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A Cromwellian Warship wrecked off Duart Castle, Mull, Scotland, in 1653

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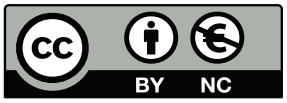

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Chapter 1

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 Sea-power in western Scotland from prehistory to 1746

The Sound of Mull is a route of prime importance in the maritime geography of Scotland's west coast and islands (Illus 2–4). Its south-eastern end gives ready access to Loch Linnhe, a long arm of the sea which penetrates the Highland massif as far as Fort William, the gateway to Lochaber. Loch Linnhe's geological continuation, the Great Glen, strikes through the mountainous interior along a series of navigable lochs to reach the Moray Plain at Inverness. This easy route into the fertile and populous north-east coastlands facilitated the spread of Christianity from Iona to the Picts in the 6th century AD (Fisher 2004; Nieke 2004), and the expansion of the Dalriadan Scots into Pictland three centuries later (Nieke 2004). The latter migration triggered the state-formation processes from which the kingdom of Scotland evolved (Foster 1996). In later periods this remote and dangerous back-door into Britain, vulnerable to seaborne penetration by continental enemies, internal malcontents, or both, was feared as much in Edinburgh as it was in London (Lenman 1995a; 1995b).

These same seaways were regarded, by those who lived among them, as arteries of movement and power. No doubt the prehistoric magnates whose strongholds fringe Argyll's convoluted shorelines projected influence and fought battles by sea (Harding 1997: 119 fig 7.1). Dalriadan expansion from Ireland in the 6th century, and the forging of a kingdom in Argyll (*Airer Gáidel*, or 'coastland of the Gaels'), was achieved and sustained by organised naval force (Rodger 1997: 5–6; Rixson 1998: 54–5). From the outset the sea was crucial to Dalriada's development and cultural contacts. Early manuscripts tell of Gaulish merchants visiting the area in the 6th century, and distinctive pottery of this period from east Gaul has been recognised at high-status sites in Argyll and beyond (Cunliffe 2001: 447–81).

Ease of maritime access also drew Christian missionaries and hermits in their skin-covered craft, to proselytise, establish monastic communities, or find solitude on the world's edge (Fisher 2004: 71–9). St Columba came to Iona from Ireland in AD 563 in a currach large enough to carry 13 men. Others included the celebrated navigator St Brendan of Clonfert, who is believed to have founded the early monastic settlement on the Garvellach Islands, with its distinctive beehive cells and adjacent natural harbour (Fisher 2004: 77). Adomnan's *Life of Columba*, written a century after its subject's death, contains much detail about seafaring and sea-craft. Both a skin-boat (*pelliceum tectum navis*) (bk 2 ch 42) and timber-built vessels (*longae naves*) (bk 2 ch 45) are mentioned, the latter being constructed of oak and pine. Oars and sails were used for propulsion (eg bk 1 ch 19, Anderson & Anderson 1961: 45, 169, 175; Martin 2009: 137–42).

In the Norse period more direct evidence of naval activity in the area begins to emerge (Crawford 1987: 11–27). During the 10th and 11th centuries the Atlantic seaboard of Scotland became a distinct political entity, which by the 12th century lay under Norwegian overlordship. By about 1156 the Norse-Gaelic warlord Somerled had won control of Argyll and the southern Hebrides (Woolf 2004: 102–5), and over the following two centuries the Macdonald hegemony became increasingly powerful. The Norwegians relinquished their claim to the remaining islands by the Treaty of Perth in 1266, and the area became a quasi-independent entity loosely bound to the Scottish crown (Barrow 1981: 120; McNeill & MacQueen 1996: 442–5). In 1336 John Macdonald, head of the clan in Islay who exercised *de facto* power over most of the region, boldly adopted the title 'Lord of the Isles' without acknowledgement to any overlord (Oram 2004: 124–8).

Following Norse precedent (Skoglund 2002), power on Scotland's western seaboard was exercised mainly through a combination of secure coastal bases and mobile fleets. The castles allowed chiefs and their retinues to concentrate resources, resist attack, and control the surrounding areas by patronage and military strength. Strongholds were usually located on headlands or close to bays from which they could dominate the labyrinthine passages among the islands and sea-lochs (McNeill & MacQueen 1996: 444) (Illus 5). Their positions were often chosen so as to be visible from one or more of their neighbours, creating networks of surveillance supplemented by lookouts and beacons (Illus 6). By this means movement by sea could be monitored, and hostile or unwelcome activity

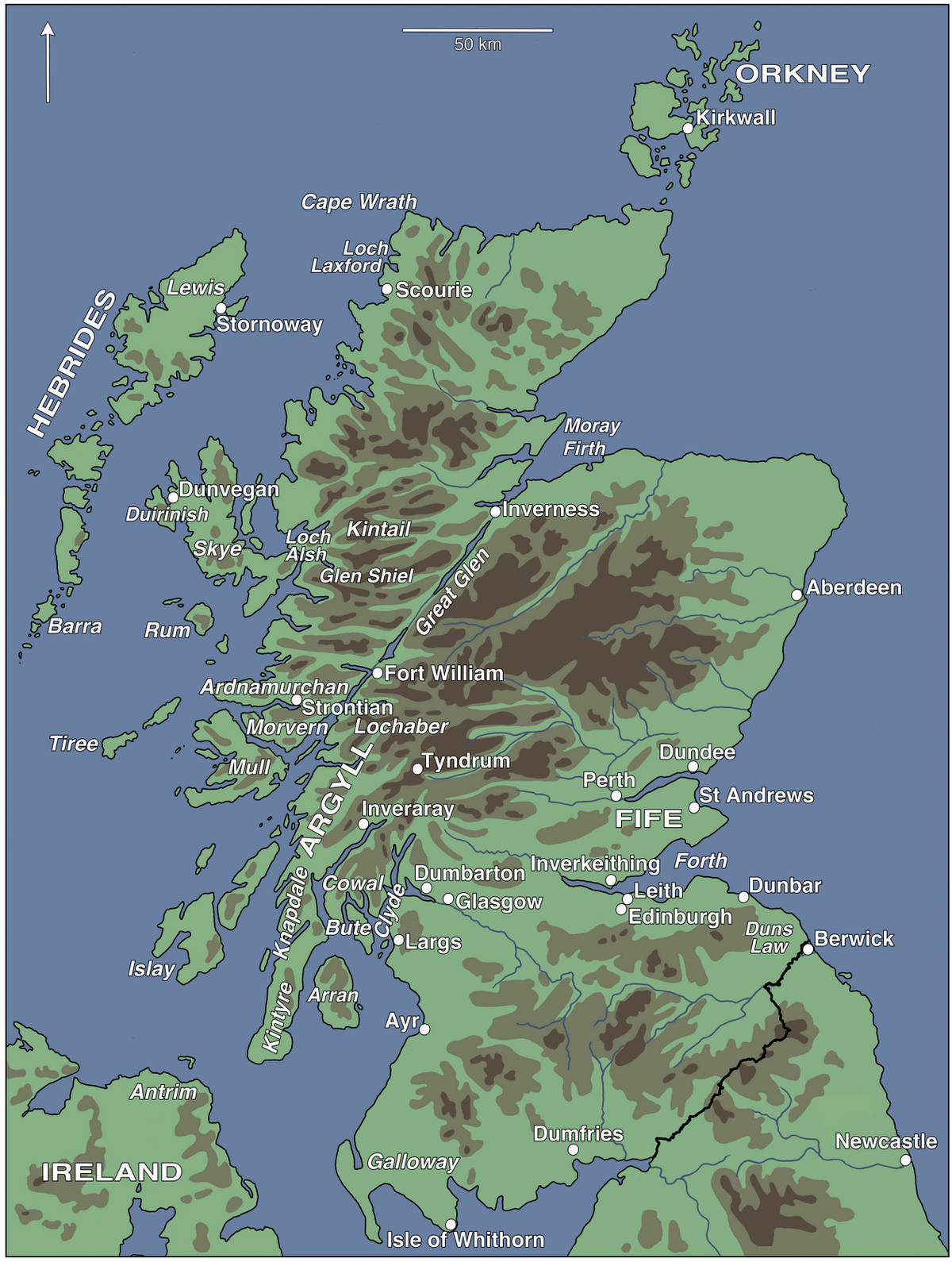

Illustration 2
Scotland showing places mentioned in the text (Edward Martin)

