

**TPF / 1860 / 4**

**DSC05188**

Precognition of Witnesses  
Henry Nisbet P.F. as to Bodies found on  
board the wreck of the Francis Yates, and  
Crosspoll sea shore -

Hector McLean

Coll 1 November 1860

Compeared Hector Maclean son of and residing with John Maclean Joiner residing at Arileod in the Island of Coll in the united parish of Tyree Argyllshire - Between 3 & 4 weeks ago I was told that the Hull of a three masted vessel was seen off the Sea Shore of Caoles between Ellen oare and Caol. 1. Three or four days thereafter I with 8 others went on Board - The vessel was water~~

**DSC05189**

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Hector McLean

water logged and without the masts - she was then about 250 yards from the Shore - She was named on the Stern the "Francis Yates of St Ives" - The water was up to the Deck. The bulwarks were broken away from the middle towards the Stern - The bow was facing the land, and the stern outwards a portion of one of the chains attached to one of the anchors on the bow was out on the sea by the stern - There was an anchor on each side of the bow - We took the compass and a Bell which was in the fore part of the ship ashore - On a Monday thereafter

Fifteen days ago (15<sup>th</sup> October 1860)

John Kennedy a witness and I with several others went on board ~~~

**DSC05190**

3

Hector McLean

board the wreck which drove closer to the Shore at Caoles and which was then not more then 150 yards distant - The companion was away that day and the Bulkheads at the cabin partially broken - and some Barrels of Tar floating in the water in the Cabin - I heard some one say that the likeness of a man was visible in the Cabin - I looked and on the Cabin floor I saw the body of a man lying as if resting in a half sitting posture and leaning on his left elbow - There would be about 7 feet water above the body - I cut an Iron hook of one of the ropes on board and fastened it to a long stick and by these means got the body raised up - we then took ~~~

**DSC05191**

4

Hector McLean

took the body ashore and sent to Caoles for a Cart which was got and the body was taken to the Barn on the farm of Caoles. - The body was under full clothing. The body was that of a young lad about 19 years of age - and without Whiskers with long light black curly hair - The face with the neck was discoloured as if bruised - and bruised blood accumulating under the skin - His eyes and mouth were shut - He was five feet eight inches in length. Half way between the wrist and elbow joints on the fore part of the right hand the letters J. S. and also on the other hand in the same place as on the right, - there was inserted the figure of an anchor. These insertions were in blue Ink ~~~

**DSC05192**

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Hector McLean

Ink - He had a pair of Wellington Boots on with Blue greyish woolen stockings. He had also a pair of woolen drawers with blue narrow stripes running across and downwards with Moleskin Trousers - He had on under a shirt of Carsyke of small print a blue flannel shirt - a blue Guernsey frock - woven

rigged & furred above the Waist and the lower part plain woven and above that a carysye frock of a small striped print of white red and blue - Above these He had a leather belt round his waist with a Brass Buckle and having a leather case attached above the right thigh with a gully knife in it - The body was interred on the day following - Tuesday  
in Crosspoll burying ground in the ~~~

**DSC05193**

6

Hector McLean

the Island of Coll aforesaid - Kennedy and I have been employed to watch articles which have come ashore from the wreck – the vessel having broken up. On

Sabbath 28<sup>th</sup> October about 12 noon

John Craig & Charles Cowan witnesses came and informed me that the body of a man was on the sea shore of Crosspoll farm which marches with Caoles farm from both sides of the Island.

We accompanied them and we found the naked body of a man wanting both neck and head on the water edge - Kennedy and I lifted the body out of the water and carried it in mats and placed it on the grass - We then sent to Caoles for a cart and the body was then taken to Crosspoll ~~~

**DSC05194**

7

Hector McLean

Crosspoll and put into an outhouse there - The body was in a decomposed state. The body was interred on

Monday last 29<sup>th</sup> Oct 1860

in Crosspoll Burying ground in the Island of Coll aforesaid.

This body was found nearly opposite the place where the vessel was driven ashore.

There was no one alive in the vessel when I first Boarded her and we found no books or papers to trace the identity of the body which we found in the Cabin Truth.

