

Walking Through History

Come with me for a walk along the shores of the Kyles of Bute, from the village of Tighnabruaich to Caladh, (Part I), then from Tighnabruaich through Auchenlochan to Kames and around the Ardlamont peninsula to Millhouse and back to Kames, (Part II). We will see some of the beautiful scenery in this part of Argyll and find out interesting facts about the development of the area in the 19th and early 20th Centuries and some of the people who have been associated with it and who have lived here.

As many as possible of the photographs have been taken from postcards or other contemporary sources. A great deal has changed over the years and changes are still going on yet much can be seen as it was up to 150 years ago. That is what makes the area interesting and attractive to visitors.



Map of South Cowal, 1801, by George Langlands

The map is geographically inaccurate but shows the hamlets and steadings in the right order. Note that Tighnabruaich does not appear and there is no 'big hoose' at Inans, (*cf* *Ardnamont, Acharossan and Ormidale*).

Walking Through History

Part 1, Tighnabruaich to Caladh

Where did the name Tighnabruaich come from? The name means House-on-the-Hill or House-on-the-Knoll in the Gaelic but where was the original house? It is not mentioned on Johannes Blaeu's map of 1654 nor on George Langlands' map of 1801 although both maps show a string of clachans along the E. side of the shore of the W. Kyle from Point north-wards, including Kildaveag, Achahadchoun, Corachra, Blair's Ferry, Kames, Auchenlochan, Innans, Rhubaan and Caladh, (to give them their modern spellings). Langlands' map shows big houses at Ardlamont, (John Lamont, Esq.); Ormidale, (G. Campbell, Esq.) and Acharossan, (Col. G. MacFarlane, Esq.) but there is no mention of a 'big hoose' on the Kyleside. Marian Pallister, (*Villages of Southern Argyll*), tells us that in 1773 the estate of Innans was sold by the Maclachlans to John Moody, who built a Georgian mansion thereon; perhaps he demolished the original House-on-the-Hill, or so-named his new house but either way the name apparently did not survive in 1801.

An entry in the General Register of Seisines, dated April 17th, 1804, refers to Isobel Moody, the widow of John Williamson, a Shipmaster of Greenock as joint heiress with her sister, Helen, of their brother John Moody, in the 3½ merk land of Over Inins. Another entry, dated April 6th, 1839, refers to Agnes Williamson, spouse of Arthur Scoular residing at Over Inins, (and presumably John Williamson's grand-daughter), receiving seisine of the estate on March 21st, 1839, '....under burden of a liferent annuity of £35 to her sister, Ruth Williamson.' This was before The Married Womens' Property Acts, of course, so Arthur Scoular acquired absolute title to the estate. It also shows his connection to the Williamson ship owning family which must have informed his knowledge of the forth-coming local property boom of the mid-nineteenth century following the development of steamships.

A Naval Survey of the Upper Clyde carried out between 1846 and 1848, published in 1853, shows two small buildings beside the burn with the word 'Bruaich', but this is not where the mansion house would have been - it occupied the site of the present Tighnabruaich House. The buildings shown on the chart are more nearly where Burn Bank is, first referred to in 1881 but known to be much older. It sits on an elevated knoll in an area where Tighnabruaich was mentioned in earlier Censuses – could this be the original House-on-the-Bank, not actually used as a house name, perhaps, because house names do not appear in the earlier Censuses, but purely as a reference to its location in the commonly-spoken Gaelic?

The National Censuses were carried out under the heading 'Parish of Kilfinan' which covers a large part of Cowal, was originally set up under the aegis of the Abbey of Paisley and contained a number of clachans. On the West or Kerry Kyle, the first **Census in 1841** started at Corachra, continued through Blair's Ferry, Kames and Auchenlochan, then Lower and Upper Innans, Rhubaan and Caladh going northwards, then Tighnabruaich, the occupants of which were Robert McKellar, 25, (ferryman); Catherine, 50, (his mother?); daughter Mary, 2 and John Crawford, 12. No house names were recorded, unless this reference to Tighnabruaich was indeed a house, in which case the placing of it after Caladh would seem to indicate a return by the Enumerator because later Censuses appear to place it around the area of the present Tighnabruaich Hotel. Amongst names listed in Upper Innans were Arthur Scoular and his wife Agnes, both aged 30. Arthur Scoular was born in Cambusnethan, Lanarks; Agnes (Williamson) was born in Greenock but had inherited the estate of Inans and presumably the 'Georgian Mansion', as mentioned earlier.

The 1851 Census placed the Scoulers and most other residents in 'Innins', naming only 'Ruban' and 'Colea' otherwise but went on to Kames without mentioning Auchenlochan.

The 1861 Census placed the Scoulers in Over Innans and listed many of the current houses, some of which were built as second homes for Glasgow business men on land feued by Arthur Scouler since 1853. Legal documents at this time refer to the estate of 'Over Innans' and Arthur Scouler as 'Proprietor'. Rhubaan and Caladh were still mentioned but Tighnabruaich occurs in three different places although this may have been because the Enumerator went back, out of sequence.

The 1871 Census was the first to refer to Tighnabruaich as a 'Village' in the heading and mentioned properties from the Royal Hotel to Rhubaan Lodge along the shore and in the hinterland, with many of the house names still in use today. Arthur Scouler was placed in 'Tighnabruaich House', (not the present one), and the Census concluded with 'End of the village of Tighnabruaich' in the Enumerator's hand but added Corachra Farmhouse and 'End of Corachra', away down the Kyle towards Carry.

The Censuses are carried out around the end of March/beginning of April every ten years. There was a Postmistress in 1871 so there was probably a Post Office in the 1860s; this might have been named 'Tighnabruaich', to show the scope of the postal district. On the other hand, Arthur Scouler might have used the name as a marketing ploy for his expanding development of the area. The 1881 Census recorded a Postmaster and a Telegraph Clerk; Tighnabruaich was growing.

The extent of the Innans estate was possibly between the burn at the start of the shops and the burn at Rhubaan and extended up the brae to march with the Ardmarnock estate. It would have been fairly poor land, consisting mainly of upland grazing and a few small areas of flatter ground capable of growing hay and roots. Compare that to the Ardlamont peninsula and to the land on Loch Fyneside and it is easy to see why Arthur Scouler decided to grow houses to satisfy the desire of Glasgow merchants for holiday homes, facilitated by the new steamships.

In the 1830s The Castle Steam Packet Company had built a wharf or pier on the shore, on land possibly feued by Arthur Scouler, to enable landings by the new steamship trade. In 1843 the Company disposed of its fleet and Arthur Scouler bought the wharf/pier. Captain Alex Williamson had been involved with steamers throughout the early 1800s and his three sons later even more so – Arthur Scouler's wife, Agnes, was of the same family so Arthur's activities were clearly more than just inspired speculation.

In 1852 a daily summer service was inaugurated with steamers from and to the Clydeside towns. The demand by business men and the ability of a growing middle-class in the towns to take holidays 'doon the watter' was facilitated by the development of larger steamers to carry passengers and Tighnabruaich set itself to cater for this trade, which lasted in all for nearly 100 years. For business men, it was possible to move to the seaside for the family summer holiday and commute to the city daily, breakfasting on the boat. Humbler folk could pack their linen into a trunk or hamper and enjoy a week or two in a rented cottage or B&B, with or without service, while the owners moved into a shed or bothy at the back.

