



A guide to some  
**MacLennan Places**  
across Scotland



**Bruce A McLennan**

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Cover: Five Sisters of Kintail and Loch Duich (Author photo 2010)

A guide to some

# MacLennan Places across Scotland

Some places your McLennan ancestors could have known, from the 1800s and earlier

Bruce A McLennan  
for Clan Gathering, Inverness, July 2018

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During the 18<sup>th</sup> century McLennans lived in the country parishes of Gairloch, Lochalsh, Contin, Applecross, Kintail, on Lewis and Harris and elsewhere. See more in [Clan Stats](#).

Over the next hundred years, often with their parents or spouses, many would migrate to the cities of Inverness, Glasgow and Edinburgh and/or overseas to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, USA and elsewhere, leaving behind only small traces of their former lives.

Scotland boasts an unrivalled variety of buildings and landscapes that can inspire you in your search for your ancestors. From tower houses to tenements, castles to crofts, and mansions to museums, there are amazing places to visit right across Scotland, and all with stories to tell.

This booklet identifies a few places where Clan events took place or families lived. There are of course many more places related to specific families.

For further information about particular places your own family might have lived, I recommend:

[Old Statistical Account](#) about 1790s

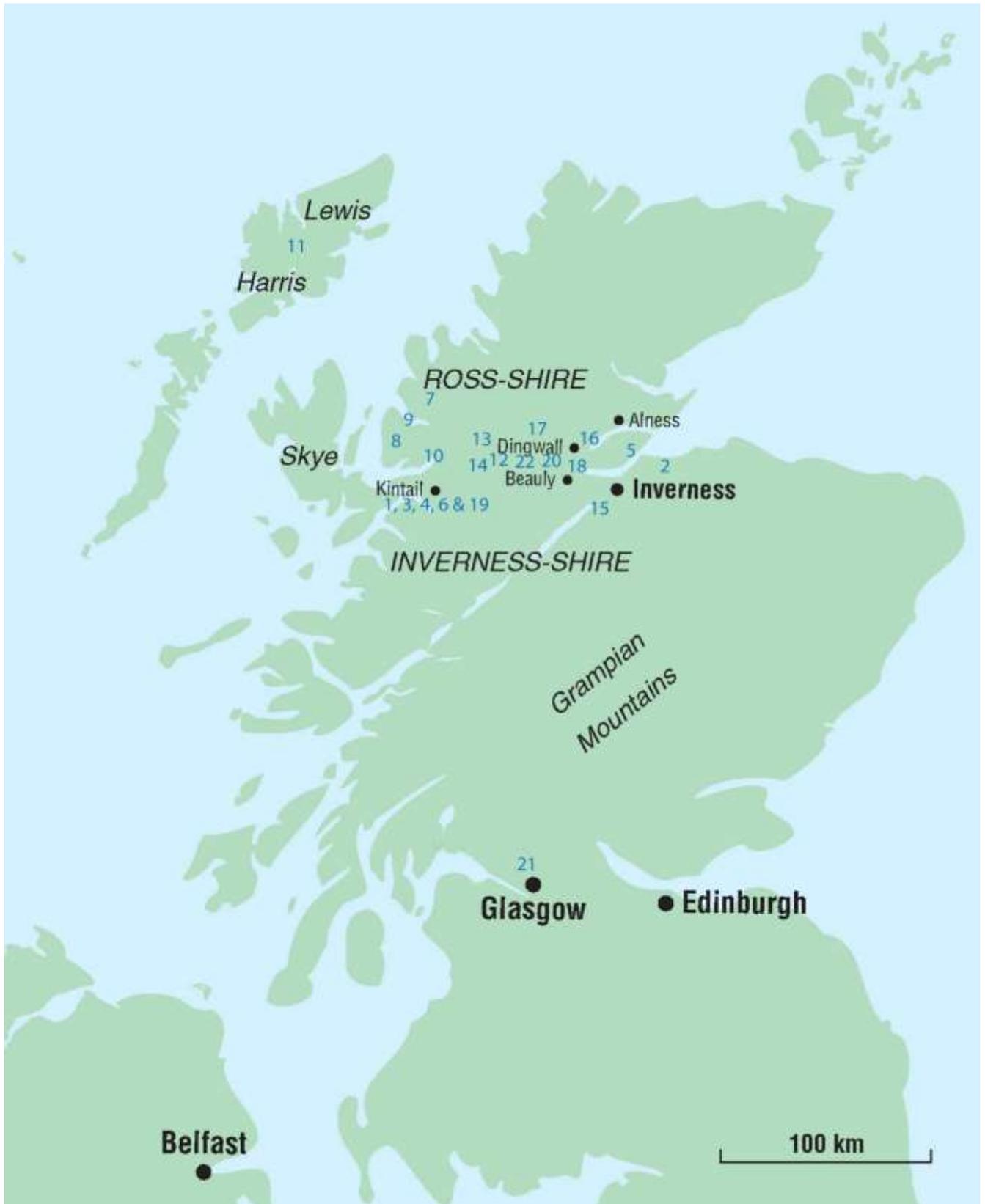
[New Statistical Account](#) about 1840s

[ScotlandsPlaces](#)

References such as (i867), are the ID numbers for the person in the Clan Genealogy resource at [www.clanmaclennan-worldwide.com/genealogy/](http://www.clanmaclennan-worldwide.com/genealogy/)

By using the “**Notes**” search function on [www.clanmaclennan-worldwide.com/genealogy/](http://www.clanmaclennan-worldwide.com/genealogy/), – click the link to “Notes” – you can often find places you might read about elsewhere.

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# 1. Clachan Duich burial grounds, Kintail

Kintail, the Clan homeland, has two burial grounds (Old and New) around the ruins of the former Kintail parish church. Many Mac/McLennans are buried here.

*Pic: McLennan headstones at Clachan Duich as used on Clan Genealogy (Author photo 2010)*

Co-ordinates: [57.2340,-5.4039](#)



The former Kintail parish church (now a ruin) has a long history. The Glenshiel parish was part of a larger Kintail parish before 1745. The Old Statistical Account (1790s) advises that, when the McRaes arrived in Kintail from the Braes of Aird on the Fraser Estate (Kirkhill, about 10 km west of Inverness), “there were several clans inhabiting it, particularly the Mac Aulays, of whom no vestige now remains. The Mac Lennans [sic], a small tribe in the parish of Glensheal [sic], were the only people that would not yield.

A Rev Donald MacLennan was a minister (probably assistant) at Kintail parish after 21 July 1674.

Before 1681 a Donald McRae became the minister and remained there through the 1715 Jacobite Rising. He was the fourth son of Alexander McRae of Inverinatie, just about 3 km (2 ml) west of Clachan Duich. Clachan Duich burial ground is built around the remains of the former Kintail Church dedicated to St Dubhthac. The church building at Clachan Duich was still in use until 1855. Donald McRae had been a schoolmaster at Fortrose on the Black Isle before he was admitted to the Kintail parish. He was still in the charge in 1716 even though he refused to conform to Presbyterianism. He was an ardent Jacobite. Both he and his family took a prominent part in the Rising of 1715 and also in the Attempt of 1719 that ended in the defeat at Glenshiel. His church was burned down by the crew of one of the warships that sailed into Loch Duich at that time. Donald died shortly afterwards. Two of Donald’s children, Colin and Christopher, were killed at Sherriffmuir. Another, John Og, joined the Roman Catholic Mission in Kintail.

The Kintail Minister before Culloden was Rev John MacLean, educated at Marischal College, Aberdeen in 1714 and ordained in 1730. After the Battle of Culloden, “the Hanoverian troops under Lord George Sackville entered the parish, driving cattle and plundering. To protect the parishioners, then loyal subjects, the minister appeared before him, but, from the simplicity of his dress Sackville took him for an imposter, drew a loaded pistol and ordered him to bring his library forthwith. This MacLean did and brought a volume of Poole’s *Annotations*, which was deemed satisfactory.” ([FASTI](#), Vol VII, page 152)

A Donald McLennan ([i37552](#)) was presented by George III and, according to FASTI, was ordained in September 1774. After nearly six years at Kintail, Donald McLennan died in 1780. He was known in Kintail as “Maistir Domhnul”. His headstone in the Clachan Duich has a different ordination date: “Sacred to the memory of DONALD McLENNAN who was ordained minister of Kintail 1st September 1771, who died on the 12th day of July 1780.” ([FASTI](#), Vol VII, page 152) Look for his headstone in the cemetery.

In 1781 Rev Donald McLennan was replaced by Roderick Morison, a native of the Strathglass. This was Rev Roderick Morison, who wrote the “Old Statistical Account” of Kintail. He was succeeded as minister there by his son and then his grandson – and, so, the family were ministers there for 116 years. The later Morisons acted as registrar of births, deaths and marriages and as census enumerators. Look for the headstone devoted to the three Morison ministers.

The photo of headstones used as the masthead for our Genealogy Pages (also above) is of a group of Mac/McLennan headstones beside the church ruin.

Rev Duncan MacLennan ([i8167](#)) became the minister at Kintail in 1920 and was there for 17 years. He had been born in Kingussie and, after study, inducted to Glenelg. In 1903 he and his family migrated to the challenging ministry at Waipu in New Zealand and in 1905 he accepted a call to Dundin before returning to Scotland. He had married Isabella Margaret McPherson from Eigg in 1893. Their son, Norman McPherson MacLennan MD, born 1895, had become a medical doctor in Kenya and another son, Roderick Diarmid MacLennan MA, born 1898, became a lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh. Roderick served in WW1, and became a Professor of Philosophy at Canada's McGill University before being ordained as a minister himself. Rev Roderick Diarmid MacLennan MA was translated into the charge of Kintail from which he only retired in 1964. In 1962 he was conferred the degree of Doctor of Divinity. Roderick Diarmid MacLennan, MA DD was also buried at the Clachan Duich graveyard in 1977, aged 77 years. Look for the memorial to Rev Duncan in the Clachan Duich Churchyard.



*Clachan Duich old burial ground (Author photos)*

The grandmother of Colonel Farquhar MacLennan ([i10245](#)), DSO (Catherine) was the sister of Christopher McRae, who, when he left for the army, composed a lament which he called "*Leaving Loch Duich*". This lament remained more or less forgotten until about 1907 when Colonel MacLennan was stationed at Fort George, he asked the piper to play "*Leaving Loch Duich*". The piper had never heard of it so the Colonel took one of the menu cards and wrote the score on the back of it, thereby rescuing it from oblivion. The tune is now no longer played as a lament but as a retreat or slow air, and the title shortened to *Loch Duich*. ([The History of the MacLennans](#), by Chief Ronald G MacLennan, page 224)

***Directions:***

From Shiel Bridge head west, after crossing the River Croe bridge, in 500 m take side road right.

***Further Reading:***

Old Statistical Account of Scotland - [Kintail](#)

## 2. Battle of Auldearn 1645 site

The 1645 Battle of Auldearn, part of the Wars of Three Kingdoms, is one of the most significant events in MacLennan history. The Clan Chief, and many other Clansmen including several brothers, were killed defending the McKenzie Standard.



Co-ordinates: [57.5777, -3.8122](#)

The Battle of Auldearn took place on 9 May 1645, in and around the village of Auldearn in Nairnshire – about 30 km (20 ml) east of Inverness.

In England in the early 1640s the Parliament was in Civil War with King Charles. At that time, Scotland was controlled by Covenanters but at first they didn't join the war between Parliament and King even though they had previously been against the King. In early 1644 Scottish forces invaded northern England with success. But in the summer of 1644, King Charles appointed James Graham, **Marquis of Montrose** as Captain General in Scotland. Although Montrose had previously fought against the King as a Covenanter commander during the Bishops War, he had opposed the subsequent power of the Presbyterian leadership under Archibald Campbell, Marquis of Argyll. Montrose achieved a number of rapid successes. After Montrose's famous victory at Inverlochy, he marched his force along the Great Glen to Inverness and then on towards Elgin.

Major-General **Sir John Hurry** (also known as Urry) was sent in pursuit of Montrose with a Covenanter army. On the evening of the 8 May 1645, the Royalists were camped to the east of Auldearn and planning to march on Inverness the next day. Hurry who was near Inverness planned a surprise attack on the Royalist camp at dawn on 9 May. He force marched his recently reinforced troops towards Auldearn overnight.

However, during the night the Marquis had become aware of the Covenanter presence. Because there had been torrential rain, Hurry had ordered his musketeers to fire their matchlocks to confirm that they were still functional. The shots were heard by the Royalist scouts who reported back to their command.

In the morning the Covenanters including McKenzies (and McLennans) were lined up west of the Auldearn Burn. Most of the Royalists were east of the village out of sight of the Covenanters. A small part of the Royalist forces, Irish troops under the command of General Alasdair MacColla, moved through the village and out to the field between the village and the Burn. Hurry sent two detachments to meet MacColla's Irish troops: Clan McKenzie, under George McKenzie, Earl of Seaforth and Lawer's Regiment of Foot, under Sir Mungo Campbell. Outnumbered, the Irish troops were forced back towards the village.

Hurry then sent his cavalry, led by Major Drummond, against MacColla's troops. Major Drummond made an infamous blunder when he gave the wrong order to his cavalry and they wheeled to the left, cutting down some of their own forces. Montrose now sent his own cavalry into action. Under Lord Aboyne, the Royalist cavalry launched an attack to the south of MacColla. They drove off Drummond's Covenanter cavalry which fled into the Lawer and Seaforth lines. Shaken, both infantry regiments fell back but not until a second Royalist charge were they routed. Royalists smashed into the main Covenanter line. Fierce fighting followed, first with ranged musket shot and then closing into hand-to-hand combat. Although outnumbered, the Royalists had the momentum and the entire Covenanter force broke into rout.

