

VERNACULAR BUILDING 14

Scottish Vernacular Buildings

Working Group

1990



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CONTENTS

Preface		2
Margaret A Mackay	<i>Chair of Scottish Ethnology</i>	3
Roger Leitch	<i>Fishermen's Bothies and other Shelters</i>	4
Alex Gilchrist	<i>Buildings and Features of School Playgrounds</i>	20
John Shaw	<i>Dutch - and Scotch - Pantiles. Some Evidence from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries</i>	26
Harry Gordon Slade	<i>Doocot : Grandhome, Aberdeenshire</i>	30
Angela R Wardell	<i>Cruvie Castle, Fife</i>	35
W Ashley-Bartlam	<i>Notes on a Victorian Sea-Flushing Toilet</i>	39
John Reid	<i>Miscellaneous Gleanings concerning early House Building in Central Scotland</i>	41
Interesting Snippets		
	<i>Buttermilk used for Mixing Lime Wash</i>	45
	<i>Farm Buildings Survey, Bathgate Hills, West Lothian</i>	45
	<i>The European Vernacular Architecture Research Unit</i>	46
	<i>Early Eighteenth Century Lowland Housing</i>	47
	<i>Historic Farm Buildings Group, Scottish Conference, 4-6 October 1991</i>	49
	<i>Vernacular Architecture Forum Meeting</i>	49
Reviews		50
Contributors		58
SVBWG	- How to join	59

PREFACE

The Scottish Vernacular Buildings Working Group was set up in 1972 to provide a focus for all those interested in the traditional buildings of Scotland.

To some, Scottish 'vernacular' may mean cottages, croft-houses and farmsteads; to others, its essence may be urban tenements and terraces, industrial watermills and smithies, or even the older traditions of tower-house buildings. All - and more besides - find a place within SVBWG.

The Group embraces those whose interests are centred on general settlement and social patterns, as well as those who have a specialized interest in building function, or in traditional building trades and crafts. The subject brings together architects, surveyors, archaeologists, historians, geographers, ethnologists, and above all, those who simply want to know how and why the traditional buildings of Scotland have such variety and character. The Group thrives on this refreshing blend of interests and attitudes, all of which are quite clearly evident in its activities.

Members of the Group are invited to attend annual conferences, held at different venues in Scotland each year - this year the spring conference was centred on Berwick-upon-Tweed; and an autumn study weekend took place in Ardnamurchan. The 1991 spring conference is planned for the Uists.

The Group's publications include **Vernacular Building** an annual miscellany of articles published free to members and to which members and interested readers are invited to contribute.

Articles, reports on work in progress and reviews for the next issue of **Vernacular Building** are now eagerly awaited and should be submitted to the editor by the end of June 1991 at the address below.

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CHAIR OF SCOTTISH ETHNOLOGY

Dr Alexander Fenton has been appointed to the newly-created Chair of Scottish Ethnology in the School of Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh.

Professor Fenton has long been a familiar figure in the eighteenth-century premises which house the School in George Square. Before he began his distinguished career in the National Museum of Antiquities as Assistant Keeper, Deputy Keeper and Director, and as Research Director of the National Museums of Scotland and Director of the European Ethnological Research Centre, he was on the editorial staff of the Scottish National Dictionary. He has continued his close association with Scotland's lexicographical projects and with the various activities of the School of Scottish Studies since those early days.

The year in which Professor Fenton takes up his new appointment sees the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the School of Scottish Studies, where the study of Scotland's oral and material culture has been fostered through field collecting, research, teaching and publications. Its tape, photographic, film and video archives, as well as its library resources, attract scholars from around the world, and it offers an undergraduate programme unique in the United Kingdom leading to an honours degree in Scottish Ethnology. Comparative material plays an important part in the curriculum. The establishment of this chair by Edinburgh University demonstrates its commitment to the study of Scotland, and it is fitting that the first holder of the Chair of Scottish Ethnology should be a scholar of international repute, one whose own research, museum work, lectures and prolific publications have given so much encouragement to others and have been so vital in developing Scottish studies and in ensuring for Scottish evidence a place in the wider world of ethnographic investigation.

Members of the SVBWG may be certain that with Professor Fenton's appointment the subject of Scottish building traditions will assume a heightened focus in the honours teaching curriculum, and will want to join with all his friends and colleagues in warm congratulations.

Margaret A Mackay

FISHERMEN'S BOTHIES AND OTHER SHELTERS

Roger Leitch

Whereas shieling huts connected with livestock activities have received a good deal of attention, only scattered reference has been paid to bothies used by fishermen and others. Apart from commercial salmon fishing, different types of sea fishermen are known to have used an interesting variety of seasonal dwellings as a means of shortening sailing distances and to be nearer the more profitable fishing grounds.

In R L Stevenson's classic, Kidnapped, a memorable part of the story centres on David Balfour's plight on the tiny tidal island of Erraid off the south coast of Mull. It is here that Stevenson describes 'a little hut of a house like a pig's hut where fishers used to sleep when they came there upon their business; but the turf roof of it had entirely fallen in'. At least as far back as the eighteenth century there were vestiges of places occupied by fishermen on Ailsa Craig, who resorted there for the cod season from January till April. Near to the Ailsa lighthouse are depressions in the ground which are marked on the 25 inch to 1 mile map as a 'fishermen's Camp'. The camp was situated on the foreshore and used by line fishermen during inclement weather. They would bed down for the night in these depressions which measure 3m x 4m and would sleep two to four people comfortably. The side walls show signs of obvious construction as these were not randomly hewn and very likely were stone-built huts at one stage. When it rained a large sail from a boat probably formed a makeshift roof.¹

There is a pattern of emerging evidence which shows that in many areas, fishermen made use of shore accommodation when there were still undecked sail boats. During the late eighteenth century, herring fishermen who visited dark Loch Hourn bordering Knoydart, are mentioned by the traveller, Knox, as sleeping in tents ashore. These older style tents were simply made from sails and oars. At Crinan, Argyll, in April 1876, the local Campbeltown Courier reported fishermen's tents pitched near Crinan. This was a fleet of Tarbert boats of the small open or skiff kind which had passed through the Crinan Canal on its way to the Lewis drift-net fishery.² The Kintyre writer, Angus Martin, makes the valid point that due to 'the scantiness of documented evidence, the conclusion might be that the custom of camping ashore had not existed on a considerable scale', were it not for the last threads of the oral tradition.³

¹ Information from Bernard Zonfrillow, Glasgow.

² Martin, Angus; The Ring-Net Fishermen (Edinburgh, 1981), 60

³ Ibid, 62. Also SA 1958/196 (School of Scottish Studies Sound Archive) James MacIntosh (born 1868), Retired Fisherman, Carradale, Argyll. Recorded by

Caves such as those on the west coast of Raasay are also known to have been used as shelters by fishermen. Oral tradition recalls that saithe fishermen were known to have slept in caves up the way of the channel between Jura and Islay, or to the north between Jura and Scalpay.⁴ The fishermen were away for a week at a time, weather depending, and took enough food to survive. They returned with a load of fish which had to be salted and hung from the roof of their homes until it hardened. Lobster fishermen from the now ruined settlement of Riasg Buidhe in Colonsay, also arrived for periodic stays in the caves on the north coast of Jura.⁵

Although it is important to locate the seasonal huts and dwellings used and often made by fishermen, it is not always possible to identify them with the type of fishermen who used them. Fladda, one of the Treshnish Isles, had one such refuge at the haven, where the remains of a fishermen's hut was mentioned by Harvie-Brown in 1892.⁶ Another of the Treshnish Isles, Lunga, was inhabited up until 1824. The houses were in reasonable condition until 1857 and these were used as shelters by both fishermen and herdsmen.⁷ A ruined stone cottage on Eilean-nan-Ron off the south tip of Oronsay (GR 335866) is understood to have been used by fishermen at one time.⁸ The island of Pladda to the south of Arran has a former fishermen's bothy near the east landing. It is now whitewashed stone and has a corrugated-iron roof. Any further information on these would be welcome.

'Crews of fishermen from the Rhinns of Islay customarily arrived at the Mull of Kintyre in summer, to fish for cod and saithe. They stationed themselves in crude shore huts of stone and turf and thatched overhead. The interiors of the huts were lined with dry bracken on which they slept The tradition ceased about the time of the First World War.'⁹ Beside these drystone huts on the shore below Glenmanuilt, east of the Mull of Kintyre,

Eric Cregeen on 3 June 1958.

⁴ SA 1968/76, John Shaw, Jura. Translated from Gaelic by Donald A MacDonald

⁵ Information from the Highland Folk Museum, Kingussie. See Vernacular Building 13 (1989), 5-9.

⁶ Boyd, John Morton, Fraser Darling's Islands (Edinburgh, 1886).

⁷ The Scots Magazine (June 1981), 253.

⁸ Information from John Kirk, Scone, Perthshire.

⁹ Martin (1981), 65.

there are what appear to be turf huts, probably used by Irish fishermen at an earlier date.¹⁰

Occasional references to the bothan airigh or shieling hut occur in traditional tales. No better authority than the great 'Coddy' - John MacPherson of Barra - mentions in a story of the supernatural, three Eriskay lobster fishermen going to Bagh Hartabhagh near the south-west tip of South Uist, in order to construct a bothan. 'Seeing that they were a considerable distance from home, they built a shieling there before they went.'¹¹ Apparently all went well, until on one occasion their meal was interrupted by a giant hand which broke through the floor.

Oral evidence also confirms the sites of other shieling huts used by lobstermen on both the east and west coast of South Uist. On the east, there were sites at Kyles Stuley (824235), Sloc Dubh na Hafn near the entrance to Loch Eynort (814273), Bolum Bay (826283), and the south side of the promontory of Uisinish (869349).¹² On the west side other sites were at Dun Dulan on the Rubha Ardvule peninsula (714298),¹³ Croic a Peighinn-nan-Aoireann (744354),¹⁴ Eochar and Ardivachar at the very north-west point of South Uist.¹⁵ As far as the last two sites were concerned, the lobstermen came from Loch Carnan on the east coast of South Uist.

On the sandy soil of the machair, it was found that bothies were partially dug out and given a stone base with turf walls as far as the gables. Wood salvaged from the shore was used to support the turf divots on the roof which was thatched with whatever material was close to hand. These small bothies were about five feet high at the door and were shared by two crew members from each boat. A rough stone fireplace was built and a slabhraidh (pot chain) hung over the peat fire.

¹⁰ Information from Angus Martin, Campbeltown, dated 6 November 1988.

¹¹ Tales From Barra Told By The Coddy with introduction and notes by J L Campbell (Edinburgh, 1960), 192.

¹² RWL 1988/110 (Personal tape reference). Recorded from John MacInnes (b.1907), Daliburgh, South Uist, on 30 April 1988.

¹³ RWL 1988/112. Recorded from Canon Angus MacQueen (b.1923), Bornish, South Uist, on 2 May 1988.

¹⁴ Information from Calum MacRae, Lobster Fisherman, Creagorry, Benbecula.

¹⁵ RWL 1988/113. Recorded from Donald Alan MacQueen (b.1915), Eochar, South Uist.

They slept on straw and blankets. And they made the beds out of lumps of turf: not the thin turf but fairly thick sods. These were about eight inches thick by nine inches wide, by about eighteen inches long. Latterly they used wooden box-beds but before that they used to build them themselves with two posts at each end of the bed; turf on the inside and then the straw with the blankets on top. You slept here along with the fleas and the airigh was very warm. (Donald Alan MacQueen)¹⁶

At the turn of the century there was a great deal of lobster fishing carried out by the little boats in Uist, where they had nothing but the sail and oars. They used to fish for lobsters all year round. On the east coast there was deep water close to the shore and it was calm and sheltered. It was only in summertime that the fishermen went to the west coast. The shore on the west is wild and you could not fish there except in summertime. More people worked the creels at the east side and that was one reason why lobsters were scarcer on the east coast. The boats at that time were about sixteen feet long in the keel. When they went out to set the creels, they would take about twenty creels in the one boat. There were about twenty creels in one row and it was usually about three rows that the little sail boats worked.¹⁷

The size of the boats varied from 16 feet to 18 feet in the keel. They were conditioned by the fact that they had to be rowed and anything bigger meant that it could not be easily rowed.

They had to be manoeuvrable and easily handled and they carried ballast in them as well. These were big slabs of black stone. Black stone always seems heavier than the white kind of stone. They used these big slabs on the boat as ballast. Usually Heisker (or Monach Isles) was the best place for this ballast. There was no flooring in the boats as such, and these slabs were just as flooring.

(Lachlan Morrison)¹⁸

The crofter fishermen of east Benbecula left for the west coast after the spring work on their crofts had been completed. They had bothies on the west side at what is known locally as 'Stinky Bay' near Cuinabunag (761524). Here they could safely beach their boats. Some of the bothies had thatch and later corrugated-iron was used. When they started using engines in the

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ D J MacDonald MSS (School of Scottish Studies). Translated from Gaelic by Donald A MacDonald.

¹⁸ RWL 1988/117. Recorded from Lachlan Morrison (b.1924), Grimsay, North Uist, on 4 May 1988.

boats they came back through the fords every night. The sail boats lasted up until 1939.¹⁹

They used muran (marram grass) thatch at Stinky Bay, or old straw that they got from people on the west side. They used to put in a day or two repairing the bothies before they went to the fishing. It was the old black house idea with smoke getting too thick inside and not getting out at the top. But in time when I was there (1933-4), there was these old type round stoves. They used peat in the old days, taken by boat through the fords and had permission to stay in the bothies since these fishermen's huts could be built up to twenty yards from the beach: that was an old law.

