

Information about Duncan Gunn

Schoolmaster at Ruaig Public School (ca. 1880-1901)

Compiled from extracts from emailed correspondence between An Iodhlann and Angus Gunn (great grandson of Duncan Gunn), February 2020

Duncan Gunn was born in 1841 in Druimchork, Aultbea, Gairloch on Loch Ewe. He came to Tiree just before April 1881 with his wife Christina (nee Cameron) & their infant daughter Margaret. Duncan & Christina were married 10 Sep 1878 Perth. They are listed in the Tiree Censuses of 1881, 1891 and 1901 (see below).

They had four (or five?) more children Jessie, Angus and Alexander (my grandfather who was also a teacher in Duror, Argyll) and another Alexander who died of meningitis aged 7 months. All except Margaret were born on Tiree. It is possible that Duncan & Christina had another(?) child born before Margaret. There is a gap between the date of marriage 10 Sep 1878 and Margaret's birth in around Sep 1880. This child must (also?) have died in infancy.

In the family it is said that Duncan also taught a lot of young islanders to swim until one of his pupils nearly drowned. "Duncan Gunn was a well-known teacher in Ruaig about 1895 ... Gunn took the children down to the shore at Salum and taught them how to swim. However, John MacDonald from Scarinish, almost drowned at the shore one playtime and the children were not allowed near the sea during school hours after that." *Ministers and Deep-Sea Captains*, An Iodhlann, 2011.

Duncan left Tiree to live in the Gorbals area of Glasgow.

His eldest daughter Margaret married Archibald Darroch from Greenock in 1907. They had a son Duncan Gunn Darroch, who I met as a boy, and who was a Minister in Dundee. The Darrochs were rich having made their fortune in the Caribbean, probably from slaves and sugar. There is also a park in Greenock/Gourock called the Darroch Park.

Tiree Census records

1881 Ruaig

1	Gunn	Duncan	M	32	Head	Schoolmaster
1	Gunn	Christina	M	30	Wife	Schoolmaster's Wife
1	Gunn	Margaret N		7 mo	Dau	Schoolmaster's dau

1891 Ruaig

1	57 Ruaig	Gunn	Duncan	M	42	Head	Schoolmaster
1	57 Ruaig	Gunn	Christina	M	40	Wife	Schoolmaster's Wife
1	57 Ruaig	Gunn	Maggie U.		10	Daughter	Scholar
1	57 Ruaig	Gunn	Jessie C.		9	Daughter	Scholar
1	57 Ruaig	Gunn	Alexander		6	Son	Scholar
1	57 Ruaig	Gunn	Angus Cameron.		4	Son	Scholar

1901 Ruaig

33	Ruaig School House	Gunn	Duncan	M	60/52	Head	Schoolmaster
33	Ruaig School House	Gunn	Christina	M	53	Wife	Schoolmaster's Wife
33	Ruaig School House	Gunn	Alexander	S	16	Son	Pupil Teacher
33	Ruaig School House	Gunn	Angus C.		14	Son	Scholar
33	Ruaig School House	Leggat	Mary	S	17	Servant	Domestic Servant