MID ARGYLL
An Archaeological Guide

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The Natural History and Antiquarian Society of Mid Argyll
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Foreword

This booklet replaces our Society’s *Handbook of History*, now out of date. It covers the area from the south end of Loch Awe to the coast north of Craignish, and from Inveraray to Tarbert Lochfyne.

Mid Argyll is an area of hills and lochs, shaped by volcanoes, glaciers, and the sea. Farming, forestry and tourism are the principal activities. Farmers and foresters give all possible access to historic sites on their land, but annually suffer damage from innocent and ignorant visitors - damage ranging from livestock stampeded to forest fires. In asking my neighbours’ approval of the notes which follow, I have promised them to beg my readers to observe the Countryside Code.

The places listed in the text are only a selection, but a selection of easily reached sites of interest. Anyone making a serious study of local antiquities will find a fuller list in a paper I helped produce for the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (vol. XCV), soon to be superseded by the Mid Argyll volume of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments (in preparation). Most sites given here are within a short walk from a road, but I have included some longer walks which may appeal to the energetic.

It can be hard to realise that an apparently ‘empty’ moor is part of a modern industrial undertaking. At 1983 prices a calf was worth £300, and a field of grass cost £120 an acre to sow; sheep and cattle can be killed by eating plastic and horribly injured by broken glass. Please, as you explore our countryside, help us protect our livelihood and care for the environment we all enjoy.

Many objects from local excavations are in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, Queen Street, Edinburgh, or in the Glasgow Museum and Art Gallery, Kelvingrove. A good small Museum is in Campbeltown (Public Library building). At Auchindrain near Inveraray is the Museum of Farming Life (see Route 8).

So much history lies around us that you may find a relic anywhere. If you chance upon a flint arrowhead or some old and curious object our Society would appreciate a chance to see it. If the object seems frail, try to photograph it before moving it, with a matchbox or other thing of known size included for scale. Wood will shrink and split on exposure to air, and should be kept damp (sphagnum moss and a plastic bag will help). Scraps of pottery are invaluable for dating. The exact findspot should be noted by reference to fixed points such as rocks, or cross-bearing on hills. If a larger find, such as a grave, turns up, telephone the National Museum (031-556 5984), and resist the temptation to do just a little poking-about while you await expert help. Never try to replace a grave-cover; it may slip and shatter the contents. A tarpaulin under planks is far safer.

As the laws about Treasure-trove in Scotland are rather different...
from those elsewhere, I have asked the former Keeper of the National Museum, Mr. R.B.K. Stevenson, for an exact statement of the position, as follows:-

‘Although in theory all newly discovered ancient objects (not merely objects of precious metal) belong to the Crown, because the heirs of the previous owner can never be known, it is usual in practice for only particularly rare or unusual finds to be claimed in this way. It is wise to report to a museum or the police anything that might be claimed, and invariably objects of gold and silver and hoards of coins or of, for example, bronze weapons and tools. Rewards are paid, based on the market value of the find, but may be reduced or forfeited if it has not been promptly notified and carefully treated. Anything examined but not claimed is returned to the finder.’

Walkers will find it worthwhile to call at the Forestry Commission District Office, White Gates, Lochgilphead, for leaflets describing Forest Walks in the area and others about the trees, birds and beasts they may encounter. It should be remembered that timber operations may be in progress, and that there may be people shooting in the woods (and elsewhere also), and local advice should therefore be sought before going into the hills.

I am most grateful for help and advice from officers of the Royal Commission and the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate, staff of the National and Glasgow Museums, the Forestry Commission, and many members of our Society; and to all the landowners and farmers who have advised over access, shown me their discoveries, and helped me understand my home ground. I am especially grateful to F.S. Mackenna and Colin Ferguson, who have checked all my routes on the ground. Any remaining blunders are entirely my own work.

In bringing myself up-to-date with recent archaeological opinion I have relied on two books, both well-illustrated:

Scotland Before History, Stuart Piggott (Edinburgh University Press, 2nd edn. 1982. with a Gazetteer of Sites by Graham Ritchie; paperback, £5.75); and

Scotland, Archaeology and Early History, by Graham and Anna Ritchie (Thames and Hudson, 1981, £10.50).

Articles dealing with local history and antiquities will be found in our Society’s twice-yearly magazine The Kist.

New finds are reported annually in Discovery and Excavation in Scotland, published by The Scottish Group, Council for British Archaeology.

Marion Campbell
Kilberry 1984

The Historical Background

Archaeology is the study of the past through its material remains. In the absence of written record, prehistoric archaeology must be pieced together like a jigsaw, new finds and new techniques of study continually changing the pattern and occasionally filling a gap. A certain curiosity about bygone times is common to humanity, from legends of giants to tales of ‘when Grannie was a little girl’, but the scientific reconstruction of lost ways of life only began a little over a century ago.

Speculation about objects gathered into ‘cabinets of curiosities’ gave way to a systematic ordering into Ages, of Stone, Bronze, Iron, based on the principal materials used for tools and weapons. These have been subdivided into Periods marked by changes in technique, and these again into Cultures distinguishable by assemblages of goods. The guiding thread is often the pottery, handfuls of dreary rough sherds; valued possessions such as necklaces and swords may be handed down for generations, but the everyday pots and bowls vary with a community’s needs. It is the importance of gathering these scraps of domestic rubbish that makes archaeologists so hostile to treasure-hunters with metal detectors.

The older these scraps of evidence, the more blurred the picture they form. We may be able to see that differing ways of life have been in contact with each other, farmers buying fish from nomadic hunters and selling grain to metal-workers, but the essential immaterial things, the ideas and the speech that conveyed them, are not to be recovered except by the method that arranged those cabinets - the informed guess.

Some nine thousand years ago when the glaciers had receded, small bands of Middle Stone Age (Mesolithic) hunters came over the tundra northward. Some had boats, probably skin-covered canoes, from which they fished and hunted seals among the islands. Most of these scattered groups of people used delicately made flint tools, little points glued into hafts to form saw-toothed harpoons and spears. They used white quartz also, its sharp chips hardly needing retouch, and bone needles for sewing their clothes of fur; but all their leather and basketry, the nets and the fishing-lines, have perished. No burials have as yet been identified in Scotland (one grave in Brittany is splendidly roofed with deer antlers), so we know little of their physical appearance. They are shadows in a wilderness of game.

Man was the rarest animal then. In family parties they roamed wherever food was to be found, returning to good camps where they left mounds of shells and bones. It is no long step from gathering a tasty plant to noticing that it has sprung up by last year’s camp; many groups had hunting-dogs, some may have tamed or half-tamed deer (for
bury their dead in an individual stone box, a cist (from the Gaelic for chest), laying them doubled up as if asleep. Several cists were placed inside the South Cairn itself.

Copper knives and axes were cast in open moulds, and were rather soft and easily blunted (everyone carried a hone). Before long more elaborate work was undertaken, involving an alloy of copper and tin to produce bronze. This tells us two things; they could bring tin from Cornwall, and they had a grasp of mathematics, for the alloy is precisely calculated, with softer rivets used for hatting or repairs. The farmers, too, must have counted - cattle, sheep, threads on the loom - and it should be no surprise to find that geometrical formulae have gone into the layout of some stone settings. Some indeed may have been used to predict eclipses - a time of fear for all primitive societies - and others to judge the dates for planting crops or putting the rams with the flocks.

By 1500 BC or earlier, a full Bronze Age was in being, with new types of pottery, bronze ornaments (surely a sign of plentiful production) and necklaces of jet and amber, two 'magical' substances that can attract metal filings. Graves were now covered by round cairns instead of long ones, and in places (Kilmartin for one) these were arranged in line with the older cairns. By this time too, standing-stones, graves, and rock-surfaces were being carved with enigmatic designs we call 'cup-and-ring-marks'. Such carvings are found in many parts of the world, and very many theories have been launched to explain them. They consist of pits and grooves pounded into stone and deepened by grinding; rarely there is a recognisable form, a footprint or the outline of an axe, but mostly they are a network of symbols which do not speak to us except of serious endeavour.

Towards the end of the Bronze Age times grew harder. We know the climate had turned wetter (this is when the peat grew), and at the same time events elsewhere may have interrupted the tin-trade. Cairns were smaller, graves were placed within old ritual enclosures, cremations were buried in pots protected by a few stones. The bronze-smiths turned their skill to making rapiers, spearheads, and helmets.

Around 700 BC all Europe was on the move. From the Danube plain came warrior-bands who displaced the tribes in their path. They were the Celts, a term that properly denotes speakers of a group of languages ancestral to Welsh and Gaelic (ancestral also to Classical Greek and to Latin). They reckoned their wealth in cattle and their prestige by war, and they brought an art style of flowing lines and interlacing patterns, of formalised designs concealing animal and human forms, which was eventually to take root and flower again in Ireland and western Scotland.

About this time the hilltop forts begin. Some may have stood already as tribal centres, but now refuges were needed; some were large
enough to shelter a tribe and its cattle, others were the little strongholds of invaders, others again fortified farmsteads. The Gaelic word 'Dun', meaning a heap (molehill or mountain) has been adopted for the small forts, usually rather later than the great enclosures like Creag a Chapuill (Route 2). With the forts comes a time of cattle-raiding warfare which was to last a thousand years.

