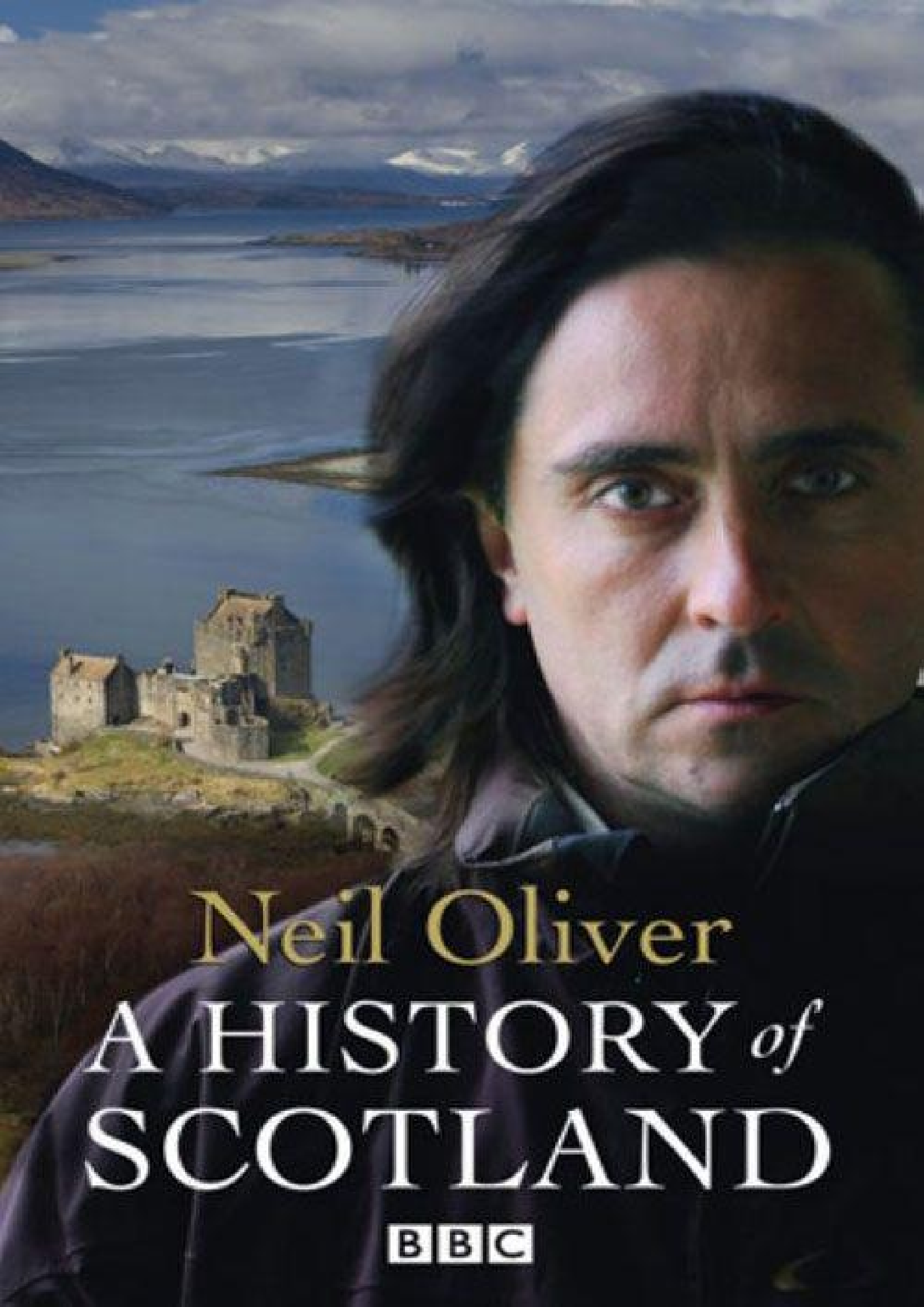
Neil Oliver
A HISTORY of SCOTLAND
BBC

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A History Of Scotland

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For Trudi and Evie

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Lovely Eugenie Furniss at William Morris Endeavour Entertainment

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As always, any and all mistakes in this work are mine and mine alone.