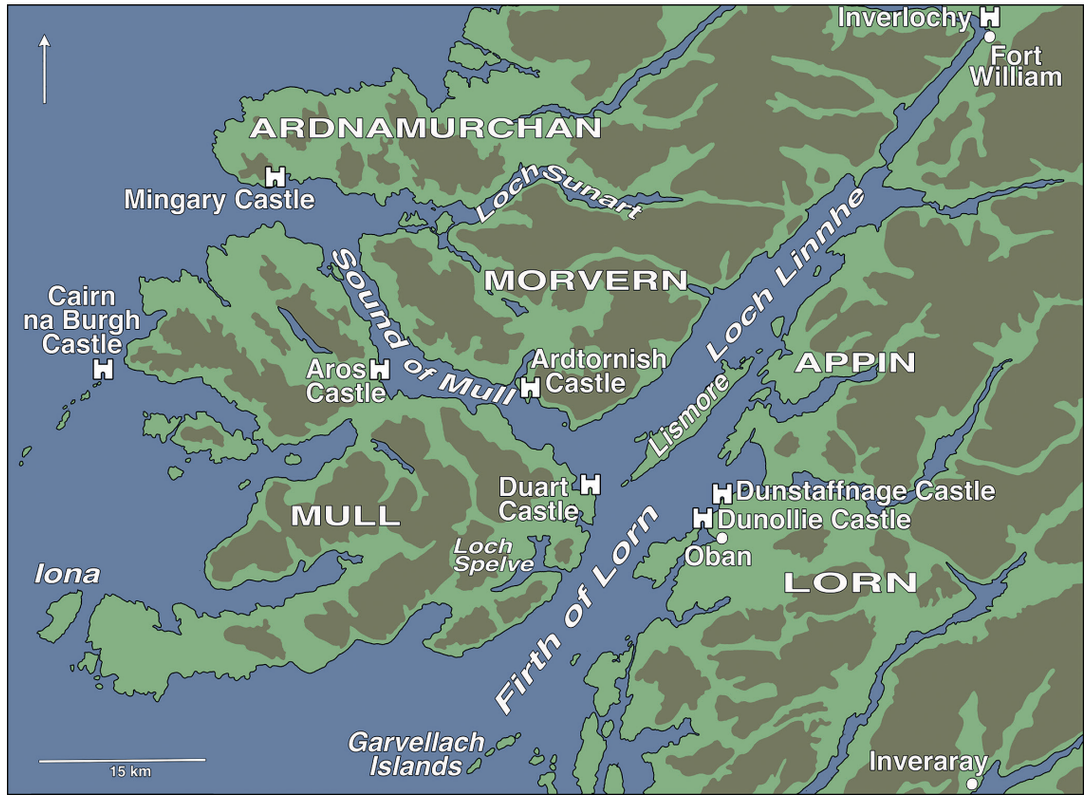

Illustration 3
The Sound of Mull and its environs showing places mentioned in the text (Edward Martin)

Illustration 4
The Sound of Mull, looking north-west towards Ardnamurchan, the Small Isles and Skye. Duart Castle stands on the headland right of centre

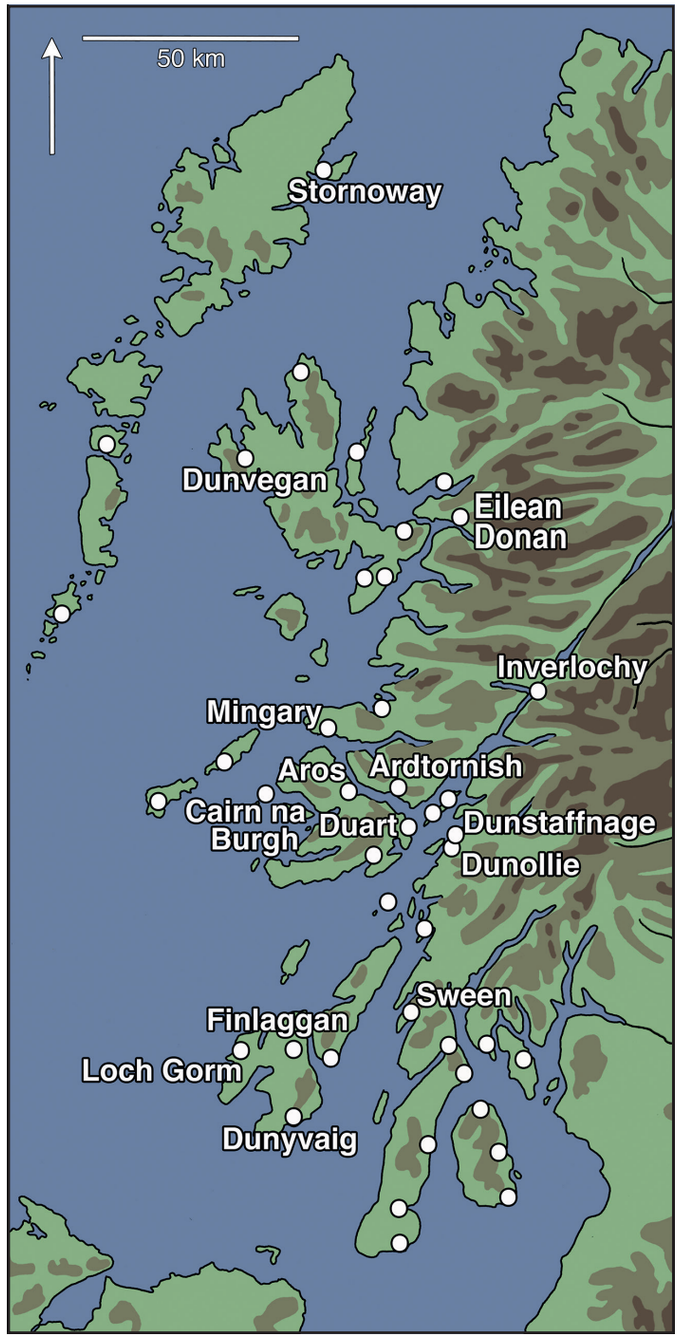

Illustration 5
Castles associated with the Lordship of the Isles. Only those mentioned in the text are named (Edward Martin, after McNeill & MacQueen 1996: 444)

dealt with by galleys operating in concert with the castle networks (Macinnes 1976; Martin 2014: 192–9). This symbiotic relationship between fleets and coastal strongholds is similar, on a microcosmic scale, to the interdependence of galleys and their bases in the power structures of the contemporary Mediterranean (Guilmartin 1974).

The chiefly elites with their retinues of fighting-men, servants, musicians, storytellers and craftsmen moved by sea throughout their often far-flung dominions, enhancing prestige and exercising power by the dispensation of justice, lavish hospitality, gift-exchange, feats of prowess, and marriage settlements. The process depended on 'sorning', the conspicuous consumption of tribute exacted in kind from vassals as the visits progressed (Dodgshon 1998: 9). Extra-territorial seaborne activities included raiding, piracy, the expansion of influence and control, arrangements for marriage, and the prosecution of feuds. There might even have been occasional opportunities for trade (Caldwell 2014: 228–33).

The West Highland galley or *bírlinn* shows a strong Norse ancestry, clinker-built with a high prow and stern, and carrying a single mast with a square sail (Illus 7). Oars provided auxiliary power, and by the 16th century the side-mounted steering-oar had been replaced by a hung rudder (Rixson 1998: 120–1). A magnificent word-picture of handling such a craft is provided by the Gaelic poem *Bírlinn Chlann Raghnaill* (Clanranald's galley) which, although written in the 18th century, is an evocation of the traditional *bírlinn* as a metaphor for Gaeldom's lost maritime-rooted culture (MacAulay 1996: 73–109).

The primary function of such vessels was to carry armed men, who while at sea could work the oars and sails. Galleys operating in concert with shore-based surveillance networks of castles and watch-posts could swiftly concentrate force to counter external threats or, in an offensive capacity, use mobility and surprise to focus violence on a distant enemy's bases or resources. Should things go wrong they might with equal facility flee. Only on rare occasions, as in the internecine clash between the Lord of the Isles and his son at Bloody Bay off Mull (*c* 1481), did fleet encounter fleet in the waterborne equivalent of a medieval land-battle (Macinnes 1976: 542–3). For the most part power was exercised by exploiting small-scale and sharply focused maritime mobility.

The importance of the Sound of Mull in the later Medieval period is emphasised by the role of Ardtornish Castle (a name with Gaelic and Norse components, Nicolaisen 1976: 55–6), which in the 15th century joined Finlaggan on Islay and Aros on Mull as a principal seat of the Macdonald Lords of the Isles (RCAHMS 1980: 173, 177; Caldwell 2014: 227). Here John, the 4th Lord, met Edward IV's commissioners in 1462 to negotiate a secret treaty by which he aligned himself to the English crown in the event of an invasion of Scotland (Gregory 1836: 40). Though never put into effect this was a deeply hostile and treacherous act against the Scottish king, James III, who on learning of it in 1476 stripped John of his titles and properties as the earl of Ross, though for the time being he was allowed to continue holding the Lordship of the Isles (Oram 2004: 136–7). However John's weakness as a military leader and incompetence as a politician brought chronic instability to

Illustration 6
Ardtornish Castle (left foreground) and Duart Castle (centre) showing their intervisibility across the Sound of Mull

the region, and in 1493 James IV passed sentence of forfeiture against him, abolishing the Lordship as a quasi-independent maritime entity (Macdougall 1989: 100–2).

A revolutionary new weapon had given James a practical means of projecting power to the maritime west. Towards the end of the 15th century European monarchs were beginning to acquire ships based on the recently developed three-masted sailing carrack, which had originated as a cargo-vessel in the Mediterranean, and to arm them with increasingly effective guns (Friel 1994: 86–90). This combination allowed latent violence to be carried, irrespective of distance, to any place accessible by sea, and to apply it (or threaten to do so) with precision and effect. Over the coming centuries this formula would allow European maritime nations to create, secure, and exploit empires on a global scale (Cipolla 1965; Glete 2000). James IV was to make an early if abortive contribution to this revolution with the launch of his great warship *Michael* in 1511 (Macdougall 1991).

