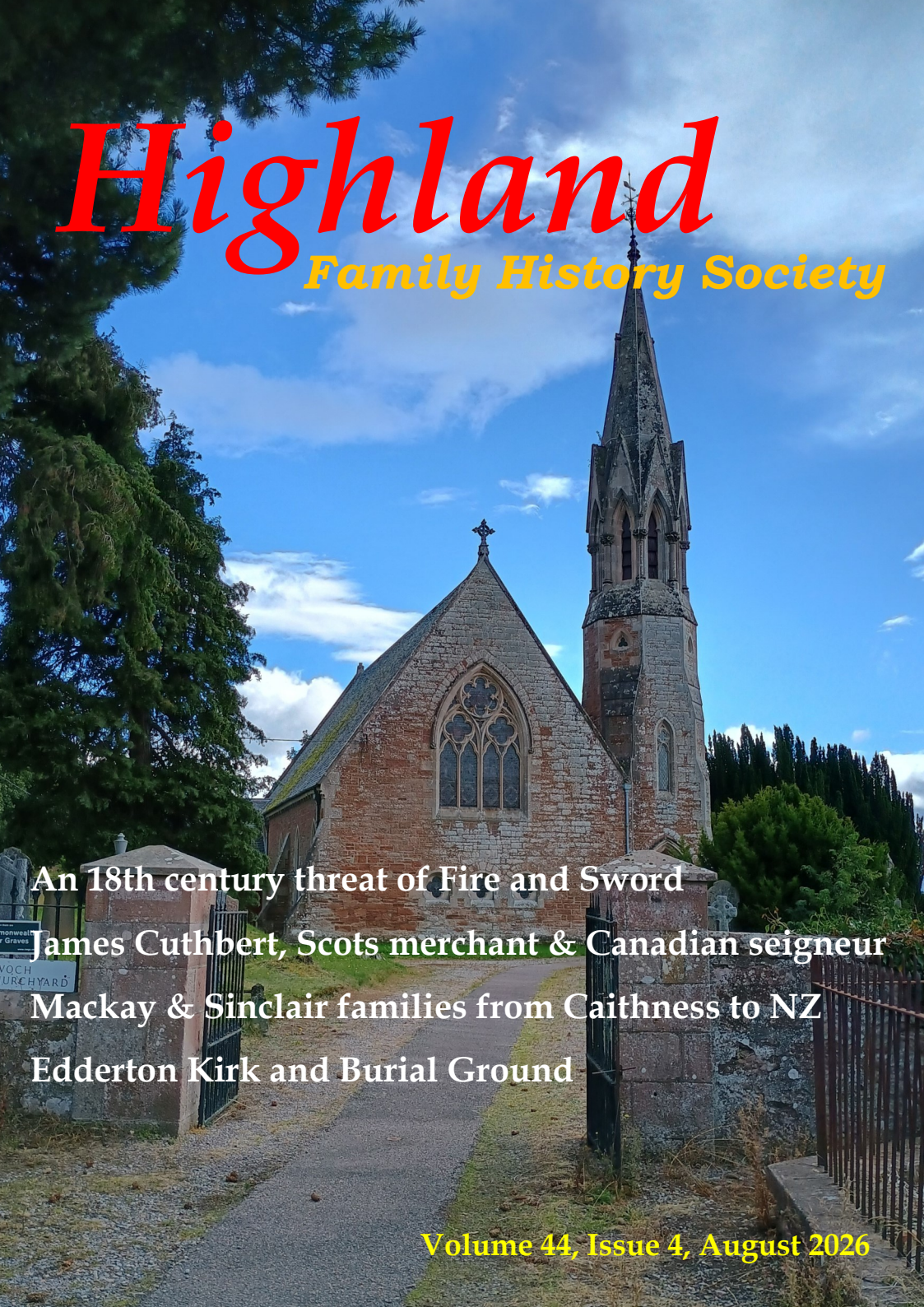




Highland

Family History Society

An 18th century threat of Fire and Sword
James Cuthbert, Scots merchant & Canadian seigneur
Mackay & Sinclair families from Caithness to NZ
Edderton Kirk and Burial Ground

Volume 44, Issue 4, August 2026



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NEWS

Talks for the new season

22 October 2026: Jonathan McColl, “800 years of Dingwall”

19 November 2026: Graeme Mackenzie, “Charles Fraser Mackintosh and the Golden Age of Highland Clan and Family History”.

Talks are open to all (free for HFHS members, and £2 for non-members) in the Archive Centre, Bught Road, Inverness, starting at 2.30pm.

The Society’s latest publications will be available to buy in the upstairs lobby – outside the meeting room – along with a sale of Free Church books which are now all available with free Post & Packing.

A New Publication

Edderton Churchyard, Monumental Inscriptions

A4, 54 pages, 300+ stones, lair register & colour plan. £7 plus P & P.

Other Recent Publications

Kilmuir Easter Churchyard & Cemetery, Monumental Inscriptions

A4, 113 pages, c1100 stones recorded. £ 9.00 plus postage & packing.

Tarbat Free Church Births & Baptisms 1843-1862 & 1873-1899

112 pages. £8 plus post & packing.

Chisholm Burial Ground, Clachan Comar Burial Ground, and Eskadale Churchyard, Parish of Kilmorack, Inverness-shire, Monumental Inscriptions.

A4, 64 pages over 350 memorials recorded. £7 plus post & packing.

Clan MacKenzie: Septs, Related Names, and Branches by Graeme Mackenzie. A5, 118 pages, with colour illustrations. £8 plus p & p.

You can order all our books online at the HFHS stand on GenFair:

<https://genfair.co.uk/supplier/highland-family-history-society-comunn-sloinntearachd-na-gaidhealtachd-65/>

Please share your family history with our other members around the world by contributing articles and notes to the Journal.

