

VITRIFIED DUNS



BASKING SHARK
TAGGING



RED TIDES

THE

KIST 84

EDITORIAL

Hello and welcome to edition 84 of the Kist...

This issue we are back to our usual varied fare.

I have always been fascinated by vitrified duns. What was the motivation behind the “firing” of massive stone-walled structures? Fiona Campbell Byatt explores an interesting possibility.

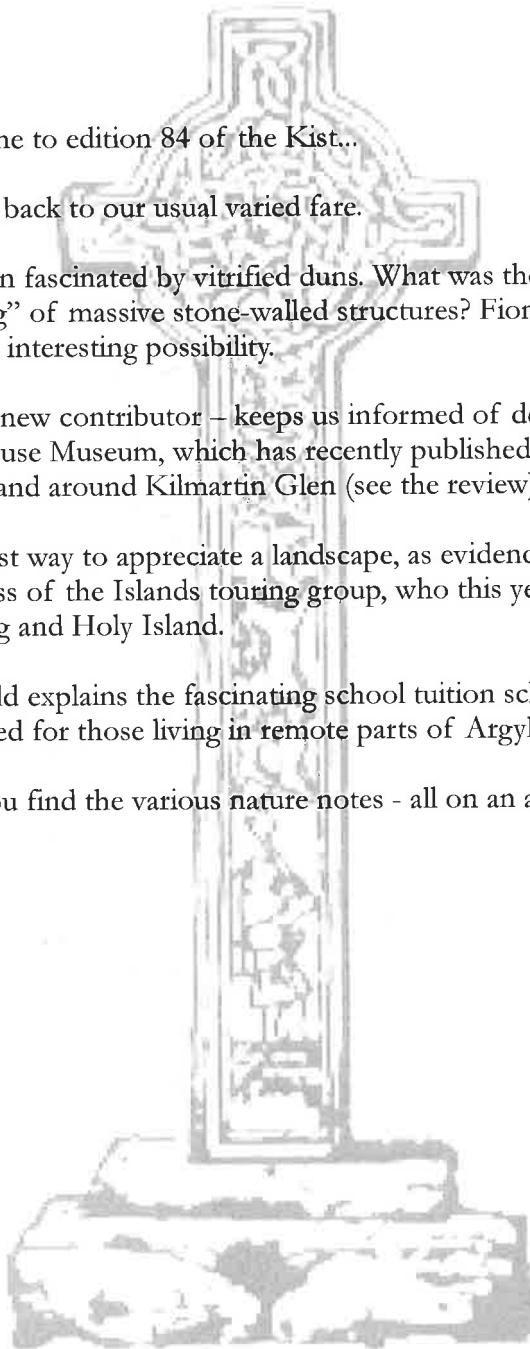
Ailsa Raeburn- a new contributor – keeps us informed of development plans for Kilmartin House Museum, which has recently published an inspiring walking guide in and around Kilmartin Glen (see the review).

Walking is the best way to appreciate a landscape, as evidenced by the continuing success of the Islands touring group, who this year explored Arran, Ailsa Craig and Holy Island.

Murdo Macdonald explains the fascinating school tuition scheme (launched in 1939) developed for those living in remote parts of Argyll.

Finally, I hope you find the various nature notes - all on an aquatic theme - of interest.

Ed.



Cover visualisation of Burning Dun - Thanks to Giorgio Granozio

RECENT IDEAS AND RESEARCH ON VITRIFIED HILL FORTS AND DUNS IN ARGYLL

FIONA CAMPBELL BYATT, F.S.A. SCOT.

