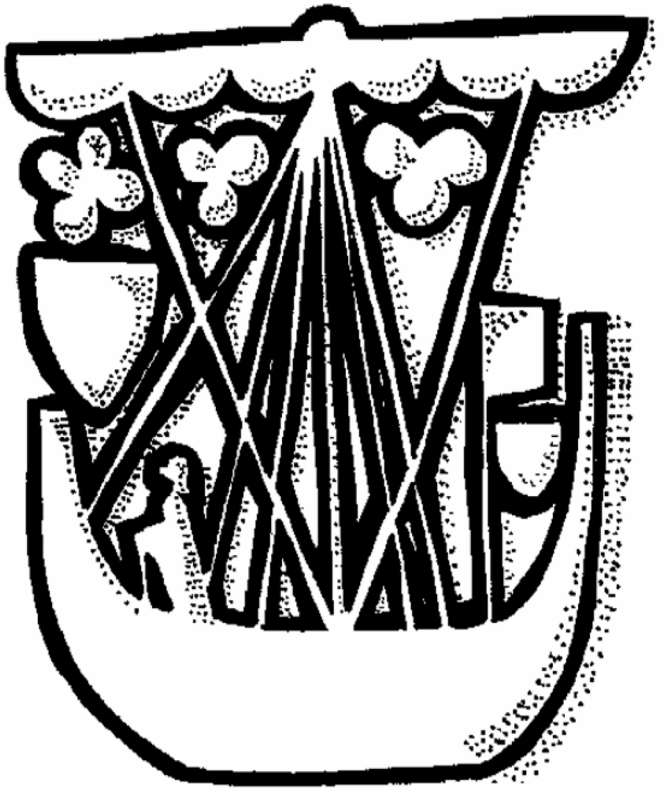
West Highland Notes and Queries



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ARTICLES

In Search of Clan MacMillan – Part One[1]

Of all the clans that have reason to be grateful to Ronnie and Máire Black for their outstanding work in analysing MS 1467, the MacMillans owe them more than most, since they have resolved a question that has bedevilled the history of the clan since William Skene first discovered these genealogies in the early 19th century. The issue was the fourth name in a pedigree which Skene first read from the original in 1839 as *Eoin* and reinterpreted half a century later, from a version found in Duald MacFirbis's genealogies, as *Cainn*.[2]

Though the Blacks had difficulty reading the later part of the MacMillan genealogy, they have shown that the word in question was *Cainnig* and that the whole pedigree, which appears more than once in the MacFirbis collection, should probably read: *Gille Coluim Og mac Gille Coluim Mhoir mec Maoilmhuire meic* ***Cainnigh*** *mc Dubhgaill mc Gille Choluim meic Gille Chríost, dar comhainm an Gille Maol, mac Cormaic mc Airbeartaigh* (my emphasis).[3]

At one point the Reverend Somerled MacMillan came up with a hybrid version of the pedigree which included both Cainn and Eoin, but those of us who came to MacMillan history in Rev. Somerled's wake remained dependent upon Skene's second version and wrote the clan's history accordingly. The name that Skene had latterly given us actually seemed to make sense, in the light of his explanation of the wider kindred in which he had placed the MacMillans in his early work, i.e. the *Siol O'Cain*: ". . . the name Cain being spelt in Gaelic *Cathan*, and being the very same with Cattan, from whom clan Chattan derives its appellation, it seems much more probable that they derived their patronymic of *O'Cain* or *O'Cathan* from the Cattan of clan Chattan. And more particularly when the oldest genealogies of the Macmillans, expressly makes them a branch of the clan Chattan."[4]

The MacMillans' old Clan Chattan connection, which was remembered in Lochaber in the 18th century, is set out in Murdoch McKenzie of Ardross's *Origin of the Haill Tribes of Clan Chattan*, a paper written in 1687, probably using the same now lost sources which Lachlan Macintosh of Kinrara used in the 1670s for the history of his clan. We'll return to the MacMillans' connections to Clan Chattan in due course; but what, in the meantime, are we to make of the *Cainnigh* who we now find as the fourth name in the pedigree?[5]

As Aonghas MacCoinnich has pointed out, the name Cainnigh/Coinneach was particularly associated in medieval times with Argyll because of the cult of Saint Columba's companion *Cainneach*, for whom Inch Kenneth, off Mull, is said to have been named, and to whom chapels there and on the islands of Iona, Tiree, and South Uist were dedicated. Dalchonzie in upper Strathearn is also said to bear this saint's name, along with the churches of Kilchenzie in Kintyre and Ayrshire, and St Kenneth's in Badenoch (the ruins of which, at the eastern end of Loch Laggan, are marked on early OS maps). Laggan became the homeland of the Macphersons after they left

Lochaber – which, according to some local traditions quoted in Cameron histories, had once been ruled by a 'thane' called Kenneth – and their eponymous Duncan the Parson is said in many of their genealogies to have been the son of a Kenneth mac Ewen mhic Mhuirich. Ardross tells us that Kenneth's grandfather Muriach was a brother of Dugall Dall mac Gillicattan, the grandfather both of Eva who married Angus mac Ferquhar the ancestor of the Macintoshes, and of *Gillmiell* the ancestor of the MacMillans.[6]

There don't appear to be any contemporary records in those areas of the Highlands most associated with the MacMillans (Knapdale and Lochaber) of a Coinneach that might have been a great-grandson of *Gille Chríost, dar comhainm an Gille Maol*, who appears on record in 1132 as Gilchrist mac Cormaic alongside his father the Bishop of Dunkeld. The name can be found, however, in the relevant period in parts of Perthshire which, according to local accounts, were at one time also home to MacMillans. A *Kyneth/Kineth* appears in the late 1190s and early 1200s witnessing charters for Lindores Abbey granted by members of the Earl of Strathearn's family; then, in 1265, *Kennauch Makyny* and *Macbeth MacKenneth*, along with a priest called Macrath, are recorded witnessing acts of homage to the Prior of St Andrews at Dull, at the east end of Loch Tay. William Gillies's history of Breadalbane reports local traditions saying the Macmillans were anciently numerous on Lochtayside where the name in Gaelic was *Mcillemhaoil* or *Mcmhaoiligan*, and notes there were six tenants of this name in Ardtalnaig in 1644. The Rev. Dr Hugh Macmillan, the first elected 'chief' of The Clan MacMillan Society, who came from Lochtayside, tells us that the clan known there as *Mac-na-Maoile* arrived from Lochaber in the 12th century and were expelled from their lands at Lawers in the mid-14th century, from whence some of the dispossessed emigrated to Knapdale and others to Galloway.[7]

The second oldest genealogy to include the MacMillans also places the eponymous of the clan and his immediate descendants in Perthshire, as the lairds of Leny (just outside Callander). Their unique mid-16th century family tree shows the Lennies to be descended from *Maolan Macgilespic de Lany*, who also appears as *Gilibile Macgilespic de Lany* (Gilibile being a garbled form of Gillemhaoil). It shows his son to have been *Colmin* (i.e. Malcolm – the same name as the son of *Gille Chríost* … an *Gille Maol* in MS 1467) who is shown as the ancestor of the *Macmillans in Airgile & Breadalbin* and of the *Macgilbiles in Lochaber*.[8]

Members of this family are documented from the 1230s when *Willelmo de Leny* appears twice – on the second occasion as the Bishop of Dunkeld's seneschal – and *Johan de Lanyn* gives homage in 1296 for his lands in Perthshire and Midlothian. According to William Buchanan of Auchmar, the father of Maolan had as a charter for his lands the large sword he had used 'as a means to his first advancement'. While the MacMillans later had the ancestral sword as their armorial crest, the Lennies handed down a small silver replica of it which was depicted in 1789 in the journal *Archaeologia*.[9]

According to the Leny tree, another descendant of Maolan/Gilibile was *Maoldonich de Lany*, the progenitor of the *MacMaldonichs in Strathearn*. As Ronnie Black notes in his analysis of the Green Abbot's clan, Strathearn was the site of a church dedicated to

Saint Catan. He goes on to tell us that when, in the 13th century, the Earl of Strathearn – whose ancestor had endowed the church in the 1170s – gifted it to support an Augustinian Priory, the devotees of St Catan left Strathearn and, led by one *Gille Moire Longach* (Maolmuire of the Ships), took their cult to the Isle of Lewis where their leader's descendants were known as *Clann Mhic Gille Moire* or the Morrisons. He suggests that in going – between 1200 and 1270 – they would have sought out fellow devotees in the lordships of the Isles and Argyll, and in seeking to identify such fellow devotees, he notes that the Green Abbot's grandson *Gille Pádraig* was killed at Harlaw in the company of Lachlan MacMillan whose surname meant 'the Son of the Monk'. He then says: "Curiously, MacMillan historians have adduced an origin for their clan very similar to the one now suggested for the kindred of the Green Abbot, that is, a migration of Gaelic-speaking monks from the east of Scotland to the security of the west, provoked by the ecclesiastical reforms initiated by David I."[10]

In fact, the only MacMillan historian to suggest such an origin for the clan is the Rev. Somerled, and his ideas about this may have been based more on religious prejudice than anything else, since it's not evident there was any such flight to escape what the Presbyterian minister calls the 'sinister designs against the Celtic Church' of a king with a 'strong Roman Catholic bias'. What's more, such evidence as we have suggests the MacMillans were undoubtedly a clan with western origins (as Ronnie Black himself later points out).[11]

The appearance in the pedigree of the Green Abbot's clan of an ancestor called *Gille Faolain* may also be significant in relation to the present discussion. The cult of Saint Fillan was centred in Glen Dochart, to the west of Loch Tay, so Gille Faolain was a name we might expect to find in clans who had their origins there; and indeed, in Perthshire, Gilfillan is traditionally listed as a sept of the Macnabs. There were also churches dedicated to St Fillan in Renfrewshire and Lochalsh, and Mac'illefhaolains/MacLellans in Wester Ross who perhaps derived their name from a devotee of the saint in that area; as may have the *clan Illeulan* who the Rev. James Fraser tells us lived in the 17th century in *Obriachen* (Abriachan, on the shores of Loch Ness).[12]

The name MacLellan was, however, perhaps most prominent in Galloway, where there was a church dedicated to St Fillan in what became the parish of Sorbie. It's striking that the heraldry of the MacLellans in Galloway points both to an ancient association with the Earls of Strathearn – whose representative in 1138 championed the men of Galloway at the Battle of the Standard – and a link with the MacMillans, who are also shown in the history of the Lairds of Leny to have had connections with the cult of St Fillan. In Robert Buchanan's 16th-century account of the Lennies he reports that as well as the 'litill auld sourd, gauin to Gilesiemvir be the King' they had 'ane auld relict callit Saint Fillanis tuithe, quhilke servit thaim for that chartour quhyle Alexander his dayis'.[13]

The cult of St Fillan and the clan called after him bring us back to the name for so long thought to have been in the MacMillan pedigree in MS 1467 (Cainn for Can/Cathan), since the only contemporary record of that given-name so far found in Scottish records belongs to the earliest known MacLellan in Galloway, i.e. *Cane Mcgillolane*

who witnessed Devorgilla Balliol's charter for Sweetheart Abbey in 1273. His name recurs a number of times in various languages in the patronymics of his children: *Dovenaldo filio Can* (who appears in Barbour's epic poem 'The Bruce' as Donald McCan); *Gibbon fitz Kan*; and *Cutbert M'Cane*.[14]

The MacLellans' lands in the Glenkens marched with those of the Galloway MacMillans, and both clans had pet or diminutive versions of their surname: *MacMhaolagain*, which as we've seen was found in Perthshire, and *MacFhaolagain* which, as MacKillican, is specifically associated in Scotland with Clan Chattan. In Ulster the McGilligans were one of the two most important septs of the O'Cahans, the other being their neighbours, the O'Millans. Auchmar derived his own clan from the O'Cahans and appears to have based his assertion that the MacMillans in Scotland were a sept of the Buchanans on the relationship of the O'Cahans and O'Millans in Ulster, along with the invention of a Buchanan called Methlan and the claim that MacMillan stood for MacMethlan.[15]

Dovenald fiz Can was one of the barons of Galloway who gave homage in 1296; two others were *Macrath ap Molegan* and *Gilbert Maccoignache*. Macrath's *Ap Maolagain* is a Brythonic version of the Gaelic *Mac Mhaolagain*, and *Maccoignache* is MacCoinnich. A decade or so later, the victorious Robert the Bruce confiscated the estates of many of the leading barons of Galloway who had stayed loyal to their native lord John Balliol, so that he might reward his own followers; and amongst the dispossessed was *Gylbycht McMalene*. On the basis of the Cainnigh now known to have been in the MS 1467 MacMillan pedigree, this Gilbert MacMillan might reasonably be equated with the above Gilbert mac Coinnich/Cainnigh. This would accord with the tradition reported by Auchmar 'that a brother of Macmillan . . . in the time of the Civil Wars after the death of King Alexander III went from Argyle-shire to Galloway . . . being the progenitor of the Macmillans of Galloway'.[16]

While we've already noted a Macrath in 1265 in Perthshire, traditions in Argyll also tell of a man with that name who, in late 13th-century Lorn, was a favoured tenant – and, according to one account, a relative – of MacDhughaill or MacCoul of Craignish. Two of the histories of *Clandowilcraginche* agree that this ancient and important Argyll kindred had a branch on Loch Tayside – the *Sliochd Thearlaich Dhuibh* – though they differ about when its progenitor may have lived, one saying as early as the 13th century and the other as late as the 15th. Both agree however that this 'black and bloody headstrong race' lived at Ardeonaig, and Auchmar tells us that some MacMillans from Knapdale returned to settle back on Loch Tayside at this very place, where 'MacDougalls' were later to be found living alongside the *Mac-na-maoiles*. This version of the MacMillan clan name appears on the isle of Jura as *MacNamel* where, though it was considered a sept-name of Clan Dougal, its bearers were acknowledged locally not to be of the same blood as the MacDougalls of Clann Somhairle.[17]

The Craignish histories tell how Macrath and followers of *Mac Dhùghaill Chreiginnis* were involved in the killing of MacCoul's brother-in-law, MacMartin of Fincharn, after which Macrath drowned MacMartin's son and fled, initially to Mull, and later to Kintail. Archibald Campbell's 'Craignish Tales' say that the followers of

Craignish who were involved in the killing of MacMartin were called the *Gillean Maola Dubha*.[18]

To a historian of the MacMillans, the *Gillean Maola Dubha* would be 'Black MacMillans', but Archibald Campbell dismisses them as "the lowest class of retainers who hung about a chief's castle . . . 'Maola' not because they were bald, as the term might be translated, but from their habit of going always about bare-headed". Ronnie Black strongly agrees with the Campbell contention, and has cited for me a number of instances from the Dewar MSS (which he and Chris Dracup are currently editing for publication) in which a Gille Maol Dubh or Gillean Maola Dubh appear as bonnet-less, shoe-less, and in at least one case simple, servants; and indeed, the Gaelic dictionaries support possible translations of *maol* as foolish, silly, easily deceived, or bare.[19]

It is notable that four of the six cited examples in the Dewar MSS of *gille*[*an*] *maol*[*a*] *dubh*[*a*] concern a follower or followers of Cameron of Lochiel, while the fifth is amongst a band of the MacDonalds of Glencoe, a clan that had close connections with the Camerons. That leaves just the one case where the gillean maola-dubha in what was presumably a more far-flung MacDonald household – that of Alasdair mac Cholla – are demeaned, according to Ronnie Black's translation, as 'rag-tag servants'. In one of the Lochaber-related examples, far from being a lowly domestic servant, the Gille Maol Dubh is said to have been the son of a tacksman and, though apparently viewed at first as an unlikely warrior, ends up killing Raghnall Gallda in single combat in a conflict that is clearly Blàr na Léine (when Raghnall Galda's opponents included the Camerons).[20]

The Gillean Maola Dubh are often shown in these examples to be worthy warriors ('although the Gillean Maola Dubha were bare-headed and barefoot, they were well armed, and they were superb soldiers', D2.182r), and the Clan Cameron context in which they mostly appear strongly suggests to me that they belonged to 'the MacGilveils of Lochaber . . . close dependents upon the laird of Locheal . . . generally employed in any desperate enterprise that occurs' (Auchmar).[21]

It appears that among the duties of Lochiel's MacGhillemhaoil dependents was the escorting of his daughters when they left Lochaber to marry into other clans. Somerled MacMillan tells us that some of the Macmillans in Glenmoriston were the descendants of those who accompanied Sir Ewen Cameron of Lochiel's daughter Janet when she married John Grant of Glenmoriston. It is in this role that we also find two other examples of the *Gille Maol Dubh*. The numerous 'Camerons' on Speyside – who said of themselves that 'they are descended from twelve young men who . . . accompanied a daughter of the house of Lochiel on the occasion of her marriage to one of the Stewarts of Kincardine' – were known as the *Sliochd nan Gillean Maola Dubh*. William Forsyth's account of them includes the comment that 'probably the epithet *maol* should not be translated bald or bonnetless, but may rather have been given them from the appearance they presented by wearing flat steel caps'. John Maclean, in his *Historical and Traditional Sketches of Highland Families*, tells the story of a son of MacKenzie of Redcastle returning from 'Lochiel's Castle' with his bride and his father-in-law's 'faithful and trusty valet, Donald Cameron, *an gille maol dhu*, or the

bonnetless lad'. He goes on to say that 'although Donald Cameron held this menial situation under his chief, he was a member of one of the most respectable families in Lochaber, and nearly allied to the chief himself', and that he married and left the Black Isle 'well supplied with the race of the *gille maol dhu*'.[22]

Given that the descendants of these Gillean Maol Dubha in Strathspey and the Black Isle continued to be known as Camerons, it's impossible to prove they were MacMillans (if indeed they were). As we'll see however in the second part of this paper, there is ample evidence to show that MacGhillemhaoils who left Lochaber were often called Camerons; and indeed, their own chiefs in Lochaber (along with chiefs of the other small clans who had originally belonged to Clan Chattan) were also often recorded in the 17th century with the surname of the chief to whom they owed service and on whose lands they lived. The imposition by the great chiefs of their own surnames on the members of the small clans who, for one reason or another, came to be living on their lands, is a commonplace of Highland history, most famously in the Inverness area in relation to the 'Boll o' Meal Frasers'. One of the most dramatic examples of it however can be found in Argyll when the MacCouls of Craignish became Campbells and had imposed on their coat of arms – which depicted the galley or birlinn that was common to West Highland and Hebridean kindreds – the Campbell gyronny of eight, as a sail: a unique sign of conquest, if ever there was one.[23]

We'll return to the MacCouls of Craignish in the second part of this paper, since their possible connection with the early MacMillans is not confined to the fleeting figure of Macrath or the ambiguous nature of the Gillean Maola Dubh, but rests also on the identity of a family said in at least one of their histories to have been their cousins, i.e. the MacGeils or McIgheills of Barrichbeyan. The mid-18th century Argyll Register of Bonds has many examples of people called McIyeall, McYeill, McIgheil, McGheill, including a number where the individuals referred to appear in the same entry with forms of the name McIlvoill (i.e. Mac'illemhaoil). One particularly busy drover and change-keeper in Kilmichael, Glassary, in the 1750s and '60s called Duncan, appears variously as McIyeall, McIyeile, McIgheill, McGheill, and most helpfully in one entry as 'McYeill or McIlvoill or Bell' (the Bells in Argyll – particularly in Inverary – have long been recognised as MacMillans).[24]

Ronnie Black, in his comments on the MacMillan pedigree in MS 1467, says that 'in the fifteenth century the MacMillans of Knap fell victim to two minor kindreds which were almost certainly of Viking origin, the Clann Dubhghaill of Craignish and the MacIvers of Asknish, both of which protected themselves by taking on a Campbell identity'. It's entirely possible of course that the connection of Macrath MacMaolagain and/or the McIlvoils of Barrichbeyan to the MacDhugaills of Craignish was simply one of marriage, made by an incoming clan – whether Vikings or Campbells – to create binding links with the native kindreds; much as the Camerons, who some old accounts would also have as Danes, are said to have intermarried with the MacMartins when they arrived in Lochaber. It should be noted however that the traditions of the MacCouls said that in the time of King William the Lion they were 'the chief guardians of the western coast against the incursions of the islanders', and the islanders then would

probably have been the Gall-gaidhel, who might or might not be defined as Vikings. Whether or not the MacMillans of Knap – probably An Cnap, by Asknish, in Lorn – lost out to or belonged to the MacCouls who became the Campbells of Craignish, they certainly lost out later in Knapdale to the Campbells, after which their chiefs were mainly located in Kintyre. By 1841, McMillan was by far the most common clan name in the five parishes that wholly or in part make up Kintyre (McDonald 207, McNeil 340; Campbell 462; McMillan 1047). All this might be seen as a further part of what Ronnie Black has described as 'a composite picture of a family . . . who appeared in Aberdeenshire in the twelfth century, then moved to Perthshire soon afterwards, and on to Argyllshire in the fourteenth', for which account he says Rev. Somerled MacMillan 'should have known better'; a judgement we'll also consider in the second part of this paper.[26]

Graeme Mackenzie

Abbreviations

CDS	Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland
HFHS	Highland Family History Society
NRS	National Records of Scotland
RMS	Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum
RRS	Regesta Regum Scotorum
SHS	Scottish History Society
TGSI	Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness.

