

What's in a Name



Munro (Rothach in Scottish Gaelic)



The Munro surname is common in Ross-shire and other areas of northern Scotland as far back as the 11th century. The name 'Rothach', translates as 'man of Roe' or Rotha, an area in County Londonderry, Northern Ireland,

Descended from Donald O'Kane, of Rotha is said to have settled at Ferindonald on the Northern shores of the Cromarty Firth near Kiltarn and Alness. The land having been granted to them by King Malcolm II(1005-1034), as a reward for defeating invaders from Scandanavia.

By the 14th century the clan was well established in the area and had fought for Scotland's Independence at Bannockburn (1314) and Halidon Hill (1433). Known to have been loyal to the crown the served the Stuart dynasty for several generations including adoption of the protestant faith during the reign of King James VI (1603-1625), also serving in the '30 years war' and supporters of the protestant succession to the British Crown against the Catholic Stuarts during the Jacobite risings of 1715 and 1745.

Family branches soon settled on the west coast at Lochbroom, Northwards on the border between Ross and Sutherland at Ardross and East of the River Alness. Each place-name of course represents not only a house but also lands and a community of tenants, where a whole group of families would be settled. John Monro of Milntown descendants moving towards Auchinbowie, Novar and Allan and Hugh Munro of Coull's descendants holding estates at Kiltarn, Ardullie and as far north as Eriboll. Other branches grew with the Fyrish, Achany and Katewell lines, followed by lines at Obsdale, Lemlair and Culcairn.



Foulis Castle, Foulis

Urquhart



While the Urquhart name has been linked, for many centuries with Moray and Aberdeenshire, it is in the area of Cromarty and Inverness-shire that they first made their mark on Scotland's colourful history. The name originated as an area or place on the northwest shore of Loch Ness, named "Urchard" or "Airchartdan", which when translated from the Gaelic, indicates "a fort on a knoll, by a rowan tree". In old Scots spelling, "quh" represented "ch" as in "loch", hence the pronunciation sounding like "Urchart".

Earliest indications of the Urquhart name date as far back as the 6th Century in the times of St Columba. Legend also has it that Conachar, a son of the Royal House of Ulster, is believed to have come to Scotland from Ireland during the reign from 1058 to 1093 of Malcolm III. Conachar, as one of Malcolm's most fearless warriors, is reputed to have been rewarded with possession of the fortress, on the northwest shore of Loch Ness that later became the site of Castle Urquhart. However, the Urquhart's did not maintain possession of the castle for very long, with Durward's, MacDonalds, and Grants being its main occupants.

The first historical record is to be found around 1296 and 1314 during the War of Independence with England where William de Urchard supported William Wallace and King Robert the Bruce by defending Cromarty against the English. In 1358, during the reign of David II, William's son, Adam, was rewarded for the family's loyalty to the cause of Scotland's freedom and independence with the award of the hereditary sheriffdom of Cromarty, an influential and powerful post in which the family served with great distinction for 300 years.

The family continued to serve the Scottish Crown with William Urquhart, a grandson of Adam, being rewarded for his family's service to the Crown with the accolade of knighthood in 1416 by James I, and Thomas Urquhart was knighted by James VI in 1617. As the power and influence of the Urquhart's increased, their fortunes flourished and Castle Craig, on the northern shore of the Black Isle, became their main stronghold. By the seventeenth century, John Urquhart of Craighinray, known as the Tutor of Cromarty, built Craigston Castle, in Aberdeenshire.

Sadly, Coinneach Odhar, The Brahan Seer prophesised, at his execution, that 'the day is coming and is close at hand when the grasping Urquharts will not own above twenty acres of land in the shire of Cromarty.' The laird of Urquhart, may well have officiated at his execution in his capacity of sheriff.

The Urquhart's participated in the Jacobite Uprising of 1715 and the clan chief died at the Battle of Sheriffmuir. The line of the Urquhart's of Cromarty died out in the 18th century. All that remains to the clan today is Craigston Castle, in Aberdeenshire, the ruins of Castle Craig on the Black Isle, and the ancient Cullicudden Old Kirkyard.

The chief of the clan Urquhart was re-established in 1959 when Wilkins Urquhart, descended from an Urquhart who emigrated to America in the 18th century, established his rights with the Lord Lyon. The seat of the clan is Castle Craig on the Cromarty Firth, which was gifted to the 25th clan chief by Major Iain Shaw of Tordarroch.

