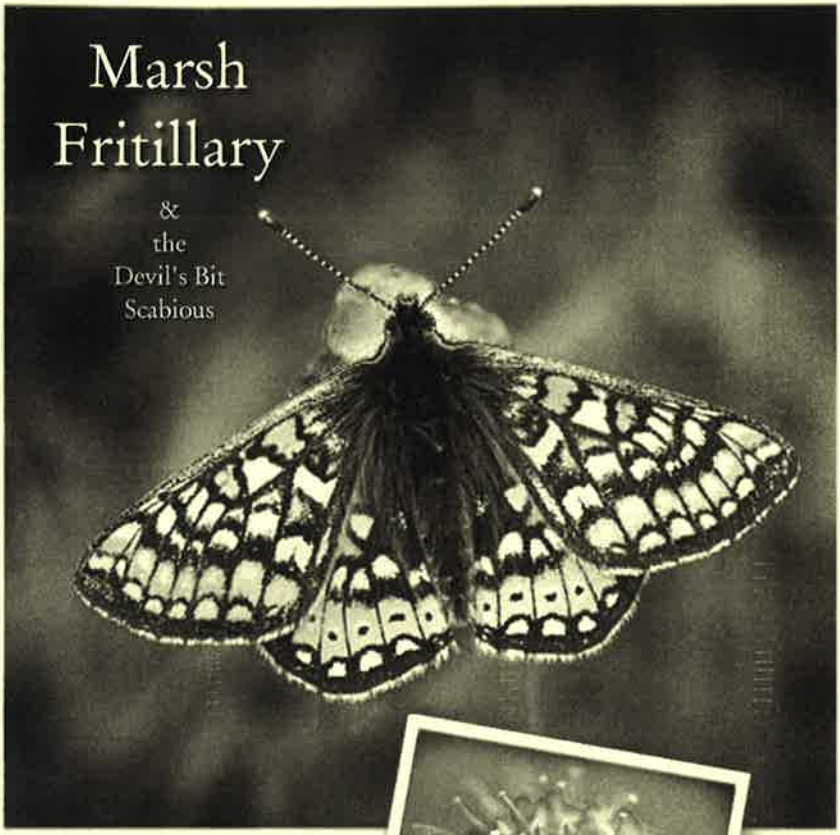

THE KIST 79

EDITORIAL

Spring is just beginning, delayed by the severe winter. Bumble bees are starting to stir, the frogs are in a mating frenzy and it is so welcome to feel the sun's warmth on one's face. For me Spring on the West Coast is a magical time of renewal and regeneration.

For this issue we have chosen a Marsh Fritillary for our front cover: iconic species of our damp, unimproved meadows - rare in the rest of the UK but with good populations here which the Dalraida Project have highlighted (see pages 33 - 34). The project has made a big difference to the area. It commissioned Kilmartin House Museum to carry out many surveys and digs and the results - including new artifacts from the excavations - will be showcased in a summer exhibition to be held at the museum. It is to be entitled Dalraida: Digs and Discoveries. A book based on the Community History Project is also coming out soon and will be reviewed in Kist 80. This will be packed with people's recollections, so we thought it fitting to revive Forsyth Hamilton's lively anecdotes of Ardrishaig from his - unfortunately out of print- Kipper House Tales.

Kilmartin House Museum are also hosting an exhibition based around a tiny Neolithic sandstone figure known as the Orkney Venus, discovered last summer by archaeologists excavating a site on the Orkney island of Westray. It will begin early April and will last for two weeks.

Finally, I would like to thank Phill Fox Denham for not only producing all the excellent pictures and layout but also doing some of the editing, and thanks to Phil Holt for coordinating the Summer Programme, a number of articles, and for helping with the proofing.

It is with great sadness that Kist notes the passing of Ted and Adeline Clark and longstanding member Creena MacKenzie.

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KIPPER HOUSE TALES
by Forsyth Hamilton

A friend from Ford village, Bill Cairns, was kind enough to lend me a book entitled Kipper House Tales written by Forsyth Hamilton and published in 1986. Described as "A reminiscence of West Coast Life" it is a charming book packed with lighthearted anecdotes, featuring not only Ardrishaig but also Lochgilphead, Kilmartin and lots of other local people and places.

Sadly, Mr Hamilton is now deceased but following permission being kindly given by Mr Hamilton's brother, Mr Johny Hamilton, we have great pleasure in including within issue 79 of The Kist a chapter extracted from this fascinating book entitled "The Early Days". We may well feature further extracts from the book. Please let us have your impressions of this first extract.

Kipper House Tales is no longer in print. However, if this extract has tickled your interest and curiosity, the wonders of modern technology have provided a means by which out of date publications can be made available via the internet to anyone with the appropriate equipment. Access to the entire printed book along with millions of other published and unpublished books, papers, maps, etc. may be had via Scribd (www.scribd.com).

At the Home page, launch a search for Kipper House Tales or Forsyth Hamilton and enjoy. Documents can be downloaded as pdf files and printed if necessary, however, Mr Hamilton's book amounts to over 100 pages so, it may be more economical to delve into it on screen.

In addition to the extract featured there are fascinating chapters packed with names and places from the past including Lochgilphead and Ardrishaig Shops of the Past, Ardrishaig, The Ardrishaig Seal 1925, Boats and Owners, Old Friends, etc. together with lots more to keep you interested and amused.

The Early Days

YESTERDAY, 10th January 1985, there was a picture in the newspaper of a lovely lady, 107 years young. She was born in the year that my grandfather was drowned in Ballantrae, Ayrshire, leaving my grandmother to bring up four boys and a girl. Whatever hard times they had to endure, it finished up that the Hamiltons were one of five families invited to move to the village of Ardnshaig. The others being the Laws, Bruces, MacEwans, and MacBraynes.

