

Highland

Family History Society

Some Assynt Kellys

The Rev. Dr John Ross Visitor Centre

William Crow Gordon, photographer in Nairn

Tuachs: MacKenzies by Another Name — concluded

Volume 44, Issue 3, May 2026



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Cover Photo: Lochinver Burial Ground

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NEWS

Dates for next season's first talks

22 October and 19 November – speakers & topics TBA in next Journal

New and 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.

Cabarfeidh's Cousins - Essays in Mackenzie History and Genealogy by Graeme Mackenzie. A5, 90 pages. £7 plus postage & packing.

May We Be Britons? A History of the MacKenzies by Andrew

McKenzie. Crown Quarto, 375 pages, colour pics. £18 plus p & p.

Though this book – the first complete history of Clan MacKenzie since Alexander Mackenzie's late 19th century work – is not published by HFHS, the Society has obtained copies from the author to sell on at a bargain price.

Free Church Books Stock Clearance

All older Free Church books now with Free Postage and Packing.
Some have limited stock so buy now.

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/>

Share your family history with other members by contributing to the Journal

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

NEW MEMBERS

2932. Mrs. P. Hart.

2933. A. LaForge.

2934. A. MacDonald.

DEATHS

2100. Mr H. Johnston.

Editorial

Coincidence is a wonderful thing. I always get myself going on a new newsletter by choosing a picture for the cover. Sometimes it is suggested by one of the stories that I know will be going into the edition in question. If I'm lucky, the writer of a feature to be included in that issue will have provided some illustrations for it, one of which I think might make a good cover; as happened for the February issue, when I was able to use the doocot photo that Jim Mackay had sent to go with his article on the Macandies and their wills.

Usually, however, I have to trawl through all my photos of Highland places, monuments, burial grounds, castles etc, in the hope of finding one that would fit a front page; but on this occasion, coincidence brought these two things together. I dug out a photo of the burial ground at Lochinver in Assynt that I had taken a decade ago—just because it was a nice picture of a family history related place—and then found, when reviewing the material I had available to put into this issue, an article that not merely featured a family from Assynt, but also mentioned a gravestone in that very burial ground.

Coincidence of course often occurs in family history research and, sadly, is the basis for many of the misleading user-submitted family trees to be found in Ancestry, FamilySearch, and other online genealogy sites. Someone knows their ancestor had a particular name and was born at a particular time, and therefore assumes that any record of someone with that name at that time must be their ancestor; ignoring, because of the coincidence of name and date, any and all of the impossible so-called “facts” that the Ancestry or other algorithms throw up as a consequence of putting too much into what is just a coincidence.

However, sometimes what one thinks is just a coincidences can turn out to be more than that; if it is supported by other coincidences all pointing to the same conclusion. I generally work on a rule of four: One coincidence is just a coincidence; two coincidences are interesting; three coincidences are potentially significant; and four may constitute sufficient circumstantial evidence to prove a point, so long of course as it makes historical and genealogical sense (which is not always the case). In such circumstances it's more important than ever to provide argument as well as evidence to support your case.

One of the more pleasing coincidences for me in the last couple of years is coming to live in Fortrose and being asked, quite out of the blue, to research a couple of families who turn out to have had connections in the Black Isle, and Fortrose in particular. As I mention in my paper on the Tuachs, the ancestor of the later representatives in Scotland of this MacKenzie sept was the Tacksman of Craigbreck—then on a part of the lands of Kessock—while his brother was a Tacksman of Garguston on the lands of Redcastle. George Tuach of Craigbreck was married to a MacCulloch and, though the northern MacCullochs were a clan mostly associated with the Tain and Fearn area of Easter Ross, some of them came to be settled on the Black Isle; and one branch in particular became prominent in Fortrose. The earliest of these so far found was a George MacCulloch who, in 1659, was a merchant burghess of Inverness, and ten years later a burghess of Fortrose. His son George—who married Margaret MacKenzie in Kirkmichael in 1689—was a tenant in 1699 in Meikle Farness and in 1702 in Davidston, in Cromarty. At this point it looks very likely this is the same MacCulloch family that Jim Mackay has documented so thoroughly on his wonderful Kirkmichael.info website; unless of course, this is just another example of a pure coincidence!

I could not mention Jim Mackay without expressing our gratitude to him for giving us two talks this season; both beautifully illustrated and full of fascinating information. The second followed our AGM last month, when we heard from Stuart that the Society's finances were in good shape, but all agreed that we needed some fresh blood on the committee, since it is presently down to just the five of us; two of whom—your present and past Chairman—have been doing this for longer than we might care to remember (just as well we still enjoy it).

While it would be nice to have one or two new committee members, you don't have to take that responsibility on to help the Society; why not just volunteer to help with some ongoing projects. We're looking in particular for someone to help compile and then to administer a new website—which of course could be done by someone living outwith the Highlands—and for some help with transcribing 19th century Poor Records (template and photos will be provided). If you'd like to help, please contact Stuart via HighlandFHS@gmail.com.

Graeme Mackenzie

John Ross Visitor Centre, Balintore: Remembering the Life and Work of the Rev. Dr John Ross DD, Missionary to China

by David Macintyre



Born in Rarichie, a small village in the Parish of Nigg, near Tain, in Ross-shire, John was the eldest of Hugh Ross and Catherine Sutherland's eight children. He was raised as bilingual in this Gaelic speaking community and was educated locally. From 1865-1869 he attended The United Presbyterian Theological College in Edinburgh and then became, for a few years, a peripatetic preacher, serving the Gaelic speaking Scottish Highlands (Barra, Inverness, Lismore, Portree, Stornoway) and Glasgow. Eventually he decided that his future lay overseas and he was ordained as a missionary to China at the Nigg United Presbyterian Church, Chapelhill, in March 1872.

