

NEWSLETTER 48

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July 2017.



Dun Ablauch, Luing: *This isolated rocky knoll rises above an expanse of low – lying marshland in the centre of the isle of Luing. On its west side there is a sheer rock face 6.0m in height, the rest is steep grassy slopes and around the margin there is an earthen bank up to 2.2m wide and 0.6m high...there is an entrance at the north end. The interior is featureless.*

Abstracted from the Royal Commission Lorne Survey, May 1996. Feature 205.

In March this year ACFA commenced a field survey of the island of Luing at the invitation of the Isle of Luing Community Trust and the Luing History Group. The group completed the north end of the island and a return is planned in the autumn to field walk the south end.

How might features such as this be described?

As a possible dun, a crannog-dun, an islet fort, a refuge, a ritual site, a simple stock enclosure, a communal assembly area? Is it time to bury typologies?

Welcome to the summer issue of the Newsletter with apologies for the delay, largely due to a busy spring of survey and excavation volunteering, and a modicum of editorial indolence. Also the usual delays in assembling the material for an issue which reflects both our continuing energy and some sad losses.

“Though much is taken, much abides...that which we are, we are. One equal temper of heroic hearts.”

Ian Marshall: Editor.

TIREE HORIZONS: ACFA Field Survey April/October 2016

Elaine Black



The Tiree Field Survey is a collaboration between the Association of Certificated Field Archaeologists, Dr. John Holliday and An Iodhlann Historical Centre, Tiree.

This article is a summary of Interim Report Season 1: Introduction, which will be published in full later in 2017.

Introduction

Tiree, the most westerly island in the Inner Hebrides, lies south-west of Coll. It has an area of 7,834 hectares (30.2 square miles) and is 12 miles long, and just 3 miles wide. The island is particularly low lying, the highest point being Ben Hynish in the south, which is 141m (463 ft.). In general, the coastal shelf does not exceed 10m OD. In the past, Tiree was known for its fertile machair and there is a folk tradition that it supplied Columba's monastic community with grain.

An idea has emerged that Tiree is *tìr bàrr fo thuinn* 'the land below the waves' or 'the secret island' - such that a recent conference organized by islanders and academics resulted in an excellent book of the latter name. 'The Secret Island, Towards a History of Tiree' (2014) which drew together several strands of historical evidence in one publication for the first time. The aim was to establish a narrative in the public consciousness on behalf of an island which, beautiful as it is, lacks the more obvious geological drama of its neighbours on the western archipelago. As Donald E Meek puts it in a forward to 'Secret Island', this was an attempt to no longer let it 'lie low in the horizon of history.' However, as Meek also points out, Tiree is not un-observed. Far from it. Researchers new to the scene encounter a growing canon of academic research and field reports, such that there is a very real danger that future work on the island re-traces paths already well-trodden.

So what attracts? Foremost is the medieval conundrum. Dr. Holliday has identified 250 names of possible Norse or medieval origin on Tiree. This suggests significant settlement during the Viking/Scandinavian period from the 8th to the 15th centuries. This place-name evidence is supported by a scatter of 18th century antiquarian Viking finds. For example, a pair of 'tortoise' brooches and a bronze pin, attributed to a now lost

grave site (Canmore ID 21417). Tiree, and its close neighbour Coll, also rates a mention in saga literature. In Orkneyinga Saga, Sweyn Asleifsson the 'ultimate viking' was entertained on Tiree in the 12th century by a chieftain called Holboldi. The extent of Scandinavian influence is further supported by land assessment studies which propose that there were between 20-25 ouncelands in the medieval period. The ounceland (Scottish Gaelic *tir-unga*) is a unit of land assessment of probable Norse origin. It was based on a value of land that amounted to an ounce of silver either as yearly rent or purchase price. Tiree, therefore, was fertile, land was valuable, and in terms of assessment, highly regulated in the past.

However, previous attempts to identify medieval, and in particular Norse, settlement evidence have failed, hampered by severe sand blow which affects most coastal areas. Strong conservatism of location, to be expected on a small island, leads to further problems of identification. Rebuilding on the same sites for millennia coupled with the ephemeral nature of pre-improvement Tiree houses and an increase in peripheral dwellings during the growth of the kelp industry from the mid-18th century, means that identifying earlier settlement is extremely difficult without archaeological excavation. On a visit to the island last year Dr. David Caldwell, formerly of the National Museums of Scotland, warned that one should not discount the possibility that on many sites medieval settlement evidence is simply not there.

It is with this in mind that ACFA has entered the fray. The intention of the present survey is to introduce a visual source of surface information which might usefully contribute to several on-going conversations. A further aim of the survey is to identify areas of possible medieval interest which might encourage archaeological and geophysical investigation. In 'Norse by Northwest: pursuing Scandinavian settlement on Coll and Tiree' (2016), originally presented to the University of Glasgow and to be published in ACFA's Season 1 Interim Report, Oliver Rusk contends that 'despite extensive research emphasizing the extent of Scandinavian influence in place-names and land management, the islands of Tiree and Coll have yet to be subject to rigorous archaeological enquiry pertaining to Viking-Age settlement.' Excavation of Norse settlement elsewhere in the Hebrides demonstrates a greater diversity of localized house forms than previously imagined, and it therefore remains a possibility that Tiree in the future will have something to add to this effect. But that longship has yet to be launched.

Tiree - Season 1

Previous archaeological field investigations on Tiree have concentrated on raised beaches, machair and beach zones, the areas most affected by sand blow. This approach has met with limited success, particularly when trying to identify earlier settlement remains. A decision was taken that the first season of this survey would target areas untouched by coastal incursions. Principal field surveys were undertaken on the slopes of Hynish and the headland of Ceann a' Mhara, in the south and south-west. Some visible remains on the machair were investigated, notably at Hough, as well as a group of 19th century buildings at Kilkenneth, and a dwelling on a strip of improved, peripheral land at Loch Dubh a Garaid Fail.

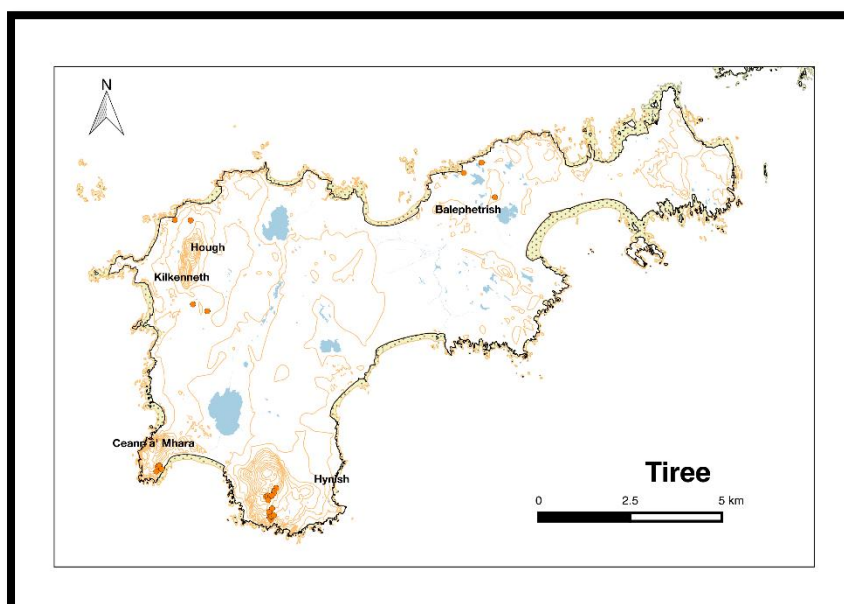


Fig. 1 Sites surveyed by ACFA, April 2016. Oliver Rusk, University of Glasgow.

