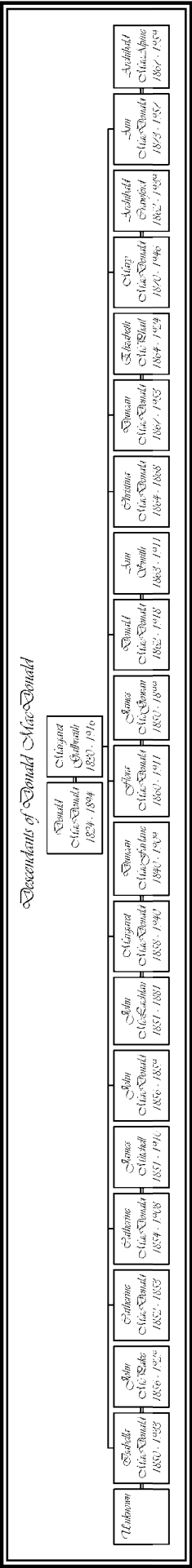
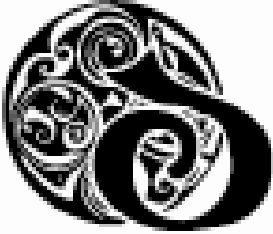


hapter 2

The mcDonalds





Donald McDonald (1824-1894) and Margaret Galbraith (1830-1916) were my mother's parents and they lived in Gigha. It's a beautiful island in the Gulf Stream, off the Mull of Kintyre. It doesn't have a severe winter and it has tropical plants growing there. Nice people, only about four or five hundred. It was once owned by the Horlick family. He did a lot for the islanders and they were very happy. When he died, his family didn't want to continue so they sold the Island and it was bought by an Englishman who had no money. He had borrowed through a Swiss bank and didn't have collateral to back it. As a result, the island was in a very bad way financially. This man was buying from the only shop on the island and not paying. The only shop was the post office and the owner of the shop is McSporran, supposedly related to my family (I think they must all be related there). The Island was owned, in the time of the clans, by the clan, McNeil. My mother had relations called McNeil in Campbelltown. Three of the McNeil brothers were sea captains and two of the paddle steamers I knew that steamed from Glasgow to Campbelltown, the Dalriada and the Davar, they skippered. I don't think I ever met them.

Margaret and Donald were married in 1849. He was a fisherman on Gigha, although most of the McDonalds and Galbraiths were farmers. The McNeils were the traditional fishing families of Gigha. While on Gigha, they had seven children: Isabella (Bella, born 1850), Margaret, Catherine (died one year old), Catherine, John (died age 3), Flora and Donald. Around 1863, when many families were leaving Scotland to go to places like Canada and Australia, my grandfather, Donald McDonald, decided that they should go to New Zealand. They left their farm, Drumeonmore, with their six children, in just a little boat, crossing the Atlantic, which could be very rough. The pier was not built in Gigha at that time, and the ferryman would take passengers in a little rowboat to meet the steamers which took them to the mainland.

They landed at Tayinloan, on the Mull of Kintyre, on the mainland, and then went on to Tarbert. Apparently there was a cholera plague there at the time, and one of their children became sick which meant they couldn't leave without being quarantined. There is a special graveyard outside Tarbert where those that died of cholera are buried.

They had four more children when they were in Tarbert. Christina (died age 4), Duncan, Mary and Annie were born in Tarbert. My mother Christina was the youngest.

So they got stuck in Tarbert and there they remained. Their's was quite a big family. They lived in a little cottage, or croft, that was one of a pair very close together. Theirs was called "Baluchrach" which means "house on the hill" It is no longer standing, or maybe is now part of a more modern home. The crofts were built from stones from the ruin of Tarbert Castle and were just one big room with a stone floor and a fireplace, for the family of ten to live. They didn't own the crofts in those days, but paid rent to the laird, a Campbell, the Duke of Argyll who lived in Stonefield Castle. Granny McDonald died the year before I was born, so I never met her. The croft was just left empty when she died. We always went to Tarbert on holiday and it was empty then still, and I never went to look in as a youngster. The croft next door was empty too, but Uncle Duncan lived in his until he died and then his daughter Mary.