He spent the following 40 years as a missionary in Manchuria, Northern China and, with his fellow missionary, Rev. John Macintyre, 'laboured diligently, against significant opposition', to build a network of Christian congregations that they served from their bases in the towns of Moukden and Haicheng. Not long after the start of his ministry in Manchuria, John Ross became aware of visiting foreign traders from Korea, a country that shared a border with Manchuria. A number of these traders expressed interest in Christianity and were baptised as Christians. John Ross quickly recognised the opportunity to gain further converts from within Korea which, at that time, was known as the 'Hermit Kingdom' as its borders were strictly closed to foreigners and, indeed, Christian worship was forbidden on pain of death. John Ross grasped the opportunity with enthusiasm and, although already fluent in Mandarin Chinese, he and John Macintyre taught themselves the Korean language. From 1877, the pair spent the following 10 years

translating the Bible's New Testament and, with the help of Korean converts, printed the Gospel in the form of religious tracts. These pamphlets were then smuggled into the country by Korean traders and distributed amongst interested Koreans who were able to read the Gospel in their own language.

After nearly 40 years of service in China, John Ross's health began to fail and he retired as a missionary in 1910. He returned to Edinburgh where he became an Elder at the Mayfield United Free Presbyterian Church, Newington. He continued to visit his family home in Balintore until his death in Edinburgh in 1915. He is buried there in the Newington cemetery where his grave is one of the most visited (with two plaques on it donated by the Korean Bible Society).

Christianity in China has had a chequered history. Long considered a religion of westerners (outsiders), it has been viewed with suspicion by both the populace and their leaders. Communists have equated it with imperialism and it was banned completely in 1949 when the Peoples Republic of China was established, and foreign missionaries expelled. There has since been a degree of relaxation but Christian activity appears to be monitored by the authorities. Recent (unofficial) figures obtained online suggest that there may be as many as 100 million Chinese Christians, many of them worshipping discretely.



**Rev. Dr John Ross's
memorial at Newington**
(photo from Find a Grave)

By contrast, Christianity in Korea became established relatively easily and Christians in South Korea worship freely. Figures obtained online suggest that 30% of today's South Koreans claim to be Christian, and the majority of these, it seems, belong to the Presbyterian Church. Much of the credit for this has been handed to the incredible enthusiasm, hard work and persistence of the Easter Ross born missionary, John Ross. The irony is that, although not well known in his native Scotland, his name is revered amongst South Korean Christians, many of whom continue to visit Scotland and localities associated with the Rev. John Ross in both Edinburgh and the Easter Ross Peninsula.

In 1894, John Ross was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by Glasgow University in recognition of his much respected publications on subjects relating to theology. He also researched and wrote on issues not necessarily connected with religious matters. He collected specimens of plants and sent them to Kew Gardens to be studied; one of these, an iris found in North China, was named *Iris Rossi* in his honour. He wrote primers of the Chinese and Korean languages and books on the history of Chinese peoples. Some of his many publications are listed below:

Chinese Foreign Policy (1877)

History of Corea (1879)

The Manchus (1880)

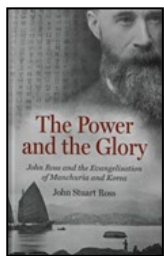
The Boxers of Manchuria (1901)

Mission Methods in Manchuria (1903)

The Original Religion of China (1909)

Origin of the Chinese People (1916)

Works about Rev. Dr John Ross:



J. S. Ross, *The Power and the Glory: John Ross and the Evangelisation of Manchuria and Korea* (Christian Focus, Tain, 2022).

An excellent book, packed with information about John Ross's life and work.

James H. Grayson, *The Legacy of John Ross in the International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, October 1999, 167-172, 170

The John Ross Visitor Centre was opened in May 2020 in a beautifully re-furnished former Free Presbyterian Church in the Seaboard village of Balintore. Funding had been obtained by means of a grant from the Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), and by a contribution from the Pyung Cheil Presbyterian Church (PCPC) in South Korea, which paid for the purchase of the building. The PCPC continues to contribute towards the Centre's running costs.

The exhibition covers John Ross's early life and his missionary work in China and Korea. The subject has been ably researched and the material on display is comprehensive and well presented in an easily readable form on attractive display boards.

**믿음 JOHN ROSS
소망 VISITOR
사랑 CENTRE**

www.johnrossvisitorcentre.co.uk

The John Ross Visitor Centre is located in the old Hilton Free Church, at Balintore near Tain—approximately 37 miles (59 km) north of Inverness—close to the Seaboard Centre, East Street, Balintore, IV20 1UA.

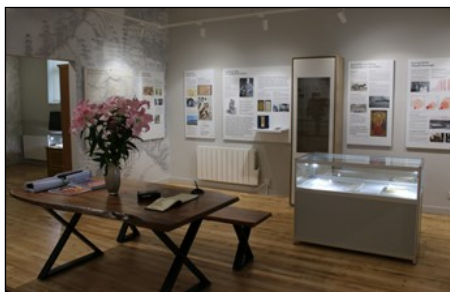


Summer opening:
Mon to Fri: 10am – 3pm
Winter opening:
By appointment only.

Prior to a visit, contact Seaboard Centre/Memorial Hall to check if the John Ross Centre is open.

