

Am Baile Meadhonach,  
Sanndaig,  
Cille Choinnich  
agus  
Grianal

Middleton, Sandaig,  
Kilkenneth and  
Greenhill

## Middleton, Sandaig, Kilkenneth and Greenhill

### The Glassary

Early in the 1860's the North British Chemical Company whose Managing Director was Edward C.C Stanford, built a seaweed processing factory in Middleton. This enterprise was, in terms of employment, large. Men were employed gathering the seaweed known as Tangle (Stamh) off the shore; 12 carts and their carters gathered the tangle from all parts of the island and delivered it to Middleton, and other men worked in the Factory, known as the Glassary.

The manager of the factory was a Mr James Slevin from County Mayo in Ireland. The house which is now Middleton Post Office was where he lived and ran a Company Store from which the workers could get their wages in goods rather than cash.

Ten acres of land was made available for planting carrots which were used for feeding the horses. (This piece of land, known as the Club, is now apportioned between John MacArthur, Lachlan MacDonald, Donald MacKinnon, Neil MacArthur and Mrs. Nancy MacKinnon.)

The man in charge of the carrot cultivation was Alasdair MacLean of Kilkenneth - 'Gaffer nan Curan.'

Her daughter, Flora, was the mother of Alasdair Brown who served as a piper in the Army in the First World War. After the war he joined the Glasgow Police and was a prominent member of the Pipe Band. On leaving the police he came home and worked the family croft.

The present tenant of the croft is Archibald Brown (Eàirdsidh Dheòrsa), Balevullin.

The Glassary closed in 1901 and the manager's house and shop were taken over by Hannah, Maggie, Charles and James MacFadyen - offspring of Alan MacFadyen (1800-1891) at one time tenant of Scarinish Farm and the Scarinish Inn. James was the father of John (Iain Earnal) one time piermaster. The family moved from Middleton in 1931.

The factory building was largely demolished during the Second World War when the stone was used as a base for the runways at the Airport.

It is interesting to note that Florence, a daughter of Edward Stanford, (Mrs Robertson Cameron) made a collection of local stories including some material gleaned by her father, over the period of her visits to Tiree. This was published in 1935 under the name of 'Told in the Farthest Hebrides.'

**Neil MacLean (Niall Ceann na Creige)**, Balephuill, moved to Sandaig and worked in the Glassary. His son Donald, born and raised in Sandaig, was a Church of Scotland Minister who spent much of his life in the Mull of Oa in Islay. He died c. 1930.

## 2. Tuairnear Shanndaig

**Donald MacLean**, wood turner in Sandaig was the father of **Iain, Archibald, a second Iain known as Johnnie (Seonaidh) and a daughter Flora**. Iain became a cattle dealer and built for himself the house in Sandaig now owned by the MacLeods, his sister Flora having married Donald MacLeod from Ruaig - Johnnie was a Church of Scotland minister.

Archibald married a sister of Donald MacLean (Dòmhnall mac Alasdair 'ic Thearlaich) a sea-captain who spent most of his life in Australia.

Archibald's children were Neil, Mary, Donald, Alasdair - who was a farmer in Bearsden, Donald Archie, and Archie who was killed in action while serving with the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean during the First World War.

3. **Calum MacArthur** of Moss was one of the unfortunate fishermen who lost his life in the Balephuill fishing disaster of July, 1856, commemorated in the poem, 'Òran an Fhuadaich' by Alexander MacDonald, Alasdair Mòr (See Na Bàird Thirisdeach page 126.) Calum's son **Archibald** became tenant of the Middleton croft who previously worked by Alexander MacLean known as Am Marsanta, who died in 1887.

Archibald MacArthur had a family of three sons and four daughters - Calum, Alasdair and John, Peggy, Kate, Mary and Elizabeth (Leezie).

Peggy was first married to George MacKinnon (Seoras Eoghan Neill) by whom she had a son and two daughters, Hugh, Effie (Mrs W. Dickie) and Flora (Mrs. N. MacLean). Sadly, George sailing as mate on the S.S Malachite belonging to Robertson's of Glasgow was killed at the quay known as the North Wall in Dublin. Later his widow married Roderick MacDonald of Caolas (Ruaraidh Beag) and their daughter Mary Anne (Mrs Donald MacLennan) lives at Dunbeg, Caolas. Roderick spent a number of years working in Patagonia, returning in 1914.

Kate married Donald Walker of Moss and Kenovay.

Mary married a brother of the Rev. Francis W. Taylor, Baptist Minister in Tiree from 1928 to 1939.