In the early 1800s there was no road linking the Kyleside clachans except, probably, a footpath or rough track. The shore was rocky and a number of burns down the braes would require bridging before a proper road was feasible. The way from Kames to Tighnabruaich, for instance, was along what has become the back road and there was no proper shore road here until 1859 when John Malcolm of Poltalloch, who owned the land, started to emulate Arthur Scouler by

selling or feuing land for wealthy townies and began to develop Auchenlochan. The only foot way to Caladh was the 'Green Road', which started up Village Brae, along to the present Tighnabruaich back road, up the burn above the Boatyard and across the bealachacaistell, across the next burn, opposite the present Hill Cottage and so on to Caladh. Some of this route is currently sign-posted and way-marked. Most traffic to and from Caladh was, of course by boat, landing at Tighnabruaich Pier.

The shore road would have been developed during Arthur Scoular's building spree from the 1850s to the 1870s. The track around Rhubaan to Caladh dates from 1896/7, (The Jubilee Way), which was widened in the 1950s. The holes bored for shot-firing when blasting the rock can still be seen around the Point at Rhubaan. (Rhubaan is *The-White-Point* in Gaelic and Caladh is *Harbour*).

It must be emphasised that, while all the foregoing history is factual and based on written evidence, there is no clear pointer to the origin of the village name of Tighnabruaich. The conclusions I have reached concerning Burn Bank as the 'onlie begetter' are entirely speculative and my own gut feeling in the absence of any hard evidence. If anyone has any better or even any other ideas, please share them – it's a fascinating problem and it would be nice to nail it with certainty.

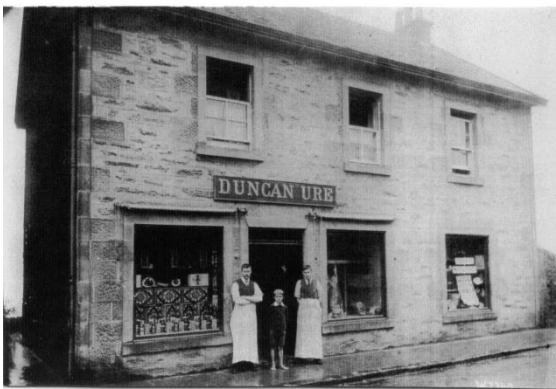
Let's look at some of the properties along the way to Caladh, starting in the Village Street, opposite **Burn Bank**, the house which was possibly the origin of Tighnabruaich, as described earlier, and **Burnside**, the building which now houses Botanica. (*See photograph*). The shops, with accommodation above, all date from the very late 1860s/early 1880s, when the village population was growing enough to support businesses. None of them is named in the 1891 Census but all are mentioned in 1901. The first, now **TighnaAllt**, (*House-by-the-Burn*) was originally Ure's Building, grocery and provisions. (*See photograph*). Next, **Albert Buildings**, **Bute View**, **Chapelton**, (originally Post Office Buildings, *see photograph*), **Royal/Seaside Buildings**, (the latter being Dewar's fruit and vegetables, *see photograph*), both now housing The Gallery and the Café) and **Smith's Building**, then housing McKellar's Shoe Shop and McLaren's Grocers, (*see photograph*).

At the end, where the **Lifeboat Station**, (built in 1998), now stands, was Smith Brothers' boat and mast shed. It is possible that Seaside is older, or replaced an even older building because the 1871 Census mentions Seaside Cottage, then occupied by John McArthur, a Butcher and his wife Margaret, Shopkeeper. There is also a Bakehouse, possibly also Smith's Building, with John Smith, Master Baker, employer of two men.

Opposite the shops **The Tighnabruaich Hotel** dates from 1867, (Walker, *see photograph*). Above that, to the left is **Helenslea** and above that again is **Lorne Place**. To the right, off Village Brae, are **Appin Cottages** and **Sea View**; all three are mentioned in 1881 but are certainly older. A problem with the older Censuses is that references were made to 'Kerr's Land', 'Dow's Land', 'Buchanan's Land', etc. and not to a house name, even if one existed. Multiple occupation, too, was common, even a modest, three/four roomed dwelling might hold two families with four or five children each, an aged relative and sometimes a lodger as well. This makes it difficult to identify later named houses with possible earlier inhabitants. At the top of Village Brae, below what is still called the 'New Road', (although completed in 1967), stand **Glenericht**, **Thornecliffe** and **Inglewood** and above them, on the old, narrow part of the incoming 'New Road', (originally part of the Green Road to Caladh), are **Tighanduinn**, (now somewhat distressed), and **Tighnadarraich**. Also above this bit of road are **Cruachan** and **Inch View**. These houses are all probably of 1890s vintage.



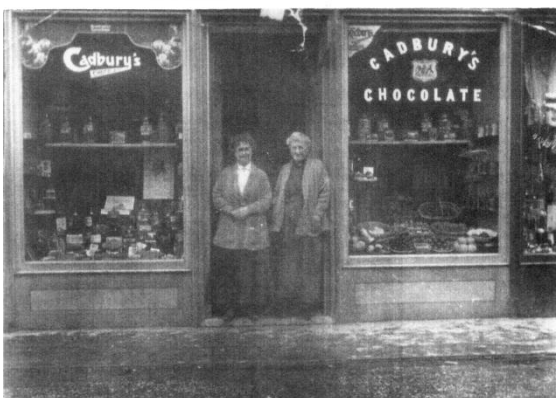
Burnside, which now houses Botanica. In the 1911 Census, George Symington was a chemist and stationer living in Craobh House. He appeared as Publisher on some of the local postcards. This photograph appears to be from the 1960s, so it may be a relative, perhaps a son or nephew, who has the shop.



Ure's Building, is now TighnaAllt, (*House-by-the-Stream*). Maybe it's Duncan Ure himself outside. Note that the boy's feet are shoe-less, which was the norm amongst children in the summer. The photograph is probably pre-1914.



The view along Village Street towards the start of Village Brae with Daisybank, (renamed Derryguais), Rockbank, the Church, the Manse and The Grove. The road surface has not been macadamised and horse-power is still of the four legged variety. The photograph is probably pre-1914.



Part of Royal Buildings, now The Gallery, half of which was Dewar's fruit and vegetable shop. The photograph is probably 1912/14 as skirts have started to go up a bit!



Smith's Buildings. The dinghy- and mast-shed are to the left, where the RNLI boat-house now stands. Boat building here may have been started originally by a Buchanan but sold to Smith. This photograph is possibly from the 1950s.



The other half of Smith's Building, photographed at the same time, was Maclaren's Grocer Shop.



The Tighnabruaich Hotel photograph is probably pre-1914. A date for the alteration to the roof line of the extension at the left hand side would be useful.



Lena Coppola outside her ice-cream parlour. Appin Cottages can be seen up Village Brae, with Glen Ericht also just visible. Her ice-cream was the best, as were hot peas and vinegar in winter.