Notes

1 I'm grateful to Ronnie Black and Aonghas MacCoinnich for reading a first draft of this paper and providing comments and suggestions that were particularly useful for a scholar without the Gaelic.

2 *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis* (Edinburgh, 1847), 358; William F. Skene, *Celtic Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1878–1880), III, 489.

3 *West Highland Notes & Queries* (*WHNQ*), ser. 3, no. 28 (Aug. 2015), pp. 4–14.

4 Somerled MacMillan, *Families of Knapdale* (Paisley, 1960), 12; William F. Skene, *The Highlanders of Scotland* (Stirling, 1902), 313. The surname of the Ulster kindred Ó Catháin or O'Cahan appears in modern times as O'Kane or Keane (Edward MacLysaght, *Irish Families* (Dublin, 1985), 109), and is usually thought to derive from the name of St Catan. Alexander Macbain asserted however that while 'Clan Chattan is so named for St. Catan or little cat', O'Cathan is 'from cath, battle' ('Excursus & Notes' to Skene, *Highlanders of Scotland*, 414, 416). This would suggest the association of the saint with the abbey of Derry, so close to the Uí Catháin heartland, is pure coincidence; but both the Scottish and the northern Irish kindreds used the cat as an heraldic symbol, which clearly suggests that whatever modern etymologists might think, the O'Cahans themselves thought their name meant the same as that of Clan Chattan.

5 The Lochaber traditions regarding the Clan Chattan connections of the MacMillans and other small clans that had become followers of Lochiel were reported by Duncan Forbes of Culloden (J. Allardyce, ed., *Historical Papers Relating to the Jacobite Period* (New Spalding Club, 1895), no. XVII: 'Memorial anent the true state of the Highlands',

vol. 1, p. 166) and an anonymous government official (*The Highlands of Scotland in 1750*, ed. Andrew Lang (Edinburgh, 1898), 87). For the Ardross MS, which is NRS/GD.80/965, see Graeme M. Mackenzie, 'Murdoch MacKenzie of Ardross and his Account of Clan Chattan', in *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* (TGSI), Vol. LXV (2006–2009), 274–282; and for the Kinrara MS, Jean Munro (ed.), *A Chronicle of the Family of Mackintosh to the year 1680 by Lachlan Mackintosh of Kinrara* (Clan Chattan Association, 2009). A note accompanying the copy Ardross made in 1684 of the Applecross MS History of the Mackenzies shows that he had custody in 1701 of a number of genealogical MSS obtained from Kinrara: 'Genealogie of Surname of M'Kenzie' in *Highland Papers II* (Edinburgh, 1916), 3.

6 Aonghas MacCoinnich, 'Tùs gu Iarlachd: Eachdraidh Clann Choinnich c.1466-1638' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Aberdeen Univ., 2004); Database of Scottish Hagiotoponyms (Saints in Scottish Place-Names): https://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/saint.php?id=400; John Stewart, *The Camerons* (Clan Cameron Association, 1971), 5; Graeme M. Mackenzie, 'For Ever Unfortunate – The Original Clan Chattan', TGSI, Vol. LXI, 1999–2000 (Inverness, 2003).

7 Gilchrist mac Cormaic and his father are documented in the Gaelic marginal notes in the *Book of Deer* (Spalding Club, Edinburgh, 1869), 93–4. The Coinneachs in Perthshire appear in *Lindores Chartulary*, Nos. 29 and 36, and *St Andrews Liber*, p. 349. For the MacMillans in Perthshire: William Gillies, *In Famed Breadalbane* (Perth, 1938), 366; Hugh Macmillan, *The Clan MacMillan* (London, 1908), 8–12, which cites 'the Maclagan MS, written in 1786 by the Rev. James Maclagan, a native of the same district' in relation to the name Mac-na-Moile.

8 The original Leny tree is NRS/GD.161/Box 17, and a copy can be found in J. Guthrie Smith, *Strathendrick and its Inhabitants* (1896), 290. The equivalence of Gillemaol and Gillibile – stemming from the fact that both "m" and "b" when aspirated in Gaelic sound similarly like an English 'v' – is demonstrated in Graeme M. Mackenzie, 'The Surnames M'Gill and Bell' in *The Scottish Genealogist*, Vol. LII, No. 4 (Dec. 2005), 161–2, and the equivalence of Colmin and Malcolm as English versions of the Gaelic *Gillie-Coluim* is discussed in Graeme M. Mackenzie, 'Clann Challuim in Lorn' in *The Scottish Genealogist*, Vol. LI, No. 3 (September 2004), 24–25.

9 William de Leny appears in *Balmarino Liber* (Abbotsford Club, 1841), 22, No. 26, and *Inchcolm Charters* (SHS, 3rd Series, XXXII, 1938), 13 and notes on 121. John de Leny's homages are in CDS, ii, No. 823, pp. 200, 213. William Buchanan of Auchmar, 'An Account of the Family of Lenny' in *A Historical and Genealogical Essay upon the Family and Surname of Buchanan* (1723), 95; *Archaeologia*, Vol. XL (1794), 45. The family's later role in the royal household is outlined in Graeme M. Mackenzie, 'The de Lanys or Lennies of that Ilk' in *The Scottish Genealogist*, Vol. L, No. 1 (March 2003).

10 '1467 MS: The Green Abbot' in *WHNQ*, ser. 4, no. 11 (Nov. 2019), pp. 3–30. Ronnie Black's thesis about how the Morrisons came to Ness is very different from the commonly accepted view on Lewis that they were of Norse origin. Other theories about the origins and meaning of the name MacMillan are discussed in Graeme M. Mackenzie, 'The Name MacMillan' in *The Scottish Genealogist*, Vol. LIII, No. 1, March 2006 – which is updated as 'The Origins of the Name MacMillan' in *Clan MacMillan: A Complete History* (2022), 201–207.

11 For his initial account of the origins of the clan, see Somerled MacMillan, *The MacMillans*

and their Septs (Glasgow, 1952), 14–22. The Rev. Dr Hugh Macmillan's earlier review of MacMillan history – the first by a member of the clan – has no mention of Old Spynie in Moray (where Rev. Somerled locates 'Gille-Chriosd otherwise An Gillamaol'), but does report 'certain genealogists who confidently affirm that the Macmillans are a sept of the Munros, and came originally from the lands on the north side of the Cromarty Firth' (Macmillan, *The Clan Macmillan*, 5). This appears to be a reference to Skene's account of the Siol O'Cain which, in this respect, was based on the *Togradh Nighean An Chathanaich* in Hugh MacDonald's 'History of the MacDonalds' (*Highland Papers I*, ed. J. R. N. Macphail (Edinburgh, 1914), 20). Though Hugh Macmillan had previously mentioned the appearance of the name Maolan in the Book of Deer and says it 'belonged to the region where the Macmillans are said to have originated', he really starts his account of the clan in Lochaber, with no suggestion of any flight from sinister Roman Catholic designs.

12 Marjorie O. Anderson, 'Columba and other Irish Saints in Scotland' in *Historical Studies 5* (1965), 26; Frank Adam, *Clans, Septs, and Regiments of the Scottish Highlands* (Edinburgh, 1908), 336; James Fraser, *Chronicles of the Frasers: The Wardlaw MS* (SHS, Edinburgh, 1905), 185.

13 Richard Oram, *The Lordship of Galloway* (Edinburgh, 2000), 203; R. L. G. Ritchie, *The Normans in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1954), 266; 'McClellan/McMillan Heraldry and Kinship' in D. Richard Torrance, *The McClellans in Galloway* (Edinburgh, 2003), 264–271; Smith, *Strathendrick*, 290.

14 RRS, vi, No. 235; CDS, ii, p. 268, No. 1049; CDS, ii, pp. 411–2, No. 1588. Ronnie Black has kindly pointed out the existence of a name Cana, as in Dùn Chana in Raasay, earlier Cano as in Cano mac Gartnáin, which is referenced in William Matheson, 'The Morisons of Ness', TGSI, vol. 50 (1976–78), 60–80: 66.

15 R. G. W. Mackilligan, *Followers of Saint Fillan* (n.d.), 15; Edward MacLysaght, *More Irish Families* (Blackrock, 1982), 109; 'An Account of the Macmillans' in Buchanan, *Historical and Genealogical Essay*, 125. The reliability of Auchmar as a source for MacMillan history is debateable, but it's worth saying that, for all his blatant invention of a name to try and derive the MacMillans from his own clan, he was enough of a historian to report the name used by the MacMillans in Lochaber – i.e. MacGilveil – which not only could not be derived from Methlan, but actually supported what he otherwise dismissed as 'a fond opinion . . . of obtaining that denomination from their ancestor's being bald, in Irish *Maoilain*, and thence *Macmailans* or Baldmans son'. For the possible connections – beyond the common derivation of their names and before the Plantation of Ulster – between two other kindreds on either side of the North Channel (the Ó Gnímhs in Ulster and the Agnews in Scotland) see works cited by Aonghas MacCoinnich in 'Looking for a Gàidhealtachd in the Southwest' in Michael Ansell, Ronald Black and Edward Cowan, eds, *Galloway: The Lost Province of Gaelic Scotland* (2022), 125–172: 149.

16 CDS, II, pp. 198 and 209; POMS, no. 19431 (https://poms.ac.uk/record/person/19431/, accessed 27 April 2024); RMS, I, App. 2, p. 530, No. 316; Buchanan, *Historical and Genealogical Essay*, 126.

17 Herbert Campbell (ed.), 'Manuscript History of Craignish' in *Miscellany of Scottish History Society IV* (Edinburgh, 1926), 208; John Tweed, publisher, *The House of Argyll* (Glasgow, 1871), 102–3; Buchanan, *Historical and Genealogical Essay*, 127; Adam, *Clans*, 320.

18 While the previously cited Craignish histories include the tale of MacMartin's killing (Campbell, 'Manuscript History', 112–3; Tweed, *House of Argyll*, 89–90), the Gillean Maola Dubha only appear by name in Archibald Campbell's version in his *Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition I* (London, 1889), 3 and 15–24. Macrath is said in the Craignish MS to have fled to Mull with some of his name, and to have begotten several children whilst living at Seanvaile on Loch Spelvie; and, coincidentally, there is a tradition on Mull that before the MacGillivrays became the lairds of Braghadal, in Glencannell, the proprietor had been a MacMillan (Glen Cannell is across the watershed to the north of Loch Spelvie): John Mackechnie (ed.), *The Dewar Manuscripts* (Glasgow, 1964), 260–1.

19 Campbell, *Waifs & Strays*, 3. Ronnie Black's references for the six examples of gille[an] maol[a] dubh[a] in the Dewar MSS are: D1.291r; D2.181r; D2.182r; D4.36r; D5.340–342; D9.115r.

20 A good account of Blàr na Léine, the characters in it, and the sources for it, can be found at https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/BTL29

21 Buchanan, *Historical and Genealogical Essay*, 128–9.

22 Somerled MacMillan, *Bygone Lochaber* (Paisley, 1971), 95; Alexander Mackenzie, *History of the Camerons* (Inverness, 1884), 57; William Forsyth, *In the Shadow of Cairngorm* (Inverness, 1900), 82; John Maclean, *Historical and Traditional Sketches* (Inverness, 1895), 102–4.

23 Graeme M. Mackenzie, *Septs, Septnames, and Surnames of the Highland Clans* (HFHS, Inverness, 2019). The Campbell of Craignish coat of arms is described in Alexander Nisbet, *A System of Heraldry* (Edinburgh, 1816), I, 33.

24 NRS/SC51/48, Vol. 16, p. 183; and for Duncan the Drover, NRS/SC51/48, Vol. 17, pp. 138, 149, 172, 323, 444, 455, 470. MacGeil/MacGeyl looks like a form of MacGill, which George Black – in *Surnames of Scotland*, 497 – says was usually a form of Mac an ghoill, "son of the Lowlander or stranger", but which was sometimes considered to be a curtailed form of Mac Ghille maoil for MacMillan; for which see Andrew McKerral, *Kintyre in the Seventeenth Century* (1948), 167.

25 Stewart, Camerons, 3, 13; Campbell, Manuscript History, 205.

26 The suggestion that the Knap associated with the MacMillans was An Cnap by Asknish is apparently confirmed in Mark A. Mulhern, ed., *Scottish Life and Society: A Compendium of Scottish Ethnology: The Law* (Edinburgh, 2012), 18 – and I'm grateful to Ronnie Black for this reference. 1841 Census figures from www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk.

Kilcolmkill

Just above the shore on the east coast of Loch Linnhe in Duror, surrounded by domestic and farm buildings, there lies a burial ground in which stands a ruined church. This area is now called Keil, but on Timothy Pont's map of about 1600 it is marked as Kilcholmkill, the church of Columcille, better known in Scotland as Columba. It is also described as Kilcholmkill or Keil on several sasines until the middle of the 20th century.

In one of the stories collected by John Dewar in the 1860s for the 8th duke of Argyll he was told that three Irish saints competed to found a religious base on the island of Lismore. This race was won by St Lucas. Tradition has it that the race was only

between St Moluag and St Columba. Columba was in the lead, but Moluag took an axe, cut off his little finger and threw it ashore, thereby winning, as his flesh reached the island first. The name that has come down to us consists of an honorific *mo* (my) *Lughaidh* (pronounced Lua) plus the endearing suffix *-oc*, hence Moluag or Moluac.[1] So it is easy to understand the corruption to Lucas. One of the others, St Columba, founded a centre at Keil, Duror.[2] The third saint, Curalain, is probably the same person as St Cairill. He was a friend of St Colman Elo, a son of St Columba's sister, and lived therefore a generation later than St Columba.[3] He has left his name on Beinn Churalain, north of Loch Creran, Cladh Churalain, the burial ground at about 700 feet above sea level on the flank of this hill, as well as an unlocated farm, Craigcuralain, and a church, St Curalain's Chaple (Roy's map, *c*. 1750, and Thompson's, 1824), although this latter map shows it to be near the shore of Loch Creran. It is shown on an Admiralty chart of 1860 (Chart 2814a). In this area are the remains of a farmstead which still exist and may have been mistaken for a church.

St Curalain also founded a religious centre on Lochaweside. On the east coast of Loch Awe, south of Sonachan, the first Ordnance Survey map (surveyed 1871) shows an unroofed building and some enclosures in a field called Cuilachuralain (Curalain's neuk). On the second OS map (surveyed 1897) only the field name remains, and on more modern maps, nothing!

The story of the saints' race was recorded about 1,400 years after the alleged events, so its veracity must be doubted. But St Columba was a great traveller, so it is possible that he did stop here on at least one occasion. However, there is nothing in St Adamnan's hagiography to suggest this.

With equal lack of documentary or archaeological evidence, it has been suggested that the present church stands on the site of a previous one, perhaps wooden.

The earliest documentary evidence we have of a congregation, and presumably a church, is dated 1354, when the churches of Durobwar (Duror) and Glencown (Glencoe) were quitclaimed by John of Lorn to John of Islay.[4]

A topological account of 1630 suggests that the church was in use at that time.[5] However, in an article by James Scott it is recorded that the Synod of Argyle was much concerned with the difficulty that the people living on the mainland of the parish of Lismore and Appin had in attending services at the parish church on Lismore. In a meeting on 7 October 1641 it was reported that Sir Donald Campbell of Ardnamurchan had built a new kirk in Appin at Kilcolkil, in Duror, the site of an old Celtic foundation. Unfortunately Mr Scott does not give reference to where he obtained this information. The minister from Lismore, Mr McCalman, was willing to hold services there, but the ferryman, John Roy McEan Douill, refused to ferry him across to the mainland. Having overcome this difficulty, Mr McCalman was refused keys to the church, and could not even preach from the dykeside, for Sir Donald, with the help of Duncan Stewart of Appin, John and Allan his brothers and Duncan Stewart of Ardsheil, prevented people from attending. This seems to have been due to the machinations of Sir Donald, an awkward character by all accounts. Sir Donald had expected the building of this church to be to his benefit, but in 1643 the Synod was asked by Campbell of Glenorchy to set

up a separate church on the mainland. This would have proved to be detrimental to Sir Donald's influence and finances.[6]

Another version of events at that time is told by Rev. Ian Carmichael.[7] He says that the Synod meeting was on 7 October 1642, not 1641, and that Sir Donald had built a new church at Annat in Strathappin in 1641. This led to the difficulties that Mr McCalman had in being able to preach. No doubt differences in opinions about which form of service to follow added to the problems.

Mr Scott's article, the last in a series about local parishes, was not published until after his death, and I suspect that it was written in a hurry and without time to confirm all the details. It is most unlikely that the church at Keil was rebuilt after 1630, as it contains two aumbries, things not found in post-reformation Protestant churches. The church that Sir Donald had built was probably near the old ruined parish church at Annat in Strathappin, which was founded in 1749.[8]

Mr Alexander McCalman was admitted to Lismore in 1660. He conformed to Episcopacy and was Dean of Lismore until the 'Glorious Revolution'. After this the Scottish church became Presbyterian, but he continued to serve the parish of Lismore and Appin as an Episcopalian until his death in 1717 at the age of 83.[9] Thus he was the cleric responsible for the church at Duror as well as the population in Appin, Glencoe, Lismore and Kingairloch. As an Episcopalian rector he was succeeded by John McLauchlan, who ceased to be listed as an incumbent about 1750. He was an ardent Jacobite and commissioned the Appin Chalice and Paten. These are hallmarked in Edinburgh 1723 and are inscribed 'The Parish of Appine 1723'. He accompanied the Appin Regiment to the Battle of Culloden in April 1746, and is reputed to have given them communion from these vessels.[10]

The church, which is said to be of late medieval construction,[11] measures 12.3 by 5.6 metres with walls about 90 cms. It is rectangular in shape with an east-west long axis. The original masonry is of roughly-coursed local rubble bonded with pinnings. The quoins and margins are of roughly-dressed blocks and slabs of the same materials. The technique is generally of the so-called 'Shiner' build, a west-coast one where large stones were split in half and set on edge to form a wall. Lime mortar was used throughout. Repairs have been undertaken on several occasions, about 1930 and about 1970. This was mainly to the north long wall, which accounts for the door, which is in the right place, being rather wider than expected. There are pieces of iron protruding from the stones on both sides of the door. Further restoration work was carried out in 2018, this time to the south wall. The tops of both long walls were sealed with lime mortar at that time.

There are two intramural aumbries near together in the south and east wall, and there are slate-lintelled windows at the east end of both long walls. Adjacent to the east wall there is on the north side a hole in the wall and on the south a recess. These were presumably there to accommodate a beam across the church at about head level. Remains of plaster can be seen on the walls both inside and outside the church. There are thatch-pegs on the outside of both gables. Looking at the insides of the gables, it seems that there may have been two or three different roof lines. There is a window

high in the west gable. Inspection of the east gable shows that the stones on the inside have been subjected to considerable heat.

At the latter end of March 1746 Capt. Robert Askew, commander of HM Sloop Serpent, put ashore marines under Lt. MacKenzie and troops from Guise's Regiment under Lt. Moody. They burnt down three houses, six barns (in which seed grain, about to be sown, was stored), a mill and a corn kiln.[12] They took away 118 sheep, 29 cows and a stirk, killed one horse and also removed anything worthwhile that they could carry. This was a Hanoverian own goal, as the buildings were the property of Donald Campbell of Airds, who was near Inverness with the government army at the time. Through his agent he submitted to the duke of Argyll an account for £292 19s 8⅔d by way of compensation.[13] Whether he was compensated is not known. He did not mention any damage to the church, but then it was not his property. However, government troops are on record as deliberately destroying Episcopalian churches, especially in the north-east of Scotland. Lord Polwarth in a speech to the House of Lords tells that in '1746 no fewer than 46 Episcopal Churches and Chapels were burnt by the order of a personage who is commonly known North of the Border as "Butcher" Cumberland'.[14] Another source says: "You could go from the Tay up and around the Spey and beyond and never be out of sight of the column of smoke from a burning Episcopal chapel. There was a fire risk to other buildings in bigger towns so the chapels in Stonehaven, Peterhead and Inverness were demolished and the bill for the demolition was sent to the congregation."[15]

Most of the population in the Parish of Appin were Episcopalians at that time. In one of John Dewar's stories he tells us that troops 'set fire to Keil near Glen Duror'.[16] Certainly buildings were burnt down at Keil, and the evidence of fire damage to the stones of the east gable must surely date from this event, in view of what Lord Polwarth had to say about Cumberland's policy. Keil House was the last to be burnt, as instructions came from the government to stop this practice.[17] This was less than a month before the Battle of Culloden.

Within the church and around it are numerous gravestones, the majority of which are of Ballachulish slate. This is an excellent material for the purpose, and inscriptions on them are almost as crisp as when many of them were sculpted over 200 years ago. The best known person to have been buried here was James Stewart, better known as James of the Glen (Seumas a' Ghlinne). This was several years after his judicial murder on 8 November 1752 following one of the most notorious miscarriages of justice in Scottish history. Someone told the eminent Victorian lawyer, Lord Cockburn, "Onybody can get a man hanged that's guilty, but it's only Lummore [Macallum More (Duke of Argyll)] can hang a man wha's no guilty ava."[18]

Just where his grave is is not known. A memorial plaque was inserted into the inside of the west gable wall in 1938 by one of his descendants, Donald McCallum of Keremeos, British Columbia, Canada, and James Stewart, the owner of the Keil estate at that time.

