

CAPTAIN DONALD MACKINNON

1828-1867



LLOYD PITCHER

By the same author

A Roving Disposition: The Life of Ernest John Pitcher, Australian Vaudeville Entertainer 1869-1940 (published 2016)

Archibald Murray: Citizen of Sydney (published 2016)

Archibald's Daughters: Blanche Murray: A Career on the Stage 1860-1884 (published 2016)

Archibald's Daughters: Florence Edith Murray and her life on the stage 1869-1935 (published 2016)

Archibald's Daughters: Ida Constance Murray and her Stage Career 1872-1944 (published 2017)

Hugh Cameron Murray: A Life in New South Wales 1829-1890 (published 2017)

The Life of William Murray: Carver and Gilder, Citizen of Glasgow (published 2017)

Front page

Donald MacKinnon

Handwritten on the back is "Captain Mackinnon."

The photograph was taken at Bow Photographic Studios by Job, Photographer, 37 High Street Bow.

Lloyd Pitcher Collection.

The ocean knows no favourites.
Her bounty is reserved for those
who have the wit to learn her secrets,
the courage to bear her buffets,
and the will to persist,
through good fortune and ill,
in her rugged service.

Samuel Eliot Morison

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There are a number of people I would like to thank for their assistance and encouragement in completing this research on the life and achievements of Captain Donald MacKinnon.

I would especially like to thank Angus and Mary Maclean of the Isle of Tiree, Scotland, for their invaluable information provided to me. This has been acquired at their considerable cost of time and effort and I would like to acknowledge their generosity and kindness in being willing to share information pertaining to the MacKinnon family tree; certificates of birth, death and marriage; photographs of images of the *Taeping*; their knowledge of the people of Tiree; and personal observations on the meaning and significance of Donald MacKinnon's life and achievements. They have provided my research with considerable scope, depth and perspective in telling this story of Captain Donald MacKinnon and, from humble origins, his rise to fame on a highly competitive international maritime stage.

I would like to thank maritime historian Angus Mac Kinnon of Troon, Scotland, for the significant information knowledge and understanding made available. Angus has undertaken substantial research into the clipper ships era of nineteenth century Britain. His understanding of the marine aspect of nineteenth century British seagoing endeavour is most impressive. I would like to acknowledge his generosity and kindness in sharing information on the clipper ships in general and on Captain Donald MacKinnon in particular. It has provided my research with a scope and perspective in telling the story of Captain Donald MacKinnon and the ships on which he sailed, in the historical context of their time.

Thanks also go to historian Robert Zimmerman of Maryland in the United States of America for sharing the research he has completed on the career of Donald MacKinnon. His knowledge has been very helpful in understanding the nature of the achievements attained in Captain MacKinnon's career.

Thanks also to Dr Ewen Griffiths for sharing his detailed medical knowledge and insights into the nature of the *Psoas abscess*, the malady to which Captain Donald MacKinnon succumbed in Cape Town on 19 January 1867. The information provided by Dr Griffiths has been invaluable in gaining an understanding of the medical circumstances in which the Captain died.

I wish also to acknowledge the continuing interest in this project provided by my cousin, Audrey Houseman. One of her mother's prized possessions was a small framed print of the *Taeping*. The unexplained disappearance of this print was the cause of some disappointment. A replacement copy was located from a photograph of the print taken by Lloyd Pitcher in 1975 and presented to Audrey in 2013.

This list of acknowledgements would not be complete without the recognition of the long term patient support of my wife Robin. Her excellent photographic and computer skills have been of utmost importance in representing images of buildings, ships and people referred to in this story.

I wish also to recognise the initiative of my great aunt, Christina Cameron Murray, the sister of Donald MacKinnon's wife, Margaret Anne Murray. Christina wrote letters and sent photographs to her brothers Archibald Murray and Hugh Cameron Murray, both of whom lived in Sydney, Australia. Much use has been made of this information in detailing Donald MacKinnon's story.

In keeping letters, documents and photographs with the family, the foresight of my grandmother Florence Pitcher has been invaluable. For generations, the meaning of these items was not known and it is fortunate that the meaning of what she kept is now known. The existing MacKinnon family photographs are the only ones currently verified as being genuine representations of MacKinnon family members.

Thanks also go to Lori Victorsen of Queensland, Australia. Her contribution to Donald MacKinnon's story is with six letters sent from Christina Cameron Murray in Scotland to her brother Hugh Cameron Murray in Sydney, Australia. These letters provide a valuable insight into the people of past times and how they celebrated family connections and endured economic hardship and family loss. The letters were not known about until an internet connection was established in 1992.

The information provided about the Gaelic language I have is courtesy of Fiona NicFhionghain (Fiona MacKinnon) of Tobar an Dualchais/Kist o Riches.

Thanks also go to *An Iodhlann*, the Historical Centre on the Isle of Tiree. They hold much information on Captain Donald MacKinnon and the *Taeping*.

I have made every effort to acknowledge the sources of the images I have used. At all times I have respected copyright and have not intentionally intended to circumvent it.

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INTRODUCTION

History is inherently interesting. The achievements of people in the past occurred in a very different society from that in which we live today. In his 1953 novel *The Go-Between*, LP Hartley wrote these opening lines.

The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.

Indeed, they do. This story of the life and achievements of Captain Donald MacKinnon (Dòmhnall MacFhionghain) has been a long time in the making. It is a window on a very different time and on very different places. A few photographs, some documents and a letter were the starting point of this research in 1968. Family members had little knowledge of the significance of what had survived or of the people to whom references were made. This left many questions unanswered, such as who was Donald MacKinnon, why was he a significant person and what was special about this sailing ship *Taeping*?

It was the development of the Internet which accelerated progress in understanding the events and people of the past. First, access to a wide range of information became much easier and links to sources of knowledge could be established more efficiently. Second, the Internet allowed people to contact and to communicate with each other and to transfer information from one side of the world to the other, quickly.

Sufficient detail is now available to present a narrative of Donald MacKinnon's life and achievements. Much existing information available focuses on perhaps his greatest achievement, the winning of the Great Tea Race of 1866 from Foochow (modern Fuzhou) in China to London, England, in the tea clipper *Taeping*. This race is generally agreed to be the most exciting race in the history of the China tea clippers.

But there is much more to know than the story of this one race. Donald's boyhood was spent on the Isle of Tyree [modern Tiree], a small island in the Inner Hebrides islands of Western Scotland. He learned to sail in the waters around the island. As a teenager, he began his seafaring career as an Apprentice, a junior role requiring the completion of menial but necessary tasks on board ships in the merchant fleet of Britain.

He was a very good learner. He progressed to be Able Seaman, Second Mate, Mate and finally Captain, all on the one ship, *Jane Brown*. His experiences with the *Ellen Rodger* saw success on the China tea run. Donald's travels took him away from his island home and all over the world: Quebec in Canada, Demerara in British Guyana [modern Guyana], and Shanghai and Foochow [modern Fuzhou] in China.

He later married Margaret Ann Murray and with her had three children who survived. The family resided near the ports from which Donald MacKinnon: Gourock, near the port of Glasgow on the Clyde River, and later Bow, near the docks in London.

Donald was away from his home and family for much of each year. As his father-in-law William Murray wrote in a letter to his son Archibald Murray in Sydney, Australia on 18 February 1865.

He sails again for Foochow on the 27th. inst., (ie January 1865) poor fellow - he enjoys little the comforts of his own fireside.

As Captain, he achieved success on several ships. With the *Jane Brown*, he achieved one of the fastest passages between the St Lawrence in Canada. The owner of the ship, Provost Patterson, was also the Mayor of Greenock, near Glasgow. He presented Donald MacKinnon with a gold watch.

With the *Ellen Rodger*, Donald also achieved success between London and China. This was a beautiful ship and very fast under Captain MacKinnon's guidance.

At this time he added to his maritime service by joining the British Royal Naval Reserve as a Lieutenant. He was now serving the British Navy as well as serving in the British merchant fleet.

Progression to the brand new China tea clipper ship *Taeping* [built in 1865] was no surprise and, despite an early disaster which required a three month re-fit in Amoy (modern Xiamen) in China, went on to win the most exciting ever Tea Race in 1866.

Donald MacKinnon was recognised by his peers as one of the finest ship captains in Britain. He was highly respected by his crews acknowledged by them as a leader of men.

In October 1866, Donald MacKinnon was a passenger on board the steamer *Chieftain's Bride*. Off the island of Coll, a storm struck and rolled the ship on its side. Donald was asked to assist and eventually the ship was righted. In the process of lightening the ship's weight by removing fifty four head of sheep and cattle into the sea, Donald was injured.

After rejoining the *Taeping* and leaving for China, he was taken seriously ill 1 000 miles east of modern Port Elizabeth in South Africa. He was put aboard the RMS *Roman* which was travelling via Cape Town to Southampton in England. All Donald wanted was just to get home to his family in Scotland, as quickly as possible.

Unfortunately, on 19 January 1867, Captain Donald MacKinnon succumbed to the injuries sustained on *Chieftain's Bride* and died on board RMS *Roman* while it was still in Table Bay, Cape Town. He was buried in Cape Town.

While the romance of the clipper era in the nineteenth century and the ships themselves is well documented, the stories of the men who sailed them is unfortunately less well documented.

This narrative follows the life and achievements of Donald MacKinnon, his family and the ships on which he served. He gave a lifetime of service and leadership to Scotland, to Britain and to the sea. It is for this superb effort that this account is dedicated to the memory of Captain Donald MacKinnon, RNR.

1. EARLY DAYS

Donald MacKinnon's life began when he was born on 14 February 1828, in Heanish on the Island of Tyree - written today as Tiree, in Argyleshire, written today as Argyll. The area is considered to be part of the Scottish highlands and uses the highland spelling of "MacKinnon." His date of birth is confirmed in a record of the issue of his Seaman's Ticket on 20 July 1848, held in the National Archives in Kew, London.

Dòmhnall MacFhionghain is Gaelic for Donald MacKinnon. Gaelic is the traditional language of Highland Scotland. His patronymic in Gaelic is: Dòmhnall "ic Nèill"ic Dhòmnaill Ruaidh, which means "Donald son of Neil son of red haired Donald." This is how he would have been known in Tiree.

His father was Neil MacKinnon, born circa 1793 in the Isle of Tiree, Argyll, Scotland and died 22 November 1872 on the Isle of Tiree, Argyll, Scotland. On 05 March 1823, Neil married Marion Munn in Heanish, Isle of Tiree, Argyll, Scotland. Marion was born circa 1800 and died in Heanish on 04 February 1887.

Irving (1882, page 308) has Donald born in 1826, which is incorrect.

Donald had 10 brothers and sisters. His eldest brother was John MacKinnon, born 24 December 1823 in Heanish on the Isle of Tiree. He died on 14 October 1852 in Heanish, Isle of Tiree. Next born was Donald MacKinnon, born 3rd November 1825 in Heanish, Isle of Tyree. While his date of death is not known, it must have been very early because the next child born was also named Donald. He later became the seafarer and captain of *Taeping*. After Donald followed Isabell, born 03 December 1828 in Heanish, Isle of Tiree. On 01 October 1855, she married Dr William Wilson in Glasgow, Scotland. William Wilson was born on 10 April 1830 in Strathaven, Lanarkshire, Scotland.



The Isle of Tiree, looking west towards Scotland's mainland.
Photograph by Robin Pitcher, May 2012.
Lloyd Pitcher Collection.

Then followed Angus MacKinnon, born on 22 September 1830 in Heanish, Isle of Tiree. He died on 06 January 1878. Following Angus was Colin, born on 16 April 1834 in Heanish, Isle of Tiree. Colin was lost at sea on 04 September 1865. This reference is on the back of a photograph of Margaret Anne MacKinnon nee Murray that was sent to Archibald Murray in Australia in 1869 by his sister, Christina Cameron Murray. Hugh MacKinnon was born on 23 March 1836 in Heanish, Isle of Tiree and died after 1872. Mary MacKinnon was next, born on 29 July 1838 in Heanish and died on 14 July 1855, in Heanish.

Euphemia (“Effy”) was born on 25 July 1841 in Heanish, Isle of Tiree. In the 1861 Census of Scotland, Effy was 17 years old and living with Captain Donald MacKinnon’s family. On 22 November 1870, Effy married Captain Angus Lamont, also a sea captain from Tiree. Although Angus was educated as a Physician, the call of the sea was stronger and he returned to his first love. He wrote a few Gaelic poems and songs about the sea which are today still sung on Tiree. One of these songs, Lang nan Cruachan or “The Hollow of the Stacks,” is published in *Òrain an Eòrna*: “Songs of the Barley” in *Traditional Gaelic Songs from the Isle of Tiree*, page 9. The text and music of the song are found in Appendix 8. The song was sung at the celebration of the life and times of Captain Donald MacKinnon, a meeting sponsored by *An Iodhlann*, the Historical Centre on the Isle of Tiree and held on the evening of Saturday 12 May 2012, at *An Talla*, the Community Hall for the people of Tiree.

Captain Lamont sadly died in San Francisco Bay in California, USA. No date is yet known for Effy’s death.

On 24 September, 1843, a third Donald MacKinnon was born in Heanish. He died on 10 February 1864 in Baugh, Isle of Tiree, aged 21 years.

The 11th and final child in Captain MacKinnon’s family was Flora MacKinnon. She was born on 24 November 1845 in Heanish. Her date of death is not known. On 12 October 1876, Flora married John (MacCholla) MacDonald in Glasgow, Scotland. He was born on 30 November 1842 in the Isle of Tiree and died on the Isle of Tiree after 1904.

Mary MacLean’s email 12 April 2011 advised

Captain MacKinnon is a very special man to the island of Tiree. There are many that claim a genealogical connection to him. His name often comes up in conversation here, well at least in our household! The descendants of the family still have a holiday home on Tiree. I was speaking to the individual who owns this house and it is interesting to note that there is an old painting in the house of a young man which may or may not be the Captain. Unfortunately there is nothing on the front of the painting to indicate who it is. We have been discussing having the back of the frame removed in the hopes that they may be something there, but we are reluctant should it cause damage to the painting. The owner is taking it to a restorer in Edinburgh to see what can be done.

Captain MacKinnon had a number of brothers who also followed the sea - it may be one of them but more likely it is he.

2. A LIFE AT SEA BEGINS: *GLENCAIRN, ISABELLA COOPER* and *CITY OF GLASGOW*

As a boy, Donald MacKinnon learned his sea craft sailing in boats in the waters around the isle of Tiree. Irving (1880 page 308) noted he was

apprenticed early in life to the sea.

Donald began his working life with Captain Nicol of Greenock, on the Clyde River, as an Apprentice on the barque *Glencairn* out of Greenock, from 1844 to 1848. Its Registered Number was 14301 and its Port of Registration was Irvine, on the west coast of the Scottish mainland.

Donald then joined the barque *Isabella Cooper* out of Greenock as a Seaman and worked aboard for five months in 1848. Its Port of Registration was Greenock, Scotland.

For eight months over 1848 and 1849, he was a Seaman aboard the ship *City of Glasgow* out of Glasgow. Its Registered Number was 27180 and its Port of Registration was Glasgow. Donald's Seaman's Ticket was issued on 20 July 1848 in Glasgow, Scotland, when he was aged 20. Original issue number was 414.499 but this was later renumbered as 62.638. This record is kept in the National Archives in Kew, London.

3. *JANE BROWN*

Donald then joined the schooner *Jane Brown*, a timber 'drogher' out of Greenock, on 11 May 1849, as an Able Bodied Seaman (AB). Donald was now a man, 21 years old. Captain of the *Jane Brown* was Alexander Leitch. The ship sailed to Montreal in Quebec, Canada. On 14 September 1849, the *Jane Brown* sailed from Glasgow to Demerara. In 1831, the former Dutch colony was handed over to the British and became British Guyana, which is modern Guyana). It was the source of a sugar cane based sweetener that was added to make demerara sugar. The *Jane Brown* returned to Greenock on 20 January 1850 and then sailed on to Liverpool where it arrived on 02 February 1850. Donald MacKinnon from Tiree was Second Mate on this voyage.



Certificate of Competency as Second Mate issued to Donald MacKinnon by the Committee of Privy Council for Trade on 26 January 1858, Certificate Number 18.074, issued in the Port of Glasgow, Scotland. Caird Library, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, England

The duties of Second mate would usually include:

1. Keeping watch, traditionally "12-4" watch: midnight to 0400 hours am and noon to 1600 hours pm.
2. Navigating the ship and creating plans for docking and undocking.
3. Ship's medical officer.
4. Maintain distress signalling equipment.
5. Oversee cargo operations while in port.

Bowen (1925 page 65) noted the significance of this qualification.

The China clippers' mates were working up to be masters, and the masters took very good care that they learned the tradition of their craft. The men shipped voyage after voyage on the same vessel, and although they spent their money ashore in traditional sailor fashion, the China trade was good enough to keep them going while the ships were in port, and the owners recognised the value of having regular crews.

When *Jane Brown* sailed from Liverpool in March 1850, 23 year old Donald MacKinnon was First Mate. *Jane Brown* headed to Montreal in Canada, returning to Glasgow on 06 December, 1850. On the ship's next voyage from Glasgow on 27 January 1851 via Greenock to Demerara, returning to Greenock on 24 June. Donald was again First Mate.

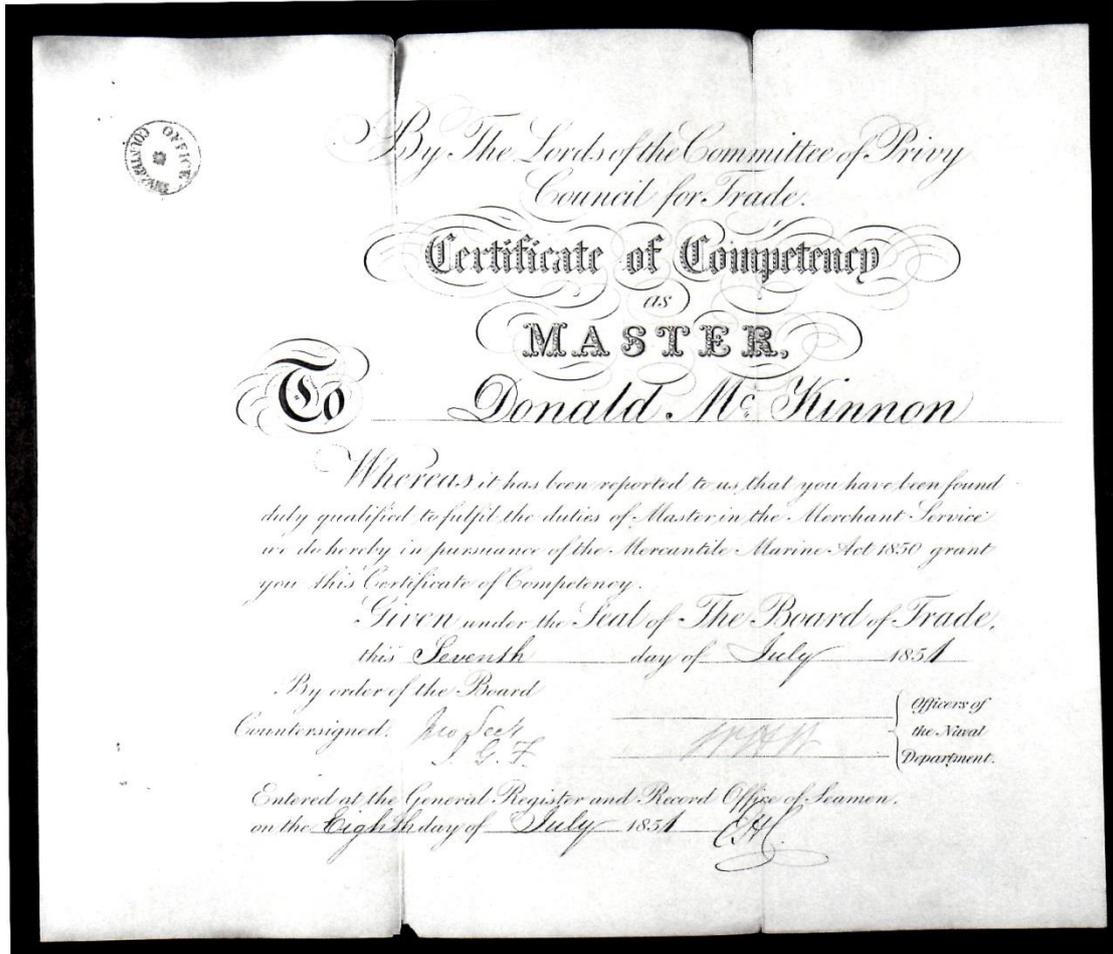


Mate's Certificate of Service issued to Donald MacKinnon by the Committee of Privy Council for Trade on 23 January 1851 in the port of Glasgow, Scotland
 Number of Register ticket 416499; Certificate Number 62.638.
 Caird Library, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, England

As First Mate, Donald's duties would have included

1. Responsibility to the Captain for the safety and security of the ship.
2. Head of the deck.
3. In charge of the crew and the cargo.
4. Responsible for crew welfare and for emergency procedures.
5. Taking the "4-8" watch: 0400 hours am to 0800 hours am and 1600 hours pm to 2000 hours pm, with an Able Seaman to act as Helmsman and Lookout.
6. Monitor communications, such as running up flags to request a steam tug in port.
7. Responsible for anchor and mooring lines.
8. While at sea: navigate the ship, safely avoid traffic, respond to emergencies.

At Greenock on 27 June 1851, Donald applied for his Master's Certificate. This was duly awarded on 10 July, 1851. The boy from Tiree had now joined the big league of ocean Mariners.



Master's Certificate of Service issued to Donald MacKinnon by the Committee of Privy Council for Trade on 10 July 1851 in the Port of Glasgow, Scotland.

Certificate Number 5308

Caird Library, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, England

The Captain's responsibilities included the following:

1. Supervision of the running of the entire ship, hiring the crew and provisioning the ship with food and water
2. Maintaining and repairing the ship.
3. Keeping the ship's log.
4. Maintaining on-board discipline.
5. Act as ship's doctor, if necessary.
6. Ensure that the ship's business was profitable.
7. Accept that all final decisions were made by the ship owner or owners.

In his first role as Captain of the *Jane Brown*, Donald MacKinnon sailed from Glasgow on 19 July 1851, bound for Montreal in Quebec and returned to Glasgow on 09 October. His trip of 19 days led to the honour of being presented with a gold watch by the ship's owner and Mayor of Greenock, Provost Paterson, for making one of the fastest passages ever from St Lawrence in the United States of America across the Atlantic Ocean to Glasgow in Scotland.

But there was no rest for the Captain of *Jane Brown*. He sailed out of Glasgow on 27 November 1851, to Greenock on the 28 November and then on to Demerara in British Guyana. He returned to Liverpool on 01 May 1852. On 04 June he sailed again for Demerara and returned to Greenock on 02 December. On Christmas Day, 25 December 1852, he sailed from Glasgow once more for Demerara and returned to Liverpool on 12 July 1853. A voyage to Montreal began on 23 August 1853. From Montreal he went to Quebec (06 November) and docked in Glasgow on 05 December 1853.

Mary MacLean (email 12 April 2011) wrote

Captain MacKinnon was well known in the UK and had received honours while captain of the *Jane Brown*, all of which made him the talk of this wee island.

4. MONTGOMERY

From 1854 to June 1857, Donald MacKinnon was the Captain of the *Montgomery*. No crew list or photograph of the ship is available. See Appendix 2 for details of the *Montgomery*. Voyage details are also not available.

In a letter from 3 Riley Street Woolloomooloo Bay, Sydney NSW to his cousin Archibald McCallum in Macquarie Street, Parramatta, Sydney dated 15 July 1854, Archibald Murray wrote

The last news I had from home I received from Captain McKinnon on the ship "Montgomery" – at present in port – who is engaged to my younger sister Margaret. – they are to be united on his return. He is a very excellent man.