INTRODUCTION

How do you do justice to a history of Scotland? The scale of the subject, coupled with the sheer volume of books already available, makes the task daunting enough. By pitching my best efforts in amongst the rest, I am making of myself a minnow in an ocean heavily populated by leviathans - not to mention several sharks and the occasional venomous jellyfish. But Scotland is a place I have loved all my life. For me, therefore, writing about Scotland is like writing about a loved one and the fear of not doing right by her is almost overwhelming.

I found the only way to get started in the first place was to accept, even to celebrate, the fact that Scotland's history belongs to every one of us: to all who live there now as well as to any whose family trees stretch a root all the way back to the old country from wherever they find themselves today. The biggest mistake is to imagine that only academics have a say in recording and commenting upon the story of this land and this people. On the contrary, I believe it is the responsibility of every one of us to understand how and why our nation turned out the way it has. Failure to do so is to live for ever on one, randomly selected page of a novel. History is the collective memory we can use to start the book at the beginning - to understand the emergence of the characters and plots we share our own few lines with. How can we fail to be fascinated by history when we are, all of us, its survivors? 'To live at all is miracle enough', said Mervyn Peake, and it is history that explains the mystery of how any of us are even walking the earth. Without that understanding we are adrift like goldfish in a bowl, condemned to greet every moment of the present with wide-eyed surprise.

Scotland's history is also a crucial component of the history of Britain, of Europe and of the world. The unfolding story north of the Border has inevitably shaped the stories of the neighbouring countries of this (for now at least) United Kingdom. Scotland, England, Ireland and Wales are like tenants of a shared house. We each have our own room but we meet the others in the hall, the kitchen and the living room all the time. Scotland has also shaped the story of the wider world. Scots have long been the world's vagabonds, 'the tattered outcasts of the earth', and our very natures have dictated at least a few lines of the story of every other country on the planet.

Apart from anything else, history is always family business - the good, the bad and the ugly as well as the downright shameful and embarrassing - and discussing it in public always leads to arguments. Scotland's history, like every other, is an amalgam of fact and opinion - and there are at least as many of the latter as the former. And that is why it is the most fascinating and engaging stuff of all. There is nothing like a good old row.

I was curious about my own family from the very beginning. I wanted to know where we had come from and why. Why we lived in the house we did, in the town we did. Who were our relatives and where did they live, and what did they do, and why? Eventually I realised this was the beginning of an interest in history: I simply needed to understand how the people I knew fitted into the bigger story. Having done that, the bigger story became just as fascinating and compelling as anything happening at home.

So when I was given the chance to get involved with BBC Scotland's 'Scotland's History' project I recognised it as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. All-singing, all-dancing productions like this, with television and radio programmes, books, websites, music and concerts do not come along very often - perhaps once a generation - and to have the chance to be identified with my own generation's telling of my nation's story was completely intoxicating.

I started my working life as a field archaeologist, helping to excavate and record sites from all periods of Scotland's past, from the Stone Ages to the Industrial Revolution. My first 'dig' was at Loch Doon, near the village of Dalmellington, in Ayrshire. It was directed by a dear man called Tom Affleck who had made a second career for himself, relatively late in life, out of his lifelong fascination with archaeology. Tom's first degree, completed just after World War II, had been in botany and for years he had been a market gardener. But, happily for many of us, he went back to university in the 1970s to pursue his second academic love. By the time I met him, in the mid 1980s, he was working towards his doctorate in the subject.

We were investigating what proved to be a campsite used by hunter-gatherers thousands of years ago and for the most part we were finding little more than tiny chips of flint and chert, the debris of stone tool-making long ago. Tom had a genius for passing on his enthusiasm, however, and to make the whole exercise more worthwhile he took the time to show us an astonishing product of his painstaking efforts at the site in previous years. He walked a group of us to an unprepossessing patch of ground, on a natural terrace overlooking the gunmetal grey waters of the loch, with a roll of white paper under his arm. This he opened out to reveal a carefully drawn plan of the little plot of stony earth we now stood beside. It showed the precise locations of hundreds of fragments of flint that had been recovered from an area measuring just a few feet square. At first sight it appeared to be - and essentially was - a random scatter. But, after a few moments, Tom pointed out four little sub-circular patches within the plan that were entirely blank. Each was no larger than a beer mat and together they formed a fairly neat rectangle. So what? 'The two larger ones are where his knees were,' said Tom, pointing at the larger pair of side-by-side blanks. 'The smaller ones were left by his toes.'