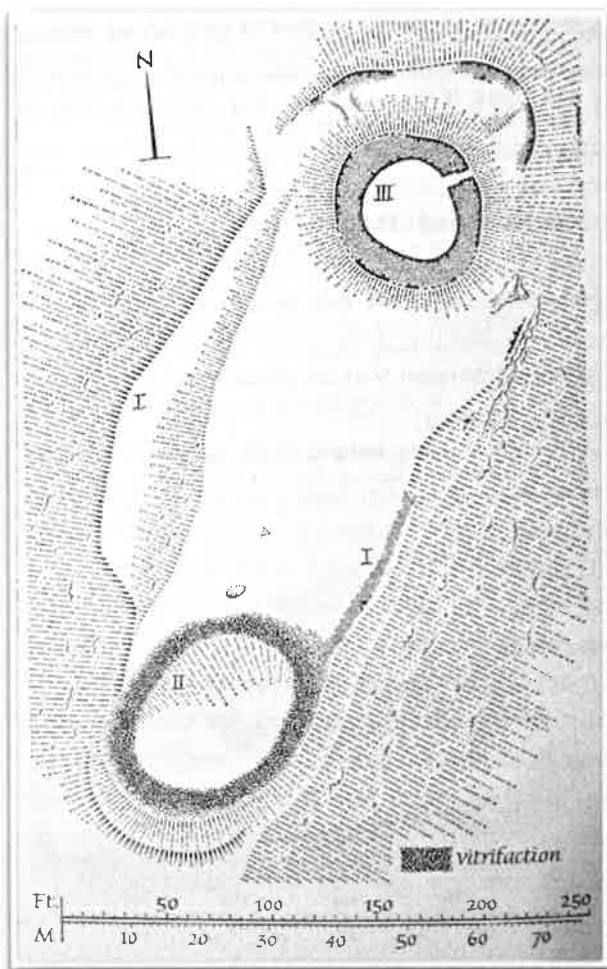
As children we would often climb up to the duns on the top of Dun Skeig and look around. The duns are built on a high cliff overlooking the entrance to West Loch Tarbert and can be seen from many different places: the Mull of Kintyre, the hills of Jura and the west coast of Knapdale. On the way up there are black glassy boulders and rocks, which have fallen down the steep slope. The appearance of the boulders is typical of what is called vitrification. The word comes from the Latin for glass (*vitrio*) and describes a process whereby intense heat is applied to a mixture of stone, sand, wood and possibly peat. A wall built of pebbles and boulders, and interlaced with timber and brushwood, would have been set on fire and the resulting high temperature would be sufficient to fuse the stone into a molten mass. Vitrification has been found in both duns and their outlying walls, and forts, and various theories have been suggested as to why it should have happened. Enemy action, accidental conflagration in a high wind, or the fusing of the stone wall to create a defensive barrier are all possibilities, but we really have no definite knowledge of the reasons behind it.

Professor Vere Gordon Childe, a professor of pre-history at London University, built a fire of stones and brushwood in 1938 and found it was difficult to attain sufficient heat in order to produce the result he wanted. He thought a temperature of 900-1100⁰ C would be required to turn it into a molten mass. He concluded that the idea of an enemy force taking the trouble to carry brushwood up to the high ground most duns and forts are built on was very unlikely. So we are left to wonder what was this

enigmatic process that our ancestors witnessed. Another experiment was attempted in 1986 by Professor Ian Ralston of Edinburgh which was shown on television. A wall laced with wood was built near Aberdeen; it was then set alight. The weather was wet and windy and Professor Ralston found it almost impossible to achieve the high temperature required for vitrification. He suggested this was partly due to the wet condition of the wood used and the fact that the wall was newly built. He thought that if the experiment had taken place in the dryer parts of the year the result might have been different.

Vitrified duns are not numerous. The sites are predominantly on the West coast of Argyll, as well as Inverness and other areas round the East coast. Argyll has about fifteen vitrified sites that have been found so far. Carbon dating is used where burnt wood has been excavated. This has produced dates ranging from the 7th century BC to the 1st century BC. Very few artefacts have been found and recorded, but the discovery of shards of coarse pottery, jet beads, stone spindle whorls and some flint scrapers suggest that the inhabitants of these forts lived in Argyll. Julius Caesar called this type of structure *muris gallicis* and he described them as having dry stone walls, ten to twelve feet thick, tied together horizontally with transverse wooden beams and infilled with sandy soil and boulders. Caesar wrote of *muri gallici* at the battle of Avaricum in 52 BC. Recent work has concluded that a proportion of the Argyll hill forts were built in the centuries before Caesar wrote, and that this term should no longer be used. Such a spectacular display of destructive power must have struck fear into all who saw the hill-fort on fire. Forts with vitrified walls have also been found in France and Germany.

What other reason could have given rise to the visual impact of a ring of fire on a hill top? The majority of Argyll sites are built on



Dun Skeig (Argyll. An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments, vol. 1 Kintyre, The Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Glasgow 1971, p. 70)

heights like Barran-Gobhan, the 'ridge of the smiths' in Benderloch, and they were therefore meant to be seen. Blacksmiths and workers in bronze and iron were considered sacred, so could these sites have been used for religious or ceremonial purposes or for the burial of a king? Kilmartin has a large number of burial mounds and Cup and Ring marks, although these are both thought to be much earlier. Evidence of cremations has been found there. The Cup and Ring marks have no definite explanation but we can estimate the amount of effort and time that went into making them

and, in consequence, the importance that was attached to them.

Could we therefore make a connection between the use of ritual carving into natural stone and the building of a stone structure sanctified by ceremonial fire on a hill top (See front cover), which then resulted in accidental vitrification? The later re-use of the site on other sacred occasions would have appeared spectacular and awe-inspiring to the pre-historic inhabitants.

Dun Skeig is dated roughly from 700 BC to 100 BC. The sitemap overleaf gives an impression of the two duns and the general layout of the area. An earlier fortified enclosure, measuring 113 x 36.5 m and surrounding the summit, is now indistinct. The larger dun, at the south-west end, is an oval measuring 26 x 18.5 m and the core of its main wall is substantially vitrified. Standing within the dun, the seaward wall rises to a height of 1–1.20 metres. The smaller circular dun to the north-east is 14.5 x 12.8 m, with walls up to 4.6 m thick and there is a noticeable entrance on the landward side, with bar checks and bar holes set into the door rebates. The later construction of this north-eastern structure is suggested by the inclusion of previously vitrified materials. At one time the eastern dun was thought to have a connection with the Antonine Wall, built in AD 128, and possibly, before that, with Agricola's ships which sailed round Scotland in AD 78, but no definite proof has been established.