On 13 June 1855, Captain Donald MacKinnon married Margaret Anne Murray, Archibald Murray's younger sister, in Glasgow, Scotland. The circumstances of their meeting and courtship are not known. His address then was 118 South Portland Street, Glasgow. William Montgomery MacKinnon was born on 02 April 1856.



William Montgomery MacKinnon
“William Montgomery MacKinnon aged
ten years, from a medallion exhibited in the Royal Academy of London 1866.
Modelled by his grandfather William Murray in his seventieth year.”
Photographer was S. Ayling 493 New Oxford Street, W. London.
Lloyd Pitcher Collection.



Margaret Anne MacKinnon
“Margaret Anne MacKinnon nee Murray, 1869,
who requests me to send this with much love to her affectionate
brother Archibald. CC Murray. March 28th, 1869.
In affectionate memory, Colin de Verd, her son, Donald MacKinnon her husband and
Colin MacKinnon his brother, who died at sea.”
William Morris, Photographer, Gourock
Lloyd Pitcher Collection.

Mary MacLean wrote in an email (12 April 2011) it was

interesting to note that his 1st born son William Montgomery MacKinnon was born at sea. It would appear from all accounts that his wife must have sailed with him shortly after they were married - the voyage took them to your part of the world. We have William's record of birth, made by his father once the ship, the *Montgomery*, returned to Edinburgh, which notes the longitude and latitude of William's birth.

According to William's Birth Certificate, he was born at latitude 31 52 South and longitude 52 25 East. This places his birth just south east of Madagascar, in the Indian Ocean. His middle name Montgomery was after the ship he was born on and captained by his father. Donald's brother Colin MacKinnon was also on this very same voyage. Sadly, Colin was later lost at sea on 04 September 1865.

See Appendix 1 for further information on the *Montgomery*.



Captain Donald MacKinnon
<http://allkindsofhistory.wordpress.com/2011/12/donald-mackinnon.jpg>

This image of Donald MacKinnon appears to be from a later era.

5. *SV TARTAR*

Donald MacKinnon was next Captain aboard *Tartar*. He only did one trip as master, in 1858, sailing London on 10 February for Calcutta. Donald sailed Calcutta 12 December 1860 bound for Liverpool, England. From apprentice to mate to captain and now husband and father! What a busy and successful time of his life. On 01 May 1858, Alfred Neil MacKinnon was born. His birth certificate shows that his Aunt, Christina Cameron Murray, was present at the birth at 6am at 118 South Portland Street Glasgow. Sadly, he died on 22 June 1858 aged 7 weeks. Cause of death was stated as “Diarrhoea, 4 days.” Aunt Christina Cameron Murray was present at his death and was the informant. Donald MacKinnon was unfortunate in not being present at either the birth or death of his son. It is yet to be confirmed whether he remained captain or took a break until he took over as Captain of the *Ellen Rodger* in 1861. The first voyage departed on 04 November 1861.

See Appendix 2 for further information on the *Tartar*.

In 1861, the MacKinnon family is recorded in the British Census as living in Gourrock, next to Greenock, on the south side of the Clyde River estuary near Glasgow.

Donald MacKinnon	Head Marr	33	Sea Captain
Margaret MacKinnon	Wife Marr	27	
William M.	“	Son	5
Euphemia “...”		Sister	17 Scholar
Christine C. Murray		Sister in law	



7 Union Street, Greenock, Scotland.
Photograph by Robin Pitcher, May 2012.
Lloyd Pitcher Collection.

Euphemia or “Effie” was Donald MacKinnon’s sister. She later married an Angus Lamont, also a sea captain from Tiree. Although he was educated as a Physician , the call of the sea was stronger and he returned to his first love. He wrote a few Gaelic poems and songs about the sea which are today still sung on Tiree. He unfortunately died in San Francisco Bay in California, USA.



“Your affectionate sister, Christina Cameron Murray. Taken July 1868.”
Christina Cameron Murray was a spinster, living with her younger sister Margaret and assisted her family as a “maiden aunt” while Donald was away at sea.
William Morris, Photographer, Gourock
Lloyd Pitcher Collection.

On 21 December 1861, another bundle of joy arrived for Donald and Margaret, a sister for William, Marion Mary MacKinnon. She was born in Ropework Street, Gourock.



Another boy joined the family on 21 August 1863, Francis Alfred MacKinnon. Mary MacLean wrote (email 26 April 2011)

it seems Francis was registered / baptised originally as a MALE MacKinnon ie no Christian name. It usually meant that the husband is away and the wife is awaiting his return prior to deciding upon a name.



Francis MacKinnon and his mother, Margaret Ann MacKinnon nee Murray.
J Paton, Photographer, Gourrock
Lloyd Pitcher Collection.

Perhaps to help pay for all the expenses that a young family can generate, Captain MacKinnon became Lieutenant RNR, a ship's captain in the British Royal Naval Reserve. He still held this position at the time of his death in 1867.

6. THE CHINA TEA TRADE

Tea was one of the main consumer goods brought to Britain from the East. It was first brought from China to London by the Dutch East India Company in the 1670s as a medicinal herb. Charles II was restored to the throne of England in 1660 and granted a monopoly to the English East India Company, which helped trade with China to commence. Noted in the website allkinds of history (accessed 11/09/2013 page 2) was

when the English East India Company, which had secured a royal monopoly on trade between England and China, wished to thank the monarch by making him a present of tea, its agents had to scour London to find even two pounds of leaves.

Tea became the national English drink after 1784, when Thomas Twining encouraged William Pitt the Younger to reduce the 119% tax on tea imported into Britain. If kept dry, China tea remained viable to drink for up to three years.

In Kentley (undated page 10) there is an illustration of *Camellia sinensis*, the common tea plant, which was first cultivated in the 4th Century CE.

7. TEA IN CHINA

Citizens of nineteenth century Victorian England began to demand not only newly arrived tea from China but also the season's first and freshest tea. The trade was dominated by the British East India Company. The average East Indiaman (ship of the British East India Company) could carry 1200 tons of cargo. The usual China trade pattern was to set sail from Britain in January, travel via the Cape of Good Hope and arrive in China in September. This would enable the ships to load up that year's tea harvest, which would be brought down river by sampans. The aim was to take advantage of the trade winds and return to Britain by the next September. The route taken was south via the South China Sea, west of Borneo, east of Sumatra, into the Indian Ocean, onto the Cape of Good Hope, into the Atlantic Ocean, past The Azores, up the English Channel, into the Thames Estuary, then towed to the appropriate dock by steam tug.

The British East India Company financed the purchase of China tea by importing opium from India. Stated in the website allkinds of history (accessed 11/09/2013, page 2) was

since the companies now trading with China were reluctant to drain their treasuries of silver to purchase tea, the opium trade was much encouraged, even though the Qing emperor had declared it illegal in his dominions. Sleek sea greyhounds of the clipper class proved admirably suited to the task of running British drugs up the China coast.

Objections by the Chinese government were ignored. The result was the First Opium War (1839-1842). The Chinese could not match British military technology and were defeated. The British demanded an expansion of trading privileges in China for British trading companies and the opening of more Chinese ports for trade.

A Second Opium War followed, from 1856-1860. The British Government took commercial and political control from the East India Company to better manage relations with China. The port of Foochow - also written as Foo-Chow-Foo, Fouchow, modern Fuzhou - was then opened for trade. The Pagoda Anchorage on the Min River proved to be an excellent place to load tea chests and to quickly get to the sea.



The Chinese port of Foochow (modern Fuzhou) on the Min River, starting point for the warehoused tea to be sent downstream to Pagoda Anchorage for the Great Tea Races, in about 1860.
<http://allkindsofhistory.files.wordpress.com/2011/12/foochow.jpg>

Foochow was closer to the tea producing area than was Canton (modern Guangzhou) so tea could be loaded fresher and earlier. In 2014, Fuzhou was the sister city of Shoalhaven City, based in Nowra on the south coast of New South Wales, Australia.

There is a fascinating representation of the loading tea in the Chinese port of Canton (modern Guangzhou) on this website:

<http://allkindsofhistory.wordpress.com/2011/12/800px-loading-tea-at-Canton.jpg>.

Kentley (undated page 8) displayed a fascinating oil painting held by the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts USA showing all the phases of tea production: growing, packing and transport. See List of References under “Paintings for further details.

8. TEA IN INDIA

In 1838, 12 chests of tea from Assam, north of India, were sent to London and secured a good price. By 1855, 500 pounds of tea were being imported to Britain from Assam each year. Trade between India and Britain was dominated by the East India Company, which provided its own fleet of ships for trade, the East Indiamen.

When the Company lost its trading rights to India, it compensated for the loss of revenue by heavily taxing the Indian people. Considerable friction developed between the East India Company and the Indian people. Other issues included the British disruption to the Indian way of life and the Indian population - particularly in the north - becoming isolated from the government. Local Indian rulers were being deposed by the British and new technologies, such as steam trains and metalled roads, were being introduced. As well, the increasing role of Christian missionaries in Indian society was upsetting both Hindus and Muslims.

Indian soldiers believed that the cartridges for new rifles were lubricated with pig and cow fat. This is forbidden by both Hindus and Muslims and was seen as humiliation of their religions. The cartridges were actually lubricated in tallow made from beef and pork fat. Even though the East India Company quickly changed to using vegetable fat as a lubricant for the rifle cartridges, the damage had been done. Matters came to a head at Meerat, near Delhi, in India, when soldiers of the Bengal Army shot their British officers and three Indian army regiments marched on Delhi. The revolt quickly became a mutiny and the relationship that once existed between the East India Company and the Indian people collapsed totally.

The British government then assumed management of relations with India. It saw the potential for growing tea in India, especially as the Suez Canal opening in 1869 made it less profitable to bring tea from China to Britain via the Cape of Good Hope.

The website <http://www.go127.com/HistoryTea.html> page 5 stated

The Scottish botanist/adventurer Robert Fortune, who spoke fluent Chinese, was able to sneak into mainland China the first year after the first Opium War. His second journey to China was for the East India Company to obtain the finest tea plants to establish plantations in India. ...With support from the crown, various experiments in growing tea in India were attempted...Finally, after years of trial and error...the English plantations in India and other parts of Asia flourished.

By 1888, Indian tea production of 88 million pounds exceeded the amount of tea imported from China.

9. THE ERA OF THE TEA CLIPPERS

By 1834, the British East India Company had lost its trading monopoly in China and thereafter tea was a freely traded item.

The repeal of the British Navigation Laws in 1849 - which had previously declared the policy of 'British goods in British bottoms' - allowed US ships to carry tea from China to London.

Invented by Donald McKay and built by master shipwrights Donald McKay and Samuel Hall of East Boston, Massachusetts, USA, the clipper was a type of sailing ship built for speed and was so named because it could 'clip' or lessen its journey time. Speed records would thus enhance profit. Aesthetically, they were beautiful ships, long and lean, truly "greyhounds of the sea". Distinguishing features included a sharply raked bow, an overhanging stern and an enormous quantity of sail. Their success was to be able to maintain relatively high speeds in light winds and to be able to beat to windward in a stiff breeze. Their brief period of trade captured the imagination of the public in the 1860s and 1870s.

Kentley (undated, page 13) wrote

the term 'clipper' came into use in the USA in the early nineteenth century, specifically describing the small schooners and brigs of Chesapeake Bay which had eluded the British navy during the war of 1812. It simply meant a fast vessel - one which could 'go at a clip'...

The United Kingdom Tea Council website indicated

they earned their name from the way that they 'clipped' off the miles.

The Baltimore clippers were the first. Baltimore is at the head of Chesapeake Bay in Maryland USA. In the 1840s and 1850s, tea was brought from China to America. The record trip was set in 1851 when the Californian clipper *Flying Cloud*, captained by Josiah Perkins Cressy, sailed from China and arrived in San Francisco Bay at 1130 hours am on 30 August 1851, having taken 89 days and 21 hours for the voyage. Clipper ships evolved from the competition between American and British ships for the lucrative China tea trade. Americans pioneered clipper ships and had six ships in the China tea trade - *Celestial*, *Challenge*, *Nightingale*, *Sea Serpent*, *Surprise* and *Witch of the Wave*.

The arrival of the American clipper *Oriental* at West India Dock on 03 December 1851 is considered to be the turning point in the development of clippers in Britain. *Oriental* sailed Hong Kong on 28 August 1851, loaded with 1 118 tons of fresh China tea and reached London in 97 days. Captain Theodore Palmer had achieved some outstanding performances on the voyages of *Oriental* between New York and Hong Kong. The cargo had an estimated value of £9 600, which represented 75% of the cost of building a new ship. There was money to be made and the three largest tea trading companies in Britain instructed their agents to charter the ship and pay any price. Those with the fastest ships who were first to Britain with the new harvest stood to make the most money.

Kentley (undated page 13) outlined the development of the clippers.

In Aberdeen, Alexander Hall and Sons had developed their own prototype for a new style of ship...the characteristic of this new type of vessel was a long narrow hull, a sharp bow, a yacht-like appearance, raking masts and a very, very large sail area.

The first British clipper was *Challenger*, built in 1852 and on the China run she defeated the American clipper *Challenge* by more than two days. The later British clippers were only half the size of the American clippers but they were more suited to navigating the dangerous waters of the China Sea.

Knight (1973 page 30) stated

as more British clippers joined, racing between British and American crews became intense. Prizes were offered to captains and extra pay to winning crews. People who had scarcely seen a ship before used to bet on the results of each year's tea race.

British clippers built in the 1850s and 1860s had a narrower beam than US ships. They were less powerful in heavy seas but faster in lighter winds. British ships used hardwood planking and decking, which cost £15 per ton to construct but made for a very strong, rigid ship. American ships used softwood, with which a ship could be constructed for £12 per ton. But, under the stress of a heavy press of sail, when the captains were driving their ships hard, American ships tended to literally open at the seams and leak water, which was not conducive to keeping moisture away from the fresh, roasted, dry China tea being carried.

Writing in the introduction to Shewan (1996), David R MacGregor defined a clipper.

To qualify as a clipper, a vessel had to have a high proportion of beams to length, certainly over four to one; a fine-lined entrance and run; a fair amount of deadrise which was closely related to her speed, stability and cargo capacity; a streamlined appearance; a generous sail area; and a capable, tireless master determined to get the last degree of speed from his ship.

Mac Kinnon (1995 page 5) wrot

In model and design, we had no answer to vessels such as the *Sea Witch*, *Hinqua*, *Samuel Russell* and the *Oriental*...nor could we compete with the cut and set of American sail plans of that time. America was also ahead of the British in terms of the number of men needed to crew and handle their vessels, principally owing to their use of deck winches, patent sheaves, light manila running gear and large blocks, whereas we were content with common sheaves, stiff hemp gear and the hard-worked 'handy billy.'

In 1857, the USA descended into a significant recession which resulted in an oversupply of shipping. By 1860, as the Civil War approached, the American clippers stopped competing. This allowed British ships to dominate the China Tea trade and British clippers continued racing among themselves.

Dudszus and Henriot (1986 page 73) provide an excellent description of a clipper.

...the famous, high-speed merchant ship from the golden age of sail. The boom in sea trade at the start of the nineteenth century called for faster ships for longer voyages... Among the characteristic features of this ship are the reduced freeboard and lack of superstructure, so that the dimensions and underwater shape could be designed for minimum resistance... The first ships, which were constructed of timber, had a length to beam ratio of 5:1 and 6:1. With the transition to composite wood/iron construction...the ships could be built even narrower at up to a ratio of 8:1...the result was that the waterlines were particularly fine...the long, sharp curving clipper stem...contributed to the vessels' racy appearance, reduced the wave-making resistance by dividing or clipping the waves (hence clipper) and extended the ship's length (useful for increasing sail capacity) whilst keeping the bowsprit short. The clipper bow has remained popular for yachts and passenger ships. Fine, tapering waterlines round the after body, and a narrow, rounded stern blended harmoniously with the refined forms of this high-speed sailing ship. Even more pronounced was the increase in sail area. The tall masts were often up to 75% of the ship's length.

Shewan (1996 page 170) wrote

Speed was everything in the tea-clippers, and the factors which made for fast passages were in consequence of prime importance.

These factors included newness of sails, trim of the ship, quality of copper sheathing, the ship's owner and, most importantly, the captain's and crew's experience.

Campbell (1974 pages 59-60) described the physical aesthetic appearance of the clippers.

The grace and beauty of the clipper ships was achieved by men who had an intuitive instinct for good aesthetic taste...Great care was taken by designers and draughtsmen in the 19th century who, inheriting old traditions in an unbroken line from the first seagoing vessels, saw to it that their finished products pleased the eye when viewed from any angle...what these 19th century designers and craftsmen did produce was truly wonderful, and the images that remain still excite the imagination and arouse admiration for their beauty and utility in an honourable trade carried on by honourable men.

Campbell (1974 page 156) was clearly enamoured with the aesthetics of the clippers and waxed lyrical about them.

When we look back to the era of the tea clippers, it is usually their physical appearance that arouses our interest and imagination...the delightful form of the hull of a tea clipper, gently twisting from a hollowed curve and flare at the bows to a slight inward inclination or tumblehome and then reversing the twist again into the grand sweep under the counter stern, all being moulded perfectly into the curves towards the keel, must surely rank as the most aesthetically perfect man-made shape. There is much to be learned about the purpose of life by looking back - as in our regard of the tea clipper.

As Kentley (undated page 13) described the tea clipper.

The design created not only a fast ship but a tax-efficient one...in 1854...duty was now to be calculated by a formula including the area of the hull at three different cross-sections. The clipper's long narrow hull and sharp bow meant a very small area at the forward point of measurement, so its owner paid less duty...

Races between the "full bloods"- as the crack clippers were called - were a regular event. The first ship home with its cargo of new crop tea could command "the first home premium." Payment of the "premium" began with the Tea Race of 1856 and was set at £1 per ton. First winner was the *Vision*. In 1866, the "premium" was worth up to 6 pence per pound - or ten shillings per ton - above the payable tea price, so there was still a financial incentive, as well as the honour of being the first captain and crew to reach London after travelling 14 000 miles from China. This distance is twice the diameter of planet Earth. The very existence of the clipper ships was evidence of the expanding global economy.

But these amazing feats of seamanship were fraught with danger. Kentley (undated page 7) wrote

many of the clipper ships that sailed the China Seas...in the second half of the nineteenth century were wrecked, foundered or lost in their first few years...men were washed overboard; at least one killing took place on board and a captain committed suicide.

Mac Kinnon (1995 pages 41-42) described the challenges of the clipper's captains.

The men who commanded the clippers were an elite, the likes of whom the world may never see again. Speed was their God, on whose altar they were prepared to sacrifice all human comfort, dignity and, when necessary, life itself. Obsessed with the need to pile on more and more sail, they would do so until it seemed the ship itself must drive herself under or, at the very least, lose her spars and masts. However, with a foresight borne of long experience and natural sailing skills, they seemed to know just how far to push their ships and the elements, stopping just short of the point of potential disaster. Their navigational skills were beyond any serious doubt... Ships were lost when they should have not been lost, often due to the demands on a skipper reaching the point where his best judgment was impaired, if not bordering on the reckless.

The website allkindsofhistory (accessed 11/09/2013, page 2) noted

some masters, anxious to cram on every stitch of canvas, might also unfurl small sails known as moonrakers at the very tip of each mast, and add supplementary staysails and studding sails, as well as fancy racing canvas such as water sails close down along the waterline. A crack ship such as *Ariel* could easily set thirty or more sails in the most favourable conditions, and any clipper taking part in the tea race might average 11 or 12 knots in reasonable conditions, at a time when the steam fleet made eight or nine knots and would need to coal four or five times on a passage between Britain and China.

Life for a sailor was very, very hard. Mac Kinnon (1995 pages 41-42) outlined the conditions of their seafaring occupation.

On long voyages - and they were always long - the food was monotonous in the extreme and often too rotten for a starving man to eat. Such was the low freeboard of clippers, and so hard were they driven, that the decks and accommodation were rarely dry, making life on and off watch a nightmare of permanent dampness and discomfort. All the hardships endured on deck, however, paled into insignificance when seamen went aloft. Here, on swaying yardarms 150 feet above the sea, where the snapping canvas ran riot, it was an unending fight for survival,, which men lost with frightening regularity. Yet despite all the hardships and dangers, there was an immense prestige associated with sailing before the mast, pride and passion were involved and few clipper men would have it any other way... The seamen of the clipper trade endured the ultimate test of men and ships, the perfect marriage of human tenacity and skill, with the products of the world's finest shipyards. But the sacrifices called for and the risks taken exacted a heavy toll. Men grew old before their time, if indeed they survived, and died before they should have.

The website allkinds of history (accessed 11/09/2013, page 2) noted a danger of clipper design to all on board.

A clipper designer would also devote much attention to smoothing his ship's "run," her bottom at the after end. This practice lessened friction and added speed - but it also had its dangers. Too clean a run could result in excessively fine form above the waterline and a consequent lack of buoyancy which often led to a ship being pooped - that is, swamped by a following wave. *Ariel* was one of a number of ships that suffered from this tendency, and when she vanished without a trace while on passage in 1872 it was generally assumed that a following sea had struck from behind and washed her helmsman overboard. With no hand on the wheel, the clipper would have swung broadside to the following wave and been struck with such ferocity she would have sunk almost instantly.

BBC television Channel 4 presented a program “Speed Machines: The *Cutty Sark* and the Great Tea Clippers.” It gave a dramatic demonstration of life at sea in the era of the clipper ships. The program can be downloaded in the UK from the website

<http://channel4.com/programmes/speed-machines/episode-guide/series-1/episode6>

The incident involving *Thermopylae* (built 1868) showed how intense was the rivalry between the ships’ crews. In Foochow, a crew member of the *Taeping* swam over to the *Thermopylae* and stole the golden cockerel exhibited on the ship. The crew of *Thermopylae* were furious at the loss and there were a number of angry and even violent incidents between them and their rival crew.

So strong was the competition between captains, crews and ships that the public’s attention was attracted. From marker points on the sailing route, telegrams would be sent to Britain advising of the ships’ progress. The ships’ bulwarks were all painted differently to help the crowds waiting on the docks to identify them. Large amounts of money were bet on the results of the races.

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 brought the competition to an end. While it reduced voyages to the East by thousands of miles, it was a route designed for steamers, not for sailing ships. The steamers could complete their voyage in some 50 days. Because they now used less coal, there was more room for cargoes such as tea. The best clippers struggled to do the trip in under 100 days. The clipper *Cutty Sark* carried tea until 1877. The last of the clipper ships – *Cutty Sark* and *Thermopylae* – transferred their speed to bringing the Australian wool clip to Britain. The clipper era came to an end because despite their speed, they could not carry cargoes as cheaply as could steamers. By 1924, *Cutty Sark* was the only remaining tea clipper in the world. It is currently restored to its former glory and on display at Greenwich in London, England.

10. ELLEN RODGER

Alexander Rodger (1801-1877) had made his fortune speculating on the Australian Gold Rush of the 1850s. On his return, he was convinced that fast clipper ships had a great advantage in the China tea trade and by 1855 was part owner - with C Carnie of Glasgow - of the *Kate Carnie*, the very first clipper to emerge from Robert Steele & Co’s shipyard at Greenock, on the Clyde River in Scotland. At 500 tons, she was only a small clipper but an immediate success because she was very fast.

Lubbock (1916 page 138) wrote

In 1858 two very fast little clippers were built, the *Ellen Rodger* from Steele’s yard and the barque *Ziba* from Hall’s. Their day, however, was only a short one as they were soon outclassed by the improved clippers which appeared at the beginning of the sixties.

Lubbock (1916 page 143) stated

Steele was, without a doubt, the designer of the most beautiful little ships that ever floated...The lines of his vessels never failed to please the eye; their sweetness and beauty satisfied that artistic sense in a sailor...