All at once the pattern made sense. There on that patch of ground someone had

knelt down for a few minutes to knap and shape a few stone tools. The tiny fragments were the debris left behind and, of course, none had landed on the four spots occupied by knees and feet. But that ancestor had knelt on that spot *several thousand years* ago. We had precious little information about this long-lost individual - even whether it was a man or a woman - but we knew with absolute certainty where he or she had spent some moments of their life, and what they had been doing while they were there.

I was stunned then and I am still stunned now, more than twenty years later. Here was a near-physical connection to an ancient, otherwise anonymous life. With reference to the plan it was even possible to place a hand where those knees and toes had once been. To be able to find a spot where someone had knelt down; to realise that even a few, seemingly inconsequential minutes of a life leave a trace that can be found thousands of years later is profoundly moving for me.

That moment on that hillside with Tom, who died prematurely just a few years later, changed my life for ever. From then on I realised history - even the ancient past - was close by and all around us. History is right here and we can touch it. (I am well aware that archaeology and history are to be regarded as largely separate disciplines - the latter made of documents, the former of material remains - but for me the two have more to connect them than to keep them apart.)

I believe that we are made of the land we live on. We breathe the air and drink the water. Sometimes, some of the food we eat is local too, and not flown in from thousands of miles away. The landscape - our awareness and appreciation of it - surely shapes us as well. In this way, then, we gradually assimilate the very stuff of the little patch of the earth we call home. Atoms of it are briefly made part of us and so those of us who live in Scotland are therefore made, at least in part, *of* Scotland.

So for me a history of Scotland is personal and the completion of the project has been a transforming one. I saw up close, in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, the ‘Chronicle of the Kings of Alba’ - the so-called ‘birth certificate’ of Scotland - and in Lincoln Castle one of the four original copies of Magna Carta. I walked the streets and lanes of the medieval hill town of Anagni, south of Rome - some of the same that were walked by Scots churchmen 700 years ago as they strove to persuade the Pope to recognise Robert the Bruce as King of Scots - and visited the château in Amboise, on the bank of the River Loire, where Mary Queen of Scots spent much of her early life.

The filming took us all over Scotland and the rest of the UK as well, of course, from the Up Helly Aa Viking festival on Shetland in the north, to Dover Castle, where a teenage Alexander II , King of Scots marched an army to pursue his claims on English soil in the early thirteenth century; from the Holy Island of Iona in the west, first home of Christianity in Scotland, to St Andrews Cathedral in the east, the shrine that

eventually overshadowed its predecessor. For me the most poignant of all was Finlaggan, on Islay, once the centre of the Lordship of the Isles. Little remains to be seen and yet it was once the beating heart of an empire that rivalled the demesne of the kings of Scots themselves. There is a reminder among those few ruins about the transient nature of power, and of importance.

If I loved Scotland before this project, I love the place even more now. I thought I knew her well enough, but the discoveries and rediscoveries of the past two years have been a revelation. Some of the story is stuff to make any Scot proud; plenty of it should make us hang our heads in shame. But when you love someone, you love them completely or not at all, the good and the bad.

Scotland’s story is one of the oldest on the face of the earth. Some tiny part of it is my story and my family’s story. It is enough just to belong.

A mid-nineteenth-century map showing Scotland firmly part of the Union

CHAPTER ONE

FROM THE BASEMENT OF TIME

> ‘I was born on a storm-swept rock and hate the soft growth of sun-baked lands where there is no frost in men’s bones.’
>
> *Liam O Flaithearta*

So, where to begin?

The first words of this history of Scotland go to an Irishman and his thoughts of Inis Mór, largest of the Aran Islands off Ireland’s west coast. But there is a way of feeling about a place, about home, that transcends nationality and geography. Sometimes the right words are found in the wrong place and remembrance - the reach of memory - matters as much as history.

Before memory or history - beneath everything - is the rock. We are shaped and tested by it. Just as we are of the people we call family, so we are of the land we walk on every day. Magic is elusive stuff, but in the ancient landscapes of Scotland there is the genuine shimmer. It’s also a tough and demanding place - much of it made more of storm-swept rock than anything sun-baked. This is important. It is the landscape that has authored the story of this place, and this people, far longer and more indelibly than any work of our own hands.

