

about 6 ins. at its thickest, having on its flatter side some marks which a lively imagination can see to be the serpent of the Druids, and which the natives declare to be "Sculptured Stone", but it is probable that the sculptor was simply Nature.

Och away. Never nature. These remains might well be a paltry five thousand years old but this location is ideal for affairs of a different sort. The hill is not impregnable yet it is out of reach, where one might continue one's pastoral practices out of harm's way, especially those of a domestic nature, distilling one's poitín, rearing one's weans and putting dinners on the table. This wee area reads more consistent with the sensible caution of indigenous folk blending with the scenery; disguising their habitats and whereabouts over several millenia to protect themselves from marauding forces, plus hiding out from the authorities, and the customs & excise officers.

A glance at the map reveals this as the start of 'the road of life' itself, the uisque trail. As recently as two hundred years ago the names of eighty people were recorded in one year alone engaged in illicit distilling in this Upper Cabrach region. Moonshining, bootlegging and poitín production is reminiscent of family business to me. It sounds like what my Hebridean Grannie's folks got up to among the moors and hills of Uig, in the shady nooks of Kentucky or along the Blue Ridge mountains of Virginia, on the trail of the Keltik wine.

I do not believe that 'the sculptor was simply Nature.' This is the kind of evaluation one associates with lawyers acting on behalf of imperialist administrations. If they can have it established that there is no indigenous claims on the land then the locals will have less opportunity of resisting eviction.

The stone cists . . . are of one description, the bottoms, sides, and ends of them being formed of a sort of green stone found in the hill beyond the ruins of the ancient settlement, while the upper or covering stone must have been taken from a basaltic rock on the opposite side of the river; and considering

their vast size, and the distance and elevation to which they had to be carried, it becomes a curious problem to ascertain how in those primitive times such heavy blocks could have been carried thither. From the fact that most of these cists are bedded upon charcoal, and that they also contain quantities of the same material, it has been conjectured that it points to the destruction of the wives of the chieftains whose bones are interred in the rude stone coffins; for acting on the axiom that it is not good for a man to be alone, when a chieftain died, they sacrificed his widows that their spirits might accompany him on his journey to the great hunting-land beyond the grave.

The nearest town is Rhynie, where “a farmer ploughing an Aberdeenshire field in 1978 uncovered a six-foot high Pictish stone carved with a distinctive figure carrying an axe, it quickly earned the name the 'Rhynie Man'.”¹ Fifteen hundred years ago, Hadrian’s Roman troops reached Rhynie and halted. Entering the Cabrach was one step too far:

The settlement, being beside the road which is pretty generally known as the Caledonian Road, was most likely inhabited by one of those Caledonian tribes, which, under Galgacus, repulsed the Romans in their attempt to explore the northern parts of Britain.

The skeletons, so far as they have been seen in the eleven cists that have been opened here, have been of enormous proportions, and would seem to point to the chieftains of those days being chosen, like Saul among the Israelites, for their extraordinary physical stature. One of the skulls that were found was large enough to contain within it the head and hair of one of the largest men in the Cabrach (whose head measures 23 ins.), and from the general appearance of the

bones, all had evidently been giants as compared with the present generation of men.

I was always interested in family roots but I knew so little. Discovering more was neither encouraged nor discouraged (who cares, do it in your own time). In recent years this area of research has become a novelty activity on 'reality' television, particularly for engaging media celebrities and is thus another potential source of income for academics. Nevertheless, like many another human being, when the personal collides with the general, I find it most intriguing indeed. More so when a reading of the family background becomes a sideways approach to the usual ghoigh (pronounced 'keech'), that which we, our children and children's children are to have been advised, on a daily basis, is a true account of "the History of our Nation".

Previous to this I discovered my Grandpa Kelman's Grandpa Kelman had a croft in Port Elphinstone, Inverurie back in the first half of the 19th century. Now I learned of the existence of the Howe of the Hawk's Nest and a place known locally as Kelman Hill, a wild remote outpost settled more than 5000 years ago. No sooner discovered than surfaced another piece of information. This was a

most fantastic theory as to the derivation of the name Kelman . . . put forward by a Cabrach man, who imagined that the people that had settled on the hill came from Kiel in Holland, and that they named the hill after their native place, and the Deveron from a stream near to it, which rises in the Doufrefield mountains. In pursuance of this theory, he sought out everyone named Kelman that he could find, and observed that they all had a squat, Dutchman-like appearance, and further that Cabrach butter and Kiel butter were alike excellent and superior to that of other districts . . .

