

DSC05900

Precognition of Witnesses
Henry Nisbet P.F.
as to sudden death
of
John Macdonald & 4 others

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Marion Macdonald

Balemartin 11 May 1860

Compeared Marion Macdonald a Widow and residing at Balemartin - says I am 49 years of age -
A fortnight past today - Friday 27 April 1860
& about 3 A.M.

John Macdonald a son of mine, Lachlan Macdonald, Donald McDonald, John Orr & John McLean left Mannal shore in a skiff for the deep sea fishing - They all took with them food for the day and as they intended to remain out during the night, as much as would serve for their breakfast on the day following - My son told me he expected they would be home from the fishing about mid-day of Saturday following (28 April 1860) - The Friday in question was calm till about midnight when a strong breeze sprang up and continued -
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Marion Macdonald

I expected my son and his Boat home at the time stated but they have not yet returned nor been heard of -

Macleans Boat from Balephuill which had been fishing with them outside Skerryvore returned on the Saturday morning, - and I was then informed that they were afraid my sons boat was upset - I have not heard anything of the fate of my son or of the rest of the crew since and I have no doubt they have all been drowned.

My son was 25 years of age -

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Marion McInnes or McDonald

Mary McInnes or McDonald wife of and residing with Lachlan MacDonald residing at Mannal on the Island of Tyree aforesaid - who says I am about 48 years of age - John Orr a fisherman was my nephew and he resided with me - I concur with the Witness Marion Macdonald with the following

addition - John Orr was about 31 years of age - and was one of the men on board the skiff from Mannal referred to by the other Witnesses in precognition -

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Janet Kennedy or McDonald

Compeared Janet Kennedy wife of Lachlan Macdonald a fisherman and residing at Balemartin - says I am 30 years of age Lachlan McDonald one of the crew of the missing boat was my husband - I concur with the witness Widow Marion MacDonald - I feel satisfied that my husband with the rest of the crew have met with their Death, otherwise something would have been heard of their whereabouts - My husband was older than Truth

Ann Macquarie or Macdonald

Compeared Ann Macquarie or Macdonald a widow and residing at Balemartin on the Island of Tyree aforesaid - says I am 80 years of age - Lachlan Macdonald referred to by his wife Janet Kennedy was my son - He was about 35 years of age -

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Flora Macdonald

Compeared Flora Macdonald a widow and residing at Balemartin on the Island of Tyree aforesaid says - I am about 50 years of age - I concur with Marion Macdonald a Witness with the following addition and exception - my son Donald MacDonald was in the boat - He took with him as much food as would serve him for dinner and breakfast the following day - He told me on the Thursday night before leaving that they were going to fish with their long lines on some fishing banks somewhere in the neighbourhood of Skerryvore and if the weather permitted that they would not be home till about breakfast time of Saturday

My son was about 24 years of age -

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Donald McLean

Compeared Donald McLean residing at Mannal in the Island of Tyree in the United Parish of Tyree and Coll aforesaid - says I am 61 years of age

On a Friday a fortnight past today (27th April 1860)
about 4 A. M.

my son John McLean, Donald MacDonald, Lachlan Macdonald, John McDonald and John Orr left home for the fishing with large lines - They expected to be home the following day and took with them food, as much as would serve till their return on the Saturday morning –

I heard by report that the boat in which my son was, was seen by Charles McLean and several others making for home - I saw Niel McLean a witness and he told me how the boat was seen under way for ~~~

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Donald McLean

home and then missed or lost sight of - I do not entertain the least hope of my son or any of the crews safety - I feel convinced they all perished and met with a watery grave, other wise their whereabouts would have been heard of particularly as the weather since has been good - The skiff in which my son was, was about 20 feet in length of keel - She was not strong -

My son was about 27 years of age -

I have no doubt my son with the rest of the crew were lost when the boat could not be seen by Niel Maclean and those with him - i.e. shortly after having missed her - Truth -

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Charles McLean

Balephuill 11th May 1860

Compeared Charles Maclean a fisherman and son of and residing with Donald Maclean residing at Balephuill on the Island of Tyree In the United Parish of Tyree and Coll aforesaid who says I am 32 years of age - on a

Friday a fortnight past today (27 April 1860)