Back down Village Brae to the Shore Road, on the end of **Lilybank**, was Lena Coppola's ice-cream parlour, (*see photograph*) and following along the Shore Road is **Daisybank**, (now **Derryguaig**), and **Rockbank**. The **Church**, (now a private house), built in 1863 as Tighnabruaich Free Church by Boucher and Cousland, contained stained glass by Ballantine & Son, (Frank Arneil Walker, *The Buildings of Scotland*, Pevsner Architectural Guides). Prior to this, Kilfinan Parish Church served the whole area, necessitating a long trek every Sunday via the green road from Middle Innans. (*Take a look back along the road, see photograph*). The **Manse**, (also now a private house), was built later. **The Grove** appears in the 1871 and 1881 Censuses as **The Bank**; John McKenzie, Physician and Surgeon, was apparently the Bank Agent. In 1891 and 1901 it was called **Violet Grove**, and in 1911 had become **The Grove**, possibly still with McKenzie connections. **Grove Cottage**, to the rear, has since become **The Knowe**. **The Anchorage** appears in the 1891, 1901 and 1911 Censuses as **Oakfield** so probably dates from the 1880s. The next house, **Woodside**, is one of the oldest houses, dating from 1849. It was originally single-storey but a second storey was added later which housed the Minister of the new Church until the Manse was built.

A modern bungalow is followed by **Susie's Tearoom**, started in the early 1950s by Susie Symington. She was recorded in Helenslea in the 1911 Census as 6-month-old Susan McKellar and died in 2011 aged 101. Next to the car-parks and two modern houses, four bungalows sit along the road-side and amongst them, set back, is **The Square**, originally a much smaller building dating from the 1840s but acquiring its U-shape in the 1920s, all in what were the policies of **Tighnabruaich House**. This 'big hoose' was designed by William Leiper, (in his second Arts and Crafts style; Hume) and built for Arthur Millar in 1896/7 on the site of the old 'Mansion House', (*see photographs*). The stone-work contains a mixture of local whin-stone and red sand-stone from Corrie, in Arran. This is '.....Arts and Crafts with a hard edge', (Walker). The fourth modern bungalow stands on the corner of Craobh Brae which leads up to the main drive entrance to Tighnabruaich House, **Over Innans**, **Craobh House** and **Glen Innans**.

Another bungalow stands on the other corner of Craobh Brae, followed by **Lizabuck**, built in 1852 and in the same family ownership since 1874. **The Cottage**, noted in the 1871 Census as Tighna(bruaich) Cottage, was occupied by Janet Scoular who, in 1861 was recorded in New House which was possibly the same building and so dates from the 1850s.

Tighnabruaich Pier was started in the 1830s as Inans Wharf by The Castle Steamship Company and was subsequently bought by Arthur Scoular. **In 1857**, the Pier House and shop were built and in the **mid-1880s** the Pier was completely rebuilt and possibly enlarged to take bigger boats. **In 1905** the upper floor was converted into a public tea-room. **In 1950**, the Pier was sold to the Piermaster, George Olding, by Arthur Millar, grandson of Arthur Scoular and in **1965** George Olding's widow sold it to Argyllshire County Council. The 'Penny Box' and the signal-tower were removed in **1972/3** and in **1982** the accommodation was sold into private ownership. **In 1999** the Tighnabruaich Pier Association was formed, on the initiative of Alan Millar, grandson of Arthur Millar, to encourage development of the Pier in association with Argyll and Bute Council for the benefit and enjoyment of the local community. Today the Pier provides an opportunity for the *Waverley*, the last sea-going paddle steamer, to visit Tighnabruaich and enable people to catch a flavour of the past, when the only sensible way into the village was by sea. (*See photographs*). Opposite the Pier, **Craigengower** was built in 1853 for the publisher, Adam

Black, on land of the Inans estate, (feued by Agnes Williamson Scoular on the 14th Feb., 1855), but was later sold to James Macdonald who extended the house in 1869. This family owned the property until 1938, when Ranald Mac-Donald gifted it to the Church of Scotland as a holiday home. It was sold back into private ownership in the 1990s. A standing stone at Craigen, to the rear, bears an inscription to the memory of James Macdonald and his wife, Catherine. (*See*

photograph of Craigens Cottages). **Creagandaraich**, (*House-with-the-Oak-Tree*) and **Dunmar** were also built about 1855; in 1861 the former was occupied by the Reverend Joseph Starke, the Minister of Kilfinan Church. **Dunmar** was owned for some time by Commander Peter Hamilton and his wife, Gill; Peter sailed a famous single-handed Atlantic crossing in August, 1956 being only the second westward by the great-circle route. The house is still in family ownership. The house now called **Schivas**, originally **Stanley Villa**, was probably built in the 1870s, the bungalow **Cluanbeag** being built in its grounds in the late 1950s. Up the brae behind **Wellpark** may be seen the cottages **Rosebank**, **Springbank** and **Ivybank**, built before 1861 by Hector McDonald, a stone-mason from N. Uist, who also built the School and the Schoolhouse at Millhouse, as well as other local properties.

Well Park House, (recently, for a time, The Wellpark Hotel), was built in 1864, (Walker), probably for Robert Paton, a Paisley boot-lace manufacturer. He and his family, a visitor and three servants were in residence in 1911 but the 1871, '81 and '91 Censuses show only domestics present. In 1911, the **Garden Cottage**, (demolished in about 2005 and now a new bungalow), contained Cuthbert Spencer, (Domestic Gardener), and his sister Mabel, both born in Yorkshire. Cuthbert Spencer, (and possibly his sister also), took many photographs around Cowal which were printed as post-cards and sent all over the UK and farther afield, thus helping to publicise the beauties of the area and Southern Argyll generally to a wider audience. There are over 800 of these cards, some of which may be seen in the Pier-Master's office and which are still traded today. The Spencers moved to Argyll Villa when the Patons sold Well Park in about 1928 and both are buried at Millhouse, Mabel having died in 1941 and Cuthbert in 1954.

Eden Kerry was built in 1857, (Walker), for William Anderson, a Glasgow merchant whose family still had the house in 1891. The house was later bought by Captain Alex Williamson, (junior), OBE, Marine Superintendent of the G & SW Railway Co., who lived there from about 1918 until his death in 1941. From 1919 to 1933 he served on the Board of Turbine Steamers, Ltd.

Ach-na-chree dates from about 1960 and between these two is an entry up the brae to **The Chalet**, built in 1857, (Walker), and originally called Swiss Cottage. It later became a Hotel and popular watering hole but closed in 1992 and has remained virtually unused ever since.

The Temperance Hotel, (*see photograph*), was first mentioned in the 1871 Census but not again until 1901, having apparently been lumped in with **Underheugh** as MacCallum's Land. There was a coal rhee at the rear and coal would have been delivered by Clyde puffer, either on the beach or perhaps to a small pier. It is not known when this area became Port Drieseach. The new build next door dates from the early C21st replacing an earlier house. **Glencur**, originally New Kilberry, was probably built in the 1870s. **Kilberry**, built in the 1860s, was recorded in the 1881 Census as a charitable boarding school run by Miss Annie McNair with thirteen boys aged from 8 to 16 years.

The new bungalow, **Fair Winds**, occupies the site of **Sunny Craig/Sunny View/Seaview Craig**, (all three names have been mentioned in the Censuses), a large house built in the 1860s and demolished in the 1960s. **Alma** is mentioned in 1861; in 1911 it was home to Captain John Turner, the Master of *Iolaire* and *Norseman*, the large steam yachts owned by William Birtwistle, a Lancashire cotton magnate and often pictured on early local post-cards by Cuthbert Spencer; had you been walking along here in Glasgow Fair week in the early 1900s you might have seen *Norseman* at anchor for Tighna-bruaich Town Regatta. *Norseman*, 412grt, was built by D. & W. Henderson of Glasgow in 1897 and launched on 24th February, 1898. (*See photographs*).



