Arran's Missing Megaliths.

A Search for Arran's Archaeology before Modernity.

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SYNOPSIS OF THESIS.

I sought to discover Arran before roads, enclosed farms, and modernity to get some sense of the earlier Megalithic landscape. I traced the earliest written references to Arran that I could find. I studied the old accounts, and tried to relate them to the ground, and see what remained. I studied accounts of missing monuments and sought to place them in their stated locations. I considered fairly what the old writers said about the monuments and considered what of that had stood the test of time. I measured their work against the most modern material known to me. This done, I considered what differences, if any, my research had made to the accepted paradigms of the island's narrative. I concluded that it does charge it and that there is value in re-evaluating older and antiquarian accounts.

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Aurime Buĉkate, researching Mesolithic Arran, was kind enough to look on lidar for the destroyed Glen Shurig circle, and, I greatly hope, may well have found it. She produced the splendid illustration at Fig 109.

Rosemary Hanson produced GIS models of the lost Blackwaterfoot Cairn which, lacking all skill at GIS, I am especially thankful for. Lorainne McEwan of GU Archaeology Department made the maps, another skill denied me.

Mr Charles McAllister, farmer, my neighbour over the fence at Arran, identified and located for me the Corriecravie Cairn at Brown Hill, a significant site now lost to view. His marker shows on Fig 82. He has a deep knowledge of the island, which is invaluable.

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The Isle of Arran Heritage Museum in Brodick is an almost compulsory stop for anyone writing on the island, and I am grateful to them, especially Stuart Gough, for their assistance regarding the monument that graced the Lamlash-Brodick road in the 1970s. The illustrations here that acknowledge the museum are testament to the depth of its resource.

I would like to thank Stuart Fotheringham for an enlightening afternoon's exposition of the archaeology of Blackwaterfoot that exists only in the oral testimony of living people.

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My wife Diana is of course due inexpressible thanks for putting up with the years that went into this project, and for assisting me is getting to sites, getting me up and off hillsides, and lending her own elegance to that of the megaliths by way of being the scale figure.

Photographs other than my own are acknowledged.

Location Map of Some Sites referred to.

(By Lorainne McEwan, Glasgow University Archaeology Department)

CHAPTER ONE.

INTRODUCTION

Why I wrote this, and when I did so. Why was I interested in the Antiquarians and early visitors to Arran? Work started, then Covid came. Who were the antiquarians, and why revisit them? Some terms defined. Arran's location, and why it might be relevant. Do the antiquarians have ideas worth looking at? Range of the work.

This dissertation collided early with Covid 19 and lockdown. My relationship with the Isle of Arran had convinced me that the surviving megaliths drive our model of its early prehistory. My hope was to identify some of those megaliths that had not survived, or were overlooked, and then see if the island's megalithic evolution might be clearer.

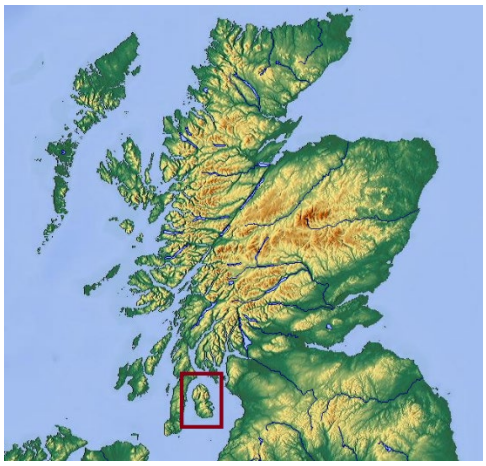

Figure 1: Arran and surrounds. North to top. Google Earth

I planned to do extensive field work to assemble that better picture. In 1973 my interest had been caught by Renfrew's 1973 analysis of the island (Renfrew, 1973). It had a plausibility

but I sensed that there was more.

Most Arran sites are intertwined with their spectacular environment. I wondered why. Much earlier, I had been privileged to be friendly with Archie Roy, to know Euan McKie, and to meet Alex Thom. Archeoastronomy, McKie's name, was a heady time in Seventies West of Scotland, and nowhere more so than in Arran. Megalith bothering was an inexpensive hobby in depressed times. Duncan Lunan took time of from the exoplanets of Epsilon Boötis to show me the rings of Saturn in a telescope and explained to me the bones of Thom's often impenetrable exposition (Thom, 1971). Thom used a Curta circular slide rule, a forgotten antique; others used pencils and logarithm tables. Computers lay far ahead. Some sense of that glad confident morning stayed with me.

My *travaux préparatoires* embarked grandly but were quickly Covid-stopped. The island was sealed and travel to it forbidden. My family chose to ride it out in Glasgow. Arran concentrated on survival, and lockdown. I followed the suggestion of my supervisors to make a desk-based exploration of Arran before roads and modern farms appeared. Sound advice and a better idea than mine. It offered something of worth that others could build on. Anyway, it was what then one *could* do.

Travel to Arran was briefly again permitted, then not, then someway resumed, and so on. Arran suffered Covid outbreaks. We lost people. My inconvenience, personally frustrating, in context was trivial. Then finally, I could lawfully resume my peregrinations.

Here I offer the outcome.

Inevitably, "'*Tis a posy of other men's flowers; merely the twine which binds them is mine own",* to follow Montaigne. (Wavell, 1968, Introduction)

Arran visitors from earlier centuries, including antiquarians, a category that we shall look at, were all variously brave and determined even to get to Arran, then proximate, but logistically remote and Gàidhlig speaking. Ayrshire's Robert Burns never made it.

CalMac's ferry service today is notorious, but CalMac do not need to wait a week for helpful winds. Island accommodation today is good. Until Arran's first hotel appeared in the early nineteenth century, the affluent stayed in the houses of the few rich residents:

others fetched as they might. There were no roads until the 1820s and scarcely a half mile of track.

Some of these earlier visitors to Arran wrote of the archaeology which they serendipitously encountered. Some visitors who saw and noted antiquities were simply that. Others might be classed as antiquarians who visited Arran. My dividing line is admittedly serpentine. As a rule of thumb, *my* antiquarians went to Arran at least partly to see the antiquities.

Who were the antiquarians?

Antiquarians existed before archaeology began to call itself that. They have an ancient heritage, and a classical one. The latter eighteenth century in the UK fostered an incipient professionalisation of them, but that was a long journey. The developing literature of archaeology created them as a category 'the antiquarians', which I think always was a poorly defined and variable category.

This work is not about them or their history. It is about what they saw in Arran and wrote about, and to some extent about how their thinking about Arran's antiquities shaped ours. A work about the history of antiquarians would have much merit, but this is not it.

Their own ancestry is well made out by Trigger (1989, Chapters 1-4) and more recently by Henty (2022 Chap 2). Mediaeval thinking assumed that the world was a divine creation with a likely short duration. The then present was a decline from the original divine work. The Renaissance focussed attention on the classical world, but by 1572 London had the Society of Antiquaries, albeit suppressed by James I and VII in 1604. (Trigger, p 47)

Seventeenth century Europe took interest in its own past, and in England Aubrey argued for Druids and temples at Stonehenge and Avebury (Burl and Mortimer, 2005, pp 38-39, and elsewhere). As modernity gained pace, and other worlds were encountered, comparison between nations became current and by the seventeenth century the antiquary was part of the landscape, particularly in England, Scandinavia, and especially Denmark. Thomsen there could be argued for as the father of modern archaeology. Those appearing in the following pages were much influenced by Scandinavia. Trigger

goes on to track early antiquarians into evolution theory, the new sciences, ethnology, empire and modernity. We will encounter some of all that. Room permits only acknowledgement of it. Mostly, early visitors were aware only of pre-scientific ideas; later antiquarians were interested in antiquities and were more up to date.

Why re-visit the antiquarians?

Antiquarians were satirised in their own times, and later, or sometimes seen as less than serious, not least in contemporary archaeology classes, or more playfully as in Walter Scott's satirising of Jonathon Oldbuck in 'The Antiquary' for demonstrating to a novice a non-existent Roman Camp (See Henty p 13). Scott does so in spite of being himself someway an antiquary, participating in excavations, (Piggot and Robertson, p 61) and amongst much else discovering both the Scottish Crown Jewels in Edinburgh Castle, where his labours remain on display, and finding in the Faculty of Advocates Library Robert Kirk's now lost 1691 manuscript on '*The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Faunes, and Fairies'*, a work never out of print since that day.

Why should we bother with antiquarians? The usual case against them is easily made; they are interested in objects merely as objects, little understanding context or meaning.

Henty (supra, Chapter 2) does them better justice, tracing their development from classical times to a mostly unannounced groundswell in this country formalised by the appointment of Leland by Henry VIII as 'The King's Antiquary' (ibid page 16), followed by James 1 & 6 and Charles 1 doing likewise to Inigo Jones and John Aubrey respectively. She makes clear that this is part of a continuum, not a self-standing innovation. Truncating drastically her argument, the growth of science found the study of antiquities marching in lockstep alongside it, and it is little surprise that 1717 sees the founding of the Society of Antiquaries of London, more or less at the same time as the founding of the Masonic Lodge there. It is little surprise that the same savants should be deeply engaged with the sciences of the day, particularly with mathematics, geometry and astronomy, not to mention astrology and other matters now seen as esoteric, including Freemasonry. (Ibid pp 17-19) Those who would mock 'antiquarians' may thereby mock, unintentionally, some of the greats of modern knowledge. Henty follows at length how antiquarians had little knowledge of the time sequences of antiquity, or of techniques, or

really of background generally. In collecting and recording material they were preserving consciously what they feared would be lost, and collecting specimens to discuss amongst themselves, at least sometimes in expectation of future days when more knowledge would explain the meaning of what they had found. The gentleman's 'cabinet of curiosities' may have been sometimes a vanity, but elsewhere was the foundation of national museums themselves. Core elements of modern archaeology were discovered or invented by antiquarians despite these handicaps.

Their ideas of human development are often offensive to contemporary sensibilities, especially with what they call 'races'. Many wrote in days of slavery, others wrote at the swelling of Galton's *eugenics* ('well born'), which sometimes generally carried all before it. Mendelian genetic transfer would not be understood until the twentieth century.

Their science often used the word 'race' in a different way to us. Charles Darwin spoke of 'races' of cabbages, meaning 'types'. Rejecting all old work only because of language shift is excessive and would dismiss much current science including Galton's own in statistics, used still every day, and his cousin Darwin's (Rutherford, 2022, p 30 et seq). However, A.N. Wilson, reviewing Alison Bashford's *An Intimate History of Evolution* (Bashford, 2022) in Spectator Magazine, 9th October 2022, angrily challenged such a gloss, and insisted that this group of savants bent the emerging science of genetics to support colonialism, especially British same. For good measure he insisted that these attitudes still form a basis for much of our contemporary thinking. (Wilson, 2022)

Where antiquarians were, in contemporary parlance, 'racist', they are appropriately challenged as offensive to modern ears, but we should also remain aware that cultural anthropology only appeared in the 1920s and struggled thereafter. We are still grappling with these issues, as Wilson's review makes clear. The past is unfairly judged by the standards of the present.

British Antiquarians typically were rich, military, well placed, and overwhelmingly male. Britain, with its burgeoning Empire, now out of favour, was their focus. Not yet archaeologists, they were mostly curious men blessed with time and resource. They were sometimes prestigious, sometimes the target of satirists.

Their excavations were often crude and destructive, their conclusions poorly regarded today. Elements of their beliefs can be held up as ludicrous, such as stone celts being thought thunderstones, stone arrows being elf-bolts, or pottery vessels growing spontaneously in the ground. (Trigger, p 47) Inevitably that detracts from serious work, such as The Royal Society seeking to determine how large stones were moved or constructed (ibid, p 62) or Stukely deftly establishing that 'Druidical temples' were pre-Roman by using an early form of Harris Matrix.

More harmful was the traditional Christian teaching that those who had furthest wandered from the Near East had most lost contact with God's revelation and had most degenerated. It would take a long time for a theory of societal evolution to emerge, and its implications considered (Trigger, p 52). Adding imperial ethnology to that mix was toxic, and still is. Books from the past have value but should be read with great care.

Folk beliefs last long. A visitor to Arran in 1955 was reported as being struck by an elf-bolt (House, 1955 p 164). This happened at 2 a.m. in Glen Shurig "not long ago". The visitor spied a shady figure in bushes that seemed to fire a bow. The visitor passed out from the (unmarked) blow to his leg, regaining consciousness only at dawn. His landlord confirmed the elf-shot.

Figure 2: John Kay, Edinburgh. This print by the famous engraver John Kay dates from about 1789. His works record life in Enlightenment Edinburgh and the characters thereof. This is his take on 'The British Antiquarian'. A solid citizen of means and position, leisured and inquisitive. His concerns are other worldly but learned.

Such mockery as is and was made of antiquarians is rarely much justified. From early times, they sought to understand what confronted them, with limited tools. We stand on their shoulders. Many had high intelligence that today would take them to greatness. Some found greatness. They can display delusion and smugness, as can we, but also thoughtfulness and caution. They stand comparison with us. Although caricatured, they were a diverse group of people with individualistic beliefs and attitudes, and, outwith satire, do not easily fit into a simplistic mould.

My thinking was that they had one asset that we can never have. They often saw with their own eyes what is now lost to us. Where they were skilled observers, and have written up well, they are witnesses of great value. Their skill as witnesses requires to be checked and evaluated, as today. Where they are good, they can be very good.

They often recorded also what was said about the antiquities at the time, a gossamer body of record easily lost. Its value may be questioned, but it takes us back a little further.

In Arran, the Celtic Iron Age Fionn epic from the Ulster Cycle is discretely everywhere, though rarely noticed let alone understood. It is an Irish warrior epic that clothed the Gàidhlig West of Scotland including Arran until recently. You need not believe in Fionn MacCoul, its hero, any more than in King Arthur, but it matters. It tells us what earlier understanding of the archaeological residue was, and, sometimes, why one particular thing was preserved, but another was not. Anyway, it is always there, better understood than puzzled over. Yet older accounts may have re-emerged in a Finnian garb that modern discoveries can sometimes relate to and be explained or confirmed by.

Also, scientific folklore study increasingly gives us insight into long running beliefs that may contain useful nuggets of reality if it can be perceived, (Dundes, 1965 p 25 et sequente) explaining the interpretation of folklore and its possibilities. For example, as a very few from many, Structural Typology from Propp (1928), or Levi-Straus(1955). treating folktales as 'fossilized evidence of the history of an individual or society' all shed light, brightly or not so brightly. (Personal discussions with Dr Sim Innes, Roinn na Ceiltis, Glasgow University) Such work is, properly, sceptically received in archaeology, though it has been attempted amongst others by Grinsell (1975). I argue that it is admissible here as an adminicle of evidence, for what it is worth, both regarding surrounding fact or as a possible aid to the interpretation of fact, and separately for evaluation of the credibility of the 'witnesses' namely the visitors or antiquarians.

The likely future interlinking of folkoric oral heritages with DNA studies may legitimately be anticipated, though I am unaware of any such venture in prospect.

Antiquarians often recorded what was happening at the time. In Arran; this can be gold dust. The arable practices of Arran remained unchanged from time immemorial until about 1750-1850 (see McLellan, 1970, p 175 et seq), when change was rapid and immensely destructive to antiquities, as noted in context infra. Antiquarians help us understand what the residue means. Sometimes, antiquarians are the only record of what was found, then lost. They started the preservation of antiquities and founded

modern archaeology in Scotland. A history of Scottish antiquarians would be a worthwhile enterprise.

Antiquarians of any stripe enable us to visit sites now lost, and to see landscapes now long forgotten. This can be transformational. Much more was lost than remains. My research questions were two:

1. What did the late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age archaeological landscape of Arran look like before agrarian reform destroyed so much?

2. Can we then draw new or different conclusions regarding it?

Some definitions of terms used.

There are technical issues of definition. In respect of dates, and archaeological periods, which megaliths date to which period is difficult, and beyond this paper. It may be impossible to say which were Neolithic, which Early Bronze Age, which both or later yet The megalithic tradition of Arran is likely to have continuity from one labelled era to another, and that discussion is also well beyond this paper. I would remind that these labels are ours, not theirs.

Mostly, I have stuck with 'megalithic' , generally following Bryce (Bryce J,1860, p 522), whose words still have value for a modern audience:

"Archaeologists generally subdivide the prehistoric period in our islands into the stone and bronze periods. If this classification be correct..... then the use of rude flint implements, and of implements of bronze, ought to be separated by a wide interval of time; and only flint implements of the most perfect forms, if any, ought to be found associated with those of bronze. But in the present case the flint implements, though of the rudest forms, are associated with an article of bronze. It seems to follow that the received classification ought to be modified;- that in fact, flint and bronze have co-existed, have been in use together, and that at least, on the view most favourable to the theory, the two periods have deeply interlaced with one another; probably more deeply in an isolated situation such as Arran, than on the adjoining continent of Britain, where

improvements in processes of art would spread more rapidly. It is highly desirable that instances of such association should be multiplied, as by them the theory must stand or fall."

'Megalithic' the adjective is as problematic as 'megalith' the noun. The etymology is not very helpful. At best it is indicative, and like other aspects of onomastics, the word has taken on a technical meaning within a discipline and has extended out from its core or original meaning. It has come to mean significant stone workings deemed typical of certain early periods of human activity. It can be used as a clumsy typology of such. The word is unthinkingly used in substantive or in adjectival form. People speak of *Megalithic Science, Megalithic Culture, Megalithic Era etc* as easily as they say '*Megalithic people created'* this or that. The word has also become both metonym and synecdoche. The movement of the moon behind the stones of Callanish is sometimes called 'megalithic magic' in the more florid reports.

I acknowledge that the de facto use of the term relates principally to large lithic archaeological works of the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age, acknowledging but ignoring for present purposes its various extensions to other periods that do not have meaning or purpose for this paper.

That is not the end of the difficulties. Does a megalith require to be one large piece of stone to qualify? If a very large cairn is composed of football sized rocks, such as the vanished cairn at Blackwaterfoot, it is, for me, '*megalithic*', being '*mega'*, and *'lithic'*. A cairn that can reasonably be inferred to have been part of an early procedure or assembly such as a circle, for my purposes comes within the orbit of the wider uses of the word '*megalithic'*. Others may disagree, but that is what I have done.

Within the category of large, worked stones of the periods above stated, many and varied terms have been applied to 'megaliths', some of them now antique and no longer clear. Here is delightful lantern slide from 1895 that charmingly introduces an audience to the speaker's understanding of 'Great Stones' :

Figure 3: HMJ Underhill. Heir. Oxford. Twitter.

'Celtic' in Fig 3 is, I think, Welsh. Scots Gàidhlig, which shares a distant ancestor with Welsh, would prefer 'Cromlech' to describe a tabletop-on-legs structure. Welsh 'Llech' is Gàidhlig 'leac', a flagstone; Gàidhlig 'crom' is more curved or turned, and 'Circle' would be something else.

Does Arran's topography and location give any clue as to why it has a 'Megalithic' history?

Consider this International Space Station shot of Ireland and nearby:

Figure 4: Source, ISS

Arran does not look the most obvious agricultural settlement spot, if, as is sometimes claimed, the Neolithic was about sedentism and farming. Ireland is as is the Central Belt, but why Arran? There is some good farming land, but much of that is modern and post clearance. There may have been another reason for Arran being important.

Gordon Noble (2006, Chapter Two) speaks of 'islands in the fast lane', drawing attention to the importance of tides, currants and maritime knowledge and skill as a factor in the development of a maritime culture in western seas between Ireland and Britain. Arran is very much a part of that culture and, although isolated to us in comparison to land movement today, was likely to have been, as he says, in fact '*in the fast lane'*. Since Arran appears to be well endowed with megalithic remains, the question arises as to whether Arran was particularly important, and if so for what reason. In consideration of this, the issue of survival or otherwise of monuments is important, and turning to antiquarian

accounts is helpful. What we are seeing, what established archaeology has long considered to be Arran's remains, may be only a partial view.

The same broad 'Celtic Sea' theme was explored in detail by distinguished contributors to Vicky Cummings and Chris Fowler's '*Neolithic of the Irish Sea' (*Cummings and Fowler, 2004), Far from being peripheral, it is safer to regard Arran as being in the midst of maritime activity and so open to the interchange of wide ideas.

The sort of landscape that we should be looking for may be very different from the long held view of the island as being 'backward', or 'remote', as it has been, in fairness, pretty much for the historical period of Scotland. That sense of 'remoteness' invites the proper rejoinder of 'from what', the answer to which today is 'from mainland activity' and thus the prime focus of modern life. It may not always have been thus. The information that the antiquarians had, and that we do not, may shed important light on this issue.

Figure 5: Farming land in Arran is not abundant. (North is top left; Arran is roughly 20 miles long and twelve wide.) Goggle Earth.

Location, winds, transits and ease of navigation all may be involved. Perhaps its topography had special resonance, or its pitchstone.

Figure 6: Brodick from Cnoc Dail, looking north.

Arran's propinquity to Ireland is well demonstrated in Fig 7's Gàidhlig denoted map. Its orientation makes it easier to see the likely routes, and the primacy of sea faring in the Celtic Sea. The map was prepared to assist Gaelic scholars trace the proselytising movements of Early Mediaeval Irish Christian missionaries. Some such also came to Arran; the island is peppered with their placenames.

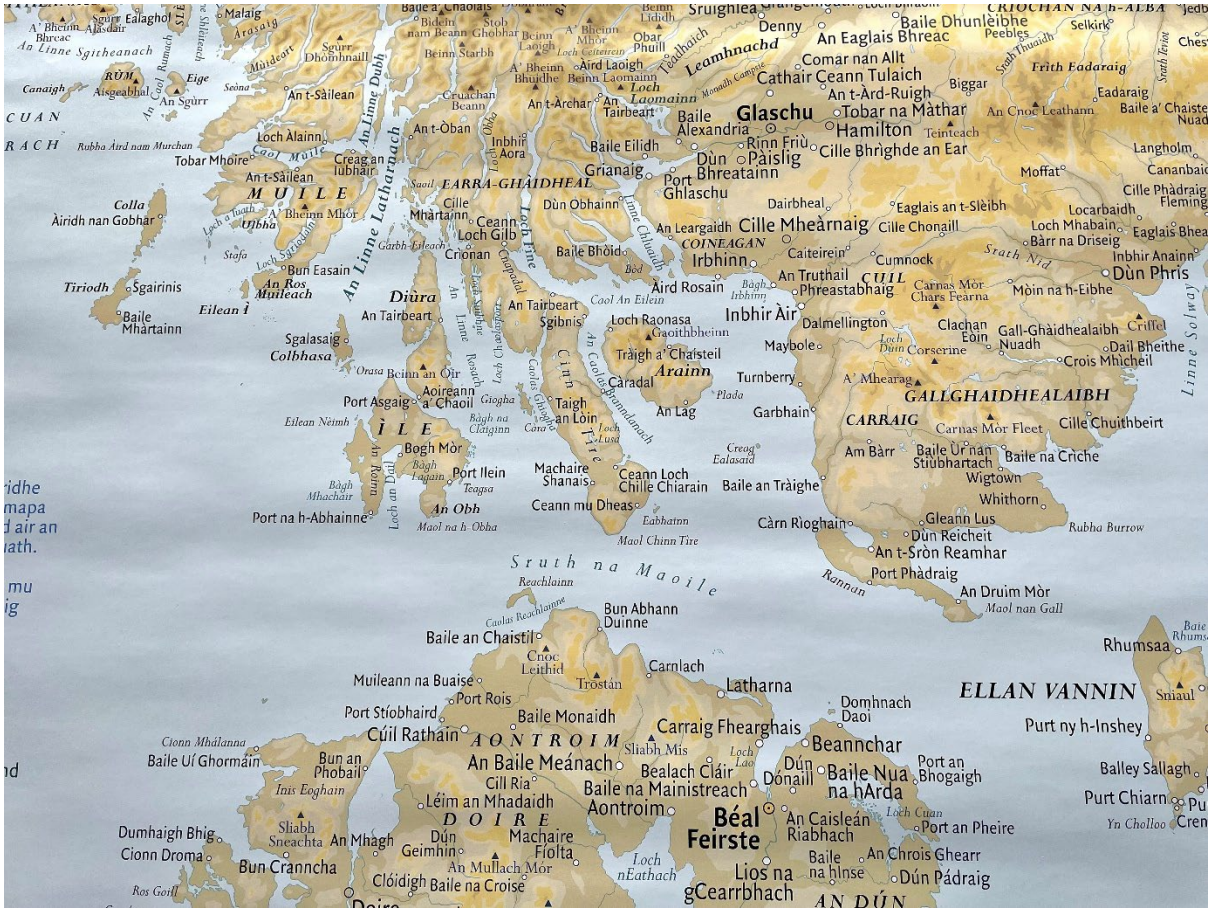

Figure 7: This map, tilted north west, seeks to show the routes of the early Irish Saints. [Colmcille: Eirinn is Alba] Courtesy Peadar Morgan Bòrd na Gàidhlig Inverness.

At the risk of labouring the point, Figure 8 below shows 1914 steamer routes, cars not yet ascendant. By inference, Tarbert and Kilmartin offered easier passage for prehistoric travellers to the north and west; Kilmartin offered the Great Glen and an easier passage to Orkney than the wilder west seas, and southwards an easier passage to Rathlin, Lambay, the Boyne, Anglesey, Cornwall, and, who knows, perhaps even Brittany?

Figure 8: Note the Argyle connections, and Tarbert, and Kilmartin. Brodick Museum

Arran's megaliths contain many examples that bear easy morphological comparison to stones from Brittany. Allison Sheridan in her 2022 Rhind lectures emphasised her belief such a connection.

Figure 9: This decorated stone found at Smerquoy in Orkney gives a very fair impression of the outline of Arran. Twitter: nessofbrodgar.co.uk

Have antiquarians any ideas worth looking at again?

Antiquarian speculations are mostly ignored by modern readers. I believe that they should be given proper respect and disagreed with for a reason, rather than being merely dismissed as 'antiquarian'. They turned to what they knew, and referenced the various Iron Age sagas, Norse, Welsh, Irish and other. They referenced the Classics, particularly Caesar and Homer, as citeable sources of fact rather than literature. They turned, inevitably, to The Old Testament of the Bible, which they knew well, and which they saw partly as history, and as a time scale, as well as being theological. This was anathema to later thinkers, being the opposite of 'science', itself the 'answer' to religion.

Increasingly, Antiquarians confronted imperial anthropological 'discoveries' from Empire, and elsewhere, a faint ghost of which lingers in the global range and breadth of today's '*Antiquity Journal'*.

I suggest that their speculations can be wrung for value.

Firstly, they might just be right, and should be fairly considered.

Secondly, speculations are an insight into the mind of the antiquarian whom we are assessing.

Ancient sources rarely speak of actual events in any reliable way, but ancillary mentions do speak to what sort of thing was done at the time and why. If a novel of uncertain date mentions a telephone, a *non-ante quem* is established. In this way, Homeric reference to funeral cairns is a sort of evidence, to be treated cautiously. If the Bible speaks of standing stones being raised for this or that purpose, it is evidence of a sort. What weight, if any, should be given to it, is another, crucial, matter. It passes the admissibility test. The relevancy test may be harder to pass.

Archaeologists relying on modern technology may dismiss the value of older, unassisted, speculation, but sometimes, basic does better, or at least assists. If the older scholars lacked science, perhaps we are over reliant on it. There is room for all at the party.

Range of this work.

Limitation of space requires me to select places and persons. Arran's prehistory is mostly in its south, though the north merits attention. Indeed, Arran's place name may lie in a lost mound at northern Catacol; recorded but used as road fill. (Infra, p79)

I have, for consistency, followed the chronological sequence of the early visitors and antiquarians discussed here, I have mostly selected the sites that they did. I know from my wanderings that there are many unrecorded ones. I have, for clarity, dealt with both Statistical Accounts in one section.

I regret leaving out many writers, especially Leslie, whose *Early Races of Scotland* (Leslie 1866) brought his Indian experiences to bear, but he does not mention Arran. Balfour deserves mention and revisiting, but his *Book of Arran* (Balfour, 1910) is still the standard work on the island's archaeology, so is for my purposes modern. Other choices could have been made, and someday will be, I hope.

I have tried to avoid history and politics, but of course both have touched Arran. . Ignoring this totally would *be* antiquarian, valuing an object for itself and ignoring context. Some history was inescapable. The '45 mostly passed Arran by, but Kings Cross point shares a 2nd War submarine net winder with a Viking Grave and an early Bronze Age gnomon.

Arran's placenames carry much of this narrative. I have highlighted some, where I thought it helpful. The Drumadoon plateau, where a LIDAR-detected cursus, being explored today by Brophy, McFadyen, McGregor, Whitehouse and others (Brophy, 2022), shares its locus with a concrete bunker, variously attributed to WW2 or the Cold War, and sits amidst hut circles, High King's Torr, and King's Cave. But which King? Bruce, if you ask the Tourist Board, but Fionn if you look deeper and believe. Many peoples, many 'races', known and unknown, have arrived, been seduced by Arran's charms, stayed, passed, and left their ghosts and detritus behind.

With that, let us rewind the diorama, and watch Arran emerge from the impenetrable mist.

CHAPTER TWO

ARRAN EMERGES INTO OUR TIMES.: THE EARLY VISITORS.

The earliest writers on Arran and its antiquities. The Irish Annals, Sir Donald Munro (1549), Martin (1695), Pennant (1777) , Danniell (1815), The Clearances commence, Old Statistical Account (1797), The New Statistical Account (1845). The disappearance of the Glen Shurig Circle and the 'stupendous' Blackwaterfoot Cairn.

"*Arran, or properly Arrinn, or 'the island of mountains', seems not to have been noticed by the ancients, notwithstanding it must have been known to the Romans, whose navy, from the time of Agricola, had its station in the Glota Aestuarium, or the Firth of Clyde:",* observed Thomas Pennant in 1772. (Pennant, p 165)

Pennant adds that:

"By the immense cairns, the vast monumental stones, and many relics of Druidism, this island must have been considerable in ancient times." (ibid)

"*Properly Arinn*" references the ancient Fionn Cycle; '*island of mountains'* perhaps was given him by his host. It is not a translation of '*Arrin*'.

Like Martin Martin who came in 1695, Pennant's purpose was to inspect the previously little-known west of Scotland, for Pennant now part of The United Kingdom, to see what profitable use might be made of it. In 1745 Scotland had brought the new country, and its Hanoverian Crown, uncomfortably close to ruin. The South might have regarded The North as primitives; informed people

perhaps knew better. As under Rome, the natives were to be chastised, civilised, and settled. Pennant was the self-invited guest of the landed gentry, and no doubt was briefed by them, they perhaps hoping that some good might come their way thereby. Martin's book (Martin, 1999) was influential; Dr Johnston and Boswell were thus stimulated into making their famous travels. Both were fascinated by Martin's account. Johnson came to see with his own eyes. Early accounts of Arran are often written against such a background: what is there, how could it be monetised, and how can peace be assured?

Figure 10: Map of Arran from before Wade's roads in Argyll. In Arran, the features include placenames, and rivers. Today, these are less important than roads, unlike earlier. Campbelltown is also in Corriegills, apparently. From Dunblane Cathedral

Others follow this pattern. Geologists arrived in the late eighteenth century. Headrick added archaeology to geology in 1807. The mixture of myth, archaeology, history, geology, biology continued until about early twentieth century.

Each writer usually puzzles over the origin of the island's name, still a lively controversy; Nicolaeson, a modern toponymic great, despairs and thinks it is not Celtic (Nicolaeson 1991 p2). Each is seduced by the island's beauty. Most see a great future if the old ways can be set aside, a process which wreaked havoc on its archaeology, though remains were sometimes cherished. Few visitors understood the island; they sound like imperial anthropologists presupposing the best interests of the natives, whom they imperfectly understand.

Pennant's '*island of mountains'*, a fairly old chestnut, was in sympathy with Romanticism (see Trigger p65). The reader might suppose it to be a translation into English of the Gaelic placename. It very much is not. The natives spoke Gàidhlig and knew Fionn. The Laird likely only knew of MacPherson's English 'Ossian', published in 1760, but perhaps was pleased to reflect that misty epic's sparkle.

Martin Martin (1999, p 134) had earlier dealt with the placename. Although some thought it derived from Gaidhlig '*aran'* meaning '*bread*', he noted,

"*... others think it comes more probably from Arin or Arfyn, which in their language is as much as the place of the giant Fin MacCoul's slaughter or execution; for aar signifies slaughter, and so they will have Arin only the contraction of Arrin or Fin."*

For kindness he might have added that Gàidhlig words beginning with 'F' in the genitive case add an 'h' and drop from sound the 'fh'. Thus his 'arr' (of) 'Fionn' would have been written 'aar Fhionn', and pronounced 'aar-inn', or, roughly, 'Arrin'. Martin was a Gaelic speaker from Skye. The same word *aar (today* àr) can mean 'slaughter', but also can mean 'kidney'. Some have seen a kidney in the shape of the island; ergo the placename origin. There are

many wonderous explanations for the name; all writers since Martin seem obliged to give their tuppence worth.

