

NICOLAISEN, W. F. H.

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OFTEDAL, MAGNE

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W. F. H. NICOLAISEN

## B. NOTES ON COLLECTION AND RESEARCH

### *Introduction*

This introduces a new regular feature in the journal: a series of notes gathered in the course of current work by members of the School of Scottish Studies. Though not always related directly to the main tasks in hand, they will to some extent reflect their range and variety.

It may be helpful to list here the subjects which the School is attempting to cover at present, and all of which are likely to be touched upon in these notes in future issues:

Scots folk-song texts, Gaelic song texts, folk-music research, the folk tale, custom and belief, material culture, the Scottish place-name survey, archiving and transcription of music and texts.

### *An Eighteenth-Century Representation of a Highland Boat*

Surprisingly little detailed information seems to be available about the ships of the Western Clans, though they are frequently mentioned in contemporary literature and records. Allusions to "Highland boats" ("galleys" or "birlins") are often met with up to the time of the Rising of 1745, when many were destroyed, and factual descriptions or drawings of the later vessels might be expected. These should show whether the eighteenth-century use of the old terms implied the survival of old types of craft. The sixteen-oared, square-sailed vessel of Alexander MacDonald's long descriptive poem, *Birlinn Clann Raghnaill*, has been regarded as "a generalised type of galley", incorporating

antique poetic features in an eighteenth-century setting (Macleod 1933: 35-6).

Some fresh evidence bearing on this is provided by a contemporary and purely practical document, a large-scale engraved *Map of the Improved Moss, and Improveable Bay of Kintra drawn from a Plan of the Survey of Ardnamorchan by I. Cowley, London 1734* (National Library of Scotland, L. 232.a.2[11]). This happens to cover the area immediately west of Alexander MacDonald's home on the Moidart side of Loch Shiel, a point which enhances the interest of the map-maker's representation of what must have been a type of sailing-craft with which the poet was familiar (Fig.). In spite of the small scale of the



Detail from engraved map of Kintra, 1734.

drawing of the boat, the relationship of this square-sailed and "double-ended" craft to the "Viking" type of the mediaeval Highland carvings (Pl. II) is established by the row of oar-ports shown below the gunwale.

These Loch Shiel craft (two are figured on the map) differ convincingly from the merchantmen and boats depicted as serving the Strontian lead-mines on another map (Loch Sunart, 1733) in the same series, which evidently derives from an original survey of Ardnamurchan and Lochs Shiel and Sunart "lately made by Andrew Bearhope Gardiner to Sir Alex Murray of Stanhope Bart", the present whereabouts of which seems to be unknown. The Loch Shiel craft also differ from the East Coast fishing and other boats carefully depicted on several plans published by Adair in 1703, for instance that of Montrose dated 1693.

If the traditional oar-ports were a normal feature of the Highland boats of Loch Shiel of his day, it is curious that Mac





Carving of a Medieval Highland Galley (*see* p. 97). Detail from tomb of Alexander McLeod of Dunvegan, 1528, at Rodil, Harris. Enlarged from a photograph by the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments (Scotland).

Mhaighstir Alasdair should repeatedly refer to the rowlocks of Clan Ranald's birlin. *Bac*, the word he used, is defined as "the space between the thole-pins", sometimes simply the thole-pin itself, but it may perhaps have had a rather different meaning in the past. Something of the sort may also lie behind a memory, possibly a little confused, of the remains of an old Loch Shiel boat which had belonged to one of the lairds of Glenaladale and is said to have "had special rowlocks to take the old fashioned flat-handled oars". (Wendy Wood, *Moidart and Morar* [1950], p. 102, calls the vessel Angus of Glenaladale's *An Dubh Lennan*). The oar-ports of the mediaeval, and probably later, Highland vessels had—like the Viking ships—a long slot aft of each port to allow the oar-blade to pass through from within the ship, a feature indicated in the Rodil carving (Pl. II), which is so valuable for its fine and well-preserved technical detail. Oar-ports survived also in some Norfolk crab-boats until our own day, seemingly because of their convenience for carrying the light boats up the steep shingle beach by means of the oars (Hornell 1946:120).

The Highland boats of the eighteenth century can hardly have been built for military purposes, at least after the '45. The Loch Shiel boat of the 1734 map seems to have carried at least a dozen oars (if the spacing of the oar-ports is reasonably accurate the total might have been sixteen oars, like Clan Ranald's birlin), so that fishing as a primary aim may be excluded. The fate of *An Dubh-Gleannach*, the boat of Captain Alexander MacDonald of Glenaladale, who died in 1815, is probably revealing in this respect. Her expeditions on Loch Shiel are commemorated in Alexander MacKinnon's *Ode*, but Mr. Alastair Cameron ("North Argyll") while describing her as a "pleasure craft", has also recorded the information that she was lost carrying stock and passengers from Eigg to the mainland (Cameron 1957: 4).

Some such mixture of business and pleasure, or display, must have been entirely characteristic of the boats of the Highland gentry, just as it was of the early yachts of the aristocracy elsewhere in the British Isles in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Thus it was natural that the Highland gentry gradually abandoned their native type in favour of the fashionable yacht, so that by 1802, when the still-surviving "Galley of the Marquis of Bute" was built at Tighnabruaich, she was simply an attractive yacht of the period.

However, even in the latter half of the eighteenth century

the generality of West Highland craft must have retained their purely local and traditional character. In the course of his Highland and Hebridean journeys covering the years 1760 to 1786, Professor John Walker found that "from the want of tradesmen at command, every family is obliged to apply to everything, and to supply its own necessities . . . [including] boats, with all their tackle. The boat has a Highland plaid for a sail; the running rigging is made of leather thongs and willow twigs; and a large stone and a heather rope serve for anchor and cable" (Walker 1808: II, 374-5). Still more primitive craft survived on some sea lochs and inland waters after the mid-eighteenth century. The son of the minister of Glenshiel on Loch Duich was familiar with dug-out canoes called *ammir* (cf. *amar*, "a trough") employed as river ferries and for salmon-spearing, evidently around the year 1760 (Bethune 1881: 179-180). People then living could remember the wicker "courich" used as ferries in that part of Wester Ross, and an actual example of one found under the rafters of a Speyside house at Mains of Advie is preserved in Elgin Museum (Hornell 1938: Pl. I in section 2, Fig. 2).

Clearly it should still be possible to assemble much interesting information from a variety of sources, including eighteenth-century documents and drawings—and perhaps even from oral tradition—on the obscure but fascinating subject of the traditional boats of the Highlands.

