

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

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Answ<sup>d</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> March &  
Copy sent to Mr  
Ferrier

Tyrii 10<sup>th</sup> March 1802

My Lord Duke;

I have had the honor of your Grace's answer, by Captain Campbell's letter of the 25<sup>th</sup> Jan<sup>ry</sup> to my letter of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of that month. According to your permission, I have used a little of the timber for the sort of byre and Stable here for a temporary accommodation, for which am much obliged to your Grace.

The Timber has been claimed, but not proved, as yet, and from any thing I can learn, the marks do not correspond. Should it however be identified & sold, I shall purchase it, if at all reasonable, according to your desire.

There has been a Cask rather larger than a half a hogshead about 2/3<sup>ds</sup> full of wine, lying for two years nearly in a barn three or four miles from this house upon Mr McLean's (who lives in Mull) farm, a sample of which is sent herewith; and your Grace will please direct what is to be done with it.

Of this date & formerly, I remitted to Mr Ferrier Bills & Drafts to the amount of £871..10 to account of the Rents due for last Martinmas from this island and ends of Coll. I have got a Return made of Bear amounting to 366 bolls, that can be spared, & thought they would have a great deal more. Notwithstanding

of

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of the Excise fines last year, one of the Tenants under Summons of removal has been bold enough to commence distilling of late, and two others who were not, followed the example; they contrived with much secrecy to work off a few bolls. I have secured their stills & worms, and signified to them that your Grace however plentiful the Cup may be, is resolved, to give no shelter or lands, to such Delinquents, and that they much remove also.

I had a letter of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Ult<sup>o</sup> from Mr Ferrier wherein he says, that Colonel Graham wrote him, that a vessel was soon to be expected here for the barley, loaded with Coals from Mess<sup>rs</sup> Watt & C<sup>o</sup> of Greenock. I rather fear they will find the Coals a bad speculation, as very few will purchase them, and there is no place to secure or store them up, without which they'll not be safe. Having no Linlithgow nor Winchester Measures, am at a loss to know the comparative proportions betwixt them and the measure of this island.

I have been able to make very little progress in the business of the Clyde Packet, as we have been cut off almost entirely with Mull or the main land owing to the very boisterous & stormy weather we

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have had for a great length of time. I believe the Campbells in Coll will take a share, and are soon to inform me positively. Some

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has been made regarding a Small Packet once a week to Mull from Scarinish so as to open a weekly communication with the Post Office at Tobermory; an object very desirable and much needed. I hope your Grace will be pleased to give one of the new Crofts about to be made there to the Packet man rent free or upon moderate terms to encourage the undertaking.

I beg to represent to your Grace that the office of the Ground Officer here is extremely laborious, and that hardly a day passes but requires his attendance: the salary, as I formerly mentioned, to your Grace is only £8, and the share of the farm he occupied, which he paid for equally with the other Tenants, he derived little advantage from, as he was under the necessity of keeping a man for hire, not being able to attend himself, to work it. The old officer upon this account, & a numerous family, is very poor, but is most thankful for your Grace's pension; along with which I do not know by Captain Campbell's letter, whether he is to pay for his portion of the land or sit free, as your Grace will be pleased.

May I beg that your Grace will be pleased to say, what Salary the new ground officer is to have including any allowance he might be entitled to for any employment he might be called to as a Sherriff Offr for this & Ends of Coll. If your Grace would allow me to suggest £15 a year in full of both, I should think it sufficient, giving him

four

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four mail lands at the same rent as any other Tenants.

It is necessary to submit to your Grace, that the island is very ill appointed with regard to an encouragement for a school master: the parochial salary is only £10 a year, & the house and byre possessed by Buchanan is not worth twenty shillings; under these discouraging circumstances no man of ability or character can be had; but should you deem it proper to order a small snug house and byre to be built & an estimate made, with a Croft to be inclosed, a garden two Cows grass & that of a horse, I have no doubt, according to your Grace's instruction a good man might be got: probably your Grace would like a small plan to be made of this when Langlands is here.

The Model of the wind Miln is now here, but Mr Stivenson of Oban, who had it is his possession, has not as yet sent the estimate.

I beg to mention that the Inclosure of this farm is so very bad, that it is impossible to keep its grass from being eat up by the cattle & horses of the contiguous farms; it is a phail Dyke which the tenants were in use to build up; one days work of the neighbouring tenants would secure it, and I have taken the liberty of calling them the first convenient opportunity, of which I hope your grace will not disapprove.

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