But the boats still crossed to Ireland, and people still farmed the land. Even when rumours spread of an alien people clad in metal and terrible in war, moving north through England, it can have made little difference to the people in Argyll. Their chiefs had war-bands armed with iron swords, more readily made (if less effective) than bronze; their fields were sometimes tilled with iron-tipped ploughs. Some young men may have gone to join Roman Auxiliary units, some coastal watchtowers have sighted Agricola's fleet as it passed, but the Roman armies never came into Argyll itself. A few trade-goods reached us, a sherd of Samian ware turns up here and there in a fort, but that is all.

When the Romans left, the tribes flooded over the areas the Wall had guarded. By then the eastern half of Scotland was dominated by a confederation of tribes Roman writers called Picti, 'painted men', a mixture of Celtic and pre-Celtic peoples. Argyll, by contrast, was full of settlers from Ireland. By 500 AD they were able to set up a kingdom under princes from Antrim, who called their new possession 'Dal Riata' after their homeland, and at first treated it as an extension of that Irish territory. They were known as Scotti, and what they had founded was to become the kingdom of the Scots. One of their centres, perhaps the chief one, was Dunadd (Route 2).

Christianity was spreading through Ireland, although the ritual obligations of the tribal kings prevented most of them accepting the new religion and imperilling the fertility of their land and people. Irish missionaries, of the same race as the Scotti, soon made the crossing and began to preach among the emigrants of the western coasts. Many of them are forgotten now, but one was a prince and kinsman of the Dalriadic kings, and he came to his own. His name was Columba.

He was born about 521 and crossed into Scotland in 563. By 572 he had converted his kinsmen and enrowned one of them, in the first Christian enthronement to take place in Britain. Before his death in 597 he had established the new faith widely through the west.

Something should be said about the way the early missionaries worked. Irish society was based on the family, and so was Irish Christianity; the followers of a missionary were his 'familia', the headship of his community often passed by inheritance to a kinsman. The first missions worked from bases granted them by a local ruler, in which they would build a small church for the brotherhood, with each man building his own hut nearby, and a communal refectory and kitchen. But outside, among their converts, they did not build churches at first; the preachers travelled about gathering congregations where they could, often at an established meeting-place such as a standing-stone on a trackway (Torran, Route 6), which they might sanctify by the addition of a cross. Where one of these missionaries died and was buried became the place where his flock wanted to be buried also, and the first Christian sites are tiny graveyards with a cross scratched on a slate or on a rock. Only later, when the whole country was christianised, did people build stone churches and put up conspicuous crosses. The little graveyards are often called after the name of the founder, or sometimes (from humility) after that founder's teacher; dedications to Biblical figures are almost infallibly later. The place-names beginning Kil- are usually pre-9th century; 'Kil' is the anglicised form of Gaelic 'Cille', from Latin 'cella', a cell, a chapel, or even a grave. (Names beginning Killie- are a trap for the unwary; they represent Gaelic 'coill', a wood).

The oldest crosses are simply knife-cut scratches; they grew gradually into larger outlines, ringed outlines, six-pointed stars (representing the sacred monogram Chi-Rho), and into stones shaped to the form of a cross and decorated all over; these last were being produced by the eighth century. Meanwhile the line of Dalriada (as we call it) went on, expanding eastward and soon coming in conflict with Pictland. There were times when the Picts invaded and captured Dunadd, other times when the Scots drove into Perthshire; there were even times when the two states shared a king. At last in 843 Kenneth mac Alpin, King of Scots, successfully claimed the Pictish throne (his mother was probably a princess of the Picts, whose monarchy was inherited through females), and the capital was transferred to Scone near Perth.

For a century before that, the western coast had received new settlers, land-hungry Norwegians who brought their seafaring skills with them. They were soon followed by traders, and these by pirates who sacked Iona and other monasteries, using the islands as winter bases from which to launch next season's raids. Some were pirates and traders by turns, bringing loot and foreign goods back as far afield as North Africa. Those who settled in the Isles were quickly absorbed; by 843 there were Norse placenames all down the coast, and the sacked churches were being rebuilt by new converts.

From 900 to 1200 AD, Argyll was hardly part of Scotland. Ruled by half-Norse magnates, its law was half Norse and half Irish, its Church was loosely based on Iona, its art was Irish with strong Norse influences. In the eleventh century a new Irish invasion, led by a prince of the O'Neills, settled in Knapdale and Cowal with the approval of the Scots king, as a useful bulwark against the Vikings. The descendants of this forgotten colony were MacSweens, MacMurchadhs, MacNeills, MacGillechristis, Lamonts and others - some of them great men in later
times.

Late in the twelfth century a diocese of Argyll was formed, with its cathedral on Lismore; until then the area had come under the See of Dunkeld (where some relics of St. Columba had been taken for safety). There was a rush of church-building in the following years, mostly of small and simple parish churches (e.g. Kilmory Knap, Route 3b) on sites already long venerated.

The earliest castles were already in being. Castle Sween (Route 3b) is arguably the oldest stone castle on the western mainland, named after one of the Irish colonists (Suibhne). Tarbert, just outside our area, may be as old in origin; Fincharn (Route 6a) existed by mid-13th century.

As the churches developed, so did the art of stone-carving revive. A quarry near Castle Sween had already been worked before the Norse attacks, and was re-opened to provide fine stone for the new school of tombstone-masons. A recent study has shown that from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century there were identifiable local 'Schools', with varying pattern-books, at work between Iona and Kintyre. (See Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands, by K.A. Steer and J.W.M. Bannerman, H.M.S.O., 1977). Some of the designs show the dress, armour, and ships of the period; others revive the ancient tradition of Celtic art as developed in Ireland before the Vikings; some incorporate Norse patterns. After a gap of centuries, High Crosses were again erected (Kilmory Knap, Route 3b; Kilmartin, Route 5).

The Lordship of the Isles, built on Dalriadic and Norse foundations, controlled the western seaboard and brought prosperity to its subjects until James IV of Scotland, trying to weld his country into a whole, destroyed the Lordship and could put no acceptable power in its place. These were times when it was wise to refurbish old island dwellings, the crannogs of stone and timber in lochs which had been built, in some cases, as far back as the Bronze Age. Their use was banned by James VI in 1607, but the one on Loch Leathan (Route 4) was occupied in 1647.

Castles had now to be modified for the use of firearms. Carnasserie (Route 2), one of our glories, was rebuilt in the reign of Mary Queen of Scots by John Carswell, Bishop and Presbyterian Superintendent of Argyll. Mary herself was at Inveraray in 1563 to visit her half-sister the Countess. Her son's reign brought anarchy to the Highlands, as the Regents and later James VI himself used devious means to weaken where they could not control. James VI and his son Charles I made religion and politics indistinguishable. To be Royalist was to be Episcopalian, to be Presbyterian was to be a rebel and later a 'Parliament Man', to be Catholic was to be the victim of both State and Church. A small band of Irish Franciscans worked valiantly along the coasts, moving James to laughter at the thought of anyone trying to 'make Christians of his wild men' and helped by the last claimant of the Lordship, 'Colkitto' MacDonald (Coll 'ciotach', the left-handed). Coll lived to see his son Alasdair in arms with Montrose, leading the clans into battle for Charles I.

The Marquis of Montrose illustrates in his own life the bitter divisions of the time. He had supported Presbyterian resistance to Charles, but turned his genius to war on the king's behalf in a series of devastating campaigns. To the havoc he and Alasdair wrought was added the havoc of Parliamentarian armies pursuing them through the hills. When Charles ordered Montrose to cease the struggle, Alasdair led his men on a final fling through Argyll, in the course of which he is alleged to have burned every house by Loch Fyne except one, where he was offered a drink of milk by a terrified woman (Route 1). A hero in the ancient mould, he believed he had lost his war-luck when he found himself losing a duel with the local leader Zachary Mor MacCallum at Gocamogo (Route 4); he retreated into Kintyre and fled to Ireland, leaving old Coll to be hanged in Islay and many of his men to be massacred at Dunaverty.

The restoration of Charles II in 1660 brought its own problems, among them the imposition of Episcopacy which sent many parish ministers into exile or hiding. At Charles' death, the Earl of Argyll returned from exile to raise his clans in support of the Duke of Monmouth, but he was out of touch with local sentiment which by then wanted only peace. The failure of Argyll's Rising was followed by the despatch of the Marquis of Atholl to restore order; the Privy Council order of 31 May 1665 reads in part:

'...Destroy what you can to all who joined with him (Argyll). All men who 'joined and are not come out are to be killed or otherwise disabled from fighting; burn all houses except honest men's, destroy Inverary and all the castles ... Let the women and children be transported to remote 'islands ...'

It is hardly surprising that tradition ascribes all frightfulness, of whatever date, to the 'Athollmen' (who had Argyll's burning of 'the Bonnie house of Airlie' to revenge). An obelisk now in Inveraray Castle grounds commemorates sixteen Campbell lairds hanged in the town; a ten-year-old boy at Kilberry was to have swung with them, in the place of his half-brother who had escaped, but the child was successfully hidden.

