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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the May edition of the Journal - no ordinary edition, I'll have you know! There are three items of extreme interest which I must inform you of. No; make that three items of extreme interest and one incidental item!

Firstly, and in no particular order of importance, your very own family history Society will be 25 years old in the Autumn. From humble beginnings, your Society has grown from strength to strength and you are one of nearly 800 members worldwide. The first Journal, published in December 1981, reported that 120 people had attended the inaugural meeting of the Society on September 21st in Inverness Museum and Art Gallery. The steering committee had catered for an attendance of 60, so were completely overwhelmed by the turnout!

Duncan Ross, who is now editor of my local weekly newspaper in Golspie, and someone to whom I speak frequently, was the chairman of the steering group, and he introduced the guest speaker, Donald Whyte, chair of the Scottish Genealogy Society. Duncan also opened the first Journal by penning the editorial. He emphasised what is still so relevant in the Society today, namely that contributions to the Journal 'are not only welcome – they are essential if the Journal is to fulfil its role'. He went on with the encouraging words 'if you don't feel up to a full-length, fully-referenced paper, we still want to hear about your ancestors and your ancestor-hunting', a sentiment which is just as relevant today.

Secondly, as an established family history society, we offered – and have been awarded the honour - of holding the Scottish Association of Family History Societies (SAFHS) conference in 2007. Our former Chairman, Neil Murray, is this year's chair of SAFHS, so he was able to apply a bit of gentle arm-twisting to us to hold the conference. We last held it in 1983, when over 180 delegates attended. The committee is now busy preparing themes for the conference and details of the event will appear in the next edition of the Journal.

Thirdly, the Society has always been seeking premises to use as a base for storage and as a home. Recently, we have had the opportunity to rent such a place in an excellent location and, especially, at a reasonable price in the centre of Inverness.

The office is on the third floor of Albyn House in the city's busy Union Street. We are now in the process of looking for desks, chairs, bookcases, filing cabinets and computers to furnish our own accommodation. We will be making a bid for money from the Lottery, so we will not be in a position to open officially before August at the earliest. Details of the opening times and how to find the office will appear in the next Journal. It has taken us 25 years to find suitable premises, but once we are in and established, it will become the focal point for local members and visitors alike and will give us a 'shop window' from which to conduct our business. It will also be a huge relief to our Treasurer, John Durham and especially his 'long-suffering' wife, Beryl, whose house will have the burden of storing all of the Society's publications lifted in one fell swoop after all these years. What will they do with the space!

Fourthly, and fittingly finally, it is with great regret that I feel that I have to relinquish my role as Editor of your Journal. This is due to further pressing demands on my time, ironically, now that my mother (if you're not up with the story – it's far too long to go into again!) has been installed in Brora. Having her here in the same village is a bit of a double edged sword – it's great to have her here so close, giving me peace of mind and being available for help on the one hand, but as a consequence, it will be a big draw on my own free time on the other.

It has been a full and hectic 5 years since John Durham pressed me up against a wall at a conference we were both attending in Nairn in April 2001, but being your Editor has given me much pleasure. I have had so much friendly and informative correspondence and have relished the job. It is time, however, for me now to bow out, move on and get John to do some pressing again. Is there anyone out there who can pen a few lines to fill a quarterly blank page? I really recommend it, and it can easily be undertaken from a distance in this day and age. Go on – just give it a go. Contact John. You won't regret it! Cheerio and thanks. Over and out.....

HISTORIES OF THE CLAN MACKINNON: A CHRONOLOGY.

E. Edwards McKinnon and Gerald McKinnon ©

Introduction

A first attempt to write a history of the Clan Finigon, or Mackinnon as it is now known would appear to be a document entitled *A Genealogical Account of the Family of Mackinnon*, compiled circa 1850 by Sir Alexander MacKenzie Downie (d. 1852) and Alistair Downie Mackinnon (d. 1860). This document, which comprises some eight pages of text and notes taken from Gregory's *History of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, (a standard Victorian period work on the Highlands) was revised and reprinted privately with a specially written introduction comprising nine pages written by Lauchlan Mackinnon of the cadet line of Corriechatachan at Plymouth, England in 1882. Lauchlan at that time described himself as of 'Duisdale House, Isle of Skye and Eilfordleigh in Devonshire, England' and 'formerly of Melbourne, Australia.'