Tel: 01862 832888

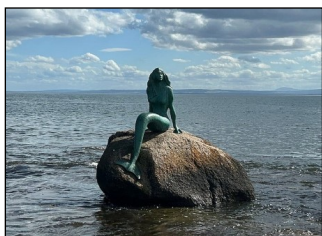
Email: info@seaboardcentre.com



As well as a thriving community café and gift shop, the Seaboard Centre provides a welcoming and adaptable community space that hosts a range of activities and events. In 2021 a Post

Office Counter was introduced and has become a vital resource for the community and businesses in the area following local bank closures.

The Seaboard Sculpture Trail features work by Hilton resident Steve Hayward, while another local sculptor, Barry Grove, has reconstructed onsite the Pictish *Hilton of Cadboll Stone*, the original of which is now in Edinburgh.



The Mermaid of the North
by Steve Hayward
(Photo from Tripadvisor.com)



The Hilton of Cadboll Stone



Giant Salmon
by Steve Hayward
(Photo CC BY-SA 2.0 Carron K).



This article brings together evidence for persons bearing the name of Kelly living in Assynt, a parish in north west Sutherland. The initial research was undertaken by the late James McIntosh (1924-2019), a Kelly descendant who was an early delver into the Sutherland Papers in the National Library of Scotland but who also explored records held by the National Records of Scotland. It is only fair to point out that his genealogical work predated the establishment of Scotland's People. Information from Scotland's People, additional documentary evidence and some historical background has been supplied by Malcolm Bangor-Jones.

The surname Kelly endured in Assynt for around a century - from about the 1720s to the 1820s - though there were descendants through the female line both in Assynt and further afield. The name was very unusual in Assynt which is in many ways a blessing. However, the old parish register does not commence until the early 1800s and even then there are missing entries - the register shows all the signs of being compiled from scraps of paper, some of which no doubt went missing.

In bringing together a range of evidence the article illustrates what can be gleaned from a variety of documentary sources. But there is no doubt that more could be discovered about Kelly descendants in the north and perhaps elsewhere. This should not be taken as the final word.¹

Alexander Kelly

Alexander Kelly first appears on record in Assynt in 1734 as "Alexander Kelly Gardiner & Violer to Assint" on the "Porteous Roll for the Shire of Sutherland for the Circuit Court of Justiciary to be held at Inverness in May 1734. The Porteous Roll was the list put forward by the county of Sutherland of those to be tried at the spring circuit court in Inverness. Kelly was one of a number of men from Assynt accused of deforcing a messenger.²

As gardener and fiddler to "Assint", Alexander served the laird of Assynt, at that time one Kenneth Mackenzie who had married his cousin Frances. They had moved to Assynt in about 1728 when Calda House had been completed. It may be assumed that Alexander came to Assynt at about the same time. Faint traces of the wall surrounding the garden where Alexander must have worked can be seen in places near the ruined mansion house.

The Mackenzies were soon in financial difficulties and creditors were pressing for their money. One brought an action to enforce payment: the messenger entrusted with serving summonses against Assynt and his tenants, Alexander Murray, from Tain, was violently deforced on the night of 24 January 1734. A large crowd, armed with swords, pistols, clubs, and staves



The ruins of Caldahouse, Assynt

pulled down the turf walls of the house the messenger was in and dragged him off to a peat-bog, shouting to one another “we have been of late pestered and distressed with officers and messengers, we are here a country by our selves who can defend our selves and this night will put a stop to any further commerce with those people, the death of one will be an example to others.” Murray was badly beaten up and robbed of his pistol, sword, money and the legal warrants.

Kelly, along with others, subsequently appeared in court on 1 May 1734. It was determined, however, that the case should be tried in the regality or sheriff court of Sutherland.³ Kelly is then named as “Allexr Kerly Gardiner at Caldahouse” in a list of “Assint people” summoned to appear before the sheriff of Sutherland on 5 July. However, his name is crossed out suggesting that he may not have had a charge to answer.⁴

The troubles of the Mackenzies continued and both the Earl of Sutherland and Mackenzie of Seaforth tried to lay claim to the estate. Caldahouse was burnt down in 1737, apparently by a party of MacRaes, and two years later, Kenneth Mackenzie of Assynt was sequestered. The estate remained under sequestration until 1757 when it was bought by the Earl of Sutherland.

Alexander’s employment as a gardener would therefore have come to an end in 1739 if not before. He is subsequently hidden from view as most of the farms in Assynt were either held by wadsetters (creditors of the Mackenzies) or tacksmen (large farmers). However, Alexander does appear in a list drawn up in the aftermath of the ‘45 Rebellion as living in Stronchrubie of Assynt. The list, which was attested by the parish minister, was of all men who had not been concerned in the “present Rebellion”.⁵



Alexander’s death in 1766 is recorded by a memorial stone set into a wall in the burial ground at Kirkton, now included within Inchnadamph. It appears to be the earliest surviving dated grave-marker in Assynt.⁶ The fact that the lettering is good and well spaced invites speculation as to who paid for the stone.

Left: Alex Kelly’s memorial in the wall at Kirkton

Ann Kelly born about 1750, married in about 1784 Kenneth Mackenzie, bowman (or cattleman) to the Rev. William Mackenzie, minister of Assynt. Their family included Isabella, who married Kenneth Macdonald, the Kirkton blacksmith, in 1803, and Janet, who married Alexander Macrae, a tailor from Glenleraig, in 1809. All were removed to the coast in 1819.

Jane Kelly, born about 1750, married Angus McLeod. Their daughter Margaret died in 1863 at the age of 87.