For the roof they used a few bits of timber that was washed ashore, turfed up with thatch on top. I believe that some of them were practically flat-roofed. I think they used quite a lot of sand on top of the flat-roofed ones. That fine sand kept out quite a lot of the rain. It's something I heard from the old people, my grandfather and that old crowd. (Calum MacRae)²⁰

The standard thatching material in the machair townships was muran - anglicised as bent grass or bent, but also as marram grass. Heather was used on the east coast and it was by far the best type of thatch. They would also use straw sometimes for thatching outbuildings and in the southern part of South Uist they also used irises. The marram grass found on sand dunes was difficult to cut because it needed to be as long as possible and this involved getting near the sand which blunted the scythe (earlier the sickle) blade. It was lifted in armfuls to get all the strands lying in the one direction because it would be no good for thatching if it was facing odd ways.²¹

The shieling huts used by the fishermen were built with stone and turf and had a thatched roof. Some had only a rough stone fireplace; others had a big flat stone on the ground. Once it got hot it would keep the heat for a long time. Most of the huts had the fire on the floor at one end - not the centre. They had to repair the thatch each year after the winter gales. (Donald John Mackay)²²

¹⁹ RWL 1988/111. Recorded from Calum MacRae, Lobster Fisherman, Creagorry, Benbecula, on 3 May 1988.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Information from Ronald MacDonald, Lobster Fisherman, North Uist, on 28 April 1988. Also noted from Donald MacDougall (b.1912), Retired Blacksmith, Malaclete, North Uist, on 22 September 1984.

²² RWL 1988/110. Recorded from Donald John MacKay (b.1916), Kilerivagh, Benbecula, on 1 May 1988.

For the fishermen of Grimsay, North Uist, it was a tradition to go to the island of Heisker (or Monach Isles) about thirty miles from St Kilda and uninhabited since 1947. The bothies of the fishermen were at the two main bays of Heisker and also on the lighthouse island of Shillay. The season was from May till the end of August. With a swell during a gale out in the Atlantic it could be very rough in summertime. From Grimsay it took about six hours to row across the Sound of Monach on a calm day, compared with two to three hours with a bit of wind.²³

On Heisker, muran was the natural thatching material. The fishermen slept two to a bed which was just a sack filled with muran and a blanket on top. Because there was no peat on the islands, the Grimsay people took out four to five bags which lasted them a week. The fire was started with little bits of driftwood and some paraffin.²⁴

Wood seemed to be a lot more plentiful than it is today, and Heisker was quite fortunate in that respect. Being a group of islands it had a lot of currents and there used to be a saying: 'If there were three bits of wood on the west side, one of them would arrive in Heisker, one in Kirkibost and one in Berneray (Harris).' So that gives you a fair estimation of how good it was for collecting any flotsam from the sea.

(Lachlan Morrison)²⁵

The Grimsay lobstermen stopped using the old bothies in Heisker during the 1950s, and latterly took to sleeping in the deserted schoolhouse. After visiting Heisker, the Grimsay men came back to fish the east coast and Loch Eyport, in particular, was a favourite winter fishing loch for them. Two Grimsay men also had a bothy at Griminish on the north coast of North Uist. Today the old bothy is a 'rickle o stanes' with a few surviving oddments such as a cast-iron bedstead, teapot, a flattened kettle and a portion of the former reek-pipe. The hut measures 16 feet x 15 feet on the outside, with a core filling of earth and small stones between the walls. It was superseded by a small asbestos hut which stands nearby.

²³ RWL 1988/109. Recorded from Charles MacKinnon (b.1909), Grimsay, North Uist, on 28 April 1988.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ RWL 1988/117.



*Lobstermen's bothy of stone and marram thatch at
Griminish, June 1958. Today only a ruined shell remains
Copyright W Nicolaisen, School of Scottish Studies*

In east Benbecula, lobster fisherman Calum MacRae heard from his grandfather about the days when fishermen and their families arrived from Buckie and suchlike places. He was able to show me one of the natural deep-water creeks which they had used as an anchorage at Peter's Port. The original iron mooring rings can still be seen in the rocks, and Calum remembered being told that the fishermen and their families brought a wooden shed with them as a shore base.²⁶

Giving evidence about Scalpay before the Napier Commission in 1883, eighty-eight year old John MacDiarmid stated:

They are very poor and very crowded. The whole of the population - crofters and cottars - have to pursue the fishing, chiefly lobster-fishing, and they have to be out summer, spring and winter, at least eleven months of the year. They have often to go from home, and live in bothies ... They have fished their own shore clean and have to pursue the lobster-fishing at a distance, all the way to Lochmaddy.²⁷

²⁶ RWL 1988/111.

²⁷ Cameron, A D, Go Listen to the Crofters (Stornoway, 1986), 78.

In 1967, R Miller refers in a paper to two seashore bothies in Harris (085977) 'which were probably fishers' or kelp burners' huts'.²⁸ One definite site of a turf bothy used by Scalpay lobster fishermen was on the east coast of Harris at Bhrollum, eight miles north-east of Scalpay. Oral evidence from Scalpay also refers to lobstermen using bothies on the Shiant Isles from September each year. One of the bothies surviving on the Shiant Isles had a felt roof, but prior to this they were thatched with luachair (rushes).²⁹

And there's another thing I must tell you; you was very nearly eaten alive with rats in the bothans. There was millions of rats at first in the Shiant Isles. There was a ship came down ... and she was putrid with rats, and the rats came ashore. They were there when we went. You'd see dozens and dozens running about the bothans as they came out of their holes. They cleared them by using cats. The fishermen took cats with them and they left the cats on the Shiant Isles. There's no rats now.

(Norman Morrison)³⁰

To show that fishermen's bothies were situated at extremities, one can take two examples. In the north at Faraid Head facing Cape Wrath across Balnakeil Bay, there was a small lobstermen's bothy used by fishermen from Durness. 'The walls are similar to the blackhouse but the roof is an old scaffie thatched over.'³¹ At the other end of the Scottish mainland, lobstermen's huts of a different type can still be seen at Point of Lag overlooking Monreith Bay in Wigtownshire. A family called Cochrane who were fishermen about Drummour on the opposite peninsula, came across for the lobster season to the Lag, as it is known locally.

They built a wood and tarred felt hut about the time just after the Great War.³² Immediately off the golf course at Kirkmaiden stand two lobster fishermen's huts. One has a tarred felt roof with a lean-to comprising of corrugated-iron walls and an asbestos lum-pipe. The second hut has also tarred felt on the roof, with walls that are partly constructed from wooden slabs that still have their bark left on.

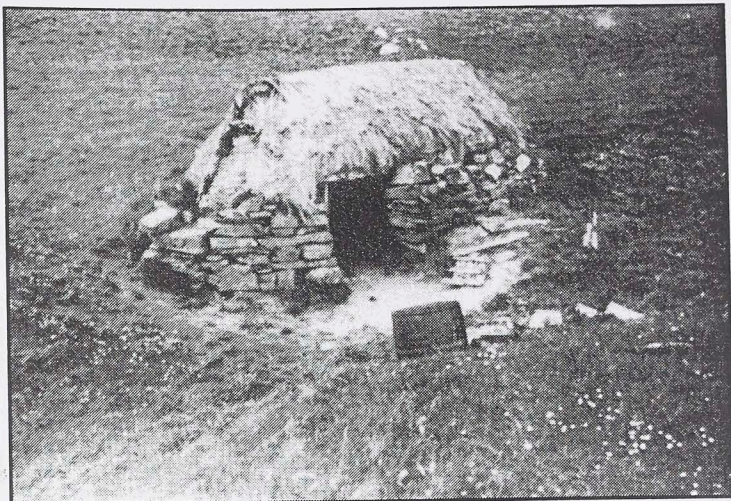
²⁸ Miller, R, Land Use by Summer Shielings in Scottish Studies 11 (1967), 215.

²⁹ RWL 1988/114. Recorded from Norman Morrison (b.1896), Former Lobster Fisherman, Bayhead, Scalpay, Harris, on 7 May 1988.

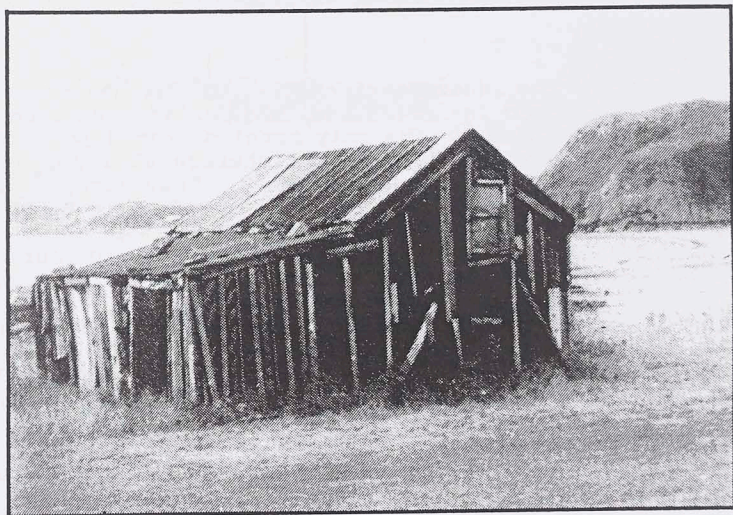
³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Lethbridge, T C, Fishermen of Durness (privately printed, 1938), 7.

³² Information noted from Mac Wallace, Lower Clone Farm, Wigtownshire, on 7 July 1988.



*Lobster fishermen's hut at Faraid Head, Sutherland.
The roof has been thatched over an upturned scaffie*



*Lobster fishermen's hut at The Lag. The wooden slats
have still their bark on and the crinkly tin lean-to
is weighted down with heavy boulders*



*Fishermen's hut at The Lag. Partial corrugated-iron
walls with tarred felt roof and asbestos
reek-pipe in cement base*

Returning north, the inner Hebridean isle of Rum has ruins on the shore east of Samhnan Insir (383044) which have been interpreted as fishermen's bothies.³³ The only bothies traced in Orkney are the tarred huts used by Stromness fishermen at Yesnaby in the western cliffs of the Mainland of Orkney. They were used in the early decades of this century by fishermen and their families who were pursuing lobsters and white fish, the latter being caught by handlines.³⁴ These huts were only occupied during the summer, possessing bunk beds and a 'bogey stove' for heating³⁵.

Shetland is a very different story from Orkney. The 'haaf' or deep sea fishermen's 'lodges' as they are better known, were located at extremities all over the islands, especially at beaches suitable for fish curing. They were used by crews who

³³ Love, John A, Shielings of the Isle of Rum, in Scottish Studies 25 (1981), 43.

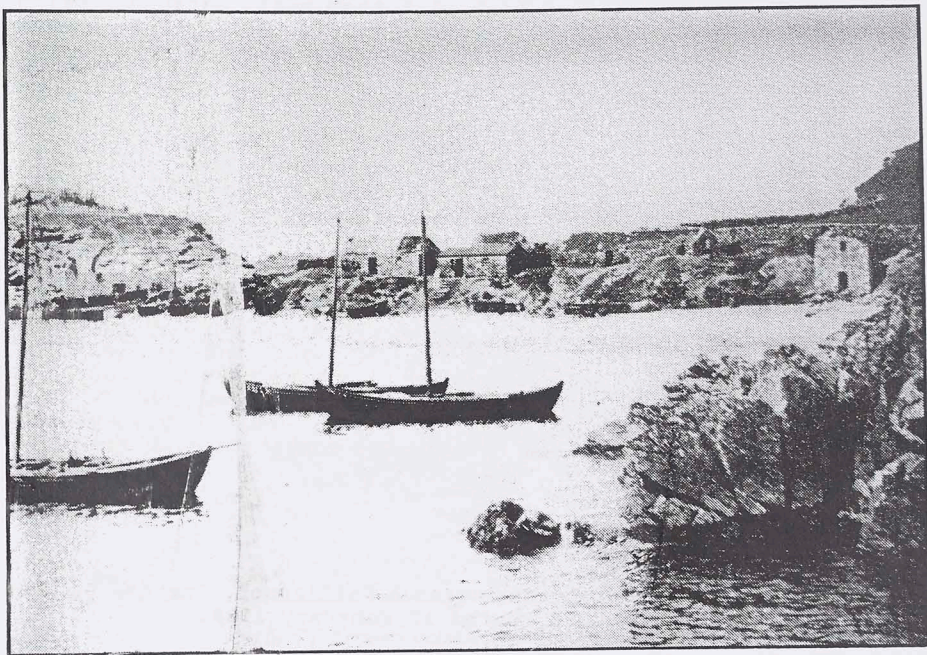
³⁴ Information from Bryce S Wilson of the Tankerness House Museum, Orkney, dated 19 January 1988.

³⁵ Information from William Craigie, Stromness, Orkney, dated 29 February 1988.

fished from open sixareen boats using long lines for catching ling, tusk and cod. The crews used the lodges because their homes were distant from the fishing station, although there were exceptions such as at Bressay.³⁶ We find that the crews could be at the lines for one to three days and nights, depending on the weather and size of the catch.

They would shoot their lines you see, and possibly manage a few hours sleep but only on the ballast, and it was customary to stick the end of the yard to which the sail was attached into the bow of the boat and hank the sail across the yard to make a sort of tent: what was called a nicht-hoose.

(Tom Henderson)³⁷



*Haaf fishermen's lodges at Aest Ayre, with
sixareen boats in the foreground*

³⁶ Irvine, James J A, The Location of Shetland's Fishing Stations 1700-1914 with Particular Reference to the Far-Haaf and Herring Fisheries (MA Honours dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1982), 25.

³⁷ SA1961/26. Recorded from Tom Henderson by Elizabeth Sinclair.