The Crinan Canal had just been opened, providing a welcome safe passage for seafarers who, prior to this had to sail round the notorious "Mull O' Kintyre". Ardrishaig was the then small village on the Loch Fyne side, and as there were no houses at that time these families lived in tents on the Fisher Row Park. Now, nearly two hundred years on, their names are still known in the village.

The canal was projected in 1793; however, the street plans for Ardrishaig had been made, two years earlier, in 1791 with the village retaining that early pattern until 1960. The landward side was then demolished and rebuilt, with the shore side buildings giving way to car parks and open spaces in the 1970s. The Parish Church was built in I860 on a prominent site beside the canal in direct line in from the lighthouse.

That is just a wee bit of background information, because I have no intention of trying to write a history of Ardrishaig. It is the people that make a place interesting to live in, and it is wee yarns about some of the worthies of bygone days that I will be trying to record here.

School didn't have much attraction for most of us young lads. How could it? Our minds were more likely to be occupied with thoughts about splashing for sea-trout and salmon, or catching lobsters, congers or saithe below the pier. Ferreting rabbits on the braes, or trying to catch a hare at the Rocky Riggens seemed more important than lessons to us with our boundless energy.

Our old lady teacher in the qualifying class used to be reduced to tears, crying, "Boys, Boys, What is going to happen to you in the years ahead if you will learn nothing in school?" Little did she know how well justified her tears were to be, for thirty or forty of her former pupils were to go off to the army, navy and air-force, never to return.

One visitor to the school that I remember was the King's doctor. Sir Clair Thompson, whose grandfather had been the first canal manager. He asked the headmaster, Mr A. Blue, who was the worst boy in the school. Mr Blue pointed at me and said. "There you have him, the Duke of Hamilton himself!"

The Royal doctor came over to me and confided that he too had earned the same reputation in his day. On one occasion he had made a boat out of three herring boxes, coated it with tar and feathers and launched it at the mouth of the burn. He then paddled out to the flashing buoy, whereupon his "boat" started to sink and he had to be rescued by fishermen. When he returned home he was on the receiving end of a good belting.

Sir Clair Thompson left £3,000 in his will to the village for the funds of the AVIA, the Ardrishaig Village Improvements Association, and the village hall.

Mr Blue was a very stern disciplinarian. Once when he had caught of us having a smoke in the toilets he laid into us with the cane The strokes were interspersed with the words : "If – The – Lord – meant – you – to –smoke – he – would – have – put – a – chimney – on – your – head"!

A bi-plane landed at Brackley Farm in 1928 and three quarters of the village population went up to see it and helped to take down a fence so that the pilot, Wing Commander MacBain could take-off. In 1931, some flying boats landed in the sea, out from the pier at Ardrishaig, and the school pupils, not wanting to miss anything so exciting, sat all afternoon waiting for them to take-off. This they did just before school closed. We all ran to the school to collect our schoolbags, but on the way out we met Mr Blue, who gave us each six of the best for being absent without leave. We were thus remanded in school until six o'clock to make up for the time we had lost.

Another teacher, a Miss Smith from Tarbert (Peter Pochie's sister), was also a great believer in the belt. She once told me I had thirty-two mistakes in my French exercise and since I apparently didn't look terribly worried about it she said, "What have you to say for yourself, Hamilton?" I said the only thing I could think of, namely that "I better just not bother going to France !" an answer that earned me six of the belt from her and a visit to Mr Blue for a follow-up of six of the cane.

Life, however, wasn't all canings and beltings, and they didn't disturb us all that much anyway. For even as laddies our hands were pretty well protected with callouses from rowing and hauling ropes.

It has just struck me that "worst boy in the school" or not, I have followed Mr Blue in many, if not all, of the positions he held in the community— Member of AVIA, Chairman Village Hall Committee, Sunday School Superintendent, Agent for the Shipwrecked Mariner's Society, Royal Benevolent Society, and Boys Brigade—further to this I was a member of the Home Guard before call-up to the RAF, ran the boy's boxing club, and am now with the Ardrishaig Wednesday Club, which consists of fifty locals who gather on Wednesday afternoons for a community get together. This includes tea, cakes and of course, the odd bit of local gossip. After all, as one lady member said to me, "What can you do with gossip, Forsyth, but spread it".

One grand old character was our next-door neighbour, James Jackson, who lived until he was only three months from his 100th birthday. I have managed to get a photo of him with his friend Andy Grinlaw together with their guns.

In the year 1860, he was on a sailing ship, on his first passage to America when they were involved in rescuing the crew of an American fishing boat. James Jackson was the first to volunteer to man the rescue boat and 12 of the crew were saved. As a result of his heroism, he was rewarded with a life pension and at the ripe old age of 99, he received a visit from four American inspectors, who wondered if he could possibly still be alive. I am sure this brave man deserves a place in the

James Jackson & Andy Grinlaw

Guinness Book of Records, as being the person to have drawn a pension, on both sides of the Atlantic for the longest time. However, on writing to them, I was informed that it did not fall under their list of published categories. But I will pursue the matter further.

He died in 1944, not long after flitting to Lochgilphead to stay with his daughter, and said himself that it was leaving Ardrishaig that would be the end of him. It was sad to come home from the war to find this great old man gone.

His daughter, Maggie Kinkey, as she was known, also lived near us. Her husband had been called "The Beara," which

might have been something to do with his favourite drink. He worked in the local distillery where the wages were paid on Fridays, one golden sovereign. The first time the pay was in pound notes, he is supposed to have gone straight to Dougie Livingstone's Anchor Bar, slapped the note on the counter and said, "I am the Beara. Pay me a pound".

You wouldn't see a lot in the newspapers of these days about sex, divorce and so forth, but there were nevertheless, always a few "goings-on" that rarely found the light of day.

One story concerned a certain kind-hearted lady who was a great source of comfort to the under-privileged males of the village, with whom she would share her bed to dispel their sorrows.