John Kelly, born in about 1750, and by 1770 in Achmore when he claimed 5 shillings for killing a fox.⁷ He is mentioned in the List of Inhabitants drawn up in November 1774 when the household of John Kelly Achmore then consisted of three persons, himself, his mother and a servant. He was one of a number of families living on the one of the largest farms in Assynt and tenanted by a tacksman, Kenneth Scobie.⁸ In 1784 he was a subtenant of the Rev William Mackenzie in "Knockdadoig a pendicle of Culine".⁹

In 1787 John, in partnership with a Donald McIver manufactured 41½ bolls of lime for the masons repairing the kirk and manse of Assynt, building a schoolhouse and harling the house of Inchnadamph.¹⁰ In 1789 he was apparently in Ledbeg when he claimed to have killed three foxes and two cubs.¹¹ In 1789 he was back in Culin where he killed one bitch, one fox and two cubs. He married Ann Sutherland and had at least two children: Anne (see below) and Jean (see below)

John is not included in the Assynt census return of 1811.¹² He may well have been living in Durness at the time as on 27 June 1812 John married, as his second wife, Janet Mackay from Achmore in the parish of Durness.¹³ They had had several children, including Anne (1813) (see below), Alexand (1817), Isabell (1820) (see below), and Helen (1822). His marriage contract describes him as "tenant in Culin" which was part of Kirkton.

John Kelly was described as 'an old man' with a household consisting of 5 people (unnamed) in the Assynt factor's list of removals and changes in 1819. He was not removed but remained on the glebe. In 1820 he was paid 5 shillings "for Carrying the Sacramental Tables from the Kirk to Torbreak".¹⁴ His name appears in the Statute Road Assessment List dated 30 August 1823 but not in later lists.¹⁵ He was not called as a witness in the glebe dispute in 1826. It may be presumed he died in about 1823 to 1824.

Ann Kelly, born about 1777, married Robert Gordon, a shepherd, and had at least 10 children. Evidence concerning one of the children (Ann below) suggests that some of the children were born in the parish of Tongue. The Sutherland Property Association list of shepherds for 1818-1819 includes a Robert Gordon one of two shepherds at Hope in the parish of Tongue working for Donald Forbes, the tenant of Melness sheep farm.¹⁶

Both she and her husband, who was then a shepherd at Filin (the small farm on which the village of Lochinver had been established) and lived next to the inn, gave evidence in the Assynt Murder inquiry in 1830. She gave her evidence in Gaelic.¹⁷ Robert Gordon appears on a meal list of 1835 as a cottar living in Filin.¹⁸ In 1840 he petitioned the Duke of Sutherland for assistance. He was living in Filin (Lochinver), was aged 70 and had spent two years in bed. The factor advised that if complied with, there would be many more such applications. “Children are grown up and able to support him”.¹⁹

According to a gravestone in the Lochinver burial ground Robert, died in 1844 and Ann died in 1867. Robert appears in the 1841 census but does not in that of 1851: he may indeed have died in 1844. Ann, however, died on 18 February 1855, aged 78. The gravestone provides a warning that not all inscriptions can be trusted.

Ann and Robert appear to have had the following children: Alexander, born about 1797; Colin, born about 1799 (dead by 1855); John, born in 1804; Hugh born about 1804; Anne, born about 1804 (awarded parochial relief in 1885 and died unmarried in 1888 aged 84); Isabella, born 1806 (dead by 1855); Kate, born about 1807; Janet, born about 1809 (died unmarried in 1893 at the age of 74. She lived in Lochinver and her death certificate describes her as a pauper); Charles born 1822; and Margaret, born about 1825.



The gravestone in memory of Robert Gordon saying he died 1844 aged 76 and Ann Kelly died 1867 aged 75

Jean Kelly, born about 1780, married William Macrae, Camore of Kirkton, in 1805. The Assynt Parish Register records the baptism of at least three children born to William Macrae and Jean Kelly (living with his father-in-law John Kelly tenant in Lower Culin); Duncan 1806; Donald 1808; Ann 1809; Janet 1814; Dolina 1816; and Jean 1818.

On being cleared from Camore in 1819, William Macrae and his family went to Newmore in the Ross-shire parish of Rosskeen. There five more children were born: Willina 1820, John 1823; Catherine 1825; William 1827; and David Carment 1831. William and Jean are buried in Rosskeen graveyard.²⁰

Francis Kelly, alive in 1770 when “Francess Kelly in Culin” claimed 5s for killing a fox.²¹

William Kelly, alive in 1774 when he assisted the surveyor John Home.²²

James Kelly, alive in 1774 when he assisted the surveyor John Home. In the accounts he is named as James Kellie in "Auchumore boat town".²³ William and James were probably young lads.

Isabella Kelly, born about 1750, married Murdo Kerr and had a daughter Ann in about 1795. This we know from Ann death in Balchladich in 1865 at the age of supposedly 70. According to the Register of Poor when Ann was awarded parochial relief in 1845 she was said to be 66 years of age. She was then described as living with a relative.²⁴

Ann Kelly, John Kelly's first daughter by his second marriage, married carpenter Evander Mackenzie in 1832 and the Assynt Register records the births and or baptism of several children at Kirkton where they lived on a small holding: John Kelly Mackenzie 1832 [OPR baptism entry given below];

Fanny Mackenzie 1834; David McGregor Mackenzie 1837; and Alexander 1839. Evander Mackenzie, the son of Donald Mackenzie and Ann McLean, died at the age of 81 in 1892. Anne herself died at Kirkton in Assynt in 1897. David McGregor Mackenzie died in 1910.

Isabel Kelly, John Kelly's second daughter by his second marriage, married John Munro on 4 November 1844 at Canisbay in Caithness, and the 1851 Census for Canisbay shows a family consisting of John Munro (42), labourer, from Assynt; his wife Bell (32), also from Assynt, and two sons, John (5) and Colin (2), both born in Canisbay. Isabel's death certificate (Keiss 1893/5) tells us that her parents were John Kelly, crofter, and Janet MacKay, and that she was married to John Munro, innkeeper in Keiss Village, Wick.