The interior of both dun structures gives one very little idea of any living space and as far as has been established there is no source of water on the top of the hill. So any idea of a prolonged battle or siege seems unlikely. On the eastern, landward side of the hill there is very little sign of any defensive wall remaining and on the steep seaward side the vitrified rocks have tumbled right down to the shore-line. We must await further excavations and discoveries to add to our meagre knowledge. Meanwhile, one can stand on this high point and see for miles up and down the West

coast and let one's imagination range over the ideas behind the building of vitrified forts and duns.

Although a great deal of effort and research has gone into looking for explanations for the practice of vitrification, it is still difficult to establish the reasons that prompted the people of those early times to build these structures and we must hope that further information will one day emerge.

Acknowledgements: With grateful thanks to Lucinda Byatt for her careful editing and referencing, and to Giorgio Granozio for his picture of a hill fort on fire.

Picture below: The 'ring of fire' on a hill fort (credited to Giorgio Granozio)

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KILMARTIN HOUSE MUSEUM- FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

AILSA RAEBURN – MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

As many of you will know, the Museum has recently been through some organisational changes, to ensure it is fit to meet both future financial challenges and our plans for redevelopment. The redevelopment proposals are aimed at addressing many of the operational constraints under which the Museum has been working in the 15 years since opening. More excitingly – it will also enable us to display recently acquired artefacts, extend our education and outreach work and build upon our successful community archaeology programme. Many readers will have seen the outline proposals prepared by Malcolm Fraser Architects for the redevelopment; these proved that our existing site could both accommodate our anticipated operational needs and provided lots of food for thought as to how a new museum might look. The overall development proposals were very well received by the local community and museum users and consequently the Director, Sharon Webb, and Trustees felt confident in pushing forward with the project.

I was appointed in 2012, with my post being funded by Museums Galleries Scotland and the Association of Independent Museums. My principal objective is to take the development project forward, ready for a submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund by March 2013. It's a very exciting and varied challenge. It will involve working with museum staff, architects, interpretation and exhibition specialists, sustainability advisers, partners and funders, as well as liaising with all our volunteers, Friends, local community contacts and museum users, to ensure we achieve the best possible project for submission to HLF. We also need to write a

Conservation Statement detailing what is important about the Museum collections and the local landscape. As well as all that, we need to start the process of developing a Fundraising Strategy to help source the private sector funding that will be essential to the development going ahead. We have been very fortunate to secure the services and advice of a group of people who have agreed to act as an Advisory Panel to the development. These are a mix of local people and long term museum supporters, who bring substantial experience on fund raising, project management, financial analysis and museum design and interpretation.

So what can you expect to see in our 'new' Museum? The highlight will be a major extension to the museum galleries to encompass later periods in Argyll history, as well as some very important new acquisitions. Associated to this will be the creation of a new temporary exhibition gallery, which will allow KHM to create a range of temporary exhibitions, and for other organisations' exhibitions and artefacts to be shown in Argyll. To date, we have been very restricted in the style and content of temporary exhibitions that we could hold due to a lack of proper environmental control and security.

As well as new galleries, the 'front of house' will also be much improved with new reception, shop and café facilities, as well as inside toilets!! All public areas will be Disability Discrimination Act compliant for the first time. Our education and meeting facilities will more than double in size, as well as being properly equipped to accommodate school and community groups.

However – the 'rear of house' is equally exciting and will make a huge difference in how KHM operates in the future. A much larger and improved collection store will allow us to properly care for our ever growing collections – part of the store will be

dedicated to 'open storage' allowing visitors and researchers easy access to a much larger part of our collections than ever seen before. Our current store is beyond capacity and this new space will allow us to acquire even more Argyll artefacts as they become available through Treasure Trove. Together with the temporary exhibition space, this will enable us to stage more regular exhibitions and ensure much more of the collection can go on display.

We have also been working in partnership with the Universities of Ulster and Queen's Belfast looking at ways of expanding our community archaeology programme. This has resulted in surveys and digs in 2012 in Tayvallich and Colonsay. Again however, we have been restricted in the extent of the work we can do, what research can be done locally and the treatment of artefacts post excavation, by our lack of laboratory and research facilities. Together with the improved education space, additional laboratory and research facilities will allow us to offer summer schools for archaeology students, as well as work and student placements on local digs.

There are also other 'virtual' developments that will form part of our wider events and activity plans. Within the overall project we will be looking at the opportunities for KHM to use digital media to expand its work in promoting, interpreting and protecting the heritage of Argyll. This is an area largely new to KHM – but one we feel has great potential in promoting Kilmartin and Argyll to the wider world. It will also make our education and research resources much more widely accessible.

