

**NORTH OF SCOTLAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**



**YEARBOOK  
2000**

## **TALKS AND TOURS**

Richard Oram gave a talk on "The Northern Pictish Kingdom" on Friday February 16th at the Lovat Arms Hotel, Beaulieu.

On Friday 28th April Hugh Cochran, a NOSAS member gave a talk at Balnain House, Inverness, entitled "A walk along the wall and China's Antiquities"

In August there was a visit to Tarbat Discovery Centre and Dig, with a guided tour from Prof. Martin Carver and George MacQuarrie.

A few members of NOSAS gave a hand at Fraser Hunters annual excavation near Elgin, where a hoard of Roman silver coins came to light.

## **THE HIGHLAND ARCHAEOLOGY WEEK**

Once again several of our members participated in the activities of the week, giving tours in their area or of their current project.

## **Editors Remarks,**

When the call went out for an editor for the year book, I only gave the item a casual glance, but it must have stirred my interest as I kept finding my thoughts returning to the possibility that I could manage to do the job. I have been compiling local history booklets over the last few years and considered that this would be another extension to my work. The rest of the story is history, for here I am putting together your contributions. Unfortunately this year there has not been many submitted, but the ones that have, I hope you will find interesting. Also included are items out of the NOSAS News Letters, which form part of our years activities.

**Sandra Law**

## DISCLAIMER

The views and conclusions expressed by contributors to this NOSAS yearbook are not necessarily those of the NOSAS Committee, NOSAS corporately, nor the Editor.

## INFORMATION ABOUT NOSAS

Information on any aspect of NOSAS can be had from the Secretary, Meryl Marshall, 10 Riverford Crescent, Conon Bridge, ROSS-SHIRE. IV7 8HL. Tel 01349 861824

there were plenty of volunteers to help accomplish the proposed work.

The Island is a scheduled ancient monument and is managed by Scottish Natural Heritage. Among the Christian burials is supposed to be the last resting place of a Danish Prince and Princess. They lie under two recumbent slabs with carved crosses. Next to the dried up, holy well is an ancient tree with coins pressed into its bark. Over the years the tree has split into three parts and dates on the coins could help to establish its age.

In the May news letter Hilary reported that the weekend had been highly successful and 150 colour slides and 200 black and white photographs were taken. The plans of the Graveyard, Votive tree and overall environment, had yet to be inked up. Likewise the paperwork need's pulling together in order to be able to produce a report in the near future.

Hilary and Janet

## AUTUMN OUTING

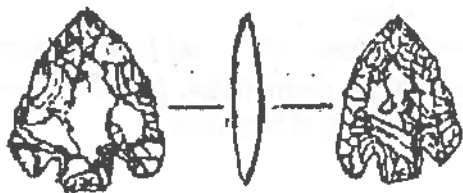
This was organised for Saturday November 4th at Strath. Carnaig which is between Bonar Bridge and Loch Fleet. It was a three mile stroll through a multi- period landscape which was organised by Alistair Jupp. Unfortunately heavy showers and swollen streams dampened the day but did not stop the eight members who turned out from exploring the many features associated with a once well settled but now deserted area. Aerial photos, which had been taken by Jim Bone, were available, giving another view of the glen and surrounding land.

## NOTES FROM THE NEWS LETTERS OF 2000

### FEBRUARY FIELD WALK

On February 5th there was a very successful field walk at Conan Mains, with over 15 NOSAS members attending. This was followed up in March with a cleaning and cataloguing day, where over 50 special finds were identified. These included 2 complete arrowheads, one 'leaf' shaped and the other barbed, plus a broken arrowhead tip. There was also several flint scrapers, a flint debitage and chips of different colours. Pottery finds ranged from prehistoric, through the Medieval period and on to the Victorian and early twentieth century. On Saturday June 24th several members met at Conon Church Hall to draw the important finds and finalise the catalogue. After the arrowheads had been photographed for the NOSAS archive and future display, the artefacts were to be presented to the Dingwall Museum.