The lodges on shore were of spartan simplicity and building materials were whatever was to hand. The walls were usually of rough stone, earth/clay-filled for windproofing, or sometimes of turf or wood. Rafters were frequently of driftwood as was some of the home-made furniture. A tarred and felt roof was never common but they were used, especially in later times.³⁸ As a roofing material it is recorded that tarred felt was overtaking thatch in the Shetlands by about the 1880s.³⁹ At the inbye end of a lodge was a raised communal sleeping area with straw-filled mattresses. Sometimes an outer cover of canvas or hessian was sewn together to form what might be termed a sleeping bag.

Floors were of beaten earth or stone flags when available. Furniture was equally basic: a table, wooden form, perhaps chairs and a seaboot jack. There would be the usual buckets for fresh water, peat keshie (container), tea kettle, frying pan, cutlery etc.⁴⁰ For food, the men took with them meal, potatoes, dried bere (which was pounded in a stone quern to make broth), a pork ham, or a smoke-dried sheep. 'Some of the men would have a little cheap smuggled fiery spirits ... but their usual drink is water, unless they bring from their homes a small cask or jar of blaand'.⁴¹

The season began in late May or early June. When fishing was about to begin, the sixareens were cleaned out and in earlier times given a coat of Stockholm tar in boiled linseed oil.⁴² The boats altered over the course of time and different types of boat were used for different fisheries. Before the season started, the lodges had to be checked for winter damage and subsequently repaired. According to Goodlad, the roof of wooden laths from the lodges was taken home by the fishermen, such was the scarcity of good building wood.⁴³ This was not true in every case. A good turf roof could last more than one year and was sometimes simply protected during the close season by being tied down with straw rope, or a fishing net was placed over the top. One commentator chose to describe the bothies at Stenness

³⁸ Questionnaire return from A Williamson, Curator of the Shetland Museum, dated 17 February 1988.

³⁹ Cameron (1986), 107.

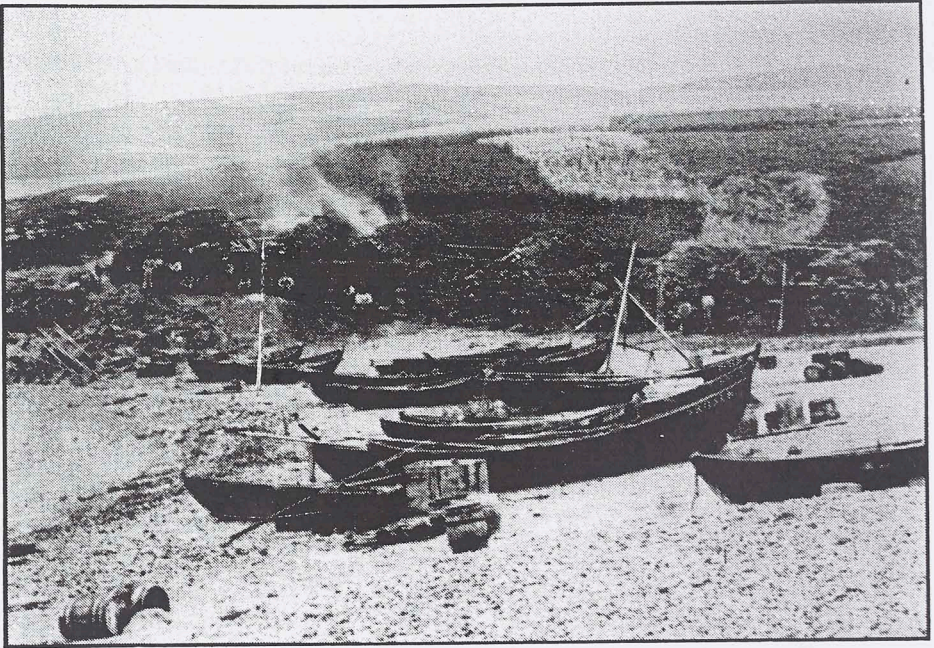
⁴⁰ Questionnaire return from A Williamson.

⁴¹ Balneaves, Elizabeth, The Windswept Isles: Shetland and Its People (London, 1977), 181. Blaand is the serum of buttermilk diluted with water.

⁴² Questionnaire return from A Williamson.

⁴³ Goodlad, L A, Shetland Fishing Saga (Lerwick, 1971), 10.

as being more akin to 'dog-kennels'.⁴⁴ Here they had mutual sidewalls and their gables pointed to the sea. The fishermen are noted as sleeping with their clothes on and received a once weekly visit from the womenfolk who came to collect cod-heads, small fish and skate for home consumption.⁴⁵ The New Statistical Account which refers to the fishing station of Noss, mentions that a few shillings payment was made for the use of the seasonal bothies.⁴⁶



*Haaf fishermen outside their lodges at Stenness
The station appears to be on the decline
as a number of lodges are falling into ruin*

⁴⁴ Reid, John T, Art Rambles in Shetland (Edinburgh, 1869), 19.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ NSA (May 1841), 15.

Apart from fishing shelters, Shetland also had in Fetlar, roughly constructed 'peat-hooses' from about the 1860s onwards. The peat bogs were far enough away on the Lambhoga peninsula that a stay was necessary for those who came to cut peat for their fires. According to Alexander Fenton, 'It is likely that the inspiration for making these peat-hooses came from the seasonal lodges used by fishermen at remote fishing beaches in other parts of Shetland.'⁴⁷ Research by the writer on Berneray - which has no peat - found that the inhabitants cut their peat on some of the small satellite islets to the north and north-east of Lochmaddy, North Uist. Oral evidence accounts for a turf-cutters' bothy being found on the islets of Hemetray and Stromay. A turf bothy was also built on the tiny islet of Dun-aarin (026805) by Berneray people who came across to shoot cormorants before the Second World War.⁴⁸

Better known are the gannet hunters' huts on Sula Sgeir, a remote forty-four miles north-east of the Butt of Lewis. Usually the men in Lewis stayed three weeks, 'living in rude huts built generations ago'.⁴⁹ The island of Boreray off St Kilda was frequently visited for short periods for stock management and fowling expeditions. It has a number of seasonal dwellings, one of which was used by women plucking feathers. 'Other temporary dwellings in St Kilda are similar in design to the peat houses in Shetland and shielings of Lewis. They are simple dry-stone structures with raised bed platforms, and a fire sited near the door. Simpler still were caves or clefts in the rocks adapted for use as bothies.'⁵⁰ To the west of Boreray lies Stac Lee, St Kilda. The young gannet or guga were an essential part of the St Kildan's diet and in August/September the islanders would make an annual pilgrimage in order to harvest the crop of guga. At a height of about 120m the St Kildans built a bothy which would take three to four people.⁵¹

I am grateful to Professor J B Caird of Dundee University for bringing to my attention an admiralty chart which marks three kelp huts in the island of 'Kalisay' (Keallasay) off the north

⁴⁷ Fenton, Alexander, Country Life in Scotland: Our Rural Past (Edinburgh, 1987), 63.

⁴⁸ Information noted from Donald John MacAskill (b.1944), Berneray, Harris.

⁴⁹ Murchison, Rev T, Deserted Hebridean Isles: Notes and Traditions in Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness XLII (1953-4), 293.

⁵⁰ Buchanan, Margaret, St Kilda: A Photographic Album (Edinburgh, 1983), 22.

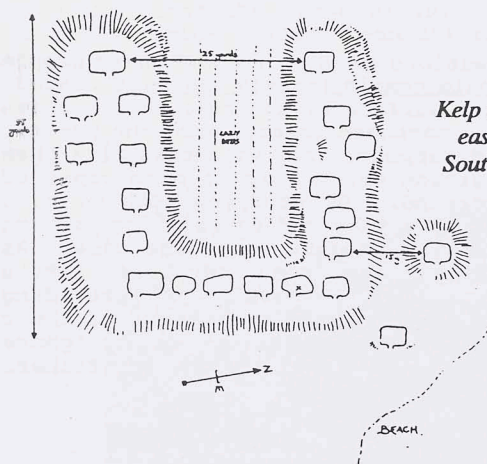
⁵¹ See Moore, Peter, Gannet-Hunters' Bothy on Stac Lee, St Kilda in Vernacular Building 11 (1987), 12-14.

coast of North Uist.⁵² What are thought to be kelpmakers' bothies can still be traced above Baymore, Grimsay, North Uist (874563) where I measured the oral circumference of one at 11 feet by 15.5 feet. Of greater importance and with less doubt attached to them are the shells of over twenty kelp shieling huts that can be found at Rubha Ardvule (713298). As an old man from the area told me:

Boisdale and other townships on the west side was where the people lived who came to the kelp shielings at Bornish. These had no thatch, just turf roofs. You see, they hadn't crofts at Bornish and Ormiclate until 1921. They stopped living in the shieling huts then.

(Roderick John MacDonald)⁵³

It was down to the fact that people had to pay their rent with kelp. The factor of Lady Cuthbert's estate had to decide whether there was enough to pay the rent and there never was. You always automatically owed the estate. The promontory of Rubha Ardvule was in a line with Mingulay and Berneray and collected a tremendous amount of weed. The people from the south end of the island had to come and live in these turf hovels until they had collected enough of the weed to pay the rent. (Canon Angus MacQueen)⁵⁴



Kelp maker's huts at Rubha Ardvule. All face east, the traditional direction for houses in South Uist [Plan drawn by Derek Robertson]

⁵² Admiralty Chart 2825 (1861), Lochs Uist and Maddy.

⁵³ Information noted from Roderick John MacDonald, Stoneybridge, South Uist, on 30 April 1988.

⁵⁴ RWL 1988/112.



*Kelp maker's huts thought to be at Rubha Ardvule, c.1908
They have stone and turf walls with turf roofs*

Without oral evidence, the questions of why, how and where people lived in seasonal dwellings would remain largely unsubstantiated. This pilot study only skims the surface of the role that bothies had on the western seaboard and northern isles. Once the present generation in their eighties disappear, they will take with them the last strands of oral tradition which help us make sense of what little is left on the ground. By studying bothies as a singular theme, it is apparent that they reflect a wider pattern of seasonal work than at first was thought to be the case. As utilitarian structures they may be seen to have little architectural merit, yet they were successful in providing essential shelter and remain truly vernacular in terms of their character. They tell of basic building practices and to ignore them is to limit the parameter of where and how our forefathers actually lived.

BUILDINGS AND FEATURES OF SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS

Alex Gilchrist

Over the past thirty years the traditional playground buildings have all but vanished. We can all agree with the disappearance of the outside toilets, which were so difficult to keep clean, but why have the playsheds gone? Part of the answer is in the development of toilets and wet weather areas inside schools. None-the-less children enjoy sheds in playgrounds.

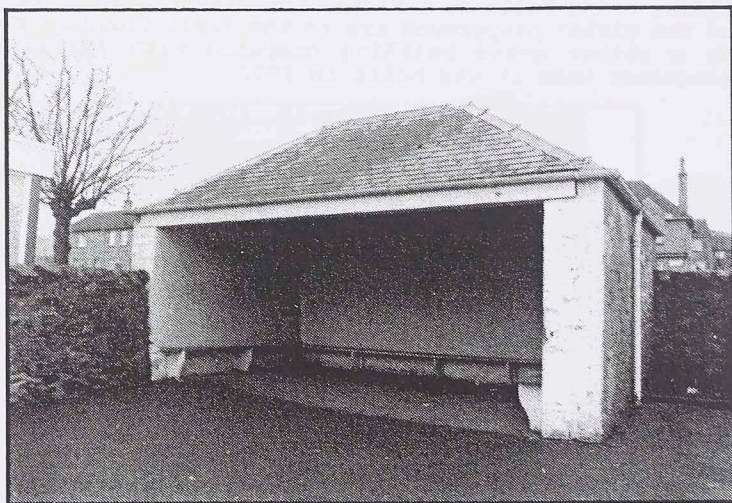
Before they all went I decided to record the survivors in our area. Unfortunately the School Board records have almost all been lost and the school logbooks contain few references to the buildings.

The area covered is the part of Lanarkshire south east of Lanark town, excluding Biggar.

School Sheds

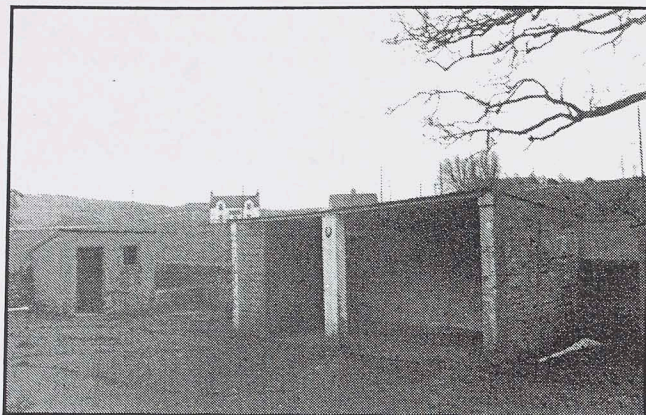
Although no sheds have been built in the district during the last fifty years, those which existed have been allowed to survive unless they needed major repairs or were in the way of new developments. As a result five have survived.

The most attractive one is at Crawford. It is built of stone, white-washed and with a slate roof. Inside there is a bench running round the three walls. There is no indication of any other structure having been attached to it.