So this is a very exciting time for Kilmartin House Museum as we plan the direction of the organisation for the next 5-10 years or so! As ever, resources – both human and financial – are very

constrained. We know this is a long term project that will be several years in the planning and gestation – but we are confident that the long standing reputation of KHM and the fantastic support that we receive from amongst the local community and Museum users will stand us in good stead. If anyone feels they would like to get involved with the project, or would like more information, please get in touch with Sharon Webb, or myself at the Museum by email to admin@kilmartin.org. We would also be very interested in hearing from you with any ideas for the development that can be fed into the architectural and exhibition design and education programmes. We also hope that the KIST will continue to print updates as the project progresses.

ARGYLL'S CORRESPONDENCE TUITION – DALTON PLAN SCHEME

MURDO MACDONALD

“Four boys in C.T. course are absent”. Observed the headteacher of Craignish Primary School on 25 October 1950. “They are gathering potatoes”. For a few older readers of The Kist the C.T. abbreviation may bring back a memory of Argyll’s unique Correspondence Tuition, also known as the Dalton Plan (or D.P.) Scheme, in schools. The New Oxford Dictionary of English conveniently gives us a definition of Dalton Plan: “a system of education in which pupils are made responsible for the completion of assignments over fairly long periods. Named after Dalton, Massachusetts, where the first school used the plan”.

Before going on to examine the topic two further extracts from school Log Books may be given. Thus in Ormsary Primary School on 12 September 1941: “The pupils who are working at the D.P. Correspondence Tuition scheme finished their first assignment at

the beginning of the week". In Ardconnel Primary School on 24 August 1948 the teacher recorded that "One Post – Qualifying pupil is to do the correspondence Course here so there are 14 Primary pupils and 1 C.T. pupil. Books and papers have arrived for the latter".

The Scheme was promoted by Dr. Colin M. MacDonald, Argyll's first Director of Education, inspired by a broadly similar scheme in Australia. (Interestingly C.T. pupils in Argyll were later encouraged to correspond with similar pupils in Western Australia.) The catalyst appears to have been the proposed raising of school-leaving age to fifteen years in 1939, a move that was eventually postponed with the advent of the Second World War. The Scheme was framed for those pupils who did not intend to pursue secondary education beyond school-leaving age. Pupils could stay at home and receive lessons by post in their local primary school under the supervision of the headteacher there. It was designed to meet the needs of rural and crofting families in particular where children helped with tasks around the home. It avoided the necessity of the children having to attend junior or senior secondary schools in centres such as Dunoon or Oban. The inaugural session was 1939/40, under wartime conditions. In August 1941 no less than 212 pupils were enrolled. Craignish Primary School recorded the highest number of C.T. pupils in any school in the session 1940/41 with eight C.T. pupils. In August 1944 eight Mid Argyll schools were participating in the Scheme.

Initially a team of five teachers based in the Education Office in Dunoon devised the lessons, sent out and received the fortnightly assignments and carried on the day-to-day administration. Post-war changes in society and education saw the system decline so that towards its end two Dunoon-based teachers sufficed to run the Scheme. A final end-date for the C.T. Scheme has proved difficult to pin-point but it seems to have survived until 1970.

Lessons were available to cover English, history, geography, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, biology and, for the girls, housecraft. Pupils successfully completing a three-year course could obtain a Certificate of Attainment. The Housecraft assignments are delightful [Argyll & Bute Council Archives, CA/5/75/2] taking us back seventy years to a time before electricity had reached into every home. Under the guidance of "Minnie Mop," "Tina Teapot" and "Hetty Houseproud", girls were shown how to make a nice cup of tea, darn socks, keep oil lamps in good working order, and how to clean the kitchen range.

In order to engender a spirit of community among the widely-scattered C.T. pupils summer camps were organised attended by both pupils and teachers. Scholars, too, were encouraged to contribute stories, jokes and puzzles to a magazine called "Outpost" [A set of this magazine is to be found in Argyll and Bute Council Archives, CA/5/75/1]

ALGAL BLOOMS AND RED TIDES

ED TYLER

On Sunday 26 August I was over at the pontoons in Tarbert harbour and noticed that the water had turned a reddish colour. Other people I spoke to said that the water had been clear the day before. One thought it was the presence of burn water in the harbour after heavy rainfall. However, this tends to produce a brown "tea" colour and I noticed that it was cloudy rather than stained. Sometimes you could notice swirls of tiny organisms floating in the "soup".

ALGAL BLOOMS

It could be only one thing: an algal bloom.

Algal blooms are regular but nevertheless always fascinating occurrences off our coast. Scientifically speaking, a bloom is a rapid increase in the population of algae (plankton) in an aquatic system. Typically, only one or a small number of phytoplankton species are involved, and some blooms may be recognized by discoloration of the water resulting from the high density of pigmented cells. Although there is no officially recognized threshold level, algae can be considered to be blooming at concentrations of hundreds to thousands of cells per millilitre, depending on the severity. Algal bloom concentrations may reach millions of cells per milliliter. Algal blooms are often green, but they can also be other colours such as yellow-brown or red, depending on the species of algae.

