. The tombstone of ANGUS MCKINNIN in Sron who died in 1793. It shows a four-horse plough team, one man guiding the plough, another leading the horses. Above is the conventional winged head, representing the soul. The green foliage frame may be purely decorative, or a symbol of life after death.

R. The tombstone of DONALD KAYMAND, tailor in Colphen, and his wife CATHRINE TAYLOR. It is dated 1727, and shows the tailor's "goose" (iron) and pair of scissors. Above is the conventional winged head, and below two of the symbols of mortality, the crossed bones and the skull.



Two 18th century tombstones in the graveyard of Kilbrannan Chapel, Skipness.

ARCHIBALD GLEN who died the 25th Jany 1828 aged 11 months and 25 days.

Erected to the memory of ARCHIBALD THOMSON late tenant at SOUTH COLPHIN who died 11th June 1826 aged 32 years and MARY THOMSON his lawful daughter who died 22nd June 1824 aged 18 months. By MARY TAYLOR his loving spouse.

Erected by DUNCAN STALKER merchant TARBERT and JULIA CAMPBELL his spouse in memory of their first-born who died in her infancy and of other three infants who died in the years 1838, 39 and 40.

JOHN McBRIDE farmer ORGAIG died 17th Jan 1847 aged 63 and his daughter CATHERINE died 1838 aged 6 months.

Erected by MARY TAYLOR in memory of her husband ALEXR CAMPBELL late tenant in CLONAIGE who died August 28th 1795 aged 30 years.

This is the burying place of JOHN THOMSON tacksman of CREGAN and spouse ELSPEY THOMSON, anno domo 1787.

Erected by LAUCHLAN CAMPBELL sheep herd PORTVAICH to the memory of ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL his son who departed this life on the 4th day of Augst 1838 aged 23 years.

Erected by DUNCAN McMILLAN and MARION THOMSON in memory of KATHERINE McMILLAN there daughter who died July 20 1798 aged 21 years.

Erected by MARY THOMSON in memory of NEIL STALKER her husband late farmer in CLONIG who died 22nd September 1838 aged 29 years and of MARY their daughter who died in infancy.

Here lyes JAMES McMILLAN in TENGANTAVIL who died May 1753 aged 55 and this is the place designed for CHRISTEAN MUNROE his spouse. Here lyes ALEX McMILLAN.

...oooOooo...

A Note on INTEGRATED PUBLIC TRANSPORT, Kist 56 pp. 16-21

Lady McGrigor writes: Jessie MacIntyre, who was born in 1889 and lived in Portsonachan all her life, told me that her great treat as a child was to go to Oban with her mother. They began the journey on the steamer from Portsonachan (I think there were three in those days) and then caught the train at Lochawe Station. On arriving at Oban they went down to the Pier and bought a whole cod for one shilling [5p], with which they triumphantly returned!

...oooOooo...



## BEHIND THE MONUMENT

### The Story of the charting of the Largs Channel. (Part 2)

William Laing

Scottish marine cartography entered a "modern" phase with the work of Murdoch Mackenzie. During the mid 18th century he laid the foundation for the establishment of a government-based organisation for marine cartography which has survived, both in quality and utility, to the present day. Mackenzie first appears on the charting scene with work on the Orkneys, published in 1740. Details of his early life are now better known, and it is clear that he did receive a basic mathematical training, probably under the celebrated Scottish mathematician Colin Maclaurin at Edinburgh. Mackenzie supplied the missing mathematical rigour by introducing the principles of triangulation in laying down accurately a series of stations on which the mapping was based. This geometric approach was well known on the continent, having been introduced by the Dutch in land surveying as early as 1617, and used extensively by the French in marine cartography in the late 17th-early 18th centuries. At this time in history, the United Kingdom was not at the forefront of cartography; but again an incident in history provided the spur that started the U.K. on the road to becoming an international leader in cartography.

It is now obvious that the 1745 rebellion in Scotland very nearly succeeded; in the aftermath to Culloden the government military and naval commanders made it very clear to the London establishment that they would be reluctant to fight another campaign in Scotland and in Scottish waters without vastly improved land maps and sea charts. It is therefore no mere coincidence that, following the successful publication of Mackenzie's Orkney and Lewis charts in 1750, he was asked by the Admiralty to chart the west coasts of Scotland and Ireland and that, at almost the same time, William Roy was involved in the land mapping of the entire Scottish mainland. Mackenzie completed his work in 1771, and published a final volume of charts in 1776. ["Early Maps of Scotland" vol.I, 1973, pp.103-113, and vol.II, 1983, pp.16-17]. In the course of this work the Clyde was surveyed, and Mackenzie's chart is the first that could be confidently used by a stranger in the area. It is not to the standard of accuracy eventually achieved by the

fully resourced Admiralty surveyors we shall encounter in the final part of this account, but this is due to the speed with which such a complex part of coastline was surveyed; one thing was certain: it was better than anything else available at the time.

As well as publishing his charts and defending himself against ill-informed criticism of the accuracy of his work ["Togail Tir; the Map of the Western Isles", Stornoway, 1989, pp.33-42], Mackenzie rendered a great service to British marine cartography by publishing an account of his survey methods; this work laid the foundation for the techniques to be used when the Admiralty finally appointed an official Hydrographer in 1795. The Mackenzie connection continued with his nephew, also called Murdoch, taking over the surveying task in 1771, and extending the West Coast work down to the English Channel.

It took some time before the Admiralty Hydrographic Service became established as we know it today. Initially it was essential to catalogue all the survey data that had been accumulating in the archives. Since early in the 18th century naval officers had been encouraged to prepare manuscript charts of all parts of the world visited at this time of geographical expansion. These valuable documents were simply gathered, stored and forgotten. No attempt was made to collate them, let alone up-date them. The engraving and printing of charts was in private hands, and in some cases naval officers did not submit their cartographic work to the government, but waited until retirement, and then published their findings privately and for profit. However, the Admiralty did send out commanders on specific voyages of discovery, which led to, among other things, the extension of cartographic knowledge. Examples of this work are Des Barres' work on the Atlantic coast of America, Cook's exploration of the Pacific and the new worlds of Eastern Australia and New Zealand, Vancouver's discoveries on the north-western sea-board of the Americas, and Owen's mammoth task of charting the coasts of Africa.