Hynish

The Hynish landscape is characterized by mixtures of heather, rough grasses, bosses of outcropping gneiss and there is peaty bog at the foot of south-east facing slopes. There is some improved land to the east and north but to the south are dramatic cliffs and gullies. Several ACFA teams led by Dugie MacInnes surveyed to the east and south of two 19th-century improvement dykes. An early picture has emerged of intense activity from prehistoric to modern times. A total of 111 features were described during Season 1. Features putatively identified as prehistoric include four possible cairns and three hut circles or round houses. Initial conclusions are that the cairns, formed from recumbent stones, are typical of chambered examples found elsewhere in the Hebrides. These are, however, smaller in diameter than those found on North Uist, for example. It remains to be seen if the Tiree cairns 'form a local or are part of a regional type' (Armit 1996: 69). Further examination in future seasons will provide a better understanding of the distribution of the much-disturbed cairns and their relationship with the landscape.

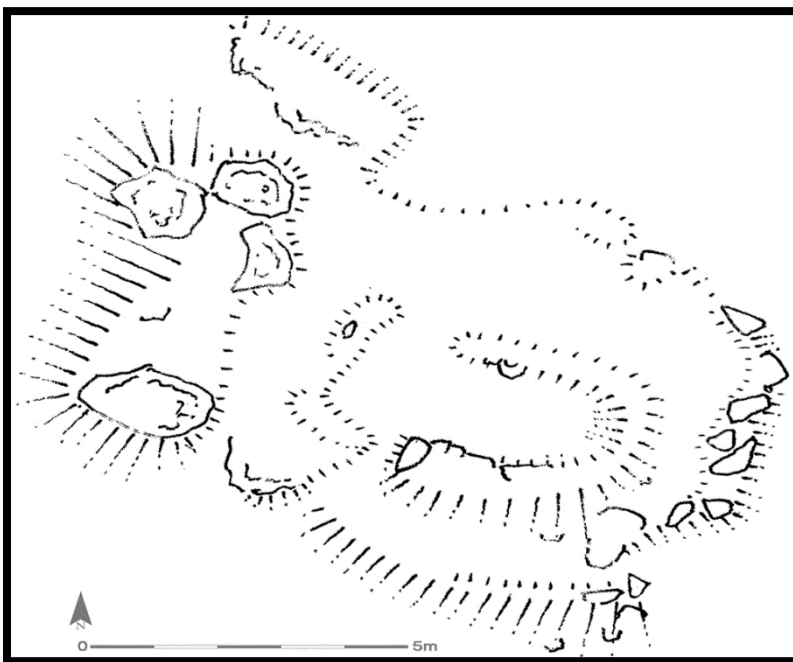


Fig. 2 Hynish. Possible kerbed cairn into which a later house has been constructed. Drawing: Margaret Gardiner and Libby King (October 2016).

A putative stone circle was also noted, although the disturbed nature of all features on Hynish does not preclude the possibility that this is a remnant of a later enclosure.



Fig. 3 Hynish. Putative stone circle or robbed out enclosure. View from north. Photograph: Dugald MacInnes (April 2016).

There is also evidence of narrow rig, which may indicate early field systems, on an area of improved slopes above the Iron Age site of Dùn Shiader. Several long and narrow features, some open at one end and formed from large boulders, were also noted. The original function of these features is uncertain, although animal enclosures, peat stores or even ritual purposes have been posited. Broader rig, of probable medieval or later date, is present in many parts of the survey area. Only one possible corn-drying kiln and no winnowing barns have been identified.

On the south-east slopes and lower ground there are areas of improved ground enclosed by field banks. Remains of structures include a house, stores and animal pens. Some of these small agricultural units may have medieval origins. Two groupings of remains are worthy of note.

The structures which may range from Prehistoric to Medieval in date. The first (Fig. 4 below), includes one or two hut circles or roundhouses with associated smaller features.

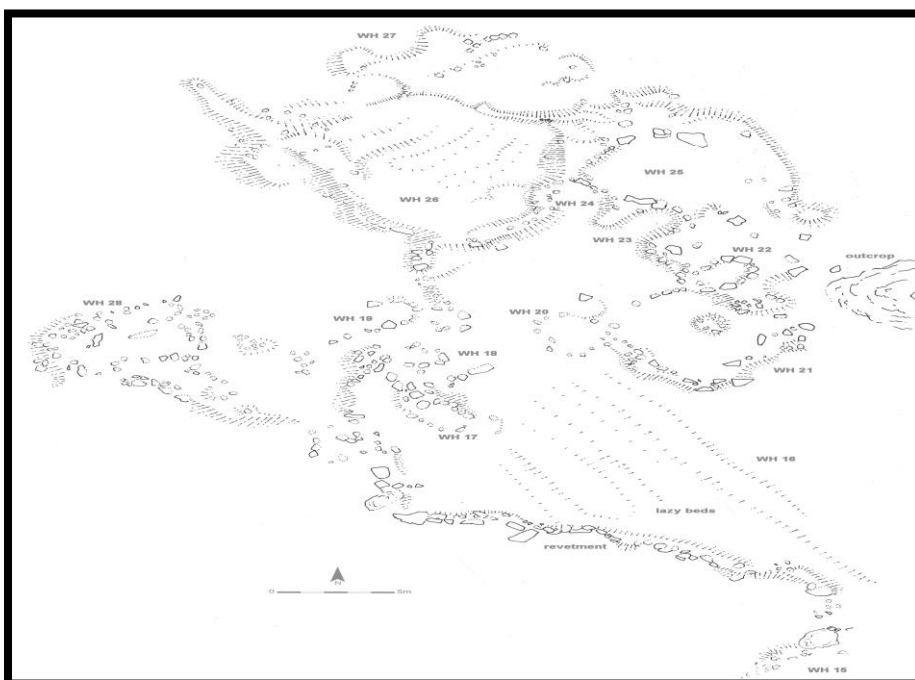


Fig. 4 Hynish. Possible round-houses (21, 26), Possible house (28), and other small features that may be stores or pens, etc. Drawing: Jim Anderson, Dugald MacInnes and Janie Munro (April 2016).

Additionally, a cluster of four roughly circular structures are associated with improved ground and close to two, possibly four, kerbed cairns (Fig. 5 below). It is not clear if these are chambered. However, chambered cairns close to settlements have been noted elsewhere in the Hebrides.