HOW THEY FORM

Why did this occur in Tarbert at that particular time? We sailed out later that morning to Barmore Island and noticed that the red colouration continued into Loch Fyne. The water (at least at the surface) also felt surprisingly warm.

Algal blooms are a predictable seasonal occurrence resulting from coastal upwelling, a natural result of the movement of certain ocean currents. The growth of marine phytoplankton is generally limited by the availability of nitrates and phosphates, which can be abundant in coastal upwelling zones. The type of nitrates and phosphates available in the system are also a factor, since phytoplankton can grow at different rates depending on the relative abundance of these substances (e.g. ammonia, urea, nitrate

ion). A variety of other nutrient sources can also play an important role in affecting algal bloom formation, including iron, silica or carbon.

THE MARINE FOODCHAIN

Why should these algae be of interest? In Kist you usually read about bottlenose dolphins or basking sharks rather than something microscopic. Yet these magnificent creatures are ultimately dependent – directly or indirectly – on plankton, because it is plankton (both phyto- and zoo-) which form the basis of our marine food chain.

RED TIDES

It is worth noting that not all algae are beneficial as a food source to the larger creatures that feed on them. A few species are toxic – and they happen to form blooms that are coloured red or brown. This was why, when I first saw this particular bloom, the dreaded words “red tide” slipped into my head.

This is the common name given to what are now referred to as “harmful algal blooms”. “Red tides” are regular occurrences off regions of the North American coast, both east and west. They are significant because the harmful “tides” can cause fish and cetacea to die after they ingest the algae whilst feeding. Also shellfish fisheries can be badly affected: the shellfish accumulate the toxins without adverse effects to themselves, but if people go on to eat the shellfish they may be poisoned.

This is why some summers a notice goes into our local press at some point telling us not to eat shellfish from certain areas. This happens all over the British coast: I remember as a child on the

north Kent coast seeing signs up on the beaches telling us not to collect shellfish.

I do not know whether or not the bloom that I saw was toxic or not. In order to verify this, I would need to know the species causing it: and it is important to note that the great majority of phytoplankton are not toxic, including many that give off a red colouration.

Algal blooms have become noteworthy recently in the context of Climate Change. I read recently that this summer the sea temperatures in the North Atlantic have been 2 C higher than normal. Harmful algal blooms are on the increase globally, and are occurring with greater severity. Could this in part be due to rising sea temperatures? No one knows. It is even unclear whether the increase is in fact a real increase or is due to increased observation effort and advances in species identification technology.

BASKING SHARKS TAGGING PROJECT

ED TYLER

In July of this year 20 basking sharks were electronically tagged in the "hotspot" areas around Coll, Tiree, Canna and Hyskeir. The term "hotspot" refers to an area to which large numbers of sharks return each summer to feed on the rich plankton supplies which reliably occur there.

Despite their great size, much of the sharks' behaviour remains a mystery. Scottish Natural Heritage and Exeter University have come together in this project to answer a number of important questions:

- How long do basking sharks remain feeding in certain hotspot areas in Scottish waters?
- How are the sharks using these areas which are important to them for feeding and potentially breeding?
- Where do basking sharks go after their summer feeding in Scotland's seas?
- Do the sharks remain in deeper waters off Scotland over winter?

In Kist 71 (2005) I reported on basking sharks, particularly in the Clyde area where reasonable numbers are seen each summer, with some in the Kilbrannan Sound and even up in Loch Fyne. Since then, they have continued to return to their favoured areas each summer. The tagging project is exciting in a number of ways. For the first time in Scotland the sharks' movements will be displayed in close-to-real time. All you need to do is look up the tagging project on the SNH website and you can follow an individual shark's movements.

A great way to get your children or grandchildren involved is to help the project name their sharks! They need names for eight of their tagged sharks. If you have any suggestions please email them to baskingsharks@snh.gov.uk and they will use their favourites.

FOUND A TAG?

You can help the project by returning any detached tags you come across. The tags are designed to detach from the sharks after several months and they can get washed up onto the beach. The tags will provide the project with a lot of



information whilst attached to the sharks but if they can be retrieved after they fall off they can learn even more. If you return a tag you can also claim a reward!

If you find a tag please contact the Scottish Natural Heritage Oban Office on 0300 244 9360, or email - baskingsharks@snh.gov.uk

LAMPREYS

ED TYLER

For a long time I have wanted to alert readers to the presence of lampreys in our unpolluted rivers, including the Add. They came to light in 2005, when as a result of a national survey populations were found in Argyll, the Western Isles and the North West Highlands – areas where they were not previously known to exist.

Lampreys are fascinating and strange creatures. Their common name is “sucker fish”; this is because the largest of our three species – the Sea Lamprey – has an oral disc known as a “sucker” in place of its mouth. The disc is wider than the fish's body, has a fringed edge and contains many small teeth arranged in concentric rows, with larger teeth surrounding the opening. It uses these to cling to its prey (including salmon, trout, herring and mackerel) and proceeds to suck blood using its rough-surfaced tongue. Once attached, they are difficult to dislodge and the host often dies due to blood loss and tissue damage.