Email Address for articles, enquiries etc: HighlandFHS@gmail.com.

NEW MEMBERS

2935. Ms M. McDonald.

2936. Mr S. McFarquhar.

2937. Dr. M. Dodge.

Editorial

I should start by apologising for the fact that the August edition of this Journal will not be reaching you until September. This is a reflection of a particularly busy two months of “high summer” (i.e. July and August). We’re told that the extreme heat of this spring and early summer in Europe—with its attendant drought and wild fires—has popularised “staycations” in Britain, with Scotland being the “cool” place to go; despite the fact that Arthur’s Seat in Edinburgh, and the Cairngorms up here in the Highlands, were also ablaze in July. It’s not uncommon to meet Americans in the Highlands in the summer saying they’ve fled the heat of Florida or Texas to bask in the balmy climes enjoyed by their ancestors; but it is—or, up to now, has been—rare to find English visitors saying the same thing.

Among the Americans I’ve met this August, over a wonderful seafood supper in Fort William, were a family of McLeans from Maine and Hawaii who had contacted me last year—through the HFHS—in search of ancestors that they thought had gone to Nova Scotia in 1802 from Urray or Kilmorack; but who it turns out had in fact gone there forty years later from Lochaber. Their descendants had themselves spotted the mistake in the information they originally had about the origin of their ancestors, and then followed that up with research using Scotland’s People that allowed them to locate where their emigrant ancestor was living in the census of 1841—at Rhue, Arisaig—just two years before they left for Canada.

I was able to help them with more detail about why they left Scotland at that time, using two main sources: Firstly, an article by Alasdair Roberts on the website of the Moidart Local History Group called “Inverailort into Rhu Arisaig”; so called because it tells how Sir Alexander Cameron of Inverailort became the Tacksman of Rhue. Secondly, Charles Fraser Mackintosh’s account—in the Ardnamurchan chapter of his second volume of Antiquarian Notes—of a visit he made in 1849 to Morar where, as he puts it:

‘I saw two things—the places from where the people had been removed, also where for a time they were sheltered, and being a makeshift in name of a temporary home, necessarily crowded, and with flimsy protection. Yet the people were so far contented, if not cheerful, blessing their benefactress, who scrimped herself and household for their relief. This I saw and do not forget, though nearly fifty years have since passed.’

Roberts tells how this clearance had come about; because Lord Cranstoun—the Lowland laird who had inherited the Arisaig estate with which Clanranald had been obliged to part due to debt—stipulated that incoming tacksmen were not to be allowed to have sub-tenants. The correspondence between Cranstoun (a Borderer) and Inverailort (a Highlander of indeterminate origins who claimed to belong to the Erracht

family and who had made his fortune as a soldier in the Napoleonic Wars) can be found in the Lochaber Archives, along with a typed copy of the rules for tenants that Cranstoun laid down for his estates in Lochaber and Sutherland. This appears to show that Inverailort's only concern about the sub-tenants was that they should have been cleared before he entered Rhue.

Fraser Mackintosh puts this event into the context both of the fate of the MacDonalds of Clanranald—the Arisaig and Morar branches of which had been intimately involved with Bonnie Prince Charlie during The '45—and of the effects of the clearances throughout the Highlands. His visit to Morar as a young legal clerk was clearly one of the events that helped shape a political career that would see him become an MP for the Crofters Party—and the only Gaelic speaker in the House of Commons—with the unofficial title of “The Member for the Highlands”.

His account of this is a classic example of why Charles Fraser Mackintosh (1828-1901) is such an important figure for those of us who manage to combine an interest in the social and political history of the Highlands with the genealogy of its clans and families. While his political career was almost unique—at a time when most Highland MPs represented only the interests of the lairds (of which he himself was one)—CFM's historical and genealogical endeavours were shared with a number of contemporary scholars and writers, some of whose political views were far removed from his.

So, while the Liberal journalist and clan historian Alexander Mackenzie (1838-1898) shared CFM's support for the rights of crofters—having written the “History of the Highland Clearances” in 1883—William Mackay (1848-1928), the long-serving Secretary of the Gaelic Society, who was also a lawyer and who wrote and edited many important works on Highland history, was a firm Tory. Political differences were however less important than their shared devotion to what would now be called their “Highland heritage”.

The 150th anniversary of the publication of CFM's “Invernessiana” has prompted various institutions to come together for a year of events to mark his life and work—for which see www.charlesfrasermackintosh.com—and it's as part of a contribution to this that I'll be giving my talk to the Society on the 19th of November called “Charles Fraser Mackintosh and the Golden Age of Highland Clan and Family History”. This will be a longer version of the presentation I gave on the eve of this year's Inverness Highland Games after the AGM of the Association of Highland Clans and Societies.

The AHCS is organising a visit to Castle Leod on the afternoon of the 24th October, where *Cabarfeidh* (the Earl of Cromartie) will give us a tour of one of the oldest inhabited castles in Scotland. We also hope to visit Dingwall Museum and the Davidson Room at Tulloch Castle in the morning. Members of the HFHS are welcome to join us. Email me for costs and further details: graeme@highlandroots.net.

Graeme Mackenzie.

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP

The new financial year for the Society commences 1st September 2026 and this is the annual reminder that membership subscriptions are now due. The action you need to take, if any, depends on which method (1 or 2 below) that you use to pay your subscription.

NB. For UK members and Overseas members, there are now only two rates:

Ordinary Membership at £12, and Institutional Membership at £18.

All members now receive the quarterly journal as a PDF by email.

