

# Na Lìneachan Mòra

## The Bynames, Genetics & Lore of Lewis

Issue 8: April 2024

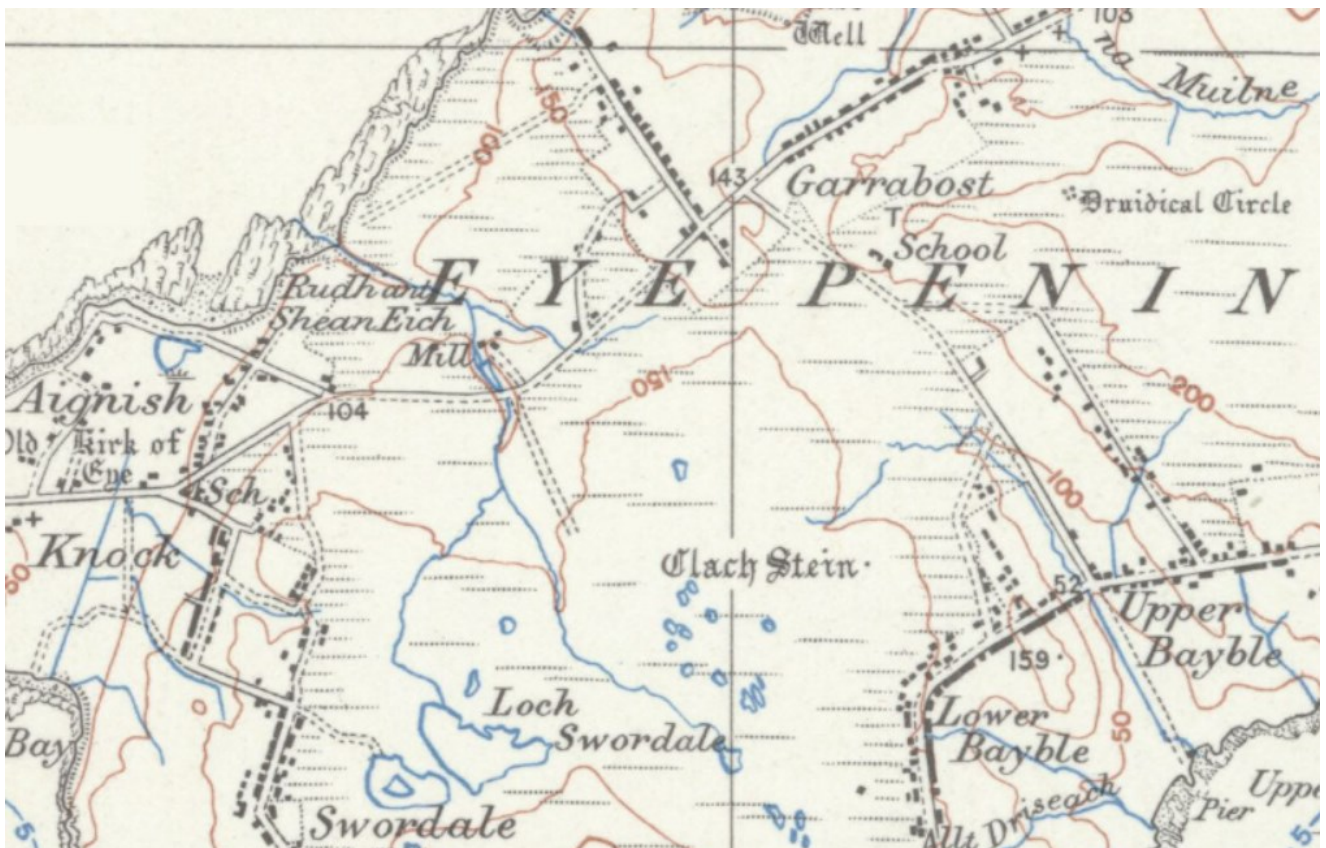
A very belated Happy Easter to you all!

I'm sure you know the feeling of life taking over, and so you'll understand why this issue of the journal is about four weeks later than planned - although thankfully still in April. I'm immensely grateful to a number of friends and correspondents who have submitted articles or given permissions for what you're about to read. It is particularly pleasing to see the three elements of bynames, genetics and lore all featuring to one degree or another within these pages.

As ever, please let any friends who may be interested know about the journal.

Yours,

William



Clach Stein, Allt na Muilne, Swordale and Bayble. Point, Lewis.  
(Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland)

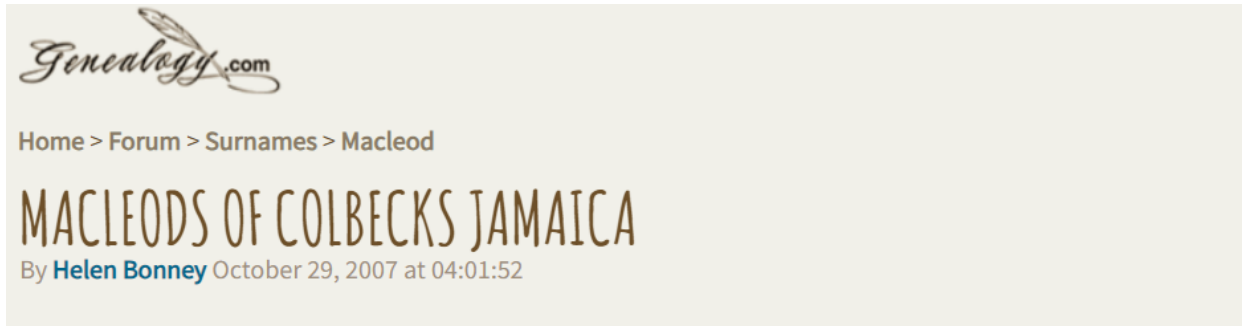
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## The 'Bonney' letters

In 2016 I came across the following [message](#) online:



Looking for information on my 4x Great Grandfather John Macleod of Stornoway Isle of Lewis, according to some letters received he was a brother to Donald Macleod whose son John left Lewis, bought some land in Jamaica and became known as the Macleods of Colbecks Jamaica. I believe John Macleod would have been born around 1720.

After establishing contact with Helen, I mentioned the letters to Andrew P. MacLeod (ACMS Genealogy Co-ordinator). Helen was then kind enough to send Andrew copies of the letters; she and her cousin Linda have recently given permission for them to be included in these pages. Andrew has done a huge amount of work both in transcribing the letters and also in considering the implications of the information contained therein. Those implications will follow after all the letters have been reproduced.

This issue sees the beginning of a series in which scanned copies of the letters will be made available. Andrew has agreed that his transcriptions appear opposite the original letters.

The letters were written by Annabella McLeod (writing before 1910) and her elder sister Mary Catherine Macleod (writing after 1910). There are two letters from Annabella (neither of which is complete) but at least sixteen from Mary (thirteen of which are complete).

Mary (1830 - 1914) and Annabella were the daughters of Norman MacLeod (1803 - 1859) and Catherine Gemmell. It is plain that they had been told of their heritage and were keen to see it remembered. These letters are therefore a potentially significant record of conversations from as early as the 1840s.

PLACE	HOUSES		NAMES of each Person who abode therein the preceding Night.	AGE and SEX		PROFESSION, TRADE, EMPLOYMENT, or of INDEPENDENT MEANS.	Where Born	
	Uninhabited or Building Enhabited	Enhabited		Males	Females		Whether Born in same County	Whether Born in Scotland, Ireland, or Foreign Part
			John MacLeod	38		Merchant		S
			Catherine D.	33				S
			Jane D.	15				S
			Annabella D.	13				S
			Mrs D.	11				S
			Mary D.	9				S
			William D.	7				S
			Catherine D.	5				S
			Jane D.	1				S

HO 107 / 567 / 6

The 1841 census for Liverpool indicates that the family moved from Scotland in the 1830s; all bar the youngest child had been born north of the border.

More biographical detail on the family shall follow in future issues.

The first (partial) letter appears on the following pages.



TELEPHONE,  
1692 WESTERN.

4 & 5, ILCHESTER GARDENS,  
BAYSWATER, W.

myself, & the best way, wld be  
for me, to do, is to send a photo,  
of myself, & I am going to send  
you one of Grand papa's photo,  
taken from a miniature, I am  
sure you will like to have it,  
but it will be about 3 weeks  
before I can get it, & send  
it, now, I am going to make  
a request, & that is, will you  
not send me a photo, of  
yourself & family, I should  
like to have it, I am sure  
you can get them beau-  
tifully taken out there,  
how, I long for some of  
my own blood, I would  
gladly come out, but cannot

& kept myself, without any-  
thing from any one, it is  
very hard for Norman alone,  
to manage in London, but  
we have now - a good place,  
& can sell it, I think well,  
I should love to know all  
about your "Father," do send  
his photo, I suppose he is my  
first cousin, he cannot be my  
uncle, there is some report,  
that we are related to the  
"Marquis of Bute," ask your  
father, if this is correct,  
I know so little about  
anything, how did you  
manage to get out to Canada,  
just tell me - everything you  
know - you write my uncle

it takes, a good bit of money  
to run about, & I am doing  
my best to get something  
to live on - my friend & my-  
self have been working  
some time, "I cannot catch it"  
& it is difficult to get on - the  
competition is so great, in  
a place like London - I was  
very young - when my father  
died, his name was "Norman  
Maileod; I was brought up (or  
rather, brought myself up)  
by my 2. sisters, I left  
stem - 28. years ago, & have  
been working ever since

& it seems easy for you to do  
Orie anything, how lovely  
it would be to go out, but  
how, well, time may help,  
The old proverb - everything  
has its time,  
how to wait, I certainly have  
had patience, some years  
ago, how good it would have  
been to have the old  
now with all nice messages  
& many thanks to your kind  
parents & self - for wishing  
me to come out & see you

