



NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES

200 Written-in-the-Landscape papers now online!

We are delighted to be able to announce that 200 fascinating records from Inveraray Archives and LiveArgyll are now available to view on our website through the [Written-in-the-Landscape Project](#). Our specialist archivist, Kirsteen Connor, has spent several months reviewing, sorting and cataloguing these records, half of which include valuable transcriptions from the Procurator Fiscal's office in Tobermory detailing criminal cases relating to Tiree during 1848-1904 (and a few from Coll and Mull as well). The two Procurator Fiscals who appear in these records are Henry Nisbet and William Sproat. Sproat's daughter, Mary, married Hugh MacDiarmid – 'The Black Factor' of Tiree.

In Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service is responsible for the prosecution of crime and the investigation of sudden or suspicious deaths. These records therefore include some harrowing accounts of death, suicide, theft, assault and murder. It's unsurprising to find that a significant proportion of the records relate to the sea, and there are many reports of shipwrecks, drownings, deaths at sea and fights on board ships.

Other records provide some light relief - three of the reports record assaults involving ducks! In 1866 Chirsty MacDonald killed a duck belonging to Malcolm MacDonald in Balemartine ([2021.54.60](#)), and in 1880 Ann McMillan/McDougall and Alice Bake/McMillan quarrelled about ducks and fought at the house of Sarah Cameron/McMillan in Balevullin ([2021.54.95](#)). In 1872 Flora MacPhail/MacKinnon assaulted Ann MacFadyen/McDougall in Vaul using a duck as a weapon. A witness statement attests that MacPhail "*did with a Duck strike her once or more severe blows on or about the face or head to her terror & alarm, and injury of her person*" ([2021.54.81](#)). MacPhail was given a fine of two shillings and sixpence or to spend one day in jail. No witness statement is provided by the duck.

The records contain a wealth of colourful and vivid detail about the lives of people who lived on Tiree during the nineteenth century. In addition, names, occupations and places of residence are recorded, making these an exciting resource for anyone researching family history.

All transcriptions of Procurator Fiscal records can be viewed [here](#), while the full 200 Written-in-the-Landscape entries can be viewed [here](#).