1. If you pay your subscription by Banker's Order, make sure your bank sends the appropriate amount to Virgin Bank plc [Bank Sort Code: 82-65-18 and Account Number: 20290121]. If you have been paying the Senior rate of £8 or Family rate of £16 previously, please change the amount to £12. If you prefer to pay using an on-line banking facility, use these details.
2. If you are used to paying by cheque (Sterling cheques only) please pay your subscription as soon as possible and preferably by the end of October 2026. Write to - The Treasurer, Highland Family Society, Archive Centre, Bought Road, Inverness IV3 5SS. Please include a note of your address.

The Society has a 'stand' on [GENfair](#), the Online Family History Fair and Genealogy Bookstore. This has been very successful from our point of view as many members joined the Society for the first time using this method and it is a very easy way of renewing your membership. If you do use GENfair and are a UK tax payer please remember to tick the Gift Aid box to enable us as a Charity to claim from HMRC.

If you have a credit or debit card, and have access to the Internet, you can use this facility to renew your membership. This will be of particular benefit to overseas members who do not have a sterling bank account as it avoids the additional charges incurred obtaining a sterling cheque or bank draft. Using GENfair also saves postage and you will receive on-line confirmation that your subscription has been paid. To use this service: -

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2. On Home page, click on Membership
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Thank You.

The Treasurer
Highland FHS

An 18th century threat of Fire & Sword and how the gentlemen of Sutherland responded

Num. 3053

The Caledonian Mercury.

Edinburgh, Tuesday, October 23, 1739.

¶¶ Whereas there has been a Letter dropt for *JAMES SUTHERLAND* of *Prionsie*, ordering him to put Five Guineas under a Stone, at the Place and within the Time therein mentioned, and in case of Failure, that Fire and Sword would be used against him, to the Terror of others to disobey such Demands: We Subscribers do hereby promise and engage our selves to pay the several Sums annexed to our Subscriptions, to any Person or Persons who shall discover or apprehend the Author or Authors of the above Incendiary Letter, and that how soon he or they shall be apprehended and brought to Justice; and any that shall discover his Accomplices shall be protected by us.

SUTHERLAND, five Guineas.
Brigadier James Sinclair, five Guineas.
Sir John Gordon of Embo, a Guinea.
James Sutherland of Prionsie, ten Guineas.
John Mackay of Tordorach, four Guineas.
Kenneth Sutherland of Meikle-Torbold, a Guinea.
John Sutherland of Riargubar, a Guinea.
William Monro of Achany, a Guinea.
Kenneth Sutherland Baillie of Dornoch, a Guinea.
Hugh Gordon of Carrole, a Guinea.
Robert Gray of Creich, a Guinea.
Robert Gordon, Esq; a Guinea.
John Gray of Rogart, a Guinea.
Andrew Macculloch, a Guinea.
Hugh Macdonald Baillie of Dornoch, a Guinea.
Hugh Monro of Clayside, a Guinea.
David Sutherland of Cambusavie, a Guinea.
William Sutherland of Thomashill, two Guineas.
William Sutherland, a Guinea.

Captain James Cuthbert: Inverness merchant, Highland landowner, Canadian seigneur

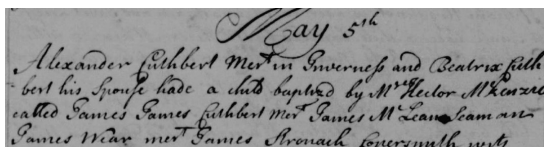
Dr Jim Mackay of Kirkmichael Trust



This story arose from the inscriptions on two marriage stones, one on Castle Street Inverness and the other on an old mill in Easter Ross. The man in both cases was the same: James Cuthbert (1719-1798), an important figure in Canadian history, and the ladies were the first two of his four wives.

This has been a challenging piece of research as there is much incorrect information about James Cuthbert, both on the net and in an old book on the Cuthberts. This is what I have gleaned from primary sources. All references are to documents in the National Records of Scotland unless otherwise stated.

The Cuthberts are well known as monied merchants in the Inverness area of noble origin. James was born to two divergent Cuthbert branches in 1719; to Inverness merchant Alexander Cuthbert and his wife from Ardersier, Beatrice Cuthbert. The witnesses to his baptism [recorded in the Inverness OPR, as shown below] reflect the charming idiosyncrasy of many Inverness baptisms—selected because their first name matched that of the baptised child: James Cuthbert merchant, James McLean seaman, James Wear merchant and James Stronach coppersmith.



I know little of his earliest years. It is reported in *The Cuthberts, Barons of Castle Hill and Their Descendants in South Carolina and Georgia* (JGB Bulloch, 1908) that James Cuthbert served in early life in the navy, was lieutenant in Admiral Vernon's flagship in 1740, at the siege of Carthage, and carried home the news of the taking of the forts. I have not seen any evidence of an early naval career. Bulloch also says he served in the 43rd, later the 42nd, regiment, and was serving in 1758 with the 15th, or Amherst's regiment, in the war with the French in Canada. However, I have not seen any reports that confirm this, though he did serve with the 15th in Canada later in the war.

The first records I have of Cuthbert in fact say that he is a merchant. This is not surprising given the Cuthbert mercantile and administrative influence in Inverness. His first marriage occurred in 1742, when he would have been 24 years old: "James Cuthbert & Marjory Anderson both in this Burgh" contracted 30 October, married 25 November. For a long time I felt it possible that this was another James Cuthbert as no history of Cuthbert mentions this marriage, but hard evidence from the sasines, to which I'll come, proved they were one and the same. "James Cuthbert Mercht & his Spouse Marjory Anderson" had a son, John, baptised two years later, on 24 October 1744, and again the Inverness witness pattern was followed: John Fraser provost, John Taylor writer, John Cuthbert younger of Castlehill, John Anderson (I presume a relative of Marjory's) and John Alves.