The McLennans, led by their Chief, Ruairidh Mclan Domhnull Bhain ([i29041](#)), while carrying Lord Seaforth's Standard were cut down. Chief Ruairidh, the hereditary Standard-bearer of the McKenzies, and his brothers, Donald and Duncan Mclan, were reportedly found, in death, protecting the Standard.



*Auldearn Battlefield from McLennan's perspective (Battlefields of Britain)*

***Directions:***

Approaching from Inverness, (on the west side of the village) take the first road on the left a few hundred metres to the car park. On foot follow the sign to "Boath Doocot and Battlefield Viewpoint". The dovecot is built on the site of an early castle.

***Further Reading:***

[www.battlefieldsofbritain.co.uk/battle\\_auldearn\\_1645.html](http://www.battlefieldsofbritain.co.uk/battle_auldearn_1645.html)

*Ridge of Tears*, [Dr] Jon G McLennan, 1980, page 31

*History Scotland* podcast episode 40 – [Auldearn Battlefield and Eilean Donan](#)

(<https://historyscotland.podbean.com/e/episode-40-auldearn-battlefield-and-eilean-donan/> )

### 3. Five Sisters of Kintail – bagging Munros

The Five mountain “Sisters” of Kintail are one of the most beautiful spots in Britain, central to the homeland of our Clan.

Co-ordinates: [57.2058, -5.3522](#)



The “Five Sisters of Kintail” mountains are not only Scottish icons, and one of the most beautiful views in the country, but they are central to MacLennan folk lore. For viewpoints you can drive along the southern shore of Loch Duich – towards Letterfearn – or take the high road to Glenelg from Shiel Bridge. The Five Sisters are now owned by the National Trust of Scotland (NTS).

Many MacLennans lived at Morvich, Inverinate, Shiel Bridge, Dornie, Ardelve, Killilan, Sallachy, Camus-luinie, etc. It is important also to notice how much of the terrain is not suitable for crops or grazing.

As the chorus of “Return to Kintail” by Ross McLennan has it: “Five Sisters they are calling ...”.

In a different tune, “MacLennans Return to Kintail”, by W M MacLennan verse 2 expresses the same sentiment:

Strong still run the Mountain rills  
Through Kintail’s deserted Hills:  
As strong hearts that sorrow borne  
To leave Kintail for ever-more

As firm they stand, the Sisters Five  
As breathes the hope that keeps alive  
And fierce in each MacLennan burns:  
“MacLennan to Kintail Returns!”

Nearby are the Falls of Glomach – a 5 to 6 hour straightforward hillwalk with a good path. See [www.walkhighlands.co.uk/kintail/Fallsofglomach.shtml](http://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/kintail/Fallsofglomach.shtml)

Why not “bag” a few “Munros” while you’re here? A “Munro” is a mountain in Scotland with a height over 914 m (3,000 feet), named for Sir Hugh Munro, 4th Baronet (1856–1919), who produced the first list of them, known as Munro's Tables, in 1891. Three of the “Sisters” qualify as Munros. With preparation, fitness and good weather, the 15 km Five Sisters Walk can be completed in 8 to 10 hours.

The website [www.walkhighlands.co.uk/kintail/Fivesisters.shtml](http://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/kintail/Fivesisters.shtml) provides guidance for good conditions. Most walkers go along the ridge from east to west with spectacular views in all directions.

NTS rangers lead guided walks over the five peaks - one of the country's finest one day hill walks. Good fitness levels required. Phone from inside UK: 0131 458 0200. Phone from outside UK: +44 (0) 131 458 0303  
Web: [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk) or [kintail@nts.org.uk](mailto:kintail@nts.org.uk)

NTS video: [www.nts.org.uk/Nature-Channel/View/The-Five-Sisters-of-Kintail/](http://www.nts.org.uk/Nature-Channel/View/The-Five-Sisters-of-Kintail/)

The following photo, along the Kintail Ridge, shows Whin (or gorse) in bloom. The whin was worn by the Plantagenets and was adopted by our Clan, as part of our badge, after giving warning of enemy approach during darkness.



*Blooming Whin on North Kintail Ridge (Neil McLennan)*

***Directions:***

Turn south off the A87 at Shiel Bridge, then head west along the Old Military Road, after about 1 km choose to turn right to go along the shore of Loch Duich (to Ratagan towards Letterfearn), or continue up the hill to a higher vantage point.

***Further Reading:***

[\*The History of the MacLennans\*](#), Chief Ronald G MacLennan of MacLennan, 2012 edition (on-line), page 58

## 4. Battle of Glenshiel 1719 site

The Battle of Glenshiel, in a narrow point in the glen near Kintail, included Highlanders under William McKenzie, 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Seaforth

Co-ordinates: [57.1662,-5.3185](#)



The Battle of Glenshiel took place on 10 June 1719 in the narrow glen east of Shiel Bridge.

William McKenzie, 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Seaforth, was a leader for the cause to restore the Stuart/Stewart dynasty to the throne of Britain (“Jacobites”). Seaforth had been exiled after the 1715 Jacobite “Rising”.

The McLennans and their allies (McRaes, Murchisons etc), as supporters of the McKenzies, usually supported the “Jacobite” cause in the so-called “Risings” between 1688 and 1746 which aimed to restore the Tories and James VII (of Scotland) and II (of England), and, later, his descendants of the House of Stuart, to the throne. Jacobus is Latin for James.

The “Glorious Revolution” of 1688 had resulted in the Roman Catholic James fleeing to exile in France, under the protection of Louis XIV. James’ daughter and her husband, who was also James’s nephew Dutch-born William of Orange, had become joint sovereigns as William III and Mary II. In 1690 Presbyterianism was established as the state religion of Scotland. The Act of Settlement 1701 settled the succession of the English throne on the Protestant House of Hanover. The Acts of Union 1707 applied the Act of Settlement to Scotland. With the death of Queen Anne in 1714, the Elector of Hanover, George I, succeeded to the British throne. The accession of George I ushered in the Whig supremacy, with the Tories deprived of all political power. After the House of Hanover succeeded to the British throne in 1714, the uprisings continued, and intensified. In 1714 William Mackenzie, 5th Earl of Seaforth, was ordered to confine himself to his Brahan Castle near Conon Bridge.

In 1715 Anne’s half-brother, James Francis Edward Stuart, from France had called on the Earl of Mar to raise the Clans as part of widespread support. The Earl of Mar rushed from London to Scotland and, on 27 August at Braemar, held the first council of war in support of James. He summoned clan leaders to “a grand hunting-match” on 27 August 1715. On 6 September he proclaimed James as “their lawful sovereign” raised the old Scottish standard of “James the 8th and 3rd”, accompanied by 600 supporters. Mar’s proclamation brought in an alliance of clans and northern Lowlanders, and they quickly overran many parts of the Highlands before suffering some setbacks (esp. Sheriffmuir) and eventual defeat – the withdrawal had not won support from Highlanders.

George Keith (10th Earl Marischal) was a Scot who became a diplomat and Prussian Army Officer. For his part in the ‘15, he was attainted by the Hanoverian government, his estates were forfeited. He fled to the continent and went on to serve the Jacobite court at Avignon and to be its ambassador to Spain. In 1719 with France at peace with Britain, the Jacobites found a new ally in Spain’s Minister to the King, Cardinal Giulio Alberoni. A fleet left the Basque port of Pasaia (alongside San Sebastián) under command of George Keith and quickly occupied the Isle of Lewis. On April 1719 they went ashore at Lochalsh accompanied by William McKenzie, 5th Earl of Seaforth and were joined by several hundred Highlanders (not as many as hoped). Keith established his headquarters at the McKenzie fort on Donan’s Island (Eilean Donan). The main body went south to generate more interest among the Highlanders leaving a small garrison (40 – 50 Spanish soldiers) at Eilean Donan.

In early May, three Hanoverian ships pounded the castle with cannon-fire and their forces were able to go ashore and easily capture the castle. The castle was reduced almost to rubble and would remain so for more than 200 years. The Spanish prisoners were taken to Edinburgh.

In early June the Jacobite forces were advancing along the Shiel glen about 30 km from Eilean Donan where the Hanoverians had established a position blocking the narrow valley. The first attack from the red coats was on Lord George on the south side slopes, next on two hundred of Lord Seaforth's men on the opposite slope who were behind a steep rock. John McKenzie of Coul moved to support the rest of the McKenzies which only resulted in their enemy pushing harder there. Many of the Highlanders drifted away. Seaforth, was badly wounded at this point but was carried to a ship by his followers, and, escaping to the Western Isles, and then back to France.

It is often said this was the last time foreign soldiers invaded the British mainland. But that honour properly goes to the Battle of Fishguard, North Wales, in 1797.



*Battle of Glenshiel by Peter Tillemans*

Following these operations, military roads (also known as parliamentary roads) were built around Scotland to achieve better control of Highlanders, who naturally treated the roads with suspicion.

***Directions:***

Heading west along the A87, the Battle site is marked on the right about 15 km (about 10 miles) after the Cluanie Inn.

***Further Reading:***

[The Jacobite Attempt of 1719](#), 1895, William K Dickson – go to page 272

## 5. The Ridge of Tears – Cairns of Drumderfit

Renowned piper “GS” McLennan wrote a famous tune to commemorate the defeat of the MacLennans at Drumderfit – the Ridge of Tears – Our Clan War Cry.

*Pic: Drumderfit ridge from across Munloch Bay (Author photo 2018)*

Co-ordinates: [57.5429, -4.2390](#)



In his *“The History of the MacLennans”* book Chief Ronald acknowledged the defeat of the MacLennans in 1372 by the McRaes of Aird and Frasers (of Lovat) at the Battle of Drumderfit – by which they were dispossessed of their lands. Drumderfit is near Munloch on the Black Isle, about 5 km due north of Inverness, as the crow flies. The survivors retreated to the ridge of Druim Dubh. Even today cairns stand to remind us of the magnitude of this defeat.

The renowned late Pipe-Major George Stewart (“GS”) McLennan ([i11739](#)) of the Scottish Highlanders (1884 – 1929), composed the clan tune “Cairns of Drumderfit” in memory of those who fell at the battle.

The composer was described in *“Pipetunes”* as follows:

“ ‘G S’ was not a healthy young boy and suffered with polio as a child. He learned pipes at age 4, first from his father and later from his uncle, Pipe Major John Stewart, whom he later commemorated with a march. Aged 10 he performed, with bag-pipes, for Queen Victoria at Balmoral Castle.”

"Those who heard him say his fingers were miraculous. His astonishing technical prowess contributed to an important evolution in Highland pipe technique in the early part of the twentieth century. As a composer of bagpipe music, the quality and lasting appeal of his tunes are unequalled. As a person he was modest, generous and well-liked by his peers. But on the strength of his light music playing alone his name would almost certainly be included in lists of the top three pipers ever."



*“GS” McLennan after he played for Queen Victoria*

“GS” also wrote the famous “Major John McLennan March” in honour of his cousin Major and Quartermaster, 1st Battn. (75th Foot) The Gordon Highlanders. (Clan database ID number [i9091](#))

Their ancestor, Duncan McLennan ([i35185](#)), was a piper at Waterloo.

Attached to the page for “GS” McLennan in the Clan genealogy resources is an article written in 1966 [“A Remarkable Family Tree”](#).

Chief Ronald disproved the story – still often heard – that the only surviving MacLennan, being the son of a Drumderfit warrior and a daughter of Fraser of Lovat, whose back was broken and he was given to the monks of Beaulieu to raise. A popular verse of MacLennan women was said to be:

Oh cursed be the Fraser  
and cursed be his clan  
each hag in her hovel  
each child and each man.



Pipe-Major George Stewart MacLennan (1883-1929), in 1906

The 1910 *“History of Clan Macrae with Genealogies”* acknowledges that the Macraes arrived in Kintail “probably during the first half of the fourteenth century, before the family of Mackenzie was very firmly established there”. “It is said that Ellandonan [sic] Castle was garrisoned by Macraes and MacLennans during the latter part of the thirteenth century, when it was first taken possession of by Kenneth, the founder of the (McKenzie) House of Kintail.”

“GS” is remembered by a headstone at the Edinburgh Echo Bank (Newington) cemetery.

The decimation of the MacLennans at Drumderfit is also referred to in *“Historical Tales of the Wars of Scotland And of the Border Raids, Forays and Conflicts”* by John Parker Lawson (1839), Vol 1, pages 270-272: “Such havoc was caused to the unfortunate MacLennans, that the hill on which the battle was fought is to this day called *Dun-a-dear*, or *Hill of Tears*.”

Described in [Place Names of Ross and Cromarty](#), 1904, page 138.

We might note also a reference in the *Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland Vol 4*, pp 446-447, edited by Francis Hindes Groome, and published in the 1880s: “On the Drumderfit ridge above Munloch are numerous cairns; and a large one on the western part of the ridge is believed to commemorate the Battle of Blair-na-coi (‘field of lamentation’), in which, in 1340, the Macdonalds were routed by a night attack of the townfolk of Inverness.” A similar story. Also see [Canmore](#).