Hilary and Janet



*One of the flint arrowheads found at Conan Mains*

### SPRING WEEKEND

This was held on the 8th-9th April at Loch Maree the main objective;- to survey and plan the central graveyard on Isle Maree, as well as searching the rest of the island for any unrecorded features. The weekend was organised by Hilary Hanson and Janet Hooper and

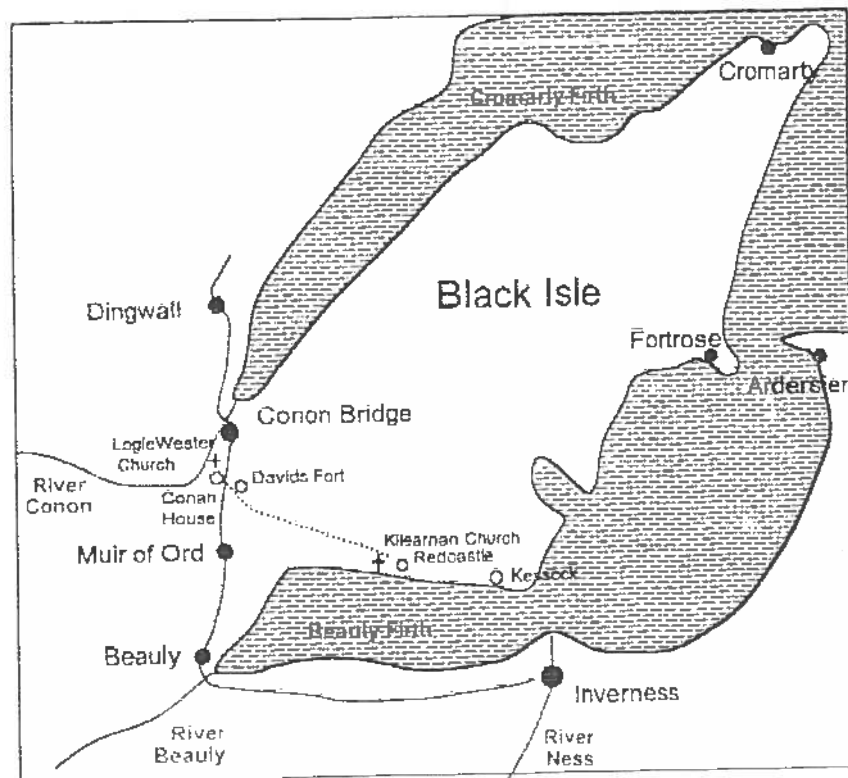
## CONTENTS

### Editors Remarks

1. Old Routes on the Black Isle. By Meryl Marshall
2. A Seaweed Circle. By Sandra law
3. A Temporary Camp at Loch Garry. By Janet Hooper
4. Burials on the Edge . By Jacqueline E Aitken
5. The Glentanar Hoard. By Hugh Cochran.
6. Other events linked with NOSAS

The first report is about the NOSAS Walk organised for Saturday 11th March 2000 and is written by Meryl Marshall