M. E. M. Donaldson did not think the gravestones were of any importance. She says that both the chapel and burial ground were 'small and of no interest; what old graven

stones there may have been having suffered such violence from weather and lack of care that their sculpturing has practically disappeared'.[19] When one looks at the stones one must wonder where she was looking, or if she ever actually visited the site! Mary Miers disagrees, stating that the slate tombstones of the 18th and 19th centuries are of exceptional quality.[20] The earliest date so far identified is 1686 and the latest 1925.

Apart from James of the Glen, very little is known about most of the people buried there. MacColl is the commonest surname found, followed closely by Stewart. Most of the Stewart graves are within the church; Buchanans are outside the east end, Colquhouns are to the north of them, and many but not all of the Livingstons form a line to the north of the doorway. MacColls and Camerons are widely distributed. It has been postulated that there might be a second, lower, layer of burials within the church, causing the floor to be raised. During the 2018 renovations two table stones just inside the doorway were replaced on their pedestals. While doing this some excavation was required, and this revealed a large slate slab devoid of any inscription under one of the stones. This hints that there may be other such stones waiting to be found.

Several different styles of inscription can be found, ranging from a primitive scratching of a couple of initials to the ones that Mary Miers so admired. Only one stone has any indication of who the sculptors were, but they must have been people working at the Ballachulish slate quarries. Stones with inscriptions of similar sculpting can be found in other burial grounds in the neighbourhood. While most of the people buried here were Gaelic speaking, this language is only found on three stones. One of these is a memorial to John òg McColl from West Laroch, Ballachulish, a slate quarrier. He was one of the people who related folk tales to John Dewar. Many of his tales fill in gaps of knowledge about local history. They include one about his ancestors nearby at Bealach in the Salachan Glen.[21]

Another stone, this time inside the church, is to another John McColl and his wife Catherine, who lived at Kentallen Bay. He was a hand loom weaver, probably for the Ardsheal estate. Both of these told stories to John Dewar. John McColl was said to be the strongest man in the parish. After a funeral and, no doubt, a few drams, he challenged some young men to carry a boulder up from the shore and place it on the wall of the burial ground. None could do so but he could. This has become known as the McColl Stone.[22] It sits on top of the slate stile near the entrance to the burial ground, and has a ring inserted on its top. It looks as if had started life as a weight for a cheese press, and had been moved to the shore to act as an anchor for buoys used when coffins were being brought in by sea from Ballachulish. It always struck me as being too light for young men not to have been able to lift it. It remained on the top of the stile until renovation work was being done about 1970, when one of the workmen took a fancy to it and brought it to his home in Ballachulish. Some time later he needed a new pair of trousers. He negotiated with a local storekeeper. He got the trousers, and she got the stone. It remained outside her shop for several years until I learned its story. She gave me the stone, and it was returned to the stile.[23] This was the story of the McColl Stone until 2023 when a letter written by Hugh MacColl, founder of the MacColl Society, to Angus MacColl who kept the Duror Store was discovered. Accompanying the letter

were two photographs taken in 1930 when renovations were being carried out.[24] One showed the stile with the stone and the other without. This stone was much larger than the one that is there now, and it contained a lot of quartzite. No-one knows where it is now. Certainly it looks as if it could have defeated most people trying to carry it.

A third John McColl is remembered by an obelisk. He was a well-known Gaelic poet, some of whose poetry was published in the book *Luinneag nan Gleann*. He was only 36 years old when he died, probably of tuberculosis, possibly aggravated by silicosis, as he started life as a slate quarrier in Ballachulish. As his health deteriorated he turned to poetry and painting. Does anyone know if any of his paintings still exist?

The inscriptions on the erect stones are on their eastern faces. On the western sides of many stones there are initials, usually of the person the stone is in remembrance of. The recumbent stones lie east-west. One exception is near the outside of the entrance to the chapel, an irregular block of sandstone on which there is an X. This is not a cross, and is placed to one side of the stone, which lies north-south. The significance of this stone is unknown, and it has been re-covered with turf for protection.

Two stones are mentioned in the 1975 RCAHMS publication. A table stone of 1825 is dedicated to the children of John McDougall and Rachel McColl, his spouse. Below a winged soul, a panel shows images of eight children, two of whom were infants. Three youngsters and three young adults are all named. Regrettably the stone has been desecrated, the noses of all the children having been knocked off. The other is a memorial to Duncan McColl, showing his hound and firearm along with symbols of mortality. This is the only stone with an illustration of the deceased's occupation.

Another tombstone of interest is in memory of Mary McLaren and her son. Mary died in 1870. The byrehouse in which she lived was recorded as unroofed the next year, when the area was surveyed for the first time by the Ordnance Survey. The human part measured only 15 by 15 feet. Her name can be found in the register of paupers in 1856. Her descendants must have done well to afford the large sandstone memorial. What is their story? No doubt other hidden stories lie behind many of the other tombstones.

At the head or foot of several stones there have been placed white (quartz) stones, none smaller than a fist. This is said to be a tradition that predates the coming of Christianity to this area. There are two such stones, fist-sized, below the plaque to James of the Glen, but they were not there a dozen years ago.

Many stones have decorations and emblems on them. The commonest of these are just swirls of lines, but there are a variety of emblems to be found. Crosses are found on a few stones. Emblems of mortality such as skull, crossbones, coffin and hourglass are found on several. There are urns containing flowers, lilies and ferns, all denoting the love of relatives. Two recumbent stones from the end of the eighteenth century have small hearts, one between the words *memento mori* and the other between the capital letters AS, but no emblems are found earlier than these. There are hearts on several later stones. On the back of one there is a starburst, suggesting that the deceased was a Freemason. There are several with rosettes, either hex(a)foils with six petals or cinquefoils with five petals as well as a couple of stars with six or twelve straight lines. These are also known as daisy wheels.[25] This emblem is of ancient origin, found as

early as the 16th century BC on gold discs from Mycenae.[26] It is thought that these emblems were commonly used to ward off evil spirits. However the Jacobites had a white cockade as an emblem, and the 1745 Association uses both five- and six-leafed foils as symbols. So were these rosettes placed just for decoration, to ward off evil spirits, or as a lingering Jacobite sentiment? There are two stones with thistles on them, another Jacobite symbol – or just Scottish patriotism? There are other emblems of uncertain significance. There are no coats of arms or other clan symbols.

The burial ground was formally closed in 1950.[27]

Neill Malcolm

Abbreviations

AEA	Argyll Estates Archives, Inveraray
NRAS	National Register of Archives of Scotland
RCAHMS	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland

Notes

1 Rev. Ian Carmichael, *Lismore in Alba* (Perth, n.d.), pp. 35–37.
2 AEA Dewar MS 3, f. 289r.
3 Ann MacDonell and Robert MacFarlane, *Cille Choirill Brae Lochaber*, 3rd edn (Spean Bridge, 1995), p. 1.
4 RCAHMS, *Argyll: An Inventory of the Monuments*, vol. 2, *Lorn* (Edinburgh, 1975), p. 139, and J. R. N. MacPhail, ed., *Highland Papers*, vol. 1 (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1914), p. 77.
5 RCAHMS, *Argyll*, vol. 2, p. 139.
6 James E. Scott, 'Lismore and Appin', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, vol. 48 (1972–74), pp. 473–517.
7 Carmichael, *Lismore in Alba*, p. 124.
8 Carmichael, *Lismore in Alba*, p. 195.
9 www.episcopalhistory.org/18th-century – accessed 11 Nov. 2024.
10 www.episcopalhistory.org/18th-century – accessed 11 Nov. 2024.
11 RCAHMS, *Argyll*, vol. 2, p. 139.
12 AEA NRAS 1209/148/1, Remembrance Donald Campbell of Airds to His Grace the Duke of Argyle, 1746.
13 *Ibid.*
14 Lord Polwarth, UK Parliament, Hansard, vol. 254, Tues. 21 Jan. 1964.
15 www.https://banffmacduffheritagetrail.co.uk – Feb. 2022.
16 Rev. John Mackechnie, ed., *The Dewar Manuscripts Volume One* (Glasgow, 1963), p. 188.
17 Mackechnie, *Dewar Manuscripts*, p. 188.
18 Lord Cockburn, *Circuit Journeys* (Edinburgh, 1889), p. 295.
19 M. E. M. Donaldson, *Wanderings in the Western Highlands and Islands* (Paisley, 1920), p. 318.

20 Mary Miers, *The Western Seaboard* (Edinburgh, 2008), p. 71.
21 Mackechnie, *Dewar Manuscripts*, p. 251.
22 MacColl Papers, Lochaber Archives, Fort William. A loose sheet of paper among many others.
23 Pers. comm., Cath Small, Ballachulish, 2018.
24 Pers. comm., Agnes McColl, daughter-in-law of the late Angus McColl, 2023.
25 Robyn S. Lacy, *Daisy Wheel, Hexfoil, Hexafoil, Rosette* (New York, 2024), pp. 12–14.
26 The Archaeological Museum, Istanbul, displays several gold discs with hexafoils from the shaft of Grave III, Mycenae, dated about 1600 BC.
27 Letter from Secretary of State for Scotland to Rev. Angus McFadyen, minister of Duror Parish Church, 1950. Photostat copy of original in possession of the author.

Ewen MacDougall's 'Reall MacDougalls' and their 'Dependants' (1)

Dr Robert Craig Maclagan (1839–1919) was a physician, anthropologist, author and co-founder of the Scottish Association for the Medical Education of Women. He was also a collector of folklore, hence the 'Maclagan Manuscripts' now held by the University of Edinburgh.[1] In 1879 he privately published his second book *The Clan of the Bell of St. Fillan*. John Francis Campbell of Islay was sent a copy in which he wrote some trenchant comments.[2] It is a somewhat curious publication, and reflects Dr Maclagan's unique views on the origin of the surname MacLagan.[3]

On p. 5 of the book are two lists of names headed 'Reall MacDougalls' and 'Dependants', see Fig. 1. Campbell did not comment on these. On p. 6 of the book it is stated that 'Mr. John Sinclair MacLagan, of Glenquoich, from whom I received this list, says that at the date 1808, on the back of his copy, the Ewen who testifies to this was a schoolmaster at or near Aberfeldy, and a little of the *bon-vivant*'. The Sinclair MacLagan family owned an estate and house in Glenqueich, Forfarshire. It seems that 'Glenquoich' should, in this instance, be taken to mean Glenqueich. Indeed 'John Sinclair MacLagan' may be identified as Dr John Sinclair MacLagan whose death was recorded in the *Caledonian Mercury*, 2 April 1831: "At Glenquaich House, Forfarshire, on the 21st. ult., Dr John M'Lagan of Glenquaich, for many years physician to the Earl of Breadalbane, and surgeon to the late Royal Highland Local Militia, aged 81yrs."

The purpose of the present article is to identify Ewen MacDougall, the alleged schoolmaster, consider the Perthshire MacDougalls more generally, print some material related to Ewen's list, and probe the accuracy of what he has to tell us. Future articles will be devoted to a detailed examination of the surnames in question.

In 1905 Dr R. C. Maclagan reprinted the list and backed it up as follows:

> Mr John Christie, formerly of Bolfrack Cottage, Aberfeldy, says: "Ewan was a relative of the late Professor MacDougall of Edinburgh University.[4] Ewan was rather a remarkable man, something both of an antiquary and a litterateur. I never heard of him as a schoolmaster – he certainly was not parochial master at Kenmore; he seems to have spent most of his days at the east end of Lochtay. He lived at Kingharrie

(Garden-end), attached to the old Priory of the Isle of Lochtay, where Taymouth Castle gardens now are, and subsequently at a place called 'Bigrow' or 'Balnaskiag,' on the slope of Kenmore Hill. He was Baron Baillie Clerk of Breadalbane and Ground Officer of the Officiary of Taymouth, and was for some time a sergeant in the Royal Breadalbane Volunteers . . . He was nicknamed 'Spitty' on account of a habit of spitting while speaking. Ewan was one of the Macewans or MacDougalls of Achomer, Lochtayside, who still occupy Achomer, Claggan, and Milton Ardtalnaig. Latterly he earned a living by writing petitions to the Earl of Breadalbane, that being the recognised form by which tenants approached his lordship as to estate matters, grievances, &c.; his fee is said to have been half-a-crown. I have passed hundreds of these through my hands when going over the Breadalbane papers." . . .

In 1574 Donald Dow M'Couil V'Quhewin was "heddyt" at Kenmor by Campbell of Glenwrquhay. We have here authority as far back as 1550 for the statement in our Ewan's list so far as his own family was concerned.[5] The Chronicle of Fortingall was in the possession of Breadalbane, however, and Ewan may have drawn from that very source.

From what we have said above it will be seen that we do not regard Ewan's list as a copy of an ancient document . . . Nor do his traditions seem to reach very far back: thus, MacDougall is the original of his family of Lorn, and he says nothing of the Somerled ancestor; but immediately after MacDougall he mentions MacIlvrides, the Gillibrede, said to be the name of Somerled's father . . . , and after them he gives MacIlechonils, the sons of Donald's servant, whom he calls Roys, – probably the MacDonalds of Bute, "patronymically styled Macruari." After the MacEwens and MacLagans come the MacKeiths, apparently the name of Somerled's son-in-law . . . , the claimant of the earldom of Moray, supported by the Moraymen, all which seems to prove that, though a proper genealogical connection was unknown in detail to the writer of the list, the tradition of it had reached him.[6]

So, according to Christie, Ewen was a Macewan/MacDougall of Achomer, and as we see in Fig. 1 and at A4 below, among his 'Reall MacDougalls' Ewen listed the selfsame MacEwens of Achomer. The Rev. William Gillies states:

The family name of the McDougalls of Achomer and Milton was McEwen. They have farmed lands in the Ardtalnaig and Ardeonaig districts since the middle of the seventeenth century. Several members of the family acted as officials on the Breadalbane estate, and one member, Hugh or Ewen McDougall, was minister of Killin (1795-1827). According to a legend the first of the Achomer family was John Dubh Mor, brother to Duncan McDougall, Lord of Lorn. He had killed the heir of McLean of Duart in a quarrel, and fled to Lochtayside. He heard that a wild beast, said to have been a dragon, was such a terror to the people in the Ardradnaig district that they removed from their homes. John Dubh Mor killed the dragon, and in consideration of the services he thus rendered, the Crown, to whom the lands belonged in those days, gave him a grant of land. He invited other members of his clan to join him, which accounts for the colony of McDougalls on the south side of Loch Tay.

A John McDougall of Achomer married Barbara Campbell, daughter of Colin

"List of the different Clans and Tribes descended from the Family of Lorne, and of those depending on that most antient family, as kept in the Records thereof, viz. :

Reall MacDougalls.

The MacDougalls of Lorn.
The MacIlvrides.
The MacIlechonils or Roys.
The MacEwens of Achomer, Perth, and Dungarthill.
The MacLagans.
The MacKeiths.
The MacPhersons in Moydart.
The MacNamuls in Jura.
The MacKellas in Barra.
The MacCillichans in Tyree.
The MacIllichears in Kintyre.
The Peddies in Perthshire.
The MacIllivartin Roys in Lochaber.
The MacVuldonich Dows in Glengarie.
The MacVeans and MacBeans of Lochaber and Perthshire.
The MacChruims.
The MacToincheirs.

Dependants.

The MacLulichs.
The MacLeas, improperly calling themselves Livingstones.
The MacInishes, The MacLellans, The MacVollans, The MacLucas's — All MacInishes.
The MacKeichans.
The MacIllichoans.
The MacCoans.
The MacIllivernochs, improperly calling themselves Grahams.
The MacInturnors or Turnors.
The MacKeigs.
The MacPheterishes.
The MacQueebans.
The MacAviaichs, improperly calling themselves M'Neils.
The MacCallums of Colgine.
The MacNaLearans, improperly calling themselves M'Leans.
The MacIntyres, many of them MacDougalls.
The MacIlevories.

Fig. 1. *The Clan of the Bell of St. Fillan*, p. 5

> of Mochaster, son of Sir Robert Campbell of Glenorchy. A silver mounted powder horn in the family bears the inscription, "From the First Earl of Breadalbane to John McDougall, 1683." This John's son, Ewen, fought at the battle of Sheriffmuir. Besides Achomer, Ewen held the lands of Margnadallach and Margchraggan at Ardeonaig . . .
>
> Ewen McDougall, a grandson of Ewen who fought at Sheriffmuir, was clerk of works on the Taymouth estate, and clerk to the Baron Bailie Court. He was the first secretary of the Lodge of Free Masons formed at Kenmore in 1818, under the name of Lodge Tay and Lyon . . . After retiring he resided with his nephew at Milton, and for the instruction of his grand-nephews, Ewen wrote a long description of the river Tay, the houses and lands in the valley, and the traditions of this region. He died in 1832, at the age of seventy-three years.[7]

There are fifteen items, dated from 1792 to 1825, in the National Records of Scotland (GD112, Breadalbane Muniments) that mention the relevant Ewen MacDougall. Unfortunately the date of his death cannot be confirmed, as the Scotland's People database (https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/) has no entry for the death of a Ewen MacDougall (or MacEwen) *c*. 1832. Similarly no birth or baptism records have been found for a Ewen MacDougall (or MacEwen) *c*. 1759, nor do there appear to be marriage, burial or testamentary records for him at any date. A 'John McDugal', son of Alexander in Skiags, Ardtalnaig, was baptised in Kenmore in 1760 (see www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk for data extracted from OPRs Kenmore). It is likely that this entry refers to the baptism of Ewen MacDougall, since Eòghan/Ewen may be Englished as John, and a baptism in 1760 is compatible with a birth in 1759 and Ewen MacDougall's given age at death of 73 years in 1832.

Ewen was the author of two, perhaps three, manuscripts of interest: (i) 'The Real MacDougalls and those dependant on the ancient family of MacDougall', as described below; (ii) the 'long description of the river Tay, the houses and lands in the valley, and the traditions of this region' referred to by Gillies, location presently unknown; and probably (iii) 'A genealogy of the Campbells', dated 1800–10, Edinburgh University Heritage Collections GB 237 Coll-1686.

As has been noted, for some unknown reason Ewen was described by John Sinclair MacLagan as a 'schoolmaster, at or near Aberfeldy'. His MacDougall family certainly had had an interest in education, as in 1729 a Ewen MacDougall, elder in Ardtalnaig, and his brother John applied to the Session for help to settle an itinerant schoolmaster in the district. John and Isabella McDougall of Perth, who founded the McDougall bursaries for Perthshire students, were descendants of John McDougall, who was in Tullich of Ardtalnaig in 1763.[8]

The Origin of the Glen Lyon MacDougalls

A person called Iain Dubh nan Lann (Black John of the Spears) was remembered in Glen Lyon tradition and has been identified by some writers as Eoin Gallda, John of Lorn. The Scottish Crown gifted the lordship of Glen Lyon to John Gallda MacDougall in 1369.[9] Much depends on whether we are able to identify Iain Dubh nan lann with

John of Lorn. This identification is not securely established, and it is possible that the designation was applied not to John of Lorn but to one of his Stewart successors in the glen, perhaps Sir John Stewart, who lived in the first half of the fifteenth century.[10] Iain Dubh nan Lann has also been proposed as the fourth son of Gregor McAnecham and the first leading MacGregor in Glen Lyon.[11]

A credible origin for the MacDougall families in Glen Lyon and Fortingall (and those in later times in the Ardtalnaig and Ardeonaig areas by Loch Tay) is that, after David II gave Glen Lyon as a present to his niece Joanna Isaac and her husband Eoin Gallda MacDubhghaill, some MacDougalls may then have been settled as loyal tenants in Glen Lyon and Fortingall.

Other Perthshire MacDougall and MacEwen families

Ewen MacDougall (see **List A** below) states that the MacEwens of Achomer, Perth and Dungarthill are all 'Reall' MacDougalls. The MacEwens/MacDougalls of Achomer have already been described, but what is known of the Perth MacDougall and the Dungarthill MacEwen families?

(i) The MacDougall pipers and bagpipe makers in Perth and Aberfeldy. There was a well-known Duncan MacDougall, bagpipe-maker, Aberfeldy, *c*. 1893. The following is taken from the *People's Journal* of 4 November 1893. It is by their 'Lady Correspondent' and is headlined 'An Interview with the Queen's Bagpipe-Maker'.

> Mr Macdougall comes of a line of pipers, his forefathers having migrated from the Lorn district of Argyllshire with the Campbells of Breadalbane. For fourteen years Mr Macdougall was chief piper to the Marquis of Breadalbane at Taymouth Castle until he relinquished the position for another branch of his art. It is interesting to notice that he represents the third generation of pipe makers. His grandfather, Allan Macdougall having carried on that occupation in Perth from 1792 to 1834 and his father, John Macdougall, handing on the business to the year 1857.