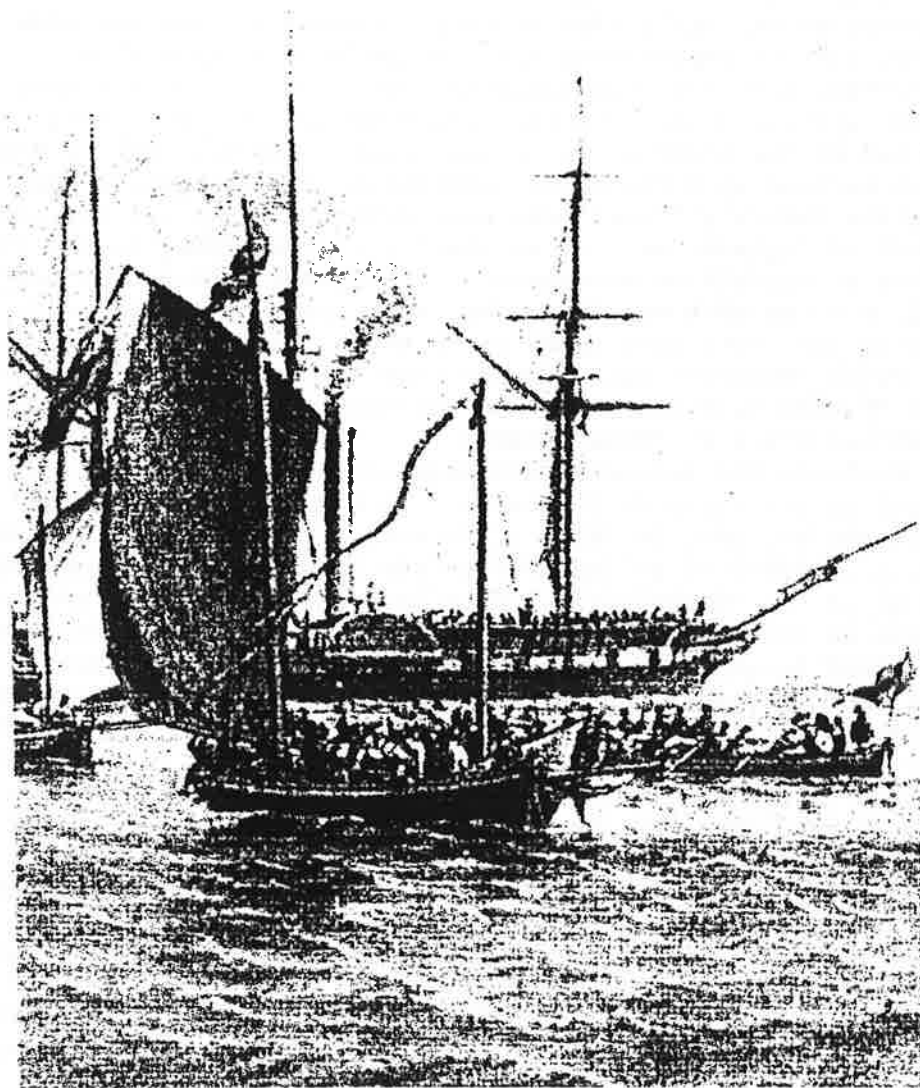
As successive Hydrographers gradually got order into the accumulated knowledge from around the world, it became clear that the charting of British home waters was not of a sufficiently high and consistent standard, and that there was a need to conduct what Admiral Beaufort called "The Grand Survey of the British Isles". Beaufort held the post of Hydrographer from 1829 to 1855, and it was during this period that the definitive survey of the Clyde was executed, laying the basis

of our present-day charts.

It would be easy to assume that, compared with some of the charting activities conducted in the far corners of the globe, the charting of British home waters would be a tame affair. This was not the case; these home waters are subject to rapid variations in weather, the east coast of England is a mass of shifting sandbanks, and the west coasts of Scotland and Ireland are exposed and severely indented. These waters required experienced survey commanders, and Admiral Beaufort was able to select men who had been trained in the extensive overseas surveys of the early 19th century. These home surveys took their toll of experienced men; George Thomas laboured a lifetime, mainly in the demanding waters of Orkney and Shetland, and was never promoted beyond Master; Michael Slater worked on the Scottish north-east coast, and fell to his death when setting up a theodolite station on a remote cliff edge; Captain Hewitt's "Fairy" was lost with all hands off the east coast of England; and, as we shall see, the Clyde claimed the lives of apprentice surveyors. It may have been a home posting, but the work was demanding, and a high price was paid. To survey the south west coast of Scotland, including the Firth of Clyde, Beaufort selected for this "stupendous task" Commander Charles Gell Robinson, and the vessel he used in the Clyde work was H.M.S.V. "Shearwater".

Robinson had served a hard apprenticeship on the African coast in the early 19th century. He had been with Owen at Fernando Po, and, in 1826, he is recorded in the archives as being involved in an incident on the Congo while serving with Vidal in the "Barracouta". From 1833 for a period of four years he surveyed the north coast of Wales, using hired boats, and then moved to the Solway Firth with all its problems of shifting sandbanks and severe tides. By 1839 he was into the south west of Scotland; By 1849 he had completely worked out the survey of the Firth of Clyde; and by 1851 he had reached Crinan on the west coast to join up with Captain Otter, who had reached there via the Scottish east coast, the Pentland Firth and the north west coast of Scotland, including parts of the Outer Isles. In 1853 Robinson, along with other experienced survey commanders had to resign from the Navy, as stringent financial measures were forced on Beaufort and the Hydrographic service by the Admiralty.

And what of the vessel used by Robinson in his Clyde work? H.M.S.V. "Shearwater" was a "paddler", a steam vessel, hence



H.M.S.V. "SHEARWATER", ca. 1842.

the abbreviation H.M.S.V. She was built in Harwich in 1826, as the Post Office steam packet "Dolphin", of 300 ton displacement, a complement of 50, and an engine of 160 h.p. She came into Admiralty service in 1837, and in 1841 on the initiative of Edward Parry, a previous Hydrographer, the "Shearwater", along with five other steam paddlers, joined the hydrographic fleet. These vessels were well liked by their crews as they were more manoeuvrable and versatile than the previous sailing vessels. The "Shearwater" was also involved in Royal escort duties, and is recorded as being part of the naval squadron that accompanied Queen Victoria and Prince Albert on their first visit to Scotland in August 1842. There seems to have been a tradition that Admiralty survey vessels escorted the Royal yachts on their visits to Scotland, and it is interesting to note that Captain Robinson was also in attendance, presumably because of his detailed knowledge of the waters, arising from his work on the primary surveys of the Clyde and Loch Lomond. However, as was common at the time, the Hydrographic service was low in the order of priority, and in 1847 all the steam paddlers were withdrawn, put on famine relief work in Ireland and the west coast of Scotland, and never returned to survey work. Eventually "Shearwater" went to the Mediterranean as a fleet tender, and was sold out of service in Malta in 1857.