Word of her generosity had leaked out to some of the younger boys who decided for a prank to raid her boudoir when she was engaged in such activities. The plan was to sneak in, pull back the bedclothes and give her companion a skelp across the backside.

Sure enough, the plan was carried out, the blow was dealt, and to the horror of the boy who had wielded the stick, the irate man who leapt out of bed was his own father. He chased the boy out of the house and up the lane, clad only in a pair of pink drawers, of the kind now known as "Long Johns," but which at that time were called "Leasey Parleys," and were the under garment favoured for wearing at the fishing in cold weather. "Leasey Parleys" somehow sounds much more comfortable than "Long Johns." *to be continued...*

A DALRIADA AND NATURAL HERITAGE SNAPSHOT

Will Self

The Dalriada Project is a Landscape Partnership scheme. It aims to protect and enhance the cultural and natural heritage of this beautiful and valuable part of Scotland and to promote access to and enjoyment of it. It includes Kilmartin Glen to Point of Knap and east to Lochgilphead.

The three year programme will end in August 2010. It will have undertaken -four natural heritage projects:

- Biodiversity Action for the Wider Landscape
- Black Grouse Habitat Improvement
- Ancient Woodland Restoration
- Near to Nature Trail at Dunardry

Three cultural heritage projects:

- Understanding the Archaeological Landscape
- Consolidation of Key Archaeological Features
- Community History Project

It will have promoted access and understanding of the above through:

- A Heritage Access Network
- Information and Interpretation Systems
- And Marketing and Training

KIST will reproduce parts of the community history and archaeological work in future editions.

The natural heritage projects have focussed on some of the internationally important aspects of this area. 268 hectares of ancient woodland have been restored. Invasive non native species have been removed to allow the old forest to return. Within weeks of this being done we have seen the native ground flora return and saplings emerge. In due course the trees will mature and the internationally important mosses, liverworts and lichens will re-colonise. We have constructed a Near to Nature Trail which drops down into a gorge where some of these lower plants can be enjoyed. The views from the top show the best of the landscape.

Biodiversity grazing projects have improved habitats for Marsh Fritillary butterflies. Again this area is important for them at a global level. Other insects and plants have also benefited from these diversified habitats. Finally, black grouse, declining internationally, have had habitats restored and connected locally.

There will be a series of events this summer to promote the project's achievements and the area overall. Detailed reports of the work will be available via the website. There will be two community history publications for sale. Please also enjoy the routes and interpretation in the landscape. See the website www.dalriadaproject.org for more.

EUROPEAN BEAVER FIELD TRIAL: KNAPDALE
by Jenny Holden

(Part 2) Beavers are referred to as a "keystone" species because of the way in which their activities affect so many other species, whether animal, plant, fungus or tiny single-celled organism. Ecosystems are delicate things where every little organism or process impacts on another or indeed many. When a part is removed it will always have some sort of effect on the other elements. When that part is a beaver, the effects are wide reaching due to the key role that they play in engineering wetlands and woodland edge. Other native keystone species include the red deer, but formally would have included the lynx and wolf also.

We have known for a very long time that our wetlands and woodlands need help. Recent studies have found that it is lack of variation in woodland structure, so called homogenous conditions, and lack of standing dead wood that have resulted in the catastrophic declines in woodland bird species.

Conservationists try to manage wetlands by creating ponds, installing sluice gates, raising the water level on bogs and re-meandering waterways. They create buffer zones where possible to prevent fertiliser and pesticide run off entering waterways and sensitively graze and mow riverbanks to maintain open areas for grasses, wildflowers and their associated species such as butterflies, dragonflies and water voles. In the forests we coppice areas, try to create a patchwork of different ages of trees and leave piles of decaying woody debris. All of these are examples of the activities of

beavers which together create a dynamic mosaic of different habitats.

Scientific research from overseas has shown how the presence of beavers on rivers and lochs, either through reintroduction by man or through natural colonisation, leads to a net increase in biodiversity, as they naturally alter their environment through foraging and damming behaviour and create mosaics of varying wetland habitats such as ponds, coppiced woodland and scrub, flooded water meadows, swampland, fens and so on. These natural wetland patchworks are some of our rarest habitats in the UK, ironically partly as a result of the past extinction of the beaver, and they are home to a vast array of native wildlife, including dragonflies, fish, waterbirds and pond plants.

But beavers bring also benefits other than wildlife. Evidence from other countries indicates that the presence of beaver dams on river systems can lead to improvements in water quality and flow regulation as they retain freshwater in periods of drought, and regulate flooding by releasing water gradually rather than it being released rapidly through the whole river system. Dams can also improve water quality by trapping silt and catching acidic and nutrient rich run-off from agricultural and forestry areas. At a local level the beaver can also provide good opportunities to develop eco-tourism to the benefit of rural economies and the public's interest has grown markedly since the animal has made appearances on the recent television programmes and magazine articles.

Having eaten his fill, Andreas Bjorn pulled himself out onto the side and proceeded to groom his scruffy brown fur while his mate and kit played a gentle, if noisy, game of "pat the nose". They looked at home and comfortable in their environment, and entirely a part of this natural scene.

At one time, this most industrious of animals would have been beavering away on the banks of waterways throughout England, Scotland and Wales, from the fens to the forested fells; and they could do so again. Evidence from Europe shows that beavers show no aversion to living in busy areas, even inhabiting urban rivers and ponds.

Simon Jones at the first beaver lodge in Knapdale

The European beaver (Castor fiber), a more ancient relative of the well-known North American beaver (Castor canadensis) was for thousands of years found in wetlands over much of Europe and central Asia. The loss of wetland habitats is also thought to have contributed to their decline, but persecution by man was the killer blow. Across their natural range beavers were hunted to extinction, although small original populations persisted in Scandanavia, France and Germany.