But in 1493 this lay in the future. The 20-year-old monarch was then still in his minority, having inherited what was in European terms a small, unstable and impoverished kingdom. Even so, he understood the potential of sea-power to exert influence backed by the threat of swift and effective violence in remote and otherwise-inaccessible parts of his realm. In August 1493 James, accompanied by senior magnates, mounted a seaborne expedition to Dunstaffnage on the Firth of Lorn. Though little is known of its outcome, it was a demonstration of how far the king's arm could now reach (Macdougall 1989: 102–3), and naval developments dominated the rest of his reign. Over the winter of 1494–5 royal accounts show the start of a concerted shipbuilding programme, and the following summer James mounted a second expedition to the west, embarking at Dumbarton and proceeding by way of the Clyde to Bute and thence to Kintyre before anchoring off Mingary Castle on Ardnamurchan (Macdougall 1989: 115). What the visit achieved is not known, but the king no doubt used the combination of a show of force, royal hospitality, and the granting of favours to those who expressed loyalty, to reinforce his authority in the area.

A further expedition to the Isles took place in 1504, unaccompanied by the king. This time the application of shipborne mobility and firepower was put to the test. The objective was two remote fortified islands at Cairn na Burgh off Mull, a stronghold occupied by the rebel Donald Dubh, who laid claim to the defunct Lordship of the Isles. Since both gunpowder and shot had to be replenished during the attack it

Illustration 7
A West Highland *bírlinn* or galley with armed warriors. Detail from a late 15th-century grave-slab in the Session House, Kiel Church, Lochaline, Morvern

is clear that shipboard artillery was involved. Cairn na Burgh fell, though whether by surrender or assault is uncertain (Macdougall 1989: 185–6). Two years later a ship called *Raven* was sent to capture Stornoway Castle in Lewis (Gregory 1836: 86–106; Mackie 1958: 76–7).

Attempts to pacify or 'daunt' Scotland's western seaboard were curtailed by James IV's death at Flodden in 1513. They were renewed by his son and successor, James V, who after a difficult minority assumed full power in 1528 and took vigorous steps to assert his authority in the more remote parts of his troubled realm. A royal progress through the lawless Border area during the summer of 1530 culminated in the hanging of a noted cattle-rustler, Johnnie Armstrong, whose crimes were compounded by his presumption in treating the young king (who was 17 at the time) as an equal when they met (Fraser 1989: 236–9). Shortly afterwards a naval expedition against the turbulent and fractious Western Isles was proposed. By early 1531 preparations were under way for a new daunting, when James wrote to his ally the king of France, Francis I, informing him of his intention to blow the Islesmen out of their ships and castles with his 'culverin' (Cameron 1998: 231). It is possible that the 'culverin' is none other than the remarkable bronze gun of heavy-culverin (147mm) calibre, emblazoned with the emblems of Francis I, which now stands outside the present Duke of Argyll's seat at Inverary Castle (Knecht 2008) (Illus 8). Alternatively it could have been brought to Scotland in 1523 by the duke of Albany (*Letters & Papers, Henry VIII* vol 3: 3365, 3368, 3403, 3446, 3451). Although this weapon has often been associated with the Armada ship which sank in Tobermory harbour (Martin 1998: 22), there is no positive evidence to support this, and the strong links which existed between the French and Scottish crowns in the 1520s and 1530s would provide a plausible alternative explanation for the otherwise mysterious presence in Scotland of this magnificent French royal gun.

Whether a naval campaign actually took place in 1531 is unclear, since most of the recalcitrant chiefs submitted during that summer, no doubt encouraged by the fate of Johnnie Armstrong. Royal accounts, however, record a payment in April 1531 'for the Kingis passing in the Ilis', suggesting a maritime visitation of some kind (Cameron 1998: 228–32). In 1536 James left Fife on an abortive journey to France, which was abandoned at the Isle of Whithorn in Galloway after circumnavigating Scotland. Alexander Lindsay's *Rutter of the Scottish Seas*, a compendium of navigational and pilotage information, is thought to have been compiled during this voyage (Taylor 1980).

Illustration 8
Bronze culverin with the initial of Francis I of France, the French fleur-de-lys and a salamander, Francis I's personal badge, now at Inveraray Castle

In 1540 the king took a fleet 'to the north and south isles [of the Hebrides] for the ordouring of thame in justice and gude policy' (Taylor 1980: 13). The main achievement of the campaign was to subdue the Macdonalds of Dunyvaig in Islay, with the installation of royal garrisons in their castles of Dunyvaig and Loch Gorm, and the exercise of control over the extensive Islay lands of the MacIans of Ardnamurchan. Relatively little is known of the maritime aspects of this campaign because of secrecy surrounding its objectives, but three letters from English agents provide details of its preparations. The first two, dated 4 May, report the mustering of 12 ships at Leith (the port of Edinburgh), all well-provided with artillery. Various Scots lords had been ordered to attend the king in person. The third letter, of 29 May, notes that James's fleet was by this time 16 strong, and included '*Salamander* which the French king [Francis I] gave him' (Taylor 1980: 13–15). Passenger vessels were provided for the nobility, together with three victuallers, a hulk for baggage, and a reconnaissance craft. Between 3,000 and 4,000 men were embarked. According to a later chronicler (in 1570) the fleet sailed via Orkney to Skye, Lewis, and 'the rest of the Isles', eventually reaching Dumbarton where the king disembarked. Precisely what this 'daunting' achieved is not known, although there was no further rebellion in the region until 1545 (Cameron 1998: 245–8). By then James had been dead for three years, succeeded by his infant daughter Mary.

In the second part of the 16th century English ships were regularly operating in the area as part of the so-called Ulster Patrol. Their activities focused mainly on intercepting Highland mercenaries ('redshanks') travelling to aid their Gaelic kinsmen in Ireland, a practice which since the 13th century had frustrated English efforts to secure control of the island (Hayes-McCoy 1937). Though sailing warships could rarely out-manoeuvre a galley they could attack the supporting network of castles, or land concentrations of troops without warning. The plantation of disaffected parts of Ireland by English settlers had begun in Tudor times, and in 1597 James VI encouraged 'Adventurers' from Fife to colonise Lewis on a similar basis. Though this attempt failed, the principle was established that title to land could be granted only by the crown and was no longer sustainable by the traditional and undocumented genealogical assertions which had hitherto prevailed. This reinforced royal authority, and (in theory at least) replaced the sword as the arbiter of territorial rights with legal process rooted in the centrally administered laws of the state (Lynch 1992: 241–2). These changes were exploited by some clans, notably the Campbells, to dispossess rivals such as the former Macdonald Lords of the Isles, and the Macleans, of their traditional lands. The Union of the English and Scottish crowns in 1603 drove a further wedge between mainland Britain and the Gaelic west, and by the early 17th century the process of naval outreach to control Argyll and the Isles, begun by James IV more than a century earlier, was vigorously being applied by his great-grandson, James VI and I.

In 1608 Lord Ochiltree embarked on a naval campaign in the West accompanied by Andrew Knox, Bishop of the Isles. Four ships and ten 'barkis' were involved, carrying a total of 900 men. Enticed by the prospect of a sermon by the Bishop, a number of leading chieftains came aboard the flagship off Aros in the Sound of Mull. They were arrested and confined to various prisons, from which they were released the following year only after agreeing to conditions prescribed in a document entitled the 'Band and Statutes of Icomkill [Iona]' (Gregory 1836: 318–24). This required them to accept responsibility for the behaviour of their clans and acknowledge the primacy of the reformed Church. It prohibited the practice of sorning – demanding (under implied threat) lavish hospitality and entertainment while journeying. Restrictions were placed on the consumption of strong drink. The activities of bards, whose heroic poetry was regarded as subversive, were explicitly banned. The use of firearms was forbidden, even for game, while the elder sons of the gentry were to be sent to the Lowlands to learn English. Further conditions were ratified by legislation in 1616, restricting each chief to a single *bírlinn* of 16 or 18 oars – a vessel some 40–50 feet long. Other requirements included a limit on the size of chiefly households (Gregory 1836: 391–6; Rixson 1998: 90–8).

Ochiltree had been ordered to destroy all the chiefs' '*lymphads*, galleys and *bírlinns*', apart from those needed to transport the King's rent to the mainland (Gregory 1836: 319). In the event this draconian stricture, which would have dislocated the region's culture, social cohesion and economy, does not seem to have been enforced. But although traditional galleys continued to be used in the West until the 18th century (the last known example was built in 1706) their offensive capability had become neutralised by the growing presence of armed sailing ships in the area, and as instruments of maritime power they were increasingly obsolete (McWhannell 2002).