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#### ILLUSTRATION

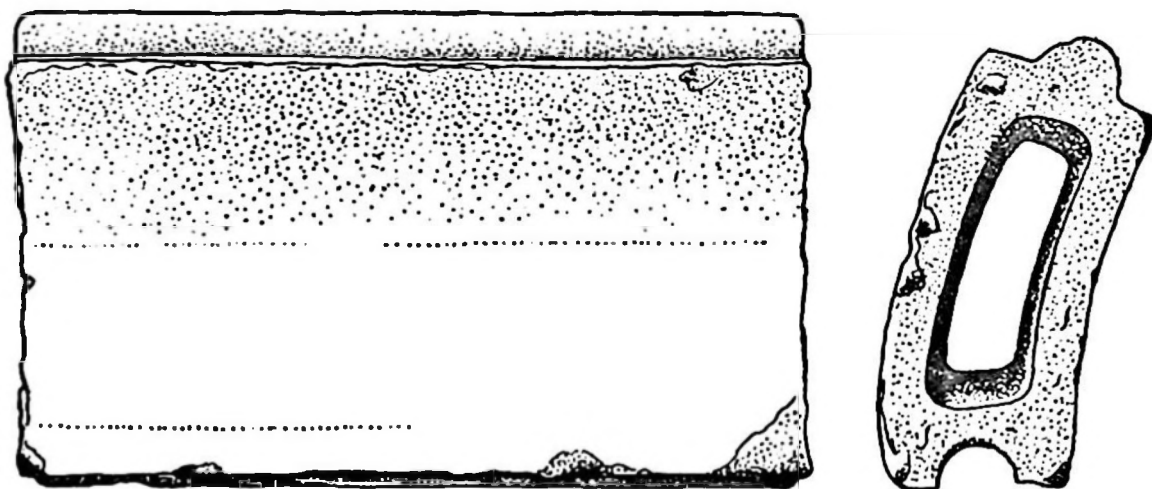
Photograph (Pl. II): *Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland—the Outer Hebrides, Skye and Small Isles* (1928), fig. 88; enlargement reproduced with the permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

B. R. S. MEGAW

### *Folk-song from a Tile*

At the beginning of February 1955 I got word from the novelist Neil McCallum that he had been shown a most singular "brick" by its owner, Mr. Douglas Mickel, of the Edinburgh firm of building contractors, MacTaggart and Mickel. This object, which had been found on a building site in Corstorphine several years earlier, had what appeared to be a verse of a song or a poem written on it.

I took an early opportunity of calling on Mr. Mickel at his office in North St. Andrew St., and proceeded to examine the singing brick. It turned out to be a segmental interlocking



Side-view and end-view of the tile which measures  $9'' \times 5\frac{1}{2}''$  overall and is from  $2''$  to  $2\frac{1}{4}''$  thick.

drain-tile, strawberry-red in colour, and hollow; its dimensions were 9 in. by 6 in. by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. What made it remarkable was the fact that it bore, scratched on its face, eight lines of what appeared to be a folk-song. They were in quite a stylish copybook hand, and read as follows (Pl. III):

m

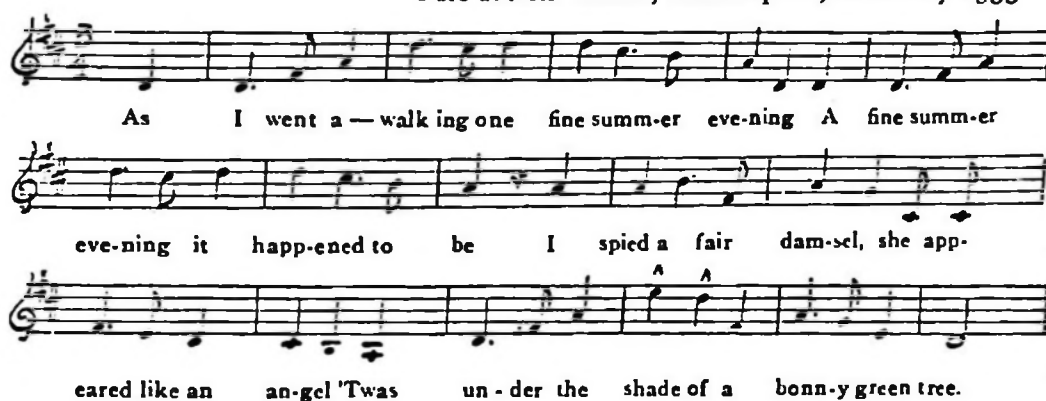
As I was a walking one fine Sumers evening  
one fine summers evening it happened to be  
There I spied a damsel she appeared like an an  
gel  
and she sat neath the shade of a bonny green  
tree  
I stepped up unto her as I seemed to vei w her  
and said my pretty maid will you no marr  
y me  
Ill make you a lady of high rank and houner  
If you share me the half of your bonny  
green tree

I asked Mr. Mickel what he knew of the brick's history, and he told me that it had been found on a building site at Broomhall Avenue, Corstorphine, not long before the start of World War II. It had formed part of the wall of a culvert, conduit or aqueduct carrying a stream across a field on what had once been Broomhouse Farm. He thought it might be over a hundred years old. I asked him if he could hazard an opinion as to where the brick had been made, and he said that, judging by the clay, it might have come from a kiln in the Prestonpans area. The words on the tile had obviously been scratched in the soft clay with the point of a nail or knife before it was fired.

[The Director of the Wemyss Development Company kindly informs us that a tile of this "extruded" form used to be produced in Fife for lining circular well-shafts. The Corstorphine example could not be older than the nineteenth century.—Ed.]

### THE BONNY GREEN TREE

Mrs Helen Wason, Prestonpans, February 1955



As I went a — walk ing one fine summ-er eve-ning A fine summ-er  
eve-ning it happ-ened to be I spied a fair dam-sel, she app-  
eared like an an-gel 'Twas un - der the shade of a bonn-y green tree.

At my request, the poet Alan Riddell, who was at that time a reporter on the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, came along to Mr. Mickel's office with a photographer, and an illustrated story appeared in the *Dispatch* on 3rd February 1955. Two days later, a letter from Prestonpans appeared in the correspondence columns of the same newspaper; Mrs Helen Wason, wife of a miner, had written in to say that she knew the whole song, which she had learned from her mother. Her version of the text was included in the letter. On receipt of it, I wrote at once, inviting Mrs. Wason to come to the School of Scottish Studies and record the song; I also paid her a visit, and prospected for

more material. About a week after her letter was published, she recorded her version in the School. It goes as follows.

As I went a-walking one fine summer evening,  
A fine summer evening it happened to be,  
I spied a fair damsel, she appeared like an angel,  
'Twas under the shade o' a bonny green tree.

I stepped up to her, 'twas only to view her.  
I said, my kind maiden, you've sair wounded me.  
I'll make you a lady of high rank and honour  
If you'll shelter me under your bonny green tree.

O I'm not a lady of high rank or honour,  
I'm but a poor girl of a lowly degree;  
Your friends and relations would all look down on me  
If you were to marry a poor girl like me.