#### **Directions:**

Co-ordinates above are for the Cairns position are from Dr Jon’s book. I was not able to find cairns at this location. The growth is quite dense and forestry operations may have damaged the site. A start-point for a walk is at [57.5387, -4.2603](#). Please advise corrections to [famhist@clanmaclennan-worldwide.com](mailto:famhist@clanmaclennan-worldwide.com)

#### **Further Reading:**

[www.electricscotland.com/history/wars/](http://www.electricscotland.com/history/wars/)

*Ridge of Tears*, [Dr] Jon G MacLennan, 1980, page 11

[Drumderfit Hill Walk](#)

Doesn’t seem to be <https://canmore.org.uk/site/13592/drumderfit-hill>

## 6. Croc nan Aingeal “Angel Hill”, Lochalsh parish

“Angel Hill” near the Lochalsh church is historically significant to both McLennans and McKenzies.

*Pic: Angel Hill (Tina Glen-Riddell, 2018)*

Co-ordinates: [57.2860, -5.6000](#)



For centuries the main Lochalsh parish church was (and still is) at a locality known as Kirkton – about 8 km (5 ml) east of the township of Kyle of Lochalsh. There are many Mac/McLennans buried in the churchyard there. Until the railway arrived in 1897, the present-day Kyle of Lochalsh locality was of little significance.

John McKillican of Alness became minister at Lochalsh in 1719, having been ordained at Dingwall, but he doesn't seem to have ever resided in the parish. He was on his way to attend a meeting with the Presbytery in 1724 but was “rabbed” and the meeting was not held. The next minister was Donald McLeod. He had been educated at Kings' College, Aberdeen (MA, 1715), licenced to the Presbytery of Aberdeen in 1719, and ordained to Contin in 1720. He was called to Lochalsh by the Presbytery on 27 October 1726 and admitted on 3 July 1727.

On 24 March 1727 a Mr Eneas Sage had reported to the Presbytery that the local people were not attending church. The Presbytery noted the Loch Alsh church building was in disrepair and provision had not been made for a Glebe, or Manse and, to rectify this they identified four acres of arable land (called “Staffs”) adjacent to Ardhill and a half acre for a Manse, office and garden.

The existing Tenant on this chosen land, Alexander McLennan ([i28647](#)) and others, were ordered to leave. Four years later Rev Donald McLeod petitioned the Presbytery that “the people of this paroch of Lochalsh, upon whom your petitioner bestowed his poor labours these four years, did neither submit to the Gospel nor afford the least ground to hope they will submit”. He still did not have a Manse and the “church is become of late much more ruinous than when Presbytery did visit the same...”. It was later reported Alexander McLennan was still occupying the land (as an “intruder”) and assistance had to be sought from the Sheriff of Ross to remove him.

In 1745 the two Commissioners appointed by the Presbytery to attend the General Assembly in Edinburgh (in May) gave the excuse that they had been unable to make the journey because of the on account of the rebels still roaming the country following the Battle of Culloden. The minutes of the Synod of Glenelg (of which Glenshiel, Kintail and Lochalsh are a part) for 20 June 1746 recorded that they met “in thankfulness for the deliverance they as a whole nation had just experienced from the late most wicked and unnatural rebellion” and indeed they went further by sending a message of thanks and congratulations to the Duke of Cumberland! (“We have to remember that, had the rebellion succeeded, the re-establishment of Roman Catholicism or Episcopacy and persecution of Presbyterians could once again have been the outcome.”). It was not until 1861 that Messrs Beaton (Bethune) and McLeod (ministers of Glenshiel and Lochalsh respectively) came back to the Presbytery with a proposal from Lord Fortrose to build churches 36 feet (11 m) long and sixteen feet (5 m) wide in each parish – which was approved.

The current church was built in 1806.

The “Angel Hill” is on the opposite side of the road to the church, a few hundred metres east, and set back from the road. It is thought this hill could once had been a fort – it is known as “Cnoc nan Aingeal” in Gaelic – meaning fire beacon, but commonly mistranslated “Angel hill”.

Ardhill is enshrined in McKenzie Clan lore – a (stylised) burning mount as appears on the Seaforths’ badge and ‘Tulloch Ard’ (the High Hillock), the clan’s war cry and slogan associated with mountain Sgùrr an Airgid further inland.

*McKenzie badge featuring a burning hill*



Today a cemetery on top of this ancient dun (hill), it has more headstones to McLennans than any other family. To find more about our Clan members buried there, just use [Advanced Search](#) (set with Cnoc nan Aingeal as burial place).



*Cnoc nan aingeal (“Angel Hill”), courtesy Tina Glen-Riddell, January 2018*

***Directions:***

About 100 m east of the Kirkton church, and on the opposite side of the A87, go through the gate just to the right of a house called Old Glebe and, after about 100 m more, turn right to head east again. A further several hundred metres, climb the (steep) path to the top of the dun (hill) – about 30 m climb.

***Further Reading:***

[www.megalithic.co.uk/article.php/mapserve/mapserve/article.php?sid=16592](http://www.megalithic.co.uk/article.php/mapserve/mapserve/article.php?sid=16592)

## 7. Gairloch parish

Gairloch during the 1800s had some of the largest concentrations of McLennans of any parish in Scotland. Many readers of this guide will find their ancestors are from here.

*Pic: Abandoned home, Cove (Author photo)*

Co-ordinates: [57.7651, -5.6052](#)



Of the Ross and Cromarty parishes, Gairloch has the most of Mac/McLennans born before 1900 of any (900 births). ScotlandsPeople statistics follow a similar pattern – of all Ross and Cromarty parishes, Gairloch has the most pre-1900 births (548). Our database has more because we know about births that were not recorded (for ScotlandsPeople) at the time (or records have been lost) but we know about these people for later censuses etc.

In earlier times Gairloch was valuable for the mineral iron and associated ironworks. Iron and iron-working brought in people from outside the parish. Cattle and fishery were also important to the economy. Like Lewis, Gairloch had been mainly in the hands of McLeods. About the year 1480 a “commission of fire and sword” was issued by the King, directing Hector Roy McKenzie to exterminate the Gairloch McLeods. This process took about a century to complete. After the McLeods were finally expelled from Gairloch and all the fights were over, John Roy applied to the crown for “remission” of himself and his sons for their lawless conduct during the struggle. This was granted by King James VI on 2 April 1614 and gives Roy John credit for “much and good benefit to His Majesty’s distressed subjects”. We can see from the above that there were numerous opportunities for McLennans from Kintail to make the move to Gairloch under the leadership of McKenzies.

The McKenzies of Gairloch (the First of Gairloch was John’s uncle) were in conflict with the Seaforth branch until the head of that branch was captured and murdered in Eilean Donan in the late 1540s. In 1703 Sir Kenneth McKenzie, eldest son of Alexander, the seventh laird of Gairloch, was created baronet of Nova Scotia by Queen Anne. These baronetcies were conferred on proprietors to support migration to Nova Scotia. He was educated at Oxford and represented Ross-shire in the Scottish Parliament where he strongly opposed Union with England. Many McLennans from Gairloch and nearby parishes would find their way to Cape Breton and other parts of Canada in the centuries that followed.

The Old Statistical Account in the 1790s says:

“Gairloch has been for many ages famous for the cod-fishing. Sir Hector McKenzie of Gairloch, the present proprietor, tends to market annually, upon an average, between 30,000 and 40,000 cod, exclusive of the number with which the country people serve themselves. Gairloch has also from time immemorial been remarkable for the herring-fishing. The coast of this parish abounds in very safe harbours for vessels of all dimensions.”

The population of Gairloch rose from about 1,500 in 1801 to nearly 4,500 in 1831. The language universally spoken was Gaelic – “... I am not aware that it has lost ground within the last forty years”. Peat was the only form of fuel used. It is often repeated that there were no clearances in Gairloch because of the good relations between the tenants and their long-standing lairds.

Our Chief's ancestor, Roderick McLennan 1836-1887 ([i5322](#)), came from Aultbea in Gairloch.

John McLennan ([i35784](#)) from [Culconich](#) near Aultbea had many family members who migrated to Australia.

Gairloch has been popular with visitors since Victorian times. The 1886 book recommended in the Further Reading section is evidence of this. Explore attractions such as Inverewe Gardens at Poolewe. There are wonderful beaches all along this section of Scottish coast from Red Point in the south right up to Gruinard Bay in the north. There are a great variety of walks of different lengths and degrees of ease/difficulty (see Further Reading).

[Inverewe Gardens](#) at Poolewe were begun by Osgood Mackenzie in 1862, planting a shelter belt, and since then, under the custody of the National Trust for Scotland, the Gardens have expanded enormously. The House is now also open to the public following a £2million restoration in 2016.

The [Gairloch Heritage Museum](#) has examples of croft houses, fishing boats, crofting tools, and much more. It also has a useful archive and library facility for genealogical research.

There is a [MacLennan Park](#) on the headland at Aultbea. Roddy MacLennan ([i29824](#)) was district and regional councillor from 1980 to -87. He was born and lived in Achgarve, near Laide. He died before the pitch was finished, but he had been told it would be named after him. He is buried in the old cemetery in Laide.



*From Sand of Gairloch, looking towards to Torridon mountains (Solus B & B, Big Sand by Gairloch)*

**Directions:**

All roads into the large parish of Gairloch will take you first to Kinlochewe

**Further Reading:**

*Gairloch and Guide to Loch Maree*, 1886, by J H Dixon – available from Gairloch & District Heritage Society

*New Statistical Account of Scotland*, 1845 - [Gairloch](#)

[Walking Highlands](#) – Gairloch, Poolewe and Aultbea

## 8. Applecross parish

The parish of Applecross once had one of the highest McLennan populations of any in Ross-shire. Since then many have migrated to Canada, New Zealand, Australia and USA, as well as other parts of Scotland.

Pic: Applecross churchyard (Author 2014)

Co-ordinates: [57.4859, -5.7368](#)



The term Applecross usually refers to the whole of the peninsula – including settlements around Torridon and Shieldaig. In the early 1800s this parish had the second largest number of McLennan births of any Ross-shire parish. Much of the area was and still is mountainous and uncultivated.

The Christian missionary Maelrubha was born in Londonderry in 642, and in 671 sailed from Bangor to Scotland to found a new monastic settlement. Two years later “...the saint at last reached Abercrossan, now Applecross in Rossshire, and in the midst of beautiful and romantic scenery he recognised that he had at last discovered the site for which he had been in search for so long a period” (*Archaeological Light on the Early Christianizing of Scotland*, 1933, G A Frank Knight). Here he established his monastery and declared the area within a six mile radius a sanctuary – understood to be the first Christian settlement on the mainland of Scotland. The former Clachan Church (pictured above) has a number of McLennan headstones and features the grave of Maelrubha himself.

Rev John Macqueen (who we know for his birth and marriage registers had terrible handwriting) wrote the Old Statistical Account in the 1790s. He tells us there were “1734 souls” in the parish. At the time Black cattle, butter, cheese, fish and kelp, are the exports of this parish. According to the Account:

“Black cattle is the great article, from which the farmer principally derives his emolument, and the landlord his rent. There are generally about 3000 black cattle small and great, in the parish. During the summer and harvest, they pasture upon the low grounds, which produces grass of a finer and more nourishing quality than is to be found in any part of Sky[e], or the other adjacent islands. The cattle are for the most part coupled, i.e. have but one calf between every 2 cows, by these means the calf is better fed, a greater quantity of butter and cheese is manufactured, the bulling secured, and no superfluous stock kept on hand.”

“The haddock, cuddie, skate, whiting, and flounder, are to be got all along the coast of this parish, but not being used for exportation, and having no ready market at hand, they are only sought after, either to gratify the desire, or relieve the necessities, of the present moment. The herring occasionally frequents all our bays, creeks, and harbours, which are numerous, and being a favourite fish, not only for exportation, but for home consumption, it is in all seasons greedily pursued. From the middle of July to the 11th of September, it is in its greatest perfection, and from the beginning of November to the 11th of December, though not so good, is thought richer than at any after period. Cod and ling are caught on different parts of the coast. The cod is in its best season from the middle of February to the end of March, but ling is caught from the middle of March to the end of July, yet those fished for the first two months are reckoned the best.”

Crops grown at that time included oats, potatoes, and barley, which, “as soon after the middle of March as the ground is properly dried up from the winter storms, are sown in regular succession, with as little interruption as the weather permits.”

In the 1800s access to the parish was mostly by sea. The coastal road towards Torridon was only built in 1975. The drive from near Kishorn over the Bealach na Ba (Pass of the Cattle) is spectacular on a clear day – with views over The Minch and Raasay to the Cuillin mountains on Skye.

From the mid-1600s Applecross was mainly owned by McKenzies until about the 1850s (apart from a short period after the '15). Following a short ownership by the Duke of Leeds, in 1860 it was sold to the Middletons of Nottinghamshire who owned it until 1928.

The [Applecross Heritage Centre](#), alongside the former church, is open Monday to Saturday from Easter until October has exhibits about Maelrubha. Usually you can buy a copy of *Applecross and its Hinterland – A Historical Miscellany*, by Iain MacLennan, 2013.

A number of the McLennan migrants from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia to Waipu, New Zealand had their origins in Applecross or nearby. Murdo McLennan abt 1790 - 1870 ([i36454](#)) is one example.



*Ard Dhubh (means Black Point), south of Camusteel, Applecross [57.3996,-5.8182](#) (Author photos 2010)*

The well-known Canadian author Hugh MacLennan ([i63240](#)) traces his roots back to Neil McLennan of Applecross ([i24941](#)).

Refer also to the separate chapter about Shieldaig and Torridon.