Donald MacKinnon's command of the *Ellen Rodger* in late 1861 was his point of entry into the tea trade from China and he made several successful passages on this ship. She was a full-rigged all timber ship, the first clipper built in 1858 at Robert Steele & Co's Yard No. 140 in Greenock, Scotland. Her gross tonnage was 585 tons and dimensions were: length 155 feet 8 inches, width 29.5 feet 4 inches and depth 19 feet 5 inches. The forecastle was 14 feet long and the poop deck was 48 feet 6 inches long. Owners were Alexander Rodger and C. Carnie of Glasgow, Scotland. The ship was named after Alexander Rodger's wife, Ellen.

Details of these voyages were obtained from MacGregor (1983) and Bruzelius (1999).



Ellen Rodger, Donald MacKinnon's first ship in the China tea trade

The first captain of the *Ellen Rodger* was John Melville Key. The first tea voyage departed Foochow on 10 June 1859 and 136 days later arrived in London on 24 October to London. Next tea voyage was also under Captain Key. It departed Foochow on 07 June 1860 and arrived in London 121 days later on 06 October. The third voyage was again under Captain Key. It departed Foochow on 11 June 1861, arriving in London 121 days later on 10 October.

In 1862, Donald MacKinnon took over as Captain. Bruzelius (1999) stated he sailed from Foochow on 19 June 1862 and arrived in London 116 days later on 13 October 1862. MacGregor (1983) supplied different dates: sailed Foochow 15 June 1862 arrived London after 116 days on 13 October 1862. While in company with the tea clippers *Falcon*, *Robin Hood* and *Queensberry*, Captain MacKinnon met with the Blackwall frigate *Kent* at The Line (the Equator) and they raced towards China. After a spirited race, the *Ellen Rodger* moved forward quickly when the winds lightened. A Blackwall frigate was a small, fast wooden sailing ship. Many were built in Blackwall, London, on the Thames River.

MacGregor (1983 page 113) described how well the *Ellen Rodger* sailed when homeward bound from China:

Ellen Rodger, with a recently increased sail plan, was able to leave the others behind.

Lubbock (1916 page 200) described how Rodger modified the *Ellen Rodger* to make it more competitive with newer ships.

Captain Rodger, perceiving that his crack *Ellen Rodger* was being outclassed by the new ships, determined to increase her sail plan by putting her main yards to the fore, and giving her new main yards 6 feet longer. This gave her two widths more canvas on the fore and three widths more canvas on the main, with the result that her sailing was very much improved in light winds. And in 1862 she made the best time coming home of the whole fleet, which included three new ships the *Min*, *Whinfell* and *Highflyer*.

Overall time with McKinnon as Captain was 116 days, leaving Foochow in China on June 19 1862 and arriving in London on October 13.

Next voyage under Captain Donald MacKinnon departed London on 28 December 1862. In a very quick 98 days, the *Ellen Rodger* docked in Shanghai on 05 April, 1863. The return trip sailed from Foochow on 03 June 1863 and arrived in London on 04 October 1863, a journey of 123 days.

Bruzelius (1999) and MacGregor (1986) are in agreement on the dates but disagree with Lubbock (1916 page 205), who stated

The *Ellen Rodger* left Foochow on May 27 1863 and arrived in London on October 5, a trip of 124 days. Captain McKinnon had secured 5th place in the race.

On 25 January 1864, Donald MacKinnon was appointed Captain of the newest Alexander Rodger tea clipper, *Taeping*. Captaincy of the *Ellen Rodger* passed to Captain E Cobbett. He sailed from Foochow on 19 June 1864 and arrived in London 124 days later, on 21 October 1864. Bruzelius (1999) and McGregor (1986) agree on the dates.

Captain Tompkins took over command and sailed from Shanghai on 09 August 1865. 124 days later the *Ellen Rodger* docked in London on 11 December 1865. Bruzelius (1999) and MacGregor (1986) agree on the number of days.

In 1865, Captain Colin MacKinnon - Donald's brother - assumed control of the ship. There are no details of the voyage available, only that Colin was lost at sea on 04 September 1865. The circumstances of his disappearance are not known.

In Knight (1973, page 49), there is an excellent illustration of the *Ellen Rodger*.

On 24 August 1866, the *Ellen Rodger* sailed from Foochow heading for London. The captain for this voyage was Captain Tompkins. Sadly, this beautiful little ship was wrecked on the Belvidere Shoals (Reef) in Gaspar Strait in the South China Sea on 20 September 1866. Bruzelius (1999) and McGregor (1986) agree on the dates. Gaspar Strait was a shortcut between the Bangka - Belitung Islands, a little to the north of Gaspar Island, but had the problem of coral reefs.

Another problem in the area was the horde of Malay pirates in their proas, constantly prowling these waters waiting to pounce like tigers upon mariners who anchored or ran aground on one of the many coral reefs. Like the Chinese pirates in their junks, the aim was to strip any stranded ship of all valuables, cargo, rigging and sails, leaving behind that which was of no value to them.

MacGregor (1973, page 113) wrote

The hull was sold for £700. Later the same year (1866) she was passed by another ship, still hard and fast aground, her hull and bowsprit intact but her masts gone.

See Appendix 3 for further information on the *Ellen Rodger*.

11. TAEPING

Another step up for Donald MacKinnon was made on 25 January 1864 when he was appointed as commander of the *Taeping*. Spurling (1973 page 75) noted

Captain MacKinnon gave up the *Ellen Rodger* in order to take over the *Taeping*.

John Spurling (1933 Volume 1) has an excellent representation of *Taeping*.

In the Chinese language, the word *Taeping* means ‘great peace.’

This move saw Captain MacKinnon rise to fame. The ship was launched at the shipyard of Robert Steele and Co at Greenock on the Clyde on 24 December 1863. The owner was Alexander Rodger of Glasgow and it was described as an extreme composite clipper ship. *Taeping* was one of the magnificent tea clippers that brought tea from China to the tables of Britain.

“Lloyd’s Register of Shipping” for 1866-1867 held in the Caird Library of the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, London, supplied these details on *Taeping*.

Master: McKinnon [Anglicised spelling of the Highland name MacKinnon]
767 tons
183.7 long, 31.1 wide, 17.8 deep ([feet]
Iron frame planked
Built: Greenock by Steele 1863, 12 months
Owned by Rodger and Co, Glasgow

Bowen (1925 page 75) described *Taeping* as

One of the most celebrated of all the tea clippers.

The artist John Bentham Dinsdale has painted a representation of *Taeping*. The caption is “*Taeping*, Tea Clipper built at Greenock 1863.” This print was purchased by Angus Mac Kinnon of Troon, Scotland

Lubbock has this to say.

Taeping was one of the first ships to be composite built. . . In merchant ships, this was the transition stage between iron and wood. It only had a short popularity of perhaps a dozen years, and that only amongst clipper ships such as the China clippers . . . it was specially suitable, though, for the tea trade, where great strength was wanted. Iron ships were never popular because iron was considered bad for the tea and they could never equal wooden ships in light winds. The clipper ships proved themselves exceedingly strong and fully able to stand the strain of hard driving without being twisted out of shape, as was the case of the American soft-wood clippers.

The perceived problem with all-iron ships was that the iron attracted moisture as condensation, which was not ideal for tea, which had been dried and roasted. Timber was the preferred material for planking and for decking.

Campbell (1974 page 72) wrote

While iron ships were superseding wooden ones, and supplies of good timber were becoming more difficult to obtain, there appeared on the scene a compromise which for a brief period was to produce the finest tea clippers ever built. These were the composite ships, which had a basic skeleton of iron covered by a wooden skin.

A print of *Taeping* was originally hung in the present-day community hall, *An Talla*, on the Isle of Tiree. It was originally given to Angus MacLean’s wife Mona for safe keeping. A large black and white copy of this print now hangs in *An Talla*.



This painting of the *Taeping* was commissioned on the occasion of Angus MacLean's 88th birthday.
Photograph by permission of Mary MacLean, Isle of Tiree, Scotland.

But the *Taeping* was not the only new tea clipper ship. Lubbock (1916 page 206) wrote

In 1863 Messrs. Steele launched two of the most celebrated ships in the tea trade, the *Serica* on the 4th August and the *Taeping* on the 24th December. Registering 59 tons more than the *Serica*, *Taeping* was 2 feet shorter but 3 feet deeper., and, in point of speed she was perhaps a trifle faster all round. They were both fine handy sea-boats, very fast in light airs, and, as usual with Steele's creations, very sightly ships. Owned by such keen racing men as Findlay and Rodger, and well skippered, they were both raced for all they were worth.

Spurling (1933 page 75) noted

she was built for Captain Rodger, with the special object of beating the flying *Fiery Cross*, which had won the premium given to the first arrival in both the previous seasons, 1861 and 1862.

Other ships built for the same purpose by Robert Steele's yard at Greenock included the wooden *Serica* for James Findlay, the *Young Lochinvar* for Messrs McDiarmid and Greenshields, from Aberdeen - designed by John Rennie and built by Hall - the *Black Prince*, and the Worthington crack, *Belted Bill*, owned by Bushby.

Spurling (1933 page 75) compared the specifications of some of the clippers.

	Tons reg	Length		Breadth		Depth	
		ft	in	ft	in	ft	in
<i>Taeping</i>	767	183	7	31	1	19	9
<i>Serica</i>	708	185	9	31	1	19	6
<i>Young Lochinvar</i>	724	186	1	31	1	19	8
<i>Black Prince</i>	750	183		35		19	6
<i>Belted Will</i>	812	186	4	32	4	20	8

Note the discrepancy with Lloyds Register of the depth of the *Taeping*.

Spurling (1933, page 75) had high praise for the ships of Steele.

Steele's ships were celebrated not only for beauty of model and perfection of build, but for their superb finish, the figure-heads, gingerbread work, and deck fittings of picked teak, with brass inlay, being specially notable. All who saw them declared that the skill and care used on the 1863 ships has never been surpassed...

Bowen (1925 page 66) noted this of the *Taeping* .

Her designer was William Steele, whose splendid creations included the *Serica*, *Ariel*, *Sir Lancelot*, *Titania*, and *Lahloo*...

The wooden *Serica* was captained by Captain Innes, who was with Findlay on the *Foam* in 1851.

Alexander Rodger was also a sea captain and the house in which he was born, in the fishing town of East Neuk in Fife, Scotland, is today named *Taeping*, in memory of his most famous ship, winner of the Great Tea Race of 1866.

On 19 January 1865, William Murray wrote to his son Hugh Cameron Murray in Sydney, Australia, about Hugh's sister Christina, who

... lives with Maggie at Bow, seven miles from where I live. Maggie has taken a house there for the convenience of the Captain who is now regularly in the tea trade, London being his port of arrival. Last winter he got a splendid clipper ship built for him (*Taeping*), leaving Greenock in February [1865]. He sailed from Shanghai on 6th July (1864), a fortnight afterwards, was caught in a typhoon, dismasted and narrowly escaped foundering, had to put back to Amoy for repairs, left there on 6th October [1864], had a splendid run home in 87 days, arriving here on 3rd January, all well.

He sails again for Foochow on 27th inst., poor fellow he enjoys little comforts of his own fireside.

His eldest boy [William] now nearly nine was laid up with scarletina when his father arrived, but is now well. [Scarletina is a variant spelling of Scarletina, which is another term for scarlet fever, an infectious bacterial disease especially affecting children, and causing fever and a scarlet rash. It is caused by streptococci.]

His little girl [Marion Mary] (3 past) is still more active than her mother was at that age, and you remember what that was like.

The youngest boy [Francis Alfred] 17 months old is a delightful child. They are all well.

On the 18th. inst. [January 1865] the MacKinnons, Christina and Duncan dined, tea'd and Supped with me, we were talking of all and sundry, present and absent of the family, of the unforeseen and unexpected event of all being located in London.

What a joy it must have been for William to have this many of his family with him in Britain at that time.

The *Taeping* sailed from Greenock on 25 January 1864 with Donald MacKinnon aged 35 as Captain. Captain MacKinnon's tenure as master on this voyage of the *Taeping* was from 27 January 1864 to 04 January 1865. This is recorded in the National Archives in Kew, London. The ship then went to Liverpool on 04 February 1864 and reached Gravesend in the Thames Estuary on 07 February. The *Taeping* sailed to Shanghai from 14 May to 29 June 1864.

Spurling (1973 pages 75-76) wrote

being too late for the first teas from Foochow, she cleared for Shanghai. When she was running her easting down, a small Liverpool clipper, the *Vigil*, of 550 tons, which had been built by Vernon in 1862, hung on to the new tea ship for several days in 'the roaring forties' and this encouraged her to think that she would make a good race of it to Shanghai. However, directly the wind lightened *Taeping* went clean away, and had discharged, and was nearly full of tea by the time the *Vigil* reached port.

The *Taeping* had demonstrated excellent speed in light winds and made its first trip with tea from Shanghai on 01 July 1864. *Taeping* and the bottle-green *Coulnakyle* under the command of Captain Morrison, departed together. But this voyage was not to be plain sailing for either ship.

Coulnakyle limped into the harbour of Hong Kong on 20 July 1864 using only her courses and jury topsails. She had encountered a typhoon [cyclone] near the southern end of Formosa (Taiwan), a region noted for such occasional episodes. Spurling (1973 page 76) described the events of the encounter.

With all her canvas blown to ribbons, the *Coulnakyle* lay down on her beam ends, and the topmasts had to be cut away to save the ship...The fore-topmast took the lower masthead with it in falling; the main topmast refused to go clear, and the gallant old Aberdonian carpenter [Captain Morrison] risked his life in cutting the wreck adrift.

Spurling (1973 page 76) wrote about the impact of the typhoon on MacKinnon's ship.

Taeping arrived at Amoy on July 23rd, having had an even worse time. Her foremast was gone, together with the bowsprit and main and mizzen topmasts...It took Captain McKinnon three months to refit the *Taeping*, and she did not arrive in the London river until January 1865.

On 23 July, *Taeping* was towed into the harbour at Amoy [modern Xiamen] by Her Majesty's gunboat *Flamer*.

The consequence of this misfortune is explained by Lubbock (1916 pages 208- 209).

Even though *Taeping* had made the best time of the year, she was unfortunate in not being able to sail earlier, thus having no chance of gaining the premium. Her late launch in 1863 and her disablement in 1864 had thus kept her out of the first flight for two years.

Writing about the Tea Race of 1864, Lubbock (1916 page 209) stated

...*Taeping* was unfortunate. Being only launched at the end of 1863, she did not get out to China in time to load the new teas from Foochow, so she went up to Shanghai. On 1st July she left Shanghai in company with *Coulnakyle*, and beating down the China Sea both ships came to grief, being so disabled they were compelled to put into port. *Taeping* went into Amoy ... After repairs had been effected, *Taeping* left Amoy in October and made such good use of the favourable monsoon that she arrived in London early in January 1865, only 88 days out.

Taeping departed Amoy on 24 October 1864 and arrived in London 88 days later on 03 January 1865. While this was a terrific sailing time by Donald MacKinnon and his crew, the misadventure eliminated the *Taeping* from the opportunity to gain the premium for being the first ship and crew to London. *Serica* and *Fiery Cross* fought out the race, with *Fiery Cross* being the winner.

William Murray, in a letter dated 18 February 1865 to his son Archibald in Sydney, Australia, noted

Mackinnon arrived on the 3rd of Jan, all well. He sailed again for Hong Kong on the 27th inst and hopes to return in Oct. Maggie, Christina and the three children are all well.

Captain MacKinnon's date of departure from England was 27 January 1865.

The following representation of *Taeping* is by the Canadian artist Howard Earl Johnston (13 June 1928 - 05 June 2001). Johnston was born in Enderby and grew up on a farm in the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia, Canada. He became a teacher of secondary English and History and joined the British Columbia Social Credit Party. In 1965 he was elected as member for Okanagan-Revelstoke electoral district. When he was unsuccessful in being re-elected, he joined the Progressive Conservative Party. In the 1974 Federal Election he won the seat of Okanagan- Kootenay. He retired from politics in 1979 and lived in Salmon Arm, British Columbia, where he took up painting.



Photograph of painting of *Taeping* by Howard Earl Johnston (13 June 1928 - 05 June 2001)
Photograph of painting courtesy Mary MacLean 13 August 2014

Mary MacLean indicated in an email Wednesday 13 August 2014

the photo came to me via an elderly lady here on Tiree ... she has contacts in England who own the painting and were wondering about the history of the *Taeping*.

In a letter to his son Archibald in Sydney dated 18 February 1865, William Murray describes what had happened.

He sailed from Shanghai on 6th July (1864), a fortnight afterwards, was caught in a typhoon, dismasted and narrowly escaped foundering, had to put back to Amoy for repairs, left there on 6th October, had a splendid run home in 87 days, arriving here on 3rd January (1865), all well.

This passage from Amoy to just off Deal in Kent was achieved in the splendid time of 88 days. Irving (1882 page 308) noted MacKinnon was

appointed to the *Taeping*, in which vessel he made an extraordinary run home from Amoy in 1865.

On family matters, William Murray wrote to his son Archibald Murray in Australia in a letter dated 18 February 1865.

His eldest boy now nearly 9 (William Montgomery) was laid up with Scarletina when his father arrived but is now well [Scarletina is a variant spelling of Scarlatina, which is another term for Scarlet Fever, an infectious bacterial disease especially affecting children, and causing fever and a scarlet rash. It is caused by streptococci.] His little girl [Marion Mary] is still more active than her mother was at that age, and you remember what that was. The youngest boy [Francis Alfred], 17 months old is a delightful child, they are all well. On the 18th inst [January 1865] the MacKinnons, Christina and Duncan dined. Tea'd and Supped with me, we were talking of all and sundry, present and absent of the family, of the unforeseen and unexpected event of all being located in London...He sails again for Foochow on the 27th. inst., [January 1865] poor fellow he enjoys little the comforts of his own fireside.

MacGregor (1983 page 46) stated these dates for the journey.

Sailed London 8 February 1865
Arrived Hong Kong on in 94 days on 13 May 1865
92 days between pilots

The National Archives in Kew, London, recorded his tenure as captain for this voyage was from 05 February 1865 to 11 October 1865.

In 1865, *Taeping* did not leave Foochow until 29 June, thereby missing the chance to race against *Serica* and *Fiery Cross*. *Taeping* arrived in Britain on 11 October in 104 days, the best ship's passage made that year.



The most recent representation of the *Taeping*
Presented to Lloyd Pitcher by Angus and Mary MacLean
on the Isle of Tiree on the occasion of his visit on 13 May 2012
Photograph by Robin Pitcher.
Lloyd Pitcher Collection.

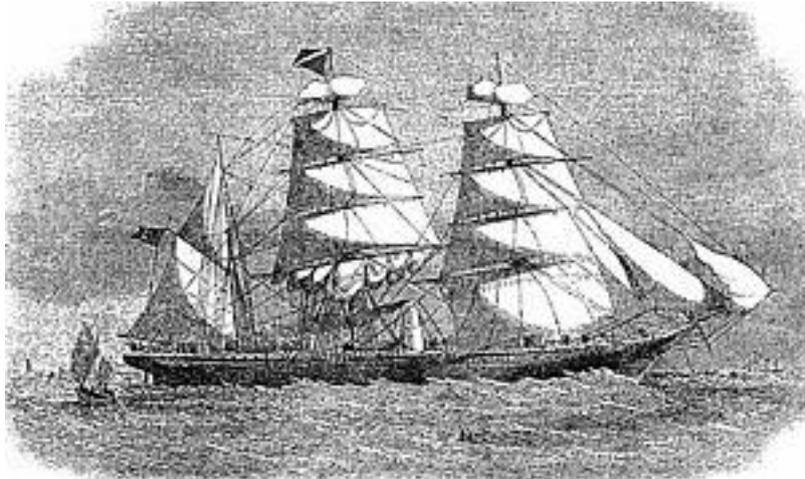
For more information on *Taeping*, see Appendix 4.

12. COLIN DE VERDE MACKINNON: *CHAMPION OF THE SEAS*

On 16 November 1865, Captain MacKinnon departed London on *Taeping*, on its outward voyage, bound for Foochow. On board was an unexpected guest, Mrs Margaret MacKinnon. The three children were left in London with Christina Cameron Murray and their grandfather, William Murray. On this trip, a child had been conceived or was about to be conceived, the fourth child for Donald and Margaret MacKinnon.

As *Taeping* was collecting a cargo of tea from Foochow, it would not have been practicable to have a pregnant passenger on board on the return voyage. A fast China tea clipper racing to London would not be able to transfer a passenger to another vessel at sea or to stop at a way station or a port on the way.

It is likely that the ship for the return passage, from Foochow to London, would be a non-racing ship. *Taeping* departed Foochow on Wednesday 30 May 1866 and began its journey to London. The ship chosen for Margaret MacKinnon's voyage was SS *Erl King*.



SS Erl King

A barque rigged ship of 1671 tons, launched 7 September 1865 in Glasgow, Scotland.
Wrecked 15 December 1891 on Long Reef, Key West, Florida, USA.

SS Erl King was an iron hulled auxiliary steamship sailing from England to China, transporting passengers and cargo. On the return trip, it would carry passengers and a cargo of over a million pounds weight of tea. In German mythology, Erl-King was a bearded giant or goblin believed to lure little children to the land of death. It seems a strange name to choose for a ship built in Glasgow! A steam engine was used to supplement power from the sails when the skies were windless or there was a headwind. On its own, the engine was not powerful enough to propel the ship, but it would be very useful in navigating the Suez Canal - which opened in 1869 - and would considerably reduce the travel time from London to China and return. China tea clippers could not navigate the canal because they lacked propulsion to travel safely through. The propeller could be lifted so as not to cause drag when the ship was in motion. With the propeller operating, top speed was 12 knots. *SS Erl King* also carried 40 First Class passengers and 400 Second and Third Class passengers, which made it ideal for Margaret MacKinnon's journey from Foochow to London.

With a cargo of 1 108 100 pounds of the first of the season's tea, *SS Erl King* departed Foochow on 05 June 1866. *Taeping* had already departed for London on Wednesday 30 May, six days earlier. The passengers included Margaret MacKinnon, who was now noticeably pregnant with her fourth child.

It is probable that her return passage from Foochow to London was pre-booked. There is no evidence of passengers travelling on a China tea clipper racing to London. Aboard *SS Erl King* there would have been other passengers with whom to mingle. As well, Margaret would have been back in London before *Taeping*. Mac Kinnon (email 26 April 2014) stated because *SS Erl King* was a cargo and passenger vessel, a surgeon would be required to be carried.

Colin de Verde MacKinnon was born aboard SS *Erl King* at 0700 hours am on 02 August 1866. He was named after Colin MacKinnon, Donald's brother, who succeeded him as captain of *Ellen Rodger*. Colin was inexplicably lost at sea from *Ellen Rodger* on 04 September 1865. Birth details of Colin de Verde MacKinnon are recorded in the ship's log for that date. Diligent research by Mary MacLean located a copy of the log. Colin was born at latitude 6°9' North and longitude 20°54' West.

26		OFFICIAL LOG of the		from
Date of the Occurrence entered, with Day and Hour.	Place of the Occurrence, or Situation by Latitude and Longitude as Obs.	Particulars required by Act of Parliament.	Amount of any Fine or Penalties incurred.	
			£	s.
2 nd August 1866	At Sea	M ^{rs} Mrs. Finlayson		
7. A.M.	Salt Co. Is.	M ^{rs} of Capt MacKinnon Long 20.54 W was safely confined of a Boy		
		Wm. G. Small		
		Supper		
		A. J. Murray		
		C. O.		

N.B.—Every entry in this Log Book required by the Act must be signed by the Master and by the Mate or some other of the Crew; and every entry of Fine, Penalties, or Apprehensions who has died must be signed by the Master and by the Mate and some other member of the crew; and every entry of wages due to any Seaman.