What do I care for my friends or relations,  
My friends and relations have nothing to do with me.  
I'll make you a lady of high rank and honour  
If you'll shelter me under your bonny green tree.

All you young maidens, from me take a warning:  
Ne'er go into young men's company,  
For all that they want is to spoil your charàcter,  
And then they will leave you, as my love left me.

(There are one or two minor discrepancies between this version, which is transcribed from her singing, and the text which she sent in to the *Dispatch*).

Mrs. Wason told me that she had first heard the song more than 50 years before from her mother, who came from Fisher-row, and was of fisher stock.

Not long after Mrs. Wason's visit, I received the following letter (which accompanied yet another text of "The Bonny Green Tree"):

17th Febr            Mr Henderson

Dear Sir I enclose the full part of the song I noticed in the Dispatch it's 65 years past since I used to sing it at the Dances in Ashkirk. Another played the Fiddle to me, I've given you the words

I enclose another old one if you think it worth while to accept only from memory have none in Print But excuse me if you care to call on me sometime I could talk better than writing much at my Age, trust I am not too ready at saying so much, only it is some one



As I was walking one fine <sup>morning</sup> business evening  
 one fine summer evening I happened to be  
 there I sped and in a twinkling she appeared like an angel  
 and she had reached the shade of a bonny green tree  
 I stepped up unto her as I seemed to never see  
 and said how pretty maid will you be my  
 will make you a lady of high rank and honour  
 If you share me the half of your treasure  
 (Yes)

Folk-song from a tile. For details see p. 100.



like you I would like to have a talk with on years gone bye, my  
memory is so clear trusting you will excuse me my address added

Your M. Simpson

The writer was Mrs. Mary Simpson, a native of Nemphlar,  
Lanarkshire; at that time, she was 86 years of age. Here is her  
version, just as she wrote it:

As I went awalking yae fine Summers Evening,  
Yae fine Summers evening it happened to be,  
I espied a wee lass she appeared like an Angel,  
She sat under the shade of a bonnie green tree,

I stepped up to her as I seemed to view her  
And said my wee lassie will ye marry me  
I'll mak ye a Lady o high rich and honour,  
A Lady you'll be of a high high Dgree—  
Your friends and relations would frown upon you  
if you was to marry a poor girl like me,

My Friends and relations I hae got but few—  
My friends and relations care nothing for me.  
Your a poor girl and I a rich boy  
tomorrow we'll wed My Bride ye shall be

It's doon on the green grass he sat doon beside me  
He made a vow to marry me but when he arose  
He shook hands and pairted and told me  
to look for one of my own degree (He  
was fallse)

last verse

Come all ye pretty fair Maids  
I pray take a warning, ne'er trust  
a young man of ony Degree  
for all that they want is the spoil on your Character,  
And then they will leave you  
As my love left me—

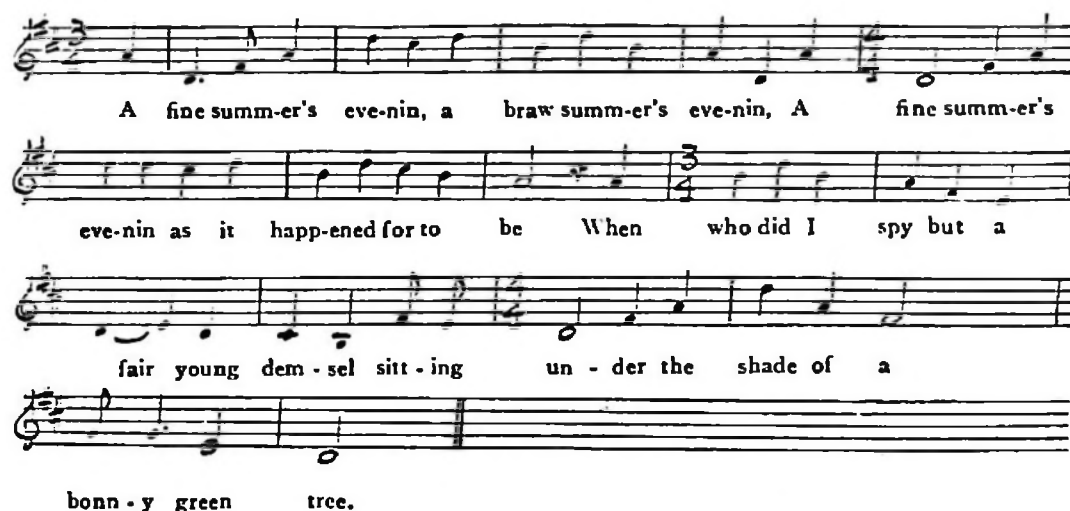
The other song Mrs. Simpson enclosed was a folk version  
of Auld Lang Syne. She appended these words to it:

PS its to be all Scotch—  
as I am. Scotch

I called on Mrs. Simpson, who lived in Dunedin St.,  
Edinburgh, and found her a delightful old lady. She had a

number of songs, most of which she had learned when fee'd as a servant girl at Ashkirk; "The Bonny Green Tree" was one of these. Unfortunately, her memory was failing, and she was never able to recall the tune properly; I attempted to record it several times, but without success. The following year, however, I was lucky enough to stumble on yet another version while camped in the berryfields of Blairgowrie; it was sung by 67-year-old Mrs. Margaret Stewart, a Banff tinker,

Mrs Margaret Stewart, Banff, August 1956



and seemed closely related to Mrs. Simpson's version. Here are the two final verses:

She sat now down, and he sat down beside her;  
 That's the very place that he vowed tae marry me.  
 But when he approached me, he found me a virgin—  
 Sayin', tomorrow we'll get married—but your bride I'll  
 never be.

Come all you fair maids, O come and take a warning;  
 Don't pay any heed whit any young man they do say,  
 For when they get the wills o' you, it's then they will leave you—  
 O it's then they will leave you, as my love left me.

Mrs. Stewart learned this version from her grandmother, who came from Wick. However, she was very emphatic that the "bonny green tree" of the song was located in Macduff.

I am indebted to Mr. W. Turner Berry, ex-Librarian of the Printing Library of St. Bride, Bride Lane, Fleet St., London, for information concerning a song sheet *The Shady Green Tree, A New Song*, which was lent to the Arts Council exhibition of

street literature in 1954 by John Cheney, Esq., Banbury. The text, as it appears on this song sheet, is as follows:

As I was walking one midsummer morning  
Down by a shady green tree  
There did I behold a beautiful virgin  
Sitting all under the shady green tree.  
I stepped up to her and said, my dear jewel  
You are the first girl that ever wounded me.  
You will not want for gold or silver  
If you will set your mind on me.

