

**Digitised copy of Letter from Malcolm McLaurine, chamberlain of Tiree, to the Duke of Argyll,
14 Jan 1802**

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M^r M^cLaurine
about Tyree
matters –
Janry 1802

Answ^d 21st Jany

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Tyrii 14th January 1802

My Lord Duke

I had the honor of writing your Grace on the 9th with a sample of the Barley; finding the Vessel by which I wrote is not off, I also embrace the opportunity of sending a specimen of the pottery of the island; of this shape they make some pretty large vessels, which they use for culinary purposes, with it is a sample of the clay it is formed of, and also a little of the fossile [sic] sand which is so prevalent. I have to acknowledge the analysis of it by D^r Gardner; and of some hints concerning a packet in the 1780, from Captⁿ Campbell; both of which I shall take care, and will attend to what you Grace desires regarding the other Papers I received in Summer last. With regard to the packet, am afraid none of the natives possess the ability to attempt anything of the kind – I have wrote to Greenock to two correspondents to use their endeavour to find out, a good steady man, who would undertake it and give in his proposals. To M^r Robert Campbell at Roseneath, I have mentioned your Grace's wish to set one a going, and as his acquaintance is better than mine, I have entreated of him to be at pains on the subject involving an object; that may be of immense advantage to the island.

Your Grace has instructed me to send two lads from this island to Inveraray to learn to be Quarriers; but tho' I have spoke to many & promised them according to your orders situations in the new Crofts to be made at Balimartine [sic]

for

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for the fishing adventurers, yet none would agree to go, if I would not promise to maintain and pay them wages while absent, and Lands upon their return home, which of course was refused. Men of this business would be very useful and I doubt not your Grace, will be pleased to order encouragement for any good men that will come to settle.

Reference: Argyll Papers/PFV65/71, An Iodhlann 2021.53.71

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I have at the same time sent to your Grace's Agent at Inveraray Mr John Campbell, a list of the people most criminal of distilling whisky last year, amounting to fifteen which constitutes the 10th man, according to your instructions to be removed from the island; Buchanan the schoolmaster and his son are on the list of removals – There is but one family at Balaphiul [sic], a herd of the old Bailie's, none at Balimartine [sic], who are workmen and herds of his, and all the people at Scarinish, being two of the fishing stations. The servants the old Bailie had upon this farm of Crossapol were not removed at last Whitsunday, the consequence has been, they rendered it good for nothing for me for this year, the whole having been cut up by their cattle & horses, particularly by a Miller who has a Croft upon it; as his miln is of no use, and at any rate unnecessary, upon account of the scheme of the wind miln; I have included him and them in the Removals; and trust all these will meet your Grace's approbation.

I beg to call your notice that your Grace's ground officer is superannuated from which cause and his being neither able to read or write, I find him of much less service than otherwise he would be, tho' he is very willing, and trust your Grace will be pleased to allow me to suggest an active young man, who served as a sargiant [sic] in Lord Lorn's [sic] fencibles¹, & who bears an excellent character in the island, and both reads and writes pretty well; his name is Neil M^cLean, and I have no doubt

he

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he would give satisfaction if you condescended to appoint him and name a salary. Thinking a Sherrif [sic] Officer resident here, would be found at times convenient & useful, I have advised him to go to Inveraray to be instructed, to which he has agreed, and now goes to M^r John Campbell your Grace's agent – In suggesting this circumstance to your Grace's consideration, I should at the same time be sorry, it should be of any prejudice to old ground officer Angus Munn, who from every thing I can learn has been a zealous faithful man in his duty; he has a son who has but very little education. His present salary from your Grace is £8 St^r per ann: and he possesses six mail lands besides for which he pays £12.10 St^r yearly.

I beg leave to mention to your Grace that in the sort of byre and stable here, neither cow nor horse can be admitted: If the wood cast ashore, is not proved and claimed, I shall beg leave to make use of a few planks of it, to put them into some temporary sort of repair, for which I shall pay your Grace –

The Model of the wind miln was at Aros, when I came here and I requested Major Maxwell to send it to Oban to M^r John Stevenson, who was to give in an Estimate of the Stone work only, as the wooden part of the Machinery was to be sent from Edin^r and M^r Stevenson has not as yet sent the estimate; but indeed communication in winter is so very seldom and accidental, that letters remain in Mull frequently three or four weeks. With the kelp vessel I came and she is the first opportunity leaving the island since then.

I have the honour to be My Lord Duke

¹ A soldier belonging to a British militia which could be called up only for service on home soil. Colonel George, Marquis of Lorne, commanded the 1st Argyllshire Regiment between 1793 and 1799, when it was disbanded. Reference: Argyll Papers/PFV65/71, An Iodhlann 2021.53.71

Your Grace's

Most Obedient humble Serv^t

Malcolm M^cLaurine

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