Believe me to remain  
Yours very sincerely  
Annabella Maileod



ANNABELLA MCLEOD LETTER 190x.xx.xx  
(to Thomas's son, Norman?); start missing

[1]

TELEPHONE, 4 & 5, ILCHESTER GARDENS,  
1692 WESTERN. BAYSWATER, W.  
myself, & the best way, will be  
for me, to do, is to send a Photo,  
of myself, & I am going to send  
you one of Grandpapa Macleod,  
taken from a miniature, I am  
sure you will like to have it,  
but it will be about 3 weeks  
before I can get it, & send  
it, now, I am going to make  
a request, & that is, will you  
not send me a Photo, of  
yourself & family, I should  
like to have it, I am sure  
you can get them beau=  
tifully taken out there,  
how, I long for some of  
my own blood, I would  
gladly come out, but cannot

[3]

& kept myself without any  
= thing from any one, It is  
very hard for woman alone,  
to manage in London, but  
we have now – a good place,  
& can sell it I think well,  
I should love to know all  
about your “Father,” do send  
his Photo, I suppose he is my  
first cousin, he cannot be my  
uncle, there is some report,  
that we are related to the  
“Marquis of Bute”, ask your  
Father, if this is correct,  
I know so little about  
anything, how did you  
manage to get out to Canada,?  
just tell me – everything you  
know – you write very easily

[2]

it takes, a good pick of money  
to run about, & I am doing  
my best to get something  
to live on – my friend & my-  
=self have been working  
some time, “I am not a chicken”  
& it is difficult to get on – the  
competition is so great, in  
a place like London – I was  
very young – when my father  
died, his name was “Norman  
Macleod, I was brought up, (or  
rather, brought myself up)  
by my 2 sisters, I left  
them – 28 years ago, & have  
been working ever since

[4]

& it seems' easy for you to dis-  
cribe anything, how lovely  
it would be to go out, but  
how, well, time may help,  
the old proverb, - everything  
[comes to those that ..... know]  
how to wait, I certainly have  
had patience, some years  
ago. how good it would have  
[been to have ..... of you all]  
now with all nice messages  
& many thanks to your kind  
parents & self – for wishing  
me to come out & see you  
Believe me to remain  
Yours very sincerely  
Annabella M<sup>c</sup>Leod

Grateful thanks are due to Helen (MacLeod) Bonney and to  
Linda (McLeod) Bec for granting permission for the original letters to be published.

I am also very thankful to Andrew P. MacLeod  
for permission to include his painstaking transcriptions.

## *Clach Steinn*

Every village has its own memories, and one such was recounted to my brother Iain in 1995 by our great-uncle Donald Roddy Macleod ('DR', 1923 - 2011), originally of 25 Swordale, but latterly of Tain. I am most grateful to Iain for the time and expertise he has given in considering this snippet of local history.

DR believed that the incident referred to dates to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and recalled that the original poem (or perhaps song) consisted of over fifty verses, only three of which he could recite. Good hearths and lintels (whether for doors or fireplaces) were hard to come by, and DR referred to the people of Swordale and Bayble both needing such things, which may imply that the poem recalls the competition for the raw materials between these two villages. The potentially devious means by which this stone was acquired were plainly considered worthy of remembrance.

The remnant of the poem, which DR knew as 'Clach Steinn', is as follows:

A Chlach Ghlas a th' ann an Allt na Muilne  
bheil thu cluinntinn mar a thachair?  
Tha mise seo nam shìneadh  
's mo leth ìseal ris an talamh.

Thathas ag ràdh gur e Dòmhnall Mhurchaidh Mhòir  
a leòn mi leis an teine.  
Ach am faigheadh e clach ùrlair  
no clach dhìreach airson a' bhalla.

Ach cha b' e Dòmhnall Mhurchaidh Mhòir a bh' ann  
no Iain Òg, bha iad nan cadal.  
Bha timcheall ormsa còignear  
Bha fir-phòsta ann agus balaich.

Iain has translated this, providing a literal translation (on the left) in addition to one which scans more easily (on the right):

O Grey Rock that is in Allt na Muilne.  
Do you hear as it happened?  
I'm here in my lying  
and my lower half to the ground.

O Grey Rock that is by Allt na Muilne.  
Do you hear what happened?  
I'm lying here  
and my lower half is on the ground.

It is said that it was Donald of Big Murdo  
that wounded me with the fire  
so that he would get a floor stone  
or a straight stone for the wall.

It is said that it was Donald of Big Murdo  
that cleaved me with the fire  
so that he would get a floor stone  
or a straight stone for the wall.

But it wasn't Donald of Big Murdo  
Or young Iain, they were in their sleep.  
There was around me five people.  
There were married men there and boys.

It wasn't Donald of Big Murdo  
or young Iain, they were asleep.  
There were five people around me.  
There were married men and boys.

A number of questions come to mind. Where was the stone, and are there any remains? Why the apparent secrecy over the breaking of the stone? Who were the wrongly accused 'Donald of Big Murdo', and young Iain?



The poem is titled 'Clach Steinn', this being a standing stone just to the north of the village of Lower Bayble. It is now fallen, and the poem is very probably describing the moment of its fall. The three surviving verses make no mention of Clach Steinn, but instead refer to Clach Ghlas (the 'Grey Stone'). This well-known rock sits on the banks of Allt na Muilne behind Knock Free Church of Scotland in Garrabost. It is marked as a 'boulder' near the top-right corner of the 25-inch [map](#) of Point which was published in 1897.

Clach Ghlas and Clach Steinn are around 1.5 miles apart, and a close reading of the poem in conjunction with the title suggests that Clach Ghlas is being asked - perhaps by Clach Steinn - whether she witnessed what happened. This notion is backed up by the fact that Clach Steinn is cleanly broken. *Historic Environment Scotland* report of Clach Steinn that:

*The monument is a fallen monolith, probably of late Bronze Age date. Beside it is another large prostrate stone. The larger stone, which has split cleanly in two, would originally have been 3.3m long and is 1m wide. The broken pieces measure 2m and 1.3m long.*

The *Canmore* [website](#) includes some photographs of the broken stone; it is very much in Bayble territory. The secrecy implied by the poem and the difficulty of locating good stone for critical features of a house, suggest that perhaps some 'men and boys' set fire to Clach Steinn one night with the deliberate plan of shattering it along the grain. When DR recounted the poem he implied that this was the case. The 'married men and boys' would then have had the difficult task of transporting the spoils over the moor before they were discovered.

The fact that the poem was remembered in Swordale suggests that it may have been Swordale folk who purloined the stone, and that those in Bayble believed that 'Donald of Big Murdo' and 'young Iain' were the perpetrators. It is unlikely that these individuals can ever be identified with any certainty, but it may be possible to suggest likely characters. Given that they were asleep at the time, perhaps they were boys. I have only found two likely characters:

Donald son of Murdo Macleod (14 Swordale) was born on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1889. he was the fourth of nine children born to Murdo Macleod and Mary Maciver. Murdo's granddaughter only knew of him as Murdo Iain, but that is not to say that he was not known as Murdo Mor.

John son of John Munro (23 Swordale) was known as Iain Beag (that is, Small Iain), but may also have been known as Iain Og, his father having the same forename. He was born on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1889 and went on to enlist with the 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforth Highlanders in World War One. He was awarded the Military Cross for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty but was killed in action on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1918. His obituary said of him, that 'to know him was to love him'.

These boys were second cousins through their Maciver ancestry, and second cousins once removed by their Macleod roots. They would have grown up together, and it is highly plausible that they may have been jointly accused of the misdemeanour. DR was born in 1923, and it may be that the 'late 19<sup>th</sup> century' which he believed the poem dated to may actually have been early 20<sup>th</sup> century, meaning that these boys would have been of an age to be potentially guilty.

One also wonders who the author of the poem may have been. He was plainly one of the five perpetrators, and he also wanted Donald of Big Murdo and young Iain to be exonerated. Might he perhaps have been a father or an uncle to one of them?

If you know more of this old poem, it would be wonderful to hear from you!

## A “MAIDSEAR” MACLEOD FAMILY MYSTERY AND THEORY

**Author: Katie Bryant, terra7754manor@gmail.com**

Note from author: I have received permission from anyone whose initials or names I have used. Anyone else has been completely anonymized.

In early 2020 I discovered a DNA match to D.A. on Ancestry that was on my only MacLeod line. We both traced back to two different MacLeod men living almost next to each other in Ontario, Canada in 1861. But we knew nothing more about either man or how they or their wives were related. D.A. and I began corresponding frequently, comparing DNA matches and records, in hopes of solving this mystery.

I was extremely fortunate in 2021 to be able to confirm my Canadian MacLeod ancestor as a grandson of John “Maidsear” MacLeod, bc 1742, who was a shepherd in a remote area called Scaparaid on Lewis, southwest of Acha Mor. But was D.A.’s ancestor, Murdoch MacLeod, b.1822, related to these “Maidsear” MacLeods, and if so, how? This was still a mystery. With the help of DNA, oral history, and circumstantial evidence I’ve developed a theory and the following explains my rationale:

### **The Ancestors**

John “Maidsear” MacLeod: The patriarch of the “Maidsear” MacLeods was John (“Iain”) MacLeod, born circa 1742. For ease of reference, I’ll refer to him as John1742. John1742’s parentage is unknown. According to oral historians, he and his sons were boundary shepherds for Major MacIver.