Such memories reinforced local antipathy, or at least apathy, to the Jacobite Risings, though there were Campbells (including some lairds) who were 'Out'. In 1745-6 the Commander-in-Chief of the West, (John Campbell of Mamore, later 4th Duke of Argyll) caused ancient forts to be manned by militia, set up a naval base at Duntrune (Route 5), used the materials assembled for a new Inveraray Castle to build barracks, and at the same time tried to mitigate the brutal orders of the Duke of
Cumberland.

Near Inveraray stands Auchindrain, a cluster of 18th- and 19th-century houses and barns, now a Museum of Farming Life (Route 8). It encapsulates the life of the little communities that weathered these storms, preserving much of Argyll down the ages. It shows Mid Argyll as an area where newcomers have been assimilated, old ways adapted, old sites re-used, and where the community can trace its roots into antiquity. It has much to teach us about the importance of the past to the present and for the future.

Maps

Mid Argyll is covered by Sheets 55, 56 and 62 of the 1:50,000 Landranger Series, Ordnance Survey. These show most of the sites to be mentioned, and explain the use of Grid references used in the text.

Route 1. Lochgilphead-Ardrishaig and circular tour

Take the Campbeltown road, A83, at roundabout at west end of Lochgilphead. (A road up to the Canal bank leads to Miller’s Bridge; towpath can be walked to Ardrishaig or to Crinan, Route 3). The Crinan Canal runs above the road to Ardrishaig; it was built in late 18th-century, with money from local subscribers and from the sale of estates forfeited after 1745. The engineers Watt, Rennie, and Telford were all involved in its design and construction. Its eastern end is crossed at Ardrishaig.

3km south of Ardrishaig, side-road B8024 is the return-point of this tour. The main road continues past Stronachullin (Fish Research Farm, not open to the public); opposite lies the site of the house spared by Alasdair MacDonald in 1647 (NR849793; see p.9). Here a drove-road from Kintyre reached Loch Fyne after winding through the hills; the present A83 line was built in late 18th-century. There are copper and lead-mines in the hills from here to Tarbert.

Tarbert is guarded by its castle (improved by Robert I, 1328; tower by James IV, late 15th-century). ‘Tarbert’ means a portage between lochs; here in 1098 Magnus II of Norway crossed in his galley to claim Kintyre as one of the islands ceded to him by Edgar King of Scots.

1km south of Tarbert, turn right on B8024 marked Kilberry (single-track with passing-places marked by striped poles). NR838673, a Standing-stone on left of road.

At Torinturk Forestry Office you may like to enquire about a forest-track to Dun a’Choit Duibh (fort of the Black Dog), NR804640, and ‘Diarmid’s Grave’, oval cairn with standing-stone, 803638, with a round cairn 16m diameter close by (cairns not on map).

Dunmore House, 3½km beyond Torinturk, is a 19th-c. Scottish Baronial mansion (not open to public).

Kilnaish, NR772614, is a former Parish graveyard with a family mausoleum and one pre-12th-c. crossmarked stone, among 18th-19th-c. graves including one to a seaman who served with Nelson and Cochrane. At the roadside is a Holy Well, protected by an iron sheet.

A side-road leads to Ardpatrick; standing-stone, cup-marked, in field behind cottages, NR758601 (not on map).

Near Carse, three standing-stones in seaward fields, NR742615 and 742617, can be seen from gates in hedge.

Lergnahension, former Parish graveyard, (not on map), lies on S. bank of river, access by gate beside bridge and cart-track through fields; NR739616; oldest dated stone 1720. The Parish Church on N. of the bridge has a permanent exhibition of papers etc. in the gallery.

Fine outlook from viewpoint at top of hill, (marked on map), includes Ireland on fine days.

Almost 2km of straight road through Kilberry was made by a
retired Army officer in 18th-c. and is still called 'the Military Road'. Farm-road marked Kilberry Home Farm leads to an Ancient Monuments Board shelter containing early and medieval gravestones, NR710643, (not shown on map. Please avoid blocking access when parking). The stones come from site of former Parish Church near Castle (not open) and include a cast of a late-medieval cross-shaft still on site, and a boulder used for trials of strength (not advised).

After about 2km on public road, notice small mausoleum below headland, with standing-stone on cliifftop near site of fort (removed for 19th-c. dyke building).

Near Tigh na Gaoithe, (House of the Wind) ruin, NR718686, old cultivations are noticeable and a small fort Dun Cragach is visible on shore (NR711681; access permission from Ormsary Estate Office).

At Gualann nan Carn, quarry, fine views include the MacCormaig Isles (Route 9).

NR736722, another Parish graveyard (no medieval stones); signpost to Estate Office nearby. Cists were found at Ormsary Farm but were removed after excavation.

NR765760, a red-roofed shed in field (not on map) covers three Bronze Age cists; access by footpath beside bungalow. Twelve cists, a stacked enclosure and a ditched enclosure were excavated here; site has been backfilled except for cists in shed (Clachbreac).

Side-road to Ellary is Route 1a, next page.

Continuing over the hill to rejoin the A83, a ruin at NR830811 in forest is a lead-miner's house (dangerous shafts nearby).

The road-bridge, NR836813, is reputed to be the highest arch in Argyll.

A farm-track running S. to two cottages gives access to a graveyard Achnacille or Kilmalsaig, NR841813 (not on map; no early stones found), in wood to E. of track and close to gorge.

Route 1a, Ellary

Leaving B8024 at crossroads, pass South Knapdale Parish Church (18th- and 19th-c.); its font is a stone basin probably from St. Columba's Cave (below).

The road is very narrow. At Lochhead bridge, a grassy path leads seaward to a former Parish graveyard, NR777781 (not on map). Oldest dated stone 1720, but a re-used medieval slab lies near gate. Circular graveyard may cover a prehistoric cairn. A church is said to have stood here and been removed 'because of proximity to the mansion-house'.

NR777780 in shrubbery near graveyard, a standing stone (not on map).

About 4½km along road, at a bay with a layby, is St. Columba's Cave, NR751767. A 12th-c. chapel stands in front of two caves; the slope leading to the caves has been roughly paved, with a retaining wall. The larger cave has an altar, and rock-cut crosses of pre-10th-c. types. A basin near the altar might be a prehistoric mortar, another by the entrance perhaps a holy-water stoup. There are beam-sockets in the cave sides, to support an inner roof. This cave was cleared of occupation-debris in 19th-c.; the spoil-tip has recently been sifted and replaced to give access to the rock-shelf (the inner end has not been filled, but has no features of interest). Finds of every date from Mesolithic to 19th-c. were made. The smaller cave may have been a hermitage; it has steps and a bar-hole at the entrance, and a faint cross scratched on the rear wall, near a rock-boss used as a whetstone.

To W. of the caves a waterfall has been diverted, perhaps to run a small mill; nearby is a rock with a basin cut in it. There are traces of later buildings abutting the rock below the caves.

The public road ends near Ellary House; from here it is possible to walk to Kilmory Knapp, Route 3b, but in no circumstances should one attempt to take a car over the track.
Route 2. Lochgilphead towards Oban

At top of main street stands the Parish Church, with a window by a pupil of Burne-Jones. The Roman Catholic Church nearby has an early Cross, rescued from Kilmory Castle gardens to which it was probably brought from North Uist in the 19th-c. Follow Oban signs.

At the left-turn to the crossroads (new housing to right, Roads Depot ahead) the old road-line continues straight on, and can be walked as far as Achnabreck (below). This was the road when a brackish lagoon extended to Cairnbaan, before the Crinan Canal was built.

Turn right past the Roads Depot, on to the main Oban road. (On the next farm, at NR858890, a grooved sideslab for a cist, decorated with lozenge patterns, was discovered; it is now in the Kelvingrove Museum. It may have been lost from a raft transporting it over the lagoon).

The farm-road next after the cemetery access leads to Achnabreck Farm. Park at sign, and follow a marked path through woodland and pasture to our finest cup-and-ring rocks (p.5) at edge of forest, NR855906, with smaller site 140m E. in trees. (Some rocks in pasture below have scattered cupmarks). The main design include multiple rings, long grooves, and near top of large rock a double-spiral.

Behind farm sheds near carpark, NR855901, is a fallen standing-stone (not on map); another standing-stone, 'the Stane Alane', NR857899, is a short distance up the track behind the cemetery.

At next crossroads, Route 3 begins; continue on main road. Forestry road on E. leads to several forest walks, one passing close to Auchlough long cairn, NR870911 (facade at N. end, remains of a secondary side-chamber).

After leaving the afforested area, Dunamuck farm appears on W. (remains of fort above farm; pair of fallen standing-stones, not on map, on ridge in field, NR848923), and to N. in Glassary glen, Torbhlaire fort is conspicuous on an isolated crag. Route 4 begins at next sideroad, on E.

The 18th-c. road-bridge ('Bridge of Add', then the only dryshod crossing) carries Route 4 but is best seen from present route. The whole area from Dunamuck (where the fallen stones were a tailor's work-bench) to Kilmichael Glassary Church, was the site of Kilmichael Tryst, the main cattle market of Argyll until the railway came to Oban. From here cattle were driven to Crieff and Falkirk; a smithy has recently been found, in the forests, where they were shod for the long journey.

Dunadd hill is conspicuous on W. in the flat ground (see below); two sets of standing-stones are visible beyond the river Add, NR848925 and 846929 (one set on map).