The McDonald children went to school on Gigha and in Tarbert. There was just one school in Gigha that both girls and boys went to. The classroom was a big room above the schoolmaster's house, with an open fireplace. There was also just one school in Tarbert in those days too, run by the church. It is still there today.

Isabella went to school and by age 15 was, like many of the women in Tarbert, was working as a domestic. She moved to Edinburgh and married a Coachman, John McPake. They had five children, and their daughter, Annie, was at my parents' wedding in Glasgow. Later in life, they moved to Australia to live with their daughter who had become Annie Simpson and son John who never married. My brother Sandy visited them when he was in the Pacific in the Navy. They had three other sons. William died just two months

old. Alexander died as a young man, where and when we are not sure, but there is a letter from Annie to my mother where she describes his death alone and in a foreign country and the grief of not knowing what happened to him. Their other son, Donald, was killed in WWI at Pas de Calais, France. He is buried there at Bois-Carre Military Cemetery Haisnes, France. He was 33 years old. None of them had children.

Catherine married James Mitchell and they had three girls and two boys. One of her daughters, Elizabeth, married James Milliken and they lived in Glasgow. Liza used to visit my Mother quite often when I was little.

Uncle Donald married Ann Smith. Uncle Donald was at one point, a shoemaker, but made a living as a fisherman. They had lots of children, many who I remained in contact with throughout our lives. The eldest, Flora, married Dugald Easton and became Flora Easton. They had two children, Annie and Archie. When he died, she married his brother, Alexander Easton and had two more children, Florence and Alistair. Alistair moved to Canada and to this day, we still write to one another. I stayed with Alistair on a trip to Barbados. Margaret married Andrew Cockburn and had two children, and the others, Sarah, Bella (who died young) and Annie didn't marry.

Flora McDonald married James McGown and they moved to Glasgow around 1880. Her husband died, then she too died young, of cancer, leaving 5 children, the youngest only 11. One of them went to live with Granny McDonald, probably Flora. The eldest of those children, Mary, moved to Canada where she married Nevin McWilliams.

Margaret married Duncan McFarlane, Duncan was a fisherman in Tarbert and they moved into the croft next door to Granny's. They had six children, Donald, John, Janet (who became Janet Pougie McDougall), Margaret, Duncan and Elizabeth.

There were only two people in my mother's big family that I knew well, Uncle Duncan McDonald and Aunt Annie (McAlpine).

Uncle Duncan McDonald lived nearby in another croft, in fact, when



Donald McDonald and Margaret Galbraith McDonald at
Baluachradch, Tarbert

About 1895

Florence Johnstone, daughter of Flora Easton has the original
copy of this family treasure



Baluachrach, McDonald Family Crofts in Tarbert

Left: Baluachradch 1, home of Margaret and Donald McDonald,
Croft on the Right: home of daughter Margaret McFarlane and family
Below: Baluachrach, as appears in "Tarbert in Picture and Story" by
 Dugald Mitchell M.D. 1908





Uncle Duncan's Croft
Above: Christine in 2000,

Middle: Florence and
Isabel

Left: Photo taken by Isa-
bel in 2006



Tarbert. This is one of the few photos we can find taken from the correct position. Baluachrach is the croft visible next to a field full of little haystacks, just behind the town. This photo was courtesy of Isabel, and of unknown time and origin.

you came over the hill into Tarbert, Uncle Duncan's house was the first thing you could see. It is now a little ruin behind a new home. He was married to Aunty Betsy but he outlived her by more than 50 years. I remember I used to visit them, and Aunt Betsy was always in bed ill. I never saw her out of bed, and in those days, you just didn't ask why. He used to stay with us when he came to Glasgow. One of his sons was Donald McDonald who worked at the pier at West Loch Tarbert. He never married. His sister, Mary, also never married and she lived in the croft after Uncle Duncan died. She died in 1986. There were three other sons, Samuel, Archie and Duncan. Samuel McDonald, a gamekeeper, had an incident at work which brought him great shame when he was asked to leave for smacking a child and the boy's father complained to his boss. He took it very badly and never recovered from that and suffered what we would probably call depression today. His wife left him with two young sons. I also remember one of Uncle Duncan's other sons, Archie, coming to stay with us in Glasgow. He was not well and later died of tuberculosis. On a trip to Tarbert in 2000, we found Uncle Duncan's abandoned croft. There is a picture of my daughter Christine in the door and my niece Isabel also sent me a photo from 2006.