She said, kind sir, you are better deserving  
I am a poor girl of low degree.  
Besides your parents will always be scolding  
So in my station contented I'll be.  
Talk not of friends or any relations  
As have no portion at all to give me;  
As I am a young man, and you are a virgin  
Married tomorrow to you I shall be.

She sat herself down, I sat myself by her,  
There did I rifle her beautiful charms.  
With sweet melting kisses and fond embraces  
We slept together in each other's arms.  
The space of three hours all in the green grove  
All under the shady green tree.  
And when I awaked, I found her no virgin:  
Married to you I never shall be.

She said, kind sir, you are my undoing.  
Can you, O can you so cruel be?  
How can I pass any more for a virgin  
Since you have had your will of me.  
Come all pretty maidens now take warning  
Never trust a man in any degree,  
For when they've enjoyed the fruits of your garden,  
Then they will leave you, as he has done me.

In a letter, Mr. Turner Berry states: "I'm afraid there is no way of tracing the printer or place, but after comparing paper and type with many other songs in our possession, some of which are dated, I would guess that the date of printing was circa 1790. . . . The item in question is called a 'new song', but so are many others, and I would guess that this statement means very little". Examination of the song sheet text and of the text inscribed on the tile suggests that both are variants of a song that has had time to develop along more than one line.

In conclusion I should add that the song has also been recorded in Ireland. It was collected by Sam Henry from James Carmichael, 32 Waring St., Ballymena, under the title "Under the Shade of the Bonny Green Tree", and is No. 794 in the Henry collection. The tune and the last three verses

#### UNDER THE SHADE OF A BONNY GREEN TREE



of that version are here added as envoi (I am indebted for the information to Mr. Ivor A. Crawley, City Librarian of Belfast):

The laddie sat down, and she sat down beside him;  
He swore and he promised that married they'd be;  
But when he arose his mind it was altered:  
And he said, "If I marry, my bride you won't be."

"Now I may go; I may go broken-hearted;  
Ill bodes the day that I sat on his knee:  
My first and my last was a false hearted lover,  
Under the shade of a bonny green tree.

"Come all ye young lassies, pray now take a warning,  
And ne'er court a young man above your degree;  
For love is a blossom that quickly will wither,  
And you will be left as my lover left me."

HAMISH HENDERSON

#### *A Traditional Song from Skye*

Dh'éirich mi moch maduinn earraich  
Maduinn dhuanaidh fhuarraidh fhearra  
Ghabh mi suas ri gual' a' bheannain  
Shuidh mi air cnoc is leig mi m'anail  
Dh'amhairc mi bhuam fad mo sheallaidh  
Chunnaig mi long 'sa' Chaol Chanach  
Is i a' strì ri sgrìoban geala  
Is i a' sìorruith dh'ionnsaigh cala

Chuala mo chluas fuaime a daraich  
 Fuaime a cuid seòl is iad a' crathadh  
 Chunnaig mo shùil i dol fairis  
 Socrachadh sìos anns a' ghaineamh  
 Lùb mi mo ghlùn, dh'iarr mi sìth dhaibh  
 Sìth do dh'Eoghainn, sìth do dh'Ailein  
 An dà bhràthair tàmh biodh agaibh.

The refrain *ó hó hi rí éile chlainn ó hó hi rí* is sung after each half line.

I arose early on a spring morning  
 A wild, chill, ugly morning  
 I made my way up by the shoulder of the hill  
 I sat on a height and rested.  
 I looked away as far as I could see  
 I noticed a ship in the Kyle of Canna  
 Thrusting against the white furrows,  
 Ever running on towards harbour.  
 My ear heard the noise of her oak  
 The noise of her sails shaking.  
 My eye saw her turning over,  
 Settling down in the sand.  
 I bent my knee, I asked peace for them—  
 Peace for Ewen, peace for Allan,  
 The two brothers: may you have rest.

This song concerning the loss of a ship belongs to the genre of "vocal refrain" songs. One of the most fascinating traditions in Scottish Gaelic literature, it is also one of the most neglected: anthologists and collectors of the past, affected no doubt by the prominence that formal panegyric verse enjoyed in Gaelic society, have tended to ignore these utterances of private emotion which nevertheless enshrine some of the best poetry in the language. Most of the songs, including this one, are anonymous. It is interesting to note too that a great number were apparently composed by women.

That so many have survived in current oral tradition is in a large measure due to the fact that they became occupation-songs used to lighten the labour of shrinking or waulking the newly-woven tweed. Gaelic songs with distinctive refrains composed of semantically meaningless (but aesthetically significant) syllables are thus often known as *òrain-luaidh* or "waulking-songs". But it is reasonably certain that their origins are to be sought elsewhere, and that even earlier than the seventeenth century (during which they flourished strongly)

the tradition was already a developed one. From internal evidence one can date some compositions fairly accurately; with others it is impossible to know within a century or more—for the text printed here one might hazard a guess at the early seventeenth century.

The opening line of the song employs a well-known convention of the tradition, reminiscent of the “May morning” openings of medieval poetry. The theme—that of loss at sea—constantly recurs in these songs, not surprisingly since the majority of them are Hebridean. In this one it is the terse, restrained, economical manner in which the incident is related that is so very arresting.

The song was noted down in Skye in 1947 from the dictation of Neil MacInnes (1862-1950) and has not been collected anywhere else. The only details known of the disaster are those to be found in the text.

JOHN MACINNES

### *A Story from Vatersay*

This is a synopsis of a story told in Gaelic by Miss Nan MacKinnon of Vatersay. I first heard it in the summer of 1956, and it was subsequently recorded for the School of Scottish Studies.<sup>1</sup> It succinctly demonstrates the remarkable continuity of tradition in the Celtic world.

A Barra man was going to bury the three heads of his sons who had been slain. He was carrying the heads in a sack. As he passed a standing stone in the Clait district, one of the heads spoke and made prophetic statements. One of these was to make known the way in which the deaths should be avenged. The father was to go to a certain township in the island, where he would find a man whose daughter was pregnant to the son whose head was speaking. She herself would give birth to a son, and he would avenge the deaths of the three brothers. The father did as the head advised and in due course the son was born. One day, when the boy was about fourteen years old, he was assisting at a fanking of sheep. The murderer of his father and uncles was present also. This man asked the boy to go to the well and get some water for him to drink. The lad did this, but on his return deliberately let the cup fall so that it broke. The murderer then went to drink directly from the well. The boy followed him and as he bent down to drink, drew a short sword which he had concealed in his sleeve and decapitated the murderer. The head was left in the well.

