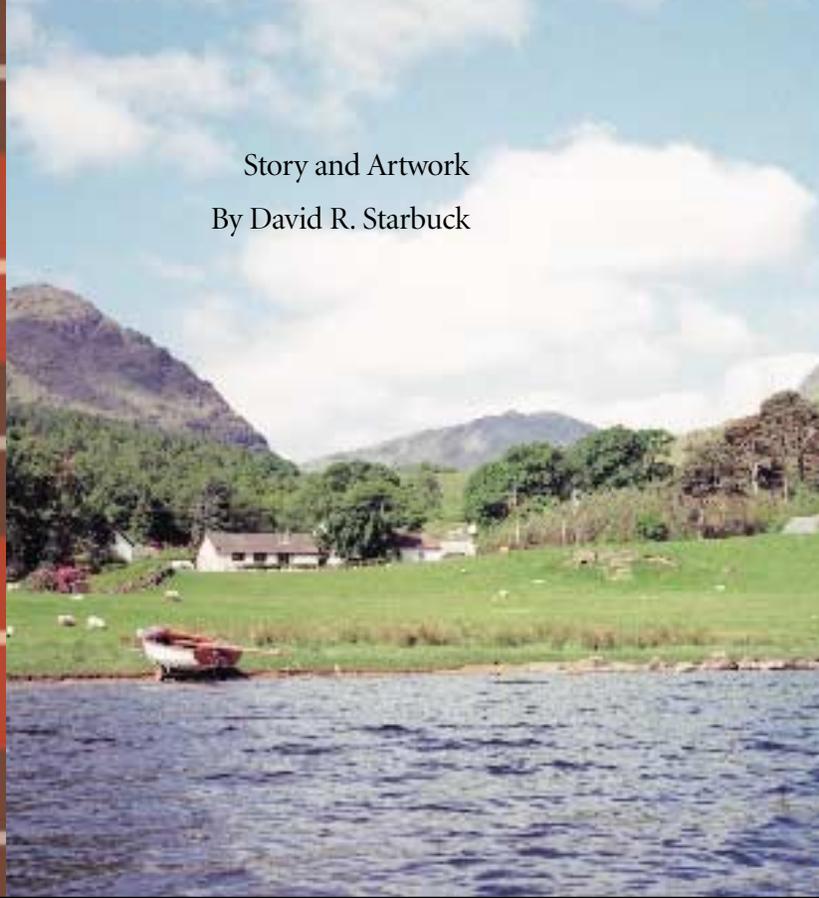


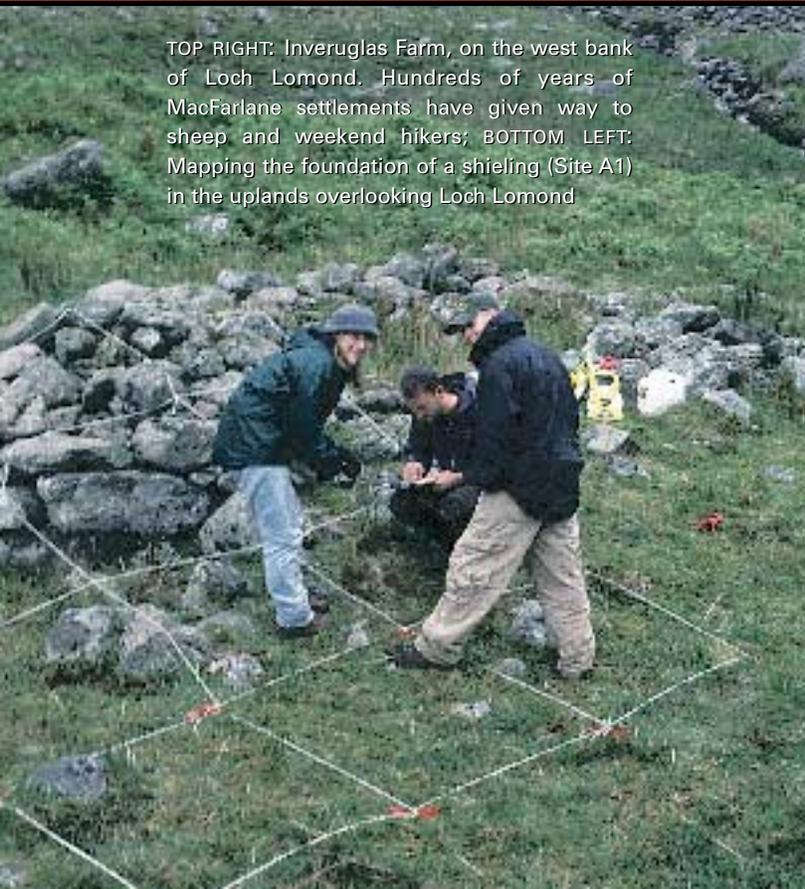
Story and Artwork
By David R. Starbuck



By Yon Bonnie Banks

An archaeological search for Clan MacFarlane

TOP RIGHT: Inveruglas Farm, on the west bank of Loch Lomond. Hundreds of years of MacFarlane settlements have given way to sheep and weekend hikers; BOTTOM LEFT: Mapping the foundation of a shieling (Site A1) in the uplands overlooking Loch Lomond



Scotland has traditionally evoked images of plaids, bagpipes, haggis, thrift, hospitality, and sheep as far as the eye can see. More recently, another image has been added: that of Mel Gibson as the revered Scottish patriot William Wallace in the movie *Braveheart*, proudly proclaiming his desire for freedom from his English oppressors. While there are 5 million residents in Scotland today, there are more than 15 million people of Scottish extraction scattered all over the world. Many of the displaced modern Scots celebrate their ancestry by wearing kilts, displaying tartans, and attending “Scottish Games” every summer. Sometimes it appears that some of these overseas Scots want to believe that they are descended from kilted kings and clan chiefs who lived in turreted stone castles. But if truth were told, as many as 90 percent of the Scots were

poor tenant farmers and shepherds throughout the medieval period and later.

I cannot claim to be descended from kings. My Scottish ancestors were the MacFarlanes, sometimes described as the most notorious cattle and sheep thieves in all of Scotland. The MacFarlanes were often considered by their contemporaries to be more troublesome even than the MacGregors, their closest neighbors to the east. However, the MacFarlanes were a relatively small clan, and none of the MacFarlane chieftains ever