The Romans did not write about Arran. They struck a road from Blackhill near Lanark to Ayr, where recent excavation found a camp. (Krakowka, 2019)
They could not have missed the dramatic outline of Arran. Why no mention?

Figure 11: Arran from the Ayrshire coast. Glasgow Herald

W. Skene (1886 p 47) takes up the story:

"*.. he (Agricola) in the fifth summer (A.D.82) crossed the Firth of Clyde with a small body of troops in one vessel and penetrated through the hostile districts of Cowall and Kintyre till he saw the Western Ocean, with the coast running due north, presenting in the interior one mass of inaccessible mountains, the five islands of the Hebudes, and the blue shores of Ireland dimly rising above the Western horizon."*

Agricola instead tracked north eastwards via Stirling. Arran presumably was neither a threat, nor tempting. After Mons Graupius in A.D. 86 Agricola circumnavigated Scotland, claiming Orkney, noted Scotland's deeply penetrating sea-lochs, sailed round the island of Britain, and returned to his base in the Firth of Forth.

Orkney is referenced in Juvenal's *Satire II* 159-60 and British whales in *Satire X 14.* Roman written reference to Britannia is extensive. But not to Arran.

About 150 A.D. Ptolemy provided the first map of Britain, perhaps in part informed by Agricola, and by Pythias' voyage around 300 BC, but Pythias' work is lost to us, and known only through his detractors (Cunliffe 2002, pp 164-171).

In Arran archaeology, you really cannot escape the Fionn Cycle

Arran's written entrance is in the Irish '*Acallam na Senorach'*, (Colloquy of the Elders), probably inscribed about 11-1200 A.D. (Dooley and Roe, 1999, Introduction).

Since it relates the imagined reconciliation between 5th AD century St Patrick and the survivors of Fionn's Iron Age *Bruderband,* generally dated to the third century, the written tale is asynchronous by about 800 years. The date of its composition is best left as 'Early Mediaeval'. We learn something from Arran's mention. It is well known, and fragments are often recited to adorn works on the island, or in tourist literature.

It tells of what the island offered then, whenever 'then' was. It tells of Iron Age Irish warrior bands there, who seem to have enjoyed the amenities of the island and endowed it with their legends, names and deeds, and trademark slaughter. They *could* have put up some of the antiquities. Patrick, who did once exist, talks to Caìlte, a war band survivor, who is probably fictional. Caìlte is now about to embrace new-fangled Christianity - not very likely.

"*Patrick then asked, "Tell me dear Caìlte what was the best hunt, whether in Ireland or in*

Scotland, that the Fian ever took
part in?"

"That would be the hunt in Arran,"
said Caìlte.

"Where is that place, "asked Patrick.

"It is between Scotland and the land of the Picts," said Caìlte.

By 'Scotland' he means the Irish colony we call Dalriada; by 'Pictland', the mainland, held by Picts. Does he mean that Arran is ruled by neither, but is *sui juris*?

"In the month of Trogan or Lugnasad, (probably the early season of August) *we of the Fian used to go there with three battalions and have our fill of hunting until the cuckoo called from the treetops of Ireland. No music can match the sweet sounds of the bird flocks rising up from the waves, and from the shores of this island. There were one hundred and fifty flocks around it, all of bright colours, deep and clear blues, greens and yellows*."

Caìlte then recited the following verse:

'Arran blessed with stags, encircled by the sea

Island that fed hosts, where black spears turn crimson

'Carefree deer on its peaks, branches of tender berries,

Streams of icy water, dark oaks decked with mast

'Greyhounds here and beagles, blackberries, fruit of sloe,

Trees thick with blackthorns, deer spread about the oaks,

'Rocks with purple lichen, meadows rich with grass,

A fine fortress of crags, the leaping of fawns and trout,

'Gentle meadows and plump swine, gardens pleasant beyond belief,

Nuts on the boughs of hazel, and longships sailing by

'Lovely in fair weather, trout beneath its banks,

Gulls scream from the cliffs, Arran ever lovely.'

'*May victory be yours, dear Caìlte, with my blessing', said Patrick,*

"We are beholden for ever to you and to your stories."" (Dooley and Roe; p 10-2)

The 'longships' above might be a reference to Lochlannaich, or Vikings, sailing past to avoid contact with the Fianna; there are Arran tales of the Fianna and Vikings fighting that we shall encounter.

Accalam is what, I believe, Pennant was being told a filtered version of. We get some idea of the earlier island. Although one cannot extrapolate from then to the period we are interested in, we perhaps gain, in the phrase of Kenneth Jackson (1964, p 55), '*A Window into The Iron Age'*, and perhaps beyond that:

"*In other words, if we want to know what it was like to be a late La Tène Celt, and what life in the Early Iron Age was like, we can get some notion of it by reading the Ulster cycle of hero stories. Hence, I submit, the title of this lecture is not altogether fanciful or without justification."*

This may well be exaggeration, and Accalam, drawing from the Irish Annals, is at best a palimpsest of chronology.

Much of Caìlte's reminiscence is recognisable, notwithstanding profound changes.

Figure12: Map of Arran, 1770, showing no roads. Argyll has roads to move troops up to Jacobite territory. Author's collection.

Arran is still blessed with stags, rather too many, and blessed with those from other parts who wish to shoot them, and to pay handsomely for the privilege. '*Dark oaks'* recalls Caesar's Druids, but placenames with '*Darroch*' (oak) as an element are not many. Now Sitka Spruce blankets far too much.
'*Meadow rich with grass'* is interesting, if we can believe Caìlte. The present areas of cultivation are quite restricted, even after Improvement. '*Gentle meadows'* there still are, but '*plump swine'* surprises. Pig placenames, Gàidhlig Muc,

are very common throughout Scotland but Currie found only one in Arran: *Creagan Leana Muic* (Little Rock of the Pigs' Meadow) near Machrie Water (Currie: p 58).

Pigs and the Neolithic are always of interest. In Arran, some time ago, a gentleman from Yorkshire took to keeping pigs, not to everyone's approval. The experiment was not persisted with. Perhaps the *Creagan* pig was a carving, or the rock resembled one. Pigs and their alleged travels to Stonehenge have become a lively recent controversy, (Madgwick et al 2019;

English Heritage, 2019), by no means unchallenged. (Barclay and Brophy 2020).

Hazel nuts can still be found on Arran, but now you need to know where to look. Inter-war writers imply an abundance then. Hazel nuts are a standout feature of Neolithic life. (Scarf National Framework. Neolithic. Section 4.1) Sloes still provide the islander with Christmas gin.

The 'longships' sailing by could be Viking – Lamlash Bay has a ship burial at Kings Cross and a sword burial at Millhouse, Margnaheglish, but perhaps not. 'Long' is Celto-Norse for 'ship' not the English length adjective. This highlights the sea as forever a highway, and Arran central to that. Although no Neolithic boats have been found, and may never be, it is plain enough that marine travel was an element in the Neolithic and before it:

"*Although we know nothing of boat-building or navigation skills at this time, we can be sure that the communities were highly competent sailors since life depended on mastery of the sea."* (Cunliffe: p 122)

Accalam is poor pickings, only obliquely relating to our period. Caìlte could be as far from the Neolithic on Arran as we are from Caesar.

Somewhere about the late sixth, early seventh centuries, Irish monks brought Christianity to Arran, which may have represented to them a 'desert' for an anchorite life, the island having been '*... long abandoned for the purposes of an arable agriculture, and thus presenting a rather shaggy, desolate appearance*. '(Campbell, 2007, p 51)

SIR DONALD MUNRO

I do not know of textual Arran records after *Accalam* until 1549 when the above High Dean of the Isles (Monro, 1884 p 14) gives us a passing snapshot of the island:

"*... ane grate ile, full of grate montains and forests, good for hunting, with pairt of woods....*

Inhabit onlie at the sea coasts".

As later, it had 'two *paroch kirks' (*parishes), one, '*Kilbride the uther callit Kylmure'*. (Kilmory)

It had '*Flada, (*Pladda*) ane little iyle full of cunings* (a type of fish) *with ane uther little yle of Molass*.' (ibid p 15)

'Molass' was 'Molaise', the Saint, whom we shall meet. This island today is Holy Isle, Lamlash. It had *'ane monastery of friars, which is decayit,'* that was '*foundit by Johne, Lord of the iles.'* (But see Campbell, 2007, p 52 for a likelier date.)

There were '*three castils; ane callit Braizey* (Brodick) ... *ane uther auld house callit the castle of the heid of Lochrenasay'* (Lochranza). Kildonan Castle, '*Dounan',' pertained to* ane *of the Stuarts of Bute's blood, callit Mr James: he and his bluid are the best men in that countrey.'* (p 15)

These harbours were for long after the principal landing places, as we shall see, and doubtless also were so into deepest antiquity. Were the ancient forests also '*grate*'? The interpretation of Machrie may depend on this question, as we shall later see.

MARTIN MARTIN.

Martin Martin arrived circa 1695. He accepted Fionn historically as having played a part in Arran, "...*as is evident from the many stones set up in divers places of the isle, as monuments upon the graves of persons of note that were killed in battle*." Although, he says, the island is high and mountainous, it slopes on each side round the coast, *"...and the glen is only made use of*

tillage…. All the hills generally afford a good pasturage, though a great part of them be covered only with heath". (Martin, pp 134- 135)

"*The mould (*earth*) here is of divers colours, being black and brown near the hills and clayey and sandy upon the coast*", and the locals told him that some places of the isle afford fuller's earth. The glen to the west has a wood above a mile in length. There was good agricultural land around Brodick Bay, '*as also on the opposite western coast*.' (p 135) The glen is probably Glen Shurig, leading by the original northern String Road to Machrie, which is presumably the '*opposite western coast*.' The '*glen area'* is good agricultural land.

Figure 13: Glen Shurig farmland looking easterly. Brodick, concealed, obliquely right.

However, '*The largest and best field for pasturage is that on the southwest side (p 135).*'

That is not clear. He speaks of two salmon bearing rivers '*on the west called Machir side' (ibid)*, and two others in the Brodick area. Most likely he means by '*southwest'* Machrie, but Corriecravie eastwards is possible, and well populated with Neolithic remains.

Map 1. Arran's Original Runrig Farm Boundaries.

Source: R. McLellan, The Isle of Arran (London, 1985).

Figure 14: Burrell's 1755 outline of runrig farms gives a fair view of what Martin would see. (after Little 1999, see infra).

He describes what is now known as Kings Cave, at what is now called Drumadoon, as an alleged residence of Fionn when in Arran. It was in

Martin's time called Drum-cruey. I think the second word is Gàidhlig 'cruaidh', denoting hardness, so perhaps 'stout stronghold'.
Martin references 'erected stones' on both sides of Arran, then returns to Druim-cruey:

"*On the west side there are some stones erected in Balliminich, and a fourth at some distance from these, each about six feet high. In the moor on the east side Druimcruey, there is a circle of stones; the area is about thirty paces. There is a stone of the same shape and kind about forty paces to the west of the circle. The Natives say that this circle was made by the giant Fin MacCoul, and that to the single stone, Bran, (his dog) was usually tied. About half a mile to the north side of Baelliminich there are two stones erected, each of them eight feet high." (p 136)*

Fionn's circle is Machrie Circle 5,: the two stones may be 'Circle' 7 there, the 'single stone' may refer to the single menhir at Circle 3, but there is reason to doubt this.

Figure 15: Circle 5 Machrie: 'Fionn's Circle'. The rightmost stone is 'Bran's'.

Circle 5 is a double circle, attributed to Fionn. ‘Bran’s Stone’ is harder to find; I am uncertain. It is said to have a hole to tether the epic beast. From Martin’s directions, it is not the tall menhir remaining at Circle 3, the most obvious candidate, but most likely one of the circle stones themselves.

Figure 16: Circle 3. Not, I think, ‘Bran’s Stone’.

The two stones ‘north of Balliminich’ may be isolated menhirs, later given circle numbers by others, believing them to be remnant circles, which they may be. They may be the two stones, now lost, shown on a map by Skene (Fig 35). Ballymeanoch is a common Scottish placename; ‘*middle village’*, usually between Ballymore (*big*) or Ballybeg (*little*). This (lost) Ballymeanoch lay near to the chambered cairn east of Torr Righ Beag car park at the Forestry Commission planting adjacent to the A841.

He moves to a very interesting circle, different from any before:

There is a circle of big stones a little to the south of Druim-cruey, the area of which is about twelve paces. There is a broad thin stone in the middle of this circle, supported by three lesser stones. The ancient inhabitants are reported to have burnt their sacrifices on the broad stone in time of heathenism." (136-7)

He describes another standing stone, then returns:

"*There is an eminence of about a thousand paces in compass on the seacoast in Druim-cruey village, and it is fenced about with a stone wall. Of old it was a sanctuary, and whatever number of men or cattle could get within it were secured from the assaults of their enemies, the place being privileged by universal consent*." (ibid p 137)

With that, he is off to Lamlash.

Unpacking this, I think that Druim-cruey is our Drumadoon. I have not found 'Balliminich', but it seems to lie south of dilapidated Moss Farm. There are two local candidates for his 'table' stones, which sound like a cromlech. One is near the fort at Drumadoon, where a standing stone remains. (**NR 88652 29287**). It is a poor candidate; see Figure 16.

Figure 17: The stone on Drumadoon.

I prefer the other one at Drumadoon Farm, near the tennis courts, at **NR 89106 28759,** labelled 'cairn' on today's map, but 'Cromlech' on earlier maps, and called 'Morvena's Grave' by some in the village. 'Morvena', say some, met a bad end through her lover, who was A Deceiver. He came, apparently, from the next village, Kilpatrick. A Blackwaterfoot shop carries a name plate of 'Morven House'. The reference is likely to Fionn or MacPherson's Fingal epic, where Malvina (not Morvena), and her lover Oscar appear. His death she sorely lamented. Malvina is elsewhere said to be buried in the sarcophagus near to Machrie Circle 5, so the attribution shifts spatially as well as personally.(Rev Angus McMillan, New Statistical Account, 1845). The Fionn Cycle action was set in Ireland mostly, which included Dalriada; the reference to Kilpatrick typically places the tale locally. The Morven(a) of the village is a half remembered Gàidhlig *Mor Bheanna,* The Big Mountains, the place of legend in the north that the Vikings overwintered in.

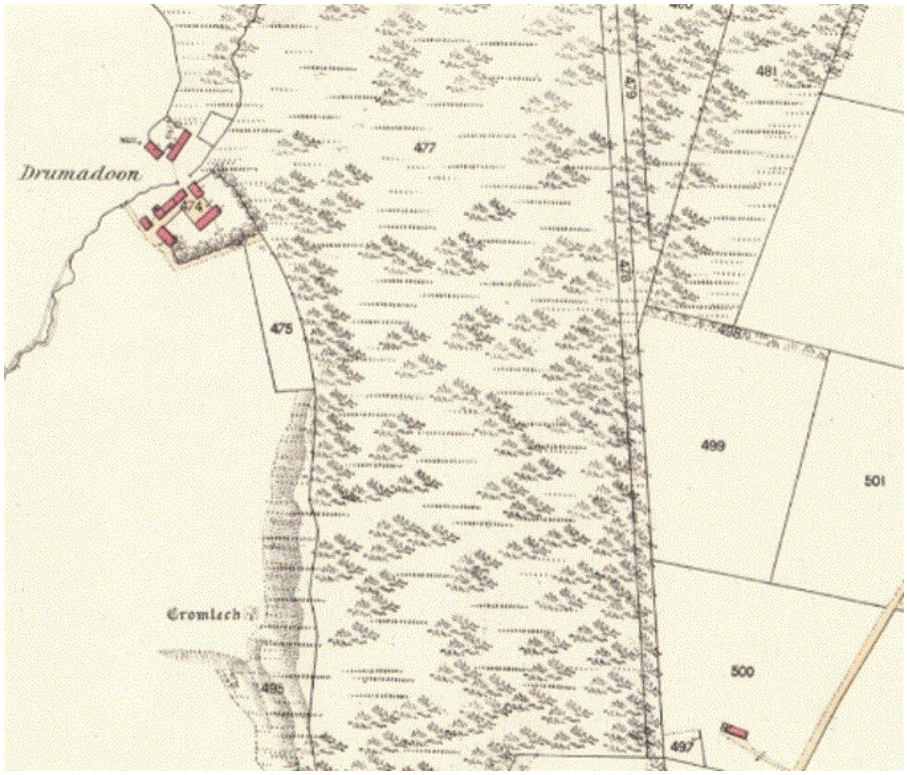

Figure 18: 25-inch OS Buteshire CCLVIII surveyed 1864 published 1867

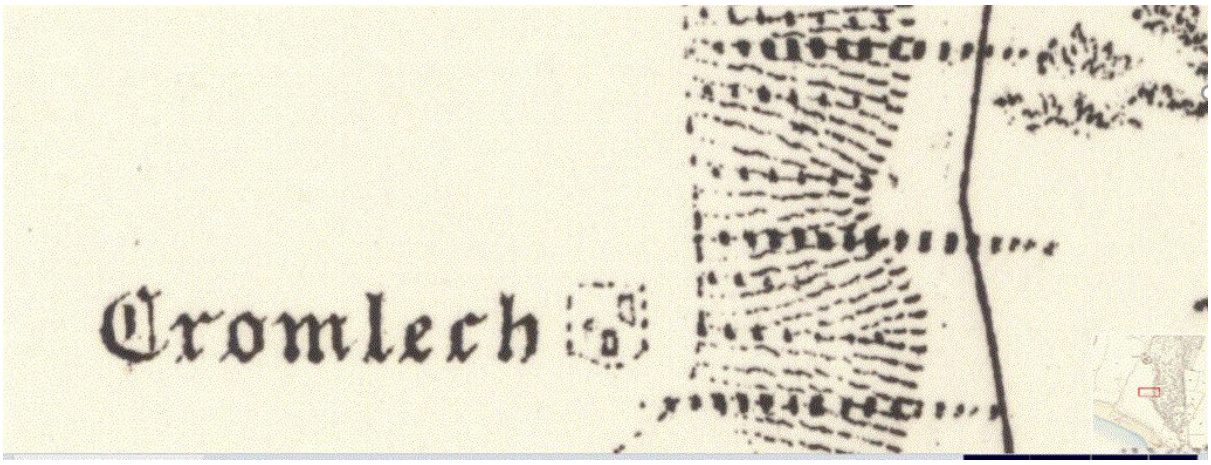

Figure 19: Enlargement of Fig 18.

The 1864 25” OS map includes the claimed cromlech, but the drawing is of something in ruin.

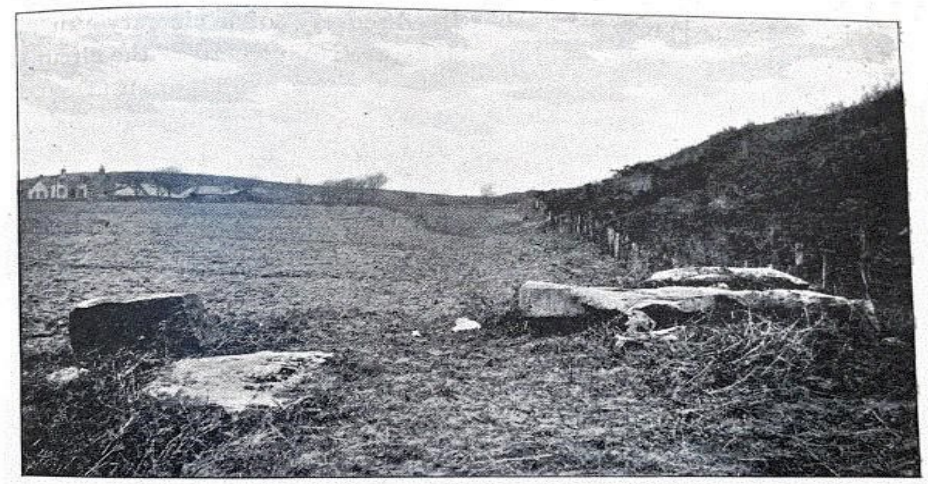

Fig. 59. Cist and Circle at Drumidoon.

Figure 20: Bryce's 1902 photo. PSAS. It sits on a rise just visible in the gap

Figure 21: The same remains today, looking west.

Currie (1908 p 65) says of Drumadoon Farm:

"*On this farm, is pointed out the tomb of Malvina, the betrothed of Oscar, son of Ossian. She was the daughter of the "generous Toscar of Lutha*". (p 66)

Further:

"*On the sea front of the Doon, columnar cliffs rise to a height of about 200 feet. On the land side a wall 8 or 10 feet thick, and formed of huge blocks of stone, may still be traced. The area enclosed is about 480 yards long by 200 yards broad. Besides being an almost impregnable fortress, it probably formed a place of refuge in times of danger for the families and flocks of the inhabitants". (Ibid)*

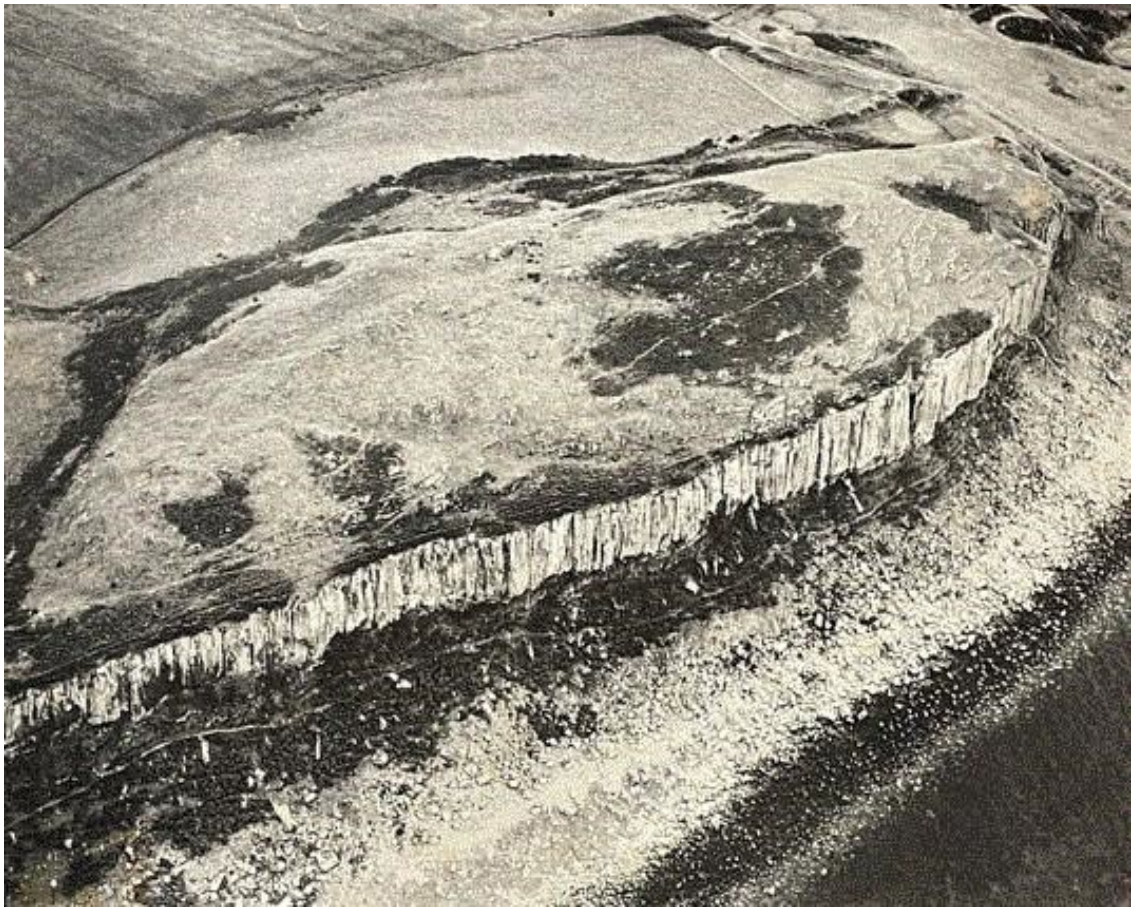

Figure 22: Museum photo of Drumadoon as was. Now part forested, unfarmed, and bracken covered.(Undated. Brodick Museum)

Martin's '*eminence*' might be up on Torbeg at Drumadoon fort, but if so, 'Drum-cruey' village must be up there, of which there is no record known to me, and Torbeg does not sound like '*on the seacoast'*. Is Blackwaterfoot village his village, with a name change? Its harbour must always have attracted habitation, though Blackwaterfoot is a mid-Victorian creation. If so, he strangely omits the great lost cairn there, of which more anon. His '*sanctuary'* seems to relate to Drumadoon. I am unaware of an old, rather than new, Gàidhlig name for Blackwater village; perhaps it was too late for that, although to my knowledge residual Gàidhlig was spoken there in the 1970s, if only by the *bodachs* (old men) in the public bar.

Figure 23: Blackwaterfoot Village as it begins to appear. The postcard is Edwardian, but the photo is likely earlier. The 'stupendous 'cairn has gone. It would have stood near the house furthest away middle left, under the foxed dots.

Perhaps there was a village up on the Doon, amidst the former hut circles, and a village called Balliminich close to the Chambered Cairns at **NR 90625 32256** and **NR 90262 31072**, an area devoid of much habitation today. A placename can be found there is some old maps that I have seen.

He mentions a thin stone, broad, tapering towards the top, nine feet tall (2.74m), within a quarter mile of the sea near 'the Machir River', which may be NR **89419 33645,** rather than Auchencar, **NR 88988 36360,** which it superficially sounds like. Auchencar is near Iorsa Water, not Machrie Water, and almost thirteen feet (3.96m).

The Drumadoon Farm site looks a convincing candidate for Martin's cromlech, as the old OS map says. Viewing it on 26th March 2022, it was hard to doubt that it was the cromlech that Martin described, or that, as David

Bennett, the owner of Drumadoon suggested, the cap stone had been pulled downwards, with equine help, to give access to what was underneath. When this was done, by whom, and with whose permission, awaits another day. 1695 is the *non-ante ,*1864 the *non-post quem*.

Figure 24:' Malvina', looking towards Drumadoon. The 'legs' may be to right. Its eminence slopes leftwards.

Its morphology is reminiscent of Brittany, where one is spoiled for examples, but Épône

(Figure 24) might serve suitably. About 12m of it survived a botched excavation in the 1790s, leaving three tabletops like Drumadoon's. The post card cannot resist a human sacrifice.

Figure 25: La Justice, Épône, Yvelines. Frenchpostcardsofmegaliths. Twitter

This antiquarian trail leads to a *very* modern discussion on possible incomers to Arran at the Neolithic to Bronze Age transition.

Before detailing Blackwaterfoot, Martin was cataloguing the island's 'erected stones', starting with four at Brodick, there being '*several erected stones to be seen on each side this isle'*. (p 136) The four stones at Brodick Bay are about '*seventy yards* (64m) *from the river'*, and '*seven feet'* (2.13m) in height. This sounds like the three stones at Home Farm near Brodick Castle, plus the Shore Road megalith.

Figure 26: Home Farm stones 1 & 2. The crop required telephoto capture.

Figure 27: Stone 3 lies south and west of stones 1-2. Note the good farming land.

"*The highest of these stones that fell under my observation was on the south side of Kilmichael River, and is above fifteen feet high*", (4.58m) which I suspect is the standing stone presently standing at the dog leg of Shore Road near the school, but 'Kilmichael River' confuses me. The school stone is beside Rosa Burn to its immediate north. If 'Kilmichael River' is Glencloy Water, the reference may be to East Mayish (Fig 44) at **NS 01798 35515**, or to a missing stone.

Figure 28: The Megalith on Brodick Road near to the Schoolhouse. Photo: Ribbeck?

Figure 29: Same view August 2020. The hedge is presently under better control. This monument should be scheduled.

Speaking of the largest stone, he says that there was a stone coffin filled with human bones until the river washed away the earth and the bones in it:

"*MacLouis, who had seen them, says they were of no larger size than those of our time*." (p 136)

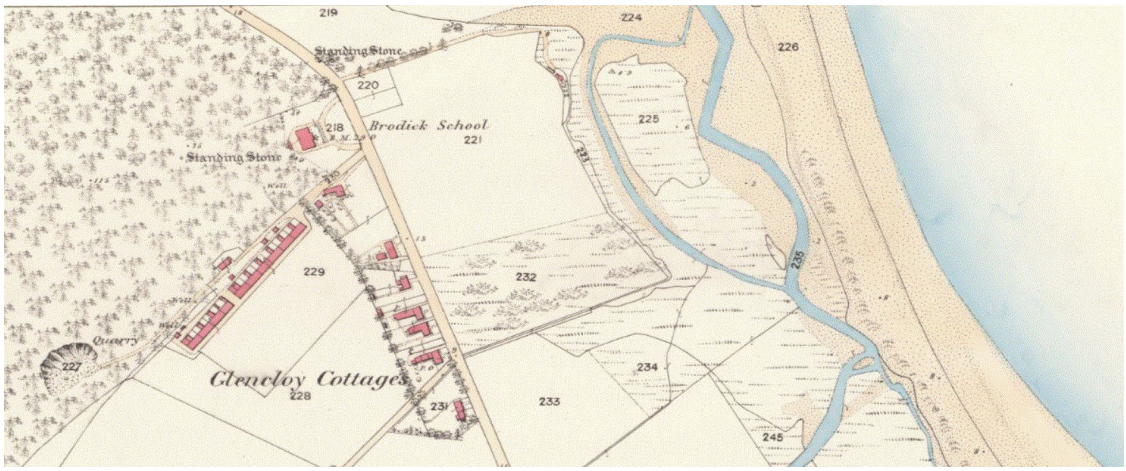

Figure 30: 1855 OS 25" map of Schoolhouse area

Lamlash

Martin, concerned with fishing, notes that:

"*The only good harbour in this isle is Lamlash, which is in the south-east end of the isle of that name. There is a great fishing of cod and whiting in an about this bay*." (p 137)

The name 'Lamlash' attached originally to what is now 'Holy Isle' but crossed the bay to '*Kirkton of Kilbride'* on the landward side about 1790-1830, and old maps show varying locations. Does Martin mean that the harbour was on the island, not in the bay, where Good Duchess Anne placed her harbour centrally?

Figure 31: Duchess Anne's C 18 Harbour remains at low tide. Canmore DP159641.

Martin was knowledgeable regarding sailing in his day, but in fact Arran has many harbours suitable for small vessels. In the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries, the illicit whisky trade flourished by their use, especially on the south coast (Adamson 2019). Martin seems unaware of Hakon mooring his fleet there before the 1263 assault on Largs. If Arran was reached by sea in the Neolithic, the logistics need discussion, especially harbourages. Lamlash Bay and its hillsides are well endowed with Neolithic remains. A very large cairn was placed at the mouth of the Monamore Water at **NS 013 289,** with an overland route to Machrie in the west.

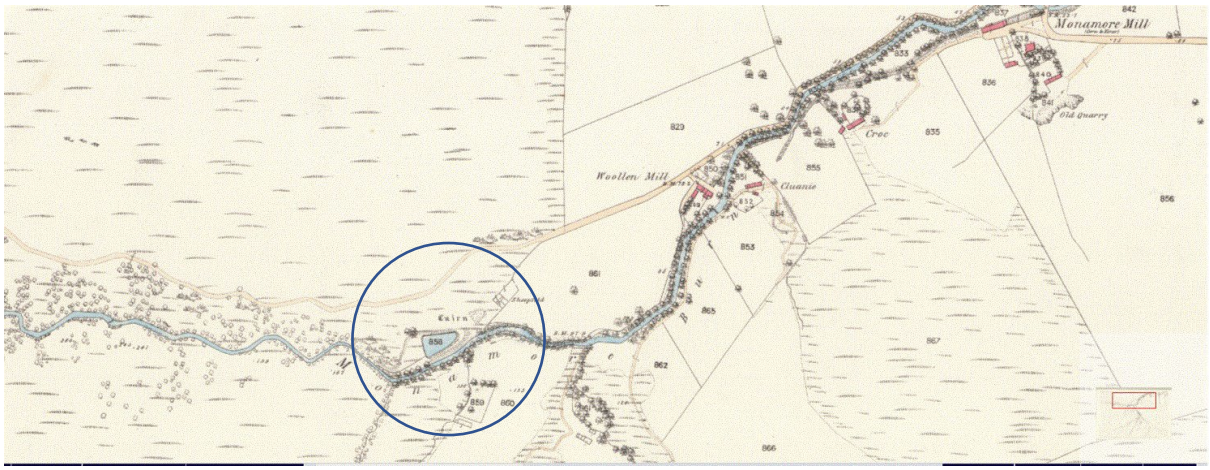

Figure 32: Monamore. The shore is a short distance to right. The then seashore extent is not determined, I understand.

