

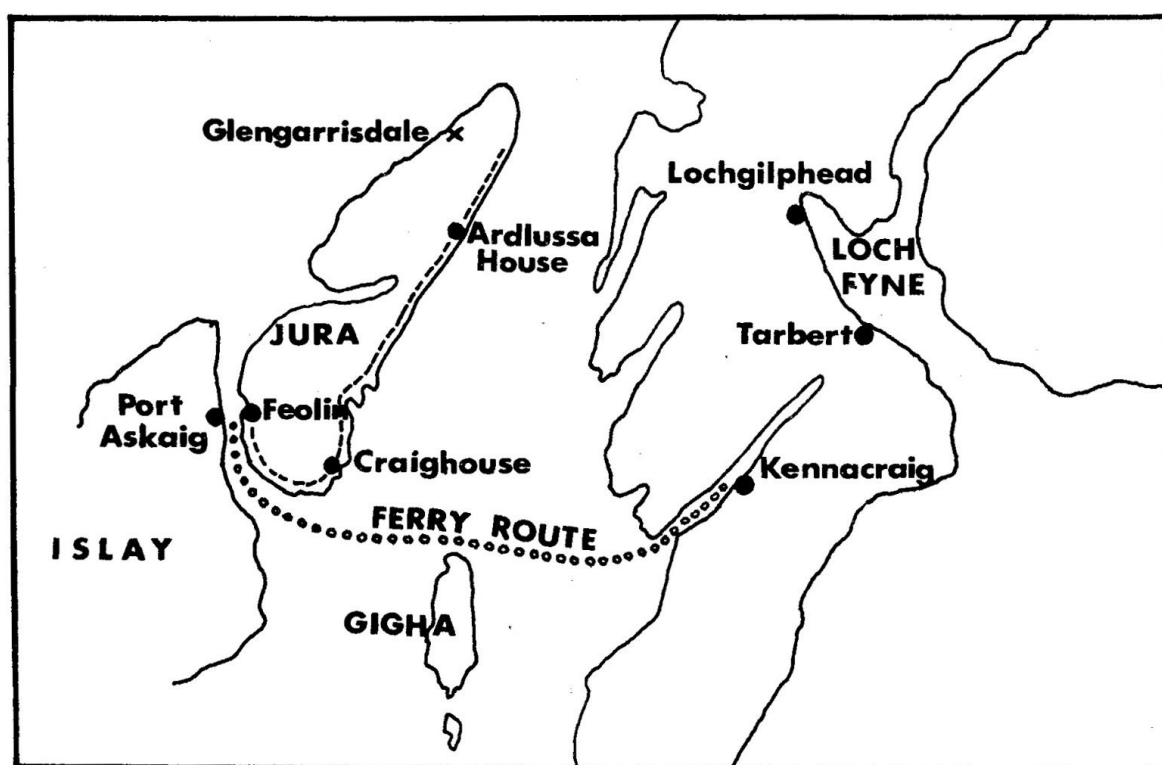
On Jura's lonely west coast

Glengarrisdale 1972 – from MBA Journals 22-24

BOTHY RENOVATION PROJECT EASTER 1972 Isle of Jura

You are cordially invited to join the MBA working party on the Island of Jura for the purpose of restoring the cottage known as Glengarrisdale. It lies in a snug corner of a sandy bay on the uninhabited west coast - an unlocked haven in the wilderness.

There is no access path! Those who join the party will have to hoof it over three miles of soggy moor. It is announced (amid cheers) that heavy materials, cement, corrugated iron, paint etc., will be delivered in advance by estate boat. Subject to the blessing of the Committee some basic foodstuffs will be provided for the workers without charge, 'à la Dibidil'. Tools provided. The bothy will accommodate the work-party. Good camp ground if required. By the time this journal goes to press the roof sheets should have crossed the sea to Jura.



As has been quoted in the National Press the MacBraynes service from West Loch Tarbert to Craighouse is likely to be withdrawn. Those wishing to go on the project are therefore advised that the services of Western Ferries Ltd. should be used.

The landrover carrying the tools and equipment will have to travel overnight from Thurso in an attempt to reach Kennacraig, Loch Fyne for departure at 9 a.m. on Saturday, 25th March for Port Askaig, Islay. A ferry boat then crosses the sound to Feolin (Jura) and so connects to the mainland service. Complete return fare approx £1.50 covers four sea journeys. Those going should take camping gear as it may well be necessary to camp on the Island, since the weather may prove unfavourable for the Estate boat to sail promptly from Ardlussa (East coast) to Garrisdale (West coast). Anyone who misses, or precedes the main party should make their way to Ardlussa House and acquaint themselves with Mrs. Nelson, the owner, who will be expecting the MBA party.