John Black, Niel Maclean, Archibald Maclean – Niel McKinnon Donald Macdonald and I left Balephuill early in the morning to pursue our avocation as fishermen. We proceeded to some of the fishing Banks which are distant about 5 miles, and set a portion of our lines - About 2 P.M. we saw the boat, in which Donald Macdonald, Lachlan Macdonald John Macdonald all from Balemartin and John Orr and John Maclean both from Mannal were proceeding towards the fishing banks ~~~

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Charles McLean

banks near Stevensons rock which is about 4 miles beyond Skerryvore Light and about 16 miles from Tyree - About 5 P.M. we followed and found them having their lines set on a bank near Stevenson's rock. We set our own lines in a parallel direction with theirs and about 400 yards distant. We went to the other boat and enquired whether they intended to remain out during the night. We were told that their intention was to remain out and lift their lines in the morning. We considered this to be the best, and particularly as the night was calm and good looking, we agreed to remain. We kept close together till sunset when each went to their fishing lines. About midnight a breeze began to spring up from the South West ~~

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Charles McLean

West and continued to increase till Sunrise, (28th April 1860), when we noticed the other boats crew engaged lifting their lines. We then began to lift our own lines and while engaged we saw the other boat having her sail (a lugsail) with we thought three reefs in, being steered towards Tyree - The sea was getting very deep and the wind increasing - We cut our lines being unable to take them in and set a buoy on the end. We had only the 1/6th of them taken in - We then set our sail taking in four

reefs and stood homewards - we found the sail too much and owing to the strength of the wind we had to take in another reef - While we were engaged setting the sail I saw the other boat about ¼ of a mile ahead of us and we were remarking that they carried too much sail - It would be between 3 & 4 o'clock in the morning when I last saw the other boat. The morning was rather hazy - After having sail righted ~~~

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Charles McLean

righted - I looked again but could see nothing of the other boat. We kept a sharp look out all the way but could see nothing of it - The wind though very high with a deep sea on was quarterly - We thought that probably she had been too far ahead of us to enable us see her - On landing we were informed that the other boat did not arrive. It occurred to me then that some mishap had occurred, and I have now no doubt that the men perished that morning

They left the fishing ground fully ½ an hour before us -

I was never in a boat in such a heavy sea. I was steering the boat and had enough to do in managing to keep her from being swamped.

The other boat was 21 feet keel but not very strong built - The place where ~~~

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Charles McLean

where we had our lines set at Stevenson's rock is exposed to the Atlantic Ocean and a very strong current which when there is any wind to signify causes the sea to run with high waves so that it is with the greatest difficulty a little boat, such as we had, can survive.

We reached home about 7 A.M. on Saturday in question.

I have no doubt the men were drowned shortly after we had missed the boat in which they were as aforesaid by the swamping of their Boat in the heavy sea that was running at the time - Truth

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Archibald McLean

Compeared Archibald McLean who says I am brother of the Witness Charles MacLean and reside with my father Donald McLean residing at Balephuill in the Island of Tyree aforesaid - I fully concur with my brother in his statement with the following addition. When I saw the boat she was about a mile ahead of us running with the wind in her quarter and making direct for home. I was busily engaged with the sail in getting it set. I looked again after the other boat but she was not to be seen -

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John Black

Compeared John Black residing at Balephuill in the Island of Tyree aforesaid - who says - I am 38 years of age - I concur with the Witnesses Charles Maclean and Archibald McLean -

Niel McLean

Nile Maclean a fisherman and residing at Balephuill aforesaid, aged 34, also concurs as above.

DSC05920

No 1
Precognition of Witnesses
Henry Nisbet P.F.
as to sudden Death
of
John McDonald & 4 others
1860
(Tobermory)

DSC05921

Baugh 1st May 1860

Police Report

The Fishing Skiff, Father & sons of Manal, Island of Tyree, and County of Argyll, is missed since the morning of Saturday the 28th day of April current, and it is feared that the said Skiff with 5 of a crew sunk, and perished whilst endeavouring to return home to Manal. from relstay Fishing Bank (4 miles South West of the Skere Vore Light House). –

Finlay Fraser
D.C. Tyree

Evidence

1st Lachlan McDonald, Aged 32 years a shoemaker residing at Manal aforesaid, states The Fishing Skiff Father & Sons of Manal, left Manal about 7 o'clock AM Friday morning and proceeded to the Fishing Bank as usuall. the said fishing Bank is about 5 miles to the east of Manal. after remaining there till about 2 o'clock in the afternoon of same day (when they had there nets lifted) they proceeded to relstay Fishing Bank which is 4 miles to the South West of the Skere Vore Light House. Having informed us on the preeceeding night that they were to go there. they also took provision with them in the Boat & stated that they could not return sooner than Saturday.