**Directions:**

In good weather, from Achnasheen, take the A896 road to Kishorn and, soon after it leaves the coast, turn left and up the switch-back to the Bealach na Ba viewpoint, then down to the [Applecross Inn](#), Shore Street.

*Further Reading:*

*Applecross and its Hinterland – A Historical Miscellany*, by Iain MacLennan, 2013

*Old Statistical Account of Scotland, [Applecross](#) parish*

## 9. Shieldaig and Torridon (Applecross parish)

The sub-district of Applecross called Shieldaig with its long safe harbour was home to many McLennans in the 1800s. Significant numbers migrated from here to Cape Breton (Nova Scotia) and beyond.

*Pic: Looking north over Loch Torridon*

Co-ordinates: [57.5391,-5.6843](#)



The New Statistical Account for Scotland (1836) reported there were 200 souls in the fishing village of Shieldaig and “as many more in its environs”. Shieldaig became a *quoad sacra* parish of Applecross civil district in the mid 1800s. By 1869 there was a government-built church at Shieldaig, erected in 1827, and a preaching station at Kishorn, also a Free Church at Applecross, and a Free Church preaching station at Shieldaig, which is 12 miles distant from the parish church. (*National Gazetteer*) The area around these parts became an official registration district after 1855, known as Sheildaig.

In 1843 the established church of Scotland was split almost in two with almost half the ministers walking out to form a new “Free Church” away from interference by the lairds. Many parishioners followed the ministers into the Free Church – particularly in the Highlands. The events are known as “The Disruption”. In Applecross generally almost all the congregations became Free Church. The land-owners (“lairds”) made it difficult for the Free Church congregations to get land where they could build a church but, undeterred, they just worshipped in the open air. In Shieldaig a site for a Free Church was refused for 33 years!

A large group of McLennans lived on the southern headland of Loch Torridon – a locality called [Fearnmore](#) (or Fearnamore). An Alexander ([i6122](#)) who was born there would go on to become a schoolmaster in the district. His birth in 1842 was registered with the surname spelt McLENAN – fairly common in both Applecross and Gairloch.



*Arriving at Shieldaig from the coastal side (Author photo 2014)*

A large number of Fearnmore McLennans are buried at the [Annat Old burial ground](#) at the far (internal) extremity of the Torridon-Shieldaig loch system (e.g. [i6311](#)) the Fearnmore MacLennans are likely to have moved there as a result of being cleared from Balgy and Doire na Furan. Gaelic-speaking Member of the Scottish Parliament [Kate Forbes](#) is a descendant of the Fearnmore McLennans.

By Shieldaig our late [Chief](#) created a wonderful garden and a bothy at what locals now call Ronnie's Beach.

On the northern side we have [Allign](#) (various spellings) and [Diabaig](#). Both localities were we find numerous McLennans in the 1800s. An example would be John McLennan ([i1643](#)) who was both a Tailor and a Fisherman. Born in 1791, he lived in Wester Allign and died there in 1863. The spectacular drive around to Lower Diabaig is well worth the visit if you have time. There is a friendly Café-Restaurant in the Old Schoolhouse – [Gille Brighde](#) – best to check opening hours. Another John McLennan ([i867](#)) lived at Croft 20 – diagonally on your right at the last T intersection on the steep descent to the Lower Shieldaig wharf.

Over the years many McLennans lived at Doire na Furan (various spellings – in the Clan Genealogy, just search Notes for [Doire](#)) – a locality at the far end of the loch system right under the Liathach mountain formation. Roderick McLennan ([i1175](#)), a shoemaker, born in 1791, is one example.



*The spectacular Liathach formation – at eastern end of lochs Shieldaig and Torridon dwarfs the houses of Doire na Furan. (Author photo 2014)*

***Directions:***

Dive northward along the coast from Applecross village (about half an hour) or approach from Kishorn or Kinlochewe.

***Further Reading:***

Walk Highlands - [Torridon](#)

## 10. Lochcarron parish

Many McLennans were born in the parish of Lochcarron during the 1800s. The district includes Coulags, Kishorn and Attadale.

*Pic: Strome Castle ruin*

Co-ordinates: [57.4315, -5.4469](#)



Many Clan members lived on the Attadale Estate on the south side of the loch. Others lived at Kishorn and other families in the Coulags locality. The Clan members who lived in these localities can easily be found by using the “Notes” search available on the [Genealogy home page](#).

In earlier times the village now known as Lochcarron was called Janetown or Jeantown.

[Attadale Gardens](#) were started by Baron Schroder in the late 19th century. Hill paths meandered through 8 ha (20 acres) of conifers and rhododendrons – today it is an artist's garden designed to frame the magnificent views of Skye and the surrounding hills. Waterfalls, Monet bridges, meconopsis, bamboo and candelabra primula are reflected in dark pools. Sculpture lurks in unexpected places.



*Attadale Estate house, with Loch Carron behind (attadalegardens)*

In our Clan genealogy database we have over 500 McLennan births in Lochcarron parish before 1900. John Norman McLennan ([i9603](#)) was born there in 1868. His father Colin was a Railway Labourer who had been born there in 1823. John graduated from the University of Aberdeen with an MA in 1893 and studied to become a minister. In 1901 he was inducted into the parish of Ballachulish – on the border between Inverness-shire and Argyllshire, on the western end of the Caledonian Canal (engineered by the famous Thomas Telford). Churches in the parish had been part of a government scheme to build about forty three churches and manses were erected throughout the Highlands – all designed by Thomas Telford. Early in his ministry John realised a new church was called for and it was completed in 1911 alongside the old manse.

There are two cemeteries along the A896 west of the village The “Lohcarron Burial Ground” around the church in the golf course and the “Lohcarron Old Burial Ground” a few hundred metres closer to the village. The Old Burial Ground has many pre-1855 stones, and many blank undressed stones but some are in poor condition. ([Ross and Cromarty Roots](#)) Kenneth MacLennan ([i980](#)) whose son gave the name to the MacLennan Mountains in New Zealand is buried here.

Felix Pryor McLennan ([i9201](#)) had been born in Contin parish but grew up on the Lochcarron Estate at Kishorn, where his father Donald McLennan was Manager of Lands/Factor/Gamekeeper. Felix studied medicine at the University of Aberdeen and initially came back to Applecross and Lochcarron to practice medicine. He died in Argyllshire in 1931 but is remembered by a handsome column in the (New) Lochcarron Burial Ground.

Lieutenant Colonel Farquhar McLennan, DSO, DSC ([i10245](#)) was born in Lochcarron in 1872, the son of Alexander McLennan, a Deer-stalker.

Lachlan, the son of John McLennan ([i1474](#)) wrote an auto-biography that is now in book form.

The famous Rev John McLennan ([i1433](#)), pioneer of Belfast, Prince Edward Island, was from here.



*Lohcarron village (formerly known as Janetown) (Lohcarron holiday cottages)*

#### ***Directions:***

Lohcarron district is roughly half-way along the A890 between Achnasheen and Lochalsh. Coulags and Kishorn are important parts of the district.

#### ***Further Reading:***

*Old Statistical Account* - [Lohcarron](#)

A guide to some **MacLennan Places** across Scotland

## 11. Outer Hebrides – Lewis, Harris and Uist

In the 1800s McLennans were to be found throughout the Outer Hebrides – including Shepherds on Uist. In the predominantly Roman Catholic South Uist, the surname spelt McLellan was more popular.

*Pic: Ancient Rodel Church, South Harris, with MacLennan headstones (Author photo 2014)*

Co-ordinates: [58.0118](#), [-6.7417](#)



The McKenzies acquired Lewis from the McLeods in the early 1600s. In fact the name Seaforth comes from the large T-shaped sea-loch south of Stornoway, the largest town in the Outer Hebrides. No doubt McLennans from around Kintail arrived in Lewis under the operations of the McKenzies. For some years, until he was called on to serve in the Napoleonic Wars, Colonel Francis Humbstone McKenzie himself (and family) lived at Stornoway and “took pleasure in directing and supervising their people to habits of industry and happiness...”.

The Western Isles (another name for the Outer Hebrides) are often officially known today by their Gaelic name: *Na h-Eileanan Siar*. The town of Tarbert separates North Harris from South Harris.

In 1598 James VI (later James I of England) had authorised some Fife Gentlemen to “civilise” Lewis but with mixed success and, within a couple of decades, the McKenzies were in charge and keeping order. Understandably the islands were often supporters of the Stuarts and played an active part in the Jacobite challenges – especially the “Fifteen” and the “Nineteen”.

Fishing was a major source of income and meat for home consumption. Ling and Cod being in a significant commercial demand. Weaving (on hand-loom) was another source of income. The Old Statistical Accounts (1790s) report some cattle and sheep husbandary in Lewis. Flax-spinning was practiced in Lewis at this time. Immediately after the Napoleonic Wars three seasons crops failed all around the world – especially in 1816 “The Year without a Summer” – due to a volcano in Indonesia – made popular by authors William and Nicholas Klingaman. Seaweed had been used as fertiliser for crops in the poor soils. With few trees, peat was the main source of fire for heating and cooking. The islands were (and are) subject to “frequent and heavy rains”.

Seaforth had established the kelp industry and during the Napoleonic Wars it was especially successful. But after the wars the industry collapsed to such an extent that Seaforth had to sell lands to re-pay debts. The depression all over Scotland, left many in the Hebrides in poverty exacerbated by forced clearances. Many chose to join the armed services or to emigrate – mainly to Canada. The Gaelic was widely spoken until the Education Act of 1872 required instruction be undertaken only in English. Many place-names are of Norse origin. Today the Islands recognise their proud language traditions. Emigrants often went first to Gaelic-speaking enclaves such as those in Lower Canada and on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia.

[Visitor Centre at Seallam!, Northton](#) in South Harris was set up by researcher Bill Lawson. With his wife Chris, they produced many books for family research in the Outer Hebrides specialising in migrations to North America and Australia. A research service is available.

The [Ravenspoint Centre](#) at Kershader is the gateway to South Lochs district, the hidden jewel of Lewis: an area with a strong Gaelic culture, dramatic history, beautiful scenery, coastal villages, and rare wildlife. The centre has visitor attractions such as the remarkable Angus Macleod Archive, a local history museum and hostel-style accommodation.

William McLennan ([i4954](#)), father of Donald McLennan (of Marsh & McLennan worldwide insurance broker), lived on Uist before migrating to the USA in 1852.

The [Garrannan blackhouse village](#) on the west of Lewis sets out to help visitors experience life in a crofting village.

### **Stornoway Provost, “Holy Alex” MBE**

The building on the NE corner of Point and Bank Streets, Stornoway has a strong connection to our Clan. In 1869 [Alexander McLennan](#) (ID number i9747) was born at Marvig (Marbhig), in the Parish of Lochs, about 50 km (30 miles) by road south of Stornoway. After attending the local school, he enrolled at Aberdeen Grammar School and then took work as a shop assistant with the Ironmongers and Ships’ Chandlers MacKenzie & MacFarlane on this street corner. A pillar of the United Free Church congregation in Stornoway and known locally as “Holy Alex”, in time he became the proprietor of the Chandler business on the corner of Point and Bank Streets.



“Holy Alex” (Courtesy Stornoway Historical Society)

Alex became one of the leading figures in the municipal life of Stornoway. In 1926 he became trustee of the Stornoway Trust and, in 1930, the Provost of Stornoway. Even after his retirement from Town Council in 1933 he gave valuable service to the community as chairman of the Lewis Hospital Management Committee, honorary Sherriff-substitute, and a member of the Licensing Branch. He was a member of the Ross County Council for 25 years, and for three years chairman of the Stornoway Trustees and Lewis Castle Trust, who administer the valuable properties gifted to the people of Stornoway by the late Viscount Leverhulme.

In 1935 he was awarded the MBE for his services. He died at “Bellevue” ([4 Goathill Road](#)) in 1938, aged 69 years, and has a fine memorial stone in the [Sandwick Old cemetery](#).

### **Stornoway’s water-powered Mill**

One of the visitor attractions in Stornoway today is the wonderfully rebuilt water-powered grain [Mill](#) on the north side of the golf course. [John McLennan](#) (ID i3816) was the only grainmiller at Stornoway from 1851 to 1891 - when the mill burnt down. The wife of the earlier miller (Wm Latter) was his aunt, [Margaret](#) (ID i31662). Like so many McLennans, both John and his aunt were from the parish of Contin in central Ross-shire.

The large headstone in the [Sandwick Old cemetery](#) tells us John died at “Mill Lands” 9th December 1909, aged 88 years.



The Latta’s Mill at Stornoway was operated by McLennan connections all its life (Courtesy Guido Blokland)

### **Directions:**

Regular car and passenger ferry services operate from Oban, Uig on Skye, Ullapool and elsewhere.

### **Further Reading: ...**

Buth Thearlaich and Holy Alex - [www.hebrideanconnections.com/stories-reports-and-traditions/44869](http://www.hebrideanconnections.com/stories-reports-and-traditions/44869)

Novels *The Lewis Man*, *The Blackhouse*, *The Chessmen* (The Lewis Trilogy), by Peter May

## 12. Contin – Strathconon and Scatwell

“Strathconon” is the name given (curiously) to the valley of the River Meig. The Meig flows into the River Conon at Scatwell.

In the early 1800s the Strathconon had one of the highest (if not the highest) concentrations of McLennans.