Corriegills, north-easterly of this is near Dun Fionn. The north old road to Brodick (northwards) crosses down from a stone circle to Glencloy and the Brodick monuments. Westwards, Monamore Water rises at Glenscorrodale **NR 965 279** (south-westerly) where it conjoins with Sliddery Water, running

down the southwestern side of the island to debouche at Sliddery, close to Torrylinn's rich Neolithic landscape. If Lamlash was the obvious harbour and central point in 1695, perhaps little in that respect had changed.

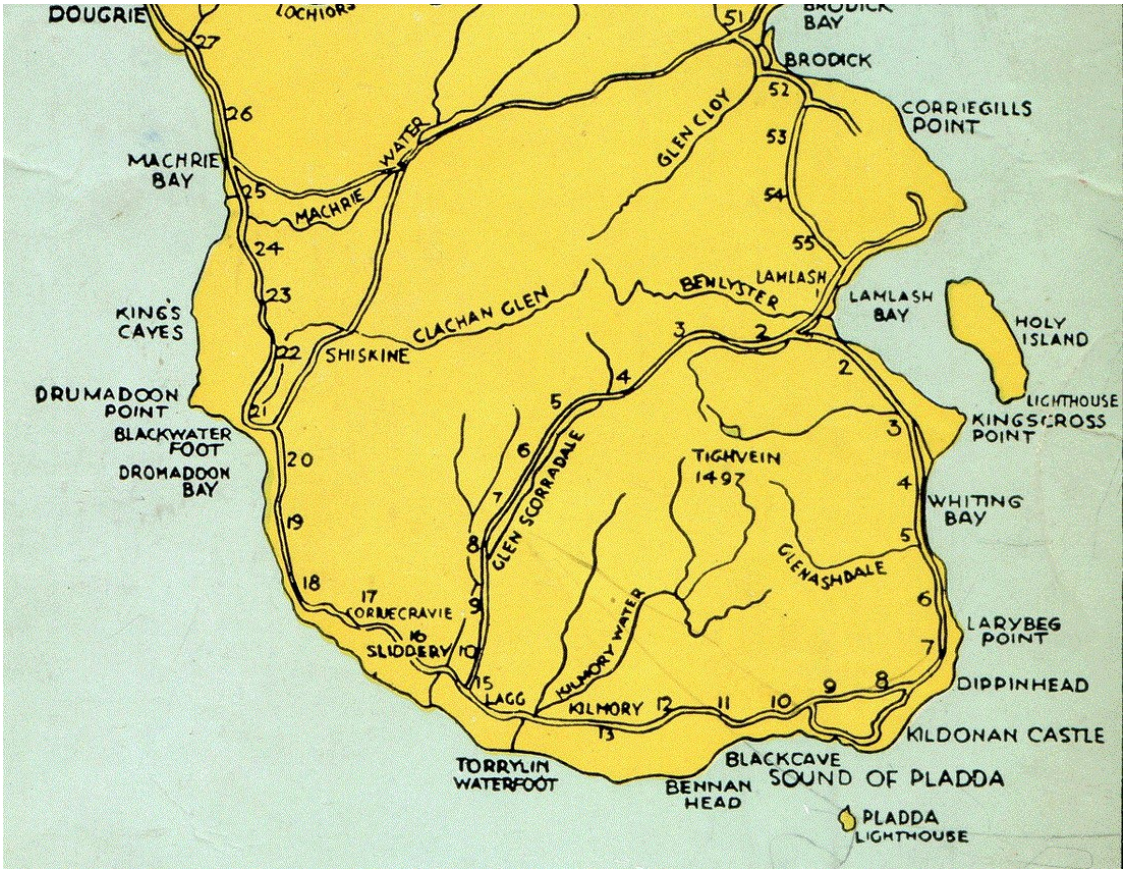

Figure 33: Old postcard map of lower half island; artist unknown. Author's collection

Martin notes the whole isle is designed by nature more for pasturage than cultivation. He mentions the '*valuable curiosity'* of Baul Mulay, or Molingus, and his stone globe. Molingus was a saint to MacDonald of the Isles. The stone was revered and carefully handed down.
and was '*about the bigness of a goose egg*.'

It would remove stitches from the side of sick persons by laying it upon the affected part.

"*If the patient does not outlive the distemper, they say the stone removes out of the bed of its own accord, and e contra. The natives use this stone for swearing decisive oaths upon it*." (p 139-140)

It was a green stone, like a globe. In battle, if cast in front of the enemy line, they will all run away. That legend is common enough in Gàidhlig folklore. Deriving a link to it from green Neolithic axe-heads is too speculative, but neither is some sort of supernova effect totally implausible in a static, oral-transmission society.

He tells us that Arran air is temperately cold and moist, qualified by the fresh breezes that blow from the hills. (p135) It still is. The natives thought a dram of strong waters a good corrective. They still do.

He offers insights into Ailsa Craig and Sanda. Along with Gigha, these deserve notice, but not here.

Thomas Pennant, 1772.

Pennant, touring Britain in 1774, found but few quadrupeds in Arran, only otters, wild cats, shrew mice, rabbits and bats: *"... the stags which used to abound, are now reduced to about a dozen."* (Pennant 1998 p 167)

The climate he noted as very severe, for "*besides the violence of winds, the cold is very rigorous*." The air was '*remarkably salubrious'*, and many invalids resorted there for that and to drink the whey of goats' milk. The men were strong and well made, their diet chiefly potatoes and meal, with some dried mutton during winter. They all spoke *'the Erse language'*. The women made wool to clothe their families and butter for export and cheese for

consumption. Summer was employed mostly in getting peat for fuel, and in house repair.

Pennant (p 170) rode south-westerly from Brodick Castle, descending into '*the valley at the head of the bay'*, which was fertile in barley, oats and peas, presumably now the Home Farm, near Glen Shurig. There he saw two large erect stones, for which Pennant cited parallels, like those from North Wales which were there called *main hirion* (tall stones*), meini gwir* (men pillars), and *lleche*. These were found in Cornwall and elsewhere; in Joshua they are memorials of the dead, monuments of friendship, to distinguish places of worship, or of solemn assemblies, citing *Joshua XXIV, 26*.

He notes that Northern nations erected them to perpetuate the memory of great actions such as remarkable duels, proportionate to the number of men who died, citing Ole Worm, *Monum Dan*, 62-3, and Boethius, *Scot. Prisc. Et Recentes Mores, 10*. (p 170)
They were also '*erected merely as sepulchral'* for distinguished person of rank 'deserved well of their country', citing *Hist Scot., 20* (ibid).

Close by was a recumbent stone such as he had not seen before; there is at one end '*a rude attempt to carve a head and shoulders*.' It was 12 feet by two feet by one foot thick. The natives explained that it was placed over a giant and referred to it as Mc Bhrolchin's Stone. (p 171)
I cannot trace this; it feels early Scottish Mediaeval, perhaps modified. (private conversation with K. Brophy)

Figure 34: Mc Bhrolchin's may be the 'Human Remains' near the Home Farm stones.

He ascended 'a steep hill', probably An Tunna, descending to Monquil, **NR 94031 35254** ('*moor of the hazels'*, says Currie, (p 55)) but I prefer '*wood*'), a small closely grouped circle of stones.

Pennant was unsure if it was a '*little Druidical place of worship, or of assembly; whether a family place of sepulchre.'* He notes that *'if an urn is found in the centre of this coronet, as is not uncommon, the doubt will cease'*. (p171) This belief persisted for over a century.

Figure 35: Monyquil Chambered Cairn lies northeast of the Machrie Moor complex. Canmore

He arrived at Torness, '*an extensive plain of good ground, but quite in a state of nature*.' He has passed by '*the river Machrai'*, so it sounds like Machrie Moor. To him, '*it seems formerly to have been cultivated, for there appear several vestiges or dikes, which might have served as boundaries.'* There is a tradition, Pennant noted, that in old times the shores were covered with woods, and this was the habitable part. '*The want of trees here, compared to their fecundity near Brodick, seems to confirm this.'* (Page 171)

He deals with '*four circles'*, then two others, being our Circle 5, and the cist nearby. These latter, and other remains, were often of old described as 'circles', which can be confusing for us:

"*On this plain are the remains of four circles, in a line, extending north- east by south -west; very few stones are standing to perfect the enclosure, but those are of a great size; and stand remote from each other. One is fifteen*

*feet high and eleven in circumference. On the outside of these circles are two others: one differs from all I have seen, constituting of a double circle of stones and a mound with the lesser. Near these are the relicts of a stone chest, formed of five flat stones, the length of two yards in the inside: the lid or top is lost. In the middle of these repositories were placed the urn filled the ashes of the dead to prevent its being broken; or to keep the earth from mixing with the blunt remains. In all probability there had been a cairn or heap of stones above. "(*p171-2)

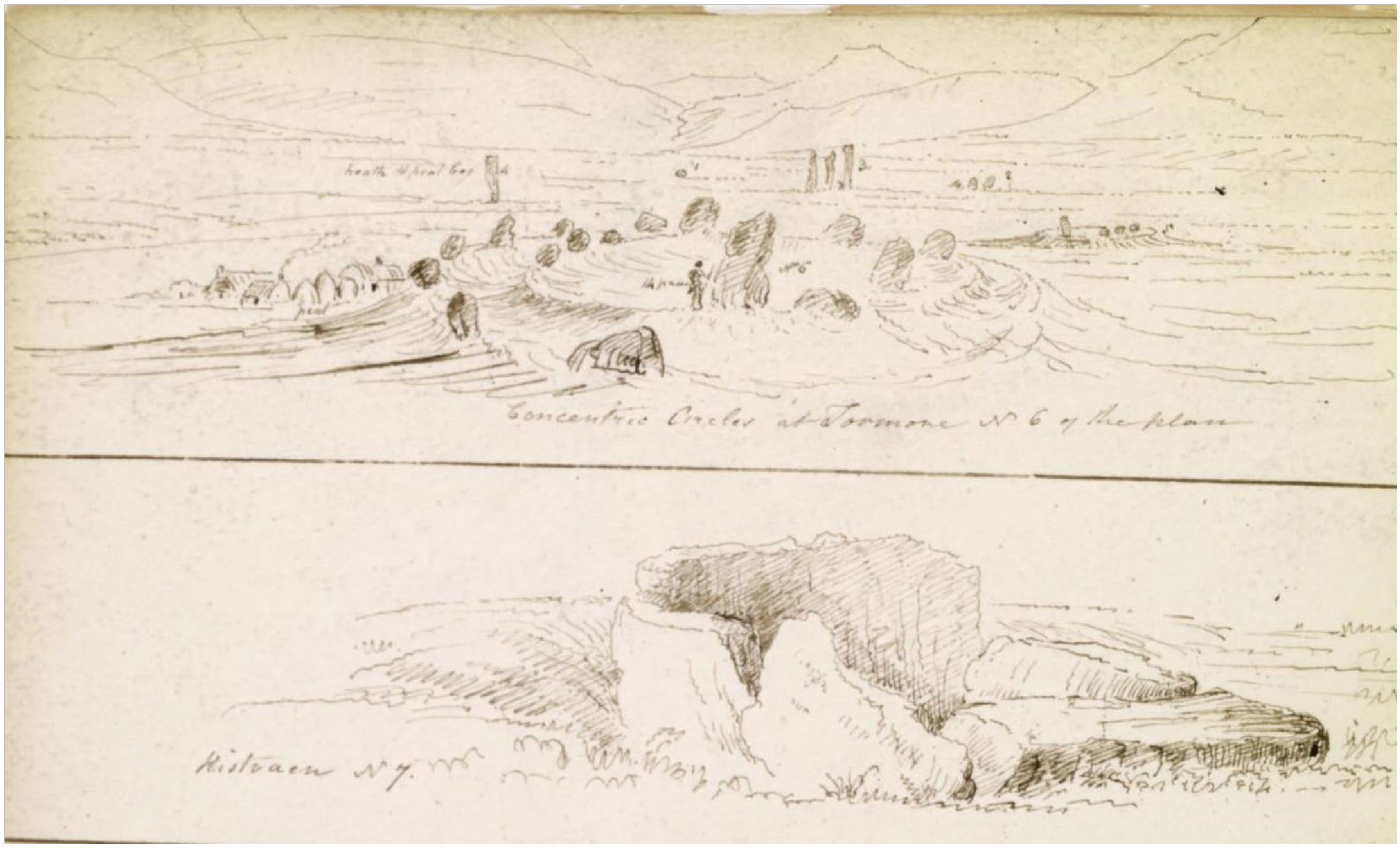

Figure 36: Skene's 1832 drawing of Circle 5 and 'Malvina's' cist, his Kistvaen No 7. Canmore. The group diagonally right of Circle 5 seems to be Circle 4, but with one elevated, not round, stone.

Skene (1832) drew these in 1832, a valuable addition to our knowledge of the state of the moor then.

Pennant is there about 52 years before him.

Figure 37: The cist remnants today, Circle 5 ahead. Circle 3 left upper middle. Circle 2 not in sight, but roughly behind the LH middle tree.

The double circle we can recognise as ‘Fionn’s Cauldron’, Circle 5. ‘Fionn’s Cauldron’ caught on as a name, and I will stay with it for clarity. However, a better translation is ‘*Fionn’s Seat of Right’* (as Leader), consistent with Early Mediaeval Ireland. I think that this issue could matter, but not now. Its Gàidhlig name, *Suidhe Coire Fhionn* is pronounced ‘Shooey Corr’in’.

Bran would be a shoulder high hunting dog, and a terrible weapon.

Figure 38: Fionn's Cauldron, looking over to Circle 3.

Using Circle 5 as a fixed point, I find the expression '*in a line'* hard to explain, if meant literally.

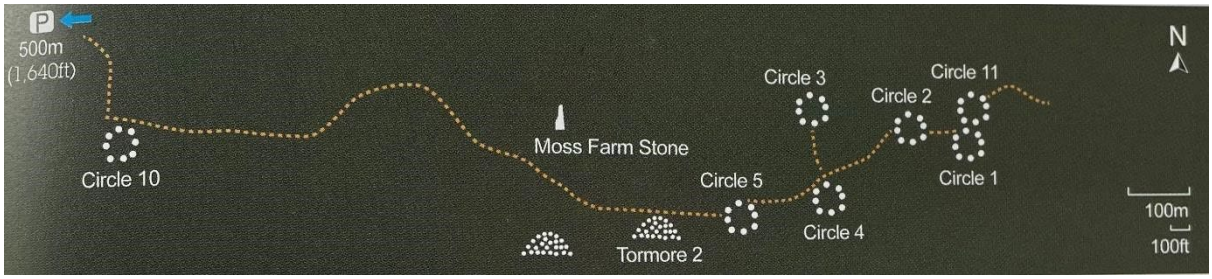

Figure 39: A modern diagram from Burnam, (2018 p 261)

Circle 3 is the single megalith, Circle 2 the threesome, Circle 11 is small, only discovered in 1975, and Circle 1 is of alternating larger and smaller stones. If Pennant is correct, a circle may have gone. Circle 4 is presently four round boulders.

Figure 40: Circle 3. Note some resemblance of top to landscape; I am doubtful that this is more than coincidence.

Figure 41: Circle 1 lies east after Circle 4 and Circle 2, and alternates large round stones with smaller rectangular ones.

He speculates on the use of the stones for sun worship, and the NE-SW alignment is interesting to him. He thinks the focus to be the sun '*at his meridian glory*', and speculates that many of the stones are lost, probably carried off to build houses and '*dikes*' nearby. This is surely right, and sounds conversational, as if told by his host. The agricultural 'improvements' were just beginning. He is part of them. However, we should not assume when stones were removed, in times historical, or otherwise.

Then:

"*At a small distance further is a cairn of a most stupendous size, formed of great pebbles; which are preserved from being scattered about by a circle of large stone, that surround the whole base: a circumstance sometimes usual in these monumental heaps*." (p172)

It is hard to place this; perhaps it is the missing 'torr' in Tormore, which M'Arthur (1873, p13) speculated on. It sounds as if it has completely disappeared, like another one Pennant will shortly describe below.

He explores 'Druim-an-Dùin (Drumadoon), and King's Cave below, and notes its association with Fionn MacCoul. At this time, the cave seems to have had no association with Bruce or the spider, the area is simply *Druim-cruey*. He travels along the coast some way, to ascend the cliff of what sounds like The Doon where there is '*a great dyke of loose stones '*. This seems to be Martin's 'sanctuary'. Within it is a single stone. A little further down is Martin's 'cromlech', but Pennant does not mention it. (p 172-3)

Leaving the hills, he travels to 'Feorling', (Norse, *Farthing Land*) the south of which is known today as Blackwaterfoot, to see another cairn *'a hundred and fourteen feet over, and of a vast height; and from two of the opposite sides are two vast ridges; the whole formed of rounded stones, or pebbles, brought from the shores*. '(p 173-4)

Of this nothing remains though its location can be reasonably be ascertained. It was just to the east of the present Kinloch Hotel, and the shops nearby, testament to the speed with which such monuments can disappear. Village dry-stone walls nearby no doubt contain some of what Pennant saw, but one sea rounded rock or stone looks pretty much like another. Pennant speculates on the meaning of this monument. The last remnant was still there to be seen by Bryce, T. (1902, p118) who excavated the cairn, cist and finds in Fig 41.

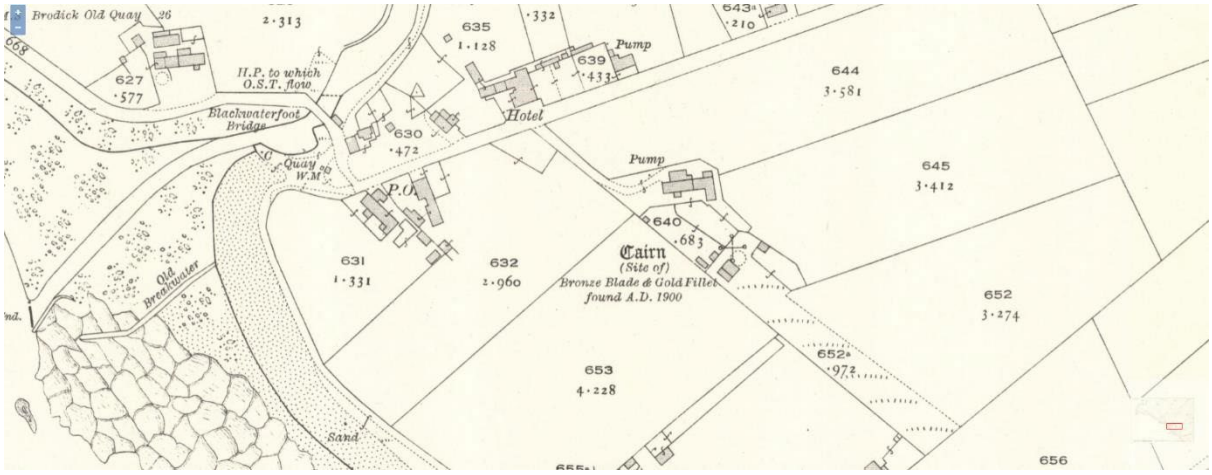

Figure 42: Blackwater foot cairn. 1915/9 OS CCCIII.3. The 'Hotel' above remains but is not the present Kinloch Hotel, located between 'Quay. W.M.' and '631''.

He generally ascribes these monuments to 'great men' (p 174), and may, of course, be right.

He finds a parallel in the Roman honour to the dead,

"*Quanquam festinas, non est mora longa: licebit injecto ter pulvere, curras*, ("even if you are in a hurry, you will not be long delayed; cast three handfuls of earth, and you may speed on.") from *Horace, Odes, 1.28***,** and with a later Celtic one:

"*Curri me cloch er do charne* "(sic) – (Cuiridh mi clach air do chàrn),- *I shall place a stone upon your cairn*.

It is still Jewish funerary practice to place a stone on a grave.

Figure 43: The cairn site on a modern satellite photo. NLS Georeferenced.

Figure 44: The lost cairn was left and behind this house. The leftward rubble is modern, intended for new construction.

He moved inland to Shiskine, passing some farms, the only cultivated tract in the internal parts of the country. One rented at forty pounds a year, with sixty

acres of arable land, the only cultivated land internally in the island. The general rate for a farm was about eight or nine pounds.

Figure 45: What Pennant would have seen. Burrell's 1757 map marks the farms. I think each of them has or had Neolithic remains.

He returns to Brodick Castle, tours the village of Brodick (now Cladach), then just below the castle:

"*Visit Glencloy, a plain, on which are five earthen tumuli, or barrows, placed in a row, with another on the outside of them: on the top of one is a depression, or hollow; on that of another is a circle of stones, whose ends just appear above the earth. These are probably the memorial of some battle; the common men were placed beneath the plain barrows; the leaders under those distinguished by the stones."* (p 174)

These I have not yet located. It is not clear to what he refers. It sounds like he is traversing the present golf course, across the road where the Cloy burn discharges, then down Glen Cloy to Kilmichael House as is.

He visited the ruins of Kilmichael Chapel, meeting Mr Fullerton, or Mac Louis, the only other royal grant holder on the island. ('Louis' likely related to Lewis and Celto-Vikings) He travelled "*two miles*" eastwards via what is sometimes called 'the old Brodick road', now a forest track over to Corriegills and Dun Fion (**NS 04651 33842),** passing through remains of megalithic structures, without comment. This is puzzling. His route would likely have pretty much followed the present forestry track from Kilpatrick to the present head of the Brodick-Lamlash Road, recently labelled Cnoc Dail. There was then no forestry. It is not obvious how he could have missed a stone circle (**NS 01892 33437)** near the present road, and chambered cairns, and standing stones just a little further into the present wood. Near the top of Dun Fionn, he is much taken by '*a great stratum of most singular stone, of a dull black green cast, smooth glossy surface, shatter in its composition*…." which '*. is like that have been the effect of a volcano*." (p 176) This, presumably, is Corriegills pitchstone.

His route has taken him through an area variously called The Sheehans, or the Fairy Glen.

These small drumlins are, in Gaidhlig, '*sitheanan*' (pronounced she-an-an), habitations of the '*sith*', the underground dwellers or faery folk of Celtic belief. In Pennant's time the islanders had a caution of these capricious spirits, whose powers were believed extensive and malignant (see Campbell, 2008, Ch1). They would likely have avoided such places, shedding a little light upon Pennant's companions' horizons, and so his. Headrick (1807, preface) says that (Headrick's) father was part guide for Pennant; improvers all, Gaels none.

On the other side of '*the hill of Dunsuin, facing the bay of Lamlash'*, he saw a cairn of a different type. It may have been Dunan Mor **NS 02669 32986**. It was on the roadside, oblong, composed of rounded stones, but along the top was a series of cells, some entire, but many fallen in. Cists, presumably. "*Each was covered with a single flat stone of a great size, resting on others*

upright, that served as supports, but I could not count them by reason of the lapse of the lesser stones." He notes (p 177) that these are called in Wales *cromlech* and *cest-va en*, reciting contemporary beliefs that they may have been altars, or burial places for kings. He thinks that there was a uniformity of culture throughout Britain in this respect, because some of these stones are British as well as 'Danish' (i.e., Viking), since they occur in places where the Danes did not penetrate.

This site, on his description, could be a Clyde Chamber Cairn, or a cairn, then perhaps used for cists, probably the former:

"*It must not be forgotten, that at one end of the cairn in question are several great stones, some extending beyond the cairn; and on one side is a large erect stone, perhaps an object of worship*." (p178)

Next day, he travelled to Kilbride (Lamlash) finding his vessel at anchor '*... in the safest port in the universe, a port perfectly Virgilian'*, protected by the '*lofty island of Lamlash'* (Holy Isle) from east winds (p178). Lamlash back then also had a use topical in our Covid times:
"*This is the place of quarantine: at this time three merchantmen belonging to Glasgow lay here for that purpose, each with a guard boat astern."*

Proper social distancing was doubtless insisted upon.

Pennant is a thoughtful, observant explorer and recorder. He sailed to Ailsa Craig, and climbed up to the castle there, and thought the ascent was '*horrible',* which it is. He thinks deeply about the history of the Highlands, and of the past mistakes of leniency made in seeking to govern them. He has little doubt as to what should be done. He was as close to the Highlanders at Derby as we are to Windows 1995:

"*The act of 1748 once deprived the chieftains of all power of injuring the public by their commotions. Many of these reguli second this effort of legislature and neglect no opportunity of rendering themselves hateful to their unhappy vassals, the former instruments of ambition. The halcyon days*

are near at hand: oppression will beget depopulation; and depopulation will give us a dear-bought tranquillity." (p 200-1)

The references are to the 1746 Heritable Jurisdictions Act, stripping chieftains of their powers, and to voluntary emigration, thought at this stage a mischief. The effects on Arran's archaeology of 'Improvement 'were about to begin. And it has not ceased.

William Danniell and the Clearances

Pennant sailed off for Argyll. In 1815 William Danniell came to tour Scotland, for much the same reasons that the others did. He has little to tell us about the Neolithic of Arran, but he does update developments on the island that are relevant to our enquiry. The stranger, he notes, is pleased to be reminded that he is travelling in an ancient country, "... *which, in its present aspect, afford a hope that the brightest pages of its history have yet to be unfolded."* (Daniel, 1815, vol 1, p 71 et seq)

He means the enclosure and cultivation of vast tracts of land; large plantations; the establishment and spread of manufactures.

Magnificent canals are branching through the country and extending from sea to sea. The speed of change is significant; "...*having been but recently adopted, that have comparatively few prejudices to contend with: agriculture and the useful arts have been introduced here in an enlightened age, with all the advantages which modern science has conferred upon them; and in the hands of an intelligent, acute and persevering race of men, they are likely soon to be carried much nearer to perfection*." (ibid)

Arran, after the upheaval of Clearance, was for many years little better off than before, and, for some, a great deal worse. (Little, 1999). Danniell's attitudes reflect the landed interest. The archaeology of the Arran had accidentally benefited from a Celtic culture that preserved it. The coming conflict would be very one-sided.

With that, he quits Lochranza for Crinan, a useful reminder of a sea route that doubtless commended itself to much earlier mariners. He was headed for the Canal. He stayed at Duntrune Castle. Between Loch Crinan and Kilmartin, "...*there is a valley of no inconsiderable extent, containing many huge upright stones and cairns. About a mile and half from the head of Loch Crinan, there is a Druidical circle, about thirty feet in diameter, the stones of which are in sand, though the ground surrounds the circle is to a considerable distance, bog earth.* "He provides a drawing of 'Rassella', near Kilmartin, confidently assigned '*to the age of the Druids' (*Fig 31*)*. It looks like, and I think is, Temple Wood at Ballymeanoch, with the other stones in the background:

"*It has been of late conjectured that the Druids had two kinds of circles, religious and judicial: the one appropriated to their mystic rights, and the other to the administration of justice. The circle in question seems to have been of the former class, if we may judge from the proximity of the sepulchral relic just mentioned; but be that as it may, its presence alone shews that this district was peopled by a fraternity of those idolatrous hierarchs, who assumed absolute sway over the souls and bodies of their fellow-creatures*." (Ibid p 85, plate 22 Vol 2)

The former speculation seems modern enough, the latter perhaps not.

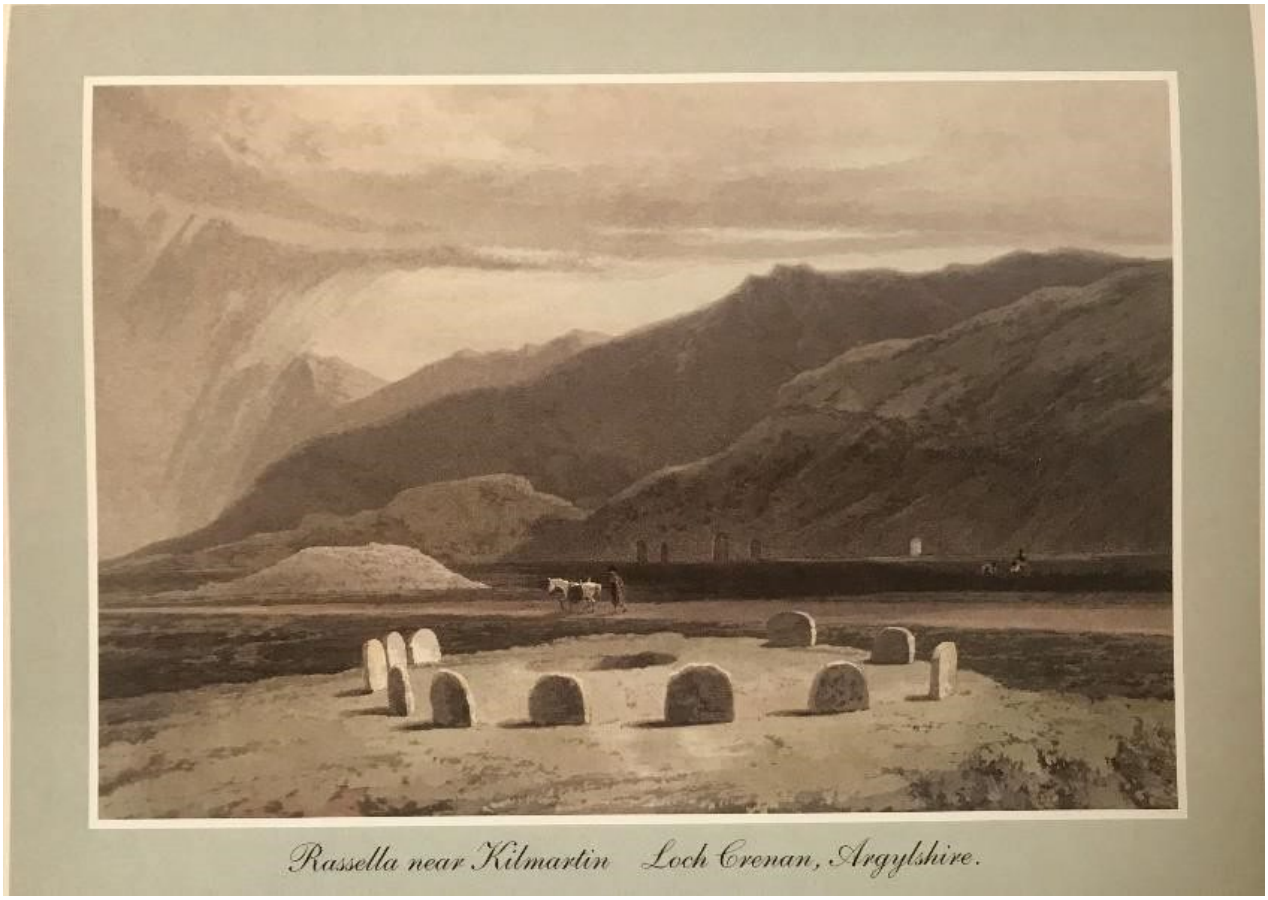

Figure 46: Plate 22 from volume 2 of Danniell's Travels.

The beginning of the 'Clearances' in Arran, and the arrival of modern farming.

By the time of Danniell, the Clearances in Arran were underway, its history relevant for what it did to ancient remains. The expression 'Clearances' refers to the clearance of people from the land due to the change from strip farming to modern, and is a process rather than an episode. It was and is highly contentious to this day, in the way that the Irish Famine of the 1840s so remains. It was often appallingly done, though the worst passed Arran by.

One motive was economic. There was money to be made. In Arran it was often justified or disguised by a distain for the local people, sometimes with racial aspects:

"*The motives for such forced removals were not just economic… hostility towards the natives stemmed not only from the enclosure of ideology…but*

also from intemperate anti-Celtic racism. The factor, John Paterson was openly so in a paper dated 1837. Nothing could be done with the natives until Gaelic was eradicated. He described the women as having peculiar physical characteristics. He thought that like the Jews, though honest with each other, they thought it no great crime to get as much as they could from strangers, or those in a station above them in rank..... In this light, the Clearances can be seen almost as a kind of 'ethnic cleansing." (Campbell, 2007 p 137-8)

British class structure was laminated, in contrast to Celtic societies' more cellular structure, where the clan chief lived *primus inter pares* amongst his people, perhaps entitled to a better hovel. This gap shows in the generally assumed superiority of antiquarians, farmers, and professors of various disciplines who visited the island and its archaeology.