Copy of the Official Log of SS *Erl King*
7 am 02 August 1866
Sourced from Mary MacLean 2015”

In an article entitled "The Great Ocean Race from China," in column 1 on page 5, the *Liverpool Daily Post* stated Colin's birth was

about 4 days sail from Cape de Verde

These islands are named after Cape Vert, on the coast of Senegal in Africa. "Vert" is the Portuguese word for "green." This places Colin's birth on a line between Georgetown in Guyana, South America and Monrovia in Liberia, Africa. His birth would have been in the Atlantic Ocean, 800 miles due south of the Cape Verde Islands.

The "4 days sail" estimated by the journalist writing for the *Liverpool Daily Post* newspaper seems to be a reasonable estimate and helps to locate the place of birth of Colin. While the top speed of SS *Erl King* was 12 knots, this region of the Atlantic faces the North East Trade Winds. This means that there would be a headwind and this may have slowed the vessel. The distance from the Cape Verde Islands would have been covered in "about 4 days sail."

SS *Erl King* arrived in London 18 days later, on 20 August 1866. The passage time was a mere 77 days, which was very fast indeed. The fastest clippers - *Ariel* and *Taeping* - arrived 17 days later on 06 September 1866 after a voyage of 99 days. The effectiveness of motorised ships was a harbinger for the future of the clippers - no longer were they the fastest cargo ships.

Mac Kinnon (email 25 April 2014) believed

It is probable that SS *Erl King* overhauled *Taeping* somewhere between Anjer and Mauritius, between 21 and 32 days after leaving Foochow.

This overhauling would have taken place in the middle of the Indian Ocean, most likely to the south of Ascension Island. Margaret and baby Colin would have been safely home and settled with family in London before Captain MacKinnon arrived to greet his newly extended family.

In her email 07 October 2015, Jennie Green wrote

Colin de Verde was born at sea on board SS *Erl King* after rounding the Cape Verde Islands en route to rendezvous with Captain Donald MacKinnon. Due to her advanced pregnancy, she couldn't travel with him for the Clipper race.

William Murray wrote a letter from 13 Fairfield Place Fairfield Road Bow London dated 19 September 1866 to his son Hugh in Sydney NSW Australia.

She was confined on the 2nd of August, two days sail from the Cape de Verde islands and arrived with her little son on the 22nd all well, just in time to get her house in order, to receive the champion of the seas, who arrived on the 6th inst.

These dates concur with all completed research.

13. THE GREAT TEA RACE 1866

The opportunity for the *Taeping* to test itself against the very best came in 1866. In this race, Captain Donald MacKinnon and the ship made history. The National Archives in Kew, London, recorded the tenure for this voyage was from 16 November 1865 to 06 September 1866.

There are numerous comprehensive accounts of the race, including Mac Kinnon (1995 pages 29-41) and Spurling (1972 pages 83-86), which reproduces part of the journal of Captain Keay of the *Ariel*. The account presented here is a brief one, focusing on Captain MacKinnon and the *Taeping*.

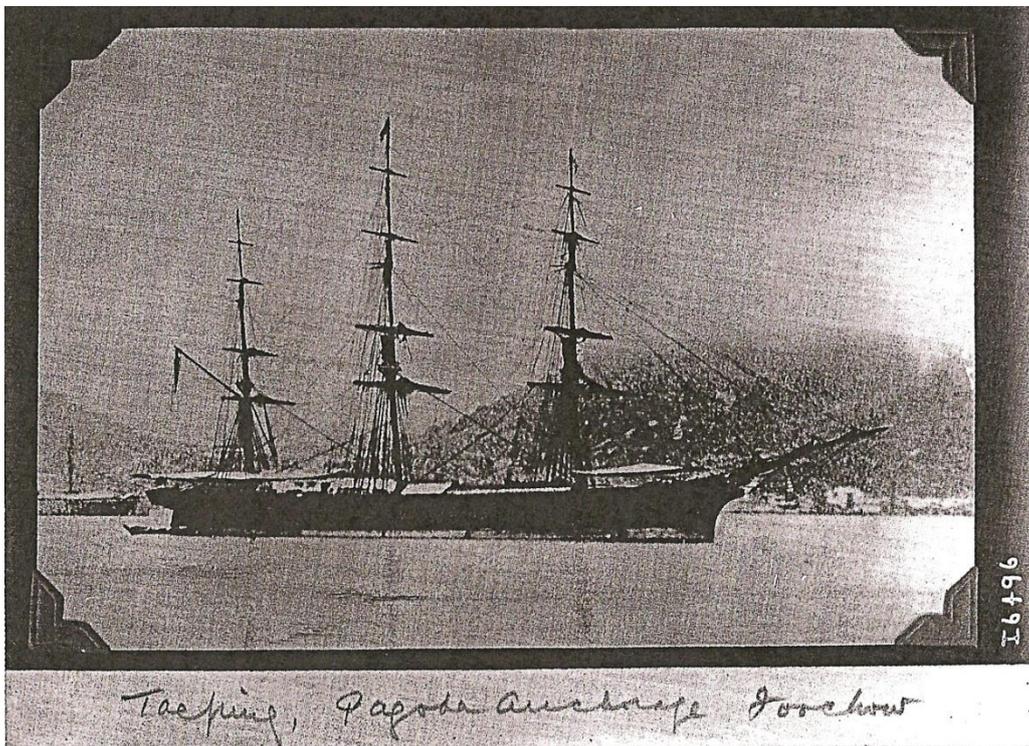
The Pagoda Anchorage would have been a splendid sight. Spurling (1973 page 77) provided a vivid description.

...there was nothing more beautiful afloat than a tea ship when she was ready to load. The competition in seaman-like smartness was tremendous. The blacks, with their golden scroll-work, shone like satin, whilst the copper above the water line, which was oiled and burnished by hand, sparkled dazzlingly in the sun. Aloft each ship was spic and span to the smallest detail, with standard rigging freshly tarred and rattled down, masts and yards under new coats of paint, and the newly-rove running gear either flemished down, or neatly turned up with stops of canvas.

The “copper” referred to were the sheets of copper attached to the hull to enable the ship glide more rapidly through the water and to prevent an attack on the hull timbers by “the worm.” After a period of time, sheets of copper would detach from the hull and actually slow the ship down. Another problem was from Chinese river thieves, who would try to pull their sampans alongside and remove sheets of copper from below the waterline.

Shewan (1996 page 138) described the cunning of copper thieves in Canton, modern Guangzhou.

To get at the coveted sheathing, a Chinaman would float downstream with his nose just above water, his face concealed by a piece of matting, old basket or other rubbish. He carried with him a length of rope which he hooked onto the cable some distance beneath the surface, then, slacking himself away alongside the vessel, he would get to work on a selected piece of copper ... it was no uncommon thing for vessels which had spent a week or two in Whampoa to be found on their arrival in London minus thirty or forty sheets of metal sheathing.



Taeping at Pagoda Anchorage, Min River, Foochow
Plate No I6496, Humphery Collection
National Library of Australia, Canberra

Lubbock (1916 page 189) said this of Foochow.

...In the heyday of the racing, Foochow was the loading port par excellence, and the Pagoda Anchorage, just before the tea came down the (Min) river, showed perhaps the most beautiful fleet of ships the world has seen.

The distance from Foochow to Pagoda Anchorage, up the Min River, was 12 miles.

Shewan (1996 page 127) described his memories. The whole of Chapter XIII of his book is devoted to Pagoda Anchorage.

There are few scenes that linger in my memory more vividly than the Pagoda Anchorage in Foochow River a day or two after the “new teas” market had opened, when the first flight of clippers was getting ready for sea.

First pickings of tea accumulated in “hongs” - mercantile warehouses - in Foochow from early in May each year. Buyers bought the same “chops” year after year. A “chop” was a number of chests of tea of approximately the same quality of leaf from the same garden. Each chest was lined with lead to preserve the aroma and flavour of the new tea. When the market was finally opened, there was a frantic 48 hours spent labelling the tea chests, taking it from the warehouses, loading it onto lighters, transporting it to Pagoda Anchorage and loading it onto the waiting clipper fleet. The contest was keen to be the first ship away. Each clipper already had on board “ground chop,” a number of chests of slightly inferior tea.

Shewan (1996 page 129) provided a vivid description of events.

It would usually happen that a dozen or more clippers would be lying ready, with holds swept and garnished, for two or three weeks perhaps, and never a lighter had come to the Anchorage to break the monotony of their wait. Then one day, or one night ... immediately after the opening of the market, the watchmen on the waiting ships would be kept on the *qui vive* by hearing the blowing of many conch shells and a distant din on the river. The hullabaloo would draw nearer and increase. It would be augmented by much shouting of weird cries and hails out of the darkness upstream, as the first “tea-chops” came down. The men on board the vessels kept up insistent sing-song calls, which represented in the Chinese tongue, inquiries as to where they should anchor to be near the particular vessel for which their cargo was designed.

Lubbock (1916 page 193) stated

In 1866 the tea fleet at Foochow consisted of sixteen front-rank clippers...

In describing the Great Tea race of 1866, Lubbock (1916 pages 217-218) wrote

It is probable that no race ever sailed on blue water created so much excitement as the great tea race of 1866... For some years past the public interest had been growing... the great shipping community of Great Britain looked upon the tea races much as the British Public look upon the Derby or the Boat Race [Oxford and Cambridge Universities rowing competition at Henley-on-Thames]

What was to follow was the most famous race of all time. “The Great Ocean Race” was an event of unprecedented occurrence because nine clippers set off from Foochow in China with their cargoes of new season tea at approximately the same time, between 29th May and 6th June 1866. Mac Kinnon (1995 page 30) provided details of the nine clippers.

Ada, 687 tons, Captain: Jones
Ariel, 852 tons, Captain: Keay
Black Prince, 750 tons, Captain: Inglis
Chinaman, 668 tons, Captain: Downie
Fiery Cross, 695 tons, Captain: Robinson
Flying Spur, 735 tons, Captain: Ryrle
Serica, 708 tons, Captain: Innes
Taeping, 767 tons, Captain: D MacKinnon
Taitsing, 815 tons, Captain: Nutsford

The real race was between five clippers.

Fiery Cross, built 1860, carrying 854 236 pounds of tea, claimed the “first home premium” in 1861, 1862, 1863 and 1864
Ariel, built 1865, 853 tons, 1 230 900 pounds of tea
Taeping, built 1863, 767 tons, 1 108 700 pounds of tea
Serica, built 1863, 708 tons, 954 236 pounds of tea
Taitsing, built 1865, 815 tons, 1 093 130 pounds of tea

With 26 000 square feet of sail and a top speed of 16 knots, *Ariel* was the fastest vessel of her time and rightly race favourite. *Ariel* was the first clipper loaded with her cargo of tea and headed off to cross the bar of the Min River and reach open water. But, the tide was falling and the paddle steamer *Island Queen*, engaged to tow the *Ariel* into the open water, lacked the power to do so against a falling tide and *Ariel* had a frustrating wait until the tide rose. *Fiery Cross*, which had won the 1865 Tea Race, gained a one day start over *Ariel*, *Taeping* and *Serica*, which crossed the bar of the Min River at Foochow together on Wednesday 30th May. *Taeping* had to wait for the return of the steam tug which had taken out *Fiery Cross*. *Ariel* gained a 2 hour start over *Taeping*.

Ada, *Black Prince*, *Chinaman* and *Flying Spur* sailed on the 3rd, 5th and 6th June. The ships did not sight each other for seventy days.

Lubbock (1916 page 155) wrote

Fiery Cross, *Taeping*, *Serica* and *Lahloo* with their single topsails were at their best in light breezes.

The artist TG Dutton painted a representation of *Taeping* in 1866. The caption reads

TG Dutton, del't et lith *Fiery Cross* (on horizon, behind stern) London Published Oct 1866 by Wm Foster, 17 Billiter Street, EC. Clipper ship *Taeping*, 767 tons. D McKinnon, Commander. In the China Sea with the *Fiery Cross* (R Robinson Com.r) on their homeward voyage from Foo-Chow-Foo to London, June 1866. To Alex. Rodger Esq. (Owner) This print is most respectfully dedicated by his obedient Servant, Wm. Foster.

A copy of the photograph was purchased by Mary MacLean in 2010

It is interesting to note that Angus MacKinnon, Captain Donald MacKinnon's brother, was First Mate on the *Fiery Cross* in the 1866 Tea Race.



Anjer, in Java (Indonesia), one of the waystations on the clipper route.

The clipper ships sailed non-stop from China home to London, San Francisco or New York
<http://allkindsofhistory.wordpress.com/2011/12/collectie-tropenmuseum-anjer-aan-de-nordhurst-van-java-tmnr-3728-415.jpg>

On Wednesday 20 June, *Taeping* passed Anjer, in Java (Indonesia) and on Friday 27 July sailed past the Atlantic Ocean island of St Helena. Heading for London, the ship passed Ascension Island on Tuesday 31 July and traversed The Line [The Equator] on Saturday 04 August. On Monday 13 August, San Antonia in the Cape Verde Island was passed and on Wednesday 29 August, the *Taeping* passed Flores, in the Azores.

The artist Henry Scott (1911-2005) painted a representation *Taeping* and *Ariel* in 1955. The caption is

Ariel leading *Taeping* in the Great Tea Race, 1866.

Then, at 0800 hours am on Wednesday 05 September, *Ariel* and *Taeping* sighted each other at Bishop Rock Lighthouse, off The Lizard in Cornwall.

This representation of *Taeping* and *Ariel* is from *The Illustrated London News*, 02 September 1866 page 276.



Caption: “The great ship-race from China to London
Taeping and the *Ariel* off The Lizard”.

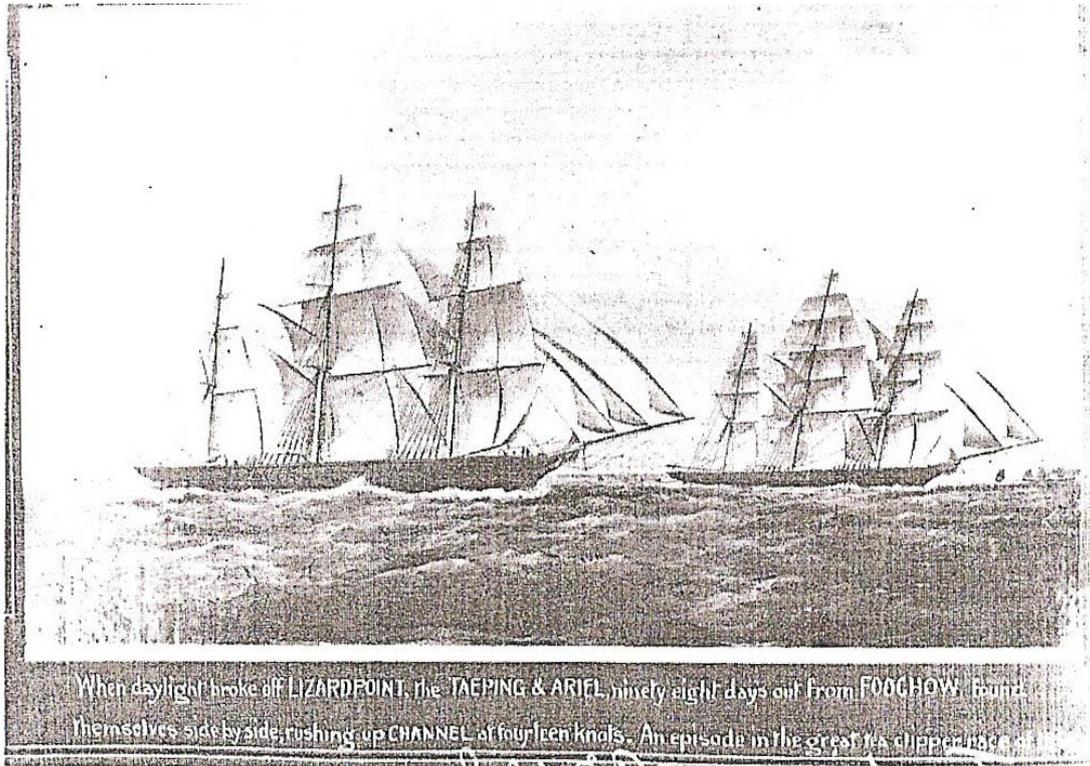
The Illustrated London News, 02 September 1866.

Original held by Lloyd Pitcher was donated to *An Iodhlann*, Isle of Tiree, on 12 May 2012
and is displayed in *An Talla*, Isle of Tiree
Lloyd Pitcher Collection.

The famous 1966 painting by Sir Montague Dawson (1895-1973) captures this moment of *Taeping* and *Ariel* on canvas. Dawson was the son of an enthusiastic yachtsman and was the grandson of the maritime painter, Henry Dawson (1811-1878). Montague Dawson was a marine artist specialising in ocean going sailing ships, especially clippers, in strong breezes. The run up the English Channel under full sail in a strong west-south- westerly wind must have been a splendid sight. Two graceful ships, side by side, every thread of rope and every stitch of sail strained to the limit, racing up the Channel for a whole day, with waves sweeping across their decks and at times on their beam ends. At 2400 hours pm they were at Beachy Head, about 5 miles abeam.

Montague Dawson is the only painter to have depicted the *Taeping* sailing alone in the light winds in which she excelled.

TG Dutton has made a famous lithograph of The Lizard encounter. Two representations of the event are shown. The first is located in the National Library of Australia in the national capital, Canberra.



Caption: "When daylight broke off Lizard Point, the *Taeping* and *Ariel*,
98 days out of Foochow,
found themselves rushing up Channel at 14 knots.
An episode in the Great Tea Race of 1866."
Taeping and *Ariel*, Plate Number A 6514
EM Humphery Collection (1876-1931)
National Library of Australia, Canberra

The second is from the Caird Library at the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, London, England.



Image A7187 The Great China Tea Race.
The Clipper Ships *Taeping* and *Ariel* passing The Lizard Sep 6th 1866
on their homeward voyage from Foo-Chow-Foo
Image courtesy of the Caird Library, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, 2013.

Shewan (1995 page 206) considered *Ariel* to be

the fastest of all the China clippers.

So, this being the case, how did *Taeping* match *Ariel* for speed in the run up the English Channel?

Shewan (1996 pages 206-207) claimed

The fact that the *Taeping* held her own with her in that famous race up Channel I hold to be attributable to the trim of the *Ariel* on that occasion. It was discovered afterwards that the matter of her trim made a perceptible difference to her speed.

Mac Kinnon (1995 page 37) wrote

Captain Keay and Captain MacKinnon were old rivals, both having proven that in terms of seamanship and experience of handling the finest vessels ever to put to sea, they had few equals anywhere in the world.



Image PY0682 Clipper ship *Taeping*
 767 tons, D McKinnon Commander, in the China Sea, in company with *Fiery Cross*
 on their homeward voyage from Foo-Chow-Foo to London, June 1866
 Image courtesy of National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, 2013

There is an interesting illustration of *Taeping* and *Ariel* by David Cobb. The image highlights two things. One is the significance of tea in the nineteenth century. The other is that of the most exciting China Tea Race ever in 1866. The illustration is on Swap Card No 31 in a series of 50 produced by Brooke Bond Oxo Pty Ltd and issued with all Brooke Bond Tea and Tea Bags.

Both ships arrived off Dungeness at the same time on Thursday 06 September. At 0300 hours am they fired flares and lit blue lights to signal their position to the pilots in the pilot station.

Taeping was astern of the *Ariel* and Captain Keay, concerned that the *Taeping* was going to run in front of him, decided to cut across in front of MacKinnon's ship. This manoeuvre was designed to prevent the *Taeping* gaining a perceived advantage. In terms of good seamanship and ethical codes of captaincy, it was both daring and reckless. Captain MacKinnon had no choice but to stand away, slacken stays and come about so that a collision would be avoided. Mac Kinnon (email 17 January 2012) stated

Keay knew his man and no doubt took that into consideration before pulling that stunt.

At 0530 hours am, both pilot cutters emerged from The Roads and were bearing down on the two clippers. Mac Kinnon (1995 page 37) wrote

this is when Captain Keay pulled his next stunt, positioning his *Ariel* between the approaching two pilot boats and *Taeping* in order that *Ariel* would embark her pilot first.

Again, Keay's manoeuvre worked. The pilots boarded both ships at the same time, at daybreak.

Mac Kinnon (1995 page 38) noted

at 0555 hours am, the pilot stepped on board the *Ariel* and saluted Captain Keay.
"The first tea clipper ship of the season from China?"
Captain Keay is reputed to have replied "Yes."
"And what is that to the westward? We have no room to boast yet."

At 0600 hours am, the two clippers made their way towards South Foreland. The race began again up the Thames River estuary.

It was noted by Mac Kinnon (1995 page 38)

While *Ariel* set all plain sail, *Taeping* set topmast, topgallant and lower stunsails on her starboard side. With this extra canvas, she managed to close up a little on her rival. But *Ariel* was still a mile ahead when Captain MacKinnon, after shifting his stunsails across to the port side on hauling up through The Downs, was at last compelled to take them in off Deal as the angle was too close and the sails would not draw.

After 99 days at sea, the two ships arrived at the Downs where, at 0800 hours am, they shortened sail and signalled for steam to enable steam tugs to attach hawsers and take them in tow for the final run up the river to the docks. Fortunately, Captain MacKinnon's *Taeping* secured the more powerful tug and reached Gravesend 55 minutes ahead of *Ariel*.

Mac Kinnon (1995 page 38) wrote

Captain Keay would have taken a second tug alongside, but by his thinking there seemed no object in attracting the additional expense this would involve as in any case, they would have to wait at Gravesend for at least a couple of hours, according to his calculations, waiting for the tide to make.

Taeping arrived in London Dock at 0945 hours pm, even though it had further to go than *Ariel*. With its shallower draught, *Taeping* drew less water and was able to go through the lock. *Ariel* had a frustrating wait of 1 hour and 23 minutes until the tide water was of sufficient depth for the ship to move to the dock. *Ariel* arrived in East India Dock at 1015 hours pm and *Serica* in West India Dock at 1130 hours pm. A more closely contested race had never been witnessed.

Captain MacKinnon was the first to begin unloading his cargo of new season China tea on the dock. *Taeping* claimed the “first home premium” of ten shillings per ton of tea and the distinction of the blue ribbon of the sea. This would have added £495 to the value of the cargo. There was also a Captain’s Bonus of £100. The terms agreed to before the race by the owners and merchants were that that the first ship to land the new season’s tea on the dockside would be declared the winner of the race. Captain Keay of the *Ariel* would have been displeased as his ship was both faster and larger. With 33 000 square feet of canvas sail and being the newest and largest of the clippers, it was the race favourite and was expected to win.

The Times of London on 23 September 1867 reported

Captain Mackinnon, the late commander of the *Taeping*, not satisfied with all the success he had already achieved, bought all his skill and experience to bear on the improvement of his ship. The yards were shifted from the mainmast to the fore, proportionately larger ones being fitted to the main, thus enabling him to spread a much greater breadth of canvas; how judicious were these and other alterations has been proved by the result

But, both the “cargo premium” and the Captain’s Bonus had to be shared with Captain Keay and the *Ariel*. To the merchants, this was not a bad outcome for the two top Captains in the tea trade who fought the ultimate ocean race and could scarcely be separated after 16 000 miles of sea travel.

Knight (1973 page 87) wrote

Five ships – *Taeping*, *Ariel*, *Serica*, *Fiery Cross* and *Taitsing* - had sailed almost together, and three months and a few days later had docked almost together. There had never been such a close-fought tea race before, nor was there ever again.

The Daily Telegraph of London, 12 September 1866 reported

There is nothing new in the fact of such a race as that decided last week, nor has it even been peculiar to the China trade. But it is in the special circumstances and details that the struggle between the three clippers has presented so many points of interest.

The website Shipstamps.co.uk (2013) provided the finishing order of the ships.