Our three UK species are described below (the descriptions are those given on the Scottish Natural Heritage website).

The lampreys belong to an ancient order of vertebrates, the Agnathans or 'jawless fishes'. The skeletons of lampreys are of strong flexible cartilage without bone. Most, but not all, species of lamprey are parasitic on other fish. Lampreys occur in temperate waters in both the northern and southern hemispheres. The three species present in the UK are: brook lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*), river lamprey (*Lamprey fluviatilis*) and sea lamprey (*Petromyzoa marinus*).

BROOK LAMPREY

Brook lampreys are an entirely freshwater species, and unlike other British lamprey species, do not feed on as adults. They are the smaller of the British lamprey species, reaching a length of 15-19 cm. Despite being freshwater-resident, brook lamprey do, however, undergo limited spawning migrations. Some of these movements may be passive, such as the downstream drift of larvae to sandy/silt nursery areas. Here they remain for up to five years before metamorphosing into adults. Active upstream migrations of pre-adults and adults occur through the winter and, on reaching suitable gravel spawning areas, these fish hide among cover until spawning takes place during April-June. All of these adults die after spawning.

RIVER LAMPREY

River lamprey are larger than brook lamprey, reaching a size of 30-50 cm. They migrate from their coastal feeding grounds into freshwater, to get ready to spawn, during the autumn and spring. Autumn migrants are sexually undeveloped while spring migrants enter from the sea in spawning condition. River lamprey migrate upstream at night and the adults rest in cover during the day. Spawning takes place between April-May on pebble/gravel substrates. Populations that are purely freshwater-resident are rare

in Europe, but one exists in Scotland. This unique dwarf-river lamprey form is found in Loch Lomond. As its name suggests, this dwarf form is smaller than its sea-going conspecific, only reaching a size of 25 cm.

SEA LAMPREY

Sea lamprey are the largest of the three species, reaching a size of approximately one metre in length. After spending 18-24 months feeding at sea, adult sea lampreys migrate into rivers during the spring and early summer. They spawn between the months of May-July in areas of pebble and cobble substrate.

HOW DO LAMPREY REPRODUCE?

All lamprey species spawn in gravel substrates, not unlike those used by salmon and trout. Brook and river lampreys spawn slightly earlier than sea lamprey. On reaching their spawning ground, lamprey construct a 'nest' in which to lay their eggs - this is best described as a pit in the river and excavated material is piled up at the downstream end. Brook and river lamprey spawn in a 'ball' which may comprise up to 50 individuals. Sea lamprey, by contrast, spawn in much smaller numbers.

After hatching, the young lamprey larvae, known as ammocoetes, drift downstream with the current. These larvae settle in suitable areas of nursery habitat - areas that comprise fine, soft substrate in well oxygenated, slow flowing water. The ammocoetes feed on fine particulate matter such as diatoms, algae and bacteria. Ammocoetes may stay in this substrate for up to five years (or up to eight years for sea lamprey) before they transform into pre-adults and, in the case of river and sea lamprey, start their migration to the the sea during late autumn (sea lamprey) and late winter-early summer (river lamprey). Brook lamprey do not migrate to sea, spending their entire life in freshwater.

ARE THEY THREATENED?

Good water and substrate quality (particularly in spawning areas) is important for all lamprey species, and all species are threatened throughout their range by habitat degradation. There is no commercial value for brook lamprey, but in some areas of Europe, river and sea lamprey are exploited commercially for food. Historical fisheries existed for river lamprey in Britain, famously resulting in the death of an English monarch, but now, only one small-scale fishery exists for this species. These fish are used to supply the angling bait market.

Despite their conservation status within Europe, sea lamprey are regarded as a serious non-native pest in the Great Lakes of North America. There, this species causes considerable damage to the sport fishery and millions of dollars are used to control sea lamprey numbers every year.

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ARRAN 2012

REBECCA PINE

For once we were not setting out at the crack of dawn: a 1.30pm assembly at the Claonaig ferry to Lochranza, just round the corner as it were, suited me admirably! As the stragglers of the Scottish Series became small dots on Loch Fyne we made our own convoys down to Shiskine with the aid of Tom-Tom (and some dubious navigation in the leading car). The accommodation was vastly

superior to last year, and the opening meal excellently crafted by the Tayvallich Ladies.