The most enduring reminders of the first people are made of the stone - freed from the bedrock and raised towards the sky; used as canvases for works of art; piled high as houses of the living and of the dead; scorched and cracked by home fires of long ago; chipped and polished as tools. But it is not enough to start with the people who *used* the stone; the correct place to begin is with the stone itself. In the very creation of the bedrock - and the coming-together of a few battered, well-travelled fragments of it to form a patch of dry land that would one day be called Scotland - is a message, a premonition maybe, about the making of the nation, and its future.

It does not matter what moment you choose to begin a story like this: there will

always be someone who says you have come in too late. So, to counter that particular criticism, this history of Scotland begins four and a half billion years ago when the planet was formed. Half a billion years before that a dying star had exploded, filling a corner of the universe with super-heated gas and vapour. Amid the chaos a new sun sparked into life and around it swirled the steadily cooling wreckage of its predecessor, the stuff of worlds and Scotland and us. Hot clouds cooled, condensing into clumps and clots. Some came together to make this earth, an object with sufficient gravity to hold, eventually, a thin silk of life-supporting atmosphere around itself.

Long before the advent of anything like atmosphere and life, an object not much smaller than earth smashed into the young world, pulling away a great dollop of it. The mystery assailant continued on its way, hurtling onwards in its orbit of the sun, or elsewhere into infinity, but the gobbet was held in place by earth's gravity. The force of the collision had raised the temperature of the debris to boiling point and at first it was a glob of liquid that was trapped in our orbit. In time it cooled and solidified as the moon. Aeons later men and women living in the land before Scotland would count the phases of that silvered travelling companion and track its passage across the sky. They would raise huge stones, in circles and avenues, to help them remember and predict its comings and goings. But all of that would have to wait. For now there were billions of years to pass and thousands of miles for the rocks to travel before they could come together as a land for Scots to walk upon.

Earth had reeled drunkenly back from the blow that made the moon. The axis around which our planet spun was now askew for all time - leaning at a jaunty angle - but it kept on spinning like a wonky top. The ceaseless rotation makes of earth a giant dynamo, generating an electrical-magnetic force field that protects all life against the deadliest of the sun's radiation. The Aurora Borealis - the Northern Lights that can be glimpsed in Scotland when the conditions are right - are an effect of the relationship between that crackling cloak and particles from the sun.

The same magnetism dictates where on earth the North and South Poles are positioned. These are not constant and have moved around the planet many times, causing chaos on each occasion. But individual rocks remember where north was located at the moment they were made and carry a permanent echo of it within themselves. Geologists listen to the echoes and tell where on the surface of the globe the various bits and pieces of Scotland were at the moment when each different type of rock came into being. If geology is the birth certificate of a rock then it is the restless magnetic field that has carefully filled in the box marked 'place and time'.

Earth's orbit of the young star had been altered too by the moon-making collision, reshaped into a regular oval called an ellipse. The warmth of the sun would no longer be constant on this planet for the duration of each of our yearly circumnavigations; we would be further from the fireside at some times than at others. In that moment the

cycle of seasons was ordained.

The monstrous temperatures caused by the collision had made earth mostly liquid again as well. As it cooled, concentric layers formed and, on the outside of the ball, a thin crust hardened. The material beneath remained liquid and as the heat circulated, rising to the surface and then sinking back down towards the interior, the currents and flows contrived to keep the outer shell in perpetual motion. Composed of continent-sized scales, the crust proved to be a violently unstable casing. These thin scales, or ‘tectonic plates’, ground together at their edges like pieces on a constantly moving jigsaw; or were pulled apart to create fissures from which the molten interior could ooze like albumen out of a cracked egg. The plates slid on top and underneath one another, allowing the uppermost to harden in the cold universe outside while the lower was pushed back into the Hadean furnace below.

But while the complete history of the country and nation of Scotland would chart the shaping of the rocks from the time of earth’s messy birth, the fact is there is no physical evidence at all of the place - of the rocks it is made of - for a whole third of the planet’s existence. Only after a billion and a half years does the geology of the northern third of the land now known as the British Isles begin to reveal how it got where it is today and, more interestingly, where it had been all the while.