For our narrow purposes, the Arran Clearances start with the arrival of John Burrell in 1766 to impose, at the Duke's behest, the latest theories of agriculture. Like many latest theories, they did not work. His were naïve, at least in execution. He wanted to transform communal farming, which had provided a dreary subsistence living for many, into large, enclosed farm units which would provide a better life for some few and much more wealth for the Duke, who however may have been initially more interested in the preservation of his game. (Little, p134)

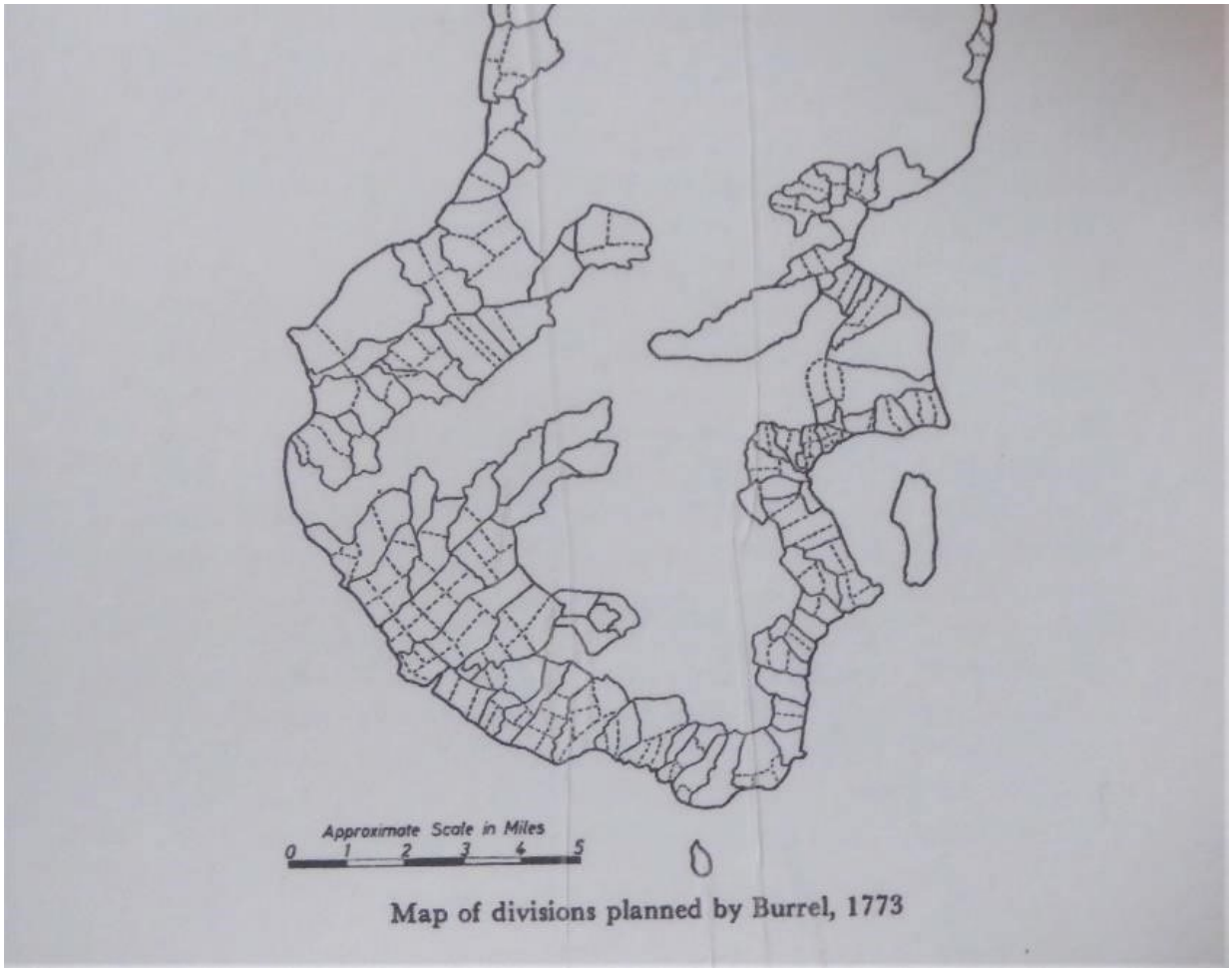

Figure 47: Burrell's plans Brodick Museum

Ineptly executed, significant results would only start to appear from about 1814, at the hands of others. It was a long slog, but eventually communal farms re-emerged as large holdings, mostly in the south, or as sheep runs in the mountainous north.

The preponderant pivot point was Culloden in 1746, after which Clan Chiefs turned into landlords, aspirant to gentrify, as Pennant related. There are many works on this contested historical period; it is a crowded field. Those seeking deeper insight may wish to consult two clear, well written accounts namely Fry (2005), and Richards (2008). There are many others, from all viewpoints.

In Arran, Lowland improvers and farmers were brought in. The local people were generally left to fend for themselves. Many left for the mainland or were

sent into newly acquired Canada. The unenclosed good lands gradually succumbed. The new priority was to clear land for enclosed fields, the plough, dykes, and buildings. Many archaeological sites were utilised and robbed, like Machrie, Blackwaterfoot, and the huge cairn at Monamore, Lamlash. The process left remains at Machrie damaged, Blackwaterfoot gone, and Monamore almost gone, today scarcely known. For a fuller account of Arran's Clearances see Little (1999).

Figure 48: The little that remains of the huge Monamore cairn. There appears to be a small megalith remaining, and the cairn is the slight elevation between it and the sheep pens and chimney. Ground truthing persuades me that a circle lies near the surface. The map above indicates a clear view of the bay, now lost. The ancient shoreline is not ascertained.

By the mid-nineteenth century, writers speak of the wholesale destruction of stone circles and other monuments for these purposes. However, a counterbalancing sense of loss and revived interest in antiquity also arose. Men of learning came to study these monuments, upon their own terms, accepting the unstopability of 'progress'.

The concept of 'cultural evolution' was then generally abroad, namely that human progress was thought to advance in stages from savage to primitive, barbarian to civilised (see Trigger Chap 4). This helpfully accommodated empire and racial views. It justified the status quo.

The archaeological issue of the day often became which *race* or *races* had produced this ancient landscape, these marvels. That language of 'race', strange to us, was current in this field and elsewhere. It propped up *avantage acquis*; some insist it still does. The 'improvers' were 'improving' the 'aboriginals' in Arran as elsewhere.

Highland visitors today marvel at the 'unspoiled wilderness' and fail to see the spoor of ethnic cleansing. This is hardly new: '*Solitudinem facunt et pacem appellant'*, said Tacitus, of Romans in Scotland: *They make a desert, and call it peace*.

The Statistical Accounts of 1793 and 1845.

These remarkable initiatives, starting in 1793, invited the Ministers from all Church of Scotland parishes to submit a report on their parish, detailing the population, resources and history of them. This was before the first Census in 1801. The first Account was in 1793, so we initially step back for a moment between Pennant and Danniell. The second was in 1845, so we there jump forward to just before the Antiquaries arrived.

Arran is split north and south into two parishes: Kilmory in the east, Kilbride to the west. The cleavage is almost central until low south. The reasons for this are historical, acknowledging Mary and Bridget respectively.

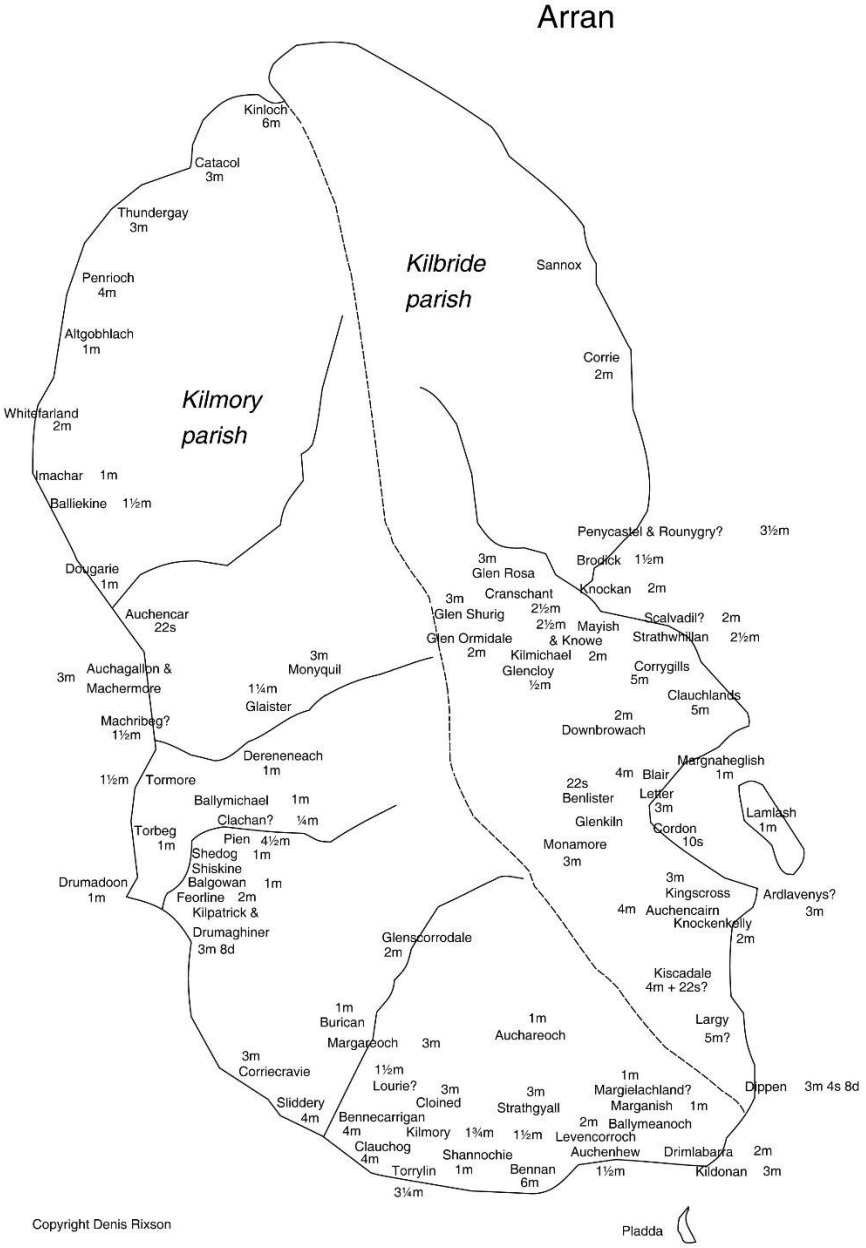

Figure 49: Parish Diagram. Denis Rixson. las.denisrixson.com

The 1793, or **Old Statistical Account (OSA)**, is limited for our purposes. The starting point inevitably is the derivation of the word Arran. John Hamilton, Minster of Kilmory, like Martin, favours the slaughter of Fionn.

In his time the soil is gravelish, clay, and mossy, capable of producing light crops of barley, oats; some places yield 'pease' and flax for private use only. Potatoes are planted in every farm. (Statistical Account, 1793, p 165 et seq) Longevity was noticeable, but many newborn infants died '*by the falling down of the jaws'*. (p166) Some women died in childbirth. Both situations were '*... attributed to the unskilfulness of midwives, who venture upon the practice from natural courage, without necessary and proper knowledge, there being none duly qualified in the island.'* The ailment is lockjaw, or tetanus, and the cause was thought to be treating the umbilical wound with gannet oil. Gemma Smith (Ph.D. researcher, Celtic Department, Glasgow University), says (private conversation) that the same thing was said of St Kilda, on which she writes, but the actual cause was bacteria in the soil, caused by potatoes being brought onto that island. The Reverend's explanation is, she says, classic 'blame the woman'.

In 1797 salmon and trout were abundant in the burns, which '*scarce deserved the name of river',* and numberless springs which empty into the sea after '*a short and rapid course'*. (p166} These likely reflect the Neolithic need for convenient water and routes.

The sea coast, especially in the east and south, was '*a very inhospitable shore'*; less so toward the west and north. The submerged Iron Rock near Corriecravie, '*has proved detrimental to many vessels*.' (p 167) My lounge is graced with a wooden balustrade salvaged from *The Bessie Arnold*; in 1908 it found Iron Rock to be as described. Its dead rest in Kilmory churchyard.

The waters were abundant with fish, though the locals had poor skills in fishing, other than for herring: '*A huge fish, call Sail-fish'* was caught by instruments *'of the harpoon kind'*, requiring dexterity when about to stick the fish, '*as the attempt is sometimes dangerous*. (p 168)

This seems to be a kind of billfish, growing up to about 1.524m (5 feet), like a swordfish, a strong fast and demanding game fish. The meat is said to be tough.

The chief island advantages were good water and pure air. There were many disadvantages and no safe harbours, by which '*many real losses are sustained'*. Gaelic was universally spoken, '*yet persons advanced in years understand the English language tolerably'*. Otters and occasionally seals were taken, and their skins were valuable. The nature of the soil was such '*that they cannot begin early to till*', like their forebears. (p 169-170) The population of Kilmory was 3259, but many young people went to sea or neighbouring counties, especially Ayrshire.

In Kilbride, the Rev. Gershom Stuart, (OSA, Number XXXVII, p 578) was sure Arran's name came from 'Ar', meaning 'high', and 'in', meaning 'island', not a modern idea at all.

His soil was hard and stony, and most of the farms were on the declivity of hills; '*the best prepared land scarce yields two returns'*. (ibid) To supply the deficiency of corn, great quantities of potatoes were planted, the principal food for nine months of the year. At the beginning of winter, fishermen came '*from the North Coun*try' to fish for the Glasgow market, *'and continue with success till May'*. In July the herring arrived, '*when the inhabitants bestow the most unwearied application*' to the fishing till the end of November.
(p 579)

The air was '*very salubrious*. Coughs and rheumatisms were prevalent during winter, '*much owing to the dampness of their houses, and the scarcity of fuel'*, attributed to the coal tax. Keeping dry, warm and out of wind is winter task enough in today's Arran.

Infants were dying from the falling down of the jaw here also; the '*eight-day sickness'*, untreatable, and again attributed to the midwives.

Goatfell yielded many '*transparent stones… naturally formed into pentagons, heptagons and octagons, and all pointed at the top as if done by art*.'
Lapidaries purchased these, retailing them as Arran Stones, Cairngorms and Scotch topazes. Most were dark brown, but some '*of a beautiful yellow'* were reckoned very valuable. (p 580) Were these transacted in the Neolithic?

Stuart records the construction of the lighthouse at Pladda, directing ships into Lamlash at night, for the south end was rocky with far reaching submerged basaltic dykes, and many shipwrecks happened there. (p581) How did Neolithic mariners fare? Did they have their versions of lighthouses? You may have to take your tides when they run, night-time or not, like Julius Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* Book IV.

Kilbride's population would have been considerably greater did not upwards of 300 sailors go annually to the Royal Navy, the bounty fishing or onboard merchant ships, '*many of whom never return*.' The possibility of a large Neolithic population is hinted at, but no potatoes then existed in Arran, nor metal to cut the turf. The inadequacy of corn may be worthy of note when considering possible arrivals bearing a metalliferous culture. Potato had by 1793 swelled population sizes. Little (p 136) suggests 5804 for 1793, 6541 (and growing) for 1821.

The New Statistical Account 1845

The Old Account was silent regarding prehistoric remains, but the New Account, 52 years later, is replete with reference. The world and science had moved on quickly. Fossils and geology had changed the world view. Darwin lay a little ahead, but the tide was running. Both ministers impress as agreeable, well-rounded, well-read people, more worldly and better educated and engaged than were their predecessors.

Rev. Angus MacMillan in KIlmory on the west says that:

" *There are a few Danish forts, Druidical circles, obelisks of unhewn stone, and tumuli of considerable magnitude, scattered through the parish*." (NSA, p 51) The tumuli have gone, but their then importance is significant.

He describes Drumadoon, where a wall runs from one cliff to the other side, enclosing a level area of several acres, with the ruins of '*rude habitation'*. The

wall, dry built, *'is now fallen, and a great quantity of the stone carried away for drains, dikes, etc.; but still the ruins are very extensive, and the gateway distinctly discernible'*. (ibid) He mentions another, '*but much smaller one'*, Tor a' Chaisteal (near Corriecravie), then thought a 'Danish Fort'. '*Druidical circles'* are found on '*many of the moors,'* (p 52) and the moss which generally surrounds them indicates a onetime covering of woods. He speaks of Suidhe Choir Fhionn, and repeats the old tales, adding that Fionn's Cauldron would serve for a boiler for the largest steamer yet to have crossed the Atlantic. (The first was the USS Savannah in 1819.)

Bran's stone he says is '*one of the stones that form the circle';* see Fig 14.

Three upright columns stand nearby, with a fourth long fallen, attempted to be made into mill stones, which did not work, and there they remain. (Circle 2)

They consisted of primitive red sandstone, and millstone grit, not found locally, and so were carried a considerable distance, up a long but gentle ascent to the scene:

"*The conveyance of such immense blocks, from such a distance, and by such a way, would require more skill in mechanics than is possessed by the present inhabitants of the parish*." (p 52)

Rev McMillan thinks Scandinavians the likely creators; their native country has many such. The moss around the eminence on which these obelisks stand contains large trunks of oak trees there imbedded, showing the place to have been formerly a forest, and proof that 'the *place was formerly a fane of Druidical devotion'*. (p 52) Stonehenge and all similar monuments will '*ever be attributed to'* Druids, yet such remans are found in Scandinavia and Scotland, '*where we have no evidence to show that they (Druids) ever existed.'* Such monuments '*were clearly erected for public purposes, whether legislative, judicial, festal, sepulchral or sacred, and consequently vary much in form and dimensions*.' (p 53) In some senses, this discussion has not moved much further on.

There were similar obelisks, he says, which are evidently monumental, '*such are those at Margegrioch, Auchincar, & &.'* Margegrioch has two columns about 30 feet (9.144m) distant:

"*Between them there is a parallel row of smaller stones, forming a parallelogram about 4 feet wide. At a little distance, a smaller area is enclosed in a similar manner. The larger is said to be the grave of one of Fingal's heroes; the smaller that of his dog. Both were opened some time since but found to contain nothing but dust and stones. Instead of the side stones .... being replaced in their former situation, as interesting monuments of antiquity, all that could be removed were carried away for building*." (p 53)

The Blackwaterfoot cairn was still there for him to see:

"*There are also many cairns or tumuli in the parish. The largest in Scotland is said to be that at Blackwater Foo*t, *It is now much diminished in size, owing to the great quantity of stones that has been carried away from it for dikes, drains, houses & but when entire, it was said to measure across upwards of 200 feet. To the north of it, and not far from Sliabh nan Caraichan (*Carraigean, the Machrie Moor Circles area*) is another, said to mark the spot where Fingal held his court of justice. The stone on which the culprit stood is still pointed out and is called the Panel's Stone. "(p 53-4)* This sounds like Pennant's other large cairn.

'Panel' is Scots Law's term for a defendant on indictment.

The cist between Circles 10 and 5 at Machrie, which the Minster says was attributed to Fionn's daughter, when opened yielded '*only an urn containing ashes. The urn was broken in the opening, and the fragments carried off by those engaged in the operation.'* (p 54) See Fig 36.

At Gleann-an-t Suidhe, *Glen of the Seat*, on The String, was a cairn, '*now moss covered'*, and a seat called Suidhe Challuim Chille, *Columba's Seat,* where he allegedly rested when crossing the island. (NR **96787 35574)** Up at Catacol was another cairn, called Aran, or Ar Fhinn, claimed as a marker for Fingal's defeat of the Norsemen under Manus, and thereby allegedly naming the island. McMillan records that the '*present road'* has been cut through it, the material used on the road, and '*now not a vestige remains to mark its site*.' (p 54)

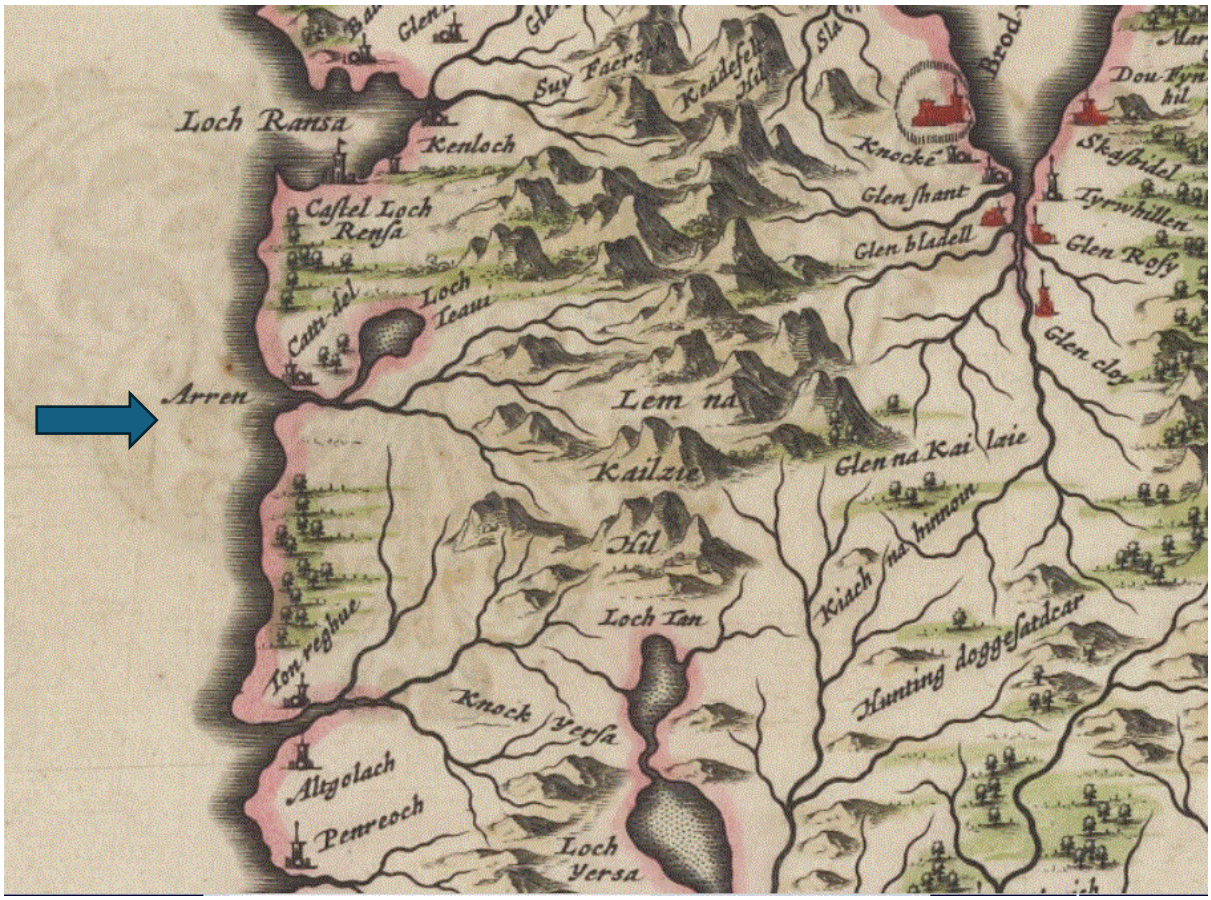

Figure 50: Arren in Catacol. Blaue.

The missing Sannox Circle and the missing Glen Shurig Circle.

On the east side of the island, in the parish of Kilbride, McNaughton noted that:

"*Relics of much earlier times … are presented in many parts of the parish. Some of these are, however, disappearing every year before the attacks of the pickaxe and the plough. Last year a double circle of these erect stones … which stood on the farm of South Sannox, was used as building materials for a dry dike; and about twenty-four years ago, a very complete circle at the mouth of Glensheraig was removed, in clearing the field in which it stood for the operations of the plough. But there are imperfect remnants of circles still to be seen at the top of Blarmore glen, at the head of Glencloy, and at some other places*." (p 22-3)

Figure 51 Site of the lost Glen Shurig Stone Circle. Brodick Castle lies beyond the foreground trees.

Many standing stones were still to be seen. The largest was the one on the Brodick Shore Road, but others appear, singly or in groups, at Glenshant, Sannox, Mayish and Largiemore. He speculates that some may be the remains of circles (*the stone at the Kildonan road turn off is said to be such, but I query that)*. Glenshant is poorly defined. He may refer to the megaliths on Home Farm, Brodick; if not he may refer to something now gone nearer Goat Fell's shoulder (Headrick p45) . Sannox has two listed standing stones extant. Mayish is extant.

Figure 52: East Mayish stone is not much visited. It looks over to Goat Fell. l

By Largiemore, he may be referring to Giants Graves at Whiting Bay, or the standing stones further south at Largiebeg.

Of the ‘sepulchral cairns’, one or two are not far from the manse, on the farm of ‘Blarmore’ (Lamlash). The largest that he has seen is one of more than 200 feet (61m) in circumference at the head of Moniemore glen. This we have met. Since it is on a wide plain near the mouth of narrow pass between east and west of the island, he surmises this was the scene of a battle:

“*A considerable part of the stones was carried away two years ago, for building a dike in the neighbourhood; and as those on the surface were removed several stone coffins, each composed of six unhewn flags, were found under them*.” (p 23)

Figure 53: The dike running up to Glenkiln Farm (mid right distance) gives some idea of the volume of stones taken from the cairn. The wall also runs back from the photographer to the cairn site.

Similar coffins were every year met with, in cutting drains and ditches, in different parts of the parish, sometimes connected with cairns and sometimes not:

"*There is a large collection of them on a narrow plain near the shore at Largiebeg. In some of them, when opened, there were found rude urns of unbaked clay, containing ashes. One turned up last year in the neighbourhood of the manse contained human bones*." (p 23)

Figure 54: Largiebeg, looking northeast

McMillan speaks of a man at nearby South Kiscadale who, finding one in his garden, discovered a piece of gold in the form of a handle of a drawer with some iron or steel, much corroded at either end. He concealed his find, took it to Glasgow, and sold it to a jeweller who melted it down into '*rings and brooches*.' It must have been large enough to do that. Accordingly, "*It was therefore, never submitted to the eye of any experienced antiquary, to ascertain either its age or probable use."* From the description, he thinks it was probably '*the guard of a sword handle*.' (p 23)

Conflicting attitudes to the antiquities are reflected in his account of the ancient burial ground at Holy Isle, once a monastery, but long abandoned, which for many years the people of Arran used for burial. They ceased doing so after a tragic loss of life when crossing to the island:

"*The situation of this burying place was pointed by a number of rude tombstones which lay in heaps upon the ground; till two year ago, a modern utilitarian, who had none of Dr Johnson's reverence for sacred places, cleared the spot, and turned the bones and ashes of the dead to account, by rearing from them a crop of onions and carrots*." (p 25)

Other antiquities would be found thereafter, and still are, but it does seem that this period was something of a cornucopia, and that the flow then ebbed. This may be because every era, from Neolithic to early Victorian, had exploited the same places, each by their own technology. The runrig system must, from time immemorial, have reworked the same patch year after year, building it up like a Middle Eastern tell, leaving everything else more or less intact. When the agricultural changes came, much was recycled and so swept away, and the frenetic improvers were digging up the world of their deep ancestors, or at least predecessors.

Rev M'Naughton of Kilbride, on leaving his readers, looks back from his time to a 1793 Arran as rude and primitive as the most remote islands of the Hebrides; there were not then six carts in the whole parish, nor a mile of regularly formed road for them. The common people's houses were in

general the merest hovels, their clothes coarse and homemade. Food was scarce; their stunted cattle died in hundreds in spring. Literacy and education were little known. Duchess Anne's excellent stone Lamlash harbour was allowed to be pillaged to build the village, leaving the island without anchorage. (p 38)

Perhaps the wonder is that any archaeology remained.

CHAPTER 3

HEADRICK: THE ANTIQUARIAN GEOLOGIST.

In 1807 Headrick, a geologist and cleric, visited Arran. He was, arguably, a 'man of science', with strong antiquarian interest in matters Scottish. He wrote, as an aside, on Arran's antiquities which he noted as he made his way around the island. I think that he shows a developing understanding of the 'whys and wherefores' of prehistoric materials, compares them with other locations and seeks to make sense of them in his own times. A continuum of Arran antiquarians is developing. More lost sites appear.

In 1807 James Headrick wrote his *View of the Isle of Arran*. (henceforth VIA) He, and his book, are well enough known by those interested in antiquarian Arran. Suited to his times, he merits more attention than this passing one.

In the Scottish tradition of difficult and thrawn learned men, cantankerous Headrick picked fights with all to hand. He was energetic, brave, gifted and aware of it, and ambitious for preferment. He wanted a job. His manner seemed unlikely, at least to me, much to charm his intended audience, the landed interest of his day. He makes his pitch that his employment would much reward the Duke, nodding perhaps to nearby Bute.

He embraced, and was a pioneer of, the new science of '*Mineralogy*', now Geology, brought to hot prominence by Hutton in 1776. Lochranza was Hutton's best example of the age of rocks, conflicting, some famously thought, with The Rock of Ages.

Still current was Bishop Ussher's determination of the date of Creation as being at 6pm on the 22nd October 4004 BC. (Ussher, 1654) Ussher was an outstanding intellectual in an intellectually outstanding time and place.

The new imagining of geological time was fundamentally challenging to previous belief systems, as was the discovery of extinct animals and new, nascent, evolutionary theory. Even as Headrick's book was being published, Darwin's grandfather was assembling what Charles Darwin would later publish as evolutionary theory. Archaeology's C14 convulsions post the 1950s were as nothing compared to these changes. Against this background, we have Headrick as a witness.

He sets out his stall:

"... (the author) having been occasionally employed, during several years, by respectable noblemen and gentlemen, is making agricultural and mineralogical surveys of their properties in the Highlands and Isles of Scotland..." (VIA,v)

In modern parlance, he talks his book:

"... humbly flatters himself he has collected a mass of facts, which are not only interesting, to the individuals who employed him, but to the public at large. Under this impression, he ventures to issue a volume, as a specimen of other familiar works, if this should be so fortunate as to meet with public approbation."

He intended to describe Arran's geology, not as a list of everything to be observed, but by localities, in the order that a visitor who followed his route would encounter them. This he would do, notwithstanding that the scheme would '*keep out the skill of the Architect, and the order in which he had chosen to arrange them.*' (VIA, vi)

Headrick's scheme would necessitate the repetition of basics, without which he would render himself '*unintelligible'* This scheme is a godsend for archaeologists. For reasons not stated, he chose to write also upon the archaeology of the island, and on other matters such as its history, the Fionn Cycle, and Gaelic culture as well. Other writers, like Jameson (1798), mostly ignored this material.

I wonder if Headrick had in mind the nearby third Earl of Bute, who in 1761 became the first Scot to be Prime Minister of Britain, and who was a founding member and first

President of the Scottish Society of Antiquaries in 1780 (Bell, 1981, p 12). Perhaps Arran's Duke would be thereby impressed.

Headrick, perhaps unknowingly, was doing missionary work for archaeology in Arran. Until today, books on Arran often twin geology with archaeology, sometimes adding history and biology. He also acknowledged the importance of Gaelic on the island, if only to suggest that monoglot English would improve the implementation of his proposed schemes:

"*This recommendation I would apply to the whole Highland and Isles. Let us be one people, having one language, the same laws, and similar customs. In this way, and this alone, the power and prosperity of these kingdoms may be carried to an extent far beyond what they have yet attained*." (VIA, 14)

The IVth Duke of Hamilton, an investor in the Darien Scheme, had been leader of the anti-Union faction prior to 1707, though he sat out the final vote on account of 'toothache'. Had Union failed, he was the prime claimant to the Scottish crown. One wonders at Headrick's research, and diplomatic insight.

Headrick gives longwinded, patriotic, panegyrics to King Robert the Bruce, whose questionable sojourn on the island generally replaced Fionn MacCoul's equally improbable legend. The Bruce was, of course, *fons et origo* of the Duke's holdings and wealth.

Some things do not change:

"*The author anticipates another objection – That his descriptions of minerals are too long-winded, and tiresome. To this objection he plead guilty; and the only defence he would humbly offer, is, that Mineralogy being made up of a slang, unmeaning, and disgusting, to men of intelligence; and being, further, adumbrated by crude and absurd theories, she cannot yet rear her head, and assume the rank of a science."* (VIA, vii)

He declares that mineralogical science cannot so raise its head by picking up stones on a sea beach or composing crude theories from specimens collected in the closet. No:

"*This desirable effect can only be produced by grappling with mountains; by accurate observation; and by minute description of nature." (ibid)*

No theorist is match for the pragmatist. Such as himself.

The Duke? Who knows what His Grace made of it all; no job offer followed. Perhaps His Grace was wearily familiar with "dreary dominies", as Lord Auchinleck said of Dr Johnson. Arran's Duke would have experienced many flattering and self-interested proposals, and doubtless was clear sighted and knowing about them. Little (1999, pp 133-4) suggests ducal resistance to any improvement threatening the island's game prevailed until the 1830s.

Headrick's future can be found elsewhere (Burns, 2002); for our purposes, we now mount saddles with him and set off round south Arran.

Brodick.