## THE OLD ROUTE FROM KILLEARNAN TO KILBRIDE



The old route is depicted as a dotted line

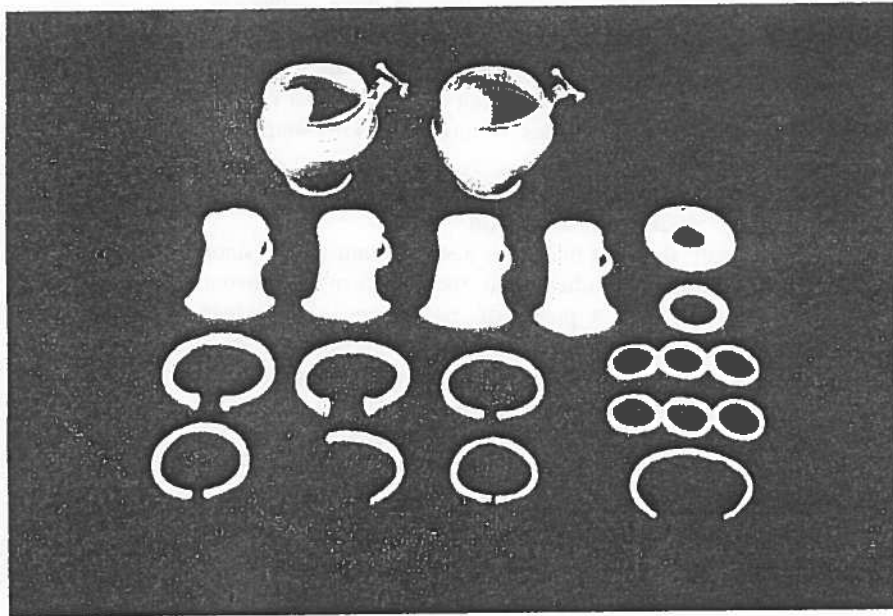
There is no doubt that in the Late Bronze Age, long before the Picts or the Iron Age, there was in common with the rest of Europe a thriving community up here which included powerful men who adopted the technology of the age by making swords, and who imported other prestigious items for display, and in the end, rather than bequeathing these items to their children, buried them in the peat and bogs and river sides with which we are so familiar.

However, the modern mystery also remains unsolved. Where are the 13 axe heads, 30 bracelets, and four bronze rings which were not in Mr Oddy's possession in Exeter? Does anyone here know anything? Are they in bottom drawers in Aboyne or GlenTanar? Or have the Gods to whom they were dedicated swooped down and carried off their magic metal?

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2. Clarke, D.V. , Cowie, T.G. and Foxon, Andrew, 19??, *Symbols of Power at the time of Stonehenge, pp 95-105 and 175-191. National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland.*

The 1843 cutting mentions all the items handed in by Mr Oddy, and the descriptions match exactly. But the goods which Mr Oddy delivered, now known as the Glentinar Hoard comprise less than half of those originally found. The two splendid cups are the most striking objects in the hoard. They have been cast from the same mould and are very skilfully made. The body of each has been cast with a tang projecting from the shoulder onto which has been added the upper part of the handle with its horn-like cross piece. Cast cups are very rare in Britain, and there are no close parallels to these, which are almost certainly imports from the continent. We don't know by what series of exchange or gift these cups reached Glentinar from the continent, or who was this influential man in Glentinar able to demonstrate his power by burying these beautiful items as a propitiation to the Gods



*Glentinar Hoard by courtesy of the National Museum of Scotland.*

## OLD ROUTES ON THE BLACK ISLE

### - Killearnan to Kilbride -

#### A Medieval route or an old Drove road?

Six members enjoyed exploring this route on a bright but overcast day. The going was rough in places, but there was plenty to take up our interest and the views to the south over the Beaully Firth were well worthwhile.

What appears to be an old route can be traced as a continuous line from Blairdhu GR NH577502, near Killearnan Church and Redcastle in the south-east of the Black Isle, to David's Fort GR NH539540 near Conan House. It is a distance of some 7 kilometres, in a north-westerly direction. The route exists on the ground, first as a farm track, then as two parallel earth banks through Spittal Wood, followed by two parallel old walls through cultivated fields. Next it continues along the line of a modern minor road, then follows an old tree lined lane, finishing as an indistinct path through Conan Wood. The entire route is marked on the 1st edition of the OS map dated 1877, but only partially on the present day maps.

There is a suggestion that this was an old route linking Inverness and the south with the glens to the west and north from the 14th to the 17th Century and possibly into the 18th Century. It may also have been part of one of the pilgrimage routes to Tain. This road probably fell into disuse when Conon Bridge and Lovat Bridge were erected in 1809, making the routes to Inverness and the south much easier and safer.

### Evidence for these suggestions are:-

1. The road links two significant locations of the time, viz:- The area of Redcastle/Killearnan (also the ferry at Kessock) and the ford over the River Conon which at that time was located below the church of Logie Wester (known as Kilbride or Logiebride) in the grounds of Conan House, just below David's Fort.