They resided at what is now 37-39 Castle Street, Inverness, and this is where I first engaged with the story, through my research into marriage stones of the north. There was an old newspaper report [Inverness Courier, 17 October 1958] that a fireplace marriage lintel with inscription IC 1744 MA had been found during renovation of the building when it was Sinclair's furniture store. It was said that "The same initials and date also appears on the coping stone on the front of the building". The old building, which has crowstepped gables, has been for a long time now home to *Grahams of Inverness, Outdoor Clothing & Equipment* and inquiries by my friend Anne Mackintosh revealed that the fireplace marriage lintel had been covered up again and the proprietors knew nothing of another stone. But Anne reported that there seemed to be something carved on the right-hand skewputt at the front



I promptly appeared with a big telephoto lens and by standing at just the right angle on the far side of the street, and waiting for a gap in the traffic, the inscription 1744 IC MA could be clearly distinguished. Research in the Inverness Burgh Sasines in the Highland Archive Centre revealed that Cuthbert purchased the land and property here in 1744, the date on the stone [HCA/BI/1/12/13 folio 236]. He gave Marjory a life interest in the property. Sadly Marjory died young in 1748 – as recorded in the Inverness OPR:

1748 Anderson Marjory Anderson spouse to James Cuthbert
Marjory Burgh

He purchased an extensive area of land in the Parish of Avoch in the Black Isle in early 1749 [RS38/10 f. 59]; land then called Wester Farnese, so he became James Cuthbert of Farnese. I have been unable to say exactly where Wester Farnese was, but from the description of “town and davoch lands of Avoch and Knockmuir” it must have been on the eastern side.

Now an estate owner, James married for a second time later that year. His bride was Margaret, the daughter of Sir Roderick McKenzie of Scatwell, and Cuthbert gave his new wife a life interest in Wester Farnese. *The Caledonian Mercury* of 23 November 1749 reported: “We hear from Ross-shire, that on the 17th current James Cuthbert of Farnese, Merchant in Inverness, was married to Miss Peggie Mackenzie, youngest Daughter of Sir Roderick Mackenzie of Scatwall, both a beautiful young Lady, possessed of a handsome Form, and of all the Endowments of Mind tending to render a married Couple a very happy Pair”. What can you say to that! And this was the lady that James would abandon.

Many family trees on Ancestry.com show James and Margaret now having a series of children baptised in the Parish of Ardersier. This is fantasy as the children concerned were grafted on from another couple, James Cuthbert and Mary Campbell who did indeed reside in Ardersier. In fact, I can find no records of any children baptised to James and Margaret, so sadly it seems to have been a childless marriage.

It was in this period that James became active in the administration of the Burgh of Inverness, serving as Town Treasurer from Whitsunday 1750 to Whitsunday 1752 [Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, INVMG 2003, 010].

Throughout his life, James Cuthbert displayed a keenness in obtaining land, this leading to his acquisition of great areas in Canada later in his life. But, having married Margaret Mackenzie and having already acquired land in the Black Isle, he strategically sold Farnese in 1754 [GD86/1002] to finance the purchase of land on the next peninsula north, in Easter Ross. He thus became known as James Cuthbert of Millcraig and Farnese. Over 1754-55, he bought the land and mill of Millcraig (or Milncraig), Nether Tollie, and Culkenzie [RS38/10 f. 218; RS38/10 f. 219], and in 1757 he secured a right to Delny and Priesthill [RS38/10 f. 336]. He had a manor house at Millcraig and he was resident there in 1754 [GD86/1002]. His manor house would I think be at the location of modern Millcraig Farm. We even know from the sasine records that his gardener there was called Kenneth Mackenzie.

His occupation of Millcraig meant he now had neighbours from hell, the Mackenzies of Ardrross. As was usual for neighbours of Ardrross, Cuthbert was soon in litigation, initially over the Mackenzies having illegally taken the custom from the ancient mill of Millcraig [CS237/C/3/3]. Ardrross of course responded; with a counter-claim that the family from whom Cuthbert had

obtained Millcraig were not legally entitled to it, and that Ardross himself owned it. Specious of course, but a typical over-the-top retaliatory action which made its way to the Law Courts of Edinburgh: John Mackenzie of Ardross v John Ross of Auchnacloch, and James Cuthbert of Millcraig [Scottish Court of Session, December 20, 1759].

I had read in another old newspaper article [*North Star*, 13 August 1955] that there was a lintel at Millcraig Mill, on the River Averon or Alness, celebrating the marriage of Captain James Cuthbert and Margaret Mackenzie, and I dropped in a couple of times to catch the sun at the right angle to record it. I was pleased to see that it was still there. It reads 171C MM. The lintel has clearly come from another building – the manor house of Milncraig – and has been cut down in size to fit the mill window. I imagine the right hand side would have continued with cK and 54 or 55. But how unusual to find two different marriage stones associated with the same man and different wives.



Cuthbert still held the Castle Street house in 1754 as in that year he wrote down what should happen if he died before his second wife Margaret Mackenzie:



“She should choose to liferent ... the mannor place or private dwelling house of Milncraig, office houses and garden ... or the said James Cuthbert’s house & garden, in the Castle street of Inverness” [RS38/10 f. 220].

And just to dispel any doubt about this being the same James Cuthbert, in 1756 “James Cuthbert de Milncraig” registered a sasine in the Inverness Burgh Sasines [HCA/BI/1/12/13 f. 236] which confirmed his ownership of the Castle Street property. Translating from the Latin, the sasine says that James Cuthbert of Milncraig, named in the disposition after mentioned as merchant in the said burgh, owned the property which had previously been owned by Duff of Drummur, and that it had been assigned in 1744 in favour of the said James Cuthbert and the deceased Marjory Anderson his spouse in fee and liferent.