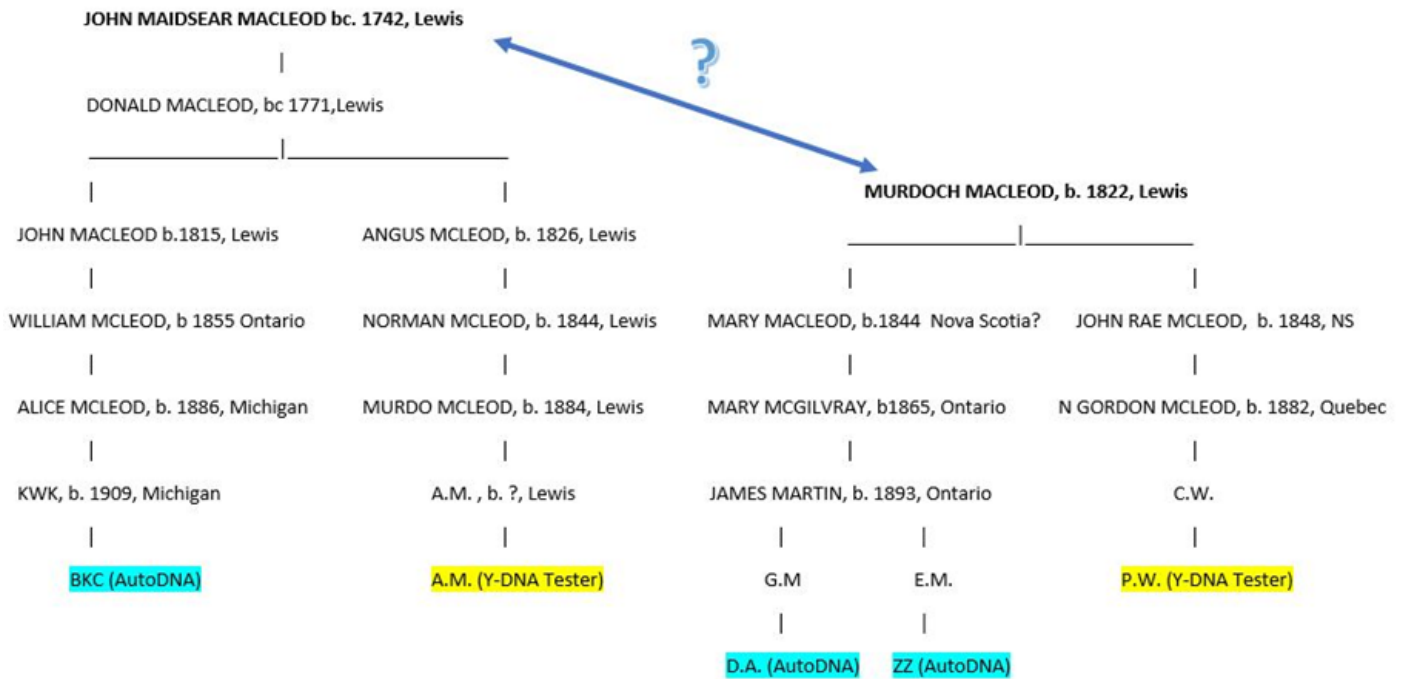
The family lived in the relatively remote area of Scaparaid, now abandoned, on the Isle of Lewis. One of his grandsons, John MacLeod bc 1815, (John1815) married Lillie MacRae. They lived at 14 Acha Mor before emigrating to Canada between 1851 and 1855.

Murdoch MacLeod: Murdoch first definitively appears in the 1861 census of Bruce Township in Bruce County, Ontario, with his wife Mary and 6 children. He was born around 1822; I’ll refer to him as Murdoch1822. Murdoch’s birthplace on the Ontario census is given as Scotland, and a likely death certificate states that his birthplace was the Isle of Lewis. Murdoch’s oldest child, Mary, was born around 1844 and some census records indicate she was born in Scotland, others in Nova Scotia.

In 1861 Murdoch and his family were living in Ontario, Canada very close to my ancestor, John. Murdoch’s parents and his relationship to both John1815 and John1742 is unknown, although Murdoch’s descendants share many DNA matches with known descendants of John1742.

### **The DNA Story**

The diagram below shows the relationships between the DNA testers. The two people highlighted in yellow did “Big-Y” DNA testing on FamilyTreeDNA. The people highlighted in blue had autosomal DNA results on Ancestry.



The Y-DNA results from FamilyTreeDNA definitively showed that Murdoch1822 and John1742 shared a male ancestor, as reported in a previous article by William Cumming (see “The R1A MacLeods of Lewis” in Issue 2). From further analysis provided by FamilyTreeDNA, we can be reasonably confident that Murdoch b.1822 was either a grandson, great-grandson, grand-nephew or great-grandnephew of John1742. I’m ruling out son as John1742 would have most likely been too old to be Murdoch’s father. More details on this Y-DNA analysis can be found in the addendum.

The autosomal DNA results between the families suggest that D.A. and BKC are most likely 4<sup>th</sup> cousins and at most 5<sup>th</sup> cousins. Combining the Y-DNA results with the autosomal DNA results, **we can narrow the possibilities further and reasonably conclude that Murdoch must have been either a grandson or great-grandson of John1742**, and not a grand- or great-grandnephew, as those would fall outside the 5<sup>th</sup> cousin range. More details on this autosomal DNA analysis can be found in the addendum.

Assuming Murdoch was a grandson or great-grandson of John “Maidsear”, then from which son of John “Maidsear” did he descend? Three sons were documented by Bill Lawson in his Croft History book for Acha Mor: Malcolm born c.1767, Donald born c.1771 (father of John1815) and Duncan, born c.1781. A 2005 article in Dugadh, the publication of the North Lochs Historical Society, based on oral history provided by the late historian Angus “Ease” Macleod, MBE, mentioned a fourth son, Norman “Sidhear”. Descendants of Malcolm, Donald and Duncan were listed in Croft History books and in census records (starting in 1841) but none appear to be candidates for the father of Murdoch b.1822. **Going back to the autosomal DNA, the most likely scenario is that Murdoch is a son of Donald – this would make D.A. and BKC 4<sup>th</sup> cousins 1x removed. The next likely scenario is that Murdoch is the son of a different brother – this would make D.A. and BKC 5<sup>th</sup> cousins 1x removed which is on the outer range of possibilities.**

## HISTORY AND CIRCUMSTANCE

Aside from DNA, other information and circumstances may provide additional clues that should be considered, including:

1. Murdoch1822 had several sons named “Norman” (the first two did not survive infancy). Obviously that name held some importance to him or his wife. The Pairc Historical Society’s Croft History for #3 Garyvard states that John1742 had a son “Tormod Sidhear”, or “Norman the Soldier” but nothing else is known about Norman other than he settled “somewhere at Loch a Ghanabhaich” (Lochganvich). Lochganvich is not far from Scaparaid, where John1742 lived, and also close to where John1815 was living in 1851. Perhaps Norman and his wife were the parents of Murdoch1822, and left Isle of Lewis when Murdoch1822 was just a boy for Nova Scotia.
2. A genealogical report by Bill Lawson states that John1742’s son Donald had a son Murdo, “who was a drover and, according to oral tradition, was mauled by a bull at Tarbert, Harris.” Nothing else is known about this Murdo. Could this Murdo/Murdoch have survived the bull-mauling and left for Canada in his youth?
3. Donald’s known wife Kirsty was 20 years his junior, and all his known children with Kirsty were born after 1815, when Donald was in his mid-to-late 40’s. It is possible that Donald had an earlier marriage with other children, one of whom could have been the father of Murdoch1822. If those children did not stay on Isle of Lewis and live until census or death records started being kept then no written record of them likely exists. (The first census was in 1841, civil death registration did not start until 1855. Old Parish Registers record some early 1800 records but vary greatly according to location and parish.)
4. The close proximity of Murdoch1822 to John1815 (grandson of John1742) in Canada in 1861 leads one to believe that they knew each other from Scotland, although clearly Murdoch1822 had lived in Nova Scotia for a number of years before going to Ontario, and John appears to have gone more directly to Ontario; if he stopped in Nova Scotia it was for not more than a year or two.

## CONCLUSIONS:

Based on the Y-DNA and Autosomal DNA comparisons between the two families, I conclude that **Murdoch1822 was a grandson or great-grandson of John1742 and therefore definitely a “Maidsear” MacLeod.** Beyond that, the evidence is just not strong enough to say which of John1742’s sons he descended from. Although odds based on autosomal DNA slightly favor him being the son of Donald, other circumstantial evidence leads me to believe he may have been the son of Norman (or another son). Hopefully more evidence will come to light through DNA or other records that will further help resolve this mystery!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Getting to this point in our research has truly been a team effort! I am heavily indebted to Neil and Anne MacLeod, of Stornoway, for sharing their knowledge, hearts and time with us. Neil, who passed in 2022, was himself a Maidsear descendant (his ancestor being son Malcolm). Neil was also instrumental in obtaining a Y-DNA test from one of the direct-male descendants. He is greatly missed. I’d also like to thank D.A. for her persistence, research and friendship in figuring out these MacLeod connections. Without a coordinated, team effort, we would never have gotten this far.



## ADDENDUM

This section provides more specifics on the data and analysis, for those who may be interested and to document for the record.

