



O B A N

THE "Old Statistical Account" tells us that about 1714 the first house of any consequence was erected in Oban by a trading company of Renfrew, which used it as a storeroom. In 1736 a custom-house was erected "Oban being reckoned a proper place for clearing out vessels for the herring fishery." About 1774 "there were from 20 to 30 vessels registered at Oban which were chiefly employed in the fisheries; but from the decrease of that trade on the N.-W. coast the number of vessels is now much smaller." In 1811 it was erected into a Burgh of Barony in favour of the Duke of Argyll. But the Court of Session afterwards set this charter aside, and another charter was granted in 1820 in favour of the Duke of Argyll and Mr Campbell of Combie. The town was made a Parliamentary Burgh in 1833.

The Seal of the Burgh is a shield in the base of which is a representation of the galley of Lorn with oars in action, and beneath, in the sea, a fish swimming. In the left hand chief is a lion rampant, the Scottish Arms; and in the right hand chief the Campbell Gyronny. The motto beneath "*Air aghart*," is in old Celtic characters, and is the Gaelic for "Forward." The fish refers to the nature of the industry long carried on by the inhabitants of the town before it became famous as a watering-place.



OLD MELDRUM

THE name Meldrum is supposed to be from the Gaelic *Mealldrum*, meaning the shoulder of a hill, as the whole parish is ridgy ground surrounded by valleys.

Old Meldrum was created a Burgh of Barony under a charter of 1672. It came under the provisions of the Burgh Police Act of 1892 in 1893, and adopted as a Common Seal the Urquhart Arms, the Urquharts of Meldrum having long been the superiors of the Burgh. These Arms represent the three families who in succession have held the estate of Meldrum. The Meldrums held Meldrum before 1236, and took their name from the place. The three families who by female descent from each other have held the estate were Meldrum of Meldrum, whose heiress married a Seton about 1430; Seton of Meldrum, whose heiress, Elizabeth Seton, about 1620 married John Urquhart of Craigintry, the tutor of Cromarty, "renowned all over Britain for his deep reach of natural art"; and Urquhart of Cromarty, as represented by the Urquharts of Meldrum.

The shield in the centre of the Seal bears the Coat of Arms of Urquhart of Meldrum, viz., three boars' heads, but I understand these should be *bears'* heads. The following extracts from Nisbet may be interesting in this connection. "The surname of Urquhart carries boars heads; as Urquhart of Cromarty *or*, three boars heads erased *gules* Ponts M S. The chief of this name (says Sir George Mackenzie in his Genealogical Manuscript of the Nobility and Gentry) was Urquhart of Cromarty. The first of the family was a brother of Ochonacher who slew the bear, predecessor of the Lord Forbes, and having in keeping the castle of Urquhart took his surname from that place." Again, "The surname of Forbes with us bears *azure* three bears heads coupéd argent muzzled *gules*. Those of this name are said by our historians to be originally from one Ochonacher who came from Ireland, and for killing a wild bear took the name *Forbear*, now pronounced Forbes." In another place Nisbet gives the Arms of Urquhart of Meldrum "as now matriculated in the Lyon Register, are *or* three bears heads erased *gules*, langued *azure*."

The supporters are two greyhounds proper, collared *gules*, leashed *or*, while the

motto beneath the shield, "*Mean, speak, and doe well,*" is the ancient motto of Urquhart of Cromarty.

The crest above is a demi-otter crowned with an antique crown, and bearing between its paws a crescent. It is a combination, the otter being for Meldrum of Meldrum, and the crescent for Seton of Meldrum. The motto "*Per mare et terras*" (Through sea and land), refers to the habits of the otter, and its capacity for living either in the water or on dry land.

The date 1672 is the date of the town's original charter as a Burgh of Barony, and the date 1893 that when the Burgh Police Act was adopted.

See also under Cromarty for a full account of the bears' heads in the Urquhart Arms.