When she died, on 13 January 1893, she was 74 years of age. Her death was notified by a son-in-law, John MacAulay of Mey, Canisbay, who had married her daughter Sarah in Wick on 12 February 1874. Nothing further is known about the sons apart from the fact that Colin was baptised at Canisbay on 29 June 1848.

Points for discussion

Ann, John, Francis, William, James and Isabella all belong to the same generation and were probably all related, but their degree of kinship can only be guessed at. William and James, in particular, are shadowy figures. All that is known about them is that they were employed by John Home in 1774 when he was carrying out his survey of the parish.

According to her death certificate, Anne McLeod, who died aged 87 in 1863, was the daughter of Angus McLeod and Jane Kelly. Her date of birth was approximately 1776. The relationship of her mother to the other Kellys is not known.

According to his death certificate, Robert Byers, who died in 1876 at the age of 39, was the son of William Byers (dec.) and Janet Kelly (dec.) How this Janet fits into the picture is not known. Could she have been the Janet who was born to John Kelly? Could she have been a daughter of the John Kelly who married Jane MacKay?

Other Kellys are to be found in the IGI for Caithness, but whether these Kellys were in any way connected with the Assynt Kellys has not been ascertained. The name Kelly does not occur in the 1851 Census returns for Wick.

NOTES

1. References are given for all sources other than the OPR and registration of births, deaths and marriages.

2. National Records of Scotland (NRS), Justiciary Court, JC26/122/D1843 Geo Sinclair & others.

3. NRS JC11/8 Northern Circuit Minute Book.

4. NRS Dornoch Sheriff Court Records, SC9/7/1.

5. Malcolm Bangor-Jones, Population Lists of Assynt 1638-1811 (1997), p.16. The list comes from the Saltoun Papers in the National Library of Scotland (NLS).

6. A S Cowper & I Ross, Pre-1855 Tombstone Inscriptions in Sutherland Burial Grounds (1989), p.149.

7. NRS SC9/84/10 [probably] State of the Fox dues & premiums paid in Assint.

8. Malcolm Bangor-Jones, (1997) p.25. The list comes from the Sutherland Papers in the National Library of Scotland.

9. NRS SC9/7/ Lybelle Sums of Removal Mr Mckenzie a Tenants.

10. NLS Dep.313/1714 Sutherland Estate vouchers: the church of Assint.

11. Highland Archives, Sutherland Commissioners of Supply minute book, Sutherland 1/1 pp.272-273.

12. Malcolm Bangor-Jones, (1997).

13. The Durness Parish Register records the marriage on 30 June 1812 of John Kelly an old man, a widower, from the Heights of Assynt and [] Mackay, Achumore.

14. NRS Assynt Kirk Session Minutes CH2/894/1 p.13.

15. NRS SC/9/86/44.

16. NLS Dep. 313/1009 Report of the Committee of The United Association Whitsunday 1818 to Whitsunday 1819.

17. NRS AD14/31/93 Precognition into Hugh MacLeod.

18. NLS Dep.313/2635 A List of Meal issued to Individuals in the Parish of Assynt 15th 17th & 18th August 1835.

19. NLS Dep.313/2627.

20. Thanks to Dr Jim Mackay for posting a photo of their gravemarker on the Kirkmichael Trust Facebook page on 5 June 2020 and thereby facilitating this discovery.

21. NRS SC9/84/10 [probably] State of the Fox dues & premiums paid in Assint.

22. R J Adam (ed.) p.58.

23. R J Adam (ed.) p.58.

24. Highland Archive, General Register of Poor for Assynt, volume 1.

The Tuachs: Part Three

This concludes a version of the talk, “The Tuachs: MacKenzies by Another Name in Ross and Lochaber”, given to the society in October 2025 by Graeme Mackenzie.

In the previous parts of this paper we found accounts and records of Hector MacKenzie of Gairloch’s younger son John of Davochpollo bearing the nickname “Tuoach” or “Towach” –from the Gaelic *Tuathach* meaning “Northerner” –which he had probably gained whilst in Lochaber, helping the “Captain of Clan Cameron” (who may have been his father-in-law) secure the old Clan Chattan lands there from the Macintoshes.

This resulted in some of the earliest records of the name –as Towache, Twiche, and Tuich –being found in the late 16th and earliest 17th centuries amongst followers and tenants of Cameron of Lochiel; with recent research also finding records from this period of John Hectorson’s immediate descendants in or around Davochpollo back in Easter Ross. In the mid 17th century, John Tuach, who was an armourer or gunsmith for the Earl of Seaforth, had a grant from his chief of the estate of Logiereich –just across the river from MacKenzie’s seat at Brahan –where he was succeeded in the course of the late 17th and early 18th centuries by his son and grandson, who were both lawyers also called John.

John Tuach 3rd of Logiereich had no children, and sold his estate to Sir Alexander MacKenzie of Gairloch who built Conon House on it. The senior Tuach line in Scotland was carried on by descendants of George Tuach of Craigbreck –a younger son of John Tuach 1st of Logiereich –whose grandson George had a tack of Glascharn, on the Scatwell estate, in the late 18th century. In 1770 he received a silver quach –now in the National Museum of Scotland [which was pictured in Part Two of this paper in the last edition of the Journal] –from MacKenzie of Scatwell’s wife, which was engraved in 1789 with the name of his wife Ann Macleay.