1st *Taeping* docked at the London Dock on 06 September at 09.45 pm
2nd *Ariel* docked at the East India Dock on 06 September at 10.15 pm
3rd *Serica* docked at the West India Dock on 06 September at 11.30 pm, as the lock gates were closing
4th *Fiery Cross* docked at the London Dock on 08 September at 08.00 am
5th *Taitsing* arrived on the Thames in the forenoon of 09 September

MacGregor (1988 page 234) was in praise of the race.

Surely a more marvellous race could hardly be imagined. Leaving the Min River on the same tide, *Ariel*, *Taeping* and *Serica* had docked in the River Thames on the same tide. It was a proud day for Scotland, for all three captains, Keay of the *Ariel*, M’Kinnon of the *Taeping* and Innes of *Serica* hailed from the Land o’ Cakes.

The *Daily Telegraph* of London, 12 September 1866 stated

Captain MACKINNON has gained what we suppose may be called the blue-ribbon of the sea - a distinction which, beyond doubt, he amply deserves.

Irving (1882 page 308) stated, very succinctly, Captain MacKinnon

won the China race of 1866.

The *Daily Telegraph* of London, 22 September 1866, stated

The annual dispatch of the earliest teas from China has always been an interesting event, and a prize has usually been offered for the ship which outstrips all her competitors, and brings her cargo first to the market.

The *Illustrated London News* 22 September 1866 observed

The *Taeping*, therefore, was the winner of the premium, 10s. per ton extra to be paid to the first sailing-vessel to dock with new teas from Foo-Chow-Foo.

The website <http://camellia-sinensis.com/carnet/?tag=fresh=tea&lang=en> wrote

However, in a truly “British” sounding ending, the two captains agreed to split the winnings.

Clearly the writer has not examined the available evidence before making this extraordinary statement.

Bowen (1925 page 66) wrote

The result of the race is perhaps best regarded as a dead-heat, for the *Taeping*'s nominal victory by 20 minutes was a matter of the chances and mischances of towing and docking.

This was stated in *Glasgow Herald* 21 May 1867.

All parties agree in stating that the late Captain Mackinnon won the race last year through superior seamanship.

The *Illustrated London News* 18 May 1867 was in no doubt about the race winner.

In justice to the memory of this gallant sailor, it is necessary to contradict a paragraph which has appeared in several of our contemporaries, and in a portion of our own impression, to the effect that *Ariel* was the winner of last year's race. Our readers will remember that when we gave our illustration of the event, we stated that, although the race was the closest on record, the *Taeping* was the absolute winner. In addition to this we may now add that, as the *Ariel* left the bar of the Min River some hours before the *Taeping*, and as both ships arrived simultaneously in the Downs (from which two points many bets are laid), it may be affirmed that Captain Mackinnon fairly won the race on its merits, particularly when it is mentioned that he suffered some detention from lying to, with his characteristic humanity, to assist a disabled vessel which he encountered on his voyage.

In an article entitled 'The Great Tea Race of 1866, London *Daily Telegraph* 12 September 1866 wrote

... a struggle more closely contested or more marvellous in some of its aspects has probably never before been witnessed. The *Taeping*, which won, arrived on The Lizard at literally the same hour as the *Ariel*, her nearest rival, and then dashed up the channel, the two ships abreast of each other. During the entire day they gallantly ran side by side carried on by a strong westerly wind, every stitch of canvas set, and the sea sweeping their decks as they careered before the gale.

From the evidence available, it is clear that the *Taeping* was the legitimate winner of the 1866 Great Tea Race. The terms of the race were, as agreed to by the Ship Owners and Tea Merchants, that the winner was the first ship to reach dock and begin unloading its cargo of new season China tea, irrespective of the vagaries of tide, wind shift, points of reference in wagering, distance to the dock, manoeuvring by captains or the power of the steam tugs.

Kentley (undated page 13) stated the core of the central issue as to which ship was the winner.

The owners of the two ships realised that their cargoes, and those of the three ships that would be arriving shortly, would flood the London market. They feared that the merchants would use any dispute about the result of the race as an excuse not to pay the premium. So they secretly agreed not to argue about whether the race was to the Thames or to the dock or to the quayside, but instead to split the bonus.

Lubbock (1916 pages 233 -234) described the outcome of the race.

Such a close and exciting finish had never been seen before in an ocean race, and the interest it aroused caused the newspapers to vie with each other in publishing sensational accounts... as to which had won the premium, set forth as 10s per ton in the bills of lading. However, Captain Keay of the *Ariel* wrote this in his private journal:

When the ships were telegraphed through the Downs, the owners and agents of both met and discussed the position and prospects as to who should dock first, the risk of losing the extra 10s. per ton if both should dock at the same time... It was arranged, after much going and coming, that each ship should make for her respective dock and let the one which had the advantage of a few minutes claim, while the other would avoid all pretence of claiming lest the tea merchants should have power to maintain that there was no first ship as both claimed the prize – this the merchants were quite prepared to do especially as the teas were selling at a great loss.

This arrangement was adhered to; *Taeping* claimed and received the 10s per ton, which she divided with the *Ariel*; Captain M'Kinnon at the same time dividing the £100, given to the captain of the winner, with Captain Keay.

Southbaysail (11/9/2013, page 3) had this interesting comment on the result.

The Tea Race of 1866 caused an enormous stir in the sporting and nautical services of Britain. *Ariel* and *Taeping* had left Fuzhou together and arrived home on the other side of the globe still together, *Ariel's* winning time being seven thousandths of one percent faster than her rival's. The Tea Race was never so close again in its 30-year history.

The author is clearly identifying the race winner on sailing time from Foochow only and is not recognising the terms of the tea race which determined the annual race outcome.

A telegram was sent to London when the *Taeping* and *Ariel* were sighted together off Deal in Kent. What Captain MacKinnon did not know was that the owners of the *Taeping* - Alexander Rodger & Co - and of the *Ariel* - Shaw, Maxton & Co - held a secret meeting in London. They agreed that the race winner would be announced but that the “premium” of ten shillings per ton would, without protest, be shared with the second placed ship. The owners and the two ships’ captains went to the Ship and Turtle tavern in Leadenhall Street, London, where the prize was divided.

Knight (1973 page 86) wrote

after 100 days and 14000 miles, *Taeping* docked 20 minutes ahead of *Ariel*, on the same tide. No wonder the two captains, M’Kinnon of *Taeping* and Keay of *Ariel*, agreed to share the prize and bonus awarded by the tea merchants for the first ship home.

Cameron (1932 page 132) stated

...the prize went to worthy MacKinnon. His was a gentlemanly act, and characteristic of him, when he handed over the half of his award to Captain Keay.

It would seem that Cameron is not aware of the agreement made between the ship owners.

The final word on the matter was expressed well by Cameron (1932 page 132).

It is generally agreed among mariners of the time that, while the better ship lost, the better skipper won.

There is no record of any reaction by Captain MacKinnon to all the indignities he had endured during this race. His seafaring professionalism and his personal dignity and integrity remained beyond reproach. As testament to the character of the man, a gift was bestowed on Captain MacKinnon by Alexander Rodger, owner of the *Taeping*. The *Morning Post* Thursday 27 September 1866 reported

Mr. Rodger, of Glasgow, owner of the celebrated clipper ship *Taeping*, has, we are informed, presented her commander with the gift of £500 to mark his appreciation of that officer’s nautical skill which did so much towards winning the great ocean race from China.

In 2012 Australian dollars, it is estimated that the gift was worth AUD 350.000 - a small fortune.

Zimmerman (email 04 January 2008) wrote

I was contacted by a descendant of the apprentice, James Lowe, who was on board *Taeping* when it won the 1866 tea race. The descendant, James Hutchinson, didn’t have much to add, except that he had an old newspaper clipping describing the 1866 race in which Lowe had scribbled the following: ‘Each one received a purse and a sovereign inside’. In other words, MacKinnon gave every crew member a purse and a sovereign as a bonus for winning the race.

In sharing his windfall with his crew, Captain MacKinnon demonstrated those fine qualities of character which made him so highly respected in the British maritime world.

Mac Kinnon (1995 page 40) stated

Partisans of the *Ariel*, on whom it must be remembered large wagers were placed owing to her being the clear favourite, felt as she was the first to have reached Deal, she should have been declared the winner as thereafter the matter lay in the hands of the tugs and not seamanship skills.

The irony was that after all this consternation and angst, so much tea was available in such a short space of time that the tea dealers endured depressed prices. Shortly afterwards, the “first home premium” was abandoned as an incentive to clipper captains. This, however, did not diminish the rivalry among the clipper captains to deliver the first fresh China tea of the new season.

The advertisement by Burgon & Co., Tea Merchants, in Kentley (undated page 14) claimed

The *Taeping*, *Ariel*, *Fiery Cross* and *Serica*, have arrived, with others in close pursuit, with something like forty-five million pounds of tea on board - half a year's consumption for the United Kingdom.

Mac Kinnon (1995 page 41) noted

with so many clippers arriving in the port within a few days of each other, the London market found itself with about 5.2 million pounds of fresh tea from the first five clippers to dock... a gross exaggeration...it was more the order of 5% of the national consumption of that time.

All three ships were on the same tide. In all, the voyage had taken 99 days, which was seven days less than the voyage by *Fiery Cross* and *Serica* in 1865. *Taeping* was not in the 1865 race but still made the voyage in five days less when it brought its tea cargo from Amoy to England. *The Gazette* of London on Wednesday 12 September 1866 outlined details of the seamanship involved in sailing in differing wind and sea conditions.

William Murray, Donald MacKinnon's father in law, wrote a letter from 13 Fairfield Place, Fairfield Road, Bow London on 19 September 1866 to his son Hugh in Sydney NSW Australia.

He has been the cause of large sums being lost, as the *Ariel* was the favourite and backed heavily here and in China.

Which clipper was the fastest of the ‘cracks’? Shewan (1996 page 223) answers this question.

I should place first, as the ideal clipper and the fastest thing that wind ever drove through the water, the *Ariel*. Next to her I should be inclined to place the *Titania*, *Thermopylae*, *Cutty Sark*, *Spindrift*, and *Leander*., with very little to choose between any of them ... In the next half-dozen or so would come the *Lahloo*, *Sir Lancelot*, *Lothair*, *Norman Court*, *Taeping*, *Kaisow*, *Windhover* and the *Undine*. I think that in light weather each and all of these were equally as fast as the first mentioned five; and in other conditions of weather in varying degree superior to one or other of them.

Captain MacKinnon's achievement in the Great Tea Race of 1866 is quite remarkable. Shewan (1996 page 206) wrote

In the race of 1866, as is well known, the *Taeping* and *Serica* made equal time with the *Ariel* from the River Min to the Downs, and the first-named ran with her all the way from the Lizard to the Thames, but such a thing never occurred again ... Though the two ships competed with each other on more than one occasion after this, it was invariably the *Ariel* which proved the faster.



Half-hulls of the tea clippers *Taeping*, *Lahloo* and *Ariel* in the Maclean Museum, Greenock, Scotland.
Photograph by Lloyd Pitcher, May 2012
Lloyd Pitcher Collection

Zimmerman (email 04 January 2008) wrote

Donald MacKinnon was a remarkable sailor and captain. He quickly earned a reputation as a fast sailor, getting his ships to port quicker than anyone else. He not only rose quickly through the ranks to command his own ship but also many of his officers and crew seemed remarkably loyal, following him from ship to ship. In reviewing a lot of crew lists, I have found this loyalty to be rare on the commercial sailing ships of his time.

Spurling (1973 page 76) made a valid point when he stated

Nothing, however, was said about the strain of such a race on the captains of the racing clippers. Only those who have gone through a hard yacht-racing season can properly sympathise with Keay (*Ariel*), MacKinnon (*Taeping*) and Innes (*Fiery Cross*). It is said that Captain Innes, at the end of the race, could not lift a cup of tea to his lips without spilling it. MacKinnon died on his next outward passage, and only the imperturbable Keay seemed to suffer no ill effects from the 99 days of strain and stress.

What characteristics made for a successful captain of a tea clipper? Lubbock (1916 pages 162-163) made his opinions quite clearly and succinctly.

No man had more to do with the reputation of a ship than her captain. In the China trade daring, enterprise, and endurance were the *sine qua nons* of a successful skipper...First-class men were so scarce that I can barely scrape up a dozen worthy of remembrance...It required dash and steadiness, daring and prudence to make a crack racing skipper...A born racing skipper has always been as rare as a born cavalry leader, and those in command of the tea ships were no exception to this rule. Most men were either too cautious or too reckless...there were a few men who held the necessary qualities of a tea-ship commander, whose endurance equalled their energy, whose daring was tempered by good judgment, whose business capabilities were on a par with their seamanship, and whose nerves were of cast iron. These men could be easily picked out of the ruck, for their ships were invariably in front of the battle. Among the best known was McKinnon of *Taeping*.

William Murray, Donald MacKinnon's father in law, wrote a letter from 13 Fairfield Place, Fairfield Road, Bow London on 19 September 1866 to his son Hugh in Sydney NSW Australia.

He sails again about the 15th proximo [*in the next month*]); God speed him safe there and back.

Captain MacKinnon did not rest on his laurels. After such a close race in 1866, he used his great skill and experience to modify and improve the *Taeping*. There is no record of any reaction by Captain MacKinnon to all the indignities he had endured during this race. His seafaring professionalism and his personal dignity and integrity were beyond reproach. As testament to his character, a gift was bestowed on Captain MacKinnon by Alexander Rodger, owner of the *Taeping*. Captain MacKinnon promptly shared this with his crew to recognise their superb efforts during the voyage. Captain MacKinnon improved the efficiency of the sails by shifting the yards from the mainmast to the foremast, with larger yards being fitted to the mainmast. A much greater spread of canvas was achieved and the 1867 race was won by *Taeping* by the margin of eight days. Sadly, Captain MacKinnon was not the captain for this race.

14. THE PLAQUE OF DONALD MACKINNON

In an email dated 07 December 2014, Mary Maclean advised of a rather exciting communication.

Our museum is in contact with a gentleman who was clearing out his grandmother's things and came across a small framed plaque of Captain Donald MacKinnon, in profile. There is some notation on the back identifying the work as he and as the captain of the clipper ship *Taeping*.

The dimensions of the plaque are 180 millimetres high, 155 millimetres wide and 30 millimetres deep. It does have a ring at the top, indicating it was designed to be hung on a wall. In an email dated 07 February 2017, Janet Bowler, Archivist at *An Iodhlann* on the Isle of Tiree, stated

The donor of the Captain MacKinnon wax portrait was John Sedgwick, Oban [Scotland]

The obverse side of the plaque has a plaster cast representation of Captain Donald MacKinnon. The profile is a right-side image of the Captain and is similar to the right-sided profile used in the *Times* of London 1867 Memorial Broadsheet to Captain MacKinnon.

On the reverse side of the plaque is a written inscription.

... of Cap,t D MacKinnon of the clipper ship Taeping 1866.

Underneath this inscription are two swap cards. The obverse side of the card depicts *Ariel* and *Taeping*. The swap card commemorates in text on the reverse side the most exciting China Tea Race ever, from Foochow in China to London England, in 1866 when *Ariel* and *Taeping* raced together up the English Channel in the closest finish ever in the history of the race.

Swap Card No 31 was published by BROOKE BOND OXO LTD of Leon House, High Street Croydon, CR9 1JQ, Surrey, United Kingdom. The card was one of The Saga of Ships, a series of 50 cards. It was illustrated by David Cobb and the description was written by George Naish. The Swap Card was Issued with all Brooke Bond Tea and Tea Bags.

The text reads

THE TAEPING AND ARIEL

The Great Tea Race of 1866 was the most exciting of all. Sixteen clipper ships at Foochow were hurrying to get the new season's tea crop loaded and get away. The *Taeping* and *Ariel*, built in 1863 and 1865 respectively (the *Ariel* larger at 852 tons) left together and met again off The Lizard. They raced up the English Channel and *Taeping* picked up the faster tug. Off Dungeness after a voyage of 99 days for the 9,000 miles, and finally docked 20 minutes ahead of the *Ariel*. The two ships shared the extra premium of 10/- a ton on the new tea crop.



Obverse and reverse sides of the plaque of Captain Donald MacKinnon. The plaque was donated to *An Iodhlann*, the Historical Society of the Isle of Tiree in February 2015 by John Sedgwick of Oban, Scotland

At this point in time, the family connection is not certain. It is not known if John Sedgwick's mother was a relative of the MacKinnons or the Murrays. There was a Flora MacKinnon born circa 1760s who may have been a relation of Captain MacKinnon's grandfather.

When the portrait arrived at *An Iodhlann*, the wax was broken into a number of pieces and the label on the back had been cut out. It was sent to the Scottish Conservation Studio at Hopetoun House, Queensferry, Scotland for restoration. Conservators discovered there had been two earlier repair attempts, one using candle wax and the other using sticky tape. Images of the portrait can be seen in the online archive at *An Iodhlann*,

<http://www.aniodhlann.org.uk/object/2015-46-1/>

It is believed that the plaster was cast by William Murray, Donald MacKinnon's father-in-law and sent to Donald MacKinnon to celebrate his success in winning the Great Tea Race of 1866. It has been suggested that after Captain MacKinnon died aboard SS *Roman* in Table Bay in 1867, the plaque was among his personal possessions in the captain's sea chest aboard *Taiping*, which were retrieved by Margaret MacKinnon nee Murray when *Taiping* returned to London after winning the 1866 Tea Race. Perhaps the Captain's possessions were dispersed by auction in 1867 and the plaque acquired by John Sedgwick's mother in this way.

In her email of 20 December 2014, Mary MacLean noted

I cannot imagine that the family would have auctioned off this treasured possession, but maybe Margaret needed the £s with three children to raise on her own.

This scenario is unlikely. Wax was not a substance suited to travel, especially in the endlessly rocking sea chest of a tea clipper captain. It appears more likely William Murray created the portrait as a remembrance of Captain MacKinnon for his daughter Margaret. It is unlikely the portrait arrived with Captain MacKinnon's family on Tiree. They retained and treasured everything to do with the captain and it would have remained with the family on the island. How the portrait ended up with an unrelated family in Oban is a mystery still.

15. THE END OF THE CLIPPER ERA

But the heyday of the clippers was coming to an end. Lubbock (1916 page 141) stated

the zenith of the Tea Clipper racing was from 1859 to 1871.

Unreliable winds in the Red Sea forced the tea clippers to take the much longer route around southern Africa as they travelled between England and China. Steam ships could take advantage of the Suez Canal, which opened in 1869 and was a significant time-saving short cut. Of the great tea clippers built, today only *Cutty Sark*, built 1869, remains. All but one were victims of the progress of power from sail to steam. In 1872, *Cutty Sark* and the *Thermopylae* engaged in probably the last great tea race from China to England. Today, *Cutty Sark* rests gracefully in dry dock at Greenwich in London, the last reminder of a great age in sail.



The clipper *Cutty Sark* at the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, London, the day before its official reopening by Queen Elizabeth II on 25 April 2012.

The ship cost £15 million to refurbish after a fire on board in 2007.

Photograph by Lloyd Pitcher 24 April 2012.

Lloyd Pitcher Collection.

Shewan (1996 page 234) wrote

The romance of the tea-clippers is a thing of the past, though the romance of the seas endures ... Gone past recall were the tall ships and the officers and men who manned them, and whose spirit of rivalry was as keen as their seamanship. No more would they watch their racing craft reel off the knots, with stunsails aloft and "Jamie Green," ringtail, skyscrapers and moonrakers set, as they traversed the region of the steady trades, or with the reefed topsails literally "hung upon the gale" while they fought the fierce squalls of the adverse monsoon of the China Sea. Never again will a straining clipper make the Channel and race neck and neck from the Scilly to the Foreland with a foeman worthy of her steel - finally to lose the world-wide race by a bare twenty minutes. This is all over and done with, though I trust not yet wholly devoured by that "great-sized monster of ingratitude" - Oblivion.

Here Shewan was clearly alluding to the Great Tea Race of 1866 between *Ariel* and *Taeping*.

The Sydney Morning Herald Saturday 24 March 2012 page 16 reported the oldest known surviving clipper was the 54 metre *City of Adelaide*, built in 1864.

It is the oldest surviving clipper, ship in the world, apart from the *Cutty Sark*, and in its heyday carried emigrants from Scotland to Australia, where about 250 000 people can trace their origins to its passengers...it has lain rotting on a slipway in Irvine, Scotland...the last survivor of the timber trade between North America and Britain... the clipper will be transported to Australia on a lift ship to become the centrepiece of a maritime heritage display in Port Adelaide.

The following photograph shows the *City of Adelaide* on its way from Irvine in Scotland to London in England on 23 September 2013.

Cutty Sark and *City of Adelaide* are not only the last two clipper ships in the world, they are also the only surviving clippers of composite structure: iron frame and hardwood timber planking and decking.



“Red Countess,” tug from Troon, Scotland on the bow; hull of *City of Adelaide* in its cradle on a barge; Netherlands tug “Dutch Power” on the stern.

Crossing the bar at the entrance to Irvine Harbour, on their way south along the Scottish west coast then east into the English Channel to London.

The entire barge, cradle and hull of *City of Adelaide* will be then heavy lifted onto a cargo ship and transferred to Adelaide in South Australia.

Photograph courtesy of Angus Mac Kinnon of Troon, Scotland, September 2013.

See Appendix 7 for more information on the *City of Adelaide*.

16. CHIEFTAIN'S BRIDE

After the Great Ocean Race of 1866, Captain MacKinnon returned home to his wife and family on the Isle of Tiree.

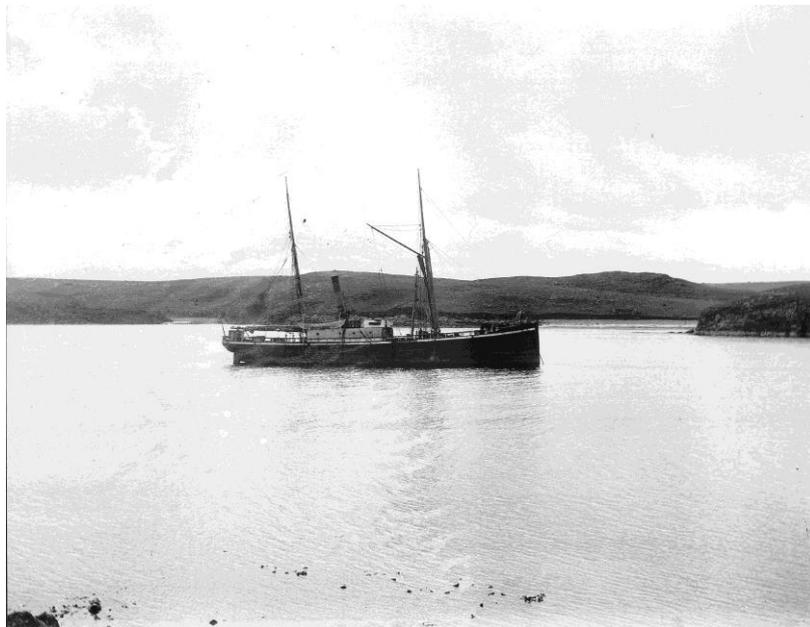
Mac Kinnon (1995 page 43) recorded

As a mark of his achievement, Donald MacKinnon was donated a piece of land on his native

Island of Tiree, called 'A Chrannaig,' at Heanish.

On 27 September 1866, he joined the steamer *Chieftain's Bride* as a passenger, heading from Tiree to London to join *Taeping* in London. But the trip was eventful. *Glasgow Herald* 03 October 1866 reported he received injuries in his brave and successful efforts in saving the passengers and crew of the ship. The steamer was crossing from the Island of Tyree to Tobermory. One and a half miles south east of the Isle of Coll, the seas became very heavy and tipped *Chieftain's Bride* on its beam end [on its side]. It was imperative that the load on the ship be lightened. On board were many cattle and sheep. Fifty-four of these unfortunate animals were thrown overboard. Some managed to swim to shore, but most were lost. One dealer lost seventeen head of cattle and twenty-six sheep. Captain MacKinnon assisted in helping to help get the ship right way up. The scenes aboard the ship must have been of utter chaos as the animals would have been panic stricken and very difficult to manage by hand. But, the efforts paid off. The steamer was righted and put back to Coll for further lightening. It reached Oban and docked on 28 September, where the gangways were replaced as they had been torn away by the sea. After several hours, the wind moderated and the steamer was able to resume its trip. *Glasgow Herald* 03 October 1866 stated

But for the exertions of Captain MacKinnon of the *Taeping*, who was on board, most likely the vessel would have gone down.