Enquire at Feolin re transport on the Island. One or two services exist, or you might be lucky and get a hitch. Only one shop on the Island, at Craighouse, your last chance to stock up with provisions.

We confidently forecast an enjoyable and adventurous trip for those who are lucky enough to get a good break as Easter. Don't miss-out on this one. Indicate your willingness to join the party now. We will keep you informed with the details of the tasks that anyone, skilled or unskilled can do, plus a do-it-yourself orienteers' route to the bothy.

Bernard & Betty Heath, Project Organisers,
From Journal 22, 1971

GLENGARRISDALE DIARY March/April, 1972

Betty S. Heath

March 1972 heralded a sudden increase in activity up here in Ultima Thule as the start of 'Operation Glengarrisdale' drew near. Tools, materials, dehydrated food and other gear were feverishly sorted and packed in readiness for departure. Prayer wheels spun vigorously as the faithful old Landrover entered our local garage for welding repairs prior to undergoing the fateful M.O.T. test, but thanks to the proprietors, Messrs. J & G. Sutherland of Halkirk, the work was completed and the test passed without delay. We were over the first hurdle! Letters came and went at an alarming rate during the weeks leading up to our departure date, Saturday March 25th, and it is feared that the Post Office was reduced to a state of chaos and despair when we finally rumbled off towards Fort William.

Early next morning we collected the cement. Eighteen double texture polythene bags each containing about 1/3 cwt (for easy handling) had been carefully packed by Neal Parrish, 'our man in Fort William' and stored in 'Sandy's cottage', the MBA warehouse at Lochy Caravan Site by courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. D. Brown. Two o'clock saw us waiting anxiously in the ferry queue at Kennacraig. Western Ferries were busier than anticipated and there was only one sailing to Jura on Sundays. Would we make it? We did, but only just! Another cliff hanger was over. Driving from Feolin to Ardlussa House, we met three of our workers, namely Antonia Meson, Julie Bloomer and Rosemary Gibson, all from Edinburgh. The Landrover was loaded to the gunwales already, so we could only take their monstrous packs and promise to pick them up later. Mr. Brian Moore, the Ardlussa boatman, made us very welcome and helped us to stow the gear in a shed to await sea transport to the bothy. Tentatively we asked if he could let us stay overnight in one of the estate barns as there was much kit sorting to be done before the 'walk in' next day. His reply was the offer of a fine cottage - fully equipped - which was gratefully accepted. Picking up the girls, who had managed to procure a lift as far as Craighouse Hotel, we returned to Ardlussa for supper. Appetites were considerable by this time, and we cheered when the girls produced three huge cod given to them by some Islay fishermen.

Monday March 27th

No chance of the boat sailing today as calm weather was required before it dared venture into the awesome Gulf of Corryvreckan. We spent the morning sorting sufficient food, gear and tools to keep us going for the next few days at the bothy. All items to follow by boat were finally checked over in the shed, and with cottage tidied we headed towards the north end of the island in the 'Rover'. En route we stopped to leave word of our intentions with the boatman, now busy about the estate, who promised to sail as soon as he could safely do so. Parking the vehicle in an old quarry some few miles up the narrow road, we struggled into our heavy packs and took to the moors at three o'clock in the afternoon. The showers gave way to sunshine, and when we reached the high standing Loch a' Gheoidh and its neighbour, their waters reflected the blue of the sky. Following the swift flowing Glengarrisdale burn, we descended steeply into a green valley, its sides clothed with rich brown heather. Here and there appeared the gold of an occasional bracken patch, the fens still crisp and dry from the previous winter. Cameras clicked

and whirled as the three girls stepped it out across the large stone-dyked field which lies to the east of the bothy. Beyond was the bay of Glengarrisdale itself with its fine strand and rolling sea. Away to the west the distant mountains of Mull.

The time was now 4.30 p.m. so the trip had taken $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Somewhat less than we had estimated. Packs were off and tea was on thanks to Dave Norgate, a member of the Rough-Stuff Fellowship. He had cycled literally all the way from Bangor and had preceded us to the bothy, bicycle and all, by at least a week. During this time, he must have walked many a weary mile carrying load after load of long timbers and firewood, if the huge pile in the 'cycle shed' was anything to go by. Fortified by the brew and inspired by Dave's efforts, all six of us walked over to the bay to the south, Bagh Gleann Speireig, for yet more. Good planks were set aside for roof ladders and possible repair work. One heavy timber was pressed into service right away as a bridge across the Glengarrisdale burn. While engaged in this operation, we noticed a large solid-looking fire-basket which seemed to have been purposely 'built' into the ground on the river bank. Perhaps this was where they heated the water for the washtay? someone suggested. (As it happened, they were later to be proved right.) Since the bothy firegrate in right-hand room was disintegrating, we decided to recover this one and build it in at the first opportunity. A quick survey in the left-hand room as you face the front of the bothy, revealed that the wooden fire surround had parted company with the wall. As it was already on its way out so to speak, it received further assistance. Another job for a rainy day, we thought as it was dropped in a corner out of the way.