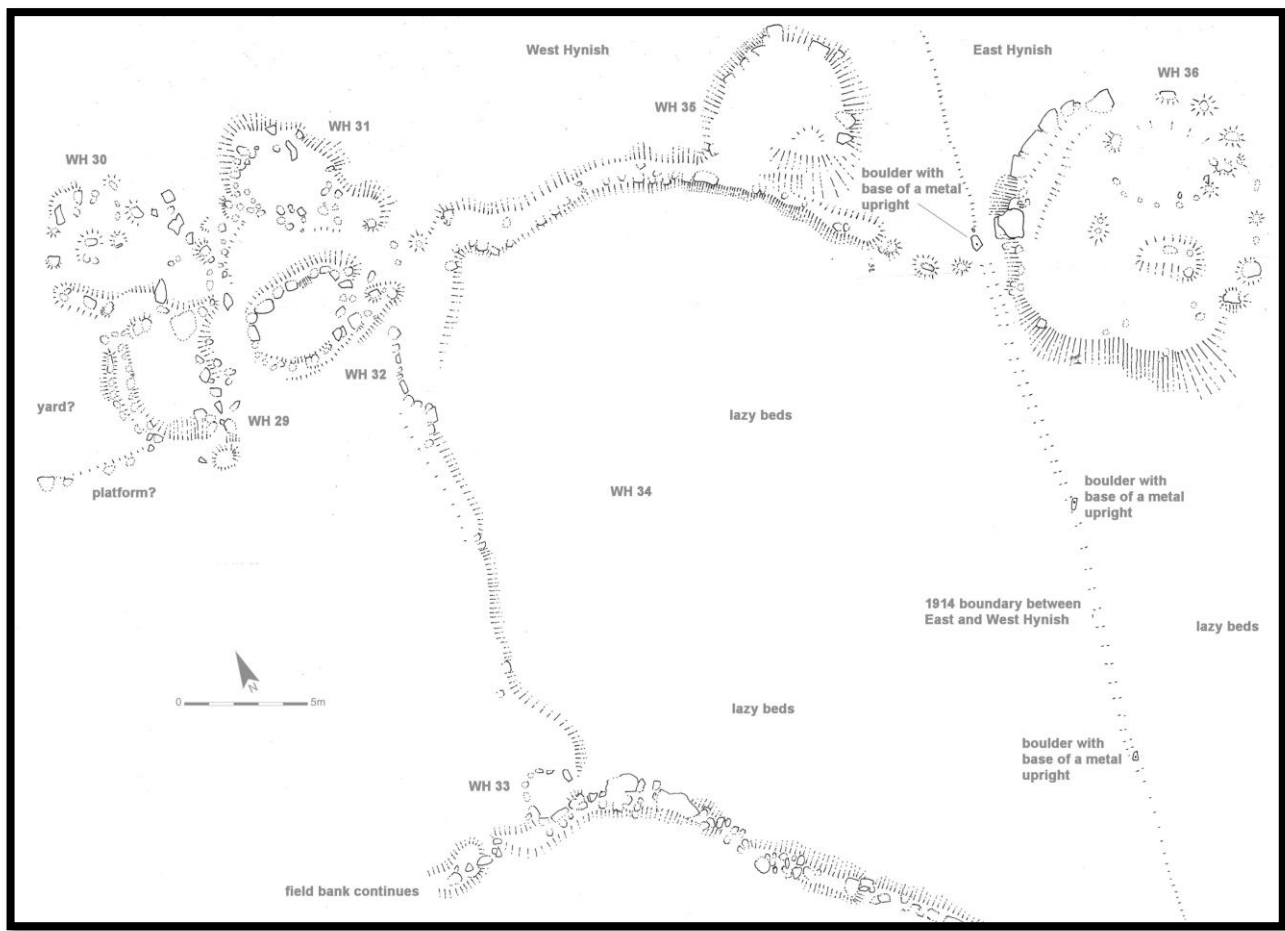


Fig. 5 W Hynish. Possible House (29), byre (30), store (31), House (32); Possible kerbed round cairn (35, 36). Drawing: Jim Anderson, Dugald MacInnes, and Janie Munro (April 2016).

A complex and large number of field banks either completely of stone or a mixture of stone and turf criss-cross the Hynish slopes. These appear to be reminiscent of field-systems present around hut circle groups in north-east Perthshire, the Céide Fields in Ireland, parts of SW England and West Wales. The possibility exists that some of these boundaries on Hynish date from Prehistoric times and could explain the almost total absence of small clearance cairns; cleared stone having been used in the construction of the boundaries as a form of consumption dyke. While there is much work still to be done on the age and function of the Hynish dykes, a major contribution towards understanding them further has been made by John Holliday, who has painstakingly recorded them and his field sketch will be published in the Season 1 report.

House, Loch Dubh A Gharaidh Fail

To date, no medieval farmsteads have been positively identified on Tiree. A team led by Wendy Raine surveyed a structure which was listed on Canmore (ID 239562) as either a church - it has an approximate east-west alignment - or a possible Norse dwelling. Similarities to a Norse homestead at Doarlish Cashen, Isle of Man, excavated by P.J. Gelling in the 1960s, had been noted. These similarities included its size and the appearance of opposing doors. Excavation on the Isle of Man has shown shieling or peripheral farming in low uplands in the Norse period. While low-lying and coastal, the feature at Loch Dubh A Gharaidh Fail sits on a spectacular site, on a strip of improved peripheral ground between loch and sea. It is c.150m from the marine shore and close to a recorded Ringing Stone, recently photogrammetrically and acoustically analysed by Dr. Stuart Jefferey, Research Fellow of the School of Simulation and Visualisation at Glasgow School of Art.



Fig 6 Alison Blackwood, Wendy Raine ACFA and Oliver Rusk, University of Glasgow. Ringing Stone, Balephetrish (April 2016). Photograph: Peter Raine.

A rectilinear building was recorded with curved internal and external corners and possible opposing entrances to the W end of the long walls, constructed of dry stone footings. A potential secondary, amorphous structure is built up against the W wall consisting of an extended SW corner which may be the remains of a room or an extension. Apart from tumble, the interior suggests a possible raised floor platform 1.0m wide, which follows the S and W walls.

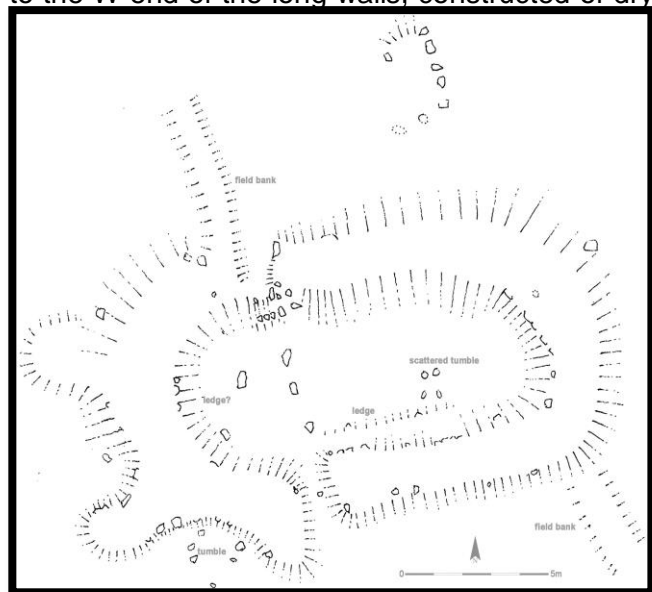


Fig.7 Loch Dubh A Gharaidh Fail. House. Drawing: Wendy Raine ACFA (April, 2016).