Chieftain's Bride
Shetland Museum, Archive Photos 2013.

Chieftain's Bride was the first Northern Isles steamer. It was owned by the Shetland Island Steam Navigation Company and was built in 1866. The ship was known locally as "The Crab" because of its tendency to broach, to be pulled sideways to the waves in strong tides or heavy seas. Its 18-horsepower engine simply did not have enough power to control the ship. There were 54 cattle and sheep on the deck, which probably made it top-heavy and a candidate for broaching in heavy weather.

Mac Kinnon (email 17 January 2012) wrote

I can't imagine a vessel in the seas here during any storm with an 18-horsepower engine. It is no wonder that they had such difficulty. It would have not taken much to put her over...you'll wonder where they put the 54 livestock! Truly amazing that anyone lived to tell the tale. I am sure that there would have been a much different outcome had Captain MacKinnon not been on board. However, he did pay a heavy price.

There is some conjecture about whether or not Captain MacKinnon was injured in the process of lightening the ship's load.

Mac Kinnon (1995 page 43) observed

Such was the panic amongst the crew of the steamer that Captain MacKinnon took command. The first thing he did was to lighten the load of the ship, and he did this almost single-handed, throwing overboard 54 head of cattle and sheep...the struggle in the wave-pounded vessel with maddened animals, however, had caused severe internal injuries to Captain MacKinnon...

The Times London 23 September 1867 reported

...on his voyage out he succumbed to the injuries he had received during his successful exertions in saving a passenger steamer in danger of total loss off the Island of Coll.

Illustrated London News 18 May 1867 stated

Captain Mackinnon, who commanded the *Taeping*, the successful ship in this contest last year, and of whom an obituary notice subsequently appeared in our columns, received some very severe injuries in his gallant (and successful) efforts to save the passengers and crew of the steamer *Chieftain's Bride*, which was in danger of being totally lost while crossing from the island of Tyree to Tobermory, in October last, he then being on his way to rejoin his ship. After leaving England, his injuries rapidly assumed a most serious character.

In an email dated 12 June 2006 page 3, Zimmerman wrote

MacKinnon helped get the ship righted, but in the process was gored.

For further information on *Chieftain's Bride*, see Appendix 5.

17. THE FINAL VOYAGE

Captain MacKinnon continued on his journey and rejoined *Taeping* in London. The National Archives in Kew, London, recorded his tenure as Captain for this voyage commenced on 11 October 1866. On 11 October, *Taeping* left London bound for Shanghai in China and was 1 000 miles east of Algoa Bay in South Africa. This inlet is 20 miles wide and a safe anchorage and is today the site of Port Elizabeth in the former Cape Colony, 425 miles east of the Cape of Good Hope. *Taeping* had reached Algoa Bay in the record time of 39 days. At sea, the captain's illness became serious. For the past three weeks, he had been unable to rise from his bed. It is highly likely that an internal infection was the problem.

The ship went about and *The Cape Argus* of Thursday 06 December 1866 reported he was landed at Algoa Bay on 03 December 1866. The National Archives in Kew, London, records that his last day of tenure for this voyage was 04 December 1866, which is when the *Taeping* in Algoa Bay departed under its replacement captain, Dowdy, the former First Mate on the ship.

In *An Tirisdeach* 12 May 2012 MacLean wrote

Doctor Housley was on the breakwater and he was quickly conveyed out to the *Taeping*

Donald was taken to hospital on 04 December, where he remained until he was well enough to travel. The *Taeping* continued its voyage to Shanghai without its captain.

Port Elizabeth Telegraph and Eastern Province Standard Friday 14 December 1866 reported Captain MacKinnon's health was improving. Being anxious to return home to rejoin his family, he secured a passage homeward on the Union Steamship Company screw steam ship *RMS Roman*, commanded by Captain Dixon. On Saturday 12 January 1866, *RMS Roman* sailed from Port Elizabeth bound for Southampton via Cape Town, St Helena and Ascension Island. *The Cape Argus* Tuesday 15 January 1866 reported *RMS Roman* arrived in Cape Town on Monday 14 January 1866 with Captain Donald MacKinnon listed as a passenger. He was struck down in Table Bay at Cape Town and did not recover. Captain Donald MacKinnon, aged 39, died on board *RMS Roman* on 19 January 1867 and was buried in Cape Town.

MacGregor (1983 page 147) wrote of *Taeping*

MacKinnon, her master, was landed at Algoa Bay on 3 December 1866, very ill, when bound for Shanghai, and died at Table Bay whilst returning home, aged 41.

In a letter from William Murray to his son Hugh Cameron Murray in Sydney Australia dated 19 April 1867, William wrote

It was my melancholy task to finish my last letter with the news of the death of my dear son-in-law, which sad event took place at Table Bay on the 19th of January at Algoa Bay on the 12th. Returning home, but the medical men were fully aware that he could not survive the journey, but such was his anxiety to get home, they did not wish to thwart him. It appears his death was occasioned [sic] by Scoas abscess, which is an internal abscess formed on some of the muscle of the spine. He suffered very acutely and was totally helpless, unable to move hand or limb. He is buried at Cape Town. Poor Maggie, how I feel for her sad bereavement, with her interesting children to be deprived of such a loving and amiable protector . . . When the *Taeping* returns in September she will return to London, as there is still some of his property on board, and ventures which she took out with him to be accounted for.

The estate affairs of Donald MacKinnon were signed by Margaret Anne MacKinnon (Donald's wife) and Robert Bartholomew JP in the presence of JW Bartlemore, Commissary Clerk for the Commissary of Renfrewshire, Scotland. This was completed in Paisley on 23 August 1867. In summary, the value of the household property at George Place Gourock (his personal estate) was £611.3.6; his Life Insurance policy was valued at £570.0.0; and there were his personal effects from the *Taeping* to be collected. They were in the captain's sea chest. A comprehensive inventory of its contents was conducted by Captain Dixon of the screw steam ship *RMS Roman*.

Dr Ewen A Griffiths has provided some insights into Donald MacKinnon's death. He was located on the internet in 2008 through his article "Psoas abscess as a secondary complication of gastrointestinal disease: report of five cases" and reported in "Case Rep Clin Pract Rev, 2003; 4(2):73-76. In an email on 03 January 2008 he stated

Direct trauma would cause a haematoma (blood clot) to form; this could then get infected (either directly from the injury or later on from haematogenous contamination; bacteria from the blood stream contaminating the wound) and eventually an abscess. It would be reasonable to hypothesise that this occurred in this case. However, the most common cause of a psoas abscess at this time is tuberculosis (Pott's disease of the spine)...the knowledge of bacteria in this time period would be extremely limited and they would not have had the facilities to identify individual bacteria. Antibiotics hadn't been invented yet.

In an email dated 04 January 2008, Dr Griffiths advised

It appears that 20-30% of patients with primary psoas abscess have some history of trauma to the area. The psoas muscle is a very large muscle lying in the very back of the abdomen and is prone to injury/haematoma formation. Because of its large size and good blood supply, it is then susceptible to infection arising in the blood stream (which is typically staphylococcus aureus, but many bacteria have been implicated). Predisposing factors which may be relevant would include malnutrition...and vitamin deficiencies.

Dr Griffiths also directed research to a review in the "Postgraduate Medical Journal" 2004; 80:459-462 by IH Mallick, MH Thoufeek and TP Rajendran entitled "Iliopsoas abscesses". This very thorough article examines the epidemiology, aetiology, clinical features and states that

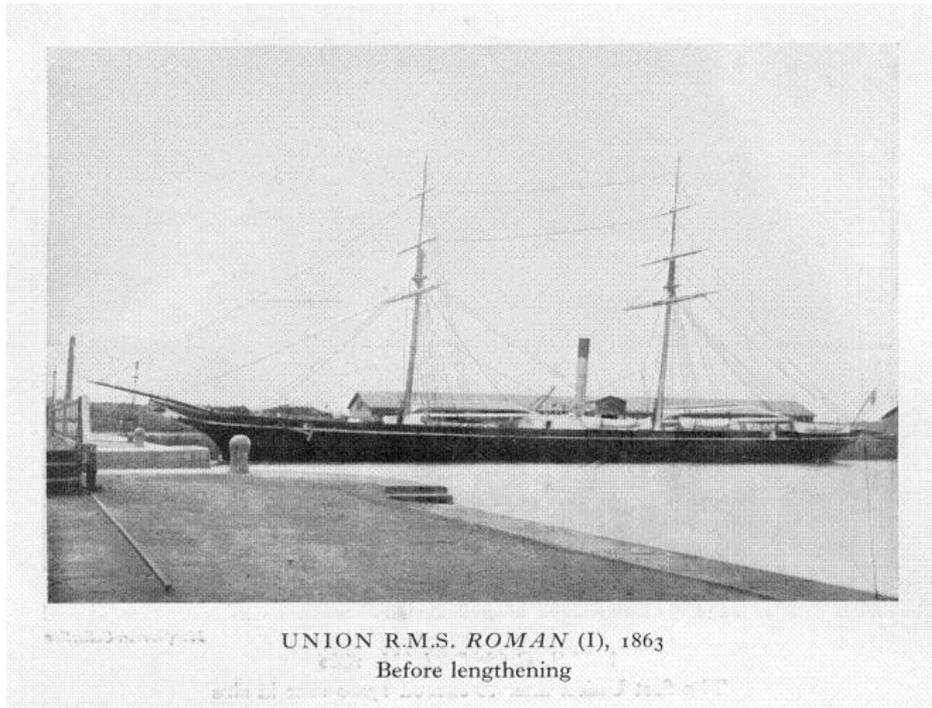
its insidious onset and occult characteristics can cause diagnostic delays, resulting in high mortality and morbidity.

Cameron (1932 page 132) showed a lack of adequate evidence when he wrote

On the very next voyage out our Captain MacKinnon succumbed to the effects of the privations he suffered during the great and memorable race.

Cameron was linking directly the death of the Captain with the strain of competing in the Great Tea Race of 1866 and may not have been aware of events on the *Chieftain's Bride*, which occurred between 1866 and 1867.

Captain Donald MacKinnon died on board RMS *Roman*, anchored in Table Bay, Cape Town, South Africa while the ship was awaiting cargo, on 19 January 1867. The ship's log notation indicates that he died of a *psoriasis abscess*. The RMS *Roman* departed Table Bay on 20 January 1867.



Union Line ship RMS *Roman* in 1863, before lengthening

See Appendix 6 for details of RMS *Roman*.

In an email dated 08 April 2009, page 3, MacLean noted the date of death as Friday 18 January 1867.

...the family headstone denotes the death of Donald MacKinnon on this day.

The family headstone is in Kirkapol Cemetery, Kirkapol, on the Isle of Tiree.

Irving (1882 page 308) stated Captain MacKinnon

...died at Table Bay, where his ship put in on her on her homeward voyage, aged 41.

This is misleading. He was on his homeward voyage, but on board RMS *Roman* as a passenger, bound for Southampton, not on his own ship, the *Taeping*, which had returned from Algoa Bay [Port Elizabeth] to drop him at Table Bay in Cape Town so he could be taken to a hospital in Cape Town, then continued on its outward journey to Foochow in China to collect a cargo of tea before returning to London. Also, his age at death was 39, not 41.

So, is it known where was Captain Donald MacKinnon buried? In an email of 12 April 2011, MacLean wrote

...the most likely place for Donald MacKinnon to have been buried was a cemetery that no longer exists. A shopping mall now stands there with a very large car park. The officials of Cape Town had all of the headstones removed and stacked in an area. One apparently with a bit of strength could "flip" through them. As I understand, individuals checked all these headstones when the reward was offered ... with no success. In Donald's case, would he have had a headstone? Who would have put it up? Maybe one of the children if they knew where he was buried. South Africa did not start recording deaths officially until just after Captain MacKinnon died ... there is likely a record somewhere perhaps in a church record book ... surely to goodness they would not have classed him as a pauper. Either way, there should be a record... but where?

The Times London 23 September 1867 stated in its collection of news items "In Memory of Captain MacKinnon"

He was buried in Cape Town.

MacLean wrote in an email on 15 April 2011

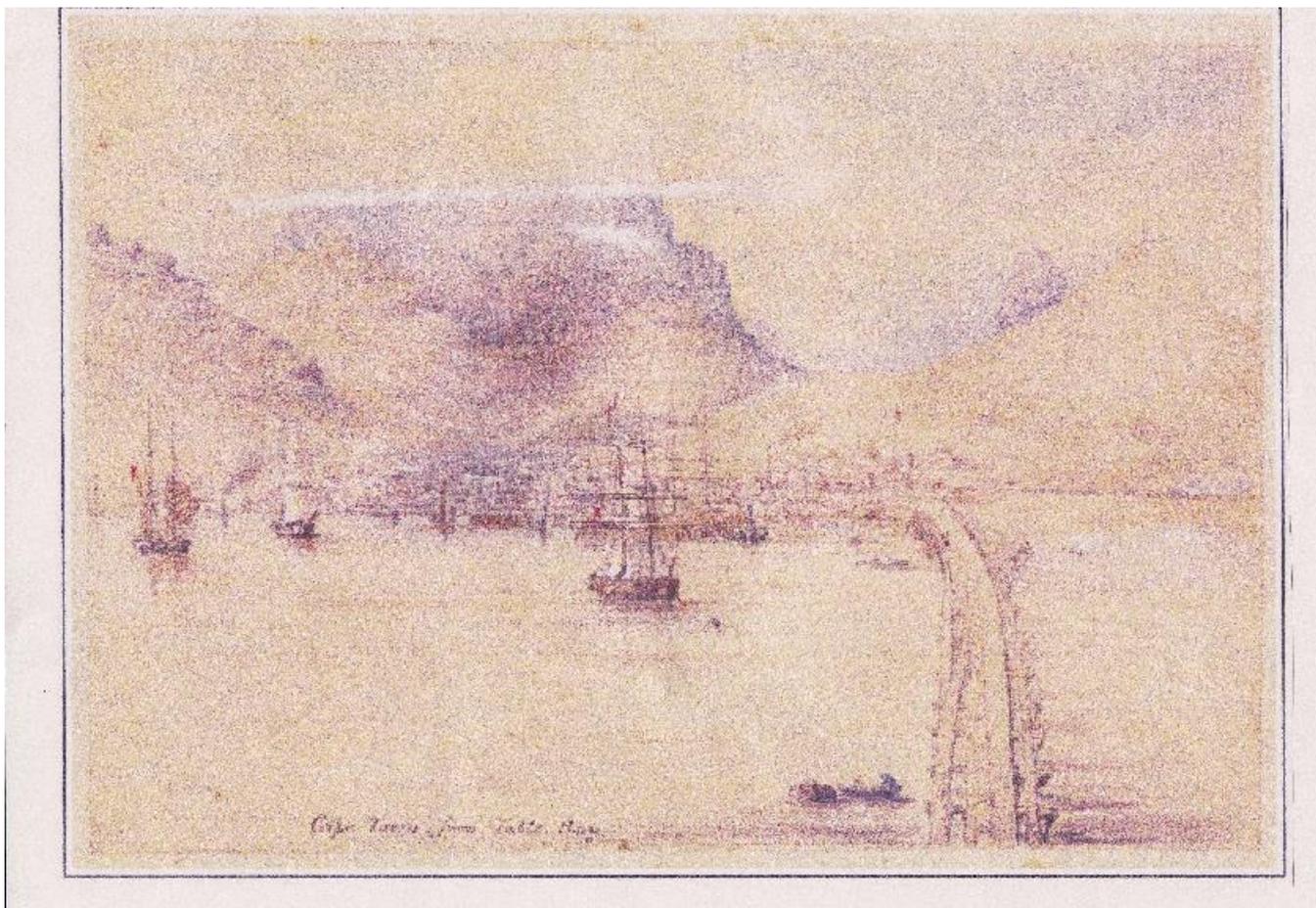
I believe that he is buried in Cape Town. Most of his family here (Isle of Tiree) and the older generation believe that he was buried at sea: that is exactly what they were told way back then.

MacLean's stated reasons are these.

1. RMS *Roman* was anchored at Cape Town.
2. His body held infection - I doubt they would put into the sea while they were in port / small harbour.
3. Being January in that part of the world [ie South Africa], it would be very warm. I think that they would have taken him off the ship as soon as possible.
4. There is nothing in the log of the RMS *Roman* to indicate that he was buried at sea. Norm for a burial at sea would be to detail latitude and longitude. Also, there would be a notation in the ship's log.
5. He was known to many, so there would have been no issue with his remains being buried in consecrated ground.

Also, in an email of 12 April 2011, MacLean explained the research which has been completed.

Captain MacKinnon's mother was Marion Munn. There were / are Munns on this island and all claimed a connection to the Captain. One branch of the Munns ended up in Rhodesia [modern Zimbabwe]. A few of their descendants returned here [Isle of Tiree] 4 or 5 years ago. One of those descendants, who lived close to Cape Town, was enticed by Captain MacKinnon's story and the mystery of where his remains are / were. She did a great deal of research in that area, trying to locate his remains. She even posted a large reward in the genealogical community in Cape Town for the researchers to find his record of death / headstone / remains. No joy. The British archives hold records of each Captain, their voyages, departure dates and return dates. Captain MacKinnon's record clearly states that he died in Cape Town and below that it says "Cert Recd."



Cape Town from Table Bay, 1867.

Confirmation of Donald MacKinnon's burial in Cape Town was obtained on Tuesday 27 October 2015. Jennie Green had a letter from William Murray 13 Fairfield Place Fairfield Road Bow London to his son Hugh Cameron Murray in Sydney NSW Australia dated 19 February 1867.

By the Cape mail of Jany we had a letter written by a clergyman stating that the *Taeping* had to put in at Algoa Bay and land poor MacKinnon in hospital, he being laid prostrate with Rheumatic fever for three weeks on board at the date of the letter Decr 13th. He had been ten days in hospital, was improving, by the following mail he was able to write himself being propped up by pillows. He wrote on his knees for a table. He was still improving and hoped to be able to return home by the next steamer which is due here on the 27th inst. to which we are all anxiously looking forward to. Poor fellow - what a disappointment to him and his expectant friends in China.

In his letter, William Murray also stated

I have just returned from poor Maggie who has received a telegram from Plymouth informing her of the death of her husband which took place at Table Bay on his way home and he was buried at Cape Town. This is most saddening news, as it is past hour I have not time to say more. Your poor widowed sister is in sore distress. She is indeed to be pitied, bereaved of such a good husband. But such is fate.

And what of his ship, the *Taeping*? As mate, John Dowdy [variously written also as Doudy and Dougherty] took over as captain when MacKinnon took ill. Third mate was Charles A Watchlin. Also aboard were George Fowler, David Watson [Murray] and John Watson. There were 26 men in the crew. From 1866 until 1870, *Taeping* continued in the China tea trade. *The Times* 16 September 1867 page 7 reported

The *Taeping* arrived in the London Docks on Saturday at 2 p.m., and is again the winner of the China clipper race. She left Foochow at noon on the 4th of June, thus completing the voyage in 102 days.

On 22 September 1871, the ship was wrecked on Ladd Reef [in the Spratly Islands, the closest land to Vietnam in the China Sea] while under the command of Captain Gissing. *Taeping* was on a voyage from Amoy in China to New York in the United States of America.

For further information on the *Taeping*, refer to Appendix 5.

18. MACKINNON FAMILY LIFE GOES ON AFTER 1866

Sadly, baby Colin de Verde MacKinnon died on 30 November 1866. This date is from a letter from William Murray 13 Fairfield Place Fairfield Road Bow London to his son Hugh in Sydney NSW Australia dated 19 February 1867.

On the 30th Nov Maggie's ocean child died of bronchitis, of three illnesses, a fine boy up to his fatal and unexpected decease

Margaret MacKinnon lost both her husband and her fourth child in the space of two months. The shock must have been great and it is a credit to her resilience that she was able to continue and to manage her family.

William Murray wrote of Margaret MacKinnon on 19 April 1867 from Bow in London

... she will look about her and fix where she may reside to educate her children. William is at Dallas Academy and is progressing well, he is eleven past on 2nd inst. Marian was born on 21st Dec. 1861 and Alfred on 21st August 1863, take note of these dates in a book, which may be useful to refer to in aftertimes, when I am gone.

In 2011, a Google check of "Dallas Academy" produced no information.

In his letter of April 19 1867, William Murray wrote to his son Hugh Cameron Murray in Sydney NSW Australia.

Poor Maggie, how I feel for her sad bereavement, with her interesting children to be deprived of such a loving and amiable protector. I trust God in his provenance will a husband and father to them in their day of need. At present she has not arranged where she will take up residence in the future, but she has given up her house here, and I have stored her furniture at my house.. She leaves next week for Scotland as she goes to her father-in-law's at Tirie. When the *Taeping* returns in September, she will return to London, as there is still some of his properties on board and ventures which he took out with him to be accounted for.

It must be remembered that being a woman, Donald Mackinnon's widow Margaret could not own property, so she rented a house and took in boarders to generate income. William Murray stored the furniture from Gourock at his house in Bow, London and Margaret and the children left to go to stay with Donald's parents - Neil and Marion MacKinnon - on the Isle of Tiree, in the Inner Hebrides of Scotland.

The spring 1871 Census for 2 George Place, Gourock showed these details of the MacKinnon family.

Marg't Ann McKinnon, Head, Widow, 37, Furnished Apartments (this is under occupation), born Glasgow
Francis A. McKinnon, son, 7, Scholar, born Greenock
Christina C. Murray, sister, single, 46, Intent of money, b. Glasgow

“Intent of money” may mean that Christina had no income or maybe no money at all. The meaning is unclear. At her death in 1915 she is described as an annuitant, deriving an income from an annuity.



2 George Place Gourock Scotland
Photograph by Robin Pitcher, May 2012.
Lloyd Pitcher Collection.

Of interest was the situation of William Montgomery MacKinnon and Marion Mary MacKinnon. They were aged 15 and 10 respectively, but they were not living with their mother. Presumably they are with relatives, perhaps on Tiree with Neil and Marion MacKinnon, Donald's parents.

The 1871 Census shows that at 22 Newton Street Govan, four miles to the west of Glasgow, a William McKinnon aged 16, Stepson, was living with a William Sutherland aged 23, Journeyman Flour Miller and his wife Elspeth B aged 27. Also living at the same address were William Hughes, Labourer in Gasworks, aged 24 and his wife Eliza aged 32 and their sons James Hughes aged 4 and Thomas Hughes aged 3. It is known that the Murrays were related by marriage to the Sutherlands, so it is possible that William Montgomery MacKinnon was placed with this family, although this is yet to be confirmed.

Margaret Anne MacKinnon and the three children move from Gourrock to Edinburgh, where they will live with Donald's sister, Christina Cameron Murray. In her letter to her brother Hugh Cameron Murray in Australia dated 01 October 1871, Christian Cameron Murray wrote c/- Mrs. D. MacKinnon, 146 Princes Street, Edinburgh, Scotland.

I am now residing with our widowed sister, to try to help her and her three fatherless children. She gave up her sea-side home [2 George Place Gourrock] to come here for the purpose of getting cheaper schools for the children with the view of getting Willie [the eldest] some situation in Edinburgh or Leith when he is somewhat better educated. At Present he is far behind for a boy of fifteen years of age. All his English schools have done but little for him. He is going to Daniel Stewart's Hospital [now a day school at a moderate charge].