2. The road is closely associated with the place names Spitalwood and Spital shore on current maps, while on Roy's map of 1750, the settlement of Spittle appears north of Killearnan. Mention is also made in a charter of 1299-1311 of "the hospital-house of Edirdouer" Edradour is thought to be either Redcastle or Tarradale.

3. Old maps - Avery's map of 1725 marks the northern part of the road, although there is a ferry crossing the River Conon at "Squigall" (present day Conon Bridge). Taylor and Skinner's map of the Great North Road of 1776 also marks the "Main" road as coming from the south via Beaully and crossing the River Conon at Scuddel ferry.

Against the suggestion is the fact that it is questionable whether a road of that time would have been enclosed, as this one is, and also that it is distinctly variable in width. For the majority of its length the walls or earth banks are between 4 and 5 meters apart but in Spittal Wood the earth banks are 11 meters apart. Could it then have been a drove road before the establishment of the Tryst at Muir of Ord in 1820?

Perhaps the explanation is a combination of both of these suggestions, the route being first a medieval road, which was then adapted for drovers when a new road by Beaully and Muir of Ord was established ; my research continues.

Whatever the explanation, a most enjoyable day was had and we all felt tired but stimulated at the end of it. My memories of the day,

### "INTERESTING RELICS

By courtesy of Aberdeen Journals Ltd.

About three weeks ago, some woodcutters in pursuit of rabbits on the Hill of Knockie, in Glentanner, accidentally discovered under a cairn an ancient burial place, covered by a large flat stone. On removing this, they found the following:-

- 1 Two bronze vessels, capable of holding about two-thirds of a pint, of neat workmanship, cast in rather an elegant shape, and with a handle on one side.
- 2 Seventeen spearheads or axe heads, of a bronze, known among antiquaries by the name of Celts.
- 3 From thirty to forty bronze bracelets, of various sizes, but mostly, it would seem, designed for the wrist.
- 4 Four bronze pieces, two of them richly gilt, consisting of three rings, each about an inch in diameter, joined together in a line, slightly curved, as if to be worn on the shoulder or body.
- 5 Six bronze rings, of good workmanship, of different sizes.
- 6 A circular piece of bronze, probably part of the mounting of a weapon.

In one of the cups there was a small quantity of resinous matter, and in the other, what the workmen described as "something like a piece of parchment", but which crumbled to pieces on being handled. The whole of these interesting relics are in admirable preservation, and are evidently of Roman manufacture, and so belong, at the latest, to the middle fourth century. We trust that the noble Lord of the Manor, the Marquis of Huntly, will take care to have them deposited in some public museum. The lovers of antiquities are in the meantime under great obligations to the minister of Aboyne and Glentanner, the Revd. Robert Milne Miller, for his exertions in rescuing many of the articles from the hands of the workmen."

\* \* \* \* \*

Before looking at that story, let us look at what else was happening in north-east Scotland at this time. The Auchmaleddie Shield dating from about 950BC to 750BC was found in 1897 near New Deer along with another shield in circumstances suggesting ritual deposition. Hoards containing spearheads and swords have been found in Glen Dye, Netherley, and Stonehaven, with other sword hoards near the Deveron. A clay sword mould was found at the Loanhead of Daviot stone circle when it was excavated recently, suggesting a local sword manufacturing industry. Another hoard containing necklets, wristlets, and other items of personal adornment was found at Braes of Gight, Haddo, in 1866. So there is evidence of a ruling class in the North-east which both commissioned the manufacture of local swords, and also imported prestige weaponry and other bronze ware from the south, sometimes from as far away as France. It is therefore consistent with this evidence to suggest that there was in Glentanar at the time a tribe or tribal chief with the power not only to acquire but also to ritually bury 64 items of some of the finest pieces of bronze work found in Britain.