This comment "that they all had a squat, Dutchman-like appearance" struck a chord with myself and Marie, my wife. It reminded us of when an older cousin of mine had died in Aberdeen and we attended the

funeral. We were a bit late. Had we arrived for the correct funeral? We entered the hall from the rear and noticed the backs of the adult male heads. Nay bother. We were in the right place. A majority of these adult male heads were remarkably similar. They were heavy heidit and the rear of the skull was baldy. When these fellows stood to their feet that "squat, Dutchman-like" description was indeed appropriate. But in the majority of cases only. There was a discrepancy; rather a vague discrepancy. Some of these guys had hairy heids and werenay baldy at all. From this, dear reader, I was led to form another conclusion, in regard to another strain, and a most fascinating and engrossing strain this is, in reference to that

regular colonizing movement also by sea (which) began perhaps as early as 2000 B.C. . . . 'Neolithic' peasants of the English Windmill Hill culture . . . led by chieftains of southern, Iberic, origin, endowed with supernatural powers, who were interred in monumental tombs (and) organized in exogamous clans such as survived into historical times among the Picts. Though devoted to primitive agriculture, they created a maritime civilization which embraced Ireland and even touched Shetland and Scandanavia as well as . . . the more open, wind-swept tracts of the Hebrides, Orkney, Caithness (and across the Moray Firth to the mouths of the Nairn and Ness and the coasts of Aberdeenshire.

(D)uring the same centuries Beaker-folk, coasting up from England or crossing the North Sea from the Low Countries, were settling along our eastern seaboard. These (roundheidit) invaders were more pastoral and more warlike than the 'Neolithic' peasants and perhaps more worldly, more ready to appreciate metal when it arrived. Though related to the Battle-axe people of the Continent, whom some authorities regard as Indo-European, they can hardly be termed Kelts, and had better remain nameless.²

Much of this I shall leave for a future work. It is enough for now that not all males were of a certain ‘squat-like physicality’ and, if they were, need not have arrived from the Netherlands. It is certainly the case that burly wee guys run in our family, usually fast as fuck, with or without hair. I do like the idea of ‘remaining nameless’; it appeals to one’s emigratory instincts. The present owner of the land is a Brit multi-millionaire if not billionaire Helper to Royalty and all manner of good causes: Christopher Moran, owner of the entire Glenfiddich and Cabrach estate. This extends to around 48,000 acres; only a little less in size than the adjacent ‘property’ owned by his neighbour *Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Her other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith:*

Arise ye Faithless and Tremble.

Heh what about me man I don't believe in god, let alone God?

Just gie us a bow & scrape.

Naw. I hereby proclaim to Whomsoever It May Please By the Good Law Established (including the Crown Estate) that I intend laying claim to the lands of my forefathers. A firm of lawyers by the name of Jarndyce & Jarndyce has offered their services at a fraction of the cost of living. The quest may be futile, they say, but it affords us a non-negotiable grin during the present period of intellectual decrepitude and institutionalized venality.

The Brit financier Christopher Moran is the same chap who “masterminded the £30 million sale of Conservative Central Office, historic backdrop to Thatcher’s election victories.” He and her Royal Majesty are together, if not as one, in certain charitable and political undertakings in the United Kingdom and in Ireland. Dr Moran has described himself as ‘astronomically wealthy.’³ Several years ago his accumulated wealth was estimated at £400 million. As well as the Glenfiddoch and Cabrach estate he “owns Crosby Hall, a 30-bedroom

Tudor mansion on the banks of the Thames in Chelsea.” Among his various charitable enterprises he

(chairs) the LSO Finance Board, (contributes) as Chair of University College London Hospitals Charitable Foundation helping UCL deliver cutting-edge care for patients living with cancer and other life-threatening conditions . . . As a firm believer in inter-faith cohesion he serves as Vice-Chair of the Council of Christians and Jews in their promotion of dialogue and understanding between faith communities.

(He also chairs) the charity Cooperation Ireland [and] promotes peace and reconciliation working under the joint patronage of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and President of Ireland Mary McAleese (whom Moran brought) “together at (his own property) Crosby Hall.” (In) a recent speech he stated that in his own opinion, given the “Queen and President Higgins are joint patrons of Cooperation Ireland, [their] two recent State visits have laid to rest the . . . ghosts of history, marking a new era for Anglo-Irish relations. It’s now so normal, many wonder what all the fuss and estrangement was about.”