Shortly after this account was printed (it was undated), a response entitled a *Reply from the Author of Memoirs to the pamphlet entitled the Family of Mackinnon by Lauchlan Mackinnon*, was issued by the Reverend Donald D. Mackinnon in which he rebuffed the arguments of Lauchlan and proved (our italics) the claim of the Antigua family. This latter publication comprises sixteen pages of text together with a chart of the alleged genealogy of the Antigua line. To this rebuff Lauchlan replied somewhat caustically on the 23rd May 1883 to the effect that both the Antigua claim to descent from Lauchlan Mor and the claim that Donald Mackinnon had been a doctor on his arrival in Antigua appear to be of no substance. Furthermore, in conclusion he stated emphatically that "I knew my grandfather and my father sufficiently well to assert most positively, that if they had known all the circumstances surrounding the claim of the late Mr. W.A. Mackinnon to the chieftainship as well as I do at the present day, they never would have acknowledged him as such."

Supposing wrongly that the line of Mishnish was extinct, both Sir Alexander Downie and Alistair Downie Mackinnon as well as Lauchlan claimed the chieftainship for the Corrie family. Indeed, none of the authors writing during the later part of the nineteenth century appears to have given much consideration to the claim of the descendants of Mishnish, thought apparently for all intents and purposes to have died out, but now, as then, resident in North America. Both Lauchlan and his predecessors, however, disputed the claim of the house of Antigua (also known as Acryse) to the clan's chieftainship, a dispute that has continued for over two centuries.

Early in the nineteenth century, soon after a visit to Skye by Mr (later Sir) Walter Scott and William Mackinnon of Antigua in 1811, the Reverend Donald Mackinnon (1735 to 1831) grandfather of the above-mentioned Lauchlan and a former minister of Strath, had been induced to compose a genealogy of the chiefly and cadet lines of Mackinnon. This genealogy thereafter seems to have been forever in dispute. As the Reverend Donald Mackinnon of Portree pointed out in 1931, at the time his namesake, the earlier Reverend Donald composed his 'family tree', the former minister of Strath was already living in retirement and bordering on, if not actually some ninety years of age. Moreover, it appears that not only was part of the original document, compiled by the elderly Reverend Donald, torn off later in the century but the composition of this particular work appears to have been based entirely upon verbal tradition and not upon any actual tangible documentary evidence of the kind usually required to verify genealogical lineages.

By the late eighteenth century, surviving papers relating to the former Kilmorie line of Mackinnon chiefs already seem to have been dispersed over a wide range of official and

private collections including the Books of Council and Session in Edinburgh, the private papers of lawyers such as MacKenzie of Delvine, a former clerk to the Council of Session at the High Court in Edinburgh; to the papers of Macdonald of Sleat now housed in the Clan Donald Centre at Armadale and also among the Dunvegan papers of MacLeod of MacLeod, as well as others.

The first edition of the Reverend Donald Dimsdale Mackinnon's (1848-19??) *Memoirs of Clan Finigon* was published privately in 1882 and is now extremely rare. Very few copies of this first attempt to publish a full history of the Clan survived, for most of the stock perished in a warehouse fire soon after publication. A second, enlarged edition appeared in 1899 but remained out of print for almost a century until reprinted in paperback by the Clan Mackinnon Society of North America at Morganstown, W.V. in 1980. The Reverend Donald Dimsdale's work is now stylistically somewhat dated and is, moreover, a rather biased, if not to say in some ways, inaccurate work in that the author had a preconceived agenda to justify. It is only fair to note that the Reverend Donald D. Mackinnon, who was minister of Speldhurst in Kent, was a direct descendant of William of Antigua (1734-94), being a grand-nephew of that gentleman. His one documented visit to the Hebrides was in his youth. He does not appear to have made further visits to the Isles.

As noted above, the Corrie family laid claim to the chieftainship and did not easily give up thoughts of their claim. The first correspondence about the chieftainship would appear to be that published in the *Inverness Courier* in 1849. In 1903 there was considerable correspondence in *The Scotsman* newspaper and in 1912, a firm of solicitors were asked by the Duchess of Somerset, a daughter of Mackinnon of Corrie, to search whatever legal documentation was available in Scotland. They produced a comprehensive report of legal sources appertaining to the chieftainship, of which more later.

The situation of the rightful chieftainship had been complicated in 1848 by an address presented by clan members then living in Skye to Charles Mackinnon of Corrie on his return from India. The Skye folk addressed Charles of Corrie as their 'Chief'. Publication of this address was followed in 1849 by the two letters in the *Inverness Courier*, mentioned above, that were recorded for posterity in Cameron's *History and Traditions of Skye*, (1877), pp. 137-138. Correspondence on the subject continued intermittently for some eighty years until the 1930's, when the matter eventually appears to have been laid to rest.