achieved the notoriety of the outlawed MacGregor leader, Rob Roy, who achieved fame in 1817 through Sir Walter Scott's novel of the same name.

The harshness of their lives in the rugged uplands, where few economic opportunities existed, led the MacFarlanes to tax cattle drives crossing their land and to carry out raids upon the farms of their more prosperous neighbors to the south. In fact, in that region a full moon was referred to as "MacFarlane's Lantern"



CENTER: A modern plan of Scotland, showing the location of Loch Lomond and the survey area; **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** Appropriate gear for work in Scotland. Midge nets are so tightly woven that it is hard either to see or breathe through them; Animal pens such as this, now often covered with bracken, were constructed at one end of some of the MacFarlane shielings; Even in the uplands, some farming was conducted on the level floors of the glens, and the furrows, which helped to drain the fields, have been preserved on the landscape for hundreds of years; Students excavate a corn-drying kiln (Site A3) that contained, appropriately enough, layers of charcoal as well as some of the maggots and slugs that are abundant here in the saturated soil.



because that was the best time to go cattle stealing. When members of Clan MacFarlane gathered, the tune played on their bagpipes was called "Lifting the Cattle," and there is no denying that they also stole sheep, goats, horses, and just about anything else.

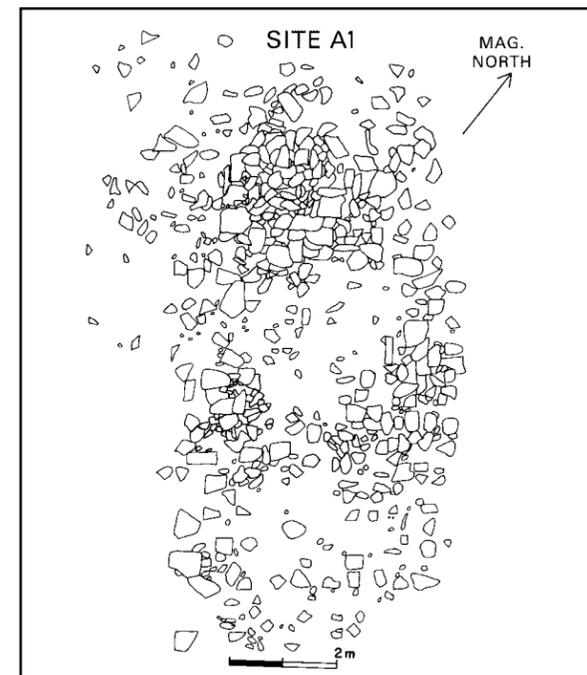
Is it possible for archaeology to describe rural life in Scotland and to document the rise of one of its clans, in this case Clan