The Urquhart clan motto is "Meane weil, speak weil and do weil" which means "Mean well, speak well and do well".



Castle Craig, Cullicudden

Bain



The Bain surname is derived from the Gaelic “Ban” meaning ‘fair’ as in fair haired and is a modern sect of the Clan Mackay being descended from Neil, brother of Angus Dubh, chief of the MacKay clan in the 15th century. Iye Mackay was 1st Chief of the Clan Mackay. He was born in about 1210 and was a descendant of the 1st Earl of Ross. Clan Mackay supported King Robert the Bruce and fought at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314.

Angus Mackay, 6th Chief of Clan Mackay (d .1403), married a daughter of Torquil MacLeod of Lewis. They had two sons Angus Dubh MacKay, 7th Chief of the Mackay's and Neil. It is thought, that following a family feud between Neil Neilson Mackay and his brother Angus Dubh at the battle of Drum nan coup in 1427 or 1433, there were further tensions within the family which saw Neil's son, John Ban Mackay leaving Sutherland for Olig in Caithness in 1435. John Ban MacKay dropped the surname and became known as John Ban which in

time became known as Bain. John Bain married in 1436 and died in 1452, leaving four sons;

John Bain born 1437, founder of the Bain families in Caithness and Haddingtonshire;

William Bain, born 1438, founder of the Bain families of Clyth;

Alexander Bain, born 1440, founder of the Baynes of Tulloch and Dingwall;

Donald Bain, born 1443, settled in Galloway.

In 1597 the Bain family of Tulloch Castle fought in the Battle of Logiebride in support of the Munros and against the Mackenzies.

Prior to 1616, the surname was BANE, after 1616, the surname used was spelled BAIN by all lines in Caithness, Clyth, Dochcarty, Haddingtonshire, Knockbain and Tarradale. The only group to differ was the small group in Tulloch, who used BANE until 1709, when Kenneth Bane was made Burgess of Dingwall in 1709, changed the spelling to BAYNE for the Tulloch group only. The Bayne family held their seat at Tulloch Castle for over 200 years until Kenneth, the ninth Bayne, sold the castle and estate to his cousin Henry Davidson in 1762.



Tulloch Castle, Dingwall

MacDonnell



MacDonnell, MacDonnell, or McDonell is an anglicized form of the Gaelic Mac Dhòmhnail, meaning "son of Dòmhnall" and is considered a variation of MacDonald. A branch from very early in the MacDonald line became the Clanranalds and a branch from them settled on the mainland near Inverness. The MacDonnell name itself is found in two distinct families known as MacDonnell of Keppoch and MacDonnell of Glengarry for the areas both families settled.

The Glengarry branch of Clan Donald originates from the marriage of Randal, son of John, first Lord of the Isles and Amy MacRuaridh, heiress to a vast inheritance of lands in the Outer Hebrides. Their second son Donald founded the Glengarry line. The MacDonalls of Keppoch descend from Alastair Carrach, third son of John, first Lord of the Isles. He acquired his lands

through the marriage settlement of John and his second father-in-law, Robert II when his estates were agreed to be apportioned between the children of both his marriages.

Alastair fought alongside Donald of the Isles at the Battle of Harlaw in 1411, supporting his claim to the Earldom of Ross. For his part in 1431 in the insurrection led by Donald Balloch on behalf of the 3rd Lord of the Isles, he was forfeited and some of his lands in Lochaber were bestowed upon Duncan Mackintosh consequently leading to a long feud between the two clans.

In 1539, Alexander, Chief of Glengarry, received a Charter from James V for lands at Glengarry and Morar, half the lands of Lochalsh, Lochcarron and Lochbroom. Donald, 8th of Glengarry, lived to be over 100, during which time Glengarry was erected into a Free Barony. The chiefs of the Clan MacDonell of Glengarry were originally seated at Strome Castle, originally built for the Earls of Ross, it was made over to the Chief of Glengarry by James V in 1539. They later moved to Invergarry Castle and chose to spell their name MacDonnell, which is nearer the Gaelic original MacDhomhnuill.