In 1909, a Scots historian, D. Murray Rose, a regular contributor to 'Highland Notes and Queries' in the columns of the *Northern Chronicle*, published two articles claiming the chieftainship of Clan Finigon for the 'lost' family of Mishnish. Unfortunately for the author there were a number of factual errors in his work, though these were later corrected and did not materially alter what he had written. Thereafter, in late 1911, D. Murray Rose wrote a six part history of the clan which was also published in the 'Highland Notes and Queries' series in which he set out the genealogy of the chiefs of the Kilmorie line, and in particular that of Lauchlan Mor, backed up by extracts from, and references to, legal documents of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He appears to have undertaken considerable painstaking archival research and his was the first attempt to establish a clan history based on tangible original documentary evidence. He publicly denounced the Antigua claim as spurious, continuously quoting the term as 'Antiqua' and demanded that the descendants of Mishnish come forward to claim their inheritance.

A decade or so later, the pages of the *Oban Times* and *Northern Chronicle* newspapers for the period from 1926 to 1928 remain an enlightening source of information regarding the controversies over the chieftainship that inflamed Mackinnons in the Highlands (and no doubt elsewhere) during this period. At this time, another minister of the Kirk, the above-mentioned Reverend Donald Mackinnon of Portree (1890-1966) contributed a series of valuable articles on clan history during this period and, apparently in the late 1920s, had also planned to

publish a volume entitled *Families of MacKinnon*. Due to the not inconsiderable amount of acrimonious correspondence in the above mentioned northern newspapers lasting for a period of more than a year and possibly pressures within the society of the period, he apparently abandoned the idea and his manuscript remains unpublished. It's current whereabouts is unknown. Recent investigations suggest, however, that these important papers, now lost for almost forty years, might still be in existence.

Following the heated debate in the northern newspapers relating to the rights of one or other claimant to the chiefship, and publication of a serialized genealogy of the various cadet families of MacKinnon in the *Oban Times* in 1927, some four years later in 1931 the Reverend Donald MacKinnon of Portree published a limited edition of a small 37 page booklet entitled *The Chiefs and Chiefship of Clan MacKinnon*. The Reverend Donald of Portree went on to become an historian and genealogist of considerable repute. A full list of his work is appended to this essay for reference.

Moreover, in his well-researched writing, the Reverend Donald in drawing conclusions similar to those of D. Murray Rose, presented a somewhat different picture of clan history compared to the earlier version presented by the Reverend Donald D. MacKinnon. The author of this brief work published in 1931 stated that "Although all sources of information are not cited, great care has been taken to verify every statement." Indeed, it may be said in all fairness that the Reverend Donald's work is of much sounder historical value than the *Memoirs*. It is unfortunate, to say the least, however, that it was clan politics that appear to have halted the publication of his manuscript entitled *Families of MacKinnon* which would have been his most important work and doubtlessly a most valuable source of clan history. Furthermore, it is unfortunate that the Reverend Donald did not quote his documentary sources as these would have saved the current authors much time and effort in trying to trace and verify his statements. The articles and correspondence in the *Oban Times* have, however, given some useful insights into the alternative points of view and the schism that no doubt had an acute effect upon the thinking of a generation of members of the clan still resident in the Highlands at the time.

Also in about 1931, the Glasgow branch of the now defunct Clan MacKinnon Society published a small booklet entitled *The Clan and What it Stands For*, subtitled "A Brief History of the Clan MacKinnon." As the date of publication is not given, it is not clear as to whether this was intended as a rebuff to the Reverend Donald's *Oban* publication or whether it preceded it. In any case, no less than eleven pages are partially or completely given over to contemporary advertising and there are five full pages of plates, allowing approximately half of the publication to be devoted to text.

At the time, concerned clansmen were divided into two distinct camps, those that supported the Antigua (or so-called Acryse) claim to the chiefship and those who did not. The members of the Clan Society of the period would appear, from the membership lists contained in the few surviving editions of the Society's magazine available to us, to have been predominantly relatively affluent members of society who raised funds for the relief of disadvantaged members of the clan in the Hebrides.

A further, concise account of Clan history by the same Reverend Donald of Portree based on his work of 1931, appeared in the *Scottish Motor Transport Magazine*, Volume XXII, No. 6, in June 1939. This short account of clan history, in what may only be termed an obscure and now extremely difficult to obtain periodical is conceivably the best, albeit brief source of clan history available to us at the present time.