The modern mystery surrounds the circumstances of the Hoard's discovery. In 1971 Mr E Oddy, a retired gentleman living in Exeter decided to take an object to his local museum. It was one of several in his possession and over the weeks he took in a total of 17 bronze objects, which are now in the custody of the National Museum of Scotland. They had belonged to his wife's mother who had been in service to a General Milne Miller who had Scottish connections. It was important for the Museum to know where the objects came from, and the Curator commenced inquiries, armed only with the name Milne Miller with Scottish connections. Months of detective work eventually led to the discovery of an account in the Aberdeen Journal for 29th March 1843;-

\* \* \* \* \*

besides the obvious archaeological ones, are, picnicking above Muir of Ord with six red kites (the bird variety) circling above us, rummaging in the several "middens" encountered, and witnessing Hilary's delight at finding a 1950s Jaguar hubcap embedded in a wall. We also visited David's Fort, walked through the grounds of Conan House, (having previously sought permission) to Logie Wester Church, which now exists only as low turf footings in a more recent graveyard, and finally located a previously unrecorded ice-house.

### SOME RELEVANT DATES FOR THE AREA

1179 - establishment of castles Edradour and Dunskeath by King William the Lyon (location of Edradour thought to be Redcastle but recently suggested as being Tarradale). Lordship of Edradour granted to John Bysset

1230 - John Bysset founded Beaully Priory

1233 - Mention in documents of first minister at Killearnan.

1309 - Tarradale Castle destroyed by Robert the Bruce.

1390 - Work commenced on Killearnan Church. Parts of present church date from 1450.

1455 - Possible establishment of Redcastle when lands in the Black Isle reverted to the crown as part of the Lordship of Meanach.

1481 - Battle of Ford of Conon, below Logie Wester (Kilbride) Church, defeat of Earl of Atholl and Mackenzie of Kintail, both supporters of James III by Angus Og Macdonald, son of Lord of the Isles.

1490 - Logie Wester church was built sometime before this date - origins go back to Pictish times - parishes of Urquhart and Logie Wester were united and by 1650 the church was little used. By 1750 it had fallen into disuse completely.



1580 - 1618 - Redcastle, Kilcoy and Kinkell Castles erected.

? 1650 - Brahan Castle built

1750 - Two settlements at Logie marked on Roy's Military map.

1790 - Conan House built (?on site of settlement at Logie) by Mackenzie of Gairloch, and extended in 1820; also Conan Mains Farm built (? on site of settlement at Logie). Hugh Miller involved as stonemason's apprentice.

1807 - Turnpike road from Beauly to Dornoch begun.

1809 - Conon Bridge and Lovat Bridge erected, Tollhouses at Conon Bridge and Arpafeelie.

1820 - Tryst established at Muir of Ord, abandoned in 1890 although horse trading continued.

1862 - Railway from Inverness to Dingwall was open on June 11th 1862

1894 - Railway from Muir of Ord to Fortrose, opened February 1st 1894 and closed to public traffic in 1946 and to freight traffic in 1951.

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<i>New Ways through the Glens</i>	Haldane	1962
<i>The Drove Roads of Scotland</i>	Haldane	1997
<i>Pilgrimage in Medieval Scotland</i>	Peter Yeoman	1999
<i>Maps:- Joseph Avery</i>	1725	
<i>General Roy's Military Map</i>	1750	
<i>Taylor and Skinner's Road Map</i>	1776	
<i>First edition OS map</i>	1877	

The following article was first published in the 'Cromar History Group Newsletter in December 2000

## THE GLENTANAR HOARD

By Hugh Cochran

There are two mysteries associated with the Glentanar Hoard, one ancient, the other modern.