George Tuach appears as the tenant of Glascharn in the 1798 “Returns to the Lord Lieutenant of Ross of men aged 15 to 60 by parish”, along with his sons, John, Kenneth, and Roderick. By 1802, when his son Kenneth witnessed a sasine for MacKenzie of Scatwell, the family had moved to Arrielietrach –on the southern shore of Loch Luichart –and in 1807, George Tuach, tenant there, advertised the sale of birch trees from the wood of Scatwell in the Caledonian Mercury. This is the last record of George Tuach himself, though some of his sons succeeded him in Arrielietrach.



George Tuach and Ann Macleay are known to have had eight children, and virtually all the Tuachs later to be found in the OPRs and Statutory Registers in Scotland can be traced back to them. Much of that tracing was first done by David Walters of Oregon in the United States, who is descended from their son Donald, and who commissioned me to research the origins and earlier generations of the Tuachs.

George's sons, Alexander and Donald, were in Arrieleitrach in 1819 when, on 19 September, they were both charged with assaulting, obstructing and deforcing Revenue officers, and prison breaking (such a run-in with the Revenue suggests they were involved in illegal distilling). Alexander was found guilty, but recommended to mercy and sentenced to two months imprisonment in the Inverness Tolbooth. Donald however failed to appear and was therefore "decerned and adjudged to be an outlaw and fugitive from His Majesty's Laws" with all his moveable goods being confiscated.

Though Donald may have taken to the hills for a while, he returned to live at Arrieleitrach until at least 1839, after which he moved to Kilcoy where he died in 1867. Alexander, having presumably served his time, returned to Arrieleitrach where he died in 1859, his death prompting the notice in the Inverness Advertiser quoted at the head of Part One of this paper which, after saying that he was "... the lineal descendant of the Tuachs of Loggie Roach ...", goes on to refer to "... the antique curiously carved tomb-stone of the family ... still to be seen in the romantic burying ground of Conan."



The "antique curiously carved tomb-stone" pictured on page 73 of the NOSAS Report on Old Conan or Logie Wester Burial Ground by Anne MacInnes & others

Though Alexander Tuach is described in this obituary as the head of the family, his elder brother John was still alive in 1859 (but only lasted until 1860) and we don't know where or when his other older brothers, Roderick and Kenneth died.

As we've seen, the Tuachs were an old and well-connected clan who one would expect to have left many bearers of that name by the 19th century; yet in the census taken two years after Alexander Tuach's death, there were just 36 people in Scotland with the name Tuach (one less than there had been in 1841), of whom 6 were in Inverness, and the rest in Ross shire.

By 1921 the total had risen to 88 and spread just a little geographically, with 48 in Ross-shire, 28 in Inverness-shire, 2 in Moray, 2 in Perthshire, 1 in Argyll, and 7 in Midlothian. Nevertheless, given the antiquity and one-time prominence in Ross-shire of the name, where had all the Tuachs gone?

Some were probably to be found as Touchs. One or two Tuachs from Ross can be found in Aberdeen bearing that version of the name – notably John 1st of Logiereich’s son Kenneth when he took his degree at the University there – and there was a family of Tuachs in Fife who were also recorded as Touchs. More commonly however, since the Tuachs were in origin MacKenzies, many later chose to use their original clan surname rather than the name Tuach. This is immediately evident in the case of one of Alexander Tuachs’ brothers, who appears in the censuses of 1841 and 1861 as Donald McKenzie (though he had been Donald Tuach in 1851) and whose death certificate in 1867 records him as Donald Mackenzie or Tuach.

Donald’s son was married in 1849 as George Tuach Mackenzie, appeared in the censuses of 1851 and ’61 as George McKenzie, then in 1871 as George McKenzie Tuach, and died in 1875 as George Tuach. George’s son was baptised in 1859 as John Tuach, was recorded in Inverness in 1901 as John McKenzie, and died there as John Tuach McKenzie. Many MacKenzies who were Tuachs later used it as a middle name in this way.

Emigration was of course the third reason why so few Tuachs remained in Scotland; but even overseas, the survival of the surname was not guaranteed. Sometime between 1854 & 1859, Alexander Tuach of Arrieleitrach’s son Donald, his wife Janet, and their daughter Jean emigrated to Australia. The passenger list recording this is very faded, but they clearly went as Tuachs. They settled in Horsham, Victoria, where their grave [pictured right] identifies them as Donald Tuach MacKenzie, died 5 Jan 1906 (aged 77), and Janet MacKenzie (1830-1912).



A grandson of Donald’s elder brother John—also called John Tuach—emigrated with his wife Rose in 1904 to New Zealand and this is the record of their departure from the UK:

No. of Emigrant Ticket	Names of Passengers	Profession, Occupation, or Calling of Passengers	English						Scotch						Irish						Foreigners					
			Age of each Adult of 15 years and upwards			Age of Children between 1 and 15 years			Age of each Adult of 15 years and upwards			Age of Children between 1 and 15 years			Age of each Adult of 15 years and upwards			Age of Children between 1 and 15 years			Age of each Adult of 15 years and upwards			Age of Children between 1 and 15 years		
			Married		Single	Married		Single	Married		Single	Married		Single	Married		Single	Married		Single	Married		Single	Married		Single
			Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
2200	Harvey	Mr. James																								
2201	Donald	Mr. John																								
	Janet	Ms. Janet																								

Their grave, pictured right, can be found in Gore, on the South Island near Dunedin (the old name for Edinburgh), in an area full of the descendants of Highland Scots, including cousins of mine that I was able to visit in 2019.

The inscription reads John Tuach 1873-1939 and his wife Rose Tuach 1881-1953.



