

Bhalla

Vaul

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Vaul has within its boundaries two Iron Age forts or brochs - Dùn Mòr (the big fort) and Dùn Beag (the little fort.) Dùn Mòr is situated some 300 m. north-west of the north end of Vaul township and is visually the most impressive pre-historic monument on the island. It first attracted the attention of archaeologists in 1880 when it was partially cleared by the Marquis of Lorne, but was the subject of a major excavation by a team from Glasgow University led by Dr. E.W. Mackie between 1962 and 1964. A comprehensive report on the dig was published in 1974 by the University of Glasgow Press.

About 400m. east of Dùn Mòr lies Dùn Beag, situated on the summit of a prominent rocky knoll close to the shore. A bronze-headed pin and fragments of pottery were found there during a trial excavation in 1963.

1. **Eoghan Ruadh**, Hugh MacKinnon (*Eoghan Iain Alasdair Iain 'ic Dhòmhnail*) who lived in Vaul and died at the age of ninety-four was not only a 'Jack of all Trades' but was master of them all.

Of his four sons, **Donald, John, Lachlan** and **Charles** only Donald, who was a tailor to trade, spent his working life on the Mainland. He was married to Mary Anne MacKinnon of Brock. (Details in chapter on Ruaig and Brock.)

The other three brothers stayed at home and with their father worked at building and carpentry, making roofs, doors, windows, facings and any other woodwork required in the building of houses. Not only were they skilled carpenters in the making of household furniture such as dressers, tables, benches, ginals, chests of drawers and chests, but they also built carts, wheels for carts and coffins. Some furniture made by this family can be seen to this day and there are some examples on display in the Sandaig Museum.

Eoghan Ruadh and his sons were also boat builders and blacksmiths. They shod their own horses which were used on the family croft. They fished ling around Tìree, and Eoghan Ruadh himself along with his son John took part in the East Coast Herring Fishing.

Eoghan Ruadh died at the age of ninety four in about 1920.

2. **Donald MacDougall** (1809-1886) and his wife **Euphemia MacInnes** (1923-1902) had the following family -

Hugh, Lachlan, Alexander, Catriona, and Marian and Sarah, both of whom died in infancy. Lachlan and Catriona stayed on the family croft in Vaul. Alexander married **Mary MacKinnon (Màiri Lachainn 'ic Thearlaich)**, also of Vaul, and moved to Oban where his two grandchildren, Euphemia (Phemie) and Mary live to this day. Hugh born 1857, qualified as a doctor in Glasgow University and apart from a year spent in London as a young man, spent his entire working life as a doctor in Amoy, China. He died in London on the eighteenth of March, 1929.

Catriona was the mother of **John MacKinnon. (Fear Ruadh na Dùbhlach)** - a highly skilled boatbuilder who could build an eighteen foot skiff complete with mast, oars and all the necessary iron work in three weeks.

Among other men from Vaul who fished for lobsters, sometimes going as far west as the Hough Skerries were John MacKinnon's sons (**Seonaidh 'ear Ruaidh**) and **Donald (Dòmhnall 'ear Ruaidh)**. All these men were very competitive as regards the speed of their boats on the way to the lobster grounds, and John MacKinnon built a long narrow boat, primarily designed for speed, for his sons. On her first day at sea in poor weather it was discovered that she was too prone to shipping water. He had her pulled up to his shed by two horses, side decks were fitted and the boat was back at sea fishing the next morning!

A boat built by Fear Ruadh na Dùbhlach for Capt. Donald MacArthur, Rosigal, is still on Tìree, now owned by Lachlan MacArthur, Mannal.

3. **John MacKinnon (Seonaidh Beag)** 1898 - 1975 - one of David MacBrayne's legendary captains - was long associated with the Oban - Tobermory - Coll - Tìree - Castlebay - Lochboisdale run as master of the 'Lochearn' and 'Claymore'. His first charge as captain was the 'Gondolier' plying up and down the Caledonian Canal from Inverness to Fort William.

In January 1953, when a ferocious gale swept across Scotland causing among other disasters the tragic loss of the Stranraer to Larne ferry, the 'Princess Victoria', the 'Lochearn' under the command of Captain John MacKinnon made a safe passage from Castlebay to Oban.

He was renowned for his kindness to passengers and many who travelled with him have cause to remember him with affection and respect. Married to Elizabeth MacDonald (Lìosaidh Bhàn) daughter of Elizabeth Lamont, (Lìosaidh Iain), Ruaig, and John MacDonald, Harris, he has one daughter, Mrs Kathleen Kennedy, who lives in Dublin, and three grandchildren, Eilis, David-John and Catriona. He was awarded the M.B.E in 1957.

4. **John MacKinnon (Seonaidh Neill 'ic Iain)** another native of Vaul who moved to Glasgow, was a joiner and for some time after 1904 had the contract to maintain Ibrox Park, the home of Glasgow Rangers Football Team. John had four children - **Neil, Archibald, Catriona and Margaret**. Both Neil and Archibald were Master Mariners and both worked for the Donaldson Line. After the Second World War, Archibald left this company and settled in Newfoundland, the home of his wife, and thereafter worked for the Shipping Company Bowaters.