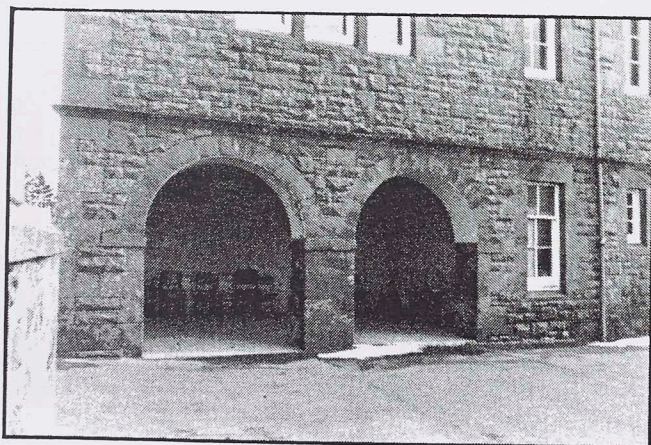
Crawford shed

At Libberton, Pettinain and Robberton the sheds are built of brick, sometimes incorporating some stonework and with the general appearance of being much cheaper productions. Robberton is probably typical of this pattern with a central shed and the sites of the toilets at each end, all built as cheaply as possible, with wooden support poles and a corrugated iron roof.



*Robberton shed, toilet site,
cleaner's store and ash midden*

At Leadhills the boys' shed is a feature of what looks like a large school built on two levels unlike any of the other village schools. In reality the 'ground floor' includes little more than the entrance hall, staff room, boilerhouse and the shed. The building being built on a slope, the classrooms and the entrance from the girls' playground are on the first floor. It must have been a rather grand building compared with its cottage-like predecessor when it was built in 1902.



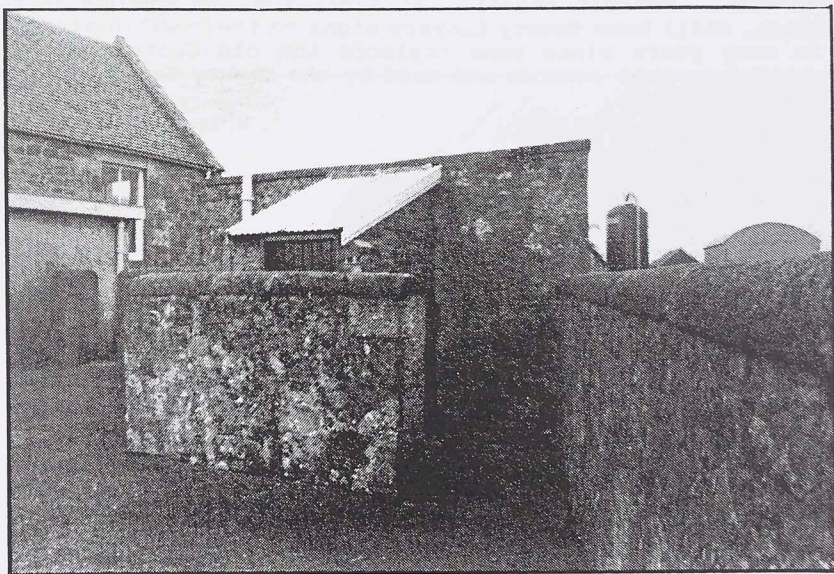
Boys' shed, Leadhills

None of them contain play equipment such as 'ladders' often found in large town school sheds, and must have been built purely as shelters, although inevitably they would have been used as dens etc. Odd features at Leadhills are what may have been fittings up for gates. Did they force the children out in good weather or were they to prevent after-school use?

Outside Toilets

As in most other areas of Scotland outside toilets are things of the past and a good thing too! In late Victorian times, when many village schools were built, school boards were instructed to build all toilets, except those for lady teachers, in blocks separate from the main school building. When they went out of use many were left standing being removed only when the site was required for other purposes or as part of a general tidying up of the school as took place at Crawford in 1989. A few, eg at Symington have been converted to cleaners' stores.

Only one now survives in use at the former school in Newbigging, now used as an outdoor centre. Here despite it being a very small school the playground was divided into girls' and boys' areas with the toilets built against the dividing wall. On the boys' side there is a disused urinal and a WC, and on the girls side WC and cleaners' store. There are indications of where wooden seats were formerly fitted and on both sides screening walls have been built.



Boys' toilets, Newbigging

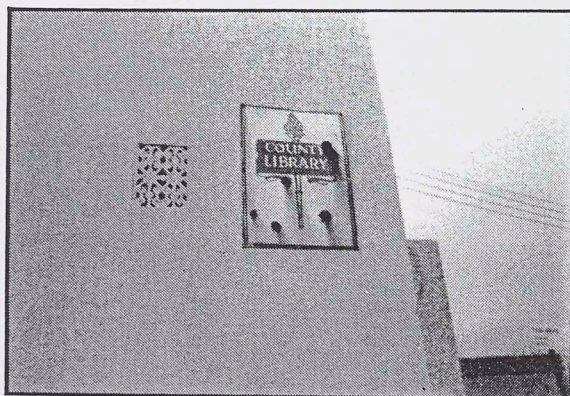
Other Features

Sometimes other features from the past survive. At both Carstairs Junction and Lamington playground fountains, often called wells, are still fixed on the wall near the door. Neither is now in use no doubt on hygiene grounds.



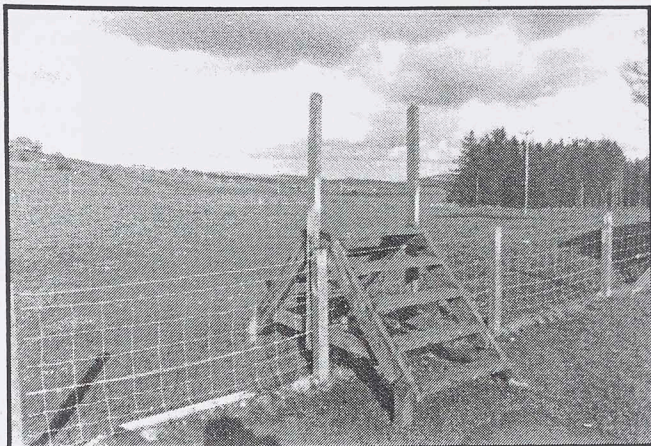
Fountain at Lamington

At Robberton, now the village hall, can be seen a purpose-built cleaners' store and an ash midden in the corner of the playground. Several schools, at Libberton and Symington for instance, still have County Library signs on their walls although it is many years since vans replaced the old Coats bookcases supplied from 1906 onwards and used by the County Service set up in the early 1920s.



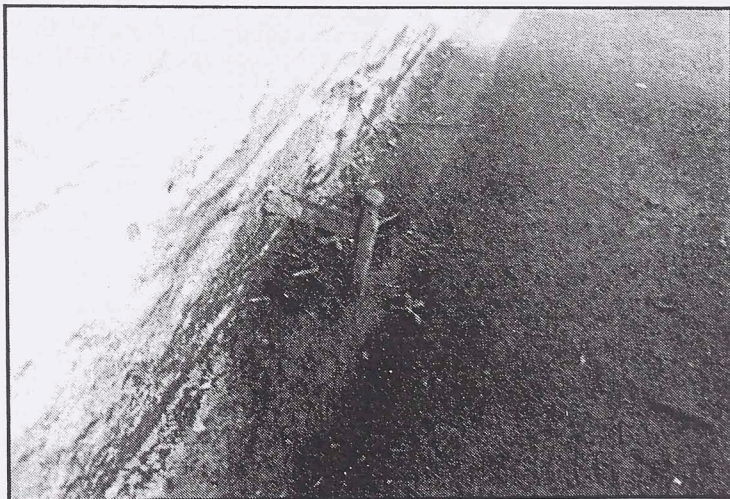
Library sign at Symington

Pettinain and the now demolished Summit schools both feature a stile which gave access to paths leading to the Upper Pettinain or outlying farms.



Stile at Pettinain

One of the most interesting features surviving is the boot scraper outside the door or the classroom used at Covington from 1827 to 1895.



Boot scraper at Covington

At Libberton there is a stone fitted into the shed wall which long puzzled me until I saw a photograph of a similar one at a Glasgow school. It is a slate pencil sharpener.



Slate pencil sharpener at Libberton

Conclusion

In conclusion I think it is important that a selection of these and other playground features are recorded before it is too late. On several occasions I have gone to photograph buildings only to find the bull dozers had beat me to it!

DUTCH - AND SCOTCH - PANTILES. SOME EVIDENCE FROM THE SEVENTEENTH AND EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES.

John Shaw

At the SVBWG Berwick conference the question of imported Dutch pantiles came up in discussion. In response to a repeated assertion that there was no evidence of such imports,⁵⁵ I offered to provide some. From this starting point a number of further thoughts arose, particularly on the availability of Scottish made substitutes, and the limited findings to date have been incorporated into this paper.

The evidence relates to the period 1678 to 1691 and is drawn from the Blackness (later Bo'ness) customs precinct Import Books, now housed in the Scottish Record Office.⁵⁶ It is confined to cargoes carried by vessels whose skippers were domiciled in Queensferry. As such it can only hint at the full extent of the trade. A summary is given in an Appendix.

The numbers carried on each voyage ranges from a mere 200 (Lyon of Queensferry, 1690) to 7,500 (Christian, 1678), with an average of about 3,500. In some cases the port of origin is given as Rotterdam; in others this can be inferred from the nature and range of other goods shipped. Occasional small shipments of brick ("brick stones") also feature in the lists of cargoes. Smout⁵⁷ confirms that Holland was a major source of both brick and pantile in the late seventeenth century. There is no question of their having been carried as ballast. In those rare instances where ships arrived in ballast this is stated in the customs record: 21 June 1689, James and George both from Calais with sand; 31 July 1689, Dove from London with shingle.⁵⁸

The evidence has its limitations. It gives no indication of the type of building for which the pantiles were destined; it cannot state the life expectancy of the pantiles and it cannot reveal whether the trade continued into the eighteenth century. Other sources may provide clues.

The oft cited 1681 Act of Parliament required houses in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee and Stirling to be theicked with 'lead, sclait, scailzie or tyle'.⁵⁹ Yet this was merely a re-enactment of the 1621 Act and its effectiveness cannot be

⁵⁵ See also Walker, B. 'They Were Never Like This!' in The Scots Magazine New Series 114.6 March 1981, 606.

⁵⁶ Reference E.72/5.

⁵⁷ Smout, T C, Scottish Trade on the Eve of Union 192.

⁵⁸ E.72/5/29. Bo'ness Import Report Book, November 1688-November 1689.

⁵⁹ Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland VIII. 357.

gauged. The term 'houses' should not be equated with dwellings but should be seen as including non-domestic buildings such as workshops and stabling.⁶⁰ Tile is only one of four options and conceivably, though improbably, could refer to plain tiles. A detailed examination of Dean of Guild records might help to clarify this point.

Another possibility, for which firm evidence exists, is that some of the pantiles were destined for industrial premises, of which a number were established in the late seventeenth century. The supposed shortcomings of tile roofs might have been positive benefits in the context of heat or humidity generating industries such as paper mills, soapworks, smiddies, sugaries or, most notably, salt-works. Evidence from the 1710s indicates that panhouses were roofed;⁶¹ pantiles would have been an appropriate return cargo for vessels exporting coal and salt from the Forth ports. Without stretching a point too far, it might be proposed that the term 'pantile' stems from their use on salt pans. Alternatively the term might stem from the verb pan (= to correspond, fit together).⁶² This can only be a matter of conjecture, but both seem more feasible than the Finnish origin ('paann' = shingle) suggested by Pride.⁶³

Pantiles are known to have been used on one of the most ambitious 17th century industrial buildings. The sederunt book of the Newmills Manufactory notes that on the 6th of March 1695 it was agreed that a bargain be made with a merchant trading to Holland for 24,000 pantiles to roof the Great Manufactory House.⁶⁴ From other sources⁶⁵ we know this to have been an exceptionally large

⁶⁰ The earliest Scottish reference to the term 'pantile' cited by A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue concerns 200 pantiles for coach house roofs, 1669. DOST XXIX 289. I am grateful to Dr A Fenton for bringing this, and other DOST references to my attention.

⁶¹ Whatley, C A, 'A Saltwork and the Community: the Case of Winton, 1716-1719' in Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists' Society, Vol. 18 1984, 47.

⁶² A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue XXIX 282. (1977).

⁶³ Pride, Glen L, Glossary of Scottish Building (1975), 59.

⁶⁴ SRO RH15/102/1.

⁶⁵ Gray, W F and Jamieson, J H, A Short History of Haddington (1944), 48.

structure, some 101' by 21'. In 1708 pantiles were used to roof a far humbler building, the outbuildings of a manse in Fife.⁶⁶

The life expectancy of seventeenth century Dutch pantiles can only be a matter of conjecture. Unless any evidence can be found to the contrary, there should be no doubt whatsoever that the pantiles seen on buildings today are the product of much more recent Scottish works.

Firm evidence of Dutch imports in the late seventeenth century raises the question of continuity. Has there been a continuous tradition of pantile roofing since that time? How long did imports from Holland continue, were English products substituted after the Union and at what stage did the Scottish industry begin to emerge?

Gifford cites a 1732 reference from The Caledonian Mercury which demonstrates not only that pantiles were imported from north east England, but also that they were claimed to be superior to any produced in Scotland.⁶⁷ Where were these Scottish works?

The Binns Papers, published by the Scottish Record Society, include a tack, dated 31 December 1709, under which Moses Lawes, brickmaker at Blackness, was empowered to dig clay for making bricks and tiles at the Braehead of Blackness.⁶⁸ This predates, by a number of years, the 1714 brick and tile works set up by William Adam and William Robertson at Abbotshall, Fife, and may undermine Clerk of Eldin's claim that "Mr Adam brought..... the making of Dutch Pantiles in[to] Scotland".⁶⁹ Tiles from the Abbotshall works were used to roof office houses at Aberdour Manse in 1722.⁷⁰ Another early brick and tile works, operated by William Pearson at Prestonpans, was supplying tiles to the Cockenzie saltworks by 1716.⁷¹ By 1743 pantiles were being made in Leith and Aberdeen, both allegedly equal to imported Dutch tiles.⁷² The manufacture and use of Scotch pantiles in the latter half of the eighteenth century is already well documented, but I would welcome any additional references to Scottish pantile works at any period within the century.

