

Na Lìneachan Mòra

The Bynames, Genetics & Lore of Lewis

Issue 1: July 2022

Welcome to the first issue of this new online journal.

During discussions with a number of online acquaintances, it was agreed that amateur research into the families of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland is quite fragmented. Emails get lost as life intervenes, and Facebook Messenger is hardly the ideal forum for detailed discussion. New researchers have no way of knowing what work has already been done, and lengthy explanations have to be given on multiple occasions. Good quality research often remains on scraps of paper, with no one else in the immediate family interested in preserving them. Consequently, the wheel is often re-invented, and researchers with similar interests do not know of each other.

This journal aims to be a place where any serious amateur researcher can post their findings and musings without fear. There is no need to have an academic qualification in order to join in. It is hoped that, over time, the journal will gather together the otherwise disparate knowledge which we have.

The journal title, 'Na Lìneachan Mòra' is a reference to 'the great lines' used for fishing the deeper waters of the Hebrides each spring and summer. I hope that this collaboration between contributors will lead to a much deeper understanding of our shared heritage, particularly regarding the poorly understood period prior to the institution of the parish registers.

This first issue contains items which I have gathered myself. This has been done for two reasons: I'm keen to see this first issue released, but I also want to give examples of what I have in mind, although please submit anything which may be of interest. I anticipate publishing roughly each quarter — January, April, July and October — but the frequency will depend entirely upon how much material is shared. Those who contact me and ask to be put on the mailing list will receive an email alerting them to each new issue. A link to all issues is [here](#).

The rules stated on the next page simply aim to encourage responsible participation.
Please get involved!

Yours faithfully,

William Cumming (Compiler)

Terms & Conditions for submissions

- 1) There is no fee to be paid at any point.
- 2) Submissions may be of any length and should be emailed to cummingwj@hotmail.com.
A fifty-word piece of oral history is as welcome as a ten-thousand word essay.
- 3) Copyright remains with the submitter.
- 4) Submissions should be submitted as Word documents. The Compiler may lightly edit these for formatting, but will otherwise be published as submitted. Images must be submitted as high resolution .png or .jpg files. If the Compiler believes that there are issues to be concerned about, these must be resolved before publication. The submitter's full name (and email address, if so desired) will be given at the foot of the submission.
- 5) In making a submission, the submitter is stating that there are no copyright issues. If that is later found to be incorrect then the submitter is liable, rather than the Compiler of the journal. In particular, the work done by Bill and Chris Lawson of *Seallam!* may not be quoted at any length. Instead the work referred to should be cited so that the reader can refer to the original text.
- 6) All submissions must relate to a family which lived in Lewis prior to the year 1900.
This could be a fairly tenuous link; for example, if a Raasay tradition has a Lewis connection this would be very welcome.
- 7) Where a tradition is known in the original Gaelic, please provide the original, but also translate the text for the benefit of those of us who, sadly, do not speak the language.
- 8) It is inevitable that submissions will sometimes contain errors.
These may be corrected by the submitter or politely challenged by others in future issues.
- 9) Submissions relating to DNA testing must have received consent from the individual whose DNA was tested. Individuals other than the submitter must not be identifiable, unless the Compiler has received specific permission directly from those other individuals.

These conditions will be updated from time to time.

Please email me (cummingwj@hotmail.com) if you would like to be notified when a new issue is published.

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Background Reading

The following articles were written by Rev. William Matheson for the Stornoway Gazette:

Nicolsons (1)	17 Nov 1950	Macdonalds (1)	24 Jul 1956
Nicolsons (2)	24 Nov 1950	Macdonalds (2)	31 Jul 1956
Murrays (1)	5 Jan 1951	Macaulays (1)	25 Sep 1956
Murrays (2)	12 Jan 1951	Macaulays (2)	2 Oct 1956
Macphails (1)	16 Feb 1951	Macaulays (3)	9 Oct 1956
Macphails (2)	23 Feb 1951	Macaulays (4)	16 Oct 1956
Maclennans (1)	6 Apr 1951	Macaulays, 2 nd series (1)	29 Jan 1957
Maclennans (2)	13 Apr 1951	Macaulays, 2 nd series (2)	12 Feb 1957
Macleans (1)	25 May 1951	Macaulays, 2 nd series (3)	19 Feb 1957
Macleans (2)	1 Jun 1951	Macaulays, 2 nd series (4)	26 Feb 1957
Mathesons (1)	27 Jul 1951	Macaulays, 3 rd series	7 May 1957
Mathesons (2)	3 Aug 1951	Macaulays of Valtos, 4 th series (1)	18 Jun 1957
Mathesons (3)	10 Aug 1951	Macaulays of Valtos, 4 th series (2)	25 Jun 1957
Mathesons (4)	17 Aug 1951	Macaulays of Valtos, 4 th series (3)	2 Jul 1957
Mathesons (5)	24 Aug 1951	Macaulays of Linshader, 5 th series (1)	28 Jan 1958
Macivers (1)	9 Nov 1951	Macaulays of Linshader, 5 th series (2)	4 Feb 1958
Macivers (2)	16 Nov 1951	Macaulays of Linshader, 5 th series (3)	11 Feb 1958
Related letter	21 Oct 1952	Related letter	18 Feb 1958
Macivers of Gress (1)	29 Feb 1951	Macaulays of Brenish (1)	29 Jul 1958
Macivers of Gress (2)	7 Mar 1952	Macaulays of Brenish (2)	5 Aug 1958
Related letter	11 Apr 1952	Smiths (1)	29 Dec 1959
MacLeods of Garrabost	30 Dec 1952	Smiths (2)	5 Jan 1960
Related letter	20 Jan 1953	Smiths (3)	12 Jan 1960
MacLeods of Pabbay*	1 Sep 1953	Morisons (1)	8 Oct 1977
* later corrected to Hacklete		Morisons (2)	15 Oct 1977
Mackenzies of Kildun	8 Jun 1954		
Mackenzies of Achilty (1)	14 Jun 1955		
Mackenzies (various) (1)	11 Oct 1955		
Mackenzies (various) (2)	18 Oct 1955		
Related letter	1 Nov 1955		