Tuesday March 28th.

A day of fine sunny weather but as this was accompanied by strong winds all hope of the boat coming was written off. We spent the time clearing out the dead plant life of many seasons from the



An aerial view of Glengarrisdale bay, © and courtesy of Iain Thornber

gravelled drainage ditch at the rear of the bothy, and in searching for sand for the future cement mixing. Some small deposits were found by the burn, but as this was fairly high we soon removed what remained about the water line. The bulk was taken from what had been the foundations of an old corrugated iron shed also situated near the burn. A few sheets were salvaged from this and were immediately pounced on by Bernard, who, assisted by Dave, transported them to the stable adjoining the bothy and there constructed a fine cubicle within one of the wooden stalls. All we needed now was the loo to go inside, but this was still to come by boat.

Scratching about in the earth covered floor near the door of this building, it was discovered that a concrete 'walk' had been laid. It would be most useful for our cement mixing purposes, so excavations were continued until the concrete area was completely cleared. We were just building the fire up for a brew of tea when Ros Manser and friend (also Ros) appeared at the door. They were glad to see a cup of char after the carry across the moor. The party now numbering eight made another journey to the bay collecting wood and were rewarded by a fine view of the island of Colonsay. We spent a while there, engrossed in the fascinating pastime of beachcombing and

hardly aware of the deer who watched curiously from their vantage points on the crags above. Eventually we staggered back with large loads which included fish boxes (these make ideal furniture), goat skulls, double handled fishing baskets and other assorted 'finds'. Soon the fire was crackling and the Primuses roaring as various suppers were prepared. 'Cerola' and 'Vesta' must have done a roaring trade judging by the number of packets filling the ingle neuk in readiness for use as future firelighters.

Wednesday March 29th

A morning of calm and sunshine raised our hopes for the boat once again. The seas were quiet, and no longer hurled themselves against the forefoot of Scarba. Sand, which had originally been stored in the bothy, was moved to the stable and two of the girls went off to the bay for more wood. Meanwhile the other three selected timber for two roof ladders which they planned to make. Some items of food were running low, and there seemed little more we could do without the tools. Anxious glances were cast across the bay from time to time but there was no sign of the boat. We ceased to look for it after 5 p.m. and concentrated on chopping up the large amount of wood which had accumulated in the stable.

Thursday March 30th

Yesterday's fine weather had given way to mist and drizzle. This coupled with our state of enforced idleness, brought to a head the already considered possibility of a trip to Ardlussa for supplies of tools and food. So two of us left the bothy shortly after 10 a.m. reaching Ardlussa about 1 p.m. Over a very welcome cup of tea, Mr. Moore explained to us his reason for being unable to sail the day before. While testing the boat - recently overhauled - in Ardlussa bay, the engine failed due to a fault in the fuel system. An early morning visit to Islay, from which he returned as we arrived, had resulted in the acquisition of a spare part which he intended to fit that afternoon. Provided the weather held, we knew that he would do his best to sail the following day. He obligingly rowed us out to the boat, now loaded in readiness and lying at anchor, so that we could collect some essentials and return to the bothy. When we finally set off with, among other things, some nails, hammers, paint and brushes, we were accompanied by Neal Parrish and his dog, Wit. They arrived just as we disembarked from the dinghy. The redundancy at Glengarrisdale and the bad weather ended with our return. The girls, armed with the long-awaited hammers and nails soon completed their roof ladders then joined Neal and Dave in applying undercoat to the thirsty woodwork of windows and doors.

Friday March 31st

The weather was perfect and we were cheered by the near certainty that Mr. Moore would sail that afternoon. Another coat of primer went into the exterior woodwork first thing in the morning, and was followed by a coat of French Grey as soon as it had dried. A wooden shuttering was prepared to hold the cement coping in position on the gable ends, and a large rubbish pit (or pond?) dug in the sandy ground nearby. Into this went the mountain of tins, laboriously flattened by Dave which had accumulated in the stable over the years. The three Edinburgh girls departed this morning accompanied by Neal and 'Wit'. Neal intending to return with the boat plus some more of his kit. We had just eaten a late lunch when the familiar black hull of the estate boat crept into view from behind an outlying line of rocks. We stared disbelieving for a moment, then dashed down to the bay to give what assistance we could with the difficult business of landing the precious cargo.