The oldest of the rocks beneath the feet of Scots are the Lewisian gneisses. These form the basement bedrock of Lewis, the rest of the Western Isles, the Inner Hebrides and some parts of the seaboard of the north-west. They were formed deep beneath earth’s crust three billion or more years ago. Calanais stone circle on Lewis was built of monoliths of Lewisian gneiss nearly 5,000 years ago. But the rock of which it is made - the rock of which Lewis is made - began its journey towards that time and that place at least three thousand million years before that.

As the endless years ground past, so more of what would be Scotland’s bedrock formed - the ancient Torridonian sandstone, some of it a memory of times when desert blanketed the land; limestone laid down first as sediments by long-lost rivers and vanished oceans; great sheets of basalt and granite that spewed, as magma, through tears rent in the gneiss to form the heart of the Harris mountains; yet more granite took shape as the Cairngorms, and parts of the Southern Uplands. Hellish temperatures would, in time, cook some of the limestone to marble and some of the sandstone to quartz.

The various fragments of landforms that would eventually join up to make Scotland are on an endless journey across the globe. As the plates moved across the face of the earth - great rafts of stone afloat upon a molten sea - so the parts that would become Scotland moved with them. For most of the time they were located south rather than

north of the Equator. Yet more aeons passed while the disparate building-blocks of this country moved around the South Pole or floated north towards the Equator and beyond. The rock that would be Scotland has been home to tropical forests, deserts and swamps as well as to verdant grasslands and uncounted acres of temperate woodland; it has borne upon its decks lizards and dinosaurs, lions and wolves, hippos and elephants; bears and giant elk, as well as human beings of ancient vintage - the passengers boarding when the climate suited them and getting off again when it did not. The land has frozen beneath ice miles thick, been set free and then frozen again.

The unimaginably powerful forces driving its passage across the face of the globe also twisted, buckled and folded the rock of Scotland like so much toffee. For a hundred million years most of it was submerged beneath a tropical sea. Tiny animals lived and died in the soupy water and when the countless trillions of their bodies sank to the bottom they formed layers of chalk hundreds of metres thick. Millions of years later that same chalk would be scoured away by glaciers, leaving scarcely a trace.

Five or six hundred million years ago some of the rocks of Scotland were on the edge of a continent known by geologists as Laurentia. On the other side of the so-called Iapetus Ocean - a body of water at least as wide as the modern Atlantic - lay the continent of Avalonia and the rocks that would, one day, form England and Wales. For the next two hundred million years the movement of the plates caused that ocean to close up, its waters consumed or pushed elsewhere by the process.

By four hundred million years or so ago, Laurentia and Avalonia had drawn close together. One plate slid beneath the other as they came on and the violence of their advances forced above the surface of that ocean an offshore arc of islands. These in turn were sandwiched and enveloped by the final coming-together of the two continents, their peaks and valleys forming what would eventually be the Highlands of Scotland. For the first time the lands that would be chiselled out as Scotland and England were joined together as one. Long since torn asunder, geologists refer to this huge continent as the Old Red Sandstone Continent and it sat somewhere south of the Equator. As well as the future parts of the British Isles, it also contained Greenland and America.

Scotland still had thousands of miles of lazy meandering to go. By three hundred million years ago all the continents of earth were fused together - a vast landform called Pangaea, or ‘all-earth’. The whole huge lot of it drifted northwards, with the building-blocks of the British Isles land-locked deep in its interior. For part of this time the rocks of our land were covered in a desert that was home to early dinosaurs. The footprints they left long ago in sediments are still being uncovered in Scotland today.

The world kept turning and the plates kept slipping and sliding. Pangaea split along its several seams and, as a new rupture got under way, the salt water that would one day be the Atlantic Ocean began to collect in one great abyss. Something like sixty million years ago, as the Atlantic continued to widen, the rocks of Scotland parted company with the landmass that would become North America. Left behind on the eastern side of the ocean, they were from now on parts of the future British Isles and Europe. Sea levels fell and for the first time the outline of the British Isles was revealed, although just a rough sketch.

It had been no amicable divorce; the rending-apart of continents had put earth's crust under unbearable stress. Temperatures rose beneath the tortured skin and a great chain of volcanoes burst into life. Among others these would come down to us as Ailsa Craig, Ardnamurchan, Arran, Mull, Rum, Skye and St Kilda. By the time the rocks arrived where they are today - a position no more permanent than any other they have held - they amounted to the most battered and ragged parcel of flotsam imaginable, unrecognisable even to its sender.