*Pic: Strathconon burial ground (in trees) (Author)*

Co-ordinates: [57.5563, -4.8292](#)



From before the 1600s the Strathconon and Scatwell were McKenzie estates. The valley also provided a convenient route for McLennans and others passing from the West coast to the Fodderty, Urray, the Black Isle etc on the East. The Estate Managers were known to move workers from one Estate to another.

In 1650 Farquhar McLennan ([i16773](#)), the minister at Fodderty, was asked by the Presbytery to conduct missions in the Strathconon but refused to do so because of how wild it was. He was removed from his charge. (*FAST Vol VII*, page 182 and Inverness and Dingwall Presbytery records)

A survey of the Scatwell and Lower Strathconon area in 2007 by the North of Scotland Archaeological Society describes the strath as follows:

“Strathconon, a long and beautiful glen in the east part of Ross-shire, Scotland. It extends for 40 kilometres westwards from Dingwall on the Cromarty Firth and was once one of the main routes to and from the west coast. According to documents of two hundred years ago it was well populated with ‘many townships, some of them with 3 and 4 families’. Today, however, the glen has very few settlements and the surfaced road comes to an end after 26 kilometres.”

The Strathconon and Scatwell are part of the Contin parish. A John McLennan ([i63731](#)) had been the church minister in the parish of Contin from 1742 to 1775 – through the Jacobite “Risings” of 1745. The “FASTI” – Succession of ministers in the Church of Scotland, published in 1915 – records the following for Contin parish: “1742 – JOHN MACLENNAN, educated at the University of St Andrews, MA (6th May 1725); licenced by Presbytery of Chanonry 22nd April 1735; became missionary in Strathglass; called 22nd July and ordained 27th September 1742; died 28th April 1775, aged about 70. He married 7th February 1752, to Helen Grant, who died 3rd March 1804.”

By the last decade of the 1700s the introduction of sheep and reorganisation of people in the Strathconon was clearly underway. The Old Statistical Account (in the mid-1790s) says: “the population is on the increase but it is feared will soon decrease as gentlemen are encouraging shepherds to come and settle on their properties which must necessarily remove the present inhabitants and force them to go in quest of bread to other countries as there are no manufactures established here to employ them”. ([Report of Phase One – Lower Strathconon and Scatwell, November 2006 – April 2007](#), NoSAS, page 4)

During the Napoleonic Wars demand for Highland products had increased, and many men went off to wars. When the war came to an end in 1815 and the demand for the produce ceased, a vastly increased population was left without a means of supporting itself. Strathconon was one of the most congested areas in the Highlands of Scotland. The continual displacement of people to make way for sheep meant that there were many squatters in addition to the official tenantry. Farms which originally had been leased by 2 tenants, now held 15 families. Furthermore, Seaforth died in 1815 and the kelp industry on the Isle of Lewis, one of his

other estates, failed in the 1820s. Most of the Seaforth lands had to be sold to clear debts. Strathconon was initially taken over by Trustees, but was put on the market and eventually sold in 1839 to James Balfour (1773-1845) who had made his fortune by supplying the British Navy with provisions in Indian waters.

A new church was built in the Strathconon in 1825.

A John McLennan ([i4270](#)), a Shepherd, and his wife, Isabella Morrison, had married in the Strathconon in 1862 and had a son Kenneth in 1867. As the informant of Kenneth's birth John signed "by his mark". Kenneth became a Lieutenant-Colonel (and MBE) in the Australian Army.



*Strathconon looking west from Milton. (Author photo 2014)*

A book, "[Strathconon](#)" by a Duncan MacLennan, is also available (in Clan Histories) to shed light on the lives of residents these parts. Duncan MacLennan was the son of John McLennan ([i10582](#)), the Gamekeeper and Factor on the "Strathconon Estate" from the early 1900s. Most of John's siblings had migrated to New Zealand. John died in 1955 in the registration district of Carnoch – the part of the parish of Contin covering most of the Strathconon.

The [Strathconon \(Milton, Contin\) burial ground](#) (formerly known as Cladh Meinn) has many McLennan headstones. Find it about 100 metres past the Strathconon Primary School then down a path towards the river (see photo in heading). Look for the MacLennan seat by the gate.

[Coul House Hotel](#), a former McKenzie mansion, is a possible lunch stop as well as accommodation. Other nearby McKenzie mansions were at Brahan, Fairburn, Scatwell and Castle Leod – refer Chapter 22.

#### **Directions:**

Find your way to Marybank. If time permits, you might take a short detour to the Contin Island church and also observe the confluence of the River Conon with the Black Water. At the main intersection in Marybank, take the road west (signposted Strathconon and Scatwell). The road is narrow in places. From Marybank to Milton/Porin is about half an hour. To Scardroy is a further 20 minutes. Corrievuic and Corriefeol are about 2 km further.

#### **Further Reading:**

[Strathconon, Scatwell and the Mackenzies in the Written Record](#), 2007, North of Scotland Archaeological Society

*Strathconon – The History and Archaeology of a NE Highland Glen*, Meryl Marshall, 2011, North of Scotland Archaeological Society, ISBN 9780956878601

### 13. Contin – Strathbran, Garve, Gorstan and Kinlochluichart

As well as the large numbers in Strathconon, McLennans also lived in other parts of Contin parish in the 1800s.

*Pic: Contin Church, Contin Island (Author 2010)*

Co-ordinates: [57.6160,-4.6900](#)



The main Contin church (above) is on an island in the Blackwater (river), access by road-bridge over the railway or a pedestrian bridge. The church in Contin is dedicated to St Maelrubha. The present building dates back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century but there has probably been a church on this site since the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century. Rev John MacLennan MA (St Andrews) ([i63731](#)) was the minister here from 1742 to 1775.

According to a booklet “*Parish of Contin 690 to 1990*”, based on research by Rev A C Maclean FSA, JP Minister from 1906 to 1937, published by the Church of Contin: “Between 1485 and 1487 the Macdonalds and some of their allies (about 1,000 men) meeting at Contin, at the appropriately named Field of Heads (Scottish Gaelic: Blar’ na’n Ceann) on their way to a punitive raid against the McKenzies of Kinellan, discovered the church was filled with the aged men, women and children trusting to its sanctuary. Alexander Macdonald ordered the door to be shut and the building to be surrounded so that none could escape. He gave orders to set the church on fire, and everyone within – several hundreds – were burnt to death. Vengeance from the McKenzies and McReas was swift. After the battle at Pairc, one or two hundred out of 1,800 to 2,000 Macdonalds and their followers, who had eventually gathered at Contin, were left to escape as they might.”

Achanalt (Strathbran) is about 26 km from the Contin church. A new church was built by the government at Kinlochluichart in 1825. Many McLennans lived at Old Town alongside Achanalt – see, for example [i34224](#).



*Modern map shows relative positions of Achanalt (Strathbran), Loch Luichart, Gorstan and Garve to Contin village and Porin (Strathconon) (Google)*

The 1793 Old Statistical Account of Contin reported: “... This year, and the last, there was a putrid fever, which made prodigious havoc in a place called **Strathbran**, where it carried off more than two thirds of the inhabitants, and still continues to rage with violence there. It is found to be very infectious; and its having done so much damage in that place is attributed to the unwholesomeness of the air, which has been worse

this year than ever, owing to the extensive flat in that strath being repeatedly overflowed in the summer and harvest months, and the stagnated putrid waters sending forth noxious vapours that poison the air.”



*View of Strathbran from Old Town, Achanalt*

A Kenneth McLennan ([i4104](#)) had been born in Garve (Contin parish) in about 1828. Both his parents were from Contin. He became a Tailor and in 1856 he married Ann Grant at the interesting locality called Jamestown. They were married according to the rites of the Free Church. According to their headstone at the [Kinettas graveyard](#), Strathpeffer, their son Donald was the British Vice Consul at Zanzibar at the time of his death.

Jamestown is on the boundary of Contin, Urray and Fodderty parishes. The church in the centre of the township was built after the Disruption of 1843 when many members of the Church of Scotland broke away to form the Free Church of Scotland. In Fodderty parish (includes the town of Strathpeffer) many people stayed with the Established Church but the minister, a Mr Noble, “came out”. In the neighbouring parish of Contin, the situation happened in reverse, with the minister staying with the Established Church and many of the people leaving. Free Church people in Fodderty and Contin managed to secure a piece of land at Jamestown on the boundary of their parishes and built a church there between 1861 and 1862. Mr Noble became the first minister of the new Fodderty and Contin Free Church at Jamestown. In this unusual situation, censuses, births, marriages and deaths can sometimes be recorded in any of the three nearby parishes: Contin, Fodderty or Urray.

The *Third Statistical Account* for Contin (Rev F S M Walker, 1950) says: The Disruption of 1843 did not greatly affect Contin as the Minister ... remained faithful to the Established Church, but Free Churches were erected at Jamestown, Garve and Strathconon. The Laird of Coul refused permission for the erection of a Free Church in Contin so the church of Jamestown stands just outside the Coul estate.

Murdo McLennan ([i2114](#)) who was a renowned Teacher of Music and Free Church Precentor (choir-master) lived in Jamestown. Attached to the Clan database record for Murdo McLennan is a “History” (book) written by a descendant. Even though he was so closely associated with the Free Church, Murdo, and his two wives, are all buried in the Established Church churchyard on Contin Island.

The Free Church building just 3 km north-west of Garve village has not been a church since 2005. But the Old Garve burial ground, next to Strathgarve Primary school and the river Black Water, features many McLennan headstones. To find it go through the village to Matheson Road.

#### ***Directions:***

Achanalt is about 26 km (16 ml) from Contin village via the A835 and after Gorstan, the A832.

#### ***Further Reading:***

[\*Descendants of Alexander MacLennan of Strathbran\*](#), by Iain MacLennan, 2016 edition

## 14. “McLennan Way” – Historic walk, Scardroy to Achnasheen

The historic route taken by so many of our ancestors travelling from west to east, and vice versa, fell into disuse as a road after 1820s, but is now a “pleasant days’ ramble”.

*Pic: Loch Beannacharain, looking towards Scardroy, road on right (Author photo 2014)*

Co-ordinates: [57.5384, -5.0475](#)



“A route through Strathconon to Loch Carron had been in existence for centuries; it linked the east and west coast lands of the Clan Mackenzie.” In 1801 the famous engineer Thomas Telford was appointed to report on the state of the roads and to plan safe and convenient routes for new roads. The “Loch Carron road”, through Strathbran, which bifurcated at Achnasheen, would serve the purpose of linking the east with Poolewe in the west, where the cattle from Lewis were landed and also Loch Carron and Strome Ferry in the south west. It must have been chosen by Telford for upgrading in preference to the Strathconon route. The new road was completed by 1817 and for travellers heading from Loch Carron to the east the new road, although longer than the Strathconon route, would have been more easily traversed. The fate of the Strathconon road and the inn at Luib was sealed! (*NoSAS blog*)



*This 1826 map still shows the (former) road going west from Scardroy (OSA). Blue text added.*

After the first part of the railway was built through Achnasheen in 1870 it would have been possible for cattle raised in the upper Strathconon to be taken across this saddle for shipping by train to the market at Muir of Ord.

Refer separate chapter on [Strathconon](#) for more to see on the way to the start-point.

A guide to some [MacLennan Places](#) across Scotland



*MacLennan walkers setting off from Scardroy end - July 2018*

There are a number of fords on the path so waterproof boots might be helpful.

[Ledgowan Lodge](#), on the A890, could be a convenient stopping point. You might even like to stay at Ledgowan and ask if they could arrange transport to the start point at Scardroy.

The header photo shows Loch Scardroy with the lodge at far end of lake – the start point for walk. The road is on right of the photo.

***Directions:***

If you don't have two cars, you will need to arrange minibus or similar through the Strathconon. Train can be taken from Achnasheen to Inverness or other centres. If leaving from the Scardroy end, go to the end of the Strathconon road and walk between Scardroy Lodge and the tree plantings (see above). Follow the path on the lower side of the trees the over the saddle and down (slightly right) to the boardwalk and bridge between the two lakes of Loch Gowan beside the A890. About 10 km to the A890 then about more 2 km to the Achnasheen station.

2 hours plus. OS Explorer [map 430](#) applies – *Loch Monar, Glen Cannich & Glen Strathfarrar*

***Further Reading:***

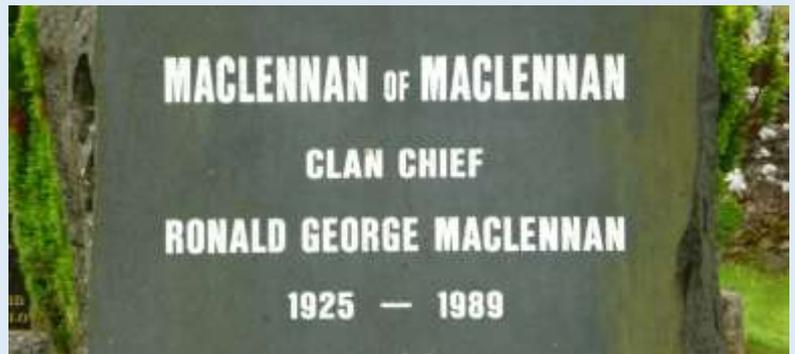
*North of Scotland Archaeological Society (NoSAS) - Old routes through Ross-shire: [Luib, near Achnasheen, to Scardroy in Strathconon](#)*

[Strathconon and Scatwell](#) chapter of this book

## 15. Chief Ronald Memorial – Dores by Loch Ness

In 1977 Ronald George MacLennan became the 34<sup>th</sup> Chief, after more than 300 years of dormancy. His memorial stone stands at Dores, on the shores of Loch Ness.