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**DSC05196**

9

John Kennedy

Compeared John Kennedy residing at Greimsary in the Island of Coll aforesaid who says I am 19 years of age - I concur with the Witness Hector Maclean as to what he says since the finding of the body on board the ship Francis Yates of St Ives about 15 days ago - I am also employed with him to watch the wreck - The body which was found on the Sea Shore was without the neck and head from the upper part of the shoulder - and I believe it was one of the men on board the ship "Francis Yates" of St Ives - and it was that of a full grown man -

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**DSC05198**

11

John Craig

Compeared John Craig Tacksman Crosspoll in the Island of Coll aforesaid - who says I am 28 years of age - On

Sunday last 28<sup>th</sup> October 1860

Charles Cowan a witness and I went for a walk, about mid day, along the outskirts of my farm with the sea shore - When we had walked only a few minutes along & near the sea shore - I saw a body of a white colour in the water edge on the shore - I said to Cowan surely that's a corpse - He said no, it would be the Figurehead of the Francis Yates - I said no it was the corpse of some person - We were then about 50 yards distant - we went to within 12 yards of it to make ourselves certain and we then saw it was the body of a grown man without the neck and the head - The body was ~~

**DSC05199**

12

John Craig

was quite naked and in a decomposed state - I suggested that we should inform Hector Maclean and John Kennedy of the fact and Cowan and I, without touching the body, went to and found Maclean & Kennedy at their duty watching the cargo or wreck of the Francis Yates which lay on the sea shore on the farm of Caoles, which marches across the Island from both sides, with that of Crosspoll we told them of the circumstances and they accompanied us to the spot, where the body lay -

They both went into the water and the body was put on dry land - and they sent to Caoles for a horse and Cart - I came home with Cowan and left McLean & Kennedy with the body In a short time thereafter a Caoles cart ~~

**DSC05200**

13

John Craig

Cart with the body was led to one of the outhouses on my farm and the body put into the house.

The body was interred on

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> October 1860

in Crosspoll burying ground in the Island of Coll aforesaid -

The body was of a stout and strong make and I would say with the neck and head the body would be from 6 feet 3 inches to 6 feet 4 inches in length - I cant say anything about the age - Truth.

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**DSC05202**

15

Charles Cowan

Compeared Charles Cowan a Mason and residing at Ballyhough who says I am 32 years of age –

On Sunday last 28 October 1860

I went to see Mr Craig - He and I had a walk together along the sea shore of Crosspoll on the North west side of the Island - Craig saw a Human body on shore at the sea edge - He pointed it out to me and we both went to within a short distance of where it lay - I then saw and was satisfied it was the body of a full grown man it was naked and wanted the neck and head - and the skin peeling of the arms and hands - We both went and informed Hector Maclean & John Kennedy of the fact and they accompanied Craig & me to the ~~~

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Charles Cowan

the spot - The body was lifted on a mat and taken out of the Water - an Express was then sent for a Cart - I went home and saw no more of it.

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**DSC05205**

Precognition of Witnesses  
 Henry Nisbet P.F.  
 as to Dead bodies  
 found in the District  
 of the Island of Coll  
1860  
 (Tobermory)

**DSC05206**

Island of Coll  
 19<sup>th</sup> October 1860

H. Nisbet Esq  
 P. Fiscal  
 Tobermory  
 Sir

I have to intimate that on Monday the 15<sup>th</sup> inst. the body of a man was taken out of the ship "Francis Yates of St Ives" wrecked at Coll, & interred on Tuesday the 16<sup>th</sup> inst. at Crossipol Coll.  
 I have also to intimate that a Mrs Fowler a pauper residing at Torastan Coll went a- missing on Saturday the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. & that

**DSC05207**

her remains were discovered on Thursday the 18<sup>th</sup> inst. at some distance from her own house.

I am, Sir  
 Your obt. Servt  
 James MacColl  
 Intrm Registrar of Births &c  
 for the District of Coll

**DSC05208**

1860  
 Coll 19 Octr  
 Revd J. McColl