Our first walk, on Sunday morning, took us down to the King's Cove on the raised beaches below Machrie in a circular route from the car park. Everyone set out and most completed the course before returning to base for lunch. A second walk was planned for



3pm on Machrie Moor itself, but something to do with a TV set and The Queen's Jubilee Flotilla held back the bulk of the party! Jean and I had already visited the Cairns, Stone Circles and Standing Stones before meeting them on the way up as we descended – and found ourselves locked out of the cottages on

our return. Fortunately, although it was raining on the Thames, the sun shone righteously on Arran,



Monday was for most the highlight of the holiday. We assembled at Lamlash and were kitted out in bright orange waterproofs for an excursion to Ailsa Craig. The

twelve-seater rib (plus skipper, partner and dog) skimmed across the waters to arrive at the north end of the island in hot midday sun. The derelict foghorns were of course silent, but the huge colonies of gannets, guillemots and puffins accompanied our circumnavigation in one vast chorus. We landed by the lighthouse on the flat corner of the island in time for (packed) lunches and a tour of the now defunct industrial archaeology before returning to base. We could not have seen the island in more ideal conditions.

The next day we set out for Whiting Bay via the south end of Arran, with distant views of Ailsa Craig across the waters. Douglas, travelling with Moisie, opened his car window with perhaps a little too much gusto and dislodged the union jack from its mounting. However, I was travelling directly behind and commandeered the flag for the duration! From Whiting Bay we climbed a steep path to Glenashdale Falls and onwards to the Giants Graves, a system of rock-outlined cairns grouped on a hilly protrusion above a slalom-like descent to the Bay.

Inevitably we took a tour of Brodick Castle, an interesting assembly of architectural styles from 13th Century Tower House, reputedly once the prison house of Robert the Bruce, to Victorian Hunting Lodge, although most of the furnishings date from its later usage – 87 stag heads in the hall, mahogany shower bath, hundreds of horse pictures, fine ceramics and silverware etc, etc.. By coincidence we all met up with Betty Hutton (lately of Inverneill) who was also touring the castle with a friend from Ayrshire. Also in Brodick we visited the local Heritage Museum with much of interest from a Geological as well as a Social History point of view.

The last 'organised' trip was to Holy Island, where some walked over the heights while others took a more leisurely route along the

raised beaches by St. Molaise's Cave, rock paintings of Buddhist deities, and to the boundaries of the Ladies' Retreat. Lorne was very much surprised to meet his niece on the island, a lovely young lady who had travelled from Edinburgh especially to see him,

Sadly on that evening Mary felt unwell and was taken into hospital on Arran as a precaution, but happily returned to us next day. After evening meals during the week which had been divided between the Kinloch Hotel and the Machrie Golf Club (all excellent) we rounded off our week with another Tayvallich Special meal in the games room at Shiskine. This was also by way of a Jubilee Special, with fairy lights around the walls, dancing on the carpet and red white and blue very much in evidence everywhere. After the meal I reminded the party of some of the ongoings of the week in 'light poetic' style with:-

..... OR THANK YOU MARY, MOIRA, MORAG,
OGDEN NASH

*They put the Antiquarians on the Caley-Mac from Claonaig to Lochranza
For the latest extravaganza.*

There was yachting on the water and the land was fairly friskin'

And Tom-Tom notwithstanding we all arrived at Shiskine

(for Tom-Tom read Douglas-Douglas).

We'll met again we put the world to rights

*With chicken-Tayvallich, home grown asparagus kale, five-for-the-day salad,
Jubilee napkins, flags and fairy lights.*

*Next morning at King's Cove we found Queen Valerie with half her court
beside her*

But didn't see King Robert or the spider.

*The word was then for 3 o'clock at Machrie Moor, the standing stones and
cairns; and some went willy-nilly
But some stayed by the telly-welly to watch the Queen's flotilly.*

*On Monday then to Ailsa Craig astride a twelve-saddle rib we went in search
of curling stones*

All dressed like Orange Order clones.

Two foghorns greeted us though neither sounded

*But on the cliffs and in the air and waters round about the gannets, fulmars,
puffins, guillemots abounded.*

The sun beat down for all of that

Upon our lunchtime table, now unhooded heads and Wilma's John Knox hat.

*Then on our next we drove the southern highway where exuberantly Douglas
wound the window down and dropped the flag*

Just south of Lagg

At once retrieved and commandeered by the next car in line

And that was mine!

*We climbed Glenashdale Falls, and Giants Graves were taken in our stride
But still no one inside.*

*On Wednesday to the Castle for Victorian exotica from mahogany shower
baths, crocodile cigar lighters, dodo decanters to 87 stag heads on the wall*

And that's not all

*For now we know why Bruce was not in his cave the other day: it all makes
sense – well a modicum –*

They've got him there at Brodick(um)

The Heritage Museum is full of stuff

*That lots of us remember from our younger days, and used to be what Robert
Robinson would introduce in "Call my Bluff".*

*And furthermore its Geological display shows that here the rocks were igneous
and Shiskine had no old fossils to its name*

Until N'hasma came.