Robinson and his band of surveyors worked hard in the vicinity of the Cumbraes and the Largs Channel. Their original work still exists in the archives of the Hydrographic Office at Taunton; there are two beautiful large scale charts of Largs Bay and Millport, where not only is there a definitive display of the marine features of these anchorages, with the appropriate detail to allow a stranger to anchor safely, but there are excellent "land map" details of the towns themselves as they existed in 1845. These "land maps" pre-date the original Ordnance Survey maps of the area by over twelve years, a situation quite common in the more remote parts of western Scotland, and as a result made the original marine surveys more demanding because there were no accurate land maps on which to base the marine measurements. The Taunton collection also contains manuscript charts that join up the individual large scale charts, and display the mass of sounding data taken in the area.

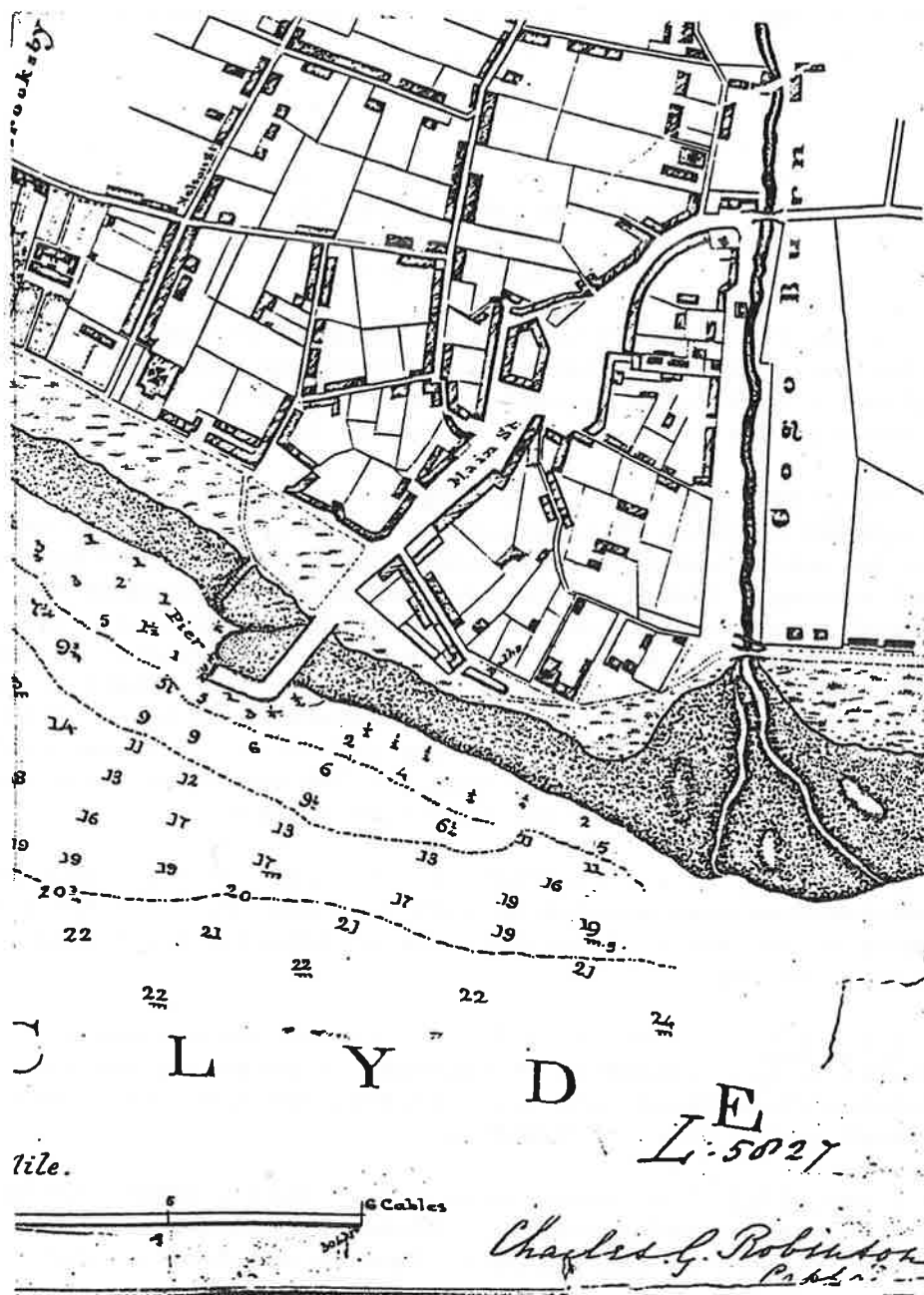
Today, when nearly every humble yacht has a mass-produced depth recorder, it is difficult to visualise the effort needed

in the mid 19th century to assemble a mass of depth data. There must have been hours and hours of backbreaking work with rowing boats, armed lead lines to give bottom characteristics as well as depth, and rope sweeps to pick up isolated rocks; all of this was carried out in all types of weather. It was during one of these small boat operations that tragedy struck: on 17th May 1844 two midshipmen from H.M.S.V. "Shearwater", William N. Jewell, aged 19, and Charles D. Cayley, aged 17, were drowned off the north east corner of the Big Cumbrae. It is the loss of these two young men that is recorded on the conspicuous monument at the north end of the Big Cumbrae; and it is a sign of the comradeship that existed in the Hydrographic service that this loss should be so permanently recorded.

The work of Commander Robinson and the crew of the "Shearwater" in the charting of this part of the Clyde estuary is beautifully recorded in the first published Admiralty chart of the area. It is quaintly titled "Frith of Clyde, sheet 1; Between Little Cumbrae and Toward Point". It has the reference number 2131, and is dated 1846, with a publishing date of 1852. In those days the Admiralty, while having the facilities to prepare the final drafts of charts, did not have their own engraving facilities, so this chart was engraved in copper by the firm of J. and C. Walker, London. The plates were then returned to the Admiralty, where the actual prints were made. The sale of the final charts was not done by the Admiralty at this particular time but by the main agent, J. D. Potter of the Minories, London, and distributed by a series of sub-agents located throughout the country.

It is recorded that Admiral Beaufort, who had master-minded the "Grand Survey of the British Isles", spent much time checking the final prints of the completed charts. Whether this was done because the Hydrographic Department was understaffed, or whether he got a secret pleasure out of seeing the end result of the labours of his staff, is not entirely clear.

One thing is abundantly clear, namely that at long last the coasts of the United Kingdom were charted in detail, and offered seamen of all nations a safe passage in these waters. With new surveying techniques, developed as the size and volume of shipping increased, the pioneer work of Beaufort and his commanders has been revised many times, but the fact is that today's chart of the Largs Channel and the adjacent waters of the Clyde, despite the bright colours and the depths in metres, is virtually identical to that created by Commander



MS chart of Largs Bay, 1845. (note signature of Captain C.G. Robinson).