A rough farm-road, marked, leads to Dunadd, NR837935 (no buses, limited parking on farm access). This road covers an ancient causeway through marshes now drained. A paved ford can be seen by the bridge when the river is low. Dunadd was the capital of Dalriada (p.7) and has been inhabited from Mesolithic times. It has been excavated repeatedly; many finds, now in the National Museum in Edinburgh.

Access is by gates and a steep path (marked) to a fortified terrace enclosing traces of buildings, and a well at N. (spring diverted for farm-supply). A further scramble from S. side of terrace leads to a rock-shelf where it is believed the kings were installed. This bears a ringed basin, a faint barefoot print pointing NE, an incised carving of a boar, a hollow footprint pointing NE, and several lines of Ogam writing. An Irish script consisting of short lines across a baseline. The Ogam, though legible, defeats translation. The boar may be a Pictish symbol, carved at a time of conquest and later re-cut by Scots to make it a domestic pig (back-line lowered, tusks erased). Both footprints point to the distant peak of Cruachan. (The rock has been given a protective coating to prevent weathering and vandalism).

On the citadel above the rock, recent work has shown several phases of construction. The western face is very steep, best viewed from above. From the summit the windings of the Add can be seen; also a small standing-stone in the farm garden below, and another, fallen, in the field to E., NR840934 (neither stone on map).

This is probably the caput regionis, 'head-place of the district', to which St. Columba came and met a wine-ship from Gaul, as recorded in Adamnan's Life of Columba. Small ships could probably be towed and poled upriver before the marsh was drained; tradition asserts that Vikings crossed overland to Loch Fyne by this route.

To W., at the mouth of Loch Crinan, is Duntrune Castle (Route 5), and at least fourteen forts are within sight. The northern end of the farm-causeway was guarded by a small fort, now hidden in forest.

Continuing on main road, note that turning marked Crinan Ferry leads to houses of that name, not to a working ferry.

At Ballymeanach is a cluster of monuments, best inspected by parking opposite Dunchragaig Cairn (below), but two lines of standing-stones, NR833934, are noticeable from the road. These can be approached either from the gate near the cairn, by walking along the edge of the field, or by a stile opposite a bungalow, and thence (in both cases) along the side of a watercourse. This brings one to a field-gate, which should not be passed when the field beyond is in cultivation. By the gate is a small ring of upright stones, the remains of a cairn. A large standing-stone which stood nearer the plantation has fallen and broken in three; its site has been excavated and the pieces of the stone are laid together by this cairn. The stone was cupmarked, and had a large perforation through which in recent times people shook hands to
seal bargains. The largest of the erect stones is heavily cupmarked.

Farther on, in a second field and seldom accessible because of cropping, is a Henge, NR833962. This consists of a circular embankment and ditch, about 42m diameter overall, the central platform being 22m across with entrances E. and W. Two Bronze Age graves have been placed within it; the central one, 2.4m long, had been robbed before excvation, and the other contained a Beaker. It is probable that the monument originally had a ring of timber posts or stones, as at Temple Wood (Route 5).

Several cists have been found in adjacent fields and woods, and two low mounds near the road may be cairns or earthen burial-mounds.

Dunchraigaig Cairn, NR833968, is a large cairn, 30m in diameter and partially excavated. At S. a massive rock, 4.3m x 2.5m x .4m, rests on boulders to form a chamber which held numerous cremations and burials. A Bronze Age cist was found near the top of the cairn, and another is exposed on W.

From here, crops permitting, the next site can be reached through a gate at the edge of the wood. (There is also a stile from the road). Baluachraig cup-and-ring rock, NR831969 (not on map) is a large rock-sheath with many markings.

The next two side-roads on W. connect with Route S. Nether Large standing-stones and the line of large cairns are visible from the main road.

Kilmartin, NR834988, has a Parish Church and graveyard containing important stones. An early and two medieval crosses (one very fine) have been placed in the Church. Signs lead to a mausoleum housing medieval stones, and to a group in open ground with an upright early stone in the next row E. A wall-tablet near the gate commemorates a 17th-century Parish Minister.

Behind the Hotel, and reached by a back-lane, is Kilmartin Castle, NR835991. The building is unsafe but can be viewed from outside. A weathered armorial panel is above the door; at the N. gable is a projecting sluice through which water could be poured to reach a water-butt in the kitchen. Some original window-bars survive in upper storeys. The building was the home of Bishop Neil Campbell (whose mausoleum houses the gravestones in the churchyard); in the 19th century it was the village school.

The Glebe Cairn, NR833989, lies below the village on N., and can be reached by a gate beside the petrol-station. It has been extensively robbed (300 cartloads of stone are known to have gone for roadmaking) and partially excavated in the 19th c. It was then 33m in diameter and 4m high, and covered a central cist; SW of centre a double ring of boulders 11m across surrounded a cist which contained a jet necklace (subsequently lost in a fire).

From the petrol-station a track leads to Forest walks to W. The gravel terraces along the valley mark the course of a river which carried melt-waters from Loch Awe at the end of the last Ice Age, before the present-day River Awe broke through the Pass of Brander.

Under ¼km N. of Kilmartin is Carnasserie Castle, NM838009, ¼km walk from carpark by road. This handsome castle is well worth a visit but can be seen from the road. The door is at N., under an armorial panel (Argyll with Scotland, for the fifth Earl and his wife, half-sister of Mary Queen of Scots), and a Gaelic inscription, 'God be with O'Duine' (Argyll).

Beneath the broken main stair, at entrance, is a corner room with gunholes. The kitchen, formerly stone-vaulted, has an oven within its huge fireplace, and to the right a spout from which water would pour into a barrel by the hearth; this connects with a sluice-stone on the outside, into which barrels could be emptied. Another sluice, in a window-sill by the hearth, drained the washing-up water.

Store-rooms fill up the rest of the ground floor; in the dark cellar at the end is a cistern (now dry) and a narrow stair to the private Solar off the Great Hall (which covered the whole area now open to the sky); the Solar has a garderobe (lavatory) in the wall, and openings to others can be seen above. Between Solar and Hall a stair rises to the wall-head.

N. of the castle on a rocky outcrop are remains of a building, perhaps an earlier castle. Carnasserie is of record in the fifteenth century, but the main building is attributed to Bishop John Carswell (d.1572); a Gaelic scholar; see p.8.

A gate-arch on W. bears the initials S.D.C.-L.H.L., for Sir Dougal Campbell (of Achnabreck) and Lady Henrietta Lindsay his wife; Sir Dougal was Keeper of the castle in the seventeenth century. The building was sacked during Argyll's Rising of 1685; (p.9).

North of Carnasserie, Carn Ban, 'the White Cairn', stands on a high ridge; below it to E. is the turning to Ford and the start of Route 6.

Beyond the head of the gorge below Carn Ban, three forts of differing types lie near each other. Dun na Nighinn, (Fort of the Girls'), NM8449028, overlooks the road from E. and can be reached by parking a little farther on (quarry on W. of road) and re-crossing the road-bridge to scramble up a steep spur.

Across the marsh to N., Dun Chonnailach ('F. of Connal's People' or 'of the Atholl Dogs' locally, p.9) towers up; it is best reached up its NW slopes, and gives splendid views all round for those who can face the climb; NM855037. (This fort was unhappily vandalised by film-makers who built a hut from wall-stones).

To the east of both these forts is Creag a'Chapuill, ('the Mare's Crag'), a large hilltop enclosure, NM855037, reached by about 1km rough walking round S. edge of marsh. A vast spread wall crosses its
northern shoulder and can be seen from the road. The summit area is about 180m x 230m; apart from the wall mentioned, the enclosure is traceable with difficulty.

At NM851044, on W. of road, a few stones survive from a chambered cairn plundered for roadmaking (not on map); nearby on E. of road, the trackway from Ford meets the road at 851045 (Route 6).

The steep descent to Loch Craighnish is overlooked by Dun na Ban-oige or Ban-sighe ('Fort of the Young Wife', or 'of the Rich Wife'); this is a smaller version of Creag a'Chaupull, but a visit is not advised because of the difficulty of parking and access. It can be admired in passing.

On a plateau among sharp corners is 'The Danish King's Grave', NM830050, a standing-stone 4m high, with a large and a small cairn near it. The name is of course recent; the site is of the Bronze Age or earlier. The cairns have been excavated, and the stone collapsed in a storm and has been re-erected. It is claimed to form part of a prehistoric lunar observatory, with an observation-platform on the hillside behind, but recent excavations have left the question open. (It is just possible, with care, to cross the stream of traffic and park in the gateway, but better to stop on one of the slightly wider verges above, and walk down).

Loch Craighnish is ringed by forts and full of tales of 'Danes'; it may indeed be one of the places raided by Olaf Tryggvesson, but most of the monuments in the stories are prehistoric.

Barbreck House (1790) lies in parkland E. of road; not open to the public. Route 7 begins at the road marked Ardfern.

In a gully beside the road on E., shortly before a road-bridge, lies a wishing-well with an 18th-c. stone tablet bearing a bewigged head and a long inscription starting 'My name is Watchman here am I still'. NM824062, access down a steep bank, leaving car at wider verge just before bridge. The stone was reputed to 'speak', but fell silent after being removed to Kintyre and returned because bad luck followed the movers.