They are here stated to have migrated from Lorn with the Campbells of Breadalbane. They may however have come east much earlier with one of the Campbells of Glenorchy. The history of Campbell of Glenorchy expansion from Lorn into Perthshire may be summarised as follows: Colin, 1st laird of Glenorchy (ruled 1432–80), acquired the tacks of Ardtalnaig, the Port and Isle of Loch Tay, Balloch, and Lawers. Duncan, 2nd laird (r. 1480–1513), acquired lands in Glen Lyon, Glen Quaich and around Loch Tay.[12] Colin, 3rd laird (r. 1513–23), shifted his power-base from Glenorchy to Breadalbane. Colin, 6th laird (r. 1550–83), built his castle at Balloch (Taymouth). Duncan, 7th laird (r. 1583–1631) extended his family's holdings from Lorn in the west to Strathtay in the east, and built more castles.

(ii) The MacEwens of Muckly, Dungarthill. The MacEwens of Muckly are considered to be MacDougalls by the Clan MacEwen.[13] Indeed MacEwan of Muckly, Dungarthill, the first armiger named MacEwen, is said to be descended from 'Ewen Mor MacDougall, brother of MacDougall of Lorn'. MacEwen of Muckly's arms are

‘Parted per fess az, and or, in chief a lion rampant arg. gorged with an antique crown vert, in base a garb’, Macewan of Muckly (1748–54)’.[14]

Dungarthill house and estate are near Dunkeld. In the National Records of Scotland catalogue for GD243/10/2 there is an entry:

> 1762, Jun 1: Dundee. Letter from John Haliburton [merchant in Angel Court, Thogmorton St, London] to William Mackewan at Dungarthill near Dunkeld. Has been unable to write having to attend the General Assembly with regard to getting a minister for Dundee.

The Red Book of Scotland, Vol. 10, p. 445, states for MacEwen of Muckly that ‘JOHN MACEWEN, is the first for whom there is evidence but of whom little of any certainty is known. He was a merchant in Dunkeld and married Agnes, daughter and heiress of William Cumming, (she was infeft as heir to her father in a house with gardens in Dunkeld on 27 November 1710)’.

The following are the lists which will be referred to in future articles. List ‘A’ is Ewen’s manuscript list, the immediate source of Fig. 1; ‘B’ is a possible earlier source; ‘C’, for further reference, consists of MacDougalls killed in the Massacre of Dunaverty, 1647. The numbers are provided by the present author for ease of reference.

List A, Ewen MacDougall’s original list (Dunollie Castle Archives, Box DG – Bundle 22), marked ‘Copy’.

> List of the different Clans & Tribes descended from the ffamily of Lorn and of those depending on that most antient ffamily, as kept in the Records thereof, viz:
>
> Real MacDougalls
> 1. The MacDougalls of Lorn
> 2. The MacIlvrides
> 3. The MacIlichonils or Roys
> 4. The MacEwens of Achomer, Perth and Dungarthill
> 5. The MacLagans
> 6. The MacKeiths
> 7. The MacPhersons in Moydart
> 8. The MacNamuls in Jura
> 9. The MacKellas in Barra
> 10. The MacCillichans in Tyree “Cithicans” ?
> 11. The MacIllichears in Kintyre
> 12. The Peddies in Perthshire “~~Mac Ewans~~” ?
> 13. The MacIllivartin Roys in Lochaber
> 14. The MacVuldonich Dows in Glengarie
> 15. The MacVeans and MacBeans of Lochaber & Perthshire
> 16. The MacChruims
> 17. The MacIoincheirs

Dependants

18. The MacLulichs
19. The MacLeas improperly calling themselves Livingstones
20. The MacInishes
21. The MacLellans
22. The MacNolans
23. The MacLucas's

} All MacInishes

24. The MacKeichans
25. The MacIllichoans
26. The MacCoans
27. The MacIllivernochs improperly calling themselves Grahams
28. The MacInturnors or Turnors
29. The MacKeigs
30. The MacPheterishes
31. The MacQueebans
32. The MacAviaichs improperly calling themselves MacNeils
33. The MacCallums of Colgine
34. The MacNaLearans improperly calling themselves MacLeans
35. The MacIntyres, many of them MacDougalls
36. The MacIlevories

N.B. The whole of the above Tribes joined under MacDougall of Lorn's Banner, or Double Colours, when he would have Occasion to bring it to the ffield of strife and Honour.

A true copy (signed) Ewen MacDougall.

On the verso is the docket: "*Copy* / List of the different Tribes who are real MacDougalls and of those who are Dependants on MacDougall of Lorn, as insert in the ffamily Records – 1808." Beneath is 'J.A.S.McL. 1907'. This may have been John Alexander Sinclair-Maclagan (1834–1911) of the Glen Queich family. In *The Clan of the Bell of St. Fillan*, p. 6, R. C. Maclagan states that 'Mr. John Sinclair MacLagan, of Glenquoich, from whom I received this list, says that at the date 1808, on the back of his copy, the Ewen who testifies to this was a schoolmaster at or near Aberfeldy, and a little of the *bon-vivant*'. Why John Sinclair MacLagan mistook, or chose to disguise, Ewen's identity is unclear.

List B, the different tribes depending on the family of MacDougall (Dunollie Castle Archives, Box DG – Bundle 22). This is in an earlier document (undated, probably late 18th-century).

List of the Diffirant Trybes depending on the ffamily of MacDougall.

1. The MacLulichs
2. The MacLeas improperly calling themselves Livistons
3. The Mac Inishes –

4. The Mac Lealans
5. The Mac Volans. } all MacInishes
6. The Mac Lucas's
7. The Mac Kichans
8. The MacIllichoans [*'McCowan' (?) is here added in a later hand*]
9. The Mac Coans
10. The MacIllivernocks improperly calling themselves Grahams
11. The Mac Keichs
12. The Mac Inturnors or Turnors
13. The Mac Keigs
14. The MacKeicks reall MacDougalls
15. The Mac Pheterishs
16. The MacIllichonills or Roys in Perth shire MacDougalls
17. The Mac Queebans
18. The Mac Aviaichs Imperperly [*sic*] calling themselves MacNeils
19. The Mac Vrions
20. The MacCallums of Colgine
21. The Mac Nalearns Improperly calling themselves MacLeans
22. The Mac Cruims
23. The Mac Phersons in Moydart MacDougalls
24. The Mac Namuls in Jura MacDougalls
25. The Mac Kellas in Barra MacDougalls
26. The Mac Cithchans in Tyree MacDougalls
27. The Mac Illichears in Kintyre MacDougalls
28. The Mac Illivartin Roys in Lochaber MacDougalls
29. The Mac Vuldonich dows in Glengarie MacDougalls
30. The Mac Ewens in Perth shire MacDougalls
31. The MacLaggans in Perthshire MacDougalls
32. The MacIntyres many of them reall MacDonalds

List C, persons murdered at Dunaverty in 1647 (Inveraray Castle Archives ARG/4/3/53/164). In the early part of the War of the Three Kingdoms (1639–53) the MacDougalls fought as vassals of the marquess of Argyll. Some were killed at the battle of Inverlochy, February 1645, and by September 1645 they had changed sides and fought for the Crown. A comparison may be made between the names given in the Dunollie Castle Archives' lists and the names of those massacred at Dunaverty. Nos. 1–49 are given as MacDougalls by blood, while nos. 50–90 are seemingly supporters of the MacDougalls who were either obliged to fight, had volunteered, been recruited, or possibly even coerced, into supporting the Royalists. The list is in secretary script, with little or no distinction between upper- and lower-case. Lower-case is therefore used here for epithets (e.g. 'roy' and 'dui') and for 'mᶜ' and 'vᶜ' in patronymics; upper-case 'Mᶜ' and 'Vᶜ' are used for 'mᶜ' and 'vᶜ' in surnames. In nos. 46, 48, 57, 67 and 90 it is uncertain whether the name in question is a patronymic or a surname. 'Ein' in nos. 21, 23, 28 and 29 is a transcription of 'Eiıı'. The comments in brackets are editorial.

The names of the men who was murthered at Donnavertie in Kyntyre & severall others who can not be remembered of in 1646 or 1647

1. Duncane M^{c}Dougall brother to the Laird of M^{c}Dougall
2. Allane M^{c}Dougall his brother
3. Alister M^{c}Dougall cousing germane to the said Laird
4. Johne M^{c}Dougall his brother
5. Sorlle M^{c}Dougall brother to the said Johne
6. Johne M^{c}Dougall nephew to the Laird of Raray
7. Dougall M^{c}Dougall of Ardmoir
8. Johne M^{c}Dougall of Degnishe
9. Allane roy alias M^{c}Dougall
10. Sorlle m^{c} Conochie alias M^{c}Dougall
11. Allane m^{c} Ein v^{c} Coll alias M^{c}Dougall
12. Alexander sone to Hew M^{c}Dougall
13. Allane m^{c}Sorlle alias M^{c}Dougall
14. Allane m^{c}allane dui alias M^{c}Dougall
15. Alexander m^{c}ewine alias M^{c}Dougall
16. Sorlle roy alias M^{c}Dougall
17. Dougall m^{c}Ewine v^{c}Ewine alias M^{c}Dougall
18. Johne m^{c}Eine v^{c}Ewine alias M^{c}Dougall
19. Dougall m^{c}Ewine oig alias M^{c}Dougall
20. Alexander m^{c}Ewine oig alias M^{c}Dougall
21. Dougall Ewine v^{c} Ein alias M^{c}Dougall
22. Angus m^{c}Ewin v^{c}Ein alias M^{c}Dougall
23. Sorll m^{c}Ewin v^{c}Ein alias M^{c}Dougall
24. Sorll m^{c}Sorll alias M^{c}Dougall
25. Dougall m^{c}Duill v^{c}Ewin alias M^{c}Dougall
26. Johne m^{c}Allane v^{c}Conochie alias M^{c}Dougall
27. Dougall m^{c}Dougall v^{c}Ewin alias M^{c}Dougall
28. Dougall m^{c}Ewine v^{c}Ein v^{c}Ewin alias M^{c}Dougall
29. Johne m^{c}Ein v^{c}Ewin alias M^{c}Dougall
30. Johne m^{c}Alister v^{c}Ewin alias M^{c}Dougall
31. Allane m^{c}Alister v^{c}Ewine alias M^{c}Dougall
32. Dougall m^{c}Ein dui alias M^{c}Dougall
33. Duncane m^{c}Ein dui alias M^{c}Dougall
34. Johne m^{c}Ein dui alias M^{c}Dougall
35. Duncan m^{c}Conochie oig alias M^{c}Dougall
36. Dougall m^{c}Ranald alias M^{c}Dougall
37. Johne m^{c}Doull v^{c}Allane alias M^{c}Dougall
38. Alister m^{c}Ewin v^{c}Duill alias M^{c}Dougall
39. Alister m^{c}Ewin v^{c} Alister alias M^{c}Dougall
40. Alexander m^{c}Ewine v^{c}Alister alias M^{c}Dougall
41. Johne m^{c}Coll v^{c}Ewine alias M^{c}Dougall
42. Dougall m^{c}Sorll v^{c}Conochie alias M^{c}Dougall

43. Dougall m^{c}Sorll alias M^{c}Dougall
44. Dougall m^{c}Conochie v^{c}Duill alias M^{c}Dougall
45. Dougall m^{c}Dougall v^{c}Ilveall alias M^{c}Dougall [*v^{c}Ilveall = mhic 'ille Mhaoil*?]
46. Johne m^{c}Dougall his brother
47. Coll m^{c}Dougall v^{c}Coll alias M^{c}Dougall
48. Sorll m^{c}Dougall his brother
49. Lauchlane m^{c}Ilveall alias M^{c}Dougall [*m^{c}Ilveall = mac 'ille Mhaoil*?]

50. Johne m^{c}Ein v^{c}Ein dui alias M^{c}Onlea
51. Dunsla m^{c}Ein V^{c}Onlea
52. Johne M^{c}Onlea his brother
53. Gilchrist M^{c}Ilchoen
54. Duncane M^{c}Culloch
55. Johne M^{c}Murerdich
56. Donald M^{c}Callum
57. Donald m^{c}Conochie v^{c}William
58. Callum M^{c}Callum
59. ffergus M^{c}Callam
60. Gilpatrick M^{c}Keack [*McKeack probably represents MacShitheig*]
61. Johne M^{c}Keack his brother [*ditto*]
62. Donald M^{c}Ilchoen
63. Johne M^{c}Ilchoen
64. Johne M^{c}Keith [*McKeith probably represents MacShithich*]
65. Donald M^{c}Keith his brother [*ditto*]
66. Murdoch roy M^{c}Murrich
67. Johne m^{c}Duill v^{c}Kenilich [*vcKenilich probably represents mhic Fhionnlaigh*]
68. Johne M^{c}Phatris [*this is MacPheatrais*]
69. Donald M^{c}Illchonnell
70. Archibald M^{c}Illchonnell his brother
71. Johne m^{c}Callum v^{c} Kaldounoch alias M^{c}Callum [*mhic 'aol Domhnaich*]
72. Johne M^{c}Cluglashe [*this represents MacLugais*]
73. Johne m^{c}Innes v^{c}Conochie roy alias Murrich
74. ffinlay M^{c}Glassane
75. Johne M^{c}Glassane his son
76. ffergus M^{c}Glassane
77. Ewine M^{c}Glassane
78. Johne M^{c}Glassane
79. Lauchlane M^{c}Glassane
80. Johne M^{c}Vrion
81. Donald M^{c}Vrion
82. Johne m^{c}Malcollum alias M^{c}Intyr
83. Donald m^{c}Conachie v^{c} Neill alias M^{c}Onlea
84. Johne m^{c}Gillespick alias M^{c}Intyre
85. John m^{c}Conachie alias M^{c}Keith [*McKeith probably represents MacShithich*]
86. John M^{c}Martine

87. Donald M^{c}Gibboun
88. Johne M^{c}Kearick [*this represents MacEanraig, Henderson*]
89. Johne m^{c}Donochie v^{c} Kenoach alias M^{c}Innes [*v^{c} Kenoach = mhic Coinnich*?]
90. Ewin m^{c}conochie v^{c} William

The same list, based on information in a document belonging to the Duke of Argyll, but with 'Iain' in place of 'John' or 'Johne' and some differences in the order of the names, was published by J. R. N. MacPhail in *Highland Papers Vol. 2* (Edinburgh, 1916), pp. 255–57.

It is stated by Sir James Turner that, at the time of the massacre, the life of a young MacDougall was spared: "They were put to the suord, everie mothers sonne, except one young man, Mackoull, whose life I begd, to be sent to France with a hundreth countrey fellows whom we had smoakd out of a cave, as they doe foxes, who were given to Captaine Cambell, the Chancellors brother."[15] The 'young man, Mackoull' is unlikely to have been Iain/John MacDougall, later of Dunollie. It has been suggested that Iain was safely in Dunollie Castle at the time of the massacre.[16] Iain became chief on the death of his father Alexander in 1649, and remained chief until 1695 when he died. Duncan, the younger brother of Alexander, 'Laird of M^{c}Dougall', and Allan, the youngest of Alexander's four brothers, were indeed murdered at Dunaverty in 1647. Iain MacDougall of Dunollie was succeeded by Iain Ciar, of 1715 fame, eldest son of his brother Allan. The MacDougall pedigrees produced by Duke Niall Diarmid Campbell provide much clearly dated historical information on the lives of these men.[17]

It is believed that McDougall of Kilmun was also spared. He is said to have had the presence of mind to shout in five languages: "Is there anyone here at all who will save a good scholar?"[18]

Ewen MacDougall's statements

There is probably no need to question the presence of most of the individuals in Ewen's list, but some of the names strike one as perhaps doubtful or placed in the wrong category. The following works were examined to see if they contained any equivalent details on the MacDougalls or their dependants: John Barbour (*c*.1320–95), *The Brus*; John of Fordun (before 1360 – *c*. 1384), *The Scots Chronicle*; Anon., *The Gesta Annalia I & II* (*c*.1450–1550); Walter Bower, *The Scotichronicon* (*c*.1385–1449); Hailes, *Annals of Scotland* (1776, 1779); John MacCulloch, *The Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland* (1824); Patrick Fraser Tytler, *History of Scotland* (1828–43); Donald Gregory, *History of the Western Highlands and Isles of Scotland* (1836); William F. Skene, *The Highlanders of Scotland* (1837); James Browne, *A History of the Highlands and of the Highland Clans* (1840); Iona Club, *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis* (1847); John Keltie, *A History of the Scottish Highlands, Highland Clans and Highland Regiments* (1875).

This search produced little or nothing that was relevant apart from Skene's work on the 1467 MS, which was first published in 1836. The Rev. David Malcolm of

Duddingston presented the 1467 MS to the Edinburgh Philosophical Society in 1738 and presumably followed it up with the 'Broad Book'. By 1813, the two parts were bound together and were in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh. On the 1467 MS website under no. 28 on the map of the manuscript's contents there is 'the parson son of Dubhagan' and 'Gille Peadair son of big/great Alexander'.[19] If Ewen MacDougall's list of names is accurately dated 1808, it seems impossible for him to have seen Skene's early work on the 1467 MS. It also seems most unlikely that he would have visited either the Rev. David Malcolm or later the Advocates Library to read the manuscript and taken notes on these particular persons. Ronald Black has advised that 'there is absolutely no evidence that the lists are derived from the 1467 MS'. Accepting the 1808 date as accurate, Ewen's statement that 'MacPhersons in Moydart' and 'Peddies in Perthshire' were 'reall MacDougalls', when taken together with these particular entries in the 1467 MS, gives partial validation of Ewen's information.

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Donald C. McWhannell

Notes

1 https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/library-museum-gallery/heritage-collections/collections-and- search/archives/archives/manuscripts-collections/maclagan
2 https://deriv.nls.uk/dcn23/7733/77336142.23.pdf
3 Presently scholars believe the origin of the name MacLagan to be Mac Gille Adhagáin (son of a servant of Adomnan) rather than J. F. Campbell's 'son of the little hollow' or having links to a famous bell, or a famous stone, as proposed by R. C. Maclagan.
4 Patrick Campbell MacDougall F.R.S.E., 1806–67, Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, son of Janet Campbell and the Rev. Hugh MacDougall, minister of Killin.
5 Note also the following entry in the Black Book of Taymouth (Chron. Fortirgall): "Obiit Malcolmus M'Conil V'Quhewin apud Estyr Drumcharre xxviij die Junii et sepultus apud Fortyrgil xxix Junii anno Domini m vc lv Litera Dominicalis F." Cosmo Innes, ed., *The Black Book of Taymouth* (Edinburgh, 1855), p. 125.
6 Dr R. C. Maclagan, *The Perth Incident of 1396 from a Folk-Lore Point of View* (Edinburgh, 1905), pp. 343–45. The list is at pp. 341–42.
7 Rev. William Gillies, *In Famed Breadalbane* (Perth, 1938), pp. 361–62.
8 Gillies, *In Famed Breadalbane*, pp. 331, 362.
9 Alexander Stewart, *A Highland Parish or The History of Fortingall* (Glasgow, 1928), p. 81.
10 Stephen Boardman, *The Campbells 1250–1513* (Edinburgh, 2006), pp. 94–95, 110 n. 3.

11 http://www.glendiscovery.com/gregor-genealogy-2.html and //glendiscovery.com/macgregor_of_roro.html and https://digital.nls.uk/histories-of-scottish-families/archive/95601993?mode=transcription (see page 9)
12 Innes, *Black Book of Taymouth*, pp. 12, 15–16.
13 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clan_MacEwen (see entry for MacEwens of MacDougall).
14 Sir James Balfour Paul, *Ordinary of Scottish Arms* (Edinburgh, 1903), p. 173.
15 Sir James Turner, *Memoirs of his Own Life and Times* (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1829), p. 46.
16 Michael Starforth, *An Official Short History of the Clan MacDougall* (Glasgow, n.d.), p. 29.
17 Argyll Estates Archives ARG/11/02/001, 'MacDougall pedigrees with proofs, as collected by the 10th Duke of Argyll'.
18 David Stevenson, *Alasdair MacColla and the Highland Problem in the Seventeenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1980), reprinted as *Highland Warrior: Alasdair MacColla and the Civil Wars* (Edinburgh, 1994), p. 338.
19 https://1467manuscript.co.uk

Where is Ard-du?