Apart from being a good story, this tale is of unusual interest for the following reasons. It contains a reference to the Celtic belief that the "tête coupée" has prophetic powers, and is capable of speech and movement after it has been separated from the body, stemming no doubt from an earlier belief that the head was the focal point of being, the habitation of the soul.<sup>2</sup> The standing stone in Cliait is noteworthy, because it plays an important part in the story, the head seemingly being stimulated to speech as the stone is approached. We are familiar with such a situation in certain of the early Irish tales, where a severed head is placed on a stone pillar, and then demonstrates its continued, independent existence. Celtic iconography provides numerous examples of "têtes coupées" set on, or carved in one with, stone pillars.

Of especial interest perhaps, is the connection of a head with a well. When the boy sets out to kill his father's murderer, he tricks him into approaching a well. He does not simply stab the guilty man. He decapitates him, and in true Celtic fashion, he places or leaves the head in the well. Last summer, when re-visiting Chesters Museum on Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland, I was interested to note that one of the objects recovered from the votive hoard in Coventina's Well at Carrawburgh was a human head, stained green, but with the skull still quite intact. Welsh tradition knows of several wells where the traditional guardian is supposed to have been a human cranium, and early Irish legends likewise make frequent references to the placing of illustrious or infamous heads in wells, whereby the water is magically affected in some way or other.

In this little tale then, told by a comparatively young woman in the Outer Hebrides in such recent times, we see the persistence, in oral form, of two early Celtic elements of belief. In the belief in the prophetic powers of the severed head, and in the custom of placing a "tête coupée" in a well, we have two motifs which have a long history in Celtic oral tradition, and which can trace their direct ancestry to beliefs which, in the Celtic Iron Age, formed elements in a widespread and complex religious tradition.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Recorded for the School of Scottish Studies by James Ross (Rl. No. XXX).

<sup>2</sup> The Celtic cult of the human head is described by the writer in P.S.A.S. 91 (1957-8) 10-43.

ANNE ROSS



### *A Tidal Fish Pound*

Maritime ethnology has on the whole, been little studied hitherto, and this is especially true in Scotland. When one considers that the sea as a potential source of nourishment is some four times as rewarding as comparable areas of land it seems particularly unfortunate that in an environment so proximate to the sea as that of this country, such a subject should be thus neglected. Fishing has been the basis, clearly, of local economy in much of Scotland from the mesolithic period until the present and as man's exploitation of the sea's resources is still virtually at the "hunter-fisher" stage, there is a high degree of conservatism causing the retention of much archaic technology, either still in evidence, or at least surviving in oral tradition.

In contrast to the more active "hunting" techniques of deep-sea fishing, inshore waters lend themselves to passive trapping methods, ideally suited to a farming-fishing economy as demanding minimal expenditure of time. The basic form of sea trap is that employing the natural mechanism of the tide: the fish pound, *caraidh* (*Cairidh*-Dwelly), croy, or garth. As the *Scottish National Dictionary* has it, the croy is "a sort of fold of semi-circular form made on the sea beach for catching fish. When the sea flows the fish come over it, and are left there in consequence of its receding". These tidal traps made of rough stone walling, wattle, stakes, and perhaps combinations of these materials, appear to have been widely distributed around the Scottish coastline. In the Highlands they have been in use within living memory and in sheltered waters their remains are still quite well defined. See, for instance, Plate VIII, fig. 2, which is from a recent photograph taken at Airds Bay, Appin, by Mr. John Junor of Edinburgh who informs us that the structure is still known locally as "the old fish-trap".

There is a wealth of detail that needs to be added to the basic outline above. Questions to be considered include: the characteristic location of the traps, the types of fish concerned (there seems to have been some degree of specialisation), variation in measurement and design, the operation and allocation of catch, a specialised terminology and the relationship of Scottish forms to European parallels. Documentary evidence and place-names can also be significant, the latter especially on exposed coasts where physical traces have vanished possible examples being names like *Camusnacarnian* (locally *Camusnancaraidhean*) in Wester Ross, *Camus na Cairidh*

PLATE VIII



FIG. 1.—Nailsmiths outside a smithy at St. Ninians, Stirlingshire, *c.* 1930.  
(*See* p. 119).

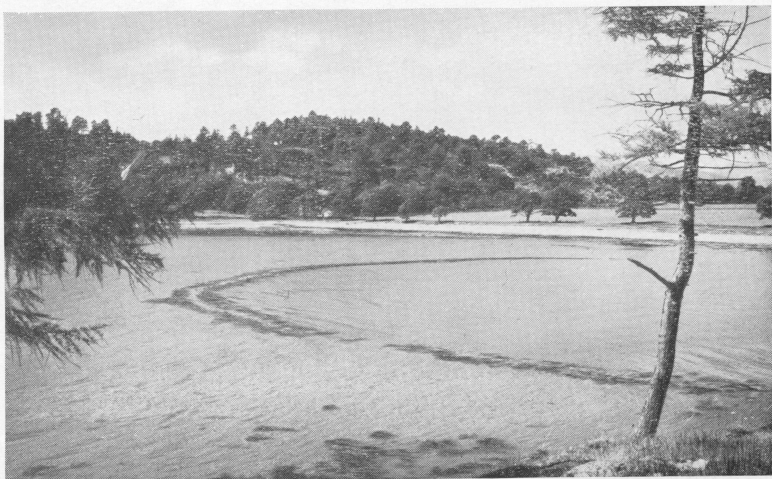


FIG. 2.—A tidal fish pond at Airds Bay, Appin (*see* p. 110).

in Muck, and *Croy Bay*, another name for Culzean Bay in Ayrshire.

Owing to its primitive nature and yet recent use, fuller details of Scottish tidal trapping could augment in a most interesting way the sparsely documented economic history of our coastal regions from an early period in prehistory.

IAIN A. CRAWFORD

### *A Symposium on Place-Name Research*

When, early in 1960, the School of Scottish Studies invited British, Irish and Scandinavian scholars to attend a "Symposium on the Scope and Methods of Place-Name Research", it was hoped that a gathering of this kind would achieve two main aims: Firstly, closer liaison amongst the various organisations, institutions and individual scholars engaged in place-name research in Britain and Ireland; secondly, personal contact between younger and more experienced scholars, with particular benefit to the former. A similar symposium held in September 1959 on the subject of British Ethnographic Research had already shown that the frank and friendly atmosphere which is possible at a meeting of a small group of scholars confronted with the same kind of problems in closely allied fields of research, greatly facilitates the exchange of opinions and information.

The Symposium took place from October 5th-8th, 1960, and at it the following organisations and institutions were represented: The English Place-Name Society, the Place-Name Commission of the Irish Ordnance Survey, the School of Celtic Studies in the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, the Ulster Place-Name Society, the Scottish Record Office in H.M. General Register House Edinburgh, and the Place-Name Survey of the School of Scottish Studies. In addition, special invitations had been sent to Dr. Per Hovda, Head of Norsk Stadnamnarkivet Oslo, and to Mr. Melville Richards, Head of the Department of Celtic in the University of Liverpool, and a number of Scottish scholars actively concerned with place-name research attended the various sessions.