Initially the boat tied up alongside a rugged promontory which jutted seawards from the bay, becoming an island at high tide, but the boat was obviously taking some punishment while juddering against the cruel rock and Mr. Moore decided to lie offshore instead. He and the shepherd, Peter Campbell ferried load after load of corrugated iron, cement, tools and supplies to the beach where the rest of us waited anxiously to receive them. Slipping and slithering on

the seaweed-strewn boulders, we hurriedly dumped our loads out of reach of the fast encroaching tide and rushed back again for another. Fortunately, due to the odd lull in this period of frantic activity, it was possible to do a little filming, which has since proved successful. Eventually, Neal himself was brought ashore accompanied by a disgusted dog who was forced overboard to swim for the last few yards. Swiftly the boat drew away, her mission accomplished. We waved and shouted our goodbyes to the two Ros's who had decided to sail with her, their holiday over. No doubt they would find their ensuing voyage through the Gulf of Corryvreckan to be an awe-inspiring experience.

Now that all was still again, we returned to the task of carrying the monstrous pile of materials to the bothy. Happily, this was considerably lightened by the timely arrival of four Edinburgh hikers who offered their services without a moment's hesitation. Great indeed was the brew-up which followed its completion! Later that evening, after a gargantuan meal, a shelf made from sea timber was put up in the kitchen - the right-hand room.

Saturday April 1st.

Heavy rain and hills enshrouded by a dank uncompromising mist dictated the terms this morning. Two rickety chairs were repaired, the base of the outside door strengthened, and the clearance of an inner door adjusted. The fireplace surround in the left-hand room was painted and odd holes in the walls of the downstairs rooms were patched where necessary with cement. These were then whitewashed. That afternoon the main timbers of the roof received two coats of Cuprinol Woodworm Killer and the kitchen cupboard painted. The four hikers who had stayed overnight each brought back a huge load of wood from the bay.

Sunday April 2nd

Wet and windy again this morning. The hikers departed reluctantly into the heavy rain, sorry that their holiday had come to an end. The roof tins were brought into the bothy, propped against the walls of the now empty left hand room, and painted on one side only by the boys. Further rubbish from the surroundings of the bothy was cleared into the pit and both front and rear windows received their second coat of paint. John Wallace, of Liverpool, arrived at lunchtime after a marathon drive, bringing with him a change for the better in weather. He and Neal turned their attention to demolishing the old kitchen grate and installing the rather fine one recovered from the banks of the burn, the cement work being left to harden while they went for more wood. Pointing up of the L.H. gable end and chimney was completed and with it the work for that day. The 'new' firegrate was declared 'open' that evening and gave faithful service thereafter.

Monday April 3rd

The fine weather we were waiting for came at last. Noisy yawns from the kitchen indicated that Wit had surfaced and was waiting to be let out. He proved to be an efficient rouser of working parties by getting everyone astir within the next fifteen minutes. The fire crackled merrily in its new basket. Kettles sang, porridge bubbled, bangers banged and bacon sizzled. Breakfast over, work on the roof started in earnest. Ladders were positioned and crow bars wrenched protesting drive-screws from their holes. The old tins slithered slowly down on to the grass leaving the underlying insulation felt undamaged, and the concrete capping around the chimneys was chiseled off to allow the new sheets to fit snugly. Before the last of the old tins fell to the ground, the first of the new sheets were well established, John cutting them where necessary to accommodate the chimney. It should be mentioned at this stage that we had decided after much deliberation to leave the original cement copings untouched due to their fine appearance and to add new ones alongside, using the originals as a guide to work to. The two skylight units, i.e. windows already incorporated into corrugated iron sheets, were positioned without difficulty, and the final section of ridge iron nailed into place before supper.

A great feeling of relief pervaded the bothy that evening. The job we had really come to do was almost completed and we relaxed by the fire listening idly to the steady patter of rain outside.

Tuesday April 4th

A morning of grey skies and showers. The fireplace surround in the L.H. room was at long last securely nailed into new douks, and the first shuttering frame lifted into place on the seaward gable end and filled with cement. Angus Speirs, Alan Wilson, and Ian Mitchell arrived in the afternoon just as the weather cleared. They reported having met John, who had left for home shortly after breakfast. Whitewashing of the outer walls commenced right away. This job involved more or less everyone and continued happily until dark.

No article about Glengarrisdale bothy can be complete without reference to Ian Mitchell's long service as Maintenance Organiser for Glengarrisdale bothy. Ian took on the job in 1976, not long after Maintenance Organiser posts were created and he still serves, well supported by his wife Christine. Ian and Glengarrisdale bothy are the longest M.O./bothy partnership in the MBA - truly remarkable service, for which the MBA is grateful. Thank you Ian and Christine.