Looking back towards Village Street past the Free Church. Smiths' Brothers' boat & mast shed is at the extreme left. The gable end visible is Burn Bank, possibly the origin of the village name 'Tighnabruaich'.



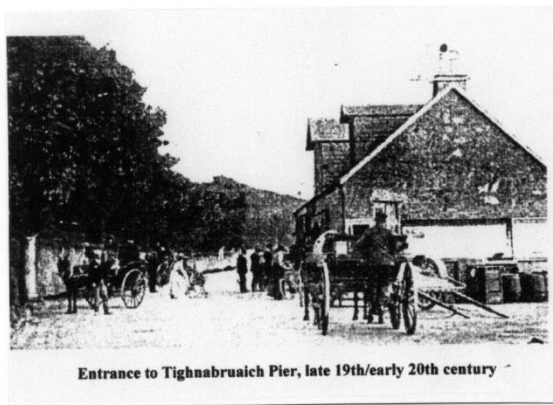
We have no photograph of John Moody's mansion house, still the term used in the 1891 Census, but this recent photograph of Garrachoran Farm at Clachaig in Glen Lean, built in 1771, maybe gives an idea of what it may have looked like.



After demolition, the Mansion House was replaced by the present Tighna-bruaich House and this photograph, dating from about 1898, shows a group of artisans and tradesmen posing outside during the final stages of building.



PS *Columbia* at Tighnabruaich Pier. Up to a dozen or more steamers called daily at one or other of the three village piers. The photograph is pre-1905.

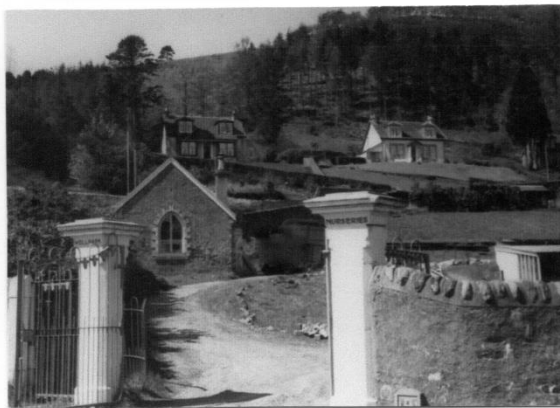


Entrance to Tighnabruaich Pier, late 19th/early 20th century

A lively scene at Tighnabruaich Pier as carriages and carts deliver and wait for customers from the steamer. The photo is pre-1905 because that is when the conversion of the upper floor to the Tea-room with Mansard roof was carried out.



Cottages at Craigens, latterly called the Clachan, which were on the back road up Croabh Brae above Craigen-gower. There was a croquet and tennis lawn in front where the roller is standing. The site has now been re-developed. The photograph is probably about 1900.



Well Park Garden Cottage, where Cuthbert Spencer and his sister lived from before 1911 until 1928, when the Patons sold Well Park. Rose Bank and Spring Bank, both built about 1860/61 can be seen above. This photograph was taken in the 1950s.



The Temperance Hotel, now holiday accommodation at Port Driseach with attached Emporium, which sold the varied stock of a Department Store from a shop about 9ft square! This photograph was taken about 1900.

Tigh-na-Mara, (*House-by-the-Sea*), was built in the early 1930s, **Alta** was mentioned in 1871. **Braehead** is one of the oldest houses, originally a farm dwelling, with the animals occupying one part. **Rowan Bank** and **Kyles Bank** probably date from the later 1870s. **Bryn Teg** was built in 1936 and from 1960 until the mid-1990s was home to Chester and Kay Currie. Chester and his brother, Duncan, ('Bunks'), were local fishermen who crewed the big 'J' Class yachts in the summers of the 1920s and 1930s. Chester was also a successful Skipper in the 12 Metre Class and had many wins with *Trivia* in the last years before the War. **Rosehill** was mentioned in the 1861 Census. **Argyll Villa** was mentioned in the 1871 Census - Walker gives a building date of 1868 and this was where Cuthbert and Mabel Spencer lived after leaving Well Park Cottage until her death in 1941 and Cuthbert's in 1954. **Ravenswood** was also mentioned in 1871. **Sherbrooke** was built in 1878, **Rhubaan Lodge**, **Nethercraigs**, **Mountainside** and **Glenelg** were all built in 1868/69. Up the brae, **Otterburn**, **Toberdhu** and **Craigard**, (which was owned in the 2000s by the actress Dorothy Paul), were mentioned in the 1891 Census and **Aldersyde** in 1901, so these were possibly the last plots feued by Arthur Scoular's widow, (his second wife), and their daughter.

Stroncarraig was not mentioned in the 1881 Census but Walker gives its building date as 1880, so it could have been under construction; at a later date it became a private Hotel. It was owned for a time during the 2000s by Robert Carlyle, the actor. **At Rhubaan**, the 1881 Census records Margaret Morrison, 37, Pauper, a widow with six children aged from 16 to 5 years, living in the 'Cottars' Huts'. 'Pauper' indicates that she was receiving Parish 'outdoor relief'.

Late in the **C19th** the Smith brothers acquired from the McKellars the boat-yard which had been started to build and service 'yachts' to meet the growing demand by moneyed incomers. A steam winch and railed slipway could handle quite large yachts. Ewing McGruer, another successful yacht and boat builder had been associated with the Smiths before moving to Rhu in 1911, at which time his family were living in Rockbank.

The burn past the boatyard marks the limit of the Inans Estate. The field adjacent to the yard was known as Rhubaan Park, used as a centre for gatherings, when everybody would march to the Park behind a piper for games and sports, (*see photograph*). The Telegraph connection to Rothesay exchange came across from Bute to Rhubaan, probably in the 1860s and some of the original cable can still be seen on the shore.

Jubilee Way leads on to **West Glen** and on the way to **Caladh**, across on Bute you can see the Maids of Bute, two rocky outcrops said to have been painted by Para Handy when he was a hand on the *Inveraray Castle*; whether he did or not, the Maids were re-painted every year by Euphemia Tensfeldt, an artist who regularly stayed at Rowan Bank. (*The photograph shows her at work with Paddy Lamont, a boat hirer*). Pont's Atlas of 1598 shows a small house at Callow, the land being owned by the MacLachlans and later by Malcolm of Poltalloch. In 1837 Callow was sold to the Reverend John Oldham, an Essex clergyman who, on his death in 1863 left it to his housekeeper, Ruth Hall and in 1867 she sold it to George Stephenson of Newcastle-on-Tyne, a nephew of the railway pioneer, who designed and built a Victorian castellated mansion, a number of houses and cottages for staff and generally 'improved' the estate, (*see photograph*). The quay and crane were probably put in at this time as well, to facilitate the building work.