Many Tuachs of course emigrated to the United States, and one of the most remarkable stories of a family who went there concerns Roderick Tuach, a great-great-grandson of George Tuach and Ann Macleay's second son Kenneth. Roderick was born in 1881 in Muir of Ord and went into the army, serving in the Seaforths from 1901 to 1912. Then he appears to have emigrated to Canada where, on the outbreak of the Great War, he re-enlisted.

ATTESTATION PAPER. No. 275
CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE. 432275
QUESTIONS TO BE PUT BEFORE ATTESTATION.

1. What is your name? RODERICK TUACH
2. Is what Town, Township or Parish, and in what County were you born? Jray, Rosshire, Scotland
3. What is the name of your next-of-kin? Wife, Amy Scott Tuach
4. What is the address of your next-of-kin? Muir of Ord, Rosshire, Scotland
5. What is the date of your birth? 2nd Mar 1881
6. What is your Trade or Calling? Stonemason
7. Are you married? Yes
8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated? Yes
9. Do you now belong to the Active Militia? No
10. Have you ever served in any Military Force? 13 yrs Seaforths, 1901-1912
11. Do you understand the nature and terms of your engagement? Yes
12. Are you willing to be admitted to serve in the (CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE)? Yes

Roderick Tuach (Signature of Man).
Amy Scott (Signature of Witness).

Roderick came back to Scotland with the Canadian Army, and his son Roderick David Tuach was born at the family's old home in 1916.

14	<u>Roderick</u>	<u>1916</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>Roderick Tuach</u>	<u>Isabella Ann Tuach</u>	<u>1916</u>
	<u>David</u>	<u>April</u>		<u>Sergeant B. Coy.</u>	<u>Aunt</u>	<u>April 28th</u>
	<u>Tuach</u>	<u>Highth</u>		<u>49th Battalion</u>	<u>(Present)</u>	<u>at Fairburg</u>
		<u>2nd 190 M. P. M.</u>		<u>2nd Canadian Bom.</u>		<u>A.C. Mackan</u>
		<u>Forest Hill</u>		<u>ington</u>		<u>Asst</u>
		<u>Cottage</u>		<u>Almiedoch Tuach</u>		
		<u>Urray</u>		<u>M.S. Mylchre</u>		
				<u>1906 April 6th</u>		

In the last year of the war, Roderick was sent to Chicago to recruit expatriate Britons in the United States for service in the army, and when the war was over, he decided to stay in the US where he became a government clerk; as revealed by the 1920 US Census, which shows him as a lodger in Cork, Illinois. Roderick's wife Ann (36) and children William (15), James (14), Catherine (11), and Roderick (6) are recorded in the "US Index to Alien Arrivals at Canadian, Atlantic and Pacific Seaports 1904-1944 (an Ancestry database) as they arrived to join him in Illinois.

Name of Ship "CLANCARITA"		Port of Arrival	GLASGOW	Date of Arrival		19 FEB. 1934	P.M. 23
Steamship Line		ANCHOR.		Whence Arrived		NEW YORK.	
NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF <u>BRITISH</u> PASSENGERS.							
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)		(7)
Port at which Passengers have been landed	NAME OF PASSENGER.	CLASS.	ADDRESS OF PASSENGER.	Profession, Occupation, or Calling of Passenger.	AGE OF PASSENGER.		Country of last Residence
		1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th			Adults of 12 years and upwards Children between 12 and 16 years Infants under 12 years		Country of last Residence
					Male Female		Country of last Residence
20	Tuach, Roderick	40	Muir of Ord, Ross-shire	Stone-mason	50		U.S.A.

UK and Ireland, Incoming Passenger Lists, 1878-1960, Glasgow, Scotland, 1934, Feb

In 1934 Roderick went back for a visit to Scotland, intending – according to his UK entry record shown above – to return to the US; but, whatever his intentions in 1934, he ended up staying in Scotland, where he died in 1940, in hospital in Inverness, though his home was then in Fortrose:

20	Roderick Tuach	10 40	M 59	William Tuach	1 year 6 months	Annie S. Tuach	10 40
	Mason	6 10 PM		Contractor	1 year 6 months	Widow	10 40
	Married to James Tuach			James Tuach	4 months	Present	10 40
	James Tuach			MS	10 40		10 40
	Scott Walker			James M. Tuach	10 40		10 40
	Widow			Deceased	10 40		10 40

Roderick's widow Annie Scott Walker went to live with their son James in Chicago. According to his obituary, James served for many years as the "dashing and charismatic ... drum major and band manager of the Stock Yard Kilty Band". He was 92 when he died leaving a son, two daughters, ten grandchildren, and six great grandchildren, so he appears to have done his best to perpetuate the name of Tuach ... except that his death certificate names him as James Walker McKenzie.

He appears as James W. MacKenzie in the 1950 census in Chicago, but as James W. Tuoch in the 1940 census in Memphis, Tennessee, where he had been married the year before as James Walker Tuach. His previously-quoted newspaper obituary names him as James Tuach MacKenzie, but the names on his gravestone in the Mount Greenwood Cemetery in Chicago appear to say exactly the right thing; that he was Tuach, but also a MacKenzie; and boy, did he look like a MacKenzie!



A more detailed and fully referenced account of the Tuachs can be found in Graeme Mackenzie, *Clan MacKenzie: Septs, Related Names, and Branches* (HFHS, 2025).

William Crow Gordon Nairn Photographer

by Stuart Farrell

I was contacted by a gentleman in Crete whose wife found the attached photograph in a flea market and wondered who the person who took the photo was. Unfortunately we have no idea who the young lady in the photo is. But I have managed to find a bit about William Crow Gordon the photographer.