MacFarlane? This has been my hope, and it has led my students and me to Scotland, where we are determined to trace the clan's customs and settlement patterns up to the late 18th century, at which time most departed for Glasgow, Northern Ireland, Canada, Australia, and the

United States. Because one of my grandmothers was a "MacFarland" (one of the several variations upon the MacFarlane spelling), this has become an archaeological search for my roots, as I seek a rural, largely illiterate people whose origins are as shadowy and obscure as the mists that rise every day over Loch Lomond.

MEDIEVAL AND POSTMEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN SCOTLAND

Scottish archaeologists refer to more recent sites — those from the medieval period to the mid-20th century — as MOLRS (Medieval or Later Rural Settlements). Many of them are highly visible, but most contain so few artifacts that it is difficult to date them precisely. Regional offices, such as the West of Scotland Archaeology Service, maintain archaeological site files. These listings contain increasing numbers of MOLRS, especially because so many Scottish archaeologists are now practicing commercial, or contract, archaeology. Intensive research efforts are increasingly emphasizing the later periods. These efforts include projects directed by the Glasgow



an area just north of where the Lowlands rise to meet the western Highlands. The southern end of Loch Lomond lies just 18 miles north of the center of Glasgow, and the 23-mile-long lake is the largest expanse of fresh water in Scotland. The MacFarlanes inhabited some of the 38 small islands in the loch, and two of them — Inveruglas Isle and Ellan Vhow — held castles that were occupied by clan chiefs. Clan members were scattered among dozens of houses and small settlements, but in the summer they were transhumant, that is, they moved with their animals to seasonal pastures with many going to the uplands overlooking the west side

LEFT: A plan view of a shieling foundation, Site A1.

of Loch Lomond. There they lived in shielings, seasonal dwellings, for about six weeks each year, from June into August. Most made a living from farming or raising cattle. Since the MacFarlanes were not a large clan, extremely few of that name still live in the region today.

The MacFarlanes have been identified with this clan territory since ca. A.D. 1225 and most Lennox charters relating to this area date to 1225. Today the area is well known for

the Linton, or blackface, breed of sheep, a hardy animal that was introduced to the local area in 1746. Linton sheep have largely replaced the cattle that were raised by earlier generations, and the sheep were responsible for what are known as the "clearances" of the 18th century, as clan chiefs displaced their followers with many thousands of sheep. The last of the Clan MacFarlane lands were sold off to pay debts in 1784. There has been no clan chief since 1824. Few MacFarlanes left any written record, although the clan chief Walter MacFarlane (1716–1760) did collect many clan documents during the period in which he lived as an antiquarian and genealogist in Edinburgh. However, there would have been little similarity between his prosperous urban

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CLAN MACFARLANE — A LIFE ON THE LAND

Historical sources indicate that the members of Clan MacFarlane, who were vassals of the Earls of Lennox, traditionally resided between Loch Lomond and Loch Long,

lifestyle and that of more ordinary clan members who lived very close to the land.

The introduction of sheep was clearly the biggest change in recent times, but while this has resulted in significant changes in ground cover, there has been little new construction or impact on the historical sites that span many hundreds of years; these are still intact and easily visible on the surface of the land. The only significant modification to this landscape did not come until the 20th century, and that was the construction of the Loch Sloy Dam between 1945 and 1950, which greatly enlarged Loch Sloy and completely submerged the principal MacFarlane village in the glen.