⁶⁶ Scottish Record Office CH 2/1132/1 133-5.

⁶⁷ Gifford, J, William Adam 1689-1748 (1989), 33.

⁶⁸ Binns Papers. SRS 499.

⁶⁹ Cited by Gifford, op cit, 72-73.

⁷⁰ Op cit, 75.

⁷¹ Whatley, C A, op cit, 49, 50.

⁷² The Caledonian Mercury 10 March and 12 May 1743, both cited by Gifford, op cit, 33.

To summarise. There is ample evidence to indicate that Dutch pantiles were imported into Scotland during the late seventeenth century and that Scottish and English manufactured substitutes were available from the early decades of the eighteenth century. Pantiles are known to have been used on non-domestic buildings from at least the late seventeenth century but there is, as yet, little to suggest that they were used on dwellings prior to the late eighteenth century. The pantiles seen on so many buildings in south-eastern Scotland are, with almost total certainty, the product of nineteenth century or later works. The idea that these were imported, as ballast, from Holland is a hoary old myth still, sadly, current in some quarters.⁷³ Yet, as is so often the case, there is a germ of truth behind the myth; the truth of the situation can only be found through patient, painstaking reconstruction of evidence - not through sweeping generalisations.

APPENDIX

CARGOES OF PANTILES CARRIED ON QUEENSFERRY SHIPS, 1678 - 1691.

1	2	3	4	5
31/10/1678	Christian	7500	-	E.72/5/8
20/12/1681	James	1500	-	E.72/5/13
04/08/1683	Kathrein	650	-	E.72/5/16
08/10/1683	Kathrein	2500	-	E.72/5/16
26/08/1685	James	6000	Rotterdam	E.72/5/22
08/04/1686	Kathrein	3000	-	E.72/5/26
25/09/1689	James	5000	-	E.72/5/27
30/09/1689	Bathia	7000	-	E.72/5/27
27/05/1690	Lyon	200	Rotterdam	E.72/5/35
27/05/1690	Elizabeth	3500	Rotterdam	E.72/5/33
28/05/1690	Dragon	4000	-	E.72/5/35
27/03/1691	James	4000	Rotterdam	E.72/5/38

KEY:

- 1: Date recorded.
- 2: Vessel.
- 3: Number of pantiles recorded.
- 4: Origin of cargo (if stated).
- 5: Source (Scottish Record Office).

⁷³

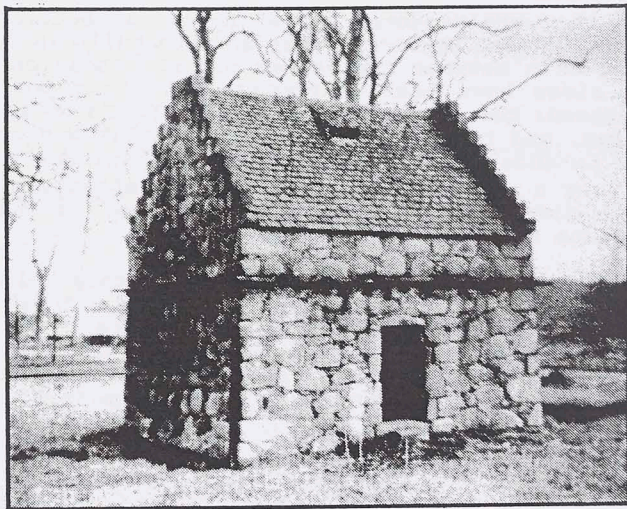
See North West Fife Rural Initiative. Farm Steadings Project, (Scottish Agricultural College) (1990), 7.

DOOCOT : GRANDHOME, ABERDEENSHIRE

Harry Gordon Slade

Amongst the Paton of Grandhome papers is an early eighteenth century account for building a doocot; it is reproduced here through the kindness of David Paton, the present laird.

The doocot has incised on the stone lintel above the entrance the letters IP and the date 1709. John Paton, who died in 1739 succeeded his father George Paton in 1711 according to James Cruickshank⁷⁴ and, if this is so, it is not clear why his initials should be on a building erected in his father's lifetime. The account confuses the picture further: it is headed, 'Accompt of Money debursed in building the Dovecot 1709', but has the sub-heading, 'Expenses in building the Dovecot begun 15 August 1711'. It is likely that Cruickshank is wrong in his dating, and that 1711 was not the date of George Paton's death, but of his son being granted sasine. This view is reinforced by the existence of a discharge of a bond to John Paton by his step-mother Jean Nicolson, the relict of George Paton on 24 October 1711. The law moved slowly and it is unlikely that this would have been possible had George Paton only died that year.



Grandhome doocot

⁷⁴

Cruickshank, James, ed, Charters and other Documents relating to Grandhome from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century (1930). MS in the possession of the University Library, Aberdeen.

This may help to account for the discrepancy between the dates in the account. From internal evidence this is not the original but a copy of an earlier document and it seems that the sub-heading is ambiguous rather than incorrect. If it is read 'Accompt of Money debursed in building the Dovecote 1709. Expenses in building the Dovecote begun 15 August 1711, it can be taken that the 1711 date refers to the time at which the copy was made. This would be the time when the settling of the affairs of George Paton would have been in hand.

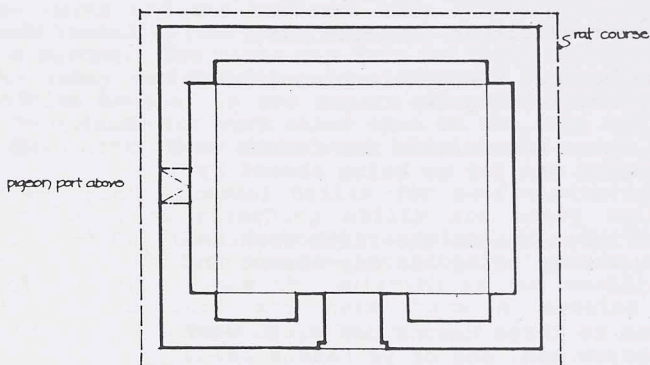
The doocot is a small rectangular building measuring 15' 10" by 13' 7", with crow stepped gables and walls 1' 3" thick. The long axis runs east-west with the entrance on the south side. The building has an unbroken rat ledge which projects 8", and immediately above the ledge in the west gable is a small square pigeon entrance. The walls are of whin-stone rubble with roughly dressed coins and door jambs, and more neatly dressed crow-steps, the putt being shaped as a corbel. Judging by the large joints and pinnings, it is likely that the walls were originally harled. The doorhead and jambs are checked to take an outward opening single-thickness plank door. The lintel which is roughly shouldered is incised with IP 1709, and the threshold is a re-used stone, possibly the head or cill of a window. The roof is of slate and is new: it was rebuilt some years ago, and again in 1989 when it was largely destroyed by a falling tree. There are small swept dormers in each roof slope, which have been restored.

Internally the cote measures 13' 6" by 11' 3" between the face of the boxes. These are 1' 1" deep and are built in stone as an independent skin between the corner piers. Those on the north and south sides have been destroyed, but their positions can still be traced; the original number was 322. No internal timber work remains, and the cote is so small that it was unlikely to have had a potence (from the French *potence*, a gibbet or bracket. It is in fact a pole to which a ladder is attached, and which revolves to give access to the nesting boxes), a small ladder being adequate to reach all the boxes.

The floor level is well below that of the threshold and this allowed the floor to be used as a dung pit from which the droppings could be collected for use as manure. A similar but much deeper pit was found in the remains of a large pigeon house excavated in Greyhound Yard, Dorchester in 1984.⁷⁵ From documentary evidence this cannot be later than 1405.

⁷⁵

Woodward, P J, inter alia, 'Excavations in Greyhound Yard Car Park, Dorchester 1980' in Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, V/106 (1984), 99-106.



GRANDPHE : DOVECOT 1709

The Account

Accompt of money debursed in building the Dovecot 1709

Expenses in building the Dovecot	£	s	d
Begun August 15, 1711			
In casting the founds to two men a day (1)	0	6	0
To wages to three Masons the first week and one Barrow man and for drink monies (2)	7	2	0
To wages to four Masons the second week and one Barrow man and for drink monies	10	0	0
To wages to four Masons the third week and one Barrow man and for drink monies	8	16	0
To six bolls of Lyme at £1 2s 0d per boll and 2s for each bolls carriage	7	4	0
To carriage of one barrowful of Stons from Craigpepper (3)	6	0	0

To twelve single trees at 16 pence per []	9	12	0
To twenty firr daills at ii pence per []	11	0	0
To half one hundred the double plen [cheoun] naills for scaffolding (4)	0	4	6
To wage to three Masons also for fourth week and one Barrow man for me being absent by bad weather	6	16	10
To wages to three Masons the fifth week and one Barrow man by being one day absent and drink monies	7	11	0
To the wages to three Masons the sixth week and one Barrow man, one of ye Masons being absent for 2 days and drink monies	6	13	8
To [] at cutting the cupples	0	16	0
To wages to three Masons the seventh and last week the Dovecot being finished by ym the last week of September and ane Barrow man all of ym being absent one day with drink monies	6	5	0
To ane man in assisting the Sclatter 3 days 9p and of drink monie to the Sclatter	0	11	6
To the Sclatter for sclatting the [dovecot] being [] except 2 elnes at 8 lib the [] (5)	7	12	0
To the Sclatter for 400 pirrns (6)	0	5	6
To a man for attending one day and 1/2 more	0	4	6
To carriage of half ane Barrowful more of stones	3	0	0
To the Carriers instead of drink monie (7)	0	4	6

Notes on the Accompt

1. The two men who cast the founds [dug the foundations] were paid at the rate of three shillings a day, and were presumably semi or unskilled.
2. It is not possible to calculate the wages paid to the individual men, although drink money may have been 1s 6d (see note). The expenditure including drink money in the first week for three masons and a barrowman was £7 11s 0d, in spite of one of them being absent for a day. Pay was probably made on a piece work basis.

3. The cost of carriage would have covered only the hire of the carts and the carters' time. The stones would have been loaded by the quarrymen and unloaded by the barrowman and masons. The carts may have belonged to the estate, and the entry was made to cover internal accounting. Later entries however in the papers show that carts were hired from outside for work other than on the farm and it is more likely that these carts were hired in.
4. Double plen [cheoun] naills for scaffolding: plenchoun, plancheoun or planching naills are heavy nails usually employed to fix floorboards or planking. In this context it is difficult to see how 'scaffolding' can be used in its present sense since the building is too small to warrant any. The word may here have a meaning that has disappeared, probably 'sarking'.
5. 'Elnes': an alternative spelling for 'ell', which was going out of use by the end of the seventeenth century.
6. 'Pirrns': the nearest that any of my own dictionaries come to for this is a 'wooden bobbin'. From the context they must be wooden pegs for holding the slates on the battens. The most likely derivation or corruption is from 'preen'.
7. 'To the Carriers instead of drink monie': it is difficult to believe that the carriers were abstainers. However, as they preferred hard cash it is likely that Grandhome traditionally paid in kind and of poor quality. This is a tradition that has not survived. The account implies that three carts were used, and that the daily drink money was therefore worth 1s 6d a man.
8. The final cost of the Dovecot came to £99 19s 0d, which is an example of inspirational accounting. It is 5s 6d more than the total of the sums entered. No sum is put against the amount due to the slater for 400 pirrns, but if the sum of 5s 6d is entered against this item, the account balances. The omission was probably due to the copyist. It is not made clear whether the account is calculated in pounds sterling or pounds Scots: the Union was two years old in 1709 and the old Scots currency had been abolished under the terms of the Act. However, the building trades have always been notoriously conservative - in 1773-5 building accounts for cottages at Glamis there were still some items paid for in merks and pounds Scots (and I still work in feet and inches and speak of 'new pence') - so it is probably quite safe to assume that the account is in pounds Scots, and that the sterling equivalent would have been £8 5s 0d.

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 Beaton, Elizabeth, The Doocots of Caithness (Dundee, 1980) SVBWG

CRUIVIE CASTLE, FIFE

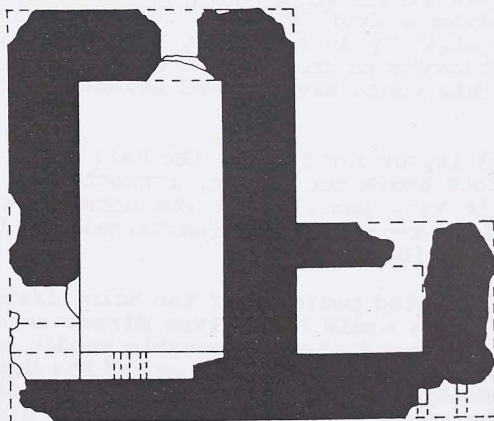
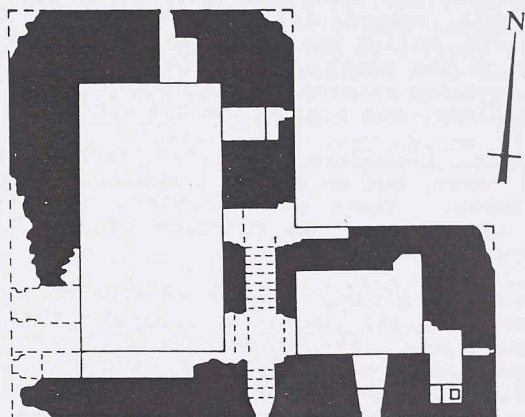
Angela R Wardell

The ruins of Cruivie Castle stand in isolation on a rocky outcrop adjacent to the steading of South Straiton Farm. The castle is L-shaped on plan and probably dates from the late fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries. Originally it was probably associated with enclosures and ancillary buildings but no trace of these was discovered on this preliminary survey. This survey work was undertaken for Dr T F Watkins as part of the programme of fieldwork for the Scottish Field School of Archaeology in 1988. At the same time, excavation was carried out at North Straiton Farm and the earlier of the two field systems there produced sherds of early east coast white gritted ware dated to the thirteenth century. The later field system, while known to be pre-Improvement, remains to be dated. This survey provided an opportunity to amplify and, where necessary, revise the account given in RCAHMS, Inventory of Fife (1933), No 407, especially since there has been considerable subsequent dilapidation and stone-quarrying.