As the meeting was the first of its kind ever to be held in these islands, the papers read were designed to give as much technical information as possible about the history and the day-to-day organisation of the various archives and institutes, in order to acquaint scholars in charge of similar projects with the background, aims, working methods and financial problems

of other undertakings in this very specialised field of research. It was envisaged that, on the one hand, this might help younger archives to avoid pitfalls discovered and successfully negotiated by older organisations, and that, on the other, it might encourage less experienced colleagues to pursue their research even when faced with great difficulties, or stimulate those who work on their own and are without support from any official society or survey.

During the seven sessions of the Symposium the following papers were read and discussed: Prof. A. H. Smith, "The Work of the English Place-Name Society"; Dr. Per Hovda, "The Norsk Stadnamnarkiv Oslo"; Mr. Melville Richards, "Place-Name Research in Wales"; Mr. Liam Price, "The Place-Name Survey of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies"; Mr. Éamonn de hÓir, "The Work of the Irish Place-Name Commission"; Miss Deirdre Morton, "The Ulster Place-Name Society"; Dr. W. F. H. Nicolaisen, "The Scottish Place-Name Survey"; Dr. A. B. Taylor, "Early Scottish Maps and Place-Name Research".

At the end of many fruitful and constructive discussions, the members appointed an interim committee, consisting of Prof. Smith and Dr. Nicolaisen, to investigate the possibilities of closer co-operation amongst the various organisations they represented, and subsequently to prepare a memorandum which may be submitted for consideration and comment to the organisations concerned.

A report on this gathering must not end without mentioning especially the contribution made to it by Dr. Per Hovda of Oslo whose visit had been made possible by a generous grant from the Northern Scholars Committee. It was of particular value to all present at these sessions to hear about the work of the Scandinavian place-name archives which have so much greater experience in this field of study than any institution in these islands.

W. F. H. NICOLAISEN

## C. OTHER NOTES

### *A Note on William Bald's plan of Ardnamurchan and Sunart, 1807*

An interesting example of an early nineteenth-century plan of a West Highlands estate has recently come to light in the

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland's office in Oban. The peninsular estate of Ardnamurchan and Sunart in northern Argyll was surveyed in 1806 and 1807 by William Bald who compiled the map to accompany a Valuation of the estate for the proprietor, Sir James Milles Riddell, Bt. The ms. of the Valuation is still extant, and in it, the Assessor, Alexander Low of Woodend, remarks on the present situation of each land holding, and adds suggestions for future changes. From the map and Valuation, Sir James hoped to proceed with some of the agricultural improvements in land distribution and husbandry which had previously spread over the Lowlands, and had already penetrated the southern fringes of the Highlands and Islands. These documents together present a finely-drawn portrait of one of many similar West Highland estates which were at this time undergoing, or about to enter, a period of transition. This change was from the old order of large tacks and unlotted runrig townships (with periodic or fixed strips) to the new one of large grazing farms and lotted townships. There was usually a corresponding redistribution of settlement from clustered clachans to linear or dispersed patterns of buildings.

On a scale of 5·35 inches to one mile, the whole plan measures twelve feet from north to south, and seven and a half from west to east. It has, however, been divided into sections, each mounted on cloth and folded. The state of preservation is remarkably good, considering both its age and its chequered history after the estate passed from the hands of the bankrupt Sir James in 1848. One of the present proprietors of Sunart is the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland in whose possession the map, Valuation and various other estate documents now lie and to whom we are indebted for their permission to reproduce sections of the map (Pl. IV and V).

Cartographically, the map presents a very pleasing appearance, whilst retaining accuracy of detail. Even now, after a century and a half, the multi-coloured washes indicating the boundaries and improved lands of different holdings, still provide a colourful fringe to the rather sombre grey tones of the rest of this rocky and mountainous peninsula. Black ink has been used only sparingly, except in lettering, figuring, delimitation of boundaries and tree symbols. Pictorial effect derives chiefly from the extremely skilful use of the paint-brush with various shades and tones of water colour. The physical appearance of the higher areas, forming unimproved pasture

land, is graphically illustrated. Summits of the highest hills and ridges, in a light grey, are made the more prominent by the use of very much darker tones simulating hill-shading, for the breaks of slope below. Brush-strokes, rather like hachures, indicate degree of slope. In this way too, the sides of gulleys are emphasised. The rivers themselves, and other water features are drawn and coloured in blue. Superb cliff representation enhances the long and indented coastline.

But the greatest detail and variety of interest are to be found in those areas used by man for cultivation, pasture or mining. The boundary of each farm or township is given a specific colour which is repeated in the plots of improved ground within the holding. Each patch is allocated a number and acreage, and these are listed in an accompanying key. Beside each entry in the key, the annotation "arable-spade", "arable-plough", "pasture", or "planting" is recorded. It is perhaps unfortunate that the first three of these categories of land utilisation are not usually coloured separately on the map. Some of the patches of cultivated land are outlined in red, which may represent a dyke or enclosure, but this is not clear. Three of the four main elements comprising the West Highland landscape of the time are depicted:

- (i) the large tacks and grazing farms rented usually by one tenant. Occasionally these may be worked by groups of sub-tenants or cottars living in clusters or clachans on the farm.
- (ii) the townships of joint tenants with undifferentiated holdings held in runrig (with periodic or fixed strips), and living in clachans.
- (iii) the townships of tenants living on individually lotted holdings resulting in dispersed settlements.

The fourth element, found sporadically elsewhere in the West Highlands and Islands, that of the planned estate village, is missing in this peninsula.

The large tacks and grazing farms comprised less of the total area at that time than in many West Highland estates. In Ardnamurchan, the western part of the peninsula, only four such holdings are shown, but Sunart to the east has a higher proportion of large sheep walks along the more inaccessible southern shores of Loch Shiel. The improved land on these holdings is usually grouped into fair-sized fields, but only a few of these are enclosed. Farm buildings are not



infrequently surrounded by the then recently introduced woodlands and plantations.

The unlotted townships comprise most of the area depicted on the map. Each contains two categories of land, improved arable and pasture, and unimproved rough grazing, both usually held in common (see Pls. IV and V). Due to the highly irregular nature of the peninsula, the arable land is often to be seen scattered in small patches, capable of cultivation only by spade. Settlements are clustered closely together near the greatest area of arable land, water supply, or kelp-producing shore. One's eye is quickly drawn to these clachans on the map, each building being coloured in red.

There was only one lotted township in the whole peninsula in 1807, that of Ardnastang, though in the Valuation, the Assessor points to many townships which could well be lotted to provide fewer tenants with a better living from the land. In Ardnastang at the mouth of the Strontian valley, each tenant's several contiguous plots are allocated the same number, (unlike the serially numbered patches in the unlotted townships) and arable and pasture land is separately distinguished. Already at this time, dwellings are built on each individual holding.