### DNA Comparisons:

#### A. Y-DNA

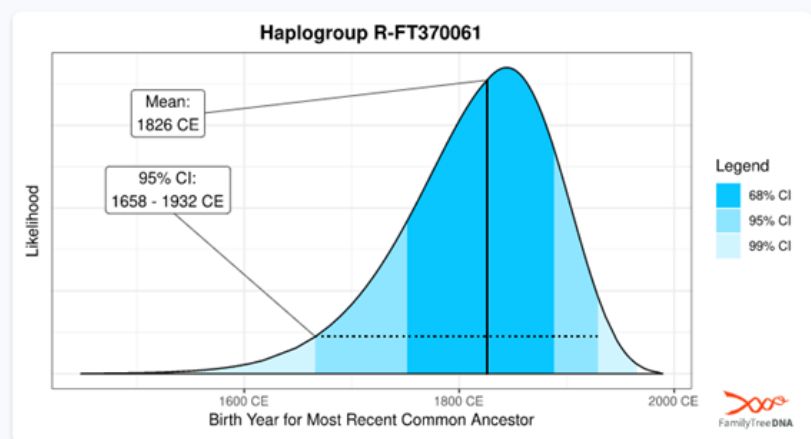
Y-DNA is passed only from father to son, with no or minimal changes, and can be used to determine if males share a common ancestor, although it cannot identify the specific common ancestor.

As noted in a previous article by William Cumming, (see “The R1A MacLeods of Lewis”, Issue 2), Y-DNA tests by a direct male descendant of Murdoch1822 (P.W) and a known direct male descendant of John1742 (A.M.) show that they do share a common male ancestor and are currently assigned to the same haplogroup (R-FT370061). FamilyTreeDNA’s new beta “Discovery” feature combines analysis of the two types of Y-DNA comparisons (SNPs and STRs) to come up with an estimated time of birth for the Most Recent Common Ancestor (MRCA).

The FamilyTreeDNA Time to Most Recent Common Ancestor (TMRCA) estimate (Beta) is calculated based on SNP and STR test results from many present-day DNA testers. Uncertainty in the molecular clock and other factors is represented in this probability plot, which shows the most likely time when the common ancestor was born amongst the statistical possibilities.

Statistic*	Years Before Present	Calendar Date
99% CI	478 - 54	1544 - 1968 CE
95% CI	364 - 90	1658 - 1932 CE
68% CI	270 - 134	1752 - 1888 CE
Mean	196	1826 CE

\* CI is the Confidence Interval for a given time range and Mean is the expected date.



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An estimated birth year (1826) is provided for the MRCA of our testers, but that is based on averages only and clearly must be earlier since Murdoch was born in 1822. Looking instead at probabilities, there is a 68% probability that the MRCA was born between 1752 and 1888, and a 95% probability they were born between 1658 and 1932. (From Murdoch’s birth date, we can rule out anything more recent than about 1800).

The 68% confidence supports John1742 or a son or grandson as being the MRCA, although the 95% confidence expands the possibilities to a father or even a grandfather of John1742. This translates to the following most likely possibilities based on Y-DNA alone (I am eliminating Murdoch1822 being a son of John1742 as John1742 would have been approximately 80 years old at his birth).

**Possibility #1.MRCA is John1742 – (68% confidence)**

**1.A. Murdoch1822 is a grandson of John1742**

**1.B. Murdoch1822 is a great-grandson of John1742**

**Possibility#2. MRCA is John1742’s father – (95% confidence)**

**2.A Murdoch is a grand-nephew of John1742**

**2.B Murdoch is a great-grandnephew of John1742**

**B. Autosomal DNA**

**a) General**

Autosomal DNA is inherited from both parents, and can be used to estimate the closeness of a relationship between two individuals up to as many as 8 generations, although due to its randomness it is not an exact tool except for very close relationships.

**b) Ancestry.com Matches and Estimates**

Baseline Comparison: BKC is a known 4<sup>th</sup> gr-granddaughter of John1742 through his son Donald. She has numerous DNA matches on Ancestry.com with other known descendants of John1742; varying from 4<sup>th</sup> cousin to 5<sup>th</sup> cousin 1x removed. In each case the Ancestry.com relation estimate of 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> cousin has been correct. The anonymized table below shows the DNA match in centiMorgans (cMs), Ancestry relationship estimate, and known relationship of BKC and other “Maidsear” descendants. It is important to note that although the Isle of Lewis, being small and remote, is known to be endogamous (people related to each other in multiple ways), and endogamy can affect DNA results, in BKC’s case there are no other known Scottish lines to affect the amount of DNA as her ancestors (John1815 and wife Lillie) emigrated to Canada in the 1850s and the descendants did not marry people of Scottish ancestry.

ANCESTRY MATCH TO BKC – confirmed Maidsear MacLeod descendants (anonymized for privacy)	DNA shared cMs/segments	Ancestry relationship Estimate	Actual Relationship
A	56/5	4-6c	4c
B	44/2	4-6c	4c
C	43/3	4-6c	5c
D	36/3	4-6c	5c1xr
E	31/4	4-6c	4c
F	30/1	4-6c	5c
G	30/2	4-6c	4c1r
H	27/3	4-6c	5c
I	24/2	4-6c	4c1r
J	23/2	4-6c	4c
K	13/2	5-8c	4c
I	7/1	5-8c	5c

## BKC Comparison with Murdoch1822 Family

D.A, a 3<sup>rd</sup>-gr-granddaughter of Murdoch1822, shares a 24cM match (all on 1 segment) with BKC, and is estimated to be a 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> cousin. D.A.'s relevant Scottish ancestry is also limited to two of her sixteen gr-gr-grandparent lines, and to date there appears to be no connection between BKC and D.A. on one of the lines. According to Ancestry, 90% of people who share that amount of DNA are 5<sup>th</sup> cousins or closer, and 85% are 4<sup>th</sup> cousins or closer. **D.A. also has a 1<sup>st</sup> cousin who shares a 34cM match with BKC (longest segment 30cM). According to Ancestry, there is only a 2% chance that their relationship with BKC is more distant than a 5<sup>th</sup> cousin, and only a 10% chance that the relationship is more distant than a 4<sup>th</sup> cousin.** The Shared CM tool at DNAPainter.com provides similar estimates.

**All of the above suggest that at most, D.A. and BKC are 5<sup>th</sup> cousins and most likely 4<sup>th</sup> cousins.** That would rule out #2 of the Y-DNA possibilities, i.e., the MRCA being the father of John1742 as that would make D.A. and BKC at best 6<sup>th</sup> cousins 2x removed. The following possibilities are left:

### **1.A. Murdoch1822 is a grandson of John1742**

#### **1.A.1. Through son Donald (ancestor of Y-DNA tester A.M. and BKC)**

This would make D.A. and BKC **4<sup>th</sup> cousins 1x removed**

#### **1.A.2. Through a different son**

This would make D.A. and BKC **5<sup>th</sup> cousins 1x removed**

### **1.B. Murdoch1822 is a great-grandson of John1742**

#### **1.B.1. Through unknown son of Donald – (different wife)\***

This would make D.A. and BKC **half 4<sup>th</sup> cousins 2x removed**

**(equivalent to 5<sup>th</sup> cousins 1x removed per [this paper](#))**

#### **1.B.2 Through son of another son (timing unlikely)**

This would make D.A. and BKC **5<sup>th</sup> cousins 2x removed**

**(equivalent to 6<sup>th</sup> cousins)**

## **c) WATO Relationship Estimator**

DNA Painter (dnainter.com) has a tool called “What Are The Odds” (WATO) which predicts the most likely relationship between two people, given enough DNA match amounts with known relatives.

I entered known DNA matches between D.A. and John1742 descendants into the tool, and looked at probabilities of the possible relationships.

The v2 beta version of the tool gave **Possibility 1.A.1 as the strongest likelihood**, at 32 times more likely than Possibilities 1.A.2 and 1.B.1. Note that the WATO tool prefers that the average cM matches be more than 40 cM, and the average I had available to use was quite a bit lower at only 20 cM, so **the results are not conclusive.**



## **Families of Lewis**

This series continues with five articles (printed in 1951) on the Mathesons. Please see page 9 of the April 2023 issue for the acknowledgements due to various individuals and organisations. If an as-yet-unpublished article is of particular interest to you, please submit a short piece of your own and I will see what I can do for you!



## Mathesons (1)

Those who have travelled through Lochalsh may have noticed a small loch by the roadside in the heights above Balmacara. It is called Loch Iain Oig, a name which commemorates the Matheson clansman who once had a crannog or lake-dwelling on the island there. The island is now completely denuded of soil, and shows no sign of former habitation unless it be a stunted rowan tree which seems to grow miraculously out of the barren rock. It is well known, ~~of course,~~ that our forefathers planted the rowan near their dwellings in the belief that it afforded protection against evil spirits.

As the clan historian is in error about Iain Og, it may be well to identify him correctly. He was by patronymic Iain Og mac Dhughail; he was descended from Donnchadh an Teampuill, a warrior so-called because he set fire to the church of Lochalsh when a raiding band of MacLeods took sanctuary there; and he belonged to that branch of the Mathesons known as Clann Iain Ghallaich. Chronological considerations suggest that Donnchadh an Teampuill was his grandfather and Iain Gallach his great-grandfather. This Iain Gallach was a grandson of Alasdair mac Mhurchaidh, who was one of the northern chiefs summoned to Inverness in 1427 by James I to answer for their misdemeanours of the past.

## Sons of Iain Og

Iain Og lived at the time of the great feud between Mackenzie and Glengarry, and we can imagine that his family often had occasion to take refuge in their island fastness when Lochalsh was overrun by one or other of the contending clans. They survived these perils and alarms, however, and we have some account of two sons of Iain Og:

(1) Dugald, of whom below.

(2) Duncan (Donnchadh Mor), who lived at Sallachy in Lochalsh. He has left a numerous progeny, some of them still in Lochalsh, and many others dispersed in various parts of the world. Murdo Matheson (An t-Aos-dana Mac Mhathain), bard to William, 5th Earl of Seaforth, was a grandson of Donnchadh Mor.

Dugald Matheson seems to have left Lochalsh and gone to live in Strath Bran, where some of his kinsmen of Clann Iain Ghallaich already were. He married a daughter of Murdo Mackenzie, third of Achilty, and had two sons:

(1) Murdo, of whom below.