Robinson and his staff, more than one hundred and fifty years ago.

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### TIMBER BRIDGES IN ARGYLL

Murdo MacDonald

In the 18th century bridges constructed of timber offered a relatively cheap and fast means of bridging small rivers. The following references to such structures are extracted from the Minutes of the Commissioners of Supply of Argyllshire.

1 June 1744 The fine, totalling one guinea, placed upon Ferquhard Campbell of Lagganlochan and Coll MacAlester, Bailie of Islay, was ordered by the Commissioners "to be Employed in building a Timber Bridge over the Water of Glendoan [Barbreck] near Clachaig; Which Timber Bridge as well as those of that kind already built or to be built at the publick Charge of the Shire The Meeting appoint to be kept in repair at the Expençe of the respective parishes within whose bounds they ly."

On the following day after making the above award the Commissioners gave another guinea from the "Bridge Money" fund towards the same timber bridge in Gleann Domhain.

15 May 1747 The inhabitants of the lands between Larnahus-ion and Cove were ordered to work, *inter alia*, at "rectifying the foord of the Water of Barinlongart & repairing the timber Bridge thereof".

1 May 1759 In the Parish of Kilchrenan the balance of £1.11s 8d was ordered to be expended on repairing the road between Portsonachan and Ardbrecknish, and also the "Timber Bridge on the Water of Brecknich".

1 May 1760 The Commissioners sanctioned payments for work carried out in Ardnamurchan: "To making Land stools of two timber Bridges on the Waters of Carnock and Camisean £4"

4 May 1763 The Commissioners gave the option of expending the balance of £1 13s 8¾d either upon the purchase of tools



for road making or upon "Making a Timber Bridge over the Water of Glenmurrell" south of Campbeltown in Kintyre.

19 October 1773 "It being represented by the Praeses that the Wooden Bridge upon the Water of Lochgare is in such a Ruinous Situation that it is very dangerous for Travellers to pass alongst it The Meeting therefore Recommend to Asknish to contract for building a Stone Bridge over the said Water".

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### THE MacCORQUHODALES OF KILCHRENAN

Mary McGrigor

Traditionally the MacCorquhodales are descended from Torquil, a Prince of Denmark, who was granted lands on Loch Awe by Kenneth MacAlpin, King of Scots, Torquil is claimed to have rescued the head of Alpin, the King's father, from the Picts who had slain him in battle by the river Carron in Stirlingshire.

Another source claims that the MacCorquhodales share common ancestry with the Campbells and MacArthurs from the O'Duines, a family of Celtic origin who settled on Lochaweside prior to the Norman conquest.

The charter said to have been granted by Kenneth is now long lost, but in 1495 it was recorded that Archibald, 2nd Earl of Argyll, exchanged the lands of Fanen, Schellachane, Craginterg and Conewrannarane on the north side of Loch Awe for those of Edderlin, Cammisien and Carrenland on the south side with Ewen McCorcadill of Edderlin. The fact that Argyll's charter was signed in Glasgow on 18 July 1495, four days after McCorcadill's at "the Church of St Peter the Deacon in Lochow" (i.e. in Kilchrenan) on 14 July, indicates that McCorcadill was already installed on the north side of Loch Awe. Both charters were confirmed by James IV at Stirling on 11 May 1497.

In 1509 Ewne Maccorquhodill of Edderlin was served heir to his father Ewne Maccorquhodill of Phantelans, in the lands of Auchidrayne. The old drovers' road runs from Kilneuair on Loch Awe to Carren and continues across the hill to Auchindrain on the east coast of Loch Fyne. Therefore the property seems to

have extended across a wide expanse of land. It remained in the family until 1556; resigned then by Duncan McCorkatill of Fantelane, it was granted by Queen Mary to Archibald Earl of Ergile.

The lands of the MacCorquhodes (as the name thereafter was spelt) on the north shore of Loch Awe reputedly stretched from Loch Avich to Ardanaiseig. They comprised the barony of Phantelane created by the early 1400s. The Hill of Hanging stands above Kilchrenan, significant of the rights of a baron which included those of pit and gallows. The MacCorquhodale Baron of Fionnt Eilean, or Phantilands, on Loch Awe, took his name from Eilean Fionn, the "white island" on Loch Tromlee, where the castle of the MacCorquhodes still stands. The origin of this now ruined castle are unknown. Dating from as early as the 13th century, it appears to have consisted first of a hall-house at the east end to which more buildings, including a curtain wall, were added on the west side during the mediaeval period.

The MacCorquhodes seem to have kept a low profile during the War of Independence - the head of the family must have been amongst the barons of Argyll "who give me no aid" as John Bacach of Lorn complained to Edward II in 1309.

They did figure more prominently in the 1450s in some sort of quarrel with the Campbells of Glenorchy. According to a famous local legend Sir Colin Campbell, first of Glenorchy, went off to fight the Saracens leaving his wife to finish the building of the Castle of Kilchurn. Before leaving he severed her wedding ring, keeping one half for himself. Seven years passed without word of him, and believing herself a widow, she agreed to marry "Baron MacCorquodale" of Phantilands. Sir Colin, supposedly warned in a dream, hastened home and appeared, like a beggar, at the Castle door. The bride as was customary brought him a goblet of wine. He drained it and handed back the cup with his half of their wedding ring inside.

According to the MacCorquhodale family history compiled by Peter Macintyre of Inveraray: "Not long after, Sir Colin took forcible possession of the Baron's lands marching with his own", and animosity between the two families is recorded at that time.

Proof of the strength of the MacCorquhodes as a fighting force appears in 1595. The MacDonalds of Islay and Skye were about to invade northern Ireland to aid Tyrone's rebellion against Queen Elizabeth of England, but, faced with the

combined forces of Argyll, the MacLeans of Duart and the MacCorquhodales, they did not dare to put to sea.

The MacCorquhodales however then antagonised the Campbells again by supporting the MacGregors in their notorious conflict with the Colquhouns. The Justiciary and privy Council Records state: "10th December, 1612, Archibald, 7th Earl of Argyll, complained to the privy Council of Duncan McQuorquodale of Phantillane and Ian Dow McQuorquodale suspected guilty of the slaughter of Glenfruin etc., and having their haunt in the bounds of Argyll". More complaints followed, but nothing was done to punish the MacCorquhodales; they did however come into conflict with another neighbour, Donald Campbell of Barbreck (1570-1657), who became Sir Donald Campbell of Ardnamurchan.