Wednesday April 5th

After a spell of fine drizzle, the skies cleared enabling us to give the roof its second coat of paint. Neal replaced the damaged glass in one of the skylights with three overlapping sections of perspex bedded into putty, but this was not as simple as it sounds. The masking paper refused to part company with the perspex, and a protracted and purgatorial hour or two ensued during which all available solvents, including hot water, were tried to no avail. The wretched staff had to be picked off, inch by inch with a pocket knife. An old chimney can, found in the stable, was resurrected once more into its former position and another coat of whitewash applied to the outer walls. Inside the kitchen fireplace surround was painted and also the interior window sill together with its surrounding woodwork. A chain from which to hang cooking pots was fixed to the firebar in the L.H. room and a cooking grid was made from old fence wire.

Thursday April 6th

Brilliant sunshine early this morning afforded a fine opportunity to take a frontal view of the newly whitewashed bothy. Thanks to the Wit alarm system it was not missed. This system however had already operated at the unearthly hour of 3 a.m., much to our disgust! Wakened by the rattling of billy cans followed by mysterious rustling noises and grunts, we decided to investigate. Next door a dog sat on the stone floor gazing dejectedly at his flooded basket. A pan of water sitting on a nearby fish box had upset when he stirred in his sleep. With the aid of old sacks and newspaper etc. the trouble was soon rectified and the unfortunate beast reinstated. The shuttering frame was removed from yesterday's cement work, and the finishing touches put to the first coping by Angus and Bernard. Neal and I kept the roof team supplied with cement as they worked on the three remaining copings, while others completed the paintwork on the roof sheets. Mrs Nelson arrived about midday to find us in the midst of all this activity, escorted by her young companion, Hamish, and Misty, a lively Westie. No doubt she shared our feeling of relief on seeing for herself that the roof was once more safely in position, and the elements held at bay. The changeable weather had caused a considerable delay in the proceedings, and had given us cause for anxiety over the past twelve days.

After a tour of inspection, both inside and out, she asked if we had come across MacLean's Skull during our stay. Regarding the skull as a mythical feature, and attributing the name on the map to one of the islets in the bay, we had never bothered to search for it. When she told us that it did in fact exist, and offered to lead us to its resting place, new interest awakened and we followed eagerly. Reaching into a recess below a large boulder, she produced the grisly

item, together with some limb bones whose size seemed to indicate that they had belonged to two young people in their mid-teens. The skull itself, bleached by years of weathering, displayed a long gaping hole, such as would be caused by a blow from the Claymore - the huge two-handed Highland sword. The owner of the skull, reputed to be a young Maclean of Lochbuie from the neighbouring island of Mull, possibly met his death while out on a cattle raiding foray to this part of Jura. Replacing the bones carefully, for to take them from Glengarrisdale is to lose one's peace of mind, we returned to the bothy for a simple meal of biscuits, cheese and tea. Misty sniffed disinterestedly at the biscuit offered to him, but had second thoughts when the cheese appeared. He snapped up the first piece with gusto, and finally took to the moor with the best part of four ounces tucked under his sporran! Doubtless he set a spanking pace all the way back to Ardlussa.

The sense of urgency had abated somewhat, and a group of four or five set off to explore the rugged coastline which stretches away towards the ever beckoning Scarba. Bernard carried a load of tools out to the Landrover while I painted the door giving access to the L.H. room, also its window sill and surround. That evening, a fine set of antlers with skull attached - found by the coastal exploration party - was mounted above the door. Below this, on the door itself, we fixed the MBA disc.

Friday April 7th

A fine sunny morning saw Neal, Angus, Bernard and I walking out to the Landrover with surplus food, kit and tools. Neal decided to try out a return route (less boggy than the usual one) which had been recommended by the shepherd, while Angus made a long, circuitous trek involving a part of the coast he was anxious to visit. Back at the bothy, Ian and Alan painted the hall and whitewashed the doorway. The window sill in the kitchen received a second coat, together with the fireplace surround in the L.H. room. Part of the panelling plus the kitchen door were also painted and a general tidy-up followed. Later on, we got a big fire going and Bernard let the uninitiated into the secret of Spotted Dick making. These proved very popular indeed, and the 7lb bag of pancake mix shrank noticeably in size.

Tailpiece: Wit was washed out once again, this time by piping hot vegetable soup which flowed into his basket after being accidentally dislodged from a Primus stove.

Saturday April 8th

We rose at 6 a.m. to the sound of heavy rain, and felt a certain lowering of the spirit prompted by our impending departure. After a quick breakfast, a big packing session, and a final check-up, we left Glengarrisdale in its quiet setting. A glen whose silence would be broken only by the muted chuckle of the burn and the lonely call of the curlew. It poured down throughout the trek to the Landrover, which we reached at 11.30 a.m. Back at Ardlussa, we emptied gallons of water out of our boots and changed into dry socks and shoes. Mrs Nelson kindly entertained all of us, except Dave who was anxious to cycle on to Feolin, to a most delicious meal of home-baked scones and coffee. Feeling much more like tackling the long journey home, we said Goodbye to Mrs Nelson and thanked her for all her help and hospitality which she extended to us not only while we were on the island, but also during the period during which the project was being planned. Neal saw us off in our various cars and vans before returning to the bothy for a further two days solitary vigil.