About NM809084, where the road again approaches the shore, a new road leads to Craobh Harbour (Marina, etc.); within the development are two forts, Caisteal nan Con Dubha, 'Castle of the Black Dogs', NM800076, a little dun on a crag, and Eilean an Duin, ('Fort Island'), now incorporated in the Marina and unfortunately damaged by a sub-contractor; NM792079. Only a section of wall was lost, and the remainder can be seen to have been vitrified (that is, the stones have been subjected to great heat either by accident or enemy action, and have partially melted and fused). A small kerbed cairn, not on map, is near the first fort, NM799076. The developers hope to arrange for these sites to be excavated and put on display.

Where the main road turns sharp N. along the shore, Dun an Garbh-sroine ('Fort of the Rough Nose') lies within the angle, NM803089. Access is possible from N. end of low cliff. The fort was probably modified in medieval times; it is ruinous and overgrown.

Mid Argyll ends here; 1½ km ahead, at Arduaine, is an interesting garden open to the public.
Route 3. Cairnbaan-Crinan

Leave the A816 at fork 2½km N. of N. end of Lochgilphead (off Route 2). From Cairnbaan Hotel carpark (between chalets E. of Hotel) a steep marked path leads uphill about ¼km to cup-and-ting rocks, NR838910 inside fence, with another in rough ground beyond next field dyke.

Cross Canal at swing-bridge (the N'ly towpath can be walked but is not a through road for cars). Carn Ban, the 'White Cairn' which names the place, lies in pasture on S. of Canal, NR840907, reached by a forestry-track from (usually locked) gate just over the bridge. The cairn has been opened and one end-slab removed to the National Museum (it bears lozenge-patterns, like the stone from Badden, Route 2). The cover-slab is carved with a small enigmatic design near one edge. The cairn incorporates a rock-outcrop for extra height.

From Letterdaill housing-scheme, forest tracks can be walked to Loch Sween (Route 3b). A row of two-storey houses on N. bank of the Canal housed Canal-builders and staff. The loch marks the summit of the Canal; just W. of it is a ruined boat-house, built for the paddle-steamer Linnet which used to ply between Ardtrishaig and Crinan.

The next sliding-bridge, NR820912, to Barnakill Farm, gives access to a narrow path down to and over a stream, thence to a track and, in a dyke to E. of track, a boulder carved with two left-hand outlines of uncertain date, NR822915. Track continues to a deserted settlement with a well, passing a circular enclosure, NR825920, probably an Early Christian graveyard, from which a cross-marked stone was removed to St. Columba's Chapel, Poltalloch (Route 5).

At Bellanoich, NR804923, a bridge connects with Route 5. Soon after, B8025 turns steeply uphill for Loch Sween (Routes 3a and 3b); B841 continues past Bellanoich Basin to Crinan. At NR788935, near a sheepfold on left of road, is a steep mound near 10m high called Dun Domhnull ("Donald's Mound"), traditionally a judgement-seat of the Lords of the Isles, and probably covering a pre-historic cairn.

The W. road-fork leads to Crinan sea-lock and Hotel, with a loop-road back to the turning. The road running straight on goes down to Crinan Harbour, where a tall chimney marks the site of a former factory producing vinegar and wood-alcohol.

About 1km (walk) along the shore towards Ardoe Point, a grave (on map) has a stone to the memory of John Black, Master of the schooner Diana, who died of cholera in 1832.

A fine fort, Castle Dounie, lies in forest, NR767932; advice on access from Forestry Office (p.2).

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Route 3a. Bellanoich-Kells (West side of Loch Sween)

Leaving Route 3 at sharp uphill turn, pass above Bellanoich and its 19th-c. Parish Church. On the ridge above the Church are a series of prehistoric hut-circles and stock-enclosures (not on map); one is at NR794923, near the 42m height on the map. Access is from the layby near the Church, across the field and up the steep wooded slope.

At the crossroads with War Memorial, take the R. fork.

A Forestry track leads SW from a lorry-park off a sharp corner, NR784906. ¼km walk along track, a deserted village (Kilmory Oib) and Holy Well in clearing, NR781902. The well is marked by an upright slab with a plain stepped cross on E. face and an elaborate design on W., a cross surrounded by sun and moon, birds, possibly a stag near base.

At the next sharp corner of the main road ('Forest Walk' on map) is a setting of stones forming an E-facing arc of low boulders, on a scarped terrace 20m x 13m, the stone at either end about 1m high; NR782907 (best reached by walking from last parking-place; road is narrow and nearer parking impossible).

Overlooking the road from ridge at sharp corner, NR781913, is Druim an Duin (Ridge of the Fort); access from forest track on E. side. The fort has been excavated. It is oval, with a gate at both ends, the S'ly one with a guard-cell in the wall and an outer terrace. There is a drovers' cattle stance across the road.

Where the road returns to sea-level, NR780914, is a former drovers' inn, down track to head of bay. Another deserted settlement, Gallchoille ('Strangers' Wood') of record in the sixteenth century, lies above the present farm of the same name and can be reached by walking through the yard with the farmer's permission (farm NR768899, ruins 768901).

Eilean nan Cear ("Hens' Island"), NR766894 (not marked; one of the small islets in the loch) has a wall around two house-ruins (can be seen from road, access by boat only).

Tayvallich village was covered by two forts on W. and one on S.; the only one now accessible, Dun a'th Chogaidh ("Fort of War"), or a'Chroadaidh, ("of hanging"), NR745876, can be reached by scrambling up from the caravan-site at N. of bay.

A side-road leads to Carsaig Bay on W. of peninsula; in the Parish Graveyard, NR735873, are a Hammaner's grave with insignia, 1735, and another of a German sea-captain, reputedly Hermann Goering's grandfather. From here a track leads back along the S. side of the valley to Tayvallich, with side-tracks to Dun Bhronaig ("Fort of Weeping") at Barnascale Farm, NR729865, (farm on map), and a standing-stone, NR720864, 4m high with several small cupmarks. This is on the line of the drove-road from Keills (below) and suggests that
the drove may have prehistoric origins.

Nearer Tayvallich along the main track is a bungalow, Croit a'Chomhdh ("Combie's Croft"), in the garden of which is a large boulder with a deep basin, cupmarks, and a sketch of a sailing-ship dated 1861.

Continuing towards Keills, a standing-stone. NR728861, may be glimpsed on the W. skyline (this too is on the drove-road).

At NR723847, where the road is close to the sea, is a flat boulder (not on map) between the roadside ditch and fence on W. of road. This has a basin and other markings, and is said to have been used for baptisms. In the low cliff nearby are several tiny rock-shelters, one of which has yielded flints; NR722846 (not on map); at S. end of cliffs, in scrub-wood, is a narrow larger cave, last used by a Spanish refugee in the 1920s.

On E. of road is Dun Mhurich ("Murchadh's Fort"), NR722844, reached by walking along its ridge from N'ly end. It is well-preserved and encloses rectangular houses, which are probably medieval. From the walls a submerged jetty can be seen below.

Near the turning to Danna and Ulva ("Danes Island", "Wolf-island", both Norse) is Carn Mor, "the Big Cairn", a shapeless heap in swamp, more likely to have been a crannog than a burial-place.

At Keills jetty cars must be left, parked clear of both access-roads. Keills Chapel lies above gated road ahead, NR690805. The building has been re-roofed to contain a superb assemblage of early and medieval crosses and gravestones. The largest cross, formerly on the hillside by the Chapel, has been brought inside for protection from weather; the other stones come from the graveyard or were excavated within the building.

The chapel has a 12th-c. E. window but has been much rebuilt (it continued in use through the 17th-c.). Excavation showed an earlier building beneath, with rock-cut graves below that. The large cross may be 8th-c.; it shows St. Michael trampling on the dragon, above a nest with three eggs symbolising the Trinity, and a cleric holding a book. The other two cross-slabs may be 7th-c., and had been re-used as gravestones. To left of the door is a 13th-14th-c. stone; the rest are 14th and 16th-c. The box-tomb in the NE corner is arguably the finest in Argyll; its carving includes a harp and remains of its tuning-key. Latin inscriptions read 'here lie ... and Allan his son' and 'Allan ... had me made'. The box-tomb at SE, with a ship, reads 'Here lies Torquill son of Malcolm son of Niall', probably the MacNeill chief who died about 1533. A stone on the S. wall reads 'John son of Cristin and Aithbreac daughter of Molmalm'; the stump of a medieval cross bears an anvil, tongs and hammer on one side, and on the other reads 'Cristin the Smith, son of Celestine Macneil, had this cross made' (see Kilmory Knap, Route 3b). A stone in the floor, decorated only with a raised strap and a perforation, reputedly marked the grave of 'Lame Engann, a noted robber', who had the hole made so that he could 'look out at his beloved hills' (alternatively, so that he could take snuff with his descendants). This may be a folk-memory of Lame John MacDougall of Lorn who died in exile in 1317 after losing Castle Sween to Robert I.

Keills is traditionally linked with Eilidh Mor MacCormaig, Route 9, as the site of a Celtic teaching-centre of 'little cells' (cenaculae, whence Keills) whose founder made his retreats to the island.