The killing in 1427 of John Mór MacDonald, uncle of third Lord of the Isles Alisdair and father of the Lordship's lifelong army captain Donald Balloch, is in the oldest known source described as follows by Hugh of Sleat in his History of the MacDonalds, written *c*.1660–85:

> In the meantime, the king sent John[1] Campbell, to know if John More of Kintyre, Macdonald's uncle, would send to take all his nephew's lands; but it was a trap laid to weaken them that they might be the more easily conquered. James Campbell sent a man with a message to John of Kintyre, desiring him to meet him at a point called Ard-du with some prudent gentlemen, and that he had matters of consequence from the king to be imparted to him. John came to the place appointed with a small retinue, but James Campbell with a very great train, and told of the king's intentions of granting him all the lands possessed by Macdonald, conditionally he would, if he held of him and serve him. John said he did not know wherein his nephew wronged the king, and that his nephew was as deserving of his rights as he could be, and that he would not accept of those lands, nor serve for them, till his nephew would be set at liberty; and that his nephew himself was as nearly related to the king as he could be. James Campbell, hearing the answer, said that he was the king's prisoner. John made all the resistance he could, till, over-powered by numbers, he was killed.[2]

Many subsequent writers have repeated these words or embellished them without being able to add new information. In particular 'a point called Ard-du' is mystifying. Such a place, a black or dark hill, headland or promontory, could be anywhere in Scotland. There is an Aird Dhubh in Loch Kinnabus, 12 km from John Mór's home base on Islay, Dunyvaig Castle,[3] and indeed the *Clan Donald* authors write: "He received a message from the King's delegate to meet him in peaceful guise at Ard Dubh point in Isla, for the purpose of communicating the royal pleasure."[4] While their claim looks credible, their

source, Balfour's *Annals of Scotland* volume I, offers no details and does not mention Ard Dubh or even Islay at all. Unfortunately they do not offer any further insight into why they chose this location. Did they have additional information? On the six-inch 1st edition 1843–82 Ordnance Survey maps of Islay the Aird Dhubh promontory in Loch Kinnabus in the Oa peninsula is the only possible Ard-du on the whole island. If James Campbell came to Islay to meet John Mór, that must have been his destination. David Caldwell, author of *Islay: The Land of the Lordship* (2008), tells me that he is 'certainly not sure it was on Islay'.

I propose another option for Ard-du: Ayrshire.

There are people on the internet who claim that the murder of John Mór took place at Dunure Castle on the Ayrshire coast. See among others https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunure_Castle https://www.livebreathescotland.com/dunure-castle/ and https://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/dunure/dunurecastle/index.htmlhttp://www.maybole.org/history/sketches/spratt/dunure.htm. None of the sites offer references as to where they got this information. It could be true, although 'with a very great train' suggests that the meeting with John and his retinue of 'some prudent gentlemen' cannot very well have taken place inside the keep. That at that time probably was all Dunure Castle was made up of. Canmore.org.uk claims that it 'consisted of two parts, a probable 13th century keep of irregular shape on top of a rock, and a range of buildings, 15th century and later, at a lower level'. So in 1427 the chances are that there was just the original keep on the cliff edge.[5] This would mean that if the Ayrshire location is correct, the meeting of Campbell and MacDonald with their retinues probably occurred outside the keep and not inside its walls. The 'Dunure people', most of whom clearly have tourism in mind, do not mention any of this, maybe lest their claim that it took place inside the walls should lose significance. Perhaps that is why none of them mention an Ard-du either. Also they all claim that the murder took place in 1429 instead of 1427. Maybe all these sites have their information about the event from the same source. Finding it may be of great importance.

At this moment the Dunure Castle claim is, at best, conjecture. However, strengthening a wider Ayrshire claim considerably is the existence of a clearly recognizable Ard-du. It is a headland called 'Black Head', the western half of the Heads of Ayr, less than two miles north-east of Dunure Castle and a mile west of Greenan Castle, shown on the Roy Military Survey of Scotland, 1747–55.[6]

In identifying Ayrshire's Black Head as Hugh's Ard-du, Greenan is as potentially important as Dunure. Like Dunure it is within walking distance of Black Head. Black Head may at some time even have been on Greenan land. This is relevant to the John Mór murder, because in 1427 Greenan belonged to Alisdair 3rd Lord of the Isles, and it has been said that 'this apparently isolated possession should in fact be seen in conjunction with the lordship lands in Kintyre'.[7] Hugh of Sleat calls John Mór 'of Kintyre', not 'of Dunyvaig and the Glens of Antrim'. That and a MacDonald ownership of the Greenan lands, perhaps including Ard-du/Black Head itself, seem to place John more or less in the vicinity of the dark cape where his fate awaited him. James Campbell, aware of James I's eagerness to crush the Lordship's power, could

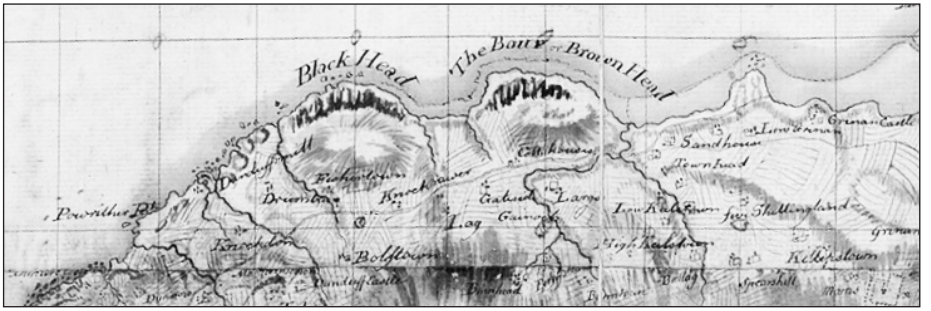
have done worse than choose a place for a meeting where John Mór would not feel exposed or threatened at all and even to some degree at home. To counter his own danger at entering MacDonald land with murder in mind, he chose to take 'a very great train' with him. He may even have assembled his large group of men at Dunure Castle, a royalist Kennedy fort.

In 1427 Dunure Castle was the residence of Gilbert Kennedy of Dunure, first Lord Kennedy (*c*. 1407–89). The Kennedys of Dunure were an ambitious family speedily climbing the ladder of power in Carrick (present-day South Ayrshire). In 1372 Robert II had made Gilbert's great-grandfather Sir John Kennedy of Dunure chief of the name of the Kennedy clan and appointed him baillie of Carrick. After 1427 Gilbert, first Lord Kennedy, became a Lord of Parliament and later served as regent to James III. Staying close to royal power paid off.

And close to it Gilbert was. It is clear that the first Lord Kennedy was deeply embedded in royal circles. His mother was Princess Mary Stewart, daughter of Robert III, who was also earl of Carrick in a direct line since Robert the Bruce. Mary was James I's elder sister.

So would this man, a nephew of the king and a grandson of the previous king, refuse a request from his royal uncle James to welcome an emissary of his and assist this man in setting up a meeting with a MacDonald Lordship emissary somewhere nearby? Perhaps lending him some of his own men? It would have been the least he could do to serve his king, even if he knew that to comply with the royal request could potentially ruin any friendly relations he may have had with his Greenan neighbor or with the Lord of the Isles himself. Perhaps with the Lord of the Isles imprisoned at Tantallon Castle he saw that the mighty Lordship's days were nearing their end. He too, as well as James Campbell, would have been acutely aware of his uncle's intentions for his greatest rival power block, the old Gall-Gàidheal Kingdom of the Isles. Getting rid of it for good.

Indeed the murder of John Mór Tanister can be depicted as a tale of two towers. Two keeps perched high upon a cliff edge and a dark cape in the middle where two kingdoms clash and an old soldier is brutally assassinated. Unfortunately that is what it is doomed to remain: just a tale that is based on an uncertain claim that Dunure



The Carrick coast from Dunure (bottom left) to Greenan Castle (top right), with Black Head (Ard-du?) in between, as shown on Roy's Military Survey, 1747–55 © National Library of Scotland

Castle was the location of the murder in combination with the existence of an easily recognizable Ard-du nearby. For the tale to become a possible historical event, it is crucial that the source or sources of the Dunure Castle claim are found and properly examined. As are the Islay claims.

That is the only way to finally make sense of Hugh of Sleat's geographically undetermined 'Ard-du'.

Kees Slings

Notes

1 Corrected to 'James' by the editor, J. R. N. Macphail.
2 J. R. N. Macphail, ed., *Highland Papers Volume I* (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1914), pp. 38–39.
3 See https://maps.nls.uk/view/228776425
4 Revs A. and A. Macdonald, *The Clan Donald*, vol. 1 (Inverness, 1896), p. 174.
5 See for a sketch https://canmore.org.uk/collection/2228382
6 https://maps.nls.uk/geo/roy/#zoom=12.5&lat=55.42754&lon=-4.70976&layers=1
7 Jean Munro and R. W. Munro, eds, *Acts of the Lords of the Isles* (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1986), pp. xxxvii, xxxviii, 170, 171.

LECTURES

This section consists of summaries of some of our most recent on-line talks. These were recorded, and a link to the recording may be obtained on application to lectures@highlandhistoricalresearch.com

Past the Shieling, through the Town: Settlement, Subsistence and the Shieling Landscape in Early Modern Glencoe (16.1.25)

The research summarised here is built upon two seasons of surveys and excavations by the author as part of a PhD in Archaeology at the University of Glasgow, and a further two seasons of excavations and surveys conducted as part of a collaborative field school with colleagues at the University of Glasgow and Derek Alexander of the National Trust for Scotland.

Much of the upland resources exploited by the communities of Glencoe, as with other communities in southern Lochaber, eastern Argyll and western Perthshire, lay on the vast expanse of Rannoch Moor, which ongoing survey work by the author and collaborators is seeking to map and investigate. Within Glencoe itself, three key areas of upland resources existed. Lairig Eilde and Lairig Gartain formed part of the hunting forest of Buachaille, while Gleann Leac-na-Muidhe to the west was home to a substantial transhumance community of summer shielings, as well as charcoal burning platforms, peat-cutting banks, stances, tracks and bothies, and a chiefly hunting lodge associated with the MacDonalds of Glencoe. Excavations at the shieling huts have identified an intensive occupation and management of this landscape which ended in the early–mid-18th century, with one structure seeing reuse as a whisky stilling site in the late 18th or early 19th century (see Stewart 2023a).

Across the Allt na Muidhe from these excavated shielings the 'Summerhouse of MacIain' was excavated in 2023. This chiefly hunting lodge lies on the lower SW slope of Aonach Dubh a' Ghlinne, and contained a vast wealth of imported continental ceramics with a significant, and unusual for a West of Scotland site, assemblage of high status German pottery from the production centres of Langerwehe, Raeren, Frechen and Westerwald, as well as pottery from the Low Countries, southern Scandinavia, northern France, England and eastern Scotland. This pottery, along with the architecture of the summerhouse, clearly indicated a space designed to impress, perhaps where the chiefs would entertain guests and host feasts for their kin and peers to cement their chiefly status through displaying martial skill in the hunt, shows of generosity at feasts and displays of their connections and worldliness through their material culture, a flashy continental dining set and a collection of curated coins now dubbed the 'Glencoe hoard' (see Stewart 2023b).

A season of excavations in 2024 took place at the township of Achnacon, which lies at the confluence of Gleann Leac-na-Muidhe and Glencoe, and will continue in 2025. These excavations it is hoped will provide a picture of the management of the townships. In 2024 excavations focused on a house of 17th-century date, an 18th-century house, a platform, and a kailyard plot. From these excavations the 17th-century house and associated kailyard yielded a rich assemblage of eastern Scottish, English and German pottery, as well as tobacco pipes of 17th-century date, and personal items suggesting that the dwelling belonged to a tacksman. Coins recovered from this dwelling point to abandonment in the 1690s.

For further details on this research you can check out: E. Stewart (2023a), 'Survey and excavations investigating shieling and other upland practices in Gleann Leac-na-Muidhe, Glencoe', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 152(1), pp. 321–340; E. Stewart (2023b), 'Find Study: Coin Hoard', Landscapes of Glencoe and Rannoch Moor (Online), available at *https://glencoeandrannochenvirons.wordpress.com/2023/10/09/find-study-coin-hoard/* (accessed 19 May 2025); project blog https://glencoeandrannochenvirons.wordpress.com

Dr Edward C. Stewart

Highland Banditry in Seventeenth-Century Scotland (13.3.25)

The words 'banditry' and 'Scotland' will typically conjure up an image of Robert 'Rob Roy' MacGregor. But Rob Roy is an uncomfortable poster-child for the occurrence of Scottish, mainly Highland, banditry, not least because the 'golden age' of the bandit was the seventeenth century, rather than Rob's eighteenth. Indeed, for successive Scottish governments in the 1600s, banditry, usually perpetrated by landless, lordless 'broken men' and particularly acute in Speyside, Lochaber, and the Stirlingshire area, was the central challenge facing them in the Highlands.

Among the very many known bandits and bandit gangs, three stand out as especially useful case-studies of the phenomenon. The Gilderoy/Dow Geir gang, active mainly in the 1630s and led by Patrick 'Gilderoy' MacGregor and John Dow Geir, operated on

Speyside. Spurred by thirst for revenge against the Forbes family, which they blamed for the killing of a previous gang leader, the group became widely feared for its cattle-thefts, kidnappings, and house-breakings, and was thought to offer itself as hired muscle to local grandees.

Thirty years later, the Mackintosh/MacGregor gang, run successively by Lachlan Mackintosh and Patrick Roy MacGregor, was active in the eastern Highlands. Driven to outlawry by a feud with a local laird, John Lyon of Muiresk, whom they eventually murdered in 1666, their influence eventually extended over a huge arc of territory running from Findhorn to Forfar. Sustaining themselves mainly through cattle-raiding and extortion, they came unstuck after a botched raid on the town of Keith, which led to Patrick Roy MacGregor's capture and eventual execution.

Our final case-study gang, active in Perthshire and Stirlingshire during the 1670s, was run by brothers Duncan and Malcolm MacGibbon, along with their cousin, John MacGibbon. Engaging in all the standard activities of Highland banditry, especially cattle-theft, their particular speciality was 'blackmail', which essentially meant extracting payments from individuals or communities in return for not attacking or damaging them. The gang was eventually run to ground by one of their victims, James Campbell of Lawers, who, with the support of the government in Edinburgh, captured the leaders and committed them to the Justiciary Court for trial and execution.

These three stories reveal several core features of Highland banditry as a more general phenomenon. They illustrate, for example, bandits' reliance on high levels of mobility, but usually within a roughly-defined home territory. They show how brigands typically worked in groups, with 20–50 being about the usual size. They highlight the central role of violence, both as a practical tool and, in some cases, as a mechanism of psychological warfare, in bandit activity. More widely, they establish banditry as a useful case-study of social marginality, underlining the power of structural disadvantage and adverse personal circumstances to push people into criminal deviance – a position from which it was, in turn, extremely difficult to escape.

Allan Kennedy

Telford's Highland Churches and Manses (13.2.25)

This lecture was a return to, and reappraisal, of the booklet *Telford's Highland Churches*, published by the SWHIHR in 1989. Although credited to Thomas Telford, it would perhaps be better to revert to the original name of Parliamentary, or Government, churches.

The Government had been helping to finance the building of churches in England, and the Church of Scotland appealed for similar help. Whereas in England clergy housing and stipends were financed from other sources, in Scotland there was no such provision, and so the Government was required to finance the building of churches and manses, and to provide clergy stipends in perpetuity. In the light of this, the comparative overall costs were not disproportionate.

It was decided that initially the churches should be built in the Highlands and Islands, where it was considered that due to the shifts of population, often far from their parish churches, the need was greater than in the cities.

The commissioners appointed were the same as those for the Highland Roads and Bridges, and they used the same engineers, under Thomas Telford, to oversee the work. Applications were sought from landowners who were required to donate land, but a major problem emerged that these places were not always where the need was the most urgent. It was discovered that the money available for the building work did not cover as many churches as had been initially anticipated, and ten places were chosen where it was considered that the heritors had a duty to repair or build churches themselves.

Telford asked three surveyors to prepare plans for churches and manses within the constraints of the budget. He then revised the plans, accepting almost unaltered the design for the church by William Thomson, engineer on the Crinan Canal, and those for a single storey manse by James Smith, Inverness, but the design for a two-storey manse is probably largely Telford's own.

The church design was according to a standard pattern, easily adapted according to local needs, especially where galleries might be installed, or on the other hand where the potential congregation was small and a side aisle omitted. Windows were all to the same design, prepared in bulk by Abernethy of Aberdeen. However, there was to be no scrimping on building work, as it was considered that they should be an exemplar of good technique.

When the Commissioners' task was completed in 1835, there were 32 churches built and 41 manses (23 single-storey and 18 two-storey), ranging from Shetland to Islay, and 42 stipends provided.

It could be argued that the building of these churches was the triumph of the Reformation, providing for reformed clergy in remote areas, paid for by the state. While it was considered an important aspect of the undertaking that a man of education and religious wisdom would be resident in such places, in the event most of the congregations withdrew from the establishment in 1843, and for the next 80 years stipends were paid to clergy with few parishioners.

The booklet depended on the archives of the Mackenzies of Seaforth and the Maclaines of Lochbuie, both of which were very informative, but there must be much more in those of the many other lairds involved. The minutes of each presbytery will probably have further information.

Of the 32 churches, nine are still in use by the Church of Scotland, plus two much altered buildings.

The booklet is available in a revised format, published by Whittaker and Brown, from Tackle and Books, Tobermory.

Allan Maclean of Dochgarroch

QUERIES

In Iona of my Heart

A verse, usually taken as traditional, was used, among others, by George MacLeod and the early rebuilders of Iona abbey's domestic buildings in the mid-twentieth century. The original reads:

> An Ì mo chridhe, Ì mo ghràidh
> An àite guth manaich bidh geum bà,
> Ach mun tig an saoghal gu crìch
> Bithidh Ì mar a bhà.

The usual translation is:

> In Iona of my heart, Iona of my love,
> Instead of monk's voice will be cow's lowing,
> But before the world comes to an end
> Iona will be as it was.

It is widely cited in this form in books on 'Celtic spirituality'. A different translation apparently won a student prize in 1879, so it predates that, but not I imagine by much, though it is of course frequently attributed to Columba. I would be glad to know if there is a known author, or anything dateable, both for the original and for the English version.

Rosemary Power

Clann a' Bhucullaich

In his Gaelic manuscripts, derived from oral tradition, John Dewar tells us that the predecessors of the MacGregors in Breadalbane were a tribe called Clann a' Bhucullaich. They were hated, he says, and got into trouble with the king (unnamed), who sent the MacGregors after them. The MacGregors defeated them in battle, and pursued them with such ferocity that they left not a single MacBhucullaich alive.[1] However, in another story, dateable to the 1540s, Dewar shows a man called MacBhucullaich serving Campbell of Lawers as his pounder in upper Glen Lyon.[2]

I know of no other source that mentions Clann a' Bhucullaich. MacGregor and Campbell migration from Argyll into Breadalbane began in earnest in 1437, but the known victims were kindreds like Stewarts, MacNabs and Menzieses.[3]

So who were Clann a' Bhucullaich? On the face of it they were descendants of a man called the Bucullach, i.e. someone called Buckle or Arbuckle, or who wore buckled shoes, such as a burgess of Perth or Dunkeld (native Highlanders wore buskins, *cuarain*, which had no buckles). Does any reader know of a Buckle or Arbuckle who developed a kin-base in Breadalbane in the century or two before 1437?

Or is there perhaps a connection with John Stewart of Bonkill, referred to by Dewar as *Iain Stiùbhart Bheinne-bhuic* in his account of the battle of Stirling Bridge (1297)?[4]

Ronald Black

Notes

1 Argyll Estates Archives, Inveraray (AEA), Dewar MS 1, f. 385r, and Dewar MS 5, f. 84r.
2 AEA, Dewar MS 6, pp. 143–46.
3 Martin D. W. MacGregor, 'A Political History of the MacGregors before 1571' (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1989), pp. 135–99.
4 National Library of Scotland, Adv. MS 50.2.19, ff. 90r–91r.

Beacons

In his book *The Lords of the Isles, the Clan Donald and the Early Kingdom of the Scots* (1984) Ronald Williams writes about a system of fire beacons at castles along the Sound of Mull and up Loch Linnhe. On pages 212 and 213 he writes (I omit the bits about the Loch Linnhe branch):

> A favorite residence seems to have been the castle of Ardtornish in Morvern. It lay in beacon-sight of Duart and was one of the great chain of strongholds which guarded the sea-ways around Lorne. They were strategically sited at intervals along the coast in line of sight so that the beacon fires could readily be seen, and warning flashed through Morvern. Thus from Dunollie, the flame was seen in Duart, and from there passed to Ardtornish in the Sound, by Aros and Casteal nan Con to Mingary in Ardnamurchan.

He offers no references to sources about the beacons system. Furthermore his theory about the warning system in the Sound of Mull is flawed by the fact that one link in the chain, Caisteal nan Con, did not exist at the time of the lordship. According to Canmore.org.uk the current ruins are the remains of a three-storey house built in the seventeenth century within the remains of a prehistoric fort: "Despite its traditional identification as a hunting-lodge associated with Aros Castle, a residence of the Lords of the Isles, there is no evidence of medieval occupation at this site."

With a vital link missing, another flaw in the remaining chain appears. The direct sight line between Aros and Mingary is blocked by an elevation called Druim Buidhe a few kilometers north of Aros Castle at Ardnacross Farm. It is 50 to 55 meters high, a lot higher than Aros is on its 10m cliff in Salen Bay and than Mingary is at sea level. The only possibilities for the beacons system to work would have been if a permanently manned beacon was put on top of Druim Buidhe or on the hillside east of Mingary Castle.