PAST ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON LOCH LOMOND

Working under the sponsorship of the Friends of Loch Lomond, Scottish consulting archaeologist Fiona Baker of Firat Archaeological Services has prepared a survey of archaeological sites located on the islands in Loch Lomond. Her comprehensive three-year inventory identified 390 sites on the islands (including castles), at least 10 constructed islands (“crannogs”), graveyards, and other archaeological sites dating well into prehistory.

Independent of Baker’s study, the Association of Certificated Field Archaeologists (ACFA), at the University of Glasgow, has conducted excellent regional surveys a bit to the south and west on ruined structures in the vicinity of Loch Restil, Glen Croe, and Glen Luss. The MacFarlanes no doubt formerly occupied some of these sites. The shielings that ACFA has documented are strikingly similar to those that my team and I studied in the summers of 2000 and 2001 at Inveruglas Farm.

AT INVERUGLAS FARM: WALKING THE HILLS AND GLENS

In the summer it rains almost constantly in Scotland. Archaeological gear includes rain slickers and rubber boots (Wellingtons, or “Wellies”), as well as fine-meshed midge nets to protect the face against the millions of tiny, flying, biting insects that cover the body with red welts. While these may not sound like ideal field conditions, the objective of our field survey has been to use archaeology to document the rise, expansion, and subsequent decline of a Scottish clan within its historic clan territory.

Because the foundations from many of the traditional shielings, farm cottages, and longhouses are still visible

and well preserved on the ground surface throughout rural Scotland, it is possible to locate and document many of these medieval and postmedieval structures and study their implications for broader settlement patterning. The area we selected for research was Inveruglas Farm on the west side of Loch Lomond. This has been one of the largest sheep farms in the county of Argyll since the late 1700s, covering some 6,000 acres. Roughly 1,300 lambs are born there each spring. The farm begins as gentle fields on the shore of the loch, but the land quickly rises to the west to form uplands.

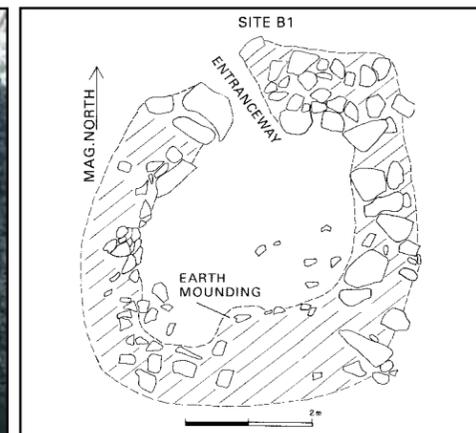
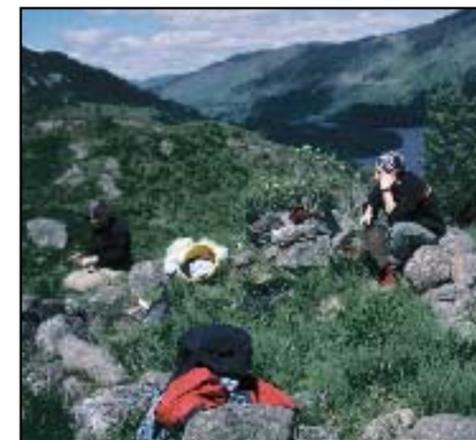
Our field survey in the summers of 2000 and 2001 was a systematic effort to locate Clan MacFarlane house and shieling foundations, as well as small pens (enclosures) for cattle, larger enclosures, or sheepfolds, for sheep, corn-drying kilns (used to prepare oats or barley for milling), and any other traces of medieval or postmedieval modification to the land. Shielings were the primary summer dwellings in the uplands for those who tended animals, chiefly women and children. The naturalist John Mitchell has written that the clan’s annual stay at the shielings was “a keenly anticipated social occasion” before returning home at harvest time. Shielings consisted of low stone or turf walls holding up raised poles that, in turn, supported a roof of peat or thatch. Cattle grazed in the fields around the shielings, and this effectively kept the animals away from the crops in the more permanent settlements closer to the loch. While this pattern lasted for hundreds of years, this way of life had ended by the early 1780s. Today all that survives of each shieling is a shallow depression surrounded by a low stone foundation wall. A primary objective of our survey is to trace the process whereby shielings and associated animal enclosures may have been evolving into semi-permanent settlements. While it is not always possible to define an upland settlement as seasonal, generally speaking the best way to determine whether a site was occupied year-round is to look for signs of cultivated fields nearby.