The main block of the tower is orientated north-south with the smaller wing to the south-east. The site is surrounded by a hollow representing either the vestiges of an enclosing ditch, or more probably, a quarry from which the stone to build the castle was extracted. The walls, although breached in several places, survive to a height of over six metres and are constructed of squared blocks of whin rubble brought to courses with the insertion of small snecks. Two dressed stones were noted in the inner face of the south wall of the main block at ground-floor level; one was a checked rybat and the other was a voussoir. None of the corners remains complete and, as the Inventory account suggests: 'many of the dressings, which were of free-stone, have been removed. Those that are left at the voids are chamfered at the arris'. The corners of the ruinous castle are thus likely to have provided a local source of quality stone and were robbed selectively. These stones may now be incorporated in the present (harled) farmhouse and its associated outbuildings but none has yet been identified. Towards the west corner of the south wall of the tower there are boulder-stone footings.

The entrance, which is very difficult to identify, was probably at first-floor level towards the south end of the west wall, opening directly into the main block, as suggested in the Inventory article. Here the ingo of the entrance continues to ground-floor level, and internal access to the ground floor was by a stair placed against the inner face of the south wall. There is no evidence of direct communication between the main block and the wing at ground-floor level, although the wing may have been entered from the north where a break in the wall now exists. Contained within the thickness of the common wall is the straight stair which ascends to the second floor. This is similar in position and character to that at Tulliallan Castle.

At the foot of the stair there are door-openings giving access to both blocks.



At ground-floor level the main block and its wing had a timber ceiling and comprised a single chamber. Over the first floor both blocks were stone barrel-vaulted, the main block having had only two metres maximum headroom while the wing was almost one metre higher. In the wing, the surviving haunches of the vault have different springing-points and show signs of repointing, almost certainly indicating a phase of rebuilding. As on the ground floor, the two parts comprised a single chamber although the possibility of internal partitions must not be discounted.

Certain details of the second-floor can still be determined. In the main block various recesses are visible, notably in the south wall, where the presence of double ingoos may suggest a fireplace, and in the east wall above the first-floor window. On the west wall, towards the south end, there appears to be a window embrasure, whilst the first two treads of a circular stair were evident in the north-west angle. A garderobe at second-floor level, venting externally beside a corresponding garderobe on the first floor, was visible in the wing.

At first sight, therefore, Cruivie Castle appears to be a conventional tower, but on closer inspection it reveals several unusual features. These pose problems of interpretation as regards the arrangement and function of the tower, and defy definitive analysis.

The presence of the fireplace and garderobe chamber on the first floor of the wing all serve to indicate that this was the accommodation block. The ground floor, however, having been cool, dark and windowless, was probably the cellar which provided for the bulk storage of food and drink; the bedrock is exposed at several points. Without excavation it is impossible to state for certain whether there was a ground-floor entrance into the north wall of the wing. It is unusual, but not uncommon, to have a fireplace above a door but what makes the suggestion of an entrance more unlikely is the trace of a stair descending from the south-east corner on the east wall of the wing. If there was an entrance, this would have opened awkwardly onto the foot of the stair.

As is the usual layout for towers, the hall is on the first floor of the main block above the cellar, connected by the stair. The stair itself is very peculiar in its nature and position, and presents problems regarding the functional relationship of the ground and first floors.

Assuming the suggested position of the main first-floor entrance to be correct, this would have given direct access to the hall and must have been reached by a moveable wooden stair or ladder. However, the narrowness of the opening and the depth of the splay are more in keeping with a window embrasure. Given that it is an L-plan tower one would normally expect to find the entrance located in the re-entrant angle. However, all that is visible in the inner angle is tussing, probably of a turret, some five metres above the external ground-level. Supporting evidence for the existence of a turret in this position is provided by a

recessed wall-face in the north-west corner of the wing, suggestive of a chamber entered from the intra-mural stair. There is no clear evidence of a doorway-opening at either ground or first-floor levels, so the position of the main entrance must remain unresolved.

In most forms of stacked accommodation, the upper floors, including garrets, provided sleeping quarters. As already mentioned, the wing contains the most obvious features indicative of 'comfortable accommodation' but it seems unlikely, on the grounds of scale and position, that this represented the main living quarters.

The lord's private suite of chambers is likely to have occupied the second floor of the main block, and indeed one of the recesses could mark the former position of a fireplace. At least one other floor existed above this, reached from the spiral stair contained within the north-west corner of the main block. It is also conceivable that the suggested turret in the re-entrant angle also contained an upper stair serving the adjacent areas of the main block and wing, as seen, for example, at Braikie Castle in Angus.

The absence of evidence for certain requisite offices and services which would have supported domestic life and economic activity in and around the castle is another peculiarity. There is nothing within the tower to suggest a kitchen, pantry or bakehouse. Cooking may have been carried out on the hall fireplace or in an outbuilding, as appears to have been the case at Scotstarvit Tower. Furthermore, there are no surviving features which reflect the needs of close-range defence. There are no arrowslits or gunloops, and, of course, all traces of wallhead defence such as parapets, slots and battlements, have, if they ever existed, long since disappeared.

NOTES ON A VICTORIAN SEA-FLUSHING TOILET

W Ashley-Bartlam

Elwick Bay on the island of Shapinsay, one of the northern group of the Orkney Isles, was used in 1263 by Haakon Haakinson to harbour his fleet of longships en route from Norway to the battle of Largs.

On the shores of the Bay in the early nineteenth century David Balfour built the village to house his estate workers. Balfour Castle, on a slight rise above the bay and village, was built to the design of David Bryce in 1847 on the orders of David Balfour. This pretentious pile in the Scottish Baronial manner replaced the original building put to the torch in 1746 by Hanoverian Troops.

On the shore beside the pier and slipway at the end of the village street is an early example of a sea flushing toilet block. This simple and labour-saving concept catered for the needs of both sexes.

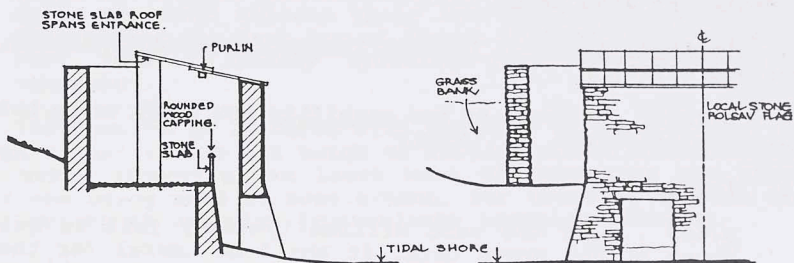
The structure is built of local stone known geologically as Rousay Flag which as the name suggests was obtainable in large flat slabs. The walls appear to be dry construction though one suspects there may have been a pat of lime mortar between slabs to position them. In the building there are only two pieces of wood, a scarce commodity in Orkney and often obtained by beachcombing. One piece extends the length of the building as a purlin to support the large stone roof 'slates'. The other piece of wood, nicely smoothed and half rounded, provides a seat or perch on top of the upright slabs forming the front of the hole extending to the beach below. The excreta was flushed away by the tides which were free to flood the area through two large apertures at beach level.

This little building has been superseded by an uninspiring but undoubtedly more convenient and sanitary one incorporating also a waiting room for the inter-island ferry boat. The original building remains as a curiosity and yet another monument to Victorian innovation and ingenuity.



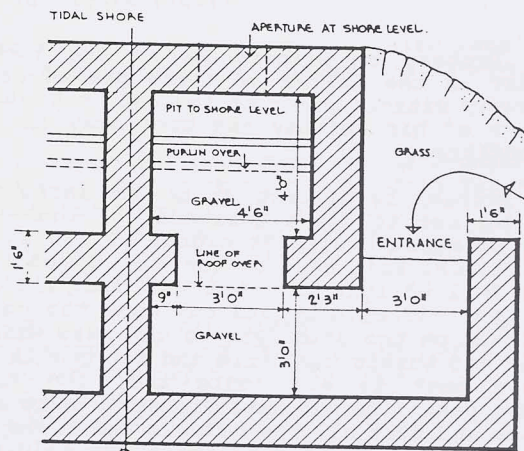
Toilet Block, Elwick Bay, Shapinsay

VICTORIAN SEASHORE TOILET BLOCK
AT ELWICK BAY, SHAPINSAY, ORKNEY IS.

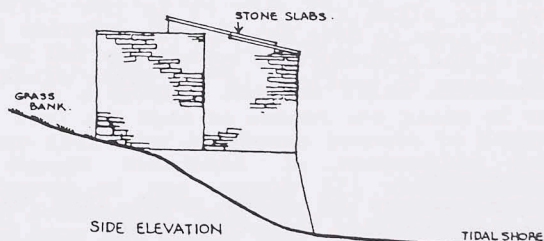


SECTION

HALF ELEVATION.



HALF PLAN.



SIDE ELEVATION

MISCELLANEOUS GLEANINGS CONCERNING EARLY HOUSE-BUILDING IN
CENTRAL SCOTLAND

compiled by John Reid⁷⁶

1. Protocol Books of Dominus Thomas Johnsoun 1528-1578, Scot
Rec Soc (1920)

p.795 ... a house of two coupillis and theik to be built on
the said acre ... [1568]

2. Ibid

p.609 ... If the said William Lyndesay fail to quit the
house at the above term, it shall be lawful for the said
William Burne to take down the house (which Lyndesay was in
occupation of) [this was in 'Burne Bray of Clarkstoun' -
location: NS9579; 1574]

From this source comes a series of entries relating to Inch of
Bothkenner, which lands now lie in Grangemouth as a consequence
of the canalisation of the Carron. These mention several
interior fittings of a sixteenth century rural dwelling.

3. Ibid

p.739 Protest by Gilbert RA in the Inche that James
Callender in the Halles of Airth passed at his own hand
wrongeously without order of law and broke down a wall with
the brace of his chimney and took away an iron crook off
the randiltree.

p.740 Protest by Gilbert Ra in the Inche that Alexander
Heuch, servant to James Callendar of the Hallis of Airth
'passit wranguslie without ordour of law at his awin hand
within Gilbert Rais hous to the said Gilbertis irn chimnay
birnand full of fyir and kest and tummyilt furth the fyir
out of the said chimnay and tuk done the cail pott quhilk
was sethand on the said fyir to the said Gilbertis servand
dennaris and turnit the caile and met quhilk was sethand in
the said pott in ane foule tub, and the said James
Callendar passit to the said Gilbertis mett awmre and thair
raif done and brak all the burdeis and treis abone the said
mett awmre at his awin quhairwith the said mett awmre was
festinet with and nalitt to'. [1566]

Iron chimneys are often referred to in the following source.
They would often seem to have been hired. However it is the lack
of permanence of the structure of houses implied in the first two
notices which seems to continue in the first extract from this.

⁷⁶ Other members of SVBWG might like to undertake a
similar exercise for other areas

4. Records of the Baron Court of Falkirk [SRO SC67/2/11]

folio 7v Ordanis Andrew Gillaspie in Carmwre [Carmuir] to build to David Wilsone thair ane duelling hous and that betwixt and the last day of August instant [this was on 23 July 1639 - thereby allowing just over a month to complete].

This last source is littered with mentions of 'over rooms' and 'laigh rooms' within the burgh of Falkirk which indicates that some urban properties at least were of more than one story. Slate was being used to some extent, for there is mention of a slate-quarry at Hallglen [approximate location: NS8978].

5. Ibid

folio 32v The quhilk day it is statute and ordanit that no persone nor persones wine any sklettis within the sklatecraige of halglen in na tymecoming without my lordis licence and warrand had and obtenit thairto Under the paine of Tuentie pundis money And that nane of the sklettis wune within the said craige all reddie and Lying thairintill be transeportit furthe thairof under the paine forsaide without Licence as saidis [1641]

Some of the fitments of the 'big house' also receive mention in the aftermath of the 'seige' by Cromwell's troops.

6. Ibid

folio 106 Compeirit also John Smithe younger mertchand in Falkirk and declairit that he bocht from Thomas Goffis sone in Redding tua singill irone staincheris and on his othe declairis that he knowis no further except Alexander Wane brocht ane old irone to him to have sold the sameine not being all with four schillings scottis.

folio 107v Compeirit Alexander Jonstowne in Beincroce Hendrie Beyge at Mumbrell mylne John Mitschell in Mumbrellis Thomas Bryssone thair and Johne Jack in Redding and Being suorne deponeit That they did not tak away noe irone graithe nor uther geir from the place of Callender and that they knew nane takine away thairfra be na uther persones.

Compeirit Robert Jonstowne smithe in Membrellis and being suorne deponeit that he had takeine away na irone graithe from the said place of Callender nor knew nane takeine away thairfra nor wrocht be him Bot that John Hart in Ridding brocht ane staincher and ane halfe staincher of irone to him to work and that he wrocht ane piece of ane band of ane doore to Alexander Jonstowne tennent to Hendrie Mykill and that George Mitschell in Membrellis brocht to him staincheris of ane warpit [?] window and that he and [blank] Johnstowne thair had ane irone breace Bot declairit that he knew not quhair they got the sameine. [1651]

From the final volume of the records [I have only indexed the first and last volumes] comes mention of what seems to be enclosed 'fore-stairs' with glass windows.