The 12th chief of Keppoch, Alexander, and his brother Ronald, were both slain in 1663 in what is remembered as Tobair-nan-ceann, the Well of Heads, not far from Invergarry. The story tells that Alexander and Ronald were educated in Rome and whilst away their father died, leaving their uncle, Alastair Buidhe in charge until their return. On their return, Alexander set about improving the condition of his people and made it his endeavour "to drive all thieves and cattle-lifters from his boundaries. Their uncle became jealous of the changes and raised the idea of rebellion which in turn led to a minor clansman of Inverlair, to set out with his 6 sons and killed both Alexander and Ronald. If it hadn't been for the local bard, Ian Lom, the incident may have passed unavenged. He fled to Kintail where Sir James MacDonlad of Sleat heard of his plight and dispatched a party to bring the murderers to justice. The seven men were duly beheaded and the heads were taken to the chief of Glengarry, having been washed in the spring now marked by an 19th century obelisk depicting seven severed heads.

Both Glengarry and Keppoch MacDonnells, supported the Jacobite uprisings of 1715 and 1745 with the son of the 15th chief of Keppoch being among the men who attacked government soldiers who were preparing a surprise assault on the Glenfinnan gathering. This was the first strike at the government in the rising of 1745. He later fell at Culloden. Alasdair Ruadh, 13th Chief of



Glengarry, was captured and imprisoned in London and later spied for the Government, becoming known as 'Pickle the Spy.'

The last chief of the MacDonnells of Glengarry died in 1828 and the last of Keppoch died in 1889.



Strome castle

MacLeod



Clan MacLeod is descended from a man named Leòd, who was said to belong to the Norse family that ruled the Isle of Man in the 13th century. He owned lands on Harris and Skye, and married a daughter of the Norse 'seneschal', or governor, of Skye, who owned the lands round Dunvegan. There are two main branches, the MacLeods of Lewis, which acquired land on the mainland as well as the island of Raasay, and the MacLeods of Harris, who acquired Glenelg on the mainland, and built Dunvegan Castle on Skye.

The son of Malcolm, 3rd Chief of Macleod received a charter for two-thirds of Glenelg from King David II of Scotland, bringing the Macleods to the mainland, whilst his brother Murdoch, also named as 3rd Chief, married a MacNicol heiress of Lewis, Raasay and Assynt, where his son then became Torquil Og Macleod, 1st Chief of Lewes was granted a charter of lands and the castle of Assynt, by King David II about 1340 and in due course came into possession of Assynt, Coigach and Gairloch on the mainland. Torquil Og's son Neil, was the start of the line for the MacLeod's of Gairloch.

Sadly, the Gairloch line died out with Neil's grandson, Allan MacLeod who married the daughter of Alasdair Ionraic VI, High Chief of the MacKenzies of Kintail. This marriage would have been regarded as auspicious, however it turned out to be a disaster as it allowed the ambitious MacKenzies to get a foothold in Gairloch. The MacLeod's fought hard to drive the MacKenzie's out of their lands and the desperate skirmishes between the two clans at Glasleod, Loch an Fheidh, Leac an t-Saigheid, Kirkton or Clachan Bay were favourite themes around the ceilidh fires in Gairloch for hundreds of years later. Allan MacLeod V of Gairloch was succeeded by his only surviving son, Alexander.

The MacLeods of Dunvegan supported Robert the Bruce during the Wars of Independence and followed the Lords of the Isles at the Battle of Harlaw in 1411. They also fought for the Royalist Cause at the Battle of Worcester in 1651 and over 500 MacLeod Clansmen were killed making it impossible for them to participate affectively in either the 1715 or 1745 Jacobite Uprisings. They were however unconvinced of Prince Charles Edward Stuarts ability and resources to succeed that they would have refused to join him.

To this day the MacLeod name is most common in The Western Isles, Coigach and Gairloch and since the time of Leod, Dunvegan Castle has been the home of the MacLeod Chiefs for more than 750 years.



Flowerdale, Gairloch

Ross



There was an ancient Celtic earldom of Ross in the north-east of Scotland which is said to have been held by the descendants of Beolan a 10th century Norse chief in the North of Scotland. Beolan married Rollo, the daughter of a Viking adventurer and went on to become the first Duke of Normandy. The Earls of Ross, are said to have descended from Gillianrias, the son of the hereditary abbot at the monastery of Applecross and are often referred to as Clan Anrias or Gille Andras/Gillanders.