From the chapel, one can walk, along the road or by a grassy track along the ridge, to reach Keilsmore (private house) and the massive pier for the Jura ferry, where cattle from the islands were landed for Kilmichael Tryst (Route 2); NR688807 (marked as Viewpoint on map).
Route 3b. Bellanoch-Kilmory Knap (East side of Loch Sween)

From Barphrugaig cross roads (Route 3a) take left fork. This road is extremely narrow and needs careful driving.

First farm-road, Gardnagrenoch, leads to a ruined chambered cairn, NR790903, in bushes opposite house; curving facade with blocked portal, inserted Bronze Age cist visible in forecourt; all heavily robbed.

Near Seabfield, at about NR770780, is the W. end of the forest-road from Carnbaan (Route 3).

At Auchmarra village is a clapper-bridge made of two stones (probably former standing-stones) on stone piers; NR776870 at stream-mouth (bridge not on map), reached by path from N. end of road-bridge, crossing a stile and following the streambank seaward. The clapper-bridge was built in the 17th-c. as a penance for non-attendance at church, the builder having pled that he could not cross the swollen stream.

Kilmichael of Inverlussa Parish Church is up a side-road, NR775859; a handsome 1820 building, now seriously dilapidated. The graveyard contains three 17th-c. stones of debased medieval design, near a Campbell enclosure (tablet by Australian descendants).

Nearby an old bridge crosses the gorge; the former Manse, below, is also 1820. Another church-site lies in woodland higher up.

In afforested land seaward of Daltoch (NR751839) is an early cross, NR745833 (not on map). This can be hard to find; leave car at first clearing on corner past the farm, and walk down E. side of gully for about 1½km. The cross is carved on a rock-slab leaning out of an outcrop, with traces of a walled enclosure below it to W. (between the rock and an old road, sometimes traceable as a guideline). The carved stone is 1.3m high x 1m wide; the carving is a ring 0.5m diameter surrounding four large and four small triangles forming the cross, with a more deeply cut 'handle' below, 0.2m long, making the design resemble a Pictish mirror-symbol.

Near Kilbride (edges of Sheets 55 and 62) a cross-marked stone stands in an arable field W. of the road at a slight rise, NR722800 (not on map; no access when field is in crop).

Castle Sween stands on the shore, NR712789, access through a large caravan-site. The castle, probably the oldest stone castle in western mainland Scotland, is a great rectangular enclosure with one original door at SW. Successive heightenings of the wall can be seen from outside. Will not be open until major consolidation is complete.

Inside, there have been buildings against the walls all round. A stair to the wallhead above the gate is now unsafe, not to be attempted. Beyond the courtyard wall, an added wing contains a kitchen, with oven, above which was a Great Hall (perhaps 13th-c.). A door leads out to N. side of the round MacMillan Tower (15th-c.) with a rubbish chute at base.

To seaward of the main enclosure is a room over-looking the galley-harbour; a prehistoric rock-shelter below has been partially blocked to support the overbuilding. A block of masonry in the water shows the strength of medieval masonry.

The placename derives from Suibhne, one of the 11th-c. Irish settlers (p.7). The castle was enlarged in the reign of Alexander II, captured by Robert I (Bruce), and last stood siege in the 17th-c. wars. It replaced a fort, Dun a'Chaisteil ('Fort of the Castle'), NR713780, above the main road—presumably because of the need to be near ships in the harbour.

A chapel marked boulder is reported at NR711784, among old cultivations (not on map; I have not seen it).

At Doide, NR703769, remains of a small fort on a prominent hill-top (not on map), deserted settlement between fort and road. Along the shore to SW of this are quarries (not on map) from which came many of the best early and medieval carved stones of Argyll, including the 8th-c. St. John's Cross at Iona. One may speculate how such large blocks were transported so far.

A natural squarish fault in a rock-face, NR703763 (not on map) is 'The Fairy Door', where it is claimed that music can sometimes be heard from the hillside.

Kilmory Knap, NR702750, has a 12th-c. Chapel, re-roofed to protect crosses and gravestones moved from the surrounding graveyard. The MacMillan Cross, formerly at the seaward corner of the enclosure, has been placed inside for protection from 'acid rain'. It has a hunting-scene and an inscription, 'hec est cruix Alexandri MacMullen' ('Here is Alexander MacMillan's cross') referring to a 15th-c. Keeper of Castle Sween. The shaft of another cross, commissioned by Alexander's grandson Duncan, stands in a plinth; near it is part of its head, recently rescued from the stream. The stones around the walls range from 8th-12th c. on left as one enters to a series of medieval stones (to 16th-c). The medieval designs include armoured men, ships, swords, and caskets. One has two axes sunk into a block, with an inscription to 'John the Carpenter' and, down its sword-blade, 'the brothers Maelmoire and Cristinus Faber' (see Keills, Route 3a). Blacksmith's tools and cloth-shears appear on other stones; one pair of shears bears the name 'Henry Tulloch', perhaps a Lowland clothier, on one leg, and on the other 'Cristinus Faber' (again). Another tradesman is shown on the small stone in high relief, a rare representation of 15th-c. civilan dress; the name 'Johannes ...' can just be made out.

A small early cross-slab near the E. end was rescued from forestry ground near Achnamara. A priest's tomb lies beside the site of the altar at E.; several fragments wrought with square sockets may be parts of the altar itself. A quern (hand-mill) probably comes from a woman's
Prehistoric sites surround the Church. There are cairns along the western ridge (one on map) at NR698750, 699751, and under dykes by the roadside the outline of a large round cairn, NR701752.

On E. Dun a’ Bhuilg ('Fort of the Bag, Bay, or Quiver'), NR704747, crowns a ridge behind the houses.

The public road ends at Balliemore, a short way past Kilmory, continuing as a footpath to Ellary (Route 1a). In no circumstances should it be attempted by car.

From Balliemore, NR707740, a faint track leads across the moor to Stonefield (Mullean) Eiteag Bagh, 'Whitestone Mill Bay', on map) where there is a watermill and deserted settlement.

Route 4. Kilmichael Glassary-Ford

Parts of this road are narrow, and there may be gates to open (and shut behind you).

Leaving Route 2 at junction N. of Dunamuck, cross the old bridge to Bridgend and hence Kilmichael Glassary village. A late-medieval market-cross (now at St. Columba's Chapel, Route 5) formerly stood near Bridgend; its fragments were found built into the Parish Church during 19th-c. reconstruction.

By the Church, NR859935, is a Village Hall, formerly the Courthouse and jail (see p.14 for references to Kilmichael Trust market). Wide drove-ways can be seen crossing the valley, by which the big herds set off for eastern markets.

Kilmichael Church replaced Kilneuair (Route 6a) as the principal church of Glassary. in 1563. A medieval shrine containing an early hand-bell, together with a bronze cross and chain, were found in 1814 under dyke-stones below the churchyard (now in the National Museum). These may be relics brought from Kilneuair. There are two early stones, a re-used cross on right of the gate, and a short slab also re-used and united with a fragment near the wall to left. Some good medieval stones lie in the grass, including parts of a box-tomb re-used.

Beyond the School to W., at NR858934, is a fenced rock of cup-and-ring markings with more on rocks outside the fence (access by wicket-gate to left of site; rock not on map).

Torbhlaire ('Hill of steep slope' or 'of battle') has a fort on it, NR857943, dominating the glen (access difficult, slight remains only).

Close to the road, NR864945, a standing-stone in a field is extensively cupmarked on both sides from ground-level up (rocks in the fields beyond are also cupmarked but only accessible when crops permit - these are not on map).

At Lechuair ('Stone of Guaire') NR876955, is a standing-stone nearly 4m high, with a possible cairn nearby. (Forestry roads lead into the hills here).

At the north end of Loch Leathan is a crannog, NR875983; this was used as a refuge from Alasdair MacCholla in 1647 (p.9); an arrow shot from it killed the man at Alasdair's side.

Cairns can be seen in the valley-bottom near Stroneskar, (they are not on the map, and have no special features, but mark an area of early settlement). Just W. of a farm-road running N. and between the road and the stream, is a green natural mound Gocamgo (perhaps 'False Outlet'?) NM870020 (not on map). Here Alasdair lost his duel with the local leader, and believed he had lost his luck by going to a place of that name (he had been warned to avoid 'Gocam-go', meaning 'Look-out, Watchman').

The marshy loch to W. is indeed the 'false' outlet of Loch Awe.
Between this point and the junction with Route 6 are traces of cairns (one cut by the road), NM862016 and 863015, what might be remains of a henge, NM863016 (see Ballymeanach, Route 2), and in the dyke at foot of slope a cupmarked rock (none of these on map).

Route 5. Kilmartin and Crinan Moss

This is a National Heritage Area containing some of the most important prehistoric monuments in Scotland.

Leave Route 2 by hump-backed bridge in valley S. of Kilmartin; leave car at Primary School and farm, straight ahead, and take footpath N. past School. The Glebe Cairn, visible ahead, is described under Route 2. Two other Bronze Age cairns lie in line with it beside the footpath.