(2) John, tacksman of Coille Mhuraidh (Hartfield), in Applecross, who married the second

the family later designated of /

2/ h  
1/



John Matheson was living in 1678, when it is on record that there were debts due by him to his deceased sister-in-law, Katharine, <sup>Mackenzie</sup> wife of Alex. Fraser of Reelig; <sup>He claimed</sup> (Some Fraser Pedigree, 65.) probably as a creditor (Black, 12.)  
 (It may be noted that the latter's son Lachlan was served heir to his father, 28th April, 1710.)  
 Described as "younger of Assint" in 1697 (Mackintosh Muniments, No. 650).

daughter of William Mackenzie, first of Shildaig, with issue a son Kenneth, who succeeded his father as tacksman. In 1684 Kenneth Matheson had adjudged to him the lands of Assynt in the east of Ross-shire. His claim to these lands may have been through marriage, possibly to the daughter of Hector Mackenzie of Assynt. He died between 1694 and 1702, leaving no male issue, but he had a daughter who married John, only son of Murdo Matheson, tacksman of Auchindarroch in Lochalsh.

but he was presumably dead by 1684, in which year his son had an adjudication of (decreet of adjudication)

Cf. The Sons of the Baron, p. 20.

7/  
 Catherine L [Dornie MS.]

Kenneth Matheson had a brother Murdoch, who had a son William (GN IX. 80-81.)

**Ancestor of Lewis Mathesons**

I.—Murdo Matheson (Murchadh mac Dhughail mhic Iain Oig) is the ancestor of most of the Mathesons in Lewis. We find him on record there in 1658, when William Munro in Foulis grants his ~~acknowledging~~ acknowledging that he is "justlie adebtit and restand awand to Murdow Mathesone in the Lewis all and haill ye some of thrie hundreth threttie ane pundis Scotis." Murdo Matheson was a first cousin of the Chamberlain of Lewis, Murdo Mackenzie, fifth of Achilty, known in his day as Murchadh Mor mac 'ic Mhurchaidh, and it was probably on account of this connection that he came to Lewis and obtained lands there. We have no contemporary evidence as to what these lands were, but tradition has it that Murchadh mac Dhughail came from Achnasheen, which is at the western end of Strath Bran, and settled at Ardrol in Uig at the same time that George Mackenzie (Seoras Mor Ma'Choinnich) settled at Baile na Cille. It is on record, however, that in the latter part of his life he was tacksman of Arinish, near Stornoway.

bond/

w/ w/

87

**Twice Married**

Murdo Matheson was twice married. Of his first marriage he had a daughter who was the wife of Alexander, son of Hector Mackenzie of Mellon in Gairloch. He married, secondly, Christian MacAulay, who survived him by many years, and was living in her own house in Stornoway in 1748. She is remembered in the traditions of the Mathesons as "nighean Iain Ruaidh air a' Chnip," being a daughter of John MacAulay, tacksman of Kneep in Uig, who was a son of Domhnall Cam, and the only Uig survivor of the Battle of Auldearn (1645). Murdo Matheson and Christian MacAulay had issue:

\* GN V. 157.

11

- (1) John, of whom below.
- (2) Donald (Domhnall Ban), who was joint tacksman of ~~Garrabost~~ in 1704, but left there in the following year to take possession, along with his son Alexander, of Raanish in Lochalsh. He had three sons: Murdo, who died in Kirkton of Lochalsh, and left descendants in Slumbay, Loch-

Raanish/  
 two years later/  
 Garrabost/

\* This was part of the Davoch-mulung estate, and it looks as if Murdo Matheson's coming to Lewis had something to do with the confiscation of the estate by Cromwell, who put a garrison in Davochmulung House. The friends of Robert Mackenzie, fifth of Davochmulung, took the garrison by surprise, and Davochmulung got his name in exchange for the officer's release. Murdo Matheson was this Robert Mackenzie's second cousin.

(ORS 79, 319; Mackenzie, 500)

with his brother Alexander L 1718

Norman MacLeod/  
 He died in Stornoway in October, 1751. (GN VIII. 58)



a seafaring man /  
\* He owned a sloop (Lomair MS.)

and graduated on 30th March, 1695 /  
(23rd May, 1697) / Two /  
Mr Rorie Matheson /

Bracadale /  
demitting office on 9th July, 1699 /

9 / 0

5 / Malcolm /  
Valtos / 6 /  
Haclete /

GN VIII. 60, 61, 62, 63, 106-107;  
Book of Dunvegan I. 163.

is /



carron; Roderick, who died in Lewis, but whose descendants lived at Attadale and elsewhere on the mainland; and Alexander, who settled in Ireland and left descendants in County Down. Donald Matheson left no descendants of the name of Matheson in Lewis.

(3) Roderick, who matriculated at Edinburgh University in 1692, [redacted] years later, when he is described as "a young man in the Lewes," he was appointed parish schoolmaster of Dingwall, succeeding his cousin Donald MacAulay, afterwards minister of [redacted]. He stayed in Dingwall only two years, and, returning to Lewis, he became tacksman of South Galson, where he lived for at least twenty-four years (1704-1728). He has left no descendants of the name of Matheson, at any rate in Lewis. It should be made clear that it is nowhere stated that he was a son of Murdo Matheson, but in view of his date and place of origin he can hardly be accounted for otherwise.

(f) [redacted] We shall find cause hereafter for thinking that Murdo Matheson had a son of this name who lived at [redacted] in Uig. (g) A daughter, who married John MacLeod (Iain mac Thorcuill), of the MacLeods of Fettery, whom we may take as the subject of a future article.

(To be continued.) 50 27 / 7 / 51

MATHESONS (2)

II.—John Matheson succeeded his father as tacksman of Arinish. He appears on record as such in 1705, when, as his father's eldest son, he returned heir male to his cousin, Kenneth Matheson, tacksman of Kilvoury, in Applecross. Thereafter he was the victim of certain proceedings connected with an attempt to force the inhabitants of Lewis into the Roman Catholic Church. This attempt was not confined to Lewis, and was probably put into effect on some other estates on a larger scale. The method was to intimate to a tenant that he would be expropriated unless he conformed to the religious views of his superior. The prime mover in Lewis was John Mackenzie of Assynt, who received a tack of "the Lands and Barony of Lewis" from Isobel, Countess Dowager of Seaforth, in 1700. He was an ardent Roman Catholic, and fully resolved to use the power thus put into his hands to bring about the conversions he so much desired. The attempt was a failure from the beginning, and was probably not persisted in for long. But we know of two of the tacksman of Lewis whose lands were taken from them and bestowed upon Roman Catholics. One was Henry Urquhart, a native of Cromarty, who was tacksman of Garrabost. His lands were given to Norman MacLeod (Tormod Og), who had become a Roman Catholic after his marriage to a daughter of George Mackenzie



in 1692 who matriculated [redacted] at Edinburgh University, where one of his fellow-students was Thomas Boston, the celebrated Scottish divine.

He also held the offices of <sup>reader,</sup> session clerk, and precentor. /

five /

GN VIII. 56.

(4) Alexander, joint tacksman of Raanish, with his brother David. He died in February, 1750, leaving no issue. (GN VIII. 56.)  
// New par. 55



on 8th June, 1705



of Kildun. The other was John Matheson, who was supplanted in Arinich by Colin Mackenzie, younger of Kildun. Thereafter John Matheson [redacted] the family [redacted]

died before 1718, and, probably on his death, h and h of hisf

Brothers In Uig

The only son of whom we have definite knowledge is:

(1) Donald, of whom below.

According to tradition, this Donald had brothers in Uig, but it has proved difficult to locate them. We shall afterwards, however, see reason for thinking that they are found as tenants in Crowlista at various dates between 1766 and 1787, as follows:

(2) Murdo, who had a son John, tenant in Erista, and a son Malcolm, tenant in Crowlista, of whom hereafter.

(3) Malcolm, who had a son Norman, tenant in Crowlista.

(4) Kenneth, who had a daughter Christian, residing in Balnicol.

III. — Donald Matheson [redacted] Arnol, and appears there as Donald McEan [redacted] and 1773.

1796/

two sons / 3/4

was tenant in /

dispersed. Some of his sons were apparently settled in Uig, and one became tenant in Arnol. He married Janet Morison.

and Donald L

at various dates between 1753/

1771, 1773 (errors) /

in or h Indent →

x Genl. Act I. 14 (1766).

+ John (Iain Ban) lived at Garsaig, North Bragar. He had a daughter Ann, who married Donald [redacted] Donald's father, [redacted] had a herd of heifers and was wintering them by the shore. One night they got across the river and were [redacted] in John Matheson's [redacted] Donald [redacted] to [redacted] [redacted] for [redacted] Donald [redacted] Ann Matheson [redacted] to live at Garsaig. (The implication seems to be that John Matheson had no sons.) His [redacted]

- (1) John (Iain Ban) (1720, 1727, 1762)
(2) Norman, who married Margaret Macleay, and left her a widow before 1780. (1780, 1787)
(3) Angus. (1720, 1727, 1792, 1796)

Mathesons In Bragar

These three sons of Donald Matheson were tenants in North Bragar. They have left no descendants of the name of Matheson in Lewis. This may be accounted for [redacted] by failure of male issue or by emigration.

(4) Donald, of whom below.

(5) Malcolm [redacted] who succeeded his brother Donald as tenant in Arnol, where he appears as Malcolm McCoil vic Ean in 1787, 1792, [redacted]

in which year, [redacted] "Anny Matheson in Arnol a widow [redacted] in a list of tenants who sold cattle to a Lochcaryon drover, Farquhar Matheson, tacksmen of New Kelso. Donald Matheson left issue GN III. 148.