Almost twenty years later in 1958 a Flight Lieutenant Charles Roy MacKinnon who styled

¹ University of Guelph Library, Shelf number M325 1931.

himself 'of Dunakin,' published another small volume, *The Clan MacKinnon - A Short History* in which, drawing heavily upon the Reverend Donald D. MacKinnon's *Memoirs*, he covered the same salient points of the clan's history from the ninth century to modern times. The intervening war years may have still left some lingering suspicions about the legitimacy of the situation for his viewpoint supported that put forward earlier by the Reverend Donald D. MacKinnon and the Clan Association, in affirming the Antigua claim to the chiefship. He was granted arms by the Lyon King of Arms in Edinburgh in July 1958 and on 15th April 1966, recognised as 'MacKinnon of Dunakin, 1st Chieftain and Laird of Dunakin in the Isle of Skye.' He is noted in Burke's Peerage as 'hereditary senmachie' of the clan. He later wrote an article entitled "Sons of the Fair One, The Clan MacKinnon," published in *The Scottish American Helper*, vol.4, #3 & 4, 1976 and also a brief description of the clan in his book *The Scottish Highlanders* published in 1984.

A thorough genealogical treatise, *The MacKinnons of Kyle and Other Connections* covering the cadet line of Kyle, was published privately in a limited edition by Major John MacKinnon of Longformacus, Berwickshire in 1981. The author expressed his thanks to the Reverend Donald MacKinnon with whom he had discussed his genealogy and apparently had also been given access to the now-lost manuscript.

Finally, in 1986 a brief history of the Clan compiled by Alan McNie, which again is in effect a work condensed from the *Memoirs* by the Reverend Donald D. MacKinnon, appeared in the *Your Clan Heritage Series*, published by the Cascade Publishing Company, Jedburgh. This, like its related predecessors contains much that is inaccurate and needs revision. In particular, references to the Clan Alpin are now considered to be no more than a seventeenth century political manoeuvre. The Clan Alpin, *per se*, never existed but was apparently invented by enterprising Highland chiefs in order to establish claims to their clan lands in the absence of tangible legal documentation.

Brief clan histories have also appeared in various books on tartans and the Highlands, in magazines, and more recently on the Internet. Naturally, some are better than others but most are quotations from secondary sources and relate directly to versions of clan history published in the *Memoirs*. In the absence of easily available alternative sources, most of the authors of these 'potted' histories have naturally, and in the current authors' view, unfortunately, drawn heavily upon the Reverend Donald D. MacKinnon's *Memoirs* which was very much a pioneering effort with a specific agenda – a work that is useful only as a very basic and somewhat biased introduction to clan history. Not surprisingly, even Burke's Peerage and the Lord Lyon King of Arms appear to draw unquestioningly upon what can now only be described as a patently 'faulty' source of clan history.

Other Sources for MacKinnon history

The work currently in hand draws on previously published but also much unpublished original archival material. Among the more dependable published sources of early clan history by authors other than writers of the name are: *The Highland Papers*, Edinburgh: (1914-34), the *Collectanea Rebus Albanicus*, Edinburgh: (1847), and Fraser MacIntosh's *Antiquarian Notes*, Edinburgh: (1897). Other sources, such as *The Statistical Accounts of Scotland*, Cameron's *History & Traditions of the Isle of Skye*, (1871); John MacInnes' *Brave Sons of Skye*, (1899); J.P. MacLean's *Isle of Mull*, (1925); John Mackenzie's *Old Skye Tales*, (1934) plus the enlarged edition of 1940; Otta Swire's *Isle of Skye* published in 1951 and her *Inner Hebrides* all give useful information either about clan lands, clansmen, or the clan itself or about folk lore relevant to the lands of MacKinnon.

The Legal Search undertaken in 1912 on behalf of Corrie is interesting in its conclusions. It states quite unequivocally that the best claim to the chiefship on the decease of John (of Riachan) in 1808 lay with the descendants of Mishnish who were "unquestionably the next in

succession." The document also mentions a note appended to a decree dated 15th August 1723 in favour of Lauchlan MacKinnon of Corriechatachan written on a Bond of Lauchlan Mor dated 1686 and recorded in 1694 that states that "Iain dubh was the first of the clan to use the (englished) form (MacKinnon) as he thought it agreed better with, and sounded nearer his Irish designation"

Through the availability of many sources not previously cited, though they were in all probability checked by the Reverend Donald MacKinnon of Portree and his collaborators, Captain Allan R. Macdonald of Waternish and Mr D. Murray Rose of Edinburgh, for their articles in the *Northern Chronicle* and *The Chiefs and Chieftship of Clan MacKinnon*, this history is in the course of being extensively re-written. Much archival material in the National Library of Scotland, the National Archives and the Scottish Records Office is, as it has always been, available on request. In consequence, the history of the clan from its earliest beginnings to the present is now rather better understood than it might have been in the late nineteenth century.