The constitutional and religious upheavals of the 17th century led to several naval expeditions to the Sound of Mull. In 1644 Alasdair MacColla brought an army of Irish Macdonalds from Antrim to support the Royalist Marquess of Montrose against the Presbyterian Marquess of Argyll. MacColla's troops landed in Ardnamurchan and captured Mingary castle (Campbell 2002: 213–15; Stevenson 2003: 111–14). The subsequent naval battle with five ships belonging to the Marquess of Argyll probably explains the 17th-century shipwreck recently discovered in this locality (http://portal.historic-scotland.gov.uk/designation/HMPA2). One of Argyll's vessels may have been *Swan*, a ship recorded as being in service with the Campbells under Captain James Brown in late 1644 (Campbell 2002: 217). As argued in Chapter 2, it is probable that this ship is the wreck off Duart Point.

In 1653 a Cromwellian task-force of six substantial vessels supported by several smaller craft put 1,000 troops ashore at

Duart to subdue the fiercely Royalist Macleans, only to be hit by a violent storm which wrecked three of the ships, including the small warship *Swan* (Dow 1979: 78–98). The background to this episode is considered more fully below.

A similar punitive operation was mounted in 1690 on behalf of William and Mary against the deposed James II's supporters by a small flotilla headed by the 5th-rate warship *Dartmouth*. Its commander, Edward Pottinger, had been ordered to 'make a diversion, alarm the rebels' coasts, cut their communications with the Islanders now in rebellion against their Majesties authority, and to take away or burn all their boats and *bírlinns*' (Maclean-Bristol 2012: 163; Martin 1998: 67–83). Central authority was now pursuing a deliberate policy of maritime neutralisation in which the confiscation or destruction of boats, or restrictions on their number and size, were the prime instruments. *Dartmouth* and her consorts engaged in this grim work throughout the summer and autumn of 1690, as well as providing labour and guns for establishing a new artillery stronghold to replace the old Cromwellian fort at Inverlochy. In October the ship, while preparing to attack Duart Castle, was caught in a storm and wrecked on an island close to the south-east end of the Sound of Mull. Her remains were discovered in 1973 and subsequently excavated (Adnams 1974; Martin 1978).

Despite these precautions, fear of invasion from the Continent remained strong, and in 1719 a small force of Spanish troops landed at Loch Alsh in support of a planned Jacobite insurrection. Happily for the Hanoverian government the operation quickly descended into farce. A task-force comprising 29 ships and 5,000 soldiers had mustered at Cadiz, with arms for the 30,000 supporters expected to rise in Britain. But bad weather dispersed the fleet before it reached Corunna and in the event only two frigates, intended to tie down troops in Scotland as a diversion from the main invasion effort further south, landed soldiers on the British mainland. There were only 300 of them. Along with a similar number of Jacobite supporters they struck eastwards into Glen Shiel, but had gone barely five miles before they were intercepted by a well-equipped and better-trained government force of similar size. The Jacobite positions were bombarded with mortar-fire before the Hanoverian infantry moved in for the assault. Most of the Jacobite clansmen, familiar with the terrain, vanished into the hills, but the entire Spanish force was captured (Lenman 1995b: 191–4).

The last application of naval force in the west of Scotland was directed against the Morvern peninsula, on the north-east side of the Sound of Mull, in March 1746 by the sloops *Terror* and *Princess Ann*, during the final phase of suppressing the rebellion in support of Charles Edward Stewart. Morvern, though by this time mainly owned by the pro-Hanoverian Duke of Argyll, had come out almost to a man in the Young Pretender's cause, and the navy had been ordered to destroy every boat in Morvern and Loch Sunart (Gaskell 1996: 3–4).

Illustration 9
Bar-shot appropriate to the calibre of an 18th-century 4-pounder gun, found at Fiunary in Morvern. Scale 10 centimetres

This ruthless punitive action effectively wiped out the area's boatbuilding traditions and seafaring skills, and it has not yet fully recovered from the concomitant destruction of its woodlands (Fergusson 1951: 117–26; Macleod 2002: xii). A 3¼in (83mm) bar-shot recently found at Fiunary, appropriate for the calibre of one of the sloops' 4-pounders, may be a relic of this brief campaign (John Hodgson pers comm) (Illus 9). Thereafter history enters a period of economic and social change beyond the scope of this monograph.

1.2 The Cromwellian expedition, 1653

Scotland's situation at the close of the Civil War was complex and confused (Dow 1979: 2–12; Furgol 2002). Following the execution of Charles I in 1649 and the establishment of republican government in England, Oliver Cromwell had embarked on a ruthless subjugation of Ireland (Ohlmeyer 2002). He then turned his attention to Scotland (Grainger 1997). Although most Scots had sided with Parliament during the conflicts of the 1640s, their concern had been more to uphold the Presbyterian religion than to bring down the Stewart monarchy, and they had been outraged by republican England's unilateral execution of their king. In June 1650 the exiled Charles II, after signing a Covenant which repudiated his father's policies against Presbyterianism, landed in Scotland. Cromwell responded by marching north with elements of his New Model Army, which on 4 September 1650 inflicted a crushing defeat on a larger force of Scottish Presbyterians and Royalists under General David Leslie at Dunbar (Illus 10). Notwithstanding this reverse, Charles II was crowned King of Scots at Scone, near Perth, on 1 January 1651. Cromwell's response was delayed by illness, but in July an army commanded by General John Lambert crossed the Forth and on 20 July annihilated a Royalist force, composed mainly of Highlanders, at Inverkeithing (Grainger 1997: 104–11). The English army then marched through Fife and captured Perth.

In a desperate counter-measure Charles led his depleted army into England where, on 3 September, he was decisively defeated at Worcester. After narrowly avoiding capture he fled back into exile on the Continent. Scotland was now firmly under English military control, and major strongholds were

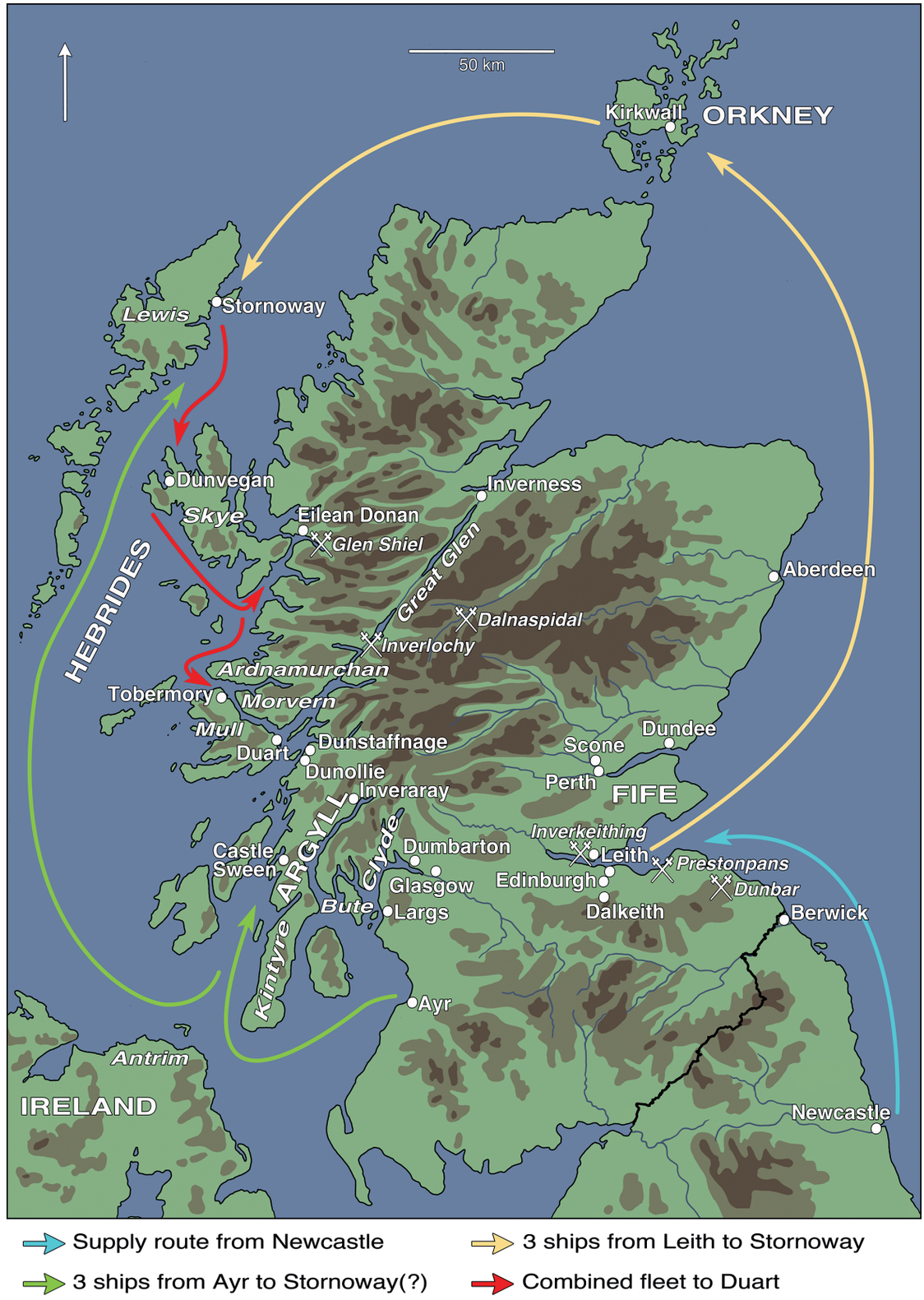

Illustration 10
Cromwellian Scotland, 1650–54. The coloured arrows indicate the progress of Colonel Cobbett's campaign, July to September 1653 (Edward Martin)

established at Ayr, Perth, and Leith, with 20 smaller garrisons gripping the rest of the country.