The ancient mystery goes to the heart of the question of why the hoard was there at all. It is a phenomenon of the Bronze Age that most bronze artefacts are found in hoards and that most hoards of bronze are found in circumstances where recovery would be unlikely or impossible, and these sites are usually in wet situations such as bogs, peaty sites, or rivers. In other words they were not put into storage for safe keeping. The question is, Why? In some cases there is clear evidence of ritual intent, such as shields being placed horizontally, or vertically beside each other, or laid out in a circle. Modern scholars have puzzled over this and come up with different suggestions. One is that as well as goods changing hands by barter, they changed hands more frequently as gifts. By giving things away obligations are created. The ability to give rather than to accumulate is a means of establishing a social position. Gift exchange is competitive, and an un-stated means of establishing rank. In a society which treats gifts in this competitive way, it makes sense that you or your tribe have a power and status to make such a gift. And there is no higher status gift that you could give than this beautiful shiny magic metal - Bronze. This may or may not have been the reason why 64 items of bronze were deposited on the Hill of Knockie in Glentanar in the late Bronze age but the circumstances of its recovery are just as intriguing.

Another possibility is that they were victims of drowning, perhaps from a wrecked ship or fishing boat, who were retrieved from the seashore. The burial of corpses washed ashore in consecrated graveyards only became general practice after 1808 when a bill was passed making it a legal right. In the Highlands before this time, unknown shipwrecked sailors were often buried in shallow graves above the beach in unconsecrated ground, but with the Christian rite, consistent with Highland tradition. In the past the Church of Scotland had always discouraged religious ceremonies at these burials and the minister's presence was not required, as death was deemed to be inevitable and interment was outwith the realm of the minister's duties.

It is certain that mariners have been sailing these coastlines for many centuries and marine disasters would have been, inevitably, part of everyday life. A burial place near the shore may also reflect notions of humanity's liminality often associated with the drowned (Pollard). We will probably never know the story surrounding the burials on the beach and can only make conjectures as to what their likely epitaphs may have been.

It has since come to light that further burials have been found at the site and the recent rediscovery of a chapel graveyard at Kintradwell 3.2km to the south-east only adds to the ecclesiastical presence in the area. We look forward to the return and reburial of the remains and will visit this place from time to time.

*"In thy best robes, uncovered on the bier,  
Be borne to burial in thy kindred's grave"*

*"Romeo and Juliet"*

### **Bibliography**

Tony Pollard G.U.A.R.D.

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A Edgar 1886 Old Church Life in Scotland. London: Alex Gardner.

The next report is about a new site noted by Sandra Law and reported to the Highland Archaeology Department. Visits to the site took place between July and December 2000.

### **A SEAWEED CIRCLE**

Located on the foreshore just north of Ardersier

#### **FIRST ENCOUNTERS.**

During the early summer of 2000, a local resident approached me to see if I knew anything about the seaweed circle on the beach towards Fort George. As I had not noticed this feature I went to investigate. It was easy to locate as it was on the sandy area of the beach. The seaweed seemed to be attached to some rocks or large pebbles that formed a circle. Having gathered some statistics and taken photographs, I approached the Archaeology Dept at Inverness to see if there were any records of the feature.

Ascertaining that there were none, I then proceeded to record as much as I could. This involved measuring and plotting the site, positioning it in the landscape and doing more detailed photography. When this was done I submitted an SMR form which was accepted and put on the local record.

#### **DESCRIPTION**

The site is approximately half a kilometre north of Ardersier village at NH 75 NE 7765 5580. It consists of a circle laying between High and Low water, the consequence of this being, there is only a limited access time of around 3 to 4 hours. The feature has only recently been noticed because stormy weather in the spring of 1999 removed a considerable amount of sand from the bay, although locals do say it was evident in the 1970s. On closer inspection it was found to be a 21m by 22m oval that resembled a giant 'e'. This is formed by a submerged wall of cobbles, over a meter wide. The wrack seaweed has attached itself to most of the cobbles, making the feature noticeable on an otherwise sandy shore.

The western edge has no seaweed but the oval is continued by a sandy bank that is more distinctive as the tide comes in. There were also remains of three wooden stakes at this side, as well as some on the north and east sides. Towards the raised beach, on the eastern side, there was a large accumulation of shell debris seemingly cemented together.