A field sketch by Oliver Rusk shows the dwelling in the context of several associated features. There is a small cairn 7.0m to the ENE of the house which may represent clearance and a less defined ancillary feature on the north side where stones are arranged to suggest a rectilinear outline 2.9m x up to 4.8m long. The building and associated features are surrounded by a raised enclosure platform and are 50m from a

fresh-water loch. A boundary shown on Turnbull's 1768 Argyll Estate map lies c. 125m to the S of the main building. However, the map does not record a dwelling at this site.

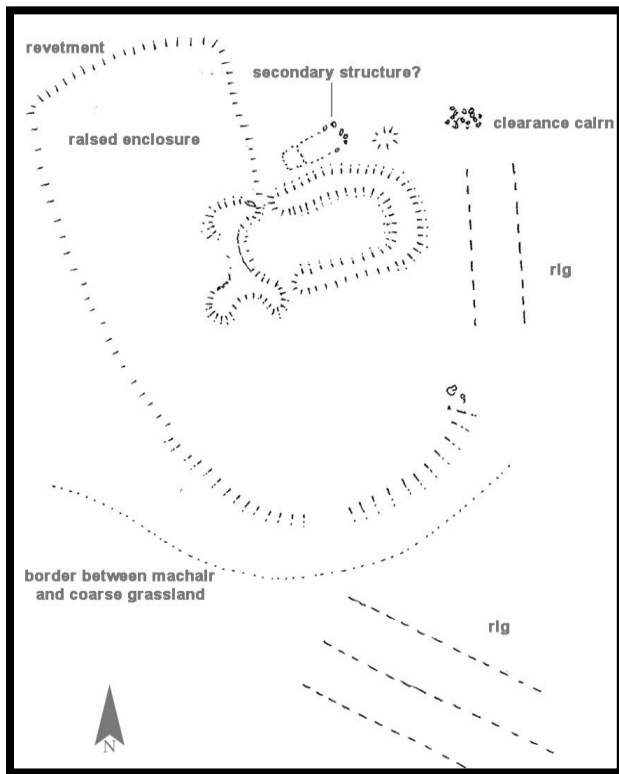


Fig. 8 Loch Dubh A Gharaidh Fail. Field sketch: Oliver Rusk, University of Glasgow (April 2016)

Associated features suggest a domestic rather than ecclesiastical function. Winnowing has been posited with regards to opposing doors, however this is precluded by the ambiguity of one door which may display traces of a step or wall and the slightly sunken nature of the structure. There is also anecdotal evidence of islanders in the past constructing two doors, the use of a particular entrance depending on wind direction.

Doctors David Caldwell and Colleen Batey visited the site in April 2016. Dr Batey was open to the possibility that the dwelling might be late medieval or occupy a medieval site, while Dr Caldwell suggested a later date. Both agreed that a Norse date in its present incarnation is unlikely. This site would merit further investigation, perhaps through test pitting, which would allow a greater understanding of the date and typology of pre-

improvement homesteads on Tiree.

‘Beacon House’ Balephuill

An ‘ancient dwelling’ has been previously noted on aerial photographs at Ceann a’ Mhara, Balephuill (Canmore ID 2148), on the headland above the chapel Temple Patrick (Canmore ID 21477). Ian Marshall and Fred Hay surveyed the site and dubbed it the ‘Beacon House’ because of its spectacular views of the bay, the inland Loch a’ Phuill and Hynish to the south.



Fig 9 ‘Beacon House’, Ceann ‘a Mhara (Hynish in the background). Photograph: Fred Hay ACFA (April 2016)

The extent of the site is 14.0m x 10.0m and there is a single entrance to the SW end with a possible curved bank c. 3.5m long which may have sheltered it. Internal and external corners are rounded and there is a possible small recess or cruck slot on the SE corner. The walls are made of substantial field boulders but there are no other internal features or evidence of auxiliary units. The terminus of a significant boundary bank lies 34.0m to the west of the house, which then sweeps east.

On a visit to the site in April, 2016, Dr Caldwell said that he was happy to suggest a medieval date.

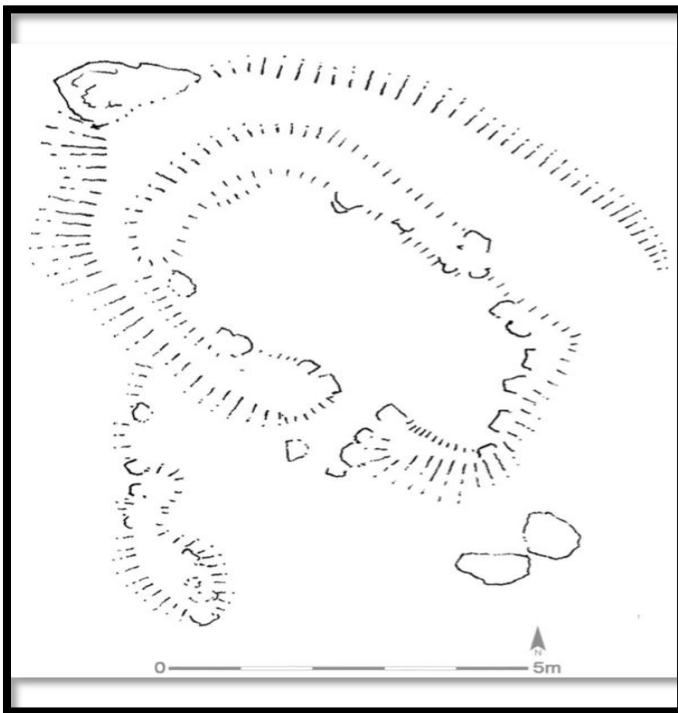


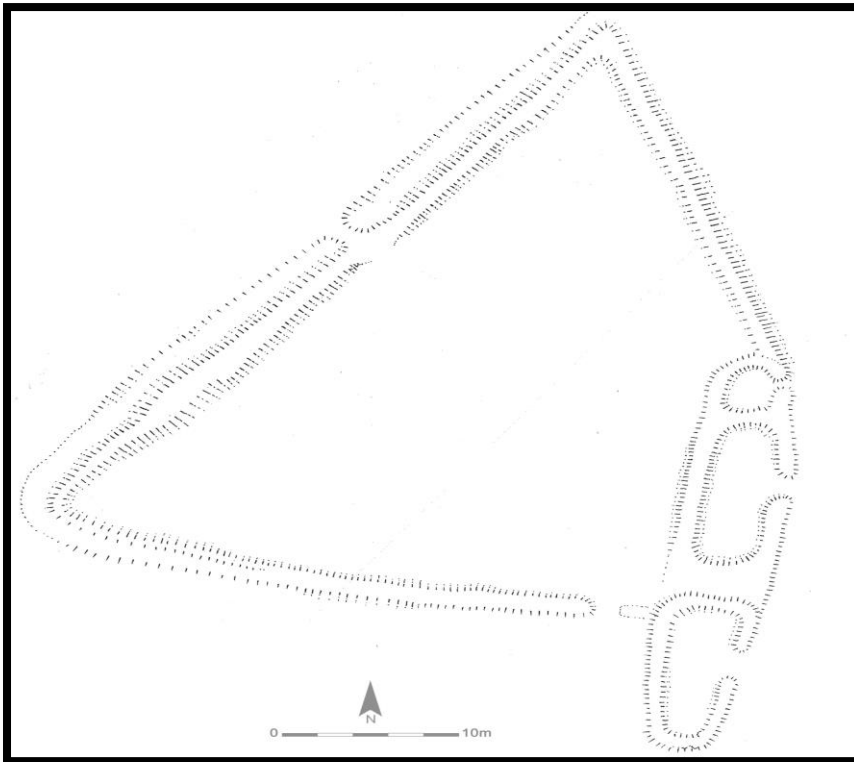
Fig. 10 Ceann a’ Mhara. ‘Beacon House’. Drawing: Ian Marshall ACFA (April 2016).