7. Ibid SC 67/2/6

folio 33 William Whyt wright in Falkirk against Mr Richard Callander portioner there, for £30 as house maill from Whit. to Mert. last and seing the fore stair with the Glass windows were sufficient at his entry Except 3 broken lozens [lozenges - see Scottish National Dictionary] And that now the ravel of the stair with the whole foir windows are turn'd ruinous through the defenders default The complainer craved that the Baillie may nominate and appoint honest neutrall men to visit the said stair Glass windows with the house within in order that they myte report the present Circumstances of the house ... [1723]

The court records also record lime being used - but for what?

8. Ibid SC67/2/1

folio 12 Decerneis the said Andrew Russell to mak payment to the said William off the soume of XVIIIss quhilk he payit for the said Andrew and at his desyre to John Wyse Item Xss that he lent him in the kirkzairde of Slamannane and VIIIss that he payit for him in Torphychane for lyme ... [1641]

[There is another mention of lime where it is clearly being brought from Torphichen to Slamannan, but I cannot track it down - it must be in one of the unindexed volumes.]

An almost contemporary notice is found for Muiravonside.

9. Ibid SC67/1/f57v

The quhilk day James Schaw Robert Forrest and John Rankeine Commissioneris of the parioche of Slamannane is dece3rnit and ordanit to mak peyment to Robert Rankeine of Middilrig quhome past furthe as ane troupper for the parioche of Slamannane the sowme of auchteine pund zit resting be thame to him of the sowme agreyit with be thame with him fot goeing furthe for the said parioche As also ordanes thame to leid hame to him ellevine leadis of lyme from Torphichen to his hous in Middilrig upone the perseweris othe ...

10. Forbes of Callendar Papers, SRO GD 170

3920 Contract of feu by James, Earl of Callendar to Hew Allane in Peaxhoill [Paxhole, Avonbridge] and Thomas Hastie there of 5s land of the ten pound land of Ballinbreich called Blakiston [Blakstone NS923731] ... reserving the liberty to win limestone [1646]

11. Register of Sasines, SRO RS83.2.10

22 ... & lands of Redding... with priviledge of winning of limestone ... [1698]

This is probably the same seam as that of a later sasine:

12. Printed Register of Sasines [Stirlingshire]

... coal and limestone in the said lands of Collochburn
[approximate location: NS9077] [1802]

Buttermilk used for Mixing Lime Wash

In the early years of this century my mother's family camped every summer somewhere along the coast between Glennan and Ascog bays on the east side of Loch Fyne. In the course of recalling episodes and observations from that time she told me that Mrs Taylor at Low Stillaig used to use buttermilk (I understood instead of water) to mix up the lime wash*. I presumed this was intended to make it stick better, but I do not know how common the practice was - I have not yet met anybody else who has heard of it. I have avoided the phrase 'white-wash' on this occasion, because the additional information was that there was some suitable clay nearby which Mrs Taylor added to the mixture which gave a pleasant primrose yellow colour to the walls.

*For her house - this was apparently an annual application.

Anne Kahane

Farm Buildings Survey, Bathgate Hills, West Lothian

Over the summer the planning department of West Lothian District Council has been employing a student, Nils White, to undertake a survey of all farm buildings in the Bathgate Hills. In addition to providing a comprehensive record, it will allow the local authority to assess properly the situation regarding redundant rural property and assist in responding to pressures for change. It is intended that the information will be indexed and stored in an easily accessible form.

Interested members should contact me at Linlithgow (0506) 843121 Ext 2161 at the Planning Department, County Buildings, High Street, Linlithgow.

Stuart A Eydmann
Design and Conservation Officer

The European Vernacular Architecture Research Unit

The European Vernacular Architecture Research Unit, under the direction of Professor G I Meirion-Jones, is based within the Geography Department at the City of London Polytechnic. It has as its remit the study of traditional vernacular buildings. A long-term multi-disciplinary study of the seigneurial domestic buildings of Brittany is its main current project, involving field-surveying, study of individual structures, archive work and dating by dendrochronology where appropriate.

The EVARU has produced its First Interim Report on The Seigneurial Domestic Buildings of Brittany, for 1983-85 (1986), edited by the indefatigable Professor Meirion-Jones. Contributions by him and four others set the scene, in terms of the above-mentioned study, and including the geographical and historical background, for further detailed work.

The principles are set out on page 57:

Although this project is concerned generally with buildings of seigneurial or comparable status in Brittany at large, hence on occasion, with the dwellings of the very great, it is principally with the houses of this middling and lesser nobility that it is inevitably most involved. So that in continuing the work now begun, as described here, especial attention will be devoted to the social evolution and economic fortunes of the numerically overwhelming majority of the Breton nobles: those of the Breton gentleman, be he medieval knight or squire, or of their later successors, the *chevaliers*, *sieurs* and *hobereaux* of the last centuries of the Ancien Regime, as the transition from medieval to modern times is charted through the development of their dwellings.

The Report is interesting, well-produced and well-illustrated.

EVARU has also published its first Occasional Newsletter (No 1, July 1987), copies of which can be got from Prof G I Meirion-Jones, EVARU, City of London Polytechnic, Old Castle Street, London E1 7NT. It outlines ongoing activities and includes lists of the publications of the participants, as well as giving references to other related research publications.

EVARU has begun well, and we welcome it, especially since it includes the possibility of directing postgraduate students in work for higher degrees in the subject. In this way, future continuity of vernacular buildings' research can be assured.

Alexander Fenton

Early Eighteenth Century Lowland Housing

compiled by Pauline Fenley

The following extract gives an Englishman's view of housing in Lowland Scotland in 1701:

Penrith

18 Sept. 1701

D^r S^r

Since my last, to which I have reciev'd no answer, I have been in the ancient Kingdom of Scotland, where my first days accommodations were So bad, that they deterr'd me from advancing farther to Edinborough as I at first intended.

The Town I din'd at goes by the name of Lanharf [?Lanark], to w^{ch} place I was forc'd over two Rivers up to my middle, for the [y] know not what a bridge is. When I came there, I found the famous Town consisted of 5 mud houses reckoning in the barns. The Kirk indeed was built of Stone, but cover'd like the rest with turf. The best house was a Tavern where I met with very good wine for an English Shilling a quart, which in Some measure made amends for the want of bread, butter, cheese & meat. As Soon as we came to the door, there issued a dirty Female without Shoose or Stockings, who it Seems was our Landlady, & being told it was the custom to kiss our hosts to make them give us the best, we desired her to wipe her mouth, & then fell to our duty. Our horses all this while Stood in the open Air, for the Stable door was So low they could not get in, and it being half uncover'd, & up to the middle in dirt (for their Sheep & calves make use of the Same Tenement) I thought 'twas better to let them eat without doors, which they did not very heartily of Some oat Straw, which was all we cou'd procure for 'em.

After Saluting our Landlady, we desired to know what victualls She could entertain us with. She told us She had geud breed & geud Wine: So She brought us into another room where there was a table, 2 Stools, & a glass window half a foot Square, a thing rarely Seen in this part of Scotland, Neither was there a house within 16 miles as we were told that had a partition like ours, which yet was no other than a curtain which hung down & parted us from the Kitchen, where there was Such a Smoke diffus'd itself that we were forc'd to feel where the glass Stood, whereby we unfortunately broak it, and were afterwards obliged to drink our wine out of the Pot.

The bread which was made of Oats was but half baked, and Standing accidentally at the door, I took notice that the butter was of 20 colours, & Stuck with hair, like Mortar, So I desired we might have the butter & hair by themselves, that I might mix them as I pleas'd my Self. I enquir'd if

they had any cheese & they had none, but She Said we might get Some at the geud Mans house, whereupon we Sent a Messenger to the Preacher, who readily return'd him with a piece of mutton, kill'd I'me confident a fortnight before. This when drest I cou'd not eat, but Stuck to my oat bread & Wine, which was all my dinner. I eat all the while in my gloves for fear of the itch, w^{ch} boldly Shew'd itself on my Landlady's fingers & legs, and put me in mind of what an Unkle Dering of mine was wont to Say, that he had been but a fortnight in Scotland, and yet had got their present State at his fingers ends. I was not So afraid of being lousie, Since tis well known, that Set a louse upon a table, & he Shall dutyfully direct his course Northward towards his Mother Country, So I was Sure if I caught any, to leave 'em behind me.

I Shall Say nothing of the Stink which both the Woman & the House favour'd us with, because the Smoke got the upperhand, & to our comfort overpowr'd it, but at first entrance I thought I Shou'd have been Struck down.

After all this, we were forc'd to thank our Lady for our good reception with another Kiss, which had certainly brought up my dinner, had not the bread been as heavy as lead in my Stomach. The bad Success of this Forenoon made me take a resolution to fly the Country, and I never look'd behind me Till I got again within the borders of England.

I Shall be to morrow at Appleby, afterwards at Kendal, Lancaster, Wiggan & Chester, where no body will be better pleas'd to hear from you than

Dear S^r

Y^r affec^t hum^{bl} Serv^t

J Percival⁷⁷ INTERESTING SNIPPETS

⁷⁷

Mark R Wenger, Ed The English Travels of Sir John Percival and William Byrd II: The Percival Diary of 1701, (1989) University of Missouri Press. ISBN 0-8262-0770-6. The diary itself is British Library: Add MS 47057.

Advance Notice

Historic Farm Buildings Group, Scottish Conference, 4-6 October 1991

The Historic Farm Buildings Group is a UK-wide organisation concerned with historical research, recording and conservation. In 1991 it will hold its annual conference in Edinburgh. The format for the conference is much the same as that of SVBWG, with a mixture of talks and excursions. As this will be the Group's first visit to Scotland, the papers will not be specific to the Edinburgh region but will cover a wide range of topics relating to Scottish farm buildings. Two excursions are proposed, one to East Lothian the other to a contrasting upland area. Non-members are welcome to attend.

For further information contact -

John Shaw
National Museums of Scotland
York Buildings
Queen Street
Edinburgh
EH2 1JD (031 225 7534 Ext 312)

Vernacular Architecture Forum

The Vernacular Architecture Forum will be holding its 1991 Annual Meeting from 15-18 May 1991 at Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA. Papers will concentrate on Southwestern (of the United States), Hispanic, Native American and Mexican vernacular architecture.

For further information on the Annual Meeting contact:

Chris Wilson
School of Architecture and Planning
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque
NM 87131

Tel: (505) 277 2903

Scottish Office Building Directorate, A Guide to Non-Traditional and Temporary Housing in Scotland 1923-1955, (Edinburgh, 1987) HMSO, 250pp, well illustrated, £19.50.

Members of the SVBWG are used to thinking of 'traditional' housing in traditional materials, and the search for survivals goes on. All the same, it is well to remember that a high proportion of the houses we live in and buildings we use today are of man-made materials and are not all intended for long-term existence. Now, for the first time we have in this present work an analytical and chronologically arranged list of such buildings, in (leaving aside the vexed question of asbestos) concrete, steel, timber, aluminium, bellrock, brick etc.

Building firms have given their names to major house types which were spread throughout the country. This entirely practical hand-book gives instructions on how to identify them, along with the broad geographical locations of the main types. In fact the report is intended to allow public authorities, building societies, engineers and surveyors to make such identifications and to provide information to them on their construction. As A Christie indicates in his Preface, many records of non-traditional houses were lost after local authority reorganisation in 1975. This Guide fills the gap. Its photographs, diagrams and clear layout make it easy to use, and it must be said that the details have far more than merely technical interest. The built environment plays such a strong role in social history that it cannot be ignored, and we are faced here with what has become a very large part of our built environment. We are looking not at traditional, regionally identifiable buildings, but at the mass-produced evidence of mobile culture, the range of types designed and distributed by building firms (marked by zonal rather than regional distributions), and behind them the pressures of central direction from both government and local authorities.

Alexander Fenton

Tone Cevc and Ignac Primožic, Kmečke hiše v Karavankah (Farm Houses in the Karawanken), (Ljubljana 1988), 252pp, well illustrated, price not known, German summary.

This is a comprehensive study of the folk architecture of the Karawanken, a mountainous, well-forested region of Yugoslavia, rising to over 2,000 metres between the Rivers Drava and Sava, with Austria (Klagenfurt) to the North. Contrasts are shown between the harsh north side and the more gentle south, not only in terms of farm houses, but also steadings, wayside shrines, and even the fences around the yards. The overall aim of the book is to identify survivals of traditional building forms and techniques, and to examine the cultural-historical contacts that have influenced the area.

The authors work through their material region by region, covering all sorts of buildings - houses, barns, granaries, grain and hay drying frames, mills, sawmills etc, as well as furniture and equipment. Typologies are worked out also, though primarily in relation to a selection of special features. The ethnic origins of the buildings are not considered here, but parallels will readily be pinpointed by anyone glancing at publications on the farm architecture of Hungary, Austria and other countries around with mountainous, forested territories. An example is the chimneyless 'smoke kitchen', with its various devices for smoke removal, though blackening above the entrance door shows where most came out. The basic approach relates to the functional needs of farming and to the effects of environmental circumstances - surely the best starting point for any such study, rather than beginning with labels like 'of German character', 'of Slovene character'.

The book is beautifully produced, with fine pictures in black and white, and in colour. There is a very adequate range of working drawings which include - a useful point - indications of how doors open. In its combination of regional variety in buildings with landscape and working operations, equipment and furniture, it provides a model we could adopt with profit.