Co-ordinates: [57.3841, -4.3285](#)



In 1969, Ronald George MacLennan ([i12866](#)) had declared his intention to claim the position of Chief and due to the tireless energy of this vital, proud Scot, the Clan recognised his right to the position. Thirty years of tenacious searches and researches were rewarded with the Matriculation of Arms – the acknowledgment of the Lord Lyon, King of Arms of Scotland – and his installation as Chief of the MacLennan Clan at a ceremony in Inverness in 1978.

Ronald had dedicated considerable time and energy to Clan research and to forming an active Clan Association and later the creation of branches worldwide. The family home saw a near constant stream of Clan visitors from every corner of the world and Ronald continued his dream of re-uniting his Clanfolk. He travelled to many countries attending Highland Games and Clan Gatherings and inspired many people to not only join their Clan, but to actively recruit new members and form new Clan Associations globally.

He authored the book [The History of the MacLennans](#).

In the late 1960's, at the peak of his research into the Clan's history, he met Donald MacLennan of Dores, who was helping him with his research. Donald had a considerable family of eleven children and it was not long before the second eldest, Margaret Ann ([i37632](#)), caught Ronald's eye.

Ronald and Margaret were married at Dores in 1970.

By the time of his death, he had put the relatively small MacLennan Clan on the map by creating an active and proud Clan, holding regular Gatherings in the Highlands and further afield and was regarded as one of Scotland's most colourful Clan Chiefs in the media at the time of his death.





*Memorial at Dores to our first Chief in over 300 years, and his wife Margaret Ann (Author photo 2011)*

***Directions:***

Approaching from Inverness, the village of Dores in the shores of Loch Ness, there is a sign for Millcroft. The village church and churchyard is on the left about 100 m further on.

***Further Reading:***

[Our Chiefs](#) on Clan website

[The History of the MacLennans](#), Ronald G MacLennan of MacLennan, 2012 edition (on-line), pages 7 - 10

## 16. Captain Donald McLennan's castle, Dingwall

Captain Donald McLennan from Dingwall had one of the most adventurous lives we could imagine. After years sailing around all the world's oceans in the 1700s and 1800s, he returned to Dingwall and built himself a castle home.

*Pic: Typical brig-rigged ship*

Co-ordinates: [57.5974](#), [-4.4229](#)



Captain Donald McLennan was a remarkable man.

His father Colin McLennan, a Wright, was for many years a member of the Dingwall Town Council. His mother was Isabella Kemp. They had a family of several children. Donald ([i753](#)) was the younger of two sons. "In their youth, the brothers, after having received the rudiments of their education in the parish school, were then taught by Mr Alexander Simpson, the father of Thomas Simpson the Arctic traveller, and were sent to the Academy of Fortrose, which at that time possessed no mean reputation as a provincial seat of learning. There Donald made good progress in the study of mathematics and navigation, and the knowledge thus acquired gave a direction to his ambition and influenced his future career."

Roderick McLennan ([i626](#)), the elder brother, "a youth of superior abilities and address, obtained a situation in London as a clerk in the house of Hamilton & Company, East India ship-owners, in which he gradually attained an important and influential position. He was thus enabled to invite Donald to London. The great city, however, had less attraction for the latter than the sea ....".



*On his return from a life at sea Captain Donald built himself a castle home in Dingwall (Author photo)*

After many voyages to India and nearby, in 1801, he joined a vessel on a voyage to South America but he and others were captured by the Spanish. In 1802 he was appointed to be Captain of the brig *Dart* owned by Mr McKenzie “and other Scottish gentlemen” and set sail for the South Seas planning to exchange his goods for “bullion and specie”. From India he crossed the Pacific Ocean calling at Otaheite (Tahiti) and other Society Isles, the Friendly Islands (Tonga) and around New Zealand. From New Zealand he sailed to Norfolk Island and then the Sydney (Port Jackson). On the 1803 voyage from New Norfolk he had, on board the *Dart*, Lt Governor Foveaux and John Turnbull (1751-1834) ancestor of the Australian Prime Minister. In Sydney, he was contracted by the Governor to command the Second Fleet to Hobart – only six weeks since the first settlement – with more supplies and personnel. In this sense Captain Donald was almost certainly the first McLennan in New Zealand and Tasmania and one of the first (if not the first) in New South Wales.

He was joined on his next voyage in 1805 by his brother Roderick on another voyage to South America. Unfortunately the ship was captured and his brother killed. Donald had determined to return to Dingwall and there he bought the old castle and, with the stones of it, built himself the “castellated mansion” we can see today at the bottom of Castle Street.



In the St Clement’s churchyard, at the top end of Castle Street, his sisters erected a memorial which reads:

“This tribute of sisterly affection is designed to commemorate the virtues of Captain Donald MacLennan. He was a native of this town of an intelligent intrepid and enterprising spirit. After having in the command of merchant ships in the time of a European war made many voyages of much incident and peril from the Thames to India, China and the South Seas he passed here in independence and ease the remainder of his eventful life indulging his love of nautical science improving and adorning by his liberality and taste the place of his birth and in an unostentatious and exemplary manner discharging the domestic and social duties becoming a sincere Christian and a good citizen. He was born 1778 and died in 1848.”

*Memorial to Capt Donald in St Clement’s churchyard  
(Author photo 2010)*

In the (private) grounds of his house in Castle Street, on his return to Dingwall after a life at sea, Donald erected a memorial to his brother Roderick: “Erected by Donald McLennan late commander of the Brig *Dart* in memory of his brother Roderick McLennan who was killed with seven of the crew of that vessel in defending her against a treacherous attack made by the Spaniards on the coast of Peru the 5th day of April 1805.”

#### **Directions:**

The (private) castle home is at the bottom of Castle Street, Dingwall. Recently, an ugly timber fence has been built along the street front. The memorial in the St Clement’s churchyard at the top of the same street.

#### **Further Reading:**

Media “Donald MacLennan (Captain) story *Inverness Courier*, 20 November 1851” attached to [i753](#)  
Article “The First MacLennan?”, [Australian Clan Newsletter Archive](#), November 2010, pp 13-14

## 17. Timaru House, Strathpeffer

In the spa town of Strathpeffer there is a listed stately home that reminds us of a local boy who did well in New Zealand and returned home to build "Timaru House" and another with a New Zealand name.

*Pic: Strathpeffer*

Co-ordinates: [57.5905,-4.5359](#)



Donald McLennan ([i5578](#)) 1838-1919 from the Heights of Auchterneed (in Fodderty Parish, near Strathpeffer) migrated to New Zealand with his brother John ([i4949](#)) – on the "Metropolis", arriving at Lyttelton harbour (near Christchurch) on 16 June 1863. In early 1872 Donald applied for a licence to re-open a hotel at Cave, a small locality in South Canterbury. Later that year, in nearby Timaru, he married Jane McDonald who had come out from Strathpeffer to join him. Early the next year they took over the licence of the Criterion Hotel in Timaru itself. A year later he moved to the Club Hotel. The hotel was improved to offer "first-class bathrooms ... hot, cold and shower at any hour of the day", and later, a "first-class billiard room". Donald became a well-respected member of the Timaru community.

In 1877 a farewell dinner was held in Timaru for sixty of his friends – including His Worship the Mayor. The small family returned to Fodderty parish where he built the stately "Timaru House" in the main

street of the spa village of Strathpeffer, now a Category B Historic Scotland Building, opposite the Museum of Childhood. The listing says "on his return after 1873" he built "Timaru House". In 1879 Timaru House was advertised for long lease – perhaps the family intended to return to New Zealand – but this did not come to fruition and, in 1880, Donald returned briefly to South Canterbury and was hosted by a banquet in his honour at his former establishment.

He became known as "Old Timaru". Jane took in guests at Timaru House, people coming to take the waters at Strathpeffer Spa, and Donald took an active part in the community. He was a member of the School Board, an active member of the fire brigade, a steward at the local Highland Gathering, an enthusiastic curler, and a member of the Parish Council for forty years. He died at Timaru House on 18 June 1919 about eighteen months after a serious accident. They had four children. Their third child, Donald Junior, born in 1879, seems to have died in South Africa (not much known).

His brother John married and stayed on in New Zealand, where he had three children who survived to adulthood. Another brother, Thomas ([i4633](#)) had married in Fodderty and soon afterwards migrated to Melbourne on the "Australia". Their siblings Grace ([i5258](#)) and William ([i5908](#)) stayed around Fodderty. For many years Grace was a housemaid at [Castle Leod](#). Later, with her mother, she ran a Lodging House in Strathpeffer, also built by "Old Timaru", with the name of another New Zealand town: Oamaru House.

**CRITERION HOTEL.**  
SOUTH-ROAD, TIMARU,  
(Next the TIMARU HERALD office),  
DONALD McLENNAN, PROPRIETOR.

**THIS** new and very commodious **STONE HOTEL** offers to Visitors, Commercial and other Travellers, conveniences of a very superior kind. The Bedrooms are spacious and well ventilated; the Sitting and Dining Rooms are comfortable.  
Wines, Spirits and Beers of best market brands.



*Timaru House, Strathpeffer, built by Donald McLennan after he returned from New Zealand (Author photo)*

The family has a significant monument in [Fodderty Cemetery](#).

The lower section reads:

Donald McLENNAN born 22nd Nov. 1838, died at Timaru House,  
Strathpeffer 18th June 1919

also Thomas McLENNAN farmer, Auchterneed, who died on the 23rd  
October 1819, aged 54 years

also his wife Grace McLENNAN who died on the 23rd November  
1820, aged 56 years

also his daughter Catherine McLennan who died on the 19th February  
1820, aged 21 years

also his son Alexander McLENNAN who died on the 16th July 1844,  
aged 25 years,

and his son Kenneth McLENNAN, mason, Heights of Inchvannie who  
died on the 12th January 1847, aged 40 years.



***Directions:***

“Timaru House”, Strathpeffer, is on the A834, opposite the road to the Highland Museum of Childhood. The Fodderty Cemetery is about 5km further east along the A834 and Heights of Achterneed are just north of the A834 between the two.

***Further Reading: ....***

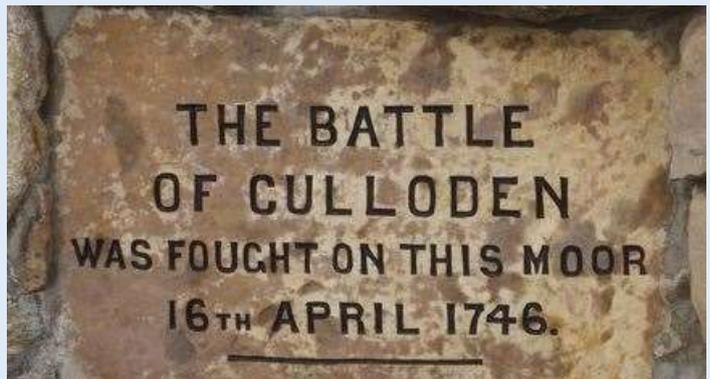
*Friends, Family and Forebears*, Bruce A McLennan, 2017, pages 142-147

## 18. Beaulieu Priory Culloden Memorial

A large memorial stone at Beaulieu Priory recognises the part played by McLennans in supporting the restoration of the Stuarts at Culloden. Subsequently Scottish-ness was suppressed. Clearances began.

*Pic: Notice at Culloden*

Co-ordinates: [57.4838,-4.4614](#)



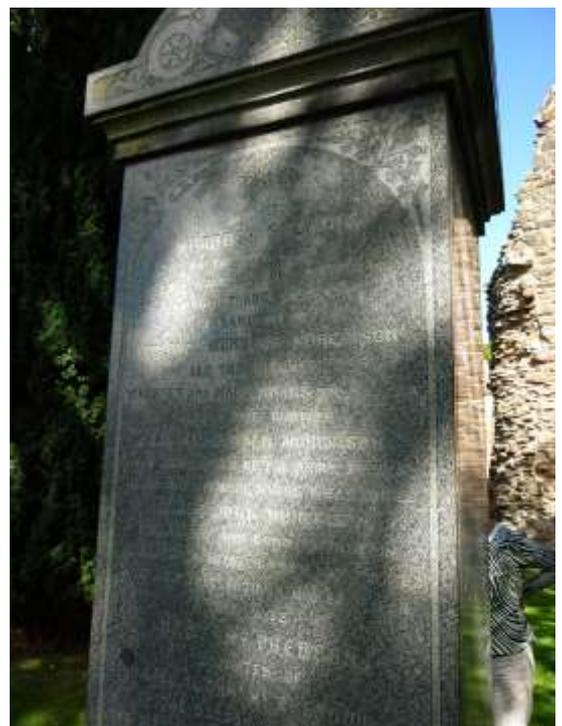
The Priory in Beaulieu was established in the early 1200s by the Valliscaulian religious order from France, a branch of the Benedictines under the patronage of John Byset [Bissett] of the nearby Aird, a Scoto-Norman nobleman. The town itself – like Ullapool, Evanton etc – is a fairly modern creation, built by the Forfeited Estates Commission after Culloden. The Priory became Cistercian in 1510, after the suppression of the Valliscaulian Order by the Pope.