Driving down to Feolin Ferry amidst heavy rain, we looked hard for signs of Dave battling along on his loaded bike. He was within three miles of the pier when we eventually spotted him, but time was running out so we put the bike on the roof rack and drove on with Dave inside. We had hoped to get some tea at Port Askaig Hotel while waiting to board the mainland ferry, but our luck was out. Rather than do without, we brewed our own in the back of the Landrover, conscious meanwhile of the wistful glances of frozen Easter tourists.

Reaching Kennacraig at 6 p.m., we parted finally as a group, Bernard and I driving to Tarbert in search of a cafe. No sooner had we ordered our meal when Dave pedalled up and joined us for tea. He was intending to cycle all through the night in an effort to reach his home at Morecambe on Sunday evening. To help him on his way, we decided to drive to Fort William via Inveraray instead of taking the Oban route.

During Mrs Nelson's visit to Glengarrisdale, she had told us a little about the history of the bothy, mentioning that Alan and Jeannie McKechnie with their family of six had been the last people to live there. They had left the place about 1935, and were now living in the tiny village of Furnace near Inveraray.

Quite suddenly we passed a road sign marked 'Furnace'. "Come on," I said to the others, "We're going to see Alan and Jeannie. It'll only take a West Highland minute!" Local enquiries soon led us to a quiet little street where some new cottages had been built. The next person we asked was none other than Alan himself and the name of his house was "Glengarrisdale!" Within seconds we were inside, telling our story and sharing their memories of the place which had been their first home after their marriage.



At the 1972 Glengarrisdale workparty, from the MBA archive/50th Anniversary book, with fewer health & safety concerns at that time

Over a big 'dram', a grand cup of tea, home-made scones, biscuits, cheese and cakes (we were dismayed that they insisted on going to so much trouble) we heard how the washing water was heated in the big iron pot by the burn side, about the monthly pony and sledge treks across the moor for stores, the peat cutting at the back of the bothy, the old well half way between house and burn, the hay store in 'Fletcher's Cave' across the bay, the small neighbouring cottage - now ruined - which was built by shepherd, Duncan MacFarlane with his own hands, of how the children, now married and living nearby, used to play with MacLean's Skull, and of how Glengarrisdale had come by its name, this stemming from the fact that a garrison had at one time been based in the glen.

This most unexpected and purely coincidental visit seemed to be the real climax of the whole project. Perhaps it was Alan's parting words that made the whole endeavour seem so very worthwhile. "My wife is only beginning to recover after being very ill, but your visit's done more for her than anything that ever came out of a bottle."

Glengarrisdale Workparty

Ros Manser and Friend	Birmingham	Four Edinburgh hikers	
David Norgate	Morecambe	Neal Parrish and Wit	Fort William
John Wallace	Liverpool area	Ian Mitchell	Rosyth
Angus Spiers	Foyers	Alan Wilson	Glasgow
Rosemary Gibson	Edinburgh University	Antonia Meson	Edinburgh
Julie Bloomer	Edinburgh University	Bernard & Betty Heath	Thurso

Neal Parrish was MBA Chairman 1973 - 1978; Angus Spiers was General Secretary 1972 - 1974; Ian Mitchell was Membership Secretary 1972 - 1975. Bernard & Betty Heath's contribution to the MBA over many years and in many roles is well-known and was marked by the award in 1991 of British Empire Medals for services to outdoor recreation.

Materials Taken to Glengarrisdale

44 x 6' sheets corrugated iron; 44 x 7' sheets corrugated iron; 7 x 6' ridge iron; 12lbs drive screws; 100 plastic washers; 6 cwts cement (2 cwts left over at site); 1 cwt whitewash (18lbs left over at site); Chemical Toilet (at site); 3 gals red paint; 5 gals Cuprinol Woodworm Killer.

Communal Food Supply

400 teabags; 9 x 1 lb tins Golden Syrup; 14 lbs sugar; 7 lbs Pancake Mix; 10 galls dried milk; 7 lbs Marmalade; Large tin Dried Potato; 2 gall packets Dried Soup; 4 lbs Dried Fruit; 18 packets digestive biscuits; 144 Ship's biscuits; 2 galls Paraffin; 1% Pints Meths.

The above items, though not consumed in their entirety, proved most useful at the bothy. But for these, some workers would have been obliged to absent themselves for at least a day in order to travel to distant Craighouse - the nearest and only source of groceries etc. Most of the tea brews - and these were legion - drew from the communal stores, and the mammoth supply of biscuits (no survivors) enabled workers to enjoy a quick snack without the time-consuming chore of preparing dried food.