In **1894** the estate was sold to Robert Ingham-Clark, who was related to the Clarks, who originated the Anchor spinning works in Paisley; possibly some mutual business had originally brought William Birtwistle, the Lancashire textile entrepreneur and yachtsman, to the Kyles of Bute. During the **1914/18** war The Castle was used as a convalescent home for wounded officers. Between the wars, Caladh was run as a sporting and family estate, almost a mini-village, with shooting and sailing parties. Land across the Kyle on Bute was rented, where a six hole golf



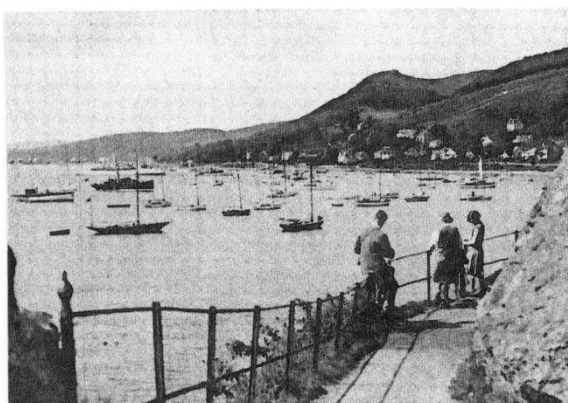
If your visit coincided with Glasgow Fair Week you would have been able to see Tighnabruaich Town Regatta, and perhaps the *Norseman*, William Birtwistle's Steam Yacht at anchor. *Norseman* was built in 1897 and launched in 1898. Photograph by Cuthbert Spencer about 1910.



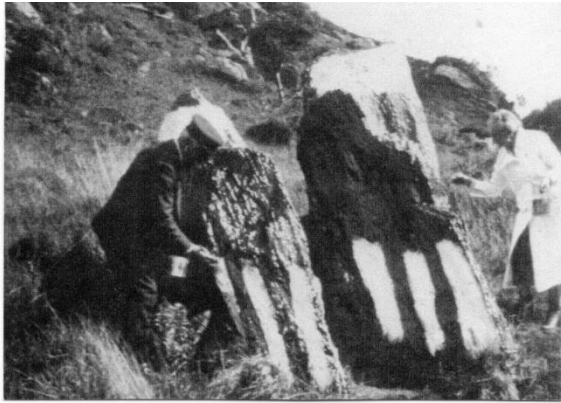
Alma Cottage, on the left, is where Captain John Turner, the skipper of *Iolaire* and *Norseman* stayed. The poles were for drying fishing nets. One of the two boatmen is probably Paddy Lamont. This photograph is early 1900s.



Past the Smith Brothers' boatyard, Rhubaan Park was the venue for village fetes and games. In this photograph, probably in the 1920s, all attention is on the greasy pole.



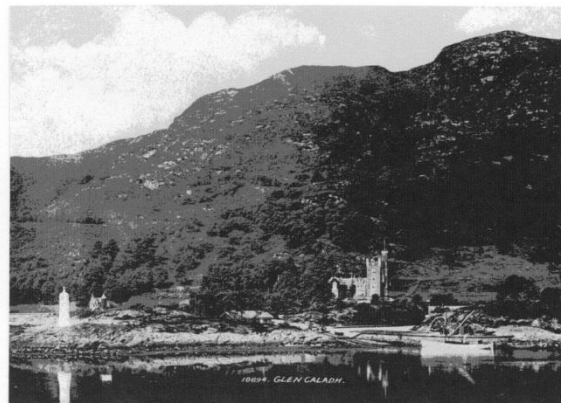
The Jubilee Way round Rhubaan is still a popular walk, but notice how narrow the path was in 1930 when this photo was taken on Regatta Day. It was later widened in about 1954.



Across the Kyle, on Bute, the Maids are being freshened up by artist Euphemia Tensfeldt, who stayed at Rowan Bank and boatman, Paddy Lamont. Photograph is pre-1914.



West Glen. The 1897 Jubilee Way to Caladh was along the shore-side. The current track up the brae and over the bridge by the waterfall came much later. This photograph, was taken before 1914 by Cuthbert Spencer.



Caladh Castle and the end of our walk – just in time for tea with the Laird! This photograph is pre-1914.



The bridge over the burn above Tighnabruach, built in the 1920s by John Ferguson of Tighanduin, so that his daughter could walk dry-shod to school. The bridge was demolished in 1967 and this photo probably dates from the time of its building.

course was created. In **1942** Caladh became HMS *James Cook*, a Naval navigation school and the family moved to **West Glen**, to what had been the Factor's house. After the war the Navy effectively abandoned the Castle, the roof was taken off, dry rot moved in and The Castle, having been deemed to be dangerous, was blown up as an exercise by the TA in **1958**. Some of the stone was used to revet the Tighnabruaich Hotel car park opposite the shops and a number of house owners claim to have a fireplace from Caladh Castle. A fish farm was later developed in West Glen but this has now been moved up the Kyle.

It should also be understood that, until the 'New Road' was built in 1967, there was no road from the top of Bobbies' Brae N-wards owing to the deep burn, the Green Road to Caladh starting from Village Brae, as already mentioned. Although the burn could be crossed on foot if there wasn't too much water coming down, about 1920 a footbridge was constructed by John Ferguson of **Tighanduin**, to enable his daughter to walk to school without scrambling through the burn, (*see photograph*). The bridge was demolished when the 'New Road' was built.

That concludes the first part of our walk. If you return to Tighnabruaich, the rather longer walk to Kames and round the Ardlamont peninsula, through Mill-house and back to Kames can be undertaken. Tomorrow?

Walking Through History

Part II, Tighnabruaich, Kames and the Ardlamont Peninsula

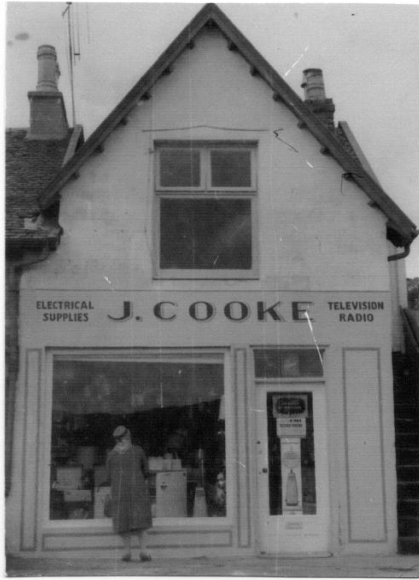
Now let's walk through Auchenlochan towards Kames and have a look at the properties along the way. Across the bridge, heading S, we pass **Bridge Cottage**, which until the 1990s was Jackie Cook's shop, (*see photograph*). If you look over the bridge up the burn as you do so you may see a dipper in the water. **Coron Cottages**, (there are two of them), are followed by **Bank House** which for well over 100 years housed The Royal Bank of Scotland until it was closed in about 2010 and is now a private dwelling. **Underwood** stands on the corner of Bobbies' Brae, which, before the Shore Road was made in the 1860s, was the way to Kames. On the other corner is **Euroa**, then **The Shielling** an identical house, then **Tighnacaille**, (*House-beside-the-Wood*) and its mirror image **Bremen**, now **Claonaig**.

The modern Council-built bungalows of **Manor Way** were erected for older people on the cleared site of **The Manor**, a popular Hotel which boasted a function room and a tennis court, (*see photographs*), and which was destroyed by fire in the early 1960s. Some more recent bungalows are followed by **Allt Mhor**, (Big Stream in the Gaelic), which was originally called **Medrox**. The next house, **Noddfa**, was originally Allt Mhor; both houses were built in 1870 beside the burn, but Professor Sir Henry Jones, who later owned the house, changed the name to Noddfa, ('Tranquil Place' in the Welsh). Medrox took the name Allt Mhor and the gardener's cottage has since become Medrox.