Jameson had noted that the start and finish of things Arran is usually Brodick, and so it was with Headrick. Landing at Cladach, he briskly headed up Goat Fell, where we may leave him until:

"*Descending by the southern and steep shoulder of the mountain, saw at the head the hollow where the descent begins to grow less rapid, a parallelogramic mass of granite, of vast dimensions, and about fourteen inches in thickness, placed in a horizontal position, like the floor of a house. This could not have happened from its accidentally sliding down the mountain; because.... It was elevated above the heathy surface, and the opposite side rested on two thin granites, situated near its angles, and placed on edge. In front, it is so high that people may easily shelter themselves under it. Several rounded blocks are situated below, though it rests on none of them; and they seem to have been used as props in the progress of elevating the stone. I suppose this may have been a Druidical alter, or place where religious ceremonies performed, to which the awful grandeur of the surrounding scenery would give great effect.*

Below this, several copious springs burst out, which, gradually collecting, form a burn. Found the heat of one these springs to be 46 (degrees), which is probably the medium temperature of the mountain. (VIA, p46)

Later writers will return to this, but I have not found this site. Its location is ambiguous, the description limited. OS marks **NR 98590 40950** 'South Slabs', and **NR 98567 41513**

‘Rosa Slabs’. They might be worth a look-for those with vigour, clear heads and stout limbs.

There are rectangular white flat patches there visible on aerial scans. Without knowing the route of his descent, and to where, it is hard to say.

“*South of Arran Castle, a beautiful valley, called Glen Shant, or Valley of Enchantment, about a mile in every direction, extends from the head of Brodick Bay. From the head of this valley, Glen Rosa extends about five miles towards the north-west, being separated from each other by a ridge of hills. The streams which flow from these glens, form a junction near the mouth of Glen Shirreg, and, taking a sweep along the seabeach, form an incommodious harbour for boats at the head of the bay. “(*VIA, p 49)

Relating this to the geography of today, Arran Castle remains *in situ*, and Glen Rosa is easily found radiating northwest. ‘Glen Sherrig’ is Glen Shurig, beloved of many a youthful camper, pointing west towards Machrie, and offering passage there. Glen Shant is harder to find, as the name is not now in common use, but Burrell’s map shows it, with Glenrosa as ‘Glenrosie’, with what Headrick would have seen. ‘South of the castle’ is a 200 metre strip of land to the sea. His Glen Shant extends a mile in all directions, joining Glens Rosa and Shurig, and extending along Cladach. To reach modern Glen Shant he would not have left the shoulders of Goat Fell, so the place name area likely has shrunk and moved back up the hill.

Figure 55: Burrell's diagram of the area, with Glenrosa, Glen Shant and Glen Shurig farms marked.

The place name ‘Brodick’ originally related to the bay, as its etymology says.

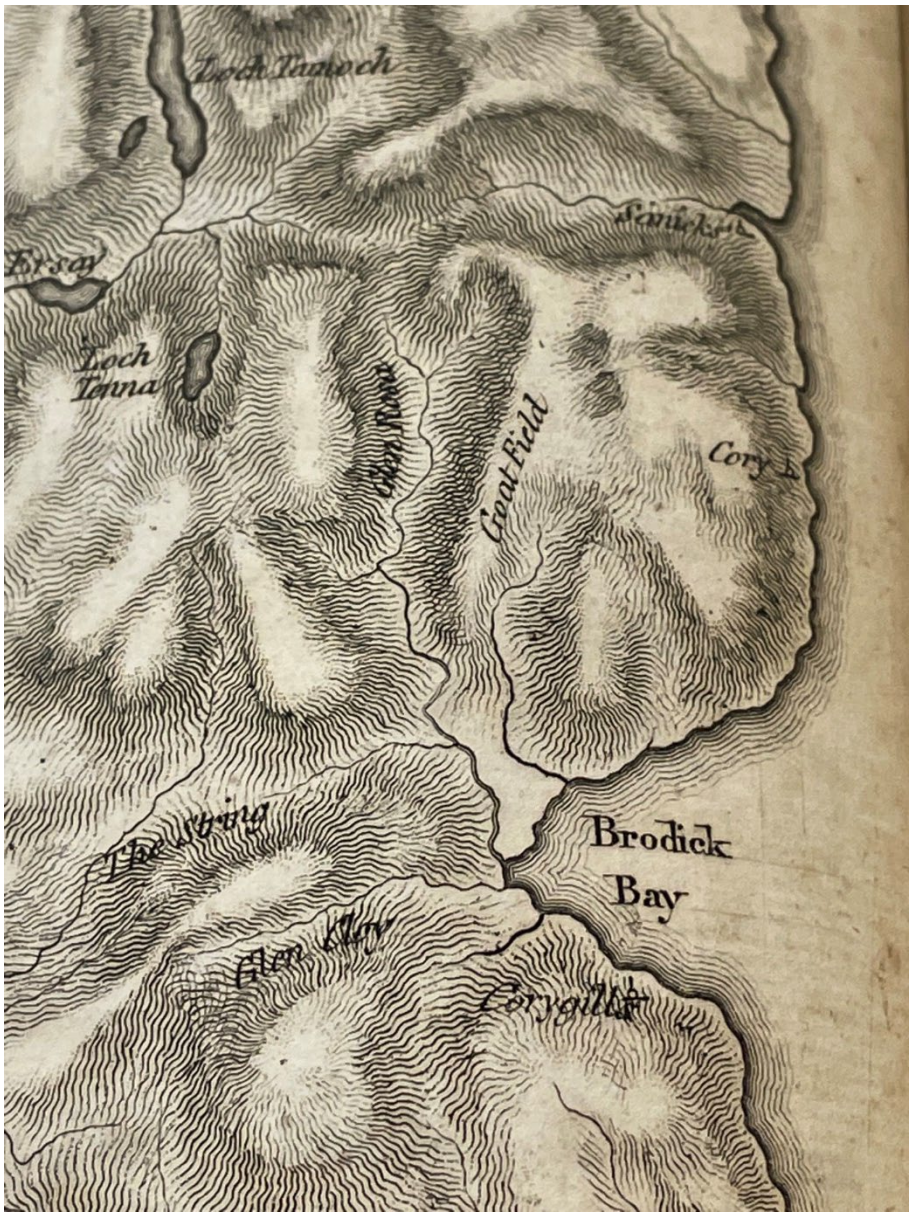

Figure 56: Jamieson 1798, showing Glen Cloy and The String. The good ground is left of 'Brodick Bay'.

The area south of today's golf course is still known as Invercloy. 'Inver' denotes 'river mouth', Cloy is perhaps an anglicisation of Gaelic *Gleann Cloiche*, 'stony glen', supplying the stream from the south-southwest that debouches there, but Robertson leans to 'MacLouis' for source. (King, 2019, p 411) There were ancient finds near its mouth.

The placenames are worth researching, if only to eliminate Norse and other usages and reveal how the Gaelic speaking namers thought. Glen Rosa is Gaelic *gleann, with* Norse *Hross,* horse, and the plural suffix *á* to give *Hross-Á,'* horse river'. It appears in 1610 Pont as Glen Rosy, elsewhere in 1450 as Glenrossy. (Currie, 1908, p 25, plus manuscript annotations on author's personal copy of same by Neil Conley, formerly of Mitchell Library Glasgow). King thinks not and favours a Gàidhlig word denoting 'tumbling'. (private conversation)

Glen Shurrig is given by Currie as from Gaelic *Searrach,* a colt or foal. Conley amends this to Glen Sherraig, *Hjardh-vik,'* Herd Bay', from Norse hjördh, a herd or flock, and claims old spellings of Glenservaig, and 1590 Glen Sherwick.

So far, so Norse, and practical. Glen Shant is more interesting. Scottish place names abound with '*sith*', pronounced 'she'. They mostly refer to the communal dwellings of the 'other' people, the faeries, the variety of spirit beings that, into modernity, were thought by Arran Celts mischievously to interact with humanity. They were rarely a welcome presence, better avoided or frustrated. Currie in 1908 translates Glen Shant as '*The sacred glen'*, from Gaelic *Seanta,* cognate with Latin *Sanctus,* to give 'charmed, enchanted or sacred'. The MacLouis derivation slightly supports this.

Glen Shant is Headrick's strange site, coincidentally or otherwise.

Headrick found:

"*In several places there are heaps of stones, which I take to be ancient cairns, piled upon the ashes of the dead. In two places there are tall obelisks, which are supposed to be monuments on the graves of heroes. But I take them to be remains of Druidical circles, or places of worship. A more entire circle of this sort is on the rising ground at the mouth of Glen Shirreg, towards the west; and a massy obelisk, perhaps the remains of a circle, is seen in Broddick wood, towards the south*. (VIA p 50)

Easily enough identifiable is the '*more entire circle'* in Glen Shuirig; this is referenced, and the site is photographed elsewhere here (Fig 51). It becomes '*an alleged circle'* by the time of J. Bryce (1872, p 52). It was entirely removed for the plough. Lidar may have resurrected it (infra p161).

Figure 57: 1864 OS map showing Glen Shurig circle site. The Castle is off map, upper right.

The '*massy obelisk'* looks like the large menhir on the Shore Road at Brodick (Fig 16), just before the road turns right to the school. The two places where there were obelisks seem to suggest the stones on the Home Farm, at the risk of squeezing into the remaining landscape what the past wrote about (Figs 14,15). Not all local stones survived to the present. What '*the heaps of stones'* that he took to be '*ancient cairns piled on the ashes of the dead'* (p50) are is intriguing, perhaps partly reconciled with other accounts from Martin and Pennant, as well as with subsequent excavations and mapping.

The Brodick area has not been treated or considered as an archaeological landscape, as far as I know. I think that antiquarians like Headrick tug our sleeves here. There are the stones that he mentions, plus a fallen one in the forest, the rock art of Stronach Ridge, not then discovered, the East Mayish standing stone, and other deposits around the now golf course.

The String leading west to the Machrie landscape was named by Vikings, who likely used it as a *tairbeart,* or carry over strip, for boats. The Glen's name, *Gleann an t-Suidhe (*pronounced '*Glen An Too-ey',* Glen of the Seat) **NR 96702 35592** allegedly memorialises the stone seat there that Columba allegedly rested himself upon when in transit in early monastic days. If he ever came here.

From Invercloy, a path, now a forest track, leads southward towards modern Lamlash. It is punctuated by monuments, culminating in the stone circle at the head of the present Brodick-Lamlash road at Cnoc Dail **NS 01885 33425**. This latter is a work of scale, apparently significantly intact, that looks over to Brodick Bay. It sits near the major pitchstone seams of Corriegills, and the rearward slope leads to the monument rich Lamlash Bay area, then, as now, a far from '*incommodious*' port, but the best one in the Clyde and Irish seas.

Headrick notes that:

*"Through Glen Shirreg, a road, or rather tract, (*The String) *conducts to the opposite side of the island; and a good road might easily be made in this direction."* (VIA, 57)

He was not wrong. In 1811 the first roads were formed starting from Lamlash to Brodick, then from Brodick to Blackwaterfoot, on the *southern* side of the valley. Today one can see on the north side the track over An Tunna that Headrick, Pennant and Martin rode. Halfway along is the Neolithic cairn and standing stone at Monyquil **NR 94010 35282**. The road building programme kept going. By 1817, road making had been extended to Sannox.

Over the hill to Lamlash

Headrick describes a '*southern ridge (called Broddick*, or *hill of a gentle rise*)', near whose summit, '*on the northern declivity'*, he found '*many masses of pitchstone; though I could not find any solid rock of that fossil'*. (VIA, 58) He must be speaking of what we call Corriegills **NS 038 339**, which, presumably, was talked of then as 'Brodick'. His etymology of Brodick seems well wide of the mark; there is little dispute that it is from Norse elements for 'broad' and '*vik*' or 'bay'.

In his day, the settlement of 'Brodick' was *Traigh Chaisteal,* Castle Beach below the castle, a name now used again by Calmac for their ferry terminal across the bay. The landing place was near the castle at Claddach. The Edwardian quay is still there to be seen.

All this hints, perhaps, at how today's Brodick was seen by recently earlier people. The standout feature is the Bay. An important part is the '*incommodius*' nature of it for

shipping. That remained true enough until later in the nineteenth century when spindly piers were built at Invercloy for paddle steamers, the pier moving further east to today's location for deeper water.

Figure 58: Relocated Brodick Pier. Castle in on opposite shore. Card dated 1903.

The Castle harbour location was the earlier one where shipping could land. This may someway explain the location of the castle, which has a very long history. Relevant or not, it is near to the strange, apparently artificial platform that Headrick refers to as a significant prehistoric site.

Corriegills ridge is a point of pivot; Brodick Bay to the north, Lamlash Bay to the south. The mountains, especially to the north, are spectacular. Today, it is hard to wipe the modern road and traffic from our thoughts. As one rises up the hill from Lamlash to Brodick, the alpine ridge ascends spectacularly into view at the crest. (Fig 6

Headrick's eye leads him naturally to travel south-southwest along Glen Cloy, which turns in due course into Glean Dubh, (dark). This leads him to '*the commodious mansion of Captain Fullarton* (or MacLouis, from 'Lewis', suggesting Gall-Gael)*, long celebrated for hospitality and a kind reception of strangers* ', features still available at the now Kilmichael Hotel there, of necessity on a more commercial basis. Headrick has set off from Brodick golf club where the shore road turns, proceeded southwards at the corner, towards today's Ormidale Hotel. The road becomes more a path, and forks to offer a leftward path to Glenrickard Chambered Cairn. Following that path, one tracks east of The Sheehans, or Sithean, a collection of drumlins. The forestry track emerges across to the modern road from the Lamlash Road stone circle at Cnoc na Dail (Dale Rise), itself leading to Dunan Beag (*small eminence or fort)* Chambered Cairn and standing stones on the south facing ridge. The Invercloy to Cnoc na Dail forestry tracks look likely to have followed the older paths, themselves no doubt informed by the logistics and topology of the situation.

On the east side of the road, he finds:

"... some tall obelisks, which seem to have been druidical circles, or places of worship. Contiguous to these, is a circular mound of loose stones, which seems to have been a small Danish encampment. Further east are the ruins of what seems to have been a conical building or fort, such as are still seen in Glenelg, Kintail, Lochalsh, etc; thought the most entire of any I have seen is in the parish of Lochs, west side of the island of Lewis. On the top of Dun Fioun (Fingal's Fort) there is a round eminence, distinguished amidst the heath by its verdure, which seems to have been a vitrified fort, such as abound in the North Highlands, though it now concealed by soil and grass". (p64)

This all deserves closer examination. The modern history of the stones at Lamlash Road is a little complicated. A wooden artistic structure reminiscent of Machrie (Fig 60) was erected near the stones Headrick speaks of, which are still in good order (Fig 59). They were cursorily excavated by Bryce (1860, p513) .

Figure 59: The Lamlash stones. Are they 'tall'?

The wooden memorial was to David Thomson of the Glasgow Arran Society. It did not remain there long, being removed to the Brodick Museum Garden where it remains (Fig 61).

M'Arthur (1873 p 32) introduces, perhaps in error, notice of some stones vaguely reminiscent of the modern carving. I have not resolved this issue.

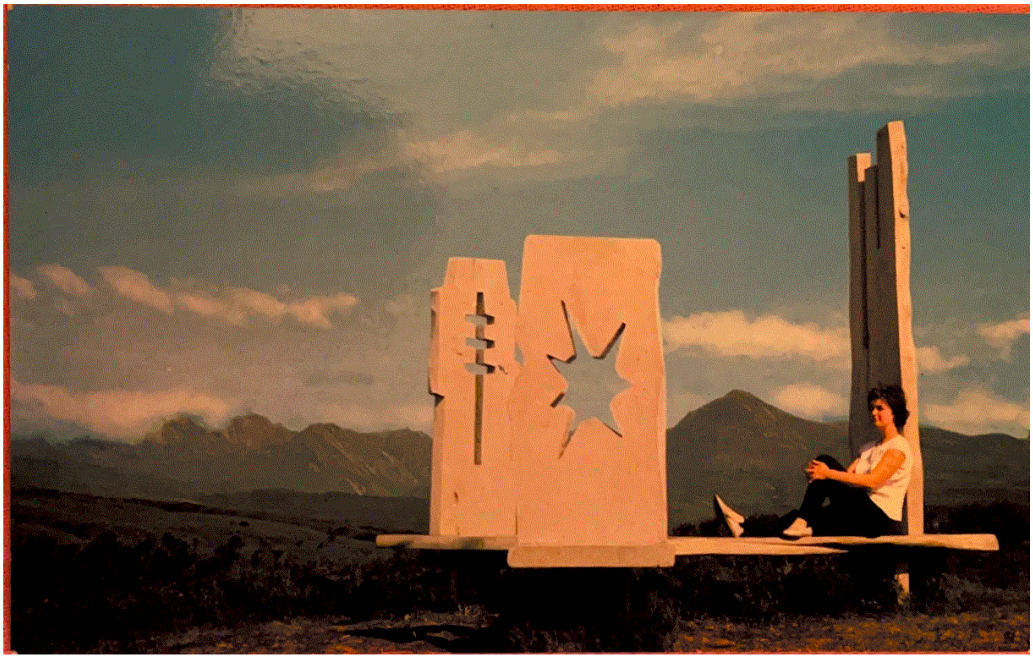

Figure 60: Cnoc Dail monument, colours per the rare postcard.

Figure 61: The renovated memorial in its new home. It was constructed by David Gilbert from Kilmory in 1965. (See 'Discovering Arran' in Arran Banner, March 1974) Details courtesy Arran Heritage Museum,

Dun Fionn may have nothing to do with Fionn; Gaelic persuades some that ‘Finn’ is the proper name, cognate with, for example, Vindolanda, and Vienna, signifying a border or boundary, but Vikings and Irish warriors used it, so inevitably Fionn became entwined there.

Notable is Headrick’s relatively brief handling of Lamlash antiquities, well noticed by others including the writer of the New Statistical Account in 1845, M’Arthur in the 1860s, and the Bryces in the 1860s and separately at the turn of the nineteenth century. Antiquities are a subject he often wanders into, as something of a mission creep for a geologist/improver. He notices pitchstone here, as he should, but mentions little else archaeological in this locality, or further south.

He has much to say however about Saint Laois, Molaise of Holy Isle, his affectionate, saintly title. Elsewhere, conventional hagiography is applied to Molaise, rather liberally. Headrick is iconoclastic in approach. This is interesting. Could Holy Isle have been ‘holy’ before Molaise? Did its existing local reputation attract him? Its ‘holiness’ may, or perhaps may not, be evidenced in Neolithic/EBA works on Kingscross Point. Headrick’s iconoclasm may conceal a point that sheds light on prehistoric Arran.

Figure 62: KIngs Cross point. The stone is likely prehistoric, the foreground is a Viking ship burial. Molios' island cave is facing. Submarine net detritus is below the ridge.

The Saint's spring was a place of resort:

": *and though the spring has long ceased to work miracles, the people still entertain for it a sort of superstitious veneration*." (VIA,81)

I think that some still do, but it is not much talked of.

The Saint, he reckoned, had acquired his celebrity '*when dirt, nastiness and absurdity, formed the most prominent features of sanctity*.' (ibid) Had Laois really wanted to be alone, says Headrick, he could have found a cave on the vertiginous other side of Holy Isle, where visitors would risk life and limb to visit him. Instead, he selected the most

commodious accommodation open to him that was within easy reach. His object must have been not to retire from the world, but to draw the world to him:

"*… I doubt not but in this cave he displayed more pride, vanity and pomposity, than Diogenes in his tub, or Bonaparte while seating himself upon a throne."* (p81)

This counterblast to the obsequious hagiography typically lavished on saints, for example, in Adamnan's *Vita Columbae*, may well be nearer the mark in describing the techniques used by proselytising Irish monks in Dalriada. Laos taking over an established pagan site is as least as plausible as the conventional monastic 'search for a desert' usually proffered.

Be that as it may, one wonders at how this full gunned broadside, irrelevant to the book's purpose, was received by the Duke, whose ancestors had supported Mary Queen of Scots, and whose family showed little enthusiasm for an anti-Catholic outlook.

Less controversially, he records that a vestige of a church still remained, either founded by Molios, or '*in consequence of the superstitious veneration for the island, occasioned by his having consecrated it by living in the cave* '. It was long the only Arran church. After one was built on the mainland (the village of present Lamlash), the island remained the burying yard until an accident where '*a sudden squall of wind overset an overloaded boat and drowned seven people attending a funeral'*. (p81) This is noted in the NSA. (McNaughton, NSA, 25)

Headrick explored the mountains westwards and south of Lamlash, and in so doing tracked what is now the Ross Road, today still something of an endeavour, and the now cycle track off it from the Dye Mill, long gone, through the forest, then non-existent, down to Kilmory. These routes pass Neolithic features including Carn Bann and Aucheleffan's four poster. He misses many, including the Giant's Graves in Whiting Bay, perhaps relying on his guides for information about stones.

He found Cnoc na Comhairle (*Crochk na Korl-e is close enough*), *Assembly Hill*, almost due south of Giants Graves, where there is a stone circle, hard to access, even find,

which some say accounts for the ‘Whiting’ of Whiting Bay, being Norse *hvit,* white, and *ding*, parliament. Others claim it is the fish that is referenced; it is a lively debate.

He was told:

“… (the hill was) *so called because the people are said to have assembled here, with a view to deliberate when they were invaded by enemies*.” (VIA, p103)

Perhaps there is some kernel of truth there, well concealed.

As he rounds the island, he offers us little. He does not find the stone at Kildonan though he spends much time there.

Figure 63: Kildonan

He tells us of a natural harbour at Sliddery for small boats. Today, we tend to pass these by. He thought this one could be made ‘*commodius*’, though Brodick Bay was not.

Whisky smugglers of his day found them well commodious to their purposes. (Adamson,2019)

He continues west to Corriecravie, to *Torr a' Chasteil* (Tor a Chas-tyell), The Tor of the Castle, and to what he calls Haddock Port, defended, as he was told, by Iron Island, which was under water when he visited. Between the (Iron) island and the harbour, he was told, was a deep channel, with good anchoring ground, where vessels could ride in perfect safety. I think he means *Port na Feannaiche*, (Lazybed Port) at Corriecravie. No modern vessel comes near it, although Puffers did up to WW2 and a little later. The iron rope rings remain. It is 'guarded' by the usually submerged 'Iron Island', referenced in the Old SA (supra p69).

This stretch of coast is rich in antiquities of all ages. Curiously, he missed entirely Torrylinn, then prominent, and other major southern sites, reinforcing the feeling that his archaeology is anecdotal, with all that that implies, which may be true of other writers. He writes of Pennant being told a fine Highland tale of the Laird calling once a year to bleed the workers to keep them healthy, letting fall the vital fluid into a hole in the ground. Pennant narrates it as fact; Headrick was told that it was a joke by locals at Pennant's expense. The latter fits well with the Highland sense of mischief, but it could also be a serious Biblical reference.

Figure 64: Torrylinn, with Ailsa Craig

Tor a' Chaisteil is an enigmatic structure, barely touched by archaeologists, and is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument. T. Bryce came skull hunting here in 1902 but lost interest on learning that an earlier party had essayed the same scheme. Headrick gives us some description of its then state, and some speculation and fantasy.

"*On its summit, there is a circular foundation of an ancient Danish fort, composed of large stones, without cement. There is also an outwork, of the same materials, to defend the narrow entrance from the land*." (p 134)

This place long had a local reputation as a bad place, variously the scene of a battle, of buried bodies, of things that go bump in the night, and to a limited extent still does, with modern tales of unexplained suicide, especially involving young women. As usual, efforts to ascertain particulars rarely succeed.

In Headrick's day, that feeling was strong, as is clear from his disputatious stream of consciousness descriptions:

" *From the superstitious veneration the people shewed for the place; - their notions of its being inhabited by fairies and spirits, beings whom they esteemed wholly inclined to mischief, though no one could condescend on any specific harm these animals had done ; - from the circumstance, that every place, where religious rites were performed before the introduction of Christianity, continues still to be an object of fear and apprehension, from Arran to the Orkneys, - I inferred that this hill was not only a fort, but also a place where the Scandinavians, who possessed this island, worshipped their savage and brutish god Tor, or Thor. "*(p134)

The first two points, the claimed superstition, and the veneration of pagan shrines, do not quite support the fort theory, but do, perhaps, support the Viking temple idea. There is not a shred of evidence for either, I believe, but the enigma of the site runs deep to this day

He says that the word 'tor' is widely used in Gaelic for many hills that are rounded, precipitous, and resemble a heap of hay. That is fair; it is also used where English prefers 'pile' as in '*a pile of money*' or rubbish or a '*heap*'. Its origins are obscure,

probably Proto Indo European. It appears in Celtic, Germanic and Romance languages, all having cognates. It is a confusing term when we look at Machrie Moor.

Headrick notes:

"*I suspect the word is not indigenous in Gaëlic, but to have been derived from the Scandinavian language, and to be now applied only to those hills where these people worshipped their worse than brute of a God."* (pp134-5)

That off his chest, he resumes geology, heading west to Brown Head, west of Corriecravie, then backtracking eastwards, pausing only to pick a gratuitous fight with an earlier geologist of Arran, Robert Jameson (1798), over the minutiae of the developing science. (VIA, 136) He does not find the Brown Head cairn (infra p127) later described by Bryce, though he walked extensively in the area, which is rough going.

At Margareeach, now Margareach, (*Speckled Merkland*), **NR 94069 623784** on the west fork of Sliddery Water, he found a chambered burial cairn, "*a grave such as Ossian describes to be the grave of a hero and reputed here to be the grave of a giant. Of this giant many stories are told, which are evidently fabulous; and he is thought to have lived in time of Fioun, when most people were giants." (*VIA 147-9*)*

His descriptions are helpful:

"*The grave is marked by two large stones, standing perpendicular, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, their distance from east to west being about thirty feet* (9.14m). *The sides are also marked by smaller flags, very neatly fastened in the earth, their tops pointing outwardly on each side, and forming the surface of the grave into a parallelogrammic area*.

A much smaller grave, a little below, and marked precisely in the same way, though sufficient to hold a very tall man (as we modern pigmies estimate human dimensions), is reputed to be the grave of the giant's dog." (pp147-8)

The latter reference is to Fionn and his dog Bran.

He has seen many such graves in various parts of the Highlands, of extraordinary dimensions, claimed for the Fionn era, always having smaller graves at the feet,

reputed to contain each hero's dog. He suggests digging into one to see what size of bone is found. He claims one case only where he obtained credible evidence, at the sea beach at the bottom of Glenelg, opposite Skye. A chief was drowned when crossing the narrow, fast running stretch there, and his body buried where it was cast up on the Glenelg side. The '*worthy and respectable minister of Glenelg'* was able to tell him something of the excavation there conducted.

This excavation report is rather different from the modern type, and might be thought lacking in detail, but not, surely, in interest:

*".. (he) assured me, that the gentlemen there, of whom he was one, employed some of the volunteers, soon after last war (*sic) *commenced, to dig into this grave, which they found constructed internally with great art, and penetrable with much difficulty. After much labour, they at last got out a jaw-bone, which, having its pivots applied below the ears of a gentleman, by far the largest man then present, hung down upon his breast, and turned clean over his head. A violent thunderstorm having ensued, raised much alarm among the people; and they were glad to replace the bone, and restore the grave to the condition in which they found it."* (VIA 148-150)

'The last war' is not clarified; perhap the breakdown of the 1802 Treaty of Amiens in May 1803. The state of archaeological knowledge is limited. No suggestion of a grave for more than one person has been made. The jawbone, if such there was, was not considered as perhaps belonging to a ruminant. The jawbone may have suggested Cain and Abel's story, or Goliath's.

Headrick is by no means stupid in struggling with all this; wrong, perhaps, but not stupid:

"*But the last fact, which I learned upon the spot, from the most respectable authority, seems to evince, that there were men in former times, a few individuals perhaps, who far surpassed the present dimension of the human stature*." (VIA 149)

He tries to make sense of it all:

"...*I suspect* (the Margareach grave*) to have been a long trench, containing the body not of one person, but all the bodies of those who may have fallen in some conflict; and that*

*the dog's grave may contain a dog for each of the personages whose bones are deposited in the other. "(*pp149-50)

He adds that burying their dogs would be natural to men who lived by hunting, and who may have thought that the next life would be very similar to this one.

'*The old men here'* had many traditions about Fionn and Ossian, represented as the last of their race. They believed them to be giants and necromancers, rather than men of ordinary stature, '*who acquired celebrity by the exertion of their natural powers'*. (VIA 150)

Shiskine

'*The Vale of Shiskin'* he correctly sees as worth putting under the plough, as later happened, to produce about 25 square miles (6,474.97 hectares) of productive land. The only parts then cultivated were fields along the sides of the valley, which were naturally dry. The wet parts were generally '*... the best soil, were they properly drained*.' They now are, and he was right. (VIA 151, et seq.)

He turns to the antiquities, including the Blackwaterfoot cairn:

"*The first and most remarkable of these is an immense circular heap of stones, or cairn, situated on an elevated plain, above the sea, in the mouth of the valley*. He cannot say that it was a place of interment, but *'the largeness of the stones seems rather to indicate that this had been a Danish fort, or encampment, of considerable extent*.'

This typology is likely wrong but is an intelligent and thought-through assessment of what he could know. Interment would have provided an easy explanation, which he sidesteps.

'The top is a flat area, filled throughout with stones, and leaving no appearance of a mound around it.' (VIA p153)

Nothing remains, as we have noticed.

'Contiguous to this cairn, there is an extensive moss, stored with numerous fragments of trees, chiefly oak, which, perhaps, had formerly been a sacred grove, and the cairn an implement of Druidical superstition.' (ibid)

This is difficult to reconcile with the present site. The cairn was a short distance eastward of the Kinloch Hotel, illustrated in Figs 41,42. Shedog is about 2km north northeast of the cairn known now as Shiskine village. (Fig 65 yellow circle)

'*The extensive moss'* is hard to discern and may be a feature totally lost.

If we take at face value his phrase '*contiguous to this cairn'*, then we can rule out Machrie, Shiskine, and other areas. We would be left with the generally built-up, road bearing and agricultural parts of the modern village. There is no indication of direction with regard to the '*contiguous moss'*, but it is '*extensive',* and his next point of reference is '*Near the village of Shedog…*'.

Is this saying that the moss has stopped before Shedog, or does it extend from the cairn to there? On balance, I think he means there is the cairn, the moss, and then Shedog with a new feature, the 'Law'. Does it lie beyond Shedog, though 'near'? There is some placename evidence that could fit that. (below, and see Figure 65 red circle)

Figure 65: The Cairn is right of the Kinloch Hotel (black circle); Shedog (yellow) Suggested old placename for 'The Law' in red circle. OS Explorer. North at top. Each square 1 km.

If correct, there was an 'immense' cairn behind the modern hotel, and an oak grove heading northeast. The route would then lead to Molios' burying ground at Pien, passing extant megaliths, and continuing to the east access to Machrie Moor that early travellers took, then to Dereneneach, '*Oak Grove of the Horses'*, and then onto Monyquil's chambered cairn and monolith, itself gateway to the An Tunna pass to Glen Shurig and Brodick.

What was to be seen near the village of Shedog, was a '*very large artificial green hill, composed of earth and rounded stones; of a circular form, and having a flat circular*

area on its top. It is every way similar to other artificial hills, called Laws in various parts of the country.'. (VIA 153-4)

It may have been a place of internment, or a place where the Druids decided controversies, or promulgated laws, he suggests, referencing, I presume, Julius Caesar describing Druids in Gaul.

Of course, one asks why there should be two such eminences, or three, and what sort of archaeological landscape we are dealing with.

The 'Law' is not to be seen, nor was it there, apparently, for M' Arthur (1861, p 24), who looked for the 'Tor' in 'Tormore'. There is on the old maps, like the 25" 1864 OS, a 'Lag nan Torr Dubh', *Hollow* of *the Dark Torrs*, marked there. That suggests that by that time the torr or law had gone, but its lag remained as a wood. This, if true, this is quite radical in the assessment of the area's early landscape. However, I have nothing to offer on why the Gàidhlig speaks of 'Torrs' in the plural, which it does.

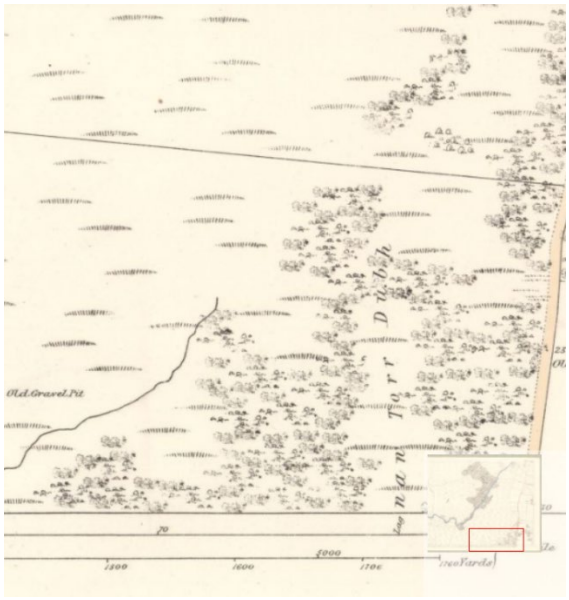

Figure 66: Lag nan Torr Dubh appears on the 25-inch maps only from mid C 19, close to the present road.