Alexander Fenton

Grith Lerche, Bondergarde i Danmark 1789-90. Byggeskikk pa Landboreformernes tid (Farms in Denmark 1789-90. Building customs at the time of the Land Reforms), (1987), Landbohøistorisk Selskab, 269pp, well illustrated, 348 Danish kroner (available from Landbohøistorisk Selskab, Cikorievej 8, 5220 Odense SQ, Denmark).

This major work on farm buildings in Denmark has much interest for us, because the land reforms and associated agricultural and building changes and improvements took place at the time when Scotland was also in the throes of having its farming landscape remodelled. Admittedly, we did not have the forest resources for extensive use of half-timbering, as in Denmark, and their forms of timber construction lie closer to those of parts of England and Wales. All the same, what we see are responses to the same thrust towards improvement, but expressed in terms of the building materials most appropriate to the two countries.

The source is a remarkable and a rich one: an archive containing explanations for officials of the methods of building farm-houses suitable to Denmark, dated 1789-90. This is not only ably edited and discussed by Grith Lerche, but she has also taken the trouble to carry out extensive field research so that surviving examples of the building techniques specified have in many cases come under the camera lens. The original material was assembled through a circular to all Danish provinces that requested data on buildings erected as a result of the udflytning, the 'flitting

out', so to speak, from the older tight-packed farming village clusters to a much more individual form of organisation.

The book is arranged according to responses from forty-four provinces. The layout of farms, use of space, and indications of equipment (including hearths and ovens) are given in most instances. Social gradations are marked by inferior farm sizes and the nature of the building materials. It is, perhaps, inevitable in terms of the original circular that only buildings of a certain status appear. Walling and roofing techniques are clearly displayed and though the entire text is in Danish, a great deal can be absorbed from the photographs and diagrams alone. In particular, attention is drawn to the analytical explanation of terms on pages 204-222, in which the wide range of terminology is listed along with numbered diagrams that speak more clearly than words. The smoke-hole or liora of the Northern Isles will be readily identified as the same as the Danish lyre (page 211), the illustration of which also shows what in Scotland was called a skylin-board, a board on a pole moved from side to side of the smoke opening to try to improve the draught.

This book is a clear, meticulous work of scholarship and a sound monument to the massive farming improvements undertaken in Denmark just over two hundred years ago.

Alexander Fenton

A Kurucz, I M Balassa and P Kecskes, eds, Szabadterei Neprajzi Muzeumok Magyarorszagon (Open Air Museums in Hungary), (Budapest 1987), Corvina Press, 180pp plus numerous illustrations, 298 forints

This is a guide to and detailed study of all open-air museums in Hungary, though most space is devoted to the central Open-Air Museum at Szentendre (St Andrews!), a few kilometres from Budapest. In an English version, now being prepared for publication, the text concentrates on the Szentendre Museum and much interesting additional information is omitted. For that reason, this review deals with the fuller text.

The first section provides a compact history of open-air museum developments in Europe and in Hungary from the time of the exhibitions of the buildings of ordinary people at Paris in 1867 and Vienna in 1873. The Szentendre Museum came late on the scene. Its concept goes back to 1931, a survey of buildings was carried out from the 1960s, and the overall plan envisages over three hundred re-erected buildings on the site, zoned to represent the ten main regions of Hungary. It is a massive plan, as yet only partly carried out, but it is proceeding rapidly under the direction of Dr Endre Fuzes. The Upper Tisza area is complete with thirty-two buildings, the Little Plain area is nearly finished (thirty buildings so far) and West Transdanubia is well on.

Complementing Szentendre are five substantial regional open-air museums, as well as eighteen 'tajhazak', a word perhaps best translated as 'village houses'. These are houses preserved in situ in villages, carefully selected in the light of extensive research as good, representative examples. They have been conserved and restored, together with their contents, and are open to visitors who can get from them an impression of the daily life and belongings of an earlier generation, often making a marked contrast with changing conditions around them. Their active period of use is usually so recent that the present caretakers have often lived in them, and therefore have a detailed knowledge of everything in them. Such careful in situ preservation has much to commend it. The Hungarian example is worth careful study.

This guide is well supplied with clear diagrams and a good range of photographs, several in colour, that permit analysis of the range of building-types and structural features, as well as of furniture and furnishings. The examples range from farm-buildings and crofts of various sizes to wind- and horse-operated mills; there is even a cemetery of an older type with upright wooden grave 'stones'. The book provides an excellent introduction to the material culture of Hungary.

Alexander Fenton

MORE ON LOCKS

In 1984, I published, along with my colleague Colin Hendry, an article on wooden tumbler locks (Review of Scottish Culture 1 (1984), 11-28). This reviewed the Scottish evidence and put it in a wider geographical setting. As a follow up, a later issue of ROSC (4 (1988), 130-138) carries a contribution on wooden locks from Finland by an old friend, Alfred Kolekmaiven. This was a kind of foretaste for a book he has now written and illustrated with his beautiful drawings that combine artistry with technical skill. In this case metal as well as wooden locks are examined. Though the text is in Finnish, the pictures speak for themselves and there is a resume in English. Illustrations from the bulk of the book, and the subject matter ranges widely over the world.

Locks are, of course, integral parts of buildings. There are several photographs of locks in position on the doors of buildings, for Kolekmaiven's work is based on field research as much as on the study of collections where locks are no longer in their functioning context. It is a point for us to remember too: that though a number of features of buildings are detachable and collectable, we should nevertheless be concerned to establish where they fitted and how they were used. From the illustrations, it is possible to see that locks had more than functional significance. Some examples - eg from Africa - are suggestively anthropomorphic; they can have ritual significance but just as likely were made for fun. Above all, however, the range of locks shown and their variety of mechanisms, continually draw to mind the realities of human ingenuity over the centuries. It is easy to forget that technology is also part of history, flowing as it does from the mental make-up of human beings, often as an extension of the body's own moving parts in order to achieve greater effectiveness than by the movements of hands and arms, feet and legs alone. Locks like these gave more security to people in their homes, and to their stored goods. They also demonstrated the ingenuity of their makers to the world, and on occasion added a touch of decoration. They deserve and will repay further study in all their aspects.

The new book is: Alfred Kolehmainen, Lukkoperiune, Helsinki 1988. It is 175 pages, nearly all bearing photographs and drawings in black and white. It is available from the author, whose address is Nay Helijantie 12 A17, 00400 Helsinki 40, Finland, at a cost of around £5 (limp covers), plus postage.

Alexander Fenton

NORTH WEST FIFE RURAL INITIATIVE. FARM STEADINGS PROJECT
The Scottish Agricultural College, 1990

Available from the Centre for Rural Building, The North of Scotland College of Agriculture, Craibstone, Bucksburn, Aberdeen, AB2 9TR. (No price stated).

North East Fife District Council is one of several local authorities operating guidelines for steadying conversions and is one of the partners in the North West Fife Rural Initiative, a body set up to 'stimulate farm diversification and business development in this area of Fife'. The report presents their findings on how a sample of 20 steadings might be adapted to serve other uses.

The project has two stated objectives:

- a. 'to utilise these [redundant and under-used] buildings for new business ventures.'
- b. 'to prevent further deterioration of our rural architecture and heritage.'

The difficulty arises in striking the right balance between, on the one hand, economic imperative and, on the other, cultural and aesthetic value. Economic imperative, quite rightly, will always have the upper hand; farms are businesses and as such cannot be expected to sustain liabilities indefinitely. But does this justify capitalising, through conversion, on buildings which might still be considered as assets, in as much as they are still capable of being put to agricultural use?

Cultural and aesthetic value is less tangible; it is harder to argue for, it does not pay the bills. Its very nature is poorly defined. Does it reside in the finer architectural features, such as cart-bay arches and the massing of structures? Or is it to be found in the detail of fittings, functional relationships or even the general ambience, which together constitute a historical record of great richness and complexity? Without a clear understanding of these issues, and answers to these questions, attempts to save 'our rural architecture and heritage', however well intentioned, may prove to be counterproductive.

Each of the twenty sites was surveyed in plan, section and elevation and the main features photographed. North East Fife District Council was consulted on the acceptability of proposals in planning terms. The format adopted in the published report consists of an outline plan, sometimes with elevations, of the steadying as existing with a photograph and brief description. Against this is set a plan of the steadying as modified, a description of the proposal, budgets, sources of grant aid and, in most cases, a sketch of the buildings as modified.

The nature of the sites, and therefore their cultural and aesthetic value, varies considerably. At one extreme there are complete and little modified steadings of the 19th century; one

steading, Rankeillour Mains, is said to be more than 300 years old in part. Six of the sites are Listed Category B. At the other extreme are much modified structures with some recent adaptations, and individual modern buildings as at Cults. Three sites - a sawmill at Scotsraig, a joiners' shop at St Fort and a 1930s aircraft hangar at Craighead - were not built as farm steadings, but have been included in the study.

The proposed uses, which were arrived at in consultation with owners, show imagination and diversity, with a strong tendency towards tourist-related and workshop facilities, as befits this scenic rural area. It is disappointing, however, to find that no fewer than eight of the proposals envisaged conversion for housing.

The quality of the conversions and the sensitivity shown to the existing structures varies considerably. As is inevitable in almost any change of use, internal fittings and some internal walls are lost. Alterations to fenestration have been kept to a minimum as have demolitions, both external and internal, though it is not clear whether this is on economic or aesthetic grounds. The handling of glazing patterns on existing openings requires a more thoughtful approach as does the infill proposed for open archways. In one instance (the Category B Listed Montquhanie) a formal facade of some architectural distinction would be marred by the enlargement of one window to form a doorway, even though the infill proposed for two adjacent openings appears to consist of six door-like elements. At the same steading a D-shaped retaining wall would be breached in order to facilitate access to a yard, while the existing opening would be closed off.

In the majority of cases the steadings are reported to be redundant and many are in poor repair. There are, however, several steadings which are still in agricultural use, albeit at a low intensity, or which are in good structural order. The steading at Berryhill, for example, is said to play a very active role, providing stock housing, workshop facilities, bedding, feed and potato storage. The buildings are in good order, yet their owners have been granted consent for a change of use to bunkhouse accommodation.

The Category B Listed steading (and/or mill?) at Daftmill is said to be still in agricultural use, 'but the old oat house [i.e. kiln?] is virtually redundant'. In the words of the report 'arguably, this is the most characterful building of the survey; it is perhaps unique in its setting and condition'. Given this consideration, the proposal to demolish part and turn the remainder into a large, prestigious house is nothing less than alarming. Large, glazed patio doors are poked through a blind gable wall, a single storey range is heightened to two storeys and the east elevation is transformed by adapting it from three storeys to two. To add insult to injury the report concludes that 'retention of the character of this building is vitally important'!

The best proposals, in contrast, involve good, sensible and inexpensive solutions: the conversion of a cart shed and granary range at Ramornie to form stabling, at a cost of £4,500, typifies this.

Had the report's sole objective been to highlight the economic potential of farm buildings there would be little to argue with; but, given its dual objectives, it fails to give sufficient weight to cultural and aesthetic values. The fault does not lie entirely with its authors. Though broadly sympathetic, planning authorities have insufficient resources, powers or access to expertise to enable them to deter potentially harmful proposals or encourage higher standards of conservation and design. There may even be a conflict between their interests and the priorities for economic regeneration set by their authorities or by central Government.

There is a hint of more than one sub-text to the report in its conclusions. Without repairs or conversions 'Fife will be in an unenviable and embarrassing position with dilapidated steadings littering the rural landscape'. In its own words, the Report will perhaps 'inform interested parties of the resources available in rural Fife, both human and man-made. There is no shortage of useful buildings and farmers with ideas, energy and enthusiasm'. It would be a sad day if tidying up the countryside and making money from it were to become the main considerations where historic farm buildings are concerned. It is to be hoped that, at the very least, detailed surveys are prepared for those steadings about to undergo conversion, in order that vital historical evidence is not lost.

CONTRIBUTORS

W Ashley-Bartlam, born and educated in England, discovered Scotland during the War and has lived in Elgin since his demobilization in 1946. A Chartered Architect, he founded a private practice in Elgin which he enjoyed until retiring in 1982. He now spends some of his time painting, sculpting and sailing.

Alex Gilchrist has been a head teacher in a village school for over twenty years. Over the years he has become more and more concerned at the lack of interest in our educational heritage. As a result he has built up a collection of material dealing with primary schools - now under the care of Biggar Museum Trust. His recent research has concentrated on pre-1940 school buildings and on building up a collection of primary school textbooks and children's work.

Roger Leitch was born in St Andrews and graduated from Dundee University in 1978. He was a postgraduate student at the School of Scottish Studies in the University of Edinburgh from 1982 to 1985, and was awarded an MLitt in 1985. He is currently researching seasonal and temporary dwellings with Bruce Walker.

John Reid was born in Falkirk and after leaving school worked in a variety of jobs before gaining entry to Glasgow School of Art where he specialised in Ceramics. He now teaches Art in Falkirk. His interest in local history was nurtured by the late Doreen Hunter who, during the 1960s, was curator of Falkirk Museum. A founder member of Falkirk Local History Society, he served as President from 1985 until 1987. He assisted Doreen Hunter in the preparation of the first volume of the Records of the Baron Court Book of Falkirk which is to be published by the Stair Society early in 1991. Falkirk Museum intends publishing his paper on *The Stentmasters of Falkirk* within the next few months.

John Shaw is an Assistant Keeper in the Working Life Section of the National Museums of Scotland. Having trained as a historical geographer, he spent four years with Glasgow Museums before joining the National Museums in 1980. He is a former SVBWG committee member and author of *Water Power in Scotland, 1550-1870*. His current work includes research into Scottish farm buildings, the vernacular buildings of East Lothian and 1920s silage towers.

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