Despite the Cromwellian military occupation Royalist revolt continued to smoulder, especially in the Western Highlands and Islands. But opposition to English-imposed republican rule was fragmented and riven with dissent. On the one hand the Covenanters resisted the new order forced on them by Cromwell and his generals, and supported the compliant young King of Scots, Charles II. On the other stood the hard-line Royalists, whose purpose was to restore an unreconstituted Stewart monarchy. Most were Highland noblemen and clan chiefs, but their leaders were Lowlanders. The situation was complicated by general lawlessness and feuding, particularly in the Highlands. The revolt was not therefore a cohesive movement, but rather a series of dislocated and sometimes conflicting manoeuvres through which the various protagonists vied to secure political and personal advantage, often without regard to a common cause. In such a climate of mistrust and confusion survival demanded cunning and flexibility, and loyalties were adaptable. As is often the case in civil conflict, many of those caught up in it took steps to hedge their bets (Dow 1979: 78–114).

For the most part the rebels avoided direct contact with Cromwell's troops, preferring to box them up in their bases through low-intensity guerrilla activity in the surrounding countryside. This allowed them, in some areas more than in others, to divert by persuasion or coercion the monthly cess (assessment tax) levied by the Cromwellian authorities to defray the massive costs of occupation.

An external factor was the threat of invasion. The western coast and islands of Scotland had long been vulnerable to hostile incursions from the Atlantic seaboard of mainland Europe. As the early 17th-century naval strategist Sir William Monson put it, 'one wind will carry them from their harbours, till they arrive in that part of Scotland' (Monson 1903: 322). This threat was exacerbated by the perceived character of the inhabitants, whose 'brutishness and incivility', according to Monson, 'exceeds the savages of America' (Monson 1903: 58). Worse, the Dutch already had a strong presence in the area through their extensive herring fisheries and the locals, thought Monson, would 'easily rebel by the insinuating practices and instigation of the Hollanders' (1914: 320). Another worry was the increasing practice of European shipping from ports east of the Channel, bound for the Atlantic and beyond, to take the 'north-about' route around Britain. This avoided contrary winds and interference by potentially hostile foreign navies, but it compromised England's ability to control shipping in the area and reinforced the need for a naval presence off western Scotland. Monson considered that three warships would suffice, supported by a fleet of Newcastle colliers whose small crews and capacious holds made them ideal troop transports. Ten or 12 such vessels of between 200 and 300 tons, Monson calculated, could carry a regiment of up to 1,500 men. From a base at the fortified river-mouth harbour at Dumbarton, near the head of the Clyde Estuary, sea-transport would act as a force-multiplier to enable the garrison to deploy swiftly to keep 'all the northern parts of Scotland in awe' (1902: 2, 313–19).

Monson's assessment of naval realities on the western seaboard, made *c* 1640, certainly held true in the early 1650s. War had broken out between England and the Dutch Republic following the anti-Dutch Navigation Act of 1651, and in November 1652 the Dutch Admiral Tromp defeated an English fleet under Blake off Dungeness (Capp 1989: 79–81).

England's fragile Commonwealth was threatened on land as well as at sea. By 1653 the Royalist revolt in Scotland was gaining momentum. From his court-in-exile at St Germain, near Paris, Charles II and the officer appointed to command his forces in Scotland, Lieutenant-General John Middleton, had been planning their return. But the king was not prepared to land until the revolt was well advanced, and its success assured. Middleton, moreover, was ill, so a Lowland lord, the Earl of Glencairn, was appointed acting commander in his place. As a preliminary to more active revolt, several clan chiefs were persuaded to declare for the king, including the Earl of Seaforth, chief of the Mackenzies, whose territories extended from the Isle of Lewis to Kintail on the mainland. Their main stronghold at Eilean Donan, an island castle at the head of Loch Alsh, commanded the route into the Great Glen via Glen Shiel and Glen Morriston. Another Royalist magnate was Macdonell of Glengarry, whose territories also controlled access to the Highland interior.

The Macleans of Duart, most of whose fighting men, including their chief, Sir Hector, had been slaughtered at Inverkeithing, also promised support, though their kinsmen, the Macleans of Lochbuie, refused to come out. The new Duart chief, Hector's young brother Sir Allan, was only six, but his uncle and tutor (guardian), Daniel Maclean of Brolas, declared for the king on his behalf. This may in part have been to thwart plans by their hereditary enemies, the Campbells of south Argyll, to acquire the Maclean lands by guile, force, and legal process. The Campbell chief, Archibald Marquess of Argyll (Illus 11), had not participated in the revolt, though his Royalist son, Lord Lorne, had joined Glencairn, no doubt to hedge the family's bets. In the event Glencairn's insurrection petered out, and its remnants were finally routed at the battle of Dalnaspidal on 19 July 1654 (Dow 1979: 129–30).

Argyll was a leading Covenanter, and had opposed Charles I's attempts at religious reform in Scotland during the 1630s (Willcock 1903; Macinnes 2011). In the Civil War he fought against the Royalists, though on occasion he participated in negotiations with the king, which at one stage came close to securing an accommodation. After Charles's execution Argyll distanced himself from the English Parliamentarians, and officiated at Charles II's Scottish coronation at Scone (Illus 11–12). Though technically now returned to the Royalist fold

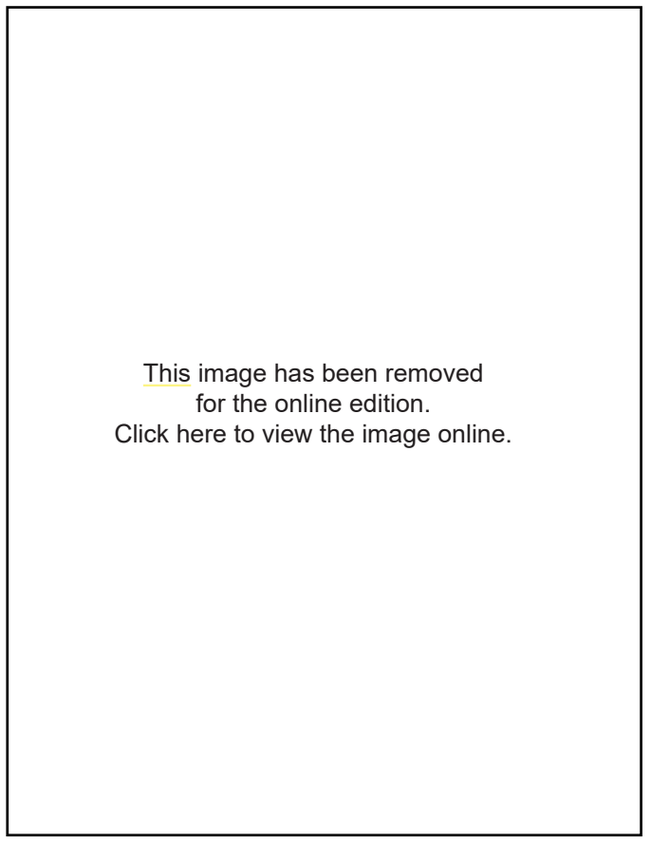

Illustration 11
Portrait by David Scougall of Archibald Campbell, 1st Marquess of Argyll (1598–1661) (© National Galleries Scotland, PG 1408)

(albeit with strong personal reservations and unquenched Covenanting resolve), he submitted to Cromwell's forces after being besieged in his castle at Inveraray in 1652. Thereafter he sided with the English invaders, an error of judgement for which, following the Restoration in 1660, he was to lose his head.

In May 1653 the Royalist Earl of Seaforth captured some English soldiers who had landed in Lewis from the private warship *Fortune*, which had come from Ayr to gather information about the situation in the Outer Isles. He demanded that the vessel be pressed into the king's service (Firth 1895: 140). When news of this overtly hostile act reached Colonel Robert Lilburne, commander of the English forces in Scotland, at his headquarters in Dalkeith, he wrote to Cromwell that Seaforth's 'estate might be sequestered, and that Island [Lewis] … might be secured for the State's service' (Firth 1895: 148–50).

This was the trigger for the 1653 campaign. The logistics for mounting such an expedition were complex and time-consuming, especially as Lilburne's finances, munitions, and provisions were almost exhausted. But the operation was pushed forward with urgency and vigour. The officer chosen to command it was Colonel Ralph Cobbett, a hard-line New Model Army veteran who in 1648 had commanded the detachment which removed Charles I from Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight to Hurst Castle, pending arrangements for his trial. He was subsequently one of the four officers who guarded the king at Windsor (Firth & Davies 1940: 340). In 1651 a regiment bearing his name and under his command was raised for service in Scotland. It comprised five companies each of 200 men. While it was preparing to embark, news came of Charles II's march into England following the Royalist defeat at Inverkeithing, and the regiment was diverted to join the intercepting force which defeated the king at Worcester. Part of Cobbett's regiment eventually arrived at Dundee in mid-October 1651, the remainder following in January 1652. There Cobbett succeeded General George Monck, who had captured and sacked Dundee the previous September, as the city's military governor (Firth & Davies 1940: 476–7).