Banda Aceh, Indonesia, and Prince George, British Colombia, Canada
January 2006.

Bibliography: Donald MacKinnon Portree & Kennoway, Fife (1890-1966).

1910 Fear-Cuil. Dain, orain, is sgeulachan. (Am Fear-Cuil. Poems, songs, etc). An dara do-bhualadh, le moran ris / [edited by Donald MacKinnon F.S.A.Scot.]

1929 MacLeods of Arnisdale compiled from family and other documents [with portraits].

1930 Gaelic Bible and Psalter: being the story of the translation of the scriptures into Scottish Gaelic, etc.

1930 Clerical Sons of Skye

1931 History of Skye. A review, Reprinted from "Northern Chronicle," 16th July 1930.

1931 Chiefs and Chieftship of MacKinnon. Obar: Obar Times.

1937 Touring in Skye. A Guide.

1939 Urramach Iain MacLeod, O.B.E., F.S.A. Scot., Eaglais Hope Street, Glaschu.

1939 Guldees of Scotland. [Reprinted from the transactions of the Society of Friends of Dunblane Cathedral].

1939 The Clan MacKinnon. [Scottish Motor Transport Magazine, vol. pp]

1946 Annals of a Fifeshire congregation, being the story of the original associate (Burgher) Church at Kennoway, afterwards the United Original Secession church at Kennoway, and since 1845 the Free Church at Kennoway — 1800-1945. [With plates, including portrait].

1943 Disruption picture. A memorial of the first general assembly of the Free Church of Scotland. [a description of the picture by David O'Hill. with a reproduction, and other plates].

- 1948 Bardachd Dhomhnaill Chataanaich, Cinnhiuthsaich
- 1950 MacLeods. Being a short historical and genealogical account of their chiefs and cadets. [With plates, including portraits].
- 1957 Clan Ross [With plates, genealogical tables and a map].
- 1969 MacLeods, the genealogy of a clan. Vol. 1, MacLeod chiefs of Harris and Dunvegan. Co-authored with Alick Morrison.
- 1975 MacLeods, the genealogy of a clan. Section 2. The MacLeods of Talisker, Berneray, Orbst, Luskintyre, Hamer, Greshornish, Ullinish and Dalvey. Co-authored with Alick Morrison.
- 1975 MacLeods, the genealogy of a clan. Section 3. MacLeod cadet families descended from William XIII Chief, Norman XII Chief, Iain Borb VI Chief, William Cleirach V Chief, Malcolm III Chief. Co-authored with Alick Morrison.
- 1975 MacLeods, the genealogy of a clan. Section 4, The MacLeods of Lewis with several septs including the MacLeods of Raasay. Co-authored with Alick Morrison.

BITS & PIECES

UNUSUAL PLACE-NAME

In the previous journal Ken Jones asked if anyone in the society could identify the birthplace in 1840 of someone on his family tree. The place in question was Fisher Kew, Inverness. Along with a couple of queries that she sent in, and which appear later on, Eleanor Rimmer suggested that perhaps it was a spelling error. She suggested it may have been the place called Fisher Row that she noticed in the 1881 census for Inverness.

DONALD MACDONALD

Eleanor intimated that she had somehow 'mislaid' a Donald Macdonald in the 1871 census. He would have been aged about 55 and his occupation mason, building contractor or possibly quarry/quarry owner. She had spent a small fortune on Scotland's People to no avail. Has any member come across him?

BACK NUMBERS OF THE JOURNAL

William Maeers (member 1492) wrote in to say "I have been a member of HFHS for a long time, and have been very happy with the results from your magazine. As a consequence I have a large number of back copies of the journal. Perhaps some of your new members would be pleased to receive some of these. If anyone was interested, I will send six copies each time. The only cost would be the postage." Contact address is 95 Middlelune Avenue, Milton Regis, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 2JE.

BOOK REVIEW

Member, Rita Cook, for her husband's 60th birthday has come up with a very novel present. She has thoroughly researched and just produced a book entitled "If Ye Danna Spier Ye'll Nivir Fin Oot" about his Cook ancestry. The main role is taken by John Cook, ship-builder in