The North Cairn, NR831985, is over 20m diameter; it has been reconstructed after excavation, and can be entered by a trapdoor in the top to reach the cist. This has a capstone 2m long, and is carved with cupmarks and axeheads. When found, the cist was sealed under 18 large stones beneath the cairn. An earth platform 14m diameter underlies the cairn, within a bank over 2m wide.

Behind the dyke on W. of the path is a small cupmarked rock (not on map), NR830985.

The Mid Cairn, over 30m diameter, NR830984, had been robbed before excavation. It has a wide kerb of boulders and covered two cists, only one now visible, with cupmarks and faint axeheads. Old records suggest a third cairn lay between this and the next site.

Returning past School, continue down road S'.

The South Cairn, NR828979 (p.4) is now an irregular oval some 40m across, containing a burial-chamber entered from N. by a gap in its roof. The chamber is nearly 6m long and 1m wide, walled and roofed by massive slabs ejected out with wailing. Transverse stones divide the chamber into compartments and brace the feet of the slabs. In 19th-c. excavations several Beaker graves were found overlying Neolithic burials and cremations, with other cists under the cairn to N. (now hidden again) and at S. There is probably a facade of upright stones fronting a forecourt at N. but this was not excavated. From inside the chamber it can be seen that an entrance (blocked with cairning) existed at N.

This cairn set the alignment for the Glebe, North and Mid cairns, and for Ri-Cruin (below) and some smaller cairns beyond it, extending some 3km in all. Similar alignments are known from near Stonehenge. The Glebe and Mid cairns were probably altered to bring them into alignment.

'Temple Wood', NR825977, lies at the roadside SW of the South Cairn. A bank 13m diameter with an incomplete ring of upright stones surrounds a central cist with a low kerb. In recent re-excavation, sockets for missing stones of the ring were located and two other ringed cairns (and a stray cremation) were found within the circle, with another outside on W. Both the main and the western ring had sections of drystone walling inserted between the upright stones. At NE, partly
covered by the bank, was a Beaker grave which had also had a kerb, flattened by the bank (which is therefore a later addition). Close to the site of this grave, one of the upright stones bears a pecked dot and wide ring on its outer face: another, at N., has a large spiral design which coils over two adjacent faces of the stone.

A short distance to N. of this monument were found the sockets and some fragments of another stone circle, overlying pits which had held massive tree-trunk uprights (now marked by concrete blocks).

This complex site is interpreted as a ritual enclosure of timber, renewed in stone and re-sited (all probably in the Neolithic), later used as a place of burial.

In the field opposite is a group of standing-stones, the largest almost 3m high; NR828976, with an outlier towards the South Cairn. These can be visited by walking along the line of the fence (but not crossing the fields when in crop). The largest stone is impressively cupmarked. 7m SW of it are the remains of a plundered cist. (These, the Nether Largie stones, are confusingly called 'Temple Wood' by some writers).

At a T-junction ahead, the road to right leads to Stockavullin, to the left is Ri-Cruin, and straight ahead is a drive to the site of Poltalloch House.

A cart-track leaving the Stockavullin road at the first corner leads to Tayness, passing gravel-workings in which were found a cupmarked Beaker cist and a later Bronze Age cist (these have been left exposed, together with a stone-lined storage pit) near a standing-stone, NR820972. From Tayness a path runs N. uphill into a pasture-field, where at NR816977 is a cup-and-ring marked rock, Ballygowan ('Smiths' Township'), with a good outlook.

From Tayness one can follow a back-drive SWly to reach Kilchoan, a burial-chamber of huge stones with Bronze Age cist added. This is at NR808965, on a side-track turning W. opposite a Lodge. The drive can be followed to Barsloisnach Farm (see below).

The North Drive to Poltalloch, back at the T-junction by Temple Wood, leads through the park and connects with the South Drive (emerging near Barsloisnach). Overlooking the North Gate, from top of the bank, is a cist. The drive passes below the gravel-workings, rising to pass the site of four cists and some late-Iron Age graves, NR820972, all now cleared away. Two of the cists had side-slabs grooved to take their end-slabs, in a woodworking technique; one held a crescentic jet necklace (now in National Museum). The site is published as 'Brouchaundrum' (for 'Bank of the little Ridge'); it is not on the map, and no longer impressive to visit.

St. Columba's Chapel (Episcopalian) stands in a shrubbery by the remains of Poltalloch; NR816965. There are two early grave-markers, one (from Barnakill, Route 3) with a semi-legible inscription by its cross-shaft, the other from a site beyond Kilmory Oib (Route 3a). W. of the Chapel is the re-erected Kilmichael Glassary Cross, never a masterpiece and not improved by iron struts.

Poltalloch itself was built in 1858 and demolished 1958.

Reverting to the North Lodge, a short way down the left-hand (E) road is a signpost to Ri-Cruin, NR826971, one of the cairns of the alignment. The cairn has been greatly flattened (houses and a limekiln were removed from on top of it before excavation). It contained three cists, all with grooved sideslabs; one has been robbed of endslabs and collapsed inward; another is carved with axeheads and cupmarks, and contained a stone with a unique design, perhaps representing a boat and its crew. (This stone was lost, but a cast is in the National Museum).

At the bridge E. of Ri-Cruin, the road runs N. to rejoin the Oban road (Route 2), or S'ly to cross the Moss. Taking the S. turning, pass below Balnaghaig (Route 2) and reach the East Drive of Poltalloch (now closed); opposite, a road rejoins Route 2 near Ballymeanach. Continuing SWly, note a standing-stone on ridge beyond stream and field on W.; at a road-junction just after a bridge, turn W. for Barsloisnach (the Home Farm). Just past the South Drive gate, on the other side of the road W. of a small wood, are two cists in a swampy field, NR814956 (not on map). They lie 10m apart; one has a massive cover, a grooved endslab, and cupmarks.

The road from Tayness and Kilchoan reaches the farm from NW; the road from the farm southward brings Duntrune Castle into view. (NR794956, the Castle is among the oldest still inhabited; it can be visited only by special arrangement with the owner, Mr. R.H.L. Malcolm of Poltalloch).

The southward road continues as far as the site of a former ferry across the Add, but this is a dead-end; turn E. instead, to reach a cross-roads in the middle of the Moss from which either Route 3 (at Bellanoich) or Route 2 (near Dunadd) can be re-joined. The easterly road gives good views of Dunadd.
Route 6. To Ford; and Loch Awe (west)

Leave the A816 (Route 2) N. of Carnasserie and take the B840 marked Ford. The road runs through a gorge cut by melt-waters. Prominent rocks opposite Eurach, NR846012, have scattered cup-markings; (rocks not on map).

Glennan, a ruined house on E. side of road, has two wrecked cairns by gate, NM856012 (cupmarked cover-slab) and traces of a larger cairn near house. A standing-stone is built into a dyke leading to back of house; on hillside overlooking house, a large rocksheet is cupmarked, NM857009 (none of these on map).

Creag a’Chapuill hill-fort (Route 2) is prominet on W.

Beside the road on E., NM859014, a standing-stone, broken in the Tay Bridge Gale of 1879. Route 4, marked Stroneskar, joins present route nearby.

In Loch Ederline a small scrub-covered crannog is visible close to the road at NM867025 (not on map).

W. of road in field, a standing-stone nearly 3m high, NM866032.

N. of the cross-roads at Ford Hotel, an opening on left (at Parking sign for a shop) leads to a drove-road which can be walked to join Route 2, in something over 2½km. Along the first part of the track, where it first rises sharply, are a number of cupmarked rocks (not on map).

Near the old loch-steamer pier, in woods on W. of road, a cache of bronze axes was found (now in National Museum).

At next farm, Torran, a standing-stone over 3m high by a timber stockyard, NM879050, has crosses added to both E. and W. faces. A faint track runs past it to reach Inverliever in 2km.

Overlooking the stone, across the stream, is Dun Toisich (‘Fort of the Chief’), NM880047, an example of the small defended-farmstead type, accessible up western side.

A plundered cairn, with exposed chamber, lies on a grass ridge W. of road, NM890052 (not on map; cairn about 18m x 11m).

S. of rivermouth and W. of road, NM983005, a group of ruined houses has a cupmarked boulder in the line of an old dyke passing E. of easternmost building (not on map); the track from Torran comes back to the road below this site.

Mid Argyll ends shortly; the road continues to Dalavich (side-road to Kilmelford) and to Taynuilt.

Route 6a. Loch Awe, east side

From the right fork at Ford, B840 leads E. After 2km, Public Footpath sign marks a right-of-way to Loch Fyne near Auchindrain, about 20km, mostly good surface. Near the start of this path is a ruined church, Kilnaveuir (‘Church of the Yew-trees’; ‘St. Colm’s Kirke in Glastrie’, 15th-c.). This was the principal church of the district until replaced in 1563 by Kilmichael Glassary (Route 4); NM889037. The building has been enlarged and is unusually long; many medieval stones lie in and around it. A font has been re-assembled from fragments collected nearby. A small mausoleum may incorporate reused stones from church.

A market used to take place at the gates, when the footpath was the main way through the hills.

Finchern Castle, the seat of the Lordship of Glassary, stands at the lochside, NM898043 (gate and fields at end of plantation on W. of road). Now very ruinous, the castle was granted in 1243 by Alexander II to Gillescop MacGilchrist; this is the oldest surviving charter for any Argyll castle.