It is certainly useful to ignore seven hundred years of the land-grabbing, robbery, deliberate starvation and outright murder of the indigenous population perpetrated by the British State on behalf of its ruling elite. This in essence is what “all the fuss and estrangement” are about, that Doctor Moran has difficulty in understanding. Why didn't the President of Ireland advise her colleagues Moran and the Head of the House of Windsor of the reality? There was no need. Obviously the British State needs no reminding. In the final event its authorities will agree to most every action or activity laid at its door, including those termed criminally despicable, barbaric, sadistic, depraved, and so on. In return it asks merely that perpetrators and victims, abusers and abused will together forget the past and shake hands, play up, play the game

and forge ahead, as in a new beginning. They ask only that any wealth, privilege and property gained through theft, piracy and aforesaid practices should remain with the current holders, thus "laying to rest the ghosts of history . . . wonder(ing) what all the fuss and estrangement was about."

Moran is a staunch Helper to Royalty of another of his neighbours: the eldest son of the aforementioned Monarch, whose fuller appellation (crucial in business transactions with foreign potentates) is . . . wait for it . . . *His Royal Highness, Duke of Cornwall, Duke of Rothesay, Earl of Carrick, Baron Renfrew, Lord of the Isles, Prince and Great Steward of Scotland, Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester.*

Jesus christ, what can one say, gie us the cloot till I gie my heid a dight.

As a member of the "Prince's Charities Council" Christopher Moran provides "strategic advice to ensure (the) long-term sustainability" of all of the charities adumbrated, instigated, originated or otherwise associated with said Royal Personage. Although upgraded to a Freeman of The City of London the good Doctor has yet to be ennobled or offered a Medal of Empire by his neighbours and colleagues for his sterling charitable work. One difficulty may concern the core of his 'astronomical wealth.'⁴ The dastardly fellow

has been censured several times by the London Stock Exchange for a series of controversial share purchases and holds the dubious privilege of being the first person to be debarred for life by Lloyd's of London. (He was) expelled . . . for "discreditable conduct".

Maybe the Advisory Helpers to the Royal Household didn't know anything of the personal background when they entered into charitable work with the fellow.

Four years later he was censured by the Stock Exchange, and in 1992 he was fined \$2 million in New York for insider dealing.

And they were probably out the country when that happened. It was all news to them. Maybe they were up in bonné North Britain doing some hunting, shooting and organizing field events with the local Highland Games association who would have been too embarrassed, too overcome with reverence, respect and awe, to advise them concerning the behaviour of their next-door neighbour, their comrade in charitable arms, Dr Moran, whose

estate (of Glenfiddoch and Cabrach) has one of the worst records for wildlife crime in Scotland. . . In just five months during 1998 a joint investigation by the RSPB and the police recorded ten incidents on the estate. The estate's gamekeepers were successfully prosecuted for wildlife crime offences in 1998 and again in 2006.

Maybe none of Her Royal Highness' agents, stockbrokers, lawyers, accountants, investors, privy-purse keepers, horse-trainers, crown-estate property dealers, treasure-trove curators, servants, ladies-in-waiting, butlers and duchy advisors (how do ye spell adviser?) and aw the rest didn't know any damn thing about Moran's dealings.

Then aw naw, here we go again; yet another difficulty concerning the fellow:

In late 2018 The Sunday Times claimed more than 100 prostitutes have been listed online as working from flats inside the Chelsea Cloisters building he owns. There was no suggestion that he or the management of the block knew anything about their activities, and Moran's representatives said he had a "zero-tolerance policy" towards prostitution on the premises and added: "Any suggestion that Dr Moran or the management of Chelsea Cloisters has, or would, in any

way knowingly allow or even tolerate the premises being used for prostitution would be utterly false.”⁵⁶

And now, Christopher Moran makes the news yet again. This time he has been caught making the 500 mile trip to his 48,000 acre sanctuary in bonné North Britain during the lockdown days of the coronavirus pandemic. No doubt he shall be ticked off, there's a good chap. Boris Johnson can put a good word in for him. He regards him as a 'friend' and has made use of his private plane.⁷

My interest only extends to derelict cottages and the ruined foundations of former townships, in particular when my family were concerned. I don't fucking care if it was five, four, three, or two hundred years ago, these bastards stole the croft and I want it back on behalf of the grandkids and all these other grandkids of my cousins, distant and far-flung.

Hoy! Yous mob! Back ye come from New Zealand, Australia, the Republic of South Africa, Canada, Paraguay and Americay! Bonné North Britain awaits.

...

Back to this dump! Aye, exactly, the pipes explodit at the very idea.

Find yer ayn place of refuge and batten down the hatches, perhaps "a line of hollows (some hundreds of yards apart, 6 to 8 feet in diameter, and about 4 feet deep), which are (good) for catching deer (and) lookout posts."