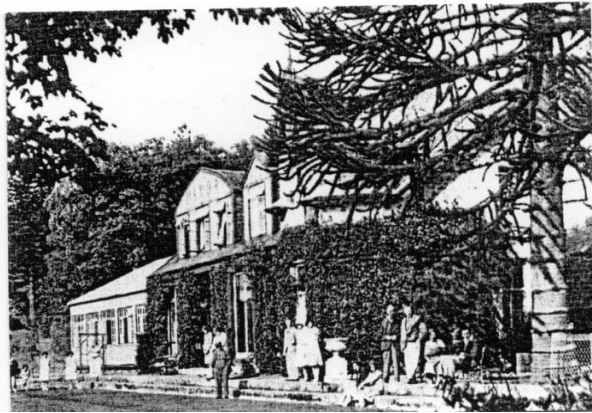
Laurel Bank is followed by **Ardess**. Andrew Irvine, from Ardess in Northern Ireland, set up a business at Millhouse cross-roads in 1857 making sacks for the gunpowder works. He moved the business to Ardess, a single-storey house and shop on the corner of Royal Brae in 1865 and started tailoring and supplying goods to the outer Islands. Later, land was sold for Laurel Bank, upper storeys were added to Ardess and the rest of the land was run as a nursery garden. Other properties have since been built on the site for members of the Irvine family.

On the other corner of the Royal Brae is **The Royal Hotel**, built in the early 1860s and extended to the south in 1900, (Walker). In the entrance, the mosaic floor was laid by Italian POWs towards the end of the second world War. The Hotel was the haunt of Glasgow escapees, such as Cliff Hanley and '*Scotland the Brave*' is said to have been written here.

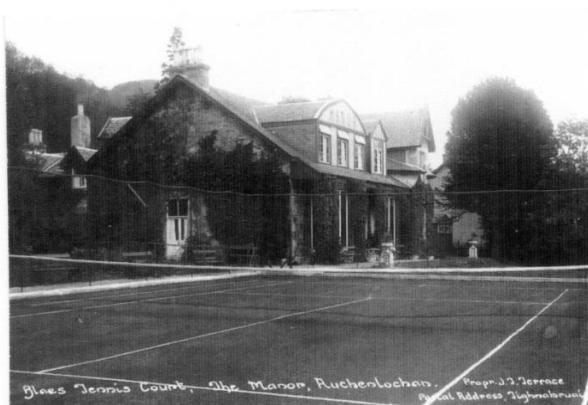
The road along the shore was made between 1853/59, when the Poltalloch Estate planned to develop this part of Auchenlochan, in emulation of Arthur Scoular's work to the north. (Poltalloch had acquired the Ardlamont Estate following its sequestration after the 1745 rebellion). A number of modern bungalows are followed by **Dunsyre** and **Ardvaar**, (both 1880, Walker) and **The Hollies**, which became the Kyles of Bute Hotel. A function room was later added to the S. side and internal modifications were made in the 1990s. The function room has since been demolished and the internal lay-out restored to its original domestic state. On the other side of the road, **Auchenlochan Pier** was built in 1878/79, (Walker. *See photograph*), and continued in use until 1948, when the Piermaster, Colin Simpson, converted the buildings into a garage, a function it has retained ever since.



Bridge Cottage, which was formerly the electrical shop of Jackie Cook and later of Charlie Black.



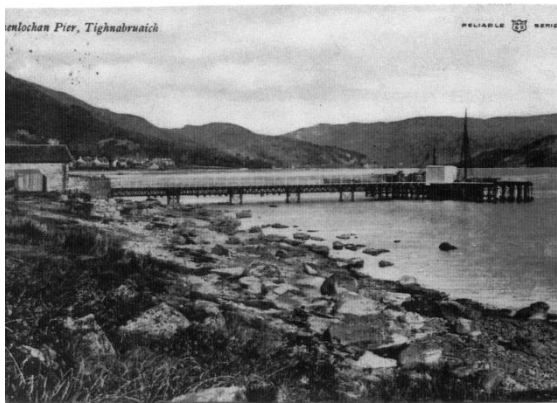
The Manor Hotel, looking south, as we approach. After the fire, the site was cleared and re-developed as Manor Way. The monkey puzzle tree was only cut down in the early 2000s and its stump is visible on the grass in front of the houses.



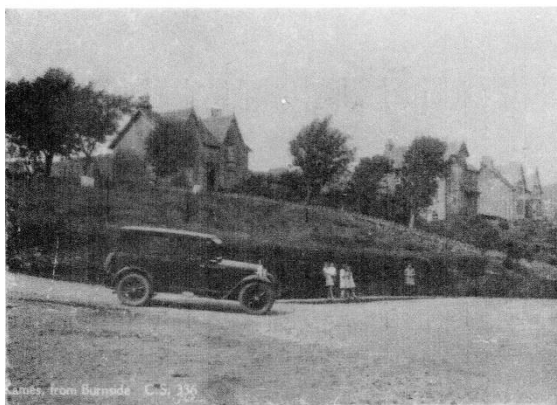
The Manor Hotel, looking north across the tennis court. This was a very popular facility and the Hotel was much used by visitors and the locals.



(L/R), The Royal Hotel, Ardess and Laurel Bank. Above Ardess is Hillside with Aalt Beag to the right. Above Hillside is the Schoolmaster's House and above that is the High Church, demolished early C21st, where the Medical Centre now stands, and above them the Primary School, built 1874/5, probably by James Boucher and extended in 1997/8 by Argyll and Bute Council



Looking back along the road we get a good view of Auchenlochan Pier, now a Garage. Built of iron in 1877/8 the Pier was abandoned in 1948 and the remnants were demolished as an Army exercise in the 1990s.



Probably one of McBride's cars in the early 1930s, (an Austin Big 6?), seen heading down Smiddy Brae. From **L** to **R**, Roslin Cottage, One Oak and Viewfield. A new build, 2016/7, now occupies the ground behind the girls.



Burnside House, from the camera position of the previous photograph. The charabanc and Bull-nose Morris are also probably part of McBride's fleet and date the photograph to the 1920s or early '30s.

The Hollies is followed by five villas, all built around 1875/78 to, essentially, the same footprint; **Gordon Villa**, (now Dalshian), **The United Free Manse**, (now The Old Manse), Copeswood, (later Algrave, now Tighnasith), **Elmbank** and **Ferguslie**, the latter being a mirror-image of the other four and having the later **Ferguslie Cottage**, (now Inverae), adjacent. All would have been built for professional or retired people of means, either to live in or as holiday houses. Steamer services from the central belt meant that the family could live in them all summer but business people could commute daily to the office, with breakfast on the boat. Wealthier folk often had a small cottage for staff built alongside the grander villa.

Across the road is **Tighnafaolin**, (*'House-of-the-Seagull'*, on a plan similar to Ferguslie); following a modern bungalow and the Shinty Field is the larger tenement, **Adolphin Building**, (now King's Court), with **Adolphin Cottage** to its left and we're now into Smiddy Brae. Up the hill on the other side of the road, (above a new house), may be seen, from right to left; **Viewfield**, **One Oak**, **Roslin Cottage** and, round the bend, **Airey Cottage**. Back across the road **Burnside House** comes into view, the last element of which was a shop and then a cafe until about 2012, (*see photograph*).