All in all, it is a tale almost impossible to be believed but it bears a message and a reminder: just as the emergence of a nation, a political entity called Scotland, was never inevitable, so the cohesion of its rocks - four or five shards of four or five different landmasses - was anything but preordained.

The places we know as the Western Highlands; the Northern Highlands; the Central Highlands; the Central Lowlands and the Southern Uplands are just leftovers from other times and other places: parts of a work still in progress. The shards came together by chance, a whim of pressure and time. It could all have been so different and in a hundred million years or so it will likely all be different again. Nothing is or ever has been permanent; everything is on the move and the only constant is change.

From about thirty million years ago the forces of glaciation were at work around the world. During the past three million years they have sculpted the whole of our land with an energy and violence akin to the wrath of God. The ice has formed and thawed, again and again: long cold periods called glacials followed by shorter warm periods called interglacials. We still live in the Ice Age and during the last three-quarters of a million years the cold periods have been more intense and longer in their duration than before - around 100,000 years each. It has been the advance and retreat of the ice that has ground Scotland's mountains down to broken teeth - mere stumps of what they once were - and bulldozed millions of tonnes of rock out of the valleys into the lowlands and sea beyond. The last signature to be written upon this land before ours has been that of the ice.

Modern humans, people indistinguishable from us, lived first in the southern-eastern

parts of Africa. A suitcase-full of bones is all that remains to testify to the emergence there of *Homo sapiens sapiens* something like 100,000 years ago. From that warm cradle they spread northwards and then east and west, gradually moving out in all directions until every part of the old world felt their feet upon it.

The earliest evidence of the presence of modern humans in the British Isles is from Kents Cavern, in Devon. The jawbone of a woman was recovered from the limestone cave and radiocarbon-dated to around 30,000 years ago. She is the sole survivor of her time - of the world of the British Isles before the last glacial - and despite the millennia between her and us, we are one and the same. Bones from other sites in England - at Swanscombe in Kent and Boxgrove in West Sussex - reveal the presence of ancestors that are hundreds of thousands of years older. These were early humans of the type that predated even *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* - Neanderthal Man - and recall a time when the people who came before us hunted giant deer and rhino in a climate much kinder than our own.

But of Scotland's first humans - those who lived in the northern third of Britain in the time before the onset of the last glacial - not a trace has been found. It's safe to assume they were here but every hint of their physical presence - be it tools, shelters, butchered animal bones, artworks or their mortal remains - all of it has seemingly been erased by the ice.

The last glacial began around 25,000 years ago. Perhaps the planet wobbled on its axis, tilting the northern hemisphere even further from the warmth of the sun; maybe its orbit was altered again, becoming more elliptical and straying further from the life-sustaining rays at both extremes of its journey. Whatever the trigger, the deterioration in the weather would have been rapid enough for any humans living in the land before Scotland to notice the change.

Over the course of a few generations the temperature dropped markedly. There was seldom rain any more - especially on the high ground - just snow that grew deeper and deeper until its own weight compacted the lower layers into ice. Huge domes of snow and ice formed and grew within the mountain ranges of the north, rising and enveloping the tallest peaks. As the ice sheet spread, a vicious cycle was established. More and more of the northern hemisphere turned white and reflected the heat radiating from the sun, accelerating the cooling process. Less and less water fell upon the land as the ice claimed and drew towards itself whatever precipitation was forming in the atmosphere. Sea levels began to drop for the same reason and all the while the great domes of ice grew thicker and heavier.

Too great to be contained within the mountains, the ice spread out into the landscape around and below. Where it touched the land a scum of watery sludge became a

lubricant that enabled the frozen mass - several miles thick - to nudge and grind southwards. Rock trapped in the lowest layers and in contact with the land surface acted like the coarsest-grade sandpaper imaginable. On Skye's Cuillin the smoothed and polished scars etched deep into the rock reveal the direction the ice sheet took across the bedrock. The weight of the ice pushed the very land itself down into the crust below. At the height of the glacial, parts of northern Europe would be many hundreds of metres lower than they are today, depressed like one end of a couch beneath a fat lady's bottom.