One of my mother's other sisters was Mary. She married Archie Crawford, a painter in Tarbert. He had painted at Stonefeild Castle. Archie had respiratory problems, so they packed up the family, by then they had ten children, and in 1910 followed in his brother Robert's footsteps and went by boat to Australia. The Crawfords came to stay with my family in Glasgow when they were leaving for Australia. Duncan Crawford was one of their sons. I eventually met Duncan Crawford and his wife Mary. I had been in Australia for some years when I decided to take my chances and start calling Crawfords in the Sydney telephone directory. The first two numbers did not answer, the third was Duncan!

Duncan and Mary had moved to Sydney from Queensland in 1915. He remembered my family well, and thought my mother was a lovely person. But he didn't remember me, because I had not been born! Duncan showed me his family group photos taken in Queensland and I was amazed at the close resemblance between my own mother and his mother Mary. As we talked family, I asked him about our Grandmother as he had lived with her at "Baluachrach" as the custom in those days was for a child or grandchild to live with a widowed grandparent. He told me it was a great wrench for him to leave her and they both cried at the pier in Tarbert. Out of the blue he said, "You know, she smoked a clay pipe!" I was quite shocked as I had a romantic idea about her in my head. When Duncan died, I went and stayed with Mary in her home in Sydney. John Crawford is her son, John and his wife Yvonne. I wish I had found out more about the family from him.

Aunty Annie, who was closest in age to my mother, married Archie McAlpine. Archie was a fisherman, and they lived near the quay and you had to go round the back and up the stairs to get into their house. We knew them very well, and I used to stay with them sometimes when I was on holiday in Tarbert. There were five daughters, Annie, Bella, Margaret, Mary and Flora. My brother Bobby, was good friends with Duncan McAlpine, their son and he used to play bowls with him.

I don't know much about Granny McDonald, but she was always looking after children in her family, even though she had ten of her own. Several grandchildren lived with her from time to time. I was told that there were always lots of cousins there, and her croft was right next to another where the McFarlanes lived. I know she spoke Gaelic and after my Grandfather died, she lived in the croft until she died in 1916. She was 86 when she died. My mother gave me a leather purse that belonged to Granny which I still have. It is named in gold on the inside, "Margaret McDonald, Baluachrach, Tarbert Loch Fyne, Argyleshire 1885" It is a treasured possession.

My mother, Christina McDonald, was born in Tarbert, Loch Fyne. She was the youngest (and I was the youngest in my family) so I didn't know all the older Aunts and Uncles. Some of them had died before I was born and others had moved away.

In those places there is no great work, except fishing and the females mostly had to go into service. I know my mother worked for a Doctor McMillan and he had a son Eough, the Gaelic for Hugh. She looked after him and I think she got a lot of her nursing experience there because she was always helping people in their illnesses. Then she went to work in the Commercial Hotel, it's now called the Figgate...you have a photo of it from when you were in Tarbert. She was a cook there and that's where all the fishermen came at the end of the week to settle up their finances and pay their men. My mother told me that when she was looking after the doctor's baby, the doctor and his wife used to be asked to Stonefield castle, to the laird for afternoon tea or dinner, and she went with them. I can remember seeing the laird, and Lady Eileen in Tarbert, the castle now is a hotel, open the public. I think it's called Stonefield Hotel and it faces Beaumore Island.

My mother told me that when she was young, she had gone to bring the cows down from the hills and she found a sword. It was taken to Campbelltown Museum, where it still might be. Perhaps that sword belonged to King Robert Bruce. Apparently when he was fleeing from the English, he dragged a boat from East Loch Tarbert to West Loch Tarbert and escaped. The Castle ruin in Tarbert was the Bruce Castle.

My mother met James McKinlay, who used to come to Tarbert, from Glasgow cycling. They married in 1901, in Glasgow, when she was 25. It must have been a big change for her to move from the quiet life of Tarbert to the tenements in the middle of Glasgow. Tarbert was an unusual place because people there still lived as they always had in the highlands, even though the rest of the country was becoming industrialised. It was a very popular place for tourists to visit, and the way to get there was by steamer from Glasgow

Baluachrach was referred to in Tarbert as being protected by the Baluachrach Police as Granny had a flock of geese that wouldn't let anyone near. Everyone in Tarbert had a nickname. In Tarbert, Mother was known as Teenie McDonald. Mother told me she used to sing in Gaelic to the cows as she milked them so they would give more milk.