The extinction of the beaver from Britain is commonly quoted as being somewhere around the 16th Century, primarily due to hunting for its pelt, meat and the medicinal properties of a secretion called castoreum. There are those who dispute that beavers were ever present in Argyll or even in Scotland. Research carried out by Dr Bryony Coles however provides an intriguing insight into the history of this species in Britain both through fossils and preserved gnawed wood and also written records and place names throughout history. On examining the historical range of the beaver across Europe, and the habitats that they colonise, it would be very strange if the beaver had not occupied the whole of England, Scotland and Wales.

Beaver fossils are rare in Scotland, because the conditions for the preservation of bone are poor, except in limestone cave areas. Efforts to find fossils of this kind have been limited in the west of Scotland. However, fossils which have been found suggest that beavers lived in Scotland for almost 8,000 years. Historical records show that beavers were formerly commercially exploited in Scotland and may have survived around Loch Ness until at least the early 16th century, but intriguingly a Gaelic name for the beaver, losleathan or

dobhran losleathan (broad-tail or broad-tailed otter), survived as an oral tradition until the late 18th/early 19th century in Lochaber, Argyll, which suggests that the beaver may have survived in the west of Scotland until much more recently.

The beaver is important because it has become something of a symbol for modern conservation thinking. Conservation organisations, including SWT look more and more at the 'landscape scale approach' in the battle to maintain and enhance our native wildlife. In SWT's recent 'Natural Connections' vision we recognise the importance of properly functioning ecosystems as being the only really effective way of conserving our wildlife habitats and species in the face of modern agricultural intensification, growing development pressure and the threats of climate change.

Not only is the beaver a missing natural link in the restoration of our degraded functioning wetland ecosystems, but it also gnaws away at us from afar as a guilty reminder to our collective moral conscience that we drove it to extinction and yet we have it within our power to bring it back.

Several years ago, some brave individuals within Scottish Natural Heritage decided to do something about this missing link. Despite having their attempt to run a trial in Knapdale in 2002 being turned down by the last administration, SNH persevered and early this year the Government, through SNH, signalled its intent to reintroduce the beaver in the 2007 Species Action Framework. This document provides a strategic approach to species management in Scotland and amongst 32 species requiring targeted management and action the European beaver appeared. This action although

admirable is far from unprecedented however – the UK is one of the last countries in Europe to reintroduce the beaver, with

Beavers made light work of this tree

26 states already way ahead of us in their reintroduction programmes.

So what would we expect to see in a wild beaver landscape? How would it differ from now? The answer is that this depends on the terrain and vegetation type. Beavers prefer sizable areas of still water surrounded by broadleaved woodland and when colonising sites such as large lochs or meandering rivers, their presence and impact may not be very obvious at all, with only scattered felled trees dotting the banks and a few well worn tracks to and from the water being the only signs of their presence. If such sites are not available then beavers will attempt to create their own water body and build a dam across a burn, using felled timber in order to back up water and create a 'safe' environment for them. Such beaver ponds are obvious and tend to be about 1.5 hectares in size, with dams averaging 15 metres in length and 1 metre high. However the beavers still require plentiful broadleaf tree cover very close by and will not set up in areas that are solely within coniferous woodland. In hilly areas, like Knapdale Forest, these ponds are longer and thinner as they sit in steeper sided valley bottoms, whereas on floodplains beaver ponds can cover larger areas due to the flatter terrain.

With such engineering behaviour it is inevitable that beaver and man can occasionally come into conflict and across Europe there are several examples where the presence of European beavers in a modern landscape creates issues at a local level, mostly for landowners with forestry or agricultural interests. Beavers can block drainage culverts, fell orchard trees or feed on crops such as maize that are very close to the waters edge. Authorities and landowners in these countries

deal with the problems in a variety of ways, but what we must accept if we are to have wild beaver populations in Scotland in the future, is that we will have some local problems and these will need to be managed if man and beaver are to co-exist again. The evidence from comparable countries in Europe is that these problems tend to be on a small, local scale and there are many proven methods to deter beavers using fences and pipes and protect particularly vulnerable sites. However, there may be times when the culling of particular problem beavers is the only solution and we cannot ignore this fact.

Put into context however, it is lack of management which is a major problem for woodland and wetland species in Britain. The reason for this is mainly down to funding. It costs a huge amount of money to carry out all of the activities listed in the paragraphs above: beavers work for free. There are few animals in Britain that do not come into conflict with people and inconvenience us from time to time whether it be a bird nesting in a pestiferous place, a badger undermining a railway line or indeed an aphid feeding on a favoured rose bush. Humans are very capable of change to suit our own needs, but we are resistant to it when it seems to come from outside this remit.

Some are concerned that beaver populations could quickly get "out of control" due to an apparent lack of predators in modern day Scotland. However, although bears, wolves and to some degree lynx, will predate beavers, it is unlikely that this would ever be at a level capable of controlling the population. All predation of adult beavers by these species is on an opportunistic level. A beaver, being aquatic, is not an easy

animal to hunt for any of these species and is by no means unprotected, bearing a sizable pair of cutting teeth. Bears can sometimes penetrate the lodges of beavers, but the adults will normally have escaped by the time they get to the nesting chamber and it is likely that only young kits would be taken.

Beaver populations are therefore controlled by habitat and food availability, weather conditions and kit mortality. Kits have many predators and there are plenty of them here in Scotland: badger, fox, otter, sea eagle, buzzard, wild cat, stoat, mink, the list is formidable. Add to this the natural stresses of weaning and securing territory and already we have a population that is in fact under natural control.

Lessons from Europe tell us that the beaver, if allowed to return to the British countryside once more, would likely expand very quickly as no other beaver territories limit the dispersal of individuals in search of a new home. However, the density of beavers would take far longer in increase and would likely take over 30 years to reach carrying capacity.