He was born 5 January 1857 at Allardice Street, Stonehaven, Parish of Fetteresso, Kincardine-shire (now Aberdeenshire), as the illegitimate son of Mary Crow, a Domestic Servant. The name of his Father is not stated on his birth certificate. He was named William Crow at birth, and its not known when he adopted the surname of Gordon.

He was first married to Elspet Simpson Fullerton on 18 March 1886 at Dunochter, Stonehaven and had a daughter Margaret Ann Bisset born 19 June 1887 at Nairn (Margaret Ann Bisset Gordon, Photographer, died 13 January 1918, and is buried in the Nairn Cemetery). Their son William George Summers, who was born at Nairn on 7 June 1889, died 4 June 1890 at 94 Allardice Street, Stonehaven. His wife had died at 14 Virginia Terrace, Nairn, on 24 June 1889 of Epilepsy.

William Crow Gordon was married again, on 22 April 1891 in Wandsworth, London to Elizabeth Pasby. They were living in Seabank Road, Nairn, when the census of 1901 was taken, with children Maggie 13, Henry 8, Eliza 6, Amelia 4, and Frederick 2.

The 1911 census shows them living at the same address, with another child, Arthur E. aged 9.

His services were advertised in the Nairnshire Telegraph, featuring group photographs of the Highland Mounted Brigade amongst others.

William Gordon is named on the Rosebank United Free Church Roll of Honour of 26th January 1915. When he joined the 4th Battalion Cameron Highlanders in Inverness on 18th September 1914 his attestation form shows that he had previously served in the 5th Gordon Highlanders (though it doesn't say when and for how long).

The entries on this page only require to be made from time to time as they occur.

STATEMENT of the SERVICES *8251* Name *William Gordon*

Corps	Unit	Promotions, Relections, Qualities, &c.	Rank	From	To	Signature of Officers certifying correctness of Entries
Service towards engagement reckoned from						
EMBODIED			<i>PR</i>	<i>18.9.14</i>		<i>W. Mackintosh</i>
<i>No 1 Sep 16 61 Sep 17</i>			-	<i>17.4.15</i>		<i>W. Mackintosh</i>
<i>Trans to 36 Protection Co. Royal Defence Corps</i>			-	<i>29.4.16</i>	<i>20.5.17</i>	<i>W. Mackintosh</i>

W. Mackintosh (Signature of Officer certifying correctness of Entries)

The above record—from *Find My Past*—shows that he transferred to 6th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders on 17th April 1915 and to No. 36 Protection Company Royal Defence Corps on 29th April 1916. He was discharged on 20th May 1917 when he's described as being 5ft 7 in height with blue eyes, grey hair and of a sallow complexion. His commanding officer described him as "being a most intelligent and honest and trustworthy man careful in carrying out his duties".

8. Certificate to be signed by the soldier on discharge.

I hereby acknowledge that I have received all my PAY and ALLOWANCES, and all just demands up to the present date, subject to the reservations of the claims noted on the 3rd page.

(Place) *Inverness* (Signature of Soldier) *W. C. Gordon*

(Date) *11/6/17* (Signature of Witness) *F. Morrison*

(When a soldier is absent through illness or any other cause, and it is not desirable to forward these proceedings to him for signature, a manuscript copy should be sent for the man to sign, and when returned should be attached here.)

William Crow Gordon died on the 10th of August 1930 of Cerebral Thrombosis at 2 Charles Place, Nairn aged 73 years and is buried in 1918 Section of Nairn Cemetery. His wife Elizabeth Catherine Pasby, died 8th July 1934 aged 72. Their headstone also commemorates their daughter, Amelia Gordon M.P.S. who died 2nd August 1975 aged 79.

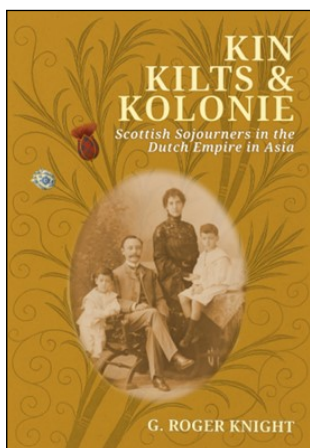
A family stone in the Victorian Section of the cemetery is 'In memory of Elsie Fullerton beloved wife of W. Gordon photographer, died 25th June 1889, in her thirty second year; also their son Willie who died 4th June 1890, aged twelve months. Also their daughters Eliza Fullerton, who died .. Dec 1917 aged 22 years ...'.

William's death was noticed in The Nairnshire Telegraph of 12 August 1930, which also included the following obituary:

'Death of Mr W. C. Gordon, Photographer. Another link with old-time Nairn has been severed by the death of Mr William Crow Gordon, which occurred at Charles Place, Cumming Street, on Sunday. Mr Gordon came to Nairn from Kincardine-shire over 50 years ago and took up business as a photographer. He speedily acquired a wide connection, and continued to carry on a successful business, numbering among his clientele all the leading families in the neighbourhood, until a few years ago, when failing health compelled him to take a less active part in the work.

The deceased will be specially remembered for the active part he took and the high position he occupied in Free Masonry in the North. He joined the local Lodge in 1886, and held various offices in it; acting for two periods as Right Worshipful Master. He was also for a term First Principal of St. Ninian Royal Arch Chapter.

The possessor of a liberal store of knowledge pertaining to Nairn of former days, Mr Gordon was often referred to for information concerning persons and places, and was ever ready to import his knowledge. Of a pawky and kind disposition he gathered round him a large circle of friends who will learn with regret of his demise.'



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