#### SURVEY WORK

On a very windy day I attempted to measure accurately and plot the site. On subsequent visits, when I found something new because the sand was still being washed away, I added it to my plan. A total of seven wooden stakes was finally uncovered on the inside of the circle to the west, outlining the sandy bank. These measured 7cm in diameter and were 60cm apart. Further round to the north I located four other posts of 15cm diameter and approximately 1.5 m apart, with another one some 3m away, which seems to be part of an opening on that side of the circle. Posts also appeared on the east side near to the large deposit of shells. Also the bar, that seemed to start in the north-eastern area and run towards the middle, was clearly defined early on.

#### RESEARCH

As I searched among the reference books for information it soon became apparent that, other than a small addition at the bottom of a page in the New Statistical Account, written by the Revd John Matheson in 1840, which referred to an unusual shell formation, there did not seem to be knowledge of any kind of structure on the beach at that location.

By evaluating the information available I found that the lower shore may have been several feet above High water at sometime in the past. To support this theory there is another reference in the 1840 New Statistical Account which states that Dr Tolmie had seen remains of peat beds and tree trunks at the low water mark, while in the 1950s eye witnesses report that, during the

Historic Scotland commissioned GUARD, under the Human Remains Call-off Contract, to carry out a rescue excavation of the site. This resulted in the exposure of a second individual lying in close proximity to the first set of remains. The fieldwork was carried out on 14-15 December 2000, when the days were short and the weather unforgivingly cold. There was little time to reflect on the burials, but as the excavation came to an end we had all gained an affinity towards these two people from the past and couldn't help wondering what malign set of circumstances had brought them to rest on this beautiful, isolated place on the edge, between land and sea.

The burial of at least two individuals here seemed peculiar, given the close proximity of the parish church, 2.4km away. They were both laid out according to the Christian rite, aligned east/west. The excavation showed a clearly defined band of dark organic sand lining the edges of a shallow grave cut, and this was interpreted as the stain of a shroud in which the body had been wrapped before burial. Up to the passing of the Poor Law Act in the 19th century, the poor in Sutherlandshire were usually wrapped in linen or woollen cloth and lowered into the grave in a long basket made of twisted rushes, called the '*sgulan ruhairbh*' or 'dead hamper', which was then recovered for reuse, (Edgar 1886, p249).

The locality houses many sites of antiquity, including Pictish stones and settlement remains of all periods, The closest pre-improvement settlement to the burial site is the township of Lothbeg, 1km to the west, with others dotted about in the surrounding district. Local tradition states that some of the Lothbeg burials date back to the cholera epidemic of 1832, which was introduced by fishermen from Edinburgh who were working in the area at that time. A local woman washing the clothes of one of them caught the disease, which then spread throughout the community, ultimately killing thirty or forty people (Ross 1840 p193).

This report is about burials found in un-consecrated ground by the sea in Sutherland, December 2000

## BURIALS ON THE EDGE

by Jacqueline E Aitken

Today we take it for granted that in time of death our remains will safely find their way to the parish graveyard, carefully put to rest in a coffin of comparatively elaborate nature and therefore under the eye of God.

A chance find by a tourist of a human skull on the beach at Lothbeg in the late summer of 1999 led me to become involved in a collaboration with archaeologist Olivia Lelong. The ensuing discoveries and intriguing research into less privileged burial rites revealed that not so long ago traditions and practices associated with death in the Highlands were very different. After the initial discovery was made, the local police recovered most of the skeleton from the site beneath about 0.3m of sand. The skeleton was later identified by Dr Rosslyn Rankin as an adult male and C14 dating of the remains established that he had died sometime in the Post- Medieval period (cal AD1481 -1786)

Over the following year the area was monitored by "Clyne Heritage Society" and more human bones were collected from the northern edge of a deflated sand dune. A track and platform made of large cobbles, now under grass, dominates the location and was built in the 1970s, when a company called Premier Consolidated Oil attempted to drill for oil on the land there. Although some small bones were missing from this skeleton, it soon became evident that more than one individual was represented by the material recovered and so it seemed likely there could be further burials at the site.