On the plus side, *Notes & Queries* editor Ronald Black has pointed me to the existence of a 1547 document from Queen Mary's Privy Council that orders the setting up of such a warning system of balefire beacons with a prearranged meaning: an imminent invasion by sea of English troops 'lik as thai have done in tymes bypast'. In seven steps from St Abb's Head near Coldingham to Linlithgow Palace a warning

could be 'flashed through' Lothian in no time. So a similar sort of elaborate system I imagine may well have existed a century before in the Sound of Mull and in Loch Linnhe, and indeed elsewhere in Scotland. But is there any indication of this either from oral or documented sources?

Kees Slings

Squire Lesly

Many years ago our founder and now Honorary President, Nicholas Maclean-Bristol, contributed a piece in which he quoted from the Crossapol MS, which is in his possession at Breacachadh Castle in Coll. It included a passage about Niall Mór, chief of the MacLeans of Coll *c*. 1573–87: "Neil More went to Ireland was taken great notice of by Squire Lesly till he got his Daughters consent to marry him, which made him retire from Ireland sooner than what he expected, he had a son called Neil Oig from Squire Leslys Daughter." He footnoted this: "I have failed to identify 'Squire Lesley'."[1]

Who then was Squire Lesl(e)y?

The first thing to say is that Lesly, Lesley or Leslie is not an Irish name but a Scottish one. This is, I think, confirmed by George Hill's very comprehensive *Macdonnells of Antrim*, in which all the index entries under Leslie turn out to be 17th-century Scots generals or noblemen. Secondly, in John Dewar's stories, when young Highland warriors take refuge in Ireland (as they often do), their host is always 'the earl of Antrim', irrespective of whether the event predated or postdated the creation of that earldom in 1629. Is it possible then that 'Squire Lesly' was the celebrated Somhairle Buidhe, 'Sorley Boy' (d. 1589), father of Raghnall Arannach, 1st earl of Antrim?

The earls of Antrim were MacDonalds of Clann Iain Mhóir, direct descendants of Iain Mór (d. 1427), brother of Donald, 2nd lord of the Isles and earl of Ross (d. 1423), son of John, 1st lord of the Isles (d. 1386). There is then a possible reason why Sorley Boy might be derisively nicknamed 'Squire Lesly'. Donald, 2nd lord of the Isles, had secured the earldom of Ross by his marriage to Mary Leslie, heir presumptive to her niece Euphemia, daughter of Alexander Leslie, earl of Ross. Donald's line had petered out with the death of Domhnall Dubh in 1545. Nicknames often passed down from generation to generation, and in any case, by the time the Crossapol MS was written in the early 19th century[2] there was an extra reason why members of the Antrim family might be contemptuously described as 'squires', a term unknown in Scotland – they had become fully-fledged members of the English aristocracy.

So has anyone else come across the term 'Squire Lesly'?

Ronald Black

1 Nicholas Maclean-Bristol, 'Documentary Evidence and Oral Tradition in Coll in the Late Sixteenth Century', *WHN&Q*, ser. 1, no. 24 (Aug. 1984), pp. 7–19: 12.

2 Nicholas Maclean-Bristol, 'Maclean Family Manuscripts', *WHN&Q*, ser. 1, no. 10 (Dec. 1979), pp. 3–12: 7; Nicholas Maclean-Bristol, 'John Maclean, Miller in Coll', *WHN&Q*, ser. 2, no. 13 (Feb. 1995), pp. 21–22: 22.

Lost Maclean of Coll Papers

What has become of the Lost Maclean of Coll Papers, acquired by Nicholas Maclean-Bristol in 2007? Have they been stored in an archive? Are they available to view by the public? Is there any index or catalogue detailing what they consist of? I'm particularly interested in records covering Rum and Muck, where many of my ancestors (MacLean, MacQuarrie, MacKinnon and Fraser) lived.

Eugene Quigley

A Glenorchy Mint

John Dewar tells a story about Sir Duncan Campbell, head of the Glenorchy family 1583–1631, in which he promises his grandson (an illegitimate son of Stewart of Ardvorlich) a thousand merks if he will bring him the head of a particular robber. Young Stewart brings him the head, and demands the reward. Sir Duncan is reluctant to pay him the money, so Stewart threatens him with his sword. Sir Duncan takes fright, opens his money-chest and counts out the thousand merks. Stewart sees that his grandfather has a lot more money and says, "Since you refused to pay my reward at first, pay me another thousand merks or I'll knock your head around the house like a shinty-ball!" So Sir Duncan gives him another thousand merks.[1]

I wondered how likely it was that even such a prosperous magnate as Sir Duncan would have so much ready cash, but then I came across the surprising statement that around the 1640s 'the Lord of Breadalbane had then the right to mint his own money'.[2] Is there any historical evidence for the Campbells of Glenorchy having the right to mint their own money?

Ronald Black

1 'Airt-mhurluig', Argyll Estates Archives, Inveraray, Dewar MS 6, pp. 96–106.
2 John Macdiarmid, Killin, 'Folklore of Breadalbane', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, vol. 26 (1904–07), pp. 136–56: 147–48.

A Settlement Name in Coll

Having now read Donald MacKinnon's Gaelic account of Coll I have a new query. Donald lists several place-names on the Isle of Coll at the time he was growing up in the early 1800s which I am unable to find on any map. An intriguing one is *'n t Seannleaba* which might be translated as 'the old bed' and was given as Sheannlep in the *WHN&Q* translation (ser. 3, no. 17 (Nov. 2011), pp. 8–9). I am unable to find Sheannlep on any maps either, and am wondering if anyone knows any more about this locale or the meaning of its name?

Catherine Scougall

A Name in Strathdon

A family resided in Glen Nochty, Strathdon, from the 1680s to the 1730s, with a surname recorded with these various spellings:

1680s: MCYOSE
1690s: MCCHEOS
1700s: MAKCHEOS
1710s: MCYOIS
1730s: MCKEOS, MCEOS, MCKOES.

Does anybody know, or can anybody suggest, the origin of this name?

Graeme Mackenzie

The Appin Chalice

By tradition the Appin Paten and Chalice were used to give communion to Jacobite troops before the Battle of Culloden.

Both Paten and Chalice are hallmarked Edinburgh 1723 and on both is engraved 'The Parish of Appine [*sic*] 1723'. They were commissioned by Rev. John McLauchlan, who was appointed minister to the United Parish of Lismore and Appin in 1717. He was an Episcopalian and an ardent Jacobite travelling with the Jacobite army in 1745/46 into England and up to Culloden. Presumably it was he along with other Episcopal and other clerics who administered communion to the troops. After the battle he went off to the Loch Broom area of Wester Ross and skulked there for several years. He ceased to be listed as incumbent in Appin in about 1750. Did he take the paten and chalice with him? Prof. Allan Macinnes, a native of Ballachulish, thinks that he probably did and later returned with them to Ballachulish, but admits he has no supportive evidence. Another story that I have heard is that Donald Livingstone wrapped them up in the Appin Banner and took them to Morvern.

There is no mention of their being used by Bishop Forbes on his visit to Ballachulish in July 1770. There is no definite evidence to show what happened to them until they turned up at St John's Episcopal Church in Ballachulish (built in 1842) at an unknown date. Inquiry of the people at St John's and people locally who are interested in heritage has not produced an answer. However, they are there and used regularly. The hallmarks and inscriptions are still very clear. There are a few dents and scratches, hardly surprising after over 300 years. I understand that removal of these blemishes will be carried out by the Repair Shop and that they will appear on BBC TV at some future date.

I hope that someone may be able to fill in the gap of these two historical vessels.

Neill Malcolm

REPLIES

The Farr Stone

Ronald Black, 'The Farr Stone', *WHN&Q*, ser. 5, no. 11 (July 2024), 25

Ronald Black asks whether the Farr Stone, an Early Medieval cross slab at Farr, Sutherland, was associated with Fearchar Lighiche, the well-known Beaton physician. This followed a report of the inauguration of the Mackay chief in which the Farr Stone was referred to as *Clach Fhearchair*, 'Farquhar's Stone'.

This name for the stone is not recorded until the early 20th century. James Dingwall, minister of Farr, wrote in the Old Statistical Account (1792): "There is a figured stone at the west end of the church, under which a Dane of distinction is said to be buried."

George Sutherland Taylor, who made a tour of the Reay Country in 1831, makes no mention of the Farr stone. Taylor, who was soon to become the local legal agent for the Marquis and Marchioness of Stafford, was keen to gather historical information for the Staffords' commissioner, James Loch, and made specific enquiries as to traditions relating to Fearchar the physician. However, he could only uncover knowledge of a few place-names along the north coast and almost forgotten traditions relating to a tree at Melness known as *Craobh Fearchar Lighiche*.[1]

There is no mention in the Ordnance Survey namebooks under Clachan (of Farr). Hew Morrison, the Edinburgh librarian and Gaelic speaker from Torrisdale in Sutherland, describes the stone as "one of the finest obelisks in the northern part of the county" and states: "Like all others of its kind, it is popularly supposed to mark the grave of a Danish chief." On the other hand, he mentions the nearby 'Eilan tigh an t-Sagairt' ('Island of the Priest's House'), and also a stone 'Leac Margaid', said to mark the boundary of the priest's croft.[2] The photograph of the stone in *Sutherland and the Reay Country* is merely captioned 'Ancient Gravestone in Farr Churchyard'.[3]

The earliest reference appears to be that in *The Book of Mackay* (1906): "At the west end of Farr churchyard stands a sculptured stone with Celtic cross and tracery, locally known as Clach Erchar, Stone of Farquhar. It may mark the grave of Farquhar mac Iye, the king's physician, and is supposed to do so." The author, Angus Mackay, judged Farquhar to have been a Mackay.[4]

The Farr Stone was also referred to by Angus Mackay in *The History of the Province of Cat (Caithness and Sutherland)*, published posthumously in 1914. Mackay, who was born in the parish of Farr, was an antiquarian who fully appreciated the magnificence of the stone. He states: "Whom it commemorates we cannot say, although it is called Clach Fhearchar, Stone of Ferchar, but it conclusively proves that the culture of these early times was broad and that their piety was intense." He would have been fully aware that the stone was much older than Fearchar the physician, and in a footnote he draws attention to Watson's mention of a St Ferchar commemorated in Glenshiel, Ross-shire.[5] The absence of earlier references to this name is curious, given the stone's prominence and rarity on the north coast. The evidence – such as it

is – raises questions about the attribution to a saint and whether antiquarian interest in Fearchar Lighiche gave rise to a new association.

Malcolm Bangor-Jones

Notes

1 National Library of Scotland, Sutherland Papers, Dep.313/1059.
2 Hew Morrison, *Tourists' guide to Sutherland and Caithness* (Wick, 1883), p. 86.
3 Adam Gunn and John Mackay, *Sutherland and the Reay Country* (Glasgow, 1897), p. 111.
4 A. Mackay, *The Book of Mackay* (Edinburgh, 1906), p. 48.
5 Angus Mackay, *The History of the Province of Cat (Caithness and Sutherland)* (Wick, 1914), pp. 47–48; W. J. Watson, *Place-Names of Ross and Cromarty* (Dingwall, 1976 [1st edn Inverness, 1904]), pp. lxx, 175.

The Irish Origins of Clann Donnachaidh: A Refutation

Ethan J. Hunt, 'The Irish Origins of Clann Donnachaidh: A Synthesis of Genetic and Historical Evidence', *WHN&Q*, ser. 5, no. 13 (March 2025), 1–16

In November 2024 Edward Kane, from the Cenel Eoghain Y-DNA project, approached me to alert me to the fact that my 2020 paper on the Clan Donnachie, was in error because it failed to take account of the fact that the DNA demonstrated that the current Clan Donnachie chiefly line descended from Niall of the 9 Hostages. He also told me of a paper by Tim McQuaid, https://www.academia.edu/107997361/ which attempted to explain this. McQuaid's paper threw out the baby with the bathwater so I took a fresh look at the matter, resulting in a wholly new paper on the **Clan Skene** (November 2024): https://www.academia.edu/125799630/ followed up by a new version of the **Clan Donnachie** paper (December 2024): https://www.academia.edu/42889850/

To accommodate his own fantasy interpretation of the DNA evidence, like McQuaid, Ethan J. Hunt has run roughshod over and parades both a disregard for and an ignorance of Scottish history. In a maximum 1000 words I cannot begin to deal with all the errors and guesswork in Hunt's paper – so I will do that elsewhere. When offered sight of a first draft Hunt complained that some of what I took issue with was not central to his argument – but it is his carelessness with these issues which helps demonstrate the weakness of his 'central argument'.

Heraldry

Hunt entirely ignores the heraldry which proves that the Robertsons descended through a female line from the Earls and Mormaers of Atholl (see my paper).

Maelmuire

P5: *"Máel Muire is inexplicably absent from the bloody conflict between MacBethad mac Finnlaích and Donnchad and their descendants"* Err no . . . in 1040 Maelmure

was no more than 2 years old, more likely younger. He will have been with his mother. In Scots legal terms he was still a nonentity.

P7: Hunt has no understanding of traditional naming patterns. Thus when he claims that Maelmuire b.c1038 could not be Maelmuir in the Book of Deer (reign of David I) of course not! They were grandfather and grandson.

P7: Hunt admits that *"Predecessorum is readily translated to 'predecessors',"* but to bolster his argument insists that it should be taken to mean "ancestors". This is baseless – and wrong.

P8: He goes on to suggest that *"This alternative removes the implication that Máel Coluim is claiming descent from the kings of Scots,"* Err no . . . it only implies that he is not descended from the kings buried at Dunfermline – which is true.

Dunfermline Abbey

P7: *"According to tradition, the original church at the location was founded by St Margaret, wife of Máel Coluim III, around 1070 on the site where they were married."* Errr . . . So Hunt is saying that Malcolm and Margaret married in a field???? This is risible. The church which Margaret founded was built on 'Patrick Muir'. So of course Malcolm and Margaret were married in a church – and that church was dedicated to St Patrick. However (i) it was probably built of wood and (ii) it was clearly not a Catholic establishment (the clue is in the name). So what actually happened was that Margaret founded a NEW stone-built church on an EXISTING site and ensured that it was a thoroughly Catholic establishment excluding the dedication to Patrick. So the Church which Margaret founded was NOT the 'original church at this location'.

In other cases – where a Celtic church was catholicised – it was normal to add a Catholic dedication to the existing Celtic one. In Kirkcaldy just a few miles away the Auld Kirk was dedicated to St Patrick and this dedication was 'overwritten' by Catholics who dedicated it to St Bryce (1244). But in this case – where the building itself was being replaced – clearly the name Patrick was NOT retained for the church itself. But it WAS retained for the land it stood on.

Western Isles

I wrote the paper on the Robertsons because they had made such a mess of it themselves eg pretending that Conan was legitimate (if he had been he would have become Earl). So too Hunt is correct to challenge the claim that Angus was descended in the male line from the Lords of the Isles. The connection was through his mother.

Canon Law

P6: Hunt says "*However, a third-degree marriage would have been clearly uncanonical at any time after the ninth century,"* Here Hunt betrays his woeful ignorance of Scottish history. The Picts expelled the Columban clergy in 717 preferring Catholics. However the whole matter was reversed c845 when Kenneth mac Alpin reasserted the Columban faith in Pictland and forbade Catholic priests from practising, a matter reinforced on the Hill of Belief (Scone) in 900. Thus Catholic law did not prevail amongst Scots at all until after 1070 and in Pictland from 845 to 1070. So Hunt's reference to 'the ninth century' parades his lack of understanding here.

On the substantive matter he is just guessing. In fact even first cousin marriages were two-a-penny. King Duncan I and his queen were 1st cousins. I can cite several from Grant history alone, never mind the Earls of Fife where eg Earl Duncan IV (1298-1353) was his father's step brother-in-law as well as being his son.

Hunt can make stuff up as much as he likes, but it has no bearing on reality.

Conclusion

As I propose in my paper

- Angus married the heiress daughter of Ewen son of Conan de Atholia, illegitimate son of Earl Henry of Atholl the last of the male line from Maelmuire, son of King Duncan I. It was this descent through the distaff line which triggered the differencing by tincture of Conan's arms.
- Angus' mother descended from the Kings of the Isles through the Thanes of Glentilt.
- Angus' father descended from Niall of the 9 Hostages by a route yet to be fully determined.

Errr . . . That's all the space I have, but there is more.

Adrian C. Grant

Proaig and Laphroaig

Kees Slings, 'Proaig and Laphroaig', *WHN&Q*, ser. 5, no. 12 (Nov. 2024), 14

I asked Niall Colthart, Trudernish, about Kees's query. He replied (e-mail, 18.12.24):

> Laphroaig bay is in distinctly two parts, whereas Lagavulin is wholly encompassed. As a boat owner who fishes my creels in this area, the wider bay starts from Port Bàn in the west to Portintruan in the east, which is a broad shallow bay, and then you enter Laphroaig proper. The direct approach from Eilean Caorach and Port Ellen takes you across the former and into the latter. There are also two parts when viewed from the shore north to south divided by a finger of skerries. I see no connection whatsoever to Lagavulin.

I think the map (Ordnance Survey 1" to mile, 1st edn, 1885) shows this pretty well, except that Niall's Port Bàn and Portintruan are not marked. However the 6" to mile map shows the *Poll Bàn* (White Harbour') as the little bay to the west of the Sròn Dubh and Portintruan (*Port an t-Sruthain*) as the little bay at no. 32. To answer Kees's query, then, Laphroaig means 'Half a Broad Bay'. 'La-' is for Gaelic *leth* 'half'. 'Proaig' is Norse *Breiðvík* 'Broad Bay', the same as Brevig in Barra. Put *Leth* and *Proaig* together in Gaelic and you get *Leth Phroaig*, Laphroaig.

Ronald Black

Viols, Violins, Fiddling, Dancing and the Church

Aonghas MacCoinnich, 'Fiddling, Dancing, the Presbytery of Lewis and the "Merry People at Shabost"', *WHN&Q*, ser. 5, no. 13 (March 2025), 28–33

Martin Martin claimed that *c*. 1695 there were eighteen men in Lewis and Harris who could play the violin – a statement with which I have always had a problem, given the background. However, we must start with some definitions, or rather a chronological timeline.

The term 'fiddle' originated as the name of the medieval instrument which appeared throughout medieval Europe, including Scotland, where it became downwardly mobile and had faded out by the end of the 16th century. Its distribution was not uniform, and I know of no evidence of it in the geographical area of the 'Highlands and Western Islands', although if one changes the parameters to the 'Gaelic speaking area', which in medieval times would bring in areas like Carrick and possibly extend to Moray and some other north-east places, then there are a few references. The few references to its sound/performance are late, by visitors from outwith Scotland, and in all cases unflattering. Although the original instrument had gone by *c*. 1600, the name 'fiddle' received a colloquial revival over the 17th and (especially) 18th centuries. It was attached to the viol, and more so in the 18th century to the violin.[1]

To unscramble that confusion, one must start with an appreciation that the viol and violin were different, albeit both bowed, instruments, with the viol appearing first. The viol usually had six strings (the violin has four), also frets and a differently-shaped bow, held in a different way and tuned similarly to lutes. It first appears in Scotland in court circles in the 16th century, usually in the hands of continental musicians. In that setting it seems to have been played in consorts of up to four viol players. By *c*. 1600 it was moving into wider use, and in the hands of native Scots, but now as a solo instrument, probably indicating a change in what was being played. However, in the early part of the 17th century, viol players still had some degree of status, as they can be found as burgesses in the burghs, in which they mostly resided.

There is little to no evidence of viols on the other side of the 'Highland line' in the first half of the 17th century, but as the century wears on, probably starting with Grant patronage in Strathspey, the viol can increasingly be found in what Will Lamb

has termed 'the intercultural zone'.[2] The one outrider to this seems to have been at Dunvegan, where in the last few decades of the 1600s evidence of an external musical presence can be found in the shape of a professor of music[3] and a violer called James Glass.[4] The violer may connect to another violer of that name, an Alexander Glass who fell foul of the Elgin Kirk Session in August 1649 for playing on a Sunday and was told to leave the burgh, which he seems to have done, as he got married in Edinburgh in 1680.