A second possible late medieval dwelling and a hut or shieling feature also lie within the area of the same boundary bank. These features lie in rough grazing on a terrace and have a wide outlook to the south-west over Balephuill Bay and Loch a’ Phuill. The extent of this site is 10.0m x 7.0m. There is a single entrance at the W end with possible evidence of re-alignment and blocking. At both E and W ends an outer short bank of stones may represent features associated with a roof or eaves. There are no obvious internal features, but the E end may contain a secondary feature where a spread of boulders enclose a circular feature.

Hough

Ian Marshall and Fred Hay also surveyed a house, a sub-rectangular detached structure and triangular enclosure on open ground of grass and blown sand, north of the seasonal Loch Carrastaoain. The site was not recorded on the 1768 Argyll Estate map or later First Edition OS map. This suggests these features were either of an earlier date, short-lived, or not deemed significant. Marshall and Hay noted a possible domestic unit incorporating a further compartment, perhaps a tool or cart unit. The putative house has an entrance on its E length and rounded corners internally and externally. The turf walls are not substantial at c. 0.5m high

and 1.5m thick. There are no visible internal features within any of the features here or on the enclosure wall.



The extent of the site is c. 40m by 40m. To the west are several boundary-like straight ridges together forming a zig-zag pattern? This is possibly a natural feature although it should be noted that several field boundaries associated with a series of small 18th-century townships south of Hough, which are marked on the 1768 estate map, also appear to exhibit similar zig-zag patterns. Work at Hough, and a further survey undertaken of an 18/19th century farmstead at Kilkenneth, will contribute towards the beginnings of a typology of extant settlement remains on Tiree.

Fig. 11 Hough. House and enclosure, Loch Carrastaoain. Drawing Ian Marshall (April 2016)

Conclusion

So there we have it. A smorgasbord of ACFA's first season on Tiree. As ever, more questions have been raised than answered. We are at the beginning of understanding the typology of extant settlement remains in low-lying areas. On the headland of Ceann a' Mhara, however, we may have two structures of tentative medieval date. The association of these features with the surrounding landscape on the headland, a string of coastal Iron Age duns, St Patrick's Temple and the inland Loch a' Phuill requires further investigation. While function and dates attributed to features surveyed on Hynish are, as MacInnes points out, 'tentative at best' it is possible to say that those already recorded are 'remarkable in their number as much as their variety'. It seems likely that there is evidence of a late Bronze Age landscape on Hynish but we are a long way from a complete picture of the archaeology here. There is certainly evidence of intensive activity from prehistoric through to present-day use for sheep and cattle grazing. The nature of shieling activity on Hynish also awaits further investigation and it is worth noting that the name of nearby Dun Shiader has its roots in Old Norse 'fort of the shieling.'

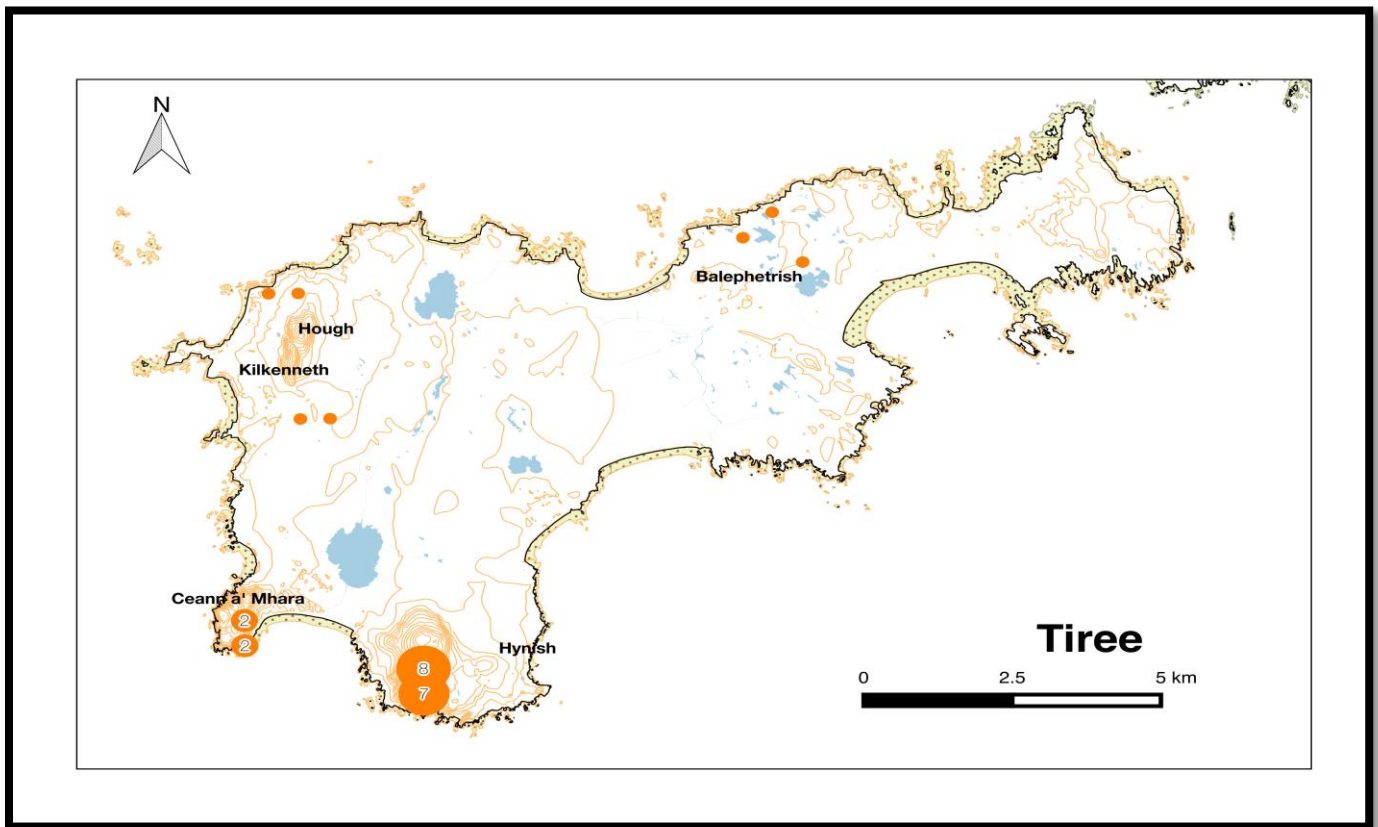


Fig. 12 GIS Cluster Map, Tiree (April 2016). Sites surveyed reflect concentrations of ACFA activity but also survival of evidence on Hynish. Oliver Rusk, University of Glasgow.