Headrick leaves his speculations there, and turns to St Molios, who seems something of a *bête noir* to him. St Molios, '*had been induced'* to quit his Holy Isle cave and set up residence in the mouth of Clachan Glen where he set up a chapel, and where Headrick

saw his decorated gravestone, now set in the outer wall of the Church in Shiskine that bears Molios' name. (p 154) There is a modern cemetery at Clachan, **NR 92060 30398**, attached to the old one, and a broken-down chapel.

"On *the moor between Shiskin and Machry, many tall obelisks, called Standing Stones, are scattered; and many more have been broken, or have fallen down*. "(p 154) Since he is writing in 1807, the Clearances of Arran have scarcely started, implying that stone removal was happening earlier, perhaps much earlier, though no doubt greatly accelerated thereafter.

The local legend was that these were the graves of heroes, who fell in a battle fought here by Fingal (Fionn) against the Norwegians. Proving victorious, Fingal pursued their broken forces to their fort above Clauchland, on the opposite side of the island, and obliged them to leave Arran. (VIA 154) That would be Dun Fion, Lamlash, and hints at a *longphuirt* there.

This *may* be a folkloric rendition of an actual battle between native forces against the Vikings, or others, but Fionn as a real person can be disregarded. That would be like trying to identify King Arthur as an actual person. The story shows that a track from Shedog to Lamlash was recognised by Headrick's 1807 informers, when no roads yet existed on the island. It was likely in use before then. If we accept Vikings using the port facility of Lamlash, where there are two Viking graves circa 8-900 AD, the route mentioned might fit with an expedition to the west from there, that was resisted, causing the Vikings to retreat to the safety of their *longphuirt*. That is plausible, if utterly lacking in evidence. Later road makers did not follow that track, nor is it in use today other than by serious-minded hillwalkers, but the track is there for those who wish to use it, and the place names along it reference a funeral route.

Headrick seems to have had a better relationship with his informants than other writers, and to offer a better range of then contemporary beliefs.

"*In one place, there are three vast stones standing, all of red sandstone. One is about twenty feet above ground. Three other stones have fallen or have been broken down; all placed in the periphery of a circle."* (VIA 154)

That is Circle 2, with three stones standing and some cut. "*One of the broken stones is a white small grained granite, which had been nearly formed into two millstones, that had been broken before they were completed*".

Figure 67: Circle 2, Machrie, showing cut stones.

Figure 68: Circle 2 'mill stones'. I doubt their relevance to the original structure.

The monolith that stands often as symbol for Machrie, and sometimes for the island itself, was in 1807 much as we find it, as Circle 3:

"*To the west-north-west is another very tall stone, with broken stones in the periphery of a circle, of which it makes a part. I doubt not but the other tall stones scattered through the moor, may also be remains of circles.*" (p 155)

Figure 69: Circle 3. LHS some cut down stones shown left.

Figure 70: Circle 3 cut down stones.

The date of cutting down stones of the various circles is still mysterious and may be from times ancient or times relatively modern. We often assume that it was a function of Clearance, or earlier, but recent work arguing for the relocation of megaliths from one site to another suggests that was a practice around the time of the creation of the circles. (Parker Pearson et al, 2021)

Headrick makes another observation and a speculation that has held up pretty well:

"From these circumstances, I am inclined to think that these stones are not monuments over the graves of heroes; but Druidical circles, or places of worship, such as are found in various parts of the Highland and Isles. There are, however, numerous heaps of stones, or small cairns, scattered here and there, which may have been collected to commemorate the dead." (VIA, 155)

He briefly covers what sounds like Auchagallon circle and cairn:

"*Upon a bank, which faces the sea, below the same farm-houses, there is a circle of large stones, fastened in the ground, and including a cairn of loose stones. Where this has been a Druidical temple, or for purpose it was constructed, I shall not pretend to decide; but it is reputed here to the grave of heroes*." (VIA, 181)

There was a cairn some distance to the north.

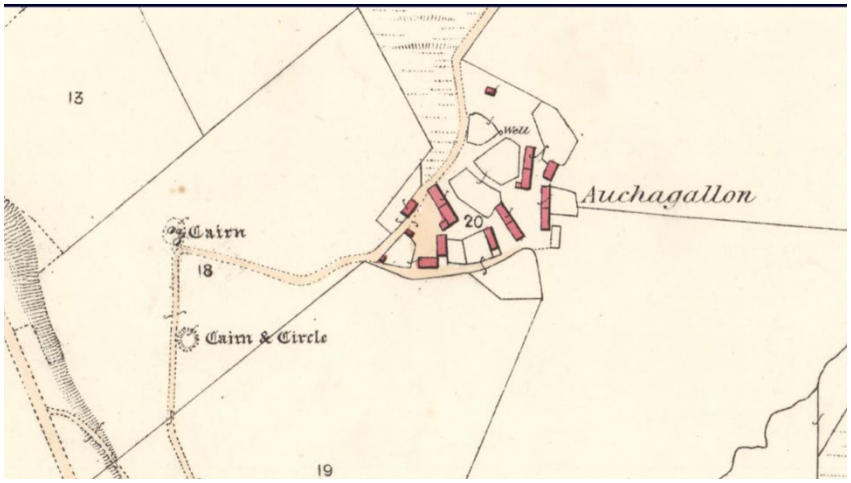

Figure 71: Auchagallan Circle, with cairn OS 24 inch 864

Figure 72: Figure at cairn site, photographer at circle.

T. Bryce relates the farmer's claim to have put the cairn, and gathered stones, into the otherwise empty circle, to release the field for farming. (Bryce, in Barbour (1910), p 181) Headrick may give some credence to that. Bryce's informant said that in youth he saw an antiquarian digging the centre. A stone cist was found and opened. Bryce therefore moved on elsewhere.

The place name references standing stones as heroes.

He climbs 'Bheininhuruch' *Beinn a' Chaoraich*, Sheep Mountain, and the view is clearly impressive, showing Glen Iorsa and the tributaries feeding into it, from Ceum na Cailleach.

Figure 73: Auchencar Stone (s). Looking to Kintyre.

Further north, Auchencar Standing Stone, laconically, is 'a *very large obelisk, which may be the remains of a Druidical temple*' (VIA, P 183). It is a complex site, in need of analysis.

At Immachar, he notices a' very incommodious harbour' used for the ferry boat to Saddell in Kintyre, '...*the nearest point of Arran to the mainland of Scotland, the channel*

being only reckoned from four to five miles across.' (VoA p187) Carradale looks closer than Saddell, at least to me.

He describes Corrie Fhionn Lochan (usually pronounced 'Corrie 'n Lochan'), a popular picnic spot, as '*an immense corrie… in the bottom of which is a beautiful oval lake, of great depth… The people here believe that a water bull, of great ferocity, resides in this lake, and that he often comes out, and uses freedom with their cows*." (VoA p 189) Salutary to remember this in mulling the credibility of a folkloric narrative. The corrie was '*immense*'; but presumably not for Fionn.

Lastly, he describes Catacol:

"*Upon the sea-beach, at the bottom of this valley, a small green tumulus is shown, called Arin, which some people think occasioned the name of the island*."

Fionn, he says, fought a Norwegian freebooter there, called Arin, and slew him, and Arin was buried below this tumulus. We saw this at Fig 42. Headrick says that all that may be true, but it is not probable that his name would be affixed to the island which he had unsuccessfully invaded. (Ibid p192)

He is confused. The proper legend is that *Fionn* was buried there, and that the mound was Ar Fhionn, Fionn's Grave, (pronounced *Ar-in)*, demonstrating again the many perils of folklore. The cairn was used for roadbuilding as M'Naughton confirms. Not a trace remains.

Headrick's life was picaresque and contumelious pretty much to the end. Those interested can read more (Burns, 2002).

We remain much in Headrick's debt for his willingness to wander off topic, to describe, and to try to explain. He reached closer to the people acting as guides than more august travellers, so we hear more of their voices. His real success lay with his 'irrelevant' archaeology where he is still quoted. His geology was dismissed as early as 1841, where Ramsay, (1861, p 72, footnotes) sniffy, dry, and condescending, observes:

"*.. and Mr Headrick's work which, however, is completely antiquated*."

Perhaps so, but he unintentionally joined the antiquarians, and thereby earns our thanks.

CHAPTER FOUR.

ENTER THE ANTIQUARIANS

Between Headrick in 1807, and Wilson,1851, a founding figure of Scottish Archaeology, lies the New Statistical Account of 1845, as we have seen, a major milestone still referred to. There are also lesser figures in a hazy background, then Daniel Wilson seeks to create ' Archaeology'. Opinions vary.

He can, and does, claim to create 'prehistory'. His amateur admirer John M'Arthur, 1861, writes a work that still greatly matters in Arran archaeology. Were these people 'antiquarians' or 'archaeologists? Or did Schrödinger's cat make an early walk-on appearance, as only cats can?

Daniel Wilson (1816-1892)

Daniel Wilson left Scotland to be Professor of History and English Literature at University College, Toronto. He represents, I think, the pivot point from antiquarian to archaeologist, then a newish term. He sees himself as more the latter; but his work suggests that he was more antiquarian than he recognised. Returning to Scotland, he published "*Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*" in 1851 in two volumes, with a second edition in 1862. (Wilson, 1862) (henceforth PAS)

His first edition preface starts thus:

"*The zeal for Archaeological investigation which has recently manifested itself in nearly every country of Europe, has been traced, not without reason, to the impulse which proceeded from Abbotsford."* (Wilson, 1851, preface)

Perhaps so, perhaps not. Perhaps the reason lay in some of the issues discussed above. Sir Walter's claim is said to rest on his teaching that the bygone ages of the

world were filled by living men. The reference may be to Romanticism (Trigger p 65) versus Classicism, but see Liz Henty (2022, p11 et seq) for a wider view.

By the second edition, Wilson considers matters so to have moved on as to place Archaeology alongside other sciences, and that the term "…*Prehistoric – introduced if I mistake not, for the first time in this work*…" has come to mean not just speculation as to races before the oldest historical ones of Britain and Europe, but now to 'a *comprehensive range of speculative and inductive research'* in fellowship with other professionals. (PAS p xiv)

The dedication of the book was gifted to John Young Simpson, an eminent archaeologist himself whist Professor of Medicine and Midwifery at the University of Edinburgh. He pioneered the use of chloroform and anaesthesia, applied also for childbirth, to the gratitude of his Monarch.

In setting forth humanity's development in PAS, Wilson hops from site to site in the context of whichever theme is under discussion. He references Arran more than once, but his Arran material is mostly lifted from authors already considered and the lifting is not always done accurately.

For example, discussing cromlechs, he moves from the Auld Wives Lifts at Craigmaddie, Milngavie, to the Stones of Vea at Sandwick, Orkney, to ". *another remarkable assemblage, in a similarly ruined state, near Lamlash Bay, in the island of Arran; and a single cromlech stood – if it does not still stand - in the centre of a stone circle in the same island."* (PAS p 94) His authority for this is '*Martin's Western Isles*, p. 220'. This is Martin's circle '*someway south of Druim-Cruey with a thin flat stone held up by three others, and surrounded by stones, on which sacrifices were said to have been burned'*. (Martin,137)

Martin's work however then proceeds to describe Lamlash; perhaps Wilson has confused himself and conflated the two, though they are on opposite sides of the island. Wilson's Lamlash reference is too oblique for clarity. Note that phrase," *if it does not still stand*". Others in thrall to him, like M'Arthur, will borrow it.

Wilson defines for us his concept of a cromlech:

"*It consists of three or four unhewn columns, supporting a huge table or block of stone, and forming together a rectangular chamber, which is occasionally further enclosed by smaller stones built into the intervening spaces. Beneath this there is generally found a corresponding cist or sepulchral position, and accompanied with urns, stone implements and other relics of an early period*." (p 90)

He draws a distinction between the buried megalithic cist and the true cromlech, which was not in itself the sepulchral chamber, but a monumental structure reared over the grave. He says this class of monuments is rare in Scotland, when compared with other megalithic structures that abound in almost every district. He then leaves Sepulchral Remains for other topics.

He describes *Suidhe Choir Fhionn,* at Machrie, and the outlier, but tells us nothing new, and leaves one doubtful that he ever visited there, or indeed Arran. (p 142) He connects standing stones to the Lia Fail, and its ancient eastern ancestors, which is interesting. He classes these as Tanist Stones, from Gaelic *Tanaiste,* thane or lord, or next heir, standing beside which the new king was sworn. He references The Stone of Destiny, and Biblical examples, citing *Judges ix. 6*, *2 Kings xi. 14.*(p 140-2)

He notes the recent finding of cists at '*the point of Largiebeg'*, quoting McNaughton (1845 NSA p 23), and the story of the gold drawer handle like object. The Minister merely recorded the parishioner's actions and regretted the non-examination of the object. Wilson uses the incident to argue for a kind of Portable Antiquities Scheme, such as had assisted archaeology in Denmark, an idea Rhind (1855) had already canvassed publicly. Scotland's treasure trove law, different from England's, has its wellspring here.

Who is antiquarian, and who archaeologist? This is opiniative. Both words, but especially 'antiquarian' have, in the onomastic sense at least, wandered, as we noticed above. Trigger, (1989, Chapter 2 and Henty 2022, Ch 2) both trace this at a length that I cannot repeat here. Originally a word merely descriptive of one interested in things older, from classical times, it later described those collecting artifacts in the hope of future explanations, then those seeking to allocate them to particular cultures, mirroring at one remove the development of knowledge generally. Antiquarian societies

came of age, and then the term ‘archaeologist’ superseded ‘antiquarian’. It did so at first neutrally, but a distinction of modernity and seriousness of purpose grew, the term ‘antiquarian’ withering to denote a lesser person not always treated as respectfully as the ‘archaeologist’. Though a fascinating discussion, doing justice to it would consume this effort, and I must here part with it.

I should state my own position. I treat as archaeologists those who seek to apply ‘science’ to what they find, to collect, to systematise, and to create paradigms that can be constantly tested and corrected.

The antiquarian was interested in things of the past and relied for understanding on his own eyes, and on such earlier accounts as wear available to him. As science progressed, each approach increasingly intruded into the other. The transition phase was rarely smooth. Like Schrodinger’s cat, the people here discussed can sometimes be simultaneously one thing, and sometimes another. As with particle physics, there need be no inherent contradiction in simultaneous but alternative interpretations or different states of the same thing.

John M’Arthur

In 1861 John McArthur, a Glaswegian, published his *‘Antiquities of Arran’* (M’Arthur 1861), with a second edition (M’Arthur 1873) *(AoA. Unless specified, references here are to the 2nd Edition*). He engaged in some excavation at Torylinn and Machrie. His account, like Wilson’s, recirculates Pennant and Headrick. He appears to consider Wilson to have set out a proper structural framework for archaeology, and, as an amateur, he defers to him, sometimes using Wilson’s phrases, like ‘*… if it does not still stand’* (above), while expressing his own opinions, which can be the better view.

At Blairmore, near the base of Dun Fion, M’Arthur says that the scattered ruins of a chambered cairn may be seen, noted by Pennant. (1989, p 177). On the stones being

carried away '*some years ago'* to build the Lamlash schoolhouse, a series of inner cells was exposed, each covered with a single flat stone. (AoA p 11)

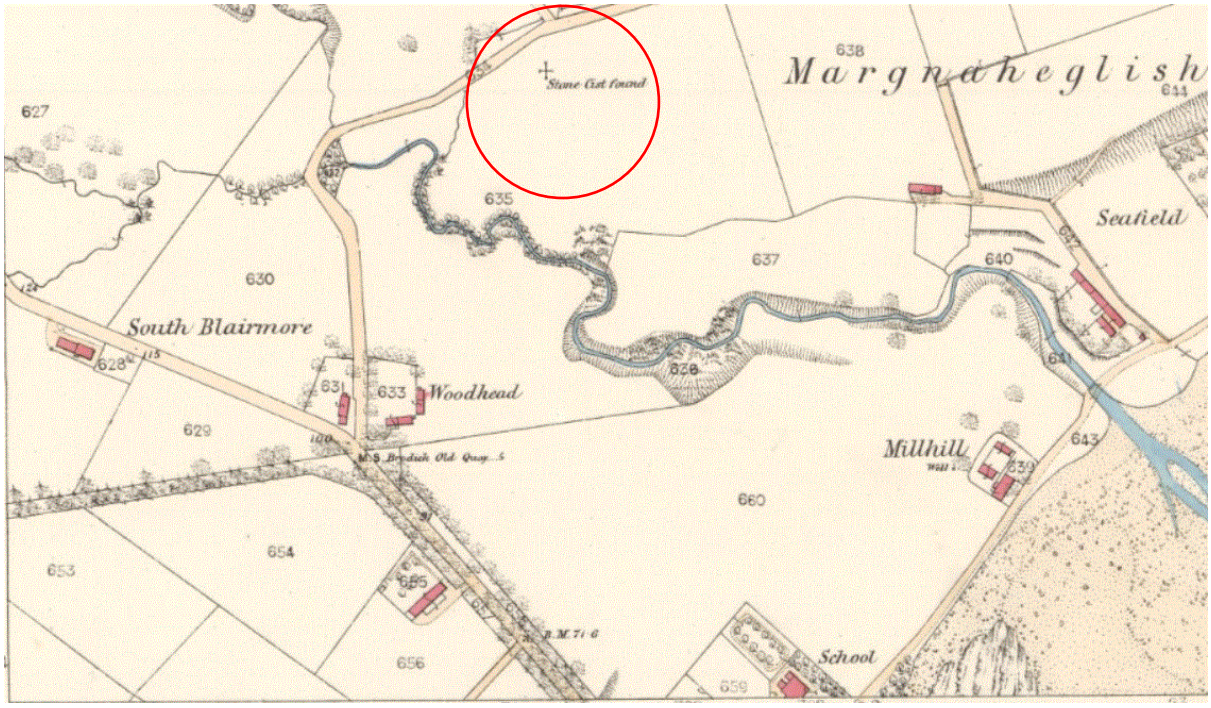

Figure 74: Possibly the cist referred to. A Viking sword was later found at Millhill. 1863 25-inch OS

At Torlin (sic) he noted, "… *an interesting specimen of the 'elongated' chambered cairn. It is intersected from east to west* (in fact about 158°) *by a row of vaults, consisting each of six unhewn slabs, from five to eight feet square. (1.524-2.438m) These vaults or chambers were filled with human bones, some of which, we were informed, were cleft as if from the blow of an axe or hatchet."* (AoA p 11) (see Fig 57)

The place name is a false friend; there is no '*torr*' or '*linn' known*. The name is likelier '*tuar leathan*', a wide bleaching field, as Currie (1908, p78) suggests. '*Todhar'* may be better, a spreading, though that is usually of dung. (Dr Peadar Morgan, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Inverness, private conversation.)

M'Arthur would have seen a broad round cairn as the Gàidhlig suggests, now gone. The OS map seems to confirm this.

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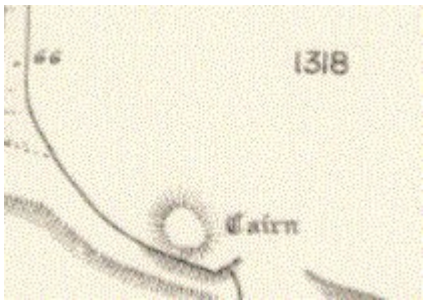

Figure 75: An enlargement of the 25" OS map of 1864 showing what M'Arthur saw

T.H. Bryce (1902) left it as the skeleton it is today; he did not backfill. It became a Scheduled Monument only in the 1960s.

M'Arthur, the man of science, smiles at the superstitious Gael and retells a tale he was told. (p 12). The cairn was partially removed by '*a modern Goth'*, who rifled the cells of their content '*and strewed them over his field*'. The modern Goth was a farmer, presumably a survivor of the 'reforms', doubtless in urgent need of stone. Times and customs had changed: "*With daring irreverence, he selected one of the largest skulls from the ghastly heap and carried it home with him*." Not a wise move; on entering his house, its walls '*were as if struck by a tornado'*. Again, and again '*the avenging blast'* swept over his dwelling, though not the gentlest breeze was noticed elsewhere. He hastened to re-bury the bones in their desecrated grave, but day and night shadowy phantoms haunted his mind and tracked his steps. A few months later, while riding the high road into Lagg, he was thrown from his horse and dashed to death against the rocks below. *Post hoc ergo propter*, presumably. This widespread, familiar, Celtic folk tale warns people not to approach the monuments, but here a man of modernity is going to do just that, and the superstition is belittled:

"*It was with some feelings of trepidation, after listening to this fearful tragedy, that we proceeded to remove the stones and earth which filled the rifled cells of this ghost-haunted cairn; but a few marine shells, mixed with the small delicate bones of birds, were all we could discover to repay our labour*" (ibid p 12).

So, *scientia vincit omnia*.

On the lower east side of the island, at Largiebeg, south of Whiting Bay, a "*white cairn*" was denuded of its contents, exposing a range of chambers containing "*several rude urns of unbaked clay, filled with earth and calcined bones.*" (Ibid p 12-3) This may refer to **NS 04238 22629**, but that is nearer Dippen.

He does not discuss what a white cairn might be, but there is a "white" stone circle up on the hillside, now pretty well unvisited, and the nearby hill is Cnoc na Comhairle, *Assembly Hill*. (See Headrick, p102, *supra*)

He turns his attention to west coast Torbeg **NR 90269 3114**, to '*the ruins of an interesting cairn, measuring about 350 feet in diameter. It is intersected north to south by a concentric row of chambers, each chamber consisting of five unhewn slabs of three to five feet in height.*' (p 13) This was dug by T.H. Bryce in 1902.

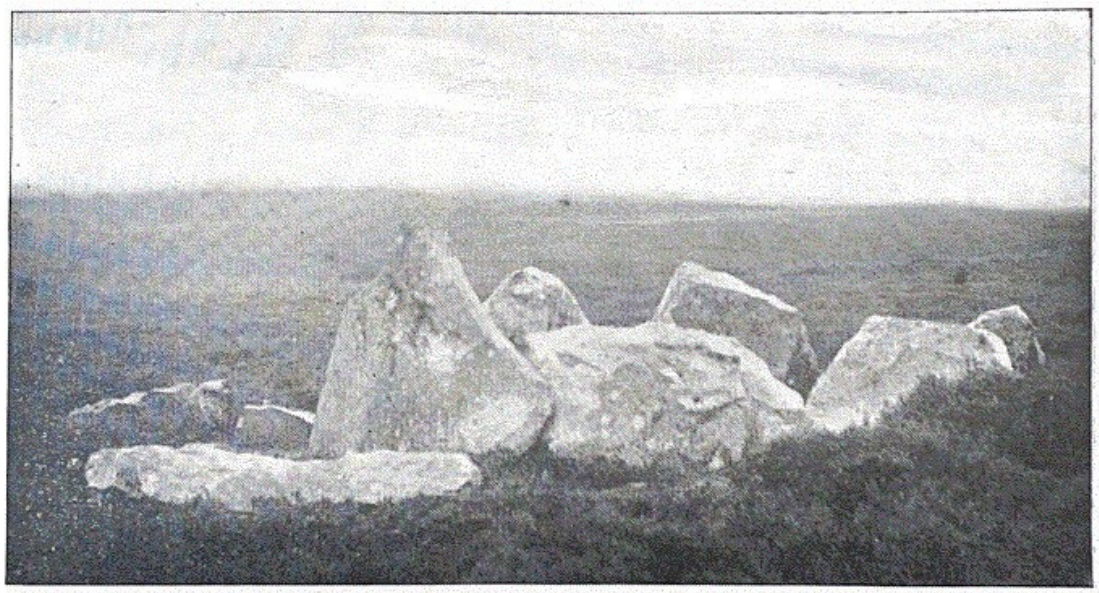

Fig. 21. Tormore Cists from the West.

Figure 76: From TH Bryce 1902. Notwithstanding the 'more' suffix, I think that this is what M'Arthur refers to.

As he leaves Torbeg – *Little Hill*, as he puts it, and moves towards Tormore – *Great Hill*, he speculates that the latter name may come from there having been '...*some gigantic*

tumulus, which may have appeared in olden times, like a natural eminence rising above the waveless moorland, for neither hill nor mountain ridge breaks the monotony of the dreary expanse of moss and peat-bog, excepting here and there the rifled grave-mounds or fallen monoliths of the buried dead'. (p 13) (see Headrick, supra, p103-5)

'Torr' place names are candidates for vanished cairns that defined an area. (Murray,2014, p 57)

He knows that there is a cairn thus named on Tormore Farm but believes that name to be recently given. He finds the exposed cells of one of these cairns, consisting of huge slabs of red sandstone and granite, deeply sunk in the moss, '*about a stone's cast from the shore'*. I have not identified this. It may be **NR 89417 632414**, which does have 'Cairnfield' next to it, but which looks (to me) a mighty stone's throw from the shore.

Still further north, on the farm of Auchagallon, there is, he notes, a tumulus known as the "White Cairn". This likely refers to the lost cairn we have met a little north of the circle there (see Fig 72), removed by the farmer, who claimed to have placed the stones in the centre of the circle there. (T. H Bryce, in Balfour, at p 119) Whether he did so or not is less certain. (Headrick supra p108-110)

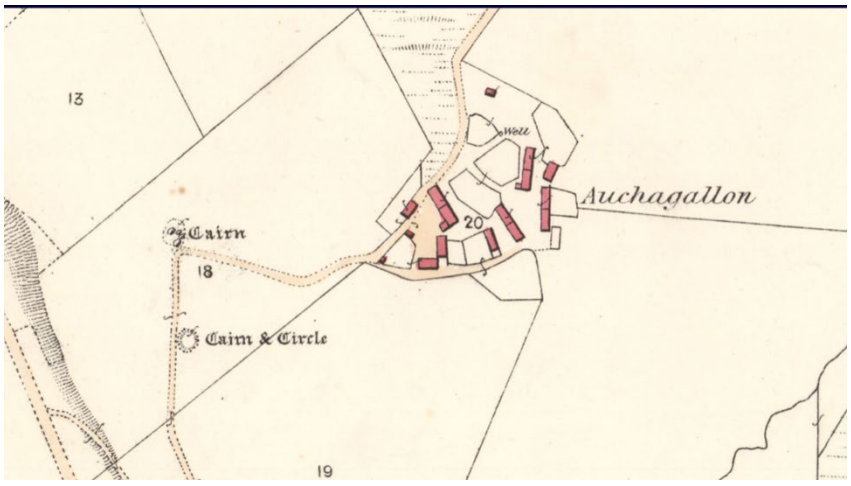

Figure 77: 1864 25" OS map. The circle's history is presently enigmatic. It has a triangular stone that looks a likely equinox/west marker, amongst a variety of others.

The circle may have had floor stones when built, or perhaps stones were added later, or arrived when the north cairn was put into it. Its present appearance could have been created anytime from installation to the late nineteenth century. (See p110 supra)

Headrick contributed to this puzzle (Headrick,1807 p 181):

"*Upon a bank which faces the sea, below the same farmhouses, there is a circle of large stones, fastened in the ground, and including a cairn of loose stones. Whether this has been a Druidical temple, or for what purpose it was constructed, I shall not pretend to decide; but it is reputed here to be the grave of heroes*." (The place name is consistent with that.)

"Including" is ambiguous; does he mean the circle is the cairn, or the separate north one is? I think the former more likely, but he could be referring to the separate cairn.

Figure 78: Auchagallon looking to the north. The infill suggests that this was not how it looked when constructed. The cairn site is beyond the gate.

M'Arthur notes that near the farmhouses many large fragments of dark green pitchstone are visible.

Brodick

'*Where the lovely Glen Cloy - Lewis- opens into the Bay of Lamlash, a few minutes' walk from the mansion house of the Fullerton family, there is a green mound which was dug into some years ago.'* (AoA p 14) Glen Cloy in Brodick runs from Kilmichael House, the Fullerton house, and the river Cloy discharges into Brodick, not Lamlash Bay. Is it an error? Both editions carry it. Found there were a collection of chambers which yielded two rude clay urns with calcinated bones.

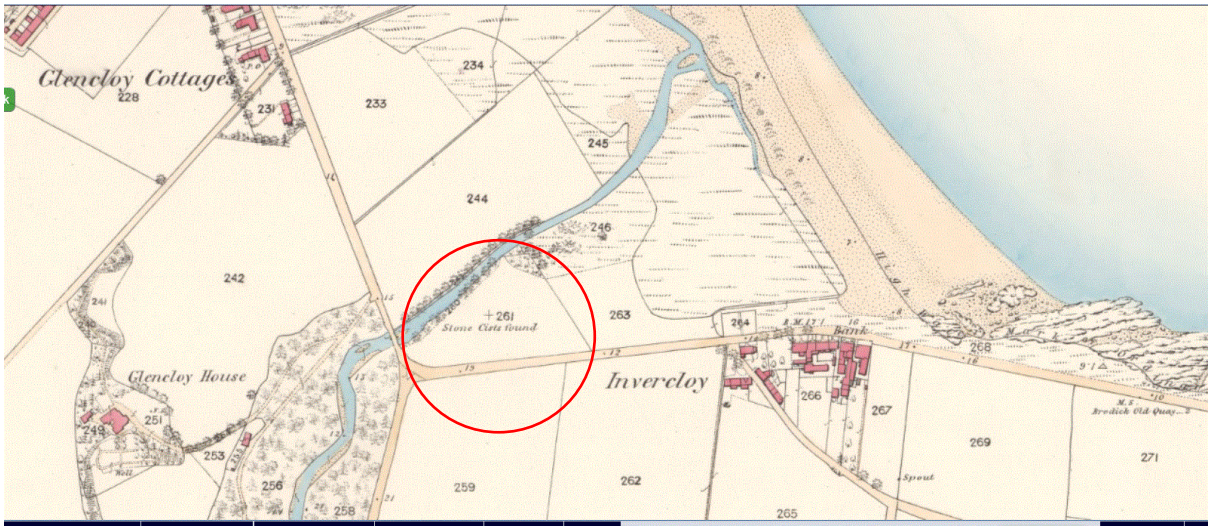

Figure 79: Likely record of above. Invercloy Bay

Machrie

At a green bank near the shore at 'Mauchrie' was a cairn about one hundred and fifty feet (45.72m) in circumference, partly removed for the building of a neighbouring dyke. The '*huge stone columns alone remained entire'*. Where was this? *"In a few years the stone circle, …. may be the only relic of the encircled tumulus."* (AoA, p 15) The map to The Book of Arran shows a cluster of sites in the area. A good candidate looks like **NR 89446 33650**. If it is, the prophecy was fulfilled, by one stone remaining. [Canmore ID 39239]

He refers to the cairn ‘in the neighbourhood of Tormore’ mentioned by Pennant at Vol.ii. p206. This may be gone without trace. Perhaps it is the same one as above.

To the south, past Blackwaterfoot, past the Preaching Cave, near Brown Head, was an ‘*imperfect cairn’*. It was near ‘Corrie Creive’ (Corriecravie) and was within three concentric circles. Large, rounded boulders from the passing stream formed the interior mound. This is **NR 905 244**, but no stream appears today. T.H Bryce dug and reported it. He found a vessel with a strange arrow pattern, (see Conclusions in my Chapter 5) .

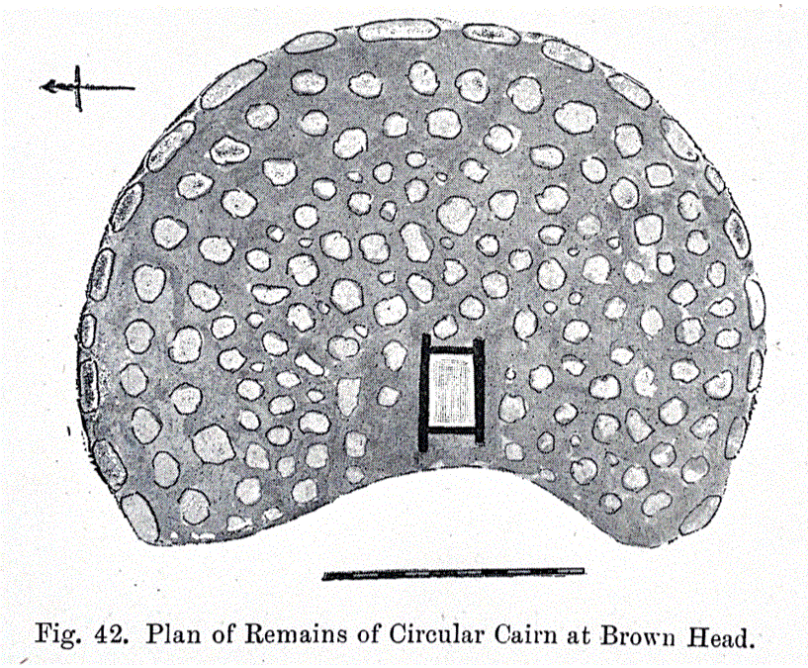

Fig. 42. Plan of Remains of Circular Cairn at Brown Head.

Figure 80: Coriecravie Cairn; from Bryce 1902.