The Cuthberts resided at Millcraig and took their place in Easter Ross society. I see James Cuthbert appearing personally at a church meeting in 1755, for instance [CH2/1136/1]; but soon he would be departing the area with Margaret left in the manor house and a factor looking after the land.

Various sources on the net say that Margaret Mackenzie died in 1765. I suspect this has arisen as he re-married in 1766 in Canada. Prepare for a startling reveal. I picked up from the Rosskeen Kirk Session Records [CH2/1136/1] the following:

“Mrs Cuthbert of Milncraig’s Letter of Special mandate to William Munro Tacksman of Delny, Authorizing him to appear in the Kirk Session of Rosskeen to act for Capt. Cuthbert in insisting for a re-division of the Kirk &.

Milncraig 10th June 1772

Sir

Mr. William MacLeay came to me in the beginning of May last and communicated the Substance of a Letter he had received from Sir John Gordon of date the 30th April preceding, and the Substance of the Papers Sir John endorsed to him in said Letter ... I thereupon told him that I approv’d much of all Sir John’s Proposals, and that I would take it upon me in Capt. Cuthbert’s absence to authorize you to concur with Sir John Gordon in every point, for that Capt. Cuthbert himself was never satisfied with his Allocation in the Church; and that I therefore was certain, that if it pleased God he return’d to the Country, he would insist for a re-division of the Church, as he thinks himself aggriev’d by the former Divisions, whether Sir John insisted upon it or not. ...

(Signed) Margt. Cuthbert, address thus

To Mr. William Munro Factor to Capt. James Cuthbert of Milncraig.”

Well, far from having died in 1765, Margaret was alive and kicking in 1772, and residing in the manor house in Millcraig waiting for her husband to return from Canada. Meanwhile, James Cuthbert was seven years into a bigamous marriage with his third wife by whom he would have ten children.

But this is to jump ahead. He must have tired of life in the Highlands and was seeking new challenges.

In 1760, “James Cuthbert, Esq. of Milncraig, is appointed Captain of a Highland independent company of foot, to be forthwith raised”. [*Caledonian Mercury*, 25 August 1760]. According to the same paper on 18 February 1761, and the *Newcastle Courant* on 28 February 1761, the company was greatly praised, and this appears to be the start of his military career (although Bulloch has him fighting in Canada as early as 1758).

I see that he became a Captain of the 101st regiment and then, in 1762, was appointed Captain in the 15th regiment [*Leeds Intelligencer* 28 December 1762]. It was in this role that he served under General James Murray fighting the French in Canada. Cuthbert must have arrived in the midst of this war.

Following the Treaty of Paris in 1763 France formally ceded control of New France (Canada) to Great Britain. When Cuthbert left the army in 1765, Murray, now Governor of Quebec, appointed him to the Council of Quebec. This was another springboard for Cuthbert.

You can follow his tempestuous career in the on-line version of the Dictionary of Canadian Biography [www.biographi.ca/en/bio.php?BioId=35956] and the website www.chapelledescuthbert.com/james-cuthbert.

Captain Cuthbert purchased in 1765 the seigniory of Berthier, a tract of land about fifteen miles wide by about twenty-one miles in depth, on the north shore of the river St. Lawrence, nearly opposite the mouth of the Richelieu. He paid a considerable sum for the property by draft on George Ross Esq. of London, this being none other than George Ross of Pitkerie and Cromarty who was single-handedly responsible for the economic redevelopment of Cromarty in the Black Isle.



Cuthbert's arms

James Cuthbert had a manor-house built, and went on to add to his great land interests. A Seigneur (or Lord) was a landowner granted large fiefs, by the French Crown originally, and was responsible for developing the land and settling on it tenants who farmed smaller plots, paying rent and dues to the Seigneur. Cuthbert was no stranger to being a land-owner, but the scale was vastly greater than his estates in the Black Isle and Easter Ross. He had many reverses, and was even imprisoned by the Americans during their invasion of Canada. He returned several times to the UK, not least to seek (in vain) compensation from the government for damages caused by the American incursion. Curiously, I see him back in Edinburgh in 1768 as a witness to the baptism of "James Cuthbert Forrest", the son of merchant Andrew Forrest and wife Helen Blackburn [Edinburgh Baptism Register]. Many years later he settled, by means of his last will and testament [CC8/8/133, 1802] an annuity on Nelly Forrest, the widow of Andrew Forrest; so they must have been close friends.

Back in 1765, he had obviously made up his mind to start a new life in Canada. Did he ask Margaret Mackenzie to join him there? I doubt it. In 1766 he married again, Catharine Cairns (1745-1785). They had three sons and seven daughters and most of them survived to form a modern Cuthbert dynasty. He was clearly very fond of Catharine Cairns and her death in 1785 was the stimulus for him to erect the first Protestant Chapel in Quebec, in a vault of which the Cuthberts would be thereafter buried. It was then called St Andrews Chapel but is now a museum and event space called appropriately "La Chapelle des Cuthbert".

James Cuthbert wasn't finished with marriage even then. In 1786, the year after the death of Catharine Cairns, he married again, still bigamously, Rebecca Stockton (c1742-1811), daughter of a Justice of the Supreme Court of the Province of Jersey. He would have been 67 years of age. It must have



St Andrew's Chapel, now La Chapelle des Cuthbert

been an uneasy alliance given the strained relationship between Canada and America at the time and the significant role her family had played in establishment of the republic. His will ensured that if she should move out of Lower Canada, much of her income from his estate would cease.

His will [CC8/8/133, 1802], written a few weeks before his death in 1798, was long, complex and worded extremely carefully given his marital position. It provides a clear picture of the man for it minutely plans the inheritance of his children, taking into account almost every conceivable eventuality, for the period of 150 years into the future. In reality, this form of land holding ended long before then, so there was one factor he had not allowed for.