As expected, therefore, we are seeing reflected in the archaeology of Tiree the 'thriftiness' of a small island community. Re-use of sites mitigates against the survival of evidence of earlier settlements, particularly in low-lying areas. However, in the case of Hynish where there is plentiful access to stone, the impact on earlier structures has been notable but not disastrous. Here at least - and on Ceann a' Mhara - Tiree lifts its head above sea-level and interesting horizons await.

Spring Surveys, Excavations and future Plans 2017:

Island of Luing March 18th - 25th 2017:



At the invitation of the Isle of Luing Community Trust and its History Group, a substantial group of ACFA members directed by Dugald MacInnes participated in a walk over survey of the northern half of the island in brilliant sun, shower and occasional hailstorm.

Based in cottages at Cullipool and entertained in the impressive new Atlantic Centre there, a wide range of new and known sites were recorded, from a large possible roundhouse, to deserted settlements, abandoned boat wrecks and the many haunting remains of the industrial slate industry.

Evening lectures on the geology of slate, the phenomenon of the Aurora Borealis and the history of the island by local scholars were much enjoyed

and we look forward to a return to the island in October to complete the survey.

Tiree April 18th – 24th 2017:



Another return to the east Hynish area at the south end of Tiree was arranged by Elaine Black, Wendy Raine and Dugald MacInnes and became among the best of recent field surveys, enjoyed for weather good company and richness of features found.

A complex and sometimes baffling sequence of monuments, boundaries and stone settings were found and the certainty that more remains to be found.

A taste of this survey is described above by Elaine and there are high hopes that the planned return by a group in September this year may elucidate and add yet more.

Ed Smith at Feature 11 with Feature 4 in mist behind.



For some of course the prospect of dazzling friends with highend slim cut wellies were just too irresistible – and that's when you find out just who your friends are !

Wendy with Elaine assisting in extraction mode.

Irvine Valley: 25th January; 8th and 11th February, 2017:



Further days on the banks of the Garnock investigating the nodal point where it meets with the Irvine, in relation to the antiquarian accounts of sites and material from the vicinity, in the context of the low key campaign to return to re-visiting sites along the Irvine Valley over the next few years.

Among other sites a definitive identification of the site of the Dubbs Crannog was agreed and the site of Bog End Farm recorded which by name and current topography offers evidence of the prehistoric original coastline in understanding the archaeological record.

The completion of the survey of lost sites and the river banks of the River Garnock on the Ardeer peninsula is planned before progress into the River Irvine itself.

Christine McDiarmid, Margaret Gardner and Libby King at the site of Dubbs Crannog.

This survey was stimulated by ACFA member Richard Pugh, who, we are very pleased to report, is now back home following months of recovery from his stroke in Ayr Hospital. He is making progress and hopes to return to both his degree studies at Glasgow University and to be with us again at some time in the future.



Excavations: Creag a'Phuirte Almshouse Loch Lomond: April 14th – 19th 2017.

ACFA volunteers, Libby King, Alison Blackwood, Margaret Gardiner, Ewen Smith, Kath Kane, Eric Gardner and Ian Marshall were part of the team led by Dr Heather James (Northlight

Archaeology) in this community dig, part of the Clan McFarlane Archaeology Project.

In the AD19C, there is a report of an 'almshouse' erected by John McFarlane for the "reception of poor passengers.." and of a subsequently lost armorial panel of John McFarlane, recorded as the laird in AD 1581 and as chief in AD 1612.

The excavation evidence seemed at first doubtful about this status but the emerging width of walls and artefactual evidence strongly suggested that this may well be the structure.

Scoulag Point Ferry House, Mountstuart House, Bute: February 28th 2017.

As part of the continuing survey of the Bute coastline and the completion of outstanding surveys for the third report, a small team of Sue Hothersall, Christine McDiarmid and Ian Marshall surveyed the remains of this once impressive, sandstone boat and ferryman house, probably erected in AD 1769, on the site of a small settlement which occupied the area prior to the AD1720 creation of the Mountstuart Estate.

Druim Liaghart, Bridge of Orchy (Donnchadh Ban Mac an t-Saoir House) 13th 15th February 2017.



View from DunLiaghart and the monument to Donnchadh Ban Mac an t-Saoir.

This survey will appear as an ACFA monograph.



A survey of the house of the great Gaelic nature poet Duncan Ban Macintyre (1727-1812) in the small settlement above the old Rannoch road near Inveroran, was carried out as a promise to John and Anne Macdonald to complete a survey they had initiated some years before.

Margaret Gardiner and Libby King directed the survey with Dugald MacInnes and Ian Marshall, in winter sun and icy blasts, looking south to the peak, capped with the brilliant snow which form the subject of his greatest poem: *Moladh Beinn Dobhrain*.

Glenlochay, Laraig Breisleich: May 8th – 9th 2017.

Dugie MacInnes led a strong team into this most remote of the Glen Lyon and Glenlochay shieling areas to finally complete this epic 27 year survey (1990 – 2017). Access each day required an hour and a half walk in and a climb over the pass from the Allt Baile a Mhulain and over the lower slopes of Meall

Buidhe – and of course back again. Not one some of us will probably be attempting again!
 Weather was luckily perfect and complimented by some excellent and diverse shieling settlements and the usual enigmas, including the apparent enhancement of a mound to create an impressive amphitheatre, possibly a site where the two communities whose shielings march next to each other along this burn might meet communally?

Ed and Ailsa Smith, Margaret Gardner, Libby King, Jean Hirst, Elaine Black, Anne and Dugie MacInnes and Ian Marshall – behind the pass into the Lairaig Breisleich from Allt Baile a Mhulain.

Eaglesham Archaeological Heritage Week: June 5th – 9th 2017.



In a co-operative project, inspired by Sue and Robin Hunter's ACFA monograph: *'Eaglesham Orry' An archaeological survey. Occasional Paper no.113 (2012)*, Eaglesham History Society and Northlight Heritage, conducted a geophysical survey of the area remaining in the Orry not covered in the 2006 work. Members of ACFA participated.

The week incorporated an exhibition, heritage walks and the direct participation of local primary and secondary schools in both the survey and a series of field archaeological seminars supervised by professionals from Archaeology Scotland.

Initial analysis of the scans does suggest that the Orry, created in AD1771 by the Tenth Earl of Eglinton, and with no mapping indicating any structures within this area may in fact conceal evidence of the medieval village in the shape of boundaries and

possible structures.

Eaglesham village and Orry.

Only excavation will tell !

Or not.



Excavation at the site of All Hallows Church, Inchinnan 2017: 30th May – 23rd June 2017.

An excavation programme commissioned by the very active Inchinnan Historical Interest Group and supervised by Heather James and colleagues from Northlight Heritage plus local and ACFA volunteers, was conducted over three weeks.