Leezie married Donald Archibald MacLean (Dòmhnall Eardsidh Mhic 'ain Òig) of the Green and Greenhill and they became the parents of Flora and Archie, a teacher who spent most of his life in Australia.

John, who served in the Merchant Navy during the First World War, inherited the tenancy and his son, also called John (Iain Sheonaidh) is the present tenant.

Calum was a missionary on St. Kilda for some time. There he met Catriona Gillies who became his wife. Their son Archibald (Eàirdsidh Chaluim) was the father of Neil, Fiona, Anne and Norman MacArthur.

Alasdair (Alasdair MhacArtair) married Effie, daughter of Dugald MacLean who worked at the Glassary. They were the parents of sisters Mary and Flora MacArthur who still live in Sandaig. Alasdair spent his working life as postman for the west end of the island.

#### 4. **John MacLean - Iain Mac Eachainn Bhàin**

John MacLean was born in Ruaig in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and over his lifetime built up a reputation for himself as a Seer. For many years he worked as 'gille' or farmhand on Lag nan Cruachan Farm in Cornaigmore, and also on Hough Farm.

He and his wife Oidhrig MacArthur of Balephuill were the parents of **Dugald, Flora, Catriona** and **Marion**.

Although it may not have been clear at the time, what he foresaw had an uncanny accuracy when viewed from the present, particularly with reference to Tiree's wartime activities.

Walking along the Reef one night he saw blinding lights in the night sky and was assailed by deafening sound for which there was no explanation. On another occasion he predicted.

'Eiridh eòin mhòra thairis air an Ruighe le fir is sròn muice orra gan stùireadh,' (Large birds will rise over the Reef controlled by men who have the snouts of pigs.)

He also foretold destruction above the land and under the sea where 'blood will be spilled because men will fight in the heavens and under the surface of the ocean.'

His two daughters Flora and Catriona lived in Glasgow.

*Flora* married a Mr Kemp who owned a Grain Store in Springburn. They had two sons, Norman and Archie, and two daughters Isobel and Effie. Norman had a son Hamish who played Rugby for Scotland in the 1950's. *Catriona* became a Mrs MacInnes.

His son Dugald who worked in the Glassary married Flora MacArthur of Sandaig and their family comprised of Effie, Iain, Marion, Alasdair and Donald. Effie as stated earlier, married Alasdair MacArthur, the postman from Sandaig.

Iain married Mary MacFarlane from the Isle of Skye.

Alasdair, a merchant seaman, died of fever in India,  
Donald never married.

Marion worked in Glasgow and retired home to Tiree.

#### **5. Hugh Kennedy (Eoghan Dhòmhnail Eoghainn a' Chiaraich) 1861-1959**

Hugh Kennedy was the son of Donald Kennedy and Marion MacArthur, a sister of Flora, wife of Dugald MacLean (Dùghal Iain mac Eachainn Bhàin) His parents had died by the time he was seven years old and he was raised by his maternal aunt, the afore mentioned Flora and her husband.

As a young teenager, he worked for six months as a shepherd in Kenavara for a wage of £3 - 15 - 0.

At the age of seventeen he set off for Glasgow to earn a living paying 7/6 (35p) for his passage on the 'Dunara Castle.' He was employed by a Mr Turner, owner of a Public House, and after a number of years he eventually bought that pub as well as the owner's house. In time, he became owner of the 'Black Bull' in Maryhill and the 'Granite City' in Cathcart Road. He was the last surviving founder member of the Tiree Association which was established in 1901.

Hugh married Margaret Anderson and they had three children - Tom, Morag, and Hugh.

Tom (1908-45) ran the 'Black Bull.'

Morag (1909-61) an International Hockey Player was the first girl from Hutchison's Grammar School to be capped for Scotland. She married Gordon Walls and their family are Mairead, Sandy and Ewan.

Hugh (born in 1913) became a doctor distinguished for his services in the R.A.M.C during the Second World War, being awarded the Polish Cross of Valour and being twice mentioned in Despatches. He and his wife, Nancy Henry, have two sons - Cameron who practises as a lawyer in Glasgow and James (Jimmie) a gynaecologist, who in keeping with the family tradition for sport has played Cricket for Scotland.

#### **6. H.M.S Sturdy**

In the early morning of 30<sup>th</sup> October 1940, the Destroyer H.M.S Sturdy, captained by Lt. Comm. G.T Cooper, ran ashore on Sgeir an Latharnaich, Sandaig. A strong south westerly wind was blowing and in the pitch dark night an attempt was made to abandon ship, five seamen being tragically drowned. Some men did manage to scramble ashore and made their way to the house of Mrs. Mary MacDonald (Màiri Mhoireasdan) who alerted Alistair MacArthur (Alasdair Mhac Artair) and the general alarm was raised.