The two other features of human occupation depicted are the lead mines and the roads. The various tracts of land and the major lead veins therein, leased to different mining companies, are accurately marked. Roads to the mines, and to most of the townships, often more numerous than those of today, are drawn and coloured in red.

The map and Valuation together provide a valuable impression of the extent of improved land, and of the distribution of settlement in Ardnamurchan and Sunart before the main clearances for farms and shooting forests, and redistribution of land holdings and people took place. The greatest changes have occurred in the former unlotted townships. In some cases, the improved land was lotted out into individual holdings in the nineteenth or even the twentieth centuries. These holdings were often rectangular in form, stretching upwards from the valley-bottom or sea-shore (e.g. Anaheilt, Fig. 2). Population moved on to the individual holdings, and a linear or dispersed pattern of settlement replaced the old cluster. In other cases, where greater variation in quality of land occurred, the runrig holdings became fixed, and each holding still consists at the present day of several non-adjacent



strips of land, with buildings set up on one of the plots. Such is the township of Kilmory (Pl. IV). Similar scattered strip holdings occur in Ockle (Ochkill, Pl. IV), but the old clustered form of settlement has remained. The only other clachan remaining is that of Achnaha in Ardnamurchan, in which township the 60-odd strips belonging to each tenant were reallocated into individual holdings during the First World War.

In other cases, the former townships were cleared of population and stock to make way for large sheep walks, and they remain as hill farms today (e.g. Swordlechorrach, Swordlemore and Swordlehuel in Fig. 1 are now one farm, Swordle. Another element, characteristic of much of the West Highland area after the late nineteenth century, was added to the Sunart landscape after World War I, when the two large farms of Ranachan and Drimnatorran were broken up and each resettled as four small holdings for returning ex-servicemen.

But whether lotted or cleared, the traces of the old order of unlotted townships and clusters of buildings remain now in the extensive green patches showing the abandoned rigs of old lazy-beds and ploughed areas, and in the clusters of ruined buildings to be seen on almost every holding. The only other major change has been the twentieth century spread of afforestation, especially in Sunart.

Unfortunately, a complete understanding of the material presented by the map and Valuation is not yet possible. At the time of writing, no rental of the estate corresponding to the Valuation has been found. If this were discovered, the precise numbers of tenants, and perhaps even of cottars and their families, might be known for each holding, and the value of the documents greatly enhanced. Nor is a later map showing the actual lotting known to the author. Despite this lack, however, the map and Valuation together provide a good basis on which to construct the story of subsequent land and population changes from estate documents and Census records.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS

Pl. IV. This part of the map shows, from west to east:

- (1) Achateny, a large farm in 1807, and still so today.
- (2) Branault, lotted after 1807 into four holdings. Now one farm.
- (3) Kilmory, at that time an unlotted township with clachan. Now a lotted township of strip crofts and linear dispersed settlement.
- (4) Swordlechorrach, Swordlemore, and Swordlehuel, all then unlotted townships, and now one farm, with buildings based on Swordlemore.
- (5) Ochkill, now lotted township of scattered strip crofts; settlement in original cluster.



A section of William Bald's plan of Ardnamurchan and Sunart, 1807. For details  
see p. 116.



A further section of William Bald's plan of Ardnamurchan and Sunart, 1807.  
For details *see* p. 117.

Pl. V. This part of the map shows, from west to east:

- (1) Part of a "plantation".
- (2) Ranachanstrone and Ranachanmore unlotted townships later cleared into one sheep farm, and resettled in 1924 as four small holdings with dispersed settlement.
- (3) Ardnastang, in 1807, the only township with lotted holdings in Ardnamurchan and Sunart: linear dispersed settlement.
- (4) Anahcilt unlotted township, now rectangular holdings from valley bottom upwards, and with dispersed linear settlement.
- (5) Strontian "village" containing, Factor's residence, Inn etc.

MARGARET C. STORRIE

### *A Note on the Making of Nails by Hand*

Nailmaking evidently has a long history in Stirlingshire, as a payment for slating-nails to a smith in Bannockburn is on record in 1633 (M. of W. Accts. II: 359). In 1770 William Cadell, one of the original partners of Carron Company, introduced nailmakers from England, and Carron, Camelon, St. Ninians, Kilsyth and Kirkcaldy are subsequently recorded as nail-making centres (Cadell 1913: 164). In 1796 four masters were employing about a hundred and thirteen hands in St. Ninians parish, the daily output per man being from a thousand to twelve hundred nails and the wages low (Stat. Acct. 1796: 394). By 1841 the number of hands had decreased to two hundred; the same figure for output is given, and the wages from 8s. to 9s. per week (N.S.A. 1845: 332). Rather more details are available for Camelon at the same date, the minister of Falkirk parish recording (N.S.A. 1845: 18) that there were then two nail manufactories in that village, employing about two hundred and fifty men and boys. The employers provided houses and workshops, and the rods from which the nails were made, while the men found their own coal and turned in the finished product. They worked a ten-hour day, five or five-and-a-half days a week; a man working alone was paid from 9s. to 14s. per week, and one with a boy or boys working under him proportionately more. A cottage industry of this kind, dependent on substantial capitalist employers and centralised marketing, remained in existence in Stirlingshire until the beginning of the second World War; it was then fundamentally re-organised by Messrs. J. & W. Somerville Ltd., who transferred all the work to a modern factory at Lennoxtown.

Notwithstanding the change thus effected, many of the traditions of the "cottage" phase of the industry are still alive