The site of All Hallows, is a large fenced off *tell* within the perimeter of Glasgow Airport, on the banks of the Black Cart. It consists of the remains of at least three churches

from the AD12C until the final church was comprehensively demolished in 1965.

Four AD9-12C grave slabs were re-located to the new Inchinnan Parish Church a mile to the north-west and the site has documented associations from one of the most obscure of Celtic saints, St. Conval, to the Knights Templar.

Dr Heather James (Calluna Archaeology) All Hallows Church. Inchinnan 2017



ACFA volunteer Irene Dayer at All Hallows 2017.

Four trenches were taken down through the complicated debris of this history and the recovery of architectural fragments and possible attribution became a daily jig saw puzzle.

Excavation is only a part of this ambitious programme which includes geophysics, workshops, grave recording, photogrammetry and RTI imagery with Clare Sanchez of Spectrum Heritage and Gilbert Markus from the Dept. of Celtic and Gaelic at Glasgow University on placenames, on St Conval (or Finnian ?) and the political context of the Knight Templars.

ACFA volunteers include Eric Gardner, Irene Dayer, Gerry Hearn and Ian Marshall.



Andrew Gemmell (1955-2017).

Dorothy Gormlie

Andrew was born in Glasgow and spent most of his recent working life in aviation and held a Private Pilot's Licence. He had worked for both the Transport Security Administration in the USA as well as the Department. His passion for archaeology started with aviation archaeology in the 1970's and he helped establish the British Aviation Archaeology Council. He was also involved with major projects here and abroad including with Time Team. Andrew felt that the greatest project in which he took part, as an accomplished and experienced diver, was assisting in the recovery of a Wellington Bomber from Loch Ness.

Andrew was also involved with the National Museums of Scotland's East Fortune Museum as a student restoring aircraft for the opening of the museum.

Nearing retirement, he found a passion for traditional archaeology and had completed the Certificate in Field Archaeology at the University of Glasgow; also he had commenced a postgraduate course in the Battlefield and Conflict Archaeology or Material Culture.

Andrew was a member of the European Association of Archaeologists and attended the very successful conference in Glasgow. He was a very valued and active Council member of the Glasgow Archaeological Society and was involved with the Clyde and Avon Heritage Group and also the Association of Certificated Field Archaeologists.

Andrew was always full of life and so very enthusiastic about archaeology, his courses, his contacts, GAS and the friends he recently made and those he knew of old. He was kind and generous, shared so much with us and was such a valued friend and member of the Council that we will greatly miss him.

Margaret Alexander (1934 – 2016)

Dugie MacInnes.



Margaret joined the DACE course in 1990 into a delightful group of people that quickly bonded and produced many active members in a host of ACFA surveys.

She took part on surveys beginning with Craigmaddie and Milton of Lawers, co-editing both occasional papers. In 1997 Margaret also assisted students from Kilsyth Academy in their work in the Kilsyth Hills, perfectly illustrating her willingness to help others in any way she could, especially when it came to the younger generation. She was also a member of our committee, taking on, if I remember correctly, the post of chair.

It is from our surveys in Glen Lochay that my fondest memories of Margaret come. The glen positively rang with her laughter and I remember several journeys from the Central Belt during which we literally cried tears of merriment, a result of her sharp wit, quick insight and ability to find humour in the most unlikely of situations; ask me about the gazebo in the grounds of a guest-house in Callander, for example. (I have to this day a tape recording of

Margaret telling her dear friend Cathy that it was her own turn to be correct with the compass bearing.)

Margaret was a fixture in the glen, working with the likes of Ann Bray, Cathy and Jean Aitken in the 90's when every corner of every boulder was carefully measured and when great patience was required, but working in the knowledge that Margaret had a bottle of white in a nearby burn and Ann invariably produced a glass or two of her home made sloe gin. Those were the Days!

In 2012 she paid her last visit to Glen Lochay, and, along with Cathy and myself, she helped to bring to completion our work on another of the many farm sites there.

Margaret is sorely missed but those happy memories will always remain with me.

Margaret.

Cathy Gibson.

Margaret was born in 1934 and, although she was a Yorkshire lass, she was educated at Edinburgh University, where she studied history. For all of her professional life Margaret was a history teacher and she completed her career as assistant rector of Clydebank High School.

She was married more than once and had one son, one stepson, four grandchildren and one great granddaughter who were the lights of her life.

One of the great interests in Margaret's life was classical music and opera – particularly opera which she enjoyed regularly. True to her Yorkshire roots, she was an avid fan of cricket, if unable to watch the match live, she would record it for later, and woe betide anyone who revealed the final score before her viewing. However, her greater sporting love was rugby and she knew all the songs !

For many years she was very active in the administration for the junior teams in the West of Scotland Rugby Club.

Of course, the area of Margaret's life in which she all shared was her love of archaeology. Margaret was a member of the CFA Class of 1990-93. One of this writer's earliest memories of Margaret was, contrary to her air of quiet refinement, she had an outrageous sense of humour, and carried a portable bar when on CFA field trips. She was a delightful, knowledgeable companion and a very popular member of the course and, later of ACFA where she served her time on the committee and was, for a few years, the secretary.

Beginning with the first of Dugie MacInnes's surveys at Glenlochay, Margaret was keen and willing surveyor over the years. In later years, as her health failed, she was less active in ACFA but was always a welcome sight at social events.

We will remember Margaret for her humour, her grace and her caring and thoughtful nature. She will be much missed.



Dr Carol Swanson (West of Scotland Archaeology Service – and ACFA) Anne Macdonald.

I'm sad to report the death of Dr Carol Swanson who died on the 20th of March after a long and painful illness.

Carol was a student of the 1978 -1981 course and although she hadn't been a member of ACFA for the last few years she was one of the founder members.

Carol and her husband Ian Johnson were the driving force behind ACFA's first

survey at Chalmerston. For this survey we received £5000 from the Coal Board which gave ACFA a great start.

Then in 1989 she and Ian organised a survey in Skye which ran for 4 years each Easter. This led on to the Raasay survey which lasted from 1995 till 2009.

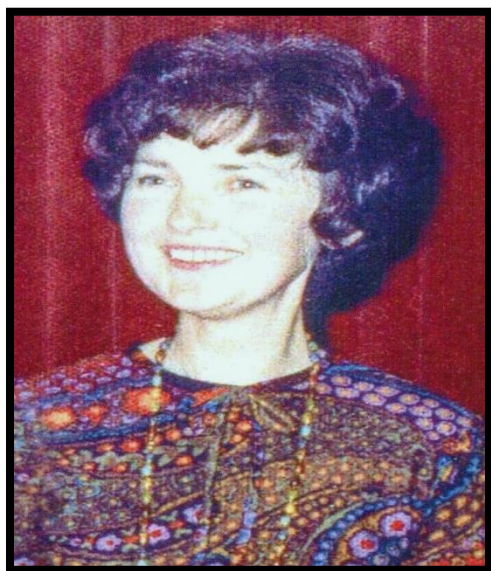
Carol Swanson at a kiln in the Pony Park, Glen Orchy c.1990.

Carol was the head of the Strathclyde Region's Archaeology Department and when Strathclyde was broken up she continued on as the head of WOSAS.