Above: Archie Simpson, Uncle Duncan McDonald, Archie McAlpine, Annie Simpson (daughter of Isabella McDonald) 1938 in Tarbert



Left: Annie and Archie Simpson Glasgow 1938

Below: Annie and Archie on the Steamer to Tarbert





John McPake, son of Isabella and John McPake, killed in World War I



Above: James McGown, Margaret 1939, in the Rockies. Taken by Mary (McGowan) McWilliam

Below: Margaret McWilliam and her father





Donald McDonald (Son of Donald and Ann McDonald)



Miss McDonald (Same goatskin as Donald!!)??



Sarah McDonald (left) and friend



Meg and Isa McDonald (Daughters of Donald and Ann McDonald)



Margaret (Meg) Cockburn Daughter of Donald and Ann McDonald



Flora (McDonald) Easton (Daughter of Donald and Anne McDonald)



Left: Flora Easton and Margaret Maxwell

Below:
 Standing: Annie McDonald
 Nan Easton
 Sitting: Flora Easton, Alistair Easton, Florence Easton,
 Christina McKinlay

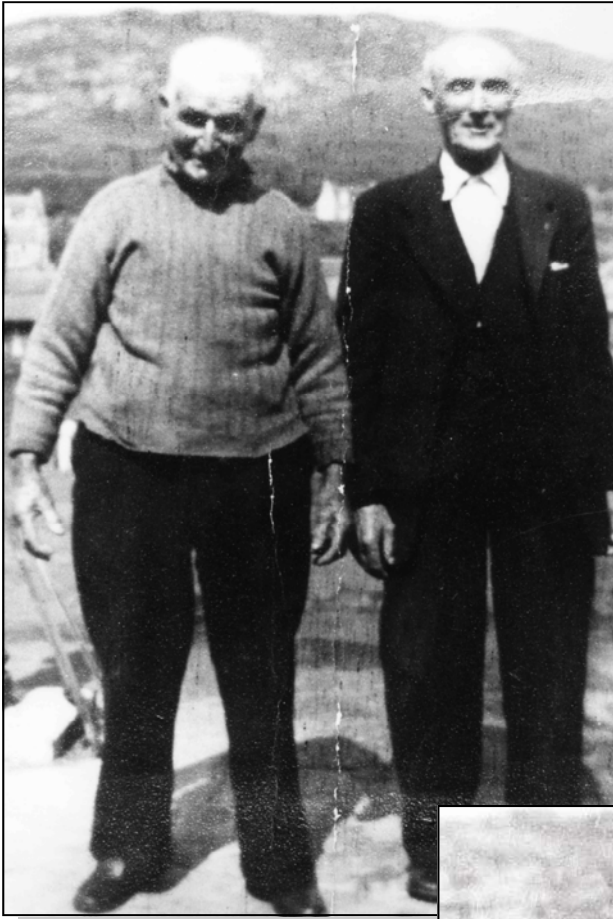




Margaret Cockburn, James, Flora Easton, Christina McKinlay



David McKinlay, James McKinlay, Sarah McDonald, Sarah McDonald, Elizabeth,,
Flora Easton, Netta McKinlay, Chrissie



Above: Archie McAlpine and James McKinlay (Father)

Right: Archie McAlpine, David McKinlay and James McKinlay

Tarbert





Crawfords Back, Donald, Robert, Duncan

Middle: Catherine, John, Archibald, baby Alexander, Mary (McDonald) Crawford,
Archie Front: Neil., James, Mary



Tarbert School about 1909 Duncan Crawford, front row 3rd from left



Granny McDonald's Purse

This is a treasured possession, given to me by my mother. It belonged to Margaret (Galbraith) McDonald and it is beautifully embossed. It is hard to tell the year, but I think it says 1885. It is not big, about 4" square.

There were probably not a lot of pennies to go in it.



Duncan and Mary Crawford



Sarah McDonald (Donald's daughter), Chrissie, Flora Easton, Agnes