1796, and c. 1808.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

\* Present tenant is [redacted] Donald's [redacted]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

IV.—Donald Matheson (Domhnall Og) appears as Donald McCoil vic Ean [REDACTED] in 1780. But in 1787 we find his name deleted and that of his brother Malcolm written above. The reason for this is that he left Arnol and settled in Melbost Borve, Murdo Ross, tacksman of Melbost Borve, died in 1787, leaving a widow and daughter in charge of his possessions, as he had no son to succeed him. There is a tradition indicating that the daughter had several suitors before Domhnall Og became the man of her choice. He was for long remembered on the west side of Lewis for his unusual size — a big man with light auburn hair (duine mor soilleir).

succeeded his father as tenant in Arnol, where he had

by them

had where he appears on record in 1792.

2/93

[REDACTED]

Marion

[REDACTED], whose name was

The issue of their marriage was an only child:

Domhnall Og died in middle life, and his widow survived him by many years.

Murdo Muirhead

V.—John Matheson, born 1784, who was tenant in Melbost Borve. He married (7th May, 1810) Catherine, daughter of [REDACTED] Nicolson (Cleireach), South Galson, and they had four sons and one daughter. A grandson, Mr Angus Matheson, resides at No. 39 Borve. Most of John Matheson's descendants in Lewis, however, are to be found in Upper Shader. Among descendants furth of Lewis — great-grandsons — are the Rev. William Matheson, Tobermory, and his brother, Angus Matheson, Lecturer in Celtic Literature in the University of Glasgow.

\* See NB IV. 258; 242, 195.

Languages and

SG 3/8/51

(To be continued.)

MATHESONS (3)

and Vatos and

We now embark upon an account of a branch of the Mathesons of which the earliest generations lived at Kneep in Uig. Its genealogy, as at present known, begins with a certain Donald Matheson (Domhnall Ban).

This branch has the tradition of being descended from "Nighean Iain Ruaidh air a' Chnìp," a tradition which, taken together with the fact that Domhnall Ban [REDACTED] born [REDACTED], makes it practically certain that he was a grandson of Murdo Matheson and Christian MacAulay.

was about 1707



His father's name is not now remembered, and as Kneep was in the hands of tacksmen during the whole of the 18th century we do not possess a complete list of the tenants at any time during that period. There is, however, a story in Morrison's MS. Traditions of Lewis which looks as if it may have preserved the name required. The period of the happenings described in the story is fixed by the statement that the Chamberlain of Lewis at the time was Zachary MacAulay, and it can be shown that he died between 1730 and 1735.

The story relates that John Og Campbell of Scalpa once had occasion to track a stolen cow from North Harris to Uig. We are not concerned at the moment with the success or failure of his quest, but with the fact that he and his men received hospitality for the night in a certain house at Kneep. His host was known as "Murdo McUrchy Cuill," i.e. Murchadh mac Mhurchaidh 'c Dhughail.

As we have seen, there is reason to believe that there was a Matheson at Kneep early in the 18th century. Murchadh mac Dhughail, and therefore Morrison appears to be in error in saying that Campbell's host was a MacAulay. The indications are that he was a Matheson, though of course a MacAulay on his mother's side. We may therefore enter the name of Murdo in the genealogical account that follows.

I.—Murdo Matheson and Christian MacAulay who, among other children previously mentioned, had a son:

II.— Matheson, tenant at

**Grand-Uncle's Great-Grandson**

He had at least two sons:

(1) Donald, of whom below.

(2) Another son, whose name is unknown, but he was the father of the brothers Murdo Matheson and John Matheson, who were living with their families at Reef at the beginning of last century. This is known in a curious way. A son of Murdo Matheson, when a young lad, went to a wedding, and was met with a question as to whether he had a title to be present through kinship with bride or bridegroom. The matter was referred to the bride's father, Norman Matheson (Tormod Beag), of whom later. When he found out who the lad was he declared that he had every right to be present—that he was his grand-uncle's great-grandson (iarogha brathair mo sheanar).

The above-mentioned brothers had large families, and have left many descendants. Murdo was married to Rachel MacLeod, and John to Catherine Mackay. One of John's sons, known in his day as Iain Ban na Loch, was the grandfather of Mr Donald Matheson, Mangersta, and the great-grandfather of Dr Peter Matheson, medical officer for the parish of Uig.

whose father was/

Malcolm/  
Vattos/

had a son Donald, who h

Donald's son (see GN IX. 14; V. 86; Murdo's son (see GN IX. 44.) and also apparently of Donald Matheson, Gestader-h

x b. 1767.

John/  
Catherine Mackay/

o/

c/

s/

who is described as "a respectable farmer,"

tentatively h

John Mc Curdie tenant in Leyra (part of Berre) in 1754, when he was a married man, aged forty years.

Murdo/  
Rachel MacLeod/

x b. 1764.

x b. 1765.

x i.e., Loch na Cuile, Reef.



was born about 1707,  
 As a boy he herded cattle for John MacAulay, tacksman of Brenish. When his master and Donald Campbell of Scalpay were fixing the march between Lewis and Harris about 1719 the herd-boy was whipped so that the position of the march would be impressed on his memory. But each of the gentlemen presented him with 5s. by way of solatium. He

Norman Matheson died a. d. 1951  
 (1735-1871)  
 Christian, also in John MacAulay, and died at home. He also had a son, Neil, who migrated from three children to Ben in 1850, and had nine:

Penny Donald

(1) John, who married before 1850, and remained at Benish, near Cliff, Mig. His sons left being Donald & Ban Iain Meil was in Aberdeen, and Calum Iain Meil in Glasgow.

(2) and (3) Don - Penny Donald

and Norman, who went to Ben with their father, and afterwards emigrated to Canada.

(4) A daughter, who married John MacAulay, Borogay.

§ He married (3rd April, 1854) Janet, daughter of Malcolm MacAulay (Calum Seòladair) Cliff.

**Donald Roy Matheson**

III.—Donald Matheson (Domhnall Ban) seems to have removed in the latter part of his life from Kneep to Valtos. He is probably to be identified with Donald Roy Matheson who appears as tenant in Valtos in 1700 and 1787. (Variations between 'Ban' and 'Ruadh' sometimes occur in the records). He had, besides some daughters, the following sons:

(1) Malcolm, of whom below.  
 (2) Norman, tenant at <sup>Cari:hadar</sup> in 1804. One of his sons, known as Iain Ban nan Uigean, married Christina MacAulay and has left a large number of descendants in Uig and elsewhere. Iain Ban's son Donald gave evidence for the township of Kneep before Lord Napier's Commission. A son of Donald, Mr Peter Matheson, died in Crowlsta in January of this year. (b. 1762) <sup>1787-1872</sup>

(3) Peter (Padruig Eireasta) who married Christina MacLeod with issue <sup>(b. 1748)</sup> daughters.

IV.—Malcolm Matheson, known as Calum Ruadh and Calum Mor, was tenant in Carnish when John Nicolson was tacksman. In his time the population of the townlands of Uig was increasing rapidly, with the result that what were previously summer pasturages came to be occupied permanently by some of the tenantry. Thus it was that Calum

Ruadh, although a tenant in Carnish, actually lived at Ard Bheag on the shores of Loch Resort, at least during part of his life. He married Mary, daughter of Norman Morison (Tormod Caol), Brenish.

Calum Mor was a man of impressive proportions, while his wife could only be described as diminutive. There is an amusing story which illustrates their disparity in this respect. She once became ill and required medical attention. The only two doctors in the country at the time were resident in Stornoway and Tarbert, Harris. Calum met the situation by slinging his wife on his back in a creel, and so was she conveyed all the way from Ard Bheag to the doctor's consulting-room at Tarbert.

Malcolm Matheson and Mary Morison had issue:

- (1) Norman, of whom below.
- (2) Donald, known in his day and to tradition as Domhnall Ruadh Beag.

He had an adventurous career. In early life he was press-ganged and thereafter apparently spent a number of years in America. Having eventually found his way back to Lewis, he married and settled down at Pennydonald, where he appears as tenant in a rental of 1823, but between 1825 and 1828 he removed to Cari:hadar.

**Encounter with an Outlaw**

There is a saying about him in Uig: "Domhnall Ruadh Beag a chuir eagal a bheatha air Mac an t-Sronach." It

succeeded his father as tenant in

at various dates between 1778/

He died about 1787 at the age of eighty.

married Catherine MacLeod.  
 In 1805 he corroborates his brother's deposition in connection with the boundary between Lewis and Harris. daughter of Donald h (Domhnall Og na Buaile, Kneep, (See GN VI. 165)

(born 1819)h

x Evidence, 884-887 (NB IV. 196).

\* cf. NB IV. 251.

SGN VII. 98. Christina ? MacLennan (GN VIII. 145)

— ~~Christina~~, who married Donald Munro, Eivata, and Marion, who married Angus Gillies, Bressay, and Ann (1786-1877) who married John MacLennan. (x Douglas MacLennan)

The ruin of Peter Matheson's house is still pointed out at Eivata.

x cf. NB IV. 304. Ann/

She was Ann, daughter of Norman Morison (Tormod Caol), Brenish.

, one h ("mac Iain 'ic Alasdair", the other with c.e. Dr. Alexander Mackay)

Ann/

ih



appears that on one occasion, as he was making his way across the moor to visit his brother Norman, he was espied at a distance by the outlaw Stronach. The day was warm, and Domhnall Ruadh was walking through the knee-high heather in his drawers, with his trousers draped over his head and shoulders. The outlaw made to intercept him, but on a nearer view, unable to see how the squat, fore-shortened, weirdly garbed figure of his intended victim could belong to the world of men, he ignominiously turned and fled.