Our field team spent three weeks in 2000 systematically walking the uplands, looking for evidence of sites. We were not disappointed. Ridge lines and even the glens were sprinkled with abandoned shieling foundations, measuring from 5.5 to 8.6 meters (18–28.2 feet) long and from 2.3 to 3.8 meters (7.5–12.5 feet) wide. Some were in fact large enough to suggest that they had become permanent houses. Two of these (A2 and B2) contained a

small animal pen at one end, about three feet in diameter, probably to shelter a lamb or a calf. Old cultivation fields, now primarily used for grazing sheep, were still marked with “rigs” (ridges) and furrows from past plowing, and it appears that the furrows helped to drain water away from the crops. This pattern of rigs and furrows has been in use in the British Isles since the Late Neolithic. Bracken, a fern typically tied into bundles and used for thatching roofs, sometimes grows most luxuriantly atop the old stone walls. There also were large, round, cattle enclosures with chest-high stone walls, and every-

where the fields were saturated with water from meandering streams and the many rivulets that flow down the hillsides. These small streams are known as “burns,” and we discovered that nearly every foundation was located alongside a burn.

In 2000 our survey crew divided the study area into Subregions A, running from the Loch Sloy Dam to Loch Lomond, and B, running north and parallel to the west shore of the loch (see Table 1). Subregion A included the fields that parallel Inveruglas Water, the largest stream that



CENTER: A plan view of an enclosure, Site B1; **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** Part of the team rests atop a shieling foundation (Site B4) overlooking Loch Lomond. It is a drop of about 500 feet to the loch below; Medieval and postmedieval shieling foundations and enclosures are scattered throughout the hills above Loch Lomond and are well preserved but incredibly barren of artifacts. This enclosure at Site C2 was one of the most intact; Team members, wearing midge nets, excavate the fireplace inside the remains of the large cottage that once sat close to the shore of Loch Lomond; Measuring the tower at the northeast corner of the MacFarlane castle on Inveruglas Isle.



runs out of the hills and down to the shore of Loch Lomond below. A few of the more level fields sited close to Inveruglas Water were covered with rigs and furrows, suggesting that the sites at A1 and A2 may not have been shielings — which are defined as upland and seasonal — but may actually have evolved into a permanent settlement. In every case the sites were drawn, photographed,

and described. That season we excavated one site, a very intact corn-drying kiln at A3.

Subregion B was an area shown to us by one of the property owners, John Duncan, who escorted the sur-

vey team to a cluster of foundations alongside the track running north from the Loch Sloy Power Station. The Duncan family refers to this as “Stumpey’s Area” because there they killed a fox with a very short tail that had preyed upon their lambs. The sites designated B1 to B4 (Table 1) are located on a ridgeline where they are quite exposed and windswept, and the land drops off sharply on the east, plunging down to Loch Lomond.

B2 and B4 were shielings, B1 was a large, round enclosure, and B3 was a small pen built against a boulder. All four sites are thus tightly clustered together and appear to have functioned as a single farm-and-family unit, perhaps even on a year-round basis, since they were in an intermediate position between the more

permanent medieval settlements located on better land alongside the loch and what may originally have been somewhat more seasonal settlements in the uplands.

During the summer of 2001, a third survey area designated subregion C was pointed out by John Mitchell, who referred to the setting as a hidden valley south of our region A. This is known locally as the Lag Uaine (literally, “green hollow”) area. We found two sites there, a shieling foundation (C1) and an enclosure (C2). The sites were only about 25 meters apart (see Table 1). Both were nestled in the bend of a stream that wandered through this remote, marshy glen before flowing downhill toward Loch Lomond. While our sites of the previous season had all been positioned between

about 130m and 210m above sea level, these new sites were considerably higher up. At 470 meters there were no traces of plow furrows in the surrounding fields, indicating that these sites were more likely seasonal.

In addition to our work in the uplands, we also excavated at the foundation of a ca. 1800 cottage located close to the shore of Loch Lomond. This cottage had been used as a shed for lambs as recently as the 1940s. Its rectangular, dry-laid, stone foundation measured 6 meters by 11 meters, and we excavated a trench across the north end, completely exposing the stone base of a fireplace.