Donations amounting to £3 towards the communal food supplies were received from Mr and Mrs Tonkin and Dave Norgate.

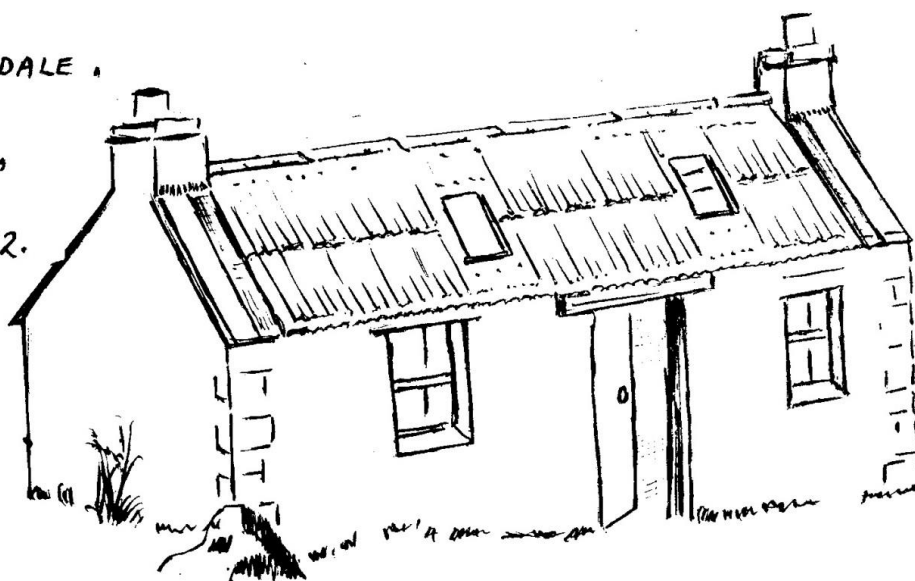
From Newsletters 22 - 24, 1971 - 72

With thanks to members Denis Mollison and Iain Thornber for providing the source material for this article. MacLean's skull disappeared in the 1980s. Iain Thornber will be pleased to hear from anyone who has any information about the disappearance or current whereabouts of the skull.

GLENGARRISDALE .

RE ROOFED,

EASTER, 1972.



Bothy Maintenance Workparty Report

Bothy renovation projects are nearly always hard work, there is usually a lot of work to do, materials to handle and so on. Hard work, but fun and enjoyable also. The hard work is not always so evident on bothy maintenance workparties as the following report illustrates:

Glengarrisdale Jubilee Escape Weekend

Ian Mitchell

The weekend got off to a good start with the organisers missing the boat on Friday evening by a wide margin. Those who were there – on board and on time – were surprised when they set sail without us. They hadn't heard the messages being conveyed to the Captain of the 'Gemini' from the Mitchell family who were still 30 miles away, having been delayed by fish suppers in Arrochar. Mike already had a full boat load so all went smoothly as all the Dixons and Brockies landed in Glengarrisdale Bay and won a pitch inside the bothy, leaving the Mitchells dossing in their van besieged by clouds of ravenous midges.

Mike was prompt at Crinan harbour the next morning to pick up the stragglers, two of Trevor Cotton's party arriving at the very last minute from the luxury of their campsite on the lawn of the Crinan Hotel. Acrobat tea was served as we crossed towards Corryvreckan and we and the whitewash were soon to be helped ashore by the inhabitants of the bothy.

The big problem now was how to keep 21 workers happy when there really was not much work needed. Even the whitewash was looking good from two years before, but with some effort we found some flaky bits and decided it must get another coat. With great determination we took turns alternating between loafing about and whitening each other. Hugh soon retired, suffering from flesh eating lime foot, and gradually others succumbed to other attractions like searching for driftwood. Here a significant 'first' occurred when Dave Dixon found a piece of timber that was too heavy for him to carry. Many people found amusement, pleasure and relief from Peter King's patent clip nip and twist tick extractor which was soon in constant use.