In June 1653 Colonel Cobbett received orders from Colonel Lilburne to prepare an expedition against the rebels in the west, and by 6 July 'several ships … [were] ready to weigh anchor out of Leith road, with several of our foot forces, commanded by Colonel Cobbet, and provisions of victual and other necessaries' (*Diurnal of Occurrences in Scotland*: 114–50). By this time reports were circulating of Dutch and Irish vessels among the Isles, and the landing of arms. Cobbett's orders were

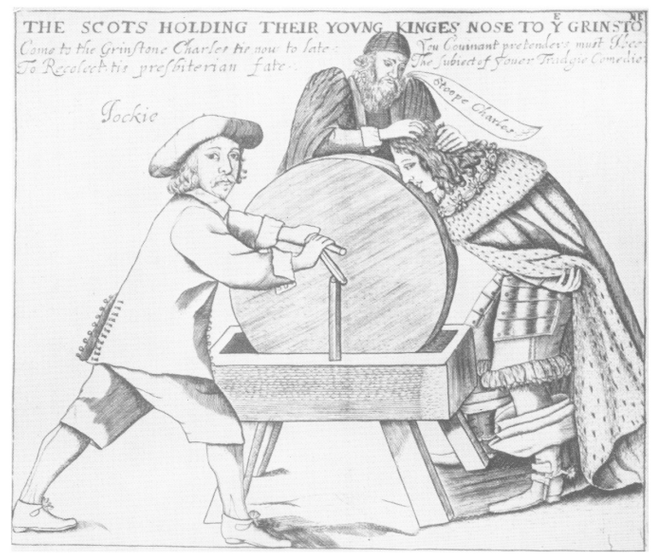

Illustration 12
An illustration from a satirical broadsheet published in London in 1651 showing Charles II having his nose held to the grindstone by a figure representing the Covenanting Presbyterian Scots, one of whose leaders was Archibald Campbell, 1st Marquess of Argyll (Wikimedia Commons)

first to convey reinforcements to Orkney, where a fort was to be established. Then he was to invade Lewis and eject Seaforth from his power-base there. The island had been bought by the Mackenzies of Kintail on the adjacent mainland, who took the title Seaforth from the long sea-loch which penetrates Lewis's interior. In 1651 Connaich Mor (Big Kenneth) became the 3rd earl and clan chief. He was only 16, and a student at Aberdeen University, but he rallied to the Royalist cause and joined the king at Stirling for the ill-fated march to Worcester. He remained fervently loyal to Charles during the king's exile on the Continent, serving as a teenaged Secretary of State for Scotland (in waiting). But Seaforth's estates were sequestrated by the Cromwellian authorities in 1654 and two years later he was imprisoned until the Restoration in 1660.

The task-force was next to subdue Eilean Donan, another Mackenzie stronghold on the mainland at Lochalsh, leaving a company to secure the district. Finally the fleet was to land troops and artillery on Mull, after making contact with the governor of Dunollie Castle, which along with the adjacent Dunstaffnage Castle was in English hands. Cobbett's men were to land at Duart, take the castle by siege if necessary, and place a garrison there. These actions were intended to secure the Western Isles and nip Glencairn's revolt in the bud. Cobbett's final task was to return to Stornoway and investigate the practicality of building a fort (Firth 1895: 148–50).

Two merchant vessels were obtained at Leith for the expedition. They were *Martha and Margaret* of Ipswich and *Speedwell* of [Kings] Lynn. *Martha and Margaret* had been hired in May 1653 to carry biscuit and other provisions from England, and on 24 June she was again on her way to Scotland, presumably with supplies for Cobbett's fleet (*CSPD* 1652–3: 585, 614). On 8 July the Leith commissioners paid £40 to William Goodlade, 'master of *Martha and Margaret*', to join the expedition, and on 13 July he was ordered to take on board a contingent of artillerymen before setting out for Orkney and then Lewis (Clarke MS 3/8, unfol., 8 July, 13 July 1653). The hire-charge for the ship was £298, and £200 was later assessed as compensation for her loss. At Lewis *Martha and Margaret* took on board two 24-pounder siege-guns and a mortar which had been brought from Leith by *James* (Clarke MS 3/8, unfol; 20 September 1653). *Speedwell*, or *Anne Speedwell* as she was officially called, was hired from 11 July for the expedition and £203 was subsequently paid to her four owners for her loss (Clarke MS 3/8, unfol; 30 Sept 1653).

It is not clear whether Cobbett called at Orkney as planned, but towards the end of August his fleet arrived at Lewis. The Mackenzie defenders of Stornoway and its castle, commanded by Seaforth's illegitimate brother, fled without resistance and most abandoned their arms. Two large guns and four smaller pieces were captured with the castle (*Thurloe State Papers* vi: 284). A small contingent was left to garrison it. The siege-guns and mortar were transferred from *James* to *Martha and Margaret*, and *James* returned to Leith.

On 27 August the fleet sailed for Skye. Dunvegan Castle was seized and occupied, and the Macleod chief and his kinsmen bound themselves not to act against the Commonwealth. While on Skye Cobbett's men plundered the minister of Duirinish, Martin Macpherson, of 'goods, gear, sheep and nolt [cattle]' (Grant 1959: 300), this action doubtless being the expedition's normal means of replenishing supplies (see discussion in Chapter 6). 'Besides the spoil the English soldiers shall make in the country, that they be careful to destroy their corn as the next way utterly to ruin them. For, besides that they will take away their bread, they will utterly destroy their straw which is the food of their cattle and horses; for hay they have none' (Monson 1903: 317). At some point during the voyage, or perhaps before they left Stornoway, they were joined by three vessels which had left Ayr on Lilburne's orders on or around 20 July. These were led by the frigate *Wren* under Captain Robert Drew with a company of Colonel Alured's regiment aboard, a collier, and a small warship called *Swan*, commanded by Captain Edward Tarleton (Firth 1895: 221).

The possibility that *Swan* had once been a private warship belonging to the Marquess of Argyll is explored in Chapter 2.2. She first appears in official records on 6 June 1653 when 'Captain John [*sic*] Tarleton' was commissioned to command an un-named frigate 'to carry letters between Ayr and Ireland' (Clarke MS 3/8, unfol., 6 June 1653). On 10 June Colonel Alured, the governor of Ayr, sent *Swan* – 'appointed for holding intelligence between Ireland and Ayr' – to Liverpool (*CSPD* 1652–3: 600), and on 21 June the provisioner at Liverpool sent a request to the admiralty commissioners that she should be refitted 'with provision, sails, waist-cloths and colours, tallow and oars'. He noted that the vessel was 'the state's own, being bought by … Colonel Alured', and personally recommended her captain Edward Tarleton, whom he had known 'for some years past', 'and could heartily wish the Commonwealth were supplied with many more of his principles and qualities' (TNA SP18/55/21 ff36r, 38r, Samuel Windis to the navy commissioners 21 June 1653). Tarleton was clearly one of the new breed of officers whose appointments were based on experience and competence rather than privileged birth (Firth 1926; Kennedy 1960). In September 1653 a list of naval ships included the '*Swan* in Scotland, brought for the state by G D [probably the former commander-in-chief, General Deane]'. She was described as a frigate of five guns with a crew of 30 (TNA SP18/58, f63). The refit was authorised on 24 June (*CSPD* 1652–3: 614), and orders to carry it out were issued on 27 June (TNA ADM18/10, unpaginated). Thereafter she returned to Ayr.

The three ships allocated at Ayr to the Cobbett expedition had been ordered to call first at Dunstaffnage to deliver coal and other supplies before returning to Knapdale where 'certain great guns lie … between Sween Castle and Ross'. These were to be brought back to Dunstaffnage in readiness

for Cobbett's invasion of Mull. If Cobbett was not in the area the Ayr ships were to sail 'towards the Lewis or Kintail' in the expectation of meeting him there. In the event the rendezvous was successfully accomplished (Firth 1895: 188–9; also *Thurloe State Papers* i: 478).

On 5 September the combined fleet anchored off Duart and landed eight companies of troops in the bay (Illus 13). They found the castle empty, the chief's tutor Daniel Maclean having prudently decamped to Tiree, presumably taking his young charge with him. Glencairn himself went into hiding on Mull. The primary objective of the expedition was thus achieved without a shot being fired.

Also present on the island was the politically flexible Marquess of Argyll, who offered his services to the invaders (*Mercurius Politicus* no 173: 2767), and guaranteed that the cess tax on Mull would henceforward be paid not to the rebels but to Cromwell's authorities. Argyll was a complex character whose shifting loyalties exemplify the fragile politics of the time (Willcock 1903). As a prominent Covenanter he had opposed Charles I's attempts at religious reform in Scotland during the 1630s which led to the so-called 'Bishops' Wars' in 1639 and 1640. The king's attempt to invade Scotland was thwarted by a Covenanting army on Duns Law near Berwick, later joined by Argyll and 1,000 Campbell Highlanders ('supple fellows with their plaids, targes, and dorlachs [blanket-cloaks, round shields and arrow quivers]' (Willcock 1903: 77). An accommodation was reached with the king under which both armies disbanded, and Argyll demonstrated his loyalty to the Crown by kissing Charles's hand. In 1641, despite the king's extreme dislike and mistrust of him, he was created a marquess.