Mid Argyll ends at Abhainn a’Bhealaich (‘River of the Pass’); from Durran, just beyond, another Public Footpath leads towards Auchindrain (Route 8) in about 10km. Near the top of the hill, halfway across, are shellings, huts for people herding cattle in summer; a dam and lake from Loch Leacann provided water-power for the iron furnace and powder-mill at Furnace and Goaffield, (Route 8). Parts of the track are steeply embanked; it was used to bring charcoal to the furnace by pony-train.

B840 continues along the loch, with fine views including Innis Chonnaille Castle (on an island), and several crannogs, to re-join Route 8 at Cladich.
Route 7. Craignish peninsula

Leave Route 2 at turning for Ardfern, B8002, (single-track).

By Craigduh ('Black Rock') Farm, a conspicuous volcanic dyke of basalt projects from the raised-beach terrace; there are several more along the peninsula.

The islet marked 'Cairn' on map, NM814050, is more probably a crannog; no structure can be determined.

A side-road W. from centre of village gives access to a plundered round cairn, NM805045, locally Clach an t-Sagairt ('The Priest's Stone'; not on map). The cairn has been 14m diameter and has a central cist with massive capstone 1.8m x 1.5m resting on boulders, with a possible smaller cist nearby.

A farm-track past Corranmore Farm, beginning NM797033, leads past a cupmarked boulder above the track, NM788038, and cupmarked rocks at top of ridge, 787040, to Barrackan Farm (about 2½km walk). Past the farm on cart-track, a low mound in field W. of track, NM777038, has a stone 1.8m long lying on it; the stone bears two small crosses and a large pecked design resembling two Bs back-to-back. (The stone, Leac an Duine Choir, 'Flat Stone of the Just Man', is said to have been taken for a lintel in the farmhouse, but replaced when 'a voice came every night asking for it'. Not on map).

The track continues towards the next bay and two round cairns, each about 11m diameter, NM766043. 19th-c. surveyors were told that '3,000 heads were gathered from the field after a battle with Danes', hence the name Bagh Dail na Ceann, 'Bay of the Field of the Heads'.

The cairns, plundered, are presumably Bronze Age.

A tiny fort at Duine, NM791028, and a fortified island Eileen na Nighinn ('Island of the Girls'), NM796025, can be seen in passing. Dun Mhullig fort, NM777019 on cliff-top, is difficult to reach, and ruinous; a gravel-pit at S. end of bay yielded cists with pottery and bronze spears, but the site is now overgrown.

Kilmory (sometimes 'Kilvaree', as if dedicated to Our Lady), NM778014, is the former Parish Church. It has been partially re-roofed to shelter some of its early and medieval stones. There are box-tombs at the E. end, and a stone of unknown date, in the floor, has outlines of several horseshoes. There is also a socket for a standing cross, with a Sundial ('Massclock') on one corner. There are more stones in the grass outside. The church is 12th-13th-c. and later.

From the next bay Craignish Castle, NM771017, can be seen. Of record in 1414 (when it needed re-roofing) it is inhabited and not open to the public.

The road ends at a former ferry-pier to Jura, NM765006. With permission from the nearby Aird Farm it may be possible to walk to the tip of the peninsula, 1¼km, where there is a promontory fort of three embanked ramparts at NR755991, overlooking the bay where in December 1820 the first sea-going paddle-steamer Comet was wrecked. (Sites at the NW end of the peninsula are mentioned under Route 2, near end).
Route 8. Lochgilphead-Inveraray; Glen Shira, Glen Aray.

The gateway at the E. end of Lochgilphead leads to the Forestry Commission District Office, where permission and advice about Forest Walks are obtainable.

The ‘Quay’ shown on the map served the town. A 19th-c. landowner built a causeway across the loch (visible at low tide) to bypass the town but was forced to breach it to allow access to this quay. A gate-house in the French style, the ‘Clock Lodge’, stands at the Kilmory end of the causeway.

Three massive boulders on the foreshore, 'the Three Sisters', mark the site of an accord between the Duke of Albany, Regent of Scotland, and the Lord of the Isles (the Treaty of Polgillip, i.e. Lochgilp, in 1412 after the battle of Harlaw; the site of the accord presumably chosen to be in 'No Man's Land' between sea and shore). NR864866.

Kilmory 'Castle', now District Council HQ., is reached by a road through an Industrial Estate. The grounds are open to the public and contain fine old trees and shrubs. The house (badly damaged by fire, 1984) was an 18th-c. laird's home much enlarged in the 19th-c. by the causeway-builder.

Just N. of another drive to Kilmory, at NR866964, is a graveyard and the site of the former Kilmory Church, of record in the 15th-c. Among the graves is a 19th-c. one covered by an iron mortsafe to frustrate body-snatchers.

A short way up the drive, NR868865, is a standing-stone 2m high, which in some lights appears to be cross-marked.

There were copper-workings around Balliemore in the 18th-c., (some shafts still to be seen, walled round in fields), and the placename Silvercaigs refers to finds of silver and lead.

At Lochgair, on E. of road (bad corner), NR923906, is a Hydro-Electric generating station using water from Loch Glashan (see below). A stone arch, brought from an island now submerged in that loch, has been built into the wall by the entrance.

Askinish House, a handsome 18th-c. building, can be seen from the road, in parkland at the head of the bay (occupied and not open to the public). A Forestry and Hydro-Electricity Board road leads up to Loch Glashan (access by permission only). When the loch was lowered for dam-building in 1960, a crannog and a large dug-out canoe of oak were found. The crannog and an island were excavated; the finds and the dug-out are in the Kelvingrove Museum.

Anyone interested in prehistoric astronomy should stop in Minard village and ask at the Post Office for descriptive notes which can be borrowed and taken to Braiport, NR977952, an observatory-site on the shore reached by a footpath from the village (about 1km walk; site not on map). There are quarries for quernstones (handmills) nearby.

Remember to return the notes to the Post Office after use.

Within Crae Gardens (open to the public) is an excavated chambered Cairn, NR986972 (not on map).

At Furnace, there are remains of the 18th-c. Iron Furnace, NN026001 (not on map); over bridge in village and on left before the large working quarry.

At Goatfield on W. of main road and within its angle, are extensive remains of a 19th-c. Gunpowder Factory, traceable in woodland and fields but not laid out for display.

At Auchindrain ('Field of Thorns'), NN030032, is the Museum of Farming Life ('Folk Museum' on map), consisting of houses and farm-buildings on their original sites, displaying furnishings, tools and farming practice. (See p. 10). The Museum is open from Easter to October (hours and charges at Tourist Offices); Information Centre near gate; a full tour needs at least an hour. Prehistoric agriculture has been traced; on the crags above is a chambered cairn, and there are at least three more between here and Inveraray, off the road.

The Public Footpaths mentioned under Route 6a end at the side-road opposite the Museum.

At Bridge of Douglas, NN058047, an older bridge lies on S. side of road, among trees; the buildings beyond the river are remains of an 18th-c. Linen Mill.

Inveraray is a fine example of 18th-c. town-planning, with many interesting buildings. The Church in the main street is double, one end for English and the other for Gaelic congregations. The Castle and its grounds are open to the public and should not be missed. Dun na Cuaiche ('Fort of the Cup') above the town has an 18th-c. Watch-tower within a rampart, and gives fine views, NN101102 (access from Castle grounds, where there are other monuments of interest).

The Parish Graveyard, Kilmaileiu, NN102095, at roadside on A83 (not on map) has some medieval stones, including (in eastern half) a damaged Crucifix.

At the seaward end of the Dubh Loch at the foot of Glen Shira is the site of a MacNaughton castle, replaced in 15th-c. by Dunderave, (restored in 20th-c., outside Mid-Argyll); the Dubh Loch site is about NN113107, barely traceable.

The rest of Glen Shira is accessible only with permission from the Hydro-Electricity Board, who have a large dam at the head of the glen.

Glen Aray, running N. from Inveraray (B819, Dalmally) has few accessible antiquities. The monument near the summit, NN097190, is to Neil Munro, the Inveraray-born novelist (who, as 'Hugh Foulis', also wrote the Para Handy stories).

At Cladich, NN099215, the Loch Awe road (Route 6a) can be followed back to Ford.

These islands lie off Loch Sween and are accessible only by boat (seek advice from Tourist Office in Lochgilphead).

Eilean Mor, NR665755, is owned by the Scottish National Party, who hope soon to provide boat-transport for visitors. Its antiquities consist of a medieval chapel containing a priest's gravestone, an early cross by the chapel and the cast of a medieval cross-shaft on the ridge above (the shaft and head are in the National Museum), and an ante-chapel behind which is a tiny cave with fragile carvings.

The chapel was turned into an Inn by the 18th-c., and visited by John Paul Jones in the U.S.S. Ranger during the American War of Independence.

The original foundation is believed to have been an early hermitage-retreat, traditionally of a saint 'of the Race of Cormac' (mac ui Charmaig) whose teaching centre was at Keills (Route 3a).

The island, and the nearby Corr Eilean (in private hands) are bird sanctuaries grazed by sheep in summer, and visitors should take care not to let dogs run loose.

It is hoped before long to provide an unobtrusive Information Centre on Eilean Mor.