Peter Macintyre explains that the argument concerned the MacCorquhodales' western march. He says that, c.1900, "On the banks of Uisge Chille a little down from Sron Acha-na-Sgitheag are to be seen the trenches where a Baron MacCorquhodale posted his men on the occasion of a dispute he had with Sir Donald Campbell of Barbreck. It was agreed that they should meet on a certain day to settle the matter." Each party arrived with a force of about 200 men; but a sage who lived at Ach-na-craoibh, saying it was a pity "to shed much blood over the matter" suggested that the leaders should fight it out themselves. Sir Donald with seven of his best men would cross the stream to a flat plot of ground, while he (the sage) with his six sons would act as the Baron's bodyguard. Accordingly the fight began. "Sir Donald and the Baron exchanged blows like wintry hail" until "Sir Donald made a sudden spring backwards, and alighted in a pool at the bend of the burn, where he spluttered about, arousing much laughter and delight among the MacCorquhodales ... he retreated chagrined and crestfallen" and MacCorquhodale won the day.

In 1645-47 the country of Argyll was ravaged by Alasdair MacColla MacDonald, lieutenant of Montrose, who carried out a vendetta against the Campbells, on the excuse that they had opposed the Royalist cause. Alasdair, who was apparently friendly with the then Baron MacCorquhodale, spared his people in Glen Nant. However, continuing past the castle on Loch Tromlee, he was greatly insulted when MacCorquhodale did not even acknowledge him by lowering his flag. Then as a cannon ball fired at random killed one of his men Alasdair, in a fury, launched an attack. Somehow the Baron and his family escaped, but the castle was levelled to the ground.

Alasdair vented his rage further by firing the roofs of the MacCorquhodale townships of Ach-na-craoibh and Barrachander. In Tigh-a-mhullaich, highest cottage of the latter place, an old woman lived alone. As a soldier thrust a lighted bunch of heather into her roof she sprang at him "like a wild cat" and threw him on to his back. Her sgian dubh was raised to stab him when Alasdair pulled her away saying in Gaelic "Well done, old woman! it would be a pity to molest a great one like you". This, so the chronicler states, was "one chivalrous act ... which Alasdair committed in Lorne, where his memory is anything but kindly remembered." A legend exists that the Baron, Duncan MacCorquhodale, was pursued, and slain in Kintyre.

The evidence of a curiously spelt document proves that Mr Archibald McCorquidill of Phantilans was served heir to his brother german, Duncan MacCorquhodale, on 2nd March 1686 in the barony of Phantilans, then almost 20 merklands in extent. Duncan however had three brothers; Ewen, the youngest, found refuge in Inveraray under the protection of the Marquess of Argyll. There his descendants remained.

Archibald was succeeded by Duncan his son. Duncan died childless and Hugh MacCorquhodale, a farmer in Cambridgeshire, was served "heir male of provision general" to his cousin Duncan in 1718. M.D Murray Ross, who wrote "Notes on the MacCorquhodes of Phantilands", names Hugh as the 13th chief, but adds that "the connection between him and the next laird has not been traced." Thus the direct line of the MacCorquhodale Barons of Phantilands is unrecorded from this time.

The MacCorquhodes maintained a link with Loch Awe by continuing to use the family burial ground at Kilchrenan. The grave slab of the Barons of Phantilands, bearing the effigy of a sword, stands beside that of Cailean Mor (ancestor of the Duke of Argyll) against the church wall. Other ancient stones lie on the north side of the door. A stone commemorates Doctor Alexander McCorquhodale, of the Parish of Hanover in Jamaica, who died on Lochaweside in 1742 at the age of 38 years. The Uaigh nam ban saor (grave of the virgins) where the unmarried women of the Baron's family were buried, lies below the step of the east door of the church.

The right to use the graveyard was not universally accepted, and thereby hangs another tale. [in Kist 59. Ed]

## THE KELP INDUSTRY IN NORTH KNAPDALE

Leslie Rymer

The northernmost boundary of North Knapdale more or less coincides with the Crinan Canal; the area is almost bisected by the sea-inlet of Loch Sween, and is further dissected by branches of this loch such as Linne Mhuirich. Particulars of kelp manufacture are available for the lands of Danna, Taynish and Ulva. Taynish is a long narrow peninsula, while Ulva and Danna form another peninsula, Danna being in fact an island connected to Ulva by a single road bridge. Considering the great length of coastline in relation to the land area it is not surprising that kelp-manufacture became important there.

The earliest reference to kelp occurs in 1773 when Archibald Campbell of Danna 'finding his affairs in disorder' was forced to sell his estate. The industry was already well established in the Islands, kelp being sold for £5 a ton. However in the rental of Danna we find that 'The kelp of Mid Town and New Town was sold summer 1773 at £7 strl. and it will sell at the end of every three years at that price'. It is very unlikely that just over a ton of ash was produced, so it would seem that 'kelp' is being used as a synonym for sea-ware, the shores being let to independent contractors who arranged the collection and burning of the weed, and who reaped most of the profit. This seems to have been general practice in the area, for in the same year Major Donald Campbell let the sea-ware of Castle Sween and Kilbryde shores at £1 10s 0d [£1 50p]p.a., or £4 10s 0d [£4 50p] for the three-year period.

The next cut of the Danna shores was not until the summer of 1776 (a three-year rotation being practised) when Neil Brown, change-keeper in Keills, paid £9 for them. The rent of the shores then showed a rapid increase and in 1782 John Stewart and Hugh McDougall paid £37 for the right of cutting the rock-weed. They manufactured 12 ton 12 cwt (Clyde weight) of the ash, but Duncan Campbell, the Inverneill factor, was uncertain as to 'whether the necessary attention was paid to the manufacturing it by that CoY'. At that time kelp ash was worth about £6 a ton, so Stewart and McDougall would have collected at most £75, leaving £38 after deduction of rent.

As the industry became increasingly important the people bidding for the shores came from further afield and increased in number. In 1788 the Danna shores were finally let to

Messrs Angus & Neill Shaw and MacDougall and Co., of Lagg on Jura. By their contract the company were given:

"Full power...to Cut and Manufacture during the ensuing Summer the whole sea-ware fit for kelp,...with Liberty for that purpose to erect and use Kills and pits and take Turff and stones for the same upon and from the said shores and nearest Ground thereof beyond the highest Tide of flood on the same for Manufacturing and securing the said Kelp properly, you always committing thereby the least damage possible to the ground...and carrying the said Kelp from the same before the first day of November next".