*Where did they go
and what happened when they got there
and how did the culture affect them
and how did they affect the culture
and did they suffer much
and did some die or did they recover
or did they just do*

*what had been done to them
and move on, move on.*

It is exciting to discover not simply artefacts but in placenames clues to earlier indigenous cultures, long gone, perhaps unknown, except through irrational persons like myself who do the research to find out which one stolen by the bastards belonged to one's grandpa's grandpa or one's grannie's grannie's first cousin. I like to figure out how they lived and guess at how it was when they flitted, or were removed, or cleared, forced from their homes, evicted at sabre-point or down the barrel of a musket.

Such issues are not curtailed to romantic old bonné North Britain. Throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland not just land but houses and apartments are being bought by wealthy people to accomodate themselves, for their own convenience, as a function of their own particular needs at any particular period. When they don't use them they let or rent them to those who can afford the cost. In the process communities and cultures are being helped along the road to oblivion in villages and small towns along the coasts.

Generally I cope with the knowledge. It is less easy to bear in these wee townships and hunting-lodge hotels throughout the highlands and islands where Brits in one form or another - Welsh Brits, Scottish Brits, north Irish Brits or English Brits - thrive on the desolation they have purchased, and are perplexed to discover the immediacy of those of the lower-order indigenous persuasion. I was once in Tobermory visiting my daughter who worked in the Mishnish Bar. I passed the time by going into a wee sort of shop museum. The only kind of ordinary Scottish voice I heard was my own. A woman passed by, paused, and asked in her fuller Brit tones - which for some reason reminded me I had forgotten to change my socks - Did you buy a ticket?

Never mind, it was probably a case of mistaken identity, as Matt McGinn said once about a tricky night in Kirkintilloch.

Nevertheless, here I am in Glasgow. I am not up in the north east of skallin picketing the uisqué trail, neither am I in mid Argyll, nor over the sea to the island of Lewis, nor the smaller Hebridean islands in a personal attempt to reclaim a single damn thing.

I accept that it has gone. The fucking lot. My family and their communities 'lost'. I hope my descendants read this and related stuff, and come to know a little more of how it was lost, and learn some more of the communities and culture. It's only human but so what. I wish I knew more of it myself. Just about everything I do know I have had to weed out in one way or another; the bulk of this from 2012, at the age of 66, and now eight years on at this time of writing.

Ach well.

Unlike Emperor Hadrian and his Roman troops, the British ruling elite found stealing the land from its inhabitants straightforward. They sent in their army and grabbed it then set the rules of acquisition that allowed them to retain it with minimum fuss. They exploited the people who were living there or expelled them altogether, whichever was most convenient to themselves, their associates and minions. Three hundred years later they continue to pass it backward and forward amongst themselves, using their preferred systems of exchange, under their own interpretation of a law established by themselves on behalf of themselves, all these multi-millionaires, billionaires and trillionaires; financiers and royalty domestic and foreign, helpers to monarchy, bla bla, all these leeches in every available continent and who knows where else bla bla bla, who gives a fuck.

But that 'who gives a fuck' is a lie.

The idea that I shall die before these people are sorted out is irksome. Not so irksome as once it was. In past times I doubt I ever would set foot on Kelman Hill unless in possession of the means to bring about its destruction. Not now. I intend to see it one of these fine days, at least once, prior to my demise.

Aye, definitely, it shall be done. I shall visit the Cabrach. I shall search out that “line of hollows . . . pitfalls for catching deer, lookout posts, and the holes left after digging up tree trunks for firewood” and farther on find “the Howe of the Hawk's Nest” and that “large stone, (which has) on its flatter side some marks which a lively imagination can see to be the serpent of the Druids, and which the natives declare to be ‘Sculptured Stone’. I shall cope with the place being owned by whatever member of the bloodsucking leech brigade this happens to be: monarch, aristocrat, uae sheikdoms and arse-licking associates; foreign magnate, financiers, celebrity clowns; helpers to royalty or whomsoever else it pleaseth their majestic regalities, general fucking lickspittles man whoever the fuck.

Calm down.

I’m calming down.

No you’re not.

Ah well fuck off.

Notes:

¹ see archaeologists attached to Aberdeen University are involved; see <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/news/8083/>

² p265 The Prehistory of Scotland by V.Gordon Childe (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co.,Ltd. 1935)

³ see Independent on Sunday, April 2006

⁴ His own description, according to the Independent on Sunday, April 2006

⁵ See this recent update on the exploits of Dr Moran:

<https://www.thenational.scot/news/18435372.tory-donor-fire-500-mile-trip-highlands-lockdown/>

⁷ ibid