laying of the sewage pipe, remains of a peat bed were encountered some 18 inches below the sand which extended down to a depth of 6 feet. There is also the matter of the parish boundary. A finger of land belonging to Petty Parish runs along the shore for about half a mile, which would suggest that there was once a larger area of land to claim when laying out the parishes. When the tide is out, the bay can be seen to be very flat and extensive, with the southern end being very stony which could account for the missing land. The local fishermen will confirm that after low water the sea bed drops away to quite a depth, which would also suggest a possible ancient shore line.

### SUMMARY

Towards the end of the year there were more heavy seas and it looked as if the site may be disturbed. John Wood and Allison Fox from the Highland Council Archaeology Department, inspected the feature. It was decided to try for funding from Historic Scotland to enable us to do an exploratory dig which would help us to establish whether it was originally a dry land site or structure used by the local fishermen. We had to wait until the beginning of the new year for news that funding would be available to do an exploratory dig. The dig took place in late spring and a report will appear in the 2001 Year Book.

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- Highland Council Archaeology department*

In October there was a Field Trip to Loch Garry just south of Fort Augustus, which was led by Hector Rogers and reported on by Janet Hooper.

## A TEMPORARY CAMP AT LOCH GARRY.

On a Sunday in October, members of NOSAS were taken by Hector Rogers to a rather intriguing site deep in the woods above Loch Garry. The site consists of two tumbled stone structures, but neither seems to be complete! At first sight, each appears to comprise two separate sections of earth bonded, U-shaped walling, facing each other, but about 8m apart. Each stretch of walling is about 1.8m wide and 1.3m high, narrowing slightly towards the top, although only two courses wide at the base. The slightly curved form of the internal face contrasts with the more rectilinear external face and neatly squared ends of each piece of walling. Although the area surrounding the structures is deep within leaf mould, moss and bracken, the slight suggestion of a revetment can be 'felt' along what would be the long sides of a building incorporating the stone feature in both cases. The outer edge of the lip is defined by stones, which may have helped support a timber wall resting against this lip. The lower structure appears to have a narrow drainage ditch along its uphill side.

The iron 'flue' for a chimney lies close to the more southerly of the structures. In addition to this, there are a number of other pieces of iron lying around the buildings, one of which appears to be an elaborate attachment for a horse-drawn cart. There are several cauldrons, a large quantity of handmade nails, and numerous sherds of pottery and glass, all of which are likely to be nineteenth century in date. A midden to the south-west of the possible buildings appears to consist entirely of broken earthenware 'marmalade' jars. These have been mass-produced and would therefore appear to confirm a nineteenth or perhaps early twentieth century date.

The upper structure lies on a large revetted platform, which appears to have been respected by the woods planted when Ardochy Lodge,

just to the west, was built in the 1850s. The second structure, located on a narrower natural terrace slightly lower down the slope, is now within the plantation. Building footings and traces of enclosures, more reminiscent of township remains and likely to be earlier in date, lie in the woods to the north of the site. There is an old quarry close by, possibly associated with the construction of Telford's road along the lochside between 1804 and 1812.

The most obvious explanation for these U-shaped walls seems to be that they were fireplaces in the gable ends of a wooden building, although in neither case are the two stone elements square on to each other. This interpretation appeared to be supported by the presence of the chimney. However, local stories provided the clue to understanding the real function of these rather unusual structures. These suggested that the Ardochy site was a worker's camp used between the wars by itinerant teams of sawyers. Illuminated by George Grant's reminiscences of helping his father in a sawmill in Strathspey, it became clear that each section of U-shaped walling surrounded a level stone bench on which rested one end of the timber to be sawed. The upper part of the wall helped to retain the timber in place. Since such travelling sawyers tended to reuse pre-existing sites, the site at Ardochy might have a far longer history than that recalled locally. It is hoped that further historical work will help illuminate this enigmatic site.