If this Trial is a success then it will likely be followed by another such experiment, before any decisions are made about its presence on a wider scale. Plans are afoot in both England and Wales for similar projects but there are many issues to yet be fully addressed, such as the concerns of fishermen for salmon stocks and of landowners for their crops and drainage systems.

For some, the main reason to reintroduce the beaver and other creatures lost from our shores, is down to a moral obligation to restore what we destroyed. For me it is more

about learning from the past and looking to the future of our wild habitats. Not just for wildlife, but for the people who depend on it too: for food, for water, for our environment and for our mental well being.

IT'S A FAR CRY FROM LOCH AWE
by Charlie Mitchell

Those Members and friends who joined our Leacainn Muir drive along the new Forestry Track from Auchindrain to Braevallich last year will remember the splendid write up prepared by Charlie Mitchell, one of our valued, long-standing members. His three page write-up gave us lots of fascinating facts about the places and people associated with the track from Loch Fyne to Loch Awe which, thanks to the Forestry Commission, has recently been made reasonably passable for normal passenger cars.

Charlie has recently revealed that he has been working, for some time, on a major work accumulating facts, figures, dates, people, anecdotes, etc. about Loch Awe and the surrounding land. This currently amounts to some 100 pages and Charlie has kindly given his permission for us to feature a short extract in this issue of The Kist.

The extract covers the early part of Charlie's journey around the loch starting at Glennan and continuing up to Ford, a relatively short part of the journey as those of you who know the loch will be only too aware.

A full explanation of the title "It's a far cry to Loch Awe" is given in Charlie's book but the jist of it is that, if you're a long way from your homeland at Loch Awe and are placed under heavy pressure by opposing forces then, there's little point in shouting for reinforcements 'cos It's a Far Cry to Loch Awe!

It's A Far Cry to Loch Awe

A Historical and Nostalgic Tour Around Loch Awe

In the following pages, I have tried to give an interesting historical and contemporary account about the places, past events, people and stories that are to be found in a trip around my home country of Lochaweside. I have started from Glennan, at the south-west end and gone clockwise around the loch, but I have also diverted off, to include Loch Avich, Glen Orchy, Glen Lochy and other parts that I feel should be included in the Loch Awe area, and the road mileage of the full journey is well over a hundred miles; plus whatever walking mileage one wishes to do.

Lochaweside West

We start our journey at Glennan Cottage, which is built on the watershed between Loch Awe and Kilmartin Glen; in fact so much so, that rain falling on one side of its roof, is said to run down into the sea at Crinan, but rain falling on the other side; to run into Loch Awe, and eventually the sea north of Oban. This will be the Glennan Cottage that is mentioned in the 1841 census, as having nine inhabitants. It is an old house and for most of its life, it appears to have been a croft, and was home for much of the 1900s to 'Neilly Ban' and his family. His son Dan Stewart was a well known, larger than life character, and from Dan, who was commonly known as the Bohunk, I heard many stories about the loch-side that had come down from generations past, and I have used a good number of them. Though Glennan is no longer a croft; South American alpacas are reared there and a small bunch of them are kept beside the house.

By the roadside, about a hundred yards south of the house is a large broken standing stone; with its leaning stump still anchored in the ground. It is said to have been broken in the 1879 gale that destroyed the Tay Bridge, and as this stone when standing, would have been a good five metres in height, it must have been one of the largest around. Near the standing stone are faint remains of Tigh-a-Charr, or, House by the Stone that is mentioned in the 1790s Statistical Account for Kilmartin Parish: for this is part of the Kilmartin Parish; which stretches up the west side of Loch Awe, to almost Kilmaha, and that is the way that we will be going on the early part of our journey.

From Glennan, down Kilmartin Glen to the sea, once flowed a mighty river, fed by melting ice at the end of the ice-age; as this was once the outlet from the Loch Awe catchment area, and that stretches as far as Rannoch Moor. Why Loch Awe should then have changed to flowing out by the Pass of Brander, is not clear. But I think that the likeliest explanation is, simply, that it had flowed out at the Glennan end for centuries because the Pass of Brander was blocked by a glacier fed by ice from Ben Cruachan. When the glacier melted it had scoured out the Pass of Brander making it lower than the Glennan watershed.

Glennan Cottage is situated opposite the junction of the Kilmichael Glen road with the B840 and the B840 is the road that we follow, past a modern house, built at the foot of the towering and precipitous Craigantairb, Crag of the Bull; or as it is usually called, the Bull Rock, so called because a bull had once fallen over it. The rock was in the past home to a pair of

Peregrine falcons. The B840 road runs alongside the small Dog-Head Loch, but just before this, the old Ford road can be seen, running up and across the hillside. It goes past the ruined remains of an old Free Church building that was situated in what is a very pleasant and idyllic spot, at the edge of the trees and looking out over the Dog-Head Loch. Such a position does not seem consistent with the present Free Church's austere image, but this site may have been chosen in order to serve both the Ford and Kilmartin area; in the days before Kilmartin had a Free Church built there.

The old road then goes on past Auchinellan and rejoins the B840, and when walking that road, I found an old lime kiln that was built into the banking below the road in order to make use of the lime-rich rock nearby. The lime-kiln dates from the big agricultural Improvement that started in the late 1700s and carried on through the 1800s in the form of liming, land-draining, enclosing of land by stone dykes and the growing of new kinds of crops. The road above would give easy access for charging the kiln with fuel and broken up limestone. There was also water nearby to slake and disintegrate the burnt lime stone and complete the chemical process of lime-making. Sometimes, it seems, the burnt limestone was simply carted out to the fields and it was left to nature to finish the job. On the brae-sides below the lime kiln can be seen hundreds of small mounds that are home to colonies of countless numbers of small brown and tan ants.