Opposite Burnside House stood **Fairfield Cottage**, (*see photograph*), very similar to Airey Cottage, which was owned by the McBride family, who hired out carriages and later had motor cars and a charabanc. Petrol pumps were installed and the house burned down in the 1970s. In the photograph are McBride's charabanc and a 'bullnose' Morris of the 1920s.

Up the brae stood **Berryburn** and **Berryburn Cottage**, (*see photograph*), which were demolished when the Berryburn Estate was built by the Council, probably in the late 1950s/early 60s. The modern bungalow complex below Berryburn was built in about 1991/2 as an Abbeyfield sheltered home which was closed in 2007 and then sold off.

We now come to Kames cross-roads, (*see photograph*). On one corner was the General Store and Post Office which later became a Co-Op and was converted into flats in the 1990s. Opposite are three standing stones and more Council houses; on the third corner, now a dwelling, was the 'Wee Free' Church, (Walker is somewhat scathing – 'A gabled, roughcast shed, 1939. Double lancet astragals effect a pusillanimous symbolism.')

On the fourth corner stands the War Memorial.

This is not strictly a cross-roads, as the B8000 up which we have just come turns right to Millhouse. The other two legs are unclassified, being Kames High Road and Low road, respectively. The Police Office and houses next to the War Memorial are a tribute to the '...white heat of technological revolution...' in the 1970s when oil rigs were to be built at Portavadie, Polphail village was demolished and replaced by workers' accommodation and the Police strength was doubled in anticipation of trouble. Nothing happened – no workers came, no rigs were ever built, much money has been wasted and only in 2016/17 has anything serious been done to remove the eyesore at Polphail and re-instate the area. Turning left, we start down the Low Road, passing a lane down to the Powder Wharf, then past the Kirk, (1898/99, Walker); the bell-tower was erected in the 1990s. We dive to the left round a hairpin bend past the Kames Hotel, (mid C19th, *see photograph*). Until the 1970s this was called The Blair Arms, in front of which stood Kames Pier, (*see photograph*). Walker is somewhat scathing about Kames, '.... little of architectural note', although Kames was named on the maps long before Tighnabraich appeared.

At one time, (*see photograph*), back along the shore towards the Powder Wharf, were buildings with two large chimneys. This was where supplies of sulphur and saltpetre, were milled before being



Opposite Burnside, Fairfield Cottage was McBride's transport HQ, which originally had horses and carriages but later installed petrol pumps and ran motors. It was burned down and demolished in the 1970s.



Up the brae to the rear were Berry-burn and Berryburn Cottage. Both were demolished in 1969/70 when the Berryburn housing scheme was built by the Council.



Kames crossroads. The motor looks like a Model T Ford and the War Memorial is in place, which would date the photograph to the 1920s but what is the crowd waiting for?



Kames Pier, with The Blair Arms, (as it then was), to the left. The photo-graph is probably pre-1923, when the railway groupings took place.



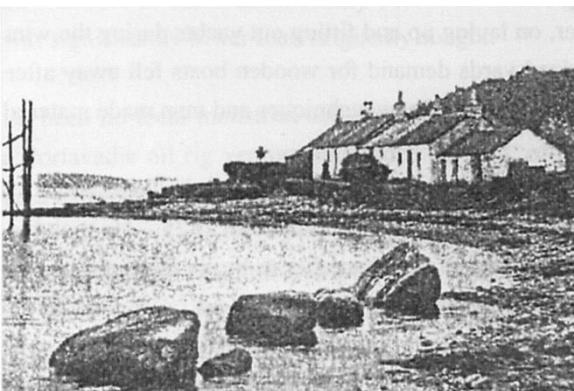
Continuing south along the shore, if you had looked back before 1900, you would have seen the processing plant of the Gunpowder factory. This was where ingredients were refined before being sent to Millhouse before incorporation into gunpowder.



Cameron's Corner, at the turn back up to the High Road, where there was a thriving grocer's shop.



Gate Cottage, where you were firmly reminded that this was a private road. The photograph is probably pre 1912.



Blair's Ferry, which was served by a rowing boat across to the burying ground below Kilmichael Farm on Bute. It was operated for a number of years by a Cameron. Note the net drying poles. Date of photograph not known.

moved to the gunpowder factory at Millhouse. Work here was discontinued and the buildings were demolished following an explosion, probably caused by dust, around 1900.

We continue along the Shore Road, past **Rockholm** and **Netherton**, (1900, Walker), to **Cameron's Corner**, (*see photograph*), which, until 1965 was a general store. The right turn here leads back to the cross roads but we will go on along the Shore Road, passing two or three villas of late C19th vintage, followed by modern bungalows and new builds, until we reach **Gate Cottage**. This was the private Lodge entrance to the Ardlamont Estate, (*see photograph*), the road originally being gated and closed once or twice a year to make the point. Next to Gate Cottage is **Blair Bank** which, until his death in the late C20th, was owned by David Gieve of the London-based Military tailoring Company. He was very active in local life and charitable works.

After passing more modern bungalows and new builds we reach the Tank Landing, so-called because that's what it was, a muster park and slipway for the tanks of an American Ranger battalion who came to the village in 1944 to practice for the invasion of France on D-Day. Local people were moved out in order for the troops to be billeted in their houses. To the rear of the concrete apron is a sewage treatment plant, a dog's breakfast of a system put in in the early 2000s which serves 10% or less of the village. Next to this area are the remains of a cottage which was occupied until the 1950s, (*see photograph*).

Blair's Ferry, the group of three cottages on the shore side farther along, was the base for a rowing ferry across to Bute. On the point below Kilmichael Farm are the remains of a bothy used when burials were taken across to the enclosed burying ground a little farther to the north. This bothy was recently re-discovered when reference to its use as a clearing bearing for the Carry Spit when rounding Ardlamont Point was found on an old Admiralty Chart. A display in the Piermaster's Office in the Pier has more information about the Camerons, an important local family who ran the ferry in the 1800s. In 1911, four families of twenty-five souls lived in these three cottages, which are now a holiday home.

Past Blair's Ferry a prominent spit called **Corachra** juts out to seaward on which, at low water, seals may sometimes be seen hauled out. The name refers to the turbulent water caused by the spit when the tide is running. There was also a farm-stead called Corachra about four hundred yards up the brae which was inhabited until the early C20th but which was abandoned and has now been totally destroyed and overgrown by forestry plantation. The remains are once again visible off the forest road, although badly damaged, (*see photograph*). In 1841, this steading had 13 inhabitants.

We are now approaching a shoreside plantation of Scots pines. Just short of the trees a path to the right alongside a burn leads to **Auchadchoun**, another ruined steading, (*see photograph*), still partially inhabited in the late 1920s. In 1891, this was described as a 'Hamlet' and consisted of five separate households, (if not separate buildings), containing 18 people. The plantation of pines is a popular picnic spot which has orchids in Spring and a shell beach curving round to Carry Spit, which protrudes well into the waterway known as the Kerry Kyle.

Our way continues through **Carry Farm**, now the base of the Tighnabruaich Sailing School. Camping and caravan facilities here make this a popular holiday destination. There are some interesting photographs in the café. Farther along the road is a caravan called 'Clachan'. This was the site called **Clachaelin** in the 1891 Census, containing one or two dwellings in which two families lived; Hugh Carmichael,(36), farm servant, his wife, Jane,(31), and their four children, all of whom had only the Gaelic and Archibald Glew, (55), fisherman and his wife, Augusta,(60).