Distressingly, it emerges from his will that the family held slaves; not many, but reading lines like "the wench named Margaret and her children shall be deemed and considered to be the property of the said Rebecca Stockton, otherwise called Rebecca Cuthbert" is not pleasant.

I believe that, back in Scotland, his second wife Margaret Mackenzie survived him. We have seen her in the manor house of Milncraig in 1772. Cuthbert sold Milncraig to George Ross of Pitkerie a few years after this, the two of them having had a long financial association [RS38/13 f. 358]. She moved to Inverness, and I see her there ("Mrs Cuthbert Millcraig") with a female servant in 1786 and 1791 in the servant tax returns [E326/8 and E326/28]. Three of her Mackenzie nieces joined forces in 1802 to become her executors dative qua legatees [CC11/1/6] to try to recover some money outstanding from George Ross of Pitkerie. I think they could have done this only if she had survived her husband, but I will be advised by somebody who knows inheritance law!

So next time you pass 37-39 Castle Street on your way up towards the revamped Inverness Castle, have a look at that skewputt; the man who put that up became a Lord or Seigneur in Quebec!

Mackay and Sinclair Families from Caithness to New Zealand

Maggie McDonald

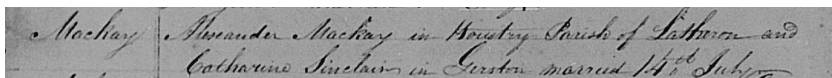


Alexander Mackay and Catherine Sinclair [centre] and their daughters
Left: Ann, Margaret, & Barbara. Right: Margaret, Johanna, & Catherine

On the 14th of July 1820, Alexander Mackay, son of John Mackay (1753-1837) and Christian Campbell (1771-1885), was married to Catherine Sinclair, daughter of Andrew Sinclair and Barbara Campbell, at Latheron in Caithness. Alexander was born on the 27th July 1794 and Catherine Sinclair was baptised on the 4th May 1798.

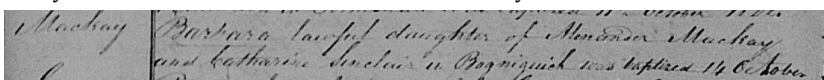
They had the following children: Christian born 1821, Barbara 1822 – 1899, Finlay 1824 – 1856, Johanna 1829 – 1910, Helen born 1826, Andrew born 1832, Margaret Ann 1834 – 1905, Ann 1840 – 1917, William born 1842, Catherine 1845 – 1921.

Four of the girls would all marry and move to New Zealand: Barbara, Ann, Margaret and Catherine.



The marriage entry from the Halkirk OPR showing that Alexander Mackay was married from Houstrey, to the north west of the village of Latheron, and Catherine Sinclair from Girston (now Gerston), just west of the village of Halkirk

Barbara McKay was born on the 14th of October 1822 [her baptismal entry is shown below] and married Stewart Sutherland (1829-1905), son of John Sutherland and Ann Sinclair of Latheron, Caithness, on the 19th May 1865. She was 42 years old, but her marriage certificate states she was 35 years old and Stewart was 33. They set sail for New Zealand on the ship *Tudor* and arrived in New Zealand 24th September 1865. They settled in Yaldhurst, to the west of Christchurch in the South Island, where Stewart farmed. Their daughter Catherine Anne Sinclair was born in 1867 but sadly died. They had no other children. Barbara died 1899 and Stewart 1909. They are both buried at Yaldhurst Cemetery.



Ann McKay (Annie) was born in March 1840. She sailed to New Zealand on the *Matoka* with her friend Ann Sutherland. They were both aged 23, and arrived in February 1862. Annie married James Sinclair at the home of James Bruce on Cashel Street, Christchurch, on 13th March 1862. James was the son of James Sinclair (1806-1891) and Isabella Budge (1809-1898) of the Dunbeath Estate, Latheron, where James Sr was the bailiff. James Jr had trained under his father and had immigrated to New Zealand in 1858 on the ship *Indiana*.

James first worked in the bush at Ohoka, 20 minutes north of Christchurch, then followed the gold rush at Gabriels Gully, Otago, where he made enough money to purchase a farm at Yaldhurst in Christchurch. While on the goldfield he heard that his fiancée Annie McKay had arrived at Lyttelton on the *Matoka*. It seems that he then downed tools and walked, so the story goes, to Christchurch to meet her. As a married couple James and Annie first settled in Yaldhurst, then in 1878 moved to Tai Tapu, east of Christchurch, where James bought a farm. Annie and James raised five sons and two daughters.

James Alexander and Katherine Sinclair, twins, were born in 1865. James married Emily Charlotte Howard in 1899. They farmed at Edendale, Southland. They had no children. James died 1944 aged 78 years old. Katherine (Kitty) married Harold (Harry) Braithwaite in 1901. They had one child, a son called Gordon Sinclair Braithwaite, born in 1904.



**James Sinclair and Ann McKay with their family
on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary**

William Andrew Sinclair was born in 1868 and married Rose Elizabeth Nicoll Ormiston in 1896. William was a clergyman/minister. They lived in several places and finally ended up in Mt Roskill, Auckland. They had four sons: Norman Taylor born in 1898; Cyril and Frank born in 1900, both of whom died within a few hours of their birth; Ronald Ormiston Sinclair born in 1903.

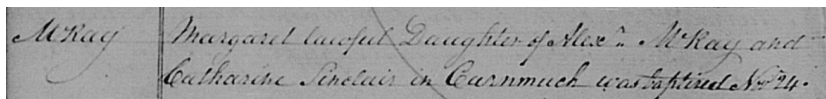
John Robert Sinclair was born in 1871. He married Clara Emily Ormiston, sister of Rose, in 1900. They had two sons Russell Mackay in 1901 and Hector Ormiston in 1908.