Figure 81: The locus today, marked by plastic bag. Blackwaterfoot lies north, Corriecravie south. Marker courtesy C. McAllister, Farmer, Corriecravie

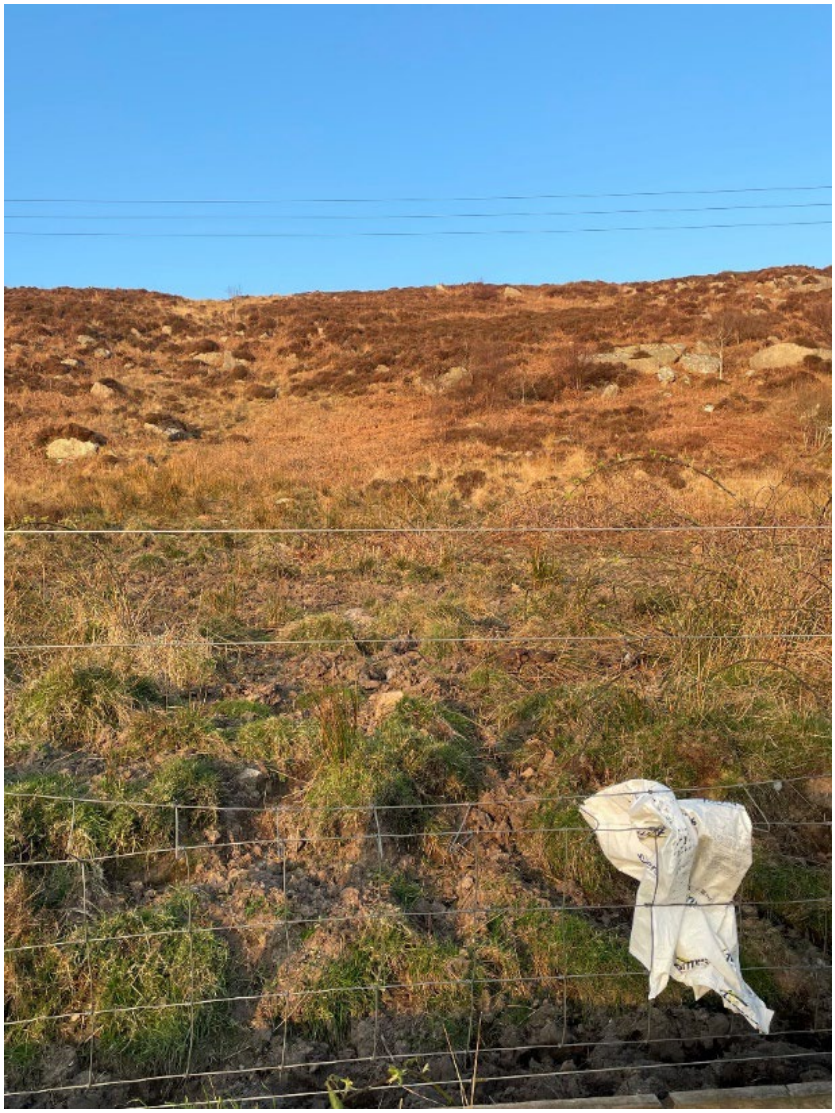

Figure:82: The Cairn site is not promising. March 2022. The Water Board may have been digging here.

Referencing 'Ship Barrow or Cairn', he finds one on the bank of the 'Slidry stream'. This sounds like **NR 94328 28329**. It is, according to McArthur, "... *exactly similar to the celebrated currach mound of Iona. It is thirty feet in length, with a smaller ridge attached measuring nine feet. The sides of the* tumuli *are trenched with flat, flag-like stones, and at each end there stands a large monolith of red sandstone.... This monument is supposed to mark the grave of one of Fion-gal's heroes about whom many strange stories are told".* (AoA p 16)

The Iona reference is to the mound of Saint Columba at Port a' Churaich in Iona, modelled after the upturned wicker and hide currach that carried him to the island.

Headrick had noted this cairn, as M'Arthur relates.

He says that according to Headrick (1807, p 148) an anxious treasure seeker who dug there found a huge bone, into the hollow of which he thrust down his foot and leg as into a boot. A tall tale? Probably. As is usual with high claims, fearing a judgment for tomb violation, the excavators reburied the finds, so there is only an oral account. Absent better explanation, this *could* be a whale bone, perhaps, *possibly* reflecting a Columbine word play of 'Iona' and Hebrew 'Yonah', or Jonah. (See Markus, pp 185-6) Tall tale seems likelier.

Whiting Bay and Lamlash

MacArthur notices the Giants' Graves at Glenashdale, which Wilson attributed to Vikings. In proper acknowledgment of McArthur's judgment, he says that "... *in the absence of more trustworthy evidence than the mere analogy of construction, such an opinion must be received with caution*" (AoA p 17), a caution that rarely hinders Wilson.

M'Arthur also notices a cairn, "*Near the base of the Ross Hills, where the Monie-mhor (*Monaidh Mor, *anglice* Monamore*) glen narrows into a bosky ravine... There may be traced the remains of a cairn which, when entire, is said to have measured about two hundred feet* (61m) *in circumference."* (Ibid p 17)

That is about the size claimed for the Blackwaterfoot cairn on the west side.

Figure 83: The stones lying here are unexplained. Monamore Cairn site to the right. The wall, and its extension across the road are likely cairn material.

Today, the bosky-ness is far from manifest. There are some natural woods, and much Sitka. The actual site is a rather dreary semi-industrial one at present, containing a

series of old sheep pens with a chimney. It looks like an overflow field from Glenkiln Farm across the Ross Road. There is a very long wall likely using cairn stones, stretching from the road to the farm, and another from the road to the sheep pens. The stones are significantly variegated and may not all be local.

Figure 84: Small part of the wall at Monamore.

"*On being partially removed some years ago, for the building of a neighbouring dike,* (Glenkiln farm I think) *several cistvaens or stone coffins were exposed, consisting of six unhewn flags, and containing human bones.*" (ibid)

His citation was 'New Statistical Account', surely the one that McNaughton describes (NSA, p 23). It lies at **NS 01275 29770.**

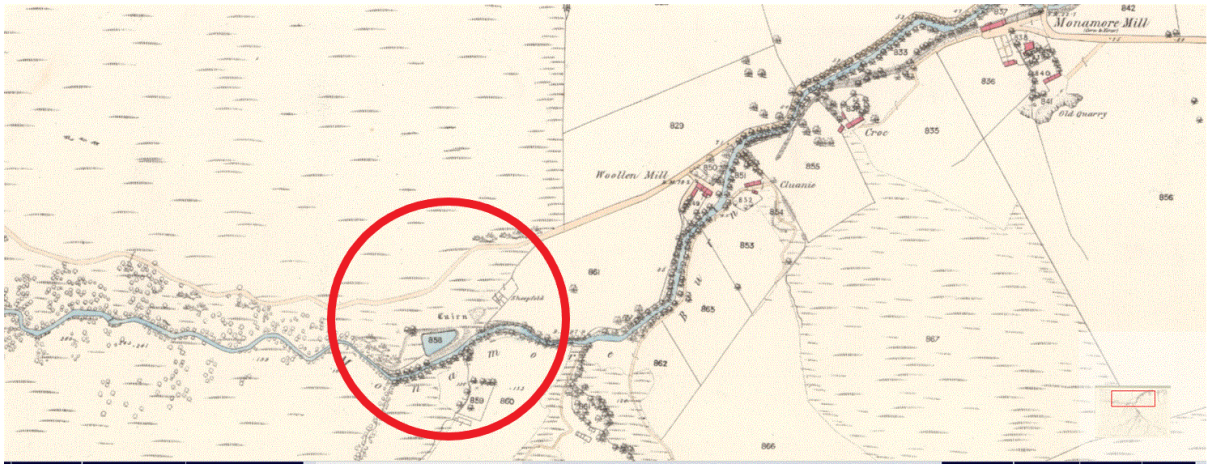

Figure 85: Monamore Cairn in Victorian times.

Figure 86: The remnants of the cairn at Monamore Glen, looking easterly. The stone looks megalithic. There seems to me to be the remnants of a circle just protruding of which this stone is one. Its orientations may be cardinal.

Blackwaterfoot

M'Arthur returns to Pennant's observation of an elongated tumulus at west coast Feorling, in 'Drumadoon Bay'. It was built of rounded stones from the shore and measured one hundred and fourteen feet in diameter, perhaps the missing first one that Pennant mentioned, or Headrick's "Law" that still needs finding.

He goes on to describe the other tumulus, the Blackwaterfoot cairn:

"*Perhaps the largest cairn in Scotland, but of which scarcely a stone now remains, stood upon the shore at Blackwaterfoot. It was of a circular, conoid formation, measuring two hundred feet across*." (A0A p 18)

The authority for the scale is given as "Headrick, New Statistical Account, etc." Headrick (1807, p153) described it as '*immense',* and 'on *an elevated plain, above the sea, in the mouth of the valley.*' To give his reader some clearer idea of vertical scale, M'Arthur notes that it was '*twice the size of the tumulus raised over the ashes of Patroclus on the plains of Troy*'. (AoA p 18) A measurement in metres would have been helpful; cubits even.

The Patroclus reference seems to originate from Wilson, (1861, Vol 1, p 74) a small genuflection. M'Arthur sets some Homeric hares running. Achilles and Patroclus are fictional Trojan War heroes. Patroclus was killed by Hector; Achilles killed Hector, then later was himself killed. Achilles cremated Patroclus and asked for a '*seemly*' mound to be raised over Patroclus' bones on the plains of Troy. Achille's own bones were, postmortem, interred with Patroclus' bones, and a bigger mound raised. Homer does not give heights, but says at **Odyssey Book 24, 80-85:**

"*Over their bones we soldiers of the mighty Argive force built up a great and glorious mound, on a foreland jutting out over the broad waters of the Hellespont, so that it might be seen far out at sea by the men of today and future ages*. "(Rieu,1991, p 357)

Did M'Arthur reference the 'great' Patroclus/Achille mound, or just the Patroclus 'seemly' mound? For the latter, Achilles instructed:

"*As for his barrow, I do not ask you to construct a very large one, something that is seemly but no more. Later you can build a big and high one*...." (Rieu,1975, p 324)

Alexander the Great sought this grave, as did Schliemann ten years after M'Arthur. The siege of Troy is likely Bronze Age, about 1200 BC. Homer was probably written down about 800 BC. There are various candidates for the mounds.

Such mounds may have been Neolithic, perhaps later re-purposed or explained as Bronze Age graves.

The authority of Homer would understandably persuade early archaeologists that mounds and stones were sepulchral of great men, or memorials of battle, as with Patroclus. Some may well have been. What height M'Arthur meant is hard to guess. Some prints, about contemporary with his writing, suggest cairns of about 25-30 feet (7.62-9.144m) tall, making twice that M'Arthur's estimate?

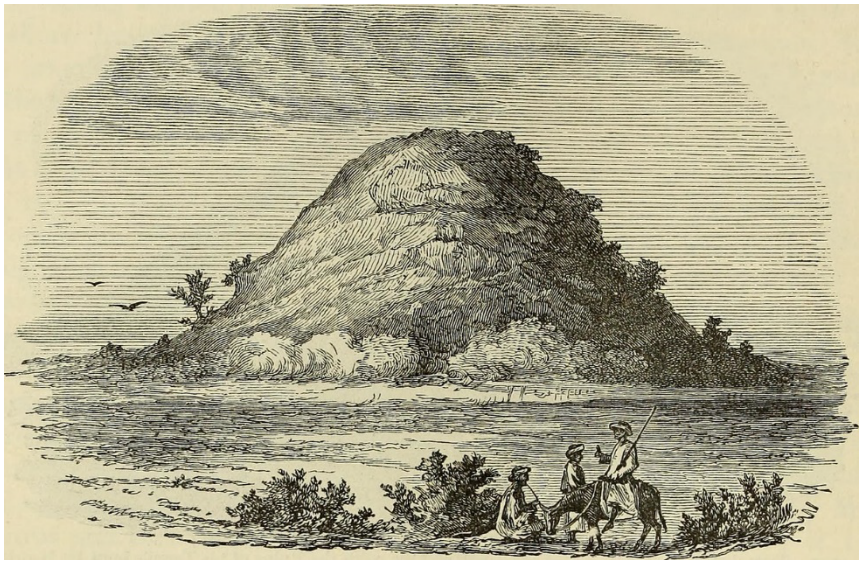

Figure 87: One of many efforts at Achille's grave. Author unknown

Pennant's 'vast' gives a better sense.

Hellespont would be a natural place for cairns used as marine navigation aids if cairns were so used. However, though Homer may be epic poetry, it is not true history of any real entity. (Lin Foxhall, Dalrymple Lectures, Glasgow November 2022).

At Blackwaterfoot, "*Several thousand car-loads of stones were removed from this cairn for the building 'of the rude cots* (cottages) *of the fishermen which cluster at the mouth of the Blackwater, when large numbers of stone coffins were discovered, filled with human bones, placed irregularly over the surface soil, but not a vestige of stone or metallic implement could be found. The huge cistvaens may still be seen, built into the dikes and houses, investing the little hamlet with the mysterious memorials and ghostly traditions of prehistoric times. "(p18)*

Figure 88: One of many Blackwaterfoot walls of roughly this period that likely reused cairn material

These huge cairns are extraordinary yet written out of contemporary Arran archaeology because they no longer exist. I think they alone require a re-evaluation of our contemporary understanding of it. Without study of the antiquarians, that could not happen. Headrick says that this one's top was a flat area, filled throughout with stones, and leaving no appearance of a mound around it.

The cairns, of enigmatic period, represent a prodigious effort by their builders, and their locations presumably had some significance lost to us. They could be Bronze Age, with cists built into them, or a modified work of an earlier lithic era.

Cairns appear in many parts of the island. I speculate that, though perhaps multi-purposed, those associated with small harbours were designed to be seen from the sea. The 'massive ridges' on the Blackwaterfoot one *might* have been platforms, for viewing or signalling. Torrylinn cairn has beside it 'Cnoc Faire', '*Watching Hill'*, a common enough West of Scotland place name. Torrylinn Water passes nearby that chambered cairn. The large cairn at Lamlash, beside the Monamore Burn, could have acted as guide to safe landing there if the earlier shore was closer, being an ideal hub for crossing the island. Light houses serve a similar purpose, as radio beacons did for aircraft before satnav.

Cromlechs

M'Arthur moves on to consider the 'cromlech'. He is satisfied that modern science has established that they were not sacrificial slabs of the Druids, but rather sepulchral in nature, due to some cists with human bones being found under some of them:

"*In 1825 a large cromlech, consisting of four stones, was exposed in removing a cairn on the neighbouring coast of Kintyre and with the recess human bones were found, mingled with those of the horse and cow*." (p 27) This is referenced to Wilson (1863, p 67), though I have not found it there.

M'Arthur (1873, p 27) writes:

"*A little to the south of Druim-cruey, in Arran, there lately existed an interesting cromlech, enclosed within a stone circle. It consisted of a large flat block of red sandstone, supported by three lesser ones, and is described by Martin as an altar-piece, upon which the ancient inhabitants of the island were wont to burn their sacrifices in times of heathenism*."

For this, he cites "*Martin's Western Islands p 220"*.

Martin (1999 p 136-7) actually says:

"*There is a circle of big stones a little to the south of Druim-cruey, the area of which is about twelve paces. There is a broad thin stone in the middle of this circle, supported by three lesser stones. The ancient inhabitants are reported to have burnt their sacrifices on the broad stone in the time of heathenism*."

M'Arthur then says (VoA p 27):

"*Headrick refers to a remarkable specimen of the* trilith, *or cromlech, of three stones. The copestone, of vast dimensions is represented as resting on two smaller ledges, deeply sunk in the earth."*

The citation for this is "Headrick's *Arran, p.46*"

M'Arthur's citation does not, apparently, support this claim; Headrick (1807, p 46) there discusses the strange structure that he found near Glen Shant at Brodick, and does not mention the Drumadoon cursus. Perhaps M'Arthur was hopping from one cromlech site to another believed cromlech site, as Wilson tends to do.

M'Arthur (1873, p 28) then seems to compound these two, apparent, cromlech descriptions. He repeats that one '*... of the most perfect triliths we have anywhere seen stands on the farm of Drumidoon.'*

This version implies that he has seen it intact, but he has just (above) said it was '*lately standing'*. It consisted of a huge block of red sandstone, resting upon two smaller ledges, and enclosing an area or chamber of two feet square, neatly trenched with small, thin flag stones. He adds that it was excavated, and material found that crumbled into dust. Further, by tradition, Ossian's daughter resided there.

This seems a miscegenation of several separate matters. The 'trilith' reference boils down to Martin only. The sandstone and chamber appear to relate to the stone cist on Machrie between Circle 5 and Circle 10 there, which could then fit with '*the farm of Drumidoon'*, which was extensive. The turning to dust might be from Pennant, perhaps with an element of McMillan (1845 NSA P 53) discussing 'Maregrioch'. The tomb legend of Malvina, or Morvena, is from Macmillan (NSA p 54), referencing Drumadoon.

The Drumadoon Farm cromlech is marked on the 25" OS Survey Map of 1864, three years after M'Arthur's 1861 edition with the '*we have seen'* reference there. It is shown to be in ruins on the map.

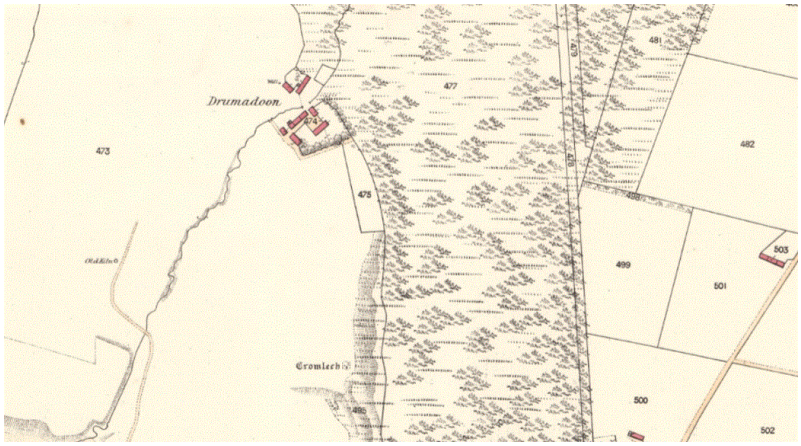

Figure 89: 1864 OS Drumadoon

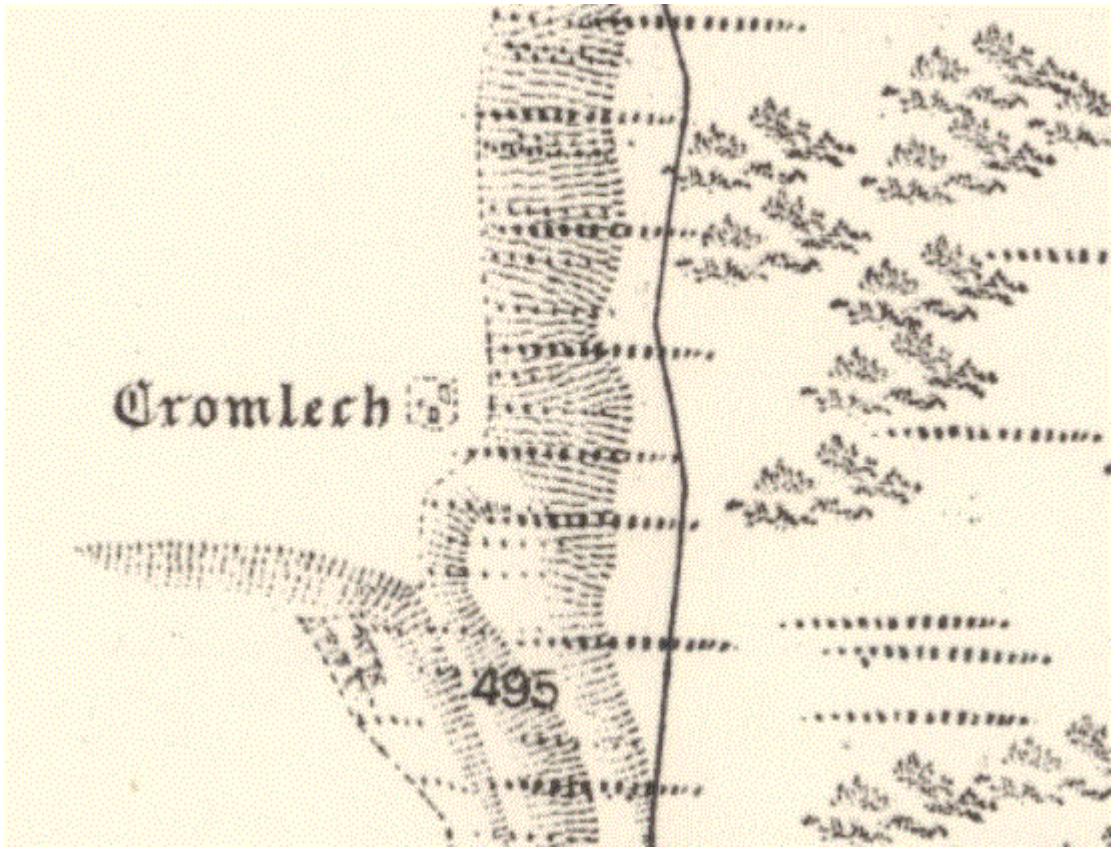

Figure 90: Enlargement of above.

In summary, I believe that there was a standing cromlech that Martin saw at Drumadoon, where it remains disassembled, and that all other references are a mostly inaccurate reprocessing of Martin's account.

M'Arthur discusses this class of monument, and the wonder that they have excited always, and references the "*huge cromlechs of Brittany, extending over an area of about eight miles. In France they are known as "Faeries' Tables", and the little chamber beneath as "Faeries Grottos* ". (VoA p 29)

I suggest that Martin's cromlech may indeed have some ancestry in Brittany, a fascinating stepping off point in re-assessing Arran's deep history.

He notes the folklore of Sweden, and Anjou, and '*a similar tradition accounts for an interesting trilith on Craigmadden Moor'*. (p 28) The Machrie folklore that he heard said that faeries met on the summit of *Durra-na-each* (sic), near Shiskin (sic), and amused themselves by throwing down pebbles held betwixt thumb and finger amongst '*... the trees of Mauchrie Forest*.' Those '*giant oaks*' have since crumbled to dust, but the pebbles of the faeries remain in the monoliths and stone circles *'... which lie buried in the moss and heath.'* The faeries used Dereneneach hill nearby (VoA p 29), derived from Gàidhlig '*Oak Grove of Horses'*.

I am open to the idea that at heart there might be some folk memory here recorded in corrupted form of how Machrie Moor operated in the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age, a subject that must await another day.

It is interesting that there are oaks at Machrie, surrounding its stones, according to the tale.

'Durra-nan-each' is puzzling. Place names are a quagmire, a trap for the unwary, but across the Kilbrannan sound lies Ptolomy's 'Promontarius Epidii' , *'Horse Peoples' Promontory*,' or Mull of Kintyre. The 'p' in '*epidii'* suggests Brythonic Celtic, i.e., Picts. Irish Q Celtic has the same word rendered '*each'* pronounced 'ay-ach', suggesting here a later Irish/Gaelic takeover. Perhaps this linguistic trail goes back to a 'horse people', and if so to what period? Fraught with difficulty, but another intriguing speculation on how Machrie worked over the ages. Both Celtic words are cognate with Latin '*equus',* horse, and its English derivatives.

In passing, McArthur is transliterating into English the Gaidhlig that he is hearing. Arran's Gaidhlig had a strong Irish accent. M'Arthur hears 'Cory-Crevie', with a

nasalised ‘e’ as in ‘egg’, unlike contemporary ‘Corrie*cravie’* with an acute ‘a’. At the time, it would have sounded as M’Arthur spelled it. He observes accurately.

In addressing the Stone Circles of Machrie, he offers little that is not still manifest. He does tell us that the roots and trunks of old oaks are still found embedded in the moss.

He has a Chapter IV devoted to single standing stones, much elaborated with assumed history of territory demarcation, funereal monuments, and enlivened with reference to cultures from different eras, places and times. Fionn features abundantly. I do not intend to deal with these, though they have their interest.

He does, however, make some references of interest as well as rehearsing older authors like Martin:

“*By the roadside between Brodick and Lamlash there stand three massive blocks of red sandstone, which are said to mark the spot where the lands of three of the old proprietors of Arran met*”. His source for this is “Local tradition” (VoA p 32) which presumably relates to the meaning of the stones. They ‘*stand*’, in the present tense, in both his editions.

This echoes Headrick (1807, p 64) who describes ‘*some tall obelisks, which seem to have been Druidical circles*’ on the east of the road, ‘*on the hill behind the minister’s manse’*. These I have described in the section on Headrick. They are not, however, sandstone, and are not very ‘*tall’*. M’Arthur’s description however resonates with the 1970s wooden circle placed there that I have described. I have not resolved this puzzle. I spoke with the last people that I could find alive with knowledge of the creation of the wooden monument. There is nothing to suggest that the creator knew anything of these matters. His inspiration instead seems to have been wider artistic and social concepts, with the three ‘monoliths’ of the monument being an artistic local reference to Circle 2 at Machrie Moor. That same symbol appears widely on island related manufactures and designs.

Figure 91: The Lamlash Road Stones are not tall.

Machrie

Returning to Machrie, or Mauchrie as he has it, he cites local tradition as telling the tale of Fionn and his band hunting there when Vikings arrived by sea. They were attacked by Fionn's band and driven back to sea. A few Vikings could not reach the boats, were chased over the hills to Dun Fionn above Lamlash and there slaughtered. The Fingallian heroes were buried in Machrie and marked with columns and circles. Nonsense, probably, but it stresses the use of a crossing of the island from Machrie to Lamlash. Another version of the tale has the Vikings being chased up to Catacol, Fionn dying there, being buried at a lost cairn, thereafter dubbed Fionn's grave, or Ar Fhionn, Arran. This we have met before. (Macmillan, 1845, NSA, p 54)

His 1861 description of the Machrie circle group is:

"(It) *consists of eight circles, all more or less complete, running irregularly from east to west; each circle comprising from four to fourteen columns of rude unhewn sandstone, measuring from three to eighteen feet in height, with an average circumference of eight feet. The diameters of the enclosed areas range from fifteen to thirty feet*." (ibid p 38)

Today, there are 7 generally obvious circles, numbered 1,2,3,4,5,10, and 11. Early writers assumed that all objects were former circles, so some of today's 'circles' appear as single stones, namely numbers 7, 8, and 9, or sarcophagus 6. Unfortunately, each writer has, from the start, used their own notation. For example, today Burnham (2018, p 261) uses his own, helpfully distinguishing circles from numbered items. There is much confusion, and an agreed protocol is greatly to be desired.

Entry to the moor formerly was from the east but is now from the west. This makes nonsense today of an implied easterly route according to numerical sequence. For example, Circle 11 is just eastward of Circle 1, and Circle 10, westward, is the first encountered today. Two unnumbered circles lie eastward of the main group, in rougher ground, beyond 11, difficult of access, one a remnant, the other slightly resembling 4. The latter is close to the Water Board building on The String; the other is north westerly towards the road to Machrie Bay. They are little noticed today, but were surely part of the wider Machrie scheme, whatever it was. They are in the area of Lag nan Torr Dubh, previously noted by Martin. (Figs 58-9)

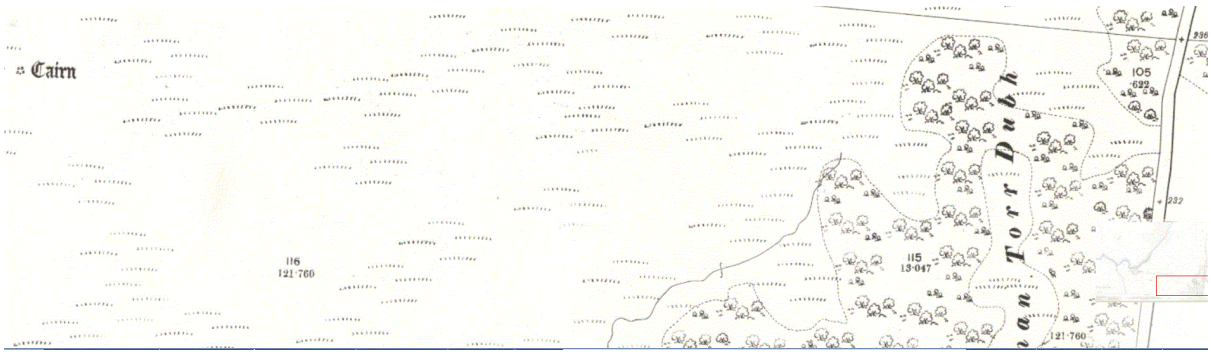

Figure 92: The upper and lower eastern circles, rarely discussed, at Torr nan Lag Dubh, Machrie. The road at right is The String. OS 25" 1864.

Other remains have disappeared or are vestigial. At present, one must reconstruct, as best one can, what each author is seeking to describe.

M'Arthur enters from The String to the east, and proceeds '*in a north-westerly direction, through deep tufts of heath and peat-bogs'*, to arrive in '*a few minutes'* at the first of his eight.

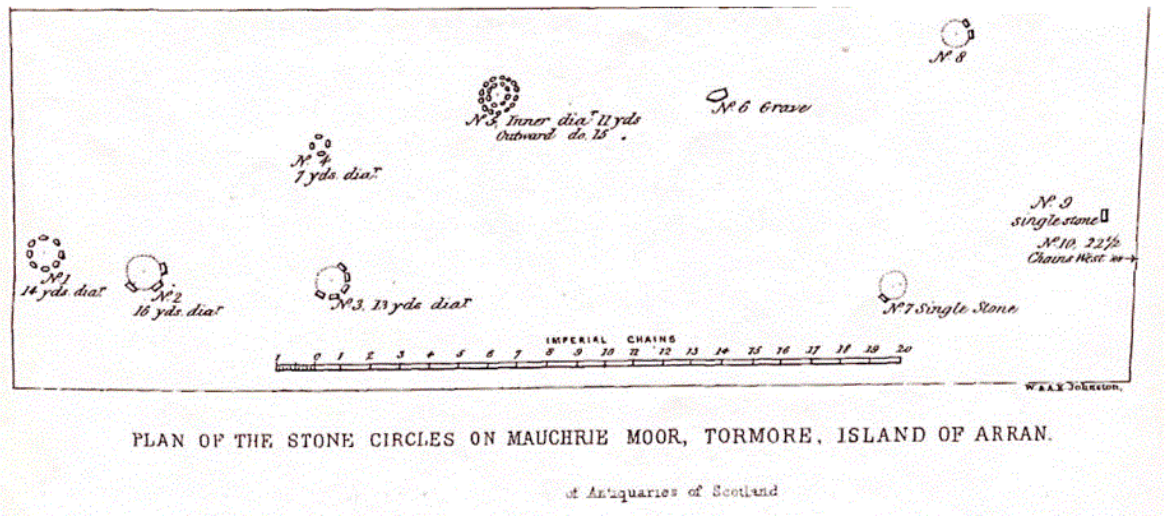

Figure 93: T Bryce's 1860 diagram; north is at diagram bottom. M' Arthur enters from left.

Figure 94: Circle 1. 11 lies to the left. Shiskine is below hills.

The Shiskine road is off Fig 17, well to the left. Circle 1 is still thus numbered, but today he would have encountered Circle 11 first, re-discovered since his time. I assume that he has noticed first one of the eastern circles, and next is at today's Circle 1, but his above description is hard to reconcile. There are 6 taller stones, and 5 smaller, of which one, right of the photographer's path in Fig 95, is about as tall as the larger ones. One lesser stone is absent between the large stone on the furthest left, and the next large one to its right. That gap looks out to about 50° east from the centre.

His second circle is clearly Circle 2, the one, confusingly, with three megaliths:

Figure 95: Circle 2.

Next, "*The third consists of six stones, forming three-quarters of a circle; diameter of area thirty feet.*" (9.144 m) This is circle three, with one standing.

Figure 96: Circle 3, with Circle 2 just left of erect stone, about 100°E of it.

His fourth circle consisted of six stones, averaging six stones, and fifteen feet (4.572m) across. This, I think, is today's Circle 4, that now has only 4 stones left, and looks as if it might have had five. I wonder if those missing stones may be the 'mill stones'.

Figure 97: Circle 4, photographer looking about 35°N. with C3 mid left, C2 mid right. Ben Tarsuinn skyline centre.

His fifth was Suidhe-Coir-Fhionn, also today's Circle 5. The inner circle had 8 stones three to four feet (0.91-1.22m) high; the outer had 14 stones.

Figure 98: Circle 5.

Figure 99: Satellite shot of 5. Flightradar.

M'Arthur's stone count seems accurate, but the southern part of the circle had had some rough usage by Skene's time (1832) (Fig 22).