During the Civil Wars which followed, however, Argyll supported the Covenanters, who opposed Charles I's religious policies in Scotland. In 1644 he intercepted an incursion from Ireland of Royalist troops under Alasdair MacColla, which led to the loss of one of the invaders' ships off Mingary Castle in Ardnamurchan (Stevenson 2003: 139–41). MacColla joined the Marquess of Montrose in a brilliant and ruthless campaign which included, in 1645, the battle of Inverlochy at which a Covenanting army was routed. Argyll's Campbell troops were

Illustration 13
Duart Castle on its headland commanding the east end of the Sound of Mull. Cobbett's fleet anchored in the bay beyond. The complex currents around and beyond the Point are evident (DP 173105)

virtually annihilated by the Royalists although the marquess himself was not present at the battle, having been injured in a riding accident. Instead he watched the rout from his ship anchored offshore, in which he was then able to make his escape. It is not inconceivable that the ship, described as his 'barge', was the small warship *Swan*. If so, eight years later, in September 1653, he may have witnessed the demise of the same vessel off Duart Point.

After Cobbett's ships had anchored in Duart Bay, most of the men came ashore and began the task of converting the medieval castle of Duart into a government stronghold. But eight days later disaster struck, as Lilburne reported to in a letter to Cromwell from Dalkeith on 22 September:

> There happened the 23rd [*sic*] instant a very violent storm upon these coasts, which continued 16 or 18 hours, in which we lost the *Martha and Margaret* of Ipswich, a large ship, which carried all our remaining stores of ammunition and provision, only the great guns and mortar piece were saved. We lost a small man of war called the *Swan*, Capt. Tarleton commander, with two small ones and most of our boats. But that which was most sad was the loss of the *Speedwell* of Lynn, which having 23 seamen and soldiers in her, they were all (except one man) cast away (*Mercurius Politicus* no 173: 2768; *Diurnal of Occurrences in Scotland*: 129).
>
> The rest of the Men of War and others of the fleet were forced to cut their masts by the board, and yet hardly escaped: we lost also two of our shallops; and all this in the sight of our men at land, who saw their friends drowning, and heard them crying for help, but could not save them (Firth 1895: 399–400).

Another report of the incident was recorded by the governor of Dunstaffnage, Captain James Mutloe on 17 September,

> Colonel Cobbett has placed a garrison in Duart Castle in the isle of Mull and taking an engagement of all the chief of the clan, only the Tutor who refused to come in. Glencairn is still in the isle. The 13th of this month a great storm arose, in which storm the ships with Colonel Cobbett suffered very much. The small frigate that came with Captain Drew from Ayr was carried away but saved all his men. The commander's name was Tarleton, a very pretty man for his place. We lost a merchant man with 8 guns. [Our] vessel struck upon a rock and sunk [he/who] saved but one man. There were drowned in all 20 or 22 persons. Also the great [coal] ship was cast away, the 2 shallops and most of the boats that belonged to the fleet. 2 of the men of war were fain to cut down their masts to save the ships. I never saw such a storm in all my life. The marquess of Argyle came over to us and has taken a [great deal] of pains with the people of that isle to settle them. The late Tutor is dismissed of his tutorship and Glencairn knows not what to do (transcribed from William Clarke's shorthand notes, Worcester College msxxv f129r, by Dr Frances Henderson, Worcester College, Oxford, August 2005, words in square brackets are unclear in the original).

1.3 After the wreck

Cobbett and his men were transported by boat to Dunstaffnage on the adjacent mainland, from where they made their way overland through difficult and largely Royalist-held terrain to the government stronghold at Dumbarton, assisted by Argyll (*Mercurius Politicus* no 173: 2768; Firth 1895: 174–5). Meanwhile the three surviving ships, which had cut away their masts to save themselves during the storm, were sent to London for repair, with the request that they be returned to their station off northern and western Scotland, or replacements sent, since further rebel activity or a Dutch invasion was still feared (Firth 1895: 238–9). Ralph Cobbett returned with his regiment to Dundee, and subsequently participated in the final suppression of Glencairn's revolt in 1654 (Firth 1895: 472). In 1659 the regiment moved to Glasgow, and during the breach between the army and Parliament later that year most of its officers were dismissed, including Cobbett, who had been one of the nine dissenting colonels whose commissions were declared void on 12 October 1659. When he went to Berwick to negotiate with the pro-Parliament General Monck, Cobbett was arrested and confined for a time in Edinburgh Castle. On his release he was banned from London, and following involvement in an abortive coup he was arrested at Daventry on 22 April 1660 and committed to the Tower. A month later Charles II was restored to the throne, and Cobbett, who had been implicated in the imprisonment and guarding of Charles I before his trial and execution, was a marked man. In 1661 he was transported to a prison overseas, and his subsequent fate is unknown (Firth 1895: 476–7).

Edward Tarleton, *Swan*'s captain (Illus 14), was born into a family of minor gentry on the outskirts of Liverpool. They had owned land at Fazackerly since at least the 14th century, and acquired more at Aigburth in the 16th century. Tarleton was a remarkable man who lived in remarkable times, and his descendants recorded accounts of his exploits which are preserved in the Tarleton family papers, compiled *c* 1770 or earlier (f1, no 9, copy held in the Liverpool Record Office). Unless other documents are cited this is the source of what follows.

Tarleton was the founder of a Liverpool merchant dynasty, and his descendants regarded him as a model of courage, stoicism, and good humour. In the early 16th century the family had been split by religious dissention. During the first quarter of the 17th century William Tarleton of Fazackerley, head of the senior branch, adhered to the Church of England while his younger brother, Edward of Aigburth, was a Roman Catholic. Edward disinherited his second son, John, who had angered him by reverting to the English church. By 1630 John's wife and two of his three children were dead and, with his surviving son, Edward, the ruined but resourceful John went to Ireland where he obtained an estate at Green Hills just

Illustration 14
Portrait of Edward Tarleton (*c* 1628–1690), captain of *Swan* in 1653
(reproduced by kind permission of Captain Christopher Tarleton Fagan)

to the west of Drogheda and close to the town's seaport on the River Boyne.

Drogheda lay within the Pale, the area around Dublin under the direct control of the English Crown. John Tarleton doubtless obtained his estate as part of the process by which English or Scots settlers were 'planted' to suppress Catholic-inspired revolt. Such a revolt erupted in October 1641 and in December Drogheda was besieged by an Irish rebel force under Phelim O'Neill. Although the town held out the rebels ravaged the surrounding countryside and, despite his Catholic wife's entreaties, among those killed was John Tarleton. His son Edward, however, then aged 13 or 14, managed to escape to safety aboard the ship *Tulip*, captained by a friend of his father. We may presume that this is where Edward in the following years served his apprenticeship as a seaman.

Some time later (according to family tradition) *Tulip* fought an action with a Spanish man-of-war. The young Tarleton was by this time second-in-command and when, during the fighting, his captain was killed, and the crew faltered, he pulled out his pistol and rallied the men, threatening to shoot the first who 'showed the least pusilanimity'. Victory over the Spaniard followed. Edward later commissioned a portrait of himself holding the pistol he had used (Illus 14). The engagement must have occurred in the mid 1640s, when England was not at war with Spain, but the apparent contradiction can be resolved by noting that the 80-year war between Spain and the Dutch Republic was close to its end. Final hostilities were mainly conducted at sea, and England was an ally of the Netherlands. *Tulip* might therefore have been an English privateer operating under a Dutch commission.

By 1646 Edward Tarleton had become captain of *Tulip* (presumably in the aftermath of the pistol incident), and about this time he married his first wife. In 1651 the couple and their growing family moved to Liverpool. In a petition of 1655 he stated that he had served at sea during the civil wars, though not as a captain. Before taking command of *Swan* in 1653 he had been involved in various trading voyages, vessels in which he served having been captured by Scottish Royalists and the French (*CSPD* 1652–3: 493). On 20 February 1653 a commission appointing Tarleton commander of *Tulip* was signed by George Monck and John Dissbrowne (private collection). His Liverpool connections and Parliamentary sympathies doubtless secured for him the command of *Swan* when she was refitting there in June 1653 (*CSPD* 1652–3: 610).

On 24 September 1653, less than two weeks after *Swan* had been wrecked, Tarleton petitioned the Admiralty Commissioners for the command of *Merlin* or some other frigate. Because of the shipwreck he had 'lost a considerable value, which … has weakened his estate and causes the distress of his wife and family to be augmented'. He wished to 'be in employment so soon as he can that he may do the state some service and to endeavour to replenish his family' (TNA SP18/58/92 f153r). Though his application was supported by Colonel Lilburne, Cromwell's commander-in-chief in Scotland, he did not get command of *Merlin*, but on 22 November was recommended for another command (*CSPD* 1653–4: 522). This was *Islip*, probably similar to *Dartmouth*, another 32-gun frigate built during the Cromwellian period (in 1655) and coincidentally wrecked only 6km from Duart in 1690.