Domhnall Ruadh Beag married Catherine Campbell, and had a number of daughters and two sons, Murdo and William. Murdo (Murchadh Ruadh) lived at Carishader, and had a family of daughters. Among his grandsons are Dr D. J. MacLeod and the Rev. Murdo MacLeod, Portmahomack. William (Uilleam Ruadh) lived at Geshader.

Though not tall, he was muscular and broad-chested, and had uncommonly strong hands. In the old days one of the feats required of the members of MacLeod's bodyguard (buan-naichean Mhic Leoid) was with bare hands to break the leg of a slaughtered mart at the knee and wrench it off. Uilleam Ruadh is spoken of as the last man in Uig who performed this feat of "detaching the neat's-foot" (am fear d'heireadh an Uig a thug a mach dorn-bhuar). He had a number of sons, including William (Uilleam Dearg) who went abroad and was lost sight of. He, too, possessed unusual physical strength. A stone is pointed out near Carishader which he lifted from one side of the road to the other, and which no one has moved since.

- (3) Marion (Mor), who married Donald MacDonald (MacDonald).
- (4) A daughter, believed to have been called Euphemia (Oighne), who married Donald Campbell (Domhnall mac Uilleim) Swainbost.

**Merchant at Carnish**

V.—Norman Matheson (Tormod Beag) lived at Carnish and was a merchant. For a time he was in partnership with Malcolm Maclean, brother of the Rev. Peter Maclean, as joint owner with him of a vessel in which they made trading voyages north and south.

Tormod Beag was a good piper, and in consequence was much sought after for the Army. The attempt was made to impress him several times. Once, as he was returning from a business trip to Glasgow, he was waylaid at Oban, and only made his escape through the good offices of a merchant of the town, Alexander Sinclair by name, who kept him in hiding until the danger was past. He called his eldest son after this Alexander Sinclair.

to repair herring nets at Kenraesort

over/

(See also TGS I XXXVIII. 57-58.)

had/ x see further NB IV. 254.

m/

x cf. MacLeods, 50.

fo/

stet

She lost her life in a snowdrift at Loch Resort about 31st December, 1824, at the age of 81. x Lewis Notes, 59. Pennydonald and h

x cf Lewis Notes, 124.

Some of his business papers, written in an elegant hand, are for were recently obtained. For his encounter with the bean-nighe see Lewis Notes, 124.

Morison (Domhnall Chaluin Maivcastan), Brenish, one of the old soldiers of Uig (GNII. 22)

born in 1781

Friday Campbell, elder in Oban, was from Oban, Angus. H. Abost, Oban, in Uilleam.



Norman Matheson lived during the latter part of his life at Aird. He married Christina, daughter of Angus MacRitchie (Aonghus mac Fhionn-laigh), Carnish, and had a large family. His grandson, Mr Norman Matheson, resides at Cliff. Possessed of a remarkably retentive memory, he is one of the best local historians and genealogists in Lewis. He is well versed in the traditions of the Mathesons, and, indeed, of most other families in Uig. **SG 10|8|51**

(To be continued)

He died there, 27th March, 1863, at the age of 82.

x See General Notes, I. 47; NB II. 254.

**MATHESONS (4)**

We now turn to the problem of identifying the brothers whom Donald Matheson (Domhnall mac Iain) left in Uig when he himself migrated to Arnol.

One way of attempting to do this is by a process of elimination. All the Mathesons now in Uig can be accounted for otherwise than by descent from any of these brothers; but on going back a few generations we find a family of Mathesons in Uig of whom this cannot be said. They may be called the Crowlista Mathesons, for that is where they were tenants before they left the parish.

The first of them spoken of by present tradition is Calum Ban, who must have been born not later than 1770. We have complete lists of the tenants in Crowlista down to the end of the 18th century, and if we make the safe assumption that Calum Ban appears somewhere in them, it can be shown that he must be equated with Malcolm McCurchie Brebidar, tenant in Crowlista in 1780 and 1787.

His father also appears in these lists and apparently his father's two brothers, Malcolm and Kenneth. It is probable that Murdo, Malcolm and Kenneth were the brothers of Donald Matheson, Arnol.

As affording some corroboration, it may be noted that they are all called "Brebidar," indicating that they were a family of weavers. Several of the descendants of Donald Matheson were also weavers, and it is thought he may have been one himself, though family tradition is not positive on the point.

**The Crowlista Mathesons**

There is thus some justification for suggesting that the following table shows the ancestry of the Crowlista Mathesons.

- I.—Murdo Matheson and Christian MacAulay, whose eldest son was
- II.—John, whose sons were
- (1) Donald, who [redacted] Arnol and of whom previously.
- (2) Murdo, of whom below.
- (3) Malcolm (Calum Breabadair), tenant in Crowlista in 1780, who had a son Norman, tenant in Crowlista in 1787, 1796 and c. 1802.

settled in/

1773 (Arrears) 1771, 1772, and 1773

Documents I-XII (I).

and a son Donald (Domhnall) Ban, tenant in Crowlista in 1796, c. 1802, 1819, and 1824.

He was also known as Calum Breabadair, as is shown by one form of Murdo's his son's patronymic, still remembered in Uig.

⑥ (Presby his son) Neil Matheson (d. 1838), Crowlista, married Christina Mackay, with issue Peggy (6/6/26), Norman (4/5/29), Finlay (10/5/30), Ann (16/2/33), Hannah (24/9/36), and Peggy (11/6/39). It is believed that the family emigrated to Canada. X 9. [redacted] IX 36, 42.



(4) Kenneth (Coinneach Breabair), tenant in Crowlista in 1766, who had a daughter Christian, residing in Balnicol in 1768.

III.—Murdo (Murchadh Breabair), on record as tenant in Crowlista in 1780 and 1787. Where he was tenant previously is unknown, but it may be he and his son Malcolm who appear in Valtos as Murdo McEan and Malcolm McCurchie Ker in 1766 and 1770. He had at least three sons:

- (1) John, tenant in Erista in 1766;
- (2) Malcolm, of whom below.

Mathesons Of Gravir

In addition there is reason for thinking that he had a son.

(3) Donald (Domhnall Ban), ancestor of the Mathesons at Gravir. Our information about Domhnall Ban is derived from his great-grandson, the late Rev. Duncan Matheson.

A native of Uig, he joined the Seaforth Highlanders when they were first raised in 1777, and saw service with them in India. On returning home after fourteen years in the Army he found that his parents had died, while his two sisters were married—in Harris, it was said.

Under these circumstances he decided to marry ~~one~~ whom he had met in Stornoway. She belonged to ~~Gravir~~ and he went to live there. He was a weaver, and followed that avocation at Gravir. This last item of information suggests that Domhnall Ban was one of the Crowlista Mathesons, who, as we have seen, were a family of weavers.

We note that his father died between March 1778 (when the first of the recruits raised by Seaforth left their native island) and 1792. This probably excludes Coinneach Breabair, who appears to have died before 1780, leaving the other two brothers, of whom Murdo was still alive in 1787; but he must have been well advanced in years, as his son John was old enough to be tenant in Erista in 1766. Domhnall Ban's eldest son was called Murdo, and he had no son called Malcolm or Kenneth. In the light of these facts the most probable account of his paternity is as suggested above.

He had the following sons and daughters: Murdo, Donald, who was drowned; Norman, Torquil, Ann, married in Gravir; Margaret, married in Lurebost; and another daughter, also married in Lurebost.

Among living descendants are Mr Donald Matheson, schoolmaster at Sandwickhill, and his brother, Mr Angus Matheson, in the teaching profession in Glasgow.

Petition To The Chamberlain

IV.—Malcolm Matheson (Calum Ban) ~~is~~ identified as tenant in Crowlista in 1780 and 1787. He also appears as the signatory of a petition to the Chamberlain of Lewis,

1772-3 (Arrears) and 1772/

for certain/ is probably/

, the former/

three/ ~~has~~ probably to be identified with "John Bain M'couchie tenant in Valtos", reported for refusing to send his wife (whom he had recently married, after she had attended the spinning school in Stornoway) for a wheel and fleas (letter to John Macbrian, dated Bero, 22nd December, 1766). Having thus come into conflict with authority, it may be that he was dispossessed, and emigrated.

(cf. TGS I, xxiv. 132)

OH, 537-8. But, according to Gravir tradition, Domhnall Ban had a son called John in Gravir. Hence John Ban is probably for Matheson tenant in Gravir in 1808. N.M. maintains that the Breabair line came from Gravir. If so, he was a son of John given a tenancy/

given a tenancy/

1798-1873 (GN I. 74) who married Mary Macleod, who married Marion Morrison to Duncan Macleod to Norman Montgomery Henrietta/

has already been/

/ and 1796/

the latter in tenancy who was given a tenancy

NB IV. 146.

\* Domhnall mac Iain mac Mhurchaidh.

one of them to a MacInnes, ancestor of MacInnes at Lochs. Another has Ann Macleod, a girl/

Compell in Harris; and the Seaboy Cummings are descended from her or from a third sister.

\* See also Special Notes I. 98.

who married Margaret Mackay/

and he was still there in 1796/



dated at Stornoway, 26th April, 1773, asking that rents be reduced and certain grievances redressed.

In the petition he is called "Malcolm MacVah Tennant at Croulsta." It is evident that he had only recently settled in the township, and that he was acting, not only on his own behalf, but on behalf of a number of the other tenants. He signs with his mark.

It is possible, of course, that the petitioner was Calum Breabadair, presumably an uncle of Calum Ban, but more probably it is the younger man who would undertake the long and arduous journey from Uig to Stornoway.