Alexander Stewart Sinclair was born in 1875. He married Edith Bessie Carpenter in 1902. They had one daughter, Margaret Hilda, born in 1904.

Isabella Jane Sinclair was born in 1878. She married Herbert Knight Bowden in 1906. They had one daughter Myrtle Elizabeth Annie, born in 1907.

Robert (Bob) Sinclair was born in 1880. He married, firstly, Emily Faulkner in 1909. She died in 1930. Bob then married Christiner Stringer on the 3rd of August 1933. They had two children: Caroline Ann born 1935, and Robert Mackay born 1937. The family was very close knit.

James Sinclair was prominent in the local community. He and Annie McKay had a huge Golden Wedding celebration, which was in the local newspapers. They eventually sold their farm and moved into Christchurch, at Macauley Street in Addington, where they remained until they died. James died on 18th September 1927 and Annie on Thursday the 8th of March 1917. They are both buried at Sydneham Cemetery (Block 1E plot 15) in Christchurch.



Margaret McKay was born in 1834 [baptismal entry in the Halkirk OPR shown above]. She sailed to New Zealand on the *British Empire* in 1864. She met Walter Murray (1834-1906) on board and married him at Knox Church in Dunedin, Otago, on the 20th of May 1866.

Walter was the third of five children born to John Murray and Ann Munro of Creich in Sutherland, Scotland. His siblings were William 1834, Ann 1836, Erica, 1838, Donald 1840-1920 (also came to New Zealand), Margaret 1847, Jane 1849-1893, and Isabella 1854. Walter and Margaret settled initially lived at Kohi Bush, Waipahi, in Southland, then moved in 1870 to Dunback which is 14 kilometres from Palmerston and on the route to the goldfields of Central Otago. Walter was a sheep farmer and had several acres on Loop Road, west of Dunback. Margaret and Walter had 8 children:

John 1868 – 1951; born at Kohi; married Mary Sim.

Donald 1870 – 1901; born at Kohi; died in a mining accident at the Limeworks Dunback. He had married Elizabeth Griffin from Macreas Flat whose father owned a Hotel there.

Walter Finlay 1872 – 1956; married Catherine Schrick (1872-1904); then married Barbara Parkhill (1855-1958).

William Andrew 1874 – 1926; married Mary Jane Hitchon.

David Burnett 1876 – 1945; married Sarah Todd

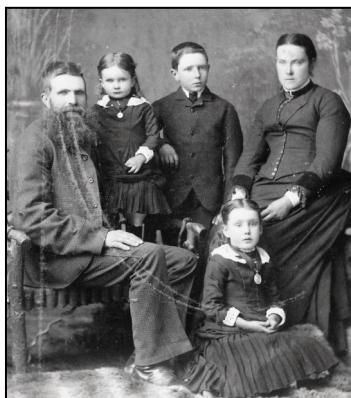
Andrew 1876 – 1958, twin of David Burnett; married Barbara Alice Ward.

Margaret Ann 1878 – 1938; married Thomas Ross

Walter was caught stealing sheep and spent time in prison. He died in 1906 and Margaret died 1905. Both are buried at Palmerston Otago.



**Walter, Donald &
Margaret Murray nee McKay.**



**John & Catherine McDonald
nee McKay with children.**

Catherine McKay (1845 – 1923) was the last child born to Alexander McKay and Catherine Sinclair. It is not known why she decided to come to New Zealand, but possibly as a companion to Margaret who had settled in Otago on a fairly isolated farm. She possibly met her future husband John McDonald when shopping in Palmerston, or when John delivered his goods to Dunback.

Catherine and John were married at the home of Mrs C. Sutherland of Dunedin on the 22nd of October 1872 by Dr Donald Stuart, the minister of Knox Church, Dunedin. Catherine was 27 years old and John 47 years old. They settled in Palmerston where John had a general store. They had the following children all born in Palmerston, Otago.

Donald (Dan) 1873 – 1947; married Ann Margaret Cumming.

Catherine Ellen 1875 – 1875.

Alexander 1876 – 1926; married Maria Fox nee Spring.

Ellen 1878 – 1919; married George Ellis.

Margaret 1881 – 1909; married Francis Caverhill.

Walter 1884 – 1923; married Georgina Mooney.

Mary 1886 – 1970; married James Service.

John was Mayor of Palmerston 1883 – 1885. His shop was successful mainly due to being on the road that led to the Goldfields in Central Otago. John died in 1906 and Catherine in 1921. Both are buried at Palmerston Otago.

Edderton Kirk and Burial Ground



The Society's latest publication, *Monumental Inscriptions from Edderton Churchyard, Ross-shire*, includes what must be one of the longest MIs in Scotland (does anybody know of a longer one?), the transcribed text of which is given on the opposite page.

The stone itself is pictured on the right here as photographed by Roddie Macpherson for his Ross & Cromarty Roots website. He notes that when he was there this and other Baillie stones had to be seen from outside a locked enclosure.

Three related inscriptions—one also very long—follow (as Nos. 337, 338, & 339 in our booklet) and tell a sad story of multiple drownings as members of this military family perished on the way to or back from service in the East.