Sadly there are only three survivors from the 1978/81 course, Scott Wood, Gerry Hearn and me but I'm sure many will remember her from the early days of ACFA.

Jean Aitken (1935 – 2017).

Ann Bray



We, members of the Association of Certificated Field Archaeologists, first met Jean in 1990 when we enrolled in the three year certificate course at Glasgow University. In the course of field trips at weekends and training weeks in the spring we all got to know each other well. Jean fitted in to the group adding to the social side with her talent for writing poems and songs such as "You are my baseline.." performed to the tune of You are my sunshine. In the field Jean was an asset to any group. She was supremely fit so was often the one picked to survey the higher parts of a site and if you were with her it was difficult to keep up. There are not many ladies who, in advanced middle age, go off to walk the Inca Trail in Peru or drive a dog sleigh in Lapland! Jean was an artist and a perfectionist which showed in the drawings she did.

On completion of the course Jean participated in weeklong surveys on the island of Raasay, spent many weekends mapping deserted settlements in Glen Lochay near Killin, and worked on Shorewatch recording the coastline between Helensburgh and Dumbarton. It was always interesting to be with Jean on survey. Besides knowing the names of wild flowers, she could also talk about their medicinal or herbal uses. She worked well in a group situation both as a leader and as an assistant. She treated everyone equally and was liked by all. Her quiet sense of humour and wide general knowledge made her excellent company and we miss her. A very special lady.

Although Jean had to retreat from ACFA due to a stroke some years ago, she remained in contact through the annual meetings of her CFA group and as a shining inspiration and companion on many happy days with the group in Glen Orchy and, in earnest, in Glenlochay over many years.

It was known to her group that Jean was a witty and observant rhymist for the Newsletter and the pub but it became clear at her eulogy that Jean was much more than just that and that she was an accomplished and more serious poet than that. The winner of the 2003 International Poetry Competition in the Scottish Language Section and in tribute to that gift and with the agreement of her family, we are very pleased to include this wonderful little poem 'Milestones' illustrated with her own pen vignettes.

It was also noted from a noted member of the Scottish climbing fraternity that he was working on publishing a collection of Jean Aitken's verse – and we know that many ACFA would be pleased to have that on their shelves. The text of "You are my baseline..." is promised for the next Newsletter!

Milestones —



Lochaber

to Lomond



*A poetic journey
by
Jean M Aitken*

In the gloaming, the moon and the evening star
Speed me on my way home.

A few lights twinkle across Loch Linnhe
The shore-edge laced by foam.

No queue for the evening rush
at the ferry

Pale turquoise diffuses the west
All is tranquil before light falls

The hills of Ardgour a blue crest.



A sturdy old larch in Highland setting
Could model for Chinese art
Years of withstanding the
cross-winds' blast
Have clearly played their part.

Someone thought it too close to a house
So the art-form tree was cut,
A decade on I pass the stump and mourn,
The cottage? - still boarded up.

Ahead is the bulk of the Giant Serpent!
Asleep in twilight glow,
Try to anticipate the
possible mood



Of the shadows in Glen Coe.
The big black slash of Ossian's Cave
Seems suspended in air,
The Bard Antiquity now long gone
No one seeks his lair.

The exciting lack of space is unseen
Along The Rhyolite Romp,
Aonach Pinnacles etched in silver
Are drama, without the pomp.
The darkly-dour sisters in
mellow mood,
Bidean snowed and bright,
Car parks empty except for a caravan
Tea-making, the only light.



Out of the Glen to head for Rannoch
 The Herdsmen heave into view
 To-night all seems more expansive
 Clothed in a ghostly hue.

An exciting lunch spot merits a glance
 The slender Crowberry Tower,



A hoolit flits across my path
 This is his hunting hour.



Although there is a moonlit clarity
 Tonight, Schiehallion is unseen,
 The Black Mount misnamed in pearly glow
 Only shadows, a black velvet sheen.

The rowan watched since
 its sapling days
 Sitting on its hassock,
 Commands attention as it sprouts
 Apparently out of hard rock.



The barrage of road signs dangerously dazzle
 At a bend we are warned to mind,
 Why, when the moon can dazzle us so
 It, never makes us blind?
 The sturdy old snow-poles a thing of the past,
 Car lights hitting reflectors
 Stress the anorexic nature
 Of the characterless crew of successors.

Entering the domain of Duncan Ban?
 Immediately begs the question
 Would his spirit still rebel
 At this modern new insertion?
 Moonbeams usher me alongside the Orchy
 A narrow ribbon on silver,
 And there ahead the great
 quartzite dyke
 A white arrow in a quiver.



Familiar hills are silhouetted
 As darkness makes its gain,
 Brooding quietly in repose
 Ben More, Stob Binnein,
 Cruach Ardrain.

The majestic shapes of the ancient pines
 Whose offspring lack capacity
 To defy the grazing mouths around,
 The moon highlights their paucity.

How plenteous were these
 old Scots Pines
 Before our history was written?



Nearby the Three-nation Boundary stone
 Is silent --- Clach na Briton³.

The Beinglas Falls are milky-white
 As o'er the rocks they flow



Their roaring noise masking the sounds
 Of traffic long ago.
 Once, hardy drovers herded their charges
 Up there by an ancient track,
 The old Drovers' Inn now trade with a different,
 Cosseted, driver pack.



Loch Lomond glimmers with paths of light
 From Inversnaid where it's shone.
 All is silent at Inveruglas
 The coaches and climbers have gone.
 The tartan rugs at the Weaver's Cottage
 Safely gathered in, long ago —
 changed days
 Now a welcome teashop
 'The Bonnie Braes'.



Pass the remnants of an ancient yew
 Nurtured in old age,
 Said to have sheltered
 Robert the Bruce,
 A small part on history's page.



And who's to say, now time has gone,
 That was never so
 Nearby islands grew the trees
 To furnish the archer's bow.

Luss a modern pilgrimage spot
 Presents a post-card face,
 The history of Kessog and the Norse
 Are difficult now to trace.
 A churchyard harbours many a secret
 And destiny one can't postpone,
 So ponder the story behind
 The Norse-style hog-back stone?



The last few miles, it's time to turn
 From Lomond's tranquil face
 All shimmer as the faintest ripples
 Are edged by chiffon lace.
 Life's undercurrents are everywhere
 As, under the loch's visage —
 The moon, the stars, the journey, the milestones,
 Are they all a lovely mirage?

1. One of various translations of Beinn a'Bheithir
2. Duncan Ban MacIntyre — Gaelic poet 1724-1812. Born Loch Tulla. Best known poem was about introduction of sheep.
3. Legend has it this was a boundary marker or meeting place of The Britons, Picts and Scots — translates as Stone of the Briton.

Finally to remember some archive and recent images of happy days, now and to come.



After their third glass of sloe gin, Jean and Cathy decided to stay the night.



Margaret Brown, Jack, Jean Aitken - as Dugie spots an elf in the kiln vent. Old Arichastlich, Glen Orchy.

“If there is a God, why are bums at the perfect height for kicking?” [‘Withnail and I’]



See women and horses ! Elaine Black and Janet Macdonald Tiree 2017.



Willie Dougan presents the Photography Quaich to Susan Hunter 2017.

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