Islip had been built at Bristol, and Tarleton was there supervising her fitting-out on 8 April 1654, when he asserted that no ship was better built. He recommended that she should carry 32 guns, four more than originally specified. Two days later he complained that the ship had been victualled for only 90 men, though she needed provisions for 100 plus a carpenter (*CSPD* 1653–4: 473–4). Throughout May *Islip* continued fitting out, and on the 14th it was considered that she would be operational by the end of the month (*CSPD* 1653–4: 489). In July she was in north-western waters, delivering money

and provisions to the newly established fort at Inverlochy (later renamed Fort William). On orders from the garrison's commander, she then conveyed a commissary officer to north Wales, reaching Beaumaris by 27 July after a five-day voyage. For the next five weeks she patrolled the north Irish Sea and Western Isles (*CSPD* 1653–4: 261, 270).

Islip was not a happy ship. On 28 September 1654 senior members of her crew, including the carpenter, gunner, boatswain, quartermaster, cook and surgeon's mate, signed a petition to the Admiralty Commissioners accusing Tarleton of favouring drunkards and swearers, and of attempting to subvert the authority of the ship's master, so as to put a crony in his place (*CSPD* 1654: 557). Later Tarleton sacked the ship's surgeon for near-mutiny (*CSPD* 1655: 433). In late summer 1654 *Islip* was again at Inverlochy, presumably delivering supplies, and on 20 October she was re-victualling at Liverpool. The commissariat was apparently not up to scratch, and although he received 14 days' provisions from the victualler, Tarleton had to disburse his own money and give his men credit-notes to buy clothes (*CSPD* 1654: 563). The ship's next mission, to convey a senior legal officer to Dublin, was accomplished by 6 November (*CSPD* 1654: 568). In the same letter Tarleton mentions further difficulties with his crew, accusing the boatswain of embezzling and selling ropes.

To his credit Edward Tarleton's personal integrity does not appear to have been in question, for at Liverpool on 24 November he was entrusted with £40,000 to pay the army in Ireland (*CSPD* 1654: 575). Bad weather delayed *Islip's* departure and she did not reach Dublin until 8 December, when the specie was safely delivered. Tarleton was then ordered to cruise for three months between Kinsale and Scilly (*CSPD* 1654: 582). But the ship had lost an anchor at Liverpool, and now had only two left. Moreover *Islip*, despite Tarleton's high opinion of her when she was fitting out at Bristol, had proved crank in bad weather. The shipwright, he now considered, had made her beam two feet too narrow, and only the drastic process of girdling – bulking out the hull around the waterline with solid timber – could cure the defect. His recommendation was accepted, and Tarleton was ordered to escort two merchant ships to Cork with stores for the army before returning to the shipyard at Bristol to have the modification carried out (*CSPD* 1654: 287).

Islip's girdling was completed with dispatch, and on 6 February 1654–5 she landed soldiers at Chester (*CSPD* 1655: 425). Her next assignment, on 1 March, was to transport a group of Irish Members of Parliament from Liverpool to Dublin, where they arrived two days later (*CSPD* 1655: 442). At Dublin *Islip* took on six weeks' stores before sailing for Liverpool on 15 March to receive a further nine weeks' provisioning. At Liverpool the steward absconded after being sent ashore with cash to purchase the supplies. *Islip* then returned to Lochaber where from 23 March to 3 April she lay at Dunstaffnage waiting for a wind to take her through the narrows of Loch Linnhe to Inverlochy (*CSPD* 1655: 451). She reached the fort on 4 April and remained there until 1 June, when General Monck ordered her back to Liverpool to revictual.

In April and early May Tarleton took part in two amphibious operations in the West Highlands, and his subsequent report probably characterises the nature of such actions from the Stewart kings' 'dauntings' of the 15th and 16th centuries to the punitive Hanoverian raids of 1746. As an exemplar of the strategy it is worth quoting in full.

> In compliance with the enclosed orders, on 29 April I marched 10 miles into the country, with the commanded party, and 40 of my own men, to surprise some delinquents, but they must have had notice, for they were gone. We plundered and fired their houses, and brought away 150 cows and sheep without opposition, save that at a pass 3 miles from the garrison [Inverlochy], some Lochaber rogues fired at us and ran.
>
> On the 5th [of May] I received 250 men on board, and sailed at night 8 leagues off to Kynnyogh harbour; but our pilot not knowing the coast well, we lost time, and before we could get our men landed next morning, we were discovered by the inhabitants, who gave the alarm through the town and country; but though we could not surprize the rogues, we burnt 40 of their houses, and destroyed all their cattle. Then we re-embarked in our 2 boats. We saw 50 men together who waited, as we thought, to engage the men who were to be shipped last; but finding us more than they were, they durst not attempt to leave their hills until we had put off, when they came down and fired upon us without effect.
>
> The Highlanders have come in very fast lately; between 3 and 400 have taken the engagement [submitted], and more are expected to do so. They will all come in under protection of this garrison. My provisions will last until 4th June, when I hope to be at Dublin (*CSPD* 1655: 161).

Islip reached Liverpool on 8 June and on 15 June Tarleton reported the ship ill-supplied and his men distressed. She was still there on the 29th, when he complained that he had to borrow £115 to fit her out. The ship was operational by early July, and on the 11th she left Chester for Dublin with the army's pay-chest (*CSPD* 1655: 494, 497, 503). She then returned to Inverlochy.

During that summer *Islip* was wrecked somewhere off western Scotland, and on 8 September an enquiry was ordered into the circumstances of her loss (*CSPD* 1655: 529). Two days later the Navy Commissioners reported that they had examined Tarleton and his officers and could not lay the blame on any individual, though they felt that the ship had come too far into the bay in which she was wrecked. However they were unfamiliar with the place because of its remoteness, and could not therefore reach an informed judgement (*CSPD* 1655: 530). That Tarleton and the ship's master, John Sayers, were held at least partly responsible is indicated a month later by their reduction to half-pay for 'neglect in the performance of their duty as to the loss of the frigate' (*CSPD* 1655: 533).

This wreck may well be the one recorded by Martin Martin, a native of Skye writing *c* 1695, who noted that:

> About four miles on the south-east end of this island [South Uist] is Loch Eynord. It reaches several miles westward, having a narrow entry, which makes a violent current, and within this entry there is a rock upon which there was staved to pieces a frigate of Cromwell's, which he sent there to subdue the natives (Withers & Munro 1999: 61).

A rock submerged at high water in the narrow entry to Loch Aineort is a distinctive feature at NF 799 277 (OS 2015 Explorer 1:25,000 Sheet 453).

Although both Admiral Monck and General Lawson recommended Tarleton for another command, commissions dated 11 November 1658 and 11 June 1659 appointed him Lieutenant on the 40-gun 4th-rate *Maidstone* (Tarleton Papers, f1, nos 3–6). *Maidstone* was part of the fleet under Admiral Robert Blake which defeated a Spanish fleet off Tenerife on 20 April 1657, so it is not certain whether Tarleton was a participant. Family tradition (Joni Davidson pers comm) recounts that he was at one time taken prisoner and held by Barbary pirates, and returned home 'in a very distressed condition'. Blake had attacked Tunis in 1655 to release British captives, while Cromwell's government negotiated the release of English prisoners held by the Bey of Morocco in August 1657 (Matar 2014: 109, 189). It may well be that Edward Tarleton was one of the rescued or ransomed prisoners.

Despite his service with the Commonwealth Tarleton was no puritan. His family remembered him as good-natured and fatalistic, and that he celebrated Christmas with 'dancing and festivity', activities banned while Cromwell was Lord Protector. Among his favourite sayings were 'God's will be done'; 'life is chequered'; and 'good will come by and by'. He made no attempt to claim his father's property in Ireland and did not challenge when the Catholic branch of the family broke an entail on the Aigburth estate to allow the property to be inherited by a daughter rather than come to him through the male line. He is recorded as having said that 'he could maintain himself and family very well, and did not care to disturb either his own repose, or that of others; and wished all the world to live in peace and harmony'.

Tarleton resigned his naval commission about the time of the Restoration and returned to Liverpool to make his fortune in trade, commanding some of his own vessels. Family tradition says that he made the first voyage from Liverpool to Barbados. His first wife died some time between 1660 and 1670, after which he married Ann Corles, the daughter of Liverpool alderman and mayor Henry Corles. In 1673, during the third Anglo-Dutch war, some of Tarleton's ships were pressed into royal service, including *Dublin*, of which Tarleton was made captain. The campaign was abortive, and hostilities were concluded by the Treaty of Westminster in 1674.

Back in Liverpool, Edward Tarleton played an important civic role. He was an alderman and served as mayor 1682–3. One of the last acts of his life was in June 1690 when, as master of *James*, he carried King William III from Hoylake, on the Wirral Peninsula, to Carrickfergus in Ulster on his way to fight the Battle of the Boyne (Mayer 1852). There he may well have encountered the 5th-rate frigate *Dartmouth* which, four months later, was to be lost in the Sound of Mull only 6km away from the wreck of his old ship *Swan*. Tarleton died on 9 July 1690 and was buried in St Nicholas' Church, Liverpool.

Illustration 15
Duart Castle from the north-east (DP 173648)