*On Holy Island some went over the top, but those in more contemplative mood
The heights eschewed.*

*We saw the healing garden, took the path by St. Molaise's cave, dipped the
healing water, saw the Buddha paintings, the walls of the Ladies' Retreat we
greeted
And then retreated.*

*Apart from that we've cased this island
From that bit low to that bit very highland.
We've sailed and trailed and shopped and dropped and locked each other out
But that's what antiquarians are all about..*

*I hear the Arran planning girls were noisy
Though no one was prepared to say if the biggest noise was Morag, Mary-
Mac or Moisie
But never mind girls, all the banter or the lip
It was a super trip!*

BIRDS ON ARRAN 2-9 JUNE 2012

Black guillemot
Blackbird
Blue tit
Buzzard
Black cap
Barn owl
Chaffinch
Chiff chaff
Common sandpiper
Cormorant
Crow (hooded)
Cuckoo



Curlew
Duncock
Eider
Fulmar
Gannet
Golden eagle
Goldfinch
Greylag goose
Great black backed gull
Guillemot
Herring gull
Heron
House martin
Jackdaw
Kestrel
Lesser black backed gull
Longtailed tit
Kittiwake
Mallard
Mute swan
Meadow pipit
Merganser
Oyster catcher
Pheasant
Pied wagtail
Puffin
Ringed plover
Robin
Rock pipit
Rook
Shag
Shelduck
Song thrush
Spotted flycatcher
Starling
Stone chat
Swallow

Siskin
Tawny owl
Wood pigeon
Willow warbler

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear editor

Further to the Kist 83 edition dedicated to Auchindrain, I would like to make a number of comments.

The Township of Auchindrain was known as "Misery Farm" as few people in my father's time knew how they ever made a living there. When Marion Campbell of Kilberry asked for old farming artifacts for the museum I obtained three wooden barrelled mole-trips which hung on the museum stall. On a visit there with the head mistress and pupils of Clachan school I showed how to set and "earth" the twine used in both ends.

My youngest brother Duncan married Isabel McCallum, Torinturk, Tarbert, who was a descendant of the McCallum family (often referred to in the articles).

The two horses on the front cover photograph appear to be pulling a "chain harrows". This was used before sowing to fill in cracks in the furrows and thus prevent grain from falling too deep. A rig (five and a half yards) was sown by a man using a "fiddle" which was carried on his breast so that he was free to use both hands. The best oats for meal were "Sandy", and, after the War, "Onward" and "Forward".

The picture on p.2 shows farm workers gathered behind a "hut" of oat sheaves. This was assembled by erecting three long poles then building round them with oat sheaves in order to quicken the drying process.

Usually stack rope (coir yarn) was used to keep the sheaves from blowing down in windy weather.

The Langlands map referred to on p.17 was compiled by the Langlands family who were both land surveyors and map makers. They are buried in Kilkenzie Parish near Campbeltown and were brought up from Haltwhistle Parish, Northumberland, by the Duke of Argyll.

The "smearing" of the sheep referred to on p.29 involved a mixture of Archangel tar and butter. It was applied liberally on all bare places between the fore legs and around the udder or underparts.

Sheep in those days were prone to "Sturdy", known locally as "grub in the head" (tapeworm larva). If infected, a sheep would walk round in circles, then go blind and eventually die. A mixture of whisky and snuff was poured in the nostrils of the animal to cure it.

Ian Macdonald

Honorary President of the Kintyre Antiquarian Society

21 High Bank Park

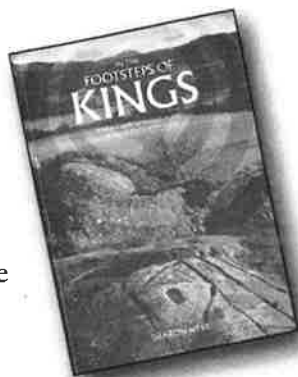
Lochgilphead

PA31 8NN

BOOK REVIEWS

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF KINGS

A New Guide to Walks in and around Kilmartin Glen, Sharon Webb, Kilmartin House Trust, 2012, £7.99, 224 pages. Available from Kilmartin House Museum.



This full colour guide features 25 walks in Kilmartin and Kilmichael Glens and the Craignish peninsula. Each walk has a map, photographs and a detailed description of features en route. Some are short and suitable for those with restricted mobility; others are a lot longer. It also includes an excellent introduction to mid-Argyll's archaeological and historical past.



ATLANTIC HAZEL

Scotland's Special Woodlands, Sandy and Brian Coppins, Atlantic Hazel Action Group, 2012, £9.50, 108 pages. Available from ABC bookshop, Lochgilphead and AHAG, Old Poltalloch, Kilmartin, Argyll PA318RQ, info@ahag.org.

This A4 format colour publication is published by the Atlantic Hazel Action Group whose work is described by Gordon Gray Stephens in Kist 82. It covers a lot of ground and succeeds with lavish colour photographs from West Scotland. Topics include hazel dynamics; flowers, ferns, bryophytes, fungi and lichens associated with hazel; Atlantic hazel habitat management and advice.

THE KIST ISSN 0307-529

The magazine of the Natural History and
Antiquarian Society of Mid Argyll

ISSUE NO. EIGHTY FOUR - AUTUMN 2012

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The Society's year runs from 1st September until 31st August.
Charity No. SC000894

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