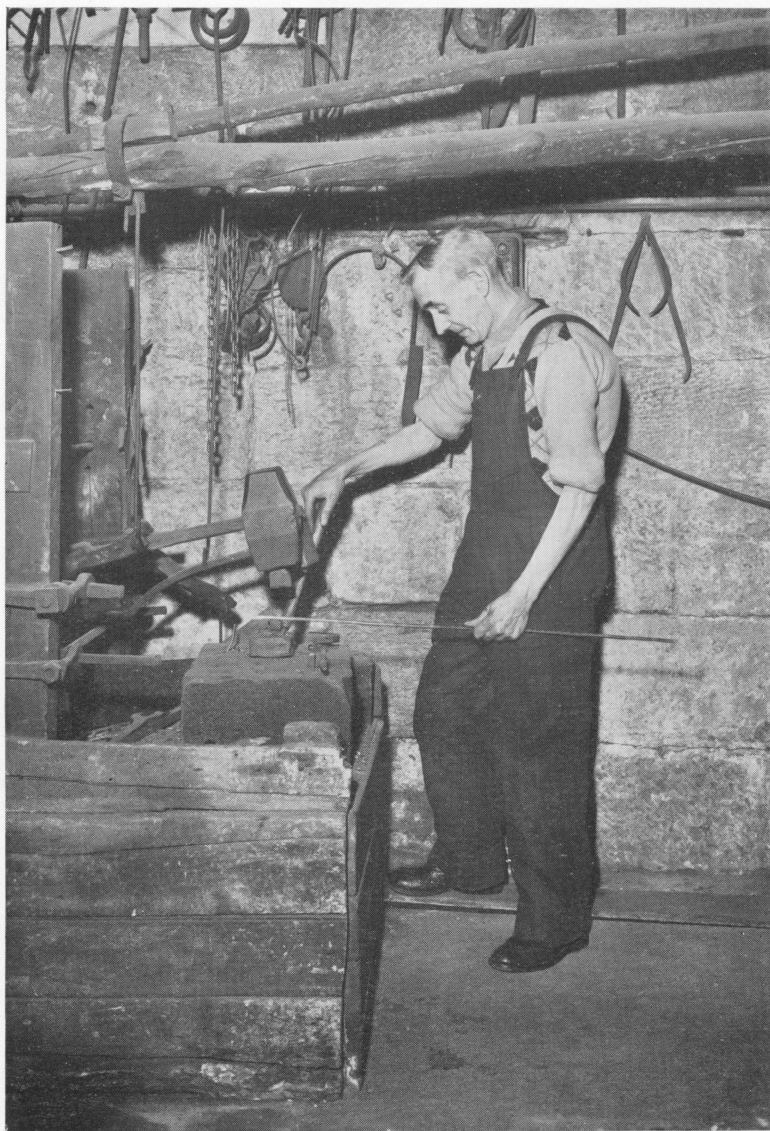
at Lennoxtown, and Messrs. Somerville also possess some interesting old pieces of equipment. The School of Scottish Studies is most grateful to Mr. J. B. Webster, the managing director, and to his staff, for the information that they were so good as to supply, and also for the opportunity that they gave to its representative of interviewing Mr. James Squair, the last of "cottage" nailmakers, and of seeing him demonstrate the use of the forge and "oliver" (*infra*). The School is also indebted to the Ancient Monuments Commissioners for copies of their photographs of the oliver.

The oliver is a kind of work-bench, equipped with a pair of treadle-operated hammers and specialised for the making of nails or other small products, such as can-ears, which are formed from iron rods. It is understood to take its name from its inventor, a former nail-maker of St. Ninians, who is said to have had to barricade his smithy to preserve the secret of the machine that gave him such high production. It is placed close to the forge, so that the operator, standing between, can attend to his bellows, fire and irons when facing one way and be in a position to use the oliver on turning about. The machine has a massive cubical pedestal, from each of the two rear corners of which there rises a solid wooden upright. These uprights support two transverse iron bars which are free to turn on their axes, and each of them carries one of the hammers mounted on a short radial shaft. Partial rotation of the bars thus brings the hammers down to strike or raises them to their upright position, which is rather above "three o'clock". The downward stroke is effected by the depression of the treadle, which is conveniently placed to the smith's right foot and can be connected with either of the hammers; after their stroke the hammers are raised by the upward pull of long, springy larch-poles, mounted above the smith's head and having their small ends connected with the hammer-shafts by means of rods. The mechanism is unquestionably crude, but by manipulating his treadle against the pull of the larch-pole the smith can regulate the force of his blows with great nicety. In the oliver seen at Lennoxtown, one hammer has a 15 lb. head and the other is lighter. If it is desired to use the hammer that is not attached to the treadle, it can be brought down by a blow from the smith's clenched fist.

On the bench, below the hammers, there rests an iron block containing twelve square sockets, into which can be fitted small specialised anvils, called "jacks", as required for



PLATE VI



"Oliver" machine and operator, Lennoxtown, Stirlingshire, 1958.  
(See p. 118).



Making a "hold-fast" at the "oliver".  
(See p. 118).



PLATE VIII



FIG. 1.—Nailsmiths outside a smithy at St. Ninians, Stirlingshire, *c.* 1930.  
(*See* p. 119).

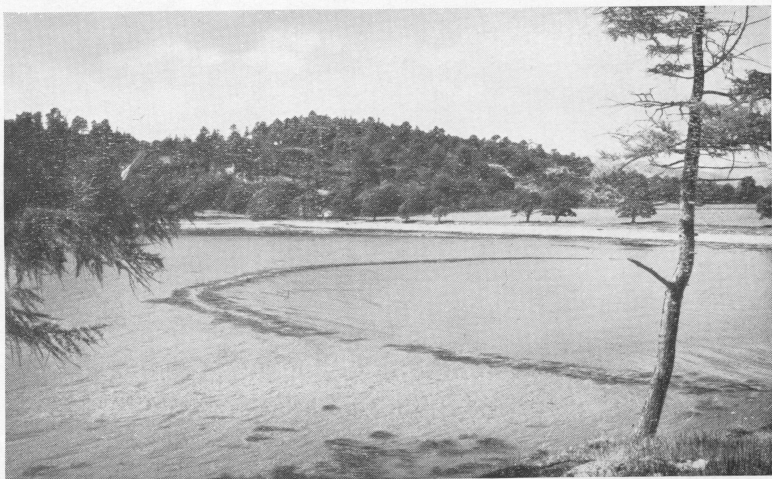


FIG. 2.—A tidal fish pond at Airds Bay, Appin (*see* p. 110).

various products. A demonstration was given in the manufacture not of nails but of can-ears, of which Mr. Squair has made as many as 20 gross in a week. For these, three jacks were used—one, a small block under the 15 lb. hammer, on which the white-hot end of a slender rod was given the shape of a can-ear; a second, consisting of a short length of horizontal rod round which the hook was formed with an ordinary hammer; and a third, which carried an upturned cutting edge on which the ear was severed from its rod by a blow from the lighter hammer, struck in this case with the fist. The rivet-holes in the can-ears were made with another machine of venerable appearance, a manual punch operated by a quick-action screw.

In conclusion, a word must be said about the old nailmakers' houses. Typically a nailmaker's cottage was distinguished by the presence of an extra room at one end; this was the smithy or workshop, and it was entered both from the adjoining room of the cottage, by a door in the partition, and also from outside by a separate entrance. Several of these cottages are known still to exist in and near St. Ninians, and some of them were visited on the strength of information received at Lennoxton; but all were found to have been "improved" and considerably altered, and their constructional details were often obscured by harling, with the result that it was impossible, in most cases, to identify the distinguishing features. At Chartershall, however, the row of cottages by the southern end of the bridge still shows quite clear traces of the original arrangement, according to information supplied by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS

The two photographs on Plates VI and VII are Crown copyright and are here reproduced by permission of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.

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