In 1214, when Alexander II led an army to the north to repress a rebellion by Donald Bane, who was claiming the throne, Fearchar MacinTagart ('Son of the Priest'), assisted the king and was rewarded with the title Earl of Ross. He was granted lands in North Argyll which thereafter became known as Wester Ross. In the next generation, his son was gifted land on the islands of Skye and Lewis. Unlike their followers, those who occupied the territories over which they held dominion, none of the early earls of Ross ever assumed the surname of Ross.

The clan and their chief served with distinction in the Wars of Independence against the English. Their chief was captured at the Battle of Dunbar in 1296 and was taken as a prisoner to London. He was released but was captured again while protecting Robert the Bruce's wife and daughter at the shrine of St Duthac in Tain. The clan fought bravely at Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 and the earl's seal is one of those on the Declaration of Arbroath in 1320.

Hugh, 4th Earl of Ross had married Maud Bruce (also known as Matilda), sister of Robert the Bruce, but Hugh was killed at the Battle of Halidon Hill in 1333. Their son died in 1372 and the earldom passed to their granddaughter Euphemia when the lands were acquired when the Macdonalds of the Isles were defeated in 1476 and the lands were subsequently confiscated by the Crown.

The surname survived and the chieftainship devolved to the Rosses of Balnagowan.

In 1651, Ross Clansmen fought for the Royalist Cause at the Battle of Worcester, where David, 12th of Balnagowan was taken prisoner and imprisoned in the Tower of London where, it is assumed, he died. After the death of his son in 1711, the Chieftainship passed to a kinsman, Ross of Pitcalnie, and Balnagowan Castle was later bought by Lieutenant-General Charles Ross of Hawkhead, whose family descended from the Lowland family of Ross.

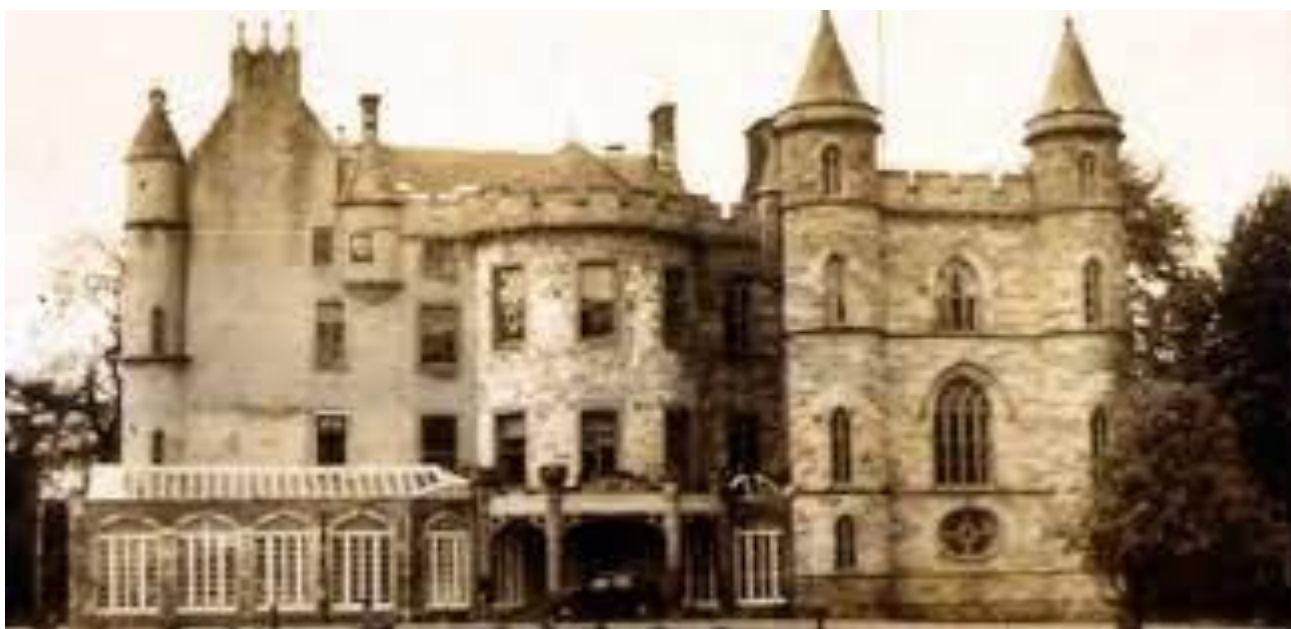


Balconie castle, Kiltearn

A Norman family called de Ros settled in south-west Scotland in the 11th century and some of their descendants also became known as Ross. This family of Ross's descended from the de Moreville family, from whom they held lands in Stewarton. In 1296, they rendered homage to Edward 1 of England. At one time they managed to convince the Lord Lyon that they were the chieftains of the clan Ross but this was overturned in 1903. The chieftainship was awarded to the family of Ross of Pitcalnie, heir of the line of David, last of the old family of Balnagowan.

Miss Rosa Williamson Ross was the 13th and last Laird of the Pitcalnie line and the 22nd Chief of Clan Ross and the last link with the old line of the Earls of Ross. At the time of her death in 1968 she still owned some of the original lands in Nigg. The Ross Chieftainship passed to David Ross of Ross and Shandwick, 29th Chief of Clan Ross.

Ross is still one of the five most frequent names in the northern Highlands and the 16th most frequently registered in 1995.



Balnagowan, Kildary

Mackenzie



The Mackenzie's were once the most powerful clan in the North of Scotland. They got to the top by acting as Royal agents for a succession of Scottish kings – being in effect the monarchy's strong men in the North. Centuries of Royal patronage, intrigue and ruthless ambition eventually delivered the Mackenzie's a territory originating in Kintail, to eventually dominating the Ross-shire landscape Westwards to the Isle of Lewis.

The Mackenzie's as a clan first came to prominence under Alexander Ionaic ('The Upright'), the 6th Baron of Kintail, who died in 1488. However, their lineage can be traced to the 11th century Celtic chief, Gilleoin na h'Airde, who was a direct descendent from the ancient High Kings of Ireland.

The name Mackenzie derives from the Gaelic name MacCoinneach (son of Kenneth) which translates as 'son of the fair one'. The 3rd Baron of Kintail being known as Coinneach MacCoinneach (Kenneth son of Kenneth), with the clan sharing its ancestry with Clan Matheson and Clan Anrias.



The chiefs of the clan Mackenzie were loyal to the royal Stuart dynasty and supported Mary Queen of Scots in her short and troubled reign, and became fervent Jacobites after the Royal house was forced into exile in 1688. As a consequence, the crown forfeited Mackenzie estates after the failed Jacobite rebellion of 1746. Following a period of reconciliation, the once proud Mackenzie chiefs become British aristocrats.

The first castle to be associated with the Mackenzie clan is Redcastle at Killearnan, where Kenneth MacKenzie of Kintail lived in 1492. As the MacKenzie's began to rise in stature over the subsequent years, so too did the castle, with the reigning monarch, Mary, Queen of Scots, stayed at the property in 1552. The MacKenzie's would stay in control of the castle for the next two centuries as it survived numerous wars thanks to its Northern location within the British Isles. In fact, so far away from London was the castle that it would be the last place in Scotland to hold out against the troops of Oliver Cromwell in 1649.



Redcastle, Killearnan



Eilean Donan castle on Loch Duich is another well-known Mackenzie stronghold with other seats being established further East in the 16th century at Kinellan and Castle Leod near Strathpeffer, and then in the 17th century set up court in the castles of Chanonry and Brahan on the Black Isle. Lesser-known branches also held seats at Kilcoy, Kinraig and Kinkell castles.

Traditionally, MacKenzie of Seaforth, chief of the clan, was known as 'Caberfeidh', meaning deer's antlers. The direct male line of the Mackenzie chiefs became extinct after the death of Francis Mackenzie Humberston in 1815 - the last Mackenzie Lord Seaforth. The Brahan Seer famously foretold the tragic circumstances of his death two centuries earlier. He predicted that the last of the chiefs would die a deaf mute. Mackenzie, whose sight and hearing were destroyed by scarlet fever, eerily fulfilled the ancient prophecy. He outlived his four sons, and the direct line died out.



Brahan Castle, Brahan

In 1979, Roderick Grant Francis Blunt-Mackenzie, 4th Earl of Cromartie legally changed his surname to Mackenzie and was appointed chief of Clan Mackenzie by the Lord Lyon King of Arms. Although not descended from a Mackenzie in the male line, he inherited his titles through his mother who was distantly related to the old Mackenzie Lords of Seaforth.



Kinraig Castle, Kinraig



Kilcoy Castle, Killearnan



Fairburn Tower, Marybank



Kinkell Castle, Easter Kinkell



Castle Leod, Strathpeffer