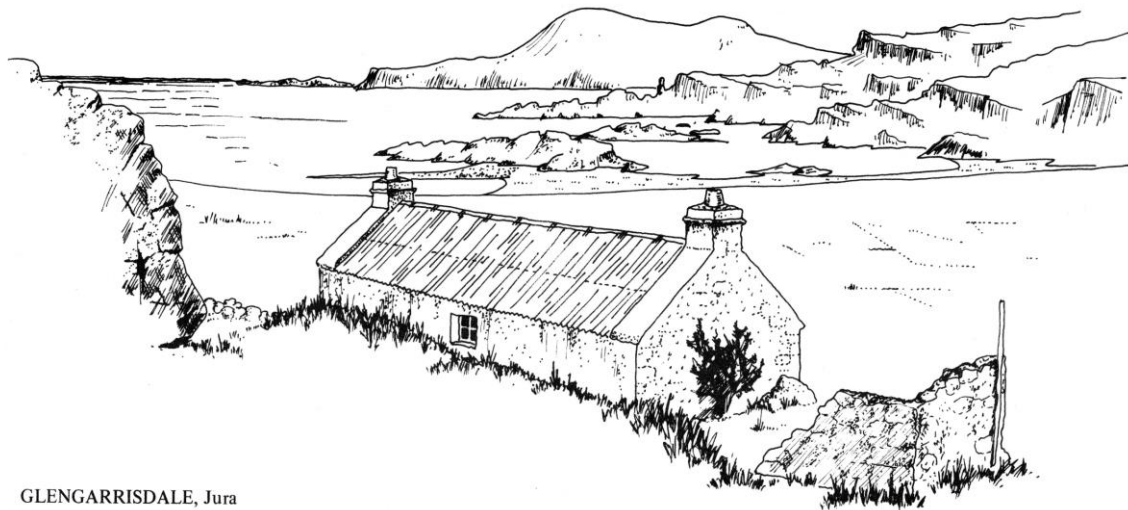
Just as boredom was about to set in, our attention was caught by three men in a tiny rubber dingy drifting about a mile offshore in quite choppy looking water. John Bowness was denied the opportunity to summon international rescue when their outboard motor spluttered back into life and they beached next to our tented village on the machair. They were weighed down with plastic barrels full of beer and little else. It seemed that they were on an annual cruise down the coast, based on providence more than anything else.

After all the excitement of the day we settled down to a very convivial evening, entertained by John with his accordion and Trevor on the bodhran.

Sunday morning and most of the work was finished. We turned our hand to cleaning the beach and giving the bothy a good tidy up. This was a great success and produced results well in excess of the effort put in, although we failed to fill the gigantic hole excavated single handed by Dave in less than an hour. Stewart and friends, worried that their rations might not last, disappeared into the hinterland with rods and lines. Their expedition returned with fresh main courses and starters for the evening meal. The Brockies led a party consisting mainly of other Brockies up Ben Garrisdale, encountering wild goat herds and deer by the hundred. Trevor led a group of unsuspecting low-level explorers northward to see the Gulf of Corryvreckan and the famous whirlpool. Many hours later they limped back after visiting every bay and headland on the way out, and paying homage to George Orwell's cottage at Barnhill. Some food and rest restored sufficient energy for the continuation of the previous night's entertainment, which only moved into top gear after the most law-abiding citizens had retired. John and Trevor again stole the early limelight with music, song, and tall tales, followed by 'songs from the shows' compered and largely performed by Alan with enthusiastic support from the surviving revellers. A night to remember.

Monday opened slowly with a blanket of grey cloud after a night of heavy rain, but before long the cloud withdrew in a straight line like a blind being drawn, revealing blue sky and soon pleasant sunshine. A small team finished whitewashing on the north gable and another squad whitened walls inside, brightening the left-hand room a lot. We had a good look at the fireplace in this room and pointed up the back of it, finding that the stone flue looked very rustic all the way up. We'll have to think of putting a flue liner and possibly a stove in.

The MO reflected on 30 years association with the bothy, having taken part in the final two days of the original MBA renovation project in 1972. One of the present party, Hugh Mackay, was last seen in 1977 at one of the regular workparties to repaint the old corrugated iron roof before the dazzling vermillion red aluminium sheets were fitted in 1998. In all these visits a full measured survey of the building had never been done, an omission put to right by crawling around in the attic, hanging from the chimneys, and hacking through the brambles and nettles outside. John took GPS readings to fix positions of some of the more distant points. We were comparing the surroundings with the 6" Ordnance Survey Plan dated 1900, three quarters of which was simply marked 'Atlantic Ocean'.



GLENGARRISDALE, Jura

Drawn by Alistair Dickson, from the 1980 MBA Calendar

The more energetic folk down on the beach shouted for the old timers that sports day was starting. 5-a-side football was followed by rounders where the bounds were the sea on one side and a boulder field, leading to bracken, on the other. Relaxing after all the exercise, we spotted a boat coming into the bay with someone on board trying to attract our attention – chaos, the Gemini had broken down and Mike had arranged two relief boats which had come earlier than expected. The arrival on foot of a school party from Wales added to the confusion as we cleared up our gear. Howard was still down at his tent cooking a meal and blissfully unaware of imminent departure. The school children helped move tents, tools and rucksacks down to the boat landing and formed part of a human chain loading it on board. Soon Glengarrisdale was a brilliant spot of colour below a very grey sky and dark hills. Our thoughts were mainly contemplating all the bits of kit left behind – and the memory of a nice piece of graffiti, now disappeared.

*I must go back to Garrisdale
To the lonely sea and sky
I left my socks and trousers there
I wonder if they're dry?*

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