This school was begun as a school for orphan and destitute boys. Its "perpetual management" was entrusted to the Merchant Company of Edinburgh. In 1855, the school had 50 boys. By the 1860s, the "Hospital" system of education for destitute children was increasingly unpopular, so the Merchant Company of Edinburgh turned the Hospital into a fee-paying day school in which "foundationers" were only a small minority.

In 1870, just before William MacKinnon came to the school, it became Daniel Stewart's Institution, with 300 boys and fees of £2 a quarter. Mr William Wallace Dunlop was the Headmaster from 1882 to 1911. In 1890, the school had grown to 890 boys.



Daniel Stewart's Hospital School, now Stewart's Melville School, Queensferry Road, Edinburgh.
William MacKinnon attended this school in 1871.
Photograph by Robin Pitcher, May 2012.
Lloyd Pitcher Collection.

Christina Cameron Murray continued in her letter

We proposed taking children attending school as boarders, but none have come our way, so since May [1870] we have been doing what we could by letting apartments [sic].



146 Princes Street Edinburgh. These are the “letting apartments” [sic] to which Christina Cameron Murray was referring.
Photograph by Robin Pitcher, May 2012.
Lloyd Pitcher Collection.

Continuing her letter, Christina wrote about Marion.

Marion or Mary as we call her, is to attend a branch of the Merchant Maiden Hospital in Queen Street about five minutes from this. She is rather a smart little girl of ten years.

At this point in time, 01 October 1871, Christina’s mail address was

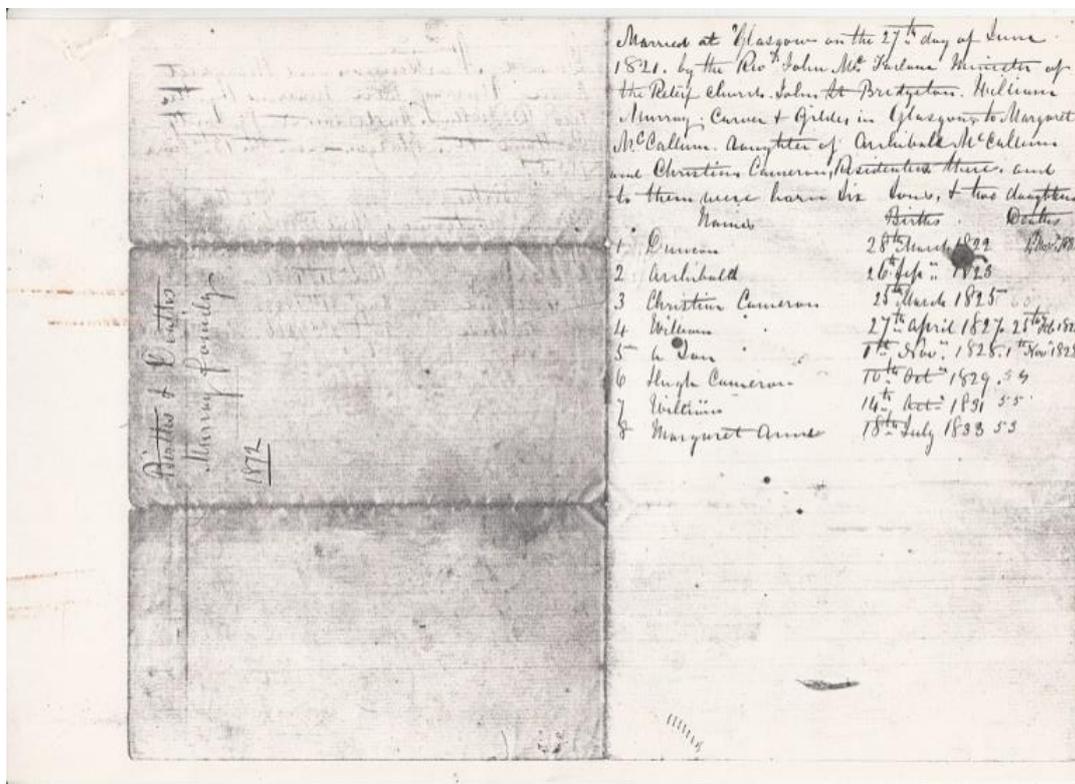
c/- Mrs D. MacKinnon, 146 Princes Street, Edinburgh

The MacKinnon referred to is Margaret and the address is that of her sister, Christina.

The Merchant Maiden Hospital in Lauriston Lane was founded in 1694 by Mary Erskine of the Company of Merchants of the City of Edinburgh. With 75 girls in 1870, it was refounded as a day school of 1200 students and renamed The Edinburgh Educational Institution for Girls. It is only one mile from Daniel Stewart’s Institution, where William attended school.

19. MACKINNON FAMILY 1872

Family lore was that the following list of William and Margaret Murray’s family was written by Margaret Anne MacKinnon [nee Murray] in 1872 and sent to her brother in Australia, Hugh Cameron Murray. The list was in the papers of Hugh’s granddaughter, Agnes Murray. In 2015 the list is now in the possession of Agnes’ daughter, Jennie Green.



A list of William and Margaret Murray's children written in 1872 by Margaret Anne MacKinnon (nee Murray) and sent to her brother in Australia, Hugh Cameron Murray
 Courtesy Jenny Green 07 October 2015

As at 2015, original authorship of the list has not been finally determined.

20. MARION MARY MACKINNON 1881

Sadly, on 28 October 1881 at the age of 19, Marion Mary died of

Inflammation of the brain, 18 days.

Probable cause of death is meningitis. She died at 03.30am at 60 Frederick Street, Edinburgh. Her brother Francis D MacKinnon was the informant and was present at her death. Mary's memorial card, edged in black, advised she was in her 20th year,

Having been taken, after a short illness, from her sorrowing relatives and friends to meet her Saviour and her God. She was interred in Morningside Cemetery.

The cemetery is in Edinburgh. Marion Mary MacKinnon was interred in Grave Space 992 in Section G2, outer row west.

Her death certificate showed she was single, she died at 60 Frederick Street, Edinburgh and her usual place of residence was 21 East Maitland Street, Edinburgh. The Register of Deaths was for the District of St Andrews in the Burgh of Edinburgh. Registration number is 594.



60 Frederick Street, Edinburgh.
Photograph by Robin Pitcher, May 2012.
Lloyd Pitcher Collection.



21 East Maitland Street Edinburgh.
Photograph by Robin Pitcher, May 2012.
Lloyd Pitcher Collection.

Christina Cameron Murray wrote to her brother Hugh in Sydney, Australia, on 30 September 1883.

Tell me if you received the Memorial card with Photo of dear Mary, Duncan designed it, and had it done for her friends - tell me what you think of it.



Black edged Memorial Card of Marion Mary MacKinnon.
 It was sent to Archibald Murray, Christina's brother in Sydney, Australia.
 "I know that my Redeemer liveth.

In loving memory of Marion Mary MacKinnon,
 only daughter of the late Donald MacKinnon, Commander of the famous China Clipper-ship *Taeping*
 and Lieutenant RNR.

She died at Edinburgh on October 28th 1881 in her 20th year,
 having been taken, after a short illness, from her sorrowing relatives and friends to meet
 her Saviour and her God.

Interred in Morningside Cemetery.

'Not lost, but gone before.'

'She is not dead, but sleepeth.'

Lloyd Pitcher Collection.

The Duncan referred to is Duncan Murray, Christina Cameron Murray's brother.
 He was an artist by profession.

In her letter to her brother Hugh Cameron Murray in Australia dated 04 January 1883,
 Christina Cameron Murray wrote

I have been so overwhelmed with grief, and illness ever since the death of my lovely niece
 Mary, that I felt quite unable to write a letter.



Marion Mary MacKinnon
21 December 1861-28 October 1881

There was another matter of greater concern to Christina.

I sent you a paper with the announcement of Maggie's marriage in June (1882) to Mr William Flemming, Solicitor, Dublin. A very nice thing for her indeed, but a very great sorrow and trial to me for I will be then alone and in greater poverty and shorter of health than ever I had ...all the ills to face and to keep on the house for a time and keep Frank while he was able to go to the office (in which he was a clerk at a small salary)...

Christina wrote her brother Duncan also came to live with her, but he died. Christina wrote

He was buried in Morningside Cemetery beside his niece Mary, whose funeral he came from London to attend just twelve months before.

In her letter of January 04 1883 to her brother Hugh Cameron Murray in Sydney, Australia, Christina advised

There is a very beautiful white marble obelisk above six feet high erected in memory of Mary by Wm. Flemming also in memory of her father [ie Captain Donald MacKinnon] - he inscribed on it.

Given the uncertainty of his burial in Cape Town and the inability for a memorial to him to be found in Cape Town, South Africa, this was one lasting memorial to Captain Donald MacKinnon. Mary MacLean advised in 2011

There is a plaque in our Island hall [ie Tíree] dedicated to him and of course he is included on the family headstone with all his brothers and sisters and parents.

It seems likely that these are the only two memorials to Donald MacKinnon which have survived to the present. The white marble obelisk in Morningside Cemetery could not be located in 2012.

In a letter to Hugh Cameron Murray in Australia from his sister Christina Cameron Murray dated 30 September 1883, Christina mentioned a couple of things relating to her brother William's visit from the United States of America.

He ... was so taken up with his niece Mary, he also made the acquaintance of our brother-in-law William Flemming who was Edinburgh at the same time tho' we never dreamed that he was to be a brother-in-law to us ... I told you Maggie was married to Mr Flemming. I also sent a newspaper with the announcement of the marriage - you make no remark on it. It is very well for her to get a good home for it was up-hill work for several years previously - I am left alone of course to try and keep my neck above water or sink at last.

In her letter of 01 October 1871 to her brother Hugh in Australia, Christina wrote on Francis.

The youngest boy Frank is not very strong to face the winter, is only seven, so time enough for him next year when the worst part of winter is over. He has lessons at home and reads pretty well.

Christina wrote to Hugh from 86 George Street Edinburgh on 04 January 1883. This was a bad time because her much loved niece Marion Mary [Mary] MacKinnon had died aged 19, her sister Margaret MacKinnon had remarried and moved to Carrick-on-Shannon in Ireland, her brother Duncan came to her in very poor health and Francis Alfred MacKinnon came also.

A very nice thing for her indeed [Margaret getting married], but a very great sorrow and trial for me for I will be then alone and in greater poverty and shorter of health than I ever had ... all the ills to face and to keep on the house for a time and keep Frank while he was able to go to the office (in which he was a clerk at a small salary)...

21. 1896 FRANCIS ALFRED MACKINNON

In an email on 09 May 2011, Mary MacLean advised Francis Alfred MacKinnon died at "Ivy Bank," 131-137 St John's Road, Corstorphine, a suburb of Edinburgh. In the 1890s, Corstorphine would have been in the Edinburgh countryside. Francis had been ill for two years and died on 19 March 1896, aged 32. Cause of death was consumption [tuberculosis]. The informant was a hospital nurse and Francis' occupation was noted as dramatic author [playwright?]. Margaret Fleming [formerly MacKinnon nee Murray] and her sister Christina Cameron Murray were also living in the house.



“Ivy Bank,” 127-129 St John's Road, Corstorphine, Edinburgh.
 Photograph by Robin Pitcher, May 2012.
 Lloyd Pitcher Collection.

Francis was interred in Morningside Cemetery in Edinburgh, Scotland, in Grave Space 992 in Section G2, outer row west. Also located in this Grave Space were his elder sister, Marion Mary MacKinnon, who died aged 19 years on 28 October 1881, and their mother, Margaret Fleming, nee Murray who died on 28 August 1906. A 2-metre-high white marble obelisk was erected at the grave site in memory of Marion Mary MacKinnon and Donald MacKinnon.

22. 1901 CENSUS, CORSTORPHINE, MIDLOTHIAN, EDINBURGH

“Ivy Bank,” 131-137 St John’s Road, Corstorphine

Margaret A Fleming	66 Head Widow	Living on own means
Christine Murray	76 Single	Annuitant
Helen I Robertson	18 Single	Boarder



“Corstorphine Hall,” 131-137 St John’s Road, Corstorphine, Edinburgh, Scotland.
Photograph by Robin Pitcher, May 2012.
Lloyd Pitcher Collection.

23. 1906 MAGARET ANNE MACKINNON NEE MURRAY

At 1900 hours pm on 28 August 1906, Margaret Anne departed this world from “Ivy Bank,” 131-137 St John’s Road, Corstorphine. She was described as a female widow. Her death certificate listed her Father as William Murray Sculpture, dece and her Mother as Margaret Murray MS MacCallum, dece. Her spouses were Donald MacKinnon, Lieutenant Royal Navy Reserves and William Fleming, Solicitor. The stated cause of death of Margaret was Cystitis 6 months, pyelitus, 2 months. Informant was her sister, Christine C Murray.

Pyelitis is inflammation of the renal [kidney] pelvis. It is caused by the micro-organism (bacteria) *Escherichia coli* (*Ecoli*) or, less often, streptococci or staphylococci – which invade the kidneys via the blood supply. It may arise from bladder infection and affects females more because at 4 centimetres, the female urethra is much shorter than in the male. The bacteria gain easy access to the bladder, causing bladder infection. If infection spreads, pyelonephritis can result, which is severely disabling in its chronic form because kidney cells are damaged. This results in high blood pressure and uremia in which fluid, electrolyte and hormonal balances and metabolic abnormalities develop in parallel with deterioration in kidney function. Also called “urine in the blood,” it commonly develops with chronic kidney disease (CKD). Severe complications include seizure, coma, cardiac arrest and death. Today, this fairly common disease can be diagnosed and cured quickly without great difficulty with antibiotics.

Cystitis is bladder inflammation caused by *Escherichia coli* (*Ecoli*). It is common in older people, particularly if they are unwell.



Plan of Morningside Cemetery, Edinburgh, Scotland
 Grave space 992, Section G2, outer row west
 Marion Mary MacKinnon d. 28 October 1881
 Francis Alfred MacKinnon d. 19 March 1896 aged 32
 Margaret Anne Fleming, formerly MacKinnon, nee Murray, d. 28 August 1906 aged 73
 The 6 feet tall white marble obelisk was not located in 2012



Morningside Cemetery, Edinburgh, Scotland.
Neither the grave site nor the white
marble obelisk could be located in 2012.
Photograph by Lloyd Pitcher, May 2012.
Lloyd Pitcher Collection.

Of the last known descendant of Donald MacKinnon and Margaret Ann Murray,
William Montgomery MacKinnon, nothing more is known.

24. CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF CAPTAIN DONALD MACKINNON AT AN TALLA, ISLE OF TIREE, 12 MAY 2012

At Scarinish on the Isle of Tìree, a public meeting was held to celebrate the life and times of Captain Donald MacKinnon. This meeting was sponsored by the Historical Centre on Tìree, *An Iodhlann*. Pronounced “an ee lun,” it is Gaelic for “the stackyard where the harvest is stored.”



An Iodhlann, Isle of Tìree
<http://www.aniodhlann@tìreebroadband.com>

The meeting was held on the evening of Saturday 12 May 2012 at the Community Hall on Tìree, *An Talla*. An audience of 60 was in attendance, representing 10% of the island’s population.



An Talla, Isle of Tìree
<http://www.tìreeimages.com/detail/antalla-tìree-02.html>

Mary and Angus MacLean organised a display of documents and historical items connected with Captain Donald MacKinnon. Their research on the captain has led them to Canada, South Africa the USA and Australia. Mary and Angus published in the isle of Tiree historical group's newsletter *An Tirisdeach* No 27 May 2012 an extract from a book they are writing on the Captain.

Two guest speakers presented interesting talks.

One was Angus Mac Kinnon. His origins were in Barra and Eriskay, both islands in the Outer Hebrides. Angus lived in Troon, Scotland and is a marine engineer with a lifelong interest in the sea. He was researching the four generations of Robert Steele & Sons, shipbuilders of Greenock on the Clyde River in Scotland. Angus had also compiled a private work entitled "The Clipper Ships of the Nineteenth Century; a Short History of the Great China Tea Clippers." Angus spoke wonderfully on aspects of nineteenth century maritime industry and answered many questions from an appreciative audience.



Angus MacKinnon speaking at *An Talla*, Saturday 12 May 2012
Photograph by Robin Pitcher, May 2012.
Lloyd Pitcher Collection.

The second guest speaker was Lloyd Pitcher. Lloyd is a retired history teacher who lives in Jervis Bay, New South Wales, Australia. In 1852, Archibald Murray and his brother Hugh Cameron Murray sailed from Glasgow aboard the ship *Sir Adrian Molesworth*, bound for Melbourne, Australia. In 1855, Donald MacKinnon married Margaret Ann Murray, sister of Archibald and Hugh. Lloyd is the great grandson of Archibald Murray and Captain MacKinnon is his great uncle. His talk focused on the family history and seafaring aspects of Donald MacKinnon's life. A copy of this slide show presentation may be found on the internet on these websites:

KeithDash.net/Services/Pitcher.pdf
www.tyreegenalogy.com



Lloyd Pitcher speaking on Captain Donald MacKinnon on Saturday 12 May 2012. On the left is the only known photograph of Captain Donald MacKinnon. It was sent by Donald's sister-in-law Christina Cameron Murray to Archibald Murray in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. An A4 size colour copy of this photograph was donated to *An Iodhlann* by Lloyd and Robin Pitcher and is displayed in *An Talla* on the Isle of Tìre. Photograph by Robin Pitcher, May 2012
Lloyd Pitcher Collection.

25. REMEMBERING DONALD MACKINNON

By remembering what has happened to people in the past, we in the present do not forget. Donald MacKinnon was both a family man and a seafaring man who achieved a great deal in his short life. These contemporary statements show how highly respected was Captain MacKinnon.

The Times London 23 September 1867 described Captain Donald MacKinnon as

A brave and skilful seaman, his life a sacrifice to his gallantry and humanity. A devout man, exemplary as son, husband, father, and friend - lamented by all.

Glasgow Citizen 23 February 1867 stated

This gallant officer, who has achieved so many laurels in connection with the China clippers, is, we regret to state, no more... in Glasgow and Greenock, where he was well known and greatly respected, the intimation of his comparatively early decease has caused much sincere regret.

Glasgow Herald (undated) 1867 observed

Bred a sailor, he has for upwards of twenty years past been voyaging in tropical climates, and his recent feats in navigation prove him to have been a seaman of great experience and more than ordinary skill.

Greenock Advertiser (undated) 1867 wrote

Captain MacKinnon ... was a thorough seaman, a perfect gentleman, and a man of indomitable energy. He left a widow and three children.

The website allkindsofhistory.wordpress.com/2011/12/16/thegreattearace/ said of the Captain

Donald MacKinnon, skipper of the *Taeping*, one of the finest masters of the clipper era.

The evidence sources reveal not one comment detrimental to the character of Donald MacKinnon. He was highly respected by his contemporaries and by all who knew and worked with him. Rashi (1040-1105), the medieval French Jewish scholar, summed up the qualities of character that apply to Captain Donald MacKinnon.

Receive with simplicity everything that happens to you.

The captain never lost sight of the objective: do the job the best way that you can. His creed was that if you give of your best, no one can ask more of you and you can be at peace with yourself.

In the contemporary world, there is a company named “*Taeping Tea*,” founded by Shannon Campbell in 2011 in California USA. It supplies, online to customers, a range of Taiwanese and Chinese tea varieties, as well as mid-grade to premium leaves.

On the Isle of Dogs, near London Docklands, there is *Taeping Street*, E14 9UT.

Sailing off the south coast of Hampshire, England is the yacht *Clipper 60 Taeping*. It takes paying customers for short journeys around the Solent.

There remains today a song written in celebration of Captain Donald MacKinnon of the *Taeping* and the Great Tea Race in 1866. The words, in Gaelic, are found in the song *Deoch Slàinte na Gillean* in the book by Cameron (1932 pages 132-133).

There are recordings of the song on these websites:

<http://tobarandualchais.co.uk/fullrecord/47498/1>

<http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/fullrecord/65121/1>

<http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/fullrecord/65121/4>

Further details on the song can be found in Appendix 9.

In the fast-paced, rapidly changing modern world, people have little time to speak or write about the past. This narrative will enable us today to reflect on the life and achievements of a man whose personal contribution to the world, while substantial, did ultimately cost him his life. This is a reason to not mourn his passing, but rather remember and celebrate what this great man and great leader of men, Donald MacKinnon, achieved in his time.

APPENDIX 1

MONTGOMERY

Registered Number: 23334

Port of Registration: Glasgow

Built: 1850 New Glasgow, Nova Scotia

Transferred to Glasgow: 1854

Net Tonnage: 750

Gross Tonnage: 848

Owner: M'Kenzie

Registered: Pictou, (Nova Scotia, 10 kilometres north of New Glasgow))

1854 Master: A. Chisholm, voyage Liverpool to (blank)

1855-1856-1857 Master: M'Knonn

Owner: Aikmans of Glasgow

Voyages: Liverpool to South America

1858 Master: J. Simpson, voyage Clyde to Calcutta, India

1859 Master:?

1860 Sailed Calcutta December 12 for Liverpool

1860 Master: J. Smith, voyage Liverpool to North America

1861 Master: J. Nickson. Sold to W. Haynes of Liverpool

1862 Master: J. Nickson, undergoing damage repairs

1863 Master: J. Nickson

Montgomery is not listed in Lloyd's Register after 1863, but is listed in the mercantile Navy List 1867 and Registered at Greenock

The Maritime History Archive has Crew Lists for 1863, 1864, 1867 and 1868

http://www.mun.ca/mha/holdings/viewcombinedcrews.php?Official_No=23334

APPENDIX 2

S.V. *TARTAR*

Registered Number: 2361

Port of Registration: Greenock, Scotland

Builder: Scotts of Greenock

Launched: 16 October 1851

Type: 3 masted, ship rigged

Tonnage: 641net/670gross

Dimensions: 147.6 feet long x 27.3 feet wide x 20.4 feet deep

Owners: Adams and Company

Registered: Greenock

From Lloyd's Register 1852-1865:

1853-1853 Master: J. Guthrie, voyage Clyde to Bombay

1854-1855 Master: (not known)

1856-1857 Master: Guthrie, voyage Liverpool to India

1858-1859-1860 Master: M'Kelvie, voyage London to India

1861 Master: Smith, voyage Liverpool to India

1862 Master: J. Smith, voyage London to India (seems to be a different Smith)

1863 Master: J. Smith, voyage London to India. Sold to Kerr and Co Glasgow

1864-1865 Master: J. Smith, voyage London to India

1865 Wrecked in India

The Maritime History Archive has Crew Lists for 1863 and 1864

http://www.mun.ca/mha/holdings/viewcombinedcrews.php?Official_No=2361

APPENDIX 3

ELLEN RODGER

Registered Number: 22082

Port of Registration: Glasgow

Builder: Robert Steele & Co, Greenock, Clyde River (second ship for the tea trade)

Dimensions: 155.8 feet x 29.4 feet x 19.5 feet

Gross Tonnage: 554.93

Coefficient of under deck tons: .62

Owners: Alexander Rodger & Co; C. Carnie; both of Glasgow; owners of *Kate Carnie*

Construction: Wood

Propulsion: Sails

Launch date: 1858

Completion date: 1858

Maiden voyage: Outward trip: Singapore, then on to Macao

Sailed Foochow 19 June 1859, arrived London 24 October 1859 in 136 days

Captain: John M Keay

1860: Sailed Foochow 07 June 1860, arrived London 06 October 1860 in 121 days

Captain: John M Keay

1861: Sailed Foochow 11 June 1861, arrived London 10 October 1861 in 121 days

Captain: John M Keay

1862: Sailed Foochow 19 June 1862, arrived London 13 October in 113 days

Captain: Donald MacKinnon

1862-1863: Sailed London 28 December 1862, arrived Shanghai 05 April 1863 in 98 days

Captain: Donald MacKinnon

1863: Sailed Foochow 03 June 1863, arrived London on 04 October 1863 in 123 days

Captain: Donald MacKinnon

1864: Sailed Foochow 19 June 1864, arrived London 21 October 1864 in 124 days

Captain: E Cobbett (probably a misspelling of Corbett)

1865: Sailed Shanghai 09 August 1865, arrived London 11 December 1865 in 124 days

Captain Colin MacKinnon, brother of Captain Donald MacKinnon, was lost at sea during this voyage on 04 September 1865. This reference is on the back of a photograph of Margaret Anne MacKinnon nee Murray that was sent to Archibald Murray in Australia by his sister Christina Cameron Murray in 1869. The circumstances of his disappearance are not known.