As we continue on alongside Loch Ederline, a small stony man-made islet can be seen a short distance out from the shore, and this would once have been the foundation for a crannog supported on piles. It would have risen high above

the water and provided a refuge and home for a large extended family and their livestock. This would likely have been built and occupied for centuries around the early BC and AD years. I was told a much later tale of how someone fleeing for his life had swum out to this islet for refuge but had been killed by an arrow fired from the shore.

The Kilmartin Parish Statistical Account from the 1840s, says, that, "fresh water mussels, containing pearls of great value, have been found in Loch Ederline". I do not know whether the loch still has mussels, with pearls or otherwise; but fresh-water mussels are now an endangered and protected species and pearl fishing is banned. Loch Ederline is a popular pike-fishing loch and a favourite haunt of ospreys. Ospreys on Lochaweside and elsewhere, had died out through persecution and egg collecting in the 1800s but after their return to Scotland, a pair were persuaded to set up home at Ederline in 1987 by a man-made nest-platform being built on a treetop. Since then the ospreys have returned yearly and with a bit of help from the provision of artificial nest sites in tree-tops there are now a good number of pairs nesting around Loch Awe. The number of young ospreys being reared yearly is now into the late teens. Osprey chicks are all ringed by the RSPB and a ring from an Ederline reared bird was found in the stomach of a crocodile in Africa.

Pike were never native to the area and they were, I believe, introduced into Loch Ederline by a laird from Ederline: possibly Henry Bruce, or maybe his angling wife who caught five salmon in one spot in a day's fishing on Loch Awe. From Loch Ederline the pike spread down into Loch Awe, and are now found in all suitable shallow weedy habitats. Pike

fishermen in Loch Awe were responsible for introducing Roach. Someone using them for live bait fishing must have released them into the Ford end where they have bred and multiplied and are now a well established species. Another non-native species, which was introduced into the wild in recent times, again at Loch Ederline, was the Canada goose. The keeper then hatched a number of goslings and set free. They have now multiplied to considerable numbers and spread around the district, but at least they are not so destructive as pike and they may even be a good addition to the local fauna.

Set on the hillside above Loch Ederline, is the old mansion house of Auchinellan, Field of the Island. This island probably took its name from the one at the Ford end of the loch where the old Ederline lairds are buried. Their grave slabs can be seen along with a prominent Celtic cross which commemorates its later Bruce family owners.

Not far from the loch, on a rise below the present Auchinellan entrance, are the remains of an old house and other buildings which suggest that that may have been the original Auchinellan. The present house, with its converted farm buildings and cottages, is now a small self-catering holiday complex. In past centuries it was owned by a Campbell family who were Rectors of Kilmartin Parish. James Wright, the owner in the mid 1900s, had a small but beautiful stone oratory built there. He was generous in many ways and any tinkers or beggars who called there were always given a handout of money until he discovered that some of them were going straight to the pub to spend it. His response was to give vouchers to spend on groceries instead! He was

very keen to ensure that the Auchinellan land would not be sold on for forestry when he died, as was happening to so much other land at that time. Therefore he left the place in trust to a very young niece until she reached maturity. She then took over and now runs the place with her husband.

Auchinellan in the past appears to have been a small hamlet which had 61 inhabitants in the 1841 census. The 1880s Lochgilphead J. P. Court records mention a Cuthbert Jobblin of Auchilnellan, along with a person from Ford, who were both fined 5/ for having no names on their carts and driving the horses with a single rein. There is also a collection of dance tunes called 'The Auchinellan Collection' that has tunes called: Auchinellan Jig, Crown House, Ederline, Farm-House Jig and The Ford Strathspey.

Between Auchinellan and Ford, and at some distance to the left can be seen a three metre high standing-stone. This must have been dragged there by the local people with much sweat and effort from some cliff or rock-face and erected there sometime during the Late Stone Age. The question is: why? Was it erected to commemorate some important event, perhaps in memory of some big and important chief, or possibly lined up with its missing companion stone on some distant celestial body by the intelligentsia of the day. The theories are many but the answer it seems has been buried with the people of that time. Near to it, until the late 1800s, there was another smaller stone but this fell down and for some reason it was removed to Auchinellan and now appears to be lost.

The next place we come to is the small village of Ford. This took its name from the old ford across the river. Its Gaelic was Anagra, meaning Ford of the Hazels. In a 1723 list of people charged with contravening the Excise Acts there are three persons named as being from the Ford of Annacraw. Over time the place name simply became 'Ford'.

It was always a somewhat scattered small village or hamlet and possibly grew up there because it was at the junction of several old tracks. During the cattle-droving days it would have seen quite a lot of through traffic of cattle. Some of them would have been heading for the local market at Kilmichael but many others were bound for the southern markets of Dumbarton and Crieff to be sold to English buyers, who would not risk coming up into the lawless Highlands. These cattle would mostly have come over the hill road from Kintraw and Craignish with many of them having been shipped across from Jura and Islay. The drovers had their own favourite routes, or would alter them to avoid too busy a route where the grazing for their cattle would be poor. Ford had its own stop-over stance for cattle and travellers by the riverside just below the present bridge. The cattle going east and south would then have gone by way of Kilneuair over the Leckan Muir road to Auchindrain and on up round the head of Loch Fyne.

Ford also had twice yearly horse fairs and markets, held on the first Thursday of August and the first Thursday of September and in these days when the horse was the main form of transport and power they would have been important affairs. The Statistical Account of 1840 says that lambs, sheep and wool were also sold. Many other things would have been

traded by local and itinerant tradesmen. These Fair days would be holidays for the local people and were eagerly looked forward to as they were possibly their only other days off apart from New Year's Day.

In 1830 a young Irish horse-dealer called John MacAlaster arrived at Ford for the September Fair with money to buy horses but was assaulted and robbed in a change house of some fifteen pounds by an Irish-born criminal from Campbeltown called Archibald Sproul. The outcome of this was that Sproul was tried before a jury at Inveraray Court, found guilty, and sentenced to life transportation.

to be continued...