336 – Here lies interred the remains of **William BAILLIE** Esqr. Rosehall, who departed this life in the 75th year of his age, A.D. 1779. To the masculine energies of a clear and comprehensive mind, he united that happy equability of temper and suavity of manners, which always render their influence efficacious and acceptable. As a Christian, his respect to the institution of religion was uniformly decorous and exemplary. The talents, wisdom, and vigour, displayed in the more public transactions of his life, were acknowledged to be unrivalled; while in private life, whether viewed in the character of husband parent, master or friend, he was ever found mild and indulgent, true to his word, and constant in his attachments, and in the reward of his merits it was his happiness to have seen a numerous offspring liberally and honourably established in the world. Alas of his twelve sons, there remain at the date of the completion of this structure but one great grandson to rescue the name from oblivion. He was twice happily married, and by each marriage had six sons and a daughter, 1st. to **Catherine**, daughter of **James SUTHERLAND** Esqre. of Clyne, who died in 1749 (and interred here). Pious, meek and prudent she discharged with fidelity the duties of a Christian, of a wife, mother and head of family so as to endear her memory to her surviving relatives and friends. He married 2nd. **Mary** daughter of the Hon. **Col. Hugh MACKAY** of Bighouse. To a pleasing and graceful exterior she added the charm of engaging manners, heightened by the exercise of those domestic virtues which gain esteem and secure affection. She died at Peterhead in 1808 lamented by all who knew her and particularly by the poor. Here also is deposited the body of his son. Major General **Mackay Hugh BAILLIE**, who died in the 54th year of his age, A.D. 1805. This gentleman like greater part of his family, embraced the Military life, in which his professional merits and repeatedly gained him the thanks of his superiors in command. After a series of arduous and honourable service at different periods, in North America, in the West Indies, and in Ireland, in which last Country he had the honour to serve during the late Rebellion as Colonel commanding of the Reay Fencibles Regiment. He retired with a constitution greatly impaired by the fatigues of duty, and the influence of various climates. Upon his death, society had to lament the loss of a cheerful and interesting companion, a warm and generous friend, and an elegant and accomplished gentleman. This monument has been restored by his great grandson **Mackay Hugh Baillie SCOTT**, 1883.

Monumental Inscription Books published by HFHS

Prices do not include Post and Packing

Burial Place	County	Mem- orials	Pub- lished	Price
Abernethy Churchyard	INV	439	2012	£7.00
Advie Churchyard	INV	147	2012	£6.00
Alness Old Churchyard	ROC	659	1996	£6.00
Alvie Churchyard	INV	203	2014	£6.00
Ardersier Cemetery [A5]	INV	371	2009	£1.00
Avoch Old Churchyard	ROC	651	2006	PDF
Badenscallie Churchyard	ROC	270	2016	PDF
Beauly Priory & St. Mary's Ch'y'd	INV	430	2023	£8.00
Brachlich Cemetery, Gollanfield	INV	200	2003	£3.00
Carrbridge Cemetery	INV	332	2022	£6.00
Chapel Yard, Inverness	INV	2802	1999	£12.00
Clachan Churchyard, Lochbroom	ROC	298	2017	£6.00
Chisholm Burial G'nd, Clachan Comar & Eskadale Churchyard	INV	300+	2025	£7.00
Contin Churchyard	ROC	410	2015	£8.00
Corrimony Burial Ground	INV	95	2020	£4.00
Cromdale Churchyard	INV	365	2011	PDF
Croy Churchyard	INV	367	2002	£6.00
Dalarossie Churchyard	INV	221	2011	PDF
Daviot Churchyard	INV	246	2003	PDF
Dores Churchyard	INV	427	2004	£6.00
Dundonnell & Gruinard BG	ROC	200	2023	£5.00
Dunlichity Churchyard	INV	315	2010	£6.00
Easter Suddie Burial Ground [A5]	ROC	209	2004	£1.00
Edderton Churchyard	ROC	300+	2026	£7.00
Fodderty & Kinnettas Burial Grounds	ROC	1635	2022	£10.00
Fortrose Cem'y & Cathedral [A5]	ROC	450	2005	£1.00

Burial Place	County	Mem- orials	Pub- lished	Price
Geddes Churchyard [A5]	NAI	156	1995	£1.00
Glenconvinth Churchyard	INV	154	2021	£6.00
Greyfriars Cemetery, Inverness	INV	132	2002	PDF
Invermoriston Churchyard	INV	174	2013	PDF
Invershin Burial Ground	SUT	142	2020	PDF
Killearnan Churchyard	ROC	285	1995	PDF
Kilmorack Burial G'nd & Cem'y and Struy Churchyard	INV	900	2024	£10.00
Kilmore Old Churchyard, Drumnadrochit	INV	496	2007	£6.00
Kilmuir Cem'y (Black Isle) [A5]	ROC	239	2006	£1.00
Kilmuir Easter	ROC	c1100	2026	£9.00
Kinlochluichart (Contin) (Garve, Achnahalt etc)	ROC	487	2023	£6.00
Kiltarlity (Tomnacross & Old) Churchyards	INV	769	2022	PDF
Kiltearn Burial Ground	ROC	830	2020	£8.00
Kirkhill Churchyard & Kirkton of Bunchrew	INV	651	2022	£8.00
Kirkton of Ardersier Cemetery	INV	393	2003	PDF
Laggan Churchyard	INV	344	2021	£6.00
Lochend Burial Ground	INV	129	2004	£3.00
Logie Wester Burial Ground	ROC	273	2021	£4.00
Moy Churchyard	INV	174	2008	£3.00
Nonikiln Churchyard	ROC	181	2023	£4.00
Old High Churchyard, Inverness	INV	476	2004	£5.00
Petty Old Churchyard	INV	476	2002	£6.00
Rosemarkie Churchyard	ROC	575	2004	£5.00
St Clements Cemetery, Dingwall	ROC	689	2002	£7.00
Ullapool Burial Grounds	ROC	577	2020	£8.00
Urquhart Old Churchyard (Black Isle)	ROC	937	2006	£5.00
Urray Old + Urray West Churchyard	ROC	495	2016	£6.00



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