From *c*. 1700, as the popularity of the viol increased the boundary of Will's intercultural zone was expanded. In 1702, for example, the laird of Lude was patronising a violer, purchasing a treble and base viol, and payments to violers can be found among the Menzies and Straloch papers. Further north and west a contract of apprenticeship was signed in 1705 for Lauchlan Cameron, son of Cameron in Glenmorison, to Alexander Chisolm, violer and servitor to Frackerdale, in his vocation of playing on the viol.[5] In terms of amateur players, between 1706 and 1708 the accounts for the education of Sir Donald MacDonald's daughters Margaret and Isobel cover the costs of teaching them the virginal and viol and of two viol books.[6]

The violin had reached Scotland by the late 17th century, perhaps one of the earliest records being an obligation signed in 1678 by William Job, violer and piper residing at Craiglockhart, to John Clerk of Penicuik that on delivery of a violin and case worth £48 Scots he would attend said John at his house of Newbiggin, the town of Penicuik or at Edinburgh for 40 days yearly to play the violin or pipes.[7] Over the early years of the 18th century the viol continued to expand its presence, but by the middle of the century the violin had caught up, overtaken and started to replace it. There are also some signs that the Highland gentry were starting to take up the violin. For example, the testament of Alexander Robertson of Fascally, dated 15 August 1732, has a 'Trible Violin and Bass all valued att twentie four pound'.[8]

However, as the 18th century progressed, finding the evidence for how the viol was replaced by the violin becomes more complicated by the return, mostly in colloquial use, of 'fiddle' to describe both instruments, although it is probably safe to assume that the transition was complete by start of the second half of the century. An example of the problem can be seen from the events of 1745, six 'bow'-using musicians being listed among the Jacobite prisoners. Of the two whose connections point to the West Highlands, only one, John McIsaak of Clanranald's regiment, was described as a 'violer', while Peter Grant of Glengarry's along with the remaining four are simply described as 'fiddlers'.[9] There might even be a question of doubt over the description of McIsaak playing the viol, since there is a receipt among the Clanranald accounts for 23 April 1736 for the purchase in Edinburgh of a violin along with bow and two sets of strings which, apart from demonstrating Clanranald's musical interest, might have been intended for a servant musician.[10]

It is possible to add many more examples, but the overall picture provided by the contemporary evidence so far suggests that although during the 17th century the viol successfully spread throughout 'Lowland' Scotland, mostly to the detriment of the gut-strung harp, encroachment beyond the 'Highland line' other than the 'intercultural

zone' only gained any momentum during the early 18th century. However, by mid-century it was overtaken and replaced by the newer violin. Which brings us back to Martin Martin's comments *c*. 1695. Although I have a note from many years back of payments to a fiddler *c*. 1710 from the Seaforth papers, I failed to note the context, but I suspect it may not be of relevance.[11]

Therefore, taking Martin Martin at face value, Lewis and Harris had more players of the newly introduced, expensive, and at that period imported, instrument than any contemporary population in Lowland Scotland. Even if 'viol' is substituted for 'violin', the Long Isle would still represent the most concentrated local collection of players in Scotland. Hence my reservations over the claim, which leads on to the question of the 1759 Presbytery censure of a fiddler for playing on a Saturday night on the basis that he might run over into the Sabbath. I can only think of one example of preemptively including the Saturday as well, and that was for an East Lothian piper, George Martin in Dirleton in 1735.[12]

While the Kirk records for 'Lowland' Scotland contain many references to musicians being censured for playing on Sundays, and provide an early source for plotting the rise of bagpipes in Scotland, context is important. For example, if the picture provided by the evidence is correct, that the progress of the 'fiddle' (viol/violin) into the West Highlands and Islands was a feature of the 18th century, there would have been few 'fiddlers' to censure, and 1759 might have been the first occasion on which they and the church were to clash. There certainly were pipers, but they also need to be placed in context when assessing their relationship with the Kirk, and it is important to remember that they, like all the other musicians who attracted the church's ire, were professionals.

I can think of only one example of a member of the gentry being included in a session record for profaning the Sabbath. This is in an entry for Stirling in April 1600, when a local piper was summoned for playing for dancers. His defence was that when his master, one of the local lairds, ordered him to play, he declined as it was a Sunday, but his master then broke his small pipe and violently compelled him to play on his large pipe for dancers at a place called the Peace Craig. Its location was a few miles south of Stirling, but the place-name, or at least the 'Peace' part, no longer exists – possibly connected to the fact that the dance only came to the attention of the Kirk due to a mass brawl breaking out there.[13]

All the musicians who appear in Kirk Session records were professionals. However, there was a contrast between the nature of the employment of Lowland musicians compared with those employed in the Gaelic world.

Firstly, despite the modern image of Scotland and kilted pipe bands, there was absolutely nothing 'Highland' about drums. The large drum was created by the Swiss military when they developed the use of massed phalanxes of pikemen and needed a way to move them in ordered ranks. It was brought back to Scotland by soldiers returning from continental wars and adopted by the burghs. In burgh accounts the drum was still called a 'Sweisch' and the drummers were 'sweichers' through most of the 17th century. While most burghs employed both a drummer and a piper, in some

accounts the drummer was paid the most, due to the fact that he had to be ready to respond to any public announcements, such as if an important dignitary or laird was visiting and wanted to announce his presence.

The burgh pipers, on the other hand, apart from going round in the early morning and last thing at night, and some pre-booked events like going round the burgh marches, was free to augment his income from other sources. Some, like the Hasties in the Borders and the Balnaves family of burgesses in Perth, were butchers, while the mid-18th-century burgh piper of Inveraray was also a boatbuilder. The other main source of revenue for pipers and fiddlers was playing for dancing, which like many penny weddings occurred on the Sunday. This was the source of friction between the ministers, who wanted their parishioners in the kirk on Sunday, and their flock, who wanted to relax on their day of rest – dancing, playing ball games and so on.

The professional pipers of the Highlands and Islands were in a totally different situation. The settlements lacked the compact form and management structure of the burghs, where the musicians, like other officers, were effectively funded or employed by the community. Therefore, no burghs meant no drummers, and if a piper was employed it was down to the local laird. Furthermore, as Highland lairds were usually short of coin, the cheapest way to employ a piper, like other professionals, was to provide a tack of land, thereby moving the piper into the 'tacksman' class. Although estate accounts sometimes show items of clothing, usually shoes or a plaid, being purchased for their pipers, and some pipers were paid to be part of the 'watch' funded by the laird for policing markets, there is no evidence of those pipers playing for dancing, let alone being *paid* to accompany dancers.

The difference between the backgrounds of 'Highland' and 'Lowland' pipers also introduces the more esoteric thought that Lowland pipers used to working with burgh drummers and playing for dancers would mostly have played music with a regular beat. Their 'Highland' counterpart however mostly played 'piobaireachd', whose grounds, like the amhran on which they seem to have been based, were played with a free rhythm before developing the ground in a manner which exploits the only technical advantage the open-chanter bagpipe has over other instruments.[14]

It is of course quite possible that finding evidence to the contrary is only a matter of time, but the picture that we have so far is that while the evidence of conflict between the Kirk and musicians in Lowland Scotland is to be found in church records (almost from the earliest that survive), that scenario does not seem to be replicated in the Highlands and Islands. This may be partly due to the problems of providing ministers to what were geographically much larger parishes, even where there was a minister maintaining a firm administrative presence over such topographically diverse landscapes, often in areas which still had some leanings to Catholicism.[15] In addition, if the professional players of viol or violin were relative latecomers to that area, and lacking evidence that pipers played for dancers, then recorded accounts of earlier events comparable to the Shawbost incident may not exist.

Having read my way through a lot of Kirk and Presbytery records over the last 50 years, I believe that our image of life in Scotland under the post-Reformation church

is due a revision. An example I have used before is today's laws which ban drinking above a certain amount and driving, or driving and using a handheld mobile phone. A look at court records rapidly demonstrates how many people are charged with those offences, and as they are only the ones who are caught, it becomes clear that a sizable section of the population routinely takes no notice of the law.

Returning to the Kirk records, in my experience generalisations do not work. For example, one cannot take a blanket view that ministers were against music, for this, like most of these things, is dependent on the individual minister and the circumstances. The main point of conflict was the profanation of the Sabbath rather than music and dancing as such. This is demonstrated by the Dalkeith Presbytery Records for 1594, which pragmatically note that the problems of 'piping, fiddling and dancing' on the Sabbath are due to weddings held on that day, and suggest that perhaps weddings should only be held on other days of the week.[16]

Music and dancing link together, but it was the dancing which was the real target, as many ministers saw 'promiscuous dancing' as leading to out-of-wedlock relationships and were concerned for children produced by unmarried mothers. Certainly, a blanket assumption that the church as a whole was against music is contradicted by those 18th-century ministers like Patrick MacDonald and his father, or the Rev. John Skinner who composed the words for 'The Reel of Tullochgorum'. There does seem to have been a hardening of attitudes in the 19th century, with more recorded destruction of instruments, which one observer has linked to the rise of the Free Church.[17]

Keith Sanger

Notes

1 A good example comes from the Blair Atholl Kirk Session records for 1722, where on facing pages are references to 'Donald Steuart Violer' and 'Donald Steuart Fidler' (CH2/430/1 68 and 69). There is also some evidence that the term 'Fidler' could be generic for a musical instrument. In *The Pilgrim and the Heremite* by Alex Craig, printed in Aberdeen in 1631 (only known copy now in the Huntington Library in California) there is a woodblock illustration entitled 'Orpheus Fiddle' over what is clearly a harp. In an example from Ireland there is an account of how someone in the late 19th century went looking for descendants of the harper Dennis Hempson and was taken by the local priest to visit one of the older members of the community. When asked about the harper, the respondent replied that he remembered there was a girl called 'O Hampsey the Fidlers daughter'. At which point the priest interjected that in those parts the term 'fidler' just covered any musician. In more modern times I remember Patsy Seddon telling me how when she was in her late teens and could not have been long out of them, as she was at university and was looking for help with an essay on harps, she had lugged her harp onto a late-night bus when one of the passengers in a happy state had stood up and called down the bus: "Hey hen, gi' us a tune on your fiddle."

2 William Lamb, 'Grafting Culture: On the Development and Diffusion of the Strathspey in Scottish Music', *Scottish Studies*, vol. 37 (2014), pp. 94–104: 98-99, see https://www.research.ed.ac.uk/en/activities/music-scotia

3 Keith Sanger, 'Some Musical Notes from Skye', *WHN&Q*, ser. 4, no. 2 (Dec. 2016), p. 11.

4 William Matheson, ed., *The Blind Harper: The Songs of Roderick Morison and his Music* (Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, Edinburgh, 1970), p. l and footnote.
5 National Records of Scotland (NRS) GD23/4/69.
6 National Register of Archives of Scotland (NRAS) 3273/3874 and 3273/3875.
7 NRS GD18/2285.
8 NRS CC7/6/3/399.
9 The full list is: David Fraser, fidler, Earl of Cromartie's; Peter Grant, fidler, MacDonell of Glengarry's; William Innes, fiddler, Lord Lewis Gordon's; John MacIntosh, fiddler, Duke of Perth's; John McIsaak, violer, MacDonald of Clanranald's; John Shaw, fiddler, Stoneywood's Aberdeen Regiment.
10 NRS GD201/1/350/105. The total cost was £1, so presumably sterling rather than Scots.
11 Seaforth MSS, Mitchell Library MS591705: 'To my son for John the Fidler 1sh 6d' and 'To pay the fidler'.
12 NRS CH2/1157/2, p. 230.
13 NRS CH2/722/3/152.
14 See https://pibroch.net/learning/what-is-piobaireachd/
15 Frances J. Shaw, *The Northern and Western Islands of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1980), pp. 138–44. In some cases the ministers themselves presented their own problems.
16 NRS CH2/424/1/323.
17 Alexander Duncan Fraser, *Some Reminiscences and the Bagpipe* (Edinburgh, 1907), pp. 291–92, 319–20.

Donald MacKinnon's Account of Coll

Catherine Scougall, 'Donald MacKinnon's "Account of Coll and its People"', *WHN&Q*, ser. 5, no. 4 (March 2022), 35; Pamela O'Neill, 'MacKinnons in New South Wales, 1882–1902', *WHN&Q*, ser. 5, no. 6 (Nov. 2022), 31

Since my initial query some time ago as to the whereabouts of the original Gaelic manuscript of Donald MacKinnon's account of Coll, I am happy to report that I was able to track it down in the keeping of the Richmond River Historical Society in Lismore, New South Wales. The manuscript, which has been in temporary storage since the Lismore Museum was inundated during devastating floods in February 2022, was briefly relocated late last year, and I was sent a photocopy of their photocopy (the original being too fragile to copy). I am less happy to report that at the time of writing the museum remains homeless and their entire collection threatened by less than ideal storage conditions in a damp environment.

Compelled by a desire to read the account in the language in which it was written, but having a very rudimentary understanding of Gaelic, I was most fortunate to have two previous translations at hand: the one by Ronald Black and Nicholas Maclean-Bristol previously serialized in this publication,[1] and one held by the Mull Museum that was commissioned by Susan Alley from a Gaelic-speaking minister who was living in Australia and originally from the Isle of Lewis. Susan Alley is descended from Donald MacKinnon's son Lachlan MacKinnon, and it was her great aunt Bella Mitchell who donated the family papers to the University of New England. With constant reference to these two translations and the online dictionary, Am Faclair Beag, I was slowly

able to make my way through the manuscript and to feel that Donald, a Gaelic school teacher, was still teaching the language that he had been so committed to preserving during his lifetime.

By matching personal information given in the account with family history records, i.e. "Hector died suddenly eight years ago", it can be deduced that the account was written in 1878 or 1879, Donald's youngest son Hector having drowned in September 1870 at Coraki, N.S.W., aged 13. Donald himself died at Coraki in 1884, at 84 years of age. The family had emigrated from Coll to Australia in 1859 on the three-masted wooden ship, the *Fitzjames*. Built in 1852, the *Fitzjames* was decommissioned as unseaworthy in 1866 after five voyages from the UK to Australia, and ended its days as a hulk anchored in a bay near Adelaide, South Australia, where it served as a boys' reformatory.

I would like to thank Dr Pamela O'Neill for her warm response to my query and for the information she supplied on MacKinnon family diaries she found at the University of New England in northern New South Wales. It would seem that some family papers are still with the University and some (including the Gaelic account of Coll) had been passed on to the museum in Lismore.

Catherine Scougall

Notes

1 Nicholas Maclean-Bristol, 'An Account of Coll and its People', *WHN&Q*, ser. 3, nos. 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and ser. 4, no. 1 (Nov. 2011 to Aug. 2016).

Rekerris

Ellen Beard, 'Rekerris', *WHN&Q*, ser. 5, no. 13 (March 2025), 34

As 'Rekerris' did not readily bring to mind any known place-name in the north-west Highlands, an inspection was made of the manuscript in question.[1] Irvine's writing is indeed hard to read: the text appears to have been scribbled in a hurry.

The word in question is reproduced in Fig. 1 which, it is suggested, may be read as 'na Herris'. The 'na' has been written over 'of'. The initial 'H' of 'Herris' is apparent from other instances in the text, for instance Fig. 2, which reads as 'He early'.

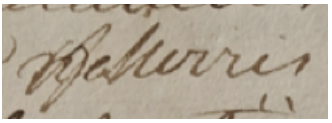


Fig. 1: 'na Herris'

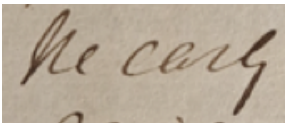


Fig. 2: 'He early'

The reading thus becomes 'MacLeod na Herris'. This, it is suggested, is a reference to John MacLeod (1757–1841), minister of Harris from 1779 to 1806.[2] As Black points out, he was a compiler of the Highland Society's Gaelic dictionary and probably had access to Rob Donn's poems.[3]

Malcolm Bangor-Jones

Notes

1 National Library of Scotland Acc. 14544/4, p. 7.
2 Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ*, new edn, vol. 7 (Edinburgh, 1928), p. 189.
3 Ronald I. Black, 'The Gaelic Academy: The Cultural Commitment of the Highland Society of Scotland', *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 14 part 2 (1986), 1–38; Ronald I. Black, 'The Gaelic Academy: Appendix: The Ingliston Papers', *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 15 (1988), 116.

REVIEWS

R. W. Munro and Alan Macquarrie, *Clan MacQuarrie, A History* (North West Mull Community Woodland Company, Penmore Mill, Isle of Mull, 2023), x + 282 pp., £15.50

This is a second edition of the 1996 book of the same name, which has been slightly revised and updated under the editorship of Alan Macquarrie, one of the original authors, with a final chapter about the purchase of the island of Ulva, homeland of the MacQuarrie clan, by the North West Mull Community Woodland Company, who have published this new edition.

The first edition was difficult to obtain, of large dimensions, and without index, printed in the USA, but the text was excellent, as one would expect from the two eminent historians (both of whom have been trustees of SHIHR), and was highly commended by David Sellar. The chapters cover the history of the clan, and its chiefs, especially Lachlan MacQuarrie, the last land-owning chief, who inherited in 1735, entertained Johnson and Boswell, sold Ulva in 1777 and died in 1818. Other chapters cover the history of Ulva.

The changes in this edition include a revision by Dr Alasdair Whyte of the section on place-names, clarification of the references, a bibliography and a revised index, as well as a new map and many good illustrations.

The references show exactly R. W. Munro's sources, but for those who wish to do further research, his working papers about the Clan MacQuarrie are in the Mull Museum (held among those of the Clan Maclean Heritage Trust). Munro started his meticulous researches in the 1940s, and it was fortunate in at least one respect that he did so. As footnote 62 on p. 30 indicates, he used a MacQuarrie genealogy which was among the 'Ulva MS', but it was not among those papers that were later deposited by Mrs Clark in the National Library of Scotland.

Allan Maclean of Dochgarroch

Catriona M. M. Macdonald, *The Caledoniad: The Making of Scottish History* (Birlinn, 2024, xiv + 562 pp., hardback, £90)

This is more a notice of a splendid and bulky book than a review, and is aimed primarily at drawing the attention of *WHN&Q* readers to its potential interest for them. The book

is a historiography of Scottish history from the death of Sir Walter Scott in 1832 to the centenary of the Scottish History Society in 1986. Dr Macdonald takes a wide view of historiography: it includes novels as well as histories. The general argument is that historians in the period were a self-conscious male elite who did little to spread knowledge of Scottish history in the population at large. This was especially true of the academic historians who began to emerge in university chairs of Scottish history at the end of the nineteenth century. Indeed, "academic prejudices often served to kill off an idea [for a history] before it was tentatively articulated, or even formed in the mind. *The Caledoniad*—a study of a battle between the Caledonians and the Romans in verse, planned by the characters in Sir Walter Scott's *Antiquary* (1816)—never materialised" (preface, p. xi). The book's footnotes bear witness to extensive archival research right across the period covered, and at the very least the book is nothing less than an essential tool of biographical reference for anyone interested in Scottish history and those who have written about it in the last 200 years.

Dr Macdonald exempts from her general criticism the local history societies of Scotland. "[T]hey offered very different perspectives on the nation to those cultivated by the university establishment and advanced a powerful critique of the power of the academic elites that instinctively viewed Scotland from the south, and particularly the legal and commercial capitals of Edinburgh and Glasgow" (pp. 230–1). Macdonald offers (at pp. 230–57 and 369–82) case studies of Inverness (in particular the town's Gaelic Society, founded in 1871 and still very active, and the forthright contributions of Evan MacLeod Barron), Perth, Aberdeen, and Orkney and Shetland. In each of these apart from Inverness, however, the societies rose and fell as local interest and support fluctuated in intensity. This made your reviewer wonder if the author's overall thesis about local history societies might have been somewhat better supported by looking, not exclusively north of Edinburgh and Glasgow, but to the south (and even in between the two cities). In recent times his research has led him to attend online meetings and to mine the publications of the Dumfries & Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society (founded 1862), the Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society (founded 1877), the Falkirk Local History Society (founded 1981) and the Kirkcudbright History Society (founded 2001). The first two of these have been publishing annual *Transactions* from their first establishment, while the Falkirk society now each year produces a journal, *Calatria*, the title being a nod to the medieval name for what we know as East Stirlingshire. The Kirkcudbright society produces books and pamphlets in addition to its meetings. It and the Falkirk society may have been founded too late to come within Dr Macdonald's purview, but their existence confirms the continuing interest and vigour of local history. Our own Society of Highland and Island Historical Research (founded 1972 and going strong through *West Highland Notes and Queries* as well as its regular online lectures) might have been mentioned, however, even if its website proclaims that 'the society's interests now cover the entire history of Gaelic Scotland from St Kilda to Aberdeenshire and from Caithness to Galloway'. Local history may not be an entirely spatial concept.

It would be wrong to finish this brief notice on a carping note. Dr Macdonald succeeds

in demonstrating the interest of local history societies for Scottish historiography, and it is to be hoped that she and/or others may pick up on the trail that *The Caledoniad* has blazed. The book as a whole is a triumph of research and argument which looks sure to provoke discussion and debate for many years to come.

Hector L. MacQueen

Humphrey Welfare, *General William Roy 1726–1790: Father of the Ordnance Survey* (Edinburgh University Press, 2022), xv + 303 pp., £24.99 paperback

General William Roy is best known today for what is widely known as 'Roy's Map', based on the Military Survey of Scotland carried out between 1747 and 1754. One of the biggest contributions of this wide-ranging and well-researched biography is to show the breadth of Roy's legacy beyond a series of maps. He devised increasingly accurate methods of cartographic survey in the field, developed systems for establishing trigonometric frameworks, brought his military experience and survey skills to the investigation of the Roman fortifications of Scotland, and worked with some of the most famous scientists, generals and instrument-makers of 18th-century Europe.

One theme that runs across his life and this book is his astonishingly careful attention to detail. 'Meticulous' is Welfare's favourite word to describe Roy's work and character. The culmination of this was the painstaking practical work and mathematics that went into setting out the baseline for trigonometric survey of the south of England on Hounslow Heath in 1784. He measured and compensated for the expansion and contraction of his measuring rods through heat, the height above sea level, the use of spheroidal rather than flat geometry, and terrestrial refraction – even when the effects were minimal. Characteristically, he published this 'achingly detailed process' in a 95-page article (212).