The ice drove all before it. Humans and animals alike migrated ever southwards, beyond its reach. Great glaciers grew out from the mountains of snow and ice and pushed through valleys, making them deeper and wider. Uncountable tonnes of rock were quarried out of the mountains and bulldozed into the valleys below. Beyond the Highlands and towards the south the glaciers left a gentler, less spectacular landscape of rolling hills and river valleys. As well as scouring and quarrying, the ice sheets deposited new material. Silts and gravels in vast quantities were spread out across the low-lying terrain - deposits that would develop into some of the most fertile farmland in the British Isles.

Around 16,000 years ago the last glacial was at its peak. The ice sheet had reached as far south as Wales and the midlands of England and all traces of human habitation had been wiped from the land as completely as chalk dust from a blackboard. From that time onwards, however, temperatures began to rise. Maybe the planet tipped back up on its axis, increasing the effect of the sun's warmth; or maybe our orbit took on a more circular path. In any case earth began to warm up and so the ice melted and receded.

Valleys cut by ice, rock and time filled with melt water. As vast volumes of water returned to the sea, so the waves lapped higher. Over centuries and then millennia the coastline we recognise took shape. The unmistakable outline of Scotland's western seaboard is what happens when the sea floods troughs excavated by glaciers. The fjords of Lochs Alsh, Broom, Duich, Eriboll, Fyne, Hourn, Laxford, Linnhe, Long and Torridon and more were all cut and sculpted by the ice before being drowned in the rising sea.

Inland, beyond the reach of the tide, other huge, ice-cut scars filled with melt water to create lochs like Affric and Arkaig; Luichart and Lochy; Monar and Mullardoch; Morar and Ness. Great rivers flowed out of the Southern Uplands to water the fertile plains below. The Firths of Clyde, Forth and Tay offered easy access deep into the interior.

Seawater and melt water alike revealed, in the manner of a highlighter pen, ancient

fault lines and geological schisms. Loch Maree and Loch Broom, Loch Shin and Loch Laxford were cut by glaciers that exploited the north-west to south-east grain of the Lewisian gneiss. The Great Glen - running contrariwise from north-east to south-west - follows the path a glacier took along the massive geological fault line between two tectonic plates that cuts across Scotland like a sword wound. These landforms, shaped first by geological forces and then modified by ice, are marks deeper and more profound than any yet made by humankind.

Long before any human foot made its imprint, geology and ice conspired to ensure the land of Scotland would be split in two. The thin, acid soils that gradually formed in the valleys and rugged slopes of the north and west would only ever be suitable for the least demanding of domesticated animals, the toughest crops. South and east of the Great Glen would form the much richer soils that, in time, were turned into a ‘bread-basket’ of arable farming. The destinies of the peoples who would eventually reach and settle these two quite distinct terrains were pre-determined, at least in part, by the nature of the land itself.

All of that lay in the future. As the climate improved and the ice receded - from around 12500 BC onwards - tundra gained a toehold. The sub-soils remained frozen all year round but during short summers a thawing of the topsoil allowed a greening of the landscape for the first time in thousands of years. Grazing herd animals came then, lured north by the promise of food. Mammoth, woolly rhinoceros, bison, giant fallow deer and reindeer - all of them walked the land during a time when Scotland was embraced by a sub-Arctic climate. It was a tough life but one that suited hardy animals that thrived in the chill and enjoyed wide open spaces where predators could be seen from afar.

The land continued to warm up and the seeds of other species arrived from the south, borne on the winds. More came in the guts of the herd animals themselves until, in time, woodland replaced the open plains. Animals that had felt secure in the open - like the reindeer and the bison - left for green pastures elsewhere or fell to extinction. In their place came beasts that preferred the cover of trees and browsed among the shadows of the forest floor.

Scotland drew across herself a cloak of aspen, birch, elm, hazel, lime, oak and pine and through the dappled gloom moved all the creatures of the woods - wild cattle, boar, deer both red and roe, elk. Through the canopy above moved polecats, martens and birds. The rivers and streams wending their way towards the coasts harboured beaver, otter and wildfowl as well as all manner of fish - and where there were prey animals there were hunters like fox, bear, wildcat and wolf.

If there ever was a time when animals had the place to themselves, it could not and