A TRIBUTE TO TED AND ADELINE CLARK

Adeline and Edmond Clark of Tarbert passed away last year and it beholds Kist to recount something of what they gave to the Society. Adeline (or Mrs. A.O.M. Clark as she was known in Kist) edited issues 41-65. When she handed over the editorship to me in 2002 I was made aware of the august nature of the position, following a lineage going back to the polymath F.S. Mackenna and even to Marion Campbell, who edited the first three issues. In taking it on I became aware of the great contribution both she and Ted made to the Society since settling in Tarbert in 1981.

After assuming the editorship I was well supported by Adeline, who noted any errors and made sure corrections were noted in the following issue (Moira, her daughter, tells me that her letters home were also sometimes corrected). However, she and Ted had a great sense of humour. This can be found in an anecdote passed on to me by their dear friend and fellow Society member Sheena Carmichael:

"On one occasion I got in touch with them after reading one of the back numbers of the Kist. In the article it referred to "a number of indignant cattle from the Falklands." A misprint for indigenous but probable indignant also. Adeline phoned me to tell me how much they'd laughed over breakfast when the note arrived."

Editorship involved plenty of work including encouraging contributions, handdrawing illustrations, compiling accounts of summer expeditions and receiving letters from folks all over

the world who were interested particularly in family connections with the area.
Adeline typed many of the issues on a manual typewriter, though for later editions she used a word processor whilst still using a folder to make up the pages (the folder having been passed on to her by Dr. McKenna).

Their contribution to the Society was broadened by the work they undertook to become Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries. Moira thinks that their choice reflected their personalities: "Dad's dissertation was an overview of the archaeological importance of Kilmartin Glen, whilst Mum's was a detailed assessment of duns in Mid Argyll, which involved clambering up to every known site and taking detailed measurements of them all." Adeline's knowledge and writing skill are present in some fine articles she contributed to Kist.

Their lives prior to settling in Tarbert speak of their courage, thirst for knowledge and fair mindedness: qualities which came to the fore in the service of their local community, supporting numerous organisations including of course NHASMA.

Adeline read Latin and Greek at Glasgow University, where she met Edmond. As he then went on to spend 6 years with the RAF, it was a long engagement. Adeline finished her degree, began to teach at the University, and took two years out to take a second degree at Cambridge University. This was at a time when women were allowed to study at Cambridge, but not to graduate, even if they beat all the men in their class, which Adeline did. Many years later, Cambridge offered

to confer on Adeline her first class honours degree, for a fee. She politely declined, saying she already had a perfectly good qualification from Glasgow.

During the war years she helped to bring evacuee children out of Glasgow to the relative safety of Argyll, and spent her summers working with the Land Army on High Ronachan Farm. This involved back breaking work weeding carrots by hand, trying to catch the carthorse who didn't want to be caught, and cycling home at the weekends to go to dances in Tarbert.

Meanwhile Ted, who had been reading Classics, had joined the RAF as a navigator. After being involved in the D Day landings his squadron towed gliders as part of the assault on the bridge at Arnhem, where he was shot down behind enemy lines. He escaped capture and made it back to England only to discover that he had been listed as missing in action. Back at barracks his bunk and bedside cabinet had been allocated to another officer and his luggage packed to go home.

After such eventful experiences they were finally able to get married and settle down, with Ted becoming a Tax Inspector. In the 50's, 60's and 70's the family came to Tarbert on holiday and in turn the children brought their family there - and continue to do so.

Their archaeological interests and love of the village laid the foundations for what may turn out to be their most enduring legacy: the restoration of Tarbert Castle.

In the late 1980's they were leaders in a group who took some action to try to save the ruinous structure. Funds were raised, a brochure produced and a school project launched. Site clearing commenced and access improvements arranged with the Forestry Commission, owners of the site. By the early 1990s a Lottery application led to the formation of Tarbert Castle Trust who took over ownership from the FC. At that time funding was difficult and despite further clearing and interpretation of the site no major grants were forthcoming.

In 2004 Ted and Adeline agreed to hand over the Castle site to the newly formed Tarbert and Skipness Community Trust generously including an additional piece of land which they owned and £1000 in the old Trust account. They maintained an interest in the Trust's work at the site - all of which was visible from their house - and generously advised whenever information was required.

2010 has proved a watershed year with the announcement of a substantial grant to consolidate the Tower House structure over the next four years. Everyone in the village was saddened that Ted and Adeline were not able to share in the celebration. But all their hard work will live on in numerous ways, including those precious back issues of Kist and the newly restored Castle.

Editor's note.
I wish to thank Moira Clark, Sheena Carmichael and Robert McPhail for their contributions to the above tribute.

It is beholden to me to also announce the passing of another invaluable member of the Society, Creena MacKenzie. Overleaf are some reminiscences, again from Sheena.

A TRIBUTE TO CREENA MACKENZIE
by Sheena Carmichael

Creena MacKenzie of Craiganterve, who passed away in October 2009, was a special friend and is missed very much. She was such a warm, caring person with a wonderful sense of fun.

Creena enjoyed the Society meetings and particularly the outings. She was so good at giving lifts to non-drivers.

On one island outing she lost her small, green binoculars in a green thicket. We searched with no success and had to give up or miss the boat. A super find for someone!

Returning a friend to his home on New Years Day, mid-evening, when turning the car at this remote place the car slipped into a shallow drain and stuck there. To our great relief a neighbour from some miles away, interrupted during his New Year dinner, arrived to pull us out. Heartstoppingly, on the first pull his rope broke but did sterling work on re-connection and we were free to go.

I miss Creena and our little adventures.