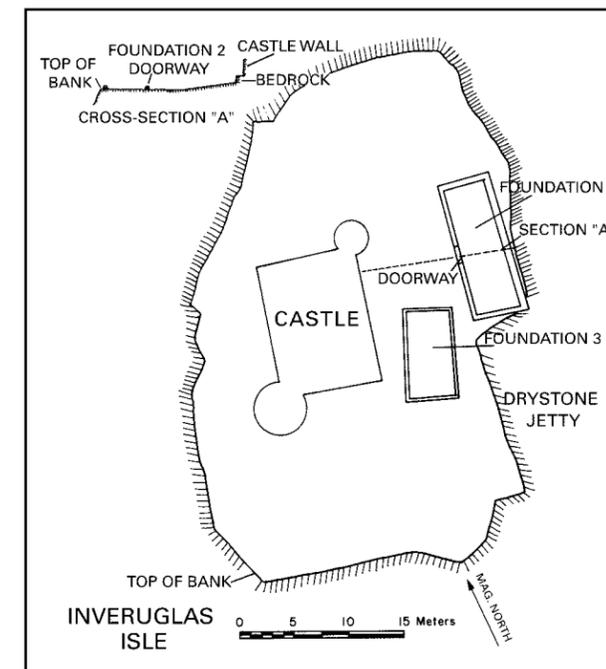
We also cleared a complex of foundations from mill buildings positioned on the south side of Inveruglas Water, at a point just before the river flows into Loch Lomond. This area has been known as Port a’ Chaipuill since at least the 1600s, at which time historical sources indicate that all clan members were required to have their grain ground in the clan chief’s mill. We discovered either two or three large, dry-laid, stone foundations, littered with large sherds of red earthenware that were fragments of a redware chimney or stove pipe.

THE CASTLE ON INVERUGLAS ISLE

The island known as Inveruglas Isle is the site of the first historically documented MacFarlane castle, occupied by the clan chiefs of the MacFarlanes from as early as the 1400s until around 1654 when it was burned by soldiers loyal to Oliver Cromwell, lord protector of the English commonwealth. During the English Civil War of the 1640s, the MacFarlanes were ardent supporters of Charles I and the royalists, thus prompting the castle’s destruction. The castle has a Z-plan and might be termed a tower house because it probably had three stories stacked vertically. At the ground level, the castle

originally would have had a hall over a vaulted basement.

The island is small, about 40 meters by 60 meters (130 feet by 200 feet), and supports a rather heavy growth of bracken, wood fern, spleenwort, woodrush, bluebells, and honeysuckle, intermixed with mature trees. Swans nest here in the late spring, and some 17 plant species have been noted on the island so far, including the many trees that grow out of the walls and interior of the castle. Cruise boats constantly ply the waters of Loch Lomond and typically



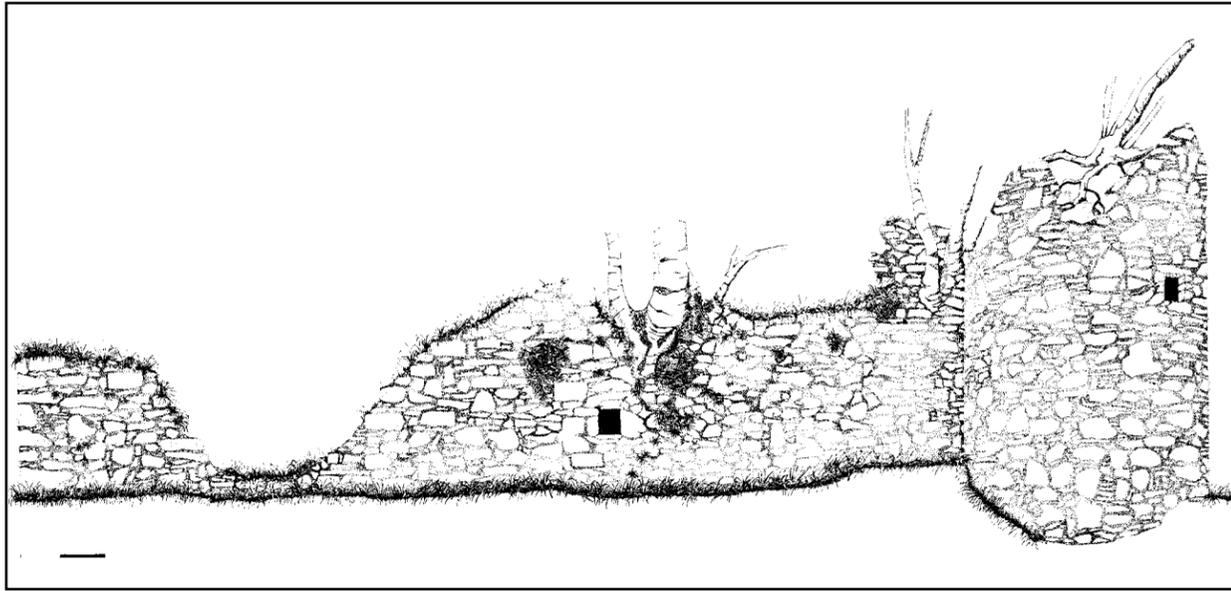
LEFT: A plan view of Inveruglas Isle, delineating the MacFarlane castle and associated structures. This Z-plan castle is set directly onto bedrock.