Remains of a cottage just south of the Tank Landing, abandoned in the 1950s. This photograph and the three below were all taken in September 2017.



All that is left standing of Corachra. Some lumpy bits can also be found but the plantation has made it very difficult to move about. The remains can only be found by following the forestry road past the Golf Course and then taking the left fork on to the lower road. The site is then on the RH side of the track above the Corachra spit.



This photograph and the one below is all that remains of Auchadchoun. It is on a level space above Carry but lower down the brae than Corachra. It can be reached on foot via a foot-path up beside a burn 20/30 yards short of the Scots pine plantation.



The photograph above was taken to-wards the SE, this one is looking towards the NW.

The road continues past **Kildavaig**, a substantial farm, before reaching a junction. To the left, the road ends with **Ardlamont Ferry** cottages, fronting Blindman's Bay; straight in front of us, a large mound known as the camp is possibly man-made, even prehistoric; to the right, the road continues to Ardlamont. A track to the left passes **Camp Cottage** and **Point Farm** before ending in a rocky beach. In a field on the way is a cup-marked stone – not a very good specimen.

We continue on the main road, passing what were the old **School** and **Teacher's House**, now considerably extended, round a sharp right-hander, past an unused driveway to **Ardlamont House** and on towards a left-hander by the old estate Sawmill and Stables. A track beside the Stables leads to **Glenahuil** farm. At the next right-hander is the main drive to Ardlamont House, which was built for the Lamont family by a Rothesay stone-mason, Thomas Napier, in 1819/20. The House is, 'A five-bay, piended mansion, a little too wide and rectilinear to be elegant, but dignified and well groomed', (Walker). It replaces or, more likely, reworks an older structure, the wings of which survive. (*See photograph*). Ardlamont's chief claim to fame was the *cause célèbre* trial in December, 1893 of A. J. Monson on a charge of murdering Cecil Hamborough, a young man from whose death Monson and an accomplice expected to make £20,000 on insurance policies. Against a wealth of evidence and the calling of innumerable witnesses a verdict of Not Proven was returned and the case is well-covered in a book in the Notable Scottish Trials series. (William Hodge & Company, 1908).

The road continues up a steep hill, from the top of which we can enjoy a spectacular view of Arran, the Kilbrannan Sound and the coast of Kintyre. Down the other side we pass **Corra**, where a newish house replaces the ruins of the original farm, which also housed a mill. Round the bend at the bottom of the hill Loch Fyne comes into view, and farther along, Ostal Bay, Sghat Island and Tarbert. An entrance to **Craig Lodge**, now demolished, is followed by **Kilbride Farm**, (to the left), and **Kilbride Church**, (to the right). The latter is now a private dwelling. The graveyard is still consecrated and well worth a stop as it contains the lairs of many local people and some War Grave Commission memorials. The track by Kilbride Farm leads down to the only decent bathing beach in the area, backed by dunes and a tiny stretch of , (almost), machair.

Past Kilbride, to the left across a ford, is **Colachla**. In 1891 there were three households here containing twelve people. Farther on, to the left, is the hamlet of **Auchadalvorie**, which, in 1891 contained three households with seventeen people followed, on the right by **Auchgoyle Cottage and Farm**. In 1891 this was described as Auchgoyle 'Hamlet', containing ten households described as 'Houses' totalling sixty-one people, including a farmer and his wife with eight children and three farm servants. Round the bend and over the bridge, to the left is **Millcroft**, followed by Council housing and a cottage which was the original Post Office, (*see photograph*). At the cross-roads, (not really a cross-road - the Kames/Kilfinan road is major and takes a sharp right hand bend), on the opposite corner of which is Andrew Irvine's original shop, (*see photograph*). The left hand turn goes to Portavadie and a short way down are the old Millhouse **School-master's House**, the School, now Millhouse Village Hall and the old Church, now **Kirk o'Kerry**, a private house.

We take the right turn and pass through the old gunpowder factory village of **Millhouse**, (*see photograph*). There is a website devoted to this, giving details of its history and the names of everyone who worked there from 1839 to 1921 when it was closed. The Works were closely linked to the Works at Clachaig in Glen Lean. A ruined shed to the right is the remains of the last Millhouse Post Office.



Ardlamont House, in a photograph probably taken in the early 1900s. (Copied from the book mentioned in the text).



Approaching Millhouse crossroads. This was the original Post Office. The lady's dress and the boy's knicker- bockers suggest a date in the early 1900s.



Andrew Irvine's original shop at the crossroads, looking from the Kilfinan direction. Our way continues down what is, from here, the left turn.



Millhouse village, workers' houses on the left had no windows facing the road, in case of an explosion at the factory, which was on the other side of the road. Some remains can still be seen in the wood, entered by the gap farther on.

At the next bend is the entrance to the present burying ground, which was the field where the Powder Works' horses were kept and here you can see the bell which used to be at the Foreman's house and the Proof mortar, used to test finished gunpowder by firing a projectile with a measured charge of powder. This was in a field behind the houses – if the slug passed a line 50 yards away the powder was satisfactory. Here, too, is the start of a footpath leading up over the Golf Course, albeit difficult at first and eventually crossing the line of the old tramway from the Powder Works to Kames.

Up the hill, away to the right, is the old magazine where finished gunpowder was stored before shipment. The track to this is opposite the electricity switch yard at the top of the hill round the next bend. From here the road drops down to Kames past the Moss where shinty matches were played, the entrance to the Golf Club and the old water treatment plant; the new plant is away over to the left, towards Auchenlochan Farm. The old Kames Farm is by the Golf Club, where there has been some new housing development.

We have now almost completed the Ardlamont peninsula circuit, where the very popular and competitive Kyles Ten Mile Run takes place annually. In 1891 this area was home to more than 300 people and before we return to the fleshpots of Tighnabruaich, just take a look at this:

Traffic Census taken at Kames Crossroads during period 8th/14th August, 1911.

(Details taken from papers belonging to the late Colin Simpson, who was the Piermaster and owner of Auchenlochan Pier).

Bicycles	481
Motorcars	38
One Horse Vehicles (Light)	839
One Horse Vehicles (Heavy)	256
Two or more Horse Vehicles	72
Horses led or ridden	30
Total Horses drawing Vehicles	1239
Sheep and Pigs (Driven)	71
Hand Carts	37

Sleepy backwater? Really?

Acknowledgements

Sources consulted include Scotland's People website for Census returns; The Buildings of Scotland, Argyll and Bute, by Frank Arneil Walker, (in the Pevsner Architectural Guide Series); The Villages of Southern Argyll, by Marian Pallister; the two books of reminiscences resulting from collaborations between The Elderly Forum and Argyll and Bute Council.

I am also grateful to Mrs. May Bunting, Mrs. Robina Cruickshank, Mr. Ali Davidson, Mr. Alistair Gay, Mrs. Margaret McBride, Mrs. Mary Millar, Mrs. Rosemary Sharp, Mr. Tam Simpson, Mrs. Mary Taylor, Dr. Jeremy Thomson and many others, who have shown great patience with my enquiries. Any errors, omissions or other blunders are, of course, mine.

Note: Many interesting photographs and other archival material concerning the past history of the area can be seen in Tighnabruaich Pier, by arrangement with the undersigned on 01700811556.

Geoff Newton,
January, 2018.