Following the Reformation, control of the Priory passed to Lord Lovat (Fraser), and the grounds of the Priory were used for burials. Alastair Ionraic McKenzie, 6th of Kintail, died in 1488 at Kinellan, at the grand age of 90 years, and was buried in the Priory of Beaulieu. He is said to have had a natural son, Dugal, who became a priest and was Superior of the Beaulieu Priory, which he repaired about 1478, and in which he is buried. This cleric is said by others to have been Alexander's brother. Sir Kenneth McKenzie, 7th of Kintail, died in 1491 and was also buried in the Priory. Before this the Kintail family had been buried on Iona and later the Earls of Seaforth were buried in Fortrose Cathedral. However, a younger branch of the family, the McKenzies of Gairloch, continued to be buried in the Priory. John Glassich McKenzie, 2nd of Gairloch married another Agnes, the only child and heiress of James Fraser of Foyness [third son of Thomas, 2nd Lord and brother of Hugh, 3<sup>rd</sup> Lord Lovat]. So the Priory is a significant place.

The succession of George I from Hanover to the UK Crown had triggered the Jacobite challenge of 1715 by Tories in London combined with Scottish interests. The Whigs had played a central role in the Glorious Revolution of 1688 as standing enemies of the Stuart Kings. Following the failure of the '15, the Whigs thoroughly purged Tories from all major positions in government, the army, the Church of England, the legal profession and local offices.

George II succeeded his father. He had had been born in Hanover in 1683 and was known as "the King is wasn't there" due to his long absences from Britain. William August, Duke of Cumberland (1721-1757), was the son of George II. The Jacobite Army, after securing parts of Scotland, had advanced as far south as Derby (200 km/130 ml from London) but decided to withdraw. Cumberland was called back from Flanders to assist the Hanoverian operations.

A large headstone at Beaulieu Priory recognises the part played by Mathesons, McLennans and others in support of the Jacobites at Culloden – the Memorial for "Murdoch Stewart whose grandfather Murdoch Murchison led the MacKenzies, Macraes and MacLennans to Culloden".



The atrocities committed by the Hanoverians in the closing stages of the battle are well known (“few prisoners taken”). Not so well known are those committed in the days after – on 17 April for example the Orders of the Day sent a captain and fifty men round all the neighbourhood houses with a ‘licence to kill’. The wounded were gathered together in heaps and fired into by artillery. Jacobites were shot, burnt alive and clubbed to death – well beyond the normal practices of the British army of the time. Atrocities were not reported and mis-information was spread in favour of the Hanoverians. Many prisoners were shot or transported. The full occupation of Scotland had begun.

Even today the Jacobite Army is often described as “Highlanders”. However only about half of the Jacobite forces came from the parts of Scotland that today we would call the Highlands. The balance were Franco-Irish and Franco-Scottish units – which included Lowland volunteers who had joined as the force moved south. The Hanoverian Major-General James Wolfe (wrongly) described Franco-Irish Brigadier Walter Stapleton and Lord Kilmarnock as “Highlanders”. There is no reason to think the Scots who supported the Jacobites were all Catholics. The Jacobite Army was organised like any army at the time, disciplined and drilled often with a French influence. Jacobite orders were given in English. Although nominally greater, they usually had no more than 9-10,000 men on the ground in practice. Most Jacobite units wore the saltire (St Andrew cross flag) symbol. In this sense they were to be the last Scots army fighting for Scotland.

Prince Charles Edward Stuart took care neither to threaten to repudiate the high UK national debt at the time, nor to suggest disestablishment of Presbyterianism.

Professor Murray Pittock of Glasgow University argues that, following Culloden, Highlanders were systematically vilified and the foundation for the subsequent clearances / overseas military service were laid down.



*Propaganda – An Incident in the Rebellion of 1745 by David Morier – greatly misrepresents the facts*

The painting above is now often used to portray the circumstances of the Battle. It was commissioned by the Duke of Cumberland to tell a story. The influential cavalry and mortars are not shown. One of the enduring myths is that Jacobite soldiers were largely armed with swords rather than firearms. This myth suits both Hanoverian propaganda and the heroic Gaelic traditions. However, factual evidence from contemporary reports and archaeological evidence have Jacobites with at least as many guns as the Hanoverians but no guns can be seen on that side. The Lochaber axe shown in the painting was no longer in use by Jacobites.

Overall the painting gives the impression of a hairy “primitive” rabble fighting a well-got out British army. This narrative would be used over and over as the empire overran primitive tribes around the globe.

The picture paints the Highlanders as “other” and backward. Charles Edward was revised to become a figure of humour – often painted as a Harlequin.

Scotland was under military occupation. Following the battle, the Duke of Cumberland was initially feted for his success and the military influence was on the rise and at the forefront of what Allan MacInnes describes as a policy of ‘genocide’ against Gaelic Scotland. Cumberland’s hard-line policy was influential in the Parliament and led to the proscription wearing of the plaid [tartan] etc. Jacobites and suspects were rounded up and many hanged, shot or “drawn and quartered”. Lord Lovat was tried and beheaded in 1747 – the last in British history. Legislation was introduced to break the feudal power of the Scottish magnates. The most visible legacy of military occupation was the great white elephant of Fort George completed in 1769 having cost more than the annual GDP of Scotland to build. Named for the Duke of Cumberland, the main feature of the fort is to prevent attack from the landward side. Of the 3,400 prisoners some 750 were “pardoned on enlistment” in the British army and were to serve in such dangerous and disease-ridden places as Antigua or Jamaica. Between 500 and 1,000 prisoners escaped and some joined Scottish regiments in the French army. Many others held in prisons or prison ships died with survivors being transported to slavery in Barbados. Needless to say these actions at Culloden and subsequent repressions had not won over many Scots. Throughout northern Scotland communities were devastated, impoverished and angry. Clearances began. Some were settled in the newly won parts of Lower Canada.

Many of the Highlanders who had enlisted were “cut to pieces” in the wars in Canada – ironically against their old ally, the French. General James Wolfe (of Culloden) was the hero of the Plains of Abraham (Quebec) where he died. The clearances in Scotland anticipated the deportations of Arcadians from Nova Scotia from 1755.

Seldom has the adage that history is written by the victors been more accurate or appropriate than in the case of Culloden. Scottish history was downplayed. Even William Robertson’s “*History of Scotland*” of 1759 stated that the history of countries like Scotland are best forgotten!

As Cumberland failed to live up to early expectations, his star faded.

Ironically, whereas the Whig party, at its origins before 1700, had been strongly anti-Catholic, in the 1800s came to support Catholic emancipation.

There seems to be little record of the numbers of McLennans who served at Culloden. I would be interested to hear if you know of any – famhist@clanmaclennan-worldwide.com.

#### **Directions:**

Beaulieu Priory is on the A862 (the main street through the town), on the Muir of Ord side of the centre.

#### **Further Reading:**

*Culloden (Great Battles)*, Murray Pittock, Oxford University Press, 2016, ISBN-9780199664078

*The Myth of the Jacobite Clans: The Jacobite Army in 1745*, Murray Pittock, Edinburgh University Press, 2009, ISBN 9780748627578

## 19. Eilean Donan

Donan's Island is at the junction of three sea lochs, alongside the McLennan homeland of Kintail. The building we see there today is less than 100 years old.

*Pic: Fort as it was from 1719*

Co-ordinates: [57.2718,-5.5221](#)



Donan's Island is at the junction of three sea lochs: Loch Alsh, Loch Duich and Loch Long, and therefore has strategic importance, controlling traffic though the passes to the east of Scotland and back.

St Donnan of Eigg lived from about 550 to 617. He was probably of Irish origin and is known to us through his work introducing Christianity to the Picts of North West Scotland. Places that include his name stretch up the western seaboard of Scotland from Ayrshire and the Isle of Arran via the Western Isles to Sutherland – for example: Kildonan, Kildonnan, Chapel Donan and Eilean Donan. Donnan and his followers were killed by local people on 17 April 617.

About 1221, Alexander II of Scotland set about the arduous task of breaking the power of the Lord of the Isles in the west. He built a fort on St Donnan's Island. King Alexander III (of Scotland) was only seven when his father died in 1249 and he was inaugurated at Scone on 13 July 1249. On attaining his majority (the age of 21) in 1262, Alexander made plain his intention to resume his father's projects to control the Western Isles.

At first, it seems, McKenzies operated under the auspices of the Lord of the Isles, later switching to support the Kings of Scotland. By a series of strategic moves, the McKenzies are said to have first acquired control of Eilean Donan and the surrounding lands of Kintail, then in the fifteenth century Strathconon and Garve by Royal Charter. It was from Alexander III (1241-1286) that Colin Fitzgerald, the founder of the Seaforth dynasty received the governorship of Castle Donan in Kintail, in reward, it is said, for his conduct at the Battle of Largs. The Seaforth lands included the whole of Kintail and Lochalsh parishes – including the part of Kintail that later became the separate parish of Glenshiel. The anchor title to Donan's Island (Eilean Donan) in the heart of McLennan territory would bring together the McLennans and McKenzies in the centuries to come. And it resulted in McLennans being present in numbers wherever McKenzies held sway. By the sixteenth century the McKenzies also controlled Easter-Ross, Gairloch and Lewis. "Tradition states to have existed through long years between the MacRaes, the incomers, and the MacLennans, for long settled in the district" – for example as to which should provide the Constable of the fort on Eilean Donan. (*Clan History*, pages 52- 53 & page 70)

In [Chapter 4](#) we saw how, in early May 1719, three Hanoverian ships pounded the castle on Eilean Donan with cannon-fire and their forces were able to go ashore and easily capture the castle. The castle was reduced almost to rubble and would remain so for more than 200 years. The fort remained a ruin (picture above) until 1913 when Lt Colonel John Macrae-Gilstrap of Balliemore, Agyllshire began a new home on the site – finally completed in 1932 and opened to the public later. It is not a "13<sup>th</sup> Century Castle" as advertised.

### **Directions:**

The modern "castle" is about halfway between Shiel Bridge and Kyle of Lochalsh - [www.eileandonancastle.com](http://www.eileandonancastle.com)

## 20. Glen Ord Distillery, Urray

Donald McLennan was born in Urray in 1806 and was founder and distiller of the Ord distillery. His son Alexander moved to Glasgow and whisky was marketed worldwide.

Co-ordinates: [57.5219,-4.4766](#)

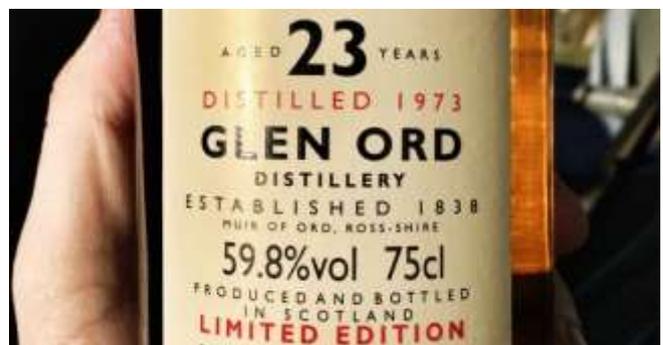


The fabric of the Ord distillery (now The Singleton) was established in 1838 by the land owner, Thomas Mackenzie of Ord. Donald McLennan ([i1974](#)), who was born in Urray parish in 1806 and was the first operator founder and distiller of the Ord distillery, having learned his trade at the older Millburn distillery in Inverness.

In 1834 he married Margaret McAndrew in Inverness. Donald and Margaret had at least seven sons and one daughter. Their first child Alexander ([i5077](#)) was born at Millburn in Inverness the next year.

In 1838, with his partner Robert Johnstone, Donald took out the first licence to operate the Ord distillery. The early licenced whisky industry was not a guaranteed source of easy profits and many distilleries were shut temporarily or permanently after only a few years. There was still substantial illicit production in remote areas like nearby Glen Orrin and Strathconon, whose cheaper products could undercut and take away revenue from the legitimate producers.

The partnership between Donald and Robert Johnstone ended in 1843 and Donald stepped back to concentrate on other business interests. Robert Johnstone became the sole operator but the distillery became bankrupt in 1847. This prompted Donald McLennan to return to the business in 1848. In the 1851 census both Donald and son Alexander are living at the Ord Distillery itself. Donald aged 44, Distiller etc and son Alexander 15, a Scholar. Also there, was a young Thomas Macgregor, a clerk and salesman.



In 1852 Donald took on a new partner- John McLennan ([i1692](#)) of Tomich near Beaully, a successful farmer, grain merchant and shipowner - and they ran the distillery until 1858 when the partnership ended and each moved on to concentrate on other business. When the lease was advertised it was taken up by Alexander McLennan (Donald's son [i5077](#)) in partnership with Thomas Macgregor. After running the distillery for a decade both Alexander and Thomas got into financial difficulties and had to give up the lease in 1870. Alexander and his family moved to Glasgow where he became a wine and spirits salesman.

The distillery was mothballed until 1874 when a Beaully-based banker, farmer and businessman Alexander McKenzie ([i42533](#)) took on the lease. With Alexander came yet another MacLennan connection. John McLennan of Tomich ([i1692](#)) - who had been Donald McLennan's partner in the distillery from 1852 to 1858 - died in 1872. His widow Catherine ([i13282](#)) married Alexander McKenzie ([i42533](#)) in 1874. Alexander McKenzie took out a 19-year lease of Glen Ord and constructed a new still house. Unfortunately, it was destroyed in a fire in 1878, and the distillery took a few years to get back to full operation. Alexander McKenzie died in 1895,

just when the lease of the distillery ended and the owners, the Mackenzies of Ord decided to sell rather than continue to lease it out. At an auction in Edinburgh in 1896, Glen Ord distillery and surrounding lands were sold to James Watson & Co. (a blending company from Dundee) for £15,800. Watson & Co also purchased all the stock and machinery owned by the late tenant, Alexander McKenzie.