Sometime in the 1930's Neil was promoted to Assistant Marine Superintendent in Vancouver where his father-in-law, Captain Andrew Clark was Senior Superintendent. In 1939 he returned to Glasgow and remained Superintendent there until the Donaldson Line was wound up in 1964.

Tiree Men and The Donaldson Line

The Donaldson Line, formed in 1854 employed a large number of Tiree men over a long period of years as deckhands and deck officers - in fact at one time they were so numerous that the company was nicknamed 'The Tiree Navy.'

Five Tiree Men - Donald Kennedy (Dòmhnall Neill Mhòir), Kilkenneth, John MacFadyen (Iain Lachainn 'ic Phàidein), Barrapol, John MacInnes (Am Bàn), Ruaig, Iain Downie (Ruaig and Balemartine) and John Lamont (Seonaidh Iain 'Ic Eoghainn), Ruaig - were all at one time captains with the Donaldson Line.

Donald Archibald Kennedy (*Dòmhnall Eardsidh Màiri Dhòmhnail Mhòir*) Cornaig, sailed as chief officer on Donaldson Line passenger ships such as the 'Cassandra' and the 'Saturnia'. The 'Saturnia' (built 1910 with accommodation for 1200 passengers) on one of her early voyages homeward bound from Canada, hit an iceberg off the coast of Newfoundland. Due to the seamanship of Donald Archie Kennedy in rigging collision mats to stop the ingress of water, the ship completed a safe passage home. Donald Archie left the Donaldson Line in the 1920's and thereafter sailed as master of tankers trading between Vancouver and Alaska before retiring eventually to Glasgow.

Lachlan MacKinnon of Balemartine and Vaul sailed as bosun of the 'Letitia' for some thirty years. The ship, built in 1925 went through the Second World War as an armed merchant cruiser troopship and latterly as a hospital ship.

In 1946 she was sold to the British Government for the Australian emigration trade and renamed the 'Empire Brent', transferred to the New Zealand trade in 1951 and was renamed the 'Captain Cook'. During these years in the emigration trade she remained under Donaldson Line management and was manned by Donaldson Line crews.

Her sister ship, the 'Athenia' was the first British ship to be torpedoed in the Second World War. Struck at 7.45p.m on Sunday 3rd September 1939 she did not sink until 10.00a.m on Monday morning. Out of a total of 1418 people on board, 93 passengers and 19 crew lost their lives. Among the survivors were Iain Downie, who sailed as first mate on this fateful voyage, and other Tiree members of the crew.

Neil MacDonald (*Niall Sgibinnis*) had sailed as first mate on the 'Athenia' before the war.

As a result of the First World War, the Donaldson Line lost 9 ships and 60 seamen. The losses sustained in the Second World War were even more terrible in that they lost 13 ships and 188 seamen. In his first report after the Second World War, the Chairman of Donaldson's said; 'During the course of the war, in spite of the ever present perils at sea, no difficulty was experienced at any time in obtaining crews to man our ships, and the readiness with which these men went to sea as required is beyond praise.'

Vaul Master Mariners

Hugh MacKinnon | Mac Sheonaidh 'ear Ruaidh
Alexander MacKinnon | Alasdair Iain Òig
Neil MacKinnon | Niall Sheonaidh Neill 'ic Iain
Archibald MacKinnon | Gilleasbuig Sheonaidh Neill 'Ic Iain
John MacKinnon | Seonaidh Dhòmhnail Bhig

6. When **William MacFarlane** (*Uilleam Dubh*) of Balinoe married Catherine MacFadyen (Cathriona Dhòmhnail 'ic Ruairidh Alasdair 'ic Ruairidh), Vault, about 1890, the wedding party was led from Balinoe across Soroby beach to Crossapol by Pipe Major John MacDonald of Balemartine (1831 - 1893). A woman of the party remarked to the piper that when he had the pipes on his shoulder he looked 20 years younger. He replied 'Nan robh mi còig bliadhna nas òige, bheirinn fad' an rathaid gu Bràigh Bhalla iad.' (If I were five years younger I would pipe them all the way to the top of Vault.)

7. Golf Course, Vault

There is no doubt that some form of Golf Course existed in Vault as long ago as the 1890's, but certainly by June, 1911, a full eighteen hole golf course was laid out with the help of James Hobbins, a professional golfer. James Hobbins married Catherine MacArthur, a daughter of John MacArthur (Iain Sheumais) who was the brother of Alasdair MacArthur, an Clachair Mòr, of Balinoe.

Mrs Catherine Hobbins was the sister of Margaret who lived to the great age of 103 years. This lady was the mother of Lachlan MacLean (Lachainn Sheumais) presently living in Vault.

Below are the details of the Golf Course (length 6,306 yards) as laid out on 29th June 1911.

Hole		Yardage	Par
1.	MacNeill	448	5
2.	Perfection	360	5
3.	Buchanan's Gully	345	5
4.	Mount Ararat	115	3
5.	Rhum	280	4
6.	Dutchman's Cap	400	5
7.	Ben Hough	390	5
8.	Dun Beg	420	5
9.	Port Arthur	330	4
10.	Ben Mor	400	5
11.	Pier Head	400	5
12.	Cuchuillin	380	5
13.	Calum Mor	394	5
14.	Andes	157	3
15.	Iris	345	5
16.	Lodge	436	5
17.	Argyll	486	5
18.	Punchbowl	220	4