THE MARSH FRITILLARY
by Ed Tyler

Argyll has thousands of amazing species and one of the more familiar and obviously beautiful is the Marsh Fritillary *(see our front cover)*. With its lovely brown and orange chequered pattern, it is only found on or near unimproved damp pasture. This is because the caterpillar feeds solely on the Devil's Bit Scabious (with its lovely purple flower) - and damp unimproved pasture is exactly what this plant thrives on. It is also exactly what Argyll still has in abundance (in certain special places). Consequently our County is a stronghold not only in the rest of the UK but in Europe as a whole (in two European countries it has actually become extinct).

There has been a 60% decline in the species across the UK. If you look at a pre-1970 distribution map there are quite a lot of sites across Scotland. However, the post-1970 map is very different! Nearly all the sites occur in Mid and North Argyll including the islands. This is due mainly to habitat loss.

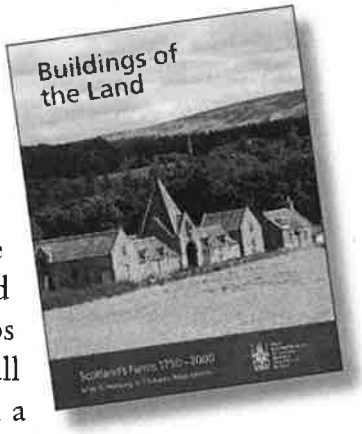
Recently 3 new sites have come to light: in 2008 a site at Clachan in North Kintyre was discovered and in 2009 two sites at Whitehouse, also in North Kintyre. This is very exciting news. You need to count the tents on the scabious made by the caterpillars some time during the month of September.

My friends the Wilsons farm one of the sites at Whitehouse and they told me that the field in which they occur is the only one which they have never reseeded or fertilised.

Here's to the Marsh Fritillary, and here's to the Argyll farmers who have farmed sensitively for hundreds of years and now reap the reward of being able to see a beautiful, rare butterfly flitting around their damp meadows.

Editor's note. To find out more about the butterfly log on to the SNH website and search for it. After genning up, you might look around for suitable sites and come across some of those tents, or even a butterfly!

BOOK REVIEWS



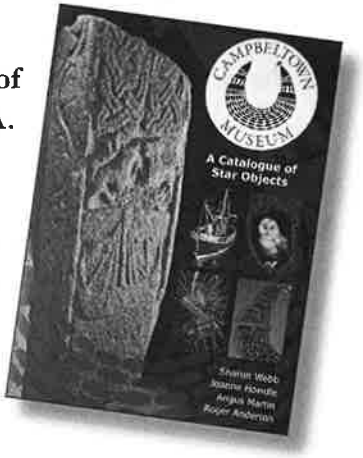
Buildings of the Land: Scotland's Farms 1750-2000, M. Glendinning and S. Wade Martins, RCAHMS, 2008. Price £30.

Abandoned farm buildings are generally ignored in the landscape and do not get a second look - perhaps because they are abandoned. We've all seen them, beside a single-track road in a similarly half-forgotten, half-neglected landscape typical of much of Highland countryside, a Sitka spruce plantation nearby taking up the old pasture on which livestock once grazed. Ghost livestock that were once hefted to that old building.

A second look tells us that this was both functional (a working building designed to fulfil its farming roles) and the result of a concept embodying notions of how people saw

themselves in relation to the land and to each other. This was Improvement, part of the Enlightenment movement that swept across Europe during the 18th Century.

The book describes how in Scotland, this century "saw the transformation of the agricultural landscape into a great experimental laboratory for a (....) system which set out not to rationalise or modernise the old patterns but to systematically eradicate them." One of these old patterns survives, preserved in the museum of Auchindrain near Inverary founded by NHASMA.



Campeltown Museum: A catalogue of star objects, S. Webb, J.Howdie, A. Martin, R. Anderton.

This catalogue illustrates some of the objects in the collections of the Campbeltown Museum. Some were chosen during an open day in September 2008 - and are deemed to be the best-loved in the community - whilst others were selected by the curators as being of particular importance.

Whilst the chosen objects come from various collections including Fine Art, Social History and Natural Sciences, the Archaeological Collection is reckoned to be the finest, with some of the artifacts being of national importance. There are some fascinating Neolithic finds, including an enigmatic stone ball, a pot from the burial cairn at Beacharra between

Taynloan and Muasdale and a polished stone axe head. The most amazing object of all has to be a Bronze Age jet and cannel coal necklace found as recently as 1970 in a cist along with a bracelet and flint blade. The excavator who discovered these objects reported that "necklace was found in disarray, with beads partially scattered at random. He thought that the necklace might have been broken as it and the body were placed inside the grave, scattering the beads."

The objects were beautifully photographed for the catalogue by Aaron Watson, who has also done a fine job designing it. Whilst the catalogue includes much-loved paintings, it is the objects (including a fascinating herd horn which the Town herd used to blow through the streets) which really stand out thanks to his skill in lighting and obvious empathy with the objects themselves, which are seen in exquisite detail.

A visit to the Museum itself is most highly recommended (phone 01586 559000 for details of opening hours) so you can see the objects for yourself, not forgetting to learn more about them from the catalogue.

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Editor: Edward Tyler
Sub/Picture Editor: Phillip Fox-Denham
President: Dave Batty

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Office bearers:

President	Dave Batty Kirnan Farm, Kilmichael Glassary, PA31 8QL. (Kist contributions to the editor)
Vice-Presidents	Douglas Barker & Sharon Webb
Membership/Publications	Phil Holt Glasvaar Cottage, Ford, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RJ
Organising Secretary	Post Vacant
Minutes Secretary	Pat Doughty
Hon. Treasurer	Cat Chisholm
Events - Publicity	Phill Fox-Denham/Phil Holt
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Editor: Ed Tyler, Daisy Cottage, Big Brae, Tarbert, Argyll, PA29 6UQ
Tel. 01880 820 656. email. tyleredward@hotmail.com

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