Calum Ban was married with issue:

- (1) Murdo, of whom below.
- (2) Malcolm
- (3) John, who died suddenly at Garrynahine, while on his way to Stornoway, leaving issue, one daughter.
- (4) Donald, who was in the Army, and was known as An Saighdear Ban. He married a daughter of Norman MacDonald (Tormod mac Dhomhnaill mhic Thormoid), Erista, and emigrated with his family to Cape Breton.
- (5) Norman, who also emigrated with his family to Cape Breton.
- (6) Ann, who married Domhnall Ban, son of the above Norman MacDonald.

SG 17/8/51

(To be concluded)

MATHESONS (5)

V.—Murdo Matheson was one of several members of this branch who had a career in the Army. He joined the Seaforth Highlanders apparently in 1793.

In an account of that date which refers to Seaforth's recruits in Lewis there is a charge for "the levie money paid Murdo Matheson."

Thereafter he saw service in Italy and elsewhere. In 1847 he was awarded a General Service Medal, with a clasp for Maida, being one of several old soldiers of Lewis whose services were thus belatedly recognised.

On being discharged from the Army he became a tenant in Stornoway, having a holding which is now part of the Manor Farm, Hugh Matheson, founder of the firm of that name, was his grandson, and the family is still represented in Stornoway by Mr John C. Matheson, Dental Surgeon.

Another family of Mathesons in Uig are locally known as Clann Eachainn, being descended from Hector Matheson (Eachainn mac Iain Ruaidh), who removed from Reef to Aird between 1825 and 1831, at which dates he had grown-up sons and daughters.

9 9

\* John Cameron in Gravier in 1808.

~~Calum Mackay~~  
 apparently a daughter of Malcolm Mackay, Valtos, m. Henrietta Cameron, and (2 Pads 1824) who had a son John, and a daughter Christina, who married Alexander Mac Donald (Alexander Beag), Stornoway, with issue, George (Seoras an Gobha), Keith, and other children. ~~John Mackay~~ Matheson also had a daughter Mary (1779-1833), who m. John Graham, Sparrow, and a daughter Catherine (1771-1872), in Stornoway, and a son Angus in Aird Tong, who had a daughter Henrietta (b. 1816) (GN VII, 18).  
 e/ GN V. 148; IX. 43. IX. 91.  
 † Ib.; VIII. 27.

① His wife ~~was~~ Catherine Matheson (Catorina Bliann), whose mother was ~~Catherine Matheson~~ <sup>(her name Notes, III)</sup> ~~John MacGulley~~ <sup>(John mac Thormoid), Craighata.</sup> ~~John MacGulley~~ <sup>(John mac Thormoid), Craighata.</sup> (her name Notes, 57, 60)  
 b. 1766  
 \* b. 1774

Indiagh

and m. Catherine Mackay.

(Known as Murchadh Chalum Breabadair), born in 1773,

He mtd  
 of ~~Notes~~ I. 20.  
 \* Bundle XVII. (He must have been transferred to the 2nd Battalion in 1804, along with Col. Patrick Mackay, and was not transferred back after the Caledonia campaign, otherwise he would also have had a clasp for Jena.)

\* General Notes, II. 54, 65, 66; VIII. 23.

② Are these not the sons of Calum Breabadair (p. 30)?



There are two accounts of the origin of this family. According to one, Hector Matheson came to Reef from Lochs, and there does seem to have been some kinship between him and Hector MacLeod, Valtos, who was ground-officer of Lochs in 1800.

The other account has it that Iain Ruadh, Hector's father, was the son of a MacAulay of Brenish, born out of wedlock, who took his mother's surname. If so, the MacAulay referred to is no doubt Domhnall Og, who is known to have had several such children. These accounts call for no comment save to observe that they need not be regarded as mutually exclusive.

Emigrated To America

Iain Ruadh had at least two sons:

(1) Hector. He married Eory Smith, [redacted]

[redacted] mother was a daughter of Murdo MacLeod (Murchadh mac Iain mhic Thorcuill), of the MacLeods of [redacted]. Hector Matheson and his wife have left descendants at Aird and elsewhere in Uig, including their great-grandson, Mr Kenneth Matheson, Valtos. x

(2) John, who was pressed into the Army and afterwards lived in New York, where he is said to have [redacted]

The only Mathesons in Uig to whom we have yet to refer may be called Sliochd a' Bhreabadair Mhoir. Their ancestor was Donald Matheson. x

[redacted] He settled at Reef in Uig. It is said that he claimed kinship with the Mathesons there. [redacted]

Am Breabadair Mor was physically a very powerful man, [redacted]

[redacted] Once he was at a fank in the vicinity of Baile na Cille, and the news went round that his wife had given birth to twins. The Rev. Hugh Munro (Maighstir Uisdean), knowing that he had a struggle to bring up a large family, pointed to a wether in the fank and said he would give it to him if he could carry it home to Reef.

~~Keese~~

37

the following issue |

[redacted]

x Died 11/4/70, aged 86.

prospered |

x [redacted] N.M. says he came from Gravir. Probably a son of Iain mac Mhurchaidh Bhreabadair. (Yes.-A.M.I.)

x At Keese c. 1808.

[redacted]

(Eoiridh nighean a' Ghobha Lag [redacted] Dhuibh), [redacted], whose |

Haclete |

> (3) A daughter, <sup>Euphemia</sup> married in Keese, where she left descendants named [redacted] [redacted] (Murchadh Beag mac Gille-phairuig).



When the wether was on his shoulders, the minister jestingly asked if he could carry another. "Yes," was the reply, "if someone would lift it on me." This was done, and he carried the two wethers without resting all the way to Reef—to the amazement of Mr Munro, who sent a man after him to bring word back.

Donald Matheson married Peggy MacRitchie, <sup>Margaret</sup> ~~Reef~~ <sup>Kysep,</sup> sister of John MacRitchie (Iain Donn), Aird, with issue a large number of sons and daughters, including Iain Mor, a mighty man like his father, who suffered much at the hands of evicting factors and ground-officers. The family is still represented in Uig by Mr Donald Matheson, Timsgarry, and others.<sup>x</sup>

#### Name Changed In Error

In conclusion, attention may be drawn to one of those interesting changes of surname with which we have to reckon from time to time. There are a good number of Mathesons in and about Barvas, whose present surname originated as a blunder on the part of a former minister of the parish.

They were known locally as Clann an Lighich, and as such appear on record in Lower Barvas as far back as 1778. This was a designation borne by descendants of the hereditary physicians of the Isles, but their true surname was Mac Bheathain, usually anglicised as MacBeth or Beaton. The Gaelic for Matheson is Mac Mhathain, which differs in pronunciation only by a shade in one vowel.

It is not therefore surprising that the two names have been confused and rendered indiscriminately as Matheson. The earliest example we find of this confusion in Lewis is in a document dated at Stornoway, 29th March, 1768, in which Donald MacIver, merchant in Stornoway, becomes bound for the good behaviour of "John Matheson alias McCoillog" in Bragar, who was almost certainly the son of "Donald Og McLyich," on record as tenant in Bragar in 1766. This mistake was repeated when parochial registers came to be kept, and so it has been perpetuated down to the present time. Clann an Lighich were in Lewis long before the Mathesons. We may enquire into their origins on some future occasion. <sup>56-24/2/51</sup>

(Donnall mac Iain Duinn) daughter of Donald

Donald Matheson, 1 Timsgarry, died, 3rd October, 1968, aged 86, survived by his widow, Mary Matheson (SG 19/10/68).

cf. GN VII. 66.

NB IV. 304.

x Donnall Aonghus Iain Aithair.  
x See General Notes I. 45.

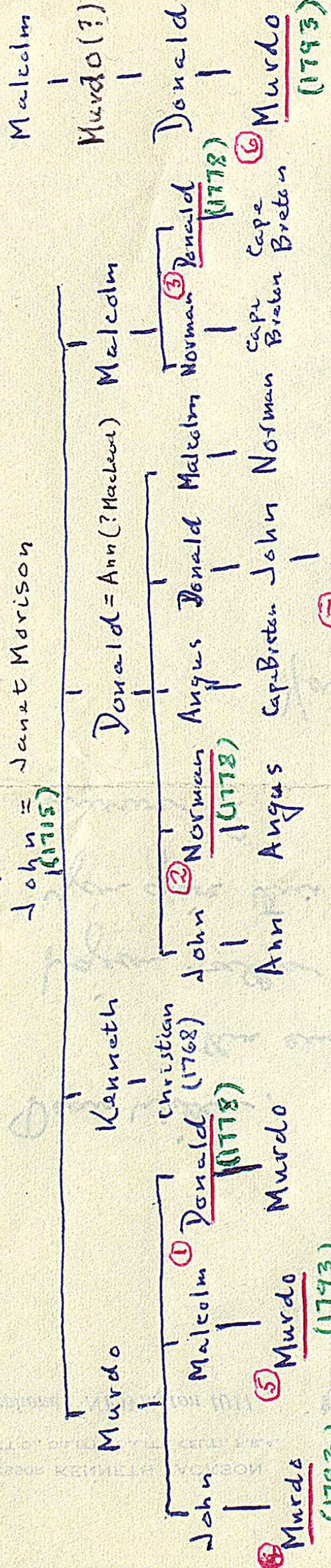
x tenant there in 1766 + 1773  
(Arrears).  
1771



# NAMES OF LEWIS MATHESONS IN THE ARMY

Murdo = Christina MacAulay (1654-)

John = Janet Morison (1715)



- ① Crowlister (later Gravir)
- ② North Bragar family in ~~later~~ Cape Breton
- ③ Crowlister (later Cape Breton)
- ④ Gravir
- ⑤ Crowlister (later Stornoway)
- ⑥ Reef
- ⑦ Melbost Barve (later Upper Shadar)

In the 78th Regiment.

[Dates in green refer to military service under the Earls of Seaforth.]



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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.
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