pass by Inveruglas Isle, with captains eagerly entertaining their passengers with tales about the notorious and rascally MacFarlanes.

While largely screened from view, the castle literally covers most of the island. Its interior is now littered with stones, probably from the vaulted basement that collapsed inside the structure. The structure is built entirely of undressed blocks of sandstone. Sometime after its initial construction, towers were added at the northeast and southwest corners. While unused for nearly 350 years, both towers are amazingly stable and, like the rest of this structure, show signs of the burning that accompanied its destruction. Square and rectangular firing slots, traces of the castle’s defenses, appear in all of the walls and in the towers. Because the towers were added after its initial construction, it is most likely that the castle’s defenders created the firing slots for use with muskets, rather than arrows. There is also evidence for fireplaces in both the northern and southern walls at the first-floor level. At the southeast corner of the island, there is a dry-laid stone jetty or landing stage that was probably the original access onto the island.

TABLE 1: UPLAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES ON INVERUGLAS FARM

| | Dimensions | Elevation Above Sea | Ground Cover | Proximity to Water |
|---|---|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| SHIELINGS | | | | |
| A1 | 3.2 x 7.3m x 0.5m | 190m | grass | ~100m |
| A2 | 3.2 x 5.5m x 0.5m | 190m | grass | <1m |
| A6 | 3.4 x 5.7m x 0.9m | 210m | grass | 48m |
| B2 | 3.3 x 8.6m x 0.5m | 200m | bracken | 1m |
| B4 | 2.3 x 6.0m x 0.5m | 200m | grass | 13m |
| B5 | 2.6 x 5.5m x 0.6m | 140m | bracken | ~100m |
| C1 | 3.8 x 7.0m x 0.35m | 470m | grass | 35m |
| ENCLOSURES | | | | |
| A5 | 2.8 x 5.4m x 0.8m | 210m | grass | <2m |
| A7 | recent sheepfold | 130m | grass | ~100m |
| A11 | recent sheepfold | 50m | grass | ~100m |
| B1 | 4m diameter x 0.9m | 200m | grass | <1m |
| C2 | 2.6 x 3.7m x 0.7m | 470m | grass | 18m |
| ANIMAL PENS BUILT AGAINST BOULDERS | | | | |
| A5 | 1.8 x 2.3m x 0.5m | 210m | grass | 18m |
| A6 | 1.2 x 2.5m x 0.5m | 210m | grass | 50m |
| A6 | 1.0 x 1.0m x 0.5m | 210m | grass | 50m |
| B3 | 2.3 x 2.5m x 0.5m | 200m | bracken | 11m |
| CORN-DRYING KILNS | | | | |
| A3 | 2.0 x 2.5m x 0.2m | 130m | grass | 10m |
| A10 | 1m diameter x 0.45m | 180m | grass | 2m |
| STONE ARCH BRIDGE | | | | |
| A4 | 22m long (with approaches), 5m-diameter arch, 1.7m above Inveruglas Water | | | |



Elevation of the east wall of the MacFarlane castle on Inveruglas Isle.