Welfare structures the biography through a neat combination of chronological and thematic chapters, so that the narrative covers Roy's life clearly, but also explores in depth his many different professional activities. These include his well-known cartographic work and his expertise in military logistics, the passion for accuracy and context that he brought to identifying and surveying Roman forts, and a series of highly complex scientific experiments on hypsometry and geodesy which helped to establish the mathematical basis of accurate mapping on a national scale.

The most familiar of his activities to many readers of *WHN&Q* will be the Military Survey of Scotland, which Welfare not unreasonably calls 'the most beautiful map of Scotland ever made' (26). Welfare's explanation of the technology, purpose and context of the survey is clear and helpful, and essential for using Roy's map critically as evidence for the 18th-century landscape of Scotland.

The core of the survey consisted of traverses along the main roads, glens and flat ground that were most important for communications and military campaigns. For all the map's compelling clarity and richness of detail, there was no trigonometric framework to tie the traverse surveys together. This produced many frustrating

'misclosures' while plotting out the surveys during winters in the drawing office in Edinburgh: not to put too fine a point on it, these had to be fudged. Many of the landmarks overlooking the roads and glens where the traverses were carried out were plotted in by eye alone. The appealing patchworks of parallel lines showing areas of rig and furrow are schematic, not specific.

Roy's commitment to precision and transparency made him painfully honest about his own work. Looking back in 1785, he called the Military Survey of Scotland more of 'a magnificent military sketch, than a very accurate map of a country' (31).

Welfare makes the striking point that that Roy's short and memorable name lent itself neatly to whatever demonstrated his zeal for accuracy and usefulness (260). So what was determinedly called 'Roy's Map' by the end of the 18th century could more fairly be called 'Watson's Map', as it was David Watson who initiated, managed and largely funded the survey. Perhaps it should also be called 'Sandby's Map', as it was the landscape artist and watercolourist Paul Sandby whose eye for line, detail and representation made it seem so attractive and, perhaps spuriously, informative.

Even if some of the material in the book is familiar ground, particularly on the cartographic aspects of Roy's work, what makes this book especially valuable is its broad scope. We learn much about the intellectual and technological context, while the thumbnail biographies of Roy's many associates, colleagues, superiors, friends and family make for a very rich contextual understanding of his life, work and society.

Given Roy's wide-ranging abilities and activities, and Welfare's broad and careful coverage, there is sometimes perhaps too much information, or occasionally not quite enough, but that is entirely dependent on the reader's interests. My own wish was for more specific discussion of the beautifully reproduced maps, as sources for understanding the man, the methods and the landscape.

Roy's life and career are perhaps best summed up in his own words: 'no pains were spared, nor the most trivial circumstances neglected' (215). Welfare is to be congratulated on his biography, which shows a depth of research and meticulous attention to detail worthy of Roy himself.

Michael Given

John L. Millar, *Power Plays and Pulpits: Telford's Century in Scotland, 1750–1850* (Haddington: Handsel Press, 2024), pp. vi + 298. £15.00

This publication comes on the bicentenary of the Highland Churches Act, which was passed to increase the number of churches in the Highlands and Islands. The results of the project became known as 'Parliamentary Churches'. The 1820s were a decade of increasing evangelical activity in the Church of Scotland, and there was a movement to increase the presence of the Kirk in the huge parishes of the north and west. The Church recognised that only the state had the funds to carry this out, hence the 1824 Act, which created a budget of £50,000, overseen by Thomas Telford, to build thirty-two churches. The government continued to subsidise the stipends of the clergy in these charges.

It is Millar's objective to delve into this episode and to set it in the context of the long-term project of the established church to reach into the Highlands and Islands, to spread reformed theology, education and the English language to an area of the country that was often seen, from the point of view of Edinburgh and London, as a political threat and cultural affront. His study is organised into a series of ten wide-ranging essays that touch on the social, economic and cultural context of the religious history of the Highlands. That these essays cover fairly well-known ground is not a criticism, but, perhaps, their effect would have been greater had they been more concise. The works of Douglas Ansdell and David Paton also provide this context, although neither has any detail on the Parliamentary Churches scheme. The value of Millar's book is to provide the first full study of this important episode.

The Parliamentary Churches are an intriguing case-study of the effect in the Highlands of the Disruption of 1843. Millar has some fascinating detail on this point. These parishes were *Quoad Sacra* – that is, they had religious but no secular functions. Ministers of such churches were admitted to Church courts during the 'Ten Years' Conflict' that led up to the Disruption, and probably swelled the ranks of the evangelical wing that went to create the Free Church. David Paton in his 2006 book *The Clergy and the Clearances* argues (142) that ministers of such parishes played a disproportionate part in the Disruption because they had less to lose than their colleagues in *Quoad Civilia* parishes. In an interesting appendix Millar provides data that might qualify this to a certain extent. He notes that of forty charges for which details can be found, eighteen ministers left to join the Free Church and twenty-two (55 per cent) remained with the Church of Scotland. That figure strikes me as quite high and bears out a point made to me many years ago by Donald Withrington: namely, that the motives of those who remained with the Kirk are at least as interesting as those who went out to join the new Free Kirk. A point that has not been fully explored.

John Millar has written a useful book that explores the relationship between the Church and the State in the Highlands and Islands in the nineteenth century.

Ewen A. Cameron, University of Edinburgh

Andrew Ross, *Donald Ross and the Highland Clearances* (Amberley Publishing, Stroud, 2023): 352 pages, £25 (on-line, www.amberley-books.com, £22.50)

Donald Ross, baptised in March 1813 in Dornoch Cathedral, the seventh child of a miller on the Skibo estate in Sutherland, became one of the pre-eminent campaigning figures of the mid-nineteenth century period of Highland clearance. The story told here is of a rise to virtually heroic status among the impoverished folk his fiery pen championed, followed by a fall from grace which saw him emigrating from Scotland under a cloud of suspicion.

This book, by his great-x4 nephew Andrew Ross, does us a tremendous service by piecing together the life of a man who, while his proto-journalistic investigations

remain an important element in our understanding of the experience of eviction, has remained personally elusive. Although the book does not take us very far into the complexities and motivations of the man himself, it does shed further light on how he viewed some of the most shameful events in Scottish history and his often controversial role in publicising them.

Ross took over from his father as the miller of Skibo, but the family were evicted in the 1840s after a lengthy legal battle. During this period Donald, in trouble financially, was tried on various charges of forgery. The case was found not proven, but the evidence raised early questions about his probity. As the author remarks, 'it does look suspicious'.

It's worth saying here that as a reader I longed throughout the book for rather more rigorous assessments, or at least for more of the author's speculative mind on the material so assiduously collected. While the social and legal detail is often fascinating in itself, the narrative would have benefitted from a more assertive guiding hand.

Donald and family moved to noxious, industrial Glasgow, where he found work as a lawyer. When the Glasgow Association in Aid of the Poor was formed in 1846, he became their sole agent and was soon writing copious articles for the newspapers, mainly about court cases in which he had successfully defended people claiming poor relief. These early reports of destitution in the city and the system that enabled it reveal the flair for language and unerring grip on the reader's heart-strings typical of Donald Ross's style.

In 1850 he began taking a closer interest in the evictions proceeding apace back home in the Highlands, and this decade was when he wrote most of his articles, letters and pamphlets. He was frequently accused by those he eviscerated in print of deliberately omitting or inventing facts. On the other hand, he was often right. Travelling in Skye, he wrote: "Unless some stop be put to the now general system, nothing will soon be heard but the bleating of sheep and the barking of dogs, throughout the length and breadth of the land." It's a sentiment which, while containing the usual dollop of lyrical generalisation also, as hindsight teaches us, expresses a truth that needed to be heard and depended on people like Donald Ross to say it.

His skills of observation and investigation, talent for the telling detail, unremitting passion and unwearying prolixity brought home to readers of countless newspapers and pamphlets the treatment of people from Knoydart on the mainland to Boreraig and Suishnish in Skye, and most damningly of all in Greenyards, Strathcarron, in 1854, when women attempting to thwart the delivery of eviction notices were set upon by a posse of policemen and savagely bludgeoned. Ross interviewed eye-witnesses and doctors. He named victims. He enumerated injuries in minute medical detail.

But 'like any good journalist', the author writes, 'Donald was prone to exaggeration'. Actually Donald Ross exaggerated like any bad journalist. His frequent recourse to hyperbole was always in danger of diminishing what he was trying to highlight. The author notes that he has sought 'wherever possible' other sources to corroborate what Donald wrote, but has not always succeeded, 'which leaves open to question whether he was recording the truth or embellishing it'. Indeed.

Happily, Andrew Ross is more scrupulous than his ancestor, and quotes several competing accounts of the Greenyards confrontation. But his impeccably factual delving for truth faces the same problem that I did in drawing on Donald Ross's extraordinarily detailed account for my novel *Music in the Dark*: namely, how much of this man's excoriating reportage are we entitled to believe? Even the title of his pamphlet, *The Massacre of the Rosses*, is a misnomer since, according to his own account, nobody actually died that day. What can be truly said, though, is that we only know (more or less) what happened to those named women today because, then and now, Donald Ross made us look and insisted we imagine.

In 1856 he was among the founding members of the Glasgow Celtic Society. But a fierce controversy over how far he had strayed from the truth in trying to procure funds for indigent families in North Uist (he may have gone so far as to invent a storm in which people were lost at sea), along with accusations that he was benefitting too liberally himself from a cut of the donations raised, led to his resignation the following year.

Under the shadow of misrepresentation that may have amounted to fraud, Donald and his family emigrated to Nova Scotia, where he worked as a book-keeper in Dartmouth till his death in 1882.

The author's researches have been conducted with immense diligence and a fondness for his subject that remains clear-eyed about Donald's weaknesses. If we don't feel we ever really know Donald Ross, or can imagine him in the kind of home setting that I'm sure the author would have loved to unearth, we do recognise strongly in his writings a man of humanity and restless conviction. Donald Ross bore witness. His battling pen exposed the wickedness committed in the name of agricultural improvement in the Highlands. He went too far, but he never gave up. It is no mean legacy.

Sally Magnusson

C. M. Holms, *The Clearance of Leckmelm: The Dispossession of a Highland Crofting Community* (Achiltibuie: Seantaigh, 2023), pp. 430. £22.99

The 'Leckmelm evictions' are not the best known of the events in the very early stages of the Highland Land War of the 1880s. They have been overshadowed by the 'Bernera Riot', the 'Battle of the Braes' and the 'Glendale Martyrs'; all of which were very important events in the history of protest, politics and resistance that led to the 'Crofters' Act' and later legislation that provided crofters with security of tenure. The fact that each event has a moniker that can be put in inverted commas indicates that all of them were, to a greater or lesser degree, subject to reputational construction in the media. Like the other events listed here, the 'Leckmelm evictions' were the topic of extensive media coverage.

The bare facts are that the Leckmelm estate in Wester Ross was purchased in 1879 by an Aberdonian paper manufacturer, A. G. Pirie, who proceeded to issue eviction notices against his tenants. There was, however, a tradition of protest in Wester Ross and the local Free Church minister, John MacMillan (a Lochaber man), combined

with Highland politicians and journalists, such as John Murdoch and Charles Fraser MacKintosh, to draw attention to the plight of the Leckmelm tenants. These activities were covered extensively in the press in Scotland and beyond, and fed into a growing political concern about the politics of the Highland land question.

There has been some writing about the episode. This reviewer paid attention to it in his biography of Charles Fraser MacKintosh (2000), and there is a fuller and more nuanced account in Andrew Newby's *Ireland, Radicalism and the Scottish Highlands* (2007). Now, we have this valuable collection of material by C. M. Holms, which adds to our understanding of what went on in Wester Ross on the eve of the Highland Land War. The book is not a monograph on the subject – although such would be possible – but a collection of primary sources. Holms has transcribed a mass of newspaper and related evidence that highlights the way in which this event had resonance far beyond Wester Ross. The journalism cited here ranges from Inverness to Glasgow, London and Ireland and shows how the 'Leckmelm evictions' exemplified the insecurity of small tenants in the Scottish Highlands. The case was taken up by Charles Cameron's important Glasgow newspaper, the *North British Daily Mail*, and by newspapers in London and Dublin. Holms' material shows, although somewhat implicitly, that 'Lecklmelm' helped to put the Highland land question on the map of radical politics in Victorian Britain. The primary material is presented without much comment, although there are some helpful footnotes to identify important individuals. There is also some useful visual material. A short introduction and afterword is the extent of additional discursive comment. This is a pity, as the comments in these sections are perspicacious, if brief.

Holms writes in her afterword that it is her 'hope that this book encourages a clearer understanding of what happened during this period of Scottish history and an open, honest and constructive dialogue about its lasting effects'. I hope this book has that effect. It deserves to. Holms has performed prodigious labour to bring this lesser known event to greater prominence. Her book will henceforth be on the reading list for my fourth-year students studying the Highland land question, and deserves a wider readership.

Ewen A. Cameron, University of Edinburgh

Calum Maclean, *Alexander Ross, Architect of the Highlands* (AITEAS Architectural Press, 2023), v + 381 pp., £36.00

Alexander Ross (1834–1929) was an architect, based in Inverness, who designed at least 180 buildings of note in the Highlands, as well as much of Inverness, including the Cathedral, and many of the new streetscapes in the centre of the town. Calum Maclean, the conservation architect from the Black Isle, covers descriptions of many of these buildings, from houses, institutions, schools, churches and public buildings to the restoration of historic structures, like Kilcoy Castle on the Black Isle, and St Clement's Church at Rodel. Ross designed 76 schools in the Highlands and Islands, including the Nicolson Institute. A large number of his buildings are described, and there are references to many others which are not covered in detail.

Ross was not an architect of the 'Scottish Baronial' style, and he rarely used a castellated turret, but he was skilled in his many designs which are quite clearly 'Highland' in their inspiration.

As a man, Ross's lifespan covered very nearly a hundred years, an era that saw the transformation of the Highlands, from the use of pony and carts, to railways, cars and then aeroplanes. His interests covered far more than architecture; as an ethnologist he recorded the lifestyles of a disappearing way of life; as Provost of the town of Inverness, he brought in sweeping social improvements; as a founder of the Inverness Field Club, he promoted interest in ecology. He was a manager of the Inverness Mechanics Institute, which encouraged the opportunities for young working-class people. He published a book, *Scottish Home Industries / Ealadhna Duthchasach na h-Alba*, in 1895, and in the same year his academic contribution to Highland culture was recognised with the award of an honorary doctorate from Aberdeen University.

To celebrate his life, the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland arranged a weekend conference, in May, at Ardtornish, in Morvern; remarkably in such a relatively remote place, 95 people attended. The proceedings covered much more than the architecture, and in various presentations, many aspects of the wider Highland history that allowed Ross's practice to flourish, were covered. From the influx of shooting tenants and tourists, the opening up of communications, the sources of the new finances both for grand houses and for the educational provision, were all discussed.

Dr Alexander Ross, sometimes referred to as the 'Kit Wren of the Highlands', was clearly far more than just an architect, whose life and interests in the development of the Highlands might well be covered in a separate biography, fuller in this aspect than Calum Maclean's excellent volume.

Allan Maclean of Dochgarroch

SHIHR Zoom Talks

Grace Wright, 'Land Agitation in Portree in the 1880s'. Thurs. 16 Oct. 2025.

Iain A. MacInnes, 'The Death of David Strathbogie, Earl of Atholl, in 1335: What was going on?' Thurs. 13 Nov. 2025.

Frances Bickerstaff, 'Cowal and Kintyre in the Charters of Paisley Abbey before 1300'. Thurs. 11 Dec. 2025.

Sandy Johnstone, 'Sutherland to Glasgow and Back Again: Gleanings from Family Diaries 1772–1863'. Thurs. 15 Jan. 2026.

Ellen Beard, 'The Diaries of Rev. Murdo MacDonald, Minister of Durness 1726–63'. Thurs. 12 Feb. 2026.

Karen Deans, 'Climate Change in the Highlands 1810–20'. Thurs. 12 March 2026.

Each talk will begin at 7.30 pm UK time and last up to one hour, followed by questions. Keep an eye on our website, Facebook page or the next *WHN&Q* in case any changes are made to the schedule. Places can be booked by e-mailing lectures@highlandhistoricalresearch.com. Free to students and *SHIHR* members. Non-members are asked to pay an attendance fee of £5 via https://www.highlandhistoricalresearch.com/online-lectures/

CONTRIBUTORS

Malcolm Bangor-Jones is a retired civil servant. He has maintained an interest in the history of the northern Highlands for many years.

Ronald Black was a lecturer in Celtic at Edinburgh University from 1979 to 2001. His latest book, co-edited with Christopher Dracup, is *John Dewar's Islay, Jura and Colonsay*.

Ewen A. Cameron, a native of Lochaber, is Professor of Scottish History at the University of Edinburgh. He is the author of *Impaled Upon a Thistle: Scotland since 1880* and other works.

Michael Given is a landscape archaeologist, working on rural landscapes in the early modern period in both Scotland and the Eastern Mediterranean. He is a co-director of the Glencoe Landscape and Archaeology Project, and is Professor of Landscape Archaeology at the University of Glasgow.

Adrian C. Grant retired from teaching social subjects and computing in 1995. Most of his papers, and synopses of his books, are at https://independent.academia.edu/AdrianGrant1

Allan Kennedy is Lecturer in Scottish History at the University of Dundee. His research focuses on the political and social history of the early modern period, especially the 17th century.

Graeme Mackenzie, a Cambridge University graduate, made history programmes for BBC local radio. After researching his Macmillan ancestors in Glenurquhart he became a professional genealogist and clan historian. He has chaired the Clan MacKenzie Society and the Highland Family History Society, whose *Journal* he now edits. He lives in Fortrose.

Allan Maclean of Dochgarroch is a founder member of SWHIHR (now SHIHR) and is past Chairman of the Clan Maclean Heritage Trust.

Hector L. MacQueen is Emeritus Professor of Private Law in the University of Edinburgh. His most recent publication is *Law and Legal Consciousness in Medieval Scotland* (Brill, 2024).

Donald C. McWhannell is a retired Chartered Engineer with publications on Scottish maritime history, the *Clann Mhic Gille Chonaill* and other subjects. He lives in Dundee.

Sally Magnusson is a prize-winning Scottish journalist, broadcaster and writer. Her acclaimed 2023 novel, *Music in the Dark*, was described by historian Dr James Hunter as 'truer to the reality of clearance and what came after than many ostensibly factual accounts'. Her next novel, *The Shapeshifter's Daughter*, inspired by Norse Orkney, is out in November.

Neill Malcolm was born within sight of Kilcolmkill. He spent most of his professional career as a doctor in Canada but returned to Duror after he had retired.

Rosemary Power writes on the Hebrides from a Norse-Gaelic perspective, also on folk tradition, art, and spirituality. She is currently studying the pilgrim routes from Donegal to Iona.

Eugene Quigley, an amateur genealogist from Inverness, Nova Scotia, has 40+ years research experience. He has an interest in Muck and Rum where he has connected numerous families listed on the 1764/5 Parish of Small Isles Roll with Nova Scotia descendants.

Keith Sanger, a retired clinical perfusionist from Edinburgh, has been studying the historical background of the harps and bagpipes of Scotland and Ireland for close to fifty years.

Catherine Scougall is a semi-retired research lab technician living in a small township with no mains water in the Adelaide Hills of South Australia. She is interested in conserving native flora and finding out more about her Hebridean ancestors.

Kees Slings is a retired cinema projectionist from Holland. He has travelled extensively in the UK, especially in Scotland, and considers Scottish history his main hobby.

Dr Edward C. Stewart is an archaeologist and researcher currently based at Archaeology Scotland as Clyde Valley Archaeological Research Framework Engagement Officer. He is also an Affiliate Researcher at the University of Glasgow where he co-directs the Glencoe Field School Project. He has worked on sites across Scotland, Italy and Cyprus.

THE SOCIETY OF HIGHLAND AND ISLAND HISTORICAL RESEARCH
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The society was founded in 1972. It is a registered charity, no. SC051933. Its aim is to stimulate research into the history of the Highlands and Islands, and of Gaelic Scotland as a whole. Anyone wishing to support its work is invited to become a member.

Members receive the journal *West Highland Notes and Queries* (which comes out every March, July and November) and free access to the society's Zoom lectures, which take place once per month from October to March. Details of all our publications and lectures will be found on the website.

Annual membership of the society costs £20 (£10 for students with a valid student e-mail address). Membership is valid for 12 months from date of payment. New members receive the most recent issue of *WHN&Q* and the next three. Members are encouraged to pay through PayPal on the website – 'Join the Society' – or can create a standing order by contacting treasurer@highlandhistoricalresearch.com.

New members should contact the Secretary to let her know if they wish to receive a hard (paper) copy of *WHN&Q*, otherwise an electronic copy will be sent. Back numbers of *WHN&Q* are only available electronically. They can be ordered through the website.

Contributions to *WHN&Q* are welcome. Short articles, notes, queries and replies are preferred. Referencing is essential, other than in queries and reviews. There is no style sheet. Simply follow the styles used in our published articles, or e-mail editor@highlandhistoricalresearch.com

Postal address: Ms Viv Sutherland-Kemp, Secretary, SHIHR, 57 Belmont Road, Portswood, Southampton, SO17 2GD, Hampshire.