2nd John McLean Aged years. a crofter residing at Balephuill, Parish and Island

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Island of Tyree, and County of Argyll states. The Fishing Skiff yern Gorm of Balephuill. left Balephuill on the evening of Friday and returned home about 7 o'clock AM on the following morning, after being fishing all night at Relstay Bank. I had been on the beach at the time they landed at Balephuill on Saturday morning and one of the crew named John Black asked me, did I see the Manal Skiff going home. I said no. the whole of the crew then seemed to doubt of her safety, and told that the said Manal skiff had been in there company at SunSet on the preceeding night. that there (the Manal Skiff's fishing lines had been set parallel to thers on the west side and having been together at sunset. they both considered it better for each of the Skiffs to go to the end of there lines so as to commence to lift said lines as soon day light would come in. So they parted where it was getting dark Friday night. and each boat went to the end of there respective lines. and as soon as it was clear in the morning we comenced to lift our lines, and observed the Manal Skiff doing the same we had a very strong breze from the South. & South east. with a very heavy sea. after working very bussy on our lines for 1½ hours. We observed the Manal Skiff under Sail, Stearing on land. We should think that they had 3 reefs

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reefs in of there sail at the time. they were about the distance of 400 yards to the north west of us when we observed them. we then considered it our safety to follow the same example. and each of us turned too to prepare, which took about ½ hour from us before we got our Sail up. we then looked for the Manal Skiff. but would not see her we had 4 reefs in in our sail & owing to the strong breeze & heavy see. we were compelled to put in a fifth. we considered that the Manal Skiff carried to much sail with the 3 reefs only. the name of the place where we were at the time we observed her. is relstay Fishing Bank 4 miles South West of the Skere Vore Light House.

Remarks

I had been in Balphuill and as the fishermen there are out fishing every day. from morning till late at night. I did not see any of the crew on Board the Skiff Yern Gorm of Balphuill. who had seen the Manal Skiff on Saturday morning. but having examined all parties who conferred with them on the subject. I find each of them corroborating the aforesaid John McLean's statement. the Skiff in Question belonging to Manal was 21 feet long, not very strong, with crack in the mast.

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mast. some hopes has been entertained of them getting in to the Skere Vore Light House, until teusday last when a Skiff went to make enquiry there and had been informed that they did not as much as observe the Skiff on Saturday morning. not the slightest doubts is entertained of there safety now.

Finlay Fraser
D. C.
Tyree

Police Report
sudden Death
of
John Macdonald & 4 o'rs
Tyree
May 1860

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Names . ages . and residences of the crew of Skiff . Father and sons of Manal . Tyree

Name	Age	Residence
Donald McDonald	25 years	Ballmartain Tyree
Lachlan McDonald	35 years	Do Do
John McDonald	24 years	Do Do
John Orr	31 years	Manal Do
John McLean	26 years	Do Do

Name . Age and residence of the crew of Yern Gorm of Balphuill ~~

Name	Age	Residence
Jno Black	38 years	Balphuill Tyree
Neil McLean	34 years	Do Do
Charles McLean	32 years	Do Do
Archibald McLean	24 years	Do Do
resides with Flora McFadyen		
Neil McKinnon	21 years	Do Do
resides with Janet McDonald		

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C. 1 - No. 1230

[page of notes in pencil]

John McLeans house

Niel McLean Balephuill

running quarter home -

told me that the other boat set sail before sunrise on Saturday when we noticed that they set sail we immediately cut the lines which we were lifted and the other boat left - we set four reefs, when we set the sail the other boat was running before us for Tyree and I looked and saw her before us about ½ a mile - and when we got the boat turned looked & saw no more of her