Captain Donald Sinclair (Dòmhnall an Dan), home on leave from the Merchant Navy, came to the scene with a torch and flashing Morse Code, advised the men left on the ship to remain on board until daylight. Because of his action the vessel was successfully abandoned when day broke with no farther loss of life. The seamen who lost their lives, J.H Rivett, F. Greenshields, T.W Cowler, P.R Cornford and A.T Trahearn, are buried in Soroby.

#### 7. MacLeods, Sandaig

**Flora MacArthur (Nighean an Tuairneir)** was married to **Donald MacLeod** of Ruaig and they had a family of three children, *Dugald, Donald Archie and Marion*.

Marion worked as a seamstress in Glasgow.

Donald Archie emigrated to New Zealand.

Dugald served as an Army Captain during the First World War and then worked as a teacher and ultimately as Headmaster in Glasgow. He married Catherine Kennedy of Kilmoluaig and their family comprised of Douglas, Anne and Fiona.

Douglas, a Chartered Accountant, served as Army Captain in the Second World War and was also a director of Tennant's Brewery before he retired. He and his wife, Ursula De Ath, had a family of four children, Kenneth, Eileen, Moira and Rhona. Moira, a doctor, played hockey for Great Britain at the Seoul Olympics, 1988.

#### 8. The tenant of Croft. No. 2 Sandaig, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was **Allan MacLean (Ailean Mòr)**

Allan's brother **Donald** a Church of Scotland Minister, spent most of his life in Harris.

Hector Cameron, their nephew, was the next tenant followed by his son Alasdair, whose widow, Nancy, is the present tenant.

#### 9. Grianal - Greenhill

##### **Muinntir MhicCruithean - the MacNivens**

About 1760 **James MacNiven** from Loch Etive took over the tack of Greenhill. Upon his death, his son Archibald was succeeded as tenant for one year and was in turn succeeded by his brother Colin.

In 1822 Colin MacNiven and his family including his son Colin and daughter Julianne emigrated to Antigonish, Nova Scotia. Two years later father and son were tragically drowned in the same fishing trip.

Julianne, had married Dr. Noble from Rosshire who had also emigrated on the same ship as the MacNivens. In 1843 at the age of 37 she died during childbirth leaving a young family. 'Marbhrann do Mhrs. Noble' an eloquent elegy, was composed in her memory by John MacLean from Caolas, Bàrd Thighearna Cholla, who himself had emigrated to Nova Scotia in 1819. This verse encapsulates the devastation felt by her family. (Na Bàird Thirisdeach, page 80)

'Leam is duilich do phàisdean  
Gur a lag iad 's gun mhàthair ri'n cùl;  
Sinn mar luing air a fuadach  
Ann an ànradh a' chuain thar a cùrs;  
Tha i 'n cunnart gach stuaighe,  
Bhrist na ceanglaichean, dh' fhuasgail an stùir;  
Tha 'n cairt-iuil air a stracadh;  
Dh' fhalbh a' chombaist, na slatan 's na siùil.

## 8. MacLeans, Greenhill

After the MacNivens left Greenhill, a family of MacLeans took over. The last of these, Lachlan, died in 1886.

Before this time, some of the family emigrated to Australia and one, Archibald, to New Zealand, where he was Farm Manager to Sir Donald MacLean in Maraekakaho for 23 years.

On his retirement he returned to Tiree and is interred in the Cladh Beag in Kirkapol.

The death of Lachlan MacLean in 1886 precipitated the uproar which led to Warships, Marines and Police arriving in Tiree to quell what the tabloid journalists of the time had labelled 'The War of Tiree.'

For many years the Land League had been agitating for large farms on Tiree to be broken into crofts. When Greenhill became vacant it was regarded as the perfect case for Land Reform. The factor of the time, Hugh MacDiarmid, on the old principle of 'divide and rule', offered Greenhill Farm to one of the prominent members of the Land League, Neil MacNeil. On hearing this, an enraged mob descended on Greenhill, and captured Neil MacNeil with the intentions of hanging him. An old man standing some distance away observing the commotion approached those involved saying;

*'Ma chrochas sibh an duine seo, 's ann aig Dia fhèin tha fios cà' sguir am marbhadh.'* (If you hang this man, only God knows where the killing will stop.) This had the effect on calming the leaders. MacNeil was immediately released. He left the island. Where he went, nobody knows, because he was never heard of again.

On Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> July 1886 there arrived in Gott Bay the S.S Nigel with 50 policemen on board, the warships H.M.S Assistance (2500 tons) and the Lieut. Col. MacKay-Heriot. Under his command were 3 Captains, 6 Lieutenants and 250 Other Ranks.

The upshot of this commotion was that 9 men were arrested, eight of whom were tried at the High Court in Edinburgh on the 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> of October of that year.

These nine were **Colin Henderson, Hector MacDonald, Gilbert MacDonald, John MacFadyen and Alexander MacLean** of Balemartine, **Donald Sinclair** from Barrapol, **George Campbell** from Balinoe and **Donald MacKinnon** and **Lachlan Brown**, both from Balevullin.

They were found guilty of Mobbing and Rioting, some being sentenced to four and others to six months imprisonment. The exception was Lachlan Brown from Balevullin who was not brought to trial. Eventually, all eight of the prisoners were released on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 1887, and returned to Tiree on the 'Dunara Castle' direct from Greenock.

Thereafter, Greenhill Farm was rented to Lachlan MacNeil, a son of Malcolm MacNeil, a native of Colonsay who spent many years as a teacher on Tiree. In 1906 Lachlan was succeeded by his brother Neil who continued in the Tenancy until 1906 Lachlan was succeeded by his brother Neil who continued in the Tenancy until Greenhill was divided into crofts (along with Hough and Heylipol) in 1914.

## Kilkenneth

Croft No. 4

The present tenant of this croft is **Colin MacKinnon, (Cailean Eoghan Eoghain Neill)** brother of the late Alasdair of Croft No. 2 Sandaig. This is one of the crofts on which exists an extensive underground Souterain. Souterains were stone-lined dwellings, possibly constructed six thousand years ago by people referred to by archaeologists as 'Sand-dwellers.'

This particular souterrain was explored in 1863 by Lachlan MacQuarrie, the Ground-Officer of the time. It was further examined later in the century by Lord Archibald Campbell, the second son of the eighth Duke of Argyll.

### **Sandaig Museum**

The house that is now Sandaig Museum was occupied by **John MacDonald - Iain 'ic Chaluim an Fhìdhleir** - and his wife **Sara Kennedy**. They had four children - Charles, John, Flora and Kate.

**Charles** born in 1868 was a Church of Scotland Minister whose son **Hector**, born in 1900, the eldest of his seven children, also became a minister.

**John** known as 'Bee Gee' a noted character and storyteller had for some years been manager of a Clothing Store, owned by the Company 'Dallas' in Glasgow. He died in the mid-fifties.

**Kate** married William Agnew who worked as a teacher in Cornaig School from 1915- 1918 and as Headmaster from then until 1925.

### **Taigh na Cachaileidh**

After Greenhill Farm was divided in 1914, Croft No. 7 was allocated to **John Sinclair (Iain Neill Oig)** He and his wife, **Kate Campbell**, nighean an 'Dan', had a family of seven children - Neil, Archie, Donald, Alasdair, Christina, Flora and Margaret.

**Neil** born in 1900, died in 1925 in Karachi while serving as Third Mate in the S.S Strathallan.

**Archie** served in the Royal Navy during the First World War and subsequently settled on his maternal grandfather's croft in Barrapol.

**Donald** was a sea-captain. He lost his life when his ship the 'Empire Eland' was torpedoed by a German U-boat in 1941. He has already been mentioned in connection with the rescue of the crew of the H.M.S Sturdy.

**Christina** was married to Captain Donald MacCallum from Kilmoluaig.

**Flora** married Giddy Scott, who worked for Corsons' the Auctioneers, in Oban.

**Alasdair** - Alasdair Ruadh na Cachaileidh, the youngest in the family -worked until his retirement at the local Meteorological Station and was a talented Piper since his time serving with the R.E.M.E during the Second World War.

The story goes that while he was stationed in Naples he met up with Neil MacKinnon (Neil a' Ghobhainn), Kilkenneth, having found out that he also was in the area. The two Tìree soldiers went walking through the streets of Naples and as they approached the dock area to their surprise, walking towards them were another two Tìree men, both merchant seamen from Balemartine - Malcolm Campbell (Calum Beag Chaluim Chaimbeul) and Dugald Lamont (Dùghal Hec)

### **Master Mariners**

Neil MacDonald  
Alasdair MacDonald  
Donald Kennedy  
Donald MacLean

Niall Màiri Mhoireasdan  
Alasdair Màiri Mhoireasdan  
Dòmhnall Nèill Mhòir  
Dòmhnall mac Alasdair 'ic Thearlaich.