Captain: Colin MacKinnon (until 04 September 1865)

Captain: Tompkins (from 04 September 1865).

1866: Sailed Foochow 24 August 1866, wrecked 20 September 1866, after 27 days at sea, on Belvidere Reef in Gaspar Strait, South China Sea

Captain: Tompkins

In an email dated 08 January 2013, Mary MacLean noted

I have in my notes that Edward Corbett was found to have committed grave errors and was suspended for 4 months.

This raises the question of who was the captain of *Ellen Rodger* on its last two voyages.

APPENDIX 4

TAEPING

Registered Number: 47842

Port of Registration: Glasgow

Builder: Robert Steele & Co Greenock, on the River Clyde, Scotland

Dimensions: 183.7 feet x 31.1 feet x 19.9 feet

Gross Tonnage: 767 (723.85 under deck)

Co-efficient of under deck tons: .63

Owner: Alexander Rodger & Co, Glasgow

Construction: Composite - iron frame, teak decking and greenheart planking

Propulsion:

Launch date: 24 December 1863

Completion date: 24 December 1863

Maiden voyage: Tea Season 1864-1865

Master: MacKinnon

Sailed Greenock 25 January 1864

Sailed Liverpool 04 February 1864

Sailed Gravesend 07 February 1864

Sailed London 14 May 1864

Arrived Shanghai 29 June 1864

Sailed Shanghai 01 July

Arrived Amoy 23 July 1864 towed by HM gunboat *Flamer*. Seriously damaged by typhoon - lost foremast, bowsprit, main and mizzen topmasts. 3 months refit.

Sailed Amoy 24 October 1864

Arrived London 03 January 1865 in 88 days

Tea Season 1865-1866

Master: MacKinnon

Sailed London 27 January 1865 for Foochow [modern Fuzhou]

MacGregor (1983, page 46) stated these dates:

Sailed London 8 February 1865

Arrived Hong Kong on in 94 days on 13 May 1865

92 days between pilots

Sailed Foochow 29 June 1865

Arrived London 11 October 1865 in 104 days

Tea Season 1866-1867

Master: MacKinnon

Sailed London 11 October, for Shanghai in China

1 000 miles east of Algoa Bay, today the site of Port Elizabeth in the former Cape Colony, 425 miles east of the Cape of Good Hope.

At sea, the captain's illness became serious. For the past three weeks, he had been unable to rise from his bed. It was highly likely that an internal infection was the problem. He was landed at Algoa Bay on 31st December 1866, taken to hospital, where he remained until he was well enough to travel. Being anxious to return home to rejoin his family, he secured a passage homeward on the steam ship *Roman*.

Struck down in Table Bay at Cape Town and did not recover.

Died on board the screw steamship RMS *Roman* on 19th January 1867 aged 39

Buried in Cape Town.

And what of his ship? As mate, John Dowdy [variously written also as Downie, Doudy and Dougherty] took over as captain when MacKinnon took ill. Third mate was Charles A Watchlin. Also aboard were George Fowler, David Watson (Murray) and John Watson. There were 26 men in the crew.

Sailed Foochow 30 May 1866

Master: J Dowdy, former
Mate on *Taeping*

Loaded 1,099,900 lbs of tea

Unmoored 03 June 1866

Arrived London 10.30pm on 11 September 1866

102 days after leaving Pagoda Anchorage on the Min River

Tea Season 1867-1868

Master: J Dowdy

Sailed Foochow 03 June 1867

Arrived London 14 September 1867 in 103 days

Taeping placed 3rd behind *Sir Lancelot* and *Ariel*.

Ariel was only 5 hours ahead of *Taeping*.

Tea Season 1868-1869

Master: J Dowdy

Sailed Foochow 28 May 1868

Arrived London 07 September 1868 in 102 days

Winner *Spindrift* completed trip in 97 days.

Account of trip in ship's log of *Spindrift*

Tea Season 1869-1870

Master: J Dowdy

Sailed 27 November 1869 Plymouth Sound (took shelter
from a south-west gale)

Arrived Shanghai in 97 days on 04 March 1869

Sailed Foochow 13 July 1869

Arrived Deal (Kent) 23 October 1869 in 102 days

Winner *Sir Lancelot* completed voyage in 89 days.

Tea Season 1870-1871

Master: J Dowdy

Sailed Canton 05 June 1870

Arrived London 28 September 1870 in 115 days

Winner took 98 days.

Tea Season 1871-1872

Sailed between Shanghai, Hong Kong and Bangkok,
but was no match in speed for the *Cutty Sark*.

Sailed Amoy 08 September 1871

Master: Gissing

Wrecked on Ladd Reef, in the Spratly Islands, in the
South China Sea, the closest land to Vietnam,

New York bound, on 22 September 1871, after 14 days at sea

The Mate and six sailors were the only survivors.

They drifted in a boat for 3 days before rescue.

APPENDIX 5

CHIEFTAIN'S BRIDE

Registered Number: 53148

Built: 1866

Port of Registration: Glasgow

What happened to *Chieftain's Bride*? In the 1870s she was employed in the great herring industry in the Southern Isles of the Hebrides, off Scotland's west coast. The ship's role was to transport curing salt and fish barrels between the numerous locations or "stations" dotted around Castlebay and Vatersay.

NLO: Bagh a' Chasteil [name centred NL 660 975]

Barra (Barraigh): [name centred NL 67 02]

10 June 1879, CHIEFTAIN'S BRIDE, 13 yrs old, of Fraserburgh, iron steamship, 60 tons, 6 crew, Master A. Milne, Owner J. and T. Park, Fraserburgh. Departed Castlebay, Isle of Barra, for Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, carrying salt, empty barrels and one passenger, wind variable. Stranded, total loss, Castlebay, Isle of Barra, Outer Hebrides.

Source: PP Abstracts Returns of Wrecks and Casualties on Coasts of the UK 1878-79 (1880 [C. 2519] LXV.47).

Stornoway, June 16, CHIEFTAIN'S BRIDE (s), of Fraserburgh, left this place 8th inst., bound for Castlebay, Island of Barra, with 200 barrels of salt and 600 empty barrels. Reached Castlebay in safety at 5 a.m., the following day. After discharging the greater portion of her cargo at three different fishing stations, proceeded at 9.30 for the fourth station, when she took the ground. On examination she was found to have a foot of water in the hold, and her bottom pierced by a rock. The hole was subsequently plugged, the ship pumped dry, and she left for Stornoway for repairs, but had to be abandoned 10th inst., six miles from the Ushenish Lighthouse in a sinking condition. [Record received incomplete].

Source: NMRS, MS/829/69 (no. 2923).

Classified as a wooden schooner, with cargo of salt and empty barrels: date of loss cited as 10 June 1879).

Chieftain's Bride: this vessel stranded in Castlebay [Bagh a' Chasteil]. Capt. Milne.

Registration: Fraserburgh. Built 1866. 94 grt. Length: 27m. Beam 5m.

(Location of Loss cited as N56.0 W7 29.5).

IG Whittaker 1998.

The location assigned to this is essentially arbitrary.

Information from RCAHMS (RJM), 18 March 2008

Mac Kinnon (email 17 January 2012) wrote that

Although a ship, with all the associated sentiment that goes with that, it is hard to be saddened by this particular vessel's demise insofar as she indirectly caused the premature death of one of Scotland's finest ever seafarers, Captain Donald MacKinnon of Tiree.

APPENDIX 6

R.M.S. *ROMAN*

Registered Number: 44906

Port of Registration: Southampton

Builder: Charles Lungley & Company of Deptford, London

Dimensions: 267 feet x 32.4 feet x 23.6 feet

Gross Tonnage: 1282

Owners: The Union Steamship Company

Construction: Iron hull, two masts rigged for sale, one funnel, clipper bow

Propulsion: Steam engine, single screw, delivering a speed of 9 knots

Launch date: 10 April 1863

Completion date: 30 April 1863

Maiden voyage: Plymouth to Cape Town - 30 days 20 hours - broke the record

1863: Inter-colonial: Cape Town - Algoa Bay (Port Elizabeth) - Buffalo River (East London) - Port Natal

1863-1900: Intermediate Service: Southampton - Plymouth - Cape Town - Port Elizabeth

1864-1868: Eastern Mail: Cape Town - Algoa Bay - Port Natal - Mauritius, thence via P&O Line Suez -UK

1867: Saturday 12 January 1866 (Captain: Dixon) departs Port Elizabeth with the ill Captain Donald MacKinnon on board.

Monday 14 January, arrives Cape Town

Saturday 19 January, Captain MacKinnon dies on board

Sunday 20 January, late arrival of mail; sails at 1600 hours for St Helena, Ascension Island and Southampton

Wednesday 30 January, arrives St Helena

1866-1868: Cape Town - Algoa Bay - Port Natal - Mauritius - Galle (Ceylon), then via P&O Line to Far East or UK

1868-1900: Cape Town - Algoa Bay - Port Natal - Mauritius

1870: Lengthened by 54 feet, increasing tonnage to 1751

1872: Re-engined to give a speed of 11 knots

1873 25 May: Struck an uncharted rock off Dassen Island*. Returned to Cape Town for repairs.

*This island is in the Atlantic Ocean, off the West Coast of South Africa, 10 kilometres west of Yzerfontein and 55 kilometres north of Cape Town. It is flat and low lying, oriented north west to south east, 3.1 km long and 1km wide. It is surrounded by reefs and many ships have run aground here.

1873-1878: Cape Town - Port Nolloth*

*In Aukwatowa Bay, western side of northern Cape, 89 miles north west of Springbok. Established after discovery of copper at Okiep, 96 rail miles inland. Problem was a narrow and shallow entrance which became increasingly silted

1881-1899: Southampton to Antwerp - Rotterdam - Hamburg feeder service

1889: Sold to Oondjian & Co., Constantinople. Renamed *Adana*

1911: Scuttled as a blockship in October in the approaches to Yenikale in the Gulf of Izmir during the Italo-Ottoman War.

APPENDIX 7

CITY OF ADELAIDE

Built by William Pile of Sunderland, Tyne and Wear in north-eastern England in 1864, the *City of Adelaide* saw service until 1886 carrying passengers from London to South Australia. It was very strongly built. Of composite construction, the ship had an iron frame and hardwood planking and decking. In his email of 24 September 2013, Angus Mac Kinnon wrote

Whereas most ships were laid down and constructed in accordance with detailed plans and drawings, William Pile...was of a different school of thought. A quite brilliant shipbuilder and engineer, he did not believe that ships should be built to a standard *per se*, but ignored tradition and built his vessels "off the hoof"...he was personally involved in all the construction phases and operated very much on an *ad hoc* basis, relying on his own fine eye or detail and engineering expertise.

In his email of 24 September 2013, Angus Mac Kinnon waxed lyrical on the quality of the ship's construction.

...if you inspect the framework of the *City of Adelaide*, as I have done, you will rarely find elsewhere a construction as heavily designed in terms of structural sections, thicknesses, bracing and reinforcement. Also, the pitch between the ribs of his ships was far tighter than anyone else's, by a factor of two. Over the top? Over designed? For the purpose, yes, but that is why *City of Adelaide* still exists today. She's as strong as a horse, even after 150 years and much neglect, and that was because William Pile knew his job, strived for perfection, and disdained convention.

The Sydney Morning Herald
March 2012, Page 16
Saturday 24

Historic clipper retires to sun after 150 years

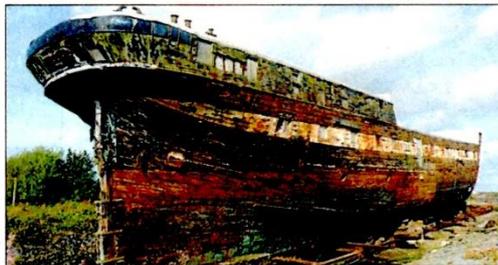
Billy Briggs

GLASGOW: It is the oldest surviving clipper ship in the world, apart from the *Cutty Sark*, and in its heyday carried emigrants from Scotland to Australia, where about 250,000 people can trace their origins to its passengers.

For years, the *City of Adelaide* has lain rotting on a slipway in Irvine, Scotland. But now, nearly 150 years after the ship was built, preparations are under way for one last voyage – to Adelaide, where the vessel is to become a tourist attraction.

According to the National Historic Ships Committee, the 54-metre ship is one of the most important in British maritime history, the last survivor of the timber trade between North America and Britain.

Despite its early splendour and pedigree, the future had looked bleak for the *City of Adelaide* after it sank in the River Clyde. It became a political



Survivor ... the *City of Adelaide* carried emigrants from Scotland.

issue, with various parties laying claim to ownership until a bid from Australia secured its future.

The ship was built in 1864 in Sunderland, England, and launched on May 7 that year. It spent 23 years making 16,000-kilometre trips to and from Australia, and played a fundamental role in the development of the young nation.

In 1893, it was converted to a hospital ship at Southampton on

England's south coast, and after being commissioned into the Royal Navy in 1924 was converted to a training ship at Irvine and renamed HMS *Carrick*. The ship was moored at Greenock, on the River Clyde until 1950 and later in Glasgow, where it was used as a clubhouse for the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve.

It became a landmark before it sank in 1991. After a year under

water, it was raised by the Scottish Maritime Museum and moved to its site in Irvine. The *Carrick* was repaired and opened to the public in 1995 but there were problems with funding and the museum applied for consent to dismantle the vessel in May 2000.

Experts said the restoration required would be akin to building a new ship. They suggested breaking it up, which provoked a campaign by interested parties, including a group from Sunderland, to save the ship.

In 2010, the Scottish government announced that the ship would not be dismantled, and that *Adelaide* had been identified as a preferred bidder.

Engineers in Australia constructed a 100-tonne cradle, costing £680,000, which has now arrived in Irvine. The clipper will be transported on a lift ship to become the centrepiece of a maritime heritage display in Port Adelaide.

Guardian News & Media

City of Adelaide

Newspaper article from *The Sydney Morning Herald* Saturday 24 March 2012 page 16

Further information on *City of Adelaide* can be found on Angus Mac Kinnon's website www.clydemaritime.co.uk

APPENDIX 8

An àite dùil bhith fortanach,
'S ann thàinig oirnn a' bhochdainne;
Bha cruadal agus gort againn
A' nochdadh rì Cèip Horn.

Instead of the expectation of being fortunate,
Poverty overcame us,
We had hardship and famine,
When we came to Cape Horn.

Cha robh ach briosgaid chruaidh againn;
An fheòil chan èireadh buaidh oirre;
'S chan fhaighinn-sa air uaireannan
Den fhuar-uisge na dh'òlainn.

All we had was hard biscuit,
The meat was inedible;
And at times I could not get
Enough cold water to drink.

Gun dh'fhalbh an rail 'on bheul againn,
'S an ceabain chaidh na stiallan oirnn;
'S gun robh sinn anns an t-siorraidheachd,
Mur b' iarrann bha 's a' chòrr dhith.

The rail was torn from our gunwale,
And the cabin took off in pieces,
We would surely have been in eternity
If it were not that the rest of her was made of iron.

Lag nan Cruachan The Hollow of the Stacks

Ma thèid thu Lag nan Crua - chan, Dèan inn-seadh dhaibh, mur cual iad e, Gur
ann air moch Di - lu - ain Le gaoth Tuath a rì -nn sinn seòl - adh. Nuair
dh'fhàg sinn a-mach Grian - aig, Bha ceò is fiath nan eun a - gainn; 'S ged
chuir sinn h-uile stiall oir - re, Cha dèanadh i - dhuinn cròn - an.

About this song

Rugadh an Sgiobair Aonghas MacLaomainn ann an Lag nan Cruach, Còrnaig Mòr, Eilean Thiriodh, mun cuairt air a' bhliadhna 1844. Is e mac de dh'Iain MacLaomainn, a bha na thuathanach agus na mharsanta, a bha ann. Bha e na oileanach is e ag ionnsachadh a bhith na lighiche ach dh'fhàg e sin air a chùlaibh air tàillibh tàladh na mara. Rinn e a chuid ionnsachaidh an luib a' 'Hall Line' agus rinn e adhartas gu bhith na Sgiobair. Shìubhail e aig aois 44, air bòrd bàta, agus tha e air a thiodhlaiceadh ann an Armeineagaidh. A rèir an fhiosrachaidh a tha ri fhaighinn anns a' chruinneadh, 'Na Bàird Thirisdeach' chaidh deannan de dh'òrain a sgrìobhadh aige ach chan eil air fhàgail againn ach 'Lag nan Cruachan'. Bha an t-òran ga sheinn ri linn beatha a' bhàird thein agus tha e fhathast a' dol gu làidir san latha a th' ann.

Captain Angus Lamont, the composer of this song, was born at Lag nan Cruachan, Cornaigmore, Isle of Tìree around the year 1844. He was a son of Iain Lamont who was a farmer and a merchant. Angus became a medical student but the pull of the ocean enticed him and he gave up his studies to go to sea. He served as an apprentice on the Hall Line and eventually rose to the rank of Master. He died on board ship at the age of 44 and is buried in America. According to the information given in 'Na Bàird Thirisdeach' several songs were composed by Captain Angus Lamont but this is the only surviving example. It is still going strong on the island.

Captain Angus Lamont
Lang nan Cruachan: "The Hollow of the Stacks."
Published in Òrain an Eòrna: "Songs of the Barley:"
Traditional Gaelic Songs from the Isle of Tìree, Published by An Iodhlann, Isle of
Tìree, 2012, page 09.

APPENDIX 9

1. *Deoch Slàinte na Gillean*

'S tha 'n Ariel bhòidheach gar feuchainn aig seòladh Airson a bhith còmhla rinn 's bu chòir dhi bhith ann; Ach le mheud 's fhuair thu dh' fhòghlam an toiseach do thòisich, Gun bheat thu iad còmhla 'n àm crosadh na Line'.

'S i ghearradh an fhairge mar shiosar air caimrig, 'S bha Chinaman mailidheach na dhealbh air a sròin; 'S i thàirngeachd an t-sùrdag air bhàrr nan tonn dùbhghorm, Mar fhiadh anns a' bhùireadh air chùl nam beann mòr.

'S nuair a chroch thu cuid aodaich am bàrr a cruinn chaola, 'S i dh'fhalbh gu h-aotram mar fhaoileag nan tonn; Gaoth-tuath 's i na frasan mar luaidhe ga sadadh, 'S bha fuaim aig a darach 's i sgapadh nan tonn.

'S nach gabh sinn an t-òran a rinneadh do Dhòmhnall Bhon bha thu cho fòghlaimt' air seòladh nan long:

Choisinn e an t-urram à China gu Lunnainn 'S gur feàrr leam na m' uile gun bhuidhinn e 'n geall.

These words were located by Fiona NicFhionghain (MacKinnon), who belongs to the organisation Tobar an Dualchais/ Kist o Riches and passed on the words in an email on 25 September 2013.

2. *Deoch Slainte Nan Gillean*

More information about the song can be found in this book: “Na Bàird Thirisdeach” (Rev. Hector Cameron ed. 1932) pp. 131-133. The words of the song differ from the ones provided by Fiona NicFhionghain. They are reported to be composed by the carpenter aboard the *Taeping*.

Deoch Slainte nan gillean a b'aill leam a thilleadh;
Mo chaileachd air mhire ga sireadh 's an am!
Cha b'e run a bhi 'poit a dh'fhag sunndach 'ga h-ol mi,
Ach clui nam fear oga nach soradh an dram.

Gu'n gabh sinn an t-oran a rinneadh do Dhomhnall
Bho'n tha e cho foghlaimt' air seoladh nan long:
Bho'n fhuair e an t-urram eadar China is Lunnainn
Gur fearr leam na m'uile gu'n bhuithinn e'n geall.

Bha'n Ariel bhoidheach g'ar fiachainn aig seoladh -
Gur h-i a bu choir a bhi comhl' ruinn 's an am';
'S le meheud 's fhuair thu dh'fhoghlum an toisdeach do toisich
Gu'un bheat thu comhla 'n am srosadh na Line.

'S i ghearradh an fhairge mar shiosar air caimrig,
Is Chinaman mailidheach 'na dhealbh air a sroin;
'S i thairngheadh an t-surdag air bharr nan tonn dubhghorm,
Mar fhiadh anns a'bhuireadh air chul nam beann mor.

Nuair thogadh tu 'h-aodach am barr a cruinn chaola,
'S i 'shnamhadh gu h-aotrom mar fhaoileag nan tonn;
Gaoth-tuath 's i na frasan mar luaidhe g'a sadadh,
Is fuaim aig a darach 'n am sgapadh nan tonn.

Tha na Sasunnaich tursach, 's na Goill chan eil sunnd orr'
O'n choisinn thu'n so do dhuthaich nam beann;
Le'd sgoilearachd Bheurla, 's tu 'd sheoladair gleusda,
Gheibh a' ghaoth fo 'cuid bhreidean 'n am reubadh nan tonn.

Gur mis' th' air mo leireadh 's a mhaduinn 's mi 'g eirigh;
An druichd air mo leine 's mi eisleanach fann;
'An China na dunach ga m' lot leis a' chuileig;
Gu'm b'fherr a bhi 'm Muile fo dhubhar nam beann.

An email from Mary Maclean 12 November 2014 indicated her research showed the ship's carpenter who composed this song was not on the crew of *Taeping*. This carpenter was Michael Koster, from Hamburg, Germany and he completed voyages on *Taeping* in 1865 and 1866. Maclean believed John MacKinnon from Tobermory, aged 26, the ship's carpenter aboard *Jane Brown* when Donald MacKinnon was captain, was the likely composer of the song in praise of Captain Donald MacKinnon, *Deoch Slainte Nan Gillean*.

3. <http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/fullrecord/65121/1>

Recorded 1970.05.20

Duration 00:05:25

Track ID 65121

Original tape ID SA 1970.105

Original track ID SA 1970.105

Contributor: Hector Kennedy

Reporter: Eric R Creegen

Held at the School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh, Scotland

There was a captain from Tiree who was involved in an ocean race from China to England. He was a MacKinnon and he was brought up in Heanish. He was captain of the *Taeping*. A song was composed about the boat race.

MacKinnon had a brother who was a doctor. He was killed in a shooting accident on New Year's Day. He was out shooting geese when the gun misfired and killed him.

4. Another recording with information about Donald MacKinnon is

<http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/fullrecord/65121/4>

5. [http://tobarandualchais.co.uk/full record/47498/1](http://tobarandualchais.co.uk/full_record/47498/1)

Deoch-slainge nan Gillean: Òran an Ariel

Colm o'Lochlainn ed 1948 p. 1

Seamus Campbell. This song praises the captain and crew of the record-breaking tea clipper *Taeping* and tells the story of the race which made it famous.

1minute 55 seconds, in Gaelic

Recorded in Oban, Argyll, Scotland, 1970 at the Royal National mòd

BBC Track ID MOD 1970 GR00331 Reel 1

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Christina Cameron Murray, 86 George Street, Edinburgh, Scotland, to her brother,
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William Murray, 2 Seymour Terrace, Loughborough Road, Brixton, London, England,
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BRIDGEMAN ART A high resolution image of the Peabody Essex Museum painting on file, available with licence to use, for £60.00 GBP. Image PEM216862
PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM, Salem, Massachusetts, USA. Oil painting on canvas
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BROOKE BOND OXO LTD *The Saga of Ships* Swap card, No 31 in a series of 50.
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