There are also two rectangular foundations from smaller buildings, measuring 5.6 meters by 13.1 meters and 4.4 meters by 8.7 meters, but no artifacts are visible anywhere on the surface.

Beginning in June 2000, we prepared a detailed map of the island using a surveyor's theodolite (a simplified version of the map appears on page 31), and we measured and drew the castle's exterior walls, which average about 1.3 meters thick. These walls, while overgrown with birch, aspen, and sycamore maples, still rise in spots to as high as 18 feet. Even though no excavations have been conducted yet, archaeology would probably recover carved blocks of stone that might reveal how the interior of the castle was constructed and decorated and that might help to identify interior features such as the fireplaces and floor levels. And because the occupation of the structure ended with a fire, there is certainly the possibility that its ruins contain more than the usual number of artifacts. During the 2000 summer season, we invited Allan Rutherford of Historic Scotland to examine the castle, and he subsequently "scheduled" it the following winter. The act of scheduling gives the castle increased government protection and prohibits any excavation or disturbance without government permission.

TAKING STOCK

The fieldwork conducted on Inveruglas Farm is an effort to systematically record all archaeological sites that have survived from the period of residency by Clan MacFarlane. The sites we have examined so far are chiefly the remains of seasonal dwellings and either cattle or sheep pens. In the years ahead we plan to further expand the site survey in the hills while also locating the remains of more permanent settlements along the shores of Loch Lomond. It would be useful to be able to compare the architecture and artifacts found at the sites of shielings with evidence from wealthier, more permanent houses alongside the loch.

The work conducted in the hills west of Loch Lomond was accompanied by the clearing and excavation of a hearth area within a cottage on the side of Loch Lomond, within what is now the Loch Lomond Holiday Park. We have also cleared and excavated within structures associated with the Port a' Chaipuill mill complex on the side of Inveruglas Water. The mill complex in particular appears to warrant further work in order to locate the components of its power system, the headrace where water entered, the wheel-pit where the water wheel turned, and the tailrace where water exited after use.

At no farmhouse or kiln have we found more than a handful of artifacts, making it difficult to date these sites precisely. For this reason we have to lump all sites together as "Medieval or Later." This is a grim reminder

that everything was dear and nothing could be wasted by Scots, many of whom lived a hand-to-mouth existence that required some to "lift" cattle to survive. Small wonder that life in distant lands beckoned to them, and Scottish descendants such as I were forced to grow up in foreign lands. Still, I can remember when I was young often being asked to sing the old Scottish ballad "By Yon Bonnie Banks," for we all knew how beautiful, how "bonnie," our homeland must be. Thanks to modern archaeology and the rough stone foundations and walls in the hills and glens, there now comes a deeper understanding that Scottish rural life was difficult, that long-term survival for many meant moving away. But the MacFarlane archaeological sites are still there, and through archaeology it is possible to go home again to the land of my ancestors, who lived and died "on the bonnie, bonnie banks o' Loch Lomon." 



David Starbuck teaches archaeology at Plymouth State College of the University System of New Hampshire. He has conducted research in Scotland since 1998 and professes to love all things Scottish (except for the rain and the midges). When not in Scotland, he directs excavations at American forts, battlefields, and Shaker villages.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This archaeological survey of Inveruglas Farm was conducted under the auspices of Plymouth State College of the University System of New Hampshire, and I especially wish to thank our Scottish sponsor, Fiona Baker of Firat Archaeological Services, Rhu, by Helensburgh, Scotland, for her advice, encouragement, and comments on earlier drafts of this paper. I have been assisted in the field by Gordon and Barbara De Angelo, Elizabeth Hall, Sarah Waite, Wendy Borghoff, Shane Sargent, Jo Ann Guilmett, Christian Colwell, Stephen Bates, and Penny McDowell. The owners of Inveruglas Farm — John and Jane Duncan, Ian Duncan, and Bruce Duncan — were most helpful throughout our research. I am also indebted to Hugh McBrien of the West of Scotland Archaeology Service, Allan Rutherford of Historic Scotland, the naturalist John Mitchell of Drymen, and D.J. Johnston-Smith



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