As far as I have been able to ascertain, these are all the articles written by W. Matheson for the Stornoway Gazette under the pseudonum *Mac Gille Chaluim*. If you know of other articles in the same vein, perhaps between 1960 and 1977, please let me know.

Matheson cut the articles out of the newspaper and pasted them into large albums and then annotated them with the results of his later research, sometimes amending or deleting sections of the original articles. These albums are held by the National Library of Scotland, Acc. 9711, Box 8. The annotations make frequent reference to ten notebooks which contained his original notes. These cannot currently be found. If you know of their whereabouts please let me know.

The list of books, articles and lectures which follows is far from exhaustive, but may be useful.

Book

The MacLeods
The Book of the Lews
The Western Isles
History of the Outer Hebrides
The Blind Harper
Lewis in History and Legend. The East Coast
Lewis in History and Legend. The West Coast
Plantation and Civility in the North Atlantic World
Lewis: A History of the Island
The Men of the Lews
Banner in the West

Author

I.F. Grant
W.C. Mackenzie
W.C. Mackenzie
W.C. Mackenzie
W. Matheson
B. Lawson
B. Lawson
A. MacCoinnich
D. Macdonald
N. Macfarlane
J. Macleod

Articles

The Ancestry of Leod
(Clan MacLeod Magazine, No. 91, Nov 2000)

Author

A. P. MacLeod

Lectures given to The Gaelic Society of Inverness

The Pape Riot and its Sequel in Lewis
The Ancestry of the MacLeods
The MacLeods of Lewis
Sgialachdan a Carlabhagh*
The Life and Work of Rev. Robert Finlayson
Gleanings from Raasay Tradition
Lewis and the Law: A Libel Refuted
Three Island Travellers
Some Nicolson traditions
The Ancestry of the MacLeods reconsidered
Donald Ruadh MacLeod: The Old Trojan of Berneray
Gaelic Spirituality
Emigration from the Outer Hebrides

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*Can anyone provide a translation? I can provide the Gaelic text for you.

Urras Eaglais na h-Aoidhe have printed adaptations of their annual lectures [here](#). One of these lectures was given by Andrew P. MacLeod, Genealogy Coordinator for the Associated Clan MacLeod Societies, and can be watched [here](#). It begins at around 10 minutes 30 seconds.

The research done for this lecture is closely related to that in three booklets written by myself:
Family Traditions: John Macleod, 11 Melbost
The MacLeods of Garrabost Revisited
The Torquils of Point, Lewis

Please contact me directly if any of these are of interest to you.

Y-DNA Testing: an introduction

In the early 2000s, Julia Abernethy completed the first genetic study into Clan MacLeod. She concluded that the sample of men tested contained three main groups of MacLeods, genetically unconnected since long before the dawn of surnames.

These three groups appear in the current FTDNA MacLeod project as haplogroups I1a, R1a and R1b, with the latter dominating. It is currently believed that the chiefly line of the MacLeods of Lewis would have been within the R1b haplogroup. All MacLeods in other haplogroups would therefore be genetically unconnected in the male line to the MacLeods of Lewis. Some would have taken the name because it was politically expedient, others because they wished to identify with their chief, whilst some so-called 'non-paternal events' (NPEs) are bound to be present. It is likely that these issues exist no matter which surname is being considered.

When contributing to the discussion on Y-DNA, please restrict yourself to just one haplogroup per submission, and if it relates to a very common haplogroup, please be as precise as possible when describing which genetic line you are considering, being careful to mention any relevant bynames.



Notes on some Lewis Families (W. Matheson)

There were various tribes of MacLeods, e.g.

- (1) Those known as *Tolmach* (*na Tolmaich*). They are to be found now about Leurbost. The old house (? Seaforth Lodge) which was there before Stornoway Castle was built, and which is now used as offices, was known as *Tigh an Tolmaich*. The name may be derived from the farm of Holm, near Stornoway.
- (2) Those known as *Uallach*. In 1726 they are on record in Arnol.
- (3) Those known as *Baranta*. They are to be found now about Knock. The name perhaps means "security" or "hostage".

From NLS Acc 9711 Box 7/6, p47



An Gobha Gorm, (W. Matheson)

The Gobha Gorm rests under an undressed blue slab near the east side of Swainbost cemetery.

From NLS Acc 9711 Box 7/6

An Gobha Gorm has been shown to be the progenitor of the Murrays in Lewis.
Suggested reading: 'The Pape Riot and its Sequel in Lewis' (see page 5).