His sixth circle '*consists of an erect column about twelve feet in height, with others just visible above the moss'*. (p 39)

This, I think, is likely to be what is today is called 'Moss Farm Stone'. (Burnham, p 261)

Figure 100: Moss Farm Stone, M'Arthur's sixth circle? Sail Chalmadale to north, photographer on the track, main group off-picture right.

His seventh and eighth are more problematic.

I think the seventh, '*two erect stones, four to six feet in height, the others are deeply embedded in the moss',* are the seventh of Bryce at Fig 16 above. Where are they? They are en route to Bryce's and today's Circle 10.

Figure 101: A telephoto shot of a visitor en route to M'Arthur's seventh circle, Skene's No 9, south of today's track.

If I am correct, this is a complex site, one function of which I believe is to mark the winter solstitial sunset. It awaits proper investigation, a ‘Cinderella’ site of great interest.

Figure 102: M'Arthur's 'Circle' 7?

M'Arthur's eighth circle, is '*an imperfect circle, about twenty-nine feet in diameter. The stones are scattered and partially removed.'* (ibid) It is today's Circle 10. It is large, and not easy to photograph well:

Figure 103: Circle 10. Southward view.

However, could his seventh circle possibly be two of the stones to the rear of Circle 10? I *think* not, but it is a possibility. (Fig 105 is of Circle 10 from a different angle, creating such an impression).

Figure 104: Circle 10

And there are stones further west of Circle 10, on the farm track to Balnagore, that are little noticed today, but which also *could* be what he is referring to, though I doubt it. They are possibly a onetime circle, west of Circle 10 (M'Arthur's eighth, his terminus). (See Figs 98-100)

Figure 105: Circle 10 aerial shot. An overgrown farm track heads west (left) where main track turns northwards.Canmore.

Figure 106: A little further west. Balnagore off centre top. Canmore.

Figure 107: This older view shows the stones. The aircraft is travelling east, inverting the position of the path. Canmore.

I think that J. Skene, (1832) probably resolves the issue. A blow-up of his diagram, west of Circle 5 shows Skene's No 7, the sarcophagus, 193 paces opposite (Skene's) No 8, (Fig 23). 100 paces west southwest of the sarcophagus are two stones that he calls No 9. Those I think are M'Arthur's *seventh* circle. (VoA p 39)

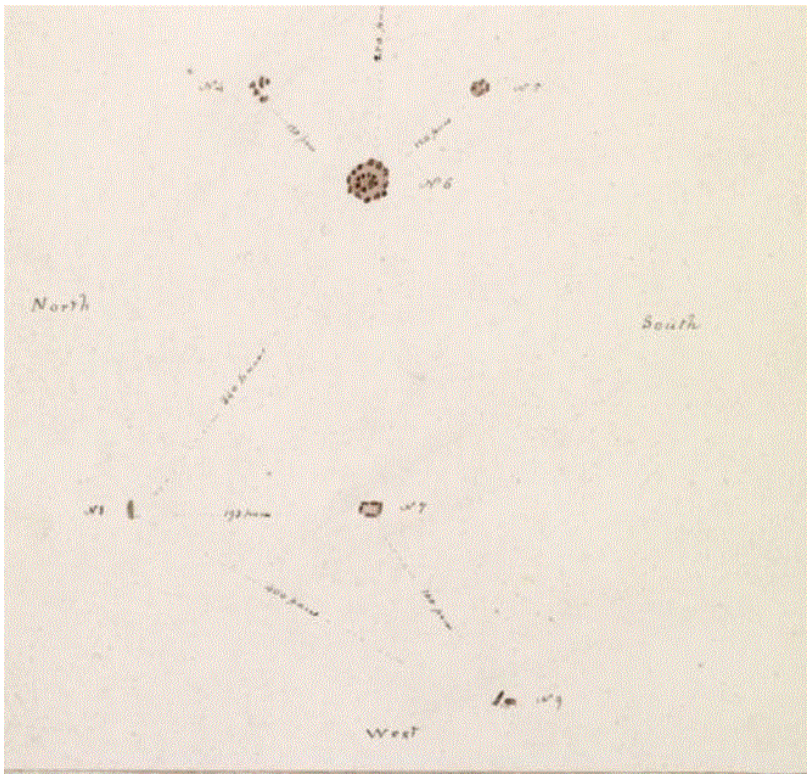

Figure 108: The west portion of Skene's 1832 diagram. Detail is poor; but it is better to work with the small scale.

M' Arthur gives a romantic description of the empty landscape's silence and foreboding nature. Keats's Ozymandias seems somewhere in M'Arthur's mind.

That utter silence is long gone in most of Arran, though a dying winter afternoon on the hills gets close. After lockdown, people spoke in wonder of the then silence, the birdsong, the wind soughing, all remembered nostalgically

M'Arthur lets slip that he is, archaeologically speaking, well connected:

'*A careful examination of these and similar monuments in Arran has convinced us of the* sepulchral *origin and design of their construction.'* Who were *'us?*

'On removing the moss and heath which clad the area of the concentric circle above noticed, large stones and boulders were exposed to a depth of 'three to four feet' (0.92-1.21m) but without arriving at the original soil.' (AoA p 39-40)

Further investigation convinced '*us*' that those stones had been placed there .... over the surface soil, and over the centuries the forests... had grown up and decayed around them and entombed the '*tiny cairn'* beneath the peat and moss until only the '*tall columns'* appeared above. (supra) I think that the unacknowledged voice of Bryce can here be detected in '*us*'.

His footnote shows that while his first edition was under press, J Bryce's 1860 excavations were conducted, and that the results were known to him. M'Arthur presumably was part of that '*we*', consistent with the 1861 date of his first edition. I suspect that M'Arthur was likely invited along, and that we hear Bryce's voice in M'Arthur's writing. If so, M'Arthur was rather well connected. The belief that circles were funerary monuments likely came from Bryce, who was unshakable on this point.

M'Arthur reviews at some length ancient sources, assumed relevant, which need not much detain a modern reader; not too many contemporary readers will be persuaded that stone circles were now proved to date from:

"*... the two earliest periods of the archaeological annals – when the Allophylian and Celtic races were slowly emerging from their gross ignorance and barbarism into a knowledge of the metallurgic arts...*" (1873 p 41)

The 'Allophylians' were a fantastical race conjured up by a Dr Pritchard whom Wilson (1851 Chap IX p 238 et seq) was much impressed by. They were superseded, apparently, by Indo-European races of 'superior mental capacity'. Quaintly, Wilson's narrative has some very loose resonance with contemporary discussions on new DNA evidence. (see Nativ, 2020: BBC Scotland (2022))

M'Arthur tells us that:

"*Many of the stone circles of Arran have been removed to make way for the advance of agriculture. A concentric circle on the farm of south Sannox was demolished a few years ago for the building of a dike; and a very complete single circle, which stood near the mouth of glen Shirrag (sic) was cleared away in preparing the field for the operations of the plough*..." (pp 44-5)

The Shurig circle escaped Bryce in 1860 but may have been found by Aura Bockute (*Glasgow University Ph D candidate, private communication*) using Lidar.

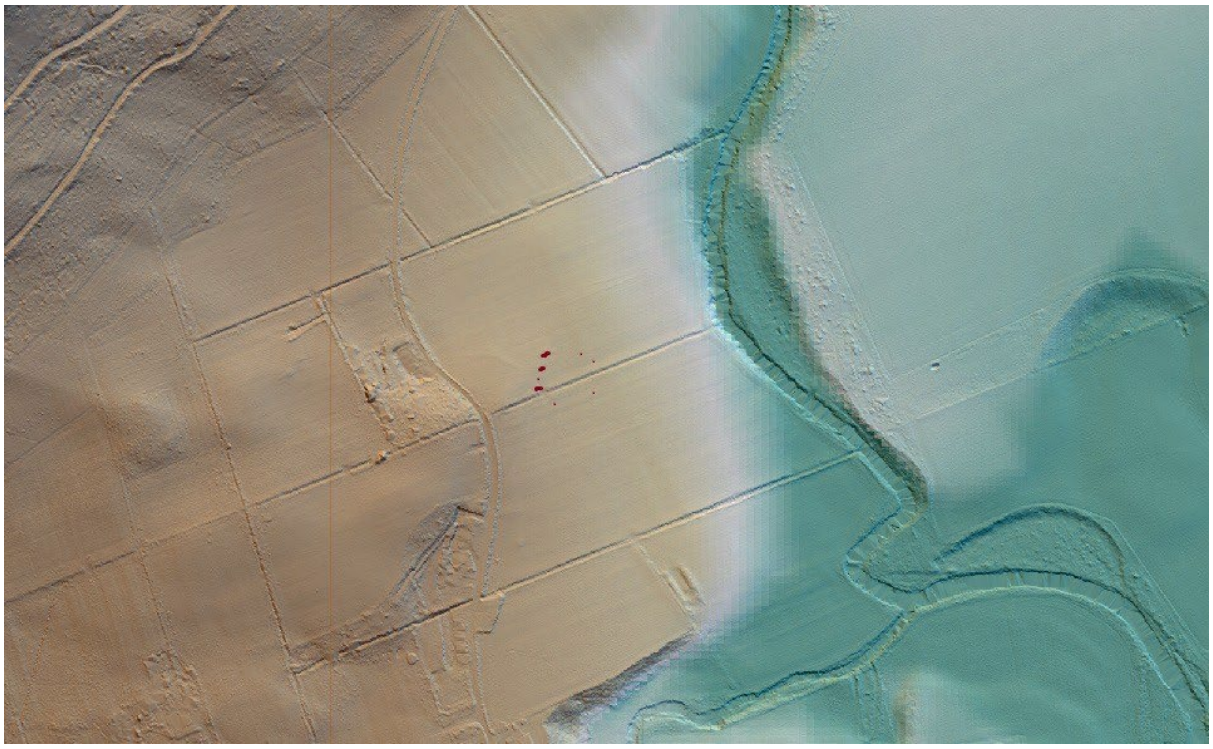

Figure 109: Aura Bockute's interpretative Lidar analysis of the Shurig circle.

Many remains still existed, and there is *"... an interesting* gray *circle, surmounting a green mound, at Moniquil; and others may be seen at Mayish, Blaremore, Largiemore, Largiebeg, and other places." (*page 45*)*

"*The monumental remains of the early inhabitants of Arran are now fast disappearing from the Island, and soon all trace of their existence shall have been swept away by the ravages of time and the encroachments of agriculture*." (p 58)

There we shall leave him. Time, and the Antiquarians, had been kindly enough to the remains. Agriculture was almost as severe as M'Arthur feared. Then, just when the remains thought that things could not get much worse, the Archaeologists arrived. That too awaits another day.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions

Did my methodology work to any extent? Was it possible to use the antiquarians as eyewitnesses to envision an earlier archaeological landscape in Arran than the one we have grown up with, discussed, and modelled? Could their described sites be revisited and if so what was found? Did a "new" ancient Arran emerge, and if so what did it look like, and where might we "go" next? Are any of the ideas of the antiquarians of use today, even as exemplars of what not to think? Are they worth a better opinion now than they have sometimes received in the past? If the methodology did succeed to some extent, can it be applied elsewhere?

My plan had been to revisit the writings of the antiquarians and early archaeologists of Arran to try to catch a glimpse of the archaeology that they saw. I was aware that roads came late to Arran, as did modern agriculture. I watched with my own eyes the destruction of archaeology in Arran, knowing full well that this is a process that is continuous throughout the ages. Could I, as it were, travel alongside the antiquarians and see what they did? That journey would reach back to late seventeenth century, and the 'prospect' as they might have said would change with every decade. I did not anticipate the extent to which the mental 'prospect' of these observers would change with the rolling times, though I suppose that I should have done. It was hard to miss that each generation gets the archaeology that is proper to it. Or gets the archaeology that it deserves.

I think that I succeeded at least someway in this endeavour, but it is of course for others to reach their own conclusion.

I think that the methodology has been shown to work and is of potentially wide application. Space here lets me describe some “new” or re-classified megaliths, but not all. I believe that I have found seven, perhaps eight, “new” megalithic standing stones of which I know of no mention in the literature. They are joined by a cromlech, reported here. unmentioned in modern literature, but known to the knowing old of the village. A stone circle of contested existence at Brodick has been located and is ripe for resurrection. A huge lost cairn at Lamlash has been located, with decent prospect that it was originally built over a stone circle.

‘Stupendous cairns’ are shown to have existed and vanished. One, perhaps the largest in Scotland, was in the sleepy village of Blackwaterfoot, tucked behind the hotel that busloads of modern visitors debouche from and walk around, sometimes passing the still standing debris of whatever happened in prehistory there. The last stones of that cairn lived on to be chronicled in the very early twentieth century. The place name still references ‘Cairn’, to the perplexity of long standing residents which is manifest if one asks them about it. The enormous cairn at Lamlash on the other side of the island I have never heard spoken about or read about after the middle of the nineteenth century. There is a good probability that it was linked to the cairn of Blackwaterfoot, and the trail across the island’s moors is still there for the vigorous. It was a pilgrim trail in the early and mediaeval Christianity, and may itself be a pagan carry over.

Circles which are no longer present are suggested for Machrie Moor. Lidar may disturb that repose.

Yet another cairn, or ‘law’ as Martin described it, is likely linked by his narrative to a Gàidhlig place name on the east side of Machrie Moor. That place-name was extant in 1864, then itself mostly vanished. It seemed to indicate a long gone feature. It was approached by an oak grove, he says. Nothing of the latter remains, but the modern place name Dereneneach is close by, meaning ‘Oak Grove of the Horse People’.

The ‘lost’ circle claimed for Glen Shurig over at Brodick is, I believe, here established and located again, courtesy of the antiquarians, and the technical skills of Aura Bockate. It presumably lies under a shallow turf in an easily accessible area, likely untouched since being thrown down in the 1830s, and is otherwise available for the full

battery of modern techniques. As is the stone circle that I believe lay under the cairn at Lamlash, whose vestigial remnants still poke just above the surface. I presume that it was ancient when the cairn was accumulated.

The Blackwaterfoot/Drumadoon area here emerges as a significant and busy early landscape not previously considered and is ripe for re-evaluation. The discovery of the Torbeg Cursus fits in well with all this. Something of more than local importance is suggested, and Machrie Moor features in it.

At Auchagallon, the antiquarian evidence suggests that the stone filling in the circle is mid nineteenth century, leaving, presumably, the original floor intact. The once - discussed cairn to its north is available for physical reclaim by modern methods.

These are just some examples of what the study of Arran's antiquarians can offer. There is much, much more besides. The accounts of antiquarian excavations, including those to be discussed hereafter, lightly touched on here, offer fresh opportunities to re-do their work with modern technology. The finds from these often lie in museums in Edinburgh, Glasgow or some in Arran, and do so undisturbed, but available for modern analysis.

Excavation accounts also tell us which sites they did *not* excavate, and which are still as they were.

Some local legends, myths and old tales are shown to have a slippery connection with a yet older order of things. The incoherent transmission of long lost purpose is at least poignant and may on some occasions amount to '*an adminicle of evidence'*, as old fashioned lawyers might have argued.

Megaliths, *alignments*, or *orientations*, according to taste, are rarely free from contention and controversy, and in Arran they were looked at and hypothesised by archeoastronomy pioneers of the nineteen seventies and later, but because they did not know what the antiquarians did, they missed much that would have piqued their interest (and no doubt that of their opponents).

I knew some of the notables in that group, all now dead, and regret to be unable to show them what I have found.

Some locations discussed.

Lamlash

Lamlash Bay had important monuments, although the remains are not much in evidence now. Few are aware of them. Good agricultural land today, Lamlash was in the past swampy, with agriculture, now lost in Sitka, mostly on hill sides, as the placenames attest. The Monamore Cairn is a neglected monument, today scarcely observable. My research suggests an initial stone circle site, later overlaid. I have found seven stones, six of them just protruding, one clearly observable (Fig 115). Given the expansion of the village, time for exploration is limited. The circle may have become a cairn in antiquity, perhaps re-used in the Bronze Age, augmented in later times by the overland route to Molios' burial ground near Pien. Thus M'Arthur:

"; and many of the villagers of Lamlash were wont to bury their dead with the sacred enclosure of the Clachan, beside the traditional tombstone of the Saint. (Near Pien) On *their journey across the moors, the funeral attendants halted near the head of Monie-mhor Glen, where a huge cairn of stones, raised during successive generations, now marks the site where the encoffined dead was placed*." (M'Arthur, p23)

He sources this from NSA and local tradition. He would not have known that a circle may have been the base layer before the cairn. He suggests that in carrying over a coffin, the bearers rested, and placed a stone where they did so. Many *bealachs* (passes*)* in placenames reflect this practice. The pall bearers' transit would have been exhausting and speaks to the importance of the route. As suggested, that importance may have been taken over by Christianity, rather than created by it. An excavation at this site is justified on the basis of the antiquarian records and the residue; time may be short.

Figure 110: The slight bump is the cairn remnant at Monamore. There are a number of stones just breaking the surface, apparently in a circle.

Blackwaterfoot.

The lost cairns in the Machrie to Blackwaterfoot complex deserve a more thorough revision than was possible here. The Blackwaterfoot cairn was, on early accounts, 'stupendous', and perhaps unique in Scotland. Why at that spot? If it signposted a safe harbour on the west, what was the ongoing destination, or the importance of the harbour? I have found stones enough to suggest a route to Machrie Moor west of Shiskine Valley, if one is attracted to that idea. One the eastern side of Shisking, what happened to Headrick's 'Law' nearby? A western route could be argued for.

M'Arthur's casual comparison to Patroclus' grave might have unexpected substance; Homer suggests that they would be seen from the sea, perhaps to honour the dead, perhaps also as navigation aid for finding harbourage. It is a striking feature of the south

and the west of Arran that megaliths and cairns are or were where larger streams debouched to sea and provided harbours for the whisky smugglers.

Blackwaterfoot has at least one other stone of note at the ford, although I am not aware of its being mentioned elsewhere. A triangular stone, it is close to the crossing. The cairn would have been visible from it on the nearby south westerly ridge, but that may be coincidental. It looks associated with the nearby river fording stones. It is orientated north/south on its narrow axis, and east /west on its broad axis.

I field-noted it as being within a degree or two of the cardinal points. This made me think of sidereal bearings, and remarks of Ludovic Mann, which specific remarks enjoy little acceptance, but little obloquy either. (Mann, 1914, p 127)

Figure 111: The stone lies left of the driveway.

Figure 112: The broad axis points west at the tip.

Figure 113: The short axis points north.

More curious yet is a stone apparently in line with that stone *and* the site of the missing cairn. What they mean, or do not, I have not as yet ascertained. Both could be an important residue, or the recent playthings of a whimsical owner. It sits in the garden lawn of the house next to it, awaiting clarification of what its story might be.

Perhaps the 'dagger' stone is independent of the cairn, perhaps associated with it. It could indicate the location of the ford, before the bridge came into being, or was placed there for a reason not based upon utility. In any event, I found it because the antiquarians made me aware of the cairn, from whose site I took a number of systematic back bearings.

It is not too hard to envisage it indicating the crossing point, leading onwards to Shiskine, Machrie, and Drumadoon on the western side. This in turns suggests established paths up Arran's west coast around Machrie, and a relationship with Auchagallon and Auchencar, which also show extensive labour and a maritime outlook.

Figure 114: The cairn was approximately centre background. Follow the line of the front stone for the middle one.

The great cairn and harbour may have indicated a route, perhaps processional, from Blackwaterfoot to Machrie, perhaps there to meet with others approaching from Brodick, or over from Lamlash, or up from the southern parts of the island. This is entirely speculative, but plausible. The moor trails are consistent with such postulations.

Machrie, however, has its own harbour. Auchencar, especially if both stones were erect, would have well indicated its harbourage at nearby Dougarie, albeit Dougarie being further away from 'its' cairn than at Blackwaterfoot. That needs explaining on the indicator theory.

A track to the east side of Machrie would pass a recumbent standing stone opposite Balnacoole, then continue to Gleann an t-Suide, and Moniquil standing stone and cairn, joining the route that the antiquarians took to Glen Shurig, Brodick and the Sannox monuments, present and missing. Looping southwards to Lamlash, Whiting Bay, Largiebeg and onwards reinforces the idea of an integrated island, with communities clustering near to resource, agricultural or marine. All such areas boast monuments. The antiquarian findings redraw this.

Machrie is a good candidate for a central meeting ground, perhaps someway explaining the diversity of traditions in its megaliths, having been a central area from the Mesolithic onwards.

Figure 115: There are fords of various ages present before the Blackwaterfoot bridge was built. Megalithic stone centre right.

Brodick Village Area

Glen Shurig's importance is boosted by its lost circle, whose remains may have been found by Aurime Bockute, as above noted. An excavation cries out here to see if the antiquarian accounts, plus lidar, have brought a circle back into being that escaped James Bryce. Its place in the glen then falls to be considered in terms of landscape. Why was it *there*? Was it liminal, an entrance or an exit? Likewise, the lost Sannox circle.

The stones in Brodick, which are usually dealt with separately, may be interconnected. The antiquarian records hint at this. The 'Castle Stones', the Shurig circle, the Schoolhouse stone, and its neglected neighbour in the nearby wood are all someway interlinked, and, I suggest speculatively, so also is the rock art of Stronach. My ongoing research suggests that the shore road stone was a winter solstitial marker using a still extant cairn on Corriegills ridge to the south, but space constricts me.

Beyond Blackwaterfoot.

Martin's account suggests that much was going on at Blackwaterfoot, including a grove and other large cairns nearby.

In old writings, the sides of the Shiskine hills were used for agriculture. If that extended into prehistory, hill routes were probably easier going, creating a fork; the leftwards route heading over Drumadoon to Torbeg and Tormore, past the hypothesised cursus excavated by Brophy and McGregor and others in 2021 (Brophy 2022), the rightwards route running nearer the present road. That would accommodate pretty well all the known monuments on both sides.

At present, there are no extant monuments to the south of Blackwaterfoot until the Kilpatrick/Brown Hill ones, which lead on via the Corriecravie cairn to the southern complexes.

Drumadoon's 'Cromlech'.

The Drumadoon Farm 'cromlech' might be rather more important than just being 'Malvina's' or 'Morvena's' imagined grave. Martin's description, apparently confirmed by me, suggests a flat table on top of three legs. This is a different megalithic tradition to others seen on Arran. I am aware of a claimed cromlech at mainland Largs, but it does not fit Martin's description:

Figure 116: Largs 'Cromlech' - high on ridge above Largs, looking to sea. ***NS 220936 58594***

Martin's is more like Lanyon Quoit from Cornwall, or Pentre Ifan, or similar. If validated, this would indeed be an exotic addition to Arran's prehistory. There are many such in Wales, Ireland, and Brittany. That is what the present remains suggest.

Figure 117: Lanyon Quoit, Cornwall. Photo credit klamawe.eu

Shiskine

Shiskine is key to Machrie. The Gàidhlig name is given as 'Seisken'. (Currie, 1908, p 61) He gives no source for this. I think it might be 'Seasgunn', as given by Ainmean Aite's website, which sources that from Ian A. Fraser's *Placenames of Arran,* which has it as An t-Seasgunn, ' a boggy, marshy or sedgy place' (1999, p93) Currie has it as '*a quagmire, a marsh'*. Robertson (2019) has *'air' an t-Seasgann*, on the Seasgann, not 'anns' or 'aig', suggesting a thing rather than a place name. That seems to be from his Arran wife.

Currie adds that during geological changes, *"…the sea penetrated far up into the Shisken valley. The only lands suitable for cultivation were on the hillsides, where traces may still be seen of the iomaires or ridges. After the sea had receded, and the valley had been drained by some eruptive or artificial means at Blackwaterfoot, the hillsides were abandoned for the lower and more fertile vale."*

Currie attributes this information to W.Gunn, F.G.S., a then geologist of note.
I am not competent to discuss the implications of this for Machrie's archaeology, but McGregor (1965, p 62) says the 100-foot (30.48m) sub-arctic or arctic sea must have extended up many island valleys, and notes:

"*An even more striking change was in the southwestern part of the island where the lower Iorsa was a sea-loch and where the sea penetrated up the Machrie and Black Waters to flood a large part of the Shiskine plain." (p61)*

Torr Righ Mor, and Beag, and Drumadoon fort, would then have been isolated. That would be about 23,000 – 9000 BC. Gradual retreat of sea produced 50- and 25-foot (15.24m and 7.62m) beaches, the latter in evidence '*north of Drumadoon'*. The 25-foot level dates to 5,500-3,000 BC, followed by a 15 foot (4.572 m) one from 3,000-1,000 BC. Today's levels are about those of 1 AD, with a slight submergence noted '*which may still be in progress'*. *(p 64)*

All of which suggests that the present name, in a language not likely present before 500 A.D., records the quagmire once there. That bears on what Machrie was, or meant, at its various stages.

Brodick

For us, Brodick is Arran's point of arrival, but that bay may then have been of limited purpose, and that focussed on the north shore at Cladach near the castle. Elsewhere may have mattered more.

The route linking Brodick and Lamlash today is by road, following natural contours and no doubt older paths. Absent roads, the track from ridgetop at Croc Dail to Invercloy suggests this. Glenrickard chamber cairn may evidence this example.

Figure 118: The contemporary path from Corriegills to Invercloy. The forestry is all modern.

Which suggests, at least to me, that we should discuss Glen Shant, Invercloy, Corriegills and Lamlash southwards as being intertwined in the Neolithic onwards, and perhaps forming a large landscape. All the writers here considered apparently ignored the Mayish monolith, an important work, little known today. It may have waymarked the other fork of the track near to today's road, leading to the present pier area, whose riverine harbour still has some traffic.

Figure 119: Mayish This orientation might be an alignment to Goat Fell, or to north.

DID THE ANTIQUARIANS' RELIGIOUS FOCUS ONLY GET IN THE WAY?

I was not surprised to find antiquarians looking to the Old Testament to ponder the meaning of the monuments that they were considering. In fact, my surprise arose as to how little they did so, given Christianity's then prominence. I thought that restraint suggested a transition by them (Trigger p31 et seq).

Megaliths often appear in the Old Testament, and many have looked there for explanation. Today, doing so is thought a little embarrassing or contentious. I beg to differ; it is evidence, though assessment of its weight is a difficult issue. There are textual issues; most Bibles in western translations have travelled through Paleo Hebraic, Aramaic, Greek, Latin and earlier English usage. Vernacular translations mostly derive from mediaeval translations of Jerome's Latin Vulgate, itself not free from doctrinal distortions. There is however the Jewish Tanakh available to read, closer to the original languages, and much learning has been applied to it. (See Berlin and Brettler, 2004)

Dating Tanakh is a heroic endeavour, and a lively controversy, but Tanakh can be approached easily enough and offers, on one view, a letter from the Bronze Age with, perhaps, a folkloric, liminal and evanescent memory of much earlier.

A concise account and summary of Tanakh references to megaliths was made by Lebouf (2012).

He gathers the references, annotates them, and he gives his provisional conclusions as to megalith functions there claimed (ibid p 55-56):

"*The megalithic sanctuaries are:*

– House of God

– Place of prophetic visions and encounter with divinity

– Residence of priests

– Place of sacrifice, rituals, ceremonies

– Place of communion

– Community centre

– Place of pilgrimage and processions

– Territorial landmark, military and spiritual fortress

– Astronomically orientated and dedicated to calendar

– Gathering place of idols, state or national treasury

– Collection of relics and clan signs

– Music and dance centre

– Place of royal unction

– Political centre

– Tribunal

– Necropolis or mausoleum"

He points out that more than one function may apply at any time:

".. it is good to recall that the majority of modern authors see in the megalithic sites mere graves. But the fact of finding bones under a monument does not make it a grave only." (Ibid, p 56)

The sepulchral fixation of both Bryces spring to mind.

On Leboef's analysis, the question would not be, "What are stone circles/standing stones/four posters etc *for?",* but rather, "What was *this* circle/standing stone etc *for?*"

In this work I can only draw attention to this issue, invite research, and nod to the antiquarians for reminding us that it is there. Much the same reasoning would apply to other ancient texts whether Mesopotamian, Egyptian or other.

The Antiquarians

All the antiquarians looked at would have made good contemporary archaeologists; later ones were. It is striking how what really changes is nearly always the technology, and the accumulation of antecedent

knowledge. The antiquarians impress as being as wise, or foolish, or hopeful, or blinded by contemporary beliefs as we are. They lead to the next chapter from here, the Bryces, outstanding in their day, as befits a remarkable dynasty that included a Professor of Civil Law at Oxford University and a British Ambassador. The speed of their archaeological work in Arran was astonishing, perhaps appalling, to modern archaeologists. Their methods had faults that deserve careful review. Allison Hagerty (1991, p 60-3) suggests that much was missed in 1861 when Bryce dug Machrie circles that modern techniques could grasp. There must be so much more awaiting us.

I would welcome the chance to write in detail about the antiquarians, their development and their thought in today's world, but space does not here permit. I have to let the antiquarians speak for themselves. I think they give a good account of themselves; the reader can decide. I enjoyed 'meeting' all of them and would welcome them as colleagues. I shall plead writer's privilege to ponder only one favourite of mine.

John M'Arthur

John M'Arthur struck me as a remarkably perceptive and informed person. I tried to find personal information about him, but with little result. He lived in Glasgow in a terrace near the west end of Argyle Street, better known today for its tall ash tree. That terrace was then popular with sea captains, but M'Arthur had an office in Glasgow city centre. He seems to have had some connection to Perth; perhaps he was at school there. He was steeped in the Classics, so perhaps a public school, or similar. Perth might explain his ease in Gaelic. A drawing, I presume of him, is missing from my second edition of his book, but graces the first, making this a suitable point to wish him, and the others: *Ave atque vale*[1]. He would surely reciprocate

[1] Hail, and farewell.

Figure120: Mr M'Arthur, I presume?

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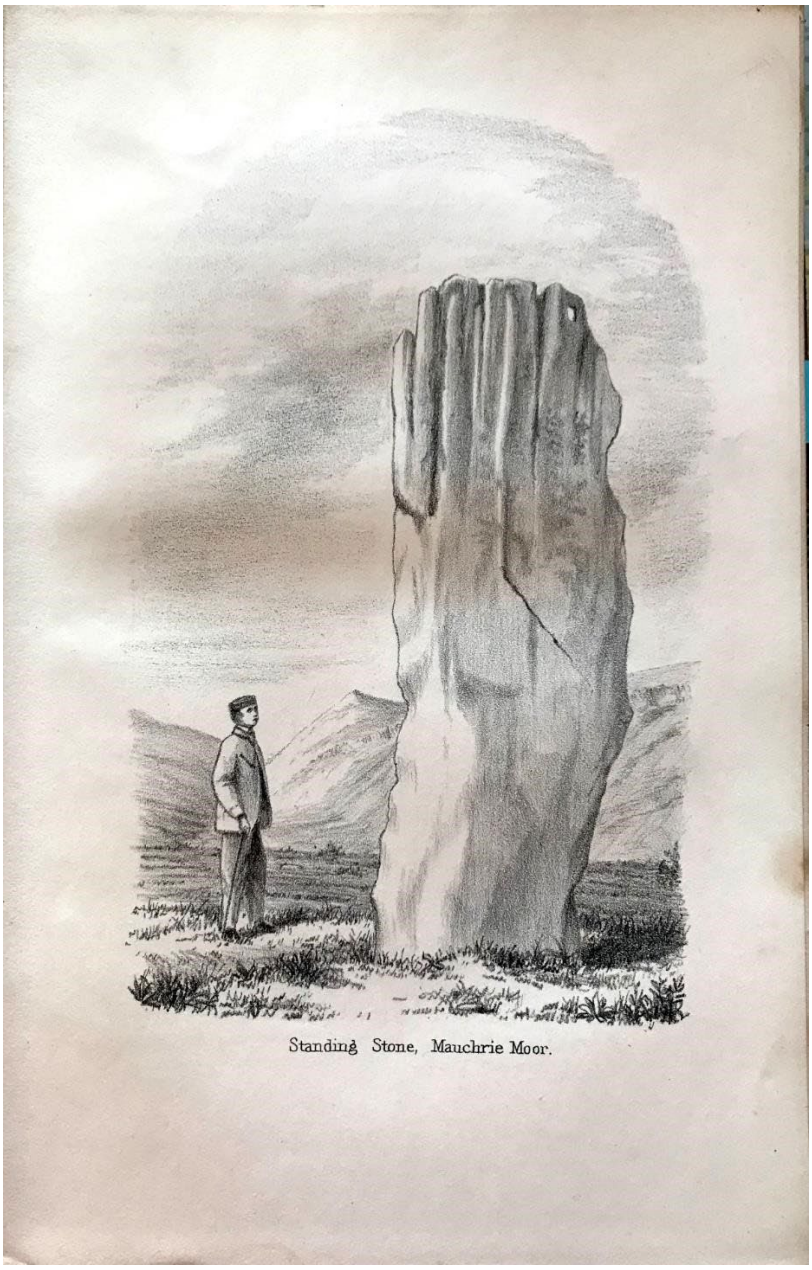

Standing Stone, Mauchrie Moor.

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