Many histories of this distillery have errors.



Donald's brother Alexander ([i58859](#)), was an Innkeeper at Aultgowrie – about 5 km (3 ml) west of the distillery. He was born in Urray in 1813 and married Ann McDonald at Urray in 1852. It seems the census enumerator in 1871 recorded his surname as Mackenzie. Alexander knew well the nearby Aultgowrie (Corn) Mill.

The Distillery today has an exhibition and short video.

Tours and tastings are also available at the Distillery – check the [website](#) for opening times and tour bookings.

During the 1800s, Muir of Ord was the location of a significant cattle market – held once a month from April to November (inclusive). Cattle were brought here from the west coast, the islands and many other places. The land on which the market was held was owned by Lord Lovat of Beaufort Castle. Once the railways arrived in the 1860s and '70s, a Station was available for unloading stock.

In the 1870s, when the government surveyors were trying to get the right names to put on maps in the area, Mr Hugh McLennan, Lower Ardnagrask ([i3024](#)), Carpenter, was one of the authorities consulted - [Ordnance Survey Name Books](#).

One of the notorious characters of this part of the world came out of the Strathconon, where his family had been involved in illegal whisky production – Farquhar McLennan ([i1164](#)) – known as "Fearchair-a-Ghunna: The Ross-shire Wanderer". He built himself a "garrison" close to Muir of Ord – at Muir of Tarradale. He was well-known for his pranks ... often involving guns and explosives! The Clan records include a book, written about his life and sayings. To read the book, click on his link above and go down the page to Media.

*Fearchair-a-Ghunna,  
The Ross-shire Wanderer*



#### **Directions:**

The village of Muir of Ord 24 km (15 ml) can be reached by car, Stagecoach bus or train from Inverness. From Muir of Ord station take the A832 for N-W about 600 metres then left into Ord Road about 100 metres.

#### **Further Reading:**

[How whisky is made](#)

## 21. McLennan Arch, Glasgow

The McLennan Arch has been described as the local “Arc de Triomphe”. It sits at the Charlotte Street entrance to Glasgow Green.

*Pic: James McLennan (Galloway assoc)*

Co-ordinates: [55.8533,-4.2457](#)



In the 1700s Glasgow was widely admired as one of the most beautiful small towns in Europe. Broad, gridded streets had been constructed westwards from the old High Street with handsome houses, offices, shops and warehouses. By 1800 the city had a population of about 70,000 and was growing rapidly as navigation improvements on the Clyde brought new opportunities for its merchants.



*McLennan Arch (Image Thomas Nugent, geograph)*

In 1796 the arch was originally the centrepiece of the facade of the Assembly Rooms on the north side of Ingram Street, designed by renowned architects Robert and James Adams. These Rooms provided a social gathering place for dances, music and other cultural pursuits. In 1847 they became the Atheneum Club. In the 1890s the Assembly Rooms were demolished to make way for the extension to the General Post Office, and the arch was rebuilt in Greendyke Street. In 1922 the arch was moved again to its current position in Glasgow Green, and presented to the city by James McLennan.

James McLennan ([i5744](#)) was a successful merchant in Glasgow and Baillie of the city. He had been baptised in 1838 at Coylton, Ayrshire – the son of Andrew McCleounan [sic], Spirit Dealer, and Isabella Brown. He married, first, Agnes Logan in 1865. Agnes died of Typhoid in 1866, aged 19 and he married, second (in 1868), Henrietta Bryce, the daughter of Alexander Bryce from Galloway in the Scottish lowlands. Alexander Bryce had a successful career as substantial wholesale wine and spirit merchant in Glasgow. He was an active member of the Glasgow Galloway Brotherly Society, a charitable trust founded in 1791 with the purpose of assisting the families of men from Galloway who were working in Glasgow. In 1875 Alexander retired from Alexander Bryce and Co, he died in 1887 leaving a substantial personal fortune. The business was assumed by Peter Clark and James McLennan, who had been a traveller for the company.



*Plaque to James in the Trades Hall, designed 1791 by Robert Adams, at 85 Glassford Street, Glasgow.*



*Bust of James in the Trades Hall (Courtesy Sandy Rankin, Galloway assoc)*

A report from 1909 states: “Baillie James McLennan was for many years one of the leading citizens of Glasgow. He died in 1899, and was succeeded in the firm by his sons, Messrs Andrew and James Bryce McLennan, both of whom were specialists in the selection of wines and spirits and in the delicate arts of maturing, blending, and bottling. Like his father, Mr Andrew McLennan takes a prominent part in the business of the Trades House. For the last two years he held the office of Collector of the Trades House, a post which had been filled previously by the Bailie. The firm has extensive premises in St. Andrew Square and High Street. The huge main warehouse, at the latter address, which measures 240 feet square, contains a vast stock of Irish and Scotch Whiskies in cask from all the most famous distilleries in the United Kingdom.”



*Glasgow Necropolis Memorial (courtesy Sandy Rankin)*

James has a substantial memorial in the Glasgow Necropolis and is remembered on his parents’ headstone in the Coylton Churchyard, Ayr.

**Directions:**

Glasgow Green (north-west end), Saltmarket, Glasgow G1 5JZ – one of the most historic parks in Scotland

**Further Reading:**

[Scottish Places](#)

## 22. Brahan Castle, Coul, Castle Leod and Fairburn Tower

Some reminders of the McKenzie presence remain in the vicinity of Contin village.

*Pic: Lieutenant-General Francis Humberston Mackenzie, 1st Baron Seaforth FRS FRSE FLS 1754-1815, by Sir Thomas Lawrence – The last Baron of Kintail*

Co-ordinates: [57.5595,-4.4939](#)



For centuries McLennans supported McKenzies so it is worth thinking were we find McKenzie strongholds. Traces of major buildings – well-known to our ancestors – stood like sentinels in the narrow pass around the village of Contin. The most significant, Brahan Castle, also has the least remaining.

In 1611 Colin McKenzie, 1st Earl of Seaforth, built **Brahan Castle** about 6 km (4 ml) south-west of Dingwall – opposite where the River Orrin joins the Conon. It is thought that the castle and its related estates facilitated the migration of many McLennans from the West Coast across to Easter Ross. A Kenneth McKenzie, a labourer on the estate, was a reputed seer who made a number of prophecies in the later 17th century – he is remembered as the “Brahan Seer”. The Siege of Brahan took place as part of the First Jacobite “Rising” in November 1715 and William McKenzie, 5th Earl of Seaforth, was “attainted” and he forfeited the estate. From 1725, Brahan Castle had become the headquarters of General Wade during his “pacification” of the Highlands. The building was modified into a house in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



*Brahan before demolition*

During WW2 Brahan provided accommodation for Norwegian servicemen.

All that survives today of Brahan is an ornamental wall representing the north wall of the 19th century extensions. The remainder was bulldozed away in 1965.



*Castle Leod (Wikipedia)*

**Castle Leod** about 5 km (3 ml) east of Contin village was occupied in the late 1400s by the famous “Tutor of Kintail”, Sir Rory McKenzie – so called because he looked after the Seaforth Chief’s oldest son. He was highly educated and, when his brother died, he became the effective chief. He played an important part in extending the lands of the McKenzies. He was a great favourite of King James VI (I of England) and, in 1623, he was created Earl of Seaforth and Viscount Fortrose. His son John became “Baronet of Nova Scotia”, and for a time owned Staten Island, now New York, but sold it (it is said) “on account of too many Indians and mosquitoes”. It was John’s son George who became the 1st Earl of Cromarty, friend of Sir Isaac Newton, founding member of the Royal Academy of Science in London and Secretary of State as well as having been Lord Advocate for Scotland.

**Coul Castle** is just a couple of kilometres north of Contin village. The New Statistical Account for Contin (written in about 1834) tells us the “new” Coul “mansion house” was built in 1821. The first of the family of Coul, was Alexander McKenzie, brother of Kenneth, first Lord McKenzie of Kintail, who, before his death, made Lord McKenzie a present of his own sword, as a testimony of his particular esteem and affection. His son, Kenneth McKenzie of Coul, was created a Baronet of Nova Scotia on 6 October 1673. His eldest son, Sir Alexander, second Baronet, died in 1702. His son, Sir John McKenzie, third Baronet, was forfeited for being concerned in the rebellion of 1715. Today Coul House is a hotel.

**Fairburn Tower** is a prominent landmark on the south side of the River Contin from Contin village. The Tower was built around 1540 for Murdo McKenzie, Master of the Bedchamber to James V. The Brahan Seer, foretold that 'the McKenzies of Fairburn would lose their entire possessions and their castle [the Tower] would become uninhabited and a cow shall give birth to a calf in the uppermost chamber. And today the Tower is in a poor state of repair – with no roof and no floors.



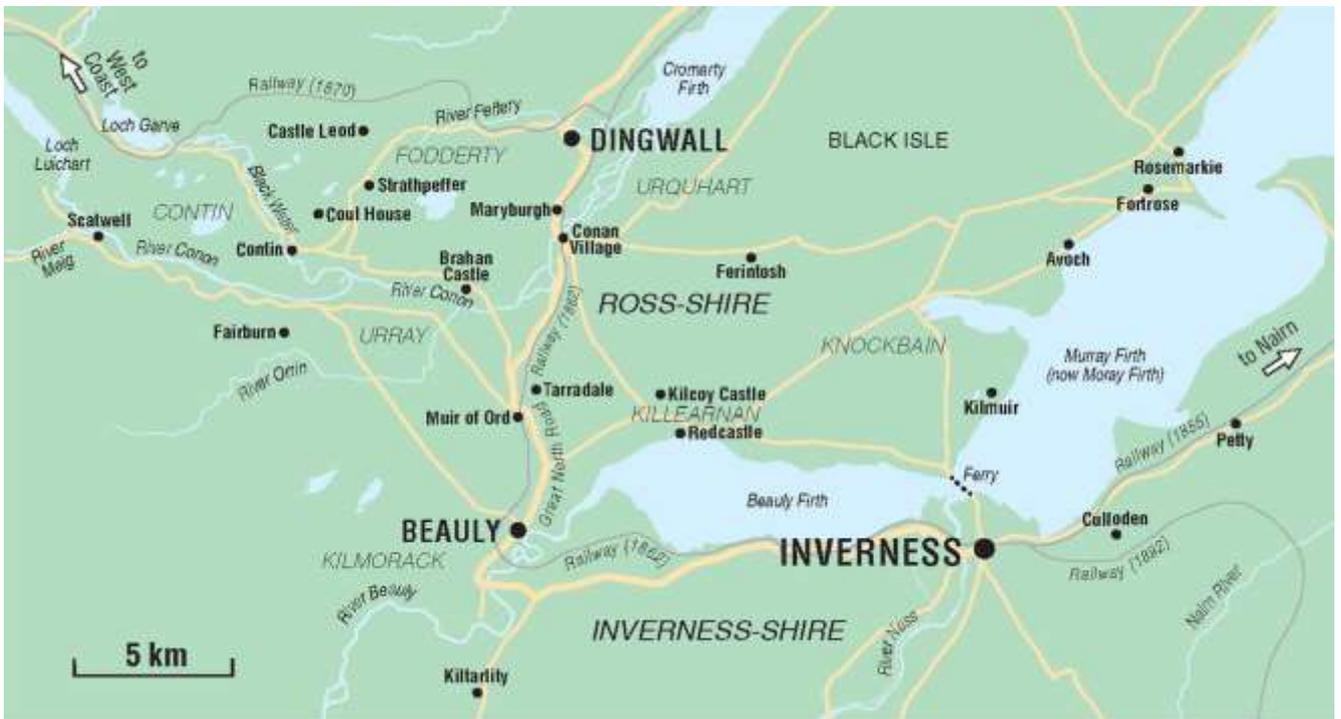
*Fairburn Tower (Author photo 2014)*

***Directions:***

Refer to map on next page

***Further Reading:***

[Canmore - Brahan Castle](#)



Map showing Brahan, Coul, Leod, Fairburn (Donald C McLennan)

## ***Further research:***

### **Clan Genealogy** – [www.clanmaclennan-worldwide.com/genealogy](http://www.clanmaclennan-worldwide.com/genealogy)

Our Clan Genealogy resource “Family-Sharing” is available on line to all financial members of any of our Clan associations. For Scotland the resource includes large numbers of recorded Clan members and their spouses and children. Evidence for the relationship between spouses and their children include citations and transcriptions of many original records and headstones.

There is also a collection of many books known as “Clan Histories”.

A good way to search for localities and streets where your ancestors lived is to search for a word included in the “Notes” associated with each individual.

If you have further evidence for your own ancestors, please send them to [famhist@clanmaclennan-worldwide.com](mailto:famhist@clanmaclennan-worldwide.com)

*Tracing your Family History on the Internet - A Guide for Family Historians,*  
by Chris Paton

Useful for origins of place names: [\*Place-Names of Ross and Cromarty\*](#), William John Watson, 1904

Outline of resources for British origins – [Click here](#)

## ***Other books***

***Friends, Families and Forebears***, 2017, Bruce A McLennan, hardback, 1010 pages

The communities where Rev Donald McLennan and his wife Annie (nee Brown) lived – with many examples of the Scottish diaspora in Scotland, New Zealand, Australia and Canada – especially McLennans. Available from Book Depository with free shipping worldwide – <https://www.bookdepository.com/Friends-Family-Forebears-Bruce-McLennan/9780648246602?ref=grid-view&qid=1529192040732&sr=1-1>