Under normal conditions a good crop of seaweed took three years to grow, and the crop was sold as soon as it became ready for cutting. In 1790 the factor decided to change this system. He proposed that, instead of selling each area of kelp as it became suitable for cutting, he would give a lease of the shores of the whole Estate (Taynish and Ulva as well as Danna) for nine or twelve years. Consequently, Duncan Fisher, merchant at West Tarbet, was offered the lease of all the sea-ware on the estate 'which is cuttable in hags at 3 years age and affording a cut every year after Whitsunday next including a cut for summer first' for a yearly tack duty of £50. As 'overtures for the kelp shores are daily made' he was warned that if he wanted to become lessee of that 'valuable subject' no time ought to be lost in placing his offer. So far as the papers reveal Duncan Fisher made no offer; nor did anyone else. But it may be that offers were made and rejected, because between 1790 and 1791 the price of kelp ash increased from £6 to £9-£10 a ton. At any rate, in May 1791 Sir James Campbell was told that the sea-ware of Danna had been sold to the tenants for £44; the tenants of Taynish had paid £44 for the seaweed on that estate; and the ware on Ulva and Knap shores was expected to fetch £16 and £12 respectively. This was considered a more beneficial measure than 'employing undertakers to manufacture it, unless a person resided on the lands to superintend them daily'. As the Ulva shores were not let, Alexander McNab of Ulva 'engaged hands meal and tools' for manufacturing its kelp on behalf of Sir James, second of Inverneill. He produced 10 tons 3 cwt which was sold at £4 10s a ton with a further 2 tons 18 cwt described as 'not marketable' and presumably of low quality. The ash made on Danna in that year was sold at £5 9s a ton and fetched the same price in 1793. By 1794 the price had risen to £5 15s a ton and in

1798 the kelp manufactured was sold at £7 17s 11½d a ton. But even this price was significantly below the £10 per ton being paid for kelp manufactured in the Islands.

This difference in price between kelp produced in Knapdale and that produced in the Islands may well be a result of the smaller quantities of ash produced on the mainland and the greater effort and inconvenience required by the purchaser to go and collect it; or it may simply reflect the fact that, at this time, there were many available outlets for the ash, each requiring different quantities and paying different prices. This contrasts with the situation at the end of the 19th century and in the earlier part of the 20th, when only two companies were in the market: the British Chemical Company Ltd. of Glasgow bought all the ash manufactured in the west of Scotland while Messrs Fairlie of Falkirk purchased all the kelp manufactured in Orkney. I have been unable to determine the final destination of the Knapdale product, but it probably varied from year to year. In 1791 about 20 tons were offered to John Stevenson, merchant in Oban, who was already the owner of kelp that had to be shipped from the Oib Campbell Estate in Knapdale. The same year Duncan Campbell enquired of James Campbell of Bolton Lemoor, near Liverpool, whether there was going to be any demand for 'kelp or Highland wool, clean or laid with tar at Liverpool Manchester Leeds, or any of the manufacturing towns in your neighbourhood'. A letter of similar import was sent to Richard Paley Esq., a merchant in Leeds. The coupling of kelp and wool is not as strange as it may seem, for the woollen industry would use large quantities of soap for cleaning, and kelp was important in the manufacture of soap.

Of especial interest are the accounts of kelp manufacture given in the Taynish rent roll for 1794 which includes a full and detailed breakdown of the cost of manufacture and shipping of the ash and enables an estimate to be made of the number of people taking part in the industry in this area. On the Taynish estate in that year 31 tons 4 cwt 24 lb of kelp was manufactured: at Scotnishes by Donald Munro, at Kilmory and Taynish by Malcolm McLean, at Barnashallag, Barbreck and North Ardbeg by Dugald Graham. The cost, consisting of freight at 10s per ton, tonage, Custom House fees, commission for sale, and a discount on some small kelp; wages of hands manufacturing; 30 sheeting hooks, 1 cwt good rope, 12 stone iron for clatters [kelp irons for stirring the burning ash] and payment

to smith for making same, came to £102 7s 6<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>d. The 'free proceeds' were £77 2s 8 /4d.

An examination of various account books suggests that a man received 6d [2½p] for one day's work, and if this was the case for kelp labour it can be worked out from the Taynish accounts that about 2,860 man days were required to produce 1 ton of kelp. This would appear to be very low productivity, but when one considers that 20 tons of wet seaweed were required to produce 1 ton of ash; that the seaweed had to be cut from the rocks on which it was growing, gathered, dried, placed in pits dug in the ground and burnt, the estimate does not seem too outrageous. As in any one year kelp might be manufactured on Danna, Taynish, Ulva and Knap a considerable proportion of the workforce must have been involved in the industry. Of course not all the tenants were working at the kelp every day of the season - the rent roll for Old Ulva for 1796 contains an entry 'By work at Kelp summer last per folio 1st kelp book 18s' showing that at least one tenant put in 36 days work at kelp. Unfortunately none of the kelp books appears to have survived, so it is impossible to gain any clear idea of the total number of people involved, or the effect that this industry might have had on agriculture. It is interesting to note, however, that in 1791 Sir Archibald Campbell was writing that his estates in the parish '...abound with more inhabitants than sufficient employ can be had for', and that in 1792 the population of Taynish, Ulva and Danna amounted to 632, 330 of whom were under the age of 16.

No reference to the kelp trade has been discovered in the estate records later than 1798. John Leyden, who visited the area in 1800 [see Kist 52], mentioned that 'On the shores of Knapdale...the manufacture of kelp has been carried on to great advantage', but there is no reference to the industry in the parish entry in the New Statistical Account of 1844. One can only suppose that it was discontinued some time after 1822 when, for a variety of reasons, there was a sudden and drastic fall in the price of the manufactured ash. In the Islands the industry was able to recover, because of plentiful supplies of iodine-rich drift-weeds, but the rock-weeds of Knapdale and other mainland areas were suitable only for the production of alkali salts which were in plentiful and cheap supply from other sources.

The decline of the industry must have had some effects on the parish economy, but there seems no evidence to show how



great they were. The population of the parish began to decline in 1821, and more rapidly after 1831, but this is as likely to be associated with agricultural depression as with the demise of the kelp industry. The economy of the parish seems to have remained basically agricultural throughout the period considered here, and the profits made were in no way comparable with those made on some of the Island estates.

Reference: Inverneill Papers

Note: 'Clyde weight' According to a note in the Rent Roll, Estate of Ulva 1776, 1 ton of kelp weighed 2,520 lb on the Clyde and 2,408 lb at Liverpool.

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## BOOK REVIEW

### KILMARTIN: PREHISTORIC AND EARLY HISTORIC MONUMENTS.

An inventory of the monuments extracted from ARGYLL volume 6. 126 pages, 8 maps. 214 black & white diagrams and illustrations. RCAHMS. 1999.

This volume was published at the request of the Kilmartin House Trust to serve the needs of local community and visitor alike. Bringing together descriptions of all such sites in the Kilmartin area, it forms a valuable field guide and is useful as an updated extract of the RCAHMS Volume 6, now sadly out of print. It provides up to date information on over 136 sites in the Kilmartin area - cairns, barrows, cists, standing stones and stone circles, forts, duns, crannogs and other features. Each site is described in detail with photographs, plans and list of artefacts where appropriate. Special emphasis is given to the numerous examples of rock art with detailed drawings and photographs. There is an introduction to the landforms and landscape evolution of the valley by Dr Richard Tipping and to the prehistory by Dr J.N.Graham Ritchie.

The extract is an invaluable tool for researchers and those with an interest in an internationally important archaeological area incorporating a Neolithic and Bronze Age ritual landscape and the Early Historic site of Dunadd, the power seat of the Scotti in Dalriada and effectively the home of the birth of the Scottish nation.

Copies are currently available at a special introductory

price of £10 (until 31 December 1999) plus £2 postage and packing (£4 p.&p. outside UK) from Booksales, Kilmartin House Trust, Kilmartin, Argyll, PA31 8RQ. Tel.01546 510 278. E-mail booksales@khouse.demon.co.uk. Cheques payable to Kilmartin House Trading Co Ltd, or by quoting credit card details.

B.Blench

It should perhaps be noted that the extract does not include early Christian sites such as chapels and crosses, nor of course does it include mediaeval castles or deserted settlements, as these are dealt with in ARGYLL 7.

It is a source of great pleasure to our Society that RCAHMS and Kilmartin House have dedicated this book to Marion Campbell of Kilberry and to the memory of Mary Sandeman, two of our founding members. In the 1950s these two enthusiasts visited and recorded 640 sites in Mid Argyll. Their report was published in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 95 (1961-62). A study of the Notes sections of both ARGYLL 6 and KILMARTIN will supply the reason: "Campbell and Sandeman" are credited throughout.

Just before Kist 58 went to press Kilmartin House Trust published KILMARTIN; An Introduction and Guide, by Rachel Butter. It is a beautiful production; the colour photographs and other illustrations are outstanding. It professes itself to be "a museum guide" based on the text at Kilmartin House Museum, a description which in print looks very dry. In fact it is a vivid guide to 10,000 years of the history of landscape and people of the Kilmartin Valley, followed by a gazetteer of 22 main sites with short description and details of access. The following Notes section is packed with information and references, and there is a Bibliography for further reading. A review will appear in Kist 59. Ed.

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#### N.H.A.S.M.A. ON TIREE

Following the success of the Society's visit to Coll in 1997 (see Kist 54) a 4-day visit to Tiree was arranged for May 25-29 1999. Again the weather was variable but did not dampen the enjoyment of the 19 participants who all had the opportunity to do what they liked best whether it was studying the flora or the fauna or the archaeology or simply spending a few days on a lovely island. In response to a general

request by the Editor a number of excellent reports was produced. What follows is, as in the account of Coll in Kist 54, a compilation and conflation of these.

The sail from Oban was, to the great relief of at least one member, quiet and comfortable in Calmac's new Clansman, and afforded several good sightings for our ornithologists: common guillemots and black guillemots in Oban Bay along with the usual gulls and swans. Out in the Sound of Mull many diving gannets were an interesting diversion during the half-hour or so of safety and rescue exercises carried out by the crew of the Clansman (this included launching the lifeboats) - nice to see in the national press one or two weeks later that Calmac's record of safety at sea has been recognised to be of the highest standard. A spectacular sight was that of a huge flock of Manx shearwaters (roughly estimated at about 600) streaming across the Sound in front of us.

We stayed at the southern end of Tiree, at Hynish, the place chosen in 1836 as the most suitable for a harbour and workyard to serve the building of Skerryvore Lighthouse on a reef some 20 km offshore to the WSW. This tremendous project was designed and built by Alan Stevenson, who had succeeded his father Robert Stevenson as Engineer to the Board of Commissioners (and incidentally was the uncle of Robert Louis Stevenson). Building materials had to be assembled and prepared on shore, in particular granite shipped from Mull as the local granite-gneiss was not suitable. This necessitated the building of a dock and harbour, barracks for workmen, storehouses, a signal tower to maintain semaphore contact with the lighthouse, and later cottages for the lightkeepers. These buildings are now converted to other uses - the barracks to flats, the signal tower to a small museum, the storehouses to Alan Stevenson House, comfortable accommodation for study groups of 12 to 24 people; this is where we stayed. The large lounge was certainly very comfortable - deep-cushioned settees and armchairs and low tables. The bunk beds were comfortable once one got in but "would perhaps have suited a younger party" and "provided quite a challenge and not a few laughs" as remarked by members who nobly volunteered to take the upper ones (there were 12 lower and 12 upper in 8 rooms). Food was excellent and plentiful; we made up our own packed lunches each day from an ample supply of brown and white bread and rolls, about ten different fillings to be mixed and matched to choice, fruit, crisps and chocolate biscuits; thermoses filled if required.

### Remembering Tiree

It is a very low-lying island, nicknamed in Gaelic "Tìr fo Thuinn" "the land beneath the waves", because when seen from a distance the low ground disappears and only the south-western hills remain. We found however that there was quite a lot of slightly hilly ground where we enjoyed walking on the springy turf above the sea and hearing the almost constant singing of larks. So often was the corncrake heard that eventually it no longer seemed remarkable; but only two of us actually saw a corncrake as by late May they were nesting and keeping well hidden in the beds of iris and long grass. Lapwings were everywhere - another source of pleasure. As there are no trees on Tìree, birds other than ground-nesters or cliff dwellers find accommodation hard to get; one nest high up on the old parish church at Kirkapoll was wreathed in barbed wire in lieu of twigs; and post boxes were blocked with thick wads of paper which had to be removed and replaced when posting letters to prevent them becoming habitations.

Noticeable and attractive were the three main types of traditional houses: thatched and usually whitewashed; whitewashed with steep black tarred roofs; and 'speckled' - white-painted with a random pattern of stones painted black. The long deserted golden beaches, a joy to walk on, the machair thick with flowers, the huge wide skies, delighted us all, as did the fields of cattle and sheep in beautiful condition, the hares that lolloped quietly away at our approach, or raced over the grass in distant fields - they were the only wild animals we saw. There are no rabbits, though Coll is crowded with them; and apparently there are no ticks either, so that cattle coming to the mainland have to be treated against tick infestation when they arrive.

### The Past

Two group visits were arranged for us by Mrs Monica Smith, the Warden of Alan Stevenson House, to places not yet officially open: the first to An Iodhlann ("The Stackyard") a study centre set up by a committee of Tìree residents to preserve all sorts of information relating to Tìree - history, island lifestyles, folklore, language, the two World Wars and much more, all classified and presented in its own special building. We were welcomed by Dr Holliday from the committee, and spent a fascinating morning among the material on display. The second visit was to Sandaig Museum, three traditional thatched houses renovated by the Hebridean Trust, comprising a house

furnished as it might have been in the mid to late 19th century, a byre and barn. This was of particular interest to older members such as the editor, who well remembered many objects still familiar in their young days (and some such as wooden butter pats they were still using). One sharp-eyed member spotted a book "Sheepmarks of Argyll" and found those for Tibertich, Craigenterive and Eurach, just north of Kilmartin.

Sites visited by most in smaller groups included Dun Mor Vaul, the broch whose substantial remains stand on a rocky knoll overlooking the sea. In the 4.5m wide wall the gallery survives all round except where interrupted by an intramural stair and the entrance passage which preserves bar-holes, door-checks and a pivot hole for a wooden door: also a guardroom. Further along the shore is Clach a' Choire, the "Ringing Stone" a glacial erratic covered with over 50 cupmarks, quite unmistakable when one knows what to look for. When struck with a pebble it emits a ringing sound; the pitch and volume can be varied by place struck and size of pebble. Some of us, being aware that if the Stone split Tìree would sink below the waves were very cautious, so Tìree stays above the waves for the time being; and the legendary pot of gold remains hidden.

We visited the ruinous late mediaeval parish church and chapel at Kirkapoll; there are early Christian incised crosses on nearby rock outcrops, and mediaeval stones in the burial ground; but the tall disc-headed cross which used to stand at Kirkapoll now stands, repaired, on its original plinth, in the grounds of Inveraray Castle. The modern (1842) parish church is a plain oblong building with a belfry; a gallery runs round three sides of the interior. It is beautifully kept and to judge from its notice-board has a very active congregation. The burial ground at Soroby contained interesting Early Christian and mediaeval stones, two of these being cross-shafts now lying flat. There are among later memorials four commemorating craftsmen who worked on the construction of the Skerryvore Lighthouse.

#### Birdwatching

Summer migrants were well established on the island. Wheatear, chiffchaff, most of the warbler species, swallow and house martin appeared to take an interest in the resident greylag geese as they grazed on the machair. Twite were numerous; the skylarks soared and sang on high despite the strong winds. Starlings were everywhere, perhaps along with lapwings

the most common birds on the island. No doubt their feeding was easily obtained from the short turf on most of the fields. The rocky shore and the long lovely beaches were the haunt of oystercatchers, mallard and other ducks, the many species of the gull family, common terns (and at least a couple of Arctic terns) cormorant and shag. Where the cliffs were steepest they appeared to attract the largest colonies of fulmars: noisy in their granite tenements, but what masters of flight!

Further inland on our way to various duns and abandoned settlements we had the pleasure of seeing and hearing golden plover, dunlin, yellowhammer, stonechat and whitethroat; and there were several reports of watching parent birds carrying beakfuls of food to nests tucked away from sight - one, a pied wagtail, in a derelict corn mill; another in a wall. B

### Botanising

Tiree lies in four 10km squares for botanical recording purposes, and three of these were visited during the trip, adding valuable records for the Atlas of the British Flora 2000. Overall, records of about 165 species were made by the group - not bad for a few days when botany was only part of the programme. Needless to say the hard work of recording was done by Lynne Farrell our botanist from SNH; the rest of us, if not on the same expedition, brought our notes of what we had seen (or thought we had seen - some unconventional descriptions!) to her in the evening. Lynne's own accounts follow, slightly abbreviated.

Wednesday 26: I was with the group that went to the area round the broch at Vaul, the churches at Kirkapoll and Traigh Mhor shoreline. A small shallow lochan near the broch (Loch an Fhaing) had 2 species of water buttercup, Ranunculus aquatilis and R. baudotii (to be confirmed), with rich flushes nearby where bog pimpernel, Anagallis tenella, was in flower. On the walls of the broch several ferns grew, black spleenwort, Adiantum nigrum, Broad Buckler fern, Dryopteris dilatata. Picnic lunch in the narrow dunes by the Lodge Hotel was pleasant; but very few typical species apart from Marram Grass were found; but in the wet sandy grassland on the seaward side of the road were good numbers of orchids mainly the flesh-pink Dactylorhiza incarnata, Early Marsh orchid.

Thursday 27: After combing Soroby graveyard with some of the members and listening to the corncrake calling in the field beyond in broad daylight, I set off with the RSPB warden to a wet area with small lochans near Cnoc Bhirceapol to check

aquatic plants. Specimens of star-shaped rosettes were collected with a view to confirming a recent record of Pipewort, Eriocaulon aquaticum, a nationally rare plant mainly found in Ardnamurchan, the West of Ireland and Coll. Other species included several pondweeds, Various-leaved pondweed, Potamogeton gramineus and Long-stalked pondweed, P.praelongus. The evening began at midnight doing a corncrake census and ended at 2.30 a.m when a heavy downpour set in and both corncrakes and naturalists decided to shut up shop.

Friday 28; This saw a group walking round the coast from Balephetrish to the Ringing Stone in showers; but it did brighten up and we found Oysterplant, Mertensia maritima, nationally scarce, in good quantity - 186 plants counted and photographed on the exposed shingle beach at Ard Mor point.

A violent storm of wind and rain marked our last night on Tiree, but by morning all was calm for our sail back to Oban.

#### Vision Prompted by an Early Morning Corncrake

The highlight of my visit was, I actually saw a corncrake. I was immediately transported back in time, about seventy years in fact, to a small bivouac pitched in a farmyard not far from Galashiels, with yours truly lying in it unable to sleep for the 'cacophony of crakes' emanating from what seemed that night hundreds of throats.

Walking back for breakfast I pictured a scene seventy years from now: a member of the Society walking along the Canal bank between Bellanoch and Crinan casually watching all the ospreys lining up single file to dive and select whatever they fancied from the huge shoals of wild salmon swimming below; the same member rushing home to E-mail the Editor of The Kist (he's still using the old method of communication) not to tell of the everyday occurrences just described, but to say that, while watching all this, he was nearly positive, the insect that bit him on the face was, of all things, an 'Argyll Midge' I'm sure that night, in my wee tent, I would have been just as sceptical about the near demise of The Corncrake.

With acknowledgments to Sheena Carmichael, Ginny Crawford, Lynne Farrell, Colin Fergusson, Mary McKellar